CHARLES AND CROMWELL

By the same Author

KING JAMES I (1935)

GEORGE VILLIERS, FIRST DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM (1940)

JOHN HAMPDEN (1933)

CAPTAIN THOMAS SCHOFIELD (1942)
A novel of the years 1647 and 1648.

[Detail of the Charles I on Horseback in the National Gallery

KING CHARLES I

by VAN DYCK

CHARLES AND CROMWELL

by

HUGH ROSS WILLIAMSON

DUCKWORTH
3 Henrietta Street
LONDON

First published 1946

TO

MY WIFE

Printed in Great Britain by
The Camelot Press Ltd., London and Southampton

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

The portrait of Charles by Van Dyck is reproduced by permission of the National Gallery; that of Cromwell by Robert Walker by permission of the National Portrait Gallery.

INTRODUCTION

ON WRITING HISTORY

THERE is much to be said for the old-fashioned method of teaching history as a list of names and dates. "In such-and-such a year, This-or-that battle was fought and So-and-so was killed." There is a simple incontrovertibility about it, a reassurance that we are moving among certainties. Once we enquire why the battle was fought and what were its consequences and what kind of man So-and-so was we are in the realm of speculation. And the more thoroughly we explore causes and character, the more surely we appreciate the *mot* of the dying Walpole, who, when asked what he would like read to him, said: "Anything but history, for that is bound to be false."

"History is a science," says Bury, "nothing more, nothing less." "All history," retorts Keyserling, "is necessarily mythology." Within the limits of these two epigrams the historian moves. On the one hand, his work partakes of the nature of science in that it involves a patient accumulation of data, a constant checking of hypothesis by known fact, a conscientious accuracy; on the other, he is forced to admit that, however much information he may accumulate on any given point, his ignorance is still more profound than his knowledge and that his interpretation of his data will, in the last resort, be mythological.

"For want of a nail, a horseshoe was lost; for want of a horseshoe a horse was lost; for want of a horse a rider was lost; for want of a rider a message was lost; for want of a message a battle was lost; for want of a battle a kingdom was lost—and all for the want of a horseshoe nail." In that moral tale of the nursery is epitomized the only intelligible philosophy of history. Historians may be profound about the kingdom, grandiloquent about the battle; by studious dili-

gence they may even discover the message; but quite certainly they will never find the nail. The only safe rule for the writer of history is, as Dr. H. A. L. Fisher has expressed it, "that he should recognize in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen."

There are, of course, schools of historians who, from time to time, refuse to accept this, which they look on as a counsel of despair. They incline to the scientists in that their tidy minds are avid for formulæ. There must, they feel, be some ultimate simplification, some discoverable angle of vision from which the maze of untidy ruins will be somehow revealed as a uniform edifice. Enthusiastically accumulating facts to fit their hypotheses, they present us with a coherent parable of Progress or a magnificent myth of Determinist Materialism. That they call it science and not mythology does not, however, alter its nature.

At the opposite end of the scale from the Marxists who consider that the mainspring of history is Mammon are the Christians who think it is God. The classic expression of this school is, of course, the Bible. Cromwell, who was soaked in it, expressed its philosophy—which was also his: "Let us all not be careful what use men will make of these actings. They shall, will they, nill they, fulfil the good pleasure of God and so shall serve our generations. Our rest we expect elsewhere: that will be durable."

What to some may seem an act of faith, however, is to others a continued begging of the question. To label "the contingent and the unforeseen" "God" is merely, they would say, to change the label and not in any way to posit a solution. Moreover, to them it is more intelligible to consider as the unifying principle Mammon, whose nature and effects are sufficiently visible, than God, Whose ways are, by definition, past finding out.

This is, however—or so I would suggest—essentially a superficial judgment. To assume a human purpose in history is to be caught between the Scylla of despair and the

Charybdis of dishonesty. To assume a superhuman one is to admit chaos without cynicism and to study the actings of men with an interest and tolerance devoid of the ulterior motive of establishing a thesis. In either case, certainly, you come back to the horseshoe nail; but it makes a difference if, behind the nail, you take the chain of causation back to God or whether you stop at nascent capitalism paying insufficient wages to unorganized blacksmiths.

But there is another more profound difference between the two views of history. By admitting God, you can emphasize man. He is the master, not the slave of circumstances; a creature, not an automaton. And the "meaning of history," in so far as it is discoverable at all, is to be found in what people do. It is the story of personalities, not the conditioned reaction of economic man—that abstraction of an abstraction. As I put it in an earlier book, "history is the relationship or interaction of characters, or it is nothing."

. . . . .

This book completes the work I began thirteen years ago—the writing of the story of the reigns of the first two Stuarts in terms of the key characters. *Charles and Cromwell* is the third volume of a trilogy of which the predecessors are *George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham* and *John Hampden.* The "mythological" structure is, as I stated in the first of these: "Buckingham's death closed the first act of the tragedy which ended with Charles's execution. I use the word 'tragedy' advisedly, for the story has something of the sweep and intensity of a Greek tragedy. Eliot was mainly responsible for Buckingham's death, and Charles never rested till Eliot was dead, murdered as coldly and calculatedly by the King's imprisonment of him as Buckingham had been by Felton's knife. But Eliot also had a friend and disciple, John Hampden, and after Eliot's death Hampden became the foremost of the revolutionaries who nerved and directed the early years of the Civil War. When he was killed in a skirmish, Charles immediately knighted the deserter who had brought it about.

But Hampden, too, left one who looked to him for leadership and inspiration—Oliver Cromwell. And Cromwell, finally, killed the King."

This book differs from its predecessors in that, in them, I was able to print for the first time new material, whereas in this I have not researched among primary sources or referred to manuscripts (except occasionally for purposes of verification), but have contented myself with secondary printed sources. This is partly because the late war made access to manuscripts difficult, if not impossible; but mainly because the publication of W. C. Abbott's great *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* has made it unlikely that any new light will, except by an accidental discovery, be thrown upon Oliver. Also, the purpose and structure of this book differs from the other two. They are, strictly, biographies; this is concerned with the clash of two characters. I shall feel that it has accomplished its aim if, when the reader gets to the end of it, he feels that he is in a position to appreciate the story which forms the last paragraph.

I should be the last to claim that my "mythology" was *the* truth of the matter. It has been written from no other motive than that I wanted to write it—remembering Acton's dictum that the historian should learn as much by writing as by reading—and it has taken the shape it has because, by the accident of individual temperament, I saw it that way. In accuracy of detail—the scientific side—I have been as scrupulous as I can, but the number of facts that one does not know is so vastly in excess of those which one does that it would be even more pointless to pretend to exhaustiveness here than to claim exclusive validity for the interpretation. There is, in particular, the difficulty of estimating the credibility of contemporary memoirs. I am perhaps too inclined to favour them at the expense of such stark and sober documents as financial estimates and official denials. But it has always seemed to me that Chesterton's remark about contemporary Fleet Street—"all the truth they tell in Hell, and

all the lies they write"—is eminently applicable to all writers of official history. If you are curious to find out the truth, gossip is more likely to lead you to it than statistics.

In general, I have tried, as in all my historical writing, to remember Acton's advice: "Keep men and things apart; guard against the prestige of great names; see that your judgments are your own and do not shrink from disagreement; no trusting without testing; be more severe to ideas than to actions; do not overlook the strength of the bad cause, or the weakness of the good; never be surprised by the crumbling of an idol or the disclosure of a skeleton; judge talent at its best and character at its worst; suspect power more than vice."

. . . . .

But why the first half of the seventeenth century? Why Charles and Cromwell?

There are reasons which could be adduced. There is surely some interest attaching to the end of the English monarchy—for monarchy in the true sense died with Charles in January, 1649—or to the emergence of the greatest of the dictators. The "struggle for freedom," the Civil War, the forging of the Constitution, the appearance of new ecclesiastical and political theories are in themselves worthy of study. One might go deeper and contend that this fifty years was the climax of English history to which all that went before was but the prelude and all that followed the consequence or echo. Certainly by comparison the modern world is rather dim. Ireton and Rainsborough argued the case of Fascism *v.* Communism at Putney in 1647 much more intelligently and profoundly than it has ever been argued since. No "underground movement" can ever have been so successful and well-organized as the "Great Rebellion." The role of the Church in politics, the Anglo-Catholic desire for reunion with Rome, the ethics of the Establishment—these matters were debated then in such a way that the modern ecclesiastical pronouncements on them sound like a series of parrot cries.

Yet such reasons—though I would be prepared to defend the position they imply—are in reality no more than rationalizations of a personal preference formed in childhood.

As long as I can remember King Charles's head has been my King Charles's head. In my childhood, I walked often through a field where the footpath is still called Kingsway because Rufus's body passed there dropping blood, and Charles, five hundred years later, rode the same path from Carisbrooke to the scaffold. Under a mulberry tree planted by James I, I read my first books and round it learnt to ride my first bicycle. On windy nights I was kept awake by the creaking of the sign hanging from the same bracket from which Fairfax had hanged one of his soldiers for theft. The Congregational church where my father was minister was used by Richard Cromwell, and one knew by tradition, as if it were only yesterday, the corner on the old site which was his pew. In the Abbey opposite, Lancelot Andrewes had preached; and when Buckingham was murdered the Vicar wrote the news in the register there in so great a hurry that the sentence was blotted—I was shown this, the first historical manuscript I was able to decipher, when I was six. And the names of the local tradesmen had not altered. Godfrey the haberdasher and Elcombe the florist, Smart and Munday the tailors, Jenvey the estate agent and the Biddlecombes, who were small-holders, were all good, law-abiding folk. So it came as no surprise, when at school one took a somewhat precocious interest in Charles I's taxation, to discover among manuscripts on a holiday visit that William Godfrey, James Elcombe, Thomas Smart, William Mundy, Stephen Jenvey (who was apparently an estate agent even in 1635) and John Biddlecombe all paid their Ship Money assessments without any recorded protest. In a little country town in the heart of England time passes imperceptibly; and the consciousness of continuity was such that, for me, the early Stuarts were always near-contemporaries. Going to a children's fancy-dress party in Stuart costume seemed hardly fancy dress.

The first time I appeared in print, as a schoolboy, was—inevitably—with an account of the execution of Charles I written for a competition; and one was robbed of half one's rightful delight in Dumas' *Three Musketeers* and *Twenty Years After* by the feeling that he was weaving fantastic romances round people whom one knew very well indeed and found much more interesting as they were. When the time came to take one's degree in history, the fact that the special period was the Tudors and not the Stuarts made that conventional process even more pointless than it would otherwise have been.

I can therefore make no pretence of approaching the years 1603 to 1649 with the academic detachment of an impartial scholar. I have been their lover as long as I can remember and the contemporary world intensifies my nostalgia for them.

One consequence of this approach is that it reinforces my view of history as the interaction of character. It is the people that matter, and the principles are important only as far as they further an understanding of the people. One might have fought either for Charles or for Cromwell; but if it had been a matter of fighting for the Divine Right of Kings or for the Principle of Toleration, one would have absented oneself from Naseby and got on with the haymaking.

To some readers this will, I know, be a cardinal defect in my work. In the matter, for example, of Charles's refusal to see Denbigh,[1] which was regarded by Cromwell as the awaited sign from Heaven that the King should die, many weighty explanations could be—and have been—given. I happen to think that the clue lies in who Denbigh was—a trifling circumstance which no historian troubles to mention. I do not suggest that it is more than a guess, but at least it arises from considering Charles as a person and not as an incarnated principle. This may serve as a typical instance of an attitude which I shall not try to defend, but which the excursion into

[1] See p. 231.

autobiography is intended to explain. At least, the unwary reader will be on his guard.

. . . . .

Until the beginning of the 1914 war, when English civilization as it had hitherto been understood came to an end, the names of Cromwell and Charles were potent as living symbols. Mr. Lloyd George was distinctly Cromwellian and there was something indubitably Caroline about Mr. Arthur Balfour. In spite of the change of names and of conditions, in spite of the impossibility of maintaining a strict parallelism, Royalist and Parliamentarian, tamed but recognizable in Toryism and Whiggery, had emerged as Conservative Anglican and Liberal Dissenter. The feuds and the division were still there and the axe at Whitehall, two and a half centuries old, gave edge to the controversy. It was impossible to write of that past without being influenced by predilections in the present.

We have changed all that. To-day, Cromwell and Charles are at last above the battle, in the sense that modern political differences no longer derive from their antagonism. For to any form of democracy they were united in unbending hostility. If they were still opponents in 1910, they were reconciled by 1940. And, if a rough modern analogy is wanted, it can be found in the circumstance that, had the negotiations between them in 1647 succeeded, they would have anticipated almost exactly Mussolini and King Victor Emmanuel.[1]

There is, however, still one place where the battle rages with unabated vigour. An enthusiastic minority of extreme Anglo-Catholics still makes much ado about Charles and Laud. Since Laud's efforts were successful in destroying Anglo-Catholicism as an effective force in the Church of England for two centuries and Charles was put to death in the last analysis because he undertook to establish Presbyterianism at the point of Scottish swords as the State religion of

[1] Professor Ernest Barker's comparison of Cromwell and Hitler in his *Oliver Cromwell* (1937) is most instructive.

England, I have always been slightly at a loss to understand their reasoning. I found it, therefore, pleasing to discover that the position, as regards the scholars of the Anglo-Catholic party, has been repudiated. Canon Addleshaw writes in *The High Church Tradition* (1941): "There were also enemies in their own camp, High Church divines such as Laud, who threatened to destroy the organic functioning of the Church by an illegitimate extension of the royal authority."

This is no reason, of course, why those who wish should not lay wreaths on King Charles's statue at Charing Cross on January 30. But there is now nothing to prevent the most ardent Cromwellian from joining them in commemorating a tragedy of circumstance and character in which there were, in fact, two victims.

. . . . .

The standard bibliography of the period is the *Bibliography of British History, 1603–1714*, edited by Godfrey Davies (1928). Of the books subsequently published I have referred, in addition to Abbott's great *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1937), to Davies and Firth's *Regimental History of Cromwell's Army* (1940), W. K. Jordan's *Development of Religious Toleration in England* (1936), A. S. P. Woodhouse's *Puritanism and Liberty* (1938), N. G. Brett-James's *Growth of Stuart London* (1935), Basil Willey's *Seventeenth-Century Background* (1934), Enid Welsford's *The Court Masque* (1927), J. G. Muddiman's *Trial of Charles I* (1928), H. R. Trevor-Roper's *Archbishop Laud* (1940), C. V. Wedgwood's *Strafford* (1935), the Earl of Birkenhead's *Strafford* (1938), S. Reed-Brett's *John Pym* (1940), Carola Oman's *Henrietta Maria* (1936), James Cleugh's *Prince Rupert* (1934), R. W. Ramsey's *Henry Cromwell* (1932) and *Richard Cromwell* (1935), C. W. Firebrace's *"Honest Harry": A Biography of Sir Henry Firebrace* (1932), G. M. Young's *Charles I and Cromwell* (1935), F. J. Varley's *Cambridge during the Civil War* (1935), *A Royalist's Notebook*, edited by Francis Bamford (1936), John Buchan's *Oliver Cromwell* (1934),

F. M. G. Higham's *Charles I: A Study* (1932), Evan John's *King Charles I.* Needless to say, this list includes books of unequal value.

I have deliberately omitted all footnote citation of authorities.

HUGH ROSS WILLIAMSON.

LONDON.
1946.

CHAPTER ONE

PRINCE AND UNDERGRADUATE

THE great house at Hinchinbrook was the first halt on the Royal Progress to Scotland after the Court left Royston on March 19, 1617.

The choice was appropriate enough. Fourteen years earlier, when the King had first come south from Scotland to ascend the English throne as James the First, his reception at Hinchinbrook had made a lasting impression on his mind. He had not, he said, been so well entertained since he left Edinburgh—"such plenty and variety of meats, such diversity of wines, and those not riff-raff but ever the best of the kind." And on his departure his host, Sir Oliver Cromwell, High Sheriff and Member of Parliament for the county of Huntingdon, had presented him with horses, hounds and hawks, and a great gold cup, exquisitely wrought.

James had shown his appreciation by creating Sir Oliver a Knight of the Bath and had continued to manifest his favour by subsequent visits. In the first three years of his English reign he had returned four times to Hinchinbrook to occupy the State Bed which was kept for him in the Velvet Room. Later it was from Hinchinbrook, in the winter of 1610, that he had written his angry letter to the Privy Council, complaining of the conduct of the Commons, who were showing an inexplicable reluctance to allow him to indulge himself, unhindered by petty constitutional restrictions, in the riches of his new subjects, to the existence of which the splendour of Sir Oliver Cromwell's hospitality had first opened his eyes. "Our fame and actions have been tossed like tennis-balls among them," he complained, "and all that spite and malice durst do to disgrace and inflame us hath been used. To be short, this Lower House by their behaviour have perilled and annoyed our

health, wounded our reputation, emboldened all ill-natured people, encroached upon many of our privileges, and plagued our purse with their delays."

Two years later, it was to Hinchinbrook that his eighteen-year old son, Henry, Prince of Wales, had made an epic ride through the heat of an August night. The King had ordered Henry to accompany him on the autumn Progress, joining it at Belvoir Castle in Nottinghamshire. Henry, who was not the most accommodating of sons, left the matter till the last moment. "His Highness, neither considering the strength of his body, the greatness of the journey (being near fourscore and sixteen miles) nor the extreme and wonderful heat of the season, determined to ride that great journey in two days: according to which he set forth on Friday by one of the clock in the morning from his house at Richmond, coming to Hinchinbrook beside Huntingdon, a house pertaining to Sir Oliver Cromwell, Master of his Game, by ten of the clock in the morning, which, as they say, is threescore miles in nine hours posting, where he remained all night, the next day having six-and-thirty miles to Belvoir Castle, where he met his father just at the time prefixed."

In the November of that same year, 1612, Henry had died, and for England it seemed that a light had gone out. For many years to come, the conventional counsel to resignation in face of sudden disaster was: "And did not the good Prince Henry die?" For Henry was idolized as no Prince of Wales had been since the days of the Black Prince. With his passion for the sea and ships and his dreams of founding a maritime empire, he was the epitome of the Elizabethan spirit. Men knew of his friendship with Sir Walter Raleigh, whom the King had imprisoned, and they repeated his angry protest: "No one but my father would keep such a bird in a cage." They approved his discreet Protestantism, his dislike of foreigners, his athleticism and his accessibility. Simple in dress, unaffected in conversation, Henry could on State occasions assume a majesty of manner to match his kingliness of attire, and thus

gratify the twofold desire of subjects for a monarch who should be plain when moving among them, but magnificent when acting for them. His father, on the other hand, reversed the process. James's grotesque untidiness made him publicly ridiculous, while his immense learning and shrewd wit made private approaches difficult. His pedantry and eccentricities were, however, endured with the greater patience because of men's hopes of his heir.

The death of Henry—"the Delight of Mankind, the Expectation of Nations, the Strength of his Father and the Glory of his Mother, Religion's second Hope"—meant that the succession passed to his younger brother, Charles, then within a fortnight of his twelfth birthday, who, with his recurring spells of illness, his stammer and his weak, bandy legs, had been brought up quietly in seclusion. Although, as a courtier commented, "Charles, Duke of York, was then so young and sickly as the thought of their enjoying him did nothing at all alienate or mollify the people's mourning," the new heir was gradually brought into the public eye and prepared for his unexpected eminence.

It was not, however, until 1616 that he was considered capable of sustaining the dignity of Prince of Wales. James was at Hinchinbrook again immediately before his departure to London for the investiture ceremony, whose usual pageantry had to be drastically curtailed owing to Charles's weakness—though the citizens were privileged to see "the Prince come along from Richmond attended by the Lord Mayor and all the Companies of London in their barges in very good order, which made a goodly show." And now, four months later, the new Prince of Wales was commanded to accompany the Scottish Progress as far as Hinchinbrook.

So Charles Stuart first came into the Cromwell country: and it is possible—though direct proof is lacking—that it was on this occasion that he first met young Oliver Cromwell, Sir Oliver's godson and nephew, who was at the time an undergraduate at Sidney Sussex, Cambridge.

As Easter fell late that year, it still wanted three weeks to the end of the Lent Term, but Hinchinbrook was no more than two hours' ride from Cambridge, and the first appearance of the Prince made the occasion one of sufficient importance to warrant a full attendance of the Cromwell clan. For the Royal visits were events of family and local, even more than personal, significance. The great Cromwell connection owned, between them, a considerable part of the county of Huntingdon. Owing their lands originally to the beneficence of the Crown in granting them some of the spoils of the Church (in the procurement of which their ancestor, Thomas Cromwell, had so signally aided Henry VIII), they had remained, as was fitting, models of loyalty. For three generations they had served the Throne as Members of Parliament and Sheriffs and Justices of the Peace and lesser officers. They took the lead in all local affairs, particularly in the "Great Project" of draining the fens. They were landowners and farmers and traders and lawyers, and all, in their separate spheres, revolved round Hinchinbrook, where the head of their house ruled the county for the King.

Young Oliver's own home was less than a mile from Hinchinbrook, a stone house at the northern extremity of the High Street of Huntingdon, with a notable garden and extensive meadows and the Hinchin brook flowing through the courtyard. His father, Robert, Sir Oliver's younger brother, had been Member of Parliament for the town of Huntingdon, bailiff and Justice of the Peace, Trustee of the Free School and a Commissioner of Sewers. He owned, in addition to the house and the land about it, a dovecote and a brew-house and property outside Huntingdon. His income (in its modern equivalent) was between £2,000 and £3,000 a year—small, indeed, by comparison with the great wealth of his elder brother, but sufficient to maintain his family of one son and six daughters in comfort if not in luxury.

Oliver's upbringing had been the conventional one for his station—a station which, in later years, he defined: "I was by

birth a gentleman, living neither in any considerable height, nor yet in obscurity." He was educated at the Free School, with the other boys of Huntingdon, by the schoolmaster, Dr. Thomas Beard, who was also the Rector of St. John's —which church, the smallest in Huntingdon, the Robert Cromwells attended—an author, a figure in local affairs and a friend of the family. Here Oliver underwent the usual Grammar School training prescribed for those between the ages of five and fifteen—English, based on the Prayer Book and the Bible; Latin, based on Cicero, Ovid and Virgil; arithmetic and geometry; logic, rhetoric and a little Greek. He excelled not in these, but in the athletic exercises which accompanied them—"throwing the stone or bar, tennis, wrestling, running, swimming, handling weapons, riding, hunting, dancing and shooting with the long bow."

But it was Beard himself, not his plan of education; the individual cast of his own mind, not the thoughts and the civilization of the authors he taught, which dominated Oliver's boyhood and determined his development. Beard was a Puritan, whose book, *The Theatre of God's Judgments* (which went into four editions), was concerned to stress God's immediate presence and His interest in every petty detail of men's lives. It was full of examples of angelic or Satanic intervention in daily life; of retribution for the wicked and salvation for the good—especially when the good were also poor. It was shot through with hatred for Rome, which was equated with anti-Christ; and with the certainty of triumph for the Elect who obeyed God's laws "and consequently the laws of man and nature." Religion was not a matter of forms and ceremonies or even of speculation and philosophy, but an exciting and tempestuous melodrama being continuously performed from day to day, with God and Satan heading the cast.

Beard not only saw life and religion in terms of the theatre, but he wrote short classical comedies, with unimpeachable endings, for his pupils to perform. Occasionally they acted

plays by other authors, and it was in one of these entitled *The Combat of the Tongue and the Five Senses* that Oliver, as the Sense of Feeling, had donned a royal robe and a crown for a soliloquy ending:

This crown and robe
My brow and body circles and invests.
How gallantly it fits me! Sure the slave
Measur'd my head that wrought this coronet.
They lie who say complexions cannot change,
My blood's ennobled and I am transform'd
Unto the sacred temper of a King.

This occurrence, which provided the only authentic anecdote of his youth, was later remembered for its prophetic appropriateness. But its implications are both deeper and less obvious; for it was to the dramatic sense in Beard that the true temperament of Oliver responded most surely.

The ethics and thought-forms, the ecclesiastical and political postulates of Beard's teaching were for him reinforced from many sides—the temper of the time no less than the religious complexion of the Cromwells. The personal apprehension of sin and salvation which Oliver was to undergo was, of necessity, a unique individual experience. As a child of his age, at once circumscribed and compelled by his circumstances, he expressed himself in the belief and action available to him. But the dynamic force, which underlay and conditioned all, was timeless and found its everlasting counterpart in the instinct which leads all great men to their destiny—an Alexander as well as a St. Francis—the instinct, indefinable but unmistakable, which is that sixth sense called a "sense of theatre."

Puritan mystic, cavalry commander, King-breaker, subtle politician, Oliver's eventual diversity was unified by this constant apprehension of the world in terms of the theatre. To him, as to all dynamic characters, every action, natural and supernatural, was dramatic action. His enemies who called

him an actor were, though they meant it as a synonym for hypocrite, defining more exactly than they knew. No man on the stage of history ever had a surer instinct for exits and entrances, for the balance of speech and silence, for the interplay of suspense and decision, for the uses of surprise and the understanding of dramatic irony. Because he was, in the profound sense, an actor, he was able to play his part in the Theatre of God's Judgments.

To oppose Cromwell's sense of theatre, Charles never had more than a sense of pageantry. He was to sustain with increasing dignity his ordered place in a pattern, as in his boyhood he gravely participated in the formal masques at Court or the ritual pomp of the water-procession from Richmond. But when the pattern was broken he was lost. Lacking Cromwell's key to the understanding of action, every move he made was infallibly false.

His childhood had not prepared him too well for life. In the beginning it had not been supposed that he would live. "There were many great ladies suitors for the keeping of the Duke: but when they did see how weak a child he was and not likely to live their hearts bore down and none of them were desirous to take charge of him." Even when, under Lady Carey's care, he reached his eleventh year, able to walk without having had his legs in irons and to talk slowly without having had the string of his tongue cut (both of which drastic remedies his father suggested), he anticipated a life of retirement under the splendid shadow of Henry. "Sweet, sweet brother," ran his first letter, "I will give anything that I have to you: both my horse and my books and my pieces and my cross-bows or anything that you would have. Good brother, love me and I shall ever love and serve you."

To Henry, too, was written a decorous letter in Latin, of which the translation ran: "Nothing can be more agreeable to me, dearest brother, than your return to us; for to enjoy your company, to ride with you, to hunt with you will yield me supreme pleasure. I am now reading the *Conversations of*

Erasmus, from which I am sure I can learn both the purity of the Latin tongue and elegance of behaviour."

The closing sentiments suggest that Charles's tutor may have aided him in the composition—the boy was eight at the time—as he most certainly superintended the Latin, but the picture which emerges is not misleading. Charles was "so diligent and studious that he far advanced in learning; insomuch that his brother, Prince Henry, taking notice of it, by way of jest put the cap of Archbishop Abbot (who was then with the Prince and the Duke and other of the nobility, waiting in the Privy Chamber for the King's coming out) on his head; adding, if he was a good boy and minded his book, he would make him one day Archbishop of Canterbury."

But the sudden death of his "sweet, sweet brother" determined for him a lonely and secular destiny. And three months after Henry's funeral that loneliness was increased by the wedding of his sister, Elizabeth, and her departure abroad with her husband, the Prince Palatine. He never saw her again. At twelve he was called on to live the life of an only child. His mother took little interest in him, and his father, absorbed in his own Favourites, gave him only official attention. Starved of affection, sickly and silent, he was driven in upon himself. Inevitably he became the more susceptible to the influence of his tutor, Thomas Murray.

Murray was a Scot and a Presbyterian, and this circumstance was to have momentous consequences. In the end Charles was to come to death because by promising to abolish Episcopacy and substitute Presbyterianism as the state religion of England he induced a Scottish army to invade England on his behalf. The seeds of this disastrous action were sown in his childhood. In the first place he was a Scot—the only English blood in him came, thinly, from a great-great-grandmother—brought up by Scots, speaking to the end of his life with a Scots accent, and looking always on the Scots, not the English, as his friends and compatriots. "He was always an immoderate lover of the Scottish nation," Clarendon

complained, "having not only been born there, but educated by that people and besieged by them always, having few English about him till he was king, and the major number of his servants being still of those, who, he thought, could never fail him."

And, under Murray's guidance, he grew to understand Presbyterianism to such an extent that, when he was seventeen and his father was taken so ill that it seemed likely that he would then succeed to the throne, Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Ely, bewailed "the sad condition of the Church, if God should at that time determine the days of the King; the Prince then being only conversant with Scotchmen, which made up the greatest part of his family, and were ill-affected to the government and worship of the Church of England."

In later years, when he became a champion of the Church of England, this early training was not eradicated. Always he was able to regard Presbyterianism as a religious (though not political) alternative for his people, if not for himself.

Cromwell, on the other hand, who was brought up in the Church of England, became an Independent, and hated the presbyter only a little less than the priest. He respected, even if he disagreed with, Charles's Anglicanism; but he could not forgive Charles's tenderness to Presbyterianism. And this exasperation was increased by the difference in nationality. To Cromwell, fiercely, even parochially, English, the Scots were "foreigners." Charles's final action in calling in the Scottish army was, he wrote, "a more prodigious Treason than any that had been perpetrated before" because its intention was "to vassalize us to a *foreign* nation."

That mortal quarrel was far in the future, but the foundations of it had been already laid on the spring day in 1617 when, at Hinchinbrook, they may have taken each other's measure for the first time.

There were, indeed, differences enough between the Scottish Prince and the English undergraduate. Charles was nearly sixteen and a half, Cromwell within a month of his eighteenth

birthday, but the inequality of development was out of all proportion to the small severance in age. Cromwell, with an ailing father near death and six sisters growing up, was already in sight of responsible manhood; Charles, hardly out of leading strings. Cromwell, nearly six foot tall, with a long, strong body overbrimming with vitality, rejoiced in a reputation at Cambridge as "one of the chief match-makers and players at Foot-ball, Cudgels or any other boisterous sport or game"; Charles, frail and tiny—he never grew even to "middle height"—found walking still a difficulty and even in his exercise of horsemanship had to be so carefully guarded that the King had, that year, ordered the local farmers to "take down high bounds between lands" and "not to plough their lands in narrow ridges" to make it easier for "the Prince in hawking and hunting."

In appearance the two presented as complete a contrast—Charles with delicate, regular features; a pale, unhealthy colour; heavy-lidded, listless eyes: Cromwell with forehead and chin both slightly receding, a prominent nose as florid as his country complexion, and keen blue eyes, at once penetrating and reflective. Both were faces to remember, though it is doubtful if either was much noticed by the Court on Progress. It had its own preoccupations and was tactfully turning its eyes to the amazing beauty of Mr. George Villiers, whom the King had just elevated, by way of the Bedchamber, to the Earldom of Buckingham. Among those who were paying court to the Favourite was the new Archdeacon of Huntingdon, Dr. William Laud. He was accompanying the Progress as chaplain to his pattern and patron, Richard Neile, Bishop of Lincoln, whom he had recently aided in burning an unorthodox parishioner at the stake.

With Buckingham's sun nearing its zenith and Laud's infallibly rising, why should the worldly-wise courtiers pay more than perfunctory and prescribed attention to the awkward Prince or notice the uncouth undergraduate at all?

CHAPTER TWO

THE KING AND THE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

ONE episode, which occurred during his youth under Dr. Beard's tuition, made a deep impression on Oliver. The Vicar of Therfield, near Royston, was the famous, if somewhat eccentric, Dr. William Alabaster. He was remarkable for many things. His literary works—which included a subversive Latin tragedy, *Roxana*—were praised by poets as diverse as Edmund Spenser and Robert Herrick. In the sphere of action, he had accompanied Elizabeth's Essex in the expedition against Cadiz. But his theological career was the most spectacular. He had been converted to Roman Catholicism, but, after a difference of opinion with the Jesuits and the Inquisition, had escaped, not without difficulty, from Italy, returned to England and become reconverted to Anglicanism. He was made a Doctor of Divinity, a Prebendary of St. Paul's and Vicar of Therfield, where he settled down to write esoteric treatises on Cabalistic divinity.

His subtle brain, reconciling occult mysticism with highly speculative theology, may have recommended itself to the teasing, enquiring mind of King James at Royston, but it found no sympathy in Dr. Beard at Huntingdon, who had the Puritan habit of seeing things clearly in black and white. When Dr. Alabaster preached at St. Paul's Cross an official sermon which Richard Neile, Bishop of Lincoln, ordered to be read in the churches of his diocese, Dr. Beard signified his intention of not "rehearsing" it at Huntingdon. He went further and said that, as it contained what he considered "flat Popery," he would refute it. Neile thereupon sent for him and charged him, on canonical obedience, to do nothing of the sort. Beard then put the matter privately to the Bishop of Ely, who, though not his diocesan, "charged him as a minister" to oppose Alabaster. This Beard did, with the result

that he was again sent for by Neile and "exceedingly rated."

This local ecclesiastical dispute, which took place shortly before the visit of the Court to Hinchinbrook in 1617, found its way into national politics twelve years later when, on the afternoon of Wednesday, February 11, 1629, Mr. Oliver Cromwell, as Member for Huntingdon, rose to make his maiden speech in the House of Commons, which was sitting as the Committee for Religion under the chairmanship of Mr. John Pym.

The matter under discussion was the "Manwaring affair." Dr. Roger Manwaring had preached a sermon in which he enunciated so absolutist a view of Royal authority that he suggested that all men who refused to pay a "forced loan"—which included several Members of Parliament—were *ipso facto* eternally damned. The sermon was printed, for the better instruction of recalcitrant subjects, and the House retaliated by taking proceedings against Manwaring. He was condemned to imprisonment during the pleasure of the House, fined £1,000, suspended from preaching for three years and forbidden to hold any office, ecclesiastical or civil. Within three weeks of the sentence, Manwaring was granted a Royal pardon and presented with two wealthy livings as a token of the Crown's esteem. The Commons, furious, decided to discover by whose advice the pardon was granted, and on that afternoon in February, 1629, the first speaker on the subject suggested that everything pointed to the new Bishop of Winchester, Richard Neile, as the hidden influence.

It was at this point that Oliver Cromwell rose in the House for the first time and, with halting delivery and untuneful voice, added to the weight of evidence his anecdote of Dr. Alabaster and Dr. Beard.[1]

[1] There are three accounts of Cromwell's first speech, taken down at the time:

"Mr. Cromwell said that he had by relation from one Dr. Beard, that Beard said that Dr. Alabaster had preached flat Popery at Pauls Cross. And that the Bishop of Winchester commanded him, as he was his diocesan, that he should preach nothing to the contrary" (*True Relation*).

The name of Dr. Beard meant less to the House of Commons than it meant to Cromwell, but the next speaker assured the House that he was a sound and learned man, and it was decided that he should be sent for to give his own account of the matter to the Committee. This, however, was not to be carried into effect. The House was only to be allowed ten more sitting days before it was dissolved by an angry King.

. . . . . .

That Cromwell in one of the most famous of all English Parliaments—that which passed the "Petition of Right"—should concern himself solely with a local, and even personal, issue is unsurprising. He was thirty and he was Member for Huntingdon not because he had any interest in politics, but because it was expected and fitting that a Cromwell should be Member for Huntingdon. And he was now, for all practical purposes, the head of his house.

His father had died three months after the Royal visit to

"Mr. Cromwell saith that Dr. Beard told him that one Dr. Alabaster did at the Spittle (i.e. at the Hospital of St. John, Huntingdon) preach in a sermon tenets of popery and Beard being to repeat the same, the now Bishop of Winton (then Bishop of Lincoln) did send for Dr. Beard and did charge him as being his diocesan not to preach any contrary doctrine to that which Alabaster had delivered, and when Dr. Beard did by the advice of Bishop Felton preach against Dr. Alabaster's sermon and person, Dr. Neile then Bishop of Lincoln did reprehend him the said Beard for it" (*Notes of Sir Edward Nicholas*).

"Mr. Cromwell related from the mouth of Dr. Beard concerning a sermon he preached by way of rehearsal at Spittle when Winchester was of Lincoln. He was to rehearse Dr. Alabaster's sermon who had uttered somewhat of what he conceived to be Popery. Winchester sent for him and charged him not to deliver anything by way of opposition against Dr. Alabaster, by virtue of his canonical obedience. He went to Dr. Felton, Bishop of Ely and charged him, though he was not his diocesan: yet he charged him as minister to oppose it: which Dr. Beard did: and was sent for by Neile, and was exceedingly rated for what he had done" (*Notes of Sir Richard Grosvenor*).

It will be noticed that Nicholas makes a mistake as to the place of delivery of Alabaster's sermon—unless, indeed, Alabaster "tried out" his sermon at Huntingdon. "The Hospital of St. John" was the official name of the property which comprised both the Free School and the Church.

Hinchinbrook in 1617 and he had left Cambridge without a degree to return and manage the estate. He had married just after his twenty-first birthday and, at the age of twenty-nine, was the father of four sons and one daughter. They all lived together—his mother, his wife, his four unmarried sisters and his five small children—in the old stone house at the northern end of Huntingdon High Street.

But the glory of Hinchinbrook was gone. It had passed with the passing of King James. As long as he lived, the King continued to visit Sir Oliver, though with the advance of age and rheumatism, his early enthusiasm gave place to bursts of irritation. "I forgot to put you in mind," ran the postscript of one of his letters to Buckingham in 1622, "that Hinchinbrook stands in so ill an air that you seldom go thither that you do not return sick again," and in the autumn of 1623 the Court had to remain at Hinchinbrook for a fortnight "by reason it was beset with waters at Hinchinbrook-by-Huntingdon and, withal, the King was overtaken with the gout or pain in his arms so that he could not remove."

The Royal visits ceased with James's death in 1625 and the predictable result of them became apparent in 1627 when Sir Oliver, impoverished by repeated hospitality, was forced to sell Hinchinbrook to the local rivals of the Cromwells, the Montagues of Kimbolton.

Though Sir Oliver bore no ill will to the Crown on that account—he remained a staunch Royalist even under the Protectorate of his nephew, during which he died at the age of ninety-six by falling into the fire—young Oliver took the matter more hardly. What he had seen of the Court at close quarters had not increased his respect for it, and when he was invited to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles by accepting a knighthood he bitterly refused. The Membership for the borough was, however, a different matter. Huntingdon was represented by two Members. In the 1628 Parliament one was a Montague—which was now an additional reason why the other should be a Cromwell.

Oliver not only went to Westminster because it was his expected course, but when he arrived there he took his expected place. The "great Cousinage" was waiting for him. The prolific and carefully-married Cromwell clan, though not yet of the proportions it was later to assume (when Royalist writers spelt the operative word as "cozenage"), was already a nucleus in the House. Six of Oliver's relatives were there, with three others who were later to join the family, and many friends. Even Manwaring's sermon was, in a sense, a matter of family importance, since several of the "cousinage" —including his first cousin, John Hampden—had been imprisoned for their refusal to pay the forced loan and so were, on Manwaring's hypothesis, assured of eternal damnation.

Oliver's maiden speech was thus as unremarkable as his presence in the House was unremarked. For himself, his stay in London may well have been memorable mainly for the opportunity it gave him to consult Sir Theodore Mayerne, chief physician to the Court, who, with his white hair and beard and jovial red face, was in demand at every influential sick-bed. Oliver was worried about his health and Sir Theodore, after the consultation, noted him in his case-book as "excessively melancholic"—a diagnosis which confirmed that of Dr. Simcott at Huntingdon, who complained that the patient was "a most splenetic man, and had fancies about the cross in the town, and that he had been called up to him at midnight, and such unseasonable hours, very many times, upon a strong fancy that made him believe he was then dying."

Cromwell's life during his twenties at Huntingdon had been conducive neither to peace of mind nor to health of body. There were too many strains. The financial stringency was only partially relieved by his marriage to the daughter of a wealthy fur-dealer and leather-dresser, older than himself; nor did this marriage of convenience answer all the needs of his robust sexuality. The circumstances of his home—a household of six women and a monotonous regularity of babies—

were not such as would induce one of his restless vitality to spend much time in it. He became remarkable for his indulgence in boon-companionship, in gaming (which did nothing to improve his financial condition and was, by gossips, blamed for the decline in his fortunes), in exploits which friends might excuse as irresponsible horse-play, but which enemies characterized as coarse brawling, and in sexual irregularities. On two occasions at least his conduct was sufficiently scandalous for Dr. Beard to insist on a public penance in church.

His personality was hopelessly at odds with his environment. His turbulent nature could not adapt itself to the limitations of Huntingdon society, which at the same time, being a Cromwell, he could not escape. And if the integration of character could not be brought about by external discipline —for he could not deny the law of himself at the bidding of a convention he despised—he was further divided by other elements in the character itself.

In particular, there was that sense of the mystery of sin and salvation which had been developed by Dr. Beard's teaching. In these early years, certainly, it found its expression in the mere sharing of a mass prejudice affecting belief—a fanatical hatred of "Popery." It would not, indeed, be unfair to apply to Oliver, or to any English Puritan, a contemporary epitome of Scottish religion: "They think it impossible to lose the way to Heaven if they can but leave Rome behind them: to be opposite to the Pope is to be presently[1] with God." But a personal conviction which could be expressed only in individual moral action was never far away. Through these years it struggled for mastery—years of which his own description to one of his cousins was: "You know what my manner of life hath been. O, I lived in darkness and hated light. I was a chief—the chief—of sinners. This is true: I hated godliness."

Increasing the tension, there was his mother and his mother's nature in him which made him "naturally compassionate

[1] i.e. immediately.

towards objects in distress, even to an effeminate measure." Between mother and son, so alike in qualities and temperament that he seemed to have hardly anything of his father in him, there was a profound affinity. She was, emotionally, the only woman in his life. To the end she lived with him. Dying in Whitehall at the age of ninety, when he was Protector, she gave him her last blessing: "The Lord cause His face to shine upon you and comfort you in all your adversities, and enable you to do great things for the glory of your Most High God and to be a relief unto His people. My dear son, I leave my heart with thee. A good night!"

In those difficult years at Huntingdon not the least of Oliver's cares must have been that by his way of life he was both offending and impoverishing her, and the accusation which was hardest to bear that "by these ways he had run himself out of that little patrimony he had and brought his Mother to the same near ruin."

It was in these circumstances that, "afflicted in body, mind and estate," Cromwell was called on to assume the additional eminence—and expense—of representing Huntingdon as its Member of Parliament. And the event, which on the outward, historical plane, was so conventionally obvious as to be unremarkable, was thus on the inward and personal one of critical importance. It gave him responsibility and it was a way of escape. As it happened, it was a false dawn. He was to return to go into even deeper shadows, to suffer, as one of his friends said, "very great troubles of soul, lying a long time under sore terrors and temptations and at the same time in a very low condition for outward things . . . till his will was broken into submission to the will of God." But for the moment he was allowed to glimpse a world large enough to exercise instead of cramp his spirit and a task great enough to demand a subjugated will.

. . . . .

If those twelve years between 1617 and 1629 condemned Cromwell to circumstances too narrow for his spirit, they

called Charles to tasks far beyond his capabilities. In their personal lives the contrast was as great. For Cromwell they were perhaps the most miserable years of his life; for Charles they were certainly the happiest, though they opened in loneliness and closed in tragedy.

From beginning to end they were dominated by Buckingham. At the outset, Charles loathed his father's Favourite. It was to be expected. When Henry was Prince, James had been amorous of a robust, handsome Scotsman whom he created Earl of Somerset, and the quarrel between Henry and Somerset, for both social and political reasons, had been of such dimensions that Somerset had been suspected of causing Henry's death. Now Charles was Prince and Buckingham had usurped Somerset's place, the tension between the new Heir and the new Favourite was, if possible, greater. For Henry had at least had his popularity and his prestige and the knowledge of his own power to set against Somerset's influence; whereas Charles had only his awkwardness and self-mistrust to counter the graceful beauty and self-reliance of Buckingham. He indulged in such futilities as turning a water jet on the Favourite when he was elegantly parading in a new suit and in hitting him with a tennis racket when they were playing together. His father invariably punished him for these outbursts and enforced a reconciliation which, on Charles's part, was perfunctory in the extreme.

Then, suddenly, the situation changed. From being patronizingly indifferent or laughingly hostile, Buckingham became deferential, charming, sympathetic. He had, certainly, his own reasons for this, which were not unconnected with the fact that Charles would one day be King, but the effects of the altered attitude were personal enough. In the sun of Buckingham's affection, Charles's ice melted. Buckingham became his *beau ideal*, who could do no wrong. "Baby Charles" and "Steenie" (which was King James's nickname for Buckingham, because of a fancied resemblance to a painting of St. Stephen) were inseparable. They hunted and bathed, danced and feasted

together; Charles was made a Privy Councillor to learn something of the ways of statecraft; he watched Buckingham's growing collection of pictures and statues for his various houses and learnt more of art; and, as the climax to a youth of mounting interest and excitement, two months after his twenty-second birthday, he and Buckingham, disguised with false beards and owning to the names of John and Thomas Smith, left England secretly and rode across France into Spain, where the Prince began to woo the Infanta.

King James, who was alternately coaxed and bullied by Buckingham until he let them go, regarded the "sweet boys" as "dear venturous knights worthy to be put in a new *romanso*"; the Lords and Commons accused Buckingham of high treason in that he had abducted the heir to the throne; the clergy offered public prayer that the Prince might return safely and still Protestant from the land of Catholic iniquity; and Charles enjoyed Paris and Madrid, not only with the enthusiasm which any young man might feel on his first visit abroad, but with the added savour of flattery and deference and entertainment on a scale undreamt of in England—and the knowledge that his unconventional exploit had made him the cynosure of Europe.

The English people's anger that he had gone to Spain was eclipsed by their joy when he returned, eight months later, still a bachelor. Their hatred of Spain was intense. Less than fifty years had elapsed since the Spanish Armada sailed against England, and the sense of danger and elation which that event had produced had now crystallized into an enduring and illogical hatred. With this national feeling, the religious issue was inextricably woven. Spain was Catholic: England was Protestant; and—in the mind of the common man—to be a Papist was to be pro-Spanish, while even to condone such "Popish" practices as calling the Communion Table an "altar" was to incur suspicion of treachery. For the remainder of the seventeenth century the word "Popery" was to have a propaganda and political significance altogether independent of its

religious implications, and could be—and was—used with varying degrees of unscrupulousness for manipulating mob-opinion.

Charles, by his circumstances, was never able completely to comprehend this. His projected marriage to the Infanta (itself a political move designed to help his sister, Elizabeth, whose husband had been deprived of his kingdom by the Catholic Powers) eventually foundered on the rock of religion, for the Spaniards were hoping for, as the English were fearing, Charles's conversion to Roman Catholicism. But the Anglican Prince, who had been brought up by Presbyterians, had no aversion to Romanism. Religion to him was, and long remained, a matter of theological subtleties or political convenience; and he cheerfully promised the Spaniards to abolish all the laws against English Romanists, to allow his heir to be educated as a Roman Catholic, and to listen willingly whenever asked to the arguments of Romanist divines with a view to his own conversion.

The Spanish Minister of State when he heard of this was speechless for some time and then remarked: "Is it possible? I should as soon have expected my death"; while from England King James wrote angrily, when Charles asked him to "acknowledge the Pope chief head under Christ": "I know not what ye mean. . . . I am not a monsieur who can shift his religion as easily as he can shift his shirt when he cometh from tennis," and thought it was time for Charles to come home.

Neither the House of Commons nor the people knew anything of this, and when Charles and Buckingham returned to England they were given such a welcome as had not been known for decades. Charles was, indeed, officially affianced to the Infanta, but he had not taken the irrevocable step and Londoners showed their approval by lighting 108 bonfires between St. Paul's and London Bridge, decorating St. Paul's Cross by a blaze of torches, one for each year of Charles's age; and, in St. Paul's itself, singing a new anthem: "When

Israel came out of Egypt and the House of Jacob from a barbarous people."

And when, later, Buckingham gave a version of events, which impugned the good faith of the Spaniards and demanded both a breaking of the Spanish match and a war with Spain, he found himself, for the first and last time in his career, a popular hero, while Charles was worshipped as even Henry had never been.

But, as long as James lived, war against Spain was not declared. In spite of the pressure of Charles and Buckingham, he refused to surrender the title which he most cherished—"the Peacemaker"—though Charles's engagement to the Infanta was broken off and negotiations started for his marriage to the sister of the King of France, who was fourteen.

. . . . .

He did not marry her till his father was dead and he, at the age of twenty-four and a half, became King. Buckingham went to France to fetch her and Charles paced the leads of Dover Castle restlessly awaiting not his bride's coming, but his friend's return. He found that he did not like his child-wife, and Henrietta Maria on her part detested Buckingham. The first three years of the marriage, from 1625 to 1628, were marked by growing estrangements—between Charles and Henrietta, between the King and his Parliaments, between the people and the Queen (who was distrusted as a Catholic), and between the country and the Favourite. The only constant was the passionate affection of Charles for Buckingham which, increasing, increased the other enmities.

For Buckingham's sake, war was declared and when this, by his incompetence, ended in ruin and disaster, Charles opposed all Parliamentary attempts at inquiry and control. To save his friend, the King first packed, then prorogued, then dissolved the House of Commons which, under the leadership of a Cornish orator, Sir John Eliot, saw in Buckingham the author of all the misfortunes which were befalling the country. "If he is Sejanus," remarked Charles, hearing

that a pointed classical parallel had been invoked in the attack on the Favourite, "then I must be Tiberius."

Thus the Parliament of 1628, where Cromwell was learning for the first time something of the nature of that body which stood for English opinion, appeared to Charles as a collection of narrow, uninformed and spiteful country gentlemen bent on destroying the thing he held dearest in life.

On June 11, under the spell of Eliot, it passed a Remonstrance, in which it stated that "the principal cause of evils and dangers we conceive to be the excessive power of the Duke of Buckingham and the abuse of that power; and we humbly submit unto your Majesty's excellent wisdom whether it be safe for yourself or your kingdoms that so great a power as rests in him by sea and land should be in the hands of any one subject whatsoever. And as it is not safe, so sure we are it cannot be for your service; it being impossible for one man to manage so many and weighty affairs of the kingdom as he hath undertaken besides the ordinary duties of those offices which he holds. . . . And our humble desire is, further, that your excellent Majesty will be pleased to take into your princely consideration whether, in respect the said Duke hath so abused his power, it be safe for your Majesty and your kingdom to continue him either in his great offices, or in his place of nearness and counsel about your sacred person."

Charles's answer was to prorogue Parliament, but in the country the Remonstrance was eagerly read and discussed. Also, it was acted upon. On St. Bartholomew's Eve, at Portsmouth, Buckingham was stabbed to death by a discontented lieutenant, who thereby elevated an act of private vengeance into a gesture of public liberation.

The King was at prayers at Southwick, a few miles from Portsmouth, when the news of his friend's murder was brought to him. When the messenger "without any pause in respect of the exercise they were performing" went over to him and whispered what had fallen out, the life went out of Charles's face. But he did not move. The service continued

to its end and not till the Blessing had been given did he go to his room, where he threw himself on his bed in a passion of tears.

With the assassination of Buckingham, something in Charles died. He was twenty-seven and he had nearly twenty-one years still to spend before, on a winter morning in London, his enemies were to kill his body. But that summer morning in Portsmouth, they had killed his heart. His tears, indeed, dried, though not easily, for "he continued in this melancholic and discomposure of mind many days," but he never forgot or forgave. The world saw that no one replaced Buckingham in his public offices and courtiers noted that the King took upon himself the burden of that work, devoting himself to it so feverishly that, according to one letter-writer, he "in fourteen days after the Duke's death despatched more business than the Duke had done three months before." But it was only more gradually realized that Charles neither could nor did replace Buckingham in his private affections. It was long after the event that Clarendon, noticing how matters had moved, could write: "From that time almost to the time of his own death the King admitted very few into any degree of trust against whom he (Buckingham) had ever manifested a notable prejudice."

Yet it was not in Charles's nature to be able to stand quite alone. He needed someone to whom to surrender himself. In his boyhood it had been his brother Henry; in his early manhood, Buckingham. Now circumstance dictated his choice and, during the autumn of 1628, the Court noticed with some amusement that the King was falling in love with the Queen. That winter, Henrietta's pregnancy was formally announced and Laud drew up a prayer "for the safe child-bearing of the Queen's Majesty."[1]

Thus the Charles who called together that session of Parliament in which Cromwell made his first speech was already

[1] The child, a seven-months' boy, died an hour after birth on May 12, 1629.

a man who had known great happiness and greater sorrow, who was dominated by his desire for revenge and who was gradually surrendering himself to the influence of a foreign wife who had even more extreme views on the nature of the Royal Prerogative than he himself held. A clash was inevitable.

It came on March 2, 1629, in a two-hour sitting that was to become a landmark in constitutional history. When, on that day, the Speaker announced the King's command that the House should adjourn, Eliot rose to insist that the Commons had the right to adjourn themselves. The Speaker checked him by saying that His Majesty's absolute command was that no speech was to be permitted and rose from the Chair to put an end to the proceedings by leaving the House. But two of Eliot's party seized his arms and forced him back into his seat, one of them calling out above the tumult in the House: "God's wounds! You shall sit till we please to rise." Another of Eliot's friends, so that no one might leave the House to inform the King, locked the door and put the key in his pocket.

Then Eliot began his last speech to the Commons, calling upon them to declare as "capital enemies of the State" all who would introduce innovations in religion and all who should acquiesce in taxation levied by the King without the consent of Parliament. After a deafening shout of "Ay! Ay!" the doors were unlocked and the Members, some in fear, some in triumph, surged out to give the news to the waiting city. In the passage, the King's soldiers had already arrived.

Next day Eliot was arrested and sent to the Tower. So Charles commenced his vengeance, and Cromwell, watching it, learnt something of the nature of politics.

CHAPTER THREE

HEAD OF THE CHURCH AND FARMER OF TITHES AT ELY

THE summer of 1637 heralded a change of fortune. In the eight years since the dissolution of the 1629 Parliament, Charles had ruled without one. For him they were years of increasing stability and quiet happiness. Time mitigated the bitterness of Buckingham's death, even though the consequences of Charles's love of him still determined the pattern of events. He exacted what retribution he could. When, after nearly three years' close confinement in the Tower, Sir John Eliot wrote to him, "By reason of the quality of the air, I am fallen into a dangerous disease. I humbly beseech Your Majesty you will command your judges to set me at liberty that, for the recovery of my health, I may take some fresh air," the King refused the request, and, on Eliot's inevitable death shortly afterwards, even rejected his son's petition to be allowed to bury the body among the family graves in his Cornish home. But that tribute to Buckingham, though its eventual consequences were disastrous enough, was not the most immediately dangerous. For Charles turned, in matters of government, to the man who had been the closest to Buckingham in life—his confessor, William Laud, one-time Archdeacon of Huntingdon, protégé of the Puritan-burning Neile.

In 1633, the year after Eliot died, Laud was made Archbishop of Canterbury. As Charles's reign until 1629 was the rule of Buckingham, so, from 1630, it became the rule of Laud. If the memory of Eliot and determination to avenge him was potent only among his few devoted friends (of whom John Hampden, Cromwell's first cousin, was the chief), the administration of Laud was provoking a sullen popular resentment, the more menacing for being undirected and

suppressed. And in that year 1637 the two strands met and intertwined. John Hampden stood out alone to challenge the King by refusing to pay an illegally-levied tax of ship money, and William Prynne with two others, sentenced to lose their ears and to be branded for publishing attacks on Laud, were elevated to the status of national heroes.

At the time of these events, Oliver Cromwell had succeeded his uncle, Sir Thomas Steward, as farmer of tithes and lessee of cathedral properties at Ely and, for the first time in his life, found himself with an assured background and some sort of financial stability. His house in Ely, close to St. Mary's Churchyard, was that of his mother's family, in which she herself had been born and to which she now came back again to live. For him the change was the greater since, during the eight years of the personal rule of Charles and Laud, he had been through the deepest waters. He had lost faith, health, social position, money. Now at last he emerged, at thirty-eight, with the character tried and the will moulded, to take his place again on the stage of history.

When the 1629 Parliament was dissolved, Oliver returned to Huntingdon and the local politics of his home. Here in little were mirrored the changes which were taking place in the State itself. A new charter for the borough altered the administration from a corporation governed by two bailiffs and a common council of twenty-four, freely elected year by year, to twelve aldermen and a recorder chosen for life, and a mayor chosen annually from and by the aldermen. At the same time, both Dr. Beard and Cromwell were appointed Justices of the Peace. Cromwell's first action, however, was to disturb the peace so vociferously on behalf of the disenfranchised inhabitants that the new Mayor and Aldermen had to appeal to the Privy Council to restrain him. Throughout 1630 the affair dragged on, until the case was heard in London at the beginning of December. Here Cromwell came face to face with Laud—and lost. The new charter was up-

held "and the town sank rapidly into 'the spiritless condition of a rotten borough' in which it remained until the passing of the Reform Act."

Four months later—at the Easter of 1631—he came again into collision with the Government, this time with the Exchequer. As he still refused to be knighted, he was fined £10. But on this occasion the fine was paid, though probably not by himself. It is possible that Uncle Oliver considered that the family name had been brought sufficiently into disrepute and insisted on keeping this matter at least out of the courts. Oliver's name heads the list of those who paid the fine, yet it is obvious from the manuscript that it was added after the list was made. The fact remains—and the mystery.

Ten days later, he left Huntingdon. He sold the "Augustine Fryers," the house where he was born, other houses that he owned, seven acres of land in Huntingdon and the tithes at Hartford. With the £1,800 he got from the sale, he took some grazing-land at St. Ives, five miles down the river, and there removed with his family to spend five years, no longer a man of property and position, but the tenant of a rented farm. A son who was born to him died the day after baptism. His own health was poor. His neighbours saw him at church with a piece of red flannel round his neck, an outward and visible sign of his chronic inflammation of the throat. His brooding melancholy increased, as his conviction of sinfulness deepened. He repaid £30 which he had won at cards some years before, on the ground that "he had got it by indirect and unlawful means and that it would be a sin in him to detain it any longer." Before the work of each day started, he held long prayers with his family and his men; and summoned them again, after the midday meal, either to prayers or to religious instruction. Since the men, removed from his vigilance, spent no small part of what was left of the working day playing cards, it was surprising that "scarce half a crop ever reared itself upon his grounds."

He contemplated leaving England. His friends and relatives,

the core of the Puritan gentry, were interested in the colonization of the New World, and had formed various companies to forward the project. But his financial position was not such that he could join them on anything like equal terms. In desperation, he endeavoured to borrow money from his maternal uncle, Sir Thomas Steward; and when he failed, he tried—so his enemies said—to have him certified as incapable of administering his estates, so that he might gain legally what was refused to his importunity. Here, too, he was unsuccessful. Ill in body, tormented in mind, fallen in estate and at the edge of bankruptcy, he was at the nadir of failure.

During those five years, there is only one word of him in public affairs and that so apparently petty that, isolated, it may seem only an irrelevant emphasis on his decline. He wrote to a business friend in London, entreating him to continue to make financial provision for a local "lecturer."

In fact, however, the incident was neither irrelevant nor petty. It went straight to the heart of the situation which was developing in the country.

With the indefinite suspension of Parliament, Charles was faced with the twin problems of administration and money. It was the genius of Laud to see that both could be solved by making the Church the real instrument of government. That "little, low, red-faced man" determined to centralize the government through the bishops, who were appointed by and responsible to the King. They had their own courts and their own legal officers, and, unlike the gentry in the civil administration, they had no local ties. At the head of the system was the Court of High Commission, over which Laud presided, and the Star Chamber which he called "his pulpit."

So successful was he that even the Royalist Clarendon complained that "the Bishops grew to have so great a contempt of the common law and of the professors of it, that prohibitions from the supreme courts of law which have and must have, the superintendancy over all inferior courts were

not only neglected, but the judges reprehended for granting them"; and Londoners complained that "of later times the judges of the land are so awed with the power and greatness of the prelates . . . that neither prohibitions, Habeas Corpus, nor any other lawful remedy can be had."

The courts were—and not incidentally—a source of continual revenue for the Crown. Over all Laud's policy was "the smear of finance." Most offences could be construed as ecclesiastical offences, and if the £10,000 fine on Leighton for libelling the French Roman Catholic Queen as "a daughter of Heth" and the £12,000 fine of Alington for marrying his niece were exceptional, the steady stream of smaller fines provided the King with no small part of the income necessary for personal government.

To support the new practice, it was necessary to have an old theory which was, at least, defensible. Laud's theory was that the Church and the State were the same organism under different aspects; and he emphasized this at the outset of his campaign by urging the King to return to Henry VIII's role as "Head of the Church" and abandon Elizabeth's compromise as "Supreme Governor." The difference was that the former could dictate doctrine and the latter could not.

The test case he chose was the petition of some Puritan parishioners that, in the church they had subscribed to restore, the Communion Table should remain a Table and not be transferred to the east end as an altar. The case was to be heard by the Dean of Arches, the greatest civil lawyer in England, who refused to make politics subservient to law, and who found that, by the terms of the Elizabethan settlement, the parishioners were undoubtedly right. The case was, therefore, stopped and transferred to the Privy Council, where the King found in favour of Laud. Thus "the Head of the Church gave a legal and legitimate ruling that the old compromise had been torn up."

(Without an understanding of this, it is impossible to see, in its true perspective, the continual strife in all the parish

churches of England between the Table and the Altar. Undoubtedly there was also a doctrinal issue involved, though —since every Pope for the first thousand years of Christian history had used a Table—not so acute a one as might be imagined. To say that with a Table, the Church of England could be seen to be Protestant, with an Altar, Catholic, is to state less than half the truth. To men in that decade of history, an Anglican Altar was a symbol of tyranny, as surely as the Roman Catholic Mass was an indication of treason.)

To oppose Laud's theory and the practice which it supported, the Puritans elaborated their own—a total denial of the identity of Church and State and an insistence that the Church was the Elect, the Saints, the Gathered Community. Opinions might differ as to the means and signs of segregation (this was to lead later to the strife between the Presbyterians and the Independents), but there was unanimity in the opposition to the Laudian conception. Political implications, if less obvious, were no more absent from the Puritans' doctrine than they were from the Primate's. As Morley has put it: "Civil politics and ecclesiastical grew to be the same. Tonnage and poundage and predestination, ship-money and election, habeas corpus and justification by faith, all fell into line."

The main weakness of Laud's position was the "lecturers." He could appoint the bishops, he could govern the courts, he could "tune the pulpits," but as long as lecturers were at large, his system was insecure.

These lecturers were supernumerary clergy who were appointed to preach sermons in market towns and other fixed places. Once they were ordained, the bishops had no further control over them. If they were Puritans—as most of them were—they could, without let or hindrance, preach Puritan views. They could be maintained—and, again, most of them were—by subscriptions from the Puritan gentry. Since they preached a sermon only, there was no need for them to conform to the Prayer Book. Round them, not round the

incumbent, the religious life of the predominantly Puritan eastern counties gathered. Selden, who likened them to the friars of Catholicism, complained that they secured "not only the affection but the bounty that should be bestowed on the minister."

Laud did what he could. He ordered them to read the Prayer Book service in surplice and hood and to accept a cure of souls if one was offered. Many refused and were punished. Fines of as much as £1,000 were imposed on those who continued preaching against Popery and Laudianism. But more continued with their sermons.

So it was that Cromwell's letter to Mr. Storie showed him as striking—as he was always, as a soldier, to strike—at the enemy's vulnerable point.

After thanking his correspondent "for erecting a lecture in our country, in the which you placed Dr. Wells, a man for goodness and industry and ability to do good every way not short of any I know in England," he entreats him to continue financing him: "Surely, Mr. Storie, it were a piteous thing to see a lecture fall in these times wherein we see they are suppressed, with too much haste and violence by the enemies of God's truth. Far be it that so much guilt should stick to your hands. . . . You know, Mr. Storie, to withdraw the pay is to let fall the lecture; for who goeth to warfare at his own cost? I beseech you therefore in the bowels of Christ Jesus put it forward and let the good man have his pay. The souls of God's children will bless you for it; and so shall I."

This, Oliver's first extant letter, was written on January 11, 1636. The end of his exile was in sight. On the twenty-ninth of the month, the uncle whose property he had unavailingly tried to seize relented (urged, some said, by Puritan clergy convinced of Oliver's piety and reformation) and named him his heir. He died shortly after making the will and in the early summer Cromwell, again a man of property, assured income and social position, moved to Ely as farmer of the tithes.

The life of Charles during the first half of the 'thirties was as serene as Cromwell's was troubled. As his grief for Buckingham slowly healed, so his love for and dependence on his wife increased. Charles, surprising her one day with the present of a diamond brooch, tried to fasten it himself. But he was clumsy, the prong went into her skin and she snatched the jewel away and flung it on the ground, whereupon "the King looked alarmed and confounded, and turned pale, which he was never seen to do in his worst misfortunes."

She returned his solicitude. When Charles, in the winter of 1632, suffered from a slight attack of smallpox, she never left him, but kept him merry "in a warm room with a furred gown on his back" playing parlour games with him. Looking back on those years she wrote: "I was the happiest and most fortunate of queens, for not only had I every pleasure the heart could desire; I had a husband who adored me."

Their first son, weakly and undersized, died in 1629 an hour after baptism, but the lusty, swarthy Charles, Prince of Wales, was born in the spring of 1630, Princess Mary in 1631, James, Duke of York, in 1633, Princess Elizabeth in 1635, Princess Anne in the spring of 1637. In the intervals of child-bearing, Henrietta, with her train of dwarfs, negro servants, monkeys and dogs, indulged her passion for theatricals, which so exasperated the Puritan pamphleteers. The diminutive couple—she only just reached to the shoulder of her five-foot husband—took part in the elaborate masques which Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones contrived for them. Sometimes there would be two royal masques a year—the King presenting one to the Queen on Twelfth Night, and the Queen returning the compliment on Shrove Tuesday—which would be the social events of the winter; but others were given in their honour at which they were only spectators, such as the great Inns of Court masque of 1633 when the Banqueting Hall was so crowded that the King and Queen had difficulty in reaching their seats.

There were also plays for their pleasure, such as Shirley's *The Gamester*, of which Charles himself suggested the plot; and lesser excitements, such as shopping on Ludgate Hill, going to Bedlam to see the madmen, considering the invention of a Frenchman of "a floating bathing-palace" to be placed in the Thames opposite one of their houses, interviewing "Old Parr," who had been brought up to Court at the age of 153, and who told Charles about the dissolution of the monasteries, which he remembered perfectly.

"You have lived longer than other men," observed the King. "What have you done more than they?"

Parr replied that he had got a wench with child when he was over a hundred and done public penance for the deed.

Charles decided to have his phenomenal subject painted by Sir Anthony Van Dyck, Principal Painter in Ordinary to their Majesties at St. James's.

It was not Van Dyck whom Charles had originally wanted for this office. He had tried to induce Rubens to take up residence, and when that failed, had written to Franz Hals, also unavailingly. Eventually he took Van Dyck on Rubens's recommendation, and his patronage for the Flemish painter, five months older and no taller than himself, soon ripened into friendship. The connoisseurship which he had learnt from Buckingham led Charles to find in his growing collection of pictures one of his abiding pleasures. His greatest prize were seven Raphael cartoons (which, after his death, Cromwell was to save for England when Parliament sold the Royal Collection); but there were Titians and Tintorettos unequalled in Europe, side by side with Mantegnas, Correggios and Giorgiones.

With art, Charles was at ease. A painting was something which remained eternally itself, suffering renewed and patient scrutiny until it yielded up all its secrets—the antithesis of the puzzle of Protean humanity. For pictures Charles had a discrimination he lacked for men. "With any artist," wrote

Sir Philip Warwick, who knew him, "he would discourse freely; and as he was commonly improved by them, so he often gave light to them in their own art."

One such story told of him was that he, in a company of painters, was the only one to recognize by the style the authorship of a portrait. Then, suddenly doubting, asked: "Is there but one man's hand in the picture?" The majority dissented from the notion, but Charles persisted: "I am sure there are two hands that have worked on it, for I know the hand that drew the heads; but the hand that did the rest I never saw before." And he was right. The picture had been finished, after the artist's death, by another hand.

He was a collector, too, of curiosities. Altars from the ruined Temple of Apollo at Delos; a chess-board, reputed to have belonged to Queen Elizabeth, with squares alternately of gold and pearls; a model of Solomon's Temple in ebony and amber; the mace of a Saxon king; "a conjuring drum from Lapland"—all found their places in his twenty-four palaces, which a foreign visitor found "all very elegantly and completely furnished," while a native pamphleteer protested against "Nonesuch Charles, squandering away millions of pounds on braveries and vanities, on old rotten pictures and broken-nosed marbles."

After Easter each year, according to the custom of the realm, he left his own houses in or round London—Whitehall, St. James's, Denmark House, Hampton Court, Nonesuch, Oatlands, Theobalds, Sheen, Greenwich, Windsor and the rest—and proceeded on the Royal Progress to the great houses of his subjects, so that "the whole kingdom should thus have the satisfaction to see its sovereign."

In the summer of 1633, however, he went further afield. He journeyed to Scotland to be crowned. His countrymen gave him as magnificent a welcome as they were able. Edinburgh itself, the dirtiest town in the British Isles, where, owing to the primitive sanitary arrangements, the stench was incredible to civilized noses, was actually cleaned a little—

a demonstration of loyalty and affection even more striking than the processions, pageants and sartorial magnificence which plunged the nobility even deeper into debt.

He found in the country, through which he made a progress after the Coronation, a warmth of welcome in no way inferior to that in the capital. He had, indeed, come among his own people; and he enjoyed himself extremely. The only untoward incident was his narrow escape from drowning in the Forth at Burntisland, on his way back to Edinburgh.

But behind the personal lay the politico-religious; and in that respect, the entire visit might be characterized as an untoward incident. Laud was with him, laying plans for ruling Scotland as he was ruling England—through the Bishops—and taking the first steps in the policy of promoting ecclesiastics to temporal rank which was to culminate, two years later, after seven other bishops had been gradually admitted to the Privy Council, in the appointment of the Archbishop of St. Andrews as Lord Chancellor. At the Coronation itself, a foretaste of the future caused an explosion. Charles asked the Lord Chancellor to allow the Scottish Archbishop to precedence of him. The Lord Chancellor thereupon offered to resign office, but added that, while he kept it, "never a priest in Scotland should set a foot before him as long as his blood was hot."

It was not, however, Laud's political designs, but his religious observances and opinions which provoked immediate disquiet. It was the gold copes and the Table placed altarwise, with a tapestry embodying a crucifix behind it, which in fiercely Calvinist Scotland "was noticed and bred great fear of inbringing of Popery." Nor were men reassured by Laud's refusal to take the oath to defend "the true Protestant Reformed religion" on the grounds that he was more accustomed to exact oaths than to take them; or by his remark, when a comment was made on the beauty of Dunblane Church before the Reformation: "What, fellow? Deformation, not Reformation."

By his temperament, Laud was sincerely susceptible to an ordered dignity in worship which he equated with "the beauty of holiness," just as his instinct for centralized efficiency drove him to seek to impose mechanical uniformity of observance on a natural diversity of belief. And though his endeavours to enforce a dignified performance of the Book of Common Prayer was in fact a consequence and not a cause of his political schemes, his personal enthusiasm for it, in the teeth of the religious spirit of his age, ensured that this aspect of his rule should bulk largest in the minds of the majority of his contemporaries and of posterity. That, at least, all men could see and understand; some men could appreciate; and a few could applaud.

Charles, by his nature, was entirely of his adviser's mind. The liturgical services of Anglicanism were part of the pattern within which he felt as secure and at ease as he would have been bewildered and uncomfortable at one of Cromwell's vehement, agonizing sessions of prayer.

"Through the whole week," says Sir Philip Warwick, "he never failed before he sat down to dinner to have part of the Liturgy read unto him and his menial servants, came he never so hungry or so late in: and on Sundays and Tuesdays he came (commonly at the beginning of Service) to the Chapel, well attended by his Court-Lords and chief attendants and most usually waited on by many of the nobility in town, who found those observances acceptably entertained by him."

In Scotland, in the chapel at Holyrood, he did not alter his habit; and when he rode south again with Laud, they had determined to impose on the Kirk the same Book and order which were their own delight.

Back in London, Laud set about enforcing his plans in England by a Metropolitical Visitation to every parish in the province of Canterbury, conducted by his Vicar-General, Sir Nathaniel Brent. The visitation took three years, and its twofold purpose of tuning doctrine and restoring the beauty

of holiness may be convenienty epitomized by his suspension of the incumbent at Stratford-on-Avon "for grossly particularizing in his sermons and for suffering his poultry to roost and his hogs to lodge in the chancel."

In the Puritan counties, the Visitation, apart from rousing widespread exasperation, was completely ineffective. In Buckinghamshire John Hampden was arraigned for holding a muster of trained bands in a churchyard and for failing to attend his parish church regularly on Sundays. Hampden apologized so charmingly that Brent himself urged that no measures should be taken against him; but when he had gone on his way, Hampden proceeded to make the life of the vicar who had laid information against him uncomfortable and continued with renewed energy to prepare for the worst in a rapidly-worsening political situation.

As the counties of England were being organized throughout '35, '36 and '37 by means of the Visitation, so, during the same period, a new expedient for levying a tax on them was devised. In the autumn of '34, Charles issued a writ for ship-money on the seaboard counties—the traditional and legitimate method of financing the Navy. Why, however, should the cost of defence be borne only by the seaboard? The logic of the case for extending the tax to the whole country was incontrovertible. In the August of 1635, he issued a second writ, explaining that "as all are concerned in the mutual defence of one another, so all might put to their helping hands for the making of such preparations as, by the blessing of God, may secure this realm against those dangers and extremities which are the common effects of war whensoever it taketh a people unprepared."

The answer to this new departure was to ask by what right the King altered the law. The tax itself was neither burdensome nor unfair; but the principle behind it, once granted, would mean that the Crown could permanently dispense with Parliament as the revenue-granting institution. There was, however, little actual resistance to the principle,

though there was an outcry in every locality against the unfairness of individual assessments by the sheriffs which, however ineffective (for nearly everyone grumbled, but paid), laid a foundation of nation-wide sympathy for anyone who might be bold enough to challenge the legality of the imposition.

With the issue of the third writ of ship-money in the autumn of 1636—which showed that it was intended to be a permanent tax and a precedent for extra-Parliamentary taxation—the challenge came. John Hampden refused to pay the twenty shillings.

Suddenly the name of the Buckinghamshire squire was on all tongues, "every man enquiring," as Clarendon put it, "who and what he was that durst at his own charge support the liberty and property of the kingdom and rescue his country from being made a prey to the Court."

When he lost his case, the majority decision of seven of the judges to five "proved of more advantage and credit to the gentleman condemned than to the King's service" since ship-money had been adjudged lawful "upon such grounds and reasons as every stander-by was able to swear was not law," the judges' arguments "left no man anything he could call his own" and every man, in consequence, "felt his own interest by the unnecessary logic of that argument no less concluded than Mr. Hampden's."[1]

If the Hampden trial was for Cromwell, watching it from Ely, a family matter—for Oliver St. John, who defended Hampden, was also of "the cousinage"—it is probable that he was more moved, as were the rest of the nation, by the cases of Prynne, Bastwick and Burton. It was not that, though less legally minded than his cousins, he underrated or was indifferent to the strict constitutional issue; it was that he was becoming more obsessed with religious matters. It was Laud's persecution of the godly rather than the King's taxation of

[1] The trial is dealt with at length on pp. 190–216 of the author's *John Hampden.*

the gentry that dictated the terms in which he saw the incipient struggle.

Prynne, a lawyer, Bastwick, a doctor of medicine, and Burton, an Anglican clergyman of Puritan leanings, continued, in spite of previous warning and punishment (Prynne had been shorn of his ears for libelling the Queen) to pamphleteer against Laud. Prynne accused the bishops of attempting to suppress the preaching of the lecturers that the way might be paved for Popery; Burton deplored the turning of Tables into Altars; and Bastwick attacked the new ecclesiastical courts. The three together formed a vehement assault on the key-points of Laud's system.

They were summoned before the Star Chamber and, at Laud's instigation, were condemned to lose their ears—in Prynne's case even the stumps to be sheared off; to stand in the pillory; to pay fines of £5,000 each; and to be imprisoned for life in three remote castles. Prynne, in addition, was to be branded on the cheeks with the letters S.L. for Seditious Libeller.

The sentence of the Court was carried out on June 30, 1637. It was greeted with such a roar of anger from the crowd in Old Palace Yard that Charles heard it in his palace of Whitehall. The path to the pillory was strewed with flowers. "S.L." was interpreted as meaning "Stigmata Laudi," the Scars of Laud. And as the three set out north and west and south to their prisons, all England turned out on the roads to echo what London had said.

Laud had, that day, laid the foundations of a scaffold for himself and his King.

CHAPTER FOUR

"LORD OF THE FENS"

IT was in local, not in national or ecclesiastical politics, however, that Cromwell and Charles were first to come publicly within each other's orbit. And the circumstances of that encounter were to be prophetic of their whole relationship. Essentially they were both on the same side and, to a certain extent, from the same motives. They were, at least, united against the same opponent—the millionaire nobility—though Cromwell's care was the welfare of the poor and Charles's the rights of the Crown. Yet it would be unjust to both to assume that they were not also implicitly concerned with each other's interests. Charles desired justice for the poor as sincerely as Cromwell, though his position and the manner of his life made the matter for him theoretical. Cromwell was too essentially a conservative authoritarian to desire the executive power to be weakened and destroyed by financial blackmail from private groups, but the confusing of the situation by religious, constitutional and personal factors obscured from him that this was the point at issue. A Fenland squire could not be expected to see the problem of government as the King saw it, any more than the leading European patron of the arts could be expected to understand the lives of grinding poverty which Cromwell saw daily round him and tried to alleviate. It was not until Oliver was in Charles's place that he fully grasped what the King's problem was; and then he took Charles's way with a tyranny ten times more ruthless, against which Charles himself would have cried out in horror. But that was far in the future. The present matter was the draining of the Fens.

The overflowing of the slow-moving Ouse and the perpetual flooding of all the lands around had been a long-standing problem of the Isle of Ely. At the beginning of the

century—in the last years of Elizabeth's reign—a project had been initiated for the construction of a system of dykes and drainage which should reclaim from the waters some thousands of acres of pasture and arable land. The draining of the Great Level—as the fen was called—had been pushed forward during the reign of James I, but had aroused more opposition than energy. The fen-dwellers themselves were the chief opponents—a wretched, ague-stricken community, who, however, made a living by cutting the willows which supplied all the baskets in England and by availing themselves of the plentiful supplies of fresh-water fish and wild ducks and geese. They, and the "poor commoners," who used what dry land there was for grazing their cattle at no charge, were terrified of the coming change, and were supported both by the people of Cambridge, who felt their interests threatened by the possible growth of new centres, and by certain of the local gentry who had not invested money in the scheme.

In 1629, however, a determined attempt was made to forward the project. The Commissioners of Sewers—a body composed of the neighbouring gentry (including Uncle Oliver) acting under the authority of the Crown—made a contract with the Dutch engineer, Cornelius Vermuyden, to drain the level. Public opinion, further incensed by the proposed introduction of foreign workers into the district, forced them to rescind the contract; whereupon they urged the wealthy Earl of Bedford to put himself at the head of the project, and provide the money.

He agreed on the understanding that 95,000 acres of the reclaimed land should be allotted to him and his associates, known as the "Adventurers," of which 12,000 should be conveyed to the Crown and 40,000 be set aside as security for the upkeep of the work after completion. He then personally engaged Vermuyden (who was so incompetent that "one of the principal labours of modern engineers has been to rectify his errors"), and by the October of 1637 the Commissioners of Sewers were able to pronounce it successfully

completed and to adjudge to Bedford and his fellow shareholders the stipulated lands.

Satisfaction on anyone's part, except possibly the Earl's, was singularly lacking. The lesser "Adventurers," complaining that Bedford had pursued his own interests at their expense, threatened to prosecute him; Vermuyden complained that he had not been allowed to finish the work properly as, though the land was dry in summer, it still flooded in winter; the "poor commoners" complained that their land had been taken from them and that their life, as hired agricultural labourers, would be harder and more miserable than before; the small landowners complained that they were now worse off than before Bedford's intervention. Bedford, having spent £10,000 and gained a fortune, refused to do anything more.

In the spring and summer of 1638, the crisis was acute. The dispossessed "commoners," armed with scythes and pitchforks, prepared to break the boundaries by which the new landlords had enclosed what had been their common land; a meeting was arranged of 600 hardy men who, under the pretext of assembling for a football match, were to destroy the drainage works; Bedford's workmen were attacked by angry mobs. Meanwhile, at a session in Huntingdon, the Commissioners of Sewers decided that the work of drainage was not complete.

At this point both Cromwell and Charles intervened in their different ways. Cromwell put himself at the head of the "poor commoners" and the small landlords who complained that Bedford had ruined them. Charles, acting on Vermuyden's advice, adjudged the work incomplete and offered to complete it himself in return for an additional 57,000 acres.

From the very beginning, Sir Thomas Steward had opposed the project, and Cromwell, inheriting his uncle's property, also inherited his local leadership in this matter. He threw himself into it with the more enthusiasm because of his interest in the poor. Now, asking from them the nominal sum of a groat for every cow they had on the common, he

undertook to delay Bedford for five years by legal processes "and in the meantime, they should enjoy every foot of their common." He went over to Huntingdon "to be their Orator"; and on their behalf showed such energy that his opponents dubbed him contemptuously "Lord of the Fens."

Charles, also, in his own way aided their cause. He pronounced that, as the drainage was not completed, the inhabitants were to continue for the time being in possession of their lands and commons. Meanwhile, the Crown would proceed with the project, and Bedford and his associates would have to remain content with 40,000 acres and no more. As this gave them a 60 per cent. annual return on their capital, they had little genuine ground for complaint, though it sadly disappointed the expectations of their rapacity. Even Charles's efforts to be fair to all sides were nullified by the political atmosphere. Men remarked that Bedford was a Puritan, that Oliver St. John (who was an "Adventurer") was Bedford's lawyer and that Charles had, in this new decision, remembered that he had also been Hampden's. And even Cromwell, who had been prepared to defy his cousin for the sake of the dispossessed, now opposed the King's Commissioners with as much tenacity as he had opposed the Earl.[1]

The critical phase of the dispute, however, was over. The King's attention was to be occupied by more serious controversies. He had neither time nor money to devote to drainage; and the "poor commoners," given legal security by his pronouncement and practical security by Cromwell's vigilance, remained for the time being in possession of their lands.

[1] Some confusion about Cromwell's stand in this matter has arisen from the assumption by early writers that he would automatically oppose the King and side with those who were later to be his own associates. Forster in his *Life of Cromwell* has, as Gardiner pointed out, "a highly imaginative narrative of Cromwell's proceedings which has no support in any known evidence." Gardiner shows, by comparison of dates, that the theory of Cromwell's opposition to Charles at the outset of this matter is untenable and concludes that "he must have been on the King's side against Bedford, and not, as is always asserted, on Bedford's side against the King."

CHAPTER FIVE

CREEDS IN CONFLICT

OLIVER'S religious conversion, which had begun at Huntingdon and which gave rise to the continuing spiritual struggle during the whole period at St. Ives, was completed at Ely. His own account of it is contained in a letter which he wrote in the autumn of 1638 "to my beloved cousin, Mrs. St. John."

"To honour my God by declaring what He hath done for my soul," he wrote, "in this I am confident and I will be so. Truly then, this I find: That He giveth springs in a dry and barren wilderness where no water is. I live (you know where) in Mesheck, which they say signifies *Prolonging*; in Kedar, which signifieth *Blackness*; yet the Lord forsaketh me not. Though He do prolong, yet He will (I trust) bring me to His tabernacle, to His resting-place. My soul is with the congregation of the firstborn, my body rests in hope, and if here I may honour my God either by doing or by suffering, I shall be most glad.

"Truly no poor creature hath more cause to put forth himself in the cause of his God than I. I have had plentiful wages beforehand, and I am sure I shall never earn the least mite. The Lord accept me in His Son, and give me to walk in the light, and give us to walk in the light, as He is the light. He it is that enlighteneth our blackness, our darkness. I dare not say, He hideth His face from me. He giveth me to see light in His light. One beam in a dark place hath exceeding much refreshment in it. Blessed be His name for shining upon so dark a heart as mine! You know what my manner of life hath been. O, I lived in and loved darkness and hated the light. I was a chief, the chief of sinners. This is true: I hated godliness, yet God had mercy on me. O, the riches of His mercy! Praise Him for me; pray for me, that He who hath

begun a good work would perfect it to the day of Christ."

He had received the personal assurance of grace and salvation which was never to leave him until one moment twenty years later he was dying in Whitehall as Lord Protector of England, when he asked his chaplain: "Tell me, is it possible to fall from grace?" When the chaplain assured him that it was not, he murmured: "Then I am safe, for I *know* that I was once in grace." And his last prayer breathed the spirit of this first experience: "Lord, though I am a miserable and wretched creature, I am in covenant with Thee through grace, and I may, I will come to Thee for Thy people. Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some good and Thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death. Lord, however Thou dost dispose of me, continue and go on to do good for them. Give them consistency of judgment, one heart and mutual love, and go on to deliver them, and with the work of reformation, and make the name of Christ glorious in the world. Teach those who look too much on Thy instruments to depend more upon Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy people too. And pardon the folly of this short prayer, even for Jesus Christ's sake, and give me a good night if it be Thy pleasure."

Here is the soul of Cromwell, the constant in all the changes, the rock among the shifting sands of policy and necessity. It was the secret which his foes never fathomed, the key lacking which his detractors saw only a pious dissembler. But in a private family letter and in a dying prayer, there was neither need nor occasion for dissembling. Here he could speak simply of the two realities—himself and God, the sinner and the Saviour, the instrument and its Maker.

This intensely-conceived personal relationship is the clue to his creed. He was still, at forty, a communicating member of the Church of England. He and Charles were fellow members of the same Body. But it was noticed at this time that he

tended to consort in Ely with "the people of the Separation," and that he "more frequently and publicly owned himself a Teacher, and did preach in other men's as well as his own house."

At what point in his career he left the Church of England and joined the Independents—or, as they are now called, the Congregationalists—is unknown. The logic of his position, combined with Laud's use of the Church for political ends, made the step eventually inevitable. At this time, the Independent theologians themselves, though suggesting that the Anglican Church contained "all the ungodly of the land," still maintained that it was in essence a true Church; they had not yet moved to the position, to which Laud was soon to drive them, that the true visible Church must consist of the regenerate only; and that, as the Church of England was not a voluntary association of the regenerate, but a body constituted by secular authority and used for secular ends, it could not claim to be truly the Bride of Christ.

The struggle between the Laudians and the Puritans during the 'thirties was not at all a struggle between Anglicans and Separatists. To see it thus is to misconceive it in terms of a subsequent development. It was an argument between two parties within the Church itself as to what the nature of the Church was. To the Puritan the Reformed practices had not gone far enough; to the Laudian, they had gone too far; where the Laudian saw a Catholicism purged of accretions and errors, the Puritan saw a not yet sufficiently unequivocal Protestantism.

Laud, whose theological theories were as tolerant as his ecclesiastical practice was tyrannical, realized the ultimate implications of the Puritans' personal conception of religion more clearly than they themselves realized it. He diagnosed, as early as 1629, that the "right of private judgment" was an anarchistic principle which bade fair to tear the Church into fragments and "fiery atoms." Certainly there is "a latitude in faith" and men may differ radically in their religious

opinions; none of the Articles of the Church of England are fundamental or necessary for salvation, "nor will I ever take it upon me to express that tenet or opinion, the denial of the foundation only excepted, which may shut any Christian, the meanest, out of Heaven." But such differences could only be safely indulged in in a Church which allied uniformity of practice with unity of belief in its basic creed; and men must bring a temperate mind to the consideration of spiritual problems and be willing to lay aside their private opinions in the interests of public peace and concord.

His most famous prayer showed him sufficiently alive to the Church's inperfections: "Bless, O gracious Father, Thine holy Catholic Church. Fill it with truth and grace. Where it is corrupt, purge it; where it is in error, direct it; where it is superstitious, rectify it; where it is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is divided and rent asunder, heal the breaches of it. O Thou Holy One of Israel." What he would not countenance was that fallible men, in obedience to their private revelations, should attempt the task. "Never heretic yet rent the Church of Christ," he said, "but he pretends some great abuses which his integrity would remedy."

The strength of Laud's position lay in the fact that, at the Reformation, the Church of England had kept all the essentials of Catholic order.[1] It retained the Sacraments and the hierarchical episcopate. Bishops, priests and deacons continued to minister as they had always ministered. Ritual and ornaments—bowing to the Altar instead of passing the Table; wearing a surplice and not a plain black gown—were, by comparison, negligible irrelevancies. That they were indications of doctrinal differences was admitted by both parties; but in the battle they were the far outworks of the citadel. Every vestige of "the beauty of holiness" could have been dispensed with; an Anglican service could have looked starker

[1] *All* the essentials. See, if in doubt, Dom Gregory Dix's *The Question of Anglican Orders.*

than Geneva; but the Catholic centre would have remained untouched. This, Laud's strength, was equally and inevitably the Puritans' weakness. They were within the Catholic framework, accepting the Catholic order, acknowledging Catholic doctrine and at the same time demanding an anti-Catholic crusade. Logically, as they became aware, they had only two alternatives. Either they must alter the order or they must leave the Church.

In Scotland they had ordered things better. Here Protestantism had remoulded the framework to fit the doctrine. Bishops, priests and deacons had given way to presbyters. No longer were men ordained from above in a succession reaching back to the Apostles; they were elected and approved from below, by the members of the Church, to whom, finally, they were answerable. As early as 1580, by the *Second Book of Discipline*, a logical and thorough Presbyterianism had been established in Scotland; in 1592 it had become the legalized government of the Scottish Church; and though in 1612 it had been rescinded and episcopacy officially restored, it remained the national religion in the eyes of nobility and people alike.

James I's preference for bishops rather than presbyters had nothing to do with doctrine; he looked on the form of Church government as a "thing indifferent," but he regarded episcopacy as agreeing better than presbyterianism with monarchy. And under Laud, the slogan "No Bishop, No King" acquired a new significance. No longer did it indicate merely that a spiritual hierarchy was a proper and convenient parallel to a temporal hierarchy; it epitomized the new policy of exercising the temporal power of the King by means of the temporal authority of the bishops.

James had been wise enough, even when restoring the form of episcopacy, not to interfere with the lower Church courts of the presbyterian system. After his return from Scotland, Charles, on the advice of Laud, determined to make these in practice subservient to the bishops and so gradually to destroy

what were, in fact, the effective centres of popular self-government. The King and the Archbishop decided also to *impose a new Prayer Book, on the English model, on the* Church of Scotland.

The reading of it, for the first time, in the Cathedral Church of St. Giles at Edinburgh on July 23, 1637, was as surely the harbinger of revolt in Scotland as the popular acclamation of Prynne, Bastwick and Burton three weeks earlier had been in England. Whether or not both outbursts were spontaneous or organized is irrelevant. In all probability they were the latter, but their danger to the Crown lay in the fact that they were not the stirring-up of a fanatical faction, but a release of popular anger. When, on that day in St. Giles, Jenny Geddes threw her stool at the Bishop's head and narrowly missed grazing the Dean's, she acted on behalf of the overwhelming majority of Scotsmen, who regarded Charles's policy, from a lay as well as an ecclesiastical point of view, as an insult to their country.

Laud might write angrily from Lambeth: "Will the bishops now cast down the milk they have given because a few milk-maids have scolded at them? I hope they will be better advised." But in spite of the offer of large sums of money by the magistrates, no ecclesiastic in Scotland could be found to read the new Book.

Throughout the autumn and winter the dispute dragged on. Just before Christmas a General Supplication reached the King, demanding that all bishops should be withdrawn from the Privy Council, thus cutting at the roots of the new policy; and on February 28, 1638, in Grey Friar's Churchyard, was signed the National Covenant, in which "Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burgesses, Ministers and Commons undersubscribing" bound themselves to re-establish and defend Presbyterianism according to "the intention and meaning of the blessed reformers of religion in this land."

Charles had to withdraw—or to fight.

At Court, there was one personal indication of the extent

to which Charles was affected by these happenings. Archy, the Court Fool, stood to him somewhat in the same relation as Yorick to Hamlet. He had been his father's jester and had known Charles from childhood. He had accompanied the Prince and Buckingham on their amorous expedition to Madrid—and, on that occasion, his wit had won him a pension from Philip of Spain. He had even been permitted—and this above all was a measure of his influence—to rejoice publicly at Buckingham's murder. However powerful the enemies he made at Court, he was proof against them. In the Archbishop's presence, he had on one occasion said grace in the terms, "Great praise be to God and little laud to the Devil," and, in spite of Laud's furious complaint, gone unreproved.

Ten days after the signing of the National Covenant, Archy acted as spokesman for the rest of the King's Scottish servants and left no doubt where his sympathies lay; he taunted Laud with being the real fool of the Court; was openly exultant at the news from Scotland; and, indiscreetly in his cups in a Westminster tavern, described the Archbishop as a monk, a rogue and a traitor. Laud complained again and this time Charles let him have his way. Archy was dismissed.

(As a Parthian shot, he remained for some time in London in the disguise of a Laudian clergyman—in which habit, he explained, he could be as scandalous as he pleased with impunity.)

Yet, however bitterly in the country the strife might develop between Laudian and Puritan Anglican, Independent and Presbyterian, the theological interest of the Court lay in Roman Catholicism. The 'thirties were years of an intensive missionary effort on the part of the Roman Catholics, and the Court acted both as their protector and as the centre of their activity. They had the active support of Portland, the Lord Treasurer, Cottington, a member of the Star Chamber, and Windebank, Charles's Secretary of State among the eminent laity; of Montague, Bishop of Chichester, who

was enthusiastic about reunion; and, above all, of the Queen.

Henrietta's early missionary endeavours on behalf of her Faith were now performed with more discretion than in the early days of her marriage, but with no less enthusiasm. She no longer broke into an Anglican service with a pack of beagles and interrupted the preacher with hunting noises or made pilgrimages to Tyburn to pray publicly for the Roman Catholic martyrs; but her chapels at St. James's and Denmark House were open to the public and she was privately having the Prince of Wales brought up in the Faith, even though Charles had insisted, somewhat rudely, that he should be baptized by Laud.

By the end of 1634 there were in England 500 secular priests, 250 Jesuits, 100 Benedictines, 30 Franciscans, 20 Dominicans, 20 Carmelites and 8 others, according to the estimate of Dom Leander—a Welshman named John Jones—whom the Pope had sent over in charge of the Mission to England. The penal laws against the Roman Catholics, though still on the Statute Book, were so far in practice relaxed that they might be considered no longer operative. Panzani, who succeeded Leander, continued the efforts towards reunion on the one hand and the still further relaxing of the recusancy law on the other. Roman Catholicism became almost the fashion at Court. The King's nephew, Prince Rupert, on a visit to his uncle, narrowly escaped conversion; the Earl of Carlisle was held back only by his dislike of Rome's political pretensions; Lord Herbert announced that he revered Rome as the mother of Churches and would like to submit the manuscript of his *De Veritate* to the Pope; Lord Boteler, the Marchioness of Hamilton, Lady Newport and many others made, openly or privately, their submission; and the Venetian Ambassador, watching the course of events with unbounded surprise, reported to his Government that "anyone who wishes a celebration [of the Mass] in his own house can avoid the danger of the penalty with very slight circumspection. This is all due to the connivance

of the ruler, and indicates if not a leaning to the rites of the Roman Church, at least an absence of aversion."

In fact, however, Charles was quite indifferent to the theological issue. His interest was to find some formula by which Roman Catholics would be enabled to take the Oath of Allegiance and so bind them to the Crown. By the February of 1637 he was willing to consent to certain modifications in the Oath, but he would not agree to the Roman demand that all phrases attacking the Pope should be eliminated. Even here his motive was political. The Oath could not be changed without the consent of Parliament; and he had no intention of summoning Parliament on any pretext whatever—certainly not on one which would have led to immediate revolution. Personally, he enjoyed a theological argument as much as any form of intellectual exercise—and he was almost as good at it as his father had been; he made a close friend of George Con, a Scot long in the Vatican service, who was sent over as Papal Agent in 1636 and who could discuss art with him better than anyone else at Court. (Con was instrumental in inducing the Vatican to add some Leonardos and del Sartos to Charles's collection; he also procured bottled sweets and relics for Henrietta; and was, in his turn, presented with the antlers at one of the Royal hunts.) But the Head of the Church was never doctrinally inclined to his wife's religion, and when he heard that Buckingham's two sons were being brought up in it, he promptly had them removed, in spite of their mother's wishes, to the care of a safer tutor.

The Archbishop was even more inimical to Romanism than the King. Even the offer of a Cardinal's hat left him unmoved. He always feared the Queen's influence, he was irascibly jealous of Con, whom he constantly implored Charles to send away, he asked the King to banish Montague from the Court, and demanded that the Queen's chapels and the Embassy churches should be closed to English subjects.

At last, at the end of 1637, Charles was persuaded by the Privy Council to issue a proclamation threatening to punish

according to law those who converted Protestants to Rome and forbidding the celebration of Mass.

But by then it was too late. Popular indignation, at fever heat, contrasted the punishment of Prynne, Bastwick and Burton with the leniency shown to recusants. It construed Laud's attempts to introduce "the beauty of holiness" as visible proofs that he was trying to sell the Church of England to the Pope, and it neither knew—nor would have believed if it had known—that to the Roman claims he was as implacable an enemy as Prynne. It compared Charles's protection and encouragement of French and Italian priests with his defiance of Scottish presbyters; and it vented on "Papistry" an unreasoning and emotional fury which matched the mood of Oliver at Ely, but which Charles at Whitehall could not at all appreciate.

CHAPTER SIX

FAMILY MEN

THE King determined that his heir should, in his impressionable years, be protected from the various extremisms. Until he was five, "Charles P." was taken to Mass by his mother, who, at first, contrived to talk her husband out of his displeasure. But early in 1636, Charles forbade the practice to continue, and as soon as his son was old enough removed him from the care of the women. At the age of eight, the Prince was made a Knight of the Garter, given his own household and entrusted to the care of his "Governor," the Earl of Newcastle. The selection was significant. Con wrote sadly to the Vatican that "in matters of religion, the Earl is too indifferent. He hates the Puritans, he laughs at the Protestants and has little confidence in the Catholics." And Newcastle instructed his new charge: "What you would read I would have it history . . . that so you might compare the dead with the living; for the same humours is now as was then; there is no alteration but in names."

In certain matters, however, Newcastle still had to appeal to the Queen, who, in her maternal capacity, was emphatic in his support. "Charles," she wrote, "I am sorry I must begin my first letter with chiding you, because I hear that you will not take physic. I hope it was only for this day, and that to-morrow you will do it, for if you will not I must come to you and make you take it, for it is for your health. I have given order to my Lord Newcastle to send me word to-night whether you will or not."

Whether he did or not, the matter remained much on the Heir's mind. A little later, when his Governor was away, he wrote to him: "My Lord, I would not have you take too much physic, for it doth always make me worse, and I think it will do the like with you. I ride every day and am ready to follow any other directions from you. Make haste to return to him that loves you."

If Heaven had made the future Charles II a wit, Newcastle made him a horseman; for the Earl was the best rider of his age and his passion for horses equalled only his love of music and "the softer pleasures." He infected the Prince with his own enthusiasm, which, however, received a temporary check when, in 1639, Charles was thrown and broke his arm while riding in Hyde Park and, partly as a result, became dangerously ill.

The King's anxiety for his eldest son was scarcely mitigated by the fact that the succession was still safeguarded in the person of the fair, pretty, delicate James, then five and a half. But the "Black Boy" recovered and continued with his riding and his physic.

Cromwell was less fortunate a father. That same year, his eldest son, Robert, aged seventeen, fell ill of smallpox at school at Felsted. And he did not recover. His death nearly broke Oliver's heart. To the end of his life, he never forgot the shock of it. On his own deathbed, he returned to it. Quoting the passage from Philippians which closes with the words, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," he added: "This Scripture did once save my life when my eldest son died: which went as a dagger to my heart; indeed it did."

To his other sons, the handsome Oliver, aged fifteen, the weak, indolent Richard, aged twelve, and the colourless Henry, aged ten, Oliver never gave the affection which he lavished on Robert, who was the "son of his heart." His favourite became his second daughter, Elizabeth, now aged nine, whose childhood gave promise of the charm which was to win all hearts. Against her, alone of all Cromwell's family, no scurrilous word was to be said, even in the most intense bitterness of envenomed pamphleteering; and it was to be "poor Bettie's" death, less than a month before his own, which so distracted him that it precipitated his last, strange illness.

The eldest girl, Bridget, aged fourteen, Mary, aged one and a half, and Frances who was born a few months before Robert's death, completed Oliver's family.

All his sons were sent to the Grammar School at Felsted, in Essex. For one thing, it was near the house of their maternal grandfather, Sir James Bourchier; for another—and more importantly—its reputation was such that, though intended for "male children born in Essex," it drew the Puritans from all the countryside. From the Royalist point of view, it was a nursery of sedition. Its master, Martin Holbeach, was said to have "scarce bred any man that was loyal to his prince." But he bred men of mark. He had a Fairfax and the three sons of the Earl of Radnor among his pupils; and Isaac Barrow, who was to be a famous mathematician, and John Wallis, who was to become professor of geometry at Oxford. And, of the Cromwell boys, Richard was to be Lord Protector of England in succession to his father, and Henry Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

The Cromwell girls remained, as was the custom, at home. The house at Ely was, predominantly, the household of the three Elizabeth Cromwells—Betty the beloved daughter; Elizabeth, Oliver's mother, who, though she had not been with him at St. Ives, now came to live with him again in the house which had been her own birthplace; and his wife Elizabeth, the quiet centre of it, managing capably the housewifery of existence, but taking no part at all in the religious and political ferments. To the world, Mrs. Oliver Cromwell was and remained a shadow—and when all the strife was over and her husband and two eldest sons dead, she could write truly to the returned Charles II that she had never intermeddled with any public transactions. The Secretary of State docketed the paper: "Old Mrs. Cromwell, Noll's wife's petition." The description was exact. She was "Noll's wife."

. . . . .

Henrietta at Whitehall achieved no such self-effacement. She was to bear the King three more children, Katharine, who died half an hour after birth, in 1639; Henry, Duke of Gloucester, in 1640; and Henrietta—the beloved "Minette" of Charles II—who was born at Exeter in 1644 on the eve of

her flight to France. But already she had begun to interfere in politics, in which she was to be her husband's evil genius, giving advice which was invariably disastrous and driving him, with taunts and threats, along a way which, alone, he might not have taken. She was already unpopular enough with the people, who credited their Papist, play-acting Queen with machinations of which, so far, she had been innocent enough. Once, however, she embarked on her new career, she more than justified their suspicion. One of her first acts, for instance, was to ask the Pope to send money and men to help Charles quell the Presbyterians in the Northern Kingdom.

Her most trusted agent was Henry Jermyn, whom at the age of twenty-four she had made her Vice-Chamberlain. This obliging, handsome, raffish courtier remained always her "Prime Servant." By 1640 she was already reputed to be his mistress; he was with her in Holland and France during the years of the Civil War; at the French Court their *liaison* was universally assumed; after Charles's execution she was said to have secretly married him, and at the Restoration he returned as Earl of St. Albans, to live with her until her death as chamberlain of her household.[1]

[1] There seems no good reason to doubt either the marriage or the *liaison*. George Smeeton, the antiquary, appended to his reprint in 1820 of a life of Henrietta first published in 1685 the following footnote: "It is undoubtedly true (though kept out of sight by Clarendon, Hume and other royalist historians who knew it) that Henrietta Maria was married to Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans, shortly after the death of Charles, notwithstanding all her pretended grief at the loss of him and her declaration that she could not live without him. Sir John Reresby, in his memoirs, p. 4 edit. 1734, notices the circumstance. The late Mr. Coram, the print-seller, purchased of Yardly (a dealer in waste-paper and parchment) a deed of settlement of an estate, from Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans, to Henrietta Maria as a marriage dower; which, besides the signature of the Earl, was subscribed by Cowley the poet and other persons as witnesses. Mr. Coram sold the deed to the Rev. Mr. Brand, for five guineas, who cut off many names on the deed to enrich his collection of autographs: at the sale of this gentleman's effects, they passed into the hands of the late Mr. Bindley."

Miss Carola Oman, quoting the greater part of this passage in her *Henrietta Maria*, comments: "If the document mutilated by the reverend

She sent Jermyn to France, at the beginning of the troubles with Scotland, in an endeavour to arrange that she might visit her brother, the King, and put before him the necessities of her husband. Her brother was unsympathetic. She appealed both to the Catholics and the ladies of England for money to provide an army against the Scots. Both appeals were ill-advised, and the success of the former was, if anything, more dangerous to Charles than the failure of the latter.

In the matter of the unfortunate Prayer Book she was, indeed, as dissatisfied as Jenny Geddes, though from different motives. Charles brought a copy of it to her one evening in her apartments to try and convince her that it was to all intents and purposes the same as her own Roman Catholic books of devotion. After studying it with him, she found herself unable to agree.

Her dislike of the Scottish unreasonableness in the matter of "that fatal book" grew to detestation when she found that it involved another and more dangerous separation from her husband. This time Charles's journey to his native land was not for the amenities of a coronation, but for the risks of war. He had seen that to refuse the challenge of the Covenant was tantamount to abdicating. But when the motley and incompetent army which he managed to raise for the occasion reached the North a compromise was arrived at; and Henrietta had the satisfaction of seeing him return from Berwick—a husband who was still a lover—at breakneck speed.

Philistine was dated soon after the death of Charles I in 1649 and signed St. Albans, it was expensive at five guineas, for Jermyn was not created an Earl until 1660."

I cannot see that this discrepancy is implied in Smeeton's note. In any case, it is unlikely that there could be the deed of settlement of an estate until Jermyn had returned to England—and his Earldom was bestowed by Charles II in exile before the Restoration.

The attempt of Royalist sympathisers to deny the Henrietta-Jermyn and the later Charles-Jane Whorwood relationship seems to me as foolish and unwarranted by probabilities, as is the denial of Oliver's early wildness by Puritan partisans. Both are attempts, in the interests of propaganda, to confine life in the strait-jacket of an improving moral tale for schoolchildren.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHARLES BREAKS HIS WORD

THE three years between the summer of 1639, when Charles returned from Berwick, having been forced without a battle to treat with the Scots by withdrawing the Prayer Book and destroying the political power of the bishops, and the summer of 1642, when, at the head of his army, he set up the Royal Standard at Nottingham to signify that the Civil War in England had begun, are so crowded with incident that it is difficult to see the man for the King. Biography is lost in history. The Short and the Long Parliaments, the Grand Remonstrance, the attempted arrest of the Five Members, the imprisonment of Laud, the impeachment of Strafford—these familiar events hold the stage.

Indeed, from this point to the end of Charles's life, a little over nine years away, it is convenient to see clearly a simple outline if any proportion is to be observed and the eventual confrontation of Cromwell and Charles appreciated.

Charles's dissolution of Parliament after the murder of Buckingham took place in March, 1629; his first attempt to levy an army to subdue the Covenant-bound Scots was in the January of 1639; he was executed in January, 1649. Thus the period of the "personal rule," which began when he was twenty-eight and ended just before his fortieth birthday, was rather longer in time than the period between the resummoning of Parliament and his death.

This last nine years, again, falls into three equal periods—three years of preparation and constitutional manœuvre for position, three years of fighting and three years of negotiation. Throughout the whole of it, Charles's ultimate objective never changes; his character, set in its mould, alters only slightly; but his fortunes suffer a catastrophic decline.

Cromwell, on the other hand, rises gradually from an un-

known Fenland squire to be the most powerful man in England and the best soldier in Europe; his character, faced with contingency after unforeseen contingency, keeps pace with an ever-deepening, ever-widening experience; and he has no ultimate objective at all.

Neither understood fully the significance of the events whose surge and sweep threw them together; but Cromwell at least understood men and if he had no ultimate objective, he had an unerring eye for the immediate problem. He saw, step by step, that if you want a freedom denied by existing laws, you must change the law; that, if you cannot change the law constitutionally, you must resort to force; that, if you resort to force, you must have an army; that, if you have an army, you require for success, morale (he would have called it morals) and efficiency; that a victorious war precipitates a new situation, in which the first requirement is a stable peace; that such a peace can only be ensured by just and acceptable negotiation; that such negotiation depends on the honesty of the negotiators; and that if one of the parties has no intention of keeping faith, he must be removed. But he did not envisage the end at the beginning. He dealt with each situation as it arose, seeing the necessity, but not the consequences. There was no thought of the scaffold outside the Banqueting House when he took his place in the Long Parliament as Member for Cambridge.

It is on this occasion that we can first see him clearly and in detail through the eyes of an observant contemporary. "The first time that I ever took notice of him," writes Sir Philip Warwick, "was in the very beginning of the Parliament held in November, 1640, when I vainly thought myself a courtly young gentleman (for we courtiers valued ourselves much upon our good clothes). I came one morning into the House well-clad, and perceived a gentleman speaking (whom I knew not), very ordinarily apparelled; for it was a plain cloth suit, which seemed to have been made by an ill country-tailor. His linen was plain and not very clean; and I remember a

speck or two of blood upon his little band, which was not much larger than his collar. His hat was without a hat-band. His stature was of a good size, his sword stuck close to his side; his countenance swollen and reddish; his voice sharp and untunable, and his eloquence full of fervour—for the subject-matter would not bear much of reason, it being in behalf of a servant of Mr. Prynne's, who had dispersed libels against the Queen for her dancing and suchlike innocent and courtly sports; and he aggravated the imprisonment of this man by the Council-Table unto that height that one would have believed the very Government itself had been in great danger by it. I sincerely profess it lessened much my reverence unto that Great Council, for he was very much hearkened unto." Such was Oliver at forty-one, on the brink of his eminence.

The outward aspect of Charles at this time has been made familiar by the genius of Van Dyck—the long chestnut curls, falling far over the left shoulder; the carefully-pointed beard and the upward-turning moustache; the full red lips; the high forehead; the large, dark eyes, protruding slightly and sad beyond need. It may be that it was not thus his contemporaries saw him and that his friend had painted, with a foreknowledge of destiny, the Martyr King he would not live to see. Certainly other portraits by other painters lack something more than Van Dyck's style.

But the great Roman sculptor, Bernini, who had agreed to make a bust of Charles from Van Dyck's three portraits on one canvas—a full face, a three-quarter face and a profile—when the painting arrived, contemplated it for a long time in silence before he pronounced that he had never seen a countenance so unfortunate.

And certainly the Martyr was implicit in the Charles of the golden years, even if it was only Van Dyck who saw it. The character was set. Charles was a King, and a King must rule. In the circumstances in which he was placed, this meant maintaining his independence of Parliament and using the Church as his executive instrument. In 1638 this was his

policy and in 1648 the final negotiations broke down because he would not abandon the power of veto on Parliamentary legislation or allow the alienation of the bishops' property. It was the same point, though at the beginning it was called autocracy, if not tyranny, and at the end it was called dying for the Constitution and the Church. Ultimately he had to die, for there was no other way left for him to save it; but in the meantime, he fought for it by every weapon in his power —by political intrigue; by appeals for foreign levies, from the Pope, from Spain, from France, from Holland, from Ireland; in arms at the head of many of his own subjects; from prison by endless, patient, cunning, conscienceless negotiation. In the simplicity of this obstinacy, he became the "Man of Blood" whose own blood was at last demanded for payment.

The appearance and accusation of duplicity which was increasingly to characterize Charles's actions spring from this root. From one point of view, it is impossible to rebut them, as from another it is irrelevant to consider them. No one expects veracity from a diplomat or probity from a politician. By definition, these vocations exclude those virtues. And, in so far as Charles was fighting with diplomatic and political weapons, he could not have been expected to observe an impossible code, the more so since he was engaged in maintaining an inherited right which was also as he saw it a supernatural duty. The King was appointed by God to check the madness of the people; and to soothe madmen—especially when they have you in their power—it is legitimate, even imperative, to humour them as far as possible, even though your ultimate intention is to get them into a strait-jacket again. It was unfortunate for Charles that Cromwell was as yet too unsophisticated in the conventions of government fully to appreciate this and thought that one's word was a simple thing that could be simply kept. But by his own code, Charles broke his word only once; he did it under intolerable pressure only after he had been released from his promise, and he so regretted it all his life that he considered his own execution

a just retribution for it. And that word was given, not to Cromwell and his associates, but to Wentworth.

The arrogant figure of Wentworth moves across these years with a lonely grandeur. As a young baronet from Yorkshire, he had thrown in his lot with Eliot, Hampden and Pym when they were attacking Buckingham. For the Favourite and his friends, as for the circle round the Queen, he had his own epithet—"Court vermin." But if, by temperament, he belonged to the Opposition, his consciousness of his own great powers drove him to seek the exercise of them in office. He went over to the King, who had always considered him "an honest gentleman," and was created a Viscount and President of the Council of the North at the end of 1628, and Lord Deputy of Ireland at the beginning of 1632. In both these executive posts he had shown himself a brilliant administrator, putting into practice his own maxim, "Thorough," and ruthlessly suppressing any private interests which conflicted with the State. He was incomparably the most gifted statesman of his age. His weakness was that he knew it. "Of all his passions, his pride was most predominant," wrote Clarendon, "which a moderate exercise of ill fortune might have corrected and reformed, and which was by the hand of Heaven strangely punished, by bringing his destruction upon him by two things that he most despised—the people and Sir Harry Vane."

No classical tragedy demonstrated more perfectly the meaning of *hubris* than the career of Wentworth; and indeed, about his haughty integrity hangs the hint of an older creed. By religion he was, if anything, a Puritan; but he would have been more at home among the Stoics. When, in his teens, he was acquiring a knowledge of law at the Inner Temple, Shakespeare was writing a play on Coriolanus. Whether or not he saw it or read it on its subsequent publication, there is no doubt that he would have had profound sympathy with its hero.

In Coriolanus's—

"It is a purpos'd thing and grows by plot,
To curb the will of the nobility:
Suffer 't and live with such as cannot rule,
Nor ever will be ruled"

and

"Thus we debase
The nature of our seats, and make the rabble
Call our cares fears; which will in time
Break ope the locks o' the Senate, and bring in
The crows to peck the eagles"

is Wentworth's view of the contemporary constitutional struggle. And in Brutus's reproof to Coriolanus—

"You speak o' the people
As if you were a god to punish, not
A man of their infirmity,"

is the anger of England.

It was a symptom of Wentworth's malady that, though he sought place in order to exercise his ability, he attempted to aggrandize his office in order to heighten himself. That he fought the Crown on behalf of Parliament in the days of the Petition of Right was not unconnected with the fact that he was a Member of Parliament. The House of Commons was his vehicle, without which he could not progress; but there is no evidence that he regarded his associates with any more affection than he showed when they became his enemies—or despised them less. In the same way, though he served the King and died for him, it is improbable that he either liked or respected him. Neither had Charles, in spite of his gratitude, any love for the greatest of his servants.

Between Wentworth and Henrietta there was frank dislike. Not only were Wentworth and Jermyn mutually exclusive tastes, but her abiding fear was that she might lose Charles to another Buckingham. The misery of the early years of her

marriage had left that scar. It was only when it became apparent, not only that she need have no such fear, but that Wentworth and Wentworth only could save the King, that she allowed her hostility to become tolerance and her tolerance to become a frenzied support. But Charles did not dare consult her when he made his original decision to recall Wentworth from Ireland, and wrote to him, hurriedly and secretly, before his return from Berwick: "Come when you will, ye shall be welcome to your assured friend, Charles R."

When he came, he created him Earl of Strafford and gave him also the title of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. But the people called him "Black Tom Tyrant."

It was on Strafford's advice that the Short Parliament met in the April of 1640, and it was also on his advice that it was dissolved three weeks later. He had seen that, in order to defeat the Scots, it was necessary to raise enough money to pay an army and that only a Parliament could grant it. Parliament, however, refused to discuss anything until grievances, of which ship-money was the chief, had been remedied. Far from presenting the spectacle of a nation rallying behind its King to fight an invading enemy, the Short Parliament exhibited a powerful faction, which spoke for the majority of the nation, united against the Royal policy and in profound sympathy with the Scots. At a meeting of the Committee for Scottish Affairs held immediately after the dissolution, Strafford told the King, "*They* refused; *you* are acquitted towards God and man," and urged him to exercise his Prerogative to the full. Ship-money, which he had previously considered injudicious, must be levied at once; and if an English army could not be equipped, there was his force in Ireland. "You have an army in Ireland you may employ here to reduce this kingdom," he said. Or so, at least, it was noted by Sir Henry Vane, the fussy, pompous, incompetent little Secretary of State, who had always disliked him.

The necessary dissolution of the recalcitrant Parliament was, if anything, more dangerous than its summoning. It left the

Opposition, led by Pym and Hampden, time to rouse the country and perfect its organization; it provoked the Scots to invade England in earnest; and it revealed the weakness of the King's army, which Strafford and Charles rode north to lead.

"Pity me," wrote Strafford to a cousin, "for never came any man on so lost a business. The army altogether unexercised and unprovided of necessities. That part which I bring now with me from Durham the worst I ever saw. Our horse all cowardly, the county from Berwick to York in the power of the Scots, an universal affright in all, a general disaffection to the King's service, none sensible of his dishonour. In one word, here alone to fight with all these evils, without anyone to help."

He was, indeed, alone; for it was against him that the whole force of the Opposition was directed. His mere presence had focused on him all the enmities. The multifarious dissatisfactions at Charles's policy were canalized into an emotional hatred and fear of his new champion; but underneath the emotion—on Pym's part at least—was shrewd calculation. To attack Strafford was to attack the King without appearing to do so. Constitutionally, it would be merely a loyal gesture to remove an evil adviser. In addition, to remove Strafford would be to dispose of the only adversary who need be feared. The attack, however, could only come from the Commons.

From every side rose a clamour for a new Parliament and, with the Scots in occupation of the North and bankruptcy and defeat staring him in the face, the King had to give way to it. He summoned it for November and asked Strafford to come to London to meet it, promising him that he should be safe. Strafford obeyed, but without illusions. "I am to-morrow for London," he wrote, "with more danger beset, I believe, than any man went with out of Yorkshire; yet my heart is good and I find nothing cold within me." He arrived in London on November 10; on the afternoon of November 11,

while he was discussing the situation with Charles in Whitehall, news was brought that Pym had induced the House of Commons to impeach him before the Lords. Saying, "I will go and look my accusers in the face," he called his coach, and drove to the House of Lords. But Pym, with the Commons at his heels and the London mobs cheering him, arrived five minutes before he did. He was not allowed to enter the House, and that night he lay a prisoner in the Tower.

Pym, "the ox," the jovial *faux-bonhomme*, the first and greatest party manager in English politics, who had once been his friend, had decided to kill him.

Strafford's fight for life, which lasted for six months, was the one topic of the day. All other political moves were subordinated to it. Pym's tactics were gradually to rouse public opinion to fever heat, knowing that in the last resort this alone could bring about the desired end, since all the legal charges of high treason against the King's most faithful servant were palpable nonsense. That Strafford, after a seven weeks' trial, should have defended himself successfully and even, by his brilliance, turned the tables on his accusers was a foregone conclusion, even though they had twisted Sir Henry Vane's note of his speech about an Irish army subduing "this kingdom" to mean England instead of Scotland. When, on the last day of the trial, Strafford summed it up in the angry sentence, "These gentlemen tell me they speak in defence of the Commonweal against my arbitrary laws. Give me leave to say that I speak in defence of the Commonweal against their arbitrary treason," it was obvious that a legal condemnation was impossible. Pym then determined that what he could not prove he would assume, and, unable to establish Strafford's guilt by law, would introduce a Bill to enact his death. But no Bill, not even a Bill of Attainder, could become law without the King's signature and, as long as Charles withheld that, Strafford was safe from everything but lynch-law. Moreover, Charles had written to him, when the impeachment had failed: "Upon the word of

a King, you shall not suffer in life, honour or fortune."

From the beginning of Strafford's imprisonment, both Charles and Henrietta did all they could. They tried to pacify the people by concessions; they tried secretly to arrange for Strafford's rescue; and they tried to bribe or persuade the leaders of the Opposition. Everything failed. Henrietta's secret interviews by night in Whitehall with the leading Parliamentarians resulted in nothing but a new crop of scandals. Charles's offer to Pym of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer was scornfully rejected by one who was already known in the country as "King Pym" and who justified the title until his death from cancer two years later; Henrietta's dismissal of the Papal Nuncio, her apology to the people for "the great resort to her chapel" and her promise to curtail it were considered suspiciously insufficient by the virulently anti-Papist mobs. The plots to raise the Army, gain control of the Tower and rescue the Earl; the plan to seize Portsmouth as the base for the landing of French soldiers who should effect the same end, came to worse than nothing because, being betrayed to Pym and revealed by him to the country, they raised to panic-pitch a populace already crazed by even wilder rumours.

Even the King's sacrifice of his ten-year-old daughter Mary in marriage to the thirteen-year-old Prince of Orange, which was to impress the people as a Protestant alliance and to ensure, by a secret clause in the marriage treaty, Dutch aid for himself, failed in both particulars. The girl, who had sat with her parents and her elder brother Charles day after day behind a grille in Westminster Hall watching Strafford's trial, was married on Easter Sunday, May 2, 1641; but the people took little notice of it and the Dutch aid did not arrive. Prince Charles, now eleven, was moody, frightened and had bad dreams. In the early days of the trial he was said to have cried for five days on end and when his father visited him to ask the cause of it explained: "My grandfather left you four kingdoms, and I am afraid your Majesty will leave me never one."

The mobs were of the same opinion. A placard appeared in the streets announcing that Whitehall was to let. On the day after the wedding, roused by the whispers of Pym's agents that a Papist plot to blow up the House of Commons had been successful, and that the Army had rescued Strafford from the Tower, "in a clap the whole city is in alarum; shops closed; a world of people in arms runs down to Westminster" where they besieged the House—which they noticed was still standing undamaged—crying "Justice! Justice!" and intimidated every peer they could discover to vote for Strafford's death. Having thus used his allies in the City, Pym revealed to the Lords that there was, in fact, an Army plot and the Bill of Attainder received its third reading immediately.

There remained now only Charles's promise between Strafford and death. And from the Tower, hearing how things stood, the Earl gave the King quittance.

"To set your Majesty's conscience at liberty," he wrote on the evening of May 4, "I do most humbly beseech your Majesty for prevention of evils which may happen by your refusal to pass this Bill; and by this means to remove—I cannot say this 'accursed'—but I confess this unfortunate thing, forth of the way towards that blessed agreement which God, I trust, shall ever establish between you and your subjects.

"Sir, my consent shall more acquit you herein to God than all the world can do besides. To a willing man, there is no injury done. And as, by God's grace, I forgive all the world, with calmness and meekness of infinite contentment of my dislodging soul; so, Sir, to you, I can give the life of this world with all the cheerfulness imaginable, and only beg that in your goodness you would vouchsafe to cast your gracious regard upon my poor son and his three sisters. . . . God long preserve your Majesty. Your Majesty's most faithful and humble subject and servant, Strafford."

On Sunday, May 9, the Constable of the Tower declared that if the King refused to sign the Bill which was Strafford's

death-warrant, he would kill his prisoner on his own authority; the Opposition let it be known that, if it was baulked of Strafford, it would attack the Queen; and the mob gathered round Whitehall. Henrietta and her Roman Catholic attendants made their confessions and waited, with what courage they could muster, for the violation and murder which they thought inevitable. Charles, deprived of Laud (who had been arrested and imprisoned in the Tower), sent for five other bishops. The majority were of the opinion that he might break his word. "The King," said Williams of Lincoln, ex-paramour of Buckingham's mother, "has two consciences; a public and a private one." But Ussher, Primate of Ireland, Strafford's friend, urged him to stand firm; and Juxon, Bishop of London, was uncompromising: "Sir, if your conscience is against it, do not consent."

Throughout that terrible Sunday, with the mob's cries for the Queen monotonously rising outside and the guard, hastily summoned from St. James's, preparing to defend her in case of attack, Charles hesitated. Not till nine o'clock in the evening did he tell the Privy Council, "If my own person only were in danger, I would gladly venture it to save Lord Strafford's life, but, seeing my wife, children and all my kingdom are concerned in it, I am forced to give way unto it," and signed the Bill.

Next day, in tears, he signed the death-warrant, saying to those round him: "My Lord of Strafford's condition is happier than mine," while to the House of Lords he sent a letter by the Prince of Wales—it was young Charles's first public act—pleading with them to change the sentence to life imprisonment, but adding: "But if no less than his life can satisfy my people, I must say *Fiat Justitia.* I rest your unalterable and affectionate friend, Charles R." Then he wrote a postscript: "If he must die, it were charity to reprieve him till Saturday." In the circumstances, they thought it safer to fix the execution for Wednesday.

So, on May 12, 1641, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford,

was beheaded on Tower Hill, in the presence of 200,000 people. With that courage which never failed him, he marched to the scaffold "more like a general at the head of an army than like a condemned man to undergo death." Fearing lest an attempt might be made to lynch him, the Lieutenant of the Tower urged him to get into a coach. "No," replied Strafford, "I dare look death in the face and, I hope, the people too. Have you a care I do not escape and I care not how I die, whether by the hand of the executioner or by the madness and fury of the people. If that may give them better content, it is all one to me."

As the headsman, with a cry of "God save the King," held up the severed head, a great shout of joy went up from the people. Pym's partisans danced and screamed with delight: "His head is off! His head is off!" Horsemen set off to carry the news to every town and village of England and bonfires greeted the event all through the night.

The Scottish Commissioners went to Whitehall to see Charles and found him calm and cheerful.

Richelieu, receiving the news in Paris, noted this new indication of the lunacy of the English and remarked: "The English are so mad that they have killed their wisest man."

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE *COUP D'ÉTAT* FAILS

CROMWELL took no part in the killing of Strafford. "It may be," as one historian says, "that he had a certain sympathy and respect for one who, however differing in principles, was in some ways not unlike Cromwell himself." Whatever the motive, the curious fact remains that his name appears in none of the proceedings against the Earl which absorbed the House for so many months. Considering his position and his persistent activity on Parliamentary Committees, the abstention must have been deliberate.

When he took his place in the "Long Parliament" in November, 1640, the situation was very different from his first introduction to the House of Commons twelve years before. The change was not only in himself and in the political complexion of the country; it was, startlingly, in the strength of the "cousinage." Oliver found himself among eighteen of his relatives, headed by Hampden, whom the ship-money business had made the acknowledged leader of the Opposition. "When this parliament began," wrote Clarendon, who was a member of it, "the eyes of all men were fixed on him as their *pater patriae* and the pilot that must steer their vessel through the tempests and rocks that threatened it."

Hampden was not the less the leader because Pym, with his powers of demagogy and organization, appeared so. He remained in the background, briefing Pym, intervening only seldom—but always decisively—in debates; and he did not vote on the final reading of the Bill of Attainder. But his quietness, his care for constitutional legality, his invariable courtesy to men of all beliefs masked an inflexible purpose. He had neither forgotten nor forgiven the death of Eliot, his hero, his confidant and his friend. Ten years ago, when it had become obvious that Charles intended to take Eliot's life in vengeance for Buckingham's, Eliot had written to him:

"My lodgings are removed and I am now where candlelight may be suffered but scarce fire. None but my servants, hardly my sons, may have admittance to me. My friends I must desire, for their own sakes, to forbear coming to the Tower. You amongst them are chief and have the first place in this intelligence." And now Hampden's purpose might be epitomized by one of the resolutions before the House—that, in the name of the Commons of England, both King and people should be reminded that "one died by the cruelty and harshness of his imprisonment which would admit of no relaxation, notwithstanding the imminent danger of his life did sufficiently appear by the declaration of his physician, and his release, or at least his refreshment, was sought by many humble petitions; and his blood still cries for vengeance or repentance."

In the shadow of Hampden's greatness, Oliver, five years his junior, was schooled in Parliamentary ways. The contrast between Hampden's quiet suavity and Cromwell's controversial aggressiveness was as marked as that between his unfailing patience and tact and Oliver's explosive and undiplomatic interventions in debate. There was, too, about Cromwell a certain narrowness, an obsession with the religious question, which was at odds with Hampden's comprehensiveness. But Hampden, quite apart from their relationship and the usefulness of his cousin's particular gifts to the Party, saw the potential greatness. One day, after Oliver had intervened in debate—it may have been the occasion when Sir Philip Warwick first noticed him—an enquirer turned to Hampden with the question: "Pray, Mr. Hampden, who is that sloven?"

"That sloven," retorted Hampden, "that sloven whom you see before you hath no ornament in his speech; but that sloven, I say, if we should ever come to a breach with the King (which God forbid!), in such a case, I say, that sloven will be the greatest man in England."

Cromwell had been returned to the Long Parliament as a Member for Cambridge with a majority of one, and his local eminence and eligibility were due to his action in the

Fen dispute. It was natural, therefore, that he should immediately be appointed to a committee to enquire into the claims and counter-claims arising from this matter, and that when the question of enclosures on the property came before the House, he should again put himself forward on behalf of the "poor commoners," demanding—though failing to obtain —a thorough enquiry into the whole business.

But it was the question of religion which absorbed him. Among the committees to which he was appointed were those to consider the abuses of the Court of High Commission, the cases of Prynne and Burton, the case of Bastwick, and the sub-committee of the Grand Committee on Religion, which was appointed to receive petitions bearing on the shortage of "preaching" ministers and the methods of removing "scandalous" incumbents. Above all, it was he, in conjunction with the younger Sir Henry Vane (who had stolen his father's notes on Strafford and given them to Pym, with the result that he had been publicly denounced by the elder Vane as treacherous and dishonest) who drew up the "Root-and-Branch Bill," demanding the abolition of episcopacy.

Nothing better illustrates Cromwell's mind at this time than the character of the two men with whom he was (outside the "cousinage") most closely associated. Prynne's "servant," for whom he had pleaded so passionately "that one should have believed the very Government itself had been in great danger" by his imprisonment, was John Lilburne, who, in Morley's words, was "one of those men whom all revolutions are apt to engender, intractable, narrow, dogmatic, pragmatic, clever hands at syllogism, liberal in uncharitable imputation and malicious construction, honest in their rather questionable way, animated by a pharisaic love of self-applause not any less unsafe than vain love of the world's applause; in a word, not without sharp insight into theoretic principle, and thinking quite as little of their own ease as of the ease of others, but without a trace of instinct for government or a grain of practical common sense."

The younger Vane, with the long, protruding chin, the loose lips and the wide eyes, was a connoisseur of spiritual self-indulgence. At twenty-eight, he had already emigrated to America for conscience sake, where his birth had ensured that the colonists chose him as Governor and his character had ensured, as Clarendon acidly observed, "raising and infusing a thousand scruples of conscience which they had not brought over with them nor heard of before, that, he unsatisfied with them and they with him, he retransported himself into England, having sowed such seed of dissension there as grew up too prosperously and miserably divided the poor colony into several factions and divisions and persecutions of each other."

In later years, Lilburne was to become the leader of the anarchist-communist Levellers, inciting mutiny in the Army which Cromwell had to quell, denouncing Cromwell as a perfidious hypocrite and being committed to imprisonment again, with at least as much enthusiasm on Oliver's part as he now showed in getting him released from it. And Vane drove Cromwell to such distraction that, in exasperation, he shouted to the House of Commons assembled: "Sir Henry Vane, Sir Henry Vane, God deliver me from Sir Henry Vane."

But by that time he had grown in wisdom and stature; now, in 1641, he found the lunatic fringe congenial to his own obsessions. With Sir Henry Vane he set to work to destroy the Church of England root and branch by drafting the "Bill for the utter abolishing and taking away all Archbishops, Bishops, their Chancellors and Commissaries, Deans, Deans and Chapters, Archdeacons, etc.," sitting meanwhile on another committee to consider "An Act for the Abolishing of Superstition and Idolatry and for the Better Advancing of the True Worship and Service of God."

The Root-and-Branch Bill divided the Commons. It was one thing to prevent the Church of England being made, as Laud and Charles had made it, the secular organ of autocratic government; it was quite another to destroy the hierarchical nature of the national branch of the One Holy Catholic and

Apostolic Church. And men who were enthusiastic for the one were horrified at the prospect of the other. But Cromwell was as logical as Charles in seeing that the bishops were the key to the situation, and he left the House in no doubt as to where he stood. In the February of 1641, having been already called to order for one of his tactless interruptions, he remarked by way of explanation that "he did not understand that there was any necessity for the great revenues of Bishops. He was more convinced touching the irregularity of Bishops than ever before because, like the Roman Hierarchy, they would not endure to have their condition come to a trial."

Oliver's enthusiasm bade fair to become an embarrassment to his party. Hampden had no intention of seeing the Opposition split on the ecclesiastical issue and the Root-and-Branch Bill was quietly dropped. The attack was continued on the safer ground of the "Laudian innovations," and just before the September recess Cromwell in debate attacked the Book of Common Prayer "shewing that there were many passages in it which divers learned and wise Divines could not submit unto and practice." The House agreed to remove the Communion Tables from the east end of churches, to take down Communion rails, remove all crucifixes and "scandalous pictures" of the Virgin Mary, and to forbid all dancing and sports on the Lord's Day. On the last day of the session, Cromwell, now able to enforce what from the misery of St. Ives he had pleaded with others to finance, proposed and carried that "sermons should be in the afternoon in all parishes of England at the charge of the inhabitants of those parishes where there were no sermons in the afternoon." Then, having done what he came to Parliament to do, he went home to Ely.

. . . . .

Charles, meanwhile, had gone to Scotland. With incorrigible optimism, he had decided to try to save the English bishops by appealing to the Scottish Presbyterians—the very men who, by coming in arms against him on the specific issue

of episcopacy, had precipitated all his troubles. But nothing, either now or later, could shatter his instinctive trust in his own nation. Nor was he altogether mistaken. He was a Stuart and he sensed, even if he did not know, something of the clan loyalty, indestructible by the bitterest feuds, which no Englishman could understand. He was given an enthusiastic welcome in Edinburgh, and in return he attended, with every appearance of pleasure, Presbyterian preachings. He removed all grievances and even forced those nobles who had not done so to sign the Covenant. He granted to the Scottish Parliament a control over executive and judiciary far greater than the English Parliament had even asked for. From Scotland, he was even gracious to his enemies in Westminster and signified his approval in removing the "Laudian innovations." But he did not, in spite of everything, get the support of the Scottish army, because it had already been disbanded. And, unfortunately, he found himself suspected of contriving the attempted murder of the Scottish leaders, Hamilton and Argyll.

The truth of this curious affair known as "the Incident" will probably never be known. It remains one of the mysteries of history; but it is unlikely that the King was implicated. Certainly the deaths of Hamilton, the leader of the political Presbyterians, and Argyll, the leader of the pious of the Kirk, would hardly have been regretted outside their immediate circle. The rumour that Hamilton wished to seat himself on the throne, as the next heir after the Stuart line, is probably false; but it epitomizes the truth of his position and character —a man of vast estates and ambition, potentially treacherous. Argyll, he of the red hair and squinting eyes, the pendulous nose and the cruel, twisted mouth, the leader of the "godly," had only to be seen to be distrusted; and his looks did not belie his character.[1]

[1] Mr. Evan John, in his *King Charles I*, remarks that "it is difficult for any but a Presbyterian to speak of Argyll without prejudice." This, I think, casts an unnecessary aspersion on Presbyterians, who, in this matter, will probably be of the same opinion as any reader who troubles to go and look at Argyll's portrait in the National Portrait Gallery.

Montrose, the one man of undoubted integrity in Scotland, wrote to Charles offering to prove Hamilton a traitor and to expose Argyll's schemes for making himself, by his control of Kirk and people, master of Scotland. On the same day, Hamilton and Argyll fled from the capital, explaining that there was a plot afoot to murder them. Charles, facing Parliament with tears in his eyes, proclaimed his belief in the innocency of Hamilton, who had been his friend from childhood; but found himself regarded with a sullen suspicion.

While the Incident was poisoning what confidence was left between the King and his northern subjects, a worse blow came from Ireland. On October 28, while Charles was playing golf at Leith, he was informed that the Irish had risen against the English colonists in Ulster. Rumour said that they had massacred 30,000 of them, with every circumstance of cruelty. In London, anti-Catholic feeling, fed by every refinement of atrocity-mongering, rose to unprecedented heights; and Pym saw to it that it was named "The Queen's Rebellion." There was now danger for her and her husband greater even than at Strafford's trial. If it had been discovered —and Hamilton, for one, knew of it—that she had been applying to the Pope for men and money, nothing could have saved them.

Charles rushed back to London, where Parliament had met again after the Recess and was busy framing "the Grand Remonstrance" which "in one long undigested mass of articles enumerated all the grievances which the combined ingenuity of Pym and his followers could collect to discredit Charles's administration." It was, in effect, a declaration of war; and it was carried, after a debate which itself nearly gave rise to bloodshed, by only eleven votes. Hampden moved that it should be printed and distributed to the people, already sufficiently aroused; and Cromwell, on leaving the House at two in the morning, when the debate concluded, announced that if the Remonstrance had not passed "he would have sold

all he had next morning and never have seen England more; and he knew there were many other honest men of the same resolution."

That Cromwell had entirely misjudged the true feeling of the House in this matter was evident from a conversation he had had with Falkland, a Moderate and a friend of Hampden's, a few days before the debate. Falkland deprecated the speed with which it was being rushed through.

"Why would you have it put off?" asked Cromwell.

"There is not time enough," said Falkland, "for it will certainly take some debate."

"A very sorry one," said Oliver contemptuously.

He could not foresee the opposition which, even in men like Falkland, would be aroused by the revolutionary suggestion to reform the Church, which he considered self-evident. "And the better to effect the intended reformation"—so ran the Remonstrance—"we desire there may be a general Synod of the most grave, pious, learned and judicious divines of this island, assisted with some from foreign parts professing the same religion with us; who may consider of all things necessary for the peace and good government of the Church, and represent the results of their consultations unto the Parliament, to be there allowed and confirmed and receive the stamp of authority, thereby to find passage and obedience throughout the kingdom." Behind the reasonableness—and even moderation—of the language, the intention of replacing Anglicanism by Presbyterianism was plain enough. If Charles would rule through the bishops, Pym would rule through the presbyters. "The whole contention of the party of the Grand Remonstrance, the whole root of the baleful tree of Civil War," as Gardiner truly observes, "lay in these words."

If Cromwell underestimated the strength of the Anglican opposition, he was also blind to the eventual implications of the policy as it would affect his own position. The Separatist conventicles were to be suppressed as ruthlessly as Catholic practices: "We do here declare that it is far from our purpose

or desire to let loose the golden reins of discipline and government *in the Church, to* leave private persons or particular *congregations to take up what form of* Divine service they please: for we hold it requisite that there should be throughout the whole realm a conformity to that order which the laws enjoin according to the Word of God."

It may be that Oliver, intent only on curbing episcopacy, thought that the synod of "grave, pious, learned and judicious divines" would evolve a system in which his own beliefs would be allowed; or it may be that he had not, as yet, gone as far on the road to theoretical Independence as his practical activities with the Separatists at Ely would suggest. He was to see, once it came into operation, that the presbyterian system was a worse tyranny than episcopalianism; and he would fight it as relentlessly. The Grand Remonstrance was, in fact, equally a menace to Charles's Anglicanism and Cromwell's Congregationalism; but Charles understood it and Cromwell did not.

In his answer to the Remonstrance, Charles said that he would consider the request for the calling of a National Synod, though he was persuaded that no Church could be found in which there was greater purity of doctrine than the Church of England. As for bishops, it was part of the fundamental laws of England that they should have seats in the Upper House.

Throughout the days of Christmas, the mobs were stirred up again. This time the cry was, "No Bishops! No Bishops!" and, as an incidental diversion, they tried to rush Westminster Abbey to smash the altar and the organ as equivalent symbols of the drift to Popery.

A detached observer of these events wrote to a correspondent: "The officers of the Army since these tumults have watched and kept a Court of Guard in the Presence Chamber, and are entertained upon the King's charge; a company of soldiers put into the Abbey for the defence of it. The citizens for the most part, shut up their shops and all gentlemen

provide themselves with arms as in time of open hostility. Both factions look very big, and it is a wonder there is no more blood yet spilt, seeing how earnest both sides are. There is no doubt but if the King do not comply with the Commons in all things they desire a civil war must ensue, which every day we see approaches nearer."

. . . . .

Charles, however, was meditating, not concessions, but a *coup d'état*. While he had been in Scotland, he had obtained some evidence of Pym's intrigues with the Scots. He now determined to treat Pym and his associates as Pym had treated Strafford. The matter became one of deadly urgency when he got news that they, in their turn, were preparing to impeach the Queen. On January 3, 1642, the Attorney-General, acting on the King's instructions, accused Pym, Hampden and three other Members of the House of Commons before the Lords; but an attempt to arrest them failed because of their plea of the privileges of the House. The Commons ordered that they should remain in their places to answer any legal charge that might be preferred against them.

The five Members, therefore, attended Westminster as usual on the morning of the 4th; and were still in their places after the lunch-hour adjournment at one o'clock in the afternoon.

That morning, at Whitehall, Charles was a prey to indecision. The plea of privilege had upset his plans. In the excited state of the city, the continued freedom of Pym, Hampden and the others was merely an increased danger to himself. The essence of Pym's action against Strafford was the rapidity with which the Earl had been arrested and imprisoned; and his counter-action, to be effective, must be of the same kind. Yet, though urged by his wife and advised by his counsellors, he could not bring himself to take the necessary steps. He went to Henrietta to explain the reasons for a strict constitutionalism.

Henrietta, whose nerves had never fully recovered from her ordeal of the night when Strafford was allowed to die and

who had lately been threatening to leave Charles and retire to a convent in France, turned on him in fury. "Go, you coward," she spat at him, "and pull these rogues out by the ears—or never see my face more." The alternative decided him, and Henrietta, in triumph, was able to confide to her "darling Lucinda" that the King, with an armed guard some hundreds strong, was going to the House of Commons to arrest the five Members.

"Lucinda," her confidante, was Lucy, Countess of Carlisle. Accustomed in her youth to the homage which her beauty, her wit and her station procured for her, she turned, as youth and looks departed, to politics as a means of retaining her power over men. Carew's "Lucinda," Cartwright's "Lucy," the recipient of lyric tribute from Herrick and Suckling, D'Avenant and Waller, she became the intimate of Strafford and, after his death, of Pym. Rumour, in assigning her as mistress to both, undoubtedly lied, though her political flirtation was more disastrous than any non-intellectual amour. This "vain, avaricious *intrigante*" now scribbled a hurried note to Pym warning him of Charles's intended action.

Her swiftness was matched by the King's scrupulosity. As he went to his apartments, he found a number of poor petitioners, with whose cases he dealt before, at last, at three o'clock he summoned his guard, four hundred strong, and, joined by Prince Charles and his nephew, the Elector Palatine (Rupert's elder brother), left the palace and jumped into a coach which happened to be standing at the door.

The Commons, meanwhile, on the receipt of Pym's intelligence, besought the five Members to flee to the City, not only as a means of ensuring their own safety, but to avert bloodshed in the House. Before Charles reached the House, they were being rowed down the river to refuge. But the rest of the Commons remained, tense, expectant and not a little terrified.

So it was that in manhood Cromwell first saw the King at close quarters in a place where no English monarch had been

before or was to be after. As Charles stepped across the forbidden threshold of St. Stephen's Chapel, a quick glance at the benches assured him that his quarry had escaped him.

"I must have them wheresoever I find them," he said to the Speaker. "Where are they?"

The Speaker, on his knees, answered: "May it please your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as this House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here; and I humbly beg your Majesty's pardon that I cannot give any other answer than this to what your Majesty is pleased to demand of it."

"Well," said Charles, "I see the birds are flown. I do expect that you shall send them unto me as soon as they return hither. If not, I will seek them myself, for their treason is foul." Then, conscious of the hatred and hostility which infused the silence, he added: "I assure you, on the word of a King, I never did intend any force, but shall proceed against them in a legal and fair way, for I never meant any other."

As he went out, the silence was broken with cries of "Privilege! Privilege!"

The *coup d'état* had failed.

Six days later, he left London, never to return to it until he came back to die.

CHAPTER NINE

APPEAL TO ARMS

IN the last week of August, 1642, Charles raised the Royal Standard at Nottingham and Cromwell began to raise a troop of horse at Huntingdon. With these two events the shape of the Civil War was defined.

The intervening seven months had been occupied with a manœuvre for position, in which both parties endeavoured to get control of the militia of the Kingdom, first by legal, then by practical means. As the power to make war was one of the fundamental rights of the executive, it was impossible for Parliament to pretend to it without alienating a great body of its supporters, who, whatever their views on bishops and ship-money, would not be prepared to support this patent subversion of the Constitution. The Commons, therefore, drew up a Militia Ordinance, empowering the making of new Lord-Lieutenants of the counties and the appointing of officers for the training of the levies. The excuse given for warlike preparations was the Irish Rebellion and the authority was the King in Parliament.

Charles parried by refusing to sign it unless he retained the right to veto any appointments. Meanwhile, he announced that the Queen was going to Holland to convey Princess Mary to her Dutch husband. To this State visit no valid objections could be or were raised. The royal family set out for Dover, accompanied by a large hunting expedition, as Charles had announced his intention of indulging in the pleasures of the chase for several weeks after his wife's departure.

Nothing could have been more correct and innocuous. In point of fact, however, Henrietta was taking the Crown Jewels to pawn in Holland, where she was to raise and pay a professional army. She also intended to get military aid from Charles's uncle, the King of Denmark. The King, meanwhile,

had no intention of hunting in the south. He was going north to seize Hull, which, in addition to containing all the stores of ammunition for the Scottish war, was the obvious port for the landing of the Dutch and Danish levies.

Once Henrietta was safely out of the country, Charles, who had been temporizing over the Militia Ordinance, made his position unequivocally clear. When the Earl of Pembroke pleaded with him to allow Parliament to make the appointments, without his veto, just for a time, he turned on him with: "By God, not for an hour. You have asked of me in this what was never asked of a king and with which I would not trust my wife and children."

He then proceeded north with Prince Charles to keep Easter in state at York; but in spite of the appeals in Henrietta's letters—"Hull must absolutely be had. If you cannot you must go to Newcastle, and if you find that is not safe go to Berwick, for it is necessary to have a sea-port"—he did not get Hull. It had already been seized on behalf of Parliament.

The King's wish for and the Commons' fear of the introduction of foreign soldiers into England was due to the fact that they would be the only trained troops in the country—and, as matters stood, a mere handful would be sufficient to re-establish his power.

The military system of England was already, even before Charles came to the throne, an anachronism. It was based on the duty of every man, over the age of sixteen, to bear arms in the event of invasion. In every county a "convenient number of able men" were selected and trained in peacetime to serve as a nucleus if and when war broke out. These "trained bands" (with the solitary exception of those in London) were the laughing stock of the community. They met to drill in the summer for one day a month, most of which they spent "in the inns and taverns tippling when they should be exercising in the field." What musketry practice they had was generally confined to learning how to handle their arms and putting a pinch of powder in the pan of their

muskets and popping it off so that they should become used to the flash, and gradually learn not to shut their eyes when they were firing. Colonel Ward, surveying the system in 1639, wrote: "After a little careless hurrying over of their postures, with which the companies are nothing bettered, they make them charge their muskets and so prepare to give their captain a brave volley of shot at his entrance into his inn: where, after having solaced themselves for a while after this brave service, every man repairs home, and that which is not so well taught them is easily forgotten before the next training."

This unenthusiastic citizen army, augmented in wartime by a mass of unwilling and undisciplined conscripts, was, however, all the force there was. Those who wished to make soldiering their profession had to go abroad to serve in one or other of the interminable European wars as mercenaries of the great well-drilled and well-disciplined armies of Holland, Sweden, France or Denmark.

The trained bands, since their primary purpose was to resist invasion, had another major drawback to any general who, from necessity or choice, made use of their services. It was their privilege—and they insisted on it—that they should remain in their own county. (In the Civil War, for example, the trained bands of Cornwall refused to march into Devonshire.) This led eventually to the King, when he called upon them to support him, "borrowing their arms"—that is to say, calling them together, collecting their muskets (explaining that he did not want to take them away from their families and agricultural duties) and giving the arms to his more mobile volunteers.

Yet, incompetent as the militia was, it was the only force in existence in 1642; the only arsenals were the county towns where the local supplies of ammunition were stored; the only leaders were the lords-lieutenant of the counties who were empowered to call together the trained bands; and though both King and Parliament had in their service professional

soldiers who had seen service abroad, they were of little value apart from the indifferent material at their disposal.

The spring and summer of 1642 were thus occupied by each party trying to enlist the trained bands on its side. Parliament promulgated the Militia Ordinance without the King's signature; the King replied by issuing Commissions of Array empowering the local gentry to raise their forces in his service. And both sides started to collect a volunteer army—the Royalist landed gentry and courtiers raising at their own charge troops for the King and the wealthy Parliament supporters doing the same for Pym. The latter had the advantage that the Commons promised them 8 per cent. interest on their undertaking—and had the money to pay it. The King was in no position, at the moment, to pay anyone anything.

When it became clear, however, that hostilities were inevitable, his partisans showed themselves generous enough. Not only did individuals give all and more than they could afford, but both Universities answered his plea that they should send their plate to him at York. Loyal Oxford had already sent him £10,000 when at the end of July Cambridge decided to dispatch its treasures under the guard of volunteers from each college, guided by the President of Clare who was "acquainted with all the by-ways." The sheriff of the town gave the consent of passivity. They had, however, reckoned without the Member for Cambridge. Cromwell, hearing of it, rushed down from Westminster, gathering recruits on his way, marched straight to King's, where the captain of the Cambridge trained bands was preparing to send off another supply of plate, and, having picketed the roads leading out of the town with musketeers, prevented any further convoy going north. He then seized the Castle and the ammunition, put guards on the bridges, intercepted all horsemen and apprehended persons "coming from the North for the purpose of executing the King's Commission of Array."

Cambridge, however, that "nursery of Puritanism," now that the crisis was upon it, turned out to be hardly less

enthusiastically Royalist than Oxford. Protests were sent to Parliament from all the colleges and the King's Commission was read with the assistance of several of the Masters as soon as Cromwell's back was turned. But "down he comes again in a terrible manner, with what force he could draw together, and surrounds divers colleges while we were at our devotions in our several chapels, taking away prisoners several doctors of divinity, heads of colleges," including the Master of Sidney, his own college.

Oliver, leaving Cambridge, rode home—not to Ely, but to Huntingdon. It was there that he would raise the troop of horse which Parliament had asked of him. Like Hampden and St. John, he had been made, for the occasion, a Colonel and voted a sum of £1,104 "mounting money" to pay and equip the sixty men he would enlist. He summoned his brother-in-law, Desborough, as his quartermaster and sent his son Oliver—who was at St. Catherine's at Cambridge—to serve under St. John. Then in the Market House at Huntingdon he appealed for volunteers to fight for "the liberty of the gospel and the laws of the land." The commission which gave him his authority was phrased in constitutional language and, lest it might mislead the simple, he explained "that he would not deceive or cozen them by the perplexed and involved expression in his commission to fight for 'King and Parliament' and therefore that if the King chanced to be in the body of the enemy that he was to charge, he would discharge his pistol upon him as at any other private person, and if their conscience would not permit them to do the like, he advised them not to list themselves in his troop or under his command."

So Oliver became "Colonel Cromwell of the 67th Troop of Horse," serving under the Earl of Essex, commander-in-chief of the Parliament forces fighting "for the preservation of the true religion, laws, liberties and peace of the kingdom."

Meanwhile, in a field by Nottingham Castle, on a late August day of wind and storm, the Royal Standard was set

up. Under the great red flag, bearing on one side the arms of England and on the other a portrait of Charles, with the legend "Give Cæsar his due," the herald read the proclamation. Charles, who appeared "very melancholy," kept interrupting him to alter the wording. It was important that there should be no cause for misunderstanding. In the oath which the King took before the army, he was equally clear in defining his attitude toward the rebellion—"if it please God, by His blessing upon this army, raised for my necessary defence to preserve me from this rebellion, I do solemnly and faithfully promise in the sight of God to maintain the just privileges and freedom of Parliament and govern by the known laws of the land, particularly to observe inviolably the laws consented to by me in this Parliament."

During the night the Royal Standard was blown down in the storm.

CHAPTER TEN

THE HORSEMAN

CROMWELL and Charles both knew what they were fighting for. The issue to each was different, but equally clear. Cromwell's preoccupation was still religion. The triumph of the King would be the triumph of Laud and all that that meant. "He had special care," so an observer noted, "to get religious men into his troop. These men were of greater understanding than common soldiers and therefore more apprehensive of the importance and consequence of the war and, making not money but that which they took for the public felicity to be their end, they were the more engaged to be valiant. . . . These things it's probable Cromwell understood, and that none would be such engaged, valiant men as the religious. But yet I conjecture that at his first choosing such men into his troop, it was the very esteem and love of religious men that principally moved him."

Charles was fighting for his throne. Either he had to resign kingship, as kingship had always been understood in England, and consent to become a decorative puppet of Parliament, or he had to maintain by force the position he had lost in political warfare. The war itself was to produce new issues and complicate existing ones; but, at the opening, the choice was simple enough.

The armed struggle into which Charles was forced unwillingly and Cromwell entered enthusiastically appeared less simple and not at all inevitable to the majority of the nation. Even when the war was at its height, only one man in forty took any part on either side. Less than half the gentry took up arms and among those who did, very few had a clear-cut understanding of the issues. They would have echoed Lady

Sussex's complaint: "Both sides' promises are so fair that I cannot see what it is they should fight for." And even those who were enthusiastic for Parliament in the days of Strafford's trial would have agreed with a correspondent of Lady Verney's: "I am in such a great rage with the Parliament as nothing shall pacify me, for they promised us that all should be won if my Lord Strafford's head were off, and since then there is nothing better." Haselrig—one of the impeached five Members—complained of the people in general that "they care not what government they live under so as they may plough and go to market."

The Commanders-in-Chief of the rival armies were hardly more enthusiastic. The Earl of Essex, at fifty-two, had never quite succeeded in living down his past. He was the son of Elizabeth's Essex, which, in itself, was something of a handicap. At fourteen he had, by James I's order, been married to Frances Howard, who was to become the most dissolute woman in England and who, as soon as possible, made him the Court cuckold, started secretly to drug him and eventually insisted on divorcing him on the ground of impotence so that she could marry James I's favourite, Somerset. Essex retired to the Continent, where he took up soldiering. But his *cause célèbre* was not forgotten; and it was not surprising that, as he advanced in years, he should manifest on the one hand an inordinate pride in his family name and on the other "no ambition only to be kindly looked upon and kindly spoken to and quietly to enjoy his own fortune."

It was his pride which was his undoing. Though fundamentally as loyal as any Royalist, "the new doctrine and distinction of Allegiance, and of the King's power in and out of Parliament, and the new notions of Ordinances, were too hard for him and did really intoxicate his understanding" and he saw himself in the role of Arbiter of England's Destiny, justifying his parentage and obliterating his past.

Pipe in one hand, hat in the other, Essex bowed to the Commons who had appointed him and, taking with him his

coffin and his winding sheet, set off with the intention of surprising Charles in his quarters at Nottingham. He also had another intention—not to beat the King too thoroughly.

Charles's General, the Earl of Lindsey, was sixty-nine. He was a godson of the elder Essex and Queen Elizabeth; he had served in the Cadiz expedition under his godfather and gained other experience in the Continental wars. Charles had appointed him Admiral of the ship-money fleet, but he was now old and tired and not a little out-of-date as regards military tactics.

There was also Rupert. Charles's young nephew had been given his commission by the Queen in Holland and had hurried straight to his uncle, managing to arrive just in time for the setting-up of the Standard at Nottingham. He was already, at twenty-three, a veteran soldier, notable for his reckless courage and his impatience. The incompetence of his uncle's army filled him with an angry incredulity. He had hardly arrived before one of the courtiers who had been given a high command informed him that he had had from the Royalist camp at Coventry an urgent request for a petard, and that he would be grateful if Rupert would tell him what a petard was. The Prince, with his flamboyant tactlessness, left neither his questioner nor the older officers in any doubt of his opinion of them. He became hardly less disliked by his associates than he was feared and hated by his enemies. With his famous white poodle "Boy" which accompanied him everywhere, and which he taught a pleasantly topical trick:

> "*Who name but Charles he comes aloft for him,*
> *But holds up his Malignant leg at Pym*";

with his pet monkey, whom the Puritan pamphleteers described as "a kind of old, little, wrinkled, old-faced, petulant, wanton and malignant gentlewoman, the little whore of Babylon in a green coat"; with his great black Barbary horse; his scarlet coat, richly decorated with silver lace; his

passion and impudence and self-will, Rupert, however, became the mainstay of his "Uncle England." Partly it was due to that constant of dependence in Charles's nature. Rupert took the place of the dead Strafford, the imprisoned Laud and the absent Queen. Charles did more than defer to his advice; he violated, in his favour, the first law of a successful command. He exempted Rupert from Lindsey's jurisdiction.

Whatever doubt there may have been about Rupert's ability as a strategist or a politician, there could be none about his ability as a cavalry commander. He revolutionized cavalry tactics. Instead of using the horse to canter up to the enemy and fire carbines to cause disorganization before they rode among them, he returned to the mediæval idea of using them as shock troops. He instructed them not to fire, but to rely on their swords and the weight of a reckless charge, riding knee to knee, to scatter their opponents. And wherever he led thus, the enemy broke and fled.

By the autumn, after two abortive attempts by the King to negotiate, the opposing armies were ready. All the advantage lay with Parliament. "King Pym" held the capital, the wealthy and populous Eastern Counties, and the south, including Portsmouth (which meant that no aid could reach Charles from the Continent); he controlled the machinery of government and the Exchequer; he was in process of bringing the Scots in on his side by pointing out the coincidence of their religious views with Parliament's proclaimed policy; and he had 20,000 men in the field, including the London trained bands, properly drilled under the experienced Skippon. He also had the geographical advantage of possessing inner lines of communication.

King Charles had only 10,000 men; he was isolated in the north from his partisans in the west; he had no centre comparable with London, little organization and less money; and Rupert's plundering excursions—"Prince Robber" he was called by the people—brought him not sufficient gain to

outweigh the unpopularity they engendered. The King was, as a diarist noted, "a distressed sovereign, being now reduced to the greatest calamity of any person living . . . nothing but the name and shadow of majesty; his followers everywhere pursued, taken and made captives, and like to be utterly ruined in their fortunes" by the confiscation of their estates which Parliament had enacted and was in a position to implement.

As Essex—refusing Rupert's challenge to meet him in a duel—moved northwards, Charles left Nottingham to oppose him. They came face to face at Edgehill, between Stratford-on-Avon and Banbury, on Sunday, October 23. Lindsey advised against a frontal attack on superior forces, but was overruled by Rupert. Saying that if he was not fit to be general, he would at least be colonel and die at the head of his regiment, the old man took his place at the head of his own pikemen and, in the battle that ensued, received a mortal wound. Rupert's horse, facing the main body of Essex's cavalry, drove them in headlong flight, almost without striking a blow; but Rupert stayed to plunder the Parliamentary baggage trains, till Hampden's regiment, coming up too late for the main battle, drove them back. Had he returned earlier to reinforce the main body, he might have won the war in that single engagement; but his delay was fatal. It was dark; both sides had run out of ammunition; and, by mutual if tacit consent, the battle was abandoned, each side claiming the victory, but neither gaining it.

As night fell, Essex visited Lindsey, dying on an improvised bed of straw; and Lindsey spent his last breath urging Essex to return to his true allegiance.

Next day, the Parliamentary force fell back to Warwick and the Royalists started to march on London by way of Oxford.

Edgehill was Cromwell's introduction to warfare. His own part in it, it is impossible to determine with any certainty. The probability is that he and his troop were driven from the

field by the whirlwind of Rupert.[1] But whether or not he personally experienced that fate, it was the phenomenon of the cavalry charge and its results which occupied his mind afterwards. He saw that Rupert's new tactics were irresistible; that, if properly disciplined and brought to bear on the battle as a whole instead of being lost and dissipated in plundering, the cavalry was the decisive factor in warfare; and that the charge of the young aristocrats and professional horsemen engendered a fighting spirit against which a superior force, a belief in the righteousness of the cause and every strategic and political advantage were, in the crisis, powerless. Had Rupert but reined his horse and returned, the whole cause of Parliament would have gone down that Sunday afternoon.

Oliver spoke to Hampden about it.

"Your troopers," he said, "are most of them old decayed serving-men and tapsters and such kind of fellows. Their troopers are gentlemen's sons, younger sons and persons of quality. Do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen that have honour and courage and resolution in them? You must get men of a spirit; and take it not ill what I say—I know you will not—of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go, or else I am sure you will be beaten still." And he urged Hampden to raise new regiments, composed of such men, to add to Essex's army.

Hampden thought it was "a good notion, but an impracticable one."

But practicable or not, Oliver saw that it was essential, if the cause was not to be lost. If he could not persuade his

[1] It is impossible to reconcile the various contradictory reports of Cromwell's actions at Edgehill. In a letter accompanying Fiennes' despatch giving an account of the battle, it is recorded that "Captain Cromwell" was driven from the field by the Royalist attack. Cromwell's apologists, including Buchan, assumed that this was young Oliver, a cornet in St. John's regiment. But there seems no reason why one young cornet should have been called "Captain" and singled out for special mention; and I see no reason to doubt that it was Cromwell himself.

superiors, at least he could experiment with his own force. And through the winter and the early spring of 1643 that became his main business.

After Edgehill, Charles found the way to London open. He advanced as far as Turnham Green, but was checked there by the trained bands of the City, and retired to Oxford, which he made his headquarters for the rest of the war.

Meanwhile, a peace party, in opposition to Pym, had appeared in Parliament. Twice they forced Pym to negotiate; but the first time Charles, who thought victory was within his grasp, refused, and the second time peace foundered on their demand and Charles's necessary and inevitable refusal to allow "delinquents" who had aided him to be punished.

Parliament thereupon started to prosecute the war in earnest. On the theoretical side, they claimed complete and independent sovereignty by authorizing a tax on the whole nation for the prosecution of the war; on the practical side, they enlarged the unit of organization and formed "Associations" of several counties. Cromwell became a member of the Committees both of the Midland Association, by virtue of his connections with Huntingdon, and of the Eastern Association because of his Parliamentary Membership for Cambridge, and although the Committee had 133 members, his activity and enthusiasm marked him out early as one of the driving forces. Occasionally he took his place in Parliament on matters of what he considered urgency. While peace proposals were being considered, there was a debate on whether the King should be met and his followers protected by the passing of an Act of Oblivion. Hampden acted as one of the tellers for the Yeas: Cromwell for the Noes. The Noes had it. The war was to go on.

His preoccupation was still with his regiment of horse. It was there, not in a vote in the House, that he would prove Hampden wrong.

In the March of 1643, with a force of 800 which he had raised from the Eastern Association, he occupied Cambridge and made it a Parliamentary centre. There he began training

his new regiment, which was to be known in history as Ironsides. His men were "most of them freeholders and freeholders' sons who upon a matter of conscience engaged in this quarrel. And thus being well armed, within by the satisfaction of their consciences and without by good iron arms, they would as one man stand firmly and charge desperately." By the end of March he had five troops of fanatics. He gave the captaincy of each to men he could trust—one to his brother-in-law, Desborough; one to his cousin, Whalley; one to his son, Oliver; one to his nephew, Valentine Walton; and one to James Berry, a clerk in an iron-works, whose practical knowledge was allied with a piety betokened by his close friendship with Richard Baxter.

These were the leaven of the rest of the Parliamentary cavalry. On a day in May, 1643, on a road outside Grantham, he found himself, with twelve troops of horse, "whereof some so poor and broken that you shall seldom see worse," outnumbered by two to one by an opposing force of Royalists. This was the test. Unhesitant, caring nothing for odds, he gave the order to charge—in Rupert's fashion—and scattered the Cavaliers before him. "With this handful," he wrote, "it pleased God to cast the scale." And, in truth, "the whole fortune of the Civil War was in that nameless skirmish." Rupert was to go down before a more splendid rider.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

IRONSIDES

ONE of the earliest biographers of Charles I—William Harris, who published his Life of the King in 1753—is admirably succinct on the subject of the Civil War. "It would be tedious," he says, "as well as useless to enter into the particulars of this war. Those who would know them may consult the common historians. Suffice it here to say that the King erected his standard at Nottingham, with little encouragement, on the twenty-fifth (*sic*) day of August, one thousand, six hundred and forty-two; and that Parliament raised an army and constituted Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, their commander-in-chief. However, it must not be here omitted that though the war, from the beginning, was carried on with various success on both sides, yet for the most part the advantage fell to the King. This (and the low state of the Parliament's affairs occasioned by ill success, desertions and divisions among themselves), as it caused his Majesty to speak in a high tone to them and his subjects in general, so it also caused uneasiness in his friends (those of them who had the interest of their country at heart) and caused them to press him more to peace than was agreeable to his own inclinations. But the prosperity of Charles being of no long continuance, he lowered his note, deigned to treat his parliament with some degree of respect and solicited them again and again for peace. But his expectations not being answered, and his misfortunes increasing, he threw himself into the hands of the Scots."

Even as the barest outline of events from the August of 1642 to the May of 1646, this leaves something to be desired; and yet there is a sense in which it preserves the balance of Charles's life better than subsequent biographies in which the man is lost in a maze of campaigns, battles, sieges and negotiations. For the Charles who emerged from the Civil War was

essentially the same as the Charles who entered it. His fortune changed, but not his character; nor was he one of those who learn by experience, even the experience of ordeal by battle.

With Cromwell also the war, though it gave him the chance of eminence, was not crucial in the way in which a detailed analysis has sometimes tried to make it. His mastery of it was implicit in the skirmish near Grantham, and his subsequent career as a soldier is merely the application of the same principles on an increasingly widened scale. What Cromwell really learnt from the war was politics. At the beginning he was an impatient, earnest politician, completely lacking subtlety, wanting even tact, because he himself could see the essential point of things so clearly that he was inclined to dismiss those who saw differently or more slowly as fools, if they were of his own party, or as knaves, if they were his opponents. These very qualities, which were a handicap in the House of Commons, were the cause of his success in the field. An eye for the fundamental issue, immediacy and courage in carrying it out, ruthless overriding of foolish or timid counsellors—these made him the soldier he was; and by exercising them in their proper sphere, he gradually came to understand that the needs of a politician are vastly different. War, by utilizing these energies in an appropriate channel, left his mind free to learn.

Also, he was forced to notice that he had to fight in Parliament before he was allowed to fight as he wished in the war. This became urgent after the battle of Marston Moor, in the July of 1644, which was in effect a trial of strength between himself and Rupert.

The campaigns of the two years between Edgehill, which marks the beginning, and Marston Moor, which is the middle (in action if not in time) of the war, are simple in shape.

In the 1643 campaign, Charles's objective was to capture London by a three-fold advance on it. Newcastle (Prince Charles's old Governor) was to advance from the north; Hopton was to bring up the loyalists of the west; and Charles

himself, centred at Oxford, was to advance by way of Reading. This plan was frustrated mainly by the failure of the Cornish and the Yorkshire levies to participate in a national instead of a local strategy.

In the January of 1644, Parliament contrived to bring in the Scots once more by promising to establish Presbyterianism in England and (more importantly) paying them £150,000 a month. This dictated a change in the King's strategy, which became of necessity defensive.

In the campaign of 1644, the Royal armies, instead of attempting to converge on London, were to utilize their central position at Oxford to engage the Parliamentary armies in the south, while Rupert went north to help Newcastle drive back the Scots. The King, in spite of minor checks and defeats, managed to carry out with sufficient success his part of the plan; but in Yorkshire Rupert and Newcastle were defeated at Marston Moor, in a battle whose outcome can be ascribed to Cromwell alone.

In the latter half of 1643, after the skirmish near Grantham, the Parliamentary cause suffered blow after blow. Hampden was killed in an engagement with Rupert's men at Chalgrove Field in June; Pym died in December; and the Presbyterian Earl of Manchester—one of the Montagues who were the family rivals of the Cromwells—was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Association. Manchester, who had attended Charles in Spain, had married into Buckingham's family, and who was to rise to high office again under Charles II, had even less intention of beating the King thoroughly than had Essex, who remained the Generalissimo.

Cromwell now had to serve under the man whose father had been his persistent opponent, not only on the general principles of the traditional rivalry, but specifically in the matters of the local government of Huntingdon and the Fen dispute, in which he had been one of the millionaire land-owners who enclosed the "common land."

The military situation, however, was too dangerous to

allow any thought but of practical necessities. With Newcastle advancing from the north, Cromwell made himself the focus of resistance. Throughout these months, his letters and dispatches have about them the ring of pistol shots.

"If somewhat be not done in this, you will see Newcastle's army march up into your bowels; being now, as it is, this side Trent. I know it will be difficult to raise thus many in so short time; but let me assure you it's necessary, and therefore to be done." This to the Deputy Lieutenants of Suffolk at the end of July.

A week later, to the Commissioners at Cambridge: "It's no longer disputing, but out instantly all you can. Raise all your bands; send them to Huntingdon. Get what volunteers you can. Hasten your horses. Send these letters to Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex without delay. I beseech you spare not, but be expeditious and industrious. Almost all our foot have quitted Stamford; there is nothing to interrupt an enemy, but our horse, that is considerable. You must act lively. Do it without distraction. Neglect no means."

At the end of August came another appeal to the Suffolk knights who found Oliver's "It's necessary and therefore to be done" too difficult for them: "I have now been two days at Cambridge, in expectation to hear of the fruit of your endeavours. . . . Believe it, you will hear of a storm in few days. You have no infantry at all considerable; hasten your horses—a few hours may undo you, neglected. I beseech you be careful what captains of horse you choose, what men be mounted. A few honest men are better than numbers. If you choose godly honest men to be captains of horse, honest men will follow them, and they will be careful to mount such. The King is exceeding strong in the west. If you are able to foil a force at the first coming of it, you will have reputation; and that is of great advantage in our affairs. God hath given it to our handful. Let us endeavour to keep it. I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman

and is nothing else. I honour a gentleman that is so indeed."

To Oliver St. John on September 11: "I am now ready for my march towards the enemy. Many of my Lord Manchester's troops are come to me; very bad and mutinous; not to be confided in. . . . My troops increase. I have a lovely company. You would respect them, did you know them. They are no Anabaptists; they are honest, sober Christians. They expect to be used as men. . . . There is no care taken how to maintain that force of horse and foot raised and a-raising by my Lord Manchester. The force will fall if some help not, weak counsel and weak actings undo all. Send at once[1] or come or all will be lost, if God help not. Remember who tells you."

In October he wrote to another cousin, Sir Thomas Barrington, to deny aspersions which had been cast on his regiment, who had been accused of their share in the plundering which was rife among the soldiers of both sides: "Truly mine (though some have stigmatized them with the name of Anabaptists) are honest men, such as fear God, I am confident the freest from unjust practices of any in England. . . . Such imputations are poor requitals to those who have ventured their blood for you. I hear there are such mists cast to darken their services. Take no care of me; I ask your good acceptance; let me have your prayers; I will thank you. Truly I count not myself worthy to be employed by God; but, for my poor men, help them what you can, for they are faithful."

Later that month, he led his "poor men," his "lovely company," into action at a fight at Winceby, which freed Lincolnshire from the threat of Royalist occupation. It is at this engagement that we have the first contemporary picture of him in action: "Colonel Cromwell fell with brave resolution on the enemy. His horse was killed under him at the first

[1] The margin of the MS. is torn away and what remains appears to be ". . . once or come." I have followed here Abbott's interpretation of it. What he required to be sent was, from the context of the whole letter, money to pay his troops, which St. John might persuade Parliament to send. Through these months, Cromwell is continually asking for money to pay the army, as well as for men to fight in it.

charge and fell down upon him; and, as he rose up, he was knocked down again . . . but afterwards he recovered a poor horse in a soldier's hands, and bravely mounted himself again. Truly, this first charge was so home-given and performed with so much admirable courage and resolution by our troops that the enemy stood not another."

With the entry of the Scots into the north of England that winter, Parliament made some attempt to keep that part of its bargain which promised the establishment of Presbyterianism and the suppression of the Church of England. The impeachment of Laud, still a prisoner in the Tower, was begun. A committee of the Assembly of Divines was set up to remove "all ministers that are ill-affected to Parliament or promoters of this unnatural war or that shall wilfully refuse obedience to the ordinances of Parliament" and replace them by Presbyterians. And in the Eastern Counties, where there was both the will and the power to enforce it, the ejection of clergy and the desecration of churches began. It was superintended by the Presbyterian Manchester from his headquarters in Cambridge and aided by Cromwell, as Governor of Ely.

In Ely itself, one of the canons named Hitch refused to obey the order and Oliver (signing himself "your loving friend") wrote a warning letter: "Lest the soldiers should in any tumultuary or disorderly way attempt the reformation of your Cathedral Church, I require you to forbear altogether your choir-service, so unedifying and offensive; and this as you will answer it, if any disorder should arise thereupon. I advise you to catechise, and read and expound the Scriptures to the people, not doubting but the Parliament, with the advice of the Assembly of Divines, will in due time direct you farther. I desire the sermons may be where they usually have been, but more frequent."

Canon Hitch, however, ignored the warning, with the result that Cromwell, with a party of soldiers attended by a crowd of townsmen, "came into the church in time of

divine service, with his hat on; and directing himself to Mr. Hitch said: 'I am a man under authority and am commanded to dismiss this assembly.' "

The Canon paused. When, however, Cromwell and his men had passed him and continued their way toward the east end, he went on with the service. Cromwell in a fury returned and, with his hand on his sword, shouted at the pulpit: "Leave off your fooling, sir, and come down."

There was nothing to do but obey. He came down and Oliver drove the congregation out of the Cathedral.

Cromwell's reputation as a defacer of churches was to outlast many better things. But, whatever his personal responsibility might be, he, at least, would not have wished it to be palliated. To him, it was as much God's work, a fulfilment of the commandment against idolatry, as his military campaigns. Yet, just as his soldiering, by releasing the energies that had been frustrated in politics, left him a calmness in which he could learn to be a politician, so, once he had taken action against the Romish appurtenances against which he had for so long inveighed, his mind suddenly cleared. Within two months of his action in Ely Cathedral, he was protesting against the effort to enforce a uniformity of Presbyterianism. His tolerance certainly did not—and could not be expected to—extend to Catholics or to Laudians; but his enunciation of the principle of toleration of any sort at a time when it was equally opposed by every faction is a surprising enough phenomenon. In a letter to a strict Presbyterian Major-General who had dismissed one of his men whose "Anabaptist" convictions did not allow him to take the oath upholding Presbyterianism, he wrote: "Surely you are not well advised to turn off one so faithful to the Cause and so able to serve you as this man is. . . . 'Ay, but the man is an Anabaptist.' Are you sure of that? Admit he be, shall that render him incapable to serve the public? 'He is indiscreet.' It may be so, in some things. We all have human infirmities. . . . Sir, the State, in choosing men to serve them, takes no notice of

their opinions. If they be willing faithfully to serve them, that satisfies. I advised you formerly to bear with men of different minds from yourself; if you had done it when I advised you to it, I think you would not have had so many stumbling-blocks in your way. . . . Take heed of being sharp, or too easily sharpened by others, against those to whom you can object little but that they square not with you in every opinion concerning matters of religion."

That same month—the March of 1644—young Oliver was taken from him by the same disease that had robbed him of his beloved Robert. The second son—that "civil young gentleman and the joy of his father" who had passed so quickly from undergraduate to soldier, who had shared with his father the first experience of battle at Edgehill, who had become his trusted subordinate—contracted smallpox and died of it at Newport Pagnell.

There is no record of Cromwell's presence at or absence from his death or his burial—nothing but the official record of his successor as captain of the 4th Troop of Horse on March 28, 1644.

. . . . .

A week or two later, in the April of 1644, Charles and Henrietta said what was to prove their final farewell.

Henrietta had returned to England with what aid she could muster in the February of 1643 and landed at Bridlington. But it was not until July that the way was safe for her to rejoin her husband at Oxford. In the meantime, she had proclaimed herself "She Generalissimo" of the North, giving the command of her troops to the inevitable Jermyn, and made her headquarters at York. Here Montrose came from Scotland to warn her that Argyll was preparing to bring in the Scots against the King; but, though she liked this graceful, accomplished young man of thirty, with the keen grey eye that looked so unwaveringly at men, she trusted the deplorable Hamilton, who came hurriedly to York to assure her that Montrose was nothing but an alarmist—and was made a duke for his pains.

Though she romanticized her position—"extremely diligent with one hundred and fifty wagons of baggage to govern"—and gained a certain enjoyment from acting in war as she imagined that the daughter of Henry of Navarre ought to act, she was impatient of her separation from Charles. "When I see you," she wrote to him, "you will say that I am a good little girl and very patient, but I declare to you that being patient is killing me, and were it not for love of you, I would, with the greatest truth, rather put myself into a convent than live in this manner."

At the end of May, Parliament declared her guilty of high treason, but their affairs were not in so good a shape in the field that they could indefinitely prevent "the Popish Brat of France" joining "the Man of Sin" at Oxford. On July 11, she arrived at Stratford-on-Avon, where she was met by Rupert and entertained by Judith, Shakespeare's witty daughter, in the New Place that represented his earnings as a playwright. Charles rode from Oxford to welcome her, taking with him the Prince of Wales, now a tall boy of thirteen, and the Duke of York, three years younger. The two royal processions met at Edgehill. The battle there—nine months ago—was now ancient history and uncommemorated. But Charles commemorated this meeting by having a medal struck, representing himself and Henrietta enthroned, with the dragon of rebellion dead at their feet. Henrietta's first request was that Jermyn should be made a peer.

In Oxford, she was installed in Merton. Charles had already turned Christ Church, where he had taken up residence, into a miniature Whitehall; All Souls was an arsenal, New College housed the Mint and Oriel was the meeting-place of the Council. His parliament, such as it was, sat in Christ Church Hall and his guns lined Magdalen Grove. The Astronomy and Music Schools were given over to an army of tailors making uniforms for the troops.

Rupert, sumptuously lodged, lay at Laud's old college, St. John's, of which he was a member; and some of the more

prominent courtiers enjoyed a similar comfort; but most of the Royalist gentry who came to Court had to be content with two rented rooms over a shop, if they were fortunate enough to find even that in the singularly overcrowded town.

What was left of that hot summer saw an attempt to restore some of the enchantment of the days of peace. Pastoral plays were performed to amuse the Royal couple. "Love and gallantry sported themselves along the pleasant river-banks . . . wit, learning and religion joined hand-in-hand as in some grotesque and brilliant masque." Charles spent much time with the academicians and with his chaplain, Jeremy Taylor. With his secretary, Falkland, he visited Bodley's new library.

It was with Falkland, "that incomparable young man" (who, because of his trust in Hampden's integrity, had never believed that Parliament would resort to violence and "whose natural cheerfulness and vivacity grew clouded and a kind of sadness and dejection of spirit stole upon him" when the reality of war disillusioned him), that Charles made trial of the *sortes Virgilianae*. Charles no less than Cromwell craved "signs."

Opening the Æneid at random, the King's finger fell on the passage:

> "*At bello audacis populi vexatus et armis,*
> *finibus externis, complexu avolsus Iuli,*
> *auxilium imploret videatque indigna suorum*
> *funera, nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquae*
> *tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur*
> *sed cadet ante diem mediaque inhumatus harena.*"[1]

[1] "*Yet let a race untamed and haughty foes*
His peaceful entrance with dire arms oppose;
Oppressed with numbers in th' unequal field,
His men discouraged and himself expell'd
Let him for succour sue from place to place,
Torn from his subjects' and his son's embrace.
First let him see his friends in battle slain,
And their untimely fate lament in vain;
And when at length the cruel war shall cease,
On hard conditions may he buy his peace."

Falkland, in his turn, read:

> "*Non haec, o Palla, dederas promissa parenti,*
> *cautius ut saevo velles te credere Marti.*"[1]

They left the library unhappy and in silence.

At the end of August, the king decided to attack Gloucester, to consolidate his hold on the west. He was unsuccessful and at the inconclusive skirmish at Newbury in September Falkland cut the knot of his perplexity by needlessly rushing on death.

Charles returned to an Oxford bereft of summer gaiety, Oxford in an autumn of fogs and floods and typhus, with courtiers openly or surreptitiously leaving him, either because they now doubted his chances of success or because they could not endure a winter in their sordid lodgings. He made an effort to stem the tide. In December he summoned Parliament to Oxford, offering a free pardon to any sitting at Westminster who would attend it. But the small attendance at this "mongrel parliament"—as Charles himself called it—was itself a sufficient answer to his hopes.

Over everything lay the oppressive atmosphere of intrigue which, even in the summer, had been the reality behind the façade of graciousness and gaiety. The Queen's arrival had worsened a situation already sufficiently dangerous. The interminable feud between Rupert and Digby (he who had asked him to explain the nature of a petard) was heightened by Henrietta's jealous dislike and distrust of the nephew on whom, in her absence, the King had come to lean. The "Queen's Party," in the past so fatal to Charles, was in being again, bent on embroiling Rupert with his uncle. The rivalries of Anglicans and Roman Catholics in the royal service, which the common danger had abated a little, sprang once more into life. Amorous gallantries exacerbated personal relationships already strained by political differences and military

[1] "*O Pallas! thou hast failed thy plighted word,*
To fight with caution, not to tempt the sword."

preferences. Charles complained that the feuds of his friends wore down his spirit as much as the assaults of his enemies. In such an atmosphere, young Montrose pleaded in vain—until it was too late—that he might be allowed to raise Scotland for the King before Argyll had completed his preparations to raise it for Parliament. He was not given his commission to act until the March of 1644, by which time the army of the Covenant was well over the Border in arms against Charles and Hamilton was indubitably proved wrong.

With the entry of the Scots and the consequent change in the military situation, Oxford became no safe place for the Queen, who was pregnant with her last child. It was decided that she must go further west, to the safety of Exeter. On April 17, at Abingdon, the last farewell was said. Henrietta, accompanied by Jermyn, lumbered with her train of coaches on the road to Bath; Charles, silent and haggard, rode back to Oxford with his attendants.

Their daughter Henrietta—"Minette"—was born at Exeter in June, with Dr. Mayerne in attendance. Charles had written to his trusted physician from Oxford, "Mayerne, for the love of me, go find my wife," and the letter had managed to reach him in his house in St. Martin's Lane in Parliament-bound London. Although he was now over seventy, the old man (who had once diagnosed Cromwell as "excessively melancholic") instantly set out on the 170-mile journey, and arrived in time to be with her for the delivery.

But now, with Essex campaigning in the west, even Exeter was unsafe. As soon as she was able, Henrietta (in spite of Mayerne's belief that she was mortally ill with puerperal sepsis) "walked most of the way into Cornwall" and at Falmouth, distraught and apparently dying, found some Dutch vessels to take her to France.

It was not what had been arranged. Charles had not expected her to desert him; nor had she herself intended to take a journey which might appear desertion. But she was at the end of her strength and her courage. The night before she

sailed, she wrote to him that she hoped, by God's grace, to recover her health in France, so as to serve him further. "I am giving you the strongest proof of love that I can give. I am hazarding my life that I may not incommode your affairs. Adieu, my dear heart. If I die, believe that you will lose a person who has never been other than entirely yours, and who by her affection has deserved that you should not forget her."

Narrowly escaping capture by the Parliamentary fleet, she landed—driven out of her course by a storm—on a wild part of the shore near Brest and from a friendly peasant's cottage sent Jermyn to announce to the French Court her return to her native land.

Charles, knowing her danger at Exeter from Essex's army, had marched westward at the head of his troops with what speed he could.[1] But he did not arrive there till after she had gone. Alone now, and intolerably tormented in mind, his health at last gave way.

Contributing to his illness was the news from the north—that Rupert had fought and failed at Marston Moor and that, in anger at Rupert's rashness, the loyal Newcastle had abandoned the struggle and, like Henrietta, taken ship for the Continent.

. . . . .

The Battle of Marston Moor was fought on July 2, 1644, seven miles west of York. The Parliamentary Army was composed of three sections—the Scots under that "crooked old man," Leven, a veteran, who had trained under the great Gustavus Adolphus; Lord Fairfax, in command of the Parliamentary army of the North; and Manchester, with Cromwell as Lieutenant-General, with the forces of the Eastern Association. They were 27,000 strong.

[1] If, at this point, Charles had marched into Kent, where the county was ready to rise for him, and assaulted London, which was temporarily undefended, there can be little doubt that he would have won the war. His decision to go west seems to have been dictated by his personal anxiety for his wife.

The Royalists, who had under 18,000, included Rupert's main force of 8,000, Newcastle's 3,000 northern troops, with the addition of some levies and a body of southerners under Goring about 5,000 strong.

Each side had 7,000 cavalry, and both Cromwell and Rupert realized that the fight was to be, in effect, a duel between them.

On the evening before the battle, Cromwell could not, for a time, be found, and was eventually discovered in a disused room at the top of a tower. He was on his knees in prayer, with a Bible before him.

Rupert, questioning some prisoners brought in during the afternoon, asked: "Is Cromwell there?" When told he was indeed with the army, he said: "Tell the Lieutenant-General that he shall have as much fighting as he likes," and sent the man back with the message.

"If it please God," said Cromwell grimly when he received it, "so shall he."

When battle was joined at seven o'clock in the evening—reluctantly on Newcastle's part, who thought it unwise to risk the North on such unequal odds—Rupert, on the Royalist right, faced Cromwell, on the Parliamentary left. The Prince broke Oliver's first line and halted his second, and to Cromwell, his neck grazed by a bullet and temporarily blinded by the flash, it seemed for a moment that all was lost; but, dazed as he was, he managed to get his first line, already in retreat, to face about; and, taking advantage of a slight pause in the Royalist advance, rallied them for a counter-charge. For minutes all was indecision, and then suddenly the Royalists broke before the weight and fury of Cromwell's attack and retreated towards York.

It was at this point that Oliver saved the day—not by driving Rupert from the field, but by refusing, even in the exhilaration of that moment, to pursue him. Instead of giving chase, he reformed his men on the field and faced them east towards the centre. For here, everything seemed lost. The

Parliamentary centre, under Lord Fairfax, and the Parliamentary right, under his son, Sir Thomas Fairfax, were completely broken; Leven was in flight towards Hull (enquiring urgently, so they said, the quickest way to the Tweed); nothing remained but a handful of Scots regiments fighting against hopeless odds. Sir Thomas Fairfax, wounded in the face, took the white badge of Parliament from his hat and, passing for a Royalist, managed to make his way through the Royalist lines to tell Cromwell of the disaster.

Within half an hour, Cromwell, wheeling on Newcastle's victorious centre with an unexpected charge, had changed the fortune of the battle. By nine o'clock the Royalist defeat was complete. The North was lost to the King.

Cromwell, writing to his brother-in-law, Valentine Walton, a letter of condolence on the death of his son Valentine, Cromwell's captain, who was killed on the field, mentioned incidentally his own part in the battle: "The left wing, which I commanded, being our own horse, saving a few Scots in our rear, beat all the Prince's horse. God made them as stubble to our swords."

Rupert, in defeat, but still in admiration, nicknamed Oliver "Ironsides."

CHAPTER TWELVE

A NEW ARMY

IF Marston was the end of the King's cause in the North, it did little to strengthen the Parliamentary cause elsewhere. To Cromwell, indeed, it seemed that, in spite of his personal victory, matters had never been in worse condition. Essex in the west was outmanœuvred by the King and ended "a campaign of blunders" by the surrender of all his infantry. Another army, in the south, had been defeated and, in the inaction after defeat, melted away. The levies on the counties were not bringing in sufficient money to pay the troops, who were in consequence dissatisfied, deserting and even, in places, mutinous. The country was sick of the war. The peace party in Parliament was increasing. A split had appeared and was daily growing between the Presbyterian and Independent factions of the Parliamentary cause, between the English and the Scots. (Cromwell, himself, meeting the Scots and their Presbyterianism at close quarters, had already begun to hate both on more than theoretical grounds.) When, at the end of October, the army that had won Marston, with English troops in place of Scots, met the King at Newbury, with half their number, the engagement was inconclusive and Charles was able to withdraw his army, unmolested by pursuit, to Oxford. Manchester had refused to impede him.

Cromwell enquired the reason for such unnecessarily polite warfare.

"If we beat the King ninety-nine times," said Manchester, "yet he is King still, and so will his posterity be after him; but if the King beat us we shall all be hanged and our posterity will be slaves."

"My Lord," retorted Cromwell, "if this be so, why did we take up arms at first? This is against fighting ever hereafter. If so, let us make peace, be it never so base."

And it was on peace that both sides seemed bent—the Parliament at Oxford being no less desirous of it than the Parliament at Westminster. From the November of 1644 to the end of February, 1645, negotiations were carried on—known as the Treaty of Uxbridge—for a satisfactory settlement. The concessions which Charles was prepared to make adumbrated the final settlement which was to bring the whole matter to its conclusion in 1689—forty years after his death. While maintaining episcopacy, the jurisdiction of bishops was to be limited by presbyters chosen by the clergy of the diocese. While maintaining the Prayer Book, subject to any agreed alterations, freedom was "to be left to all persons of what opinions soever in matters of ceremony" and all penalties were to be suspended. The Army was to be controlled by a body consisting in equal proportions of his nominees and Parliament's; and when the existing armies on both sides were abandoned, he would go to Westminster to consult with a reconstituted Parliament.

Further than that he would not—indeed, could not—go. "There are three things," he said to the Parliamentary Commissioners, "I will not part with—the Church, my crown and my friends; and you will have much ado to get them from me." And it was precisely on those three things, from this moment to the end of his life, that every negotiation foundered. For his enemies, under varying formulæ, were always to demand an alteration in the constitution of the Church, the virtual supremacy of Parliament and the proscription and punishment of prominent Royalists.

And, in the middle of negotiations, by one single act, they hardened Charles's resolution and clarified his mind. In the January of 1645, they executed Laud. On the killing of the seventy-year-old Archbishop, Charles wrote to Henrietta: "Nothing can be more evident than that Strafford's innocent blood hath been one of the great causes of God's just judgment upon this nation by a furious civil war, both sides hitherto being almost equally guilty. But now, this last crying blood

being totally theirs, I believe it is no presumption hereafter to hope that the hand of justice must be heavier upon them and lighter upon us, looking now upon our cause, having passed through our faults."

Whatever concessions he might now propose, he would retain a mental reservation permissible to those who treated with criminals. The day of "both sides being almost equally guilty" in his mind was over. His natural evasiveness as a diplomat had now a moral justification—as he saw it. The day before he proposed the disbandment of both armies, he wrote to his wife: "As for trusting the rebels, either by going to London or disbanding my army before a peace, do no ways fear my hazarding so cheaply or foolishly. . . . I pretend to have a little more wit than to put myself in the reverence of perfidious rebels."

His own "perfidy" was assumed rather than known by the "rebels"; but the suspicion was enough to ensure the rejection of his plan for toleration—which was, in fact, an overture to Cromwell and the Independents. The situation was to become far more desperate before Cromwell and Charles came together.

. . . . .

Cromwell, during the months of negotiation, was engaged on very different business. Manchester had decided him. If Essex and Manchester would not beat the King, then Manchester and Essex must go. If the Parliamentary army depended for success on him and his "Ironsides"—for his own nickname was now being extended to his men—then a new army, which was all Ironsides, must be brought into being. If negotiations were to be relevant, the military issue must be decided first. And if Presbyterianism threatened the religious convictions of himself and his men as surely as Laudianism had done, then Independency must hold itself free to combat it.

So, step by step, acting not now as a soldier, but as the politician he had become, he created the New Model Army.

On November 25, 1644, he formally charged Manchester

in the House, declaring "that the said Earl hath always been indisposed and backward to engagements, and the ending of the war by the sword; and for such a peace as a victory would be a disadvantage to." Manchester retorted by accusing him of insubordination, and the Scots, seeing in him an enemy more dangerous than Charles, suggested that he should be impeached as "an incendiary."

On December 9, having heard of the preparations to impeach him, he took the offensive. He waived the quarrel with Manchester and directed the eyes of the House to the future; and in the three speeches he made that day outlined the shape of the New Army—a godly company, commanded by soldiers who were not Members of Parliament. This "Self-Denying Ordinance" would achieve his objective in getting rid of Manchester and Essex—though it would also necessitate his own resignation as Lieutenant-General, which, in itself, was a master-stroke, as it disposed of any accusations of ambition. And he went out of his way to point it: "I can speak for my own soldiers, that they look not upon me, but upon you; for you they will fight and live and die in your cause; and if others be of that mind that they were of, you need not fear them. They do not idolize me, but look upon the cause they fight for."

It was, indeed, untrue. As the only successful Parliamentary commander, Oliver was idolized, not only by his men, but by all who had the cause at heart. It was this that gave him his power in the House that day. But what was even more apparent than his change in status—that he had indeed fulfilled the dead Hampden's prophecy—was his growth in statesmanship. The Oliver of 1640, the firebrand of the "cousinage," was not more different from the Oliver of 1628, modestly defending his old schoolmaster, than the Oliver of 1644, rising to impress his will on the House, was from the tactless interrupter of the eve of the war.

"It is now time to speak, or forever hold the tongue," he began. "The important occasion now is no less than to save

a Nation out of a bleeding, nay, almost dying condition; which the long continuance of this war hath already brought it into; and that without a more speedy, vigorous and effectual prosecution of the war—casting off all lingering proceedings, like those of soldiers-of-fortune beyond seas to spin out a war—we shall make the Kingdom weary of us and hate the name of a Parliament.

"For what do the enemy say? Nay, what do many say that were friends at the beginning of the Parliament? Even this—that the Members of both Houses have got great places and commands, and the sword into their hands; and, what by interest in Parliament, and what by power in the Army, will perpetually continue themselves in grandeur, and not permit the war speedily to end, lest their own power should determine with it.

"This, that I speak here to our own faces is but what others do utter abroad behind our backs. I am far from reflecting on any. I know the worth of those Commanders, Members of both Houses, who are yet in power; but if I may speak my conscience without reflection on any, I do conceive that if the Army be not put into another method and the war more vigorously prosecuted, the people can bear the war no longer and will enforce you to a dishonourable peace.

"But this I would recommend to your prudence—not to insist on any complaint or oversight of any Commander-in-Chief upon any occasion whatsoever; for as I must acknowledge myself guilty of oversights, so I know they can rarely be avoided in military affairs. Therefore, waiving a strict inquiry into the causes of these things, let us apply ourselves to the remedy: which is most necessary.

"And I hope we have such true English hearts and zealous affections towards the general weal of our Mother Country, as no Members of either House will scruple to deny themselves and their own private interests for the public good."

The Self-Denying Ordinance was passed and the New Model Army, 22,000 men under a unified command, estab-

lished in the middle of February—the same week that Charles was proposing the disbandment of the armies and writing to the Queen to assure her that he did not mean it. Sir Thomas Fairfax, whose outstanding qualities as a soldier were speed, resolution and courage, was appointed Commander-in-Chief, with Skippon, of the London trained bands, as Major-General. The post of Lieutenant-General was not filled, but Cromwell —who, by the Self-Denying Ordinance, was allowed forty days' grace from April 13—came to Fairfax at Windsor in mid-April to offer his respects before resigning from the service.

While he was there, it became apparent that, temporarily at least, he could not be dispensed with. The King, all negotiations at an abortive end, had taken the field again. He might still win the war in the south and west, and, by striking while his enemies were in the middle of a reorganization, he had every chance of success. Not that he had either fear or respect for the army in the making. He called it the "New Noddle," referred to Fairfax as "the rebels' new brutish general" and, sallying out of Oxford, wrote cheerfully back: "If we peripatetics get no more mischances than you Oxonians are like to have this summer, we may all expect a merry winter."

At the beginning he had, certainly, cause for optimism. He took and sacked Leicester and, by that gain, opened the road to an attack on those Eastern Counties which, even more than London, were Parliament's real base. And from Scotland came the news that Montrose, fighting what had seemed a forlorn cause, had inflicted a crushing defeat on that part of the Covenanting army which had remained in Scotland.

Fairfax dispatched Cromwell—his command prolonged for another forty days—to the east; and once again Cromwell, at Ely and Huntingdon, found himself performing the old task of recruiting, inspiring, ordering the Eastern Association.

Charles's plan, however, was not to turn on the east, but to march north to join forces with the victorious Montrose. Fairfax determined to cut him off, but, to give battle effectively

he must have Oliver with him. The consequences of Self-Denial must yield to the necessities of practical warfare. He wrote to the House requesting that Cromwell should be appointed Lieutenant-General in the new Army and, without waiting for a reply, sent to Ely an urgent request that he should join him near Market Harborough.

On June 13, as Fairfax was striking camp to follow the King, a great shout went up: "Ironsides is come." On the 14th, battle was joined at Naseby.

If the Royalists were outnumbered again by two to one, the odds (since the new Army was untried and might, for all anyone knew, justify Charles's estimate rather than Cromwell's hopes) gave no satisfaction to Oliver. His trust was otherwhere. "When I saw the enemy draw up and march in gallant order, and we a company of poor, ignorant men," he wrote, "I could not, riding alone about my business, but smile out to God in praise, in assurance of victory, because God would, by things that are not, bring to naught things that are. Of which I had great assurance, and God did it."

In the battle of Naseby, it is on Charles rather than on Cromwell that the interest centres. Oliver's tactics were almost identical with those of Marston Moor—a sweeping, victorious charge on the wing, brought to a halt and turned against the centre. Rupert's were those of Edgehill—a similar charge on his wing and a pursuit, except that this time he had learnt wisdom and returned as soon as it was possible to check his men. If Oliver had originally learnt from him, he had now taken to heart Oliver's improvement of his method. What defeated him was the superior discipline of Cromwell's troops. Rupert's would not, as a body, stand and re-form.

Rupert had expected to find Oliver against him, as had been the disposition at Marston. Either as a deliberate trap to the Prince or because he wished a speedier victory for his horse than a clash with Rupert would allow or possibly because he credited Rupert with those intentions and expected him to change his wing, Cromwell was no longer on the left,

but on the right. The result was that they did not meet in the battle and that the first charge of both was inevitably successful.

The day seemed lost for the Royalists by the time that Rupert and what men he could rally from plunder returned from the chase. Between him and the King was the mêlée of the main battle in which the Royalist centre was being gradually overpowered by the Parliamentarian infantry assisted by the Ironsides. The fight was in a valley between two hills. Rupert on the southern eminence looked across to Charles on the northern, and, without hesitating, threw himself on Cromwell's flank to cut his way through to his uncle.

Charles was no tactician, but this situation had about it a simplicity which he could understand. If he now led his own guard in a downhill charge to meet Rupert, Cromwell, caught between two fires, might be driven from the field. Charles, one of the finest horsemen in the kingdom and with a personal courage second to none, gave the order in the spirit of Montrose's verse:

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the touch,
To win or lose it all."

"One charge more, gentlemen," he called, "one charge more and the day is ours."

The sight of the King, sword in hand, riding to put himself at the head of his horse, rallied the half-demoralized troops. But, as he turned in his saddle to give the word, a Scots courtier—one of the members of his household ("a man never suspected of infidelity, nor one from whom the King would have received counsel in such a case")—swearing "two or three full-mouthed Scottish oaths," took the King's bridle and expostulating, "Will you go to your death?" turned Charles's horse to the right. Had the rider been Rupert or Cromwell, he would have been given the only answer that

could have been effective in such a crisis—a sword-cut. But Charles was Charles. The moment of surprised irresolution was enough. The whole body wheeled to the right, following the King, and rode from the field. The day was lost.

. . . . .

Naseby was decisive. The King's infantry was wiped out, either by death or capture. Nearly all his officers were taken prisoner. His whole train of artillery and arms for 8,000 men fell into Parliamentary hands. Though he himself, with Rupert, escaped to Hereford, and though, for another year, isolated skirmishes and sieges continued, the war was, in fact, over. He was never in a position to fight a pitched battle again.

And politically he suffered at Naseby a blow only a little less disastrous than the military defeat. His cabinet, containing the correspondence with the Queen, was captured by his enemies, who immediately published it (in spite of Fairfax's protests that it should be treated as private) so that all might know that their King had sought in every quarter foreign aid against his subjects. Parliament followed carefully the rules of this particular form of paper warfare; they printed only "so much of them as they thought would asperse either of their Majesties and improve the prejudice they had raised against them; and concealed other parts, which would have vindicated them from many particulars with which they had aspersed them."

Whatever they published and whatever they suppressed, they at least knew now what the Royal epistolary style was. Earlier in the war, they had invented, for purposes of propaganda, letters purporting to come from Henrietta in Holland, which began: "Most royal and illustrious monarch of Great Britain, my great, my good and worthy liege, the most regal object of my loving heart, best affection and utmost endeavours." They now discovered that her letters invariably began: "My dear Heart."

Cromwell was also experiencing, though in a lesser degree, the discomforts of official editing. On the night after Naseby, he wrote his account of it to the Speaker. He ended: "Honest men served you faithfully in this action. Sir, they are trusty; I beseech you in the name of God not to discourage them. I wish this action may beget thankfulness and humility in all that are concerned in it. He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience and you for the liberty he fights for."

The Presbyterian House of Commons found this paragraph both unpalatable and dangerous, so they omitted it from the printed version. Unfortunately for them, however, the House of Lords, unaware of their editing, allowed their printer to set it out in full. The country was, in consequence, able to read it, and, if it cared, to understand its implication. There was a new force in the land—an army of Independents actually, if not nominally, under Cromwell. In theory the servant of the Presbyterian Parliament, it was, in fact, its master. The aristocratic Presbyterians, Essex and Manchester, had given place to those who on the religious issue were as much their enemy as the King's. The duel between King and Parliament was over and it had been won by neither. The victor was this new force but six months old. For the future, politics were to be a triangular matter.

. . . . .

Charles, crushing as his defeat was, had no intention of relinquishing the war. Sending Rupert to hold Bristol, the last important town left to him, he determined to march north with what men he could raise to make a last effort to join Montrose. Against so desperate a course, Rupert wrote in warning: "His Majesty hath now no way left to preserve his posterity, kingdom and nobility but by treaty. I believe it a more prudent way to retain something than to lose all."

The King replied: "As for your opinion of my business and your counsel thereupon, if I had any other quarrel but

the defence of my religion, crown and friends, you had full reason for your advice; for I confess that, speaking as a mere soldier or statesman, I must say there is no probability but of my ruin; yet, as a Christian, I must tell you that God will not suffer rebels and traitors to prosper, nor this cause to be overthrown; and whatever personal punishment it shall please Him to inflict upon me must not make me repine, much less give over this quarrel; and there is little question that a composition with them at this time is nothing else but a submission, which, by the grace of God, I am resolved against whatever it cost me; for I know my obligation to be both in conscience and honour, neither to abandon God's cause, injure my successors nor forsake my friends.

"Indeed, I cannot flatter myself with expectation of good success more than this—to end my days with honour and a good conscience; which obliges me to continue my endeavours, as not despairing that God may yet in due time avenge His own cause; though I must aver to all my friends that he that will stay with me at this time must expect and resolve either to die in a good cause or—which is worse—to live as miserable in maintaining it as the violence of insulting rebels can make him."

But, however brave Charles's resolution, numbers were against him. At Doncaster, in the middle of August, he realized that, with a hostile army advancing from the north in overwhelming force, he had no alternative but capture or retreat. Fairfax and Cromwell were busy reducing points of resistance in the west; and Charles withdrew, safely, into the Cromwell country. For three days, from August 24 to the 27th, he made his headquarters at Huntingdon. His soldiers plundered all the countryside round, making thereby Parliamentarians of any civilians who were not already so. It was represented to Charles that he must, in his own interests, check his men. He made one example. From a signpost he hanged a soldier who had stolen a chalice from a church.

Huntingdon was unsafe for any long tarrying. Charles fell

back to Oxford, but left almost immediately to raise the siege of Hereford, which he entered in triumph on September 4. Then he prepared to set out to relieve Rupert, who was besieged by Fairfax and Cromwell in Bristol.

But on September 10, Bristol was stormed and Rupert surrendered. Incredulous, even suspecting treachery, Charles wrote to his nephew: "Your surrendering as you did is of so much affliction to me that it makes me not only forget the consideration of that place, but is likewise the greatest trial of my constancy that hath yet befallen me. For what is to be done after one that is so near me as you are, both in blood and friendship, submits himself to so mean an action? I give it the easiest term. I have so much to say that I shall say no more of it. Only, lest rashness of judgment be laid to my charge, I must remember you of your letter of the 12th of August, whereby you assured me that if no mutiny happened you would keep Bristol for four months. Did you keep it four days? Was there anything like a mutiny? More questions might be asked, but now, I confess, to little purpose. My conclusion is to desire you to seek your subsistence, until it shall please God to determine of my conditions, somewhere beyond seas. To which end I send you herewith a pass. And I pray God to make you sensible of your present condition and give you means to recover what you have lost. For I shall have no greater joy in a victory than a just occasion, without blushing, to assure you of my being your loving uncle and most faithful friend, C. R."

But, in truth, Rupert was not to blame. The odds against him were too great. And, in the court-martial which he subsequently demanded, he was found not guilty of "any the least want of courage or fidelity."

Cromwell, in his long despatch on the taking of Bristol, informed Parliament: "This is none other but the work of God. He must be a very atheist that doth not acknowledge it." He added: "Presbyterians, Independents, all had here the same spirit of faith and prayer; the same pretence and answer;

they agree here, know no names of difference: pity it is that it should be otherwise anywhere. As for being united in forms, commonly called Uniformity, every Christian will, for peace' sake, study and do as far as conscience will permit; and from brethren in things of the mind we look for no compulsion but that of light and reason."

In the official copy which Parliament printed, this was—again—omitted; nor this time, did the Lords reveal it. But the Independents in Parliament, who had heard it read, issued it in pamphlet form and it was "scattered up and down the streets" as "The Conclusion of Lieutenant-General Cromwell's Letter."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE FLIGHT OF THE KING

THE autumn brought no respite to the King. On September 13, three days after the fall of Bristol, Montrose was defeated and, his army cut to pieces, he became a fugitive among the Scottish mountains. Charles, refusing to face the reality of it, continued his now aimless march to the north as far as Newark. He might as well be there as anywhere, now.

Cromwell and Fairfax, exhilarated by victory after victory, decided to separate so that they might more speedily reduce the remaining Royalist castles in the south and the west. Fairfax went into Devon, Cromwell into Hampshire. So it was that, on October 8, 1645, Oliver, with a complete train of artillery, came to Basing.

Basing House, containing within its walls both a Norman castle and a Tudor palace, covered fourteen and a half acres—"as spacious as the Tower of London and strongly walled."

The home of the Roman Catholic Marquis of Winchester, this "nest of idolatry," well-fortified and well-provisioned, had for four years, in spite of attack after attack, blocked Parliament's road to the west. The "virgin-fortress" was a symbol and an epitome of the war. Winchester's wife was Essex's sister. Enjoying the safety of his hospitality were Inigo Jones, now an old man of seventy-two, Wenceslaus Hollar and William Faithorne, the engravers, some Jesuits, and Dr. Griffith, who, for his Anglican sermons, had been deprived of his London living. Among the 300 soldiers of the garrison was a giant, said to be 9 feet tall; the Major—Robinson—was, in civil life, a comedian at Drury Lane, son of the famous clown at Blackfriars Playhouse.

Against the 300 were 7,000 Ironsides and their guns; but when Cromwell called on them to surrender, making it clear

that, if they refused, no quarter would be given, there was no thought of weakening. The motto of the Premier Marquis of England was "*Aymez Loyauté.*"

At the outset the defenders had one stroke of fortune. They captured Colonel Robert Hammond as he was riding to inspect some cavalry which had been posted at the further side of the house. According to one unfriendly critic, "it was suspected that Colonel Hammond, being related to the Earl of Essex, whose half-sister was married to the Marquis of Winchester, had suffered himself to be taken prisoner on design to serve the said Marquis," but Cromwell wrote at once that "if any wrong or violence" were offered to Hammond, "the best in the house shall not expect quarter." It did not, however, need this threat to himself to induce Winchester to treat Hammond with the greatest friendliness; and his presence inside Basing added a last fantastic touch of unreality to the crossed strands of war.

Hammond was twenty-five, a young man of abundant courage—"naturally a valiant spirit," as Cromwell wrote—and great idealism. By his marriage with Hampden's youngest daughter, he had become a member of the "cousinage." He was also "the nephew of two uncles"—one of them, Thomas, a fanatical Parliamentarian and now Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance for the New Model; the other, Henry, the favourite chaplain of the King. Thus, if he was Cromwell's "dearest Robin," he was also "Robin" to Charles. In the tangle of divided loyalties, he remained, as far as he could, faithful to the memory of Hampden, steering a course to the compass of principles. Though he was a born fighter—he had distinguished himself at Bristol, where he was wounded, and had recently been court-martialled for killing in duel a major who had given him the lie—it is probable that he was more at home in Basing than outside it. Notwithstanding his youth, he belonged in spirit to the company of Hampden and Falkland and, despite his affection for Oliver, found the growing company of fanatics in the New Model not altogether to his taste.

If he was representative of a sensibility that was passing, Hugh Peters, the Chaplain of the New Model, was a portent of the future. The son of a Dutch refugee, and a year older than Cromwell, he had in the 'thirties taken that voyage to New England that Oliver had contemplated. His odyssey, however, was not entirely spiritual as, after being expelled from Cambridge, he was prosecuted by a London butcher for adultery and found it advisable to travel, first to Holland, then to America. Before his departure, he had as a "lecturer" at St Sepulchre's preached to—on his own estimate—overflowing congregations where "above an hundred every week were persuaded from sin to Christ"; and when he returned he discovered that his gifts of oratory, combined with a jovial temperament (he recommended that disputatious clergy should dine together as a way of settling their controversies), made him an ideal Army chaplain.

With no convictions, except those that concerned his own comfort, and little theology, this "very pontiff of burlesque pulpiteers" was the apostle of toleration in so far as it concerned the godly and a stirrer-up of fanatical hatred of Laudians and Roman Catholics. He named Charles "Barabbas," flattering the Army with the implied alternative, and before Naseby had ridden among the men with a Bible in one hand and a pistol in the other urging them to do their duty and explaining that the sword contained all the laws of England. His short exhortations were almost as much appreciated as his two-hour sermons. An example of them—on the text "Bind your Kings with chains and your nobles in fetters of iron"—was: "Beloved, this is the last Psalm but one, and the next Psalm hath six verses and twelve Hallelujahs—praise ye the Lord. And for what? Look into my text! There you have the reason for it. Because the Kings were bound in chains."

Peters was also used to give to Parliament an eye-witness account of the various battles and sieges which he attended; and in this capacity, the "ecclesiastical newsmonger," as the Royalists called him, considerably augmented his fortune.

If Cromwell's preference for Peters' over another chaplain, the learned and saintly Richard Baxter, whom he never liked, is indicative of a weakness in his character, it is comprehensible enough. Peters possessed exactly the qualities which were necessary for his purpose. His jovial tolerance was, indeed, something entirely different from Oliver's lofty toleration; his glib quoting of texts had little in common with Oliver's wrestling with Scripture; his superficial fluency was the reverse of Oliver's slow, weighty, untuneful speech—but there was, outwardly, a similarity which made Cromwell see in Peters an agent whom he could trust and a fellow-seeker after truth on whom he could rely.[1] And at least they were at one in their blind hatred of Romanism.

On the night before the storming of Basing House—which was decided on after six days of continuous artillery fire had at last breached the walls—they agreed on a text for meditation which indubitably referred to the now-doomed Papists: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake. . . . Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. . . . They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."

The storm began at daybreak on October 14. Quarter was neither asked nor given. All the 300 defending soldiers were killed. Of the priests, six were slain and four reserved for

[1] Gardiner, it is only fair to mention, interprets Cromwell's friendship with Peters as evidence of Peters' integrity rather than Cromwell's weakness. In his long—and, I think, slightly disingenuous—defence of Peters, he is, in fact, following (though he does not mention it) Harris' *Account of Hugh Peters*, published in 1751. There is, of course, no doubt that the Royalist accounts of Peters contained much slanderous vituperation and that Carlyle was right in referring to him as "a man concerning whom the reader has heard so many falsehoods." But, making every possible allowance, Peters emerges as the leading hypocritical mountebank of the age. A *faux bonhomme*, after the manner of Pym, but without a tithe of Pym's genius, he had his uses as an Army chaplain. As Gardiner puts it, without any ironic intention: "It is easy to imagine how he could chat and jest with soldiers, and yet could seize an opportunity to slip in a word on higher matters."

a public disembowelling and hanging. The attackers were given permission to loot the house, and their plunder was prodigious. They even took the clothes from old Inigo Jones, who was carried out, naked and a prisoner, in a blanket.

Winchester owed his life to Hammond, who protected him personally throughout the assault, in return—so he explained to Cromwell—for the courtesy which he had shown him in captivity. But he could not save him from the indignity of being stripped by a soldier and of being forced to listen to a harangue from Hugh Peters.

The Chaplain explained that the King's cause was already lost.

"If the King had no more ground in England than Basing House," said the Marquis, "I would adventure as I have and so maintain it to the uttermost."

But why fight a hopeless battle? Peters became argumentative, pointing out that the triumph of Parliament's Army, as embodying Righteousness, was inevitable.

Winchester cut him short: "Basing is called Loyalty."

When the prisoners and the plunder were removed—"our soldiers got good encouragement" was the phrase which Cromwell used in his despatch to cover their £2,000,000 worth of loot—the House was burnt to the ground and the very ruins carted away.

With the road to the west now open, Cromwell marched to assist Fairfax to bring about more speedily the day "when righteousness and peace shall meet." And through the winter and early spring to the King in Oxford, "every day brought the news of the loss of some garrison."

On March 21, 1646, old Sir Jacob Astley—who rode to battle with the prayer: "Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day; if I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me" —"had the honour to play the last stake for the King" and was beaten at Stow-on-the-Wold. Sitting on a drum on the last battlefield, he acknowledged the finality of defeat.

"You have now done your work," he said to his captors,

"and may go play unless you will fall out among yourselves."

The Army had nothing more to do but to march on Oxford and take the King.

At this new crisis of his fate, Charles made once more an old decision. Rather than fall into the hands of the Army, rather than surrender himself to Parliament, he would once more throw himself on the Scots. He secretly engaged himself to look favourably on Presbyterianism—"I promise," he wrote, "as soon as I come into the Scots army, I shall be very willing to be instructed concerning the Presbyterian government, wherein they shall see that I shall strive to content them in anything that shall not be against my conscience"—and they, on their part, finding the English Parliament dilatory in their pay and the English Army hostile to their religious principles, engaged to "employ their armies and forces to assist his Majesty in the procuring of a happy and well-grounded peace and in recovery of his Majesty's rights."

The diplomatic accord, however, covered an essential divergence. The Scots were determined that Charles should immediately establish Presbyterianism; and Charles made a secret written vow, which he gave to his chaplain (who buried it, for disinterment at the Restoration) that if ever he were restored to power he would give back to the Church of England all its rights and property. Hearing of the Scottish insistence on his immediate action, he wrote to Henrietta in Paris that "the Scots are abominable, relapsed rogues," but, with the Army closing in on Oxford, he saw no alternative to trusting himself to them. He summoned his Council and informed them that he had made up his mind to go to London, and that if they did not hear from him within three weeks, they must make with the approaching Fairfax the best conditions they could. Next day at three in the morning, led by an Oxford don who knew better than any all the byways of the countryside, he slipped out of Oxford, his hair and beard

cut short and wearing the clothes of a servant, "in attendance" on Mr. John Ashburnham, Groom of the Bedchamber. Rupert, now reconciled and forgiven, had wanted to be one of the party, but his great height would have made disguise impossible. So his uncle—whom he never saw again—passed from his hands to those of Ashburnham.

Jack Ashburnham, with something of the gaiety, the grace and the impracticable optimism of Buckingham, whose cousin he was, had long been one of Charles's friends. Though he had been employed in a minor political capacity during the Treaty of Uxbridge—negotiating with, of all people, Sir Henry Vane—and, as a courtier, had been in the centre of the domestic intrigues at Oxford, his tie with the King and his influence over him was that of personal affection. That Charles was in debt to him over £9,000 and that it mattered to neither of them was an indication of their relationship. Had his ability equalled his loyalty, the King could have had no better adviser. And, at least in this personal adventure, there could have been no more appropriate companion. It was impossible that Charles should not have turned back in memory to that spring, twenty-three years ago, when he and Buckingham, as plain Jack and Tom Smith, disguised in false beards, stole away from Court to ride to Spain. Then the penalty of discovery was nothing worse than a father's anger—and they had been nearly caught because Buckingham had wildly overtipped a ferryman, who became suspicious enough to inform the authorities.

Now there was a throne at stake—and it was Ashburnham who made the same error. As they made their way over the Chilterns, a Parliamentarian soldier fell in with them. Charles explained that his master was a Member of Parliament. When they stopped at an inn to refresh themselves, the size of Ashburnham's tip made Charles add hurriedly, seeing the soldier's surprise, that he was a Member of the House of Lords.

They managed to shake off their unwelcome travelling-companion at Slough and, striking north, came in the night

to Little Gidding. But in this sanctuary, which Charles had visited in happier days, there was no rest for a broken King. It was Puritan country. But they put him on his path in safety.

At seven o'clock on the morning of May 5, he arrived at Southwell and, alighting at the Saracen's Head, became prisoner-guest of the Scots.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INTERLUDE

THE period between Charles's surrender to the Scots at the beginning of May, 1646, and their selling of him to the English Parliament on January 30, 1647, seems, in retrospect, little but an unimportant interlude between the military and the diplomatic struggle. Nowhere is it more difficult to be uninfluenced by subsequent events. The general history of the time is a maze of bewildering and abortive intrigues and negotiations between the King, the Scots, the Parliament and the Army; of growing feuds and suspicion between Presbyterian and Independent (when the Presbyterian Essex died in the September of 1646, it was widely believed that the Independents had poisoned him); of increasing disillusion and reaction from the war at home and of the tireless militancy of the Queen abroad. And Cromwell and Charles, their figures merged in the confused background, appear reduced to puppet-Machiavellis biding their time.

But this is not the actuality of it; and a truer picture would be gained by allowing two unadorned circumstances to catch the highlight. In the June of 1646, Cromwell's command expired and, as it was not renewed, his official connection with the Army ceased; and at the beginning of November Charles was willing, and himself proposed, to abdicate in favour of the Prince of Wales—a course which was prevented by the angry Queen.

Charles's reason for this proposal was itself a just epitome of the situation: "They tell me from London that they will neither declare against monarchy nor my posterity, but merely against my person."

At the same moment, Cromwell, a simple Member of Parliament again, was endeavouring to prevent the continuance of the Army Committee and bring about the disbandment of the Army; while his dissatisfaction with the way in

which Parliament was handling the situation was so acute that within a few months he contemplated leaving the country and offering his services as a cavalry officer to the Elector Palatine.

However the future might alter the situation, both Cromwell and Charles were, at this point, prepared to relinquish their power. And, in the story of their relations with each other, these confusing months are properly seen as preparing the way, not for their mortal divergence, but for that brief alliance by which it seemed for a moment that they would rule England together.

. . . . .

For Charles, his sojourn with the Scots at Newcastle was an uncomfortable experience. "I never knew what it was to be barbarously baited before," he wrote to Henrietta, "never wanting new vexations." But he bore them in a way which compelled the admiration of the most critical. Alexander Henderson, the Presbyterian divine, who, at the beginning of the troubles in Scotland, had preached the incendiary sermon which became known as "The Bishops' Doom," came constantly to exchange theological arguments with him. He left a picture of the King: "Never man saw him passionately angry nor extraordinarily moved either with prosperity or adversity; never man heard him curse; never man heard him complain or bemoan his condition: and (which is beyond all admiration) being stript of all counsel and help of man and used so harshly as would have stupefied any other man, then did his undaunted courage and transcendent wisdom show itself more clearly and vindicate him from the obloquy of former times to the astonishment of his greatest enemies."

There was, however, one occasion on which Charles lost his temper. He failed to wait for the lengthy extempore grace before meals which one of the Presbyterian ministers was in the habit of pronouncing. While the minister "was forming his chaps as his manner was, his Majesty said grace for himself and was fallen to his meat and had eaten up some part of his

dinner before his chaplain had ended blessing the creature, the King then checking him and saying he intended not to stay until his meat was cold, whilst he stood whistling for the Spirit."

He was neither allowed to choose his servants nor to communicate with his friends; indeed, his only liberty appears to have been "to go abroad and play at golf in the Shield Field without the walls" of Newcastle. Early in the January of 1647, he wrote to his wife: "I must tell thee that now I am declared what I have really been ever since I came to this army, which is a prisoner."

Henrietta, still optimistic of foreign aid, urged him to make every concession. As, from her point of view, there was no difference between a bishop and a presbyter, she could never understand the basis of his scruples. He tried, without success, to enlighten her: "I put little or no difference between setting up the Presbyterian government or submitting to the Church of Rome. Therefore make the case thine own. With what patience wouldest thou give ear to him who should persuade thee, for worldly respects, to leave the communion of the Roman Church for any other? Indeed, sweet heart, this is my case."

But Henrietta was the daughter of the Henri Quatre who had thought Paris worth a Mass. She continued to urge him to abandon episcopacy, at any rate for a short time, in order to regain both that and everything else. Eventually he yielded to the extent of proposing to establish Presbyterianism in England for three years, provided that some measure of toleration allowed him and his friends to retain their own form of worship. Unfortunately, he also included control of the militia to Parliament for ten years and his own temporary abdication in favour of Prince Charles, who now, a tall, saturnine youth of seventeen, had managed to join his mother in Paris.

The Queen tersely pointed out that the grant of the militia meant the prolongation of Parliament's power and added:

"As long as the Parliament lasts, you are not King. As for me, I will not again set foot in England. With your scheme of granting the militia you have cut your own throat, for when you have given them that power you can refuse them nothing, not even my life if they ask you for it."

The Scots were equally dissatisfied with the religious suggestions. They would not hear of toleration and they insisted that Charles himself should take the Covenant. When it became clear that he would do neither, they determined to bargain no further with him, but to make terms with the English Parliament and withdraw to Scotland, after having handed the King over, in return for £400,000 as payment due for the services in the war. On the payment of a first instalment of £100,000[1] on January 30, 1647, their garrison marched out of Newcastle and were replaced by English soldiers with no more ceremonial than the ordinary changing of the guard to mark the fact that Charles was now at last a prisoner in the hands of Parliament.

The Royalist comparison of the Scots with Judas was inevitable.

"L'Ecosse, parjure à sa foi,
Pour un denier vendit son roi."

Nor, in later years, was it overlooked that the day of the month was that on which, two years later, he was killed.

. . . . .

Cromwell, as a Member of Parliament who was one of the Committee of Both Kingdoms set up to carry on consultations with the Scots, signed the agreement by which the King was surrendered. But in the document itself no mention was made of the transaction. Its seventeen articles were concerned only with financial and military arrangements; nor is there any reason to suppose that Oliver himself was involved, one way or the other, in a matter that was not even admitted. As an Independent in a predominantly Presbyterian House of

[1] About £1,000,000 in modern money.

Commons, he played no part in affairs except in quiet Committee work and "even there the record is curiously dull and unrevealing."

In reward for his services, Parliament had granted him £2,500 a year, to be raised from the confiscated estates of Royalists, and he had brought his family to London. With his wife, his mother, Richard, Henry, Mary and Frances, he lived in Drury Lane "near Charing Cross." His two elder daughters had married in 1646, the beloved Betty in January to a young law-student, not yet twenty, named John Claypole, whose family had long been friendly with the Cromwells; and Bridget, in June, to the thirty-five-year-old Henry Ireton, one of the landed gentry of Nottinghamshire, a lawyer and Commissary-General of the Army.

In making Ireton his son-in-law, Cromwell was but crowning his growing intimacy with the cold, clever man who was to play Cassius to his Brutus. The great square head, framed in a mass of curly black hair, the mean mouth and pinched features, the sunken eyes and sallow complexion were to become an increasingly familiar sight at Oliver's side. A man of great intellect but little perception, his legalistic mind had a passion for static form but no comprehension of dynamic force. In this respect, he was nearer in temperament to Charles than to Cromwell, though he had one quality—physical cowardice—which both of them lacked; and this, explaining his "unmerciful and bloody nature," gave him an appearance of stability which made his other fanaticisms the more dangerous. He was, as Clarendon saw him, "of a melancholic, reserved, dark nature, who communicated his thoughts to very few; so that, for the most part, he resolved alone, but was never diverted from any resolution he had taken; and he was thought often by his obstinacy to prevail over Cromwell himself, and to extort his concurrence contrary to his own inclinations." It is improbable that Oliver completely understood him; it is possible that, in a sense, he feared him when he had gone too far in reliance on him ever to withdraw.

Certainly there were times when his practical mind grew as impatient with Ireton's theories as with the muddled mysticism and waspish intractibility of Sir Henry Vane. When, in October, 1646, he wrote to Bridget to give her news of her sister Betty and her friends at Ely, he began: "I write not to thy husband; partly to avoid trouble, for one line of mine begets many of his, which I doubt makes him sit up too late; partly because I am myself indisposed at this time, having some other considerations."

The matters in which Ireton assumed importance as his father-in-law's *alter ego* were already developing while the King was at Newcastle. With the war over, what was to be done with the Army that had won it? To the Presbyterian Parliament it was obvious that it should at once be disbanded, since, in spite of every protestation of loyalty, it constituted a menace to their power. On the other hand, to Ireton and his fellow Independents, it represented their one weapon for restraining the persecuting zeal of the Presbyterians. Ireton perceived both the constitutional and the political implications of this before Cromwell, who was in favour of disbandment. Coming late into Parliament, he had less practical respect for it than had Oliver; and was able to think clearly in terms of a new Constitution where the older man was bewildered by a shifting focus. While Cromwell was fulfilling a simple and pedestrian duty in Parliament, Ireton, with his regiment, was already glimpsing in the Army a truer reflection of the national will than in the intolerably prolonged assembly at Westminster.

And as the King rode slowly south from Newcastle to the largest country house in England, Holmby House in Northamptonshire, one of his summer residences, there were demonstrations which suggested the possibility of new alignments. Wherever he passed, the bells rang out and the people rejoiced. Near Nottingham, Fairfax rode out to meet him and kissed his hand, to be commended by Charles as a man of honour who had been faithful to his trust. At

Northampton a volley of guns was fired to welcome him. Everywhere the shout was heard: "God bless your Majesty." He was Kingship, both in its symbolic and in its constitutional sense. His subjects knelt to him, "bringing their sick to be touched by him, and courting him as only able to restore to them their peace and settlement."

. . . . . .

Meanwhile, in London, Cromwell was slowly recovering from a serious illness. Fairfax, accompanying the King from Nottingham to Holmby, received a letter from him: "It hath pleased God to raise me out of a dangerous sickness; and I do most willingly acknowledge that the Lord hath, in this visitation, exercised the bowels of a Father towards me. I received in myself the sentence of death that I might learn to trust in Him that raiseth from the dead and have no confidence in the flesh. It's a blessed thing to die daily. For what is there in this world to be accounted of? The best men according to the flesh—and things—are lighter than vanity. I find this only good—to love the Lord and His poor despised people, to do for them and to be ready to suffer with them. . . . I must thankfully confess your favour in your last letter. I see I am not forgotten; and truly to be kept in your remembrance is very great satisfaction to me; for I can say in the simplicity of my heart, I put a high value upon your love—which, when I forget, I shall cease to be a grateful and an honest man."[1]

As a Member of Parliament, disciplining himself to act with a loyalty which it was becoming increasingly difficult to feel, his thoughts turned to the simplicity of the military life. He remarked in conversation to a friend that "it was a miserable thing to serve a Parliament to whom let a man be never so faithful if one pragmatical fellow amongst them rise up and

[1] I have followed Abbott in the dating of this letter, which obviously belongs to the March of 1647 and not, as Carlyle and Gardiner have ascribed it, to the March of 1648. The confusion has arisen because the letter itself is dated inside 1647–8, but outside 1646–7.

asperse him, he shall never wipe it off. Whereas, when one serves under a general he may do as much service and yet be free from all blame and envy."

Soldiers still had their uses. Four days later he wrote again to Fairfax that it was only by the intervention of the military that a riot in Covent Garden had been quelled and a crowd of sectaries prevented from "cutting the Presbyterians' throats." "These are fine tricks to mock God with!"

For himself, he would leave England, with as many of his old regiment as would follow him, to help Rupert's elder brother the Elector Palatine in Germany to regain his rights. He might even meet Rupert there—Rupert, who was now idling away his time in France in Henrietta's tawdry court-in-exile—and they would lead an invincible charge together.

One thing was certain—the days of the New Model were ended. He went down to assure the House of Commons: "In the presence of Almighty God, before whom I stand, I know the Army will disband and lay down its arms at your door, whensoever you shall command them."

But Ireton, in camp with the Army, was by no means so sure. He was putting his pen, which was so much mightier than his sword, at the service of the soldiers to draft a petition against disbandment.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

CROMWELL MEETS CHARLES

THROUGHOUT the April and May of 1647, it was the affairs of the Army which were engaging men's attention. Parliament's plan of disbanding the soldiers and inviting them to re-enlist for service in Ireland—where hostilities dragged interminably on, to no one's satisfaction—was ingenious enough on paper, but impossible in practice. For one thing, at the beginning of April the pay of the infantry was twenty weeks and that of the cavalry forty-five weeks in arrears. For another, no indemnity had been granted them for acts committed during the war and for which they were likely to be legally sued during the peace. Also, no arrangement had been made for pensions for the widows and orphans of those killed or for compensating those who had suffered loss in the Parliamentary cause.

A petition calling attention to these anomalies (which was believed, but not proved, to have owed much to Ireton) threw Parliament into a frenzy of anger. It was not merely that they were manifestly unable to raise the £331,000 which would have been necessary to pay the men—they still owed the Scots £200,000—but they regarded any expression of opinion on the part of the military, except protestations of implicit obedience, as mutiny and sedition. Their answer to it was to pass a declaration that "all those who shall continue in their distempered condition, and go on advancing and promoting that petition, shall be looked upon and proceeded against as enemies of the State and disturbers of the public peace."

Nevertheless, aware of the potential danger of the situation, they sent commissioners to discuss matters with the officers of the Army at Saffron Walden, and in a meeting held in the church there, their enquiry as to why no one would volunteer

[*National Portrait Gallery*

OLIVER CROMWELL

by R. WALKER

for the Irish service was met by the shout: "Give us back Fairfax and Cromwell and we all go!"

This was sufficiently disconcerting, but the action of the men was even more reprehensible. Believing that their officers were either unable or unwilling to represent the interests of the rank and file, eight of the ten cavalry regiments chose two representatives each, known as Agitators, to draw up a statement of their case for presentation both to the "grandees" of the Army and to Parliament.

When the Commons read the letter of the Agitators, in which they suggested that the proposal to send them to Ireland "was nothing else but a design to ruin and break this army in pieces . . . a mere cloak for some who have lately tasted of sovereignty, and being lifted beyond the ordinary sphere of servants, seek to become masters and degenerate into tyrants," their fury was impressive; but it was kept within bounds by the sobering realization that it represented the opinion of the core—perhaps of the whole—of the Army and that, in this mood, the Army "was more likely to give than to receive laws." It passed the required Act of Indemnity, promised the immediate payment of eight weeks of arrears, and sent four of its Members, Skippon, Cromwell, Ireton and Fleetwood (a close friend of Cromwell's who was to marry Bridget after Ireton's death), to endeavour "to quiet distempers." In private, Ireton told the soldiers that they ought not to disband until justice was done. In public, Cromwell besought the officers "to work in them [the soldiers] a good opinion of that authority that is over both us and them. If that authority falls to nothing, nothing can follow but confusion."

There is no evidence that, at this juncture, Cromwell either echoed Ireton's words or shared his opinions. The sentiments which he expressed were so in keeping with his consistent attitude, so expressive of his continuing policy and hopes, that even his enemies could hardly doubt their genuineness. Having performed the duty that Parliament entrusted to him,

he returned to London and throughout May watched events. He did, indeed, keep open house, which, though the hospitality was frugal, considerably annoyed his wife, whose housekeeping accounts were upset by a debit balance of "several score pounds."[1] Officers, soldiers and Independent politicians found their way to the house in Drury Lane "as to their headquarters with all their projections and were entertained with small beer and bread and butter." The upshot, in the words of a hostile contemporary, was that "no men of more abstemiousness ever effected so vile and flagitious an enterprise" as was presumed to be under consideration.

The crisis, however, was not in the least precipitated by Cromwell. As soon as Parliament brought the general theory of disbandment to the practical test of naming the day—June 1—on which it was to be carried out, and prescribed the manner of it—each regiment to be disbanded separately in different localities so that there should be no meeting of the Army as a whole—trouble was inevitable. On May 27, Ireton wrote to Cromwell: "They [the Army] are possessed as far as I can discern with this opinion—that if they be thus scornfully dealt with for their faithful services whilst the sword is in their hands, what shall their usage be when they are dissolved? It shall be my endeavour to keep things as right as I can, but how long I shall be able, I know not. . . . By what I perceive in the resolution of the soldiers to defend themselves in just things as they pretend, I cannot but imagine a storm."

On May 31, the eve of the disbandment (as Parliament still hoped) and the mutiny (as others anticipated), Cromwell made his decision. Though the choice appeared to be between military anarchy and Parliamentary tyranny, he had seen that there was a third course—a simple, direct stroke which should

[1] She reimbursed herself eventually by using the piece of gold plate which was presented to Oliver for putting down the Levellers—an action which suggests that she had (or had by then acquired) a lively sense of humour.

dispose both of anarchy and of tyranny. The King was the fount of authority—even during the war Parliament had always had to act legally in his name—and the Army was the source of power. If they were together, all problems might be solved. Whether or not the plan for ensuring the alliance was entirely his own in its first inception, it was completely characteristic of him and the responsibility of putting it into motion was his alone. To the house at Drury Lane that night came a young cornet, George Joyce, who had in civil life been a tailor. To him, reliable in action, extreme in opinion, Cromwell gave his orders. He was to ride to Holmby and take the King from the hands of Parliament.

. . . . .

For Charles, the three months at Holmby had passed pleasantly enough—at least, in comparison with his experiences at Newcastle. "All the tables were as well furnished as they used to be as when His Majesty was in a peaceful and flourishing state." The surveillance, if effective, was discreet, and his "governor," the dissolute but Presbyterian old Earl of Pembroke, had in his youth been one of his father's official Favourites before the coming of Buckingham. Among the servants which Parliament provided for him was at least one who was not uncongenial and whose loyalty to him was immediate and lasting—Mr. Thomas Herbert, a much-travelled man who had been in earlier years attached to the Ambassador to Persia and had visited Mesopotamia and India in the course of his duties.

The deficiency at Holmby which most aggravated Charles was that of a tennis court, since, in its absence, he found it difficult to get as much physical exercise as he liked. But he walked much in the grounds, with their famous herb-garden, and played bowls both on the green there and at the houses of his neighbours. He read considerably, including the works of Shakespeare, which he annotated in the margin. (That playwright was somewhat out of fashion—it was, after all,

thirty years since he died—but the presence of Pembroke formed a living connection with him. Pembroke's elder brother William had been—or so many thought—the "Mr. W. H." of Shakespeare's passionate sonnets.) And in the evenings Charles played chess.

On the afternoon of June 2, he had been bowling with one neighbour and visiting another when he heard, without attaching much importance to it, that there seemed to be a "rendezvous" of a cavalry regiment in the neighbourhood. During the following night, he was awakened by disputing voices in the passage outside his room and, on asking the reason, was told that Cornet Joyce from the Army wished to speak with him. He at once commanded that the visitor should be admitted.

Joyce, with great civility, told him that he had come for his Majesty's good and that his errand was to convey him to some other place. Charles, after some hesitation, asked if he would promise that no harm would come to him, that he would not be forced to do anything against his conscience and that his servants would be allowed to accompany him.

Joyce assented immediately, and the King promised to go with him on the next day.

At six o'clock in the morning of June 4, Charles came on to the lawn in front of the house, where Joyce stood at the head of 500 troopers, who, at the King's request, confirmed their leader's promises of the previous night. Then the King turned to Joyce.

"What commission have you to secure my person?" he asked.

Joyce was evasive.

"Have you nothing in writing," said Charles, "from Sir Thomas Fairfax, your General, to do what you do?"

Joyce, who was quite aware that Fairfax was ignorant of proceedings of which, had he known, he would have violently disapproved, again avoided giving a direct answer.

"I pray you, Mr. Joyce," insisted the King, "deal in-

genuously with me and tell me what commission you have."

"Here," said Joyce, "is my commission."

"Where?"

"Behind me."

Charles looked at the disciplined ranks and smiled: "It is as fair a commission and as well written as I have seen a commission written in my life, written in characters fair and legible enough; a company of handsome, proper gentlemen as I have seen in a great while."

That night, on the way to Newmarket, the King lay at Hinchinbrook House.

. . . . .

When news of Joyce's exploit reached Fairfax, who was with the Army at Newmarket, drawn up, 21,000 strong, less for disbanding than for debate, the General was both angry and alarmed. Fairfax's intrepidity and resolution as a soldier were counterbalanced by his lack of those qualities in every other department of activity. His unfortunate stammer seemed almost an index to character. Once "Black Tom"—as he was called by his men—was off the field, he was a prey to vacillation. Whether he was Presbyterian or Independent, only himself and his Creator—and possibly only the latter—knew. Whether at heart he was Parliamentarian or Royalist was a similar enigma. He had no political sense; and the only thing that could be said of him with certainty was that he abhorred revolution. And there could be no doubt that the abduction of the King was a revolutionary act. He was venting his displeasure on Ireton when Cromwell, hot from a swift ride from London, arrived and took the responsibility. "If this had not been done," Oliver explained, "the King would have been fetched away by order of Parliament." But he agreed that, now that Charles was safely in Army hands, it would be as well if he returned to Holmby; and he sent his cousin, Whalley, with a trusted guard to meet the King on the road to Newmarket. What had been done once could

be done again. There was a wild section of the Army—the Levellers and their friends—who were, in their fanatical hatred of superiors, capable of anything; and he did not want Charles assassinated.

Cromwell himself had left London only just in time to prevent an infuriated Parliament arresting and impeaching him. When the news from Holmby arrived, it was immediately assumed that he was contriver-in-chief. Though he was in the House of Commons at the time, the Presbyterian majority's action was confined to whispering in the lobbies; and before they could decide what procedure to follow, he had slipped out of the Chamber and, taking with him no one but Hugh Peters, had ridden post-haste out of London to seek safety with the Army.

On June 7, Fairfax, with Cromwell and Ireton, rode over to visit the King, who, though he refused to return to Holmby, had agreed to stay for a time at Childerley, a few miles from Cambridge. So, in the Cromwell country, Cromwell and Charles met once more after thirty-one years, if not as friends, at least with a suspension of animosity. From their clash in Parliament and on the battlefield had emerged an obstinate diplomat who had lost supreme power and a perplexed soldier who had gained it, each endeavouring to use the other.

Cromwell watched Fairfax kiss the King's hand and listened to them stammering compliments at each other. He and Ireton did not kiss hands, but "otherwise they behaved themselves with good manners towards him." And Cromwell, when his turn came to speak, professed himself "a devoted servant of his Majesty's interest" and explained that "the strangeness of this action of the Army proceeded of mere care for his person."

Charles's comments are not recorded.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

CROMWELL SUPPORTS CHARLES

FROM the beginning of June till the end of October, 1647, Cromwell did everything in his power to ensure the restoration of the King. The terms he suggested—known as the *Heads of Proposals* and mainly the work of Ireton—were more generous than any that had yet been offered or were to be offered in the future. That his efforts, hovering continually on the edge of success, eventually failed was due finally to the fact that Charles had no intention of making any arrangement which differed in principle from that which he would have insisted on had he won the war instead of losing it. As he had played for time for eight months with the Scots at Newcastle, so he repeated his tactics for five with Cromwell. Time, he considered, was his most reliable ally. The difficulties and divisions of his enemies would increase and the mounting tide of Royalism in the disillusioned country might soon ensure his return to power on his own terms. And he was still secretly in communication with the Scots.

Moreover, he distrusted Cromwell, and he had, from his own experience of life, a comprehensible motive for his suspicion. For, throughout the negotiations, Cromwell asked nothing for himself. This was so unnatural that it destroyed any basis of trust. Even Wentworth, at the height of a former crisis, had pestered him for an earldom. He agreed with Jack Ashburnham—who was allowed to be with him once more—that the only course by which to be sure of Cromwell and his associates was "to fasten their affections to his Majesty's perfect restoration by proffers of advantages to themselves and by fulfilling their utmost expectations in anything relating to their own interests." But his offer to make Oliver Earl of Essex and a Knight of the Garter and to give his son Richard a place in

the Royal Bedchamber produced nothing but a refusal, and a crop of libellous pamphlets from the extremist presses accusing Cromwell of treachery. Oliver disdained to prosecute pamphleteers—"Shall we quarrel with every dog in the street that barks at us and suffer the kingdom to be lost with such a fantastical thing?"—but for a time he changed his quarters every night for fear of assassination.

The new French Ambassador, even more puzzled than the English courtiers by Oliver's attitude, asked him for enlightenment. "No one," said Cromwell, "rises so high as he who knows not whither he is going." This remark, when reported, provoked the comment that now it was clear that Cromwell was a fool.

And, judged by the standards of any Court, he was. To have moulded a new Constitution for the settlement of England was honour enough for a Fenland squire whose deepest convictions concerned the vanity of all carnal dignities—"I find this only good, to love the Lord and his poor despised people." It was even a measure of his foolishness that he credited Charles with something of his own integrity, even though, as negotiations proceeded, he came to wish that the King would be "more frank" and not tie himself "so strictly to narrow maxims."

His judgment of Charles was affected radically by the physical presence of the King. The tyrannical, blood-stained monster of propaganda was a slight, athletic little man of overwhelming charm and courtesy with "a soldier-like spirit" and a grave dignity that seemed to compel devotion. The result of several meetings with him (after which observers noted that they both appeared "well satisfied") was to make Cromwell admit in private conversation: "The King is the uprightest and most conscientious man of his three kingdoms."

In the matter of those religious convictions which divided them, Oliver was equally convinced of Charles's sincerity. He not only arranged for the King to have the service of his

chaplains, so that, for the first time since he left Oxford, Charles was able to participate in the Prayer Book rite, but he instructed Whalley (who, throughout the whole period, remained to guard the King) not to obey any Parliament order to the contrary; and when the Presbyterian House of Commons demanded that the chaplains should be brought to the bar of the House for having used the forbidden Book "with divers superstitious gestures contrary to the Directory (of Worship) as prescribed by ordinance of Parliament" he took care that they should not be found by the soldiers who were sent to arrest them.

Moreover, in the *Proposals* he saw to it that his personal tolerance officially allowed to Charles all that he could reasonably ask. The continuance of episcopacy was admitted—though the bishops were to lose their civil powers; to the general toleration even those Roman Catholics who would take the oath of allegiance were admitted; the Presbyterian Covenant was no longer to be enforced.

Fascination by Charles as a man, respect for Charles as an Anglican were reinforced by sympathy with Charles as a father. The King's request to see again the children who were still in England was granted. In mid-July, at the Greyhound Inn at Maidenhead, Charles met them—James, Duke of York, a tall, melancholy boy of thirteen, whom he had left in Oxford when he fled to the Scots; the eleven-year-old Elizabeth with the grave, sweet face and the premature piety which had provoked the nickname "Temperance," and Henry, Duke of Gloucester, aged seven, who did not recognize him. This was not to be wondered at, as he had not seen the two younger children since the outbreak of the war. Elizabeth had been kept by Parliament as a hostage; and, in the spring before Naseby, they had contemplated putting Henry to a more effective use by crowning him king in opposition to his father.

Cromwell, watching the family reunion, burst into tears.

Even in the sterner matters of statecraft, Cromwell came

round to Charles's side. The correspondence captured at Naseby had made him sufficiently familiar with the King's plans to raise foreign aid and, in those particular circumstances, he had been angry enough at them. But now, faced with the identical problem of forcing a Constitution on a recalcitrant Parliament, he was prepared to go quite as far as Charles. When one of the King's advisers asked him what would happen if the King accepted the *Proposals*, but the Parliamentary majority—as it undoubtedly would—rejected them, he replied: "The Army will purge and purge and purge and never leave purging the Houses till they have made them of such a temper as to do his Majesty's business; and rather than we should fall short of what is promised, I will join with French, Spaniard, Cavalier or any that will join with me to force them to it."

There was one significant omission in the catalogue—the Scots. With the Scots, and their marauding army, their undependability and their intolerant Presbyterianism, he would have nothing whatever to do. He did not know that, on the very day when Charles began discussing the first draft of the *Proposals* with Robin Hammond and Ireton, he had sent a secret letter to Scotland, making further concessions and urging them to invade England immediately on his behalf.

The process of enforcing a realization of the relative situations of Parliament and Army was achieved on August 6, 1647, when the Army, 18,000 strong, marched through London, with Cromwell riding at the head of the cavalry and Fairfax, who was unwell, sitting in a coach with his wife and Mrs. Cromwell, acknowledging the plaudits of the crowd. The balance of power was understood. The legal position remained much as it always had been. The Army's actions were ostensibly performed by order of Parliament, just as Parliament had officially fought the Civil War in the name of the King.

Having delivered its object lesson, the Army withdrew to

Putney and the King took up residence conveniently near, at Hampton Court.

. . . . . .

The two months in Hampton Court—from the end of August to the end of October—were for Charles "halcyon days." He held his Court with something of his former state, with his old servants round him. The Presence Chamber was thronged by those who had recently been enemies, for "there was an amnesty by consent, pleasing, as was thought, to both sides." Cromwell was in constant attendance, with his wife and the Irctons—Ashburnham was noticed to take Mrs. Cromwell by the hand and lead her in to "feasting." Robin Hammond, as one of the negotiators, saw much of his uncle Henry, who continued to perform his duties as the King's chaplain without fear of Presbyterian interference. Charles was at last able to take the exercise of which he had been so long deprived. He played tennis—in a new "tennis suit of wrought coloured satin lined with taffeta" which his tailor supplied in September. He hunted in the Park in "a grey cloth hunting suit with necessaries suitable," which he ordered at the same time. He played billiards. Above all, he had his children with him. The Duke of York had apartments in Hampton Court itself and Elizabeth and Henry were at Syon House across the river.

The guards, of course, were still in attendance; but they were for his protection rather than his imprisonment, and he had, in any case, given Whalley his promise not to attempt to escape. "They neither hindered his Majesty from riding abroad to take the air nor from doing anything he had a mind to, nor restrained those who waited upon him in his bedchamber, nor his chaplains from performing their functions." He was not even prevented from writing to the Queen and other friends abroad. Every Monday and Thursday, in preparation for the foreign posts which went on Tuesdays and Fridays, he would retire to his room at two in the afternoon

to deal with this correspondence, until, between five and six, he came out to Evensong and supper.

In such an atmosphere, the negotiations proceeded amicably, but not speedily. Charles, after originally rejecting the *Proposals*, announced that he preferred them to the Presbyterian suggestions which had been put forward at Newcastle, and asked that he might discuss personally with Parliament the disputed points. He was standing out on two only. He objected to seven of his partisans, at present unnamed, being excluded from the general amnesty; and to a portion of the revenues of the bishops' property being used to pay the arrears of the Army. In refusing this, he was only, as he saw it, adhering to his unvarying formula not to betray either his Church or his friends. Parliament, however (which, though dominated by the Army, was still strongly Presbyterian in sentiment), decided to submit counter-proposals that, as they included the proscription of the Prayer Book, were in effect a proclamation of intransigence.

Cromwell's position was rapidly becoming untenable. Attacked on all sides—by Royalist pamphleteers in London, who ridiculed the redness of the nose and drew attention to the alleged laxity of his morals; by anti-Royalist politicians, who accused him of intending to make himself another Buckingham; by Parliamentarians, who accused him of duplicity; even by Hugh Peters, who denounced him for deserting the plain, godly folk and aspiring to shine as a courtier—he defended himself in the words: "Though it may be for the present a cloud may lie over our actions to those who are not acquainted with the grounds of them, yet we doubt not but God will clear our integrity and innocency from any other ends we aim at but His glory and the public good." And he continued to urge Parliament to come to terms with the King, warning them "how that there was a party in the Army labouring for the King, and that a great one; how the City was endeavouring to get another party in the Army; and that there was a third party, little dreamt of,

that were endeavouring to have no other power to rule but the sword."

In this last phrase, he glanced at the growing power of the Levellers, which had introduced a new and incalculable factor into the situation. Inspired by the writings of John Lilburne—who had become known as "Freeborn John" because of his ever-recurrent appeal to the "rights of freeborn Englishmen"—and led by Colonel Thomas Rainsborough, they were preparing to make a bid for the control of the Army, the capture and death of the King and the complete subversion of constitutional government.

Rainsborough, so they said, was the only man of whom Cromwell was afraid. This fighter and fanatic, thirty-five years old, had in his youth sailed with his father, an old sea-dog, to fight the Barbary pirates, and his heart had always been rather in sea than in land warfare; but during the Civil War he had made himself a master of siege-craft and, on Cromwell's own admission, had played the most difficult and decisive part in the taking of Bristol.

His one passion was a belief in the equality of all men—"poorest He that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest He"—and his position as a small landowner, in no way connected with the "cousinage," tended to drive him into the company of the "new men" of the Army. His isolation was increased by the fact that his great-grandparents had been refugees from Germany, driven out by religious persecution, and the foreign strain in him prevented him from sharing many of the unconscious assumptions of so English a man as Cromwell. Most of his own friends and relations had emigrated to America. In Parliament and in the Army he had followers and allies rather than intimates, as befitted a man who saw life in terms of principles instead of persons. He became the acknowledged head of the Levellers,[1] who demanded the abolition of the monarchy, and government by

[1] The name is first met with in print on November 1, 1647, but it had obviously been current as a nickname for some time.

a single House of Parliament elected biennially by manhood suffrage without any property qualification. This was to be accompanied by a scheme of confiscation which would allow an income of no more than £2,000 a year to a duke, marquis or earl and a proportionate restriction in the case of the gentry.

Cromwell detested these doctrines as heartily as Charles. If Charles's deepest political conviction was that "a subject and a sovereign are clean different things," Cromwell's was: "'Tis the general good of the kingdom that we ought to consult. That's the question: what's for their *good*, not what *pleases* them." Already he and Rainsborough had quarrelled openly, both in the House and in the Army Council; and when, on October 16, Rainsborough urged on the Army Council that all negotiations with the King should be abandoned, their controversy was so bitter that Rainsborough, in a cold rage, told Cromwell that "one of them must not live." Four days later, Cromwell went to Westminster and in a three-hour speech made a passionate defence of monarchy, dissociating himself from any suspicion of sympathy with Rainsborough's theories and asserting positively that, throughout the whole war, his one aim had been to strengthen and not to destroy the monarchy.

On October 28, the Army Council met in Putney Church, with Cromwell presiding, to discuss the question of property; and the proceedings resolved themselves into hot debate between Rainsborough and Ireton on the question of natural and civil right. The Leveller, seeing that the argument went against him, moved that the question should be put to a rendezvous of the whole Army. Privately, he said that he was certain that he could carry the Army with him against Cromwell and have in addition the support of 20,000 London citizens. Cromwell should be impeached and the King tried. His more energetic partisans hatched simpler schemes. Cromwell should be surprised and shot in his bed and Charles should be taken from Hampton Court and "knocked on the head."

Charles, who had contemplated with equanimity the early rise of the Levellers, partly because their extremism confirmed his perception of the logical consequences of rebellion, partly because they offered a further embarrassment to Cromwell and partly because their theories were driving every man of property, in Parliament or Army, in the direction of uncompromising Royalism, began at last to grow alarmed. He withdrew his parole from Whalley, an action which had the double advantage of ensuring on the one hand that he was more carefully guarded and on the other that his conscience allowed him to escape, if he could, to the more certain safety of Scotland or France.

On November 11, Whalley came to him in agitation with a letter he had just received from Cromwell, scribbled in haste after an embittered debate with the Levellers. "Dear Cousin Whalley," it ran, "there are rumours abroad of some intended attempt on his Majesty's person. Therefore I pray have a care of your guards, for if any such thing should be done, it would be accounted a most horrid act." This merely confirmed an anonymous missive which had reached Charles earlier in the day (written possibly by Lilburne's brother, who did not share "Freeborn John's" fanaticisms): "In discharge of my duty I cannot omit to acquaint you that my brother was at a meeting last night with eight or nine Agitators who resolved for the good of the Kingdom to take your life away."

This was decisive. For two days, he had been planning escape with Ashburnham and two companions; Lilly, the fashionable astrologer, had been consulted professionally as to the safest place for his concealment; and, on the 10th, a relay of horses had been sent to Bishop's Sutton. It is probable that, even without the warnings, he would have chosen the 11th for the attempt. For the day was Thursday, and he knew he would be expected to shut himself in his room with his foreign correspondence. It was dark about four o'clock. No one would miss him till six and, even if he

did not appear at Evensong, it would be assumed that he was still writing. He had told his secretary, Nicholas Oudart, a young Belgian, that he intended to send a lengthy and important letter to his daughter Mary, the Princess of Orange.

It was with this news that Oudart temporarily pacified Whalley, who, at six o'clock, came to enquire for Charles and "wondered why he was so long a-writing." Oudart also explained that he could not disturb him and that the King had bolted the door on the inside. Whalley, who, since the receipt of Cromwell's letter, was not unnaturally "extreme restless in his thoughts," kept looking through the keyhole, but saw nothing. By eight o'clock, he decided to gain entrance to the King's chamber by the back way. He then discovered, what Oudart knew, that it was empty. The King had a three hours' start and Whalley knew that a chase on a wet November night was hopeless. Nevertheless, he sent out parties of horse and foot to scour the neighbourhood and despatched an urgent message to Cromwell, who arrived in time to sit down at midnight and write to the Speaker: "His Majesty has withdrawn himself from Hampton Court at nine o'clock. The manner is variously reported; and we will say little of it at present but that his Majesty was expected at supper, when the Commissioners and Colonel Whalley missed him; upon which they entered the room and found his Majesty had left his cloak behind him in the Gallery in the private way. He passed, by the back-stairs and the vault, towards the waterside. He left some letters upon the table in his withdrawing-room, of his own handwriting."

There were three letters—one for Parliament, giving reasons for his seeking safety "by retiring myself for some time from the public view, both of my friends and enemies"; one for the Commissioners, thanking them for their courtesy and care while he was at Hampton Court; and one for Whalley, acknowledging the civility of his treatment, asking him to dispose of certain pictures for him and adding by way of

postscript: "I assure you that it was not the letter which you showed me to-day that made me take this resolution."

. . . . .

Charles, as he pushed forward with his companions through the storm and darkness, had no definite plan, except that obviously the first destination was Southampton. From there he could take ship either to Jersey or to France. But when they arrived at the old Countess of Southampton's house at Titchfield, they discovered that there was no ship available. The immediate step that had been taken by the authorities on news of his escape was to place an embargo on all shipping in the southern ports.

Ashburnham then suggested crossing to the Isle of Wight, and gave his reasons for it. The new Governor of the Island was Robert Hammond, who was at that moment on his way to take up his duties at Carisbrooke. During the Hampton Court negotiations, Robin, subject to the twin influences of his uncle and the King, had drawn closer to Charles. To his fastidious, balanced mind, the Levellers were even more unpleasing than they were to Cromwell, and, as he suspected that, if matters were pushed to an extremity, Oliver would abandon the King rather than the Army, he became progressively unhappy and restless. It was not that his loyalty was in question, but Fairfax thought it prudent to offer and Hammond found it a relief to accept the Governorship of the Isle of Wight, where the rigours of controversy and the difficulties of decision would cease to trouble him.

He had told Ashburnham a day or two previously—or so Ashburnham said—that he was glad to go "because he found that the Army was resolved to break all promises to the King and he would have nothing to do with such perfidious actions." Thus it seemed—and Charles agreed—that it might be worth following him, for he could not be far ahead, to enquire whether he would give the King sanctuary.

Ashburnham, with a companion, crossed the water and, by

breakneck riding, overtook him and explained the situation. Hammond turned deathly pale and trembled so violently that he had to dismount.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you have undone me by bringing the King into the Island—that is, if you have brought him. If not, pray let him not come; for what between my duty to his Majesty and my gratitude for this fresh obligation of his confidence, and my observing of my trust to the Army, I shall be confounded."

It was pointed out that Charles was not with them, "but," said Ashburnham quickly, "it is his express wish to come here, because of his trust in you and his affection for your family. You know as well as I that his life is in danger from the Levellers. Surely you will not fail to give him security?"

Choosing his words with care, Hammond answered: "If the King pleases to put himself into my hands, then whatever he can expect from a person of honour and honesty, that his Majesty shall have made good to him."

Interpreting this studiedly vague assurance as a pledge, Ashburnham threw discretion to the winds and invited Hammond to accompany them back to Titchfield.

On their arrival, the King, realizing immediately the extent of Ashburnham's folly in revealing his hiding place, burst out: "O Jack! Thou hast undone me!"

Ashburnham, "falling into a great passion of weeping, offered to go down and kill Hammond: to which his Majesty would not consent."

Charles's fears were partly set at rest, both by Hammond's welcome and by the obvious enthusiasm of the inhabitants of the Island, who, when he arrived, came out to cheer him and offer him their loyalty and what gifts they had. He took it as a good omen that one woman came up to him with a damask rose which, even at that cold season, was growing in her garden.

At Carisbrooke, Hammond summoned the nobility and

gentry of the Island to meet him and explained the circumstances to them in a short speech: "Gentlemen, His Majesty informs me that necessity has brought him to this Island, since there were those near Hampton Court, from whence he came, that were resolved to murder him. Therefore he was forced to come away privately and thrust himself upon this Island, hoping to be secure here. And now, seeing that he is come among us, it is our duty to preserve his person and prevent all comings-over into our Island. I have already stopped all passages except three, Ryde, Cowes and Yarmouth, and at them I have appointed guards. And I give you this caution. If you see or hear of any people in any great number gathered together, whatever their pretence, I would have you dissipate them and at once inform me of it."

Then Charles himself spoke: "Gentlemen, I must inform you that, for the preservation of my life, I was forced from Hampton Court. For there were a people called Levellers who had resolved my death, so that I could no longer dwell there in safety. And as I desire to be somewhat secure till some happy accommodation may be made between me and my Parliament, I have put myself in this place, for I desire not a drop more of Christian blood shall be spilt. I shall not desire so much as a capon from any of you, my resolution in coming being but to be secured till there may be some happy accommodation made."

In conclusion, that all might be understood, he asked one of his suite to read to the surprised Islanders a copy of letters which he left in his withdrawing-room at Hampton Court.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

CROMWELL UNDERSTANDS CHARLES

WITH Charles in safety, Cromwell turned his attention to the Levellers. What was at stake now was not the control of the King, but the control of the Army. The fact of the King's flight, irrespective of his destination, had emphasized Rainsborough's contention that the real seat of authority in the country was the common soldiers, if they cared to demand power.

Fairfax and Cromwell moved quickly. They drew up a document promising the soldiers those things about which they were most concerned—good and regular pay till disbandment, a guarantee for arrears, provision for the wounded, generous allowances for widows and orphans, freedom from conscription in the future and a special clause that all apprentices who had served Parliament must be taken back by their masters.

These things Fairfax and Cromwell pledged themselves to secure from Parliament, provided that the men renounced Rainsborough and his associates, who were described anonymously as "a few men, members of the Army, who, without any authority have (for what ends we know not) taken upon themselves to act as a divided Party from the Council of the Army; and have endeavoured, by various falsehoods and scandals against the General and general officers, to possess the Army with jealousies of them and prejudices against them."

In addition to material benefits, the soldiers were promised a new political constitution which would "render the House of Commons as near as may be an equal representative of the People that are to elect."

It was consummately clever. Cromwell could assess the mind of the rank and file far more accurately than Rainsborough and his doctrinaires. He knew, with his contempt

for democracy, that the ordinary soldiers would put economic security before any political principle. He knew also that they were sufficiently unversed in political phraseology to notice that the phrase "an equal representative of the People that are to elect" begged the whole point at issue by not specifying who those people were. By the ambiguity of the sentence and the similarity of the phrasing they could be led to suppose that he was granting Rainsborough's demand for universal suffrage instead of—as he was by omitting a comma after "People"—safeguarding Ireton's refusal of it.

This document Fairfax had printed and a space left at the foot for each regiment to sign its assent. If they would not sign, he would lay down his command. To make assurance doubly sure, he had summoned to the rendezvous at Corkbush Field near Ware only the seven regiments—including his own and Cromwell's—on whose officers he could rely to sign without any difficulty. The more doubtful, either wholly or partially under Leveller influence, he had left to two later rendezvous, on the principle that he could then assure them that he already had the support of the most weighty part of the Army and that, if they dissented, the blame for postponing a settlement of their grievances would attach to them.

Among the regiments not summoned was Rainsborough's own and that of Harrison, of which Rainsborough's brother was Major and his brother-in-law Captain. Against Lilburne's regiment—the most notoriously mutinous in the Army—stricter preventive measures were taken. It was ordered to proceed at once to Newcastle as an advance guard against a possible Scottish invasion.

On the same morning that Charles was addressing the gentlemen at Carisbrooke—Monday, November 15, 1647—Cromwell, with Fairfax, was facing the regiments on Corkbush Field. There were not, however, seven regiments. There were nine. Both Harrison's and Lilburne's regiments had disobeyed orders and had marched to the field in battle array, wearing papers in their hats, as they would have done for

purposes of identification had they been actually coming to an engagement. The papers were copies of the Levellers' demands, with the slogan "England's Freedom! Soldiers' Rights!" printed on the back. Rainsborough, too, was on the field. After Fairfax had explained to the Army that if they wished him and Cromwell to continue to lead them, they must sign the documents he had had prepared, Rainsborough stepped forward with a copy of his own counter-proposals, but he was waved aside by the General's *aides* and Fairfax himself affected not to see him.

The seven regiments signed without serious demur. Cromwell then rode over to the mutinous interlopers and ordered them to remove the papers from their hats. When he explained to Harrison's regiment the exact terms of the Fairfax manifesto, the men shouted that they had been misled by their officers and enthusiastically destroyed the offending emblems. But Lilburne's regiment stood firm. Not a man moved to obey his order. For a moment it seemed that they had defeated him. The rest of the Army, watching tensely, saw Cromwell turn his horse and ride away from them.

If Rainsborough, watching with the rest, imagined that his retreat was a gesture of capitulation, he was at once disillusioned. Immediately Cromwell wheeled round and with drawn sword charged headlong into the ranks of the mutineers. This was the final argument. For the first and last time, soldiers of the New Model experienced the terror of "Ironsides" and broke, as his enemies had always broken before him. Scattering in panic in all directions, their wills paralysed by sheer physical terror, the men tore the papers from their hats (or, since there was no time for discrimination, threw away the hats themselves) and cried for mercy. The ringleaders were arrested and three of them condemned by an improvised court-martial held on the field. But they were allowed to draw lots for their lives and only the loser was shot.

The mutiny quelled and himself established as indubitable

master of the Army, Cromwell rode back to London to a rendezvous of another sort at the Blue Boar Inn in Holborn.

. . . . . .

The King's sudden disappearance from Hampton Court had produced in the country the usual flood of contradictory rumours. He was said to be in Scotland, in Ireland, in France, in the hands of the Levellers, immured in a fortress by Cromwell to save him from the Levellers, abdicated, dead. On one department of political activity, this uncertainty had an unfortunate effect. The bearer of a letter from Henrietta to Charles went to Hampton Court as usual, with the result that Cromwell was able to open and reseal it before it came into the King's hands. From its contents he deduced that Charles was deeply involved with the Scots. He also noticed an interesting reference to himself, in the Queen's instructions "not to yield too much to the traitor."

He was not altogether surprised. Since his great defence of monarchy in the House a month ago, he had become gradually convinced that, however he might support the King, the King, for all his fair words, had no intention of supporting him. Ireton, indeed, had some time ago told Charles as much: "You have the intention to be the arbitrator between the Parliament and us. Let me speak plainly to assure you that we mean to be it between your Majesty and them." The intrigue with the Scots he had always presumed as a possibility. About Charles's personal feelings toward himself he had no indication, except what might be deduced from the offer of the earldom and the Garter. It would, he thought, be interesting to read Charles's reply to Henrietta.

Consequently, on November 22, Hammond received a letter from Ireton, hinting that all might not be as fair as it seemed and urging him to hold the King fast and trust to a guard composed of soldiers in preference to the inhabitants of the Isle of Wight. In a postscript he added: "The Lieutenant-General is at London or Putney and on scout

I know not where." Cromwell was "on scout," using what spies he had, for the messenger returning with Charles's answer.

So it came about that, a night or two later, two private troopers were sitting in the Blue Boar Inn in Holborn drinking cans of beer and waiting anxiously for the hour of ten o'clock. No one recognized, in their common uniforms, Lieutenant-General Cromwell and Commissary-General Ireton. They had reason to believe that, about ten o'clock, the bearer of the King's letter to the Queen would, carrying his saddle, arrive at the tavern, where he was to take horse to Dover. In the skirts of the saddle, the letter was sewn up—a fact of which the bearer was unaware, though some Royalists at Dover knew. A trusted servant of Cromwell's, posted at the door, gave them notice of the unsuspecting messenger's arrival. "Upon this"—according to Cromwell's narration of the episode to his friend Roger Boyle in later years—"we immediately arose, and, as the man was leading out his horse saddled, came up to him with drawn swords and told him that we were to search all that went in and out there, but as he looked like an honest man we would only search his saddle and dismiss him. Upon that we ungirt his saddle, and carried it into the stall where we had been drinking, and left the horseman with our sentinel. Then, ripping up one of the skirts of the saddle, we there found the letter of which we had been informed. As soon as we had the letter we opened it; in which we found the King had acquainted the Queen that he was now courted by both factions, the Scotch Presbyterians and the Army, and which bid fairest for him should have him, but he thought he should close with the Scots sooner than the others."

As for "yielding to the traitor," Charles assured Henreitta that "she need not have any concern in her mind on that head, for whatever agreement they might enter into, he should not look upon himself obliged to keep any promises made so much on compulsion whenever he had power enough

to break them." His real intention for Cromwell was not "a silken garter" but "a hempen cord."[1]

Cromwell shared at least one of the weaknesses of lesser men. He disliked being made a fool of. From that week in November, he became Charles's intractable enemy, with a personal bitterness to strengthen an opposition which also sprang from his political convictions. It was not till a year later—and for quite other reasons—that he decided that Charles must die; but he never again trusted the King nor intended to restore him to power.

The discovery of Charles's duplicity had two other personal consequences. It healed immediately the breach between Cromwell and Rainsborough, and it turned Robin Hammond, when he heard of it, into a conscientious gaoler instead of a sympathetic friend.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile, Charles, unaware that he was at last understood by his opponents, invited the Scottish Commissioners

[1] The sensational "saddle story" is given less than its due weight by historians who view events primarily as a constitutional or an economic struggle. It rests only on memoirs written after the event, but Gardiner admits that it is "in the main probable, though absolute accuracy of detail is not to be expected," and Abbott says that "it may be true in part, in part wholly true." He also points out that "it is generally agreed that something in that week changed Cromwell and Ireton . . . to another state of mind." As the various sources of the story quite independently corroborate each other, and as the episode is completely "in character" as regards all the persons concerned, I can see no good reason for rejecting its historicity.

The main objection to accepting the story is that "the shortest and safest way from Carisbrooke to Paris was not by way of London." But this, in my opinion, neglects two factors. One is that, as Charles had been in Carisbrooke only a week, there would have been no time to organise an alternative route—especially with shipping suspended. The second is that there were no coast roads and that it would be as natural to go from Southampton to Dover by way of London then as it was in the following year when all Charles's secret correspondence from Carisbrooke passed through the capital. The second objection—"that the timing was just short of miraculous"—deserves, I think, no serious consideration. Truth is proverbially stranger than fiction and is permitted to contrive coincidences from which any reputable novelist would shrink aghast.

to Carisbrooke, ostensibly to discuss the general constitutional situation, really to sign the "Engagement," by which, in return for Scottish aid, he promised to establish Presbyterianism in England and to do everything in his power "for suppressing the opinions and practices of Independents and all such scandalous doctrines and practices as are contrary to the light of nature or to the known principles of Christianity." He also promised to admit to the English Privy Council "a considerable and competent number of Scotsmen" and a third part of the persons employed in places of trust about the Royal family were always to be Scots. In return, the Scottish army would march into England and put him on the throne once more.

The Commissioners left on December 28, accompanied as far as Newport by Hammond. Charles intended to leave about the same time. The small ship for which he had been waiting for the last fortnight had at last arrived. The wind was fair and it would be easy to sail down the Medina River and up Southampton Water. Once on the mainland, he would join them, or alone make his way to the North to put himself at the head of the Scottish army, should that seem the best course.

As soon as Hammond had gone, he went up to his room to dress himself for his journey. Then he noticed the weathervane. The wind had changed and, blowing fiercely from the north, made the crossing to Southampton impossible.

While he consulted feverishly with Ashburnham, Hammond returned unexpectedly early from Newport, locked the gates of the castle and doubled the guards.

And to the fleet, guarding the Solent, was appointed a new Admiral—Rainsborough.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

CHARLES AT CARISBROOKE

ON January 1, 1648, Charles was confined as a close prisoner in Carisbrooke Castle and so kept for thirty-six weeks. They were months of resignation and intrigue, of alternating boredom and excitement; a long-drawn-out duel with Hammond, now at plots and counter-plots to escape, now at an innocuous game of bowls. While England was preparing and fighting a second Civil War to decide his fate, he played his little tragi-comedy with pertinacity, if not with relish.

We have unforgettable glimpses of him—now, on a wild March night, with his shoulders helplessly stuck in a window which was too small even for his diminutive frame while his rescuers waited below; now, writing carefully in his books the motto "*Dum spiro spero*" while his hair fell untidily before his eyes, since he refused to have it cut for seven months because his barber had been dismissed; now, in intoxicatingly high spirits greeting the masterful, red-headed Jane Whorwood, who had managed to elude Hammond and gain entrance to his apartments; now arranging a code with the servant who waited on him at table, so that he should understand one thing if he said there was some asparagus from London and another if he indicated the arrival of artichokes; in vexatious disappointment because a bottle of nitric acid which was to eat through the bars on his window had been spilt in transit; composing political verses; watching the building of a new Banqueting House for the Castle; gazing listlessly beyond the lilies and the wall and the village church to the Forest, blue in the distance; quietly reading the Bible and the sermons of Lancelot Andrewes.

The continuing interest of his life was, necessarily, the plans for escape, of which there were three major ones—the first,

in March, which ended abortively because he could not get through the window; the second, which was betrayed to Hammond just before it was to be put into execution, at the end of May; the third, which involved the ambitious plan of raising the islanders in his defence and which was organized by the local Grammar School master, in July. Before this came to fruition, it was rendered unnecessary by a new turn in national affairs.

The difficulty of organization centred, as far as he was concerned, in establishing means of communication with his friends and, in a lesser degree, of knowing whom he could trust within the Castle. Hammond was no fool and was, in addition, guarding the King for his own sake almost as much as for Cromwell's. He realized to an extent which Charles did not that a section of the Levellers would still welcome an attempt to escape as an excuse to murder him. The King's own fear of assassination seems to have left him once he was free of Hampton Court, nor could he know that one of the Leveller colonels, skilled in intrigue, was then suggesting that "the King might be decoyed away as he was from Hampton Court, by some letters from his friends, telling of some danger that threatened him, upon which he would be willing to make an escape; and then he might easily be despatched."

As the battle of wits proceeded, Hammond's nerves became increasingly frayed, though, with occasional pardonable lapses, the accustomed courtesies were observed on both sides.

Hammond's first move was to dismiss all the King's retinue, including Ashburnham; to reduce the number of his servants to sixteen; and to appoint "four gentlemen of approved integrity," Herbert, Mildmay, Titus and Preston, "constantly to attend the person of the King in their courses by two at a time, who are to be always in his presence, except when he retires into his bedchamber; and then they are to repair the one to one door, and the other to the other, and there to continue till the King comes forth again."

These arrangements did not, in fact, seriously incommode

Charles's plans. Herbert remained throughout a benevolent neutral, cognizant of all plans, yet, because of his personal fidelity to the King, refusing to betray them, and refusing to forward them because of his loyalty to Parliament; Mildmay was indifferent; but the twenty-five-year-old Colonel Silius Titus was won over completely to Charles and remained one of his most trusted helpers. There was also on his side the French-born Abraham Dowcett (Doucet), who had the supervision of his meals—with whom he arranged the "asparagus-artichoke" code—and who managed to smuggle ink and paper into his bedroom, so that, when he had retired for the night and was free from observation, he could write his secret letters in code; there were Mrs. Wheeler, the laundress, and her maid Mary, who took the correspondence out and brought the replies in. And, above all, there was "Honest Harry" Firebrace, who had once been his page and who now, at twenty-nine, had been allowed to remain at Carisbrooke as one of his attendants—cautious, fearless, reserved and with one unswerving purpose, to deliver his master.

It was to Firebrace's activities that the appointment of the four "Conservators" was a blow. He had been in the habit of holding secret conversations with the King in his bedchamber and of delivering and forwarding Charles's letters; with the new guard this became impossible. But not for long. He set himself to gain their confidence and to make use of it at the psychological moment—when they were hungry.

When Charles had finished his meal, he retired immediately to his bedroom, leaving the two who had to guard his door supperless. This was Firebrace's opportunity. "I offered my services," recorded Firebrace, "to one of the Conservators to wait at the door opening into the back-stairs while he went to supper, I pretending not to sup; which he accepted of; by which means I had freedom of speaking with his Majesty, none being on that side but myself. Then, lest we might be surprised by anyone too suddenly rushing into the bedchamber, and so discovering the door open (for so it was that

we might hear each other better), I made a slit or chink through the wall, behind the hanging; which served as well as the opening of the door and was more safe; for upon the least noise, by letting fall the hanging, all was well." The convenient chink was also used for the exchange of correspondence.

By the middle of March, Firebrace had organized a plan of escape. On a moonless night, Charles was to get through his bedroom window (which was not guarded), letting himself down by a rope smuggled in to him. Firebrace would assist him over the wall of the Castle; here two sympathizers in the neighbourhood would be waiting with a fast horse, boots and pistols, for him to ride to a creek between Cowes and Ryde, ten miles away, where "a lusty boat" would take him to the mainland. On the Hampshire coast, Jack Ashburnham and his friends were expecting him.

A week before the night chosen—March 20—Hammond received a message from the Parliamentary Committee in London informing him that "we have received information that there are some designs in agitation concerning the King's escape; and that there are two of those who now attend upon the King upon whom they rely for effecting the escape. Who they are we cannot discover; yet we thought fit to give you this advertisement that you might the more carefully watch against it."

Hammond acted quickly. While the King was in the garden he went into his room and began to search his writing-desk, in the hope of finding some incriminating evidence. He found nothing. Neither did he discover the chink in the wall. But before he could leave, he found himself confronted by an angry King, who, as the weather was cold, had decided to come indoors. Hammond thereupon endeavoured to search the King's pockets and was rewarded by a box on the ear. In the resultant confusion, Charles took the letters he had on him and threw them on the fire.

"Hammond attempted to pull them out again, but the King so well guarded them that they were all burnt, though

in this scuffle it is said the King got a hurt on his face by a knock against the edge of the table."

Whether the King was actually hurt or not, the Royalist journalists made the best of the story and issued a pamphlet entitled *The Fatal Blow*, accusing "Gaoler Hammond" of having "impiously and traitorously wounded his Sacred Majesty."

The scene served no end but to reveal the state of their tempers. Hammond could find no evidence of a plot; nor had anything directed his suspicions to the authors of it. And even when the attempt was actually made, he knew nothing. No alarm was raised.

It failed because of the one weak link, which was Charles's character. Firebrace had urged him to remove the centre upright bar of his window, since he feared that half the casement was too narrow an aperture for the King to get through. Charles obstinately refused, saying that he had tried with his head and he was sure "where that would pass the body would follow." At the critical moment, he discovered that it would not.

"His Majesty put himself forward," wrote Firebrace in his account of that night, "but then, too late, found himself mistaken; he sticking fast between his breast and shoulders and not able to get forwards or backwards. Whilst he stuck, I heard him groan; which (you may imagine) was no small affliction to me. So soon as he was in again to let me see (as I had to my grief heard) the design was broken, he set a candle in the window. If this unfortunate impediment had not happened, his Majesty had then most certainly made a good escape."

Their next step was to remove the impediment and Firebrace sent to London for a "saw" to cut the bar, and supply of *aqua fortis*. This was accordingly procured by Jane Whorwood, of all women most devoted to Charles and his cause.

Tall, graceful and dominant, with a mass of red hair and a round face whose attractiveness was not marred by the scars

of smallpox, Jane was now thirty-three. Her father and her stepfather had both held posts at Court, and she had known Charles from childhood. She had been married at nineteen, but had soon become the mistress of Sir Thomas Bendish, whom she eventually persuaded Charles to send to Constantinople as Ambassador. When the Court was at Oxford, her influence over the King, after the Queen's departure, had not been unremarked; and it was to her that he entrusted his jewels when he fled to the Scots. In her affection and ability he had unbounded trust, and it was not misplaced. "Had the rest done their parts as carefully as Whorwood," wrote Firebrace when all was lost, "the King had been at large."

But Charles also still trusted Lady Carlisle, whose passion for intrigue had, if possible, grown with the years. She continued to be, in Clarendon's phrase, "through the whole story of his Majesty's misfortunes a very pernicious instrument." At the moment, she was serving the aristocratic Presbyterians, who, though they had taken arms against him, were now anxious to come to terms. Charles in Carisbrooke kept her informed of his movements, under the impression that she was working for him. She passed on the information to the Parliamentary Committee as rapidly as she had once warned Pym of the *coup d'état.*

So it was that, though Hammond was still unaware what had passed in the King's room on the night of March 20 and had still no clue to his helpers, Cromwell was able to write him a detailed description of the attempt and to name Firebrace and Titus as the agents of it.

As soon as he received this letter, Hammond summoned Firebrace and Titus and told them they were dismissed, though they were to be allowed a day or two's grace before leaving the Castle. They managed to extend it to three weeks, during which time they inspected the windows of the new apartments to which the King was to be removed for greater safety and they again prepared the plans.

Firebrace imagined that Hammond had allowed him to

prolong his stay in the hope that, by an indiscretion, he would reveal some information. But the Governor had no need of such tenuous help. He received from the Parliament Committee, by way of Lady Carlisle and the King, a regular summary of all the projected plans. He knew all about the "saw" and the nitric acid—when one bottle had got spilt and when the next arrived; he knew which window had been chosen for the new escape; he knew that Jane Whorwood had chartered a ship and was lying at Margate, making herself amiable to the Mayor and the citizens, until such time as she could sail into the Solent to take Charles to safety. He knew, too, the dangerous condition of the country. London was in the throes of an intense Royalist reaction. On the anniversary of the King's accession, there had been more bonfires lit than at any time since Charles's triumphal return from Spain, twenty years ago; coaches were stopped by the enthusiastic crowds to make the occupants drink the King's health; the King's name was everywhere cheered with a fervour equal only to that with which "Gaoler Hammond" was cursed.

He did what he could. He built a platform outside the window which Charles intended to use and posted a perpetual guard of three musketeers on it.

Firebrace and Titus had left before Charles was moved into his new quarters, and the sentries on the platform were obstacles they had not foreseen. But Dowcett was still in the Castle, apparently unsuspected (in public Charles deliberately gave him "sour looks"), and another Royalist, Thomas Osborne, who had been given the post of Gentleman Usher. As his duty was to hold the King's gloves while he was dining, he found it easy to transfer messages in and out of the fingers. With Dowcett and Osborne, Titus in Southampton and Firebrace in London remained in touch; to Osborne was entrusted the task of bribing the sentries, to Dowcett, that of seeing that the acid ate away the bar at the right time, of providing the rope and of helping Charles to scale down the 10 feet to the platform. The arrangements for the

horses and the "lusty boat" remained as before, but this time it was Titus, not Ashburnham, who waited on the other side.

The attempt was to have been made on May 24, but the bribed sentries did not come on duty till Sunday, the 28th, to which date it had to be, in consequence, postponed.

Hammond, for all his information, was unaware of the exact time chosen. He had counted on the fact that no attempt could be made of which the sentries would be unaware. He would, therefore, be able to catch Charles in the act and apprehend all his confederates. What he had not counted on was the venality of the sentries.

And in this, as the event proved, he was more right than Charles. Half an hour before the time fixed, after they had already taken their places on the platform, two of them decided to confess. They told him everything. He instructed them to go on as if nothing had happened. Then he himself went straight to Charles's room.

"How now, Hammond," said Charles, conscious of the missing bar of the window. "What is the matter? What do you want?"

"I am come to take leave of your Majesty," answered Hammond amiably, "for I hear you are going away."

It was unanswerable. Charles burst out laughing and made no further reference to the matter.

Hammond arrested Dowcett immediately, but Osborne managed to get away, in company with the Islander who had brought the horses.

That June was the most miserable month of the King's captivity. All his friends had now gone; and he was completely cut off from the outside world. He had no means of communicating with anyone, nor did he see how it could be re-established. He was driven back on himself and his books. He read and re-read George Herbert's poems and Spenser's *Faerie Queen* and Tasso in translation and Sir John Harrington's rendering of *Ariosto*; Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* and Andrewes's sermons; but most, the Bible. He

also had a volume of sermons by the Governor's uncle. When he was not reading or attempting to compose verse, he played bowls with the nephew, on the new green that Hammond, in an effort to placate him, had had made.

Jane Whorwood and Firebrace and Titus, however, were not inactive. By the end of June a trustworthy woman servant had somehow been introduced into the Castle to attend to duties which took her into the King's bedroom. She could neither read nor write, but she was quite capable of bringing messages, which she hid in the room in an arranged "secret place," and of taking the answers to Newport, whence they were sent to Titus in London. So, on July 1, the King was able to write to Titus: "I have newly received yours of 22 June, for which I know not whether my astonishment or my joy were the greater; for indeed I did despair of hearing any more from you, or any other of my friends, during these damnable times, without blaming anything but my own misfortune; which makes one the more obliged to your kindness and industry for having found means to convey a letter to me." Later he asked to be commended particularly to Dowcett and Osborne, "assuring them that though I have been pumped, yet I neither have nor will say anything that may prejudice them."

A week later he discovered that he had friends nearer at hand. William Hopkins, Master of the Grammar School at Newport, managed to convey to him a plan to raise the Royalists in the island, surprise Carisbrooke, arrest Hammond and get the King away in the usual boat. The enterprise was to be commanded by the thirty-year-old Earl of Marlborough, who had been General of the Ordnance and Admiral in Command at Dartmouth in 1643. He had been attempting to found a colony in the West Indies, but the settlers had been driven out by the Spaniards, and he had returned to England. Charles approved him "for a matter of action, for I am confident of his honesty and courage; so, if the business is well laid, he may do as well as any other."

But in his letters to London, the King made no reference to his new friend. It seemed that he had learnt caution at last. There should be no more betrayals. Hopkins, indeed, organized a system of couriers to London, by which correspondence reached Firebrace under the name of "David Griffin"; but even Firebrace was never told how they came. It was "by the unknown way" or "by my way."

There was, however, one thing which might be arranged. Jane Whorwood should come to him in Carisbrooke Castle itself.

It was, in the first place, her own suggestion. On July 19, she wrote to him, asking whether it would be possible. He replied on the 24th, telling her that she would be admitted to a public audience (Hammond, it seems, was relaxing the stringency of the imprisonment as far as it was consonant with safety), but that she would only be admitted to a private interview if she could obtain the permission from the Parliamentary Committee. "Yet," he added in code, "I imagine that there is one way possible—which is to get acquaintance with the new woman (who you may trust, for she now conveys all my letters) and by her means you may be conveyed into the stool-room (which is within my bedchamber) while I am at dinner; by which means I shall have five hours to embrace and nip you. And while I go a-walking, she can relieve you."

Two days later he sent another letter to "Sweet Jane Whorwood," suggesting an alternative course: "If you like not or fear impossible the way that I have set down for a passage to me, all I count on is that you must invite yourself to dinner to Captain Mildmay's chamber (which is next door to mine) where I will surprise you and between jest and earnest smother Jane Whorwood with embraces, which to be doing is made long by your most loving Charles."

As soon as Jane received this letter, she set off—after an urgent interview with Firebrace—for the Isle of Wight and arrived at Carisbrooke for a public audience with Charles

on August 3. That night he wrote to Hopkins: "Having this day been visited by a friend, with whom I had not time to speak unto, I must desire you to deliver this enclosed note unto her; assuring you that you may freely trust her in anything that concerns my service; for I have had perfect trial of her friendship to me. I have now no more to say but that the speedy delivery of this to Mrs. Whorwood (who is this friend I mentioned) will be no small courtesy. Tell her that I expect an answer either by word or writing."

The difficulty was to get the word. Hammond was becoming increasingly irritable as his position became more delicate. On August 1, the day that Mrs. Whorwood left London, Lords and Commons had decided to reopen negotiations with the King, while the Army was engaged in fighting the second Civil War. It was therefore already apparent that Charles would shortly be restored to some sort of liberty. It was also inevitable that the cleavage would widen between the Army, who were the more incensed against Charles as a result of the new campaigns, and war-weary Parliament, whose purpose was now to restore him to the throne if any tolerable compromise could be arrived at. Hammond foresaw that the tension of conflicting loyalties would rapidly increase; and that the practical necessity to guard Charles both against escaping and putting himself at the head of the Royalist forces and against being abducted and murdered by the Levellers was greater than ever at the very moment when it was becoming impossible to carry out.

Charles, on his side, made it no easier for him. With the prospect of approaching restoration, he reminded Hammond that it might be wise to treat him better, since one day he might be beholden to him for his life.

"You are grown very high," said Hammond.

"Then it is my shoemaker's fault," said the King—"and, looking on the soles of his shoes, said he found himself no higher than before."

In the circumstances, it was hardly surprising that the

Governor treated Mrs. Whorwood with something less than courtesy. "A pox on Hammond," wrote Charles to Hopkins, "for I believe the Devil cannot out-go him neither in malice nor cunning. . . . I have received Mrs. Whorwood's sad story; and seriously I could not have believed that so much barbarity could have been in anybody that pretended to be a gentleman. . . . Certainly all sort of barbarity is to be expected from Hammond."

In whatever guise Mrs. Whorwood presented herself, the Governor knew perfectly well who she was. Months ago, before the attempt at escape in May, the Parliamentary Committee had described her to him when she was waiting on her ship: "Mrs. Whorwood is aboard—a tall, well-fashioned and well-languaged gentlewoman with a round visage and pock-holes in her face." But though he took all the precautions he could to prevent a meeting, he did not succeed. She managed, by some means or other, to see the King alone. After supper, on Monday, August 28, Charles, "scarce believing my own eyes," found her in his room. He arranged for her to come again on Wednesday, "her own way."

After that, secret meetings were unnecessary. A week later an understanding with Parliament was reached and Charles, freed from restraint, with his old servants—including Firebrace and Titus—restored to him, and with as much liberty as he had had at Hampton Court, went to lodge with Hopkins in Newport to discuss terms of settlement with the Commissioners Parliament had appointed.

Men noticed that the weather, which had been the worst known for forty years, with "scarce three dry days together," suddenly began to mend.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

CROMWELL IN COMMAND

DURING the months that the King was at Carisbrooke, Cromwell in arms was ranging England, Wales and Scotland. He was called upon first to exercise all his aptitude for political compromise; then to save his cause again by his military genius. He fought his first campaign as an independent commander and made it, at Preston, one of his most brilliant victories; he established in the eyes of the country that position which he had in fact long held. He came from behind the scenes to the centre of the stage; not, indeed, of his own volition; he was forced there by the pressure of events. But, no matter how, he caught the limelight. The famous ballad "O Brave Oliver," which was composed and became the rage at this time, was a measure of the popular appreciation of it:

"For Oliver is all in all,
For Oliver is all in all,
And Oliver is here,
And Oliver is there,
And Oliver is at Whitehall.
And Oliver notes all,
And Oliver votes all,
And claps his hand upon his bilboe—
Then, O fine Oliver, O brave, O rare Oliver, O
Dainty Oliver, O gallant Oliver, O."

The contrast between the petty pace of Charles's confined life and the upward sweep of Oliver's career could not well appear greater. But it was appearance only. In truth, Cromwell was as fast a prisoner of circumstance as the King. At every turn he was baffled and caught in the consequences of his own actions. The authority of the Crown was destroyed; the

authority of Parliament was repudiated; the authority of the Army could not be admitted as anything but the instrument of the governing power. But what was that power? To say that it was "the people" was, as far as he was concerned, merely to invent a fiction to cover an evasion. That was what the Levellers said and were monstrously logical about it; and he would continue to oppose them as tenaciously as the King.

In his perplexity, he seemed to agree with everybody in turn as long as his patience would hold and then, exasperated, to abandon hope. During the first few weeks of 1648, he held a series of conferences with those of all opinions. He tried to reconcile the remaining Members of Parliament to the idea of a continuance of the monarchy; he listened to a long debate on the relative virtues of aristocracy and democracy, which he brought to an end by hurling a cushion at Ludlow's head; he tried to come to terms with the Republican Marten, only to part "much more an enemy than before." He "bestowed two nights oratory on Sir Henry Vane Jr.," with no effect. He lost his temper completely with a variegated selection of theorists and told them "they were a proud people, considerable only in their own conceits."

In the course of his duties in the House he was consulted about Hammond's situation in the Isle of Wight and wrote to him the account of Charles's first attempt to escape; but his mind was more occupied with personal matters. He busied himself with the financial arrangements for his son Richard's marriage to the daughter of a Hampshire landowner and travelled down to Farnham to further it. (Inevitably, it was assumed that his real purpose was to cross to the Isle of Wight to consult with Hammond.) He put his own affairs in order, and of the income of the lands granted him that month in order to provide the £2,500 a year voted him for his services to the country a year and a half earlier, he offered to subscribe £1,000 a year for five years for the prosecution of the war in Ireland, to remit £1,500 arrears of his salary as Lieutenant-General and to forgo two years' remuneration as Governor

of the Isle of Ely. This left him little income apart from his private means and his Army pay, which was, at the same time, reduced from £4 to £3 a day. (Wildman, the Leveller, who had energetically denounced property at Putney, meanwhile set about buying up land in twenty different counties.)

Oliver also interceded with Parliament for his Uncle Oliver, who was now eighty-four and was facing ruin by the debt incurred by the sequestration of his estates. Sir Oliver had been declared delinquent at the beginning of the war, for the precise and particular act of offering opposition to his nephew. At this moment, worn by theoretical loyalties, the nephew welcomed the simplicity of a practical choice. He saw to it that Uncle Oliver's fine was remitted and his lands restored.

His only way of escape, indeed, was in action. His bewilderment had forced him back to fundamentals and increased his sense of the futility of "cursed carnal Conferences." And however uncertain he might be as to what was best for the kingdom, he had no doubts at all when it came to the clan. There was, too, but a month away, the final release in military activity.

He had a forestaste of it on April 9, when, fomented by Royalist agents, the increasing exasperation of Londoners at the chaos in administration, with its inevitable repercussion on trade, flamed into insurrection. A mob of apprentices, with their sympathizers, disarmed the trained bands which had been sent to disperse them, and marched on Westminster, by way of Fleet Street and Strand, demonstrating for the King. Cromwell, who was with his cavalry at the Mews,[1] fell on them, killed their leaders and drove them back into the City. During the night they rallied, seized the New Gate and the Lud Gate, raided the Armoury for arms and took possession of the City, which they held till he managed to dislodge them, by attacking through the Moor Gate next day.

London was an index to the country. Wales was on the verge of open rebellion; the Scots were arming and had

[1] Now Trafalgar Square.

invited the Prince of Wales, who, in Holland, was preparing to put himself at the head of the Fleet; Kent and Essex were ready to rise for the King. In these circumstances, when the Independents admitted that "nobody would trust them and they would trust nobody," Cromwell made one last bid to effect a diplomatic alliance. On April 27, he went down to the House to urge them to come to terms with the City by withdrawing the Army, which was still keeping order there; and on the following day, he voted with the majority which passed a motion not to alter "the fundamental government by King, Lords and Commons." Then he rushed down to Windsor, where a Council of War had been summoned to deal once more with the Levellers, who had passed a resolution deploring the ambition of "the grandees" and adopting the *Agreement*, with its democratic republicanism, as the solution of the constitutional question.

Here, at what was to become known as "the Windsor Prayer Meeting," Cromwell's liberation of spirit was at last effected. Though the question at issue was political, politics were abandoned. The first day was spent in prayer. On the second day, "Lieutenant-General Cromwell did press very earnestly on all those present to a thorough consideration of our actions as an army, as well as our ways particularly as private Christians, to see if any iniquity could be found in them, and what it was, that if possible we might find it out, and so remove the cause of such sad rebukes which were upon us by reason of our iniquities." On the morning of the third day—May 1—they received news that South Wales was in revolt. It was war again. Fairfax ordered Cromwell to start for Wales at once with two regiments of horse and three of foot. But before he went, there was a resolution to be taken.

With tears running down their faces, Cromwell and the rest made a most solemn affirmation, "not any dissenting," "that it was our duty, if ever the Lord brought us back again in peace, to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood, to an account for the blood he had shed and mischief he had done

to his utmost, against the Lord's cause and people in these poor nations." That done, he set out for the west, a soldier once more.

He was in Wales for two months, seven weeks of which were taken up by the siege of Pembroke. For some of the time he was laid up with gout in Lamphey House, a circumstance which made him the more sympathetic with the Royalist commander, who was also "very sick of mind and body" and to whom he showed the courtesies of war by allowing him, all through the siege, to receive visits from his wife and his doctor.

While he was "sitting down before Pembroke," he watched, with growing apprehension, the rest of the country burst into flame. The Scots under Hamilton, about 30,000 strong, crossed the Border, demanding that the King should be brought to one of his houses near London to reopen negotiations. The key fortresses of Berwick and Carlisle fell to English Royalists. Part of the Fleet declared for Charles and blockaded Dover. Essex and Kent rose in rebellion.

Fairfax, who had intended himself to march against the Scots, dared not, in the circumstances, leave the south—where he found himself pinned down for the whole of the summer besieging Colchester[1]—and had to entrust the defence of the north to the twenty-nine-year-old Lambert, who was stationed at York with forces altogether inadequate to check an invading army with a choice of two routes—by either Berwick or Carlisle—into England.

When Pembroke at last surrendered, on July 12, it was therefore essential that Cromwell should proceed at once to the aid of Lambert. But his soldiers were exhausted and unpaid, without proper equipment, to face the weather of that eccentric summer. He wrote to London to say that, though "his poor wearied soldiers" had managed to get as far as

[1] A detailed reconstruction of the siege of Colchester—one of the epics of the war—as well as of other events of this year, will be found in the author's *Captain Thomas Schofield.*

Gloucester, shoes and stockings were urgently needed for the long march into the North.

There was no secrecy about it. Hamilton, who, secure in his numbers, was in no hurry, was able to read in a Royalist newspaper: "Noll Cromwell is fallen into a bog at Monmouth, where his men mutiny for want of pay, and will not budge one foot northward, notwithstanding all the exhortations of his best-gifted commanders; which caused a messenger to post away with all speed from Derby House[1] with a large promise of shoes, stockings and money to meet them (if they would march) in their way northward at Northampton; but the devil a foot will these saints stir; for, as the State is hidebound in the matter of money, so the new Christians are wind-bound; and though the State's gazettes bespoke Oliver's advance as far as Gloucester, yet the last intelligence thence says that his soldiers are no men of metal without money, as well as their commanders; and they have as little mind to look northward, as Noll's nose hath to turn eastward towards Westminster."

Noll, however, was still Ironsides. On the night of August 16, when the Scots had advanced as far as Preston and Hamilton thought of his great opponent still 200 miles away, Cromwell was lying only three miles from his outposts.

The march itself, considering the condition of the men, was a major achievement which only Cromwell could have inspired. He had sent his cavalry on ahead to reinforce Lambert; with his own regiment of horse and a small party of dragoons, he had led the three tired regiments of foot. At Leicester, where they had arrived on August 1, one of the company wrote: "Our marches long, and want of shoes and stockings gives discouragement to our soldiers, having received no pay these many months to buy them, nor can we procure any unless we plunder, which was never heard of by any under the Lieutenant-General's Command, nor will be, though they

[1] The headquarters of the Parliamentary Committee.

march barefoot, which many have done since our advance from Wales." But at Nottingham, on the 5th, shoes from Northampton and stockings from Coventry had arrived at last; and they were able to proceed at more than double their previous pace to Doncaster, where they had waited three days for a train of artillery to be sent from Hull.

They had not, however, been days of rest. Cromwell had used them to dash to Pontefract, which Parliamentarian troops were besieging. He had driven the Royalists out of the town and "cooped them up" in the Castle; and taken away with him a core of the veteran, rested troops which had been hitherto engaged in the siege, substituting for them some of his exhausted men and raw Midland levies he had managed to recruit on the march. Then, when the artillery arrived, he continued northward and joined Lambert outside Leeds.

Cromwell's advance northward through Yorkshire on the east side of the Pennines was dictated to him by circumstances, even though he knew that Hamilton was moving southward west of the Pennines through Lancashire. On the night of the 13th the armies lay opposite each other, about sixty miles distant, with the mountain barrier running from north to south between them. Oliver had to make a strategical decision. If Hamilton decided to cross the Pennines through the Wharfedale Gap by way of Skipton, then Cromwell would be waiting for him and could so dispose his forces that Hamilton's superiority in numbers of three to one would be equalized by his own tactical advantage. If, however, Hamilton crossed further to the south—by Ribbledale or lower—and marched straight to Pontefract, he would have the advantage, even though he might not surprise Cromwell in the rear, of being able to rally the Royalists of the Midlands and to march against Fairfax at Colchester before Oliver could force him to give battle. There was a third alternative. The Scots might not cross the Pennines at all, but continue their way down the west coast. If they made this decision—which was, in fact, Hamilton's intended strategy—Cromwell, even if he crossed

the mountains with his artillery train, would be too late to prevent their move.

He made his decision. Outnumbered as he was, he would fight the battle without his artillery. Leaving the guns, for which he had spent precious days waiting at Doncaster, he led his men on a forced march through the difficult Craven country and the mountain gap and within three days was ready to force a decision before the Scots had left Preston. When their commander was informed that he lay but three miles away, he discounted it as an idle rumour; it was impossible for it to be Cromwell's army; if it was anything but Lambert's scouts, it must be the Parliamentary levies of Lancashire.

Meanwhile, Cromwell made another decision, even bolder than the abandonment of his ordnance. Instead of placing himself between the Scots and the south and attempting to drive them back into their own country, he would attack from the north, drive a wedge between them and the reinforcements which were arriving, and endeavour to force the main body southward, so that he could give chase and annihilate them in country which was unfamiliar to them.

The simplicity and daring of the plan showed that, now that he was for the first time in sole command of a campaign, he had transferred to the sphere of strategy those same qualities which had made him so outstanding a tactician. But underneath it lay something more profound. Bewildered and uncertain among political manœuvres, his clarity of mind returned in action and led him to rely on his instinct. To leave your guns behind and throw yourself, outnumbered, between the Scots and Scotland was not a maxim likely to be found in military manuals. But he was on the Lord's business and he was in a hurry. So he gave battle in his own way.

On the evening of August 17, he wrote to the Parliamentary representatives in Manchester:

"It hath pleased God this day to show His great power by making the Army successful against the common enemy . . .

"The enemy being drawn up on a moor betwixt us and the town, the armies on both sides engaged; and after a very sharp dispute, continuing for three or four hours, it pleased God to enable us to give them a defeat; which I hope we shall improve, by God's assistance, to their utter ruin; and in this service your countrymen have not the least share. . . .

"The enemy is broken; and most of their horse being gone northwards, and we having sent a considerable party at the very heel of them, and the enemy having lost almost all his ammunition, and near four thousand arms, so that the greatest part of the foot are naked; and therefore, in order to perfecting this work, we desire you to raise your county; and to improve your forces to the total ruin of that enemy, which way so ever they go. . . ."

As Hamilton, with the bulk of the Scots army, fled southward, Cromwell with some 5,500 men followed in pursuit. He caught them twice, first at Winwick, where they made a stand and lost 3,000 men; then at Warrington, where they surrendered. Hamilton himself escaped and fled still southward with a remnant of his followers.

On August 20, Oliver wrote again to his partisans to cut them off—this time to the garrison in Pontefract:

"We have quite tired our horse in pursuit of the enemy. We have taken, killed and dissipated all his foot, and left him only some horse, with whom the Duke is fled. . . .

"They are so tired and in such confusion that if my horse could but trot after them, I could take them all; but we are so weary we shall scarce be able to do more than walk after them. I beseech you therefore let all the counties round about you be sent to, to rise with you and follow them. For they are the miserablest party that ever was. I durst engage myself with five hundred fresh horse and five hundred nimble foot, to destroy them all. My horse are miserably beaten out, and I have ten thousand of them prisoners.

"We have killed we know not what, but a very great number, having done execution on them at the least thirty

miles together, besides what we killed in the two great fights, the one at Preston and the other at Warrington. The enemy was four and twenty thousand horse and foot in the day of the fight, whereof eighteen thousand foot and six thousand horse, and our number about six thousand foot and three thousand horse at the utmost.

"This is a glorious day. God help England to answer His mind!"

With the excitement and exaltation of action giving way to weariness, his doubts returned. The clouds of politics would soon gather round the sun of victory. That he and his army were God's instrument, he had no doubt; but he dared not forget, either, that they were temporal servants of Parliament. What use would his masters make of God's achievement? At the end of his long, official despatch to the Speaker, he broke out: "Surely, sir, this is nothing but the hand of God; and wherever anything in this world is exalted, or exalts itself, God will pull it down; for this is the day wherein He alone will be exalted. It is not fit for me to give advice, nor to say a word what use you should make of this—more to pray you and all that acknowledge God that they should exalt Him, and not hate His people, who are as the apple of His eye, and for whom even Kings shall be reproved; and that you would take courage to do the work of the Lord, in fulfilling the end of your magistracy, in seeking the peace and welfare of this land—that all that will live peacably may have countenance from you, and they that are incapable and will not leave troubling the land, may speedily be destroyed out of the land."

He could not know that, on this same day, Hammond was showing "barbarity" to Mrs. Whorwood, but there were enough rumours of Parliament's new attitude to the King to make him uneasy. To Oliver St. John, he wrote shortly afterwards, referring him to the passage of Scripture which "has been of great stay to me": "Take counsel together and it shall come to nought; speak the word and it shall not stand;

for God is with us. For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying that He shall be for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

The whole chapter of Isaiah in which, under the symbol of the name Maher-Shalah-Hash-Baz, the prophet foretells the defeat of the ungodly kings, was much on Oliver's mind during these days. He was not indifferent to signs. "I am informed from good hands," he tells his cousin in the same letter, "that a poor, godly man died in Preston the day before the fight, and being sick near the hour of his death, he desired the woman that looked to him to fetch him a handful of grass. She did so, and when he received it, he asked whether it would wither or not now it was cut. The woman said, Yea. He replied, So should this army of Scots do and come to nothing so soon as ours did but appear, or words to this effect; and so immediately died."

Certainly after Preston the Royalist cause withered away. Hamilton gave himself up on August 24; with the surrender of Deal Castle on the 25th, the resistance in Kent was over; Colchester capitulated on the 27th; the Prince of Wales and his fleet sailed back to Holland on the 30th.[1]

Oliver marched northward at his leisure, following that part of the Scottish army which was retreating towards home.

On September 8, the day the King left Carisbrooke Castle for the residence of William Hopkins in Newport, the last Scottish soldier left English soil, and Cromwell, at Durham, proclaimed and celebrated with the Army a Day of Thanksgiving.

[1] The actual occasion of this was a violent storm and a shortage of drinking water; but the loss of the ports in Kent was the real cause of the failure.

CHAPTER TWENTY

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

THROUGHOUT the campaign, Oliver had been nerved by a growing indignation against the Scots. The tales of their atrocities as they had marched into England—that they had stripped the cottages as they passed to the very pothooks, had seized the children as objects of ransom and killed them before their parents' eyes if the money was not forthcoming—had stung him to the quick. There had been atrocities before. Before Naseby, certain Royalists were said to have sold abducted children to the Irish women—"of cruel countenances" and "with long skean-knives about a foot in length"—who followed the King's Army; and after Naseby, in consequence, these women were mercilessly killed by the New Model soldiers, who also disfigured the faces of the English women, not troubling to discriminate between the ordinary camp harlots and the officers' and soldiers' wives. Nor was Oliver squeamish at the treatment given to Royalist prisoners who were allowed to be sold as slaves to the Barbadoes; and he actually wrote a recommendation for one of his colonels who proposed to sell 2,000 of the "common prisoners" to the King of Spain.

Cromwell's indignation at the Scots' conduct was not concerned with its intrinsic cruelty, but with the fact that it was perpetrated by foreigners on Englishmen. There was no point on which he and Charles so profoundly differed as on their attitude to the Scots—to one they were as "foreign" as the Spaniards; to the other, they were his own people, trusted even after betrayal. Whereas Charles, in signing the "Engagement," was merely appealing to his fellow countrymen, to Cromwell this action was "a more prodigious treason than any that had been perpetrated before, because the former

quarrel was that Englishmen might rule over one another; this to vassalize us to a foreign nation."

It was as an English patriot—a feeling of which Charles had not the slightest comprehension—that Cromwell had written before Preston to warn Parliament that the Scots intended to treat the north of England as conquered and occupied territory: "The principles they went on were such as should a little awaken Englishmen . . . there being a transplantation of women and children and of whole families in Westmoreland and Cumberland as I am credibly informed." It was in the same strain that he now peremptorily demanded the return of Berwick and Carlisle "to the Kingdom of England to whom of right they belong."

Yet, in marching to Edinburgh, he was determined, if he could, to win the Scots by argument and example. Hamilton and the nobility were broken; with Argyll and the Kirk, Presbyterians and foreigners though they were, he would treat if he could. He had no desire to prolong the fighting, and he gave to his men a warning even stricter than usual against plunder. He would show the barbarians how a Christian army should comport itself.

In the capital, with the squinting Argyll, he conducted his first effort in foreign diplomacy and imagined himself successful. He could be assured of no further hostility from the North; the Scottish Government would be purged to ensure peace; the ownership of the Border fortresses was conceded. "Our brothers of Scotland," he wrote, "(really Presbyterians) were our greatest enemies. God hath justified us in their sight, caused us to requite good for evil, caused them to acknowledge it publicly by acts of state, and privately, that the thing is true in the sight of the sun. It is a high conviction upon them. Was it not fit to be civil, to profess love, to deal with clearness with them for the removing of prejudice, to ask them what they had against us, and to give them an honest answer? This we have done, and not more. And herein is a more glorious work in our eyes than if we had gotten the sacking

and plunder of Edinburgh, the strong castles into our hands, and made conquest from Tweed to the Orcades; and we can say, through God, we have left by the grace of God such a witness amongst them, as if it work not yet—by reason the poor souls are so wedded to their (Presbyterian) government —yet there is that conviction upon them that will undoubtedly bear its fruit in due time."

The fruit in due time was, as it happened, another war; and Oliver might have been less self-congratulatory if he could have read a comment upon him, written by one of the Edinburgh Presbyterians, which accurately expressed the general feeling of the Scots: "He is an egregious dissembler and a great liar. Away with him, he is a greeting[1] devil."

Innocent of this knowledge, however, he compared unfavourably with his own speed in concluding a difficult negotiation, the unsuccessful slowness of Charles's attempts to bargain at Newport.

. . . . .

The time officially allowed for the Treaty of Newport was forty days, excluding Sundays and Fast Days; but it was found necessary to prolong it and the proceedings in fact lasted from September 18 till November 25. Those Parliamentary commissioners who now met Charles for the first time since Cornet Joyce had taken him into the care of the Army were surprised at the change in him. "They who had not seen the King for near two years," wrote Clarendon, "found his countenance extremely altered. From the time that his own servants had been taken from him he would never suffer his hair to be cut, nor cared to have any new clothes, so that his aspect and appearance was very different from what it had used to be. He was not at all dejected in his spirits, but carried himself with the same majesty he had used to do. His hair was all grey, which, making all others very sad, made it thought that he had sorrow in his countenance, which appeared only by that shadow."

[1] Weeping.

At the opening of the proceedings, two of the Presbyterian commissioners threw themselves on their knees before him and pleaded with him to yield at once all that was possible without wasting time in useless discussions. They saw—as most of England saw—that if some constitutional compromise was not arrived at quickly, nothing, in the circumstances, could avert a military dictatorship. But it was time that Charles was still playing for. He had three alternative schemes. One was to escape—he made two more abortive attempts during the conference; one was to rely on the French aid that the Queen believed was now certain; one was to incite Ireland and the Army there to achieve what the Scots had failed to do. Undaunted by the failure of the first and second Civil Wars, he would try a third. The Marquis of Ormond was to act for him there, and, since the King would have publicly to disavow him, he was put under the direct orders of the Queen. "Lest the rumour of my concessions concerning Ireland," he wrote to her, "should prejudice my affairs there, I send the enclosed letter to the Marquis of Ormond, the sum of which is to obey your command and refuse mine till I certify him I am a free man." And to Ormond he wrote later: "Be not startled at my great concessions concerning Ireland, for they will come to nothing," and also warned him: "Though you will hear that this treaty is near, or at least most likely to be concluded, yet believe it not; but pursue the way you are in with all possible speed."

In the negotiations with the Commissioners, the debate continued on the old familiar ground of the Hampton Court *Proposals* and modifications of them—Presbyterianism for three years or for longer? Toleration for tender consciences or enforcement of the Covenant? Complete alienation of the bishops' property or leasing them for ninety-nine years? Parliamentary control of the armed forces for ten years, for Charles's lifetime or for ever? Retention or abandonment of the Royal power of veto? Interspersing the constitutional, ecclesiastical, financial and military arguments came those

inevitable theological debates at which the King excelled. Bishops and presbyters were not identical. With a wealth of texts from the Epistles, the King demonstrated that Timothy and Titus were *episcopi pastorum*, bishops over presbyters, and not *episcopi gregis*, shepherds over sheep. But it was not on that point that the conference foundered. What Charles finally refused to surrender was the ecclesiastical property which was the guarantee of the bishops' temporal power. Laud's teaching in the days of triumph was not abandoned even at the edge of disaster. "What shall it profit a man," was Charles's last comment, "if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

. . . . . .

But, in truth, an atmosphere of unreality lay over all the proceedings. If Charles had no intention of coming to terms, neither had the majority of the Army. That King and Parliament were seriously discussing Ireton's plan of the summer of 1647 in the autumn of 1648 was itself an index to the nature of the negotiations. What might have been acceptable in the October at Hampton Court was merely fantastic in the October at Newport. In the intervening year, the character of Charles's diplomacy had been assessed and a new war had been fought, and Ireton himself was now in conference with the Levellers.

In September, Ireton, after a quarrel with Fairfax, who remained an unyielding moderate, offered to resign his commission and retired to Windsor to draw up a document very different in tone from his *Proposals*. By mid-October he had completed it. Known as the *Remonstrance of the Army*, it had five main demands: "that the capital and grand author of our troubles—the person of the King—by whose commissions, commands or procurement, and in whose behalf, and for whose interest only, . . . all our wars and troubles have been, with all the miseries attending them—may be speedily brought to justice for the treason, blood and mischief he is therein

guilty of"; that the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York[1] should be summoned to surrender for trial on pain of being declared incapable of governing and sentenced to die without mercy if found in England or its dominions; that capital punishment might be executed on a sufficient number of the King's instruments in both wars; that other delinquents should be moderately fined; and that the soldiers might receive payment of their arrears.

Though its constitutional proposals (arranging for biennial parliaments and excluding all Royalists from voting) did not go as far in the direction of egalitarianism as the Levellers' original manifesto, there was sufficient common ground for an alliance; and a coalition of Iretonians and Rainsboroughites was certain to carry the Army, however bitter the opposition of Fairfax and the conservative officers.

While the King was in Newport spinning out the tedious farce with the representatives of Parliament and Ireton, busy between Windsor and London, giving expression to the political consciousness of the Army, both Cromwell and Rainsborough were still on military service in the north. Whether either of them approved of Ireton's scheme, it is impossible to determine, though it is probable that Cromwell thought it went too far and that Rainsborough thought that it did not go far enough.

The matter that detained them in the north was the siege of Pontefract, which was still holding out for the King. On October 28, Cromwell arrived at Boroughbridge on his way from Scotland, and Rainsborough was lying with his regiment at Doncaster to block any communication of Pontefract from the south. But no consultation took place between them. The next day, a small band of Cavaliers managed to gain admittance to Doncaster, surprised Rainsborough in his lodgings and murdered him.

The death of Rainsborough, and the manner of it, coming

[1] The Duke of York, disguised as a girl, had managed to escape to his sister in Holland in April.

when it did, was decisive. With the removal of his one possible rival in the Army, Cromwell found himself the heir to his policy in so far as it concerned the King. Rainsborough had seen from the beginning the logic of the situation which Cromwell with his slow-moving, traditional, conservative mind had so long refused to admit. As long as Rainsborough lived, Cromwell, even though he was increasingly aware of the strength of his anti-monarchical arguments, could afford to exercise his influence on the side of moderation. He could still stand with Fairfax. Now, with the Leveller leader dead, he must go the way that Ireton had gone. He did not, however, come to London to discuss the matter, but took up his headquarters at Knottingley, to reduce Pontefract and avenge the dead Leveller.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

TWO LETTERS

AT Newport, on Saturday, November 25, 1648, Charles addressed the Commissioners. "My Lords," he said, "you are come to take your leave of me and I believe we shall scarce ever see each other again. But God's will be done. I thank God I have made my peace with Him and shall without fear undergo what He shall be pleased to suffer men to do unto me. My Lords, you cannot but know that in my fall and ruin you may see your own and that also near to you. I pray God send you better friends than I have found."

When they had gone, he went to his room and wrote to his son the letter which was to be his apologia—"all in his own hand and above six sheets of paper"—and the conclusion of which, according to Clarendon, "deserves to be preserved in letters of gold and gives the best character of that excellent Prince."

"You see how long we have laboured in search of peace," it ran: "do not you be disheartened to tread in the same steps. Use all worthy ways to restore yourself to your right, but prefer the way of peace. Show the greatness of your mind, if God bless you (and let us comfort you with that which is our own comfort—that though affliction may make us pass under the censures of men, yet we look upon it so, as if it procure not, by God's mercy, to us a deliverance, it will to you a blessing) rather to conquer your enemies by pardoning than by punishing. If you saw how unmanly and unChristian the implacable disposition is in our ill-willers, you would avoid that spirit.

"Censure us not for having parted with so much of our own right; the price was great, but the commodity was security to us, peace to our people: and we were confident another parliament would remember how useful a king's

power is to a people's liberty. Of how much thereof we divested ourself that we and they might meet once again in a due parliamentary way to agree the bounds of prince and people! And in this give belief to our experience never to affect more greatness or prerogative than that which is really and intrinsically for the good of subjects, not the satisfaction of favourites.

"If you thus use it, you will never want means to be a father to all and a bountiful prince to any you would be extraordinary gracious to. You may perceive all men intrust their treasures where it returns them interest; and if princes, like the sea, receive and repay all the fresh streams the river intrusts with them, they will not grudge but pride themselves to make up an ocean. These considerations may make you as great a prince as your father is now a low one; and your state may be so much the more established as mine has been shaken. For our subjects have learned (we dare say) that victories over their princes are but triumphs over themselves, and so will be more willing to hearken to changes hereafter. The English nation are a sober people however at present infatuated.

"We know not but this may be the last time we may speak to you or the world publicly: we are sensible into what hands we are fallen; and yet, we bless God, we have those inward refreshments the malice of our enemies cannot perturb. We have learned to busy ourself by retiring into ourself and therefore can the better digest what befalls us, not doubting but God's providence will restrain our enemies' power and turn their fierceness to His praise.

"To conclude, if God gives you success, use it humbly and far from revenge. If He restore you to your right upon hard conditions, whatever you promise, keep. These men, who have forced laws they were bound to preserve, will find their triumphs full of troubles. Do not think anything in this world worth the obtaining by foul and unjust means.

"You are the son of our love and, as we direct you to

weigh what we here recommend to you, so we assure you we do not more affectionately pray for you (to whom we are a natural parent) than we do that the ancient glory and renown of this nation be not buried in irreligion and fanatic humour; and that all our subjects (to whom we are a politic parent) may have such sober thoughts as to seek their peace in the orthodox profession of the Christian religion as was established since the Reformation in this kingdom, and not in new revelations; and that the ancient laws, with the interpretation according to the known practice, may once again be a hedge about them; that you may in due govern and they be governed as in the fear of God; which is the prayer of

"Your very loving father,

"C. R.

"*Newport, 25th Nov. 1648.*"

In this letter of one about to die, Charles accepted his death. And at the same moment, far away in Yorkshire, Oliver was writing what was to prove his most famous and characteristic letter which, however it might be interpreted, meant that he had decided at last on the King's death. On that night, both men knew. On the limited temporal stage, much was undecided, little foreseen. The tactics and strategy of politics which would determine the manner and the excuse for death would be dictated by day-to-day events. But on the plane of historic reality, the final decision was taken then and the end acquiesced in. The identity of date gives the moment something of "that epic completeness which critics call the long arm of coincidence and prophets the hand of God."

The very simplicity of Charles's letter, even in its self-deceiving passage on "favourites"—could he have forgotten that it was his infatuation for Buckingham twenty years ago which was the start of it all?—is the perfect reflection both of his character and of his political outlook. Adversity had, indeed, made a virtue of his limitations, but the limitations

had not vanished. He was as unfitted to understand Oliver now as he had been when, as a shy, sickly Prince, he faced the undergraduate overbrimming with vitality and dreams. And the inequality of the two men leaps from the letters, for Oliver's, too, faithfully reflects the character, in all its immensity and complexity, of a soldier, statesman and mystic at the height of his powers and the depth of his experience.

He was tired, ill and intolerably oppressed by the burden of leadership. To St. John he had written, at the beginning of that autumn, that he dreaded that he might be making too much of "outward dispensations." "God preserve us all that we, in simplicity of our spirits, may patiently attend upon them. Let us all not be careful what use men will make of these actings. They shall, will they, nill they, fulfil the good pleasure of God and so shall serve our generations. Our rest we expect elsewhere: that will be durable."

And in his letter, written from Knottingley on Saturday, November 25, 1648, to Robin Hammond at Carisbrooke, he returns again to the matter of those "outward dispensations" which, inevitably, were one of the lights by which he steered.

"Dear Robin," he wrote, "no man rejoiceth more to see a line from thee than myself. I know thou hast been long under trial. Thou shalt be no loser by it. All must work for the best.

"Thou desirest to hear of my experiences. I can tell thee. I am such a one as thou didst formerly know, having a body of sin and death, but I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, there is no condemnation, though much infirmity and I wait for the redemption. And in this poor condition I obtain mercy, and sweet consolation through the Spirit, and find abundant cause every day to exalt the Lord, and abase flesh; and herein I have some exercise.

"As to outward dispensations, if we may so call them, we have not been without our share of beholding some remarkable providences, and appearances of the Lord. His presence hath been amongst us, and by the light of His countenance

we have prevailed. We are sure the good-will of Him Who dwelt in the bush has shined upon us, and we can humbly say: We know in Whom we have believed, Who is able and will perfect what remaineth and us also in doing what is well-pleasing in His eyesight.

"I find some trouble in your spirit; occasioned first, not only by the continuance of your sad and heavy burden, as you call it,[1] upon you, but by the dissatisfaction you take at the ways of some good men whom you love with your heart, who through this principle, 'That it is lawful for a lesser part, if in the right, to force (a numerical majority),' etc.

"To the first: call not your burden sad or heavy. If your Father laid it upon you, He intended neither. He is the Father of lights, from Whom comes every good and perfect gift, Who if His own will begot us, and bade us count it all joy when such things befall us—they being for the exercise of faith and patience, whereby in the end we shall be made perfect (James i).

"Dear Robin, our fleshly reasonings ensnare us. They make us—say—heavy, sad, pleasant, easy. Was there not a little of this when Robert Hammond, through dissatisfaction too, desired retirement from the Army and thought of quiet in the Isle of Wight? Did not God find him out there? I believe he will never forget this. And now I perceive that he is to seek again; partly through his 'sad and heavy burden,' and partly through dissatisfaction with friends' actings.

"Dear Robin, thou and I were never worthy to be door-keepers in this service. If thou wilt seek, seek to know the mind of God in all that chain of Providence whereby God brought thee thither and that person[2] to thee; how, before and since, God has ordered him and affairs concerning him; and then tell me whether there be not some glorious and high meaning in all this, above what thou hast yet attained?

[1] I.e. his responsibility, as Governor of the Isle of Wight, for the King.
[2] The King.

"And, aying aside thy fleshly reason, seek of the Lord to teach thee what that is: and He will do it. I dare be positive to say, it is not that the wicked should be exalted that God should so appear as indeed He hath done. For there is no peace to them. No, it is set upon the hearts of such as fear the Lord and we have witness upon witness, That it shall go ill with them and their partakers. I say again, Seek that Spirit to teach thee which is the Spirit of knowledge and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, of wisdom and the fear of the Lord. That Spirit will close thine eyes and stop thine ears, so that thou shalt not judge by them, but thou shalt judge for the meek of the earth, and thou shalt be made able to do accordingly. The Lord direct thee to that which is well-pleasing in His eyesight.

"As to thy dissatisfaction with friends' actings upon that supposed principle, I wonder not at that. If a man take not his own burden well, he shall hardly others', especially if involved by so near a relation of love and Christian brotherhood as thou art. I shall not take upon me to satisfy, but I hold myself bound to lay my thoughts before so dear a friend. The Lord do His own will.

"You say: 'God hath appointed authorities among the nations to which active or passive obedience is to be yielded.' This 'resides in England in the Parliament. Therefore active or passive, etc.'

"Authorities and powers are the ordinance of God. This or that species is of human institution, and limited, some with larger, others with stricter bands, each one according to its constitution. I do not therefore think the authorities may do *anything* and get such obedience due, but all agree there are cases in which it is lawful to resist. If so, your ground fails, and so likewise the inference.

"Indeed, dear Robin, not to multiply words, the query is, Whether ours be such a case? This, ingenuously, is the true question.

"To this I shall say nothing, though I could say very much;

but only desire thee to see what thou findest in thine own heart as to two or three plain considerations. First, whether *Salus populi*[1] be a sound position? Secondly, whether in the way in hand,[2] really and before the Lord (before Whom conscience must stand) this be provided for, or the whole fruit of the war like to be frustrated, and all most like to turn to what it was and worse? And this, contrary to engagements, declarations, implicit covenants with those who ventured their lives upon those covenants and engagements, without whom perhaps, in equity, relaxation ought not to be? Thirdly, whether this Army be not a lawful power, called by God to oppose and fight against the King upon some stated grounds; and, being in power to such ends, may not oppose to one name of authority, for those ends, as well as another,[3] the outward authority that called them,—not by their power making the quarrel lawful, but it being so in itself? If so it may be, acting will be justified *in foro humano*. . . . But, truly, these kinds of reasonings may be but fleshly, either with or against: only it is good to try what truth may be in them. And the Lord teach us!

"My dear friend, let us look into Providences. Surely they mean somewhat. They hang so together; have been so constant, so clear and unclouded. Malice, swollen malice, against God's people, now called Saints, to root out their name; and yet they, by Providence, having arms and therein blessed with defence and more. I desire he that is for the principle of suffering would not too much slight this.[4] I slight not

[1] *Salus populi, supreme lex*—the safety of the people is the supreme law.

[2] i.e. by the Treaty between King and Parliament.

[3] i.e. may oppose Parliament as well as the King.

[4] Oliver here touches the most profound of problems—the balance between activity and passivity. Though suffering, even the meek suffering of persecution, is obviously a Christian duty, does there not come a point at which action becomes the prior duty because continued passivity is, in fact, only a pious excuse for cowardice? To see in his interpretation of the "providence of victory" an enunciation that "Might is Right" is a complete misreading of his mind and character. Rather it is that "Right is Might" and that, if it ceases to be "Right," then all the "Might" in the

him who is so minded; but let us beware lest fleshly reasoning see more safety in making use of this principle than in acting. Who acts and resolves not through God to be willing to part with all? Our hearts are very deceitful, on the right and on the left.

"What think you of Providence disposing the hearts of so many of God's people this way, especially in this poor Army wherein the great God has vouchsafed to appear? I know not one officer among us but is on the increasing hand. And let me say it is here in the North, after much patience, we trust the same Lord Who hath framed our minds in our actings is with us in this also. And this contrary to a natural tendency and to those comforts our hearts could wish to enjoy with others. And the difficulties probably to be encountered with, and the enemies, not few, even all that is glorious in this world, with appearance of united names, titles and authorities (we know), and (are) yet not terrified, only desiring to fear our great God, that we do nothing against His will. Truly this is our condition.

"And to conclude. We in this Northern Army were in a waiting posture, desiring to see what the Lord would lead us to. And a Declaration[1] is put out at which many are shaken. Although we could perhaps have wished the stay of it till after the Treaty, yet seeing it is come out we trust to rejoice in the will of the Lord, waiting His further pleasure.

"Dear Robin, beware of men. Look up to the Lord. Let Him be free to speak and command in thy heart. Take heed

world will not save it—"Who acts and resolves not through God to be willing to part with all?" Thus Firth's oft-quoted comment on this passage is, it seems to me, superficial: "Briefly stated, Cromwell's argument was that the victories of the Army and the convictions of the godly, were internal and external evidences of God's will, to be obeyed as a duty. It was dangerous reasoning, and not less dangerous that secular and political motives coincided with the dictates of religious enthusiasm."

[1] The Declaration to which he refers is the *Remonstrance of the Army* which, on the previous Monday (November 20), had been presented to Parliament by Colonel Ewer in the name of the whole Army.

of the things I fear thou hast reasoned thyself into, and thou shalt be able, through Him, without consulting flesh and blood, to do valiantly for Him and for His people.

"Thou mentionest somewhat as if, by acting against such opposition as is like to be, there will be a tempting of God. Dear Robin, tempting of God ordinarily is either by acting presumptuously in carnal confidence, or in unbelief through diffidence. Both these ways Israel tempted God in the wilderness and He was grieved by them. The encountering of difficulties, therefore, makes us not to tempt God; but acting before and without faith. If the Lord have, in any measure, persuaded His people—as generally He hath—of the lawfulness, nay, of the duty, this persuasion prevailing upon the heart is faith, and acting thereupon is acting in faith, and the more the difficulties are, the more faith.

"And it is most sweet that he that is not persuaded have patience towards them that are, and judge not: and this will free thee from the trouble of others' actings, which, thou sayest, adds to thy grief. Only let me offer two or three things and I have done.

"Dost thou not think this fear of the Levellers (of whom there is no fear) that they would destroy nobility, has caused some to take up corruption: to find it lawful to make this ruining, hypocritical argument, on one part? Hath not this biassed even some good men? I will not say 'their fear will come upon them'; but if it do, they will themselves bring it upon themselves. Have not some of our friends, by their passive principle (which I judge not, only I think it liable to temptation as well as the active, and neither good but as we are led unto them by God—neither to be reasoned into, because the heart is deceitful) been occasioned to overlook what is just and honest, and to think the people of God may have as much or more good the one way than the other? Good by this Man,[1] against whom the Lord hath witnessed

[1] Charles. Here, in this angry and contemptuous sentence, Oliver's judgment on the King's duplicity finds its private expression.

and whom thou knowest! Is this so in their hearts; or is it reasoned, forced in?

"Robin, I have done. Ask we our hearts whether we think that, after all, these dispensations, the like to which many generations cannot afford, should end in so corrupt reasonings of good men and should so hit the designings of bad? Thinkest thou, in thy heart, that the glorious dispensations of God point out to this? Or to teach His people to trust in Him, and to wait for better things, when, it may be, better are sealed to many of their spirits? And as a poor looker-on, I had rather live in the hope of that spirit and take my share with them, expecting a good issue, than be led away with the other.

"This trouble I have been at because my soul loves thee, and I would not have thee swerve, nor lose any glorious opportunity the Lord puts into thy hand. The Lord be thy counsellor. Dear Robin, I rest thine,

"OLIVER CROMWELL.

"*November 25, 1648.*"

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THE ROAD TO DEATH

ROBIN HAMMOND did not receive the letter. Three days after its writing, the scrupulous and worried Governor was himself arrested. On November 27, Colonel Ewer, a serving man who had distinguished himself in the wars by his "needless violence and cruelty" and who, a week earlier, had presented to Parliament the *Remonstrance of the Army* calling for the King's trial, arrived in Carisbrooke with orders to Hammond again to make Charles a close prisoner. When Hammond refused, Ewer persuaded him to accompany him back to Windsor to lay the matter before Fairfax. He was arrested on the way.

Other men were found to do what he would not. In the early morning of the 30th, after a wild and stormy night during which Charles was fruitlessly urged by his friends to make his escape, they came to tell him that the Army had ordered his removal to Hurst Castle on the mainland. They hurried him into a carriage, not even giving him time to eat. The officer in command decided to ride with him.

"It's not come to that yet," said Charles angrily, pushing him from the door. "Get you out." The King's own attendants took their accustomed places with him.

At Hurst Castle, a gloomy fortress connected with the mainland only by a narrow spit of shingle, he was given into the custody of Captain Eyres.[1] Of the new gaoler Herbert

[1] Colonel Ewer and Captain Eyres are, owing to the chaotic spelling at the time, continually confused. In spite of the fact that Gardiner established their separate identities, the mistake that Ewer was in charge of the King at Hurst persists, not only in *Dictionary of National Biography*, but in such authoritative works as Abbott's *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1937). And it is repeated regularly in popular books on the period.

The mistake is made the more easily because Eyres, though only a Captain, held the rank—or title—of colonel locally; and his manners seem to have been, when unchecked by higher authority, remarkably like Ewer's.

wrote: "His look was stern, his hair and large beard were black and bushy . . . hardly could one see a man of more grim aspect, and no less robust and rude was his behaviour." After an initial insult, however, he treated the King civilly enough, as Charles himself testified in private letters. But the nineteen days during which Charles was to be kept in Hurst were the most uncomfortable he had yet experienced. Even at midday his room had to be lit by candles; and his only exercise was a daily walk along the shingle. His interest in the shipping which anchored very near the shore was suspected of being more than academic. Rupert was preparing a frigate to rescue him and carry him to Ireland. But, as so often, Rupert was too late.

Outside the slow monotony of Hurst, events moved with bewildering speed.

The House of Commons was debating whether or not to regard the King's Newport proposals as satisfactory or at least as grounds for discussion, but the Army Council was determined to bring the King to trial. On the day after Charles's removal to Hurst—that is to say, while the Commons were unaware of the fact—it seemed probable that there would be a majority supporting the view that the King's offer should be accepted as all that was necessary "to secure religion, laws, and liberties." To prevent such a conclusion, Fairfax immediately marched on London at the head of the Army, informed the Lord Mayor that he expected an immediate payment of £40,000 and took up his quarters in Whitehall.

That was on Saturday. When, on the Monday (December 4) the House of Commons was officially informed of the *coup d'état* in the Isle of Wight, it found courage, in spite of military intimidation, to pass after an all-night sitting a resolution declaring that the King had been removed without the House's knowledge or consent. The form of this was, if factual, intentionally too innocuous to form any justifiable ground for reprisals from the Army. In order to provoke

a breach, the extremists clamoured for a division on the motion that the King's proposals were satisfactory.

If this were passed, there would be an understandable, if not a legitimate, excuse for the Army's intervention, since the Army was pledged to the *Remonstrance*, demanding, not settlement with the King, but his trial. The Presbyterian moderates were as well aware of the nature of this trap as their opponents; and instead of putting the motion to the vote, played for time by adjourning the House by the decisive majority of 144 to 93.

Next morning, at seven o'clock, Colonel Pride with a regiment of soldiers surrounded the House of Commons and, standing in the Lobby, prevented about 100 Members from entering and placed in confinement forty-one of them who persisted in objecting to his methods of obtaining a Parliamentary majority. That evening—the evening of "Pride's Purge"—Cromwell arrived in London.

. . . . .

Of all his dramatic entrances, this was the most perfectly timed. How far was he implicated? Where had he been? How much did he know? To these questions which contemporaries asked, posterity has been able to give no answer. Between the night of November 25, when he sat before Pontefract writing to Robin Hammond, and the night of December 6, when he reported to Fairfax at Whitehall, there is no certain word of him. There is a letter, dated merely "November, 1648," in which he tells Fairfax that he hoped to begin his journey to London "upon Tuesday."[1] And that is all. When he was informed what had been done in his absence, "he declared that he had not been acquainted with this design; yet, since it was done he was glad of it, and would endeavour to maintain it." He attended what was left

[1] Abbott tentatively dates this on November 29 and suggests that the "Tuesday" is therefore December 5. He assumes that the letter is in reply to Fairfax's letter of November 28. This conjecture does not seem to me, for a variety of reasons, probable.

of the House of Commons next day and heard them carry a vote of thanks to him for his recent achievements in the field. But he went only once to the Council of Officers. That was on December 15, when they decided that "the King be forthwith sent for to be brought under safe guard to Windsor Castle and there to be secured in order to the bringing of him speedily to justice." So on Tuesday, the 19th, Charles, under the impression that he was to be reinstalled in one of his own houses for further discussion of his proposals, left the gloom of Hurst. That night he lay at Winchester. The same night Oliver "lay in one of the King's rich beds in Whitehall."

The idea of escape was once more uppermost in the King's mind. That last night in Newport he had refused the possibility because, he said, he had given his word. "They have promised me," he had said, "and I have promised them, and I will not break first." Even the argument that his word had been given to Parliament and that he was being abducted by the Army failed to shake him. But once in Hurst, and with the fear of assassination returned, his mood had changed. His enemies had "broken first" and his friends might rescue him if they would. The sudden removal had interfered with Rupert's plans, but no sooner was it known that he was to go to Windsor than other designs were made. Before he left Winchester, he learnt of them, and from Winchester he wrote, in cypher, to Oudart: "I am of your mind concerning my escape and like well of the instruments you name, but you at London must lay the design. I can only expect it. If you do your parts well (in which I desire you use expedition) I hope it shall not fail on mine."

Four days later, guarded intently by Harrison, a Leveller Colonel, and his men, the King reached Bagshot, where Lord and Lady Newburgh were living. Charles's request to dine with them was granted, but Harrison, fearing a plot, "sent some horse with an officer to search the house and all about the Park." However intensive their search, they were not likely to discover the agent of the escape, which was one

of Newburgh's horses—"the fleetest in all England"—which, if Charles could only be allowed to ride it, would outdistance all pursuers. The King had prepared the way for the exchange by complaining all morning about "the going of his horse and said he would change it and procure a better." After dinner, he was indeed given a new horse, but not the one that had been intended. The fleetest horse in all England had fallen lame.

As they entered Windsor in the evening, another agent of Newburgh's gained access to him at an inn where he had asked to alight, and gave him a pass-key of the Castle. It was to be kept and used at an arranged moment. But before that moment came, his guards intercepted some cypher letters. "As soon as they had decyphered them, they searched the King and found the pass-key in his pocket."

It was thus not surprising that Charles should be as closely guarded at Windsor as he had been at Hurst. But, even so, there were compensations. It was at least Windsor. There was a popular demonstration in his favour, not only by the people, but by some militant Royalists who had to be dispersed by musket-fire. He was allowed to use the State Apartments; he had liberty to walk where and when he pleased within the Castle and on the Long Terrace. He still managed, in spite of the utmost viligance on the part of his captors, to receive and dispatch his private correspondence. His meals were taken in some sort of state. His dishes were brought up covered and tasted before being given to him. His cupbearer, Fulke Greville, "gave it upon his knee"—a circumstance which provoked a Puritan journalist to protest: "We have the same odious, vain and wicked ceremonies of kneeling performed to him now as ever. . . . Where shall we find such men as will not bow the knee to Baal, the Grand Delinquent and wickedest tyrant of the whole world?"

Cromwell did not visit the King at Windsor, though he had been a constant visitor in the two or three days before Charles's arrival. He had been interviewing another notable

captive who had been confined there—the Duke of Hamilton, who, in spite of his military defeat and his captivity, was still the leader of "the greatest part by far of the nobility of Scotland." The two hoped to use each other—Hamilton to gain the support of the powerful Lieutenant-General for his political schemes; Cromwell to extract from him the names of his accomplices. Both were disappointed. In spite of Cromwell's assurance of life, rewards and secrecy if he would betray the names of his English supporters, Hamilton rejected the proposal with indignation and wrote "with the juyce of a lemon" a warning note to his brother. Cromwell, far from supporting Hamilton, determined on his death.

With the failure of the conversations, Oliver was seen no more at Windsor. He wrote to the Governor of the Castle to keep Hamilton and Charles apart, and added: "It is thought convenient that, during the King's stay with you, you turn out of the Castle all malignant and Cavalierish inhabitants (except the prisoners)."

The fantastic parenthesis illumines his state of mind during these crowded days. Ambiguity had become second nature. No one knew what he intended, himself probably least of all. Everything he said and wrote bore the stamp of uncertainty and diplomatic evasion. To some he gave the impression that he favoured the King's deposition in favour of the Duke of Gloucester; to others that he had decided irrevocably on the King's death; to others that he favoured the King's continued imprisonment till Charles abandoned the power of veto and disestablished the Church; to others again that he was deliberately encouraging the extremists to bring the King to trial so that he might, when they had made themselves thoroughly unpopular, crush them and save Charles. But one thing was certain. However ambiguous he might be in these matters, he did not intend the Governor of Windsor Castle to imagine that he was conniving in the escape of the King. "Except the prisoners."

The Governor obeyed. As many of Charles's attendants as

possible were dismissed; his meals were curtailed and he was allowed no Christmas fare; being forbidden a chaplain, he had himself to read the daily services.

On Christmas Day they made a last attempt to treat with him. Cromwell, whatever his wishes and instincts, had become convinced that, politically, his death would be an error. There would be little sense in exchanging Charles I, who was in their power, for Charles II, who was not and who, in addition to being free, was "potent in foreign alliances and strong in the affections of the people." He determined therefore to send Charles new proposals, and chose as his envoy the Earl of Denbigh who, as Hamilton's brother-in-law, could visit Windsor without arousing in the minds of the extremists any suspicion that he wished to see the King. At the same time, the information was conveyed to Charles that Denbigh would be in the Castle and that he could summon him.

At a committee which met on Christmas Day to make arrangements for proceeding capitally against the King, Cromwell appealed to his fellow officers to spare Charles's life, merely as a matter of policy, upon the conditions that were now being offered to him. He carried his point with only six dissentients.

But the King refused even to see Denbigh. How, indeed, could he have been expected to do otherwise? For Denbigh was that Basil Fielding who was Buckingham's favourite nephew and godson of Charles's father; Basil, who had once been so brave a lad that, when there was a danger of Buckingham's murder, he had offered to change clothes with him and risk being torn to pieces by the mob; Basil, who, with the volatility of his blood, had become a convinced Parliamentarian at the outbreak of the war and who, when the realities of the struggle outraged his academic approval of its principles, lacked the courage and humility to acknowledge his mistake, but stayed on to serve uneasily a cause he hated and men he despised. And now, at this darkest hour on

Christmas Day, should it be Basil, of all men, who brought to him the ultimate counsel to betray his Kingship and destroy his Church?

Denbigh kicked his heels in his brother-in-law's apartments. The King made no sign.

To Cromwell, this was sign enough. Charles's refusal even to see his envoy was the sign from Heaven for which he had waited. The hesitations of political expediency vanished. On December 26, when the House of Commons introduced a motion to bring the King to trial on a capital charge, Cromwell announced his decision and defined the grounds of it: "Mr. Speaker, if any *man* whatsoever had carried out this design of deposing the King and disinheriting his posterity, or if any man yet had such a design, he should be the greatest traitor and rebel in the world. But since the Providence of *God* hath cast this upon us, I cannot but submit to Providence, though I am not yet provided to give you my advice."

But to the Council of Officers on the following day, his advice was definite enough. The stage was at last set for death.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

PRISONER AT THE BAR

ABOUT two o'clock in the afternoon of Saturday, January 20, 1649, Cromwell and Charles faced each other in Westminster Hall.

The old hall of William Rufus, with its great roof of Spanish chestnut from which now hung the King's Standard that had been captured at Naseby, was set for a trial. The last time it had served this purpose was when Strafford was impeached. The booths of the tradesmen which usually ranged along the walls had been removed. The entrance to the Taverns (named Hell, Purgatory and Paradise) much frequented by lawyers' clerks, was bricked up. Against the west window, rising nearly to the centre of it, tiers of benches had been erected for the Commissioners. Each side of them, running along the north and south walls, were temporary galleries for ladies and other privileged spectators. On a dais in the centre of the tribunal was a crimson velvet chair with a judge's desk before it for Bradshaw, the Lord President of the Court.

Facing it, at some little distance, was another crimson velvet chair for the prisoner.

Behind this, and about forty feet from the Commissioners' benches, a serviceable railing crossed the Hall and all the space below it was at the disposal of any citizens of London who cared to attend or who could manage to gain entry to the trial of their King.

The scene was a blaze of scarlet. The benches and seats for the Commissioners were draped with scarlet cloth. The soldiers who lined the Hall, guarded the windows, kept open the passages, intimidated the crowd, stood in a hollow square round the King, were in the red coats of the Guards. The officers, under Colonel Elisha Axtell, who was in charge of

the Hall, were in full-dress scarlet uniform, carrying their gold-headed canes.

Isolated, Charles sat in this sea of red, his tall black hat on his head and his dark suit throwing into still greater prominence the vivid blue of the broad Garter ribbon round his neck, and accentuating the pallor of the white, stern face.

On the face that day, there was a new look.[1] There was strength and purpose as never before. The tired, sad eyes were alive and accusing and not a little contemptuous. It may be that he was at ease, with a certainty of himself and his cause, as he had never in his life been at ease before. Certainly then, for the only time in his life, his stammer left him. And with the impediment in his speech had gone also the duplicity of his mind—and the need for it. Step by step, he had been forced back to the essentials which, whatever the price or the plausibility, he could not betray. He was dying, quite simply, for the rights of his order, the liberties of his people and the authority of his Church. And now in this farce which preceded death, he had one only duty—so to bear himself that, when the day of revolution, military despotism and heresy was over, posterity should know that he had kept faith.

When he came into the Hall he had been met by the serjeant-at-arms with the mace and escorted by him to the chair at the bar. He sat down quietly, without removing his hat, but almost immediately rose and scanned the faces of those present in search for some he knew. Of the sixty-seven Commissioners facing him, he could recognize only eight. On the third tier, sitting under the Arms of England and Ireland, which had been substituted for the Royal Arms, he saw Oliver Cromwell.

Cromwell's contempt for the tribunal on which he was serving must have equalled Charles's own. With one voice, the entire legal profession of England, even those noted for

[1] There is a portrait of him in Westminster Hall by Bower, now in All Souls College, Oxford.

their extreme anti-Royalism, like St. John, Oliver's cousin, and the violent Nicholas who had prosecuted Laud, refused to have anything to do with what they denounced as a judicial farce. Young Algernon Sidney had told Cromwell bluntly: "First, the King can be tried by no court; second, no man can be tried by this court"; and Oliver knew it was true. No English lawyer could be found to draw up the charge, which was eventually entrusted to an accommodating alien, Isaac Dorislaus. The House of Lords, however intimidated, refused to pass the necessary Ordinance. Even when what was left of the House of Commons appointed 135 "safe" judges, fifty of them declined to act. And those that were there proclaimed the nature of the proceedings as eloquently as those who were not. Cromwell and Ireton alone of the general officers were present. Not only had Fairfax declined ("Not here and never will be; he has too much sense," shouted Lady Fairfax from the spectator's gallery when his name was called), but all Cromwell's equals—Desborough and Fleetwood, Skippon and Lambert and Haselrig—were absent. There were present only the hard core of "Cromwellian Colonels," those who were frankly his "creatures" like Danvers and Downes (and there was to be trouble even with him) and those who owed social advancement to his perception of their military efficiency—Okey, the ship-chandler, and Pride, the brewer's drayman; Harrison, the butcher; Ewer, the serving-man, and Horton, Haselrig's servant; the cobbler Hewson and the salter Goffe. There were three London aldermen; some deserters from Charles—the renegade courtier Mildmay and the bankrupt Danvers and the half-lunatic Monson; and a sprinkling of men of no account, like the weak and shifty Millington, who were later to plead that they had been forced into service by Cromwell.

It was, indeed, Cromwell's affair. As he had created out of the poor material at his disposal a mighty instrument to take and rule the kingdom, so now, in another medium, he

moulded another tool to kill the King. But his making of the Army had been dictated to him by events; it had been undeliberate, a concession to necessity. The High Court was an expression of his individual will and purpose, an imposition of his own personality on the pattern of Fate. He saw it, certainly, as God's will—since he could see it no other way. He had interpreted Charles's refusal to see Denbigh as the awaited sign from Heaven. Once his decision was taken, he reinforced his reason by every shred of legitimate moral indignation at his disposal. But he was not at ease. His energy, indeed, was demonic; but it was not the old, quiet power. His state of hysterical exaltation seemed not far removed from madness.

There was, however, no doubt of its efficacy. On all sides, he was recognized as the mover of events. The States General sent its recommendation of ambassadors to him, with only a duplicate of the letter to his superior officer, Fairfax. Prince Charles in Holland sent to him that blank paper, with the King's signet and that of the Prince attached, on which he might write his own conditions for saving the King's life.[1] It was to him that Algernon Sidney appealed against the illegality of the proceedings, to be told, in advance, the intended outcome: "I tell you, we will cut off his head with the crown on it."

He was, however, concerned about the legality. This was less a result of his naturally conservative temperament than a practical precaution to ensure a verdict. With everyone of any note or integrity in England against him except his own section of the Army, he could not be certain that Charles at the last moment, standing on unimpeachable right, might not turn the scale against him. On the day when Charles was brought from Windsor to be lodged in Sir Robert Cotton's house near Westminster Hall, Cromwell at a window caught sight of the King as he landed. He turned "white as a wall"

[1] The paper was brought to him by his cousin, John Cromwell, old Sir Oliver's son.

and asked the others in the room: "My masters, he is come, he is come, and now we are doing that great work that the whole nation will be full of. Therefore I desire you to let us resolve here what answer we shall give the King when he comes before us, for the first question he will ask us will be by what authority and commission do we try him?" After a silence, someone suggested: "In the name of the Commons and Parliament assembled and all the good people of England." It sounded well; but none knew better than Cromwell that it was as impossible in law as it was untrue in fact.

To the Scots Commissioners, who added their protests to those of every other section of the community, Cromwell defended his action on other grounds. He fell back on the arguments (based on the writings of the Presbyterian Buchanan and the Jesuit Mariana) which examined the very basis of royal power. The pith of it was that a breach of trust in a King ought to be punished more than any crime whatsoever. Here he was standing on the reality of the situation, as he saw it. Whether or not, in law, Charles as an hereditary monarch was answerable to any tribunal whatever, he had, in fact, plunged the country into two civil wars, with all their attendant death, horror and destruction; he had demonstrated again and again that he had no intention either of observing the Constitution or of keeping his word; and he had persistently endeavoured to bring foreign armies into his kingdom to subjugate his subjects. Charles's agents had been punished and no one had questioned the legality of their punishment. If Strafford had died, why should his master, on a technical quibble, escape?

Cromwell, like Charles, was appealing to posterity. And again the complexity of the one and the simplicity of the other case matched their natures. They could both be defended, though not on the same grounds. The relevance of each could be perceived, but it could be acquiesced in only by denying the relevance of the other. Cromwell, in the

name of the people, destroyed the monarchy. Charles, in the name of the monarchy, saved the people.

. . . . . .

The King's answer to the charge was what Cromwell had anticipated. When Charles heard the charge read, describing him as "a tyrant, traitor, murderer and a public and implacable enemy to the commonwealth of England," his face, for the first time, changed. He laughed. Then he stood up to answer the charge, by challenging the jurisdiction of the Court. In his first speech—even in his first sentence—the whole matter was epitomized.

"First I must know," he said, "by what power I am called hither before I will give answer." With his father's love of argument, he had his own trick of repetitive emphasis. "I would know by what authority—I mean, lawful; for there are many unlawful authorities in the world, robbers by the highway, taking men's purses by illegal ways—I would know by what authority—lawful—I was brought from place to place like I know not what, till I came hither. That I fain would know. When I know a lawful authority then I will answer.

"Remember, I am your King, your lawful King, and what sin you bring upon your heads; besides those other judgments you bring upon the land. Think well upon it, I say, think well upon it before you go from one sin to a greater. I know no authority you have. Therefore let me know by what lawful authority I am seated here and I shall not be unwilling to answer. In the meantime, know I will not betray my trust. I have a trust committed to me by God, by old and lawful descent. I will not betray that trust to answer to a new, unlawful authority, for all the world. Therefore let me know by what lawful authority I am come hither and you shall hear more from me. Resolve me in that and I will answer."

To the question that Cromwell had foreseen, Bradshaw, the President of the Court, gave the answer that had been

agreed on: "By the authority of the Commons of England, assembled in Parliament, in behalf of the people of England." But in the heat of the moment, he made an addition of his own—"by which people you are elected King." This indiscretion played straight into Charles's hands. The first part of his reply, though difficult to sustain in argument, did correspond to some kind of reality; the addition was a piece of party propaganda which had not even a remote relationship to the truth. Charles seized on it immediately.

"Nay," he retorted, "I deny that. England was never an elective kingdom; it was an hereditary kingdom for near this thousand years." Then he returned to his first point and again defined his position. "Therefore let me know by what authority I am called hither. Your authority, raised by a usurped power, I will never—I will never betray my trust. I am entrusted with the liberties of my people. I do stand more for the liberties of my people than anyone"—here, surely, he was speaking to Cromwell—"anyone that is seated here as judge. Therefore show me by what lawful authority I am seated here and I will answer it. Otherwise I will not betray the liberties of my people."

Bradshaw informed him that the Court intended to proceed with the case, whether he would plead or not; warned him that he was there to answer questions, not to ask them; advised him that he would do well to reconsider the matter.

"It is as great a sin," said Charles, "to withstand lawful authority as to submit to a tyrannical, or any other way unlawful, authority. Therefore, satisfy God and me and all the world in that, and you shall receive my answer. I am not afraid of this business!"

At this point, the citizens of London, crowded as spectators at the lower end of the Hall, shouted, "God save your Majesty," and Bradshaw thought it expedient to adjourn the Court until Monday.

Charles spent Sunday quietly at St. James's, making his

devotions in private. Cromwell and the other Commissioners attended publicly at Whitehall the preaching of three sermons, including a Hebraic tirade by Hugh Peters, each of over an hour in length. The tone of the first and last—on the texts: "He that sheds blood, by man shall his blood be shed" and "I will bind their kings in chains"—was more acceptable than the second: "Judge not lest you be judged."

Before the public sitting of the Court on Monday, both sides prepared their tactics. Charles determined to carry his attack further. He would demur, not only against any Court's right to try him, but against this Court's competence to try anybody. Cromwell, foreseeing this move, gave Bradshaw minute instructions as to how to proceed, which the President obediently carried out to the letter.

Consequently, when Charles challenged: "It is not my case alone; it is the freedom and liberty of the people of England; for if power without law may make law, may alter the fundamental laws of the kingdom, I do not know what subject in England can be assured of his life or anything he can call his own. . . . All proceedings against any man whatsoever——" Bradshaw cut him short, "according to former directions to him given": "Sir, I must interrupt you. You may not discuss the authority of the Court."

"Sir, by your favour," said the King, "I do not know the *forms* of law; but I do know law and reason, though I am no lawyer professed. Therefore, sir, by your favour, I do plead the liberties of the people of England, more than any of you do."

Bradshaw interrupted again: "Sir, you are not to dispute our authority. You are told it again by the Court. Sir, it will be taken notice of you that you stand in contempt of the Court. Your disputes are not to be admitted and your contempt will be recorded accordingly."

"To demur against any proceedings is legal," retorted Charles.

"You may not demur to the jurisdiction of the Court,"

snapped Bradshaw. "We sit here by the authority of the Commons of England and that authority hath called your ancestors to account."

"I deny that. Show me one precedent."

"Sir, you ought not to interrupt while the Court is speaking to you. The point is not to be debated by you, neither will the Court permit you to do it."

"The Commons of England," remarked Charles, truly, "was never a court of judicature. I would know how they became so."

Cornered and exasperated, Bradshaw threw at him: "You are not permitted to go on," and ordered the clerk to read the charge.

"Charles Stuart, King of England, you have been accused on behalf of the people of England of high treason and other high crimes and treasons; which hath been read unto you. The court require you to give a positive answer, whether you confess or deny the charges, having determined that you ought to answer the same."

This time the King did not laugh, though the matter was more laughable. High treason can be committed only against the King. He said quietly: "I will answer the same so soon as I know by what authority you sit."

Bradshaw ordered the soldiers to take the King back to custody.

"I require that I may give my reasons why I do not. Give me time for that."

"Sir, 'tis not for prisoners to require."

"Sir, I am not an ordinary prisoner."

"Your reasons are not to be heard against the highest jurisdiction."

"Show me the highest jurisdiction where reason is not to be heard."

"They are not to be heard against the highest jurisdiction who have constituted this Court. The next time you are brought here, you will hear more of the pleasure of the

Court and, it may be, their final determination. Serjeant! take away the prisoner."

• "Well, sir, remember that the King is not at liberty to give his reasons for the liberty and freedom of his subjects."

And with that a great shout came from the people, crying, "God save the King!" To answer it, one of the judges, Colonel Hewson, the cobbler, left his place on the Commissioners' benches, stepped across the intervening space and spat in the King's face, calling to the soldiers: "Justice on the traitor!" Charles drew out his handkerchief, wiped his face and said quietly: "Well, sir, God hath justice in store both for you and me." Then, silently, he went out with his guard.

Next day, he faced them again. His countenance was noticed to be "very austere." He had not slept for two nights. On the previous evening he had had information conveyed to him that, at a private meeting, the Court had fixed the date of his execution. But he did not waver. He asked again to be allowed to give his reasons. He was told again that he could say nothing until he had implicitly acknowledged the authority of the Court by answering the charge.

"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 never heard of before—I that am your King, that should be an example to all the people of England to uphold justice, to maintain the old laws—indeed I do not know how to do it."

"This is the third time," said Bradshaw, "that you have publicly disowned this Court and put an affront upon it. How far you have preserved the fundamental laws and freedom of the subject, your actions have spoke it. For truly, sir, men's intentions are used to be shown by their actions. You have written your meaning in bloody characters throughout the whole kingdom. But, sir, the Court understands your meaning. Clerk, record the default. And, gentlemen, you that brought the prisoner, take him back again."

As the guards closed round him, Charles made a last

attempt. "I have one word to you. If it were only my own particular case, indeed I would not——"

"Sir, you have heard the pleasure of the Court and you are to find that you are before a court of justice."

"I find I am before a power," said the King; and went out.

The crier, who had been instructed to anticipate a demonstration like that of the two previous days, yelled; "God bless the Kingdom."

That Tuesday evening, Cromwell found affairs had reached a crisis. Charles's will was defeating him. With each appearance, his cause had gained in strength. From every quarter appeals and threats were pouring in in an attempt to save his life. The Presbyterian clergy were preaching in his favour. The Scots Commissioners had that day sent in their third protest. The attendance of the judges was still scanty and even among those who sat there were signs of wavering, while not the most hardened and optimistic could fail to realise their hourly-mounting unpopularity. There were even rumours that Fairfax, as Lord General, might use his authority to rescue the King.

Cromwell saw here a simple way in which the situation might be retrieved. If only Fairfax could be induced to take his place with the judges, the balance would be shifted. To Fairfax, accordingly, he went. It should be easy to overbear the vacillating politician. But it was not that Fairfax that he found. It was the resolute and intrepid soldier. "The General," wrote a spectator of the meeting, "was baited with fresh dogs all Tuesday night to bring him into the Hall on the morrow, to countenance the business; but by no means would he consent."

No one went into the Hall next day. In an attempt to gain time to strengthen the waverers, as well as to prevent a further public appearance of the King, the intended sitting was abandoned and the Court met in private in the Painted Chamber to hear additional evidence "for the further satisfaction of

themselves." They did so again on the Thursday, by which time the number of Commissioners had shrunk to thirty-one. On Friday, still in private, they decided to resume the public sitting next day, not to try, but to sentence the King. Cromwell and some others signed the death-warrant in advance. There was, however, one point on which "the sterner section" were forced to compromise. They wished to sentence the King in his absence; but it was eventually decided that, whatever the risk, Charles was to appear once more.

The risk was the greater, since they had learnt from their spies that he intended to appeal from the Court to the two Houses of Parliament; from a palpably illegal body to one which, as it would be King, Lords and Commons assembled, was in fact the constitutional law-making power of the realm.

Bradshaw was given the usual careful instructions and, as he rose in his place that Saturday morning, he spoke not to the King, who was sitting in front of him, but to the people.

"Gentlemen——" he began.

Charles interrupted him immediately: "I shall desire a word to be heard a little; and I hope I shall give no occasion for interruption."

"You may answer in your time. Hear the Court first."

"If it please you, sir," persisted Charles, "I desire to be heard. It will be in order to what I believe the Court will say—a hasty judgment is not so soon recalled."

"Sir, you shall be heard before the judgment be given; and in the meantime you may forbear."

"I *shall* be heard before the judgment be given?"

"You shall."

After this assurance, the President proceeded: "Gentlemen, it is well known to all or most of you here present that the prisoner at the bar has been several times brought into court, to make answer to the charge of treason and other high crimes exhibited against him in the name of the people of England——"

From the spectators' gallery there was an uproar, headed

by Lady Fairfax, masked, calling: "Not half or a quarter of them. Oliver Cromwell is a traitor."

Axtell ordered his men to present their muskets at the gallery. "Down with the whores," he shouted. "Shoot them if they say one word more. What drab is that that disturbs the Court?"

When order was restored and Lady Fairfax and her companion had slipped away, Bradshaw continued his discourse, informing those present that, as the prisoner was contumacious and would not plead, sentence would be passed on him. But, before sentence, he should, as had been promised, be allowed to speak.

Charles rose. "This many a day," he said, "all things have been taken from me but that that is much dearer to me than my life—which is my conscience and my honour. And if I had a respect to my life more than the peace of the kingdom and the liberty of the subject, I should certainly have made a particular defence for myself, for by that at least I might have delayed the ugly sentence which I believe will be passed upon me. The desire that I have for the peace of the kingdom and the liberty of the subject more than my own particular ends makes me now at last desire that I, having something to say that concerns both—I desire, before sentence be given, that I may be heard in the Painted Chamber before the Lords and Commons. This delay cannot be long, this delay cannot be prejudicial to you, whatsoever I say. If you will, I will retire and you may think of it. But if I cannot get this liberty, I do protest that these fair shows of liberty and peace are rather specious shows than otherwise and that you will not hear your king."

To the expected appeal, Bradshaw gave the arranged answer: "What you have said is a further declining of the jurisdiction of this Court, which is the thing wherein you were limited before." And added: "This Court is ready to give a sentence. It is not, as you say, that they will not hear their King. They have patiently waited your pleasure for three courts together,

to hear what you would say to the people's charges against you. To which you have not vouchsafed to give any answer at all. Sir, this sounds to a further delay. Truly, sir, such delays as these neither may the kingdom nor justice well bear." Gradually he steered his course back from the particular answer to the general argument which had been prescribed and eventually objected: "That which you now tender is to have another jurisdiction and a co-ordinate jurisdiction."

This time the interruption came neither from the King nor from the galleries nor from the spectators in the Hall. It came from the Commissioners' Benches, behind him. Downes began fidgeting and whispering: "Are we men?" he asked his neighbours, "or have we hearts of stone?" They tried to pacify him, telling him that he would ruin both himself and them. But he persisted, until Cromwell turned angrily round and asked: "What's the matter with you? Are you mad? Can't you sit still and be quiet?"

"No," said Downes, "I cannot be quiet." Then he rose to his feet and told the Court: "I am not satisfied to give my consent to this sentence, but have reasons to offer you against it. And I desire that the Court may adjourn to hear me."

Bradshaw had to give way. "If any of the Court be unsatisfied," he pronounced, "then the Court must adjourn."

In the privacy of the adjournment to the Court of Wards, Cromwell turned on Downes and asked for an explanation of his conduct.

Downes said—or so he averred later: "Sir, God knows I desire not the King's death, but his life. All that I thirst after is the settlement of the nation in peace. His Majesty now doth offer it and in order to it desires to speak with his Parliament. Should you give sentence of death upon him before you have acquainted the Parliament with his offers, in my humble opinion your case will be much altered and I do not know how ever you will be able to answer it."

Cromwell "in scornful wrath" told Bradshaw to take no notice of the opinion of "one peevish, tenacious man,"

taunted Downes in the same breath of having no knowledge of Charles's nature and of having once been in his service; took him aside and in a whisper threatened that he would consider this an attempt to incite mutiny in the Army; sent him off, in tears, to the Speaker's house and drove the rest of them back to Westminster Hall.

Once the Court was reconstituted, Bradshaw told the King that they had unanimously rejected his request and decided to proceed at once to sentence and judgment. The speech in which he did so was long, tedious and irrelevant, but the end of it was clear enough—"this Court doth adjudge that the said Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer and public enemy to the good people of this nation shall be put to death by the severing of his head from his body."

"Will you hear me a word, sir?" asked Charles.

"Sir, you are not to be heard after sentence."

"No, sir?"

"No, sir. Guard, withdraw your prisoner."

"I may speak after the sentence—by your favour, sir, I may speak after the sentence. By your favour—hold—the sentence, sir—I say, sir, I do——"

"Guard, withdraw your prisoner."

Above the tumult, as the King was being hurried away, the bystanders heard Charles's voice ring out in a final comment: "I am not suffered to speak. Expect what justice other people will have!"

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE END OF THE KING

THE King spent the rest of that Saturday at Whitehall with Dr. Juxon, Bishop of London, that man "of a meek spirit and of a solid, steady judgment" who had protested against his signature of Strafford's death-warrant. In earlier days Charles had said of him: "I never got his opinion freely, but, when I had it, I was ever better for it." Now when Juxon came to him with condolences on his lips, Charles cut him short: "Leave off this, my lord. We have not time for it. Let us think of our great work and prepare to meet that great God to whom ere long I am to give an account of myself." They talked far into the night. As soldiers remained in the room, smoking and drinking, neither of them went to bed.

On Sunday, the Bishop preached privately before the King, from the text, "At that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ," while in the Chapel at Whitehall, Hugh Peters heartened Cromwell and his fellow judges with a discourse on an Old Testament passage: "All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit as a carcass trodden under foot." "This," remarked Peters, "I did intend to insist and preach upon before the poor wretch, but the poor wretch would not hear me."

At five o'clock in the afternoon, the King was removed from Whitehall to St. James's, so that he should spend his last two nights undisturbed by the sounds of the carpenters erecting the scaffold outside the Banqueting House. The soldiers were also withdrawn from his bedroom and he was allowed to see certain visitors. But of this latter concession

he did not avail himself. He preferred to be alone with Juxon and the faithful Herbert.

In the evening he gave Herbert a ring—an emerald set between two diamonds—with instructions to go with it "to a lady living in Channel Row on the backside of King Street in Westminster" and to give it to her without saying anything. Having the password, Herbert was allowed by the guards to go on his errand; and returned, late at night, with a little cabinet, "sealed with three seals" which Jane Whorwood gave him in exchange for the ring. Charles would not open it that night; but next morning, after Juxon had arrived and prayers had been said, he broke the seals and showed them what it contained—"diamonds and jewels, most part broken Georges and Garters."

"You see," he said, "all the wealth now in my power to give my two children." They were to come to take their farewell of him later in the day.

In the meantime he arranged his legacies, which consisted chiefly of books. To the Prince of Wales he left his Bible, much used and annotated in his neat, clear hand. James, Duke of York, was to have "his large ring Sun-dial of silver, a jewel his Majesty much valued; it was invented and made by Mr. Delamain, an able mathematician who projected it and in a little printed book showed its excellent use in resolving many questions in arithmetic, and other rare operations to be wrought by it in mathematics." To Elizabeth, he left his copy of Andrewes's sermons, Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* and a manuscript which he himself had written showing "regal government to have a divine right, with proofs out of sundry authors, civil and sacred." Henry was to inherit the works of King James and the Practical Catechism of Dr. Hammond. There were other gifts of books to friends, and Herbert himself was to have the little silver striking clock which hung by his bedside.

Charles then destroyed his private papers, including the key of his cypher and, as the children had still not arrived,

tried to devote his thoughts to the mechanical pastime of making an anagram of his name. He discovered that "*Carolus Rex*" made "*Cras ero lux.*"

When Elizabeth and Henry were at last brought to him, they could not control their tears. Elizabeth indeed had been so ill that, during the first days of the trial, she was reported to have died of sorrow. Her father took her on his knee and told her that, though he had not time to say much, she was "not to grieve or torment herself for him, for it would be a glorious death he should die." And she still had work to perform for him. She was to tell her mother that his thoughts had never strayed from her and that his love was the same to the last. And to her brother James she was to bear an imperative message—to tell him that it was his father's last wish that, whatever shifts and changes there should be, he must henceforth look on Prince Charles, not only as his elder brother, but as King, and give to him not only affection but allegiance.

Between her sobs, Elizabeth promised. But she was unable to fulfil her promise. Next year, at the age of fourteen, she died at Carisbrooke of a broken heart, a few days before she would have been set at liberty to return to her mother.

It was the safeguarding of the succession which was the memory that, somehow, Charles must leave with the ten-year-old Henry. He had not forgotten that Parliament had once thought of making him a puppet king, and there were rumours that the Army had now the same intention. Taking his son in his arms, he spoke slowly and seriously.

"Sweetheart, they are going to cut off your father's head."

Henry said nothing, but "looked very steadfastly upon him."

"Mark, child, what I say. They will cut off my head and perhaps make you a king. But mark what I say: you must not be a king as long as your brothers Charles and James are alive. For they will cut off your brothers' heads when they can catch them; and cut off your head, too, at the last. And

therefore I charge you—do not be made a king by them."

"I will be torn in pieces first," said Henry.

The King turned to Elizabeth again, who was crying uncontrollably "and desired me"—so she recorded—"not to grieve for him, for he should die a martyr, and he doubted not but that the Lord would settle his throne upon his son Charles and that we should all live happier than we could have expected to have been if he had lived."

Then he gave the children all the jewels, except the great George that he was still wearing—the curiously cut onyx set in twenty-one diamonds which was to go to the Charles who would be King to-morrow—and, after many tears and embraces, he blessed them and let them go.

. . . . .

At Whitehall there was some difficulty about obtaining signatures to the death-warrant. Some of the judges, like Pride, were unable to write; but others were unwilling. Cromwell saw to it that the recalcitrance was overcome. He dragged one man to the table and held his hand with the pen in it until the signature was made. From another, he took the pen and "marked him in the face with it." When the man retaliated by spattering ink in his face, Cromwell burst into excited and hysterical laughter. That day, he was a little mad.

. . . . .

At night, Herbert, who was lying on a pallet bed in Charles's room too "full of anguish and grief" to rest, noticed that the King was sleeping soundly enough. Towards morning, Herbert himself fell asleep and was awakened by Charles, who had drawn the bed-curtain and, by the light of the little wax lamp, saw that he was in the throes of a troubled dream. He asked him what it was.

Herbert told him that he was dreaming that Laud had come to have audience of the King and that, in their conversation—which Herbert could not hear—Charles looked very "pensive" and the Archbishop gave a sigh.

"He is dead," said Charles; "yet, had we conferred together during my life, 'tis very likely (albeit I loved him well) I should have said something to him that might have occasioned his sigh."

The morning of Tuesday, January 30, 1649, was very cold, even for winter. The Thames was frozen over. Lest he might shiver and so give his enemies the impression that he was afraid, the King put on an extra shirt. He dressed himself with meticulous care. "Herbert," he explained, "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. I do not fear death. Death is not terrible to me. I bless my God I am prepared."

When Juxon arrived, Charles spent an hour alone with him; then he called Herbert in to attend Mattins. The second lesson was the twenty-seventh chapter of St. Matthew, an account of the Passion of Christ. After Juxon had given the Blessing, the King asked him if he had selected it purposely.

"No, your Majesty, it is appointed in the Kalendar as the lesson for this day."

. . . . .

At nine o'clock, while the King was at his prayers at St. James's, Cromwell was in the Painted Chamber at Whitehall with a few of the other Commissioners appointing five worthy ministers to attend the King "to administer to him those spiritual helps that should be suitable to his present condition" and Colonel Goffe (who was known in the Army as "the Praying Colonel" from his propensity to turn every committee into a prayer-meeting, and who had been assuring Cromwell for the past two years that it had been revealed to him that God was against the King) was sent to Charles to inform him of the provision that had been made for him. The King returned the answer that he would prefer not to be troubled.

Hugh Peters was not one of the five. He was superintending

more practical work. Inspecting the scaffold to see that all arrangements were in order, it occurred to him that "the poor wretch" might struggle.

He spoke to a carpenter, who thereupon went and procured four iron staples which he hammered into the floor of the scaffold. To these hooks and pulleys were to be attached to drag the King to the block, if he refused to lie down voluntarily.[1] Round the low railing of the scaffold, black cloth was hung, so that the spectators in the street below would not be able to see the block. The actual spectacle of regicide might provoke incalculable reactions.

It was not, however, the overcoming of the victim's resistance or the screening of his death from the people which was the main preoccupation of the morning. The pressing problem was to find an executioner.

The common hangman, Brandon, though forcibly brought to Whitehall and offered £100 if he would do the deed and imprisonment if he would not, refused in horror; nor would anything shake him. Through the morning the search for volunteers proceeded. At last two men were found, who stipulated that they should be disguised "in sailors clothes, with vizards and perruques." Their identity was a secret which has been kept. There were many rumours and accusations, but nothing was proved. Years later, Archbishop Tenison told how, when he was Rector of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, he was sent for to pray by a dying man in a poor house in Gardner's Lane. The man was already dead when he arrived but "the people of the house told him that the man (whose name they never knew) had been very anxious to see him and confess to him that he was the executioner of King Charles; that he was a trooper of Oliver's and, every man in the troop having refused to do that office, Oliver

[1] As the blocks of the time were used for the beheading and quartering of those already dead, they were only a few inches high. The phrase "kneeling at the block" gives quite a wrong impression. Charles was executed "lying at the block."

made them draw lots, and the lot falling upon him, he did the work."

Among those suspected was, inevitably, Hugh Peters, who, for the rest of the day, was not seen in public. According to his servant, "he kept his chamber, being sick."[1]

. . . . .

The King left St. James's between nine and ten. He was dressed in a suit of black satin—"but not in mourning"—with a short plush cloak. He wore his George and his Garter. His hair, white now, and his beard, long and greying, had been most carefully brushed by Herbert, and he had resumed his ear-rings, each a single pearl surmounted by a small golden crown.

To the waiting soldiers he said: "I go to a Heavenly crown with less solicitude than I have often encouraged you to fight for an earthly diadem." Then, calling out "March on apace," he set out with his usual quick step. He slackened only once, by the corner of Spring Garden, where he pointed out to Juxon a tree which his brother Henry had planted forty years ago. Henry was inevitably in his thoughts that day.

When he stepped on to the scaffold, through the window of the Banqueting Hall, he could hardly forget that in his

[1] Personally, I think it just possible that Peters was the assistant. The evidence of his servant is contradicted by others who saw him examining the disposition of the scaffold an hour before the execution. And one of the curious features of the execution was that the assistant, whose duty it was to hold up the severed head and shout the formula: "Behold the head of traitor," deliberately refrained from speaking for fear his voice might be recognized. This seems to argue that it was a well-known voice —which hardly points to an unknown, obscure man, but which would certainly fit Peters.

Against this must be set the facts that, in spite of the heavy disguise, which included a false wig and beard as well as the mask and tight-fitting clothes, he would have run the risk of being recognized by Juxon, who was on the scaffold, even if there was no fear of identification from the guards or danger of it—at that distance—from the people.

The fact that he was universally suspected of being the executioner is a sufficient indication of his reputation; and there is nothing known of his character which would make it unlikely that he was the assistant.

boyhood, shy and awkward, in the shadow of his adored brother, he had stepped through the same window on to a similar scaffold. That occasion was one of excitement and pleasure—to watch, with his father and his uncle, the King of Denmark, the great assault-at-arms and the bouts between the fencers of London on the platform which had been erected so that the citizens might enjoy the spectacle. This morning's scaffold was modelled on that one and placed in the same position.

The procession, leaving Henry's tree, skirted the lake and the piece of water known as Rosamond's Pond, marched in the direction of the small gate opposite the Abbey. Abreast of the King, running every now and then a little ahead of him so that he might stare closely at his face, was the carpenter whom Peters had sent in quest of hooks and pulleys. His hatred of Charles was a personal thing, for the King at Oxford had hanged his brother as a spy. Now he avenged him at least to the extent of putting the King out of countenance. Charles—though he had no idea who he was—kept turning his head away, embarrassed by the pitiless scrutiny. At last Juxon, angry at the attempt to discompose the King, complained to the colonel in charge of the guard, and the carpenter was removed. But he managed to capture the King's spaniel, "Rogue," who was following his master for a walk in the Park, and put the dog on exhibition to the crowds, together with the hooks and pulleys.

When the King arrived at Whitehall, Juxon prepared to administer Holy Communion. In the course of it they were disturbed by a knocking at the door. The five godly ministers, undeterred by Charles's refusal to see them, had come to offer their consolatory offices. The Bishop told them to go away. They knocked a second time, refusing to take any dismissal except from the King himself.

"Then," said Charles, "thank them from me for the offer of themselves; but tell them plainly that they, who have so often and causelessly prayed against me, shall never pray

with me in this agony. They may, if they please—and I'll thank them for it—pray for me."

After he had received the Blessed Sacrament, he was told that dinner was prepared for him; but, after the Eucharist, he had no wish to touch any other food. Juxon remonstrated with him. He reminded him how long he had fasted, how bitter was the weather. He might suddenly faint upon the scaffold, and that would be attributed to fear more surely than an involuntary shiver from the cold. On this advice and permission, the King gave way. But he would eat a token meal only—some beer and a crust. They brought him claret and a small loaf of white bread.

He was kept in Whitehall waiting for death for four hours. Not till two o'clock in the afternoon did Hacker at last come to summon him to the scaffold. On it, fifteen people were waiting. Beyond it, packing the street up to Charing Cross and down to Westminster, crowding the roofs of the adjacent buildings, all London, it seemed, had come to see the King die. Round the scaffold itself, Oliver's cavalry kept guard, and there were 8,000 picked troops not far away, in case of any demonstration.

The King had now no companion but Juxon, for Herbert, already half-fainting, had begged to be excused witnessing the last act. As they came on to the scaffold, the sun, for the first time that day, broke through the clouds.

Charles "looked very earnestly upon the block" and, seeing it was so low, asked Hacker if there were not a higher one. He was told there was not. He then looked at the dense throngs of spectators, but realized that they were too far away to hear his dying speech. That was intended. But he would address those who could hear. In his hand was "a small piece of paper some four inches square" on which he had written the heads of his speech.

"I shall be very little heard of anybody," he began. "I shall therefore speak a word unto you here. Indeed, I could hold my peace very well if I did not think that holding my peace

would make some men think I did submit to the guilt as well as to the punishment. But I think it is my duty to God first and to my country for to clear myself both as an honest man and a good King and a good Christian." He protested that it was never his intention to deprive Parliament of any of its legal privileges, and that it was Parliament, in its raising of the Militia, and not he who began the war. "Yet, for all this, God forbid that I should be so ill a Christian as not to say God's judgments are just upon me. I will only say this—that an unjust sentence that I suffered for to take effect is punished now by an unjust sentence upon me."

Having made this last atonement to the memory of Strafford, he continued, indicating Juxon: "I hope that this good man will bear witness that I have forgiven all the world and even those in particular that have been the chief causes of my death. Who they are, God knows. I do not desire to know. God forgive them. But my charity commands me not only to forgive particular men, but to endeavour to the last gasp the peace of the Kingdom." He turned to the journalists, who were taking down his words in shorthand. They must give to the people the last message that he could not. "Sirs, I do wish with all my soul and I do hope that there are some here that will carry it further, that they may endeavour the peace of the Kingdom. Believe it, you will never do right, nor God will never prosper you, until you give God His due, the King his due—that is, my successors—and the people their due. I am as much for them as any of you. You must give God His due by regulating rightly His Church (according to the Scriptures), which is now out of order. A national synod, freely called, freely debating among themselves, must settle this, when that every opinion is freely and clearly heard. For the King, indeed I will not——"

He broke off suddenly. One of the bystanders had touched the axe. Charles was afraid that the edge would be blunted and so give him needless pain. "Hurt not the axe," he said, "that it may not hurt me."

Resuming his speech, he admitted that it was not for him to speak of their duty to the King, but "for the people, truly I desire their liberty and freedom as much as anybody whomsoever. But I must tell you their liberty and freedom consists in having government—those laws by which their life and their goods may be most their own. It is not having a share in government. That is nothing pertaining to them. A subject and a sovereign are clean different things and therefore, until they do that—I mean that you do put the people in that liberty as I say—certainly they will never enjoy themselves.

"Sirs, it was for this that I am now come here. If I would have given way to an arbitrary way, for to have all laws changed according to the power of the sword, I need not have come here. And therefore I tell you—and I pray God it be not laid to your charge—that I am the martyr of the people.

"In troth, sirs, I shall not hold you much longer. I will only say this to you—that in truth I could have desired some little time longer, because I could have put then what I have said in a little more order and a little better digested than I have done. And therefore I hope that you will excuse me. I have delivered my conscience."

When he had ended, Juxon reminded him that there was one thing which he had not explicitly stated.

"I thank you heartily, my lord, for I had almost forgotten it. Sirs, my conscience in religion I think is very well known to all the world; and therefore I declare before you all that I die a Christian, according to the profession of the Church of England, as I found it left me by my father. And"—pointing to Juxon—"this honest man, I think, will witness it." Then, turning to the Puritan officers, he added: "Sirs, excuse me for this same. I have a good cause and I have a gracious God. I will say no more "

There was no more to say, except some words on the details of death. He asked Hacker to see that the executioner did not put him to pain and again called out to one of the men who was examining the axe: "Take heed of the axe.

Pray take heed of the axe." To the executioner, he said: "I shall say but very short prayers, and when I stretch out my hands, strike." Then he disposed of the few things he still had with him. To Juxon he gave his gold-headed cane for himself, the George to deliver to his son, his exquisitely enamelled watch for Jack Ashburnham, and an enigmatic message—one slow word "Remember."

Ready for death, with his hair put up under a nightcap, he turned to the Bishop for the last time. "I have a good cause and a gracious God on my side," he reiterated.

"There is but one stage more," said Juxon. "This stage is turbulent and troublesome. It is a short one, but it will soon carry you a very great way. It will carry you from earth to Heaven."

"From a corruptible to an incorruptible crown," said Charles; "where no disturbance can be; no disturbance in the world."

For a moment he stood and prayed with hands and eyes uplifted; then lay down immediately and "after a very little pause, the King stretching forth his hands, the executioner severed his head from his body."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE LAST MEETING

THE scaffold, once death was accomplished, became a booth. Those who, from piety or hatred or curiosity, wished to dip their handkerchiefs in his blood were admitted for money. Chips of the boards which the blood had soaked and handfuls of sand which had been scattered on it to dry it were sold at prices adjusted to the computed means of the buyers. "The soldiers took of some a shilling, of others half a crown, more or less, according to the quality of the persons that sought it. But none without ready money." The white curls were cut off, until the hair at the back was only an inch long. One of the vendors was heard to say: "I would we had two or three more Majesties to behead, if we could but make such use of them."

At last the tiny body was placed in a cheap, deal coffin and the face, still smiling graciously as if giving audience,[1] hidden from the common view. It was carried back into the Banqueting House, with Juxon and Herbert still in attendance, to the room where Charles had spent with them his last hours of life.

The play was over; and at the climax the stage was Charles's alone and for ever. But somewhere behind the scenes, enigmatic and surrounded by mystery and an uncertainty which cannot be dispelled, Cromwell moved.

There are conflicting stories. Just before the execution, he was in Ireton's room, with his son-in-law and Harrison (who were still in bed), Colonel Elisha Axtell, who had managed at last to procure a headsman, and the three Colonels, Hacker, Huncks and Phayre, to whom the conduct of the execution

[1] According to Sir Purbeck Temple, who gave "half a piece" for permission to see the body.

had been entrusted. Cromwell ordered Huncks, in his official capacity, to draw up an order for the executioner.

"I refused it," said Huncks in testimony when Hacker was on trial ten years later, "and upon refusing of it there happened some cross passages. Cromwell would have no delay. There was a little table that stood by the door, and pen, ink and paper being there, Cromwell stepped and writ. (I conceive he wrote that which he would have had me to write.) As soon as he had done writing he gives the pen over to Hacker; Hacker he stoops and did write (I cannot say what he writ). Away goes Cromwell; and then Axtell. We all went out. Afterwards they went into another room."

In that other room, the mystery deepens. It was said by his enemies that, there and at that moment, he went to consult with his officers as to means for saving Charles; that, as was his custom, he opened the meeting with a prayer to know God's will in the matter and that he was still praying when a knock at the door told him that the King was dead—"which being unexpected to many of them did at present astonish them, while Cromwell, holding up his hands, declared to them it was not the pleasure of God he should live."

If this story is true—and it may well be—the incident was surely not, as those who quoted it would have it, an instance of supreme hypocrisy, but a revelation of Oliver's deepest instincts. God could overrule every action of man. His miraculous intervention in human affairs was the constant theme of the Book which Oliver knew best. Even on the scaffold He could save, if He would. The unknown headsman, confronted with the actuality of his office, might have refused. The spectators might have revolted. In the illumination of prayer, he himself might see, before the irrevocable moment, that he must undo his own act. But there was no answer, save the knock on the door which told him that the axe had fallen.

That many of those in the Banqueting House were unaware

of the spectacle which was being enacted before it seems certain. After Juxon and Herbert returned with the coffin, they met Fairfax, who asked—so Herbert records[1]—"how the King did?" Herbert thought it strange, but discovered that Fairfax's ignorance was due to the fact that he had been "with the Officers of the Army then at Prayer, or Discourse in Colonel Harrison's apartment. . . . His Question being answer'd, the General seem'd much surpriz'd." But when they met Cromwell, who was pacing up and down the further end of the Long Gallery, there was neither question nor ignorance. He told them curtly that they should have orders for the King's burial.

But, before the burial, he must see Charles again. The first confrontation was in public to an audience. He tried to open the coffin lid with his stick, but, failing to do so, borrowed the sword of a Suffolk gentleman who was with him "and with the pummel knockt up the lid and looked upon the King." The gentleman's mind was running less on private feelings than on political repercussions, and he broke the silence by asking what government the country would now have. "The same that is now," said Cromwell tersely.

It was at night and, as he thought, alone that he faced Charles for the last time. The Earl of Southampton and a friend had obtained leave to sit up by the body. "As they were sitting very melancholy there, about two o'clock in the morning they heard the tread of somebody coming very slowly upstairs. By-and-by the door opened and a man entered very much muffled up in his cloak, and his face quite hid in it. He approached the body, considered it very attentively for some time, and then shook his head, sighed out

[1] J. G. Muddiman, in *The Trial of Charles the First*, instances a writer in the *Carte Papers* who says that Fairfax was under house-arrest in his house in Queen Street and suggests that therefore Herbert's account of this interview "is evidently one of his serious mistakes about dates and places." Considering what the date and the place were, it seems to me that Herbert's testimony is more likely to be correct than the reminiscences of a casual writer.

the words 'Cruel necessity!' He then departed in the same slow and concealed manner as he had come. Lord Southampton used to say that he could not distinguish anything of his face; but that by his voice and gait he took him to be Oliver Cromwell."

INDEX OF PERSONS