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Author Lane, Jane

Title London goes to Heaven

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LONDON GOES TO HEAVEN

JANE LANE

Miss Jane Lane has produced another unforgettable portrait of London to hang beside those others which she drew in *Gin and Bitters* and *England for Sale*. In those two novels she revealed the impact of the Revolution of 1688, and its aftermath, upon the ordinary people of the Metropolis; in this book she unveils the truth about the state of London and its citizens from the time that King Charles the First was executed until his son was restored to the throne in 1660. To make clear the changes which were wrought in the way of life of London's citizens during what the history books call the Interregnum, Miss Lane adopts a similar method to that which she used in *Gin and Bitters* revealing the period through the story of a humble tavern-keeper, Samuel Guffin, and his family.

It is a story of ordinary men and women living through those eleven years during which the struggle between the victorious Parliament and the powerful New Model Army resulted in the overthrow of all traditional law and custom, combined with the outcropping of many fantastic religious sects. Here is the humour and pathos of the robustious, colourful and independent London of the seventeenth century in all its civic pride converted by ruthless force into a New Jerusalem; here is the experience, related in moving human terms, typical of that of any small tradesman during that crazy, experimental decade. Miss Lane shows strikingly how the native humour of the traditional Londoner salted and triumphed over the harsh unnatural discipline which power-drunk cliques sought to impose upon the nation. Mr Guffin is shown enduring the twin impacts of public affairs and of consequent revolutions within his own household; and how he battles through this storm of public and domestic disturbances, and fetches up exhausted but safe on a friendly shore makes a story full of humour and excitement, and a worthy companion piece to *Gin and Bitters*.

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LONDON GOES TO HEAVEN

By the same Author

FICTION

HIS FIGHT IS OURS
GIN AND BITTERS
HE STOOPED TO CONQUER
ENGLAND FOR SALE
YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY
SIR DEVIL-MAY-CARE
COME TO THE MARCH
PRELUDE TO KINGSHIP
KING'S CRITIC
BE VALIANT STILL
UNDAUNTED

BIOGRAPHY

KING JAMES THE LAST

LONDON GOES TO HEAVEN

by

Jane Lane



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PART ONE

CHAPTER I

(0)

MASTER SAMUEL GUFFIN, freeman of London, sat in his common-room all alone, oppressed by the unfamiliar silence of his City. He sat in his tavern called The Three Crowns, upon the eastern corner of Salutation Alley, over against the Lud Gate, in the Ward of Farringdon Within. It was one of the clock on a Tuesday in January, the middle of a working day; and yet so silent was *it*, both within-doors and without, that he might have been sitting at dead of night in the heart of the country.

Uneasy and bewildered, he listened wistfully for just one sound which should assure him that he sat secure within the Walls of his City. Normally at this hour his ears were besieged by every variety of noise. There were the street cries: "Marrow-bones, maids, marrow-bones !"; "Have you any work for a tinker?"; "Rushes here I Green rushes!"; "I have marking-stones, red or black I " ; "Buy a hair-line!"; " Stopples for close-stools, or a pesock to thrust your feet in I" and all the rest. There was the harsh rumble of coach wheels, the jog-trot of the bearers of these new sedan-chairs, the bawling of 'prentices at their masters' doors, crying up the wares within, inviting to "Buy! Buy!"; the whining voices of the beggars, the plaintive supplication of the prisoners confined in the gaol above the Lud Gate, the raucous shouts of the watermen from Paul's Wharf, the bells of the innumerable churches chiming the quarters of the hour, the discordant horn Of poor Tom o' Bedlam beseeching alms, the trumpet which heralded the bearward, and the creaking, groaning, and complaining of the trade-signs which hung above every shop and tavern.

But of all these homely sounds only the bells remained to-day, sad, melodious, inexorable. The bitter cold was

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windless, holding the signboards in a hard grip. Only, from very far away to the west, came a continuous subdued murmur, as of some vast concourse, and against that sound, Mr Samuel Guffin resolutely shut his ears.

Within the house it was the same. Mr Guffin's little tavern was always well patronised, and although he had run no ordinary since his wife's death last year (for his elder daughter, Sarah, who kept house for him, was an execrable cook), there were often bespoke dinners in his private parlour abovestairs, and always there were neighbouring shopkeepers calling for bread and cheese and onions in the common-room. But this morning Mr Guffin had kept his street door locked and would admit no customers. This he had done from a vague feeling of respect, as an even vaguer gesture of protest, and for the very prosaic reason that on such an occasion he could look for no custom. Those citizens who had not flocked to Whitehall kept within their houses, and many, like himself, had locked their doors. Meantime Sarah was in the kitchen, preparing a belated dinner for her family, Thomas presumably was with his regiment, James had gone off early without saying whither he was bound, Ned Walsh the drawer and Richard Chick the apprentice were at Whitehall, and Mr Guffin's two younger children, Julia and Simon, were abovestairs in their bed-chamber; for their father had forbidden them to go to the ward-school to-day.

And he sat here before the fire, with the Book of Common Prayer upon his knees and his Sunday suit upon his person, trying to arrange his thoughts. For a while he had turned the pages of the prayer-book, searching for suitable supplications for an occasion which was quite unprecedented and entirely incomprehensible. But he could find nothing in the least suitable, so here he sat, not knowing what to do with himself, a simple citizen of fifty years, with a fair bushy beard and a cropped head, a body which was six foot four in height and broad in proportion, and a mind which had never been able to keep pace with the growth of the vast shell which contained it. It had never been able to understand what Mr Guffin called "great matters"; it had never desired to **under-**

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stand great matters; now, faced with a matter so great that it had stilled the very voice of London City, Mr Guffin's mind, troubled and bewildered, toiled to fix itself upon the normal and the familiar, and thus to shut out that which was altogether beyond it.

He thought of the City in which he lived, in which his family had lived for generation after generation. He thought of those sturdy walls which overshadowed his tavern, which made the City of London a nation within a nation, self-governing, passionately independent, the treasury of England, the strongest fortress in the realm. He thought of the Lord Mayor and the Court of Aldermen and the Common Council, of the Sheriffs and the Chamberlain and Mr Recorder, of all those venerable and powerful officials who protected and ruled this great sub-nation. If pressed to it, Mr Guffin would have admitted that the Lord Mayor of London was second in authority to the King of England; yet instinctively, and for all practical purposes, Mr Guffin placed the Lord Mayor first. Must not the King knock humbly upon Temple Bar ere he be admitted to the liberties? But when the Lord Mayor went to Whitehall, he had not to use any such formality. But then Mr Guffin remembered with a shock that the Lord Mayor had made a solemn protest against what was being done at Whitehall to-day, and that his protest had been contemptuously ignored. He shied away from the remembrance and from all its implications, and, desperately seeking some other and more soothing subject for his meditations, fell to considering family affairs.

Yet even here was little comfort. Previous to last summer, his home life had been as happy and as tranquil as a man could wish; his wife was loving, faithful, and efficient; she had borne him a large family of sons and daughters, and though infant mortality had taken its usual toll, five offspring had survived, and her spouse had been content to leave their upbringing in her capable hands. Then, last July, there had been an outbreak of this army-fever, as they called it, which had come to London in the train of the New Model. Mrs Guffin had fallen a victim to it, and despite the ministrations

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of Hal Cranton, the barber-surgeon and Mr Guffin's closest friend, she had succumbed to it within a week. To the widower's natural grief was added the dismay of having to act the part of mother as well as father to their three sons and two daughters.

The two younger children caused him little anxiety. Simon, now aged eight, was attending the ward-school, and in six years* time would be bound apprentice to his father. As for Julia, a maiden of twelve, she, reflected her fond parent, could never be a source of anxiety to anyone. He thought of her always as "Little Julia," though she was growing up fast. She was such a good little girl, so useful in the house, helping her elder sister in the kitchen, charmingly mothering Simon, always neat, obedient, contented, never saying very much but wearing always a grave, wise smile, which made you sure she had a good conscience. Soon she would be leaving school, and when she had thoroughly mastered the art of cooking, Mr Guffin might recommence his shilling ordinary; she was her mother all over again, was Little Julia.

No, it was his elder children who presented the problem. Mr Guffin was fond of all his offspring and proud of them as well; but up to the time of his wife's death he had thought of them as babies, to be humoured, petted, or corrected, as need arose. Just lately, however, he had begun to discover that the elder ones considered themselves grown-up, and were resolved to act accordingly.

He grunted to himself. It was ridiculous. Take James for example. James was but seventeen, a beardless boy; it would be four years ere he was out of his indentures to his scrivener master, and could draw a wage as a journeyman. Oh, he was clever enough, admitted Mr Guffin (half admiringly, half irritably); he had been so good at his books that when he left the ward-school the master of it had persuaded his father to allow this bright offspring to try for a scholarship to Paul's. James had won it, too, and had become a "Paul's Pigeon," as the vulgar termed it, putting on a blue frock and learning Latin and Greek. Mr Guffin had boasted to neighbours of "my son James who is a Child of Paul's," until, at

fifteen, the lad had come pestering to be sent to the University. The University indeed! It was time James remembered that he was a tit's son, his father had told him severely, and began to learn an honest trade. As a concession to his book-learning, Mr Guffin had apprenticed the lad to a scrivener, who lived in Pissing Alley off Watling Street; for a scrivener drew up formal legal documents, superintended the affairs of those who bought and sold and mortgaged lands, and was therefore a fit master for a clever young tit. James came home to dinner and slept in his father's house, yet Mr Guffin saw little of him, and the little he did see often made him long to box his ears. For James talked high-flown political talk at table, and was wont to go off by himself of an evening, presumably to indulge in solemn discussions of the like nature with other jumped-up 'prentices who shared his views.

Of Thomas, the eldest son, his father had seen nothing for more than three years. For one evening when Thomas, then a lad of fifteen, and newly apprenticed to his father, had gone off to bang the pot with some companions in an ale-house, he had been caught by the press-gang, and had wakened up next morning to find himself a foot-soldier in the New Model Army, just then in the course of being established by the Parliament, which latter, in a panic, had been viewing its original troops' constant defeats. Thomas's impressment had infuriated his father; the boy was fitter for the schoolroom than the field, and his being snatched away had compelled Mr Guffin to engage a 'prentice from outside his family, thus breaking a long family tradition. Thomas's brief and laboriously written letters had been few and far between. The first one or two were nothing but wails of home-sickness; the later ones only said that he was well, had escaped wounds, and that his regiment had distinguished itself at such-and-such a battle. If he had had leave of absence during these past three years, he had not spent it at his home, a fact which had hurt and bewildered his father; but yesterday a small boy had brought Mr Guffin a note from his eldest son, wherein Thomas had said that he hoped to be with his family for dinner on this very day. Soon, therefore, Mr Guffin would be seeing for

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himself what three years of soldiering had made of young Thomas, and he would have a few words to say to Thomas on the subject of filial duty.

There remained Sarah, the eldest of the family, a virgin of twenty years; and when Mr Guffin thought of Sarah he grunted harder than ever, and, leaning forward, kicked at a log upon the hearth with a vicious toe. It was bad enough to be an inefficient housewife (and with such a mother to train her I); it was worse to be moody, hysterical when crossed, and inclined to sulkiness; but deliberately to set her cap at a man like William Lowen—that was too much.

Mr Guffin had put his foot down firmly. Sarah was, alas, too old for a whipping, but she could be locked in her room and starved into submission, and that was precisely what lay in store for her if her father had any more of this nonsense. Samuel Guffin knew his place, if Sarah Guffin did not. It was a lowly place; it came far down in the social scale (and nowhere was that scale more rigidly observed than in the City of London). Between him and the rich merchants there was a great gulf fixed; between him and even the wealthy shopkeepers there was a considerable chasm. Immediately above him were the innkeepers; immediately below him the ale-house keepers; to the first he gave proper respect and from the latter he expected it. It was the same with his customers. He was an expert, was Mr Guffin, in recognising a man's social status at first glance. Immediately a stranger entered his tavern, he knew by instinct whether to serve the newcomer among the sheep in the common-room, or to send him to partake among the goats in the kitchen. In like manner did he know whether a customer was to be served in one of the few, precious silver tankards, in a good pewter can, or in a common wooden mazer. Oh yes, he knew his place, and he knew his trade, did Mr Samuel Guffin.

To give Will Lowen his due, he had gone meekly enough to the kitchen when directed thither on his first appearance at The Three Crowns, and had made the humble and voluntary confession that he was by trade a night-soil man and a cleaner of the dunghills. He was, that is, at the very bottom of the

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social scale; further than this a man might not sink and be admitted to any portion of a self-respecting tavern. But later it had transpired that William had not told the entire truth about himself; from certain hints and innuendoes thrown out by the other customers in the kitchen, Mr Guffin had learned to his horror that William combined the trade of night-soil man with that of assistant-hangman. And at that, Mr Guffin had been very firm indeed. He had taken William by the collar, had led him to the street door, had put him outside, and had told him, crisply and definitely, never to show his face within The Three Crowns again. He ought not, of course, to have needed this injunction. He ought to have known what everyone knew, namely, that the Finisher of the Law was an outcast, shunned by every man, and that, as assistant to this detested official, William Lowen could not expect to be made welcome in any respectable house.

William had grumbled a little, but had departed; and then, as Mr Guffin had been in the act of turning back to his work with suitable comments, his daughter Sarah had exploded a mine beneath his feet. In front of the company assembled in the kitchen she had burst into a storm of tears, had upbraided her father with insulting an honest man and breaking her heart, and had vowed that she loved William Lowen and was resolved to become his wife.

It is best to pass over the painful scene which followed. Suffice it to say that, by dint of threats, lectures, and reproaches, Sarah had been brought into a state of submission. But it was a very sullen submission, and Sarah's cooking and her father's digestion had suffered ever since. However, Mr Guffin had done what he could, and persuaded himself that he had nipped his daughter's madness in the bud. In any case, he reflected now, there was one small gleam of comfort to be found in this horrid day: there was not the slightest chance of William Lowen's sneaking into Mr Guffin's kitchen and dallying with Sarah behind Mr Guffin's back, because the fellow would be at Whitehall, engaged upon his gruesome part-time trade.

The Jesus Bells of St Paul's chimed two o'clock, and the tavern-keeper heaved his mighty frame out of his chair. It

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was two hours past dinner-time, but as yet there was no sign of Thomas, nor of James either. Their father was hungry; it was not fitting he should be hungry on such an awful occasion, but he had a large and healthy belly, and the flesh was weak. He had best go see what Sarah was up to; he had told her that she must manage without the help of Little Julia for this day, because Simon was in one of his moods, fretful and nervous, and needed the comfort of his younger sister's company.

Mr Guffin walked across the common-room in the direction of the kitchen, tut-tutting to himself at the dirty rushes on the floor, which the truant Ned Walsh had neglected to change this morning. An odour of burning meat met him in the small passage, and, his temper mounting, he flung open the door of the kitchen preparatory to making yet another protest against his eldest offspring's appalling housewifery. But his big body halted on the threshold, and the words of rebuke died upon his lips.

His daughter Sarah and Mr William Lowen stood but a few yards from him, locked in each other's arms.

For a moment or so Mr Guffin could only gape at this intolerable sight, his mouth open and his eyes stupid; but then the general misery of the morning combined with this evidence of treachery within his own household to give him the relief of righteous wrath.

"What! What! What!" bellowed Mr Guffin, drawing himself to his full towering height (living in a low-ceilinged house had given him a slight stoop). "Is this a daughter of mine will so disobey her father and disgrace her name? And is't you, you shitten rogue, that ventures to defile my kitchen with your filthy presence, ay, and seduce my wench behind my back? 'Slight, if I lay my hands on you once, I'll tear you into nothing."

Mr Lowen, who had by now extricated himself from Sarah's clinging embrace, stood sheepish and embarrassed, shuffling

his feet and fiddling with his collar-band. A strong odour of his nightly trade clung about him, though his dress was orderly and he had an air of healthy self-respect.

"Now, Master Guffin, now then," said William pacifically. "I did but step in to beg a morsel of bread and cheese. I——"

Mr Guffin stopped him by a dramatic hand flung out in the direction of Sarah.

"A morsel of bread and cheese, quotha I" barked the tavern-keeper with heavy sarcasm. "Harkee, wench, at the compliments paid you. You are a morsel of bread and cheese, it seems, to be devoured by the hangman's 'prentice. The blue gown of Bridewell be your portion, you drab; by cock, I've a mind to send you to the hemp and hammer. As for you, rogue, what make you in my tavern when you ought to be at your——" He had been about to say "duty," but, remembering in time what was in progress at Whitehall, stopped short on the word. "Why are you not at your filthy trade, you death's-head? What will your master Brandon say when he misses his precious 'prentice on the scaffold? I'll vow he'll haul you before the Chamberlain's Court and have you flung into Little Ease, where you may rot and welcome."

Glad to be able to turn the subject from his own misdeeds, Lowen said eagerly:

"Gregory Brandon is not upon that scaffold, master. He took an oath, he did, when he heard they had condemned the King, wishing God might perish his soul and body if ever he lifted his hand against His Sacred Majesty. And he shut himself up in his house in Rosemary Lane, and they sent forth a troop of horse to carry him to Whitehall, and they did offer him thirty gold pieces if he would consent, but he would not."

"Thirty gold pieces," whispered Mr Guffin with a superstitious shudder, the rage emptied out of him.

"Those that are upon the scaffold," babbled William, "are disguised with vizards and false hair, but there are those who swear they are none other than"—he sunk his voice to a thrilling whisper—"Cromwell himself and Commissary Ireton assisting him."

Bereft of speech, Mr Guffin could only gape and goggle.

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The national tragedy he had tried to ignore, because it was too great for him, intruded upon him and snatched from him his private wrath. But then, as he glanced aimlessly about the room, he noticed that there was a tankard of ale upon the table, and the thought of William Lowen guzzling his good nappy out of his best pewter, behind his back and on such an occasion, at the invitation of his deceitful daughter, reawakened his righteous rage.

"Get you out of here!" shouted Mr Guffin, advancing suddenly upon the dismayed William. "Ay, march upon't, or the pox take me if I send you not forth with a flayed arse. Get you where you belong, which is the stews, in the company of gads and foisters and those who live altogether upon the snatch. Passion o' me, how I long to see you wear the Tyburn-tippet which you are so nice to fasten upon honest men! Out, sirrah, out!" roared Mr Guffin, driving the culprit before him; and, flinging open the back door, he bestowed upon William's rump a kick which sent that unfortunate sprawling in the kennel of Salutation Alley.

Filled with triumph, Mr Guffin turned back to deal with his erring daughter while the flood of his just indignation was full upon him; when once more, and far more awfully, the regal tragedy of that morning overwhelmed his private affairs.

All that morning he had pined for noise, for sounds which should break the appalling unfamiliar silence of his world. And now he had his wish, but in such a fashion that he longed to stop his ears. Through the back door, which he had forgotten to close, that sound came in upon him; he knew only too well from whence it came and what it portended. It came from a thousand human throats; it was not a shout, nor yet a groan; it was neither acclamation nor protest. It was as a mighty sigh, exhaled unconsciously, and perhaps prophetically, by a people who saw what they could not understand, who looked upon that which was unprecedented, incredible, and beyond belief. It was more impressive than a sign from heaven would have been, than earthquake, lightning, or a blast from angelic trumpets. There was in it the very essence of bewildered humanity. If ever nation spoke with

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a united yet futile voice, so did England speak in this most daunting fashion, on this most fatal day.

And Samuel Guffin, the tavern-keeper, his soul shuddering within him, took his flat-cap from his head without knowing that he did so, and, with a pale face, murmured:

"God save us all! They have slain the King."

(3)

Ned Walsh the drawer, and Richard Chick the apprentice, came running as hard as they could up Fleet Hill towards the Lud Gate a quarter of an hour later, and, gaining the summit, paused to look back. Below them they could see a party of Harrison's Horse, distinguished by their mulberry-coloured facings, still busy dispersing the crowds, but it was clear that, having chased the multitude thus far from Whitehall, the soldiers were not minded to come within the walls of the City, and that the two boys could continue the rest of their way in peace.

"Rot 'em," muttered Ned, a big, scrawny youth of sixteen, with a face disfigured by freckles and ears that stuck out like handles on either side of his head. "You would think we were Cavees the way they used us. The axe was scarce fallen ere they drove us forth."

"'Twas but a poor show, gossip," said Dick. "I could see nought of it for the black cloths hung round the scaffold and the press of redcoats. Pish, I've seen better sights on an ordinary hanging-day at Tyburn."

"You have never seen a king have his head cut off before," Ned reminded him.

"I did not see a king have his head cut off to-day," persisted Dick, picking up a stone to fling at a dog which was nosing in the kennel. "All I saw was a bloody head held up in silence, and I had scarce time for a view of that ere the soldiers were charging us, crying 'Disperse! Disperse!'—as although we had no right to be there, albeit they had made it a public show. Damme, I was in labour to see the staples, with hooks and

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pulleys to drag him down if he resisted. D'you think he resisted, Ned?" whispered the apprentice, plucking his companion by the sleeve, and licking up the spittle which had formed upon his lips.

"I know not and I care not," replied Ned loftily, "All I know is that he is dead, and now we are all to rule ourselves, for we are all born equal, as good Master Lilburne saith, and in a free country there should be none higher nor lower than the rest."

Dick sniffed.

"Master Lilburne," he reminded his enthusiastic companion, "is now in the Tower by order of the Parliament, as formerly he was in the Tower by order of the King."

Ned rounded upon him.

"What matter for that?" cried he. "Many an honest man hath suffered for speaking the truth. Master Lilburne saith that the Parliament-men are our servants and not our masters, for 'tis we, the people of England, put them where they were, and——"

"And the Parliament-men put Lilburne where he is," interrupted Dick, who cared nothing for the doctrines of the Levellers. "Pox on't, I want my dinner. There was not a gingerbread wife to be seen at Whitehall, nor no sheeps' feet neither. I say again, 'twas a pesty poor show."

They were come by this time to the back door of The Three Crowns, and were pleased to hear sounds from within which seemed to argue that they were not too late to get some dinner after all. Pulling off their thrum-caps, and smoothing down their blue frocks, they went into the kitchen, and immediately were greeted by their master, who seemed to be in a mighty ill humour,

"The dog's head is in the pot," snapped Mr Guffin, using an expression which meant that they were so late for dinner that the rest of the meat had been given to the dog.

"The dog's welcome to it," piped up Simon. "'Twas burned on one side and raw upon t'other."

"Hold your tongue!" roared his father, who had spent most of dinner saying the same thing himself. "God damme,

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Sarah, this plate is foul with grease. Though you cannot cook, sure you can clean."

Sarah, who plainly had been weeping, seized upon this to start on an old grievance.

"The water-cob hath not been round this morning," said she, "and therefore lacked I water, which I would not have lacked had you been pleased to move with the times and have the New River Water laid on to your house."

"God Almighty," retorted her father, "hath provided for this City natural springs in great abundance, and therefore have we no need of water carried by cuts and culverets from Hertfordshire, for which we must pay eighteen shillings the year."

"If we buy a pennyworth of water a day from the cobs," persisted Sarah, "we spend thereon thirty shillings and five-pence the year; likewise are the cobs uncivil and foul, and their water comes from the Thames, for all they swear they get it from the conduits."

Before Mr Guffin could continue the argument, James, who had been sitting with a flushed face before his untasted food, suddenly burst forth:

"How can you speak of these trifles upon such a day as this! For this is the first day of liberty by God's blessing restored, and there should be nought within our minds save joy and thanksgiving."

"Nay, James," said his father mildly, "that is ill said. For this day hath seen an act of violence committed which I fear me will make our nation odious in the eyes of Christendom."

James leaned towards him across the table; the lad's eyes shone and his voice vibrated with his earnestness.

"Sir, you know I am no lover of violence, yet are there diseases which are so dangerous that the affected member must be cut off that the whole body perish not. 'Twas necessary Charles Stuart died this day that his people might live in freedom, he who hath laid them in blood these eight years past. Now is the principal tyrant fallen, and soon you will see the Lords fall likewise, and then——"

"Heart!" interrupted his father. "Will they execute the entire House of Lords?"

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"Nay, but they will abolish that House, which is useless and outmoded, and was but the pimp of kingly oppression. Then will the dawn of true liberty be at hand, and England henceforth shall be ruled by her natural sovereigns, the people, through their representatives in Parliament assembled."

"You talk so much a man may as well dine with a drum," grumbled Mr Guffin, but not without a certain grudging admiration.

James went sweeping on again.

"How happy are we to be born in such times! Blessed are the eyes which shall shortly see all grievances removed, all wrongs redressed, all antique tyrannies cast away, our trade revived, our necks freed from the hateful yoke of monarchy. Now do we emerge from the darkness of past ages into the light of the new day, wherein the proud shall be brought low, the humble exalted, and that man no longer shall be honoured that wears a crown upon his head, but he who speaks the will of the people of England and seeth it enforced, he shall be our only sovereign and at the selfsame time our fellow-servant."

"Who are the people of England?" enquired little Simon, as his brother paused for breath.

James smiled kindly upon the young enquirer.

"Why, we are, my gallant. The freemen of London, their wives and families, and all good folk throughout the nation."

"And Mistress Cranton?" asked Simon, his eyes bulging. James's smile died.

"And Mistress Cranton," he conceded stiffly.

"At school they say that Mistress Cranton——"

"Hold your tongue, boy I" rapped out his father.

Simon held his tongue for ten seconds. Then, with a side-long glance at his father, he further applied himself to James:

"Am I one of the people of England?"

"Indeed you are, sweetheart."

"And the people of England are to govern just as the King used to govern?"

"Ay, they are to govern themselves through their——"

"Then," interrupted Simon triumphantly, "I shall order myself never any more to go to school."

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James was only momentarily annoyed by this impertinence, and by the sniggers with which Ned and Dick greeted it. He set himself, seriously and patiently, to expound to his young brother the mysteries of Parliamentary Representation, waxing ever the more eloquent as he warmed to this, the only enthusiasm of his life.

For James was a young man who dreamed dreams; he was by nature romantic, and his book-learning had opened the doors of his mind to the Greek and Italian models of a commonwealth. He made the usual mistake of such visionaries and believed himself eminently practical; his evenings were spent in a Watling Street tavern, where, in company with other solemn young enthusiasts, he planned a brave new England, remodelling the Constituon on the lines of the Greek democracies. In his inmost heart he longed to take a hand in this remodelling, though he knew that one in his humble station would never be likely to have such an opportunity. But really it was all so simple. The Long Parliament, freely elected by the people of England nine years previously, had most consistently and courageously resisted the tyranny of King Charles the First. Forced to it by that monarch's obstinacy, they had taken up arms in defence of England's liberties; they had created the great New Model Army to assist them in this holy cause; they had defeated the King; and to-day they, or rather fifty out of the three hundred of them, had brought that King to the block. (The forcible excluding of so large a majority of the Members from the House last December by Colonel Pride and his soldiers was an event which, one might have thought, should have given James considerable uneasiness, but in the full flood of his triumph at the downfall of the Monarchy he was pleased to overlook it.)

Here, then, was the dawn of true liberty. The King was gone; the Lords, the pitiful remnant which yet remained, would be quietly abolished; the Army, having served its turn, would be disbanded; its commanders would relinquish their commissions and become ordinary civilians again; and, purged in the fires of war and revolution, England would

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emerge a free commonwealth, an example to the world of the only just form of government.

For, like all his kind, poor James believed that the people of England were all exact replicas of James Guffin. He had forgotten the Samuel Guffins, and the Thomas Guffins, not to speak of the Smiths, the Robinsons, and the Browns. Most of all had he forgotten the thing which had won the war and slaughtered the King: that vast, victorious army called the New Model.

(4)

The early dusk was falling when at last Thomas Guffin, private soldier in Colonel Hewson's regiment of foot, came through the postern of the Lud Gate and walked up Ludgate Hill in the direction of his home.

He rather marched than walked; indeed, the malicious might have said that he strutted. The skirts of his Venice-red cassock swung to his stride; he wore his knitted monmouth-cap at an angle over his cropped hair. His brief military career had given him muscle; the good food enjoyed by the New Model during the last few years had filled out his boyish frame. His sword (an inferior Dutch blade worth, with its belt, only four-and-sixpence) was at his side, and in his right hand he grasped the long shaft of his pike, for he had been determined to come home in full regalia. He was sorry now that he had discarded his combe-cap, but it hurt his head most damnably, and he had never grown used to it. It reposed at this moment in his snapsack which swung at his haunch, a bag bulging with his personal belongings, some of which, he hoped, would mightily surprise his family.

His mind sang, or rather chanted, as he strode along, with the unmitigated triumph of the day. He had seen with his own eyes the overthrow of tyranny embodied in that Man of Blood, Charles Stuart; he had seen the waters of the Red Sea close over the wicked Pharaoh, and now he and all the hosts of Israel were marching forward under the leadership of a new Moses towards the Promised Land. Never such a day as this I

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It was the day of days, for now was the arm of the Lord revealed in its full punitive magnificence, and before the eyes of the Elect were revealed the milk and the honey, the barns overflowing with fatness, the oil and the wine of reward.

The dusk was falling, but the hour was not yet come when, according to law, the housekeepers of the City must hang out a lanthorn before their doors to burn until eleven at night. There were people about, groups talking anxiously or excitedly, women leaning over to gossip with neighbours from the projecting upper storeys of their homes. The watchmen of the ward, one for every parish within it, were trudging towards the watch-house in the Lud Gate, to fetch their lanthorns, halberds and bells; some of the ale-houses had taken down the shutters they had kept up all day, and from behind their red lattices, which in summer, when the windows were open, screened their customers from the public gaze, came the ring of tankards and the murmur of voices. Candle-light began to gleam through casements, and a smell of supper was in the air.

As he passed beneath the sign of The Black Boy and Star, on the western corner of Salutation Alley, Thomas cast a quick glance upwards. But the shutters were closed over Mr Cranton's parlour, and the familiar sight of Mrs Cranton sitting there, viewing the street and selecting her victims, was absent. Thomas was sorry. In his present mood he would have welcomed that abominable sight; in fact he had made up his mind to celebrate his home-coming by standing under the sign of The Black Boy and Star and telling Esther Cranton exactly what he thought of her. She would have to listen, because what he thought of her was what the Lord thought of her. He had rehearsed the burning words with which he would wring that filthy soul of hers. He had seen with his mind's eye the little crowd that would collect to hearken in awe to his denunciations.

They would know then, these fellow-cits of his, that young Thomas Guffin was no longer the raw boy who had got caught by the press-gang in '45, but one of the Elect, predestined to Eternal Bliss, a warrior in the employ of a militant Jehovah.

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Perhaps, he reflected, she had died during his absence from London; perhaps she had been stricken down in her sin and was at this precise moment sizzling in Hell. He hoped it was not so; he did so very much covet the chance of denouncing her, of showing her that the little boy on whom she was used to smile, as she flung him a farthing to buy sweetmeats, was of the select company of the Saints, and knew how to behave towards Jezebels.

He had come to his home now, and paused before entering. It looked smaller, somehow, than when he had left it, a crooked little corner house, built of stone up to the sills of the ground-floor windows, and of timber above them, its over-sailing storeys bending forward over Ludgate Hill upon the one side and Salutation Alley on the other, with its great sign motionless in the still, cold air, three golden crowns, somewhat in need of paint, the wooden board suspended from beautiful and elaborate ironwork, and atop of it a bunch of green leaves and a jolly little Bacchus bestriding a miniature tun, to show that this was a tavern which sold wine and not a mere ale-house. Thomas frowned at the Bacchus, and at the three crowns likewise; and as he stood thus the street door opened, and there was his father's great figure, bushy face abeam and hands outstretched in welcome.

"I was in labour lest some accident had befallen thee, Tom, for we looked for your company at dinner. And how have you done this long time, my son? Come in with you, come in now, you must be aweary. Zounds, Tom, how tall thou art grown!"

Thomas's pike was taller still, and it was with some difficulty that it was negotiated beneath the low lintel. Despatching Sarah and her sister to prepare supper, Mr Guffin escorted his eldest son abovestairs to the chamber he had always shared with James. Forgetting all about his lecture upon filial duty, full of joy to have his boy home again, yet somewhat in awe of this tall, grave stranger, Mr Guffin kept up a constant flow of talk, asking questions and sweeping on again without waiting for an answer. Thomas, meanwhile, began to draw out his belongings from his snapsack, ostentatiously rubbing

up his combe-cap on his sleeve, and taking care that his father saw his small collection of books. Mr Guffin regarded these in simple wonder; he had never been a scholar himself and neither had Thomas; it seemed strange that the lad's military fcareer should have made him one. But when Mr Guffin stumbled his way through the titles in this collection he marvelled the more, for certainly he had never suspected Thomas of a religious bent.

First there was a copy of the Articles of War, very dry-looking, but well-thumbed. Then there were *The Christian Centurion's Observations*; *A Salve for Every Sore*; *The Soldier's Catechism*; *The Soldier's Pocket Bible*; *Preaching without Ordination*; and *Vox Militaris*. Mr Guffin gazed in bewilderment, first at the pious books, then at his son's pike which was laid upon the floor, its ashwood shaft polished by much handling, its lozenge-shaped steel head gleaming in the candlelight, and then at Thomas himself, gravely and silently washing his hands in the basin. Mr Guffin had seen some soldiers in his time, ruffling and cursing their way along the streets, grizzled mercenaries home from some foreign war, but never had he seen a soldier like this one, so solemn and orderly, with his pile of religious-sounding books and never a swear-word from him.

Thomas indeed said very little until the family was sat down to supper (all except James, who was still out). Then, as he floated bread upon his soup, Mr Guffin sighed and remarked that it had been a sorry sort of day; and immediately, for the second time within twelve hours, a member of his family exploded a mine beneath his unsuspecting feet.

"Out upon thee, Belial!" cried Thomas, crashing his fist upon the table so that the dishes and tankards rang. "Thou dost err, nay, thou dost blaspheme. For this hath been the most glorious day since Moses led the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. For now are the high places brought low, the tyrants cut off, and their palaces made a dunghill. Now is the prophecy fulfilled which saith: And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes and the king's children, and all such as are clothed in strange apparel. Zephaniah i, 8. And there was none

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like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up, i Kings xxi, 25. But the fate of Ahab hath overtaken Charles Stuart this day, ay, the same which is the fate of all wicked tyrants. There fell a voice from heaven saying: O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, the kingdom is departed from thee. Daniel iv, 31."

Nobody answered him. It was not so much what he said but the extraordinary passion behind his words, combined with **the** strangeness of hearing such words from Thomas, which silenced his family. Having thus obtained their attention, Thomas pushed his plate aside and embarked upon a catalogue of the glories of that day. He related with relish how, after the fatal blow was struck, Colonel Harrison had snatched the head from the hands of the executioner and had flung it upon the scaffold with such force that the face was bruised. Of how the foot-soldiers who had formed a cordon round the scaffold had clambered up, laughing and shouting, to collect mementoes, hacking off pieces of the dead King's hair, scooping up the reeking sawdust, dipping their handkerchiefs and their swords in the pools of blood, slashing off chips from the block, and jostling each other to obtain buttons and bits of lace from the clothes. All these things they had sold in the streets afterwards, and also had they been permitted by their officers to admit, at a set rate, as many as desired to see the corpse in its cheap deal coffin, and had made such a store of money by this means that one of Thomas's comrades had remarked: "I would we had two or three more Majesties to behead, if we could but make such use of them."

"Lord save us, Tom," exclaimed his father, with a pale face, "here is ill talk. Nay, lad, recollect 'tis the King of whom you speak——"

"The King!" interrupted Thomas, with a contemptuous laugh. "And hast thou not read of the way of the Lord with kings?" He then compared King Charles with Hoshea, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, Ahaiah, Ahab, and other wicked monarchs of the Old Testament, very much to the advantage of **the latter**. "Well had it been for Charles Stuart," **he** con-

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tinued with relish, "had he found a Daniel to have interpreted the writing on the wall, which is the same as that which appeared to Belshazzar: God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. Daniel v, verses 25 to 28."

"Bless us," murmured his astonished father, "the Scriptures do come very pat upon thy tongue. Nevertheless," he added gravely, "I cannot but think 'twas an ill deed which was done this day, for 'twas done in the teeth of the law, and at the hands of a parcel of soldiers whose will is enforced by their swords."

"And did not these same soldiers deliver you from the tyranny of Ahab and from the whoredoms of Jezebel?" demanded Thomas indignantly. "Did they not loose the chains in which you were altogether bound by the oppressor? Did they not wage war against the hosts of darkness and idolatry and overcome them? Who then should give the law but they?"

"Slight!" cried Mr Guffin in dismay. "Is it for soldiers to give the law to England? Nay, then indeed will be the time to speak of tyranny."

"Brother, brother," reproachfully observed his son, "wilt lay thyself open to a charge of black ingratitude? Wilt thou, like rebellious Israel, murmur against the Lord and His new Moses who will bring you forth into the Promised Land? How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Proverbs i, 22."

"How now, Jack Sauce!" bellowed the affronted Mr Guffin. "Dost presume to rebuke thy father?"

"When our parents do wickedly," retorted his son, in no way abashed, "we must needs rebuke them, even as Asa son of Abijam removed Maachah his mother from being queen because she made an idol in a grove. 1 Kings xv, 13."

Such unprecedented impertinence took Mr Guffin's breath away, and before he could recover it, Thomas, with a change of tone, announced that he had brought certain goodly spoils home with him from the tents of the wicked, and had designed

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them as presents for his family. So saying, he reached below the table and brought forth a bundle wrapped in a cloth. Sarah, Little Julia, and Simon gathered round him, eager and curious; he placed the bundle on the table, and, without unwrapping it, dived within.

"Here," said he, "is a rich vessel of silver, which I did take from the coach of a Malignant after our glorious victory at Naseby. This is of the prey which was taken from the Midianites, which, being purified with the water of separation, belongeth to the men of war. Numbers xxxi. Here is a length of goodly damask, which formerly was part of some Popish vestment in that outpost of Babylon called Basing House; it shall clothe a virgin of Israel," said he, handing it to Sarah, "when she goeth to worship in the house of her God. And here, sister Julia, are divers handkerchiefs made from a surplice which was part of the spoil of some Malignant's privy chapel. Likewise have I books, handsomely bound, for my learned brother James. These did belong to the Dean of Winchester, as they called him, he whom we hanged from his own rood-beam when we took that town with great slaughter."

While his family examined this strange assortment of presents, Thomas condescended to explain further how he had come by them. It seemed that the Articles of War of the New Model permitted twenty-four hours' "lawful plunder" after the capture of a town or stronghold, and likewise did they allow those who took a prisoner to seize and retain all his belongings. Thomas boasted that he had done very well for himself during his three years' service, but, with the exception of these trifles which he had saved for his family, he had sold his spoils at a good rate. The custom was, he said, for the soldiers to hold a public market, and to sell their newly acquired possessions to whomsoever would buy; sometimes the friends of the defeated Royalists would purchase valuables with the purpose of preserving them, and there were always countryfolk and merchants eager to buy household goods, horses, clothing, trinkets, and even lumps of masonry from battered walls and lead from the gutters.

Mr Guffin listened to this recital in great astonishment. It

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had been dinned into his head all through the war that the Royalists, or the Malignants as their enemies called them, were unique in their plundering propensities; it had formed one of the favourite accusations against them by the other side. And nOW here was a soldier in the employ of the godly Parliament boasting about "lawful plunder" and bringing home silver tankards and rich damasks. For his part, Mr Guffin did not feel quite happy about accepting the tankard; it felt almost like stolen property. But he could not reason the matter out, and he had no desire to engage in an argument on the matter with this altered, self-assured son of his, so he held his tongue, and polished the tankard with the tablecloth and hoped he would soon have a customer sufficiently high in social status to have his ale served therein.

Thomas, meanwhile, had turned to his youngest brother and, laying his hand upon the boy's shoulder, smiled graciously on him.

"I had not forgot thee, child," Thomas assured him. "Thou likewise shall have thy share of the spoil of God's enemies. Yet have I brought thee no whim-whams; no hobby-horses nor drums of a Malignant's spawn shall defile thy innocent hands."

Simon, who had understood only the words "hobby-horses" and "drums" with a No before them, blinked his bright eyes at his brother and turned down the corners of his mouth.

"For thou art born," Thomas informed him, "in the days of salvation, and thou, like Samuel, shall minister to the Lord in thy youth, being girded with a linen ephod. The Lord shall make known His will unto thee, and thou shalt answer, Speak, for thy servant heareth. I Samuel hi, 10. This, then, have I brought thee," concluded Thomas, fishing in his bundle for the last time and bringing forth something which he kept concealed in his hand, "which same shall be to thee a memento of this glorious day, wherein our liberties are restored to us, and the tyrant cast down. See, brother, it is a tuft of the hair of the last King of England, all befouled with his blood."

He thrust his open palm beneath Simon's nose, displaying the grisly object.

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"What a treasure is this to show thy schoolmates! What envy shall be theirs when they see——"

"No!" screamed Simon suddenly, springing back with such violence that he overturned a chair. He began to back towards the door, his hands outstretched to ward off the horrible present, his face the colour of paper, his eyes glazed with fear. "No! No! No!"

Uttering shriek after shriek of terror, the little boy rushed from the room.

(5)

Night had fallen over London.

That eventful day was ended, and within her walls the City slept. The gates were shut, the watch was set, the lanthorns over the doors were all extinguished. The rumble of wheels, the voices and the footsteps, the raucous cries of kites and crows above the littered kennels, all were stilled. Only the watchmen, slouching along in their rug gowns, disturbed the silence, their bells jingling, their husky voices proclaiming the hour: "One of the clock and a dark, cold night"; and at intervals the deep, melodious tongues of the church bells answered them, chiming the quarters. Ice formed in the puddles of the ill-paved streets and gripped the signboards faster than ever, glazing them with a thin rime; the river flowed dark and silent, rocking the wherries and the barges on their moorings. Only the thieves slipped through the alleys, lurking there on the chance of encountering some foolhardy citizen out after dark.

The Three Crowns tavern stood as dark and silent as the rest, its shutters up, its doors bolted; and above and below-stairs its occupants lay in their beds till dawn should call them to their various tasks.

Simon's truckle-bed was empty; he had persuaded Little Julia to let him creep into hers, though he was eight now, and shortly would move into his brothers' chamber. He slept at last, cuddled against his sister's warm, plump body, his curly hair tousled, his face blotched with crying, his mouth

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twitching now and again as though he had the nightmare, one arm clutching a "Bartholomew-baby," relic of his infancy but sought out for comfort on this one night. Beside him Little Julia slept peacefully, neat and rosy, flaxen hair in orderly braids, lids decorously shielding innocent blue eyes, red mouth set in a small, contented smile, young bosom rising and falling in a dreamless slumber. Near them, in her larger bed, Sarah dreamed of a William Lowen become the very prince of hangmen, honoured by all, handsome as Adonis, romantic as Romeo, famous as Sir Richard Whittington.

In the room which they shared, Thomas and James lay in bed together, with the candle newly extinguished and still smoking beside them; for James had lingered long over the fine volumes his brother had given him, and then they had talked for a while, completely in harmony, each attending only to his private dream, each believing that the other shared it. For the same words, liberty, tyranny, deliverance from bondage, the dawn of a new era, had figured largely in the talk of both, and for this one night at least their private interpretations of these large things had been overwhelmed in a confused but glorious vision of an England uniquely and miraculously free.

On their separate mattresses, beneath the ale-stond in the common-room, Ned Walsh the drawer and Richard Chick the apprentice slept like hogs, the one answering the other's snores. No dream of John Lilburne levelling the sand-castles of humanity into a neat and tidy plain disturbed the slumber of plain Ned; no delicious visions of Tyburn, bloody heads, axes falling, or piles of gingerbread upon a barrow, tantalised the mind of simple Dick. They had enjoyed an unusual holiday and they were tired; an unparalleled thing had been done to-day, the corner-stone of government destroyed, the Constitution of England ravished; but for the Neds and Dicks of London to-morrow was just another working day, with errands to run, and ale-cans to scour, and thirsty throats to serve. There would be no more excitements until May Day brought its dancing and its garlands, officially abolished by the godly Parliament in '41, but indulged in none the less by the independent citizens of London.

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And in his four-poster, all alone, Samuel Guffin, the proud but harassed father, the simple and bewildered cit, tossed sleepless, disturbed by an unease for which he could not account, teased by a Utopia he could not envisage, vaguely and secretly shocked by the disintegration of the public world. He was a man who hated above all things the abnormal, and therefore did he seek to comfort himself with the knowledge that his private world still moved upon its traditional axis; he was still a cit, the Lord Mayor still reigned supreme at Guildhall; though regicide had taken place at Whitehall, the life of the City would continue to progress upon its ancient and orderly course.

The familiar noises of the night, the voice of the watch, the chiming of the bells, assured him that he lay within a fortress which had sustained all assaults, had resisted all outside interference. To-morrow would bring him life as he had always known it, his common-room and kitchen full of thirsty neighbours, noisy with cheerful talk and song and clink of tankard, his street resounding with the cries of importunate vendors, his hands busy with a craft he loved and understood. The war was over, and trade would revive; the King (God rest him!) was dead, and with him had gone, it seemed, all illegal taxation. Thomas would soon forget his tiresome obsession with the Old Testament, would put off his scarlet cassock and don the apron and blue frock of apprenticeship; life would regain its blessed normality, and everything would go on very much as it had done before the Civil War.

Yet beneath these sensible and comforting reflections there lay in Mr Guffin's mind an uneasy vignette, surprising in one of so small an imagination, impossible to face because so baffling and macabre, impossible on the other hand to dismiss. It was a little picture of the Government of England, the sacred, the familiar, the supreme earthly authority, lying in a cheap deal coffin in the Palace of Whitehall, with the face bruised after death and the person defiled by exultant soldiers, and the head severed by an unknown hand.

CHAPTER II

(1)

IT was on the following Saturday afternoon that Mr Guffin sallied forth to the Artillery Ground in the Ward of Bishopsgate Without, to watch a sham fight preceded by some drill in which his son Thomas's regiment was to take part. Mr Guffin had had no opportunity for a private talk with the lad since the latter had paid a brief visit to his home on the evening of the King's execution, for Thomas was quartered with his regiment in the Mews at Charing Cross. After the drill to-day, Mr Guffin was determined to make that opportunity, for he was anxious to learn how soon he could expect his eldest son to come home and enter upon his apprenticeship. The boy had wasted three years of his time already, and a tavern-keeper's craft was not to be learned in a day. Mr Guffin had heard that there was some little difficulty about disbanding the New Model because its pay was in arrears, but he had no doubt that the Parliament would make the necessary payment as soon as possible, and that the soldiers themselves were all eager to become civilians again. Where the Parliament was going to find the money for those enormous arrears Mr Guffin did not know, and, it must be confessed, he did not very much care. The City was not going to provide it; she had said so, and that was that; therefore it was not Mr Guffin's business.

He walked along in his Sunday best, greeting friends and neighbours in the crowd which was pushing its way in the same direction, and thinking of all the occasions in the past when he had gone to the Artillery Ground to watch the London Trained Bands go through their exercises, which they were used to do once a month in summer. It had been a favourite spectacle with the cits and had provided considerable sport; those amateur soldiers had been so clumsy and their equipment so haphazard that the show had been as good as a droll. There were always muskets with foul touch-holes, flasks without nozzles, bullets too large for barrels, while some of the men,

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lacking a powder-horn, had been wont to bring their powder *in* a paper bag. But it had kept the young men healthy, and it had all been a game; at dinner-time, officers and men alike had crowded into the taverns, and there would get so merry that they never returned to the Artillery Ground to finish the drill.

To-day the crowd, Mr Guffin among it, jostled and elbowed its way beneath the Bishop's Gate, laughing and eager for a similar show. It was the same crowd which, but five days previously, had flocked to Whitehall to see the King die, but in the way of crowds it had shed all the solemnity it had worn on that occasion and was determined to enjoy itself. It was a Saturday; the day, though cold, was dry; there was a free spectacle to be witnessed; and, to keep the multitude in good humour, there would be all the traditional side-shows. Governments might be overturned, constitutions upset, the King of England lose his head; still the citizens of London would remain inert and placid while they had something to laugh at, while they had tumblers performing their ancient antics, dogs leaping through coloured hoops, conjurers thrusting bodkins into their legs, quacks promising remedies for every ill, the costard-monger crying his ripe pippins and furbeloe pears, the vendor of hot sheep's feet serving his steaming delicacy, the ballad-monger calling her wares.

All these attractions were in evidence to-day when Mr Guffin reached the Artillery Ground, a large open space railed round with posts and chains. But upon the open space itself, in place of the Trained Bands stood a very different sort of soldiers. Five companies of Colonel Hewson's musketeers stood there, drawn up in ranks and files, waiting to be drilled; massed behind them were five companies of pikemen, who presently would have their turn. Mr Guffin looked eagerly among these latter for his son, but there were so many of them, and they all looked so strangely alike, that he failed to pick out Thomas. It was a marvellous thing, this uniform, he reflected; before the creation of the New Model, the soldier had worn what he chose in the field, and recognised friend from foe only by the colours and the field-mark.

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Superintending the drill to-day was Hewson's second-in-command, known as a Captain Lieutenant, Daniel Axtell. The crowd craned to see this man, once a grocer's 'prentice, lately in charge of the guard at Westminster Hall during the King's trial. It was Axtell who, in open court, had branded Lady de Lisle with a hot iron for protesting against the illegality of the proceedings, and had threatened Lady Fairfax, calling her a whore, she, the wife of the Lord General himself. He was a short, squat man, his face pitted with the smallpox and seamed with the scars of war; he stood between his major and muster-master, his legs straddled, his hands upon his hips, ignoring the crowd, intent upon his men. He barked an order, which was taken up by the sergeants, and the drill began.

Five hundred men responded to that order like so many puppets jerking upon strings. Exactly alike in their scarlet cassocks, their grey breeches, their ammunition shoes, their brimless steel morions, and their snapsacks, the musketeers of Hewson's Foot performed their exercises before the gaping, jostling, cheerful crowd. *Open ranks backward to order. Files to the left double. Half files double your front to the right. Files double your depth to the right, every man placing himself behind his bringer-up. Ranks to the left hand counter-march and maintain double guard.* Five hundred grey-clad legs swinging as one leg, five hundred scarlet bodies wheeling as one body, five hundred faces expressionless, intent, masked. It was admirable, reflected Mr Guffin; and supposed it was the coldness of the day that made him shiver.

The musketeers went through the "postures" of the musket in the same perfectly disciplined manner; there were no foul touch-holes, no flasks without nozzles here. Then they were marched off, and the pikemen took their place. The crowd applauded the newcomers; the pike was traditional, an honourable weapon, its bearers tall and well-made, its function free from that taint of the infernal which still clung about the musket. There were those who said that the pike was out-moded, yet it was that steel hedge which had protected the musketeers on many a battlefield during the war; the colours

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flew upon a pike-head; and the captain was always with the pikemen on the march.

Yet, stalwart and honourable though they were, the crowd tired of them to-day long before they had gone through all their exercises. The crowd was vaguely aware that something was missing from to-day's spectacle; the old holiday atmosphere was strangely absent, the actors in the show looked so grim, and were a little too perfect in their parts. And they did not make the slightest response to the crowd's applause. It was almost as if—monstrous thought I—these soldiers of the New Model Army cared nothing for that which the greatest actor at the playhouse, the most famous gladiator at the Bankside, the most notorious criminal at Tyburn had been used to prize above all else—the favourable verdict of London City.

The *pike de resistance* of the entertainment, the sham fight, was a re-enacting of the Battle of Naseby. Skippon's Regiment of Horse represented the victorious troops of the Parliament; to Harrison's Horse was given the unenviable task of pretending to be the defeated Cavaliers. A rumour ran through the crowd that the reason for this latter choice was Cromwell's displeasure with Colonel Harrison's adherence to the Levellers, an adherence shared by many of the common soldiers. However that may have been, the fake Cavaliers played their parts thoroughly; they were decked out in plumes, and ribbons, and love-locks; they whooped, blasphemed, feigned drunkenness, and boasted of their debaucheries. One of them was dressed up as Prince Rupert, with a scarlet montero and a black horse; to make it more plain to the crowd that this was supposed to be the Devil Prince himself, the actor wore a pair of horns protruding through his feathered hat. Skippon's godly horsemen scattered the enemy in record time, to the chanting of psalms, and the crowd dutifully applauded. There now occurred, however, a small but rather unpleasant little incident.

A hackney-coachman in the crowd, somewhat the worse for drink, shouted loudly to the victors that they had not finished the play; they had forgotten, he reminded them jocularly, the slaughter of the Royalist officers' wives which had taken place

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after the real Battle of Naseby. In thus addressing the performers he followed an ancient and sacred City tradition. Whatever spectacle they witnessed, let it be a hanging at Tyburn, a stage-play, or an exercise of the Trained Bands, the citizens of London always had familiarly and freely addressed the actors in the performance; the actors expected it, and were accustomed to respond in the same manner. But not, it seemed, these actors. Scarce able to believe its eyes, the crowd beheld the tipsy coachman being manhandled by the soldiers, severely reprimanded by an officer for "sauciness and disaffection to the Good Old Cause," and finally shepherded by a constable to the nearest round-house.

Some of the crowd lingered to see the men marched off the Artillery Ground. The foot went first; they marched in silence, seemingly unwearied by their strenuous exercise, looking neither to right nor left, pikes shouldered, muskets slung, bandoleers rattling, well-shod feet thumping in unison. The horse followed, each mount branded with the State's mark, the riders armed with spit-swords, pistols, and petronels, their persons protected by good buff coats and gleaming back-and-breasts, the reins guarded with an iron chain to prevent their being cut in battle. Old Skippon led them, resplendent in satin-lined montero and plumed hat; he was a blunt, brave veteran, inarticulate save in print. The soldiers called him the Old Man, and he wrote books of devotion for them, intermixed with his own execrable verse.

Mr Guffin followed in the wake of the soldiers, because for part of the way his road lay with theirs. He felt a little depressed, and wondered at it; but his heart lifted as, over the tumble of house roofs to the south, the great bulk of St Paul's came into view. He lived under the shadow of the great church; it was as familiar to him as his own tavern; yet he never saw it without a thrill of pride and love, the Cky's own cathedral, first built by King Ethelbert in 607. His father had been used to shake his head and say that Paul's had never been the same since the marvellous tall spire had been burnt through the carelessness of a workman in the middle of the previous century; well, now that the war was over at last,

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that spire would be rebuilt, and of less combustible materials. *Mr Guffin could see the scaffolding built high up there around the central tower, and with his mind's eye he saw the huge spire rise again, higher than ever, soaring up above the towers and the roof-tops and the chimney smoke to the clear blue of heaven.* There was seventeen thousand pounds lying in the crypt of Guildhall, laboriously collected by the citizens before the war for this holy purpose. As Mr Guffin came down Blowbladder Street now, he heard the Jesus Bells in the Bell Tower, which had a gilded figure of St Paul atop of it, gently and sweetly chiming the hour of four, and he hastened his steps. It was a Saturday, and he must see that all was in order in his common-room ere his tavern was besieged by its usual evening crowds.

He was about to turn down Canon Alley when his attention was arrested by the unexpected movements of the troops ahead of him. The horse soldiers were crossing the New Market, but instead of following the foot under the New Gate, and so to Snow Hill and Holborn, they were wheeling to the left down Warwick Lane. Evidently they intended leaving the City by the Lud Gate; his curiosity aroused, Mr Guffin followed them. He was almost alone now; the crowd had had enough of the redcoats and was dispersed, some to the bull- and bear-baits at the Bankside, some to take a promenade by the river, some to the taverns. Samuel Guffin's huge figure shambled along behind the rear ranks of Skippon's Horse, a solitary witness of their movements.

The hoof-beats clattered down Warwick Lane, into Ave Maria Lane, past Cutlers' Hall with its charming gardens, past the deserted Bishop's Palace, and ceased. An order had rung out to halt. The men had come level with the west front of the Cathedral, with its strong, plain Norman towers and its Italian porch designed by Inigo Jones. Perhaps they had stopped to admire that porch, thought the simple Mr Guffin, and indeed it was a very marvellous thing. It had been built entirely at the expense of the late King and his father and was one hundred and twenty feet long and sixty-six feet high, with fourteen fluted columns. From the parapet there looked down

the statues of the two royal benefactors; there were *pedestals* set up for eight other statues, but the outbreak of war had put a stop to any further decorating.

The horsemen were dismounting. They were leading their horses between the massive brass pillars of the West Gate into the Churchyard. Evidently, thought Mr Guffin, they are going within to pray. He was pleased by this; it had been a very great blow to him when, in '45, the Parliament had abolished Cathedral Chapters, seized the revenue of the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's, and forbidden the services of the Church of England to be held in the Cathedral. Ever since then the great church had been left desolate, its vast nave defiled by merchants discussing business, housewives clustering round the Si Quis Door whereon servants in search of situations stuck up their names, rude fanatics defacing the tombs and carving, and the Italian porch let out in pitches to itinerant vendors and sempstresses. Mr Guffin felt he would dearly like to appoint himself as guide to the "foreigners" among Skippon's Horse, and to show them the wonders of the Cathedral's interior, Paul's Walk and the twelve noble Norman bays, the Early English choir approached by its long flight of shallow marble steps, the carved stalls in which the old monks used to pray, the Great Dial with the figure of Cain, and the Church of St Faith's in the crypt, his own parish church wherein, thank God, he was still permitted to worship every Sunday. But he did not like to intrude himself, and so stood, just within the West Gate, watching the men lead their horses across the enclosed Churchyard.

They led their horses across the Churchyard, up to the Italian porch, over the Italian porch, and into St Paul's Cathedral, Mr Guffin's mouth fell open. He took a few steps forward to protest. They were strangers in the City; they did not know that this was St Paul's; they were not soldiers at all but Toms o' Bedlam disguised; he was having a nightmare. Thus ran his anguished thoughts as horse after horse, impressed from many a farmer, stolen from many a gentleman's stable, each with the State's brand upon its quarters, disappeared within the sacred edifice, led by men in buff coats and long military boots. The

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horses went meekly, well trained like their masters; from the vast interior came an echo of hoof-beats, a whinny, voices urging forward, calling orders, asking for directions.

Mr Guffin was no longer alone. A small crowd had collected near him, and from the houses which enclosed the Churchyard heads craned to see, men and women ran to the doors, voices chattered at the windows. Presently the soldiers began to re-emerge from the Cathedral; but they looked different from when they had gone in just now. In Mr Guffin's mind rose up the memory of the London Trained Bands, released from their exercises, migrating towards the taverns, gay and frolicsome as children newly released from school. These new soldiers were now likewise off duty; the mask-like look was gone from their faces, the stiffness from their carriage; they were gesticulating, bawling psalms, laughing, and indulging in horseplay as they came down the steps into the Churchyard. As they passed the crowd of spectators, they cried at them that the Temple of Baal was now put to proper use, and that soon it should be battered down and no longer permitted to encumber the righteous earth of London.

"They are drunk," said someone in the crowd. It seemed, indeed, the only explanation.

But Mr Guffin could not go home until he had satisfied himself that he was not in the throes of a nightmare. He shambled forward across the Italian porch and stood there peering into the dimness of the vast nave. And there he saw horse-dung upon the pavement, and straw being carried on men's backs for bedding, buckets of oats set down in the pews, horses tethered to the pillars and drinking out of the font. The odour of holiness, of venerable worship, which had lingered yet in this House of God of late untenanted, was fading, and the rank smell of a stable was rapidly replacing it.

Skippon's Regiment had quartered their horses in St Paul's.

(2)

Late that same night, Mr Guffin sat before the fire in his common-room, with his friend Hal Cranton, the barber-surgeon, opposite him, and a can of strong-ale upon the settle beside him. The customers were gone, the door locked, the rest of the family in bed; since Mr Cranton lived but on the other corner of Salutation Alley, he was always willing to linger for a chat and a final can of ale with his friend after darkness had enveloped London; and never had that friend needed his company so much as on this night.

Skippon's Regiment had stabled their horses in St Paul's; but the common-room of The Three Crowns still remained inviolate. Thus did Mr Guffin seek to comfort himself, glancing about him at the familiar room. Behind the red lattices the shutters were up, like lids over the bright eyes of the house; the rushes on the floor were crushed and tumbled by many feet and wet with spilled ale; the solid refectory table was crowded with cans and tankards; and on the floor, on the window-ledges, on the hearth, on the chimney-shelf were mazers, haggins, whiskins, piggins, ale-bowls, and cans from a pottle to a gill, testifying to a profitable Saturday night. Behind the ale-stond or counter loomed up the barrels of single-ale, strong-ale and beer, with a cask or two of sack and canary stamped with the Lion and Castle, to show that these were genuine Spanish wines, for those customers who could afford such luxuries. Above, upon a special shelf, stood a modest array of silver tankards and flagons, the pride of the house.

„ In a canvas bag beneath the ale-stond reposed angels, crowns, half-crowns, shillings, and tokens in great abundance, all which Mr Guffin would presently lock away in the strong-box beneath his bed. He gave credit to such among his customers he deemed worthy of it, and upon the board by the ale-stond were chalked up numerous moons and half-moons, representing shillings and sixpences respectively. But as a delicate way of informing his customers that he preferred cash to credit Mr Guffin had framed over his chimney-breast the likeness of a

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hand holding a bird, with the distich (making up in truthfulness what it lacked in grammar) :

*A Bird in Hand far better 'tis
Than Two that in the Bushes is.*

While his host thus comforted himself with a contemplation of his own common-room, Mr Henry Cranton regaled himself with a pint of muscadine, well sweetened, his favourite tipple, which was always served him at The Three Crowns in a particular pewter tankard reserved for him alone, and bearing the name of The Bishop.

Mr Henry Cranton, of The Black Boy and Star, was a little dry, wiry man with a nutcracker nose and chin and a bald head. He wore low down upon his nose a pair of iron-rimmed spectacles which he had inherited from his father and had put on for the first time on the day of that gentleman's funeral. Mr Cranton junior could not see when they were in front of his eyes, so he wore them always well down upon his nose and looked over the top of them; they gave him a look of gravity and learning, invaluable in one of his profession, and he was never seen without them. But indeed he was a learned man. He could read with great ease all the news-sheets and ballads; he understood affairs of State, and could tell you of the doings in Parliament, what laws had been passed, and what they signified. He formed his own opinions upon such great matters with considerable sense and judgment, but, except in the company of intimates, was so cautious in his speech that he was never in trouble with any of the parties.

The malicious said that Mr Cranton would do better to study his own wife than the affairs of the realm, but Mr Cranton never discussed his notorious spouse even with his friends, and although he must have known his reputation as a cuckold did not seem the least distressed by it. In his own dry, quiet way he was a merry man; his wife might be faithless to him, but the fact remained that they lived together in great peace and harmony; he was a freeman of the Barber-Surgeons' Company and hoped to be admitted to the livery next year; he had a thriving business, and no family for whom to provide.

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He was a great tobacco addict, and except in business hours w^{as} never without his Winchester pipe in his mouth, which he would fill with the variety known as Roll Trinadado from a little box, which always had a French bean in the bottom of it to give the tobacco a sweet smell. Whenever he had anything important to say he always puffed hard at his pipe between sentences, and sometimes, when he had a particularly difficult molar to draw or an especially ticklish fever to cure by bleeding, he had been known to put his empty pipe in his mouth and pretend to puff at it, in order to woo concentration of mind.

"My Lord Mayor will certainly have them forth by Monday morning," said Mr Guffin suddenly, still obsessed by the horses in St Paul's.

"Then will my Lord General have them in again on Tuesday," replied his friend, refreshing himself with another draught from The Bishop.

Mr Guffin loved Mr Cranton very much, and sought his advice in all matters. None the less, he was frequently irritated by his friend's calm assumption that he knew everything, the more so in that Mr Cranton very often proved to be right.

"No such matter," snapped Mr Guffin. "Bless me, you speak as though my Lord General would venture to defy my Lord Mayor in this matter of the City's principal place of worship."

"I cannot but remember that he not only defied the King, but went so far as to cut off his head."

"Nay, Hal, that was not my Lord General's work. They say that Fairfax was kept prisoner in his house last Tuesday, because 'twas feared he would forbid the execution."

"When I speak of the Lord General I do intend rather the other Grandees of the Army, as they term them, who for long have used the Lord Fairfax as a puppet, and do their will under cover of his authority."

Mr Guffin moved restlessly in his chair. As usual, he did not understand these high matters, but he felt bound to investigate this particular high matter because the horses stabled in St Paul's had touched his civic pride to the quick.

"I am sure," said he firmly, "that those knavish soldiers

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had no orders for what they were at yesterday, and will be punished for their beastly sacrilege when it comes to the ears of their officers. The City hath been the friend of the Parliament from the beginning of the troubles, and 'twas she who loaned the money necessary for the creation of the New Model."

"She will provide likewise the money necessary for the present maintenance of the New Model," replied Mr Cranton, puffing hard, "and if what I hear is true 'twill not be a loan, nor a sum freely given. They say the seventeen thousand pounds lying in Guildhall for the repair of St Paul's is to be seized by the Parliament, and that the scaffolding surrounding the central tower hath already been assigned to Jephson's Regiment for its arrears of pay."

"Beshrew my heart !" cried Mr Guffin, red with wrath. "Here is a scandalous and lying rumour. I wonder, Hal, upon my life I marvel that you give ear to such folly. For my part I am sure that Guildhall will demand satisfaction for this insult to Paul's, ay, and will receive it instanter. As for the 'heading of the King, that was done by the Parliament, which is now become, they tell me, the supreme government, and which is in labour to disband this Army which it did raise in its own defence when there was need for it."

Mr Cranton regarded his friend over the top of his spectacles.

"There is a certain matter, neighbour," said he dryly, "which you have quite forgot, and that is this new liberty which is promised to all save Papists and Royalists. By this you are to understand that the Parliament hath liberty to make and unmake laws, the Army hath liberty to disband itself or not as it pleaseth, Colonel Skippon hath liberty to stable his horses in Paul's, and my Lord Mayor hath liberty to exchange Guildhall for Newgate if he durst protest against it. That's the way it is, gossip; I lie not, on my credit."

Mr Guffin, thoroughly nettled, told his friend not to presume to jest upon such grave matters, and presently, seeing that Mr Cranton was determined to continue in this unseemly vein, said good night and departed to bed, sustained

by the conviction that by Monday at latest the equine invaders would be driven out of the Cathedral.

(3)

Next morning, again in Sabbath attire and much refreshed by a night's sound sleep, Mr Guffin sallied forth to church, accompanied by Sarah, Little Julia, and Simon. Despite all his father's reproaches and persuasions, James had some while since attached himself to the Presbyterians, whose religion was, indeed, the favourite religion of the City. Where Ned Walsh spent his Sundays, Mr Guffin did not know, though he suspected the worst, but until to-day Richard Chick had always accompanied his master and the family to Morning Prayer at St Faith's, for, being an apprentice, he was bound to obey the master who was responsible for him in all matters, spiritual and temporal, while he was in his indentures. With Ned it was different; he was a mere labourer, and in his free time could do as he pleased. But Mr Guffin had a shrewd suspicion that Dick had played truant this morning under the influence of Ned, who, during the past week, had suddenly become very pert and unmanageable. If things did not improve, Mr Guffin would dismiss Ned from his service. He was not going to have his 'prentice's mind corrupted by the elder youth, and he was not accustomed to stomach rudeness and insubordination in his employees.

The bells of London rang to worship, St Faith's among them, but the great bells of the Cathedral were silent. There was nothing new in that; they had been silent now since 1645. What was new was the sight which confronted Mr Guffin as he came into the Churchyard. There upon the ground, shattered and smashed into a thousand pieces, were the statues of King Charles and his royal father which formerly had stood upon the parapet of the Italian porch. He tut-tutted at the sight, unable to understand such iconoclasm, and frowned in displeasure at the busy figures of the redcoats, carting manure from the desecrated Cathedral, leading horses out to exercise, and grooming them in the Italian porch. He was thankful

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indeed that he did not have to pass through Paul's to reach St Faith's; there was a door leading down to the crypt in Pardon Church Haugh. Waving aside those who called "Hassocks for your pews!", and taking his two children firmly by the hand, Mr Guffin descended into the bowels of his poor Cathedral.

Once inside he could hear plainly the stampings and neighings from above which reminded him all too forcibly that the most famous House of God in London was turned into a stables. But St Faith's at least was undefiled. He beheld the familiar chapel in all its former decorum, the candles alight upon the communion-table, the organ softly booming, the congregation decently and reverently filing into their appointed places, the master-craftsmen in the front seats, the journeymen and 'prentices behind, and at the very back the beadsmen and women and the charity children. He remarked, however, with astonishment and some indignation, that a number of soldiers were present, astonishment because of yesterday's vile doings, indignation because some of the men were smoking pipes and all wore their monmouth-caps upon their heads. Mr Guffin looked forward to hearing Mr Slade the incumbent utter a rebuke from the pulpit against this insult to the dear old Church of England. Mr Guffin really loved the dear old Church of England; she stood second in his affections to the City of London. He had been reared in her bosom; she appealed to his passionate respectability, his love of decorum, compromise, and decency; she was the ark which alone could steer clear of the rocks of Papistry upon the one hand, and the shoals of Dissent upon the other. He glared at the soldiers, ducked his head to the cross, kneeled, and whispered the Lord's Prayer.

Mr Slade entered in a starched white surplice and black stole, and the service began. It was an innocuous service, benign, sufficiently artistic, enriched with the glorious liturgy of Cranmer. Only when he came to the customary prayer for the King and the Royal Family did Mr Slade seem a little distressed. He was about to read it, evidently recollected himself, blushed, and hurried on to the next passage. The

congregation helped him with a loud and sympathetic response. In due course he climbed the pulpit, armed with a thick wad of notes, and began an erudite sermon.

It was really erudite, for Mr Slade was a cultured man. It was also, like the service, eminently non-controversial. It was bespattered with Latin tags, quite unintelligible to the congregation, but pleasing to them none the less. It had been preached before, and there did not seem to be any reason why it should not be preached again. Half the congregation gently and unobtrusively dozed; the other half placidly imbibed, without attempting digestion, Mr Slade's learned dissertation upon the third chapter of the Epistle of St Paul to the Galatians.

Mr Slade had just intoned: "And fifthly, my dear brethren/" and was flowing smoothly forward to his conclusion, when a voice from the back of the chapel loudly interrupted him.

"Thou erreest, brother," announced the voice. "Thou erreest grievously when thou dost maintain that a man may be condemned for aught but unbelief."

Poor Mr Slade, thus bombarded in midstream, blinked, stared, rustled his notes, and then, after clearing his throat, attempted to take up his discourse again. But the voice was not to be so ignored. It was now accompanied by a pair of military boots and a buff-clad person which stalked determinedly up the aisle and took up a stance immediately beneath the pulpit. The beadle, galvanised into action by this unseemly behaviour, hurried in its wake, armed with his staff and muttering an outraged protest, but the interrupter, taking not the slightest notice of him, further addressed the preacher.

"Thou art a false prophet, and so I will prove thee, for thou dost bear the marks of one in thy forehead and thou dost add unto the words which are written in the Book. Therefore shalt thou have thy place with the dogs and whore-mongers without the gate. I know thee and thy like; thou dost mouth Je-sus with a low congie; thy Roman nose stands full east; thou wilt be no Protestant but a Christian, and come out Papist the next election. Out of thy pulpit, Belial, out I say, and give place to one who will preach the pure Gospel without fear or favour."

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Half the congregation was by this time on its feet, prepared to oust the profane intruder, but at this moment the rest of the soldiers in the chapel made their persence felt in no uncertain manner. Elbowing their way out of the pews, they drew their swords and ran forward to the aid of their outspoken comrade, applauding him so loudly that the protests of the congregation were quite drowned.

"Sit still,*" they commanded the indignant citizens, "sit still and hear the joyful news of salvation from Trust-in-the-Lord Smith, who will bring ye comfortable tidings and fill your souls with the truth."

The citizens muttered, remonstrated, glared, and whispered, but they made no practical protest. How could they, caught in this unprecedented situation, unarmed, herded together like sheep whose shepherd has been captured by the wolves? Thus did they behold the intolerable spectacle of that worthy and erudite shepherd of theirs being hustled down from his pulpit, and the militant Trust-in-the-Lord Smith usurping his place. His comrades ranged themselves upon the pulpit steps with a great clatter of swords and spurs, and prepared to applaud, encourage, and argue while the self-appointed preacher embarked upon a long expounding of the doctrine of Universal Grace. Two soldiers meanwhile stood guard at the door, lest any obstinate sheep had a mind to escape from the fold ere being regaled with spiritual sustenance.

But worse, far worse, was to follow. When at last the fiery sermon was ended, the preacher and his friends engaged upon what they called a cleansing of this Temple of Baal. They overturned the communion-table, drove out the organist and hacked his instrument with their swords; they made water in the font, they tore the prayer-books into pieces, and the communion vessels of silver-gilt they put into their snap-sacks as lawful prizes of war. And all the while they were at work they chanted bloodthirsty psalms like incantations. The congregation, huddled together by the door, watched them in a terrible fascination, for there was a light in the eyes of these iconoclasts which made them seem possessed.

When all was done, and St Faith's a scene of devastation,

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the military intruders unlocked the door and drove out the parishioners, exultantly informing them that when next they came here they would find St Faith's purged of all Romish superstitions and only the plain Gospel preached herein. The parishioners hasted into the Churchyard and there, at a safe distance from the redcoats, stood in little groups, muttering the protests they dared not make audible, talking large about revenge and redress, vowing they would take the matter to Guildhall, trying to ignore the creeping doubt which was beginning to come upon them of the power of even that sacred institution to curb the violence of these new tyrants.

As for Mr Samuel Guffin, he hurried towards Ludgate Hill and his tavern, dragging Little Julia and Simon after him, paying no attention to the excited talk of neighbours. Things had got beyond him; first the world of England had broken in pieces at his feet, and now the little world of his City was dangerously threatened. There remained, therefore, only the tiny world of his tavern, of his home. That at least was inviolate and safe; there at least he had rights and responsibilities; there he was master, and, so long as he observed the fundamental laws of the land and the ancient law of the City, no red-coated tyrant durst interfere with him.

They, whoever they were, had destroyed the head of the nation; but they would not venture, reflected poor, simple, innocent Mr Guffin, to lay violent hands upon the foot of the nation, its first unit, the family and the domestic hearth.

CHAPTER III

(1)

ALTHOUGH, in the days which followed, Mr Guffin made a sincere and consistent attempt to play the part of the ostrich hiding its head in the sand, the outer world he would fain have ignored intruded even into his common-room and kitchen. For first there were his customers who nowadays seemed unable to gossip of anything over their ale but public affairs. In vain did he endeavour to bring the talk of the

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common-room back to the well-worn and comfortable channels of trade and sport and domestic matters; his customers seemed hypnotised by the great matters of State they had never understood and in which they had never taken much interest, and when he asked them how some bear-bait had gone at the Bankside they would stare at him, shrug their shoulders, and immediately begin to tell him about the abolition of the House of Lords, or of this new Engagement which all must take ere he be admitted to any office, civil or military, within the Commonwealth, and which asserted that "the office of a king in this nation, and to have the power thereof in any single person, is unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous to the liberty, safety, and public interests of this nation, and ought to be abolished/'

Then there were the news-sheets. During the war, it had been Mr Guffin's habit to send Ned or Dick to the sign of The Hand and Shears in Bolt-in-Tun Yard to fetch *The Moderate Intelligencer* from its author, John Dillingham, a tailor; this news-sheet Mr Guffin kept in his common-room, and any of his customers who desired to do so might peruse it on payment of a penny; after the tavern was closed, Mr Guffin himself would stumble through it. Dillingham was a Presbyterian, but he was genuinely moderate in his views, both religious and secular, and he had the courage to present the news of the day without bias (for this reason an earlier news-sheet of his had been suppressed in '45). During the early part of the war, Mr Guffin had taken in also one of the Royalist *Mercuries*, but when it became evident that the King's side was going to be defeated, he had forbidden it his house for the sake of his trade, though it was written by a Church of England clergyman.

Mr Guffin still read *The Moderate Intelligencer* in his leisure hours, because, however much he was resolved to shun any contact with public affairs, he found it difficult to break a habit. Mr Dillingham now informed him, soberly and tersely, of the establishing of this new Commonwealth which was to take the place of the ancient Constitution of England. First, the two hundred and forty Members of the House of Commons forcibly excluded by Colonel Pride last December were never

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again to be allowed to sit unless they declared their approval of the "High Court of Justice" set up by the tiny minority of their fellows for the trial of the King, his execution, and the abolition of the House of Lords. Next, a new Council of State was to be set up, with full executive authority, its existence to be terminable after one year unless otherwise ordered by Parliament, or rather the remnant of the House of Commons which now claimed that appellation. There were to be forty-one of these Councillors, and nearly all would be Members of Parliament. Thirdly, six new Judges were to be named, because six of the Common Law Judges had refused to serve the new constitution; the remaining six, who had agreed to serve, had done so, it seemed, only on the condition that Parliament issued a declaration that the fundamental laws be maintained. Lastly, Presbyterianism was declared to be the State religion, with a vague promise of toleration for the other sects, but none for Papists or Church of England men.

This news Mr Guffin endeavoured to digest, though it was hard for him to think of England as anything other than a Monarchy. Even when he watched the Royal Arms being chipped off the Lud Gate and other public places, and the new Arms of the Commonwealth set in their place, he could not accustom himself to the idea that near a thousand years of hereditary Kingship were at an end. Moreover, he was constantly receiving new shocks every time he opened *The Moderate Intelligencer*. Scarcely had he read that Parliament had made the required declaration concerning the maintenance of the fundamental laws, than Mr Dillingham informed him that a new "High Court of Justice" was to be set up, without judge or jury, to try a group of high-born Royalists who had surrendered, on promise of their lives, at the close of the Second Civil War; a few days later he read that they all had been condemned to death. But even worse than this, at least in the eyes of Mr Guffin, was the treatment meted out to the City. The seventeen thousand pounds lying in Guildhall had been seized by the soldiers, the scaffolding around the central tower of Paul's taken down and sold, and in April the Lord Mayor of London, having refused to proclaim the Act abolishing

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the Monarchy, was summoned to the bar of the House of Commons, deprived of his office, fined the sum of two thousand pounds,¹ and was sent to the Tower for a month.

But as if the news contained in *The Moderate Intelligencer* were not disconcerting and bewildering enough, Mr Guffin was now suddenly confronted with other news-sheets which began to enter his house without his permission. He was wont to find Ned Walsh laboriously spelling his way through a sheet called *The Moderate*, when he ought to have been attending to his duties; James was accustomed to come home with a copy of *A Perfect Collection**, and whenever Thomas paid a visit to The Three Crowns he would be sure to have the latest number of *The Army's Modest Intelligencer* in his pocket. After his family had gone to bed, Mr Guffin would glance through these various journals, with the result that he grew ever the more confused.

It had been dinned into the tavern-keeper's head ever since that fatal thirtieth of January that the slaughter of King Charles had been the one thing necessary to bring about the millenium. James had regretted it as a sad necessity; Thomas and Ned Walsh had openly rejoiced in it. All three had united in telling him that now, with the deed done, all distractions and quarrels were over, all injustices would be removed, all would be peace, prosperity, and harmony. Yet here was *The Moderate*, the organ of the Levellers, informing him that "though the old king's person and the old lords are removed, a new king and new lords are with the commons in one house, so that we are under a more absolute arbitrary monarchy than before." Here was *The Army's Modest Intelligencer* snarling at the newly formed Council of State, clamouring for a dissolution of the present Parliament, and inveighing against the Scots, the staunchest allies of the Parliamentary cause throughout the war and the sellers of the King's person in '46. And here was *A Perfect Collection*, written by one of the messengers of the Council of State, demanding the punishing of John Lilburne and the suppression of the Levellers, and asserting

¹ All such seventeenth-century sums must be multiplied by five to estimate their modern value.

that the Army had served its turn and should forthwith be disbanded.

But the greatest difficulty in the way of Mr Guffin's attempt to imitate the ostrich was in his own household. He could shut his ears to the talk of his customers and absorb himself in his craft; he could glance through *The Moderate Intelligencer* and ignore the news he could not understand; he could light his fire with *The Moderate*, order James to hold his tongue when that young man quoted from *A Perfect Collection*, and comfort himself with the thought that Thomas would very soon be exchanging the red cassock of the soldier for the blue frock of the apprentice and would lose all interest in *The Army's Modest Intelligencer*. It was when Ned and Thomas and James insisted on thrusting their political opinions under his nose by word and deed that Mr Guffin was forced to take his head out of the sand and look around him.

(2)

Ned Walsh presented the least of the harassed Samuel's problems, for Ned was but a labourer, hired by the week, who could be dismissed at pleasure and no questions asked by the City Chamberlain. But Mr Guffin was a conscientious master and Ned had served him well for two years; the tavern-keeper could not find it in his heart to dismiss the lad only for having his mind seduced by the doctrines of John Lilburne. Mr Guffin did not understand the doctrines of John Lilburne, and he had a shrewd suspicion that Ned did not understand them either; what he did understand was that John Lilburne was in the Tower by order of the Parliament, that his latest tract, entitled *England's New Chains*, had been burnt by the common hangman, that he was a man who, all his life, never had been able to resist the temptation of attacking somebody or something, and that he had succeeded in making simple Ned Walsh a thorn in the side of his easy-going master.

For Ned now took a pride in being pert, lazy, and insubordinate. When rebuked for these faults he answered that according to John Lilburne all men were born equal, that no

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man should have dominion over his fellows, that there ought no longer to be masters and servants but only fellow-citizens, and other ridiculous statements. Mr Guffin tried chastisement, he tried contempt, he even tried argument; all in vain. Each time Ned was rude to him, he vowed that next time it happened Ned should leave his service. But always his dislike of unpleasantness and upsets, and his genuine pity for the boy, got the better of his judgment; the boy was but a boy; he had the makings of a good drawer; his father, a waterman, was brutal, and would whip Ned within an inch of his life if he lost his post. On the other hand, Ned was rapidly corrupting the mind of young Richard Chick, the apprentice, not, indeed, with Levelling principles, for Dick cared for no principles in the world, but his example was making Dick pert and careless at his work. And Dick could not be dismissed without excellent reason; he was bound to Mr Guffin for the term of seven years; his father was a master-grocer of Coleman Street, and had paid a handsome fee for his son's indentures. Thus poor Mr Guffin argued with himself, arriving nowhere; and meanwhile Ned stayed on at The Three Crowns, spending his evenings in a Billingsgate ale-house where, with other Lilburne admirers, he drew up petitions for that malcontent's release.

The conduct of Ned Walsh provided a problem and an irritation; the conduct of James Guffin was now to provide a mingled disappointment and pleasure. That had always been the way with James; you were irritated by his self-assurance and conceit at the selfsame time as you were compelled to admire his cleverness and good fortune. James came home one day in the late spring and informed his father that he had great news. It seemed that one of his scrivener master's clients was no less a person than Sir Arthur Heselrig, a notable Parliamentarian and one of the Five Members who had defied King Charles in '41 and thereby had made the Civil War inevitable. Upon several occasions during the last few months, Sir Arthur had got into conversation with the scrivener's 'prentice during the former's visits to Pissing Alley, and to-day had announced to him that he had formed so high an opinion

of his worth that he was resolved to have James for one of his clerks.

"Heart I" exclaimed Mr Guffin, pausing in his carving of a collar of brawn, "here is a huge compliment paid you, lad. 'Tis pity you cannot accept this fine post."

"Not accept it?" echoed James. "Why, I have done so already."

"Nay, recollect, lad," said his father, shocked, "you have near four years of your time to serve ere you be out of your 'dentures to your master. 'Tis against the law of the City for a 'prentice to leave his service in the midst of his time, as you know very well."

"I am called," retorted James solemnly, "to a higher duty, for one hath need of my services who is the foremost champion of liberty, and may in truth be called the father of the Commonwealth. Shall I fritter my time with quill-driving for a piddling scrivener, when I am commanded to serve one of the people's representatives in Parliament?"

Mr Guffin continued to carve the brawn in silence. He knew in his heart that a principle was at stake; the whole life of the City was founded upon the traditional bond between master and apprentice, and the laws governing their relations were of the strictest. Once let those laws be questioned and trade would rock on its foundations; how would any youth learn an honest craft, how would any master continue in his service to his customers, if an apprentice claimed the right to leave his employment ere his time was up? He glanced furtively at Richard Chick, eating his supper below the salt; here was a dreadful example to set the lad! But Dick was engaged in staring at the brawn and as usual had no eyes or ears for anything else when there was food upon the table.

James, meanwhile, was in the thick of a eulogy on his new patron.

"There is no man in the Commonwealth," said he enthusiastically, "so worthy of respect as this great gentleman. Was it not he introduced the Bill of Attainder against Strafford, proposed the Militia Bill, and promoted that which was called the Root and Branch? And besides that he is an eminent

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statesman, he is a man of the sword likewise. He raised a troop of horse at his own expense immediately the King plunged the nation into blood, and got him some wounds of honour ere he laid down his commission in accordance with the Self-denying Ordinance in '44."

"There is a boy at school," observed Simon, with his mouth full, "saith this troop of his was called the Lobsters because it was all in armour like the knights of old, and that these Lobsters ran away so fast at Roundaway Down that they have never been seen since."

"Peace," said Little Julia.

"Yet now," continued James, ignoring the impertinence of his small brother, "Sir Arthur is resolved to lay by the sword for ever, for, saith he, he is called upon to nurse this delicate and new-born babe, the Commonwealth of England, which already is in peril from the greedy hands of the Army, which would set up the power of the sword over the civil magistrate, and cries loudly for the dissolution of this venerable Parliament which was in truth the mother who brought the infant Commonwealth into the world, and is called by all true men the supreme government of England."

"At school," remarked Simon, "they call it the Rump."

"Eat up your meat," said Little Julia.

But the member of his family who at this time dealt the heaviest blow to Mr Guffin's peace of mind was his eldest son, Thomas. For one day, in June, Thomas came walking into The Three Crowns and announced that in the course of the next few weeks he was going to Ireland with his regiment, and was come to take leave of his family.

"Nay, Thomas," cried the distressed father, "sure you will not continue with the Army any longer. Pox on't, lad, you will grow a beard upon your chin ere you come to learn anything of your father's craft. Methought the Army was to be disbanded as soon as its arrears were paid." .

"Disbanded!" exclaimed Thomas in high scorn. "Are the Hosts of Israel to be disbanded when Egypt is but one day's march in the rear? As for these arrears of which you speak, I must remind you that they yet remain unpaid, and therefore

hath there been most dangerous mutinies among us, as you will have read in the news-sheets, the same which our godly Lieutenant-General Cromwell hath been constrained to put down with blood. Yet money he will have, saith he, ere he embarks for Ireland, for is not the labourer worthy of his hire?"

"He will get no more from the City/" said Mr Guffin, flushing. "They have pillaged the treasure at Guildhall and likewise the eight-and-twenty thousand pounds belonging to the Committee for Compounding at Goldsmiths' Hall, and have got themselves the ill-will of the cits for their pains. As for a loan, the wealthy merchants have shut up their purses and there is not a trade-token will be given willingly."

"The City," retorted Thomas, "though she may refuse a loan, may not refuse to pay the monthly assessment levied upon all towns and counties throughout the Commonwealth for the maintenance of that godly Army which deUvered England from the tyranny of Charles Stuart."

"Methought all illegal taxation had gone with the King," said his father with a sniff. "This tax is altogether unjust and tyrannous, and the City holds out stoutly against it. She is called upon to pay the sum of six thousand pounds a month, which is the fifteenth part of the whole assessment of the Commonwealth, though she doth passionately affirm that she is but the fortieth part of it in value as her case is now."

"She will pay her tax," said Thomas darkly, "or it will be the worse for her, sordid tradeswoman that she is, without right feeling or gratitude for the blessings showered upon her."

This insult to his beloved City made Mr Guffin turn very red and wroth, but after spluttering rebukes at Thomas for a few moments he suddenly leaned back in his chair with a sigh, and said in a tone of pleading:

"Nay, Tom, let not you and I fall out over matters which are fitter to be discussed by Parliament-men than humble cits. I care for nothing but to have you home again, lad, that you may learn my trade from me even as I learned it from my father. You have served your country in her need, Tom, and now 'tis time to put by the sword and learn the arts of peace."

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"What!" cried his son, looking mighty fierce. "Would you have the warriors of the Lord leave Israel defenceless in the Wilderness? What though one tyrant is laid low, are there not others? Do not Bulls of Bashan encompass you upon every side, seeking to devour you? Pharaoh and his hosts are indeed perished in the Red Sea, yet is there not Babylon, is there not Assyria, are there not Philistines and Amalekites, Hittites and Moabites, who thirst after your blood? By which I intend," Thomas condescended to add, perceiving his father's bewilderment, "that there remain the Young Man of Sin, the tyrant's son, and the false Scots who would proclaim him, and likewise the bloody Irish, steeped in idolatry, every one of whom is in labour to come over and cut your throats."

"Do you mean to have me think," gasped his father, "that after so long and ruinous a war within the kingdom, we are not to have peace without? That we are to fight the Scots and the Irish and I know not who else, and see our merchants breaking daily and our purses drained?"

"What are merchants, and what are purses," enquired Thomas loftily, "but dross and dung in the eyes of the Lord? Will ye say with rebellious Israel, would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots and when we did eat bread to the full? Exodus xvi, 3. Will ye hanker after the fish and the garlic and the melons? The Lord will give ye quails to eat in His wrath, and they shall smite you with a very great plague, even the plague of Kibroth-Nattaavah. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they. Numbers xiv, 11, 12."

"Thomas," shouted Mr Guffin, maddened by all this glib quoting of Scripture, "I will demand of thee one thing, and do desire thy answer, blunt and honest: Are you for putting off the red coat and returning to The Three Crowns to learn your father's trade?"

"I have put my hand to the plough," crushingly replied

his son, "I have girt upon me the sword of the spirit and the breastplate of righteousness, and I will not desert my heavenly Captain to engage upon the serving of ale to sordid cits."

So that was that, and once again Mr Guffin found himself at a loss for arguments. He was not a very happy man these days. He did not know how to be a good subject, because he could not rightly understand by what or by whom he was governed. He found it difficult to be a good citizen, with the knowledge that the rightful Lord Mayor was deprived of his office, and Alderman Andrewes, one of the regicides, chosen by a carefully packed Common Council to reign in his place. Most of all did he find it hard to be a good father and master, what with Thomas refusing to leave soldiering for tavern-keeping, James outraging City tradition by deserting his employer in the middle of his time, Sarah, denied her Will Lowen, as sulky and as sullen as she could be, and Ned Walsh taking a pride in being impertinent and lazy.

Yet there remained his home, his craft, and his two younger children; these at least provided compensation. Little Julia more than made up for her sister's moodiness and bad housewifery, and Simon, now rising nine, professed himself as longing for the time when he could leave school and become his father's 'prentice. Simon might be a thought precocious, a little too nervy and sensitive for his own or his father's peace of mind, but at least he was not eaten up with schemes for putting the world to rights; at least he was natural and merry, and had a proper respect for the wisdom of his elders.

With these two younger offspring did Mr Guffin console himself; with these and with the affairs of his tavern. Until the fateful day arrived when the very fortress of his hearthstone was taken by storm.

(3)

It was an evening late in June. All day long the streets of the City had resounded to the tramp of military feet, **for** Lieutenant-General Cromwell and the Lord General Fairfax—

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very much in that order—had come to dine at Guildhall ere marching to Bristol where they were to embark for the Irish campaign. (The men had been paid a sufficient portion of their arrears to satisfy them for the moment, the money being obtained by the sale of yet more of the late King's lands, since the City had steadily refused to pay her assessment.) At intervals throughout the day Mr Guffin had heard the shrilling of trumpets, the throb of drums, the clink of steel, and the clatter of hoof-beats, but he had not heard that cacophony which invariably accompanied a procession of any kind through the London streets: the voices of thousands of citizens, applauding, cheering, or yelling abuse.

At dinner-time Simon had run in breathless, to say that just as the procession had come level with the Standard in Cheapside, the wheel of Cromwell's coach had come off, causing an hour's delay and much confusion. He, Simon, had heard a rumour to the effect that some of the Levellers had taken out the linch-pin of the coach on purpose to cause this accident; when it happened, said Simon, there had run through the crowd for the first time a ripple of cheers. Mr Guffin immediately was filled with a new anxiety lest that fool of a Ned Walsh had had a hand in the trick; he seemed always to be worrying over one or other of his household in these troublesome days.

But Mr Guffin had found little time during the day to think about this public spectacle, for he was in the thick of a new battle with his daughter Sarah.

During the past few months Mr Guffin really had done his best to cure the wench of her infatuation with Will Lowen. He had lectured her, long and seriously, upon self-respect, civic pride, virgin modesty, and the duty she owed her father; he had reminded her that in respectable households the marriages of the children were invariably arranged by the parents; he had appealed to her love for her dead mother, whom he represented as turning in her grave for very shame at this spectacle of her eldest-born resisting the will of him who was jnow both father and mother to his children. He had given Sarah little presents, had taken her upon excursions

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of a Sunday to Pimlico or Islington, or to view the wild beasts in the Tower. He had brought to her notice several eligible and worthy young men, the sons of master-craftsmen, who were only too ready to pay her their addresses. But to all these appeals, arguments, and bribes Sarah remained obstinately impervious. She would have William Lowen for her husband, or she would die a maid. * The romantic way in which she made this statement made Mr Guffin's fingers itch to take a stick to her.

And to-day she had come into the kitchen from buying radishes and lettuce from a street vendor, and had announced to her father the news that Gregory Brandon, the common hangman, was lately dead, and that the Court of Aldermen had offered the post to his assistant.

"Now do you perceive, wench," triumphantly exclaimed her father, "what a fortunate escape hath been yours. Had you your way, you would now be wed with the Finisher of the Law himself, and would be hearing your husband whooped after by every boy in the City when he walked abroad, ay, and there would be no respectable house within the liberties wherein you would be welcome."

"My Will," retorted Sarah with dignity, "is now an official in the employ of the City, being duly appointed and summoned before the worshipful Court of Aldermen; and, with his hand laid on the Scriptures, hath sworn in their presence to execute all condemned, without favouring father or mother or brother or sister or any friend whatsoever."

"And know you the words in which the Sheriff is accustomed to dismiss this high official of yours after his swearing-in?" wrathfully demanded her father. "'Get thee hence, wretch!' cries the Sheriff, and flings out after him the ropes and the fetters and the scourges and the other symbols of his beastly trade with which the table is strewn during the ceremony. Pest take you, wench, 'tis ill enough that you should desire to shake the sheets with the hangman's assistant; methinks you must be mad if you would have the hangman himself for bedfellow."

Sarah, in no way abashed, retorted that since she was sure

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her father was concerned only with her future husband's ability to give her a proper marriage settlement, Mr Guffin would be interested to learn that her Will was now the recipient of a steady forty pounds a year, and was paid also by piecework. The City, she affirmed, paid two-and-sixpence for a whipping, the same sum for a branding, two shillings for standing a victim in the pillory or fastening him in the stocks; and then of course there were the small gratuities invariably offered by the friends of the condemned at Tyburn, the rich offerings of victims about to be beheaded, and a handsome Christmas-box from the Barber-Surgeons' Company in gratitude for providing them with specimens for dissection.

Without giving her father time to speak, Sarah then went on to assert that, if public affairs continued as they were at present, her Will would be a rich man within a year or two, for there was always somebody to be hanged or whipped or branded nowadays, not to speak of the multitude of seditious tracts which it was his job publicly to burn. And look, she said, at the small but regular trade in wens. There were thousands of persons in London afflicted with wens, and the traditional remedy was to rub the sufferer with the hand of a man newly hanged. Her Will, who, it seemed, was a business man, had raised the customary charge for this service from one-and-sixpence to two-and sixpence, pleading the high cost of living, and when he had to turn off some notable criminal he sold the rope for a shilling an inch, though his predecessors had been content with sixpence.

Here she paused for breath, and her outraged father at last could get his word in.

"Hold your tongue with a pox, you cockatrice!" he belowed, "or marry hang me but I will send you into service in the country. 'Sblood, did I not know your mother was a virtuous woman I would swear you are no daughter of mine that so cries up the hangman to my face, and would become the common cry of the town by bedding with the most execrated creature in London. Come, what must discharge me from your madness? To your chamber, drab; get you abovestairs and caterwaul in a corner. Death! what sin have I com-

mitted to be plagued with so unnatural a fruit of my loins?"

This distressing interview with Sarah put Mr Guffin quite out of humour, and it was not until late in the evening that he began gradually to recover his equanimity of mind. About nine of the clock, mellowed with ale, cheered by a merry catch or two in which he had taken part, and soothed by the execution of tasks he knew and loved, he was bustling round with ale-cans and tankards, pausing here and there for a word with a neighbour, when, happening to glance towards the street door, he perceived two soldiers enter.

He broke off his conversation with Mr Knee, the upholder, and stared at the two red-coated figures. Cromwell and Fairfax had left the City some hours since, and Mr Guffin had been led to believe that they had taken with them all the troops hitherto quartered in public buildings within the liberties. He watched, frowning, as the pair pushed their way through the crowded room towards the ale-stond; one of them was evidently a sergeant of foot, for he carried his musket shouldered; the other wore a white scarf over his cassock, but what his rank was Mr Guffin could not tell. Young Simon was standing behind the ale-stond, busily engaged in sorting the trade-tokens which were common in a city always short of small change; and to him he of the white scarf now applied himself.

"A pottle of three-threads, my master," said the soldier humorously, "and do you chalk the score upon the board."

"My father," said Simon, "doth not permit credit to strangers. He saith——"

"Nay," interrupted the soldier, "I care not what he saith, but I have somewhat to say unto him, so do you go find him and bring him hither, and here is a penny for your pains."

Simon took the proffered coin and inspected it curiously. It was of the new Commonwealth coinage, and represented the Arms of England with a laurel and palm and the inscription *The Commonwealth of England* upon the obverse, and upon the reverse a cross and harp, with the motto *God with us*.

"It is a brave new penny," said the sergeant, "fresh from the mint. Canst read what it saith, my gallant?"

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"Yes," replied Simon, his bright eyes glancing innocently at the questioner. "There is the Commonwealth on one side, and God is on the other. Yonder is my father, sir, if you would have speech with him."

"Your lad hath a saucy tongue in's head," observed the white-scarfed soldier, as Mr Guffin bustled up. "You would do well to bid him have a care of it."

^C< "I did but say," began Simon, but the other waved him aside.

"Art the keeper of this tavern, friend?"

"I am. Samuel Gufih is my name, at your service. What would you?"

"The answer to certain questions. I am Quartermaster Abel Peters of Harrison's Foot, and this is Sergeant Zechariah Binfold. How many rooms have ye in this house?"

Mr Guffin stared at him.

"Why, there is this my common-room and my kitchen yonder for the humbler sort, and likewise have I a privy parlour abovestairs wherein those who bespeak a dinner may be entertained."

"And sleeping-chambers?"

"This is no inn, neighbour; 'tis but a tavern, and 'tis not my custom to——"

"I enquired of you, how many sleeping-chambers have you? I do desire an answer, and you had best have a care you speak the truth. I know very well The Three Crowns is but a tavern; I have it listed here," and he pulled a paper from beneath his scarf.

Mr Guffin's mounting annoyance was submerged in a sudden apprehension. So far as the law of the land was concerned he was above reproach; but these were soldiers, who seemed to be of late a law unto themselves, and his drawer, Ned Walsh, was a Leveller, and to-day, if rumour lied not, the Levellers had so far presumed as to pull out the linch-pin from Lieutenant-General Cromwell's coach. He ought to have thrashed that fool of a Ned, reflected Mr Guffin, instead of attempting to argue him out of his dangerous opinions. Then, maybe, The Three Crowns tavern would

not have been "listed" (horridly suggestive word!), and Ned's master would have been spared considerable trouble and annoyance.

"Be pleased to come where we may be private," said Mr Guffin hurriedly, and he led the way out of the common-room, up the stair, and into his upstairs parlour.

With the door tight shut, he was about to rally what excuses he could for his drawer's political opinions and folly, when he observed that his visitors had lost interest in him and were busy on an inspection of the apartment. One was poking his nose into cupboards and presses, the other was measuring the floor space with his feet. The quartermaster, who still carried his paper in his hand, turned round presently, and said curtly to the sergeant:

"Three may lie in here," and then to the bewildered Guffin: "And now prithee lead us to your sleeping-chambers, and hasten, if you please; we have many other houses to inspect."

"In the name of heaven," bleated Mr Guifin, now utterly at sea, "what would you with my sleeping-chambers, which are private to me and my family?"

The quartermaster leaned against the table and regarded the questioner with a dry smile. He was a tired-looking man, lacking one ear.

"You must know, friend, that you are to have soldiers quartered upon you, and needs must I discover how many you can accommodate."

Mr Guffin could only goggle stupidly.

"And lest your greed be aroused by talk of the high pay given to the soldiers of the New Model," continued the quartermaster, still with that twisted, weary smile, "I needs must tell you that until you, and the citizens generally, have paid the monthly assessment levied upon London for the arrears of the Army, these soldiers will be quartered free."

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and other tools of his trade further adorned Mr Cranton's window. From within came the loud scraping of a fiddle, denoting that a patient was having a tooth drawn; Mr Cranton had a respect for his fellow-cits, and invariably ordered one of his 'prentices to play a musical instrument to drown the heart-rending cries emitted by a customer whose obstinate molar had to be removed.

But Thomas Guffin was not interested in Mr Cranton's shop-window; his gaze was drawn irresistibly upwards to Mrs Cranton's parlour window, in the projecting first storey which leaned over the street. And there she was, that infamous young woman; there she reclined upon her couch as usual, gazing down upon Ludgate Hill, her bold eyes seeking victims. It could not be, reflected Thomas, that in this godly City, in this new Sion, with its Puritan Lord Mayor and its carefully chosen Common Council, its purged churches and its closed playhouses, Esther Cranton could still find victims of her lust.

He stood and stared at her, a fierce and almost personal hatred heating his blood. She reclined at her ease, a large, full-bosomed woman, many years younger than her husband (but old enough to know better), white of skin, dyed of cheek, her generous mouth painted with red ochre, her big grey eyes lazily watching for prey. Ringlets dangled over her ears; a curly fringe shaded her high white forehead; her corsage was cut low, and upon the broad satin expanse of bosom thus displayed there rose and fell, like seaweed on a gentle tide, a necklet of large pearls. Her hands were idle in her lap (the hands of a City housewife were idle at eleven in the morning of a working day!); now and again she would raise her fan to hide a yawn.

Then, as Thomas watched, the heavy white lids raised a little, disclosing the full and frank invitation of those bold grey eyes; the fan made a slight gesture; the carmine lips parted in a seductive smile. It was the smile of the huntress who has sighted her prey, and, turning sharply, Thomas beheld the quarry, a personable young fellow, a journeyman by the looks of him, pause as he was about to enter the shop door

for a haircut and swerve to the right, where, in Salutation Alley, there was an outside stair which gave direct upon Mrs Cranton's parlour.

The hot hate in Thomas's heart exploded into action. He took a couple of strides forward, seized the willing victim of Mrs Cranton's lust by the arm, marshalled him to the shop door, and drove him within. Then, stepping back, he faced the thwarted huntress, triumph and hate boiling in his veins, tinged with a fierce contempt. What was she but a bit of female flesh, corrupt, defiled, meet for destruction? How many of her sex had he seen during the Irish campaign, yelling for mercy, distraught, dishevelled, caught in the midst of their idolatry and their whoring, their bowels displayed, a hideous red and yellow, by one sharp thrust of the swords of Jehovah's warriors? How dared she, the wife of a citizen of the New Sion, flaunt her lusts in the light of day? Why did not her husband beat her as she deserved? Thomas longed to beat her, longed most terribly to chastise that white flesh of hers till it was livid and disfigured with wheals. Why did not the godly citizens of London raid that polluted den of hers and hurl her from her window, even as Jezebel had been hurled down in a fountain of blood?

"I have seen," cried Thomas, the words flung up from the maelstrom of fury within him as the mill-wheel throws up foam, "I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel; there is the whoredom of Ephraim; Israel is defiled. Thy mother was an Hittite, and thy father an Amorite. And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand, and thy younger sister that dwelleth at thy right hand is Sodom and her daughters. But we will demand with Jehu: What peace so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?"

A small crowd had collected; he was unconscious of it. He saw only those humorous grey eyes regarding him without malice, that gently waving fan, that broad white bosom rising and falling, and the red mouth curving into a provocative smile.

From out the full-fed pool of his Old Testament knowledge,

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Thomas bombarded Mrs Cranton as fiercely as Cromwell's heavies had bombarded the frail walls of Drogheda. The names of Jezebel, Athaliah, Aholah, Aholibah, Delilah and other Hebrew ladies of easy virtue were sent whizzing at her like arrows from a bow; passages, complete with chapter and verse, detailing Jehovah's way with harlots, were fired at her with the utmost rapidity; the denunciations of the prophet Ezekiel against the whoredoms of Samaria and Jerusalem thundered at her in a ceaseless broadside.

"Behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee/' proclaimed Thomas at the full pitch of his lungs, "and they shall deal furiously with thee. They shall take away thy nose and thy ears; they shall strip thee of thy fair clothes and take away thy jewels. Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt, and I will cause the righteous men to judge thee after the manner of adulteresses, and they shall stone thee with stones. . . ."

The crowd stood and gaped at him; it was impossible to tell from its expression which side it was on. A soldier or two within it loudly applauded; a merchant of Puritanical appearance said "Amen"; the rest merely listened, as any crowd will listen to any man making a public exhibition of himself. But she, the cause of it all, continued to recline there at her window, smiling her enigmatic smile, gently plying her fan, not dismayed, it seemed, by the loss of one victim, confident in the capture of many others, brazen in her sin.

Thomas tired of it at last (long before she did), and went on his way, shaking the dust of The Black Boy and Star from his godly feet, and still muttering to himself passages from the Lesser Prophets. He was really angry and indignant; the City needed a much more thorough purging than any it had received so far. Its present unredeemed state proved what so many of his comrades were saying, that the Parliament, having failed to bring about the reign of true godliness, was ripe for dissolution. Well, that day was coming; wait, only wait until the Hosts of the Lord had chastised and subdued the false Scots, and then would they have leisure to oust the Parliament, purge the City, and usher in the millennium.

(2)

Thomas noticed a change in his father when he came home that day. The tavern-keeper wore a harassed air quite foreign to him, his temper was short, and his big body seemed more clumsy than ever, as though the mind within it were perpetually preoccupied. The common-room was full of soldiers, bragging over their ale-cans of military triumphs, discussing politics, arguing fine shades of religious differences. The other customers were gathered into groups apart, eyeing the redcoats uneasily, talking in low tones like conspirators. Several of the soldiers sat down to dinner with the tavern-keeper and his family in the kitchen, and it was not until the middle of the afternoon, when business slackened somewhat, that Thomas had an opportunity for a talk with his father. Then, before he could embark upon an account of the glories of the Irish campaign, Mr Guffin began on his own grievances.

"I have five foot-soldiers quartered upon me," said Mr Guffin, lowering his great body upon the settle by the empty hearth in the common-room, "so that James and Simon must lie with me in my chamber, and I must refuse those who bespeak a private dinner, for they occupy my parlour."

"Here is a notable blessing bestowed upon you," his son told him, "to have the Lord's own warriors beneath your roof, and likewise must you feel very secure in their protection."

"I know not what you intend by a blessing," irritably retorted his father. "For a month and more last summer was I obliged to quarter these men free, as likewise were many of my neighbours, because the City held out against the payment of this monthly tax. And since we have paid this monstrous levy, still must I quarter them free, for their pay is in arrears, and in lieu of payment I must accept what they term debentures, which are but written promises to pay me when the men receive their wages, which, so far as I can tell, will not be till I am in my grave. As for protection, I know not why I should need any save that which the City bestows upon all within the liberties, seeing that the war is over and there is peace."

Thomas, very shocked, informed his father that had it not

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been for the protection of the Army, Irish Papists would have come over long ago and cut his throat, and also that Scotland had now put herself under the dominion of the Young Man of Sin, Charles Stuart, who was pledged to swim to his throne on a tide of his subjects' blood. Mr Guffin, however, was not to be impressed.

"These soldiers," he grumbled, "are but caterpillars. What place soe'er they come to will be the worse for it. They have huge appetites, and are very dainty in their diet; scrag-end of mutton will satisfy a hard-working cit, but your red-coated brethren must have capons larded, and bag-puddings, and I know not what besides. I was in hopes that Sarah's cooking would drive them forth, but it is not so, and b'yr lady, I think they will put me on the parish ere they are done with me.

"Sir," said his son sternly, "ye have uttered a profane oath, ay, and one that smacks of Papistry, and I would have you to know that there is a law passed which lays upon those who err in this respect a heavy fine."

Mr Guffin spat contemptuously into the empty hearth.

"Pish, Tom, there may be many such laws passed, but they durst not execute 'em. Ay, there was one passed but this last month, commanding all men of what condition soever, above the age of eighteen, to take what they call the Engagement, of the oath to maintain the Commonwealth as 'tis now established, yet it remains unexecuted, and they tell me that the Lord General Fairfax himself will not subscribe to it. They will tease us with their threats against our privy liberties, as for example this order which hath lately gone forth that no news-sheet may be published without licence from the Parliament; yet will they, for their own security, allow us in practice that fundamental liberty which is the right of every freeborn Englishman."

"You speak like a Malignant," exclaimed his horrified son.

"I speak like a plain cit," retorted Mr Guffin, "one who is willing to accept the Commonwealth and be loyal to the Parliament, but one likewise who will brook no meddling with his private life or with his trade. If the Common Council

of the City and the Court of Aldermen were not altogether creatures of the Council of State, they would demand the withdrawal of the soldiers from the City, for they are as hurtful to trade as a plague of locusts, not to speak of the vile outrages wrought by them upon our churches."

"By which you intend the Church of England," snapped Thomas, "who is but the younger sister of the Church of Rome, and partakes with her in all her superstitions and idolatries. For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels. Beware then lest I——"

Before he could complete the quotation, the door opened and young Simon came in. Seeing his brother he paused, a look of wariness came into his bright eyes, and murmuring that he had come but to seek his chap-book he would have made a hurried retreat had not Thomas stopped him.

"What chap-book is this ye seek?" demanded Thomas. "Is it this?" And he stretched out a hand to the table, whereon lay a little book beloved of children since its publication a century before, and entitled *The Merry History of the Miller of Abingdon*.

"That is the one," said Simon, making to snatch it.

But Thomas held it out of reach.

"Know you who wrote this chap-book, Simon?"

"Yes, I do," said Simon. "'Twas Master Andrew Boorde, a physician to King Henry the Eighth. They called him Merry Andrew, and that is why we have the merry-andrews at our fairs."

"He was," said Thomas sternly, "a Papist, and lived like a monk, wearing a hair-shirt and practising superstitions too abominable to mention."

"He wrote a merry tale," sulkily retorted the boy. "Will it please you to give me my chap-book, brother?"

For answer, Thomas very deliberately tore the little chap-book into pieces and flung them upon the hearth.

"Nay, Thomas," protested Mr Guffin, "that was ill done."

"It is the way of the Elect with ungodly trash," his son told him firmly. "Nay, weep not, Simon, but come hither

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to me, and I will tell thee that which shall instruct thy mind and edify thy soul and rejoice thy heart. For I will recount unto thee the glories of the late campaign in Ireland, the same which have made the name of the Commonwealth to be honoured wheresoever are men of upright heart, which have set Rome a-trembling upon her Seven Hills, and which have gone up as a sweet savour into the nostrils of the Lord of Hosts."

But Simon had edged closer to his father and now stood sheltered within one of Mr Guffin's brawny arms. Thus the pair of them remained while Thomas, straddling in front of the hearth, embarked upon his story.

Rumours of the doings in Ireland had come filtering into London during the previous autumn, but neither Mr Guffin nor Simon had heard before, from the lips of an actual participant, the details of that campaign. Thomas's eyes flashed as he told of it, his voice thrilled, his colour deepened; he relived, it was plain, every action, and so hot was his enthusiasm that he made his audience see what he had seen, hear what he had heard. They were sights and sounds which made the simple tavern-keeper and his young son, born though they were in a rough and brutal age, sorry afterwards to have listened to the story of them.

Cromwell had embarked for Ireland in August, had paused at Dublin to rest and reorganise his troops, and to issue a declaration ordering that no violence be offered to the life or property of civilians. Then he had marched against Drogheda. He had with him an army of ten thousand men; he had also his famous "heavies," the great siege-cannon which had enabled him to batter down one Royalist stronghold after another during the Civil War. Drogheda, commanded by the Duke of Ormond, was ill-provisioned, and its ammunition supplies low, but it had rejected Cromwell's summons. Upon the evening of 10th September his cannon had thundered an opening chorus, making a breach in the south and eastern walls; next day he had taken the town by storm, after a gallant resistance by the defenders; his men, obeying his previous instructions, were offering quarter to all who would

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lay down their arms, when Cromwell, falling into one of his famous rages, had shouted that this whole papistical Royalist brood must be put to the sword.

"The Governor, Sir Arthur Aston, with his principal officers and three hundred of his men, were gotten upon the Mount," continued Thomas, "and there we did surround them, and did disarm them, and every one we then did slaughter, Aston's head being battered in with his own wooden leg. The women and the children had taken refuge in one of the churches, thinking to find sanctuary in that heathen temple, and them we did burn alive, breaking up the choir-stalls and the rood-beam and the other idolatrous furniture to make a fire which did consume them, they and their house of Baal together. Every priest in the town we knocked upon the head, and those wicked townsfolk which had secreted themselves in the towers upon the walls, thinking to escape our just vengeance, we did leave till hunger drove them forth, when we slaughtered them, each and every one, even as Joshua did slay the men of Hazor, utterly destroying them. And we bound live children across our bodies in the manner of shields, and thus did we make search of the houses and the churches, protected from the malice of our enemies by these living shields, For we remembered the word of the Lord to Moses concerning the Girgashites and the Perrizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and other strange nations: When the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them. Deuteronomy vii, 2. There were but thirty left alive in this new Babylon after we had wreaked our vengeance upon it, and these we did ship to the Barbados to be sold as slaves."

Having written to the Council of State in London, dutifully giving God the praise for this "great mercy," Cromwell had turned against Wexford, had stormed it, and had repeated there the massacre of Drogheda.

"Our great General," continued Thomas, "most cunningly did gain the Castle, even whilst he feigned to be negotiating with the commander of the garrison, through the treachery

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of the Governor. There were then two thousand soldiers and townsfolk slaughtered like beasts at the shambles, the like number of women and children, and priests innumerable. It would have rejoiced your heart, sir, to have seen those priests of Baal approaching us with crucifixes in their hands, thinking in their wicked hearts that such graven images could shield them from the vengeance of Jehovah. And afterwards, our brave commander did give us the right of pillage for a week, for, said he, seeing the hand of God so heavy upon this idolatrous town, I think it meet that those who did the work of the Lord upon it should reap their reward; even as it is written: And their camels shall be a booty, and the multitude of their cattle a spoil. Jeremiah xlix,

So the grisly tale continued, incongruous in the homely London tavern, of town after town surrendering on promise of quarter, only to have their garrisons and civilian inhabitants straightway put to the sword, of crops fired, villages devastated, churches battered down, till Ireland smoked to Heaven and the dead and dying littered the roads. Recalled by the threat of a Scottish invasion, Cromwell had left Ireton, his son-in-law, to complete the conquest, and only to-day tidings had reached London that Coote had just defeated a Royalist force at Scarriffhollis, butchering all the survivors.

"And now may we say with the prophet," concluded Thomas, his face a-shine with the sweat of his excitement, "Declare ye among the nations and publish and set up a standard; publish and conceal not; say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. Jeremiah 1, 2. Art thou better than populous No, oh Ireland, that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was from the sea? Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains. Nahum iii, 8, 10."

Mr Guffin stirred uneasily in his chair.

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"Nay, Tom," said he, "but it sticks in my mind that 'tis a good bosom wherein mercy dwells."

"Mercy!" roared Thomas, affronted. "Shall the Lord of Hosts be merciful to the wicked? Nay, He will use the unrighteous and the heathen to afflict His Chosen People when they rebel against Him, but the end of all the ungodly shall be the fate of Gog and Magog, their flesh shall provide a feast for the fowls of the air, and their blood shall be lapped by the beasts of the field."

"What, are they for destroying Gog and Magog in Guildhall?" Simon asked his father in some distress; for he had an affection for the two wickerwork and pasteboard giants which were carried yearly in the Lord Mayor's Show.

Mr Guffin absently patted the lad's shoulder.

"A rope on't," he muttered unhappily, "I know not what they will be at."

(3)

Mr Guffin was sincerely troubled by this new bloodthirsty spirit in his eldest son, and was at a loss to understand it. It seemed to him to be completely alien to the young man's nature; five years previously, when Thomas had been impressed into the New Model, he had seemed a very ordinary sort of youth, somewhat sensual by nature, taking his adolescent fun where he could find it, giggling over bawdy tales, learning to drink and to swear and to wench with his fellow-'prentices, as rough and callous as most boys of his age, but certainly not more so. He had gone to church with his parents because, being of his age and class, it did not occur to him to disobey them in such matters, but he had never in those days displayed the least trace of religious zeal.

Thus did Mr Guffin puzzle his poor old head about Thomas, lacking the simple explanation. He knew nothing of Thomas's outward and inward experiences during the last five years.

The first few months of his life in the New Model had been unmitigated hell to Thomas Guffin. There was the endless drilling; there were the long marches laden with equipment;

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there were dull lectures on how to use the pike, now to resist a charge of horse, how to distinguish the different notes of command played by drum and fife, and all the rest of it. There was the abiding fear of death in one who knew not in the slightest what the war was all about; there were the terrible tales of Rupert's shock-charges, hitherto irresistible, a cloud of horse sweeping all before it. But worse, far worse than any of these trials, was the discipline. The New Model, on its formation in 1645, had been composed of the remnants of Waller's, Essex's, and Manchester's beaten and dispirited armies, and a huge percentage of pressed men, many of them, like Thomas, mere boys. To mould this unpromising material into the magnificent fighting force it was destined to become, its creators, and particularly Cromwell, had imposed upon it a discipline more harsh, more rigid, than ever had been known in any army before.

Thus Thomas had discovered that none of the ordinary outlets of the average young man were open to him without risk of severe punishment. Every week, on pay-day, the captain of his company read to him and his assembled comrades the Articles of War. Every month there met the regimental court martial, or court of war as it was called, when the provost-master of the regiment presented offenders to be judged for a various assortment of petty crimes. You talked on the march and you rode the wooden horse for it (a horrible punishment, for you had muskets tied to your legs to weight them, and the "horse" had a back consisting of two planks nailed together to form a sharp edge). For poaching a rabbit you were liable to suffer the picket, which consisted of having your right hand drawn up as far as it would reach and fastened to a hook in a tall post, and your bare heel resting on the blunt point of a stake driven into the ground below. To sing a bawdy song was to forfeit a week's pay; to fornicate was to risk being hung up by your armpits and to receive a lash from every man in your regiment as it passed by; to commit adultery was equivalent to committing suicide, for the penalty was death. Even to get drunk was to be degraded to being a pioneer. For hearing words of sedition or mutiny and not

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reporting them to your officer, you were condemned to "run the gatloup"; for straggling from the colours you suffered the slightly less severe penalty of sixty lashes on the bare back; for retaliating against a non-commissioned officer who had exercised his right to strike you, you were hanged out of hand.

Collective crimes were even worse, for then the offending regiment would be made to cast lots for their lives, so that often the innocent suffered and the guilty escaped. And there was very little chance of sinning undetected. The New Model held out high rewards to those ready to inform against erring comrades, and the corporal of Thomas's company had become a sergeant overnight only for reporting the blasphemous speech of a brother-soldier and getting him the punishment of tongue-boring with a red-hot iron.

Denied the normal relaxations of youth, and subjected upon the one hand to the constant terror of death and on the other to the boredom of the camp, Thomas Guffin had continued to grow ever the more melancholy; until there happened two things. His side began to achieve spectacular and successive victories; and Thomas himself made the discovery that he, and a small percentage of the remaining population of the world, were the Elect, and that everyone else was of the Damned.

He could scarcely avoid discovering this interesting fact, for it formed the basis of every sermon he heard (and he heard plenty); moreover it was the only comfort available to a body of men who knew nothing of politics, and who, though they were told they were fighting for liberty against a tyrant, found on their own side little enough of the first and plenty of the second. Thomas Guffin, and John Brown, and William Smith, and all the other ignorant, simple young men in red coats were the Israelites, the Chosen of the Lord, and everyone opposed to them was the enemy of Jehovah; it was beautifully simple. Normal vices were denied them; but the vice of spiritual pride could be indulged with complete impunity and with the approbation of their superiors. Thus did Thomas find relief in becoming a reactionary, in setting the clock back two thousand years; and henceforth the pre-Christian religion

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of the Old Testament became his hobby, his outlet, and his obsession.

' He had begun to read his Bible, not any longer from compulsion but from pleasure; or rather he read the Old Testament with occasional excursions into the Book of Revelation. The monotonous tale of wholesale slaughter, of plagues, threats, punishments, treachery, and divine vindictiveness contained in that work became to Thomas a source of never-ending fascination; it became also his spiritual guide. He never tired of reading the long catalogue of wars and massacres contained in Chronicles and Kings; he saw himself and his red brethren as the mighty men of valour, the men of war fit for the battle, who could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and whose feet were swift as roes upon the mountains.

The cruelties and injustices committed by the New Model were justified by the fact that its soldiers were the warriors of Jehovah, a jealous, revengeful, and touchy deity, whose wrath was not to be appeased save by blood. To fine and imprison a man for cutting firewood on the Sabbath was agreeable to the Lord of Hosts; had not Jehovah smitten Uaza to death merely for putting forth a hand to hold the Ark when the oxen stumbled? Did not the fifteenth chapter of Numbers record the stoning of a man for the crime of gathering sticks upon the Lord's own day? As for brutality towards the defeated, was it not recorded in the First Book of Chronicles that David tortured the Children of Ammon, cutting them with saws and harrows of iron? When the deity you worshipped was the same who, for a single back-sliding, had offered David the choice of three years' famine, three months' destruction by the swords of enemies, or three days' pestilence, you felt perfectly justified in offering the Papist Irish the choice of death, transportation, or the hell of Connaught.

Such, then, was the real explanation of Thomas's new blood-thirstiness which so distressed and puzzled his father. As for Thomas himself, he thoroughly enjoyed his few days' leave of absence from his regiment; for, besides the satisfaction of having dealt with the Lord's enemies in the fashion which

invariably brought reward, he found in the company of his fellow-redcoats quartered upon Mr Guffin that opportunity for religious controversy so dear to the hearts of all the Elect.

He discovered to his joy that one of the five soldiers billeted at The Three Crowns was a Seeker, another a Presbyterian, the third a Leveller, and the fourth and fifth Anabaptists like himself. He was, therefore, in a majority, and whenever his comrades were off duty during his few days' leave he and his two fellow-Anabaptists would fall upon the other three with pungent text and pithy quotation, the others now countering, now disagreeing among themselves, so that The Three Crowns tavern was full of wordy war. Thomas shared the upper parlour with three of the billetees, and half the night, disregarding poor Mr Guffin's indignant knockings on the wall, they would dispute upon the burning questions of Infant Baptism, Original Sin, Universal Grace, and other important but provocative doctrines, arriving nowhere, but thoroughly enjoying themselves. While other young men of their age, of the company of the Damned, predestined from their mothers' wombs to Eternal Fire, banged the ale-can, exchanged bawdy stories, or wrestled pleasantly with a wench in an alley, the red-coated Saints in Mr Guffin's upper parlour met text with text, drained the Lesser Prophets of quotation, brought forward the most obscure and unpronounceable biblical characters as witnesses, and vied-with one another in an intimate knowledge of the names of the sons of Benjamin or the cities of the Levites.

The Anabaptists, Thomas's allies, were brothers; their names were Christ-came-into-the-world-to-save Barebone, and If-Christ-had-not-died-thou-hadst-been-damned Barebone. (Thomas, discovering that his irreverent young brother Simon had nicknamed them Saved Barebone and Damned Barebone respectively, chastised that erring child as he deserved.) They had an elder brother, Praise-God Barebone, a wealthy leather-seller of Fleet Street, who practised a little moneylending on the side, was a warden of his Livery Company, and preached a five-hour sermon every Sunday to a select company of Saints gathered in his house for the purpose. His two brothers, and Thomas, believed that baptism should be deferred until the

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age of thirty, when total immersion must be practised. They rejected the Trinity, claimed the right to excommunicate all who would not accept their doctrines, accepted Christ's Divinity, but denied His Humanity, maintaining that He brought His body down from Heaven and passed through His Mother (to use their own phrase) "like water through a pipe."

Their Levelling comrade, on the other hand, believed that civic worth was all and religion very little; social reformation was all-important, he asserted, and religious differences could safely be ignored when all landlords and masters had been abolished, the owning of property prohibited, all titles taken away, and men redeemed themselves from their present servility by refusing to take off their hats to anyone, or to obey any king, judge, magistrate, master, or other tyrant.

With the Presbyterian and his devotion to a highly organised system of church government, his church courts, his elders, his intricate and complicated discipline, and his insistence that the Presbyterian was the church founded by Christ Himself, Thomas had little patience. The Seeker was far more interesting. This worthy man based his whole case upon his rejection of the doctrine of Original Sin, maintaining that every soul born into the world had absolute choice of good or evil. This, of course, struck at the orthodox Puritan's favourite dogma, namely, that a small portion of mankind was preordained to Eternal Bliss, and the great mass of it to Eternal Damnation. The Seeker further maintained that he and his brethren were too spiritual to need any outward forms whatsoever; each soul, he said, must work out its own relations with the Almighty without regard to anyone else's system; there must be no creed, no dogma, no sacraments, no ritual, no ministers, no church—at least, no visible church. The minute sect of which he was a member was for ever waiting and seeking the revelation of God as to the nature of the True Church which He had told them in a vision He would set up in His own way and in His own time by a "new apostolic anointing." The mention of visions cast the fat into the fire, for there was not a man among the lot of them but had experienced a personal revelation from the Lord; their voices rose in unison

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as each described his direct communication with Jehovah, who, it seemed, was much given to contradicting Himself.

Thus did Thomas while away a pleasant leave, sucking in spiritual refreshment ere starting forth to inflict upon Presbyterian Scotland the fate of Papist Ireland. Only two unpleasantnesses marred his holiday; Simon was the cause of the first, and Mrs Cranton of the second.

Having bereft young Simon of his chap-books (for Thomas was nothing if not thorough in the Lord's work, and had destroyed not only witty Andrew Boorde, but the two companions which for so long had kept him company upon Simon's shelf, *Merry Tales of the Wise Men of Gotham*, and *Mother Bunctis Merriment*), Corporal Guffin sought to compensate the child by presenting him with a copy of the Holy Scriptures, which copy he purchased specially at the sign of The Cannon in St Paul's Churchyard. This he pressed upon a bored Simon, entreating him to read it to the exclusion of all other works, adding that he would be better employed in such reading than in playing at drop-cap, barley-bridge, tray-trap and other idle games in his leisure hours.

Now whether Simon was afraid of Thomas and desired to please him, or whether he hated him and wished to plague him, it was impossible to say, for Simon was a difficult child to understand. He had a dry wit of his own, which issued with a great air of innocence, so that one never could be sure whether he were being impertinent or merely simple. But from that day to the end of Thomas's leave Simon applied himself to a study of the Old Testament with great earnestness, and with results that shocked his father and irritated his eldest brother beyond measure. The first occasion when these results were exhibited was when Thomas asked Simon, while the family was seated at dinner in the kitchen, what passage of the Scriptures he had read last evening.

"Why, sir," replied Simon promptly, fixing his large bright eyes upon his brother, "I read the story of Susanna and the Elders, and if you please I will now rehearse it to you."

"Not before your sisters, sirrah," hastily interposed the shocked Mr Guffin.

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"But there is that in it which I do not understand," protested Simon, "and I would crave of brother Thomas an interpretation."

"You heard what your father said, Sim," said Little Julia, coming to the rescue as usual (blessed Little Julia, tactful Little Julia); and the situation was saved.

But only for the moment. It seemed that Simon's delvings into Holy Writ had been confined exclusively to the more improper passages, and during the ensuing days his father's ears were outraged, those of his eldest brother exasperated, by the sound of the shrill voice retailing the unsavoury story of Lot and his two daughters, of David's extraordinary marriage settlement, of Rachel's neat but questionable method of fooling her father in the matter of the images, of the lamentable lapse from sobriety on the part of Noah, and other tales of like character. It was in vain for his brother to bid him read for edification only, to seek solely for spiritual guidance, and to eschew the indulging of his own perverted mind.

"I seek the Lord before I read," announced this horrid little boy, "and His Spirit doth put into my heart what I ought to read."

The second unpleasantness of Thomas's leave occurred every time he saw Mrs Cranton. It was torment to him to see that generous bosom, that richly smiling mouth, those inviting grey eyes looking down upon him as he walked beneath the sign of The Black Boy and Star. She was Solomon's "woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart." She lay in wait, not indeed at street corners, but, worse still, in her husband's own parlour. Solomon's harlot was crafty; Mrs Cranton was bold; Solomon's harlot assured her victim that her goodman had gone upon a journey; Mrs Cranton lured her husband's customers to their ruin beneath the very nose of her complacent and easy-going old spouse. Her way is the way of hell, Thomas would assure himself, going down into the chambers of death. Yet he could not shut his eyes to the brutal fact that the citizens of London seemed to like the way of hell, and were only too ready to go up into the chambers of death so long as Esther Cranton occupied them.

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On the morning of his return to his regiment, Thomas marched under the sign of The Black Boy and Star, resplendent in his uniform, his combe-cap shining on his cropped head, two tassels a-swing upon his pike-head to show that he was now a corporal, his step that of a conqueror going forth to gain new laurels. He took one last look up at that parlour window, hoping that, seeing him there in all his glory, the warrior of Jehovah, the instrument of divine vengeance, she would hang her head, would appear abashed, even would move away out of sight of such formidable holiness.

But Mrs Cranton did none of these things. Instead, she leaned slightly forward through the open window; one grey eye closed in a deliberate wink; one plump white hand fluttered a kerchief; and the last sound he heard as he passed under the Lud Gate that day was a merry, provocative, but quite unmalicious laugh.

CHAPTER II

(1)

ON the afternoon of the tenth of December, 1651, James Guffin presented himself at the lodging of Sir Arthur Heselrig in Whitehall Palace, and was instantly admitted to that gentleman's presence.

It was two years now since the scrivener's 'prentice had gained the favour of Sir Arthur Heselrig and entered his employment, and during that time the lad's fortunes had risen steadily. Last year, with its threat of a Scottish invasion, Sir Arthur had gone off to the North to take up his duties as Governor of Newcastle, and James, the humble clerk, had been left behind in London to deal with innumerable matters connected with his patron's vast estates in Leicestershire, being in daily correspondence with his master's steward. But no longer did he go home at night to his father's tavern; he was become a resident member of Sir Arthur's household, and he slept in an attic bedchamber in the fine house in Covent

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Garden, once the property of the Royalist Sir John Bussingford, now part of Heselrig's reward for being a member of the victorious party.

One day during Heselrig's absence there had come down from the North one of his under-secretaries to fetch some papers from Covent Garden. In need of some company, the secretary had invited James to dine with him at a tavern, and, imbibing rather too freely, had grown indiscreet in his talk. He had begun to talk of his master, saying that, though Heselrig combined the duties of a leading Parliamentary with those of a military commander, he seemed to find time to build up as great a private estate in the North as that which he had partly inherited, partly purchased, in the South. He had gone on to relate with a blatant sneer the details of Sir Arthur's activities in this matter. He was set on purchasing, it seemed, at a very cheap rate, the lands of the See of Durham, put up for sale by an embarrassed Parliament which was at its wits' end for money, had already bought the manor of the Bishop of Auckland for a mere six thousand pounds, that of Wolsingham for a trifle more, and that of Easingwood for considerably less. Since all such manors had fat rents attached to them, besides other emoluments, Sir Arthur, said the secretary, was soon like to become the richest man in England, and all for the price of bawling "Liberty 1" and crying up the privileges of Parliament.

At this point James had snatched up a full glass of Madeira and had flung it into the secretary's face.

The immediate result of this distressing incident had been a letter from Sir Arthur addressed to James, gravely and gently rebuking him for making a public exhibition of himself in a tavern, for assaulting a superior, and for bringing scandal upon his master's name. James wrote in answer a long and careful letter of explanation and apology, and there, it seemed, the matter ended. But when, in September, after the crushing defeat of young King Charles and his Scottish army at Worcester, Sir Arthur had paid a flying visit to London before returning to the North, he had sent for James to his room, had complimented him most kindly upon the way in which he

bad fulfilled his humble duties, and had told him that henceforth he was to serve as one of Sir Arthur's secretaries and was to send him weekly, by a special messenger, a confidential report of all public affairs.

"You are but a lad," Sir Arthur had said, smiling gently upon the delighted James, "yet methinks you are a youth of parts and promise, of no little learning, and of a steady affection to your master's interests. If you will but learn to combine these qualities with discretion, James, I think that you will serve me well."

James's happiness knew no bounds. To be trusted and praised by such a gentleman, an original Member of the famous Long Parliament, the foremost champion of Parliamentary privilege, filled his cup to overflowing. To him Sir Arthur was a pattern of all the virtues he most admired. He was learned, brave, and apparently devoted to the principle of a commonwealth; and that he managed to combine with this lofty devotion a very good business head appealed strongly to the tradesman in young James. Heselrig's wealth, fine clothes, and luxurious mansion, at first rather daunting to the City-bred youth, had quickly become the fitting accoutrements of this champion of the people's rights. James had never had the slightest sympathy with the Levellers; as in religion he was satisfied with the elaborate organisation of the Presbytery, so in secular matters was he satisfied that a small group of men like Sir Arthur Heselrig should take upon them the governance of the nation and with it all that appertained to that governance. They derived, he was convinced, their authority from the people; but once given that authority they stood above the people, and must maintain a certain state. As for James himself, he found that he fitted easily, after the first strangeness had worn off, into the atmosphere of luxurious gentility in which he now found himself. He thanked his God devoutly a dozen times a day that he had wrung from his reluctant father a good education, and thus knew how to talk with the gentry and behave himself properly in the company of the great.

With the defeat of the Scots at Worcester, all outside danger

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to the Commonwealth seemed over. The young King, it is true, most unfortunately had escaped, and, despite the reward of one thousand pounds offered for his capture, continued to elude it. But he would never get him another army, even if he managed to escape to France, and all the other leaders of the rising had been taken, besides a host of lesser prisoners. Parliament, which had suffered a very bad fright, was not disposed to be merciful. The Earl of Derby was beheaded at Bolton-le-Moors, and nine of his principal officers, condemned by the same court martial, were either hanged or shot at Shrewsbury and Chester. Massey, Middleton, Cleveland, Hamilton, and Lauderdale were all sent to the Tower to await their trial by one of these new "High Courts of Justice." Gibbets were erected in every street in Worcester, and the chief citizens summarily hanged upon them. An order went forth to dispose of all Scottish prisoners under the degree of a field-officer by selling them as slaves; one thousand were shipped to New England, one thousand five hundred sold to merchants trading with Guinea, one thousand given to the adventurers who were draining the Fens. An attempt to sell the remainder for foreign military service failed, because no buyers appeared, and they were sent prisoner to the London gaols, to the great embarrassment of that city. Of the lesser English prisoners, twenty were shot as an example, and the rest shipped to Ireland, where they were to serve the Commonwealth in its task of parcelling out that stricken country among its own unpaid officers.

On 12th September, Cromwell had arrived back in London, when an Act was immediately rushed through Parliament to settle upon him lands worth £4000 a year. (After his Irish campaign he had been given a grant of lands sufficient to bring him in £2500, besides the gifts of Spring Gardens, St James's Park, and the Cockpit at Whitehall for a residence.)

In October, Sir Arthur Heselrig likewise had returned to London, and, having sheathed the sword and put off the buff coat, once more busied himself with his duties as a leading Parliamentarian and a member of the Council of State. James Guffin had seen little of his master during these busy months;

but last evening a message had informed Him that he was to present himself at Sir Arthur's lodging in Whitehall at precisely two o'clock to-day.

(2)

Sir Arthur Heselrig occupied a lodging formerly belonging to King Charles's Master of the Horse; it stood upon the north side of the Privy Garden, looking eastward upon the river, southward to the towers and steep-pitched roofs of Westminster, and westward across the rambling old palace to the trees of the Park. James was admitted by a personage in gorgeous livery, with the Heselrig crest upon his sleeve, and was conducted through an anteroom full of waiting petitioners, into the private sanctum of his master. There he found the great man all alone, very finely and fashionably dressed as usual, standing by the window which overlooked the river, and gazing down upon its traffic. A moment elapsed ere Sir Arthur turned to acknowledge his presence, and during that moment James eyed the room, for he had never been here before.

It was a very splendid room. Its ceiling was all a-sprawl with painted gods and goddesses reposing upon clouds; its walls were of linenfold panelling, with a picture or two upon them, each shrouded by a curtain as the custom was. There was a rosewood table, beautifully inlaid, a leather carpet on the floor, upholstered chairs, and window-hangings of a rich green damask. On the elaborately carved secretaire stood a solid silver pounce-box and a jar of the best goose-quills; pine logs burned upon the hearth with its heraldic fire-back, giving forth a sweet odour; and upon a shelf stood a long row of books, bound in calf, with coloured markers. James thrilled to all this luxury. There was an air about it he had never sensed in any room before, no, not even in his master's fine house in Covent Garden, certainly not in the crudely rich houses of the great City merchants into which he had sometimes penetrated in the days of his apprenticeship. There was refinement here, perfect taste, and a kind of instinctive harmony.

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Indeed, he thought, here is the proper setting for this great gentleman whom the people have chosen for the high honour of being their representative, and he felt a spasm of irritation as he thought of John Lilburne and his silly ideas.

"James," said Heselrig suddenly, without turning, and so abruptly that the young man started, "James, I have advanced your fortunes because I believe you to be heartily pledged to the ideal of a commonwealth, and really dedicated to the Good Old Cause for which so much blood hath been shed."

"Your honour is too good," stammered James, flushing. "In truth, sir, I——"

"Be bold, James," interrupted his master, swinging round in that fiery way of his and wagging an emphatic finger. "Ever be bold and fear no man. What cause have you to fear if you be true in your devotion to the ancient mother of liberty?" (He referred to the Long Parliament, which was now exactly eleven years old, and certainly ancient for a parliament.) "You know me, what I am," continued Sir Arthur, turning to the window again and beginning to play with a tassel of the curtain. "I have stood for liberty from the beginning, and have spent in that sacred cause my blood, my time, and my eloquence. God forbid I must needs sacrifice friendship likewise, yet it may be so. Liberty is a stern mistress, and demands from her lovers all that they hold dear. It is well; I am content; yet must I assure myself that I have servants who are as faithful to that mistress as is their master."

"Sir," said James, his flush deepening, "I cannot think that I have given your honour cause to doubt my fidelity to the Commonwealth or to your honour's service. If I have erred, sir, or——"

"Nay, James, nay," again interrupted his patron, swinging round with an endearing and affectionate smile; "I spoke foolishly. I would as soon doubt mine own fidelity, lad, as yours. Gramercy, James, as you say in the City; you have uplifted my heart, and I am sure that I may depend upon you in the struggle which soon must come."

James's natural pleasure called forth by his master's compliments and familiarity was greatly lessened by the incompre-

hension, not to say alarm, which pricked him on hearing the last few sentences. For James was a genuine idealist; he could not help being flattered by his rapid rise in fortune and by the interest shown in him by so prominent a politician as Sir Arthur Heselrig; but he really did care supremely for liberty and just government as he understood them, and the hint that these were in danger put disquietude in the forefront of his mind.

"I cannot tell, sir," said he earnestly, "what you intend by these words. For the chief enemies of the Commonwealth are now most happily destroyed; the tyranny of the King and the House of Lords is abolished; Papist Ireland is altogether crushed; our misguided brethren of Scotland are lately taught a lesson which cannot but be lasting. Under your favour, therefore, I cannot conceive what manner of foe he is whom now we must fight; unless you mean John Lilburne."

Heselrig laughed gently.

"Nay, James, I do not mean John Lilburne, for since a jury of your London citizens acquitted him at his trial, in '49, he hath continued very quiet and peaceable, albeit methinks he will not long resist the itch to be at his agitating again. What was it Henry Marten said of him? 'If the world was emptied of all but John Lilburne, Lilburne would quarrel with John, and John with Lilburne.' Nay, I would to God this foolish Leveller were the only enemy we had to fear."

He sighed heavily, walked to the secretaire, and bent down, as though studying some papers on it. He was a big man, loose-jointed; he was jerky in speech and action, with the fiery, vigorous, but too impulsive manner suited to his mind and body. He had real courage, both in the field and in the council-chamber; but he was apt to turn morose if defeated, and spiteful if crossed. He was no orator, but he had such a belief in his own opinions, and so great a will to impose them upon others, that he was one of the most frequent speakers in the House. His black eyes were small and very bright; his beard jutted; his hands made profuse gestures. There was something simple and direct about him that made

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men either hate or love him; and perhaps it is a sad commentary upon human nature that the first were in the vast majority.

"There is one enemy who is open," said Heselrig, still apparently scanning the papers, "and there is one may prove an enemy if my fears at this time have bottom. For the first, you know it well; it is our creature, our child, created and begotten by us for the defence of the people's liberties, but now alas! turned against the parent which gave it birth. In a word, it is the Army, which for some while hath given evidence that it mistakes success in war for the right to dictate to the nation in peace, and which would have the civil magistrate subservient to the power of the sword."

"I understand you, sir," said James, regarding his master with acute attention.

"I wonder, do you?" returned Heselrig, turning upon him a small, half-bitter smile. "I wonder do you see what I see, not what the common herd sees—the insolence of the soldiers, the Levelling principles with which so many among them are infected, their itch for payment of arrears—but the danger from the Army as an integral body, as a potential power?"

"I think I do see this, sir," replied James eagerly, "for I must make known to your honour that I have a brother, a corporal in Hewson's Foot, and I have listened to his talk. Let us pay the arrears of the Army ten times over, still are we to have no peace from them, for, say they, the whole right of kingly government is devolved upon the Army because it defeated the King. Likewise say they that the foundation of all government is the sword; which, sir," concluded James emphatically, "is as stinking a heresy as ever I heard."

Heselrig was pacing the room now, one hand twisting his short beard, his glance downcast, his steps quick and restless, betraying a strange agitation. After a moment he began to speak, more to himself than to James:

"Yet if full payment of arrears be made, we shall rob the Army of excuse to maintain itself longer. There are divers ways of raising this huge sum, which is to the tune of some thirty thousand pounds, as the sale of yet more of the late King's lands and those of his family, the estates of prelates of

the Church of England, and new fines laid upon the Royalists. There is likewise talk of demolishing the cathedrals of England and selling the stone thereof, beginning with Paul's, but methinks the common people will not stomach it. Howsoever, disbandment we must have, and quickly too, that the Commonwealth be freed of unpopular taxes and the Parliament secured from a parcel of soldiers who have done the work for which they were called from their counters and should now go home again."

He paused, but James said nothing. He had heard all this before, and he could not quite understand why his patron should seem so disquieted by a task which everyone knew to be necessary, and which the Parliament of which he was so prominent a Member was even now considering. Heselrig seemed to read his thoughts, for, standing with his hands upon a chair-back, and fixing upon his protege a meaning glance, he said:

"You will recollect, James, that upon the twenty-fifth of September last there was a bill brought in, General Cromwell acting as one of the tellers for the majority, for fixing a time for the dissolution of this present Parliament. And upon the fourteenth of November, by a majority of two, it was decided to vote upon the question, Whether it was a convenient time to name a date for this dissolution; and again did General Cromwell act as a teller for the majority."

"I recollect it all, sir," replied James, "and I recollect likewise that four days later the date was named the third of November, 1654. That is to say, the present Parliament hath three years more of life, and within that time I doubt not it will have compassed this task of providing arrears and disbanding the Army. Ay, and when the three years are past, we need look for no troublesome nor hurtful change, for hath not Parliament insisted that all the present Members shall retain their seats in a new one, and that for the rest, they who are admitted shall be nominated by those who now sit therein?"

Sir Arthur looked at him a moment longer; then, turning away, he said, with apparent irrelevance:

"This day shall you and I go to the Speaker's house, for

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there is called a conference of the chief men in Parliament and the principal officers of the Army. And there shall we listen to much talk, which talk, James, you shall write down, ay, every word of it, in your excellent shorthand, but particularly must you note the words of him who hath called this conference, the Lord General of the Army, my good friend Master Cromwell."

"You said, sir," said James slowly, as he followed his master to the door, "that there yet remain two enemies of the Commonwealth. One is the Army; for the other, you did not give it a name. Under your favour, sir, I cannot hit upon what you did intend by this second and secret enemy."

Sir Arthur paused with his hand on the door-latch, but he did not turn. He said solemnly, and with a deep sigh:

"'Tis possible, James, that even Brutus be constrained to become the enemy of Caesar." And then, without giving time for comments, he added briskly: "Come, let us go."

(3)

Previous to this December afternoon in '51, James had never had the opportunity of studying the Lord General Cromwell at close quarters or on an informal occasion (for so this conference at the Speaker's house was to be). He welcomed the chance which now came his way, for he was naturally interested in the man who had succeeded Fairfax in the chief command of the Army last year, who was the idol of the common soldiers, the sworn enemy of the Levellers, the terror of the Royalists, and the close friend of Sir Arthur Heselrig and most of the leading Parliamentarians.

Cromwell stood by the fire, as Heselrig and his secretary entered Speaker Lenthall's dining-chamber, with Whitelocke the lawyer, and two of the General's most trusted officers, Lambert, his young Major-General, who, since the death of Ireton last month, had been looked upon as the obvious successor in the post of Lord Deputy of Ireland, and was reported to have laid out some five thousand pounds in equipping himself for the office; and Harrison, son of a Staffordshire

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butcher, and lately supreme military commander in England during Cromwell's absence in the North. The Lord General greeted Heselrig affectionately, but broke off to glare at James and to demand who he was. On this being explained to him, he nodded curtly to the young man, and muttered something about this being an informal gathering where secretaries were out of place.

"Yet I perceive you have your own yonder, Noll," said Heselrig with a dry smile, and nodding towards a person who sat at a table in the background, with quills, paper, and an ink-horn before him.

Cromwell gave his friend a sharp look, but made no comment. He turned back to his interrupted conversation with Whitelocke and Harrison, while waiting for his other colleagues to arrive; and James, taking up his position at the table, and arranging his papers, began to subject him to a close scrutiny.

Young James was not lacking in a certain shrewdness, and he observed in Oliver Cromwell a paradox which very much surprised him. For on the one hand Cromwell was obviously the great soldier, accustomed to giving orders and having them obeyed without question, rough and abrupt in speech, rasping of voice, blunt in manner, the master of circumstances and of men. But on the other hand James perceived something which he could only describe as nervousness, though it was entirely divorced from timidity. The man seemed continually at tension, unreposeful; he was never for an instant still as he talked, though he used few gestures; he shifted his feet, scratched his head, played with his collar-bands; he seemed, in fact, perpetually on edge. Observing this paradox, James was renjnded of certain stories he had heard about Cromwell, stories wliich at the time had seemed to be entirely out of keeping with this stern disciplinarian. In the midst of the most serious conference, Cromwell had been known to call for pipes and wine, and would turn the solemn debate into a carouse. He had wept loudly when viewing the doomed King's reunion with his younger children, and men had called him a hypocrite for it; he was always liable to burst into tears in public, or alternatively into the wildest and most unseemly

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horse-play, as when he had daubed Henry Marten's face with ink at the signing of the King's death-warrant.

When at last the late-comers were all arrived, and the conference began, James, busy taking notes, had time to observe one other trait in Oliver Cromwell: his simple and sincere belief that he was right in whatsoever he said or did, and that any who opposed him were either wicked or mistaken. This belief, James realised, was founded upon Cromwell's conviction that he was of what the Puritans called the Elect, but he did not limit this conviction to himself as an individual. He, indeed, was the chosen soul, the principal among the Saints, the new Moses; but England was in the same sense the chosen nation, selected by the Lord to reign over all the other nations of the earth. She was Israel; and it was Cromwell's task to see that she realised her high destiny, and that there were no rebellions, nor hungering after the fleshpots, nor lingering on the journey to the Promised Land.

Cromwell himself opened the conference with a rehearsal of all the victories vouchsafed to the Army during the past two years. With the blessing of God, he said, they had crushed every enemy which had risen up against them, and now they might look forward to a period of peace and prosperity.

"Yet first is it necessary to come to a settlement of the nation," he continued, "and since the Parliament is resolved to put an end to its long sitting, it is time we debated what form of government shall arise hereafter, for this is a fundamental, and nought may be done ere we are agreed upon it."

"The Parliament," said Lenthall, a timid man with the face of a sheep, "hath yet three years ere it dissolve itself, and I take leave to suggest that herein is ample time for it to debate upon its successor."

"I would venture to enquire of you, my Lord General," chimed in Heselrig, with a heightened colour, "what these words of yours signify: It is time we debated what form of government shall arise hereafter? For it sticks in my mind that this form was settled and decided finally after the King's death. We are, and may we ever continue, a free Commonwealth, having the legislative power in the hands of Parliament, and

the executive in those of the Council of State, duly elected by the Parliament."

"Yet the nation remains unsatisfied," retorted Cromwell bluntly, "because that many of the old tyrannies yet continue. Tithes are still levied and patronage permitted, though the Church of England be officially proscribed, justice is yet bought and sold by the lawyers, and in this absolute republic ye say ye have set up, the nation hath no voice but must accept laws made by the fag-end of a Parliament first called by the King in 1640. I say it is no republic; and I say 'tis necessary we debate upon what form of government is most fitting to bestow upon the Lord's chosen people."

"You say the nation is dissatisfied," cried Sir Harry Vane angrily. "It is, and I will tell you why. It is crushed by monstrous burdens of taxation, its liberties are violated by the free quartering of soldiers, and its trade is oppressed by the maintenance of an army of forty thousand men. Until the Army is disbanded——"

"I have heard all this from the lips of John Lilburne," interrupted Cromwell contemptuously, "and I will confess I did not think to hear such folly from the lips of Harry Vane,"

Before anyone else could speak, Harrison burst forth into a long and impassioned harangue. It was very familiar to most of his hearers, because Harrison's eloquence ran only in one groove. He spoke always as though he were in wine (which in fact he never touched), in Biblical language, and with such fiery fervour that he seemed either inspired or hysterical. He extolled, he almost deified, the Army in which he served; he declared that its work was but half begun, for not only must it root out from England all Papists, Prelatists, Malignants, and "those marked with the mark of the Beast," but likewise must it sweep Europe clear of such scum. The new Parliament, he asserted, must be elected by "the Churches of the Saints gathered according to the order of the Gospel" (by which he meant the Independent sects); it must be a "Representative of Saints," with power to make laws which would turn England into the New Jerusalem, and to fill every post, civil, military, and ecclesiastical, with men of proven

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godliness. Heselrig and Vane glanced across at each other with upraised eyebrows and dry smiles; it was clear that they had nothing but contempt for such wild talk, issuing from one who was quite without power, for Harrison had lost his seat in the recently elected fourth Council of State.

"I see not," said old Whitelocke, the lawyer, mildly, when the stormy harangue subsided, "I see not how we are to be a true commonwealth if the Parliament be nominated and not freely elected by the people of England, agreeable to the fundamental laws."

It was an unfortunate remark, for it was popular with nobody. There were, James was observing to his consternation, two distinct parties present in the room; there was the Army clique, which desired a small Parliament elected by the Gathered Churches and a large Army to protect and maintain it; and there was the republican group of which Heselrig was by far and away the most conspicuous figure, which affirmed that since the old Parliament had produced the Commonwealth, it should continue untouched as far as possible, though they were willing to have some of the vacant seats filled by nominees of the officers. Neither side, it was plain, had the slightest intention of going to the country; the Army clique, as James knew very well, durst not appeal to an electorate which declared the Army to be the most intolerable burden on their shoulders, and he believed that the reason for the republicans' dislike of a General Election lay in their zeal to carry on the great work which they had begun in setting up a commonwealth. He would have rejected with indignation the idea that they durst not be made to account for the large sums of money which had passed through their hands during the last eleven years.

But James Guffin was beginning to wonder, as he sat in the background, observing and listening, his mind still puzzled by his patron's strange talk of an enemy of the Commonwealth other than the Army, whether there was not a third party present in the room, a party composed of one man, a forceful yet strangely nervous man, the chief commander of the Army, the foremost figure in the Council of State, a man who now

said, with what appeared to be a singular lack of tact, what everyone in the room knew, the republicans uncomfortably the soldiers exultantly:

"The present Parliament, though it was freely elected at its first assembling, hath been forcibly lopped down to what it now is by the power of the sword. It hath suffered indignities at the hands of the Army, and it hath lacked the strength wherewith to defend itself. It is the servant of the Army, yet presumes to act the master; it is impotent, yet at the same time it is arrogant; and therefore the nation likes it not."

"May I enquire of the Lord General," retorted Vane sarcastically, "if the nation likes the Army any better?"

"Nay," sighed Cromwell, "I think it doth not. Therefore will I return to somewhat I did say at the beginning of this conference: It is necessary we debate upon the form of government best suited to the needs of the nation and agreeable to its humours."

He turned and looked about him, as though seeking advice. Harrison seized the opportunity to burst forth again in praise of the Army and a government of Saints, but James Guffin observed with mingled relief and bewilderment that his commanding officer seemed not at all to like such talk. Presently old Whitelocke spoke, plainly with reluctance.

"Methinks there is in all men," said the lawyer, "a desire for repose and quietude, which things are, in the common run of men, valued even above liberty and justice. These things, say they (for I have hearkened to them), ran with us when the government was vested in a single person, and for such government, which embodies the ancient traditions of our race, there is a hunger which it will be hard to satisfy with aught else, howsoever logically it be propounded to them."

There was a shocked silence. Both parties stared at Whitelocke as though scarce able to believe their ears. He was a venerable and respected figure, a learned man of law, revered even by the military clique, for it was felt that his presence gave their councils tone. That such a man not only should admit to so disgraceful and fantastic a weakness in the citizens of the New Jerusalem, but should seem to sympathise with it,,

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was felt by republicans and soldiers alike to be a betrayal of the basest kind.

But he who had called this conference did not seem to think so. He smiled upon Whitelocke, and after a moment said genially:

"That would be a business of more than ordinary difficulty; but really I think if it may be done with safety and preservation of our rights, both as Englishmen and Christians, that a settlement with something of monarchical power in it would be very effectual."

This time there was no silence, shocked or otherwise. Speaker Lenthall's elegant dining-chamber was filled with uproar, as a dozen indignant voices thundered forth a battery of questions. Was not Cromwell the man who had had the chief hand in slaughtering the King and abolishing the Monarchy? Was it not he who had shouted to those who demurred: "We will cut off the King's head with the crown upon it"? Was it not he who had demanded a free commonwealth, and had voted, in company with his fellow-Parliamentarians, that "the office of a king in this nation, and to have the power thereof in any single person, is unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous to the liberty, safety, and public interests of the people of this nation"?

He replied (so soon as he could still the rumpus) that they misunderstood him. Government by a king was indeed outmoded and dangerous, nevertheless government in the name of a single person might be conducive to the satisfaction of the people, who were all out of love with their experience of a republic. It was now that, for the second time that afternoon, lawyer Whitelocke made an honest blunder.

"If you seek for one who shall bear the name without the power of a king," said the old man helpfully, "there is the Duke of Gloucester, youngest of the sons of the late King, still a child, and confined since his tenderest years in Carisbrooke Castle. His appointment could offend no man; 'twould give the common people the pomp and ceremony of monarchy for which they hunger; and he, being so young, may be nurtured in just government and prevented from falling into the errors of his father."

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He looked round for approval, and found none. Indeed he could not have met with a more icy reception. Had they fought and bled and laboured that another king, a Stuart at that, should tyrannise over them? Had they slain the father only to crown the son? Harrison was particularly vocal. He knew, it appeared, the names and histories of all the child-kings in the Old Testament, and had no difficulty in proving that each and every one had brought a curse upon Israel.

But Cromwell likewise was cold, which seemed strange. After all, a puppet king had been implied in his words, and here, surely, was a most fitting puppet, immature and impressionable, separated from his family for years, denied the respect and ceremony consonant with his rank, but royal in blood, comely in person, acceptable therefore to a foolish people who seemed to prefer the pageantry of Egypt to the somewhat sordid utility of the Wilderness. Yet Cromwell looked upon the claims of young Henry, Duke of Gloucester, with obvious disfavour. He did not speak to this effect. He merely, very abruptly, dismissed the conference, saying something vague about their need to debate further at some other time. But, as the gathering filed out, he laid his hand on Bulstrode Whitelocke's arm, detaining him.

In the gloom of the passage Sir Arthur Heselrig laid his hand on James Guffin's arm, and spoke in a quick whisper:

"I left my gloves in the dining-chamber yonder. Return for them; and prithee, James, mark well what you hear there."

Then he was gone, merging into the stream of men who, heads together and voices buzzing, agitatedly debated among themselves the things they had heard at this strange conference; and James Guffin was left alone, with a delicate and quite unwelcome mission.

His idealism was of no use to him in this predicament, for he had not the slightest suspicion of Cromwell's real intentions. It was true that Cromwell had seemed self-contradictory and strange in his manner this afternoon, and that James had allowed his imagination to wander among wild ideas; likewise was it true that Cromwell had made the incredible suggestion that the nation desired a return to monarchical government,,

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though in some truncated form. But Cromwell and Heselrig were still the best of friends, and, so far as James was aware, Cromwell was, as he had ever been, a true republican and champion of Parliamentary privilege, though naturally tender of that vast Army of which he now had supreme command, of which he was the virtual creator, but which was now doomed to speedy disbandment in accordance with the needs of Parliament and Commonwealth alike.

Yet James fulfilled his delicate mission, and that which enabled him to do so was his unbounded admiration for his patron. Heselrig had bidden him eavesdrop, not a very nice thing to do. James had a sense of honour, and really detested underhand methods. But he had a far greater sense of loyalty to the embodiment of his ideals, and was ready to accept, at the word of his patron, the sad necessity to do evil that good might come. He therefore went quietly into Speaker Lenthall's dining-chamber without knocking, and was fortunate enough to hear the tail-end of a conversation between Cromwell and Whitelocke before he was observed.

"Some course must be thought on to curb them," Cromwell was saying angrily, standing by the fire and warming his hands at the blaze, "or we shall be ruined by them, and the nation likewise."

"You yourselves," Whitelocke pointed out gravely, standing beside the Lord General, hands behind his back and learned head bent, "you yourselves of the Army and we likewise of the Council of State have acknowledged them the supreme power, and have taken our commissions and authority in the highest concerns from them, and how to restrain and curb them after this, it will be hard to find out a way for it."

"What," said Cromwell, swinging round upon his heel and speaking as he did so, "what if a man should take upon himself to be king?"

He found himself face to face with the bewildered countenance of young James Guffin and, falling into one of his high passions, demanded to know what a devil he did there.

(4)

James Guffin walked into St Stephen's Chapel with the other secretaries, and took his humble place behind the back benches. Selecting a quill from the well-sharpened bundle he had brought with him, he sat waiting for the morning's business to commence. There were not, he observed, more than fifty or so Members present, and although this was an average attendance lately, he was shocked by it to-day. For to-day there was to be debated the Bill for filling up vacancies in the New Parliament; there were yet eighteen months ere the present Parliament was pledged to dissolve itself, but its Members had decided that they would lose no time in settling the form of the new one, because of the conduct of the Army officers.

Of late the Army officers had grown more and more obstreperous, and it was clear to everyone that no longer was it merely a question of arrears of pay. The officers had devoted the first week in January to praying and preaching (always an ominous sign); they had sent circular letters to the House insisting upon the adoption of their own ideas of a "New Representative"; there was even a rumour that Lambert, smarting from the abolition of the Lord Deputyship of Ireland last year, had urged Cromwell to turn out the present Parliament by force. True, the Lord General had rebuked Lambert for his abominable suggestion, asserting that he would not for anything in the world that Parliaments should be subjected to compulsion, "nothing being of more dangerous consequence to government itself"; but the Army clique was strong and violent, and those officers who had seats in the House had forced upon the republican party the consideration of a Bill for a New Representative. Never mind, thought James; to-day the republicans in the House were resolved to make use of this objectionable bill by, in Heselrig's words, "recruiting the House with persons of the same spirit and temper as themselves," and, when this was done, immediately to adjourn, thus rendering it impossible to repeal or modify the Act.

But really, sighed James to himself, the obtuseness of a large portion of his fellow-countrymen was very sad and irritating.

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There was the Army clique talking nonsense about a "Representative of Saints"; there was John Lilburne suddenly returning from exile without leave, and denying the right of Parliament to condemn him for the malicious libel against Heselrig which he had published last year and for which he had been banished; and there were the common people doing nothing but grumble about the decay of trade, the monthly assessment, and the Dutch war. He had paid a visit to his home yesterday, and all his father could talk about was the war and its disastrous effects upon the City; it was ruining the Levant merchants, asserted this sordid tradesman, especially since Appleton's defeat by the Dutch off Leghorn, and had raised the price of coal from two shillings to six shillings the cauldron. James himself had witnessed a foolish little scene in Fleet Street on his way to The Three Crowns. A fellow had stood upon the steps of St Bride's, shouting: "Coal at threepence the bushel! Plenty of good Newcastle coal 1" And when the crowd, rapidly collecting, had demanded to know where this good, cheap, and plentiful coal was to be found, the wag had replied, amid groanings, cursings, and shaking of fists: "At Rotterdam-stairs."

"And because," grumbled Mr Guffin, "the blockade of the Sound doth continue, there is upwards of an hundred vessels kept in port for want of pitch and tar. Our merchantmen miscarry daily, for if they are not boarded by the Dutch, they are sure to be seized by the French privateers; and, what is a very horrible thing, there have been a thousand men impressed within the liberties but this last month, many of them landsmen who must now go fight the Dutch at sea, a thing clean contrary to our laws."

And then he had gone on to lay the blame of all these things upon the Parliament, when he ought, as James had pointed out to him, to be thanking God upon his knees for the glorious victories gained by Blake and Ayscue, as well as for the noble Navigation Act which had been the start of the whole business and which aimed at ruining the trade of England's commercial rival, Holland. Certainly Holland was not quite so easy to defeat as some optimists had first imagined she would be, but

even now she was asking for negotiations to be opened, and soon she would find herself compelled to accede to the Commonwealth of England's drastic but righteous demands. In any case, James had added, all these great matters could safely be entrusted to the representatives of the people in Parliament assembled; it was foolish, ungrateful, and downright wicked, he said severely, to question the wisdom of those great gentlemen whom the people of England had freely elected and who had brought the nation safely through the Civil War.

But Mr Guffin had continued irritatingly unimpressed by such talk, and James had been glad enough to leave his father's tavern and return to his master's fine house in Covent Garden. He was growing away from his family; Thomas, indeed, he had not seen for months, for that stalwart corporal was with his regiment, endeavouring to persuade a perversely reluctant Scotland to be merged into the English Commonwealth. As for his father, he seemed to be getting more and more pre-occupied with trade; his sister Sarah was in a permanent state of sullenness, interrupted occasionally by violent hysteria; his sister Julia was a mere house-dove; and young Simon, who ought by this time to be taking an interest in the affairs of his republic, was becoming ever more licentious and flippant. James had been very shocked yesterday when, on seeing Simon with his nose in a news-sheet, he had discovered this to be a copy of *Mercurius Democritus*, a sheet issued without licence and devoted to the retailing of coarse stories and the most improper jests.

James put these reflections aside at the entrance of the Speaker, and set himself to take notes of the business of the day. It was a warm day in April, 1653; he had noticed the cherry-trees breaking into blossom as he came up through the gardens by the river this morning. The sunlight, streaming in through the eastern windows, illumined the Arms of the Commonwealth upon the Speaker's Chair, and glinted upon the new silver Mace which lay upon the table. High over the heads of the meagre assembly hung tattered banners, captured on many a battlefield during the Civil War. James **never tired** of contemplating St Stephen's Chapel; the whole

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atmosphere of it delighted him, it was so venerable, so dignified, so august. Here Pym's voice had uttered the first challenge to tyranny, here Charles had sought the Five Members in vain. And here the fathers of the Commonwealth still nursed and guided their offspring, keeping her feet upon the paths of liberty, planning a future in which she should stand supreme among the nations of the earth.

Glancing round he noted with relief that Cromwell was absent to-day, for during the past few months James had decided with reluctance that Cromwell was an irresponsible sort of man. On the one hand he punished the common soldiers for petitioning their officers for redress of grievances, and on the other he seemed utterly unable to prevent his officers petitioning the Parliament. Besides, there was that astounding and intolerable question of his to Whitelocke eighteen months ago, a question James had chanced to overhear: "What if a man should take upon himself to be king?" Of course it could not have been meant seriously, and even if it were the Army would soon quash any ambitions Cromwell might harbour in that direction, for there was no one in England more hostile to kingship than the Army officers. Still, it showed an improper frame of mind; and when James had reported it to his patron, Sir Arthur had looked very grave, though he still continued very friendly with Cromwell.

Vane spoke first to-day, hurriedly, and without his usual rhetoric. It was plain that he and his party wanted to rush through the revised bill as quickly as possible in case others of the Army clique came into the House. Pride jumped up as Vane sat down; he was one of the most troublesome of the Army leaders, and was for ever inveighing against the wealth amassed by individual Members, though he himself, from being a brewer's drayman, had come to draw the pay of a colonel and had so enriched himself that recently he had bought Nonesuch Park, one of the late King's houses. The republicans harboured an ancient grudge against him, for it was he who had most mortally insulted parliamentary dignity by his violent "purge" of the House just before the King's trial. True, the Members he had excluded had betrayed their party

by their eagerness to negotiate with the King, but that did not exonerate Pride for the way he had behaved. James was pleased to note that the Speaker refused to see him to-day,, and Heselrig was soon speaking instead, vigorously as ever or, as his enemies described it, "with more will than wit."

While his master was speaking, James observed Colonel Harrison turn in his seat and beckon sharply to one of the ushers. The latter came forward, was engaged by Harrison in a whispered conversation, and then slipped quietly from the Chamber. James watched this little scene in idle interest,, and quickly forgot it as his attention was recaptured by his patron's eloquence.

Heselrig had sat down, and Bradshaw had risen, when James's attention was again distracted, this time by a sound which came from without. It was quite unmistakably the sound of men's feet marching in step, intermixed with the clink of steel, and it was rapidly approaching across New-Palace Yard. For one horrid instant James felt his heart turn, over within him; he remembered how certain fanatical preachers of the Army had prophesied of late that "ere long a greater destruction shall fall upon this accursed Parliament, than ever befell the Cavaliers"; and how Colonel Pride had so far forgotten himself as to swear that he would hang up this "Parliament of lawyers" by their own gowns alongside the captured Scottish colours in Westminster Hall. It was,, therefore, with infinite relief that James now beheld Cromwell enter the Chamber all alone, dressed plainer than usual in a black suit and grey worsted stockings, and with no sign of the soldier about him save his sword at his side. He bowed formally to the Speaker, and took his seat beside Harrison.

But James could no longer concentrate upon the proceedings. He could not dismiss from his mind those military sounds which had heralded the Lord General's coming; he could not tear his glance from that powerful, soberly dressed figure and rugged, wart-disfigured face, from the man who sat there with his chin upon his hand, grimly listening to the chorus of praise for a bill he was known to detest. Suddenly he jerked his head round and began to whisper sibilantly to-

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Harrison; the latter started, and James, who sat not many paces behind them, distinctly heard him say:

"Sir, the work is very great and dangerous, therefore I desire you seriously to consider of it before you engage thereto."

Cromwell shook his head irritably, but he sat still and silent for another quarter of an hour. At the end of that time the Speaker rose to call the division; he put the final question: "That this Bill do pass"; and just at that precise moment Cromwell sprang to his feet.

For a moment James supposed that he was going to answer to the question, but the young man was speedily disillusioned. His face suffused with blood, his hands clenching and unclenching at his sides, Cromwell launched forth upon a most astonishing stream of invective. He accused his fellow-Members collectively of injustice and self-interest; he charged them with lack of care for the public good; he cried out upon them for espousing the corrupt interest of the Presbytery and the lawyers, who, said he, were the chief supporters of tyranny.

"Perhaps," he stormed, "ye think this is not parliamentary language. I confess it is not, neither are ye to expect any such from me."

His fellow-Members stared at him, petrified, stared at this comrade of theirs who, in the days of Monarchy, had been the foremost champion of parliamentary privilege, whose favourite accusation against King Charles had been that he abused it. Then, in the blank and horrified silence, Cromwell clapped his hat upon his head, as though resolved pettily to insult the House, and began to stalk the floor, pausing every now and then to shout abuse at individual Members, calling one a whoremonger, accusing another of speculation, yelling at a third that he was "scandalous in the profession of the Gospel," whatever that might mean. It was horrible to hear him, roaring and rampaging in this temple of England's liberties; there was foam upon his lips, and the sweat of his wrath streamed down his empurpled face.

"It is not fit," he bawled, coming to a sudden standstill in the midst of the Chamber, crossing his hands and then sweeping

them apart in a gesture of exaggerated contempt, "it is **not** fit that you should act as a Parliament any longer. You have sat long enough unless you had done more good."

Then one of the outraged Members found his voice. Sir Peter Wentworth rose to complain of such unbecoming language, "the more horrid," he said, "in that it came from their servant, whom they had so greatly trusted and obliged." This seemed to put the final edge to Cromwell's passion. For a moment he looked as though he were meditating a bodily assault upon Wentworth; then, facing the benches alternately on right and left, he thundered:

"Come, come, I will put an end to your prating. I say you are no Parliament. I will put an end to your sitting. Call them in; d'ye hear me, call them in!"

This last command was directed at Harrison, who rose, stumped to the doors, flung them open, and barked an order.

Then did the remnant of the Long Parliament, this fag-end of the famous Parliament which had impeached Strafford and slaughtered Laud, which had answered all a young King's appeals for supplies with the monotonous cry of "Privilege I", which had created the New Model and brought the King of England to the block, then did this begetter of the Commonwealth behold with stark and helpless horror a breach of privilege greater than any it had envisaged in its wildest dreams. It saw march across its sacred threshold forty stalwart musketeers, all in the red cassocks and grey breeches of the New Model (*its* New Model, *its* Army which it had created to defeat the King), with bandoleers rattling and snapsacks swinging and muskets firmly grasped. It beheld them march into the holy of holies, St Stephen's Chapel, the very heart and centre of the Commonwealth of England, at the word of him who was their comrade, the champion of parliamentary privilege, the servant whom they had commissioned and paid to fight their battles for them; led by Lieutenant-Colonel Worsley, the musketeers drew up in files of six deep and stood there stolid, the embodiment of the power of the sword.

There followed a scene which was to haunt the dreams of young James Guffin for many a night hereafter. Many of

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those present were elderly men, peaceable lawyers, City merchants, and country gentlemen; still they were not going to be turned out of their House of Commons, they, the representatives of the people of England in Parliament assembled, without resistance. Many loudly protested; others boldly refused to move from their seats; and among the latter was old Speaker Lenthall. With tears of shame and rage did James behold this venerable Parliamentarian dragged from the Chair by brute force, his robes dishevelled, his wig awry, his straggly beard wagging, his voice bleating futile threats and anguished remonstrances. It was not, alas, the first time poor Lenthall had been subjected to violence in this Chamber, for, in July of '47, a mob had entered the House, and had held Lenthall down in the chair while they had compelled his colleagues to put to the vote a resolution inviting the King to return to London.

And Cromwell, straddling apart from the disgraceful melfe, verbally insulted each victim as he was hustled past by Lieutenant-Colonel Worsley's vigorous musketeers. To Vane's cry that what was done was against morality and common honesty, Cromwell replied with a sneer: "Sir Harry Vane, Sir Harry Vane, the Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane!" (Vane who had had the chief hand in the slaughter of Strafford, and who had tricked the King into dissolving the Short Parliament!) To Alderman Allen's dignified remonstrance, Cromwell retorted with the spiteful reminder that Allen was indebted to the Commonwealth to the tune of seventy thousand pounds, and must find the sum immediately or taste a debtors' prison. But the Lord General's abuse of Sir Arthur Heselrig was the worst of all, at least in the eyes of Sir Arthur's devoted secretary, now struggling and jostling in that disorderly mob which resembled nothing so much as a herd of bullocks being driven to the slaughter.

"You I" roared Cromwell, wagging a thick forefinger at his erstwhile friend, who was striving to retain his dignity while being hustled along between a couple of musketeers. "You it is have forced me to this, for I have sought the Lord day and night that He would rather slay me than put me upon the

doing of this work. You might have prevented this violence, but you are but a juggler and have not so much as common honesty. You have heard that which hath passed in this Chamber to-day; get you gone, therefore, for you have no more to do here."

"I have heard what hath passed here to-day, sir," retorted Heselrig over his shoulder as he was marshalled rapidly towards the door. "And this I tell you: All JEngland shall hear of it anon, and take you notice of that."

As James was being helped upon his way out of St Stephen's Chapel by the butt-end of a musket, he took one anguished look back at that venerable Chamber, the birthplace of liberty, the shrine of a new brave England. And there he saw Cromwell snatch up the Mace, the new silver Mace with the Arms of the Commonwealth engraved upon it, the highest symbol of parliamentary government, and give it into the hands of one of his soldiers with these contemptuous words:

"What shall we do with this bauble? Here, take it away!"

"All England shall hear of it anon," had said Sir Arthur Heselrig, confident of England's righteous indignation. But alas for such happy confidence! Fickle England's reception of the news that her famous Long Parliament was put down by a parcel of soldiers was disappointing, ungrateful, nay, downright cynical. For next morning there was found chalked upon the door of the Commons by an unknown hand:

"This House to let unfurnished. For permission to enter apply to the Army."

CHAPTER III

(1)

ONE Sunday morning in the following July, Mr Samuel Guffin sat in his common-room stumbling his way through the latest edition of *Mercurius Politicus*.

He read *Mercurius Politicus*, not because he liked this particular news-sheet, but for the very simple reason that there

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were now no others. There was an Act passed recently abolishing all the old news-sheets, and imposing a very heavy fine on any author who dared to write or publish without licence, and a slightly less heavy one on those venturing to buy unlicensed stuff. In their place there now appeared two Government organs, *A Brief Relation*, written by Gualter Frost, secretary to the Council of State, and *Mercurius Politicus*, written by Marchmont Needham, formerly the author of one of the Royalist *Mercuries*, but seduced from his principles by the gift of fifty pounds and the annual pension of one hundred. The first gave the foreign news, chiefly attacks upon the Catholic Powers and spicy stories, sent over by spies, of the private life of young King Charles; the second gave as much of the domestic news as was thought fit for the free people of England to know.

Mr Guffin had been sitting here reading *Mercurius Politicus* ever since he had read Morning Prayer aloud to Little Julia, Simon, and Richard Chick. Just before the violent dissolution of the Long Parliament, in April, that institution had endeavoured to placate its enemies the Independents by passing an ordinance which repealed all former Acts enforcing attendance at church on Lord's Day, "providing men are present at some other place in the practice of religious worship." Mr Guffin had hastened to take advantage of this ordinance, because he really could not bear to visit the desecrated St Faith's on Sundays. It was officially Presbyterian since being "purged," but as if this were not bad enough, it was constantly having its pulpit usurped by the fanatical preachers of the New Model, so that divine worship there had become a mockery.

He muttered to himself as he spelled his way through the news-sheet; he could not make head or tail of the political events of the last few months, and *Mercurius Politicus* did nothing to help him. No one regretted the dissolution of the "Rump" less than he did, though he strongly disapproved of the violent character of that dissolution; and he had supposed vaguely that another Parliament, less corrupt and futile, would immediately be elected, and that otherwise things would go on much as before. But on the day after the driving forth of

the old Parliament a proclamation had been read in London justifying the act, and stating that "what hath been done is in accordance with the just demands of the principal officers of the Army, who think it fit that the supreme authority should be by the Parliament devolved upon known persons, men fearing God and of approved integrity, and the government of the Commonwealth committed unto them for a time." Who, had demanded the bewildered Mr Guffin of his neighbours, who are these "known persons"? How dare the principal officers of the Army, who obtained their commissions from the Parliament, presume to set it aside by violence? And what form of government are we now to have?

His military lodgers were eager to enlighten him. The Seeker informed him that earthly government need no longer concern him, for the Lord had appeared to one of the Brethren in a vision, and had intimated that the world was to end upon Tuesday, the fourteenth of August, at precisely four o'clock in the morning, so that all Mr Guffin need do in the interim was to prepare to meet his God. The Leveller asserted that now at last the time was come when the people of England would rule themselves; they had got rid of the King, they had got rid of the House of Lords, and now they had got rid of the House of Commons likewise. The Presbyterian warned him that he was in for a very bad time indeed, asserting that he was now to be governed by a parcel of heretical soldiers, and even hinting that Cromwell was contemplating a seizure of the crown. The two Anabaptists, on the other hand, rose to a fever-pitch of enthusiasm as they sketched for him the glories ahead. They foretold the reign of plenty and of bliss. Peace would be made with the Dutch immediately, because the Dutch were their brethren in the Lord; all taxes would be abolished, all grievances taken away; the law, said they, "shall stream down from Heaven like a river freely, as for twenty shillings what formerly cost twenty pounds, impartially as the Saints do please, and it shall run as rivers do, close to the doors. For the Lord hath given the kingdom unto His Saints, and He shall establish it for ever and ever."

It is regrettable to have to record that Mr Guffin remained

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bewildered and uneasy, nor was he in any way comforted when his drawer, Ned Walsh, came to him and announced that he had discovered the error of his ways and was no longer an adherent of John Lilburne. He was now, it seemed, a True Leveller, or, as the vulgar term went, a Digger. His new idols were Messrs Everard and Winstanley, to whom an over-worked deity had appeared in a vision, bidding them to dig and plough up the earth; they had made a start upon the fields which fringed the City, to the not unreasonable indignation of the smallholders who had the right of grazing there, and Ned spent all his spare time, and not a little of his working time, wielding a spade and furiously denouncing all property holders, great and small. He informed his exasperated master that herein lay the only right way of disbanding the Army and relieving the Commonwealth of taxation; the soldiers were to beat their swords into ploughshares and occupy themselves with digging up England wholesale.

Turning from these various fanaticisms to the pages of *Mercurius Politicus*, Mr Guffin had read in May that a new Parliament was shortly to be summoned, and that meantime the government was to be vested in a Council of thirteen persons, eight officers, four civilians, and the Lord General presiding. "Herein we may see," pursued *Mercurius Politicus* blandly, "a new Apostolic College, wherein our noble Lord General sitteth at the head of his councillors, even as Christ sat at the head of His Apostles." The news-sheet added that some in the Army had desired a Council of seventy, upon the model of the House of Advice in Israel, but that that of the Apostolic College had prevailed.

This had been astonishing enough, not to say blasphemous, but to-day, on this warm Sunday in July, Mr Guffin was even more puzzled as he read the account of the assembling of the new Parliament. It was, indeed, a most peculiar and novel sort of Parliament. Its Members, to the number of one hundred and fifty-six, had been summoned in the name of the "Captain General of all the Forces," and had been chosen originally by the Gathered Churches, all being persons "fearing God." But not only had the Gathered Churches each and

every one a different interpretation of the words "fearing God"; the new Apostoli college questioned the judgment of the Gathered Churches in the matter, and for the last six weeks had sat daily, in company with the Council of the Army, weeding out from among the nominated those whom they disliked or did not consider sufficiently godly.

Yet here at last, "*Mercurius Politicus*" went on to inform him triumphantly, was the New Representative assembled, a Parliament of Saints. It had met for the first time on Thursday, in the Council Chamber at Whitehall, that handful of successful candidates for sainthood, and it had been assured by Cromwell that its commission was from God Himself. They were called, he said, to make war against the enemies of the Lamb, and would have to aid them in this holy struggle twenty thousand angels, the armies of the Lion of Judah. Well, reflected Mr Guffin with unwonted cynicism, there at least is one army the cits won't have to pay for.

He put down the news-sheet and sighed heavily at his own inability to understand the situation, and refreshed himself with a mouthful of ale.

During the past half-hour Mr Guffin's belly had been informing him, by various low grumbles, that it required to be fed. Now it let forth such a thunder of protest that Mr Guffin glanced at the clock. It lacked but a few minutes of noon, but still there was no sign of Sarah. His elder daughter had sallied forth early that morning, dressed in her best, and Mr Guffin had understood her to say that she was going to church. He had been surprised at this, because Sarah had never before gone to church without being compelled to do so. However, pleased to find that she was at last showing an interest in something besides Will Lowen, Mr Guffin had acquiesced cheerfully enough, though he would have preferred her to stay and listen to him reading Morning Prayer aloud. At least he need no longer fear that she was bound for a clandestine meeting with the detestable Master Lowen, for it was just six months since William had been deprived of the office of hangman, which he had inherited from Gregory Brandon, and flung into gaol.

Mr Guffin, rising to replenish his ale-can, rehearsed the story

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to himself with malicious delight. One day, in the March of this year, Lowen had been called upon to execute a certain Peter Wright for the crime of being a Popish priest, together with thirteen malefactors condemned for purse-cutting and highway robbery. It is possible that Mr Lowen (or Esquire Lowen as he was always called, because one of his predecessors had played a trick on the College of Heralds and obtained from them a coat-of-arms) was tired; he had been forced to undertake the beheadings of several Royalists recently, and he did not like beheadings; also, though whippings and brandings and pilloryings might be lucrative, a surfeit of them is enough to weary any executioner.

At all events, Will had badly bungled the execution of the priest; the halter was ill-tied, the knot slipped to the back of the neck, and the unfortunate victim had taken fully three-quarters of an hour to choke to death. Amongst the other condemned was a notable highwayman, always a popular character with the mob and a source of profit for the hangman. Mr Lowen, having cut him down, was offering the rope at a shilling an inch, as his custom was, and found business to be curiously slack. Seeking to discover the cause of this, he had been informed that someone in the crowd was selling a spurious rope for sixpence an inch, and doing a very brisk trade indeed.

In the height of Mr Lowen's righteous indignation at this undercutting, the Deputy Sheriff in charge of the execution had most tactlessly chosen this moment to reprimand the hangman for his bungling with the priest. Priding himself as he did upon his craftsmanship, and furious at being cheated of his lawful perquisites, Mr Lowen most unfortunately had forgotten himself. He struck the Sheriff, that august official, hard upon the chin. Then did Mr Lowen find himself put into his own cart under a guard of constables, and carried back to the City, where he was straightway immured in Newgate, to the unconcealed delight of the mob. Next day the Worshipful Court of Aldermen, indignantly debating the incident at Guildhall, had decided to relieve Mr Lowen of his post and to give it to Edward Dun, formerly his assistant.

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When this news had reached The Three Crowns, Mr Guffin's joy and thankfulness had known no bounds. However romantic Sarah might be, however faithful in her improper affections, there was no longer any danger of her eloping with the hangman, for Will Lowen not only was out of a job but safely incarcerated in the Stone Room of Newgate. Now, had reflected her grateful father, the wench will forget her folly, she will find some worthier object on which to lavish her affections, and even, in time, she may become something of a housewife. He had been saying all this for six months now, but so far Sarah had disappointed him. True, she never mentioned Will Lowen nowadays, but she tossed her head at the addresses of her admirers, she continued to be sulky and sullen, she neglected her duties worse than ever, and occasionally she would fall into the most strange passions, weeping suddenly at nothing, chastising Richard Chick with a rolling-pin for the most trifling offence, and quarrelling violently with a neighbour. Poor Mr Guffin was at his wits' end what to make of her. To-day, however, she had gone off to church; maybe, he thought to himself, she has decided to amend her ways and has gone to seek the aid of the Almighty. All the same, she had no right to neglect his dinner; and he was about to rise and call upstairs to Little Julia to set the table, when the street door opened and Sarah herself appeared upon the threshold.

"Why, there you are," grunted Mr Guffin. "Pox on't, they preach long sermons at St Faith's nowadays, it seems. The chimes of my belly are gone; it should be past noon; ay, there are the bells telling the quarter. Haste thee, wench, and prepare us some dinner, for I have an appetite more than ordinary."

Sarah answered nothing. She had advanced a step or two into the room at her first entrance, but had made no further move; she stood there staring, not at her father, but straight before her, with the most peculiar expression on her face. Mr Guffin, irritably observing her, noted that her appearance was peculiar likewise. Her hair was escaping from the kerchief tied over her head, her bare arms were crossed in an absurd theatrical manner over her breast, her lips were parted, her

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apart from making things generally uncomfortable for its inhabitants, was left extremely vague, unless it was to convince men of the truth of the interesting and important doctrine (likewise revealed in a vision) that, when Christ descended to be born in Bethlehem, He left Elijah as His vicegerent in Heaven. However, concluded Sarah, her father might seek for further particulars in two printed works, *The Transcendent Spiritual.' Treatise* and *The Divine Looking-Glass*, published by the Two Heavenly Witnesses and setting forth their mission.

"G-go and get me my dinner," bellowed her enraged father, as soon as he could speak.

Sarah looked at him as though she viewed an insect.

"Dinner!" exclaimed the convert, in the same contemptuous tone as that in which she had mentioned the name of her former love. "Dinner, say you? What is meat and what is drink but food for the body which soon shall be caught up into Heaven with the Witnesses, unless it be devoured by the Beast?"

"Go and get me my dinner," repeated Mr Guffin, in a low and trembling voice, "or, grown woman though you are, I vow I'll take a stick to you."

"Go you and pray," retorted Sarah. "Pray that the wrath of God be averted, and that you be not found among the seven thousand who shortly shall be swallowed up in earthquake. But for me, I will go minister to the necessities of the Saints."

And she went. Not only did she go, but she took Mr Guffin's Sunday dinner from under his nose and bore it away to be devoured by a couple of mad fanatics clad in sackcloth and with bare and very dirty feet.

Mr Guffin was too stunned to protest. No sooner was he rid of a hangman than he was doomed to be plagued with Two Heavenly Witnesses, alias two olive-trees. The wench was mad. Her mind was unhinged with thwarted passion. When she returned he would take her to The Black Boy and Star and ask Hal Cranton to see what bleeding would do.

Alas for such homely remedies! What Mr Guffin did not understand was that the Two Heavenly Witnesses were but the forerunners of a whole host of strange and various fanatics

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who were due to insult his intelligence and his romantic daughter's peace of mind. For, with the advent of the Parliament of Saints, Heaven had come to London, uninvited.

All through the late summer and autumn of that year Mr Guffin continued to read in the pages of *Mercurius Politicus* of the doings of the Parliament of Saints. He read with a certain detachment, as though the news-sheet were retailing marvelous stories of some mythical parliament, for he could not convince himself that so fantastic an assembly really had taken upon itself the government of England.

Having received the blessing of the Lord General, who had summoned them by his writs, the Members of the new Parliament moved into St Stephen's Chapel on the fifth of Juiy, and, having now had the Mace restored to them (which symbol of parliamentary authority had reposed in Lieutenant-Colonel Worsley's house since the violent expulsion of the Long Parliament), fought God inorayer for several hours, and then decided, by only "sixty-four to forty-six votes, to assume the name of Parliament, "the lowness and innocency of that title," explained *Mercurius Politicus*', "having little of earthly glory in it, induced some to give their votes for that." This important question being settled, they appointed days of prayer, fasting, and humiliation, on which no shops were to open and the people were to seek a blessing on their counsels, and they passed a resolution that no one should be employed by them in any capacity, even the lowest, until he had first passed their tests in true godliness. Also they decided to enlarge the "Apostolic College," otherwise the Council of State, and added thirty of their own Members to its original number of thirteen.

Having adjusted these preliminary affairs to their own satisfaction, the Parliament of Saints got down to the serious business of ruling England. They dismissed most of the judges, and set-up yet another "High Court of Justice" to try all but the most ordinary cases; they "purged" the

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Admiralty; and they directed their Attorney-General to prepare a prosecution against John Lilburne. They renewed the Bill for the monthly assessment for another half-year, raising London's contribution from £6000 to £8000 a month. They increased the penalties for the surreptitious practising of bull-and bear-baits, cock-fighting, Whltsun-ales, morris-dances, wakes, and "other such like lewdness." They decided to meerthe crushing burden of national debt by a fresh assault upon the lands of Royalists and recusants, and invented a new scheme whereby such lands were put out to farm. Every such delinquent was to be called upon to free himself from the annual payment due by him to the Commonwealth, by an immediate advance of a sum equal to four years' purchase in the case of rentals, and of one-third of his personal property liable to forfeiture. | In the very probable event of his being unable to pay, anyone who could advance, the same amount to the, Government could purchase the right of levying, during the delinquent's lifetime, all fines and forfeitures due to the State. This Act was nor allowed to pass without some little opposition, for Praise-God Barebone, a leading light in the Parliament of Saints, opposed it stoutly on the ground that it implied a toleration of Popery.

A scheme which took up a great deal of the time of the House was the Bill for the Establishment of Ejectors. Mr Guffin read with amazement that England was to be divided into circuits, each of which was to be visited by commissioners appointed by the Parliament, whose business was to eject "scandalous" ministers and schoolmasters from their posts, and to set in their place candidates who were able to pass the formidable tests of true godliness imposed upon them. Any minister or schoolmaster was ripe for ejection who "frequented ale-houses, used profane oaths, played at cards, held blasphemous or atheistical opinions, used the Book of Common Prayer, omitted preaching or praying on Lord's Day, was reported as being loose in conversation, or countenanced such abominations in his parishioners or pupils.'T In other words, an inquisition was to be set up to pry intojiien's morals.

Protected by the Army which had created it, "and secure in

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its conviction of being directly under the guidance of the Lord of Hosts, the Parliament of Saints continued merrily upon its way, hacking at the already defaced Constitution, and soon *Mercurius Politicus* was able to inform its readers that "the Parliament is now upon the considering of a new body of law, which shall reduce the vast law-books to the bigness of a pocket-book, so that all may have access to it."

Mr Guffin's reaction to all this was incredulity mixed with contempt. It did not occur to him that the follies of the Parliament of Saints could affect his private life, except, of course, in the matter of the monthly assessment. All this talk about fines and penalties for indulging in traditional sports had been heard before; ever since the Long Parliament had taken upon itself the ruling of the kingdom, at the beginning of the war, there had been Acts passed against bear-baiting and cock-fights, yet these sports still continued at the Bankside, and very little notice was taken by the authorities. In company with his fellow-cits, Mr Guffin grumbled about the increase in taxation; and with them he was really indignant when, Lilburne having been acquitted at his trial at the Old Bailey in August (for the Parliament durst not bring this famous man before one of its illegal "High Courts of Justice"), an order went forth to keep him in confinement, and his writ of habeas corpus. was ignored. But it was not until one November morning, in the same year, that Mr Guffin discovered in a most disconcerting fashion how not even in-offensive and peaceable citizens like himself were safe from the small but belligerent handful of Saints who now called themselves the Parliament of England.

He was busy in his common-room as usual this morning; trade was bad in London just now, for not only were the merchants affected by the crushing taxation of the past few years, but the uncertainty of the political situation, no man knowing what was going to happen next, made the citizens hesitate before putting their hands into their purses to buy anything except the necessities of life. Yet Mr Guffin's trade was always pretty regular; prosperous or decayed, anxious or contented, still the citizens of London would congregate in

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the taverns and gossip and grumble and speculate over their cans of ale and beer. Mr Guffin, leaning upon his ale-stond in his shirt-sleeves and apron, was discussing with his friend Mr Knee, the upholder, a recent riot at St Paul's, when a mob of apprentices had assaulted the fanatical preacher, Chillenden; when Richard Chick came up to inform him that there was a stranger at the door desiring speech with him.

Mr Guffin left his counter and pushed his way through the crowded room. He found the stranger, a lean, plainly-clad individual, with a prim look and an air of authority, standing in the open doorway, staring up at the tavern sign which swung gently above him in its irons. Greeting him courteously, Mr Guffin enquired how he might serve the gentleman, and was astonished to hear the question snapped at him: Had he not read the latest Government decree?

"It concerneth the matter of trade-signs," explained the stranger, as Mr Guffin shook a bewildered head. "By an order made in Parliament this last week, no signboard within the liberties of London and Westminster shall bear upon it any symbol, emblem, or device which smacks of Popery, or Malignancy, or lewdness, lest scandal be given to the godly citizens."

Before he could stop himself, Mr Guffin had burst out:

"In Jesu's name, what hath the Parliament to do with signboards? Passion o' me, will these pitiful, ditiful gentlemen, Donquixote's saints, be meddling with an honest man's trade and ravish his privy matters?"

"This is evil talk," said the stranger, looking down his nose. "I trust, fellow, you will not offend so in your speech that I may suspect you of being disaffected to the Government."

Mr Guffin, the defiance seeping out of him, hastened to protest that he was a law-abiding subject of the Commonwealth; and asked mildly for enlightenment as to the nature of this latest decree.

He was told that the Parliament, which had a care for the morals of all the good people of England, and which was **determined that** this Chosen Nation should be purged of all

lewdness and ungodliness, had empowered Mr Guffin's visitor, in company with many other Government agents, to inspect the signboards of the City, and to order an alteration or even, if need be, a complete suppression of such as they considered unworthy to hang in a converted London.

"As for example," the stranger condescended to explain, perceiving that Mr Guffin still looked completely blank, "the alley which lieth yonder, adjacent to your tavern, is called Salutation Alley, and this must be remedied, for know you what the name signifies?"

"I know very well," replied Mr Guffin, nettled by such a ridiculous question. "It signifies the Salutation of the Virgin Mary by the Archangel Gabriel, and before the Reformation there was a figure of the Virgin upon the sign, and the Archangel did hold a scroll with Latin words thereon, but, as my father hath oft told me, the Reformers did take out the Virgin and the scroll, as being relics of Popery."

"We," his visitor informed him, "will take out the Archangel likewise, and we will rechristen this alley Soldier and Citizen Alley, which two types are those we would see within the Commonwealth, wherein no dregs of Romish superstition are to remain."

"If you do change the name of the alley," observed Mr Guffin, after he had digested this strange information, "the strangers who come into the City will lose their way, for they discover it only by asking for familiar signs."

"Better they should lose their way in the City of London," crushingly retorted his visitor, "than that they stray from the path which leads to Eternal Bliss. But come, Mr Guffin," he added briskly, "there is yet the matter of your own sign to be dealt with."

"Now list you, sir," pleaded the tavern-heeper, "it cannot be that my sign do offend, for therein is signified nought but the Three Kings or Magi who came from the East to bring gifts to the infant Christ."

"The good people of England," the stranger reminded him coldly, "have abolished kings and all such tyrants."

"Yet you know not the danger of altering a trade-sign,"

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cried Mr Guffin, now really apprehensive. "Many honest tradesmen have been ruined by doing this of themselves, for their customers believe that the business is gotten into other hands, and so custom falls off apace. I could tell you of a worthy mercer, my near acquaintance, who, because his wife liked not his sign of a——"

"You had best observe the order of the Parliament without delay," interrupted the inexorable voice of authority, "for the penalty of disobedience is a heavy fine. Likewise must that heathen god up yonder, he who bestrides the tun above the sign, he also must come down, unless it be you put a gown upon him, for his nakedness is not to be endured. As for the sign, there be many godly and honest devices abroad from which you may choose a new one, as for example The David and Harp, The Noah's Ark, The Balaam's Ass, The Moses and Aaron, or The Two Spies. And now prithee direct me to a lane within this ward which is called The Catherine Wheel, for this must be changed to The Cat and Wheel, which can hurt no man."

"It can help no man neither," snapped Mr Guffin, with a new spurt of defiance. "Pray who gave you authority to meddle with our signs?"

"Our authority is from the Lord," replied the agent simply. "The City of London must first be purged that the rule of the Saints may begin."

"For my part," grunted Mr Guffin, "I would prefer to take my share of that in Heaven," but he did not say it until after his visitor had walked off down the street.

As soon as the tavern closed that night Mr Guffin betook himself to the sign of The Black Boy and Star, where he found his friend Hal Cranton in the back parlour, playing at "tables" with Mrs Cranton, and drinking sweet muscadine, in great peace and harmony. Mr Guffin, refusing a glass of muscadine (which he detested), immediately demanded to know whether a prying knave had come hither to-day invading his friend's liberty in the matter of his trade-sign, and was told that he had. •

"We may have the Black Boy," added Mrs Cranton, lying

at her ease in an elbow-chair, and weighing one of the back-gammon men in her plump white hand, "but the Star must come out, because, say they, the Star is that of Bethlehem, and is a superstition. 'Tis likewise, said I, the most common sign for-a bawdy house, but I'll vow you never thought of that."

She laughed richly, and Mr Guffin, who had a sneaking affection for the notorious Esther Cranton, smiled at her. Her husband, however, rather severely reminded her that the Star was a sign common to many trades, and that he had incorporated it with his own when they were married because, for a time thereafter, his wife had carried on her own trade of stationer, which she "had pursued as a spinster under that sign. (It was a common thing for the signs of husband and wife to be thus linked together,)

"Yet I marvel they will allow us the Black Boy," yawned Mrs Cranton, smiling upon her husband with real affection, "seeing that it is a cant name used by the Cavees for their young King, Charles."

Mr Guffin, pacing up and down the room, launched forth into his own particular grievances. His grandfather had paid one hundred pounds for the signboard of The Three Crowns, for, like all good craftsmen, he prized very highly this one means of advertising his trade, and every few years since first it had been hung above the tavern, it had been repainted by one of the best sign-painters in Hoop Lane. There was to be no compensation either, he said, for the loss of it, nor money given him to buy a new one, which was unjust and intolerable, and the matter should be laid before the Common Councillor of the Ward without delay.

"You have seen during these past few years," replied Mr Cranton, drawing hard upon his pipe, "how ill it doth become us to look to Guildhall for redress of grievances, because there hath not been an election in the City since the Commonwealth was first set up, but it was done under the eyes of the soldiers, so that the Common Council, and the Court of Aldermen likewise, not to speak of my Lord Mayor, are but the creatures of those in power at Westminster."

"Let them be so," roared Mr Guffin, "I am not, and so I

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will show them. I will live peaceable, but I am not to be constrained nor meddled with in my privy affairs."

"You will be mulcted in fines if you obey not this order," his friend told him, tapping out his pipe upon his heel, "and likewise are you to take notice that many tavern-keepers have already hasted to change their signs to The Naseby, The Jacob's Well, The Liberty and Justice, and I know not what other novelties, and these will attract the custom of the soldiers, while your own trade will languish."

Mr Guffin, throwing himself into a chair, held forth at length upon the iniquities and follies of the present Parliament. England was ruled, he declared, by a handful of mad fanatics, who would oppress the realm in the name of religion. *Mercurius Politicus* had informed him only yesterday that the House had sat an entire week debating a bill prohibiting the use of powder and paint on women's faces. And there were two women even now sitting in the ward-stocks because they had cooked their husbands' dinner on a Sunday. Upon his soul he marvelled that a parcel of canters, the nominees of the Gathered Churches and the creatures of the Army, should so invade the rights of freeborn Englishmen and should carry their oppression into the home itself, and at the same time should boast that they had destroyed tyranny in slaughtering the King.

"Quacks in their bills," he raged, "do not disappoint us more than these Parliament-men with their promises, and I swear it is a very marvellous thing that those who drew the sword in the name of liberty should show themselves such tyrants when they come to rule. I hear that so ridiculous is this pretended work of reformation they are now upon, and so jealous are they against all mirth and jollity, that they would pluck down the Cat and Fiddle too if it durst but play so loud that they might hear it. If they are true lovers of the common-weal, let them take off these huge taxes which suck up all the ready money, and will constrain us all anon to eat our dinner from the Sheriff's basket."

"You talk large, neighbour," said Mr Cranton, humorously regarding his friend over the top of his spectacles, "yet in

the end of it you will be compelled to take down your sign, and therefore you had best bethink you of choosing another. Come, what say you now to The Jacob's Well? 'Tis a good sign for a tavern, since all who drank thereat thirsted again."

"I will have no Biblical sign," stoutly asserted Mr Guffin, "for I am so plagued with Holy Writ upon mine own hearth that I swear I begin to have a horror of it."

"Why then," said Mr Cranton, emphasising his words with the stem of his long pipe, "I have the very sign for you, neighbour. You shall choose a Griffin, or, if the fancy take you, shall have Three Griffins, for I doubt not a good sign-painter could turn your crowns into griffins and so save you the cost of a new board."

"I have no taste for griffins," snapped Mr Guffin ungratefully.

"Nay, you see not what I would be at," said Mr Cranton. "I perceive that I must act the schoolmaster and read you a lesson upon the matter of surnames. Now, in ancient times, so I have read, there were no surnames, but there were signs upon every house and shop as there are now, and a man was known by his sign, as it might be Will-at-the-Bull, or Thomas-at-the-Jackanapes. And then, in course of time, for convenience sake, these would be shortened, so that you had Will Bull or Thomas Jackanapes."

"There are no Thomas Jackanapes of my acquaintance," objected Mr Guffin, who was in a thoroughly perverse humour, "neither are there any Henry Black Boys, nor Dick Hare and Stirrups, nor——"

"Why, you must understand that these great signs would be shortened somewhat," interrupted the learned Mr Cranton, busily refilling his pipe, "which brings me to the matter of your own. I doubt not your great-great-grandsire was known as Samuel Griffin, because he had a griffin for his sign, and in course of time Griffin hath been corrupted into Guffin, which is a name not common in London, and one not to be explained by any other means."

"I see not why my great-great-grandsire should have chosen a Griffin for his sign," argued his difficult friend.

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"Because," triumphantly replied the ingenious barber-surgeon, "a Griffin is a supporter of the City Afms, and your family living so near upon the Lud Gate, which hath these arms carved upon 'em as you very well know, he would be very apt to choose so honourable a beast for his sign."

"It sticks in my mind," grunted Mr Guffin, "that the supporters of the City Arms are dragons."

His friend waved aside so trifling an objection.

"Dragons or griffins, what doth it signify? He is a cunning man who can tell 'em apart." He puffed at his pipe for several minutes in silence, and when at last he spoke again it was with a complete change of tone. "But let me tell you this, neighbour, and let it be under the rose, for if repeated it might cost me my neck *in* these tickle times: When you do take your old sign down, destroy it not, but put it up safe in some privy place, where it may lie ready to your hand. Ay, hide it with as much care as a spark of the town doth his money from his dun, after a good hand at play. For let the almanack-makers say what they will, I will take leave to prophesy that the day will come when you'll be glad to have a Crown to hang for your trade-sign."

(3)

Having undertaken the purging of the City, the Parliament of Saints was resolved to make a thorough job of it, as Mr Guffin now found to his cost.

No longer was he permitted to read Morning Prayer to his assembled household on a Sunday morning in the security of his own common-room; the soldiers quartered in the City were ordered to make search of all private houses and to confiscate any copies of the Book of Common Prayer they found therein. "It is high time to remove this brazen serpent," declared *Mercurius Politicus*, "and grind it into powder, seeing it is the occasion of so much evil. Therefore hath God stirred up the spirits of His Chosen Saints to be His Instruments for the destruction of that idol." Mr Guffin and his family must attend their parish church on Lord's Day, and listen to an

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Anabaptist expounding his peculiar doctrines in a three-hour sermon one Sunday, and a Ranter or an Antinomian contradicting those doctrines in a sermon of equal length the next. If Mr Guffin forbore to go, he was fined. The Parliament of Saints made much of the fact that they used corporal punishment sparingly; they left men's bodies alone and punished their purses instead, and thus pursued the work of saving souls and gathering in badly needed revenue at the same time.

Apart from this intolerable interference by the State with his private life, Mr Guffin was finding new trouble in his own household. The Digger movement had failed, John Lilburne was safely in the Tower again, and Ned Walsh, finding no new fanatics worthy of his adherence, was become a kind of chronic malcontent, permanently against the Government of whatsoever nature it might be. Indeed, the apprentices of London in general were becoming more and more troublesome, and the cry of "Clubs I Clubs!" was heard almost daily in the streets, denoting that some unfortunate passer-by was being set upon by hooligans and implored the aid of the shopkeepers, each of whom kept a stout cudgel handy for such an emergency.

Mr Guffin deplored this lawless spirit among the young men, yet he could not help but feel that there was reason for it. The old Long Parliament had passed Acts innumerable against the traditional amusements, but it was left for its successor, the Parliament of Saints, to put those Acts into force. Colonel Pride was sent from Westminster with a strong party of foot-soldiers and with orders to slaughter every bull and bear at the Bankside and to wring the neck of every gamecock within the liberties; the maypoles were dragged from the places where they had lain hidden and were burnt in the streets; some daring stage-players, acting one of the old "drolls" in what they fancied was the security of a cellar, were dragged to prison in their costumes and tinsel; and there were constant raids by the soldiers on the brothels and other houses of ill-repute.

Denied their traditional sports and pastimes, the Ned Walshs and the Richard Chicks of London found themselves

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compelled to invent their own amusements; if they could not wager their spending-money on fighting-cocks or bull-baiting, they would hunt some poor cat with their mongrels, or bait a captured rat in an alley, with a wary eye for the redcoats. Or they would waylay a hapless pedestrian at dusk, knock off his hat, steal his handkerchief, or otherwise ill-treat him; or else they would bait a preacher at church, pretending to disagree with some minute point of doctrine, and turn divine service into a wordy brawl. It was sad for Mr Guffin to see Ned and Dick and their fellows roaming the streets in their free time, on the look-out for mischief, or leaning in a bored fashion against the house walls, calling out rude remarks to the young women, defacing a door-post, or laughing loudly at nothing, or, worse still, getting drunk in some ale-house for want of something better to do.

And apart from Ned and Dick, there was Sarah.

Sarah had tired of the Two Heavenly Witnesses (who, indeed, seemed doomed to spend most of their one thousand, two hundred, and threescore days in Newgate), and was now an ardent follower of the Fifth Monarchists. She was always out at some meeting or other, and was for ever expecting Jesus Christ to appear in person and reign upon the Throne of England. Her ravings from the Book of Revelation were having a lamentable effect upon her young brother Simon, who had always been subject to nightmares, and who now, when he went to sleep, saw locusts with the hair of women, beasts full of eyes before and behind, or a great black frog which came to devour him. Another night he would be troubled with a red dragon, which had seven heads and ten horns, the feet of a bear and the spots of a leopard. He grew pale, went off his food, and tended to cling to Little Julia's apron-strings.

Mr Guffin, who was sincerely fond of all his children, was worried by his youngest-born's symptoms of ill-health, and did all he could to improve the child's spirits. Simon had left school now, and assisted his father in the tavern; in two years' time, when he was fourteen, he would be formally bound apprentice to Mr Guffin, and he would make a good

one, Mr Guffin told him, if he would apply himself to his work and leave day-dreaming, to which he was too much addicted. He had always been rather sensitive and highly-strung, but for all that he had a gay spirit and a dry, barbed wit which showed a more than ordinary intelligence. He was tall for his age, and slim, with something elflike about his movements, and with a crop of hair which grew so fast that it was the despair of Mr Cranton. Ned and Dick despised him because he had no interest in baiting things or in ogling girls. Ned in particular grumbled at him for showing no interest *in* politics, and for refusing to join in any petty riot which was in progress and which was aimed vaguely against authority in general. Both these youths teased Simon for his attachment to his younger sister; he could not explain to them that Little Julia was like an anchor in a giddy world. Little Julia was so warm and comfortable, so self-assured in her quiet way; she never laughed at you, and she was so understanding a person that you could tell her anything, even your nightmares, of which you were ashamed.

On a Sunday in the first week of December, Mr Guffin decided to take his two younger children for a walk beside the river in the afternoon. It was a mild, soft day, with fitful gleams of sunshine, and the airing would do Simon good. In the days before the establishment of the New Jerusalem, it had been Mr Guffin's usual habit to take a promenade with his family after Sunday dinner. It was a well-established custom in the City; the women liked to show off their Sabbath finery, the men relished the air and exercise after the hard working week, and both sexes welcomed the opportunity to chat with their promenading neighbours, to view the sights of the town, to feed the swans upon the river, and perhaps to catch a glimpse of the King, with his pretty French wife and their beautiful children, sailing down to Greenwich in their gilded barge, with trumpeters playing and rich draperies trailing in the water.

Now, Mr Guffin was aware that a quiet walk *on* Sunday was one of the pastimes lately forbidden by the Parliament of Saints. It was difficult for him to remember all the new

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laws passed during the five months of their sitting, though a list of these was read out every Sunday, by order, from every pulpit in London, so that the citizens might have no excuse for sinning unawares. This particular law had stuck in Mr Guffin's mind because it seemed to him to put the finishing touch to the Parliament's fanatical oppression; there might be some excuse for saying that bull-baiting and cock-fighting and other traditional sports were "commonly accompanied with gaming, drinking, swearing, and other dissolute practices"; but to forbid the citizens to take a walk with their families on a Sunday afternoon was an oppression so fantastically absurd that even the Parliament of Saints could scarcely expect it to be suffered.

Mr Guffin had changed his Three Crowns into Three Griffins; he went every Sunday morning to a religious service he detested; he ate a cold dinner; he kept his tavern closed all day long, instead of as in the old days only during Morning and Evening Prayer. He had obeyed these decrees and a dozen others of like nature, because the only alternative to obedience was a heavy fine. He grumbled about the ever-increasing mass of regulations, and even ventured, in the company of his intimates, to repeat one of his son James's favourite quotations during his schooldays at St Paul's: "The more corrupt the government, the more numerous the laws." But like the mass of his fellow-citizens he got no further than grumbling except when some particular regulation insulted his intellect beyond bearing, and he believed it to be so intolerable that it could be broken with impunity. Such was the case with this new order to refrain from walking abroad upon Lord's Day.

Mr Guffin, Little Julia, and Simon walked down Creed Lane and The Wardrobe to Baynards Castle, on this mild December afternoon, and began to pace the pleasant path which lay between the Castle and the water. There were few people about; the majority of the cits seemed resolved to obey this fantastic decree, observed Mr Guffin; and he smiled pityingly to himself at his neighbours' timidity. It was melancholy having no friends and acquaintances to greet, yet here

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was the dear old river and the wondrous London air, there were the fascinating wharves with all kinds of craft lying alongside of them, and over the water the familiar views of Lambeth, once the home of my Lord Archbishop, and to the east the roofs of Southwark, the clustering houses upon the Bridge, and the domes of the deserted bear-pits and theatres.

And here were the swans to feed from the bag of crumbs Little Julia had brought with her for the purpose, and the sport of picking out the different owners of each swan by its mark. Apart from the King, the only persons traditionally permitted to own a "game of swans" upon London River were the brethren of the Vintners' and the Dyers' Companies; and every August, at the great swan-upping which took place under the eye of the City Corporation, distinguishing nicks were cut in the birds' bills by the swan-herds. Mr Guffin entertained his children by explaining to them the meaning of a trade-sign very common in London. The Swan with Two Necks, said he, was really the swan with two nicks, but, because the signs were always above the level of the pedestrian's eye, these nicks might pass unnoticed, and so two nicks had been corrupted into two necks, and in place of the familiar Thames swan you had a fabulous bird which puzzled every "foreigner."

"There are soldiers in the barge yonder," said Little Julia, when he had finished giving them this interesting information.

"I would sooner look upon the swans," said her father rather tartly.

"But they are signing to us, Father," persisted Little Julia. "Methinks we should turn back."

"Pish, wench," cried her father, "are we to be turned from an innocent promenade by a parcel of redcoats? They may constrain me to open my purse-strings if I go not to St Faith's upon the Sabbath, but they durst not meddle with me if I choose to take a peaceable airing in the afternoon."

"Ned Walsh was telling me," remarked Simon, kicking a stone along as he went, "that his father never goes to church at all. He saith he is so poor a man that the Parliament doth

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not concern itself whether he worships the Lord or no, because they can get no money from him if he doth not."

"Maybe they will hang Ned's father one of these fine days," said Mr Guffin darkly. "For there is no man too poor to be hanged."

"If your own trade decays still further, sir," said Simon hopefully, "do you think that we shall not have to go to St Faith's of a Sunday, and listen to——"

He was interrupted by a great shout which came echoing across the water from the occupants of the solitary barge. The father and his two children turned their heads in that direction, and beheld the soldiers standing up in the boat, waving their arms, and very obviously threatening them.

"I believe that he with the gorget and buff-coat is priming his musket," said Little Julia, taking Simon firmly by the hand. "Prithee, sir, let us go back into The Wardrobe where we may be out of their reach."

But Mr Guffin was suddenly obstinate. This obstinacy was born, had he but known it, of a new and intolerable fear; he had not believed that the Parliament durst enforce their fantastic decree, and just because his confidence was on a sudden shaken, just because a doubt as to their fanaticism having limits hit him full in the diaphragm, his immediate reaction was one of bravado. He was a citizen, a freeman of London, and he had his rights. He was by nature peace-loving, somewhat timid, hating unpleasantness, and, given time to think, he would invariably choose the way of compromise, the middle path of safety. But taken suddenly and unawares he was liable to act out of his ordinary character; he was apt to display the hero which lurks in the breast of all his kind.

He walked upon his way, grasping a hand of each of his children. He looked straight in front of him; and he hummed a tune. His shoulders squared, his head up, his huge body proudly marching, he became all unawares not a man but a type. He said, not knowing what he was going to say, the words drawn out of some unplumbed depth of his spirit:

"I am a free-born Englishman, and I will walk by London River upon my lawful occasions if and when I so choose.

Whiles I observe the law of the land, and the custom of the City, there is no man durst——"

His teeth snapped upon the last word and bit it off most violently, for, as if challenging it, the new world of power and regulation blew up the old world of authority and law in one mighty explosion. It was -gone in a moment, that horrific sound; so swift was its passing that he did not know what had happened, nor from whence the sound had proceeded, until, staring stupidly across the water, he saw one of the ired-coats recharging his smoking matchlock, while the rest, with threatening gestures, indicated to Mr Guffin that their comrade was determined to purge the City of an ungodly and disobedient cit.

But Mr Guffin only stood there gaping until a cry from Simon brought him to his senses. Simon, his face as white as paper, his eyes enormous, was staring at Little Julia; and Little Julia, pale also but controlled, was examining her cloak, in which the soldier's bullet had torn a large and jagged hole. Then did Mr Guffin straightway forget the soldiers and his rights, and taking his two offspring by the scruff of their necks ran them up The Wardrobe as fast as his legs could carry him. There, out of range of the barge, he inspected Little Julia for damages; and though she assured him that she had taken no hurt, his anguished enquiries and frantic examination of his daughter's person had collected a small crowd about him before he could rest satisfied that she spoke the truth.

But Simon stood apart and stared back to where the red-coats in their barge policed London River. He had feared them; they had invaded his dreams of late, jostling red dragons and black frogs and other monsters from the Book of Revelation. But now he felt lhat fear within his breast being slowly ousted by some other emotion; it was as though the cold heap of his terror were being warmed by a spark which, all unsuspected, had lain beneath it. He said aloud, not knowing that he spoke, unconsciously articulating a desire he knew not he possessed:

"I would King Charles were come home."

(4)

London's deliverance from the Parliament of Saints was nearer at hand than any of her citizens realised. It was but a day or two after Mr Guffin's disturbing experience by the river that the extraordinary tidings reached him that the Parliament of Saints had gone the way of the Long Parliament, and that yet another novel experiment was to be made in the business of governing England.

It was one of the innumerable Days of Humiliation with which the Parliament of Saints saw fit to interrupt the trade of London. All shops and taverns must be closed on such occasions, no street-vendor might sell his wares, even the water-cobs were forbidden to go their rounds, and every citizen and his family must attend church at least once during the day. Mr Guffin had gone to St Faith's this morning, and had pottered about in his tavern all afternoon, grumbling to himself about the loss of trade and not daring even to polish his tankards lest some Government agent came prying at his door to see that he was observing the solemnity of the occasion. By the time that darkness fell, however, the weather had turned so foul that he felt himself safe from intrusion, and he was resolved to spend a pleasant evening.

The arts of playing and singing were traditionally considered, by all classes in the City, to be of infinitely more importance than the Three Rs, and in the old days it had been Mr Guffin's frequent custom to spend his winter leisure hours in some music with his family. Of late the pleasant habit had been discontinued, partly because Mr Guffin had little leisure, what with Ned's trancies and Thomas's continued absence, and partly because the soldiers billeted upon him frowned upon all jollity, even of the most innocent description. Hearing the sounds of it in the common-room, they would come downstairs and complain that it hindered them in their wrestlings with Satan or in their religious controversies. To-day, however, the soldiers had departed; they had warned Mr Guffin ere they left that he must expect fresh military guests within

a little while; but for the moment he was to be left unprotected (as they termed it) while they joined their regiment which was ordered to relieve Hewson's in the North. This was the first indication Mr Guffin had received that his eldest son was expected back in London; and since he, confirmed optimist that he was, was always expecting to find Thomas changed back from the fanatical soldier to the ordinary young citizen, he was very glad at the news.

The common-room of The Three Griffins looked snug and cosy to-night, with the shutters up, the door locked, a bright fire of sea-coal burning on the hearth, and the father and his two youngest children at their music (for Sarah was out as usual). Sitting here at his own fireside, with Simon roasting chestnuts on the hearth and Little Julia turning the leaves of a music-book, Mr Guffin almost succeeded in persuading himself that he had dreamed last Sunday's horrible experience. Little Julia herself had made light of it, and the three had wended their way homeward without further mishap, though Mr Guffin had continued all the way to voice his indignation with the soldiers. But there was no doubt of it, the experience had had a strange effect upon Simon; the boy had not said very much, but he had been very preoccupied ever since, with an odd, new independence of manner. He had not once screamed out in nightmare, nor did he dog Little Julia's footsteps as he was used to do. His father, glad only to see a little colour returning to the boy's pale cheeks, and some of his former timidity and nervousness depart from his manner, did not attempt to discover the real nature of the change.

Simon had fetched out from some secret cache this evening an old, soiled copy of a favourite music-book: *Pammelia's Miscellanies: or Mixed Varieties of pleasant Roundelays and delightful Catches*, to his father's astonishment and misgiving, for all such books were banned. It was only last week that a chapman had been pilloried for hawking that most innocuous and cherished of childish collections, *Robin Hood's Garland*. However, with the door locked, the soldiers gone, and the foulness of the night making intrusion unlikely, Mr Guffin had decided to treat himself and his family to an hour or so with *Pammelia's*

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Miscellanie. He sat in the centre of the little group, with a viol de gamba between his knees, an instrument befitting his bigness; Little Julia, flaxen hair tied with a new blue ribbon, clean apron pinned over her gown,"sat on a stool beside him, holding her pear-shaped lute, and on the other side Simon called forth the deeper note of the theorbo. So, very happily, and very tunefully too, they indulged in catches, madrigals and roundelays; Little Julia sang them a canzone, *I prithee, sweet heart, come- tell me and do not lie*, while Mr Guffin imbibed some cock-ale she had brewed for him, and Simon munched saffron cakes with raisins in them, and set out a new army of chestnuts to beroasted.

"Let us have another of those, my wench," exclaimed Mr Guffin when the song ended, "for you have a sweet pretty voice I warrant you, and that is a rare English song."

"Let us have *The Downfall of Charing Cross*" said Simon, sucking a finger which too eagerly had touched one of the hot chestnuts, "for that is a merry song."

Without waiting for permission, he uplifted his shrill voice and sang lustily:

"Methinks the Common Council should
Of it have taken pity,
'Cause, good old cross, it always stood
So firmly to the City.
Since crosses you so much disdain,
Faith, if I were you,
For fear the King should rule again,
I'd pull down Tyburn too."

His father, who had been shushing him all the time he was singing, now roared:

"Peace, I say, peace, Jack Sauce 1 You will hang us all by such treasonable catches. Nay, Julia, my treasure, let us have *Cherry-ripe*, for you know I do dote upon that"

"Why, that will hang you as surely as the other," observed the pert Simon, "for it was writ by Master Herrick, and he was a Cavee and a Church of England clergyman to boot."

Mr Guffin waved this impertinence aside, and motioned Little Julia to do as she was bid. So, obedient as ever, his

daughter plucked her lute-strings with soft fingers and, in **her** frail, true treble, sang her father's favourite song:

"Cherry-ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones, come and buy.
If so be you ask me where
They do grow, I answer there,
Where my Julia's lips do smile,
There's the land, or cherry-isle I
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow."

And Mr Guffin, beating time with his ale-can, and thinking nostalgically of the street-cries which all that day he had not heard, took up the chorus in his deep bass :

"Cherry-ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones, come and buy."

He was lingering over the last notes, allowing his voice to fade away in an artistic manner, when, suddenly and without warning, there came a great knocking at the street door. His ruddy face paled; even on such a night, it seemed, the prying bullies of Jehovah were seeking victims of their fanaticism. Feverishly thrusting the musical instruments into the settle, and secreting *Pammelia's Miscellanie* under the ale-stond, he went to the door with a sinking heart, and opened it. The night was dark, and he had but time to see a man's figure standing there before his visitor had pushed past him into the room. He turned sharply; and in a great wave of relief he recognised his son James.

Yet, when he had shut and locked the door again, and had turned with a welcome on his lips, his relief changed to astonishment, not untinged with alarm. James had sunk into the nearest chair and was leaning heavily against its back, his arms hanging limply on either side of him. He seemed as though he had been running, for he panted as he sat; his shoes were caked with mud, his fine cloak was sopping, his hat was gone, and his hair, which he had grown since leaving the City, hung about his neck in dark, wet tangles. His face was an odd colour, white about the mouth, but patched on the cheek-

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bones with an angry red, and his eyes glittered as though with fever.

"Lackaday, James," exclaimed his anxious father, "art sick? Sim, go fetch some aqua vitae; Julia, my love, place some coals in the warming-pan, and heat his bed. Come, my son, let us draw off those wet clothes, for I vow you will take a chill else."

But as his father stooped to unfasten his shoes, James leapt to his feet and began to pace the room. As he paced he talked, rapidly and with scarcely a pause; he did not seem to be aware of the presence of his family, but spoke as it were to himself, feverishly, distractedly, sometimes beating his hands together, while his eyes roamed wildly from side to side, seeking comfort and finding none.

"There was assembled at Westminster to-day this thing, this miscalled Parliament, a pitiful thing indeed, yet having somewhat of good in it, being resolved to clip the wings of the monstrous Army, and for this purpose considering a Bill to lay by certain regiments as being no longer necessary to the safety of the Commonwealth. Yet in this Parliament of under-spur-leathers, of spaniels and lickspittles, there were some more base than the rest, and these villains, very early this morning, did assemble ere the honestest men were gotten to the House, and one of them, Sir Charles Wolseley, a very great rogue, did move that 'the sitting of this Parliament any longer as now constituted will not be for the good of the Commonwealth, and that therefore it is requisite to deliver to the Lord General Cromwell the powers they had received from him.' Th&i immediately, instead of putting the question in due form, these traitors did rise and hasten to Whitehall, to advise the Lord General that the Parliament had dissolved itself."

At these words Mr Guffin brightened considerably. He did not know, and even had he known it is doubtful whether he would have cared, that the procedure of these "villains" had been unprecedented and quite out of order; all he grasped was the astonishing fact that the Parliament of Saints was about to end, and with it all its tyrannies. James seemed to sense

his elation, for he rounded upon his father and for the first time addressed him personally.

"Peradventure you think, sir, that you are now to have your liberties restored and that you will have a true Parliament in the room of this creature of the Army. Yet hear me further. There remained in the House, after these rogues had marched out of it, some thirty Members who, poor foolish men that they were, did comfort themselves that they were called of God to that place, even as the Lord General had told them at their first coming thither. These began forthwith to draw up a protest 'gainst their fellows' proceedings. But when they were in the midst of this business there did appear among them Lieutenant-Colonel White, a creature of Cromwell's, who bade them begone, and when they demanded a warrant, White did present instead a company of soldiers, who drove them out at push of pike and locked the door behind them."

At this news, Mr Guffin burst into a roar of laughter. The thing was a repeat performance and therefore had lost its enormity, and, while he had heard with apprehension, indignation, and alarm of the violent expulsion of the Long Parliament, he felt no such emotion at the like treatment of this absurd handful of fanatics. But his father's laughter seemed to sharpen James Guffin into one steel point of anger. He clasped his thin hands upon his breast, as though striving to keep within the confines of his body his passionate and outraged spirit, and his voice rose to a shrill cry which had so much of blatant sincerity in it that his father felt his own eyes prick with tears.

"Once more," cried James, "a Parliament, the only lawful form of government, is dissolved by soldiers and by a pack of Judases in the pay of soldiers. Who, then, shall rule you now? I will tell you: there is one man shall rule you, ay, after all the blood which hath been shed in defence of our liberties, after all the sworn promises of the Grandees of the Army that never again will they permit that a single person shall tyrannise over Englishmen—one man, I say, shall grasp the sceptre, even he who swore the loudest of any to abolish it for ever. This man is a soldier; he is the Lord General of the Army;

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and his will lies in his hilt. He shall rule you with the sword, though he may pretend it is a sceptre; and you shall feel his little finger heavier upon you than the loins of the House of Stuart. He will begin to rule you with a lie upon his lips, for he saith, forsooth, that he knew nothing of this so-called abdication of the Parliament; and that is a very marvellous thing that the Lord General of the Army should be ignorant that his soldiers were marched into the House of Commons to drive its Members forth at push of pike, without his privity. Likewise is it marvellous that he should accept instantly a new Constitution, drawn up without his knowledge (as he saith) by the Grandees of the Army, which same is called the Instrument of Government, and giveth into his hand the supreme power of the nation."

This time Mr Guffin was far from laughter. He stared at his son with mouth agape, and could not find a word to say. Femmes concluded, his voice lower, yet quite distinct and very bitter, and his body sunk again upon a chair:

"Within these next few days Oliver Cromwell is to be installed Protector of England. He is to have a Council of fifteen persons, to be chosen by him and to sit for life. In nine months' time he is pledged to call a Parliament, none to be admitted save those approved by the Council (that is, Cromwell), and no man having an assessment of less than £200 in land to vote. There is to *be raised* a revenue of one million and a quarter pounds" (he held up his hand to still a dismayed exclamation from his father), "of which huge sum only one-sixth is to be devoted to civil administration, the bulk to be used for the maintenance of the armed forces. The power of the sword is the Protector's absolutely, save when Parliament is sitting, which is to be but for five months in every three years, and even during its sitting its powers are left undefined. The Protector's Council is to sit in secret, and no reports of its debates are to be permitted to appear without leave of His High Mightiness." His voice, which had been growing more and more brittle, broke now, suddenly and pitifully. "The fair flower of our liberty, but yet in bud, is broke and trampled under the boot of the soldier. Our infant

Commonwealth is put to the sword, ay, and by the very man most pledged to defend it. Some of you have yet yearned in your hearts for a king; well, you shall not lack for one now. For peradventure, ere many months be past, you shall see him who already grasps the sceptre and the sword put on the crown as well."

(5)

When at last Mr Guffin had got poor James to bed, and had seen him fall into the sleep of exhaustion, the tavern-keeper, strangely restless, went out into the street, and watched the lanterns being extinguished before every door, as the hour struck which permitted the City to relapse into darkness.

But the rain had ceased, and he beheld one pure white light still riding in the sky, God Almighty's lantern, set there above the turmoil of ideologies and fanaticisms and crises and revolutions, for the comfort of puzzled and laborious men. And this white light of the moon struck down upon the Lud Gate, fast closed for the night, with its watchmen guarding it, deluding the citizens with a symbol of their former impregnability, warding liberties long violated, protecting an independence long raped. And upon the Lud Gate, beneath the Arms of London—the Cross of St George and the Sword of St Paul—he saw in the pale light the City motto, that strangely humble motto of the proudest and wealthiest city in the nation: *Domine dirige nos*.

And suddenly, instinctively, there echoed in his heart the same prayer, a heart which for so long had found the old familiar prayers forbidden, and which had fumbled for new prayers and found them not. Lifting his head from his stooping shoulders, Samuel Guffin the tavern-keeper (but no longer of The Three Crowns nor of Salutation Alley) clasped his hands as simply as a child and prayed fervently, from the depths of his bewildered heart:

"*Dotnine, dirige nos*—O Lord, direct us."

And then he went into his tavern and, sighing, locked the door.

PART THREE

CHAPTER I

(1)

ENVELOPED in her cloak and hood, with her hands clasped beneath her cloak and her eyes cast meditatively upon the ground in front of her, Sarah Guffin wended her way in the direction of Blackfriars, in which low neighbourhood, in the attic of an ale-house, Mr Feake the Fifth Monarchy preacher was wont to foretell, every Sunday morning, the imminent coming of King Jesus.

Usually upon such an errand her step was joyous, her expression eager, her whole soul radiant with hope and with certainty of triumph. For she, and the few hundreds who shared her beliefs, constituted the Little Remnant which alone was destined to remain faithful and which presently would provide members for a divine Privy Council. With what joy had they beheld the assembling of the Parliament of Saints last year; with what rapture had they seen the government of England bestowed upon the Lord's Freemen, to those who had a right with Christ in and according to the New Covenant. With what satisfaction had they read of the debates of that Parliament upon the abolition of all laws made by the Little Horn of Daniel (otherwise William the Conqueror) and the substitution of the Law of Moses. It had seemed that at last the reign of the Four Monarchies was ended, and that the reign of Christ and His Saints was about to begin.

The imminent arrival of Christ in person had for some while obsessed the unbalanced mind of Sarah to the exclusion of all else. When she rose in the morning she sped to her window, hoping that this indeed was the Day of Days, and that in the sky she would see the clouds of glory which heralded His coming; when she went out into the street at the cry of the water-cob, or to buy candles at the chandler's, she would pause many times to gaze upwards, searching for His sign in

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the heavens; and again at night she would stand at her window like a wise virgin, mindful of His warning that He would come like a thief in the night-time. She had prayed so fervently that He would deign to land somewhere in the neighbourhood of her home; she had a clear mental picture of His sudden appearance, poised upon a cloud, a celestial crown upon His head, a sharp sword issuing from His mouth, robes of unearthly whiteness clothing His person, hovering above an astonished London and descending majestically upon Ludgate Hill.

She had tried very hard to prepare her father for that great event. She had stood over him, when she ought to have been attending to her household duties, had quoted to him all the obscure prophecies of Daniel, and had given him in detail the fate of the unbelieving world. She had described the great earthquake, the thunders and the lightnings, the hail in which every stone had the weight of a talent, the feasting of the fowls upon the flesh of the damned, the lake of fire burning with brimstone. But it was in vain. He preferred *Mercurius Politicus* to Daniel, and even to the Book of Revelation; his soul was tanned with sin like a piece of neat's leather, as she had often told him, and his eyes were blind.

There were many like him, for the Saints were but a small company. Yet what of that? Had not the prophets declared that "A little one shall become a thousand and a small one a strong nation," and again, "A thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one"? When the Lamb descended suddenly upon Ludgate Hill, then indeed would the many flee before Him and His Remnant, those many unredeemed ones, Papists and Prelatists, Anabaptists and Seekers, Presbyterians and Antinomians, and all the rest of the Babylonian hordes. Mr Feake had informed the Remnant, only last Sunday, that the Gathered Churches were but "the outworks of Babylon" and must be swept away, having drunk with her in her fornication.

But now, alas, all was changed. Not that Christ's coming was any less imminent; but the Parliament of Saints had gone the way of the Long Parliament, and the London which it was to have purged and prepared for that coming was changed in a day to the City of Antichrist. When He landed upon

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Ludgate Hill He would find, not a London purged of tithes and patronage and magistrates and lawyers and the heathen laws of the Little Horn, but a London set under the heel of the most dissembling villain in the world, who now sat in the seat of authority, who usurped the throne of Jesus Christ, Oliver Cromwell, falsely called Protector.

Burdened with such sad reflections, Sarah came at length to the sign of The Honest Butcher (until lately The Jolly Butcher) in Ireland Yard. Upon the suppression of the great monastery of Blackfriars, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, all this neighbourhood had fallen into decay; portions of the old religious buildings yet remained, some in melancholy ruins, some converted into tenements. The Cutlers' Company, which had its hall in the vicinity, had annexed the old monastic gardens, enclosing them with a high wall and charging the public a penny for the privilege of walking in them; the Cutlers had planted orange-trees therein, but the scent of these could not compete with the odours of the district, especially as there was a lay-stall at the bottom of Water Lane which led down to the river. Once upon a time, William Shakespeare had owned a house here, and his fellow-actor, James Burbage, had used it for the production of stage-plays; but those had been the bad old days when London was resolved to be merry and had not so much as heard of the Wrath to Come.

Entering the ale-house, in company with several other Fifth Monarchists, Sarah climbed the narrow stair and came at length to the attic which the Honest Butcher, whose trade had suffered sorely from all these Days of Humiliation, let out every Sunday to Mr Feake's congregation at a good fat charge. The room was already crowded when Sarah entered, for it had been rumoured that Mr Feake had a more than ordinarily sensational pronouncement to make to-day; some of the elderly worshippers sat upon benches, the rest stood, kneeled, or squatted on the floor as the fancy took them, crushed together as thick as a Tyburn mob. At one end of the room, with the light from the dormer window falling full upon his face, kneeled Mr Feake himself, his arms crossed upon his breast, his body rigid in its tattered fustian suit, his emaciated face

set in harsh and tortured lines, his round brown eyes turned heavenward. Yes, it was quite evident that Mr Christopher Feake was in good form to-day.

When all had entered, and the door was shut, Mr Feake allowed a dramatic pause to ensue. Then, suddenly springing to his feet and extending wide his arms, he uttered in a voice of thunder these words:

"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the Saints. I spoke to them that were in power of late; I said to them 'Restore'; yet if ye will refuse this work, deliverance shall come, for it is revealed of God that it shall come, but woe be to you, as to the tail of the Fourth Monarchy, which is not as yet out of rule, for God hath tried and trusted you with the honour which else others shall take from you within a few years. Wherefore, said I, if ye be the men whom the Lord will own in this work, up then! and about it! for the body of laws lies ready for you in Exodus xx and likewise in Deuteronomy v, vi. Oh, that you might be used of God for Christ in this work of magnifying His law in this Commonwealth of England! But they would not hear me; they did the work of the Lord negligently, and therefore is a curse fallen upon them and they are swept away."

He paused. His congregation gazed at him in awe, gazed at this seer who had foreseen the destruction of the Parliament of Saints, and had most boldly foretold it.

"And I beheld," continued Mr Feake, staring fixedly at a cobweb on the ceiling, "and I beheld another Beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first Beast before him, and causeth all, both small and great, both bond and free, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their forehead. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the Beast; for it is the number

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of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six. And he shall deceive many. The first Beast," pursued Mr Feake, condescending to interpret, "he that rose out of the sea and hath one of his heads wounded to death, was Charles Stuart; and the second Beast which now cometh up out of the earth is Oliver Cromwell, falsely styled Protector, but the Saints of God shall have the victory over him likewise, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the Saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, and times, and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, and consume and destroy it unto the end."

Now for the first time a shuddering breath broke the stillness of his audience, as, with absolute faith and conviction, they saw themselves sitting in judgment upon this Beast which had dared delay the coming of the Fifth Monarchy and usurp the throne of King Jesus.

"But first," Mr Feake warned them, sensing their complacency, "first must he make war against the Saints, though afterwards he shall be delivered into their hands. There shall be given him a mouth speaking great blasphemies, and they that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And power shall be given unto him to continue forty and two months."

Again he paused, while many clumsy fingers reckoned up the sum, and many sighs testified that the answer had been arrived at. It seemed that there were three years and three-quarters of a year to go before 666 should be destroyed and the Lamb should come and reign in London.

"Because," thundered Mr Feake, to cheer them, "because he hath oppressed and forsaken the poor, because he hath violently taken away a house he builded not, surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly. O thou black Whitehall! Thou wert defiled with the feet of Charles, and now thou art altogether filthy with the feet of Oliver. Fah I Fah I thou dost

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stink of the brimstone of Sodom, of the smoke of the Bottomless Pit. The flying roll of God's curses shall overtake the family of that great Thief there; he that robbed us of the benefit of our tears, of our prayers, and of our blood. We are robbed of it, and the Cause of Christ is made the cause of man. He is the Seed of the Dragon, the Man of Sin, begotten in darkness, brought forth in weakness, nourished with unreasonableness, growing up in wickedness, to continue with shortness, and to be confounded with the fierceness of the Wrath of God. For the Lion of Judah shall altogether destroy the Beast and shall cast him into the Lake of Fire."

This time his pause was filled with hysterical weeping, partly of grief for past and present injustices, partly of joy for future triumph.

"Come, Little Remnant," Mr Feake exhorted them, leaning over them as though he would gather them to his breast, "come, prepare your companies, for King Jesus His muster day must shortly be at hand. His magazines and artillery, yea, His most excellent mortar-pieces and batteries are ready; we stay for the word from on high to fall-on, and faith and prayer to do the execution according to the revelation bestowed upon us: 'Reward her as she hath rewarded you'; which she is the City of Babylon. Then, by the grace of God, the proudest among them all shall know we are engaged on life and death to sink or swim, to stand or fall, with the Lord Jesus our Captain General upon His red horse against the Beast's government, so as neither to give nor take quarter according to His orders. The Sword of the Lord is whetted against the enemies of His Remnant; it is a sharp sickle and the grapes of Babylon are fully ripe. My brethren and sisters, let us enquire of this City: 'Wilt thou have Oliver Cromwell or Jesus Christ to reign over thee? Wilt thou have the Beast or the Lamb?' Let us go home and pray, having in our minds the word of the Prophet Daniel: 'A small matter would fetch him down with little noise. . . .'"

Sarah returned to her father's tavern after the meeting, with her soul comforted by the release of so much emotion, but with her mind cast down by the tidings she had heard. There

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were nearly four years, it seemed, ere she could expect to see King Jesus descending in a cloud upon Ludgate Hill, and meantime the Remnant must be oppressed by 666. She was filled with a kind of holy exasperation when she thought of Cromwell. Up till now, the Remnant had given him every encouragement, believing that he was appointed to prepare the way for the Fifth Monarchy which must succeed the Assyrian, the Persian, the Greek, and the Roman, and which was destined to last for a thousand years. But personal ambition had seduced him; he had made the Cause of Christ the cause of man, even as Mr Feake had said, and was now shown in his true colours, the colours of the Beast with the horns of a lamb and the voice of a dragon and the mysterious number which only the Remnant could interpret correctly.

Entering the kitchen of The Three Griffins, Sarah found her father sitting in his elbow-chair with a tankard of ale, and Little Julia busily preparing dinner. Mr Guffin grunted a greeting, and then snapped irritably at his younger daughter who came to put some coal on the fire:

"You will bring me upon the parish with your thriftlessness. If I have as much as will maintain a long bladder and a large belly at the year's end, you may call me a Dutchman. Neighbour Plumstead of The David and Goliath was telling me this morning after service that the excise is to be raised again, and therefore is it a vanity in us to hope for trade. The height to which it is raised already maddens the merchants; and albeit we are now to have peace with the Dutch, it is the common cry of the town that the Protector is set upon a new war, either with France or Spain, he careth not which so the other will pay for his friendship. I see not what he would be at, so to plunge the nation into new strife when she groans already under so grievous a burden of debt."

"Fear not," said Sarah kindly, taking off her cloak, "for he shall not long continue. It is written: 'Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom; but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger nor in battle.' Daniel xi, 20. Now, by a few days is intended——"

"A fart for Daniel!" crossly interrupted her father, who

indeed was growing very weary of that prophet. "What I would know is, how may he levy taxes without a Parliament? Was it not for this that he and his party were so hot against King Charles? And I cannot but remember that we had the blessing of peace in the time of King Charles his personal rule, where now we must be at the throats of half the nations of Europe, and though we empty our purses to pay for this vast Army, we must find yet more to pay a huge force of seamen. Was it not but lately that we had three or four hundred seamen rampaging through the streets, demanding their arrears, ay, and so dangerous was their aspect that the Protector was constrained to call out a regiment of foot and four troops of horse to disperse 'em. Therefore I would know—pest take you, wench, you and your Daniels have made me forget what I would say."

"I bid you be of good cheer," persisted Sarah, "for soon shall the appointed days be spent, and then shall the he-goat cease from troubling the sanctuary."

Mr Guffin, very unwisely, asked her what she was talking about, and straightway was treated to another of Daniel's mysterious prophecies, full of rams and he-goats and other monsters, until he sharply bade her hold her tongue.

"As for you, my wench," said Mr Guffin severely, "you had best have a care, for I hear there is an ordinance made by the Council that henceforth it shall be treason to speak or to preach against the Protector; and they say that if that man could be found who, during Cromwell's late visit to Guildhall, did fling a stone into the open window of his coach, he would certainly be hanged out of hand. Yet I must confess," added Mr Guffin with a sigh, "that I misliked that ceremony myself, for though the Protector was accorded the honours of a king, and appeared very richly dressed and amiable, his attendants were for the most part of the military, which made it plain that his government is founded on the sword. There was not a voice which cheered him, save those of his soldiers, and upon my soul I could not find it in my heart to blame the city. Yet you, wench, and your canting friends, I say must have a care, for your Feakes and your Rogers and your

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Simpsons are no strangers to Newgate, and Cromwell most plainly is resolved to brook no resistance to his government."

Sarah clasped her hands upon her breast in imitation of one of Mr Feake's favourite gestures.

"Because," she declaimed, "they can find no fault in us, they must dig a pit for us to catch us. Then said these men, we shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the laws of his God. Daniel vi, 5. But we, like the prophet, will open our windows towards Jerusalem, and we will kneel upon our knees three times a day, and pray to our God as we did aforetime. And if they cast us among the lions, the Lord our God will send His angel to shut the lions' mouths, and those wicked ones that did accuse us shall be cast into the bottom of the den, they and their wives and children, and the lions shall devour them all."

"Dinner is ready," said Little Julia, placing a cold leg of pork upon the table.

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Sergeant Thomas Guffin was new returned from Scotland.

After a brief rest at Newcastle last December, his regiment had been ordered North once more, and, under the new commander-in-chief for Scotland, George Monck, had spent three-quarters of a year assisting in the work of reducing to obedience that perversely disaffected country. Protestant brethren the Scots might be; the fact remained that they had taken up arms on behalf of young Charles Stuart, and then had most obstinately resisted the incorporation of their nation with England. One of their ministers had so far forgotten himself as to declare that "as for the embodying Scotland with England, it will be as when the poor bird is embodied with the hawk which hath eaten her up."

Such base ingratitude exasperated Corporal Thomas Guffin (as he was then); he was still more exasperated when it was discovered that the Scots had most wickedly and successfully hidden the Honours of Scotland, as they called them, the

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Crown, the Sceptre, and the Sword. It was therefore with zeal and willingness that he had marched off with his regiment to punish Scotland, and he had shown such fervour in battering down the King's Arms upon Edinburgh mercat-cross, and hanging the remnants upon the gallows, that he was made Sergeant Guffin overnight. He now shouldered his pike on the march, the distinguishing mark of a sergeant from the days when they had carried halberds only, that they might run the quicker up and down the marching ranks; he enjoyed the privilege of striking his men when they erred; and to him was committed the important task of drilling his company. Also, of course, he was now entitled to tenpence a day in place of eightpence; what he actually received was a "debenture" secured upon the public faith, and when he was pressed for ready cash he was wont to sell a bundle of these debentures to his captain for one-and-sixpence in the pound. (The officers' excuse for this low rate was that they would have to wait a long time before they realised the actual money; their custom was, however, to invest the debentures of their men in one of the innumerable forfeited estates, and a very good thing they made out of the practice.)

Having secured the line of the Forth by the establishment of military posts at Dunstaffnage, Glasgow, and Dumbarton, and having guarded the Tay by the occupation of Weem Castle, the destruction of the small Royalist garrison at the foot of the loch, and the burning of Garth, Monck proceeded to his task of crushing the spirit of revolt in the Highlands. It was a mighty task, and a wearisome one, for he was a man who believed in doing things thoroughly. He had had good experience with Cromwell and Ireton in Ireland of the proper way of treating the enemies of the Commonwealth, and now showed himself an apt pupil.

He began with the lands of Lochiel, systematically burning and destroying every habitation and every crop he found upon his line of march, nor did he disdain to turn aside if he heard that a party of refugees, however small and harmless, was skulking in the hills. It was a wasps' nest, this Highlands, and it had got to be burnt out. Working his way northwards,

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he marched through Glenmoriston, raising fire in the homesteads throughout that country, driving off the beasts and cutting down the forests, and so to the lands of the MacKenzies. By August he could write complacently to the Protector in London: "Myself am now destroying all the country on this side of the hills, where the enemy used to shelter themselves in winter. I have fired every house I've come upon, and have laid waste their crops, which will be a means to quiet them or nothing." In September Hewson's Foot were relieved again, and began the long march to London for a well-earned rest.

That he had assisted in so glorious a conquest was, of course, a matter of profound satisfaction to Sergeant Thomas Guffin; nevertheless he did not return to London in a very amiable mood. Just before leaving Scotland he had been put in the Whirligig, by order of a court martial, for appearing on parade in a pair of shoes which had the toes worn through. After being whirled round in the circular wooden cage for half an hour, with such velocity that he vomited through every aperture of it, Thomas had some excuse for the venom with which he demanded of his comrades round the camp-fire that night:

"How can it be thought that a poor sergeant may give four shillings for new ammunition-shoes, that never received so much these three years?"

So humanly indignant was Sergeant Thomas Guffin on this occasion, that he quite omitted to quote any texts at all.

He was used, of course, to being without pay, but until this time, whenever he had been on active service, he had been given the rewards of "lawful plunder." Not that this practice was discontinued; it was simply that, in the Highlands of Scotland, wherein he had passed so strenuous a summer, there was no plunder to be had. Never had he seen such stark poverty, and the sight of it had put the finishing touch to his dislike of the Scottish nation, which in any case, being Presbyterian, was in error and therefore in imminent danger of Hell Fire. The Assyrians, the Hittites, the Philistines, the Jebusites, and all the other enemies of Israel, they too, of course, had been in error, but at least they had been rich, and when the

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Israelites had wrought the vengeance of the Lord upon them they had yielded goodly spoil for the victors, camels and flocks and herds, and vessels of gold and silver for the taking. But in the Highlands there was nothing; there was no loot of any description; even among the Papist clans there had been none of the jewelled vestments, the gold chalices, the brocaded altar-cloths, which had made such welcome prizes for the victors in the Irish campaign. And now he was marching south, and there was a rumour that Colonel Hewson was to be given lands worth £3000 a year as a reward for his services. It was small comfort that Hewson was promising his disgruntled troops that he would demand an increase of their pay from eightpence to tenpence for a common soldier, and from tenpence to a shilling for a sergeant. Tenpence a day was as good as a shilling when each was merely an IO U.

When Thomas reached London, Cromwell's First Protectorate Parliament had just assembled, and the City was full of talk concerning it. The Protector had gone to infinite trouble to ensure that none of his critics should be returned. All Papists, Royalists, and Church of England men were excluded automatically; there was nothing new in that. What was new was that the time-honoured forty-shilling freeholder was deprived of his vote (because the poorer classes in the nation were growing steadily more hostile to Cromwell), and in the counties the new and extraordinary £200 franchise was ordered. The franchise was further restricted by an order that the old indenture in which the returning officer and the principal electors certified that the candidates in it were duly chosen, be laid aside in favour of a declaration by these persons that the Members they had elected were debarred from altering the Government "as now settled in a single person and Parliament."

Yet there had been trouble, Thomas learnt, from the beginning. A fair number of Cromwell's critics had managed to get themselves elected, partly because the returning officer was quite unable to say whether an elector's property would fetch £200 in the open market, so that many with feelings hostile to the Government were able to record their vote under this

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pretext. Cromwell had assured his new Parliament that he was their fellow-servant, and had repudiated any idea of having dominion over them; but no sooner was the House sat down, after the now customary Day of Humiliation, than certain Members had begun at once to show that they were far from satisfied with the man who had summoned them by his writs.

One complained of Cromwell's arrogance in summoning the House to his lodging the previous week, whereas the Kings of England had been accustomed to meet Parliament at Westminster. Another asked why they should leave the control of the Army and the law to a single person. Nor was Parliament at all inclined to accept in its entirety the new Constitution, or, as it was called, the Instrument of Government. They had begun to examine and to debate upon this when, on 12th September, only ten days after their first assembling, they arrived at their House to find the doors locked against them, the familiar redcoats on guard, and the curt message ready for them that they must go at once to the Painted Chamber, where the Protector had somewhat to say to them.

In a long and passionate speech, he told them that he had never desired the office of Protector, but that now it was his he was resolved to maintain it. He reminded them ominously of the fate of the Parliament of Saints, their predecessor; he recited the history of his own services to the nation; and he asserted that he would have the signature of every man present to the Recognition, a very slightly modified version of the Instrument of Government, before he would allow them to return to their House. "I say," he concluded violently, "that the wilful throwing away of this government, so owned by God, so approved by man, I can sooner be willing to be rolled in my grave and buried with infamy than I can give my assent unto."

Before evening, nearly one hundred Members had accepted this ultimatum and had been permitted to return to their seats. A few days later the Protector very nearly was "rolled in his grave," by his own reckless driving of some new coach-horses in the Hyde Park, which he had annexed for his private use; and a reward was posted for the exposure of the anony-

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mous pamphleteer who had expressed the fervent hope that the Protector's next ride would be in the hangman's cart.

All this Thomas Guffin heard when he returned to London, but he heard it without much interest. He still retained for Cromwell an unbounded admiration and would hear no word against him, for it was plain to him (as it was only too plain to the nation at large) that the Protector's power rested upon the Army, upon the Legions of the Lord of Hosts. But just at this moment Thomas was obsessed by his financial embarrassment and his private grievances, and was therefore in no mood to concern himself with public affairs. True, he could live upon his father during his leave, and there being no amusements left on which to spend money he ought to have been content to wander about the City with an empty purse. He was not by nature greedy, but never before had he returned from a campaign without plunder, and believing as he did, most sincerely, that God bestows material rewards upon those who fight His battles, it seemed to Thomas very unfair that on this occasion, after so strenuously and successfully crushing the Ammonites, otherwise the Highlanders of Scotland, he should return to his home without a single spoil.

It was the custom of Thomas's spiritual brethren very sturdily and frankly to rebuke their God when He was guilty of any remissness, an example supplied for them by numerous patriarchs and prophets throughout the Old Testament. Thomas, therefore, in order to bring his Maker into a better frame of mind, harangued Him long and candidly on the subject of reward, reminding Him of the oil and wine and the other fatnesses which He ought to be pouring upon His just servant's head. Such harangues, however, could not entirely satisfy Thomas's outraged sense of justice; what he needed was a scapegoat, some object on which to avenge himself for Jehovah's lapse.

The obvious one was his sister Sarah. For Sarah was in error, very gravely in error, and it was his duty to chastise her spirit and to set it back upon the right path. Sarah referred to Cromwell as 666 (or sometimes, to vary it, as the Old Dragon, the Man of Sin, the Black Frog of Revelation, and

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other insulting titles); and this was not only treasonable, but downright blasphemous and entirely misinformed. The Old Dragon, Thomas hastened to point out to her, was not to be confounded with the Beast; the first was the Pope of Rome, but the second, the Beast which caused all men to worship the Dragon, was Charles Stuart. Sarah, however, was not to be corrected; she gave as good as she got, and proved a very unsatisfactory scapegoat, for she had acquired, since last he had seen her, almost as formidable a knowledge of the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation as he possessed himself.

Indeed, his entire family failed him most lamentably in his present mood. His father grumbled endlessly about trade and taxation, and was beginning to imbibe too much ale; James was absent with his master at Covent Garden; Little Julia was absorbed in her housewifery; and even Simon was not to be frightened as of old with thundering texts and terrifying quotations. Threatened by Thomas with the fate of the children who had mocked Elisha and had been devoured by bears, Simon merely replied that there were no bears in London nowadays, because Colonel Pride had slaughtered them all.

Denied an object within the bosom of his family on which to pour out the vials of his just discontentment, Thomas was fain to seek one further afield. Inevitably there was one at hand; and inevitably was Thomas led to attack it, for it was an old enemy. Its name in Thomas's language was either Aholah or Jezebel, but it had been christened Esther, and it lived at the sign of The Black Boy next door.

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The more he saw of Esther Cranton, sitting there at her parlour window, passing her time in choosing new lovers from among her husband's customers, the more fitted did she seem, to play the part of scapegoat in Thomas's quarrel with the Lord. Something had got to be done about Esther Cranton; it seemed to him almost incredible that in this

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purged and converted London she should still be permitted to sin unpunished, and naturally he did not believe young Richard Chick's intolerable suggestion that she was so permitted because the officers of the New Model Army were her best customers. Evidently, however, the Lord only tolerated her until the instrument ordained for her destruction was at hand. In his present mood, Thomas very easily persuaded himself that he was that instrument.

During the days of his idleness, Mrs Cranton became an obsession with poor Thomas. He loathed her, yet at the same time she seemed to have a horrible fascination for him; the thought of her made his flesh squirm and his fingers clench and the sweat break out upon his forehead, yet he could not stop thinking about her. It was all very well to regard himself as the instrument chosen to bring destruction upon her; the Lord could have destroyed her long ago, and much more easily and safely; and Jehovah's remissness in the matter of Mrs Cranton was another mark chalked up on the score of Jehovah's debt to Thomas Guffin. After all, the Lord had plenty of means at His disposal for dealing with that sort of creature; He could strike her dead with His lightnings, or He could afflict her with some terrible and deadly disease; or He could send His angel to give her a push as she leant from her window, for all the world like Jezebel, enticing men to their ruin. Whereas all His servant Thomas could do was to denounce her, to her face and behind her back; and Mrs Esther Cranton seemed perversely indifferent to that sort of punishment.

After a week of hating Esther Cranton all day and dreaming about her every night, Thomas decided that some sort of active attack was necessary. Before his leave was ended he must find some means of ridding his native city of this female pest, and since the Lord seemed unwilling to co-operate he must rely upon himself in this holy task. It was his duty, he decided, to force a private interview with the adulteress, and shame her into believing the fact of her own damnation by his own burning assurances.

For it was plain to him by this time that Mrs Cranton liked

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him to denounce her in public; it drew a crowd, and Mrs Cranton liked crowds; very unfortunately the crowds seemed to like her in return. She was the one bright spot in the New Jerusalem. Instead of listening to what Thomas thundered against her, they would stand and gape at Mrs Cranton, craning a-tiptoe to get a better view of that generous expanse of bosom, and sniggering at the pithy answers she made to Thomas's denunciations. Therefore would he beard her in her den; he would pollute his feet by entering that sink of iniquity, and he would wring her soul within her. He called to mind various instances in the Scriptures when the godly had thus debased themselves for the benefit of their fellow-men, and he was strengthened for his task by the remembrance. But he wished most passionately that he could deal with Esther Cranton as the Levite had dealt with his concubine, could take a knife and lay hold of her, and divide her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and send them into all the coasts of Israel. He was compelled to admit, however, that such drastic measures could scarcely be used with safety by anyone under the rank of Colonel.

So, having armed himself with a fresh delving into Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Haggai, Amos, and other obscure prophets, Thomas set forth upon his holy errand. He had allowed the Lord to choose the time for him, and, having wrestled in prayer with many groans and much breast-beating, he had received an answer that he was to make no delay but was to betake himself to the sign of The Black Boy forthwith. Rising briskly from his knees in obedience to the divine command, Thomas strode forth with zest and confidence. It was plain to him that the haste of the Lord signified that Jehovah had repented Him of His weakness in regard to Esther Cranton, and that the hour of her humiliation was at hand. It was two of the clock on a Wednesday afternoon, long past the dinner-hour. Mr Cranton would be busy downstairs, extracting teeth, applying leeches, and shaving chins; Mrs Cranton (alas) would be equally busy abovestairs, at her most filthy trade. He did so hope, did Thomas, licking lips gone suddenly dry, that he might take her in the act.

This hope, at least, was doomed to disappointment. For when, having mounted the outside stair, Thomas burst without ceremony into the chamber of uncleanness, there was no one within it but Mrs Cranton herself, reclining on her couch by the window as usual, fanning herself, eating sugar-plums, and looking down upon the street. There was no lover present to be flayed with burning words and then (for Thomas was a stalwart young man and had besides the authority of his uniform) precipitated into the street with a sore posterior.

Esther Cranton lazily turned her head at the sound of the opening door, saw Thomas standing there in all the splendour of his red cassock and shining combe-cap, and arched her fine eyebrows. She did not look disappointed; most certainly she did not look alarmed. Then she smiled at him, somewhat enigmatically, and said that he was very welcome; she called him "neighbour," and she waved one plump white hand towards a chair, courteously inviting him to seat himself.

"I take it very kindly of you, neighbour," said Mrs Cranton in that rich drawling voice of hers which seemed always to have a caress in it, "to call upon me, for I did not think I had the honour of your approval."

"I am commanded of the Lord to call upon thee," announced Thomas, striding to the middle of the apartment and most sternly regarding her, "for that I must make known to thee thy doom. Wouldst thou have me be as Jonah, who fled from the presence of the Lord to Tarshish, because he feared to cry against the wickedness of Nineveh?"

"No, indeed," replied Mrs Cranton gravely, "I would not have you to flee anywhere on so warm an afternoon, for I fear you would find it mighty fatiguing. And how doth your good father? Prithree tell him how much I relished the cask of Canary he was pleased to send me on my birthday. 'Twas sweet, and Lord! how I do dote upon sweet things. I'll warrant you dote upon 'em likewise, neighbour, when you have a little leisure from fighting and slaying, for they make bitter work."

He wished so much that he could strike her. His whole body yearned for physical revenge. But he must leave that

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to Jehovah; his task was to wring her damned soul with words, to wither her with his tongue, and thus to pluck as brands from the burning the souls of all her would-be lovers.

"Thou art," began Thomas, sticking his thumbs into his belt, and summoning up his knowledge of Scripture, "the strange woman that flattereth with words. Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the Covenant of her God. For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go in to her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life. Proverbs ii, verses 16 to 20."

"God's lid," murmured Mrs Cranton, still gently fanning herself, "what a monster you would make me out to be. I am sure, neighbour, that I never caused hurt to any man, and that all who find their way into my chamber find their way out again, and are much refreshed into the bargain."

"Refreshed!" yelped Thomas, aghast at such brazenness. "Is a man refreshed with fornication?"

"Excellently so. You should try a bout for yourself and see."

"Take heed, I bid you take heed, woman," snarled Thomas. "For the dogs shall eat you by the walls of Jezreel, even as Elijah prophesied."

Mrs Cranton regarded him for a moment with a kindly smile. Then she said, beginning to use her fan again:

"Will you take a glass of your father's fine Canary, neighbour? For methinks you are not yourself."

"Wine is a mocker," retorted Thomas, waving her away, "strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." ("And you the son of a tavern-keeper!" chided Mrs Cranton *sotto voce*.) "Think upon Jezebel, she that painted her face and tired her hair and looked out of the window. And Jehu lifted up his face and said: Who is on my side, who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs."

"Slight!" exclaimed Mrs Cranton, startled. "What were they doing up there?"

"And he said," continued Thomas, ignoring the interruption, "Throw her down. So they threw her down; and some of

her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: **and** he trod her underfoot."

"Now marry come up!" cried Mrs Cranton. "The poor punk!"

"And they went to bury her," inexorably pursued Thomas, "but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. And again: The carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel, i Kings, chapter ix."

"Why, here is a pleasant tale for a summer's afternoon," smiled Mrs Cranton, selecting another sugar-plum.

"Repent!" bellowed Thomas, the veins standing out upon his forehead from the greatness of his wrath. "Repent, I say, thou harlot, for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? And I gave her space to repent her fornication, and she repented not. Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. Revelation ii, 22.

"Pox on't," observed Mrs Cranton brightly, "but I would like fine to see that bed, for I do dote upon all curiosities. It must be huger even than the Great Bed of Ware."

Thomas took a turn or two about the room, breathing hard. Then, pausing beside her, and thrusting his head towards her with a menacing air, he demanded:

"Art thou acquainted with Solomon's Strange Woman?"

"Now, pray what woman would that be?" asked Mrs Cranton, fluttering her eyelids at him and pretending a deep interest, "for it sticks in my mind that Solomon was well acquainted with my sex. I do bethink me he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (or was it t'other way round?), and among these were women of the Hittites and the Ammonites and other heathen tribes, whom I suppose that you would call strange women."

"Ay," retorted Thomas, somewhat nettled at finding the Scarlet Woman acquainted with Holy Writ, "and these were they which compelled him to worship Ashtoreth, the goddess

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of the Zidonians, in his old age. Thus did he write when repentance was vouchsafed him: The lips of a strange woman drop as a honey-comb, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Proverbs v, 3, 4."

"I wonder now," mused Mrs Cranton, "which of his thousand besses caused him write so fierce." She stifled a yawn with her fan. "He was a wondrous gamester, was King Solomon. He had a fan but wagged at him, and straightway did he fall a victim."

"Out, slut!" yelled Thomas. "Dost know the punishment for blasphemy?"

"'Tis scurvy to greet a lady so," reproved his tormentress. "I vow you sound like a soap-boiler upon a close-stool. Come, let us have no more dogged answers, but a glass of wine, and then, as the song says, we'll merry meet and merry part."

"I see what you would be at," snarled Thomas, the sweat of his rage running down his face. "You seek to entice me with your words, you seek to lay a snare for my feet with your honeyed speech. Nay, can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is for him? Amos iii, 5. Beware, filthy harlot, for God is not mocked. The Lord is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. Nahum i, 2."

There was silence for a moment. Mrs Cranton continued to fan herself and to munch her sugar-plums. Then she gave a little patient sigh, and said, in her richest drawl:

"I do believe, neighbour, you are fearful lest I should seduce you. Nay, rid yourself of any such apprehension, for, to speak blunt, I would as soon couple with a mandrake and conceive groans. And now, since we understand one another, give me leave to take farewell of you, for I do expect a friend to call upon me presently, and would make my toilet."

This shameless admission that she was about to ruin yet another soul added fuel to the already blazing fire of Thomas's wrath, and for the next five minutes he treated her to a perfect

tidal wave of denunciation, ranging far and wide through the Old Testament for passages wherein was described the punishment of adultery in this world and the next. Mrs Cranton bore it very patiently, only sighing once in a while, and hiding yawns behind her fan. But when he had ended, at last, she said to him distinctly, and with a slight edge to her voice (though her manner remained unruffled and her expression pleasant):

"Thomas Guffin, you had best have a care. I know very well what ails you and causes you to rave like a Tom o' Bedlam, though it would seem that you are deceived as to the nature of your ills. I bear your father great respect, for he is a most worthy man, and for his sake I would spare you; yet, if you will not leave tormenting me with your ravings, I must even take upon me the curing of your malady. I swear to you, and you had best take heed what I say, that my patience is very much tried and I am tempted *to* teach you a lesson."

"Dost presume to threaten me?" spluttered the incredulous Thomas. "Nay, think not, thou wicked one, that thou canst harm a servant of the Lord Most High. My soul was predestined to Eternal Bliss from my mother's womb, and is immune from the darts of thy malice. As for me, discretion shall preserve me, and understanding shall keep me; but the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and transgressors shall be rooted out of it."

"You should take a trifle of the Song of Solomon to sweeten his Proverbs," observed Mrs Cranton, turning away from him to show that the interview was at an end. "For though the last be well enough for ancients who are no longer able to give pleasure to their wives, the first is the proper reading for lusty young gallants like you. Pray carry my respects to your father, neighbour," added Mrs Cranton, reaching for her toilet-box and beginning to repair her face, "and may discretion preserve your virtue, poor saint of the last edition."

representatives, freely elected, and who bestowed upon you the inestimable blessing of a Commonwealth?"

Poor Rose was near to tears. She had unwittingly offended this handsome and amiable Master James, and she disliked offending anyone. And she could not make him understand what she meant, though it seemed to her so transparently simple. She tried again.

"I am sure," said she earnestly, "that the gentlemen of whom you speak are good, honest gentlemen, yet they do not sail down-river in grand barges as the King used to do, and they wear not fine robes and glittering crowns, nor do they have trumpets sounding before them when they go to dine. Likewise did they forbid us to have our holidays, so that now we have no holidays, but only Days of Humiliation, as they call them. But we would have a wondrous rare holiday if King Charles came back. Why, they say the conduits would spout wine, which any man would be free to drink for the taking; and that would be a rare sight. I have never seen our City conduits spouting wine; have you, Master James?"

It was as well that the entrance of Sarah at this moment interrupted a conversation which threatened to degenerate into rudeness on the one hand and tears upon the other. Sarah swept in by the back door like a cold wind; she paused to cast a glance upon the jolly and convivial group about the fire, sighed with ostentatious pity, and was crossing to the inner door without a word, when her father kindly enquired of her whether she had supped.

"I have supped upon woe," dramatically replied his daughter. "I have been carried in the spirit with Theauro-John to the Mount of Revelation, and there have I seen the Seven Last Plagues poured into their vials, which same shall soon be emptied upon this wicked City."

Rose Knee gave a little scream, and clutched James's arm.

"Let London hearken," declaimed the prophetess, raising an admonitory finger, "let the merchants which were made rich by her stand afar off for fear of her torment, weeping and saying, Alas, alas, that great City that was clothed in fine

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Proverbs of Solomon; he recalled the stern command: "Lust not after her beauty in thy heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids"; he rehearsed to himself the consequences of a lapse from virtue, "For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread; and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life." It was a tedious business, this appeasing of a playful Jehovah, and on this occasion Jehovah seemed to be in a particularly kittenish mood. Other words, Biblical still, nay, written by the selfsame hand, rose up and drowned the others in a heady sweetness: "Let me kiss thee with the kisses of my mouth, for thy love is better than wine. . . . Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely. Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks; thy breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. . . ."

It was all rather unfair on Thomas. Since the time of his conversion he had never encountered any serious temptations of a fleshly nature. His native sensuality had been assuaged by the heat of battle and by the terrible satisfaction of meting out vengeance upon the defeated; his mind had fed itself upon visions of the New Jerusalem, upon the triumph of the Elect, upon the bloody punishment soon to fall upon Babylon and her children; and, like a pair of blinkers, spiritual pride had concealed from him the knowledge of his own human weakness. And now the Lord would not let Thomas alone. He seemed resolved to go on plaguing His Chosen Servant, in order, no doubt, that He might add yet brighter jewels to the crown which one day He would place upon Thomas's head. Thomas for his part strove to comfort himself with a picture of that great day. When it came, he would look down from the Sea of Glass, from the Golden Streets, wearing his crown and his white robe, bearing in his hand the palm of the victor, and singing endless alleluias, he would look down upon Esther Cranton, devoured by worms, tortured in the flames of Hell, and he would have his reward for this great trial and testing.

But meanwhile the Lord appeared to be resolved to test to the uttermost Thomas's incorruptible virtue. Not content

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with burdening him with visions of a white bosom and seductive lips and a pair of eyes large with invitation, Jehovah now bestowed upon Thomas an unmistakable sign that he must again apply himself to a private denunciation of Mrs Cranton. Opening his Bible one morning, Thomas's eyes lighted instantly upon these words: "And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."

It was a warning; it was a sign; he dared not disregard it. He must be up and at her again; he must enter that sink of iniquity yet once more, to wrestle with her, to wring her soul, to compel her to leave ensnaring his fellow-citizens. And this time he must not part from her until he had brought the tears of repentance trickling down those painted cheeks, the howls of despair pouring from that wicked red mouth.

So he went to his undoing, did poor Thomas. He chose a time (on this occasion without consulting the Lord) when he had seen her husband leave The Black Boy, armed with the basket he carried when he went to minister to patients in their own homes. He told himself that he was unwilling to have her husband witness her humiliation; and so great was his capacity for self-deception that he really believed it.

Once again he found her alone, but this time she was not in her usual place. The day was chilly, and a fire burned on the hearth, a fire of pine logs the sweet odour of which mingled with that of the herbs strewn among the rushes on the floor. By the fire stood a day-bed, heaped with gaudy cushions, and on this day-bed reclined Mrs Cranton. She wore an overdress of a deep, warm rose-colour, with a collar of saffron lace upon the low-cut bodice; this overdress was unfastened, allowing it plainly to be seen that she wore beneath it, not the customary stomacher and kirtle, but a thin chemise through which the generous lines of her figure were very visible. Her white arms were bare; her feet were thrust negligently into fur-lined slippers; long, corkscrew love-locks fell neatly on either side of her face. And when she saw Thomas she smiled at him, not dryly any more, but as though she had been expecting him, and was glad that he had come.

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He ought to have been warned as he looked upon her, for he felt his flesh tingle and his mouth grow dry and a kind of intoxication steal over his senses. But he thought, poor fool that he was, that these were but the symptoms of a righteous anger; and once again he saw himself as Jonah and Isaiah and Elijah and all the prophets sent to small heathen tribes, two thousand miles away, two thousand years before, to proclaim the doom of the damned.

But ere he could launch forth upon his denunciations, Mrs Cranton spoke. She spoke meekly, pleasantly; and still she smiled upon him from beneath her heavy white eyelids.

"Pray, sir," said Mrs Cranton, "will you do me the kindness to pick up my book, for you see that I have dropped it. And 'tis a good book, a holy book, so that I would not for"the world to have it miscarry."

He advanced towards her with no very good grace, but curious to see what good and holy book could be in the possession of Mrs Esther Cranton. It lay open on the floor beside her, and as he lifted it his glance was drawn irresistibly to these words, heavily underlined with a goose-quill:

"I am my beloved's and his desire is towards me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early into the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my love."

He felt his eyes being drawn irresistibly from the printed words to the face beneath him; and then to the plump and lightly draped body beyond the face; and then to the warm white hand which negligently sought his own.

The Bible left his nerveless fingers; and ten minutes later poor Thomas Guflftn's virtue left him likewise.

CHAPTER II

WHEN a young idealist lives constantly in the company of politicians he is in peril of becoming disillusioned, even of

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turning" cynical; yet James Guffin, secretary to the famous Parliamentarian, Sir Arthur Heselrig, escaped these dangers. Like all his family, James was essentially sincere; like them too he was by nature very simple, and when he conceived a devotion to an ideal, or hero-worship of a person, he was quite incapable of seeing flaws in his idol, be they never so obvious.

During his school-days at St Paul's he had fallen in love with the idea of parliamentary government, and because the particular form of parliamentary government with which he was familiar was the old Long Parliament, he saw nothing inconsistent in the fact that, while it claimed to represent the will of the people, it had in fact been lopped of three-quarters of its membership by the Army. Nor did it even occur to him that this Long Parliament, once freely elected by the people, could ever cease to represent the will of the people. The people had elected the Long Parliament, and the Long Parliament had created the Commonwealth; therefore the Long Parliament was still, and would continue to be, the only just, free, and natural authority in England.

Of late years his devotion to this quaint political idea had extended to the man who seemed to him to embody it, his patron, Heselrig, and here again he showed the same pathetic obstinate resolution to see nothing wrong in his idol. Heselrig's greed, phenomenal even in that era, when to be on the winning side was to make oneself a millionaire overnight, his perfect willingness to use all the tricks of the professional politician, taking bribes, pulling strings, and making promises he knew perfectly well he could not keep, his bad temper, his spitefulness when crossed, all these passed unnoticed by the devoted James, who saw only the pattern of a true republican, the hero who, since the "abdication" of the Parliament of Saints, had refused to pay his taxes, preferring, as he said, to see his "oxen of value sold for twenty or forty shillings a piece, than pay that which only Parliament hath legal right to levy."

Having lost his seat in the First Protectorate Parliament by refusing to sign the "Recognition," Heselrig retired to his fine house in Covent Garden, watching the course of events, stoutly refusing to pay his taxes, and holding many conferences with

his republican friends. He talked freely to James, who was high in his favour, and from his patron's talk the young man gleaned much inside information, not to be found within the pages of *Mercurius Politicus*. James gloried in this exclusive knowledge, and in the confidences of his idol; he felt himself to be at the heart of things, to be in the camp of heroes, a camp at this time closely besieged but not to be surrendered on any terms.

As early as October, but one month after its assembling, Heselrig told James that a dissolution of the First Protectorate Parliament was imminent.

"For Cromwell will have to sit in the House none but those who are his absolute slaves; and though they who now sit are but spiritless creatures, all others being excluded by the Recognition, yet have they that in them which curs have, they will yap if they dare, as they have shown of late by their voting that the control of the Army shall be Cromwell's while he lives, but upon his death shall be disposed of as a Parliament shall see fit."

"Likewise, sir," James reminded him, "have they voted by a vast majority that the Protectorate shall be elective and not hereditary, by which they show, methinks, that they have some care for our liberties."

Heselrig smiled at him, not very pleasantly.

"Why, child," said he, "they never would have gotten them so large a majority for that vote had it not been for the Army officers, who, as you very well know, form so large a proportion of the House. For the Grandees of the Army fear that if the Protectorship be made hereditary, the Protector will hasten to put the crown upon his head, and that they will not stomach, nay, even his most fervent admirers among them."

"'Tis scurvy these Grandees of the Army should so lord it over us," exclaimed James in hot disgust. "Yet methinks they'll sing another tune when the House debates a reduction of the Army's pay and the disbandment of twenty-seven thousand men, as it is pledged to do."

"They will not debate it," Heselrig told him with conviction. "Or, if they do, they will never come to a division. **For I**

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tell you, Cromwell will dissolve them first. Though there be many in the Army begin to conceive a jealousy towards him (and especially young Lambert, who is the darling of the common men), his power lies in the sword and not the sceptre, and he durst not disband so much as one man, for his own security's sake."

Early in January, 1655, James, one of whose duties was to keep his ears open for useful gossip, reported to his patron that there was talk among the officers which led him to believe that Cromwell would dissolve Parliament before the month was out.

"They say," he reported, "that the five months during which the sitting of Parliament is guaranteed by the Instrument may be calculated, not by calendar but by the lunar months of a soldier's pay, and therefore the session may be brought to an end upon January 22nd, rather than on February 3rd, which is a plain trick to prevent the debate upon disbandment. Yet I do not think he durst put an end to them before their lawful time, because he is straitened for money, and requires a Parliament to vote him subsidies,"

"Cromwell durst do anything when he is in the humour," replied Heselrig, not without reluctant admiration.

He was right. Upon 22nd January the Protector summoned the Members to the Painted Chamber, and treated them to one of his famous denunciations. He dilated upon their shortcomings, he spoke vaguely but vehemently upon the dispensations of God, he discoursed upon the discontent which was rife throughout the country, which same was due, he asserted, to their folly and negligence. He complained likewise of being left in ignorance of their debates. "I do not know whether you have been alive or dead these past five months," he stormed. "I have not once heard from you all this time—I have not, and that you know." (This was a thumping lie, for he had been kept fully informed by the various committees.) Having worked himself up into one of his rages, he put an end to them in a manner which was becoming monotonous.

"I think it my duty to tell you that it is not for the profit of these nations, nor for the common and public good, for

you to continue here any longer; and therefore I do declare unto you that I do dissolve this Parliament."

Soldiers were at hand, of course, to enforce his (and the Lord's) decision.

James Guffin rather rejoiced than mourned over this summary dismissal of yet another Parliament. For it had been a Parliament in name only, and the best that could be said for it was that it had endeavoured in its feeble way to act as some sort of a check upon a military dictator's ambition. It was obvious to James that only the restoration of the dear old Long Parliament could bring peace and liberty to England; the government of men like Heselrig and Vane was truly representative because they voiced the will of all the good people of England, in other words of all republicans. The rest, Royalists, and Protectorists, and Levellers, and those who desired the rule of the sword, these were the enemies of the Commonwealth and ought not to be represented at all. For the Commonwealth was what Mattered; it was synonymous in his mind with the nation; for this had England fought and bled, for this had she beheaded her king; a Commonwealth therefore she must have, and only Heselrig and Vane and their handful of friends, the remnants of the Long Parliament, could give it back to her.

In the weeks succeeding the fall of this false Parliament James watched with malicious amusement a series of attacks upon the Government by a most varied assortment of enemies. There was, for example, George Fox, the son of a Leicestershire weaver, who had gathered about him a band of disciples and went about disturbing religious services, denouncing churches as "steeple-houses," and generally annoying the orthodox Puritans. He and his friends called themselves the Band of the Children of Light, but they were known generally as "Quakers," because they were much addicted to this form of bodily disturbance when they were in their fervours. Fox denounced many things dear to the heart of the Protector, particularly war and the taking of oaths. The Protector retorted by issuing an ordinance excepting from his boasted religious toleration "Quakers, Ranters, and others who do

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daily both reproach and disturb the assemblies and congregations of Christians in their public and private meetings."

Next there were the Fifth Monarchists. They were in truth but a handful of fanatics, but the antics of their preachers, Feake and Rogers and the rest, in their pulpits, attracted large congregations, and Feake and Rogers now openly denounced Cromwell as a traitor, justifying their accusation by an ordinance of 1649, wherein it had been declared treason to "promote any person to the name, style, dignity, power, prerogative, or authority of a king." They declared further that, when Cromwell had dissolved the Parliament of Saints, he had "taken the Crown off the head of Christ and put it on his own." Cromwell arrested three of their preachers and sent them to widely distant prisons; nothing seemed to annoy him more nowadays than hints that he was playing with the idea of making himself King.

Again there were the Levellers. Lilburne had sung his swan-song long ago, and now had joined the Quakers, but he had successors, notably Wildman and Sexby, both of whom had served in the New Model, and who could count on the support of quite a large section of their old comrades, among them the fiery Colonel Harrison. Cromwell flung Wildman and Harrison into gaol, and endeavoured to do the same with Sexby, who, however, eluded capture.

And of course there were always the Royalists. They never could be quiet, these defeated reactionaries; they were always plotting and scheming, and they were always ready to join hands with other malcontents, so they could contrive the restoration of their dissolute young Charles the Second, as they called him. Cromwell's Secretary of State, John Thurloe, had evolved a most excellent spy system, however, and during the months of January and February there was a perfect harvest of arrests. On the excuse that a Royalist rising was imminent, Cromwell directed the constables of London to draw up a list of all lodgers within their bounds, and to forbid them to move without special leave; in the space of a few days, five hundred persons had been arrested within the liberties; and on 15th February the City was ordered to provide a Militia for the

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suppression of local disorders. Despite these precautions, sporadic risings broke out throughout the country in March; these were swiftly suppressed, only that in the western counties causing trouble. April witnessed Cromwell's vengeance. Three were hanged at Salisbury, seven at Exeter, in which city the leaders of the western rising, Grove and Penruddock, were beheaded, six at Chard. The rest were flung into gaol pending their transportation, but it was curious how many seemed to make their escape from prison. One of James's fellow-secretaries explained this by affirming darkly that the common people everywhere were hankering after a restoration of the Monarchy, and were only too willing to aid a distressed Royalist. James indignantly denied the suggestion; to him it was unthinkable that the good people of England desired any restoration save that of the dear old Long Parliament.

On 24th March, Cromwell reviewed the London Militia in Hyde Park, thanked and dismissed them. Two days later a portion of his Life Guard, maddened by lack of pay, broke into the kitchens of Whitehall and stole the Protector's dinner just as it was about to be served to him. This little incident pleased James enormously; it showed that not even Cromwell's red brethren were entirely satisfied with his dictatorship.

It was not very often nowadays that James paid a visit to his home; the price of his patron's confidence was that he should be always at Sir Arthur's beck and call, and such free time as he had he spent with the friends he had made outside the City, or in one or other of the Westminster taverns, listening to gossip and picking up information. Yet James remained sincerely attached to his father and his home, and one day in the June of 1655, Sir Arthur being in the country, James gave himself the day off and resolved to spend it at his father's tavern.

He found Mr Guffin busy in the common-room as usual, assisted by Simon, Ned, and Richard Chick. The tavern-

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keeper greeted his son with his customary kindness, and, drawing a tankard of ale, brought it to the window-seat and sat down for a chat.

He was sure, he began, that James must be thirsting for news of his brothers and sisters, but it was not, sighed Mr Guffin, very happy news. Thomas was somewhere in the Indies; he had volunteered for the expedition under Perm and Venables, the object of which was to bring under English dominion the track of the Spanish gold-convoys across the Isthmus of Panama. Mr Guffin professed himself as quite unable to understand the sense of this expedition, for England, and Spain were at peace, and this would be sure to make trouble between them; but he was much more concerned with the strange conduct of Thomas in volunteering for a service so unhealthy and dangerous, when he might have remained with his regiment in London. Thomas's manner during his brief leave had been, said his father, mighty odd; during the latter portion of it he had kept close to the house, seeming as though fearful of something if he stirred abroad, and he had been very subdued and preoccupied, not once quoting Scripture or indulging in religious controversy with Sarah. This, affirmed Mr Guffin, argued some strange loss of spirit in Thomas, though on the other hand it had made the house more peaceable. But why he should have gone off on this mad expedition was more than his father could tell. Most of his companions in it were the offscourings of the London gaols, Perm and Venables had been at loggerheads from the beginning, and now there was news that they and their men had been beaten back with great loss from St Domingo, so that Mr Guffin did not know whether Thomas was alive or dead.

The news of Sarah was almost as bad. She had, it seemed, wearied of her Fifth Monarchy friends, who had begun to speak little of King Jesus His coming and much of Protector Cromwell his going, continually prophesying his fall, whereas he seemed to grow stronger and more firmly established in his single government every month. Her father's hopes had reawakened as her Fifth Monarchy ardour had waned; now,

he thought, now at last she will lay by all such fanaticisms and settle down to be a normal woman.

But no; scarcely had she deserted the cause of King Jesus than she had espoused that of some odd creature who called himself Thcauro-John. This person, whose real name was Thomas Taney, and who was said to have begun life as a sow-gelder, seemed to consider himself a cross between John the Baptist and John the Evangelist; he lived in a tent he had made for himself upon Lambeth-marsh, he refused to wear any clothes at all, he subsisted solely upon shellfish, and he was for ever seeing visions. Exactly what were his beliefs, Mr Guffin could not say, and Sarah likewise, though an ardent disciple, seemed curiously vague upon the point. But periodically Theauro-John would issue forth from his tent, and in the public streets of the City he would ignite a fire, wherein he would burn a Bible, a sword, a pistol, and a saddle, solemnly assuring the interested crowds that these were the gods of England and must be destroyed. It was the duty of his disciples to supply him with samples of these gods so that he could make sacrifice of them, and Sarah spent all her time and money begging round the armourers and saddle-makers of the City, and making herself ridiculous into the bargain. He really began to fear, confided the harassed father, that poor Sarah was out of her wits.

Simon, too, had begun to cause him some anxiety. Simon was changed, and the change had begun, believed his father, in the December of '53, after the very unpleasant little incident of a Sunday promenade during which Mr Guffin and his two youngest children had been fired on by a barge-load of red-coats. Exactly what was the nature of this change in Simon, Mr Guffin could not say, any more than he could tell the reason for the change in Thomas. The lad worked hard and willingly; he was liked by the customers, and he retained all his old dry wit; but he spent his free time abroad, and he would not say where he spent it. This worried Mr Guffin; not that he believed Simon was the sort of boy to frequent brothels, and he was sure that he was no fanatic like Sarah, and no silly malcontent like Ned. Nevertheless this new secretiveness

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was disquieting, the more so because Simon was by nature a frank and open lad, and up till now had always given his father his full confidence.

In fact, confessed Mr Guffin, the only good news he could give James was of Little Julia. Not only was Little Julia become a really excellent housewife; not only was she always obedient, cheerful, efficient, and modest; but she now had an admirer, a good honest lad named Jack, who was an under-turnkey at Newgate. Of course, smiled Mr Guffin, there could be no question of marriage yet awhile; he was not going to have his favourite daughter snatched from him by a lad who was still, so to speak, in his apprenticeship and could not properly support her. Still, it was pleasant to see Jack's devotion; he would sit in the kitchen, Mr Guffin told James, would this young Jack, not saying a word, making a can of small-beer last an entire evening, and staring at Little Julia like a dog. His dumbness got on your nerves after a while, but there, we all had our little weaknesses, and Mr Guffin had no doubt that in good time, when Little Julia grew up (she was, as a matter of fact, turned eighteen now, but her father always thought of her as a child), and when her Jack had worked out his time and could command a living wage, the pair of them would make a happy match of it, if they continued of the same mind.

"And now for yourself, my dear lad," said Mr Guffin, smiling rather nervously at the grave, handsomely dressed young stranger who sat opposite him upon the window-seat, "how do you and your affairs? I cannot but confess my heart is somewhat troubled for you, living as you do without the liberties of your native City, and among so many great ones who are so apt to quarrel among themselves and, if they fall, will likely drag you down with them. You are not bred to that life, and though I make no doubt it is a fine one, yet it hath its perils, ay, and its temptations."

James made haste to assure the poor simple old man that he did very well; and then immediately launched forth upon public affairs.

"You will have heard of the case of Mr Cony, a silk-merchant

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of the City, and formerly a close friend of the Protector's?"

"Ay, I have heard somewhat concerning it," replied his father cautiously. "But the news-sheet is silent on the matter, and to say truth, James, my privy anxieties are such that I have but little time to ponder great affairs."

"This is an affair," said James, rather severely, "which concerneth every man within the Commonwealth, for 'tis a test case of our fundamental liberties, and the way it hath run is such that the people have no longer the least excuse for believing that they can enjoy any freedom or justice under a Protector."

"Prithee, James," said his father, glancing round uneasily, "lower your voice when you would talk so, for I have many of the Army among my customers, and I durst not offend them."

"It was in August last," began James, casting a hostile glance at the redcoats, but adopting a lower tone to humour his father, "that this Master Cony did refuse to pay duty upon some silk he had purchased, and did expel from his house the Commissioners of Customs sent to wring it from him. There are no legal taxes, saith he, without a Parliament, and therefore I will not pay. He was arrested and put in the Marshalsea, from whence he applied for a writ of habeas corpus, and was brought to a trial but this last month. His counsel, of whom there were three, boldly stated that the fine imposed upon him (which was to the tune of five hundred pounds) had been condemned as illegal by the Star Chamber Act of '51, which had deprived the Privy Council (of which Cromwell's Council of State is the successor) of all jurisdiction over the property of a subject—I trust I have your attention, sir?"

"Yes, yes, indeed," hastily replied Mr GufEn, who had been, as it happens, absorbed in the horrid suspicion that Richard Chick was serving with strong-ale a customer who had asked for single.

"Mr Cony's three counsel were summoned to Whitehall next day, and, refusing to retract their arguments, were flung into gaol. The Lord Chief Justice Rolle, the judge of the case, sharing their scruples, was made to resign his post. Thus,

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within a month, no less than three of the judges have been put down, all for protesting against the illegal methods of this despot; for you will call to mind that Justice Thorpe and Justice Newdigate, with their fellow-Commissioner, Serjeant Hutton, were dismissed late in April for writing to the Solicitor-General that the trials of the Northern Royalists were not being conducted according to law."

"Ay, we live in tossing times," sighed his father, draining his ale-can and trying to catch Dick's eye to have the tankard refilled. "The world treads not upright and methinks hath need of a good workman to mend it. And now they tell me the Jews are to be let in, which will altogether ruin our trade."

James looked at his father in some disgust. The liberty of the subject was at stake, yet all Mr Guffin could think about was trade. He was about to speak further on the case of Mr Cony, when his father took up the tale of his own grievances.

"My friends among the merchants tell me," said he, "that for some years past, in truth ever since the execution of the King, divers Spanish and Portuguese Jews have been creeping privily into the City, not admitting to their religion, nay, some of them attending the Popish services at the Embassy, and living very retired. But now, I'm told, one of their number hath most boldly petitioned Cromwell to have his leave to worship openly, and to come hither without let or hindrance, nay, even that they have sundry of our churches given them to be their synagogues, that all laws against 'em be repealed, that they have free trade, a separate body of laws for their protection, and I know not what besides. Passion o' mel" cried Mr Guffin, his face crimsoning with his indignation, "here is a fine thing, that those who are the chief enemies of our religion and our trade, who live by the beastly practice of usury, and who have ever been wont to intrigue against whatsoever nation would give them shelter, should be let in by the Protector because he is straitened for money and hopes to get it from them in return for his favours. For near upon five hundred years have we been free of this plague in England; the great Plantagenet, the First Edward, he it was that rid us

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of these lice, holding the honour of Christ and the weal of his own subjects to be at stake, and now——"

He broke off abruptly, partly from lack of breath, partly because he saw one of the redcoats looking in his direction.

"Nay," he muttered, wiping his face with his sleeve, "nay, best be sparing in our speech, for yonder are catching fellows who will interpret strangely."

"There is but one remedy for all these grievances," said James. "The good people of England must demand the restoration of the Long Parliament, which alone can safeguard our liberties and maintain a free Commonwealth."

"It may be so," said Mr Guffin, sighing deeply, "yet I cannot but remember that this fag-end of a Parliament of yours, that which the vulgar term the Rump, was willing enough to hedge us about with restrictions when it had the power, and excluded all who would not go along with them. Nay, my dear lad, I am but a plain, simple cit, and I would not have you to think that I would willingly set up my opinion against yours, which is so learned and well-informed. I speak from an honest heart, though my learning be small; for I would keep a good conscience within-doors howsoever the wind blows without. Yet let us talk no further upon such matters now, James; I am sure the red locusts yonder have marked us, and wonder at our talk. What saith the old play?—'When tyrants reign 'tis dangerous to be good.' Excuse me, lad, excuse me now; there is a merchant desiring some Malaga, and I durst not trust my apprentices to handle wine."

(3)

James spent the remainder of the day in talking with one or other of his father's regular customers, and by the evening he had become very cast down and not a little bitter.

He ought to have remembered, he told himself, what the cits were like. You could take away all their rights and liberties, abolish their favourite pastimes, and hedge them about with the most intolerable restrictions; but so long as you

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left their trade alone, though they would grumble they would remain inert. Certainly Cromwell had touched their trade; his book of rates for the customs was, one of Mr Guffin's merchant customers told James, an impassable barrier against trade; he had offended them by precipitating an expensive war against the Dutch; and he had made that originally unpopular tax, the excise, more hateful still by putting it to farm. But the Dutch war was over; and in order to appease public opinion, after his dissolution of yet another Parliament, the Protector had lately, in February, announced that the monthly assessment, most detested of all taxes because it was levied to maintain a standing-army, would be lowered from £90,000 to £60,000 a month. This announcement had pleased and pacified the cits, though, as James pointed out, it was but a gesture, for the Government was involved in a hopeless deficit, and the favourite source of revenue, the confiscation of Royalist estates, had been milked dry. As for the readmittance of the Jews, James found the general opinion to be that if they were let in at all it would be by the back door. For Cromwell's Council relied upon the merchant-princes of the City for loans, and they would never stomach an open readmittance of a race which made a practice of grasping at the monopoly of trade. Whatsoever government ruled at Whitehall, the merchant-princes of London still ruled England from the Royal Exchange.

Heartily disappointed with his visit home, which he had hoped to employ in rousing up the lethargic spirits of his father and his fellow-cits by reciting the case of Mr Cony, James was determined to get back to Covent Garden immediately he had supped. But as he was about to take farewell of his family, there was a knocking at the back door of the tavern, and Little Julia opened it to find some neighbours calling for a friendly chat.

Now, there was nothing in the world Mr Guffin liked better than a sociable evening with his friends; and directly he heard that he was to have company this evening, he made such piteous appeals in dumbshow to James, imploring him to stay and join in the entertainment, that his son had not the

heart to disoblige him. And apart from the young man's genuine affection for his father he hoped that, freed from the presence of the redcoats in the common-room, his father and his neighbours might more freely express their real sentiments, and admit a yearning to have the Long Parliament restored.

The visitors proved to be Master Benjamin Knee, the upholder, who traded under the sign of The Four Coffins (formerly The Four Coffins and Crown) in Paul's Chain, and his only daughter, Rose. Mr Knee, despite his trade, was a jolly kind of man, much addicted to the telling of droll stories and to the drink called buttered-ale. Whenever Mr Knee called, Mr Guffin would hasten to prepare, with his own hands, this potation, which consisted of heated ale with the admixture of butter, sugar, and cinnamon. He would then pour the beverage into a special black-jack, called Jingle Boy, which was adorned with little bells in order that it might proclaim aloud to the company how often it was emptied and refilled. This was an ancient jest between Mr Guffin and Mr Knee, and it never failed to afford them great sport.

"But for the rest of us," said Mr Guffin, as he bustled about with sugar and cinnamon, "we will brew us a bowl of wassail, for this is a special occasion, my son James being come to visit us, who can tell us all the news from Westminster and Whitehall. Julia, my wench, do you roast some apples while I draw a measure of my best huff-cap, for what is the wassail-bowl if we have not apples floating in it?"

Leaving Ned and Dick to attend to the customers in the common-room, Mr Guffin and his friends gathered round the fire in the kitchen, and soon they began to be very merry over Mr Knee's latest batch of droll tales. Mr Knee told them of a new rhyme he had heard, which purported to be a mere nursery thing, but which was in reality a satire on the Puritans; it was called *Little Jack Homer*, and he repeated it with the most quaint gestures. Next he related how a friend of his, a needle-maker of Creechurch Street in Aldgate Ward, had complained to his ward-moot that he was disturbed every Saturday of late by the great discord made by a number of cats which met, it appeared, in St Katherine Cree, hard by.

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"But when the ward-moot bade the beadle go take up these pests which so disturbed my worthy friend, he found them to be not cats but Jews, which howled at their prayers upon their Sabbath, for you know they have gotten them this church for their worship, and there they caterwaul, these bearded Hebrews, for all the world like pussies a-coupling."

"I have heard it reported," said Mr Guffin solemnly, "that there is a young Jew amongst 'em, a journeyman weaver, who seeks to wed with a Christian wench, but his father will not permit the match because, forsooth, we Christians are all outcasts, and they alone the Chosen Race."

"Why," said Simon, toasting bread at the fire, "here is opportunity for the suitor to provide a dowry for his bride which shall please his father, after the manner of David when he would have Micah, the daughter of Saul, to wife. For you will recollect, sirs, that he went and slew two hundred of the uncircumcised and brought their foreskins to Saul, and——"

"Hold your tongue with a pox!" roared his father. "Zounds, sirrah, you forget in what company you are."

"Why, it is a tale from Holy Writ," protested Simon with mock innocence, "and were my brother Thomas here he could give you chapter and verse."

"The apples are roasted brown, Father," said Little Julia, as usual appearing at the right moment. "Shall I place them in the bowl?"

The necessity to dispense hospitality to his guests diverted her father's attention from the erring Simon, and meanwhile Mr Knee, becoming professional for a moment, asked James for news of the Protector's mother, who was reported to be dying.

"I have some hope I may get the burying of her," said he, "for Gammer Cromwell hath never relished the new state of her family, so they say, and I vow would relish rather a good plain burying than all the pomp of the Abbey." He passed Jingle Boy to be refilled, and launched into Whitehall gossip, some of which filtered through into the City despite the muzzling of the Press. "They tell me the Lady Protectress is a rare she-despot, and that upon her first coming to White-

hall she did engage a surveyor to make her some little labyrinths and trap-stairs by which she might, at all times unseen, pass to and fro, and come unaware upon her servants and keep them vigilant and honest in the discharge of their duties. But Gammer Cromwell, being by reason of her great age not so easily flattered by the temptations of grandeur, very much mistrusts the issue of affairs and will often be afraid, when she hears the noise of a musket, that her son is shot, being exceedingly dissatisfied unless she might see him once a day at least."

Meantime James had found himself seated on the settle beside Rose Knee, with whom it was his duty to make polite conversation. It was a long while since he had seen the upholster's daughter, and he was very surprised to find her grown into a young woman, for if he ever thought of her, it was as the child with whom he once had played.

She was quite a pretty young woman too, not beautiful indeed, and, from her talk, not particularly intelligent, but merry and natural like her father, and with an air about her as though she had a great zest for life. She did not seem to be in the least in awe of James, despite his fine clothes and his intimacy with the great; she treated him as a fellow-cit and an old acquaintance, and she chattered easily and pleasantly of local affairs, colouring all she said with her native vitality.

Like all persons of her century, she had a taste for the marvellous, and she regaled James with the stories she had heard of late while she gossiped with the other women at their marketing (for her mother was dead and she had charge of her father's house). There had been, it appeared, a perfect harvest of omens these last few weeks; a great comet had appeared in the sky; the Thames had ebbed and flowed two hours before its proper time, as it had done upon the eve of the King's beheading; the great South Gate of St Paul's had fallen with a crash, for no visible reason; and the ghost of the murdered Charles had been seen to walk the streets of the City at night.

James listened in idle interest; as a matter of fact, he was finding the speaker much more interesting than her words. She was so ordinary and natural, so cheerful and fresh-looking;

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she was full of sudden little chuckles, as though she had a spring of merriment inside her and every now and then it overflowed. In her company James became for the moment the ordinary young cit, one of the family circle, a member of a small and humble community, paying laboured compliments, making foolish jests, and drinking in stories of omens, for all the world as though he cared not a fig that the liberties of his country were being trampled under the feet of a military dictator.

But suddenly his ears caught a sentence from the conversation on the other side of the hearth, and in an instant he had forgotten Rose Knee and his own contentment. Mr Knee and Mr Guffin had been discussing the late Royalist risings, and Mr Knee had given it as his opinion that there would never be any more of them.

"For those Cavees who are not either slaughtered or transported, or clapped up in gaol," said he, "are so mulcted in fines and plagued with restrictions on their liberty, not to speak of being hedged about with spies, that I see not how they will get them the means to make further trouble."

It was then that James heard the sentence which diverted his attention from pretty Rose Knee. It was spoken by his brother Simon, but in so sharp and strange a tone that he scarcely recognised his brother's voice.

"You are wrong," barked Simon. "They will rise again, and that soon."

"How know you that?" snapped Mr Guffin, before anyone else could speak.

Simon blinked his eyes quickly, as though caught unawares, reddened a little, and looked defiant.

"My common sense tells me," said he with a shrug, "that you cannot hold down men of principle with fines, nor yet with the sword neither."

"Pish, lad," mildly reproved Mr Knee, "you must not call the Cavees men of principle, else will you be suspected of harbouring their opinions."

"Nay, the lad's been baiting the wassail-bowl too hard," cried Mr Guffin. "He's drunk enough, and will not be com-

pany for a dog directly. Get thee to bed, Sim; away with you, boy; Sir John Barleycorn is too doughty a knight for gallants of your tender years."

He spoke with a kind of forced gaiety and, as he ended, his eyes met those of James. There was an appeal in the old eyes; what exactly was its nature, James could not tell, but it was there, and it shocked him. It seemed almost as though his father were trying to make him his fellow-conspirator in some secret connected with Simon. It was as though he said to James: "If the lad stays here longer he will say that which he must not, for it is dangerous." Confused, apprehensive, and slightly indignant, James took refuge in one of his dissertations on the blessings of parliamentary government, launching forth suddenly and irrelevantly upon his hobby-horse.

He spoke well, for he was just a trifle under the influence of the wassail-bowl himself, and the small, puzzling scene with Simon and his father had whipped his old enthusiasm into a fever. He felt ashamed, too, when he remembered how he had spent that evening; dallying with a foolish and ill-informed wench who could talk of nothing but omens and local gossip. But unfortunately he had a very small audience; Simon had gone to bed; Little Julia was absorbed in some sewing; and Mr Knee and Mr Guffin, gloriously mellow, were talking with their heads together about the ill state of the affairs of the Upholders' Company, which, it seemed, was being forced to sell yet more of its plate because of forced loans by the Protector. Presently, therefore, James addressed himself direct to Rose Knee, sketching for her all the disadvantages of government by a single person, giving instances of the abuses inseparable from it, explaining the reasons why all kings (and protectors) inevitably became tyrants, and singing the praises of his own particular political philosophy with such eloquence that Rose's eyes grew large and her mouth fell open in a foolish gape.

When he ended at last, she shifted in her seat, sipped at **her** can of wassail-ale, choked upon an apple-pip, and fell **into a fit of** coughing. When she was somewhat recovered, **she**

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gave one of her meaningless chuckles, told him that he was the most learned young man she had ever met, and said she marvelled at his cleverness.

And then she went and spoilt the whole thing. She assured him that she, too, disliked Cromwell, because he had warts upon his face, and dressed always in black (though of course it was fine black velvet), and was so solemn, and had forbidden all the old holidays.

"Yet maybe one fine day King Charles will come back," said Rose Knee innocently, "and then we shall all be merry."

He could only gape at her in his turn, unable to believe his ears. His stare made her uncomfortable, and, wriggling her shoulders, she endeavoured to explain, though she could not understand what she had said amiss.

"Why, you must know, Master James, that I am but a City wench and know nought of these great matters of which you speak so learnedly. But I love to be merry and to frolic without hindrance, and I'll warrant you that all the young men and maidens in the City are the same."

"Would you have me to think," demanded the affronted James, "that the young men and maidens of the City hanker after a restoration of the Tyrant's son?"

She wriggled her shoulders harder than ever; she was hopelessly out of her depths.

"No such matter, Master James. That is to say," she babbled, "we of the City are not Cavees, for these would make war and hurt our trade, and likewise would they bring over a foreign army to set King Charles upon his father's throne. Yet if he could come in peaceable, that would be a rare thing; for then we could go a-maying again, and have our ballads cried upon the streets, and hear fine talk of the Court. They say he is a right merry young gentleman, and not solemn like his poor father."

"Am I to understand," thundered James, "that you would prefer a merry young gentleman to enslave you, albeit he was nurtured in tyranny, inclines to Popery, and is altogether debauched, to an assembly of wise and honest gentlemen like the Members of the Long Parliament, who are your lawful

representatives, freely elected, and who bestowed upon you the inestimable blessing of a Commonwealth?"

Poor Rose was near to tears. She had unwittingly offended this handsome and amiable Master James, and she disliked offending anyone. And she could not make him understand what she meant, though it seemed to her so transparently simple. She tried again.

"I am sure," said she earnestly, "that the gentlemen of whom you speak are good, honest gentlemen, yet they do not sail down-river in grand barges as the King used to do, and they wear not fine robes and glittering crowns, nor do they have trumpets sounding before them when they go to dine. Likewise did they forbid us to have our holidays, so that now we have no holidays, but only Days of Humiliation, as they call them. But we would have a wondrous rare holiday if King Charles came back. Why, they say the conduits would spout wine, which any man would be free to drink for the taking; and that would be a rare sight. I have never seen our City conduits spouting wine; have you, Master James?"

It was as well that the entrance of Sarah at this moment interrupted a conversation which threatened to degenerate into rudeness on the one hand and tears upon the other. Sarah swept in by the back door like a cold wind; she paused to cast a glance upon the jolly and convivial group about the fire, sighed with ostentatious pity, and was crossing to the inner door without a word, when her father kindly enquired of her whether she had supped.

"I have supped upon woe," dramatically replied his daughter. "I have been carried in the spirit with Theauro-John to the Mount of Revelation, and there have I seen the Seven Last Plagues poured into their vials, which same shall soon be emptied upon this wicked City."

Rose Knee gave a little scream, and clutched James's arm.

"Let London hearken," declaimed the prophetess, raising an admonitory finger, "let the merchants which were made rich by her stand afar off for fear of her torment, weeping and saying, Alas, alas, that great City that was clothed in fine

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linen, and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls. For in one hour so great riches shall come to nought."

She swept to the door.

"Goo night, Mhisress Sharah," murmured the blissfully fuddled Mr Knee, waving Jingle Boy in her direction.

"Good night," responded Sarah emotionally, turning a baleful eye upon him, "and indeed it may be good-bye. For the sharp sickle of death may be thrust amongst us this night. The angel standeth ready for the word which saith, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the winepress shall be trodden without the City, and blood shall come out of the winepress, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

Mr Knee politely repressed a hiccough, and put on the face he reserved for his funerals.

(4)

But when James took his homeward way, at last, he was not thinking about the extravagances of his sister Sarah. He was pondering the very peculiar manner of his father when, as they were taking farewell of each other, James had asked him what was the matter with Simon. Mr Guffin had turned red; he had avoided James's eye; he had said that the lad was drunk, and that that was all there was about it. Then he had attempted to change the subject, but James was not to be put off so easily. He reminded his father that, earlier that day, Mr Guffin had confided to him that Simon was changed; he had said then that he did not understand the nature of that change; James now wanted to know if this was strictly true. Of course it was true, Mr Guffin had assured him hastily (even a little irritably); the lad was changed, but it was nothing, nothing in the world; he was at a difficult age, he was starved for want of the old innocent sports, maybe he fancied himself in love with some wench. As for this evening, the wassail had overthrown him; nothing more than that.

James could get no more from him, and so had taken his leave. But he was uneasy. Beneath his intellectual priggishness, James was a kind boy, and in his way he was fond of his young brother. When Simon had spoken this evening of the Cavees, it had crossed James's mind for one horrible moment that perhaps the boy had had his mind seduced by some cunning Royalist. But worse still was the suspicion which had come on the heels of it. If Simon's father suspected this seduction (and James was pretty well convinced that he did), why did he not beat it out of Simon? Why did he not take James into his confidence and ask him to speak to Simon? James was the proper person to do so; he alone of his family could speak with knowledge and eloquence upon matters of politics; he alone could nip this germ of Malignancy in the bud before it took root in his silly brother's breast. It could not be, surely it could not be, that Mr Guffin himself was infected with that dread disease? No, thought James resolutely, it could not be that. Quite apart from the fact that Mr Guffin had never displayed the least hankering after a return to Monarchy, there was the danger to his own pocket, and considering that he was so sordidly obsessed with trade he would not be likely either to confess to Royalist principles himself or to countenance the same in his son. James sighed. It was all very difficult. He ought to go home more, he supposed; his family seemed to go to pieces without him. He really must make an opportunity to pay another visit to The Three Griffins soon and have a serious talk with his foolish young brother; Simon was a good boy at heart, and could very soon be weaned from any improper notions which might have taken up their abode in his head.

Having come to this sensible and dutiful conclusion, James ought to have continued his walk with an easy mind. But it was not so. No sooner had he settled the problem of what he must do concerning this possible new craze of Simon's, than he was filled with the problem of Rose Knee—of perverse, ignorant, frivolous Rose Knee, who wanted Charles Stuart to come back so that she could see the City conduits spouting wine and have her holidays.

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It was ridiculous that he should allow himself to be disturbed by the chatter of so ill-informed and shallow-minded a wench; it was quite absurd that he could not dismiss her vulgar chatter from his mind. Of course, he told himself, as he crossed the Fleet Ditch and held his nose against the foul smells which arose from the Fleet River, one did not expect City wenches to understand high matters of State, but he felt he had a right to expect better of them than this. It really was intolerable, he decided, as he came to Temple Bar, that after all the blood which had been shed in defence of liberty, after all the efforts and toils of gentlemen like Sir Arthur Heselrig, a young woman of his own age and class, the daughter of a City freeman, should calmly inform him that she, and the other young men and maidens of the City, desired to have the King again because he was merry and would give them back their holidays.

He satisfied the watchmen at the Bar of his identity and respectability, and was permitted to leave the liberties by the wicket-gate. Good God in heaven, he reflected savagely, as he walked along Butchers Row and heard ring out above him the melancholy chimes of St Clement Dane's, it was a fine state of affairs when the older men and women of London could'talk of nothing but trade, and the younger only of what they called merriment. It was not true, of course, he assured himself; Rose was not representative of her contemporaries; nobody in the City or elsewhere, nobody in their senses, wanted the King to come back for any reason whatsoever. Except, of course, the Cavees, and they were not worth a thought.

He turned up Drury Lane and came upon a redcoat patrol, which immediately halted him and put him to the inquisition usual with them. Who was he? Why was he walking abroad at this late hour? Where had he come from and whither was he bound? What was his business? Had he been tippling? Had he come from a bawdy-house? And so on. He satisfied them at last and was permitted to resume his way and his interrupted meditations. And it struck him suddenly, just as he was about to turn down Swan Alley into Bow Street, that

what had most shocked him about Rose Knee was her lack of enthusiasm for anything that mattered; what enthusiasm she had seemed to be for life itself, and that to him was quite incomprehensible.

For James Guffin lived in an age of violent enthusiasms; he lived in an era of upheavals, both religious and secular, an era in which his fellow-men all fastened upon one particular aspect of religion or political philosophy, and rode it to death. Whatever opinions one held, one must hold them frenziedly, and as frenziedly must one condemn everyone else's. Thus, while James detested Cromwell and the Army party, he understood them; they selected texts out of the Old Testament and rejected the rest of the Bible, just as he selected passages from the ancients and ignored what he did not like. Cromwell and his party spoke indeed a different language from James and his friends, but they said the same words none the less, great words like tyranny, bondage, liberty, the rights of the people, the necessity to uphold the laws, the necessity to change the laws, the necessity to remodel the laws; each party was obsessed with these great matters; all they disagreed upon was the trifling matter of interpretation.

In the same way James could understand the fanaticisms of his brother Thomas and the extravagances of his sister Sarah, for each had their root in the burning desire of the century to remake the world anew. If you lived in times like these, you had to be on fire to destroy something or other, even if you had nothing to put in its place; and you must be convinced of the exclusive rightness of your particular hobby-horse, even if it involved the imminent appearance of Jesus Christ upon Ludgate Hill, or the efficacy of burning Bibles, swords, and saddles in the London streets. If you hated a person, you hated him because he represented something hateful; thus you hated Cromwell because he was resolved to set the power of the sword over the civil magistrate, and from being the champion of parliamentary government had become the enemy of it. You did not hate him because he had warts on his face and dressed in black.

. Yet, when he came to think of it, it was not only Rose

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Knee who had been guilty this evening of a lamentable lack of enthusiasm for the things that mattered. His father had talked almost solely about trade, Mr Knee had told droll stories and then had got drunk, and even he, James Guffin, secretary to the greatest Parliamentarian of the age, had dallied with Rose Knee and had listened to her foolish chatter about omens and other wonders. They had fiddled while Rome burned.

There was no excuse for any of them, decided James, with the passionate severity of the young idealist, as he strolled along Bow Street, deep in his solemn thoughts. Every day brought some new attack upon their liberties, every hour Protector Cromwell established more firmly his single rule. They ought to have spent the evening discussing the case of Mr Cony; they ought to have decided to apply themselves, not indeed to their Member, for Parliament, alas, was no more, but to serious republicans like Heselrig and Vane, imploring them to make public their grievances. They were the lords of England, they, the people; they were the only legitimate governors, ruling themselves through their representatives. Their will was the only rightful law; their desires alone must carve the destiny of England.

And what was their will? It was, it could only be, to make themselves into a perfect republic by recalling the Long Parliament which had got rid of the King and the Lords and had given them the Commonwealth, now ravished by the ambition of this traitor Cromwell.

He stopped suddenly with a sharp intake of breath, as a thought out of nowhere hit him, neatly and cruelly, right in his spiritual solar plexus.

Suppose that was not their will?

Suppose that Rose Knee was right? Suppose the young men and maidens of London were so infatuated with merriment that they were set on having it restored to them even at the expense of their liberty? Suppose the older citizens were so obsessed with their trade and with their comfort that they would barter for them even the right to rule England through their representatives? The first, indeed, scarcely

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counted, for they had no vote, but still they formed a considerable portion of the people of England, and the second were the lords of England, alone possessing the right to govern; especially were the citizens of London the lords of England, for London was the repository of the wealth of the nation, and whoever gained London gained the realm. Suppose then that these people, these lords, exercising their undoubted right to choose those to whom they would delegate their authority, decided to choose, not sober Parliamentarians like Sir Arthur Heselrig, but debauched young tyrants like Charles Stuart, the son of the man slaughtered by order of the remnants of the Long Parliament at Whitehall?

Because he was sincere in his devotion to his ideals, James Guffin was hit hard by this intolerable supposition. Because the republican in him revered the people as the lords of England, though the man in him had a contempt for their ignorance and stupidity; because in theory he really did believe in the will of the people, though in practice he was perfectly content to see the nation ruled by the fag-end of a Parliament called fifteen years previously by a king, universally detested for its corruption and inefficiency, and lately turned out with ignominy by a parcel of soldiers, he was all but mortally wounded by the fantastic idea which so suddenly had sprung itself upon him.

And because his body was weary with the lateness of the hour, and his mind deserted by the wine which so lately had inspired him, and his spirit depressed by the empty chatter of a City wench and by vague fears for his father and brother, he knew, in this moment before he could rouse his will to his rescue, that blank despair which only the young can know.

CHAPTER III

(1)

NED WALSH and Richard Chick were strolling down Cheapside together; it was the slack hour of the afternoon, when their master was accustomed to allow them to walk abroad ot

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otherwise to amuse themselves. October had come in with unseasonable heat after a very wet summer, and the air was stifling under the pent-houses and over-sailing storeys of Cheapside. Ned, who was now a grown man of twenty-two, slouched along with his hands hanging at his sides and a look of disgruntlement upon his freckled face; Dick, on the other hand, seemed in good humour; he fanned himself with his thrum-cap and hummed an air.

They had called at The Mitre in St Paul's Churchyard for a can of ale and to see the curiosities which the landlord had collected after many years of travelling in foreign parts. There was a piece of St Catherine's skin, a "very curious young mermaid-fish," some petrified rain, a necklace made of Job's tears, the jawbone of the whale which had swallowed Jonah, a painted ribbon with which Our Lord was tied to the pillar when scourged, and Adam's daughter's hat. Most of the other objects in the collection, being of a somewhat improper nature, had been removed by order of the Parliament of Saints. Having entertained themselves for a while with these curiosities, Ned and Dick had wandered into Cheapside, looking for something to do. But there did not seem to be anything to attract them. There was no one in the pillory; there were no brandings or floggings in progress at the Standard; there was, it is true, an astrologer sitting in the stocks, with a placard on his breast proclaiming: "I will cut off witchcrafts out of thy hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers. Micah v, 12"; but after a few minutes of baiting him with bits of dirt the boys lost interest in him. Then Dick suggested a bawdy-house, but Ned replied testily that he knew all such places were shut up by order.

"There be several remain open," said Dick, winking, "if you know where to seek for them, as I do, for I have made it my business. These are they which pay money to Major-General Barkstead, and these may continue, though all others must be closed."

"And d'you think I'd enter a house licensed by the Grand Pimp of Tyranny?" angrily demanded his companion. "Id geld myself sooner," and he spat.

Ned was not alone in his dislike of the Grand Pimp of Tyranny, otherwise Major-General Barkstead, now the supreme governor of the City, who held a kind of court at the Tower and had absolute jurisdiction over the cits in all matters, and even over the Lord Mayor himself. For Cromwell, having decided to do without a Parliament, had just parcelled out England into eleven districts, over each of which he had placed a Major-General, ostensibly to persecute and control the Royalists, actually (as England was rapidly discovering) to crush all disaffection to his rule.

And nowhere in England was this new military government more resented than in the City of London, that sub-nation, that supremely and traditionally independent community, which from time immemorial had, to all intents and purposes, ruled itself through its Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council. Particularly did London resent the appointment of Barkstead, though he was the son of a City goldsmith and, before his enlistment in the New Model, had pursued the trade of thimble-maker within the liberties. For during the last few years, when he had been merely Governor of the Tower at a salary of two thousand a year, he had made himself infamous by his extortions and cruelty to the prisoners confined in that fortress, and now that he was given supreme command of the City he was showing himself as the petty little despot that he was. His trick of allowing those bawdy-houses which were willing to pay for the privilege to remain open was only one instance of his insatiable greed; his powers were enormous, and he had given evidence during the few weeks of his reign that he was resolved to make full use of them, particularly if he could employ them in the enrichment of his own purse.

"You may as well go geld yourself," Dick told his sullen companion with a shrug, "if you will not dance the shaking of the sheets in a permitted bawdy-house, for I tell you, you will dance them in no other. Come, there's a kind wench I know at The Woman's Hand in Honey Lane yonder; I'll give you first bout with her, and then I'll warrant you'll sing a different tune. Barkstead's a rare gamester when he's in

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that humour, and this cockatrice is his favourite punk, if all she tells me be true. What do you say?"

Ned said quite a lot. He was not going to demean himself by coupling with Barkstead's bedfellows; he was a freeborn Englishman, and he had his rights; one of those rights consisted in frequenting the bawdy-houses he liked and not those which paid Barkstead money to keep open; he was sick to death of being told what he may and may not do by the soldiers; there was no shred of law to justify the creation of these Major-Generals; a man might as well put on fetters and own himself a slave as live in England nowadays; and so on. It was not very discreet talk, but after all there were no soldiers within earshot, and Ned was accustomed to speak his mind in the ancient fashion of his kind except when he was in that company. Dick, meanwhile, said nothing; he let his companion go on raving, and he smiled a superior smile. He was the realist, was Dick; he accepted the *status quo* and accommodated himself to it; in this way he contrived to get a good deal of enjoyment out of life, and that, after all, was of supreme importance. He also, secretly, admired Major-General Barkstead; it must be fine to live in the Tower and have a salary of five thousand a year and bully the citizens and summon the Lord Mayor to your presence like a lackey and pick and choose among the bawdy-houses, especially if you had begun life as a humble 'prentice, as had John Barkstead. The spectacle of John Barkstead lording it over London held out all sorts of exciting new possibilities to young men like Richard Chick.

They had come as far as the Poultry in their walk when, from the direction of Stocks Market, into which the Poultry opened, they heard, above the clamour of the market, the sound of many horses' hooves and the clatter of steel. Automatically they hastened their steps; whatever the sound portended, it would provide something to look at in this wearily unattractive City, it would be a free sight, and that was always something. But when they came into The Stocks, as the market was called locally, Ned at least discovered the sight to be one he would fain have shunned.

The market-place was quite covered with stalls, nearly all of them selling fish and vegetables, for these were the traditional commodities of The Stocks. Round every stall was a group of customers, gossiping, haggling, and prodding at the goods displayed to see if they were sound, smelling them to see if they were fresh, and from all sides rose the chorus of the fishwives calling their wares: "Lily-white mussels here! New Wall-Fleet oysters! Buy great smelts 1 New flounders, neighbours! I have fresh eels!" Threading their way through the busy and preoccupied throng were cut-purses, pickpockets, and beggars of all descriptions, the Clapper Doyen surrounded by her stolen children, the Dommerer who pretended to be dumb, the Whip Jack, a sham shipwrecked sailor, and the professional sharps known as Pompinios. The ballad-monger was absent, for Cromwell had just laid new and very heavy penalties on any unlicensed printing, but the children still shrieked with delight at the sight of the hobby-horse seller with his brightly-painted toys jingling their bells within the partitioned frame on his shoulder, and his cry of "Troop, every one, one I " ; and the Irish costard-monger with his donkey was doing a brisk trade in apples and pears.

Through this busy and cheerful scene there rode Major-General Barkstead with his armed attendants. He rode a magnificent chestnut horse, and he himself was finely dressed; beneath his halecret, or light steel corslet, there showed a doublet of dove-grey velvet, his long boots of jacked leather covered his thighs, he had a collar of point-lace falling over his halecret, and from beneath his pot-helmet, with its broad brims and face-guard, fell love-locks as long and curled as any Cavalier's. His kettle-drummers and trumpeters preceded him with colours flying, and two by two behind him rode his guard, all in steel back-and-breasts, with swords looped up and calivers strapped to their saddle-bows.

He had entered Stocks Market from the south, and it was plain that he was making for Cornhill. His obvious route, therefore, was along the narrow lane which was left clear for passing traffic on the eastern side of the market. But instead of taking this, Barkstead called an order, and his leading

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horsemen began to make their way straight across the centre of the market-place, just where the stalls were at their thickest.

There was a chorus of protest from the stallholders and their customers, the terrified scream of a child; Barkstead paid not the least attention. His own horse, frightened by the press of people and the noise, began to dance, and in doing so upset a stall of fruit and vegetables. Instantly there was wild confusion; oranges, turnips, carrots and apples rolled in all directions, the crowd pressed upon itself, struggling to get away from the scene of the accident, the stallholder fell upon her knees and began frantically searching for her spilled cash-bag, people from distant corners of the market came running to see what all the fuss was about, while other stallholders in the immediate path of the horsemen frenziedly endeavoured to remove their goods to a safe distance. Barkstead meanwhile, admirably controlling his frightened horse, smiled upon the scene of confusion he had created, and playfully flicked with his whip at the people around him.

All this while, Ned and Dick had stood at some little distance, watching and listening to the chaos which Barkstead had wrought. But now, suddenly, something seemed to snap in Ned's brain; muttering a fierce oath, he stooped, picked up a large cod's head from a near-by stall, and flung it with all his force in the direction of the Major-General. His aim was good—too good. The missile caught Barkstead smack on the side of his face; he lurched violently sideways, his horse reared, and next moment the Major-General was sprawling on the ground amid rotten vegetables, fish-guts, and orange peel.

The immediate and natural reaction of the crowd was to laugh. It had been Barkstead's own fault, retribution had overtaken him, and a man in fine clothes falling off a horse because he has been hit by a cod's head is a legitimate object of merriment. But the laugh tailed away and there was silence, almost utter silence, broken only by the uncomfortable shuffle of feet, the clink of steel as the attendants unlooped their swords, and the quickly suppressed whimper of a child.

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Barkstead reappeared in saddle; he was much the worse for wear and looked exceedingly ludicrous, with a smeared face, a torn collar, and a decayed cabbage-leaf adhering to his halecrot. Yet the crowd did not laugh any longer. It fidgeted uneasily, lowered its eyes, and began to slip quickly and silently away.

"Who threw that?" barked the Major-General, sitting in saddle and staring over the crowd.

No one answered him. He leaned his crossed arms upon the saddle, and from beneath the steel brim of his helmet his eyes roamed hither and thither; those eyes were narrowed and ugly with restrained wrath.

"You had best speak up," he shouted. "If any man among you knows who insulted me, let him speak, I say, and he shall not lack for reward."

Still there was silence. He pulled himself upright and gathered up his reins.

"It would seem," said he, ominously quiet now, "that The Stocks doth encourage disaffection and harbours traitors. I must bethink me whether it would be for the good of the City to forbid the holding of a market any longer in this place."

Then he gave a sharp signal to his attendants, and the little cavalcade moved forward again, in silence still save for the hoof-beats and the ring of steel. The crowd watched it disappear round the corner of Cornhill; a fist or two was shaken at the backs of the horsemen, curses were muttered, and a sibilant whispering broke out as soon as the tyrant was out of earshot. But there was no open hostility. They were for the most part housewives, maidservants, and female fish-vendors; their resentment was necessarily passive.

As for Ned Walsh, having vented his feelings and escaped scot-free, he felt considerably better, and turned back towards the Poultry, for his free hour was spent. One or two of those around him whispered compliments and patted him surreptitiously upon the back; he had done what they would have liked to do, had they dared, and had escaped detection into the bargain. A fruit-vendor pressed a bag of oranges into his

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hand, and more than one man invited him to drink at the nearest ale-house; Ned shook his head, but he basked in their approval, and he was in a better humour than he had been for months as he elbowed his way out of the market.

It was only then that he missed his companion, Richard Chick. He paused and looked around him, but he could not see Dick anywhere, and supposed he had gone off on his own pursuits. Ned shrugged his shoulders and set off briskly homewards, whistling the tune of *Sellingiers Round*.

(2)

Meantime Dick likewise had jostled his way out of The Stocks, but in a different direction. Dick was squeezing and edging along between the stalls in the wake of the horsemen; he followed them along Cornhill with a purposeful air, but it was not until they had reached the Standard, well out of sight of the market, that he ran up to the stirrup of the last of them and asked if he might speak to Major-General Barkstead. The soldier looked at him suspiciously and demanded to know his business with the Major-General. Dick replied that he wished to lay an information, and he resisted all the soldier's persuasions to enter into particulars then and there. For he had a good business head on him, had Dick, and he was resolved to sell his information at the highest price possible, and at the same time to prepare the way for future lucrative transactions, if he could.

The cavalcade halted at the corner of St Mary Axe and Leaden Hall, and Barkstead dismounted. He disappeared into a near-by tavern, and presently Dick, who had kept close to the horsemen all the while, received the welcome message that he was to go within and present himself to the Major-General. Smoothing down his blue frock, wiping his sweaty face with his sleeve, and composing his features into an expression of profound humility, Dick followed on the heels of the attendant and was ushered into a private room abovestairs, where he found the Major-General sitting alone by the open window, with a flagon of Vin de Grave before him, and his helmet and

whip laid upon the table in company with his long steel gauntlets.

,Barkstead had removed from his person the traces of his late accident, and sat there looking very grand and fine. He subjected Dick to a hard scrutiny for a minute without speaking; then he snapped:

"Well, sirrah, what is this information you would lay?"

Dick licked his lips, glanced at his questioner, then down again at the thrum-cap which he was twisting in his hands.

"So please your honour, I know the name of the knave who assaulted your honour in The Stocks to-day."

"What is it?"

"Your honour's pardon, but your honour was pleased to speak of some reward."

"You shall have it, never fear. But first, the name."

"Gramercy, sir. The name is Edward Walsh, so please you. He works in the same house with me, and I know him for a rogue very disaffected towards His Highness the Protector and his government."

"So?" said Barkstead, raising his eyebrows. He drew out a silk purse which was folded in his scarf and took from it an angel, which he threw upon the table. "We must not permit such wicked knaves to pollute this City v.'ith their presences. And where is this house which harbours a disaffected person?"

"It is a tavern called The Three Griffins," replied Dick slowly, eyeing with some disfavour the angel on the table (for he had looked for a half-sovereign at least), "over against the Lud Gate. Yet, sir, I would not have my master know I laid this information, for I am not yet out of my time, and he would whip me for it, he being mighty fond of Ned."

"Your master is fond of a disaffected knave?" exclaimed Barkstead, sounding very shocked. "Tut, boy, would you have me think that your master is disaffected likewise?"

Dick's little eyes narrowed. There was something in the tone of the question which made him guess that Barkstead would not be ill-pleased to hear that Ned's master was ill-contented with Cromwell's government.

"Why, sir, I know not," replied Dick cautiously; "only I

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know that his tavern was named The Three Crowns ere he was forced to change the sign by an order of the Parliament of '53, and that he was very dissatisfied thereat."

"Hm," said Barkstead, rising and pouring himself more wine. "And doth this master of yours take care to observe all the laws and regulations made concerning taverns? For example, doth he refuse to sell drink after eleven at night, and doth he admit no company on Lord's Day, and doth he permit no traveller to leave his house upon the Sabbath save to attend sermon, and hath he proper care that there is no drunkenness nor lewdness among his customers?"

"I cannot tell your honour," answered Dick primly, "for I am but a poor 'prentice and have no leisure to observe what my master doth or doth not do."

"What you intend by this," retorted Barkstead, with an unpleasant smile, "is that only money will open your mouth. Well, His Highness the Protector is liberal to those among his subjects who are minded to do him service, ay, even to the least among them, and you will not find reward to be lacking if you keep your ears and your eyes open and observe what regard your master pays to the laws."

"Gramercy, sir," said Dick, making a bow.

"As for this knave Walsh," continued the Major-General, beginning to pull on his gauntlets, "I shall take him, never fear, but it will not be in his master's house, and if, when he hath walked abroad one day, he returns not to the tavern, you must take care to know nought of it."

"I will know nought of it, your honotir," promised Dick earnestly, "else would my master whip me."

"Nay," Barkstead rebuked him, "it is not your security you must have in mind, but the weal of the Protectorate. For I am commissioned to put down all disaffection in this City, and to make search for all who incline not, either *in* their actions or their words, or even in their hearts, to His Highness the Protector, and I would not have such knavish persons warned beforehand, else peradventure when I come to take them I may find them armed with excuses and prepared to conceal their ill practices."

"I understand your honour." murmured Dick, with a leer.

When he had left the great man's presence and was come out upon Cornhill again, he was whistling to himself and looking very pleased. It is true that there was a mere angel in his purse, but he had discovered, he thought, a way of making it breed, and Barkstead's talk, mysterious though some of it had been to him, had given him the feeling of being a conspirator in high matters of State, and of sharing in that marvellous power which in times like these was available to all clever realists, however lowly were their origins. If a thimble-maker could rise to be a Major-General, with a salary of five thousand pounds a year and supreme jurisdiction over the City of London, there was no reason why a tavern-keeper's 'prentice should not attain to some office almost as exalted, if he knew how to keep his mouth shut and his eyes and ears wide open.

(3)

It was five minutes past eleven of the clock on a dark night two months later, and The Three Griffins tavern was officially closed. The law had never permitted the taverns to keep open after this hour, because it was then that the lanthorns were extinguished over the doors, and those who went upon the streets during the dark hours were suspected of being on unlawful business. Mr Guffin was punctilious in his observance of this ancient law, and never yet had he got into trouble with the City authorities concerning it. On the other hand, he was not an officious person, and he saw no harm in permitting those few daring spirits who were willing to brave the City darkness to linger for a few minutes in his common-room while they finished their ale and their gossip and said their good nights.

There lingered in the common-room this evening but two customers, Mr Cranton and Mr Knee. Simon and Richard Chick were washing ale-cans and putting the room to rights, and Mr Guffin was standing by the fire, warming his capacious backside, and telling his friends for the fiftieth time that he

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did not know what could have happened to his drawer, Ned Walsh. It was now near upon a month since the lad had gone out one day and had never returned. He was a silly lad, said Mr Guffin, never able to keep out of mischief for very long, and, after enquiring in vain for him at his father's house, his anxious master had gone the round of the gaols, lest Ned had been taken up for some offence. But he could hear no word of him, and now he very much feared that he had been caught by the press-gang, for, said he, since this new war with Spain, the pressers were nightly on the streets, and there was not a young man safe from them.

Mr Cranton was about to reply, when suddenly, without warning, the street door opened, and two men entered. Mr Guffin, very surprised, had opened his mouth to tell them that the hour was passed when he might serve them, when he noted the* appearance of the strangers and abruptly closed it again.

One of them, he who now advanced confidently into the room and stood looking about him as though he had a perfect right there, was finely dressed in an embroidered cloak, which he wore with one end flung over his shoulder, long waxed boots of neat's leather, and a beaver with a drooping plume. The other was a soldier, but no ordinary redcoat, for he wore a corslet with tassets, or iron skirts, long boots like his master, and a bascinet with a coat of arms engraved upon it. He stood by the door as though guarding it, with his partisan "ordered," the proper position for a sentinel.

For a moment there was silence, broken only by the stranger's slapping of his fringed leather gloves one against the other, as he surveyed the room. Then Mr Guffin, recovering from his astonishment, stepped forward and rather nervously enquired how he might serve the gentleman.

"It is ten minutes after eleven of the clock," remarked the stranger, pulling out a large oval watch and ostentatiously examining it. "Yet your door was open and you have company, landlord."

"We were just a-going home, your worship," said little Mr Cranton, hastily depositing The Bishop upon the chimney-shelf and stuffing his precious pipe and tobacco-box into his

doublet. "Come, Ben, let us convoy each other till our roads part."

"A moment!" commanded the stranger, halting them with an imperious hand. "Come hither, you," he barked at the disconcerted Mr Knee, "and let me smell your breath."

"My what?" gasped the upholder.

"Your breath. Breathe out, sir; nay, come closer. Hal you have been drinking."

"This, sir, is a tavern," Mr Knee informed him with some indignation, "and I come not hither solely to sit upon my arse."

"I do assure your honour," broke in Mr Guffin, not in the least understanding what it was all about but jealous for his good reputation, "that these are two friends of mine, good honest citizens, and have not been served with liquor since the bells chimed eleven. I am very punctual in observing——"

"Walk across the room," interrupted the stranger, suddenly wheeling upon Mr Knee again. "Come, fellow, do as I bid you, for I would have you know I speak with authority and will be obeyed. Walk across the room instanter."

Mr Knee complied, with obvious reluctance. Unfortunately he had come to the tavern this evening from one of his funerals; he had not stayed to change his clothes, and the effect of his stumpy gait, combined with his black crape, his long hat-streamers, his buttonhole of rosemary, and Jingle Boy carried in his hand, was very extraordinary and ludicrous.

"'Tis as I thought," exclaimed the stranger in a tone of blatant triumph, after the upholder had taken a dozen steps, "you are drunk."

"Drunk!" echoed the indignant Mr Knee. "Samuel, and you likewise, Hal, I call you to witness that I have not swallowed more than five pints of single-ale the entire evening. Single-ale, mark you, sir, for I never do bang the pot with huff-cap save on a Saturday night, for it gives me a disordered belly, and a man of my trade——"

"And you," interrupted the stranger, rounding on Mr Cranton. "What is that you have been guzzling in that huge tankard yonder? It smells to me mighty like muscadine."

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"That is just what it is, your honour," Mr Cranton told him, pleased. "There is no tavern within the liberties sells better muscadine than my friend Samuel's here, and if your honour hath a liking for good wine——"

"Muscadine is a Spanish wine," once again interrupted the stranger, this time addressing himself to Mr Guffin, "and there was an order made in October against the selling of all wines imported from Spain, with which nation we are now at war."

"Against the importing of 'em, under your favour, sir," corrected Mr Guffin firmly. "I have had a tun of muscadine in my cellars for near upon three years, and this is some of it."

"Get you gone," said the stranger abruptly, addressing Mr Guffin's two friends. "Both of you, and hasten, lest I decide to enquire of you who you are and where you live. But as for you, landlord, I must have some speech with you."

Mr Guffin was trembling as he saw his two friends to the door, and closed it after them; he hoped it was with righteous indignation, but he much feared it was with apprehension. He returned slowly to the fire, wiping his hands nervously upon his leather apron, and casting upon the stranger a sidelong glance.

"Now, Master Guffin," said the stranger briskly, stepping to the hearth and loosening his cloak, "there are some questions you must answer. You seem surprised I know your name; ay, I know it well, and other things likewise. Yet it seems you know not mine, and this ignorance is not fitting. Permit me to present myself; I am Major-General Barkstead, and I have the honour to hold His Highness the Protector his commission to command the Militia of the City of London and to govern it in his name."

"Your servant, sir," said Mr Guffin stiffly, for in common with his fellow-cits he did not like what he had heard concerning Major-General Barkstead, and on the other hand he was conscious of having done nothing which could put him within the power of this man.

Barkstead seemed to guess his thought.

"I wonder," said he musingly, "are you aware of the powers

bestowed upon the Major-Generals by His Highness the Protector?"

"I am, sir," replied Mr Guffin promptly. "I have a copy of the Declaration of the Council of State published in October, which same doth justify the creation of these new military governors and proclaims their duties. They are to take command of the local Militia throughout the country and to put down all tumults within their respective districts; they are to disarm all Papists and Royalists, and compel all such to pay their fines for the support of the Militia. These are their duties, sir, set forth in the Declaration, and under your favour I see not how they may concern me, since I am neither Papist nor Royalist, nor have ever taken part in any tumult, being a peaceable citizen, concerned only with my trade.

"It ill becomes a peaceable citizen to harbour disaffected persons in his house," observed Barkstead, seating himself in Mr Guffin's elbow-chair and crossing one leg over the other.

Mr Guffin's face paled at these words, and he cast one anguished glance in the direction of Simon, busily and innocently washing ale-cans behind the counter; but he said nothing.

"You had a drawer," continued Barkstead, "one Edward Walsh."

"I had," replied the tavern-keeper, conscious only of relief that Simon was not the person concerned. "But he hath absented himself for this month past, and I know not what is become of him."

"Why, as to that, I can inform you," said Barkstead, smiling and hugging his knee. "Walsh is transported and is now in a ship bound for New Guinea."

"But for what offence?" gasped the dismayed Mr Guffin.

"For having no visible means of livelihood—pray do not interrupt me, fellow. I know what you would say, that he was a drawer in your service. Yet I am sure you would have discharged him from your service instanter had you known that he was a filthy and seditious rogue and went so far as to make bodily assault upon me one day in the open street."

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Mr Guffin could only gape at him.

"Yet it would seem," continued the Major-General, swinging one foot like a pendulum and looking hard at the tavern-keeper from under the shadow of his big plumed hat, "that you are not so good a subject of the Protector as you would have me to think, since you have not taken care to acquaint yourself with all the powers bestowed upon the Major-Generals."

"I know only what I have read in the Declaration concerning them." replied Mr Guffin sullenly.

"Then permit me to add somewhat to your knowledge. We who are thus honoured by His Highness his commission have authority to expel from the Protectorate all idlers and to transport all those who are reprieved or discharged at the assizes, that the nation may not be disturbed with the presence of criminals within her. Likewise have we power to remove from office all justices we shall find remiss, to imprison or banish all who appear by their words or their acts to adhere to the interest of Charles Stuart, to punish all Church of England clergymen who presume to preach, to keep a school, or to administer the Sacraments, with three months' imprisonment for the first offence, six for the second, and life banishment for the third, to suppress all unlawful amusements, to encourage godliness and sobriety by any means we think fit, to impound the horses of those who presume to exercise them upon the Sabbath, to eject all scandalous ministers and schoolmasters, to compel all able-bodied men to work and to commit to Bridewell those who will not do so, and to ensure that all magistrates, officers, and ministers of justice within the Protectorate be such as are of good and pious conversation, and well qualified with fitness, discretion and ability to discharge the trust reposed in them."

He paused, and Mr Guffin, whose indignation had been ousting his caution all through this speech, burst out furiously:

"What law is there in England can justify such things?"

"The supreme magistrate," replied Barkstead quietly, "and you will understand that by this I mean the Protector, is not to be tied up to the ordinary rules. The foundation of all

governments is the power of the sword, and private persons have no right to question how those came by their power that are in authority over them; for, if that were once admitted, there would be no end of disputes in the world touching titles. The whole right of kingly government being by military decision resolved upon the prevailing party, what government soever it pleaseth them to erect is as valid *de jure* as if it had the consent of the whole body of the people. The Army hath erected the Protectorate, and the Protector hath erected the Major-Generals; and therefore it behoves all well-affected people to maintain and obey the Major-Generals next after the Protector, and the Protector next after God."

"If this be liberty," cried Mr Guffin, crimson with indignation, "I know not what nation in Europe lives in servitude."

Barkstead regarded him for a moment in silence. Then he uncrossed his legs, stretched them out before him, and began to slap one of his boots very gently with his gloves.

"Master Guffin," said he, with a mirthless smile, "a while since I did you the favour of informing you of the powers bestowed upon the Major-Generals. Yet was there one power I omitted to mention: it concerneth ale-houses and taverns."

Mr Guffin swallowed noisily, and his face grew pale again.

"We are instructed," pursued Barkstead, emphasising his words with the slaps upon his boot, "to suppress all ale-houses, victualling-houses and taverns upon the outskirts of London and Westminster, except such as are necessary to lodge travellers. Likewise have we authority to put down such as cannot lodge at least two travellers and their horses, such as encourage drunkenness and gaming, those which receive company upon Lord's Day, or permit their guests to leave or to arrive upon the Sabbath, or employ apprentices or other such persons who hold opinions dangerous to the security of the nation. Further are we instructed to abate the number of all ale-houses and taverns within the Protectorate, because they encourage idleness and lewd vices, and are the places where men are most frequently seduced into disaffected talk. In a word they are, saith the Protector, the very bane

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of the nation, and the number of them must be abated that the Protectorate may flourish."

There was dead silence in the room as he ended. Simon and Dick had ceased their can-washing, and stood behind the ale-stond, frankly listening and staring. Mr Guffin himself stood trembling before his uninvited guest, his face working with mingled fury and terror, and the sweat glistening upon his brow.

"Thus may you perceive, Master Guffin," concluded Barkstead, rising and stretching himself in a leisurely manner, "that you had best have a care over your behaviour, ay, and over your thoughts as well, since I have power to punish those whom I may suspect of nourishing disaffection in their hearts. Had I cause to suspect you of any misdemeanour, authority is given me to take down your sign to-morrow, as, within these last two months, Major-General Whalley hath suppressed one-third of the taverns of Warwickshire, Major-General Worsley hath shut up two hundred in Cheshire, and it is the same throughout the other districts. I who have command over London shall not be behind my colleagues in this worthy work, I warrant you that."

Still there was silence. He turned his glance from Mr Guffin to the two lads behind the ale-stond.

"I hear," said he, "good reports of your apprentice, Richard Chick. Take care of him, and abuse him not, or you shall answer for it to me. And when he is out of his time, which I understand shall be within a year or two, you shall employ him as your journeyman at a proper wage. As for the other lad, I know nought of him, but I trust he is not one who will bring you into trouble."

"He is my son," muttered Mr Guffin hoarsely.

"Come hither, boy," Barkstead commanded, beckoning Simon with an imperious gesture. "You shall answer for yourself. How say you? Art a good subject of His Highness the Protector? Dost observe the ordinances he hath laid down, and art properly acquainted with them?"

"Indeed I am, your honour," promptly returned Simon, hands behind his back, bright eyes wide and innocent, "I

know them all. Already I have made myself conversant with the new ordinance which was passed by the Council of State this morning."

"Have you so?" enquired Barkstead, a little taken aback.

"Ay, sir. Permit me to remind your honour of its nature. It is an Act of Oblivion for Malignants to forget that ever they had estates."

Simon's father drew a hissing breath, but Barkstead only looked hard at the boy, suspecting impertinence, but unable to convince himself that so frank-looking a lad, with so innocent an air about him, with such an ingenuous glance and respectful manner, could really be making game of him. He looked quite angelic, did Simon, standing there with his hands behind his back and his young face raised so trustingly and expectantly as though he were confident of being called a good boy and given a sweetmeat.

"Where heard you this?" demanded Barkstead.

"Why, it is the common cry of the town, sir," replied Simon, opening his eyes still wider. "Sure your honour must have heard of it? And they say likewise there is another soon to be passed concerning——"

"Hold your tongue, boy!" roared his father, unable to stand another moment of this.

Simon held his tongue, but his expression, as he continued to look Barkstead straight in the eye, changed to one of hurt appeal, and a small sigh escaped him. The sigh said, plainer than words: You see how even good little boys are apt to be bullied by a harsh parent.

But when Barkstead had gone at last, with a final warning to Mr Guffin to have a care lest his tavern be summarily suppressed, Simon came to where his father was still standing in the middle of the room, trying to disentangle the appalling and revolutionary information he had received this evening, and tugging at his fair beard. Dick had taken himself off to the privy, and for the moment father and son were alone in the common-room.

Simon tucked his hands into the waistband of his father's apron, as he was used to do when he was very young. But

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now, suddenly, he did not look young at all; he looked oddly and suddenly mature, and his voice was a man's voice as he said softly:

"I held my tongue, sir, when you bade me. Yet I cannot but let you know that for my part I am assured that England hath held her tongue too long."

CHAPTER IV

(1)

IT was the evening of the third of October, in the following year. The day had been observed as one of thanksgiving in London, by order of the Protector, for upon the first the news had reached England that Captain Stayner had virtually destroyed one of the great Spanish treasure-fleets off Cadiz. The captured silver and merchandise was said to be worth four and a half millions in money, and Cromwell, who had been forced to call another Parliament last month because the Major-Generals, though they had proved effective in putting down anything which by any stretch of the imagination could be called "disaffection," had not hit upon a method of getting him some money, was reported to have composed a psalm in the excess of his relief.

London, however, had observed the thanksgiving in a somewhat half-hearted fashion. It may have been the tactlessness of a Member of the new Parliament in choosing this moment to lay before the House a statement of the public debts, which had reached, it appeared, the alarming figure of one and a half million pounds; or it may have been that London was growing a trifle restive as a result of being told when to mourn and when to rejoice; in any case, the thanksgiving had been a very formal, decorous sort of an affair, and as Sarah Guffin came along Paternoster Row this evening she had to skirt only one bonfire, and that was being lit by the soldiers.

Sarah long ago had seceded from the cause of Theauro-John,

who, indeed, some months since, had joined the Two Heavenly Witnesses in Newgate. For Theauro-John, finding the burning of the gods of England in the public street a somewhat unsatisfying method of passing his time, had resolved upon something more spectacular; he had issued from his tent one fine day, had marched to Whitehall, had somehow managed to gain access to the very door of the Council Chamber, and there, in a fit of holy exasperation, had laid about him with a drawn sword. Overpowered before he could do any mischief, he had been carried off to gaol, where he still remained, in company with an 'assortment of other fanatics, expecting, he said, that the New Herod would in due time send his soldiers to cut off his head and place it upon a charger in the approved fashion.

Sarah next had given her allegiance to a sect called the Familists, or the Family of Love, who did not appear to believe in anything in particular, but whose meetings, said the gossips, had the nature of orgies. Tiring of this amorous throng, she had turned for a while to the Ranters, who held that the Sons of Salvation (themselves) were perfect even in their crimes, and that nothing was a sin unless those who committed it apprehended it to be so. This, though a convenient doctrine, was not sufficiently inspiring to the intensely emotional Sarah, and very soon she had left the Ranters and had attached herself to the Band of the Children of Light, vulgarly known as the Quakers.

It was for a meeting of this sect that she was bound this evening. It was a Tuesday, but the Children of Light made no account of days. They would not even call them by their names, for these, they affirmed, were derived from heathen gods and goddesses. To-day was the Third Day of the Tenth Month, and the Third Day was as good as the First Day, since the Lord had made them all and had no favourites among them. Similarly, the Children of Light never addressed a man as Master So-and-So, for they rejected all titles, nor would they take off their hat to any man, nor take an oath. They glorified the use of "plain speech," by which they meant the thee and thou of the Scriptures, for this, they affirmed

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(apparently on first-hand information), was the language of Heaven.

Sarah walked along Paternoster Row, garbed in that plain dress which her sect regarded as a hedge against the enticements of the world; and as she walked she emptied her mind. It was the first essential to be observed when going to meeting; all thoughts, feelings, and experiences must be suppressed before God could speak to the soul. She had come to be, she believed, an expert in this Way of Silence; she found no difficulty in ignoring the sound of wheels, the hum of voices, and the patter of footsteps, as she listened for the Still Small Voice "speaking to her condition." Ineffably superior to the earthy throng around her, she went decorously and quietly upon her way, called from mundane tasks to enter upon a high commission.

No longer, as in the days of her Fifth Monarchy fervour, did she expect to see Jesus Christ descend upon Ludgate Hill in a cloud; He was within her soul; He was nearer to her than she was to herself; He guided her in all her thoughts, words, and deeds; He was a moral searchlight, revealing to her spirit an absolute distinction between right and wrong, and making the Path of Righteousness quite unmistakable. No longer was there any necessity to search the Scriptures for apt texts or pithy prophecies; she had got beyond such aids; she needed no outside help of any kind. The Master Key of Salvation had been placed within her soul at birth; it was likewise called the Seed, and if she did nothing to hinder its growth it would, in due time, fill her entirely, making her perfect and giving her complete victory over sin while she was yet in the body. It was all most exquisitely spiritual.

She passed the Church of St Michael-le-Quern, which stood at the western end of Cheapside, and presently turned down by The Mermaid into Bread Street. This was the bakers' quarter of the City, and about it there hung always a pervading odour of new bread. Passing Cordwainers' Hall and its walled garden, and St Margaret Moses Church, she came into Distaff Lane. Here, at the sign of The Peel, most common of all bakers' signs, was her destination; for at The Peel there

lived a certain Dinah Felstead, a fervent Quaker, who was accustomed to use her back room as a meeting-place for the female members of her sect, men and women Quakers at this time holding their meetings separately.

Sarah crossed the shop, wherein some busy housewives were making purchases in a furtive manner (for no shop was supposed to remain open on a Thanksgiving Day), passed through the bakehouse in which a group of apprentices giggled and chattered as they prepared to-morrow's baking and scrubbed the long wooden shovels called peels, pushed open the door of Dinah Felstead's private parlour, and took her place in the circle which already was assembled there. The Sisters of Truth, as they loved to call themselves, sat in a circle in order that none might seem to take precedence; all were dressed in sombre clothes, without ribbons or other ornaments, and all wore the same solemn, vacant expression. Forgetting for a moment to keep her own mind a vacuum, Sarah felt a thrill of holy pride to see her Sisters seated there, just as the godly women among the Romans and the Corinthians, the friends of Paul the Apostle, had sat with covered heads and downcast glances, waiting for the Spirit to move them to speech.

Taking her seat among the Sisters, Sarah folded her hands and prepared to give the Spirit a clear field. Outward distractions must first be got rid of, and she bent her will to the task of excluding from her senses the chatter of the 'prentices next door, the flickering flames of the candles in their iron holder, the feel of the coarse skirt under her hands, the mingled odours of new bread and human bodies. Next, her mind must be freed from all thoughts and images, from all intellectual activity, as she sought the silence and the emptiness which the Spirit alone must fill if He so desired.

The difficulty of persuading the Spirit to fulfil His part of the bargain doomed many meetings of the sect to a perennial silence, but it was not so in Mrs Felstead's little company, for Sarah herself was often moved to speak. She had not sat long this evening ere she felt commence the physical manifestations which proclaimed that the Spirit was about to reveal

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Himself through her mouth. Her body began to thrill, to quake and to tremble; the blood beat hotly in her pulses, and her face burned. Then words began to march like an invading army into the emptiness of her mind; they communicated themselves to her lips, and presently her voice, obedient to the holy inspiration, pronounced them to the assembled company.

They were not very original words, and a carping observer might have termed their meaning vague; but they fell on Sarah's ears at least like drops of honey on a tongue, for she believed herself to be a divine medium, the vehicle of the voice of God. She spoke of that "primitive Christianity revived" which was the principal mission of the Quakers. The Church of God, it seemed, had lost its vision after the death of the Apostles, and the Reformation had acted only negatively, lopping off certain obvious abuses, but failing to restore the spirit of the Primitive Church of apostolic times. Now, however, a new era was about to dawn; poor Sarah announced this fact with a perfectly genuine wonder and awe, completely forgetting that every sect she had previously joined and discarded had announced the selfsame thing in varying terms. She said that the lily, the symbol of this New Dawn, had bloomed, and that the Seed was shooting forth. The Band of the Children of Light were the divinely chosen heralds of this marvellous Dawn, and to them alone was its coming revealed. They were making a highway for holy feet to run over hill and vale; the trees were ready to clap their hands and the hills to skip for joy. Her eyes streamed with tears as she sketched the glories to come.

When she sat down, at last, silence resumed its sway, and this silence continued for the remainder of the meeting (broken only by the carnal petitions of stomachs demanding supper), no other Sister being moved to speak. Since the Children of Light were far too spiritual to appoint anyone to open or to close the meeting, the occupants of Dinah Felstead's parlour presently began to drift away, one by one, until only Sarah and Mrs Felstead herself were left. As soon as the door was shut upon them, Mrs Felstead, a fat, shapeless woman with a

pronounced goitre, rose from her seat, and sitting down beside Sarah took her hands and began gazing into her face with a look almost of adoration.

"Thou wert indeed inspired to-day, Sarah Guffin," said *hex* hostess, "and hath made all our hearts to beat for joy. Would that He were coming to London, that we might go forth to meet Him, singing our Hosannas, and casting our garments in His way."

Sarah stared at her in bewilderment.

"Of whom dost thou speak, friend?"

"Why, of James Naylor, as He is called. Was it not His coming of which thou didst speak a while since, which shortly shall make the desert to blossom as the rose?"

"Nay," replied Sarah slowly, "I knew not even that he was to be released from prison. I spoke but as the Spirit moved me."

"Alleluia! Praise the Lord!" exclaimed Mrs Felstead, enraptured. "Thou art indeed a chosen vessel and hath the gift of prophecy."

Sarah, though gratified by this high praise, remained somewhat pensive. Presently she said, in a more brisk and earthy tone:

"Tell me of this James Naylor. Nay, tell me all that thou dost know of him, for my mind is troubled in regard to diverse reports I have heard concerning him. Some say he hath estranged himself from our friend and founder, George Fox, and is set upon causing divisions among us and glorifying himself. Others say he is a holy man—nay, more than that——" She broke off abruptly. Then, in a tone of great earnestness, she added: "Tell me all thou dost know of James Naylor, friend."

So then Dinah Felstead began. She sketched, very briefly, the early career of Naylor, his humble birth, his enlistment in the New Model in which he had served as quartermaster in Lambert's Regiment of Horse, his conversion to Quakerism in '51 through the agency of Fox, and his subsequent throwing up of his commission because the Children of Light believed all war to be of the Devil. He had then, it seemed, become the principal lieutenant of Fox, who was at that time gathering

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adherents in Lancashire; but in '53, in obedience to an inward command of the Spirit, Naylor had gone off on his own, with but a few faithful disciples, and had shown signs and wonders whithersoever he had wandered.

Mrs Felstead's eyes glittered as she continued; she was breathless with awe and excitement as she gave her friend the many proofs of Our Saviour's new incarnation in this chosen soul. Naylor's father, she said, was a joiner, which was next door to being a carpenter; it was affirmed on the most respectable authority that his father had never lain with his mother, and that she had not known man at the time of James's conception. When he would have crossed the Mersey one dark night, and had no money for a boat, he had been seen to step upon the river, and next morning had been found upon the other side of it. One of his earliest converts was a fisherman. In common with others of his sect, he was persecuted because he went into "steeple-houses" and interrupted the preachers, roundly denouncing them as priests; but unlike any other Quaker he had, on one occasion, at some small village church in the Midlands, seized a horsewhip from a coachman in the churchyard, and with it had driven out the congregation, overturning the pews, and flinging the contents of the collection-bag into a new-made grave. At Leicester he had healed a woman of the falling-sickness; and early this last summer, at Exeter, had raised a man from the dead. For this miracle, or rather because of the disturbance it had created, he had been put into Exeter gaol, but was now released, and intended marching to Bristol, whither the signs of his coming had preceded him.

"He is the New Messiah," cried Dinah, clasping her hands and wringing them in ecstasy. "He is the Chiefest among Ten Thousand; He is the Lamb of God, the Hope of Israel. His name is no more to be James but Jesus, and blessed are they who believe in Him, for they shall not see death."

Sarah had listened to this extraordinary recital with a pale face and parted lips. Much of it she had known already; during the past few months her mind had been much exercised with the reports she had heard concerning James Naylor.

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She had wanted to believe in him and his mission; indeed, what she still desired above all things was a tangible object to worship, for poor Sarah was not nearly so spiritual as she liked to believe. But Jesus Christ had disappointed her once already; He had not descended upon Ludgate Hill in a cloud, and she had long since given up hope of witnessing that remarkable spectacle. Were this New Incarnation of Him to disappoint her likewise, she felt she could not bear it; were Naylor to show, like the Two Heavenly Witnesses and Theauro-John, that he was but an impostor, she would break her heart.

But as she listened to Dinah Felstead's ravings she felt in her body that familiar manifestation, that agitation which exhibited itself in trembling and shivering, which she knew portended the working of the Spirit within her. Hastily emptying her mind, she permitted the Divine Seed within her soul to speak through her mouth; and in a moment, without, it seemed, her own volition, she had sprung to her feet and was exclaiming, in accents of frenzied conviction:

"This is He I This is He I There is no other. I have met with my God I I have met with my Saviour! I have felt the healing drop upon my soul from under His wings. He hath called me, and I will go to Him. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O Daughters of Jerusalem. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth."

"Did I not affirm thou wert a chosen soul?" murmured Mrs Felstead, gazing in awe at her inspired Sister.

"Farewell, friend, farewell," said Sarah, turning and embracing Mrs Felstead. "When next I see thee I will have been in the company of the Son of Righteousness, of the Prince of Peace, for the Lord hath given me a sign."

(2)

A fortnight later, on a cold, wet afternoon, a small procession approached the city of Bristol from the east, intending to enter by the Redcliffe Gate.

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It was a very strange little procession, and there was some excuse for the way the dogs had barked at it from the outlying farms, and the husbandmen in the fields had leaned upon their spades or pulled up their teams to gape at it. In the centre of the procession there was mounted upon a cart-horse a gaunt, raw-boned figure of a man in a grubby white garment, belted round the waist with a rope. His face, which was lifted that he might gaze upon the lowering sky, was striking, with large, regular features, high forehead, and great staring eyes, and he had arranged his long hair and beard in a manner which gave him some resemblance to the traditional portraits of the Christ. There was no saddle on his mount; he sat sideways on the folded garments of his followers; his hands were clasped in his lap, and a woman led his horse by a halter.

Besides this female disciple, there preceded and surrounded him about a dozen attendants of both sexes. Those preceding him cut down branches from the yellowing trees beside the road and strewed them in his way; those who walked by his horse kept up a continual chant, melancholy in the falling rain.

"Hosanna !" they chanted. "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven and glory in the highest. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David. Fear not, daughter of Sion, behold thy King cometh to thee, sitting on an ass's colt. Hosanna in the highest 1"

As she approached this New Jerusalem, this favoured city of Bristol, leading the steed of the New Messiah, He who was just and having salvation, meek and lowly of heart, He who rode not upon an ass's colt, it is true, but upon a farm-horse procured by the simple expedient of taking it out of the field wherein it had been quietly feeding (for the Lord had need of it), Sarah Guffin felt her heart melt within her for very ecstasy. She was indeed called and chosen, as Dinah Felstead had affirmed. No sooner had she accosted Naylor as he came out from Exeter gaol, at the selfsame moment as she had arrived before *it* (having taken the stage-waggon bound for that city, immediately after the meeting in Mrs Felstead's back room), than he had laid his hand upon her head, bidding her be of

good cheer, and commanding her to follow him whithersoever he went.

It is true that this had occasioned some trifling unpleasantness, several passers-by abusing her for a bold strumpet, and another female adorer of Naylor's so far forgetting her spirituality as to accuse Sarah of usurping her position as chief handmaiden. But Sarah could afford to ignore all such earthy and jealous accusations. Hers it was to combine the roles of Martha and Mary, to minister and to worship; her hands prepared His food, the while her ears drank in His rare words of wisdom and of somewhat obscure teaching; upon her spare shift and petticoat did He now deign to sit as He rode towards a Bristol selected for the honour of being the New Jerusalem; with her own eyes had she seen a seventeenth-century Lazarus indubitably raised from the dead, even though that poor weak brother was now strenuously denying the fact that he had ever died, for fear of the authorities.

So they came to the Redcliffe Gate, and there below them in its hole lay the city of Bristol, its roof-tops hazy in a pall of smoke, its narrow, twisting streets running like rivers with the rain, and its inhabitants mighty busy with their own affairs. Exactly whither He was bound, now that He had arrived in Bristol, or what He would do there, Sarah had no idea, nor did she speculate upon such matters. He knew what He would do; she had but to trust Him, and she would see great things. Even it might be she would see with her own eyes the dead raised, the blind given sight, the lame leaping, and the sick made whole.

Catching sight of the extremely odd little procession which now appeared in their midst, the citizens of Bristol, always glad of some diversion, first turned to stare at it, and then began to follow it, in ever-increasing numbers, as it wound its way along the steep and ill-paved streets. Opinion was divided; the 'prentices, in the usual manner of their kind, began to laugh and halloo; the women gazed in great curiosity and some admiration at the striking features of the central figure; the merchants and shopkeepers shook their heads and looked askance; a Presbyterian minister, and a cornet of

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Desborough's Horse who was a Muggletonian by persuasion and fancied himself as an amateur preacher, broke forth simultaneously into angry denunciation. The chanting of Naylor's small band of disciples was soon drowned by the voices of an interested and increasingly excited crowd, as his horse walked ponderously towards the centre of the city.

This horse, which had not been rehearsed in its role, and was not at all accustomed to the noise of a city, was growing decidedly restive, and, as an indication that it wanted to go back to its field, was making sundry little bucks and rears, to the dismay of Sarah and to the no small discomfort of James Naylor, who was balanced upon its back. The sight of the New Messiah having to clutch at the mane of his steed, to save himself from being tossed off, appealed only too strongly to the humour of a certain section of the crowd, which immediately, by dint of hand and voice, began to encourage the cart-horse in its antics. Thus, by the time the High Cross was reached, which marked the centre of the city, James Naylor's progress had become decidedly undignified, all traffic was at a standstill, and the sustained roar of the mob was punctuated by the frenzied shouts and fluent blasphemy of the drivers of coaches, carts, and drays, who found themselves unable to proceed upon their lawful business because of this vast multitude.

There were those among the crowd who were genuinely shocked by their first sight of Naylor and by what appeared to them to be his parody of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, and these had lost no time in running to the nearest justice of the peace. Yet, by reason of the enormous press of people, it was some while before the officers of this justice could force their way through to Naylor to make an arrest, and in the meantime he, keeping his seat as best he could upon his frightened and resentful mount, held forth to the people upon his own mission and credentials. It was not a very impressive performance; half his attention was necessarily devoted to maintaining his precarious position upon the back of a rearing horse, and there were besides constant interruptions from the hostile portion of his audience. Yet those who were near enough

to gain a close view of him could not but feel some interest, not unmixed with awe.

For he was so deadly in earnest; and he had a voice which matched his face. It was resonant, well modulated, and filled with a profound and unquestionable sincerity. His words were simple; he made no quotations from Scripture, nor did he give vent to those fierce denunciations beloved of the orthodox Puritans. He told the people that he was appointed to bring a message of peace and good will to all who would hear him; that he hated no man, and would live in harmony with all. He recounted, without self-pity, his sufferings for his beliefs, of how he had been flogged at Leicester, pilloried at Manchester, gaoled at Exeter; and he added that he counted himself blessed to be considered worthy of such things. He spoke next of the doctrines of the Quakers, insisting upon the inherent goodness of every soul born into the world, a goodness which was not, he affirmed, a free gift of God, but an essential birthright of the human race; and he described, most movingly, the ineffable sweetness and light enjoyed by those who surrendered themselves utterly to the workings of the Spirit within them. As for himself, he abhorred, he said, all honour paid to him as a creature, but he had acted in accordance with a revelation bestowed upon him, and which he durst not disobey.

"I am set up as a sign to summon this nation," he declared, "and what hath been done in my passing through the towns, I am commanded by my Father in Heaven to suffer such things to be done to the outward as a sign."

What more he would have said was never known, for it was at this point that the peace-officers and constables succeeded at last in forcing a way through to him, with their staves of office in their hands and a sordid purpose in their hearts. They bundled poor James Naylor down from his horse, and they marched him off to the nearest gaol, he and his disciples with him.

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(3)

Two days before Christmas, Sarah stole softly from her father's house while the rest of her family was still abed, and, with a covered basket on her arm, hurried up Ave Maria Lane in the direction of Newgate Prison.

In company with the rest of Naylor's disciples, she had been confined at Bristol for the space of a few days only; they were then discharged, with a contemptuous caution to behave themselves in future. The first thing she had done was to enquire for the whereabouts of her Messiah, and to her horror she had learned that he had been sent by the Bristol magistrates to London, where he was to stand his trial before a Committee of the Parliament.

By this time Sarah was quite penniless, for she had spent what little she had in providing for the needs of Naylor before his arrest. Nothing daunted, however, she had set out for London on foot, and, sometimes walking, sometimes begging a lift from a charitable waggoner, she had arrived in her native city early in December, where she had found the worst possible news awaiting her.

Naylor had appeared before the Committee on the fifth of the month, when fifty-five Members of Parliament had debated what was to be done with him. A large section of the Committee was in favour of a capital sentence, Thomas Clarges, brother-in-law to Major-General Monck, voicing their sentiments when he cried: "Let us all stop our ears and stone him." Others had argued that he was suffering from a delusion and intended no harm, but their sterner colleagues had rebuked them with the information: "We are God's executioners, and ought to be tender of His honour." Upon the fourteenth, the findings of the Committee were laid before Parliament, which immediately debated the sentence. The verdict of death was defeated by ninety-six to eighty-two votes, yet the sentence passed upon the unfortunate fanatic was such that death itself would have been more merciful.

It was voted without a division that he was guilty of horrid blasphemy and was a grand impostor and seducer of the

people. He was condemned, therefore, to stand in the pillory in New Palace Yard during the space of two hours on the following Thursday, then to be whipped from Westminster to the New Exchange in the Strand; and there set in the pillory for another two hours. On Saturday he was to be whipped from Newgate to the Old Exchange on Cornhill, where he must have his tongue bored through and the letter B branded upon his forehead. Afterwards he must be sent to Bristol, to be conveyed through the said city on a horse "bare-ridged," with his face to the tail, and to be whipped through the streets on the next market-day. When this was done, he was to be sent back to London, confined in Bridewell, kept to hard labour, denied paper, pen, and ink, and any relief save that which he could earn by his labour, and there retained during the pleasure of the Parliament.

From the day of her return to London, when she had heard the fatal news, to this twenty-third of December on which the second part of Naylor's punishment was due to be carried out, Sarah Guffin had spent her time haunting the doors of the Parliament House, piteously crying to the Members as they passed in and out, to have mercy on her idol. That she had not been arrested as a nuisance was due, had she but known it, to a quarrel which was brewing between the Protector and this his second Parliament.

For the behaviour of Naylor during his trial and the first part of his punishment had ranged public opinion on his side, and Cromwell had been deluged with petitions quoting his own favourite phrases about liberty of conscience. He, seeing herein an admirable opportunity for putting the Parliament in its place (for it was beginning to give itself airs like its predecessors), had sent a letter to the House, stressing the fact that he abhorred the giving of the least countenance to dangerous blasphemers like Naylor, but demanding to know by what authority it had acted against this man. The House had shelved so embarrassing a question; but, because its own life was somewhat uncertain at the hand of a man who had most ruthlessly destroyed so many of its species, it forbore to anger him further by arresting Naylor's disciples. Instead, it

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concentrated all its fury upon Naylor himself, deciding by one hundred and thirteen to fifty-nine votes that, despite the reports of the prisoner's gaolers that his condition was dangerously weak and low, the second part of his punishment should be carried out upon the date originally ordained.

Early though she was this morning, Sarah found when she reached Newgate Prison that a little crowd had collected by the great gates, in order to secure good places for the moment when Naylor should be brought forth for a second torturing. Some among them eyed her curiously, for it had become known that she was the chief of Naylor's female adorers, and had led his horse upon his entry into Bristol. Finding herself recognised, Sarah entered with "zest into her role. She sat down in the mud and slush, clasped her hands together, turned her eyes heavenward, and moved her lips in silent prayer.

For, although she did not realise it, Sarah had enjoyed herself enormously since her return to London. Grief had indeed filled her, but it had been an exquisite grief, inspiring even while it prostrated her, and lifting her by its excess and spirituality above the common run of mankind. Sleepless nights and abstinence from food had given her an interesting pallor, fitting her for the part which now she must play, the role of the anguished but faithful disciple, following her master even to the gallows' foot. She hugged to herself the knowledge that her name was coupled with his upon men's lips, that she, in her degree, was become a public figure. Her ceaseless petitioning of Parliament, her haunting of St Stephen's Chapel, these had made her, in her own eyes at least, another Queen Esther, prostrating herself before the mighty ones of the land that she might obtain mercy for the Chosen of the Lord. But even sweeter was the conviction that before this day was ended, before the cruel punishment had run its bloody course, the Father in Heaven would own His Son new incarnated, and by some miraculous manifestation would declare that here indeed was His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased.

St Sepulchre's dismal bell was tolling the hour of ten when a small procession advanced across the New Market in the

direction of the prison. By this time the crowd before the gates of the gaol was very great, so great that Sarah, retaining her original position with the utmost difficulty, could make out only a gentleman on horseback, whom she knew to be the City Marshal, and, some distance behind him, the roof of a coach. This, she knew, contained the Sheriff, whose duty it was to see the sentence duly carried out. After a moment or two, a posse of foot-soldiers began to force a passage through the multitude, pushing the people back with the shafts of their pikes and crying loudly: "Make room! Make room!" It was obvious that the Parliament had some fear of the people, and, in order to avoid the risk of disturbance, had reinforced the usual guard of peace-officers, constables, and javelin-men with picked troops.

When the soldiers had succeeded in clearing a small lane which ran from the middle of the road to the great gates of the prison, a wicket within these gates was opened from within, and the prisoner was brought out by two turnkeys. Immediately a great cry rose up, whether of pity, derision, or mere excitement it was impossible to tell, and the soldiers had all they could do to keep the mob from breaking through the cordon they had formed. Sarah, meanwhile, found herself kneeling within a yard or so of her Messiah, so that she had a clear view of him in the moment ere he was pushed forward across the cleared space.

She looked upon him with the eyes of the devotee, and she saw that which she had convinced herself she would see: the forsaken Christ, already condemned by Pilate, mocked by Herod, and now about to start upon His Via Dolorosa. She saw the pale, gaunt cheeks, the ragged beard, the hollow eyes; around the dirty, matted hair she painted with the brush of her adoration a halo of light, and she almost convinced herself that upon the bowed head there rested a crown of thorns. There was no need for her to imagine the scars of a recent flogging, for these were real enough, great ugly blue weals upon the naked back, some still oozing with pus, for it was not many days since Naylor had endured the first part of his punishment.

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Across the space between the waiting officials and the prisoner there now advanced a slouching, shambling figure, dressed in clothes which looked as though they had been made for somebody else (and indeed they had been), and in one hand a thick, knotted cord. As soon as it caught sight of this figure, the crowd forgot for a moment even James Naylor, the sight of the day.

"Yah!" yelled the mob. "Yah, Esquire Dun, what a fine man hath dead men's tailors made you 1 Canst tie a knot yet, Ned? Nay, he served no apprenticeship save as a scavenger of the streets. What friend knotted yonder cord for you, Ned? 'Slight, hath Master Hangman a friend? I'll vow he paid a waterman sixpence to tie such goodly knots for him, for he never learnt the way of it himself."

So the pleasantries continued, the traditional pleasantries indulged in by the London mob whenever they laid eyes upon the most detested of the City's officials, the "Groom of the Three-Legged Mare." So had they baited poor Will Lowen; but Sarah did not think of that. She had forgotten Will Lowen; long ago he had vanished from her mind, leaving no trace, but only a thwarted desire for something she could not have. She had forgotten that ever she had been a normal young woman in love with a normal young man who, unfortunately, happened to be the hangman's assistant. She was Queen Esther, she was Ruth, she was Mary of Bethany, she was all the heroines of the Bible rolled into one. And He whom she loved was the Son of God, a second time incarnate, condemned anew to suffer the vengeance of an unbelieving world.

They led him unresisting to the tail of the hangman's cart, and tied him there by his red raw wrists. He said nothing; to Sarah his expression was one of unearthly patience and meekness; to the crowd it was merely vacant and a little dazed. So the procession started upon its way, led by the Marshal on his tall horse; the Marshal shivered in the bitter air, and envied the Sheriff who, well wrapped in rugs, followed behind in his snug coach. Behind this coach walked a constable leading the lean old nag which could walk to Tyburn

blindfold, it knew the way so well, and rattling behind it came the empty cart which had carried so many men and women on their last slow journey. Fettered to the cart-tail walked James Naylor, head bowed, matted hair falling over the twisted features, naked and defenceless back exposed to the knotted cord of conscientious Hangman Dun, who had been ordered to administer three hundred and ten strokes, no more, no less, and who was having great difficulty in deciding on the rate he should administer them, counting them feverishly beneath his breath. Into the mud and slush of the City streets, the New Market, Blowbladder Street, Cheapside, and at last Cornhill, there dripped slowly, but gathering volume, the blood of Sarah's Messiah, so that soon a red trail was left in the wake of the procession, attracting by its scent the hovering kites and crows.

She kept as near to him as she could all along the route, so near that sometimes she felt the sting of the lash upon her own body. Distinct in her ears, above the rumble of the cart and the shuffle of the thousands of feet around her, she heard the ugly whistle of the cord as it cut through the air, and the dreadful little sound it made as it fell upon that bloody back beside her. He fell once or twice, like an overloaded horse, but with something akin to equine patience he scrambled up again, aided tenderly by Sarah, roughly by the hangman (whose calculations tended to be upset by such accidents), and on he went, his knees sagging, his tortured body swaying, his head fallen forward on his breast, his raw back stooping as though it bore a cross. Now and then, during that dreadful journey, Sarah cast her eyes upward at the heavens, expecting some sign; but there was nothing save the leaden sky and the smoke of the crowded houses tossed hither and thither by the wind.

The big quadrangle of the Exchange came into sight at last, with the bell tower on its south front, and the grasshopper, the crest of Sir Thomas Gresham, carved in stone upon each corner. Here the crowd was further increased by the merchants, who were accustomed at this hour to walk upon 'Change, by citizens' wives going to visit the shops in the

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upper storeys of the building, and by the innumerable vendors of oranges and apples, the rat-catchers, the puppet-showmen and the like, who had their traditional stands by the southern portico. Above this portico there stood an empty niche, which once had contained a bust of King Charles the First. This had been taken down and broken in pieces by the triumphant regicides, who had ordered that beneath the empty niche should be painted these words: EXIT TYRANNUS REGUM ULTIMUS.

In front of the Exchange, in the midst of Cornhill, there stood the ward-stocks and the pillory on its little raised platform, now closely guarded by a ring of soldiers. Unfastened from the cart, Naylor was half carried to this platform, for he was near to fainting. He seemed to recover somewhat when he found himself at his destination; his exhausted condition prevented him from speaking, but the crowd applauded as he embraced the hangman, and then allowed himself, with great meekness and patience, to be placed in the pillory and the wooden boards to be closed around his neck and wrists. His female disciple, meanwhile, boldly pressed herself against the crossed pikes of the soldiers who forbade any of the crowd to come upon the scaffold, and either because she was obviously harmless, or because they feared that the crowd was on her side, the men, after a half-hearted attempt to stop her, allowed her through the cordon, and she took up her position at James Naylor's feet.

The hangman's assistant was tending a little brazier, beside which in a sinister heap lay the branding-irons and the instrument used for tongue-boring, a short, thin poker, sharply pointed at one end. Taking off the apron with which he had girded himself during the flogging, Dun called impatiently to his assistant to make haste. The hangman was in a hurry; he knew a hostile crowd when he saw one, and he knew also, from painful experience, that a hostile crowd liked nothing better than to vent its spleen upon a harmless, innocent official like himself. At any minute now, this particular crowd might begin to throw dead cats at him, and a tongue-boring operation was difficult enough when one could give all one's attention to the job. So he fairly snatched the red-hot poker out of

the hands of his assistant, stepped up to Naylor, and, while the assistant forced open the victim's jaws, Dun roughly pulled out the tongue and plunged the sharp point through it.

The crowd, which had lost all their sympathy for Naylor in their ancient macabre absorption in every detail of corporal punishment inflicted on somebody else, jumped a-tiptoe to get a good view. But all they could see was Naylor's head, lolling through the central hole in the pillory; his ragged hair fell about his face, partly concealing it, yet those with good places managed to make out that his cheeks, so pale before, were now high-coloured, and that his tongue, which hung out sideways like a tired dog's, was smoking and had an ominous dark spot in the centre of it.

The mob had a better view of Naylor's female adorer. She knelt in front of the pillory; she kissed the flaccid hands which protruded through the holes on either side of it; she reached up and tenderly stroked the poor sweaty face of her idol, gently and lovingly smoothing back the matted locks of hair. And when the red-hot iron, shaped into the letter B for blasphemer, was clamped upon his forehead, she sprang to her feet, and putting her mouth to the burn began to suck out the fire from it. The crowd, easily moved to tears or laughter now that the sport of the actual execution was over, began to moan and weep, murmuring that here was indeed a prophet, and that they should see signs and wonders to prove it very shortly.

Meanwhile Esquire Dun, that prosaic and anxious official whose business was with "subjects" and not with prophets or impostors, went round to the back of the pillory to open it up and release the prisoner, who now must be carried back to Newgate. Esquire Dun was pleased with James Naylor; he had given his executioner very little trouble, and had not denounced him to the crowd, as was the embarrassing habit of many of Dun's "subjects." Therefore did Dun permit Naylor's female disciple to assist him in releasing the prisoner from the pillory, and even to put a cup of wine to his lips as he lay there prostrate on the scaffold, half swooning from his dreadful ordeal.

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She took the ragged head into her lap, and with shaking fingers searched in her basket for the salves and bandages she had brought for his wounds. There he lay, a bloody wreck of humanity, his body seized with trembling and shaking (but not now from a spiritual cause), his breath coming over his agonised tongue in a series of painful whistles. His eyes, enormous in the drawn and ashen face, seemed to be appealing to her; his swollen lips tried to form words. Now, she thought, he will reveal to me something unearthly, something never before revealed to mortal ears. She bent her head and strained to hear the heavenly secrets.

"I—did not—claim to be—the Christ. I—did—not—so blaspheme—I hope—they will—let—my wife—come to me—I am—in pain—in pain——"

Her hands, which had supported his head and shoulders, dropped limply away from him. As though she fell from a mountain-top, she felt a dreadful giddiness seize her and a sordid world rush up to meet her. She made no move when the hangman and his assistant lifted Naylor to his feet to bear him, groaning, to the cart. The crowds swayed dizzily beneath her, a senseless, restless cobble of heads, a blur of foolish faces, a babel of voices, talking, snarling, laughing, shouting, a human animal satiated with bloody sport, disappointed of signs and wonders, tired of persecuted prophets, and now beginning to seek for some fresh diversion.

Seeing her huddled up there, no longer dignified and queenly *in* her passionate devotion, no longer the faithful disciple of one who might possess mystical powers, some of the men in the crowd began to taunt her.

"Death!" cried one, "the poor trull's forsaken. Her hopes are cuckolded, for her gamester will be in no mind for a bout when he comes to the Whit again."

"Nay, look a trifle lower if you would have sport, mistress," jeered another. "I'm in need of a cockatrice myself, and I'll warrant you'll find me a better companion than Master Naylor if you will go with me to the sign of The Cradle."

She was suddenly frightened.

Not angry, but frightened. The stark and brutal fact was

borne in upon her that she was not Queen Esther or Mary of Bethany, but merely Sarah Guffin, an ordinary wench, who had made a fool of herself, who had thrust herself into the public eye, that ruthless, critical eye that knows no mercy if it be once deceived, and who now was alone in the midst of a mocking and mischievous crowd. She had worshipped a man, believing him to be the Son of God; she had exulted in the conviction that during his punishment the heavens would darken, a divine voice proceed from the clouds, even that lightnings would strike the torturers dead. But there had been no sign from Heaven; and he whom she had worshipped was proved but a man after all, a poor, deluded, brave, and patient man, who asked for his wife, and denied his godhead, and said, simply and humanly, that he was in pain. . . .

As she crouched there, white-faced and terrified, and as her tormentors, growing bolder and more lustful, prepared to follow up words with actions, the cobble of heads nearest to the pillory began to sway and part like corn in the wind, as through them there jostled and pushed and elbowed an immensely tall figure, a figure she knew. And then, for the first time for many years, Sarah Guffin looked upon that figure without contempt, without infinite superiority. She saw no longer a spiritual outcast, ignorant of the high affairs of the Elect, nor a sordid citizen obsessed with trade and beginning to drink more than was good for him, but a strong and loving protector, her natural protector, who now advanced towards her with outstretched arms and a mixture of oaths and endearments.

Whimpering and trembling she sprang up and into those arms, buried her face in her father's rough coat, and, forgetting all about prophets and messiahs and heavenly revelations, she clung to Samuel Guffin like a panic-stricken child, and burst into a passion of tears.

CHAPTER V

(1)

JAMES GUFFIN was tired, and there was a reason for it. For nearly a year now he had undertaken, at the command of his patron, a work for which he had neither talent nor inclination: he had become a political pamphleteer.

It had begun last summer, when crushing taxation, the misery of the Spanish war, and the tyranny of the Major-Generals had combined to make the cry for a Parliament rise in the throats of all classes and parties. Cromwell had at first uncompromisingly resisted; but when the Major-Generals themselves, finding that they had no money with which to pay their Militia and that the Militia refused to be reduced without it, had begun to bring pressure to bear upon him, Cromwell had been forced to give in. He had done his best to pack the Parliament; he had made it a condition of his calling one that no Member should be allowed to take his seat without a certificate of approval from the Council of State. It was then that Heselrig had sent for James Guffin, his favourite secretary, and had informed him that he was to write a pamphlet. It was necessary, said Heselrig, to rouse the nation to a defence of their rights. They were not to be permitted, he said, to abstain from voting in despair of seeing their duly elected Members take their seats. They must elect men who would voice their wrongs; in other words, they must vote republican; and if they elected a sufficient number of such honest gentlemen, Cromwell would not dare exclude them in the teeth of public opinion.

James had ventured to protest. He was no author, he said; he had no experience in that art. Heselrig had clapped him on the shoulder and had told him earnestly that he underrated his own talents. He himself, said Heselrig, would be glad to undertake the task, only that he had no time. James would make an excellent proxy; and surely he would not refuse to put his hand to so glorious a work, which

was nothing less than a crusade in defence of liberty. The nation must needs be roused; and since the rousing could not be done openly, it must be undertaken surreptitiously, by means of anonymous and secretly printed pamphlets. How great was the privilege of that man chosen to rescue by this means his country from slavery! Poor James had no choice but to turn author after that; he had begun to burn the midnight oil that very night, and he had gone on burning it ever since.

It was hideously dangerous work, but he really did not think of that, or, if he thought of it, it only spurred him on. Anonymity had failed to shield many a pamphleteer now languishing in Newgate, and, despite the elaborate ritual to be observed in getting the tracts to a republican printer, most of the copies were seized by the authorities before ever they got into the hands of the public, for Cromwell's spy system was admirably thorough. Nevertheless, James continued to write his pamphlets, painfully, conscientiously, and taking as his subjects whatever new grievances Cromwell gave the republican party; and he gave them plenty.

James's first effort was entitled *England's Remembrancer*, and it was not very good. He had no style of his own, and therefore had to borrow someone else's; in this first attempt, he borrowed the style of his patron's speeches, and the result was a somewhat incoherent and ineffective piece of rhetoric. "How is the profession of holiness blasted with the names of hypocrisy, falsehood, ambition, and covetousness! How is the glory and strength of our nation spoiled, and the blood of many thousands poured forth in waste like water! And how are all our liberties, rights, and properties invaded and subverted by arbitrary powers and force of arms! Do not all our ruins at home and abroad, by land and sea, speak to you? Surely they have loud voices; surely they do cry daily in your ears, Help! Help! or England perishes!" That sort of thing sounded well enough when, accompanied by appropriate gestures, it issued from the lips of Sir Arthur Heselrig in the House; put down on paper it became decidedly weak.

Yet James had persevered. He had felt a little conscience-

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stricken when some of the leading republicans were arrested in consequence of that first pamphlet of his, Bradshaw being deprived of his offices, and Vane imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle, both on suspicion of having written so seditious a tract; but Heselrig had reassured him. It was all in a good cause, said he; these brave good gentlemen, his friends, would rejoice in their sufferings if they knew that the real author of the pamphlet retained his liberty and was determined to carry on the noble work. And in the following month, when Heselrig himself, *in company* with one hundred and fifty-nine other duly elected Members were turned from the door of the House by the soldiers, because they could not produce a certificate from the Council, James had sat down of his own free will and had written a tract made eloquent from his indignation.

It was called *An Appeal from the Court to the Country*; it stigmatised Cromwell as "the public capital enemy, a man assuming an absolute arbitrary authority, as if he came down from the Throne of God"; and it gave the exact figures of those excluded, revealing among other things the astonishing fact that the large county of Hertfordshire was completely unrepresented in the present so-called Parliament, because all the Members elected for it had been excluded from the House. Cromwell's reply to this tract was to arrest three of the most troublesome republicans in the Army, Overton, Rich, and Alured, and to dismiss two others, Okey and Saunders, from their commands.

During the autumn and winter, James had found plenty of other targets for his amateur pen. It was a pleasure to him to be able to inform his readers that they must not look to have the problem of the public debt solved by Stayner's lucky capture of the Spanish treasure-fleet at Cadiz, because by the time the treasure reached London it amounted to only two hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds, the sailors having seized the bulk of it in lieu of pay. He gleefully retailed the embarrassment of the inexperienced financiers who now filled the benches of the House; they durst not, he asserted, increase the monthly assessment, and they despaired of wringing any

more from the Papists and the Cavaliers. On the other hand, they knew that the Protector was reluctant to dissolve them until he got some money out of them, and therefore it was to their own interest to shelve the question of supplies for as long as possible.

In November, Harrington published his *Oceana*, and James neglected his own work while he devoured those romantic pages. It was all so effortless, so clean-cut and confident; it lifted him out of the somewhat sordid business of politics, and placed him once more upon that plane he had known and loved in his school-days, when he had discovered the theory of a perfect commonwealth.

When he got back to work again, he found that he had rivals. The Fifth Monarchists were pouring out pamphlets by the dozen, all with the most arresting titles: *A Sober Admonition from some Sighing Souls to the Officers and Soldiers of the Army*; *A Witness to the Saints in England and Wales from certain Mourners in Zion*; and so on. The contents were even more sensational than, the titles: "When is the time for destroying and pulling down Babylon and its adherents?" demanded the pamphlets. "And what are the means of doing it? The time is now, and the means by the sword." They referred to Cromwell as "a misshapen Court monster" and "the bastard of Ashdod," and they appealed to all honest soldiers to enlist in the army of King Jesus. Cromwell rearrested Feake and Rogers, and commissioned some of his own party to write a few counter-blasts. When he read these Government tracts, James was torn between contempt and indignation; the Protector must be desperate indeed, or else stupidly ignorant of his own unpopularity, when he allowed his pamphleteers to defend the power of the sword. "Were it not," blurted out the author of *Animadversions on a Letter*, "for the strength, honour, and success of the Army, that which we call Parliament, Government, and Commonwealth would have been made conspiracy and rebellion."

In the new year there had been a series of attempts upon the life of the Protector, and James seized the chance to write a malicious tract on Cromwell's fears of assassination and his

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elaborate precautions against *it*. He had appointed himself a new Life Guard of no less than one hundred and sixty men; when he had to ride abroad he went in a coach, and his escort and driver had orders to go so fast that the dust kicked up by the galloping hooves obscured the scene for a quarter of a mile. He changed his sleeping-chamber continually, and not even his closest attendants knew from night to night where he would lie; and he carried with him everywhere a loaded pistol. James was very annoyed indeed when a rival pamphleteer reminded him of the fact that the great Parliamentary Bradshaw had worn a bullet-proof hat when he had conducted the trial of King Charles.

But as the spring came in, James found something much more serious to occupy his pen. For years there had been rumours that Cromwell was hungering after the crown. Now the idea could no longer be dismissed as a rumour. For in February, Sir Christopher Pack, a rich merchant and former Lord Mayor, knighted by Cromwell, suddenly introduced into the House a paper he called the Remonstrance, which demanded that, in the interests of the nation, Cromwell should assume the name, style, title, and dignity of a king, with all the rights annexed to it. James was the more concerned because he had never seen his patron, Sir Arthur, so seriously frightened.

"If this do pass," Sir Arthur told him, "we shall next vote canvas breeches and wooden shoes for England."

So James's pen worked harder than ever, spluttering with indignation and rage. But he was greatly cheered and encouraged when he discovered that the republican party was not the only obstacle in the way of Cromwell's new design; he had to reckon likewise with the Grandees of the Army, hitherto his staunchest allies. Lambert said stoutly that the re-establishment of kingship was contrary to all the oaths and protestations made by the Protector since the death of King Charles, and ravished the principles for which the Army had fought. Desborough and Fleetwood, Cromwell's relations by marriage, both spoke fiercely against the scheme, and a deputation of a hundred officers waited upon the Protector to protest against it. He professed himself entirely indifferent

to the title; he might have been a king long ago, he said, had he delighted to wear a feather in his hat. Then he rounded on the officers, and accused them of forcing him to dissolve the Long Parliament, to call the detested Parliament of Saints, and to institute the Major-Generals. So colossal was his impudence that he even blamed them for the exclusion of one hundred and fifty Members from this present Parliament. What he did not say, but what they very well knew, was that the direct rule of the sword had proved too dangerous, and that his only hope lay in reviving a part of the old Constitution.

The debate on the Remonstrance, or, as it was now called, the Humble Petition and Advice, went on all through March and April. The House discussed every article in it except the one which offered Cromwell the crown. They discussed revenue, religion, and the composition of the Council of State; they passed without a division the astonishing clause which declared that in future Parliament should consist of two Houses. The truth of it was, the Army party had seen their advantage in this, for if there was to be a House of Lords again, their own principal members, many of whom were related to the Protector, would naturally take their seats therein, and be made earls and barons into the bargain.

Meanwhile James Guffin's pen raced across the paper, as he worked at his tracts in the security of his patron's house in Covent Garden. Practice had made authorship come more easily to him, and he even discovered a little wit, gravely informing his readers that Cromwell's two chaplains, those sturdy Puritans Mr Nye and Dr Owen, would be created Archbishop of Canterbury and Archbishop of York respectively as soon as their master took the crown. But he was too solemn by nature to continue in this vein, and his *The Difference between an Usurper and a lawful Prince explained in their several Characters for the Satisfaction of all Men* was a very serious piece of work indeed. Unfortunately it got him into trouble with his patron; Heselrig pointed out to him that in his anxiety to prove Cromwell a usurper, he had very nearly proved Charles Stuart to be a lawful prince, and naturally that would not do at all.

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At long last, by one hundred and twenty-three to sixty-three votes, the House decided to ask Cromwell to assume the title of King; and considering that the House was packed with his supporters the decision was not surprising. There remained to be seen whether he would venture to accept; but so far as James was concerned the thing was out of his hands. He had done his best to rouse up the love of freedom in the nation by his pamphlets; if Cromwell accepted, he would try again; meanwhile, he could but wait upon events and indulge in a little well-earned rest.

It was only decent that now, when at last he had some leisure from great affairs, he should go and visit his father; and he went, not once but several times. He seemed suddenly to have discovered that his native City had its attractions; he told himself that it was even beautiful, with its galleries of signboards swinging in the wind and the tempting wares laid out in the shops and the old Roman walls rising up on every side. These things were not, of course, important; the only really important thing in the world was representative government; still, they had their place. In intervals of reading Harrington's *Oceana* aloud to his family, he very much surprised his father by enquiring most kindly for friends and neighbours; he even asked after Mr Knee's gout. The curious thing was that he blushed when he mentioned the upholster's name; more curious still was the fact that sometimes, when he was sitting alone at his desk with nothing particular to do, his pen would, apparently of its own accord, scribble a name on a blank sheet of paper.

In fact, after half an hour or so, the paper would be quite covered with that name, in small italics, in Roman capitals, sometimes plain, sometimes enclosed within a scroll of leaves. But it was always the same name. It was "Rose."

(2)

Mr Guffin stumped wearily down Cheapside in the direction of his tavern, his ears still full of the harsh words just spoken to him by the Chairman of the Court of Aldermen at Guildhall,

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"This is now the second occasion, Master Guffin, on which you have been presented to us for a like offence. You were convicted the last time of uttering a profane oath, and now, it seems, you have presumed to speak in the language of Popery. The Jaw inflicts upon you the fine of six shillings and eightpence, and do you have a care, for you are to recollect that upon the tenth offence you may be judged a common swearer, and then you will be bound over for good behaviour for the space of three years."

The law indeed! Pish, an arbitrary regulation made by a rabble of soldiers and nominated toadies who sat in the House and dared to call themselves a Parliament. And what was behind such regulation, pray? To make men innocent and godly of speech? No such matter, but rather to get money in order to carry on a thoroughly unpopular war and to maintain an army nobody wanted. What man was there in London, however God-fearing, however respectable, but on occasion let slip a God-damme? Particularly in times like these.

And was it not altogether intolerable that he, Samuel Guffin, a good, honest, law-abiding cit if ever there was one, should be compelled to leave his tavern in the middle of a working day to go and pay six-and-eightpence at Guildhall for singing an ale-house catch which was as ancient and as innocent as any ever invented, and, worse still, to see his own journeyman pert and smiling, stationed there to lay the information against him?

"I heard him myself, your worships. He named the Virgin Mary and called her blessed. I would sooner cut out my tongue than repeat so papistical a catch, yet at your worships' order I will do so. It went like this:

**"" Bring us in good ale, and bring us in good ale,
For our Blessed Lady's sake, bring us in good ale.""**

How his fingers had itched to wring Richard Chick's false neck! Instead of which, he must cosset the young Judas, bear with his impudence, pay him a journeyman's wage though he earned not a penny, and turn a blind eye to his laziness. If

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he did not, the so-called City authorities, who were nothing more nowadays than creatures of the so-called Protector, would want to know the reason why.

And it was not only your words that could undo you in these times; it was your very thoughts. Thurloe's spies infested his tavern, and he had but to look glum when they praised the Protector, or the Army, and they were at him. He trembled every time he saw a stranger enter The Three-Griffins. They posed as ordinary customers, these spies; their job was to mingle with the convivial throng and listen for the least hint of what they called disaffection. You had only to observe that you did not like such-and-such an Act, and the next thing you knew you were summoned to Guildhall to pay a fine. Mr Cranton had said to him only yesterday, puffing harder than ever at his pipe: "We have a new Inquisition, neighbour, which causeth us to lock up our thoughts or else to forfeit our livelihoods. I confess I see little difference betwixt this and the Spanish Inquisition, only the one racks, and tortures the purse, the other the person." Hal Cranton was right; but you durst not say that sort of thing unless you were very sure of your company.

It had been raining hard ever since Mr Guffin had left Guildhall, and suddenly becoming conscious of the fact that he was very wet he turned into a small ale-house formerly called The Cardinal's Hat, but now named The Jericho, under the shadow of Bow Church. The landlord was a friend of his and he looked forward to pouring his grievances into a sympathetic ear; but, as Mr Guffin approached the ale-stond, mine host of The Jericho gave him a sign which meant that there was a spy present and he must have a care of his tongue. This put the finishing touch to Mr Guffin's depression; he ordered a can of ale, slapped down a penny for a loan of *Mercurius Politicus*, and carried ale-can and news-sheet to a remote corner.

The author of *Mercurius Politicus* had commenced a series of articles intended to prepare the public mind for the spectacle of Cromwell taking the crown. He had cast them into a series of letters from an imaginary Utopia (in imitation of

Harrington), and he now informed Mr Guffin that the Utopians had fought only against the abuses of Kingship, and not against Kingship itself. "All forms of government," continued *Mercurius Politicus* solemnly, "are but temporary expedients, to be taken upon trial, as necessity and right reason of State enjoins, in order to the public safety; and that as 'tis a madness to contend for any form, when the reason for it is gone, so 'tis neither dishonour nor scandal, by following right reason, to shift through every form, and after all other experiments made in vain, where the ends of government cannot otherwise be preserved, to revert upon the old bottom and foundation."

Talk about Jesuitry! Mr Guffin screwed the news-sheet into a small and crumpled ball, and flung it violently upon the table. Then he got up and marched out of the ale-house. If he had sat there a moment longer, either he would have uttered a whole string of profane oaths, or else he would have said aloud exactly what he thought of *Mercurius Politicus* and its casuistry. The result in either case would have been the same: he would have found himself back at Guildhall once more.

The rain was coming down harder than ever when he came out into Cheapside, but he scarcely noticed it. He slouched along the street, his hands behind him, his big shoulders hunched, his mind in chaos with wrath, confusion, and general misery. Never had he meddled with politics, and why, therefore, should they meddle with him? Why could not these jumped-up country gentlemen and rich merchants, who spoke so loud of liberty and acted so consistently against it, leave him and his trade alone? That was all he asked, to be let alone. Let the Protector take the crown, or the Long Parliament come back, he cared not a fig if only he could pursue his trade in peace and retain his fundamental liberties. As it was, the end of him would be either Bedlam or a debtors' prison. He really could not stand much more of this.

And there was the problem presented by his children. He was anxious about his children, anxious and hurt. It was a month now since an acquaintance had told him that Thomas

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was back in London; he was quartered with his regiment at the Mews, said Mr Guffin's informant, and had been there for some time. Mr Guffin refused to believe it; Thomas could never be so unfilial or so unkind as to return to London and not visit his father. But the old man was uneasy, and had applied himself to James, and James had discovered that the news was true. Thomas was indeed in London; James himself had chanced upon him in the Park one day, and had upbraided him for his lack of duty to his father. Thomas's reply, duly reported by James, still echoed in Mr Guffin's head:

"I will not set foot in that City which bred a man such as this Pack, which first did introduce into the House the horrible Petition and Advice, the same that hath seduced our noble Lord General into striving after kingly tyranny."

It sounded like Thomas, yet somehow or other it did not ring quite true. The lad was a fanatic, but at bottom he was a good, kind lad, at least where his father was concerned. Mr Guffin could not help but suspect that Thomas had some other reason for keeping away from the City, especially considering his strange conduct and manner just before he had volunteered for service *in the Indies*. Yet even if he would not come in person, at least he could have written. And there was Sarah. The poor wench seemed to have learned her lesson after the tragedy of James Nay lor; but Mr Guffin was taking no chances. He had sent her down to her aunt in the country, and there she still remained. But he missed her; yes, he missed her—fanaticisms, moods, bad cooking, and all. And Simon, too; he had only too much cause for his anxiety about Simon. . . . A man's whole life lay in his children, and he seemed to have made a melancholy failure of his task of combining the roles of father and mother.

He was come to the eastern end of St Paul's now, but he could scarcely bear to look at the Cathedral. The rembval of the scaffolding round the tower had caused part of the south transept and the roof to come down, the glorious rose window was glassless, and all the niches formerly occupied by the statues of saints were empty. There was a preacher holding

forth at Paul's Cross at the moment (the cross itself had been smashed, but the large open-air pulpit remained). He was addressing a very scanty congregation, for the citizens had their stomachful of sermons on a Sunday, and besides the rain was now a perfect torrent. Mr Guffin, however, was inclined to linger, for what with treacherous journeymen and lurking spies his tavern had suddenly become hateful to him. Also, being by nature a religious man, he yearned for some words of comfort from a minister of the Gospel.

He lingered for some time before he could make out what this particular minister was talking about. His voice was monotonous and his words chased each other with extreme rapidity as though he were repeating a hastily learnt lesson and feared to forget it. Mr Guffin caught the names of Jehu and Ahab and Ramoth-gilead; he heard likewise those of Baasha and Jeroboam, Jezreel, Ahaziah, Jehoshaphat and Nimshi; they bombarded him, those Hebrew names, like cannon-balls; he stood there patiently blinking and shuffling his feet and trying to understand. At last the preacher raised his voice and proclaimed distinctly:

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish. And I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Then they hasted and took every man his garment and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king. Now these things which were done in the days of Jehu, son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi, shall be done likewise in the days of Oliver, son of Robert, son of Henry, for the Lord hath cut off the house of Stuart, and the prophets of Baal shall perish with them. . . ."

Mr Guffin lingered no longer, for he had heard enough. You opened your news-sheet for information, and all you found was casuistry; you expressed an honest opinion in an ale-house and you found yourself hauled before a magistrate; ytiu let fall an oath or sang a merry catch, and your own journeyman informed against you; you stayed to listen to a

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minister of the Gospel, and you were treated to a twisting of Scripture and to Government propaganda disguised as a sermon. There was only one thing left: to go home, lock yourself in your bedchamber, and drink yourself silly. And even then, your journeyman might pry through the keyhole and report you.

But Mr Guffin had lingered a little too long in front of Paul's Cross. He was shivering when he left it; misery of mind and discomfort of body made the journey to his tavern seem long; and when he reached The Three Griffins his teeth were chattering and his chest was tight. He bade Little Julia mull him some ale, and he sat himself down by the kitchen fire; but when the ale was mulled he felt sick and could not drink it, and soon he began to complain that the room was too hot, and that he had a pain in his back.

By ten o'clock that night, Mr Cranton, hastily summoned, had drawn twelve ounces of blood from Mr Guffin, had strapped hot irons to his feet, and had dosed him well with liquorish. But the barber-surgeon did not seem very satisfied; he stood looking over his spectacles at the restlessly tossing body of his friend and patient, listening to the difficult breathing and dismally shaking his head.

(3)

As soon as James received a message to say that his father was ill he sent a servant to his brother Thomas, conveying the tidings, and adding a severe postscript to the effect that it was Thomas's duty to visit his sick parent without delay.

It so happened that both brothers arrived at The Three Griffins simultaneously without having met *en route*; Thomas, it seemed, had entered the City by the New Gate, which seemed to James mighty odd, since it was a very long way round. However, he said nothing, though he was curious when he observed the furtive glances Thomas cast at the sign of The Black Boy next door as they entered the tavern together. As for Thomas, who looked leaner than of old, and whose face was the colour of mahogany from his sojourn in the Indies, he

greeted his brother coldly and made haste to get into the house. There was no one in the kitchen except Little Julia's admirer, Jack, who was sitting by the fire nervously tying knots in a piece of string; he informed them that their sister was above-stairs in the sickroom, and thither the brothers ascended*

They found their father lying propped up with pillows on his fourpost bed, with the curtains drawn back, and his capacious stomach supporting one of his best silver tankards, a tankard of an extra large size called a jeroboam. Little Julia, quietly busy as usual, sat by the window with some mending, and Simon was perched on the foot of the bed with an open book in his hands. It was some weeks since Mr Guffin had been taken ill, but it was only now that Mr Cranton would permit him to see visitors. The old man had a troublesome cough and a high colour, but he seemed pretty cheerful, greeted his sons kindly (without a word of reproach to Thomas for not visiting him before), and then bade Simon put away his book. Something in the way he said this made Thomas demand sharply:

"What book is that the lad hath been reading?"

"It is a new book," replied Simon instantly, before his father could speak. "The author is a mighty droll man, and he asks herein certain questions, though he neglects to answer them. Harkee to this: 'Whether when Colonel Pride goes to quarter with Old Nick, the proverb will not be verified, Pride feels no cold?' And this likewise: 'Whether Major-General Harrison be bound to give no quarter because his father is a butcher?' Is it not witty?"

"Wit like that hath given a man Tyburn-fever ere this," snapped Thomas. "I would not have believed there are yet such filthy books within the liberties."

"They are there if you know where to find them," answered Simon, looking at his brother from under his eyelids. "Dick the 'prentice hath taught me that. Only that he is not Dick the 'prentice any longer; he is Dick the journeyman now. For the City Fathers have such care of us cits, that they will even choose our journeymen for us nowadays."

"Come, my sons," said his father hastily, "how is **it with**

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you? Let us give and hear the news, for 'tis long ere we were met together."

"You must not plague yourself with talk, sir," reproved James, sitting down upon a stool by the bedside, "for recollect that you are a sick man."

"I am a thirsty one," replied his father cheerfully. "Julia, my love, give me another measure and do you fill it to the brim."

"Sure that cannot be ale you are drinking," exclaimed James in horror, as his nostrils inhaled a familiar odour. "Upon my soul, sir, you will slay yourself, imbibing so freely in your condition. Sister, forbear, you must not——"

"Don't you be giving me orders nor Little Julia neither," interrupted Mr Guffin, with the sudden peevishness of the invalid. "I have lived all my life upon ale, and it never hath hurt me yet."

"Yet by your leave, sir," said Little Julia, gently anxious, "methinks you should drink small-ale at present, if you drink any."

"Small-ale is for brewers' horses and prophetesses," her father told her. "Did you hear the merry tale of Hannah Trapnell, the prophetess, my sons? When Cromwell was installed Protector for the second time, but this last week, she sat herself down beneath his window at Whitehall, and there she hath continued ever since, fasting upon toast and small-ale and reciting extempore psalms."

There was silence for a moment. Thomas and James stared at their father in astonishment and some dismay, for it seemed to them that he must be a trifle delirious. His eyes were unnaturally bright and his voice had an odd slur about it; it was really disgraceful of Little Julia to let him guzzle ale in his condition.

"Come, come, now," cried Mr Guffin, shifting impatiently in the bed, "let me have the news of you, for I swear I am in labour to hear it. What of the Indies, Thomas? They say our men were very discomfortably treated there, both by the Spanishers and the planters, and that poor Admiral Penn was kept shut up in the Tower on his return until he had consented

to take the whole blame for so sorry an expedition. And you, James, is your master to have a seat in this new House of Lords and put on the doubled miniver of an earl? 'Sdeath, boy, you will find yourself knighted ere you may wink."

"My patron," replied James stiffly, "will take his seat in the only true and lawful House, which is the House of Commons. For notwithstanding he is invited to sit with the Protector's two sons, his three sons-in-law, his two brothers-in-law, and a pack of Army Grandees, he thinks it his honour to sit among the Commons of England before any society of men whatsoever."

This, though addressed to his father, was obviously a hit at his military brother, and Thomas, leaning against the bed-post, and sticking his thumbs into his belt, straightway took up the challenge.

"You do ill," said he, "to sneer at the Grandees of the Army, for were it not for them you would have had Cromwell King by this time. 'Tis they, these heroes who have stuck all along by the Good Old Cause, who now have prevented the return to kingly tyranny, for they applied themselves to the Protector as soon as they heard that he was resolved to accept the crown, and they told him roundly that if he did it they would lay down their commissions, ay, Lambert, Desborough, and Fleetwood, the chief officers in the Army, which would have caused a mutiny, for the common men love them well. And so he refused it, for he is well aware that his power rests on the sword, and that without the support of the Army, his life would not be worth a leather farthing token."

"Protector or King, there is little to choose betwixt them," said James with a shrug. "At his second installation, this last week, he ordered all to be done as at a royal coronation, save only that the crown be omitted; yet he lacked for other things besides the crown. The people cheered him not at all and, what is more to the point, he will quickly discover that he lacks a revenue, for though his creatures in the Parliament have voted him huge subsidies, they have neglected to enquire from whence they may obtain them. Bless me,

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methinks that if there must be government in a single person, a king is to be preferred to a protector, for the former is bound by law and custom, but the powers of a protector no man knows."

Thomas burst forth into a furious defence of Cromwell, for while he had been hot against the Lord General when the latter had been angling for the crown, he was as hot for him now that he had chosen to remain Lord Protector. He repeated with relish Cromwell's words: "Though nine men out of ten be against me, what if I put a sword in the hand of the tenth man?" He described the glories which were to come when England, secure in the strong government of the Protector and the Army, had destroyed the might of Popish Spain and, forming a Protestant alliance with the other Powers of the Reformed Religion, carried the True Gospel to the very gates of Rome. He stoutly defended the new House of Lords, affirming that the Lower House had proved itself itchy of the supreme power of the nation, which by right belonged to the Protector and the Parliament jointly, and that therefore must there be a balancing power, which should serve as a check upon them both.

"The old Lords willingly laid down their lives in '49," retorted James sarcastically, "and the saint-like Army desired they might have decent interment, which was done. And shall we now rake them up again after they have been so long in the grave? When the late King was condemned by the Commons of England, the Lords adjourned and never met again, and hereby came a farewell of all those peers, and it was hoped that the people of England would never have a negative upon them. Will they thank you, if you bring such ^ negative upon them, the people of England who paid you to fight for the capacity to make their own laws? What balance is to be looked for in this new House of upstarts and officers turned earls and viscounts?"

"The sword is there," Thomas told him gravely. "Is that not a good balance? He that hath a regiment of foot to command in the Army, he is as good a balance as any of your old Lords whose title lay in wealth and lands."

"By what authority is this new House called?" demanded James, rising and beginning to pace the room as he warmed to his argument. "Tell me that. Not by the authority of the people of England, so much is certain. And if not by their authority, then I say that this House is illegal and tyrannical, and illegality and tyranny are to be resisted wheresoever they be found. Therefore do I pray and labour for the restoration of a free commonwealth, which cannot be revived save by the Long Parliament and its lawful successors, for in these is found the supreme power and trust committed to them by the people of England (the original of all just power), to make laws, constitutions, and offices for the government of the whole, and to call all ministers and officers whatsoever to account."

"Julia, my love," said Mr Guffin, "pour me another measure of my notable huff-cap, which is so strong 'twill bear a man sweetly through a three-hour sermon."

"Who was it won the war?" shouted Thomas, crashing his hand against the bed-post so that it shuddered. "Who was it brought the King to the block? Who was it resisted the invasion of the Scots and defeated their tyrant, Charles Stuart? Who was it destroyed the idolaters of Ireland? Who is it hath protected this nation from all the divers enemies which have lusted after her blood and would inevitably have cut all honest throats within her? It was the Army, it was the hosts of the Lord God, and therefore, say I, this Army hath the right to the chief voice in government. Will you venture to speak to me of the Long Parliament which we of the Army were constrained to purge of two-thirds of its Members ere we could force it to do its duty in condemning the King? Beware how ye murmur against the Holy Ones, the warriors of Jehovah, lest the wrath of the Lord be kindled against you. And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people. Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them. Exodus xxxii, 9, 10. Ye are fools indeed that will murmur against the rule of the sword, **for** was not Israel thus ruled? Is not the Lord Protector the

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lawful successor of David who led Israel forth in the days of wicked Saul, and to whom the Lord promised that He would establish his kingdom for ever and ever?"

"Fie, fie, brother!" cried Simon, perfectly imitating Thomas's manner and voice, "will you compare Cromwell with David, who was a king, and an adulterer to boot? Hast forgot the story of pretty Bathsheba? What will Jehovah do to you when he hears of this?"

"Peace, boyl" suddenly roared Mr Guffin. "Peace, all of you, that I may tell you what I would do were I that Jehovah of yours, who is, it seems, the only tyrant you will stomach. I would send a second Flood, and I would drown the whole pesty lot of you, Protector, and Parliaments, and Army and all, like so many unwanted kittens in a tub."

"Heaven preserve us, here is blasphemy," muttered Thomas, recoiling.

"Nay," said his father cheerfully, settling himself more comfortably against the pillows, and holding out his tankard. "Here is good ale, and let me have some more of it. For I have somewhat to say unto ye all, and needs must I wet my whistle."

"It sticks in my mind," said James stiffly, "that you are drunk, sir."

"I'm drunk as a dog," admitted Mr Guffin very pleasantly, "and I intend to continue tippling till my belly's awash. 'Tis the only estate for an honest cit nowadays, since when he is drunk he speaks his mind and cares not a sirreverence who hears him. I have lain here," continued Mr Guffin, snatching the pottle from Julia's hand and splashing ale into his tankard, "I have lain here and listened to you fox yourselves with talk. You come to visit your sick father, and you will fight your wordy battles over his dying carcass. I have listened to you, a pack of young nobodies, giving yourselves such airs and graces I am fain to vomit at them. Nay, these many years have I hearkened to you, when I ought to have taken a rod to you, and, heaven forgive me, have admired your learning, and your being cosseted by rich men, and getting yourselves commissions, and I know not what. But now I will tell you

this: There is not one among you, save only Little Julia here, that hath sufficient honest knowledge and common sense to fit him for the post of Tom-turd man; a small nutshell may easily contain the brains of ye all."

"Slight, I will not stay here to be so insulted!" cried James, reaching for his hat.

"Sit down!" roared his father, smiting the bed-covers with his fist and thereby spilling ale all over them. "Sit down, sirrah, or, sick as I am, I'll kick you till my toes grow crooked. And do you answer me this: Is there one among you will venture to swear he knows an honest trade? Grown men that ye are, is there an ounce of skilled craftsmanship to be found within your thirty fingers? Pish, you scarce know the difference, Sim, betwixt ale and beer; and you, James, that might have been a master-scrivener by this time, do not know, I'll warrant you, the way to go about drawing up an estate worth forty shillings. As for you, Thomas, what work have you done these many years save to explore men's vitals with a pike?"

"I have learned, sir," stiffly replied Thomas, "the Laws of God, the teaching of the Scriptures, the most necessary——"

"You are familiar with the Scriptures, quotha?" interrupted Mr Guffin, giving his night-cap a push which set it at a most raffish angle upon the side of his head. "What you intend by this is that you can recite without faltering the names of the sons of Benjamin, and the numbers of the companies that came to David at Ziklag, and the four-and-twenty lots of Aaron's sons, and the exact dimensions of the Temple. Yet is there one whole portion of Scripture, sir, and that the most necessary, of which you are as ignorant as a heathen savage. I mean the New Testament, sir, I mean the message of salvation and mercy and forgiveness given us by the Evangelists, I mean the adorable words of Him Who was crucified by the offspring of these bloody Chosen of yours, and Who preached to us to love our enemies, and to submit ourselves to just authority, and to be meek and humble of heart. Boast to me, sir, of your Moses and your Jehus and your Joabs; for my part I am content with Jesus Christ."

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"Father," said Little Julia, laying a gentle hand upon his arm, "you will bring on your fever if you talk so. My brothers, prithee withdraw——"

"Handle me not," furiously interrupted her father, throwing her off, "for I am in no mood to be handled." He leapt out of bed, and, with his night-shift billowing around him with the fury of his movements, he stalked up to James and thrust his bearded face close to that of his startled offspring. "And you!" cried Mr Guffin. "What do you know, my learned, high-flown boy? Liberty, saith you, freedom, the rights of the people—pah I I am sick to death, sir, of these large words, which may mean anything you choose to make 'em mean, and which in any case sit ill upon your lips, a jumped-up City spark, as full of empty noise as a drum. What do you know of the people, sir? Tell me that, eh? Have you enquired of them whether they desire to rule themselves? Have you? Oh no I You are too high to live in the City where you were born, but must become a gallant of the last edition, have your lodging in Whitehall, and earn your bread by fawning upon a rich country gentleman that hath spent many years in enriching his own pocket while he mouthed about the rights and liberties of others. A man hath but to cry out Liberty! nowadays, and hey presto he finds himself worth five thousand a year."

"Father," pleaded Little Julia, "it is time for your broth."

"A pin for such stuff!" bawled Mr Guffin, waving her aside and beginning to stagger up and down on his bare feet. "Put it in the close-stool, for while I have good barley-broth I need no other. Then there is Sarah," he continued, taking up his tale again, "she whose duty it was to take her mother's place at my board till there was found for her some honest man who would have her to wife. But what must she do but neglect her family, forswear her duty, and gad after hangmen and mad lousy prophets, and bring disgrace upon her father's name! Even now, when she is safe secured in the country, I vow I may know no peace of mind in her regard, lest she make a flit and be at her earnings again. 'Twas but this last Sunday when I sat in St Faith's that there did enter of a sudden, in the midst of sermon, a woman all muffled in a cloak and hood,

and she, advancing to the entrance of the choir, did cry with a loud voice, * Resurrection, I am ready for thee 1'—and turning herself to the congregation did rip off her cloak, and so stood, stark naked. I sweat like a butter-box till I had a view of her face, lest it be Sarah."

"It was one of the Daughters of the Resurrection, sir," said Simon, grinning, "a brand-new sect which——"

"Pollute not mine ears with the tale of new fanatics," interrupted his father, wheeling upon him. "And think not, Sim, I am minded to spare you in this my lecture. I called you a grown man awhile since, yet, though you are not that, there is already down upon your cheeks and soon we must be buying you a razor. 'Tis two years and more since you entered upon your apprenticeship, yet was it not yesterday that you presumed to fetch down Malaga when a customer desired some Alicante? How oft have I to bid you recollect the difference betwixt such common beer-cups as Humpty Dumpty and Chamber Clown? Did you not cause good neighbour Matheson to fall ill of the colic last Tuesday because you served him with bottled ale which had not stood a week in my cellar? Nay, my hopes in all of you are cuckolded; methinks I got you but to plague me, for there is not one among you is a comfort to me in my age."

He sat down suddenly upon the side of the bed, breathing hard as though he were exhausted.

"Yet will I thank my God for the gift of Little Julia," said he, in a lower voice. "For Little Julia is obedient and fond; Little Julia is skilful with her needle; there is not a cook within the liberties bakes a pie better, nor is there a house more wondrous clean. Little Julia mindeth her own business, and concerns not herself with affairs of which she is not fitted to speak. Fill up the tankard yet once again, my Julia, my pride and comfort, for I will drink to you until I raise the price of ale. But for the rest of you, pack ye out of here, ye and your Jehovahs and your Heselrigs and your foxing cant, for ye need not expect that I shall invite ye to dine with me. 'Sfoot, I'd rather dine with the Lord Mayor's hounds in Finsbury-fields. . . . What said you, Simon?"

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"I said nothing, sir. I did but presume to laugh."

Mr Guffin stared at his youngest son for a moment with a frown; then, gradually, his face cleared, and a smile began to stir his bush of untended whisker.

"To laugh, quotha? Why, there is one good thing you may teach your elder brothers, Sim. D'ye hear me, Your High Mightinesses? When you will lay by this solemnity of yours, which better befits the Ordinary of Newgate on a hanging-Monday, ye may get ye some sense, and not before. Out, knaves, out, I say! And Julia, my love, bring hither some fresh herbs for the floor. I vow the chamber stinketh of hypocrisy."

His two elder sons took themselves off in great dudgeon, but Simon lingered to help his father back to bed.

"Devil take it," grumbled the old man, painfully hoisting his big weak legs between the sheets, "I am as bad as they are with my ranting. Ay, and like a French skirmish too, the onset fiery, but the retreat mighty tame." He closed his eyes -and heaved a long, shuddering sigh. But as Simon was stealing off on tiptoe his father's voice called him back.

"Sim. Come hither, Sim, my son."

The boy returned to the bed and stood looking down upon the invalid with that deceptive meekness so characteristic of him.

"Sim," said Mr Guffin, twisting his head uneasily upon the pillows, "I fear for you, for I suspect that you are meddling in hanging matters."

"You need have no fear for me, sir," said Simon, smiling, ""for whichever way I am thrown, like a tumbler's boy I fall safe. I was born lucky," added Simon with a wink.

Mr Guffin grunted. His eyes, tired, unshrewd, and anxious, peered at his son.

"When we are young, Sim, we are wont to grow hot against injustice, and this is well, for 'tis the nature of youth to have small care for its person and security." He paused; his lips moved a little as though he would say more yet could not find the words. Then he shook his head, sighed yet again, and, patting the boy's arm, murmured vaguely but earnestly:

"Have a care of yourself, Sim, my dear son; prithee have a care what you do."

PART FOUR

CHAPTER I

(0)

ON a very wet afternoon, in the following February, Simon Guffin ran down Lothbury, passed the back of the Royal Exchange and, turning up Money Bag Alley, came into die churchyard of St Benet Fink. It was a large place, walled upon every side, with narrow paths intersecting the regiments of tombstones. At the moment it was quite deserted save for a man who, well muffled in a cloak, and with his hat pulled down over his face as though to shield him from the rain, was pacing the central path.

Simon, who had only an old sack over his shoulders as a protection from the weather, walked purposefully towards this solitary figure, and, pulling off his City flat-cap, boldly accosted him.

"Your servant, Master Rasterton. I am come hither as you bade me, and would know your pleasure."

The other, raising his head a little, disclosed the face of a middle-aged gentleman, with long military moustachios, and a puckered scar seaming one cheek. His eyes had a look of permanent wariness in them, like those of some hunted animal, and ere he replied he glanced around as if to assure himself that there was no one within earshot.

"Let us walk," said he abruptly, "as far as that tomb yonder and then back again, sentinel-wise, that we may not be taken in the rear. And if any chance to pass, you must feign to be applying to me for the post of footman, and I will seem as though I catechised you upon your qualifications."

He sighed.

Simon said nothing; he fell into step beside his companion, and waited for him to speak further.

"Well," said Mr Rasterton heavily at length, "I can give you the news in a word: the rising is postponed again."

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Simon, though he fancied himself as a conspirator, could not prevent a sharp exclamation of disappointment from escaping him.

"Again, sir? But wherefore? Never a time like this time, when Cromwell, by his late violent dissolution of his second Parliament, and his doing such desperate things of his own will, being secret even with his Secretary of State, hath shown himself to be resolved upon open despotism."

"He hath brought the Army to heel, and that is all he cares for," replied the other. "Nay, I must tell you roundly, Master Guflfin, the Sealed Knot cannot approve of a rising at this time, and that for weighty reasons. The late frost is thawed, and this will enable the English frigates to re-blockade the ports held by the Spanishers in Flanders. Therefore we cannot look to see Master Jackson—you understand whom I intend by this?—I say, we cannot look to see Master Jackson come over to us with the trifling army he hath gotten him from the Spanish King. As for our friends here, since our last proposed attempt they or the principal of them are kept under more rigorous restraint than ever, and those who remain at liberty are so beset with spies, and so straitened for money, that nothing may be expected from them at this time."

Simon said nothing for a moment or two. He was still very young, and all this talk of caution and delay made a tumult of revolt in his breast.

"Yet these our friends," said he presently, "have laid their plans. You told me yourself, sir, the last time I had the honour of speaking with you, that the lists of men and arms were completed in every county, that commissions were given out, and that they stayed only for the Sealed Knot to give the signal to fall-on. Your pardon, sir, I am but a humble agent, yet will I say boldly that, from the reports I have heard of our friends in the country, I am sure they are as eager to rise at this time as a good bulldog at the let-go."

"The persons hot for this enterprise," replied Mr Rasterton haughtily, "are mostly new-sprung-up Cavaliers, such as young gentlemen lately come of age, who know not the strength of the enemy, nor had part in our sufferings during

the late war. If not prevented, these will ruin themselves and all people who would join with them, even as they did in '5j. It is better to be quiet than busy to so little advantage."

"With all submission, sir," said Simon, his colour rising, "as I understand it, 'twas the sudden postponing of the rising at the last moment which ruined the attempt of '55. Likewise I must make bold to let you know that I never heard it was caution and refusal to hazard somewhat which won our battles in the late war."

"'Twas reckless imprudence lost that war," retorted Mr Rasterton, regarding him with coldness, "ay, and lack of discipline. You are to understand, Master Guffin, that the Sealed Knot hath the honour to be Mr Jackson's principal body of advisers in England, and hath authority over all his adherents, of what condition soever. Each member of the Sealed Knot bled for the father, and therefore have we the right to advise the son, and we do intend to advise him, without delay, that since he hath no longer the hope of a Spanish force to bring over with him, we cannot give our approval of a rising at this time."

Simon answered nothing; he paced beside the other with bent head, frowning as though deep in thought.

"You will carry this word to the messenger who stays to take the orders of the Sealed Knot to their friends in the county of Kent, for which he is appointed," continued Mr Rasterton. "'The Sealed Knot commands all honest men to bide quiet at this time, and not to rendezvous until they receive further instructions.' Have you got that pat, Master Guffin? Well, why do you not answer me?"

"Master Rasterton," said Simon, stopping short in his pacing, and rubbing with his finger at the lichen on an altar-tomb, "I am commissioned by some friends to carry a message to you, who represent the Sealed Knot."

"What are these friends of whom you speak?" enquired the other, somewhat impatiently.

"They are honest men, freemen of this City. You say, Master Rasterton," went on Simon hurriedly, as the other made to speak, "that the Cavees cannot rise because they are

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too poor and too much spied upon to do your business for you. Yet there remains the Qty of London, which, seeing its liberties altogether put down, and its trade decayed, is ready to rise for the King——"

"Pest take you, not that namel" hissed his companion, glancing fearfully about him.

"—for Mr Jackson, if the Sealed Knot will but give the word."

"Art mad? The City quotha? Was it not the very birth-place of rebellion?"

"It was, and may well become its grave."

"Are the great merchants and the wealthy shopkeepers," raved Mr Rasterton, paying no heed, "to put their hands into their purses for the son, they who had the chief hand in ruining the father?"

"I assure you, sir," said Simon earnestly, "that the temper of the City is marvellous changed these last few years, ay, even among the great merchants. Errors in raising money are the compendious ways of causing a general discontent; for whereas other things are the concernment of some, this is of all, at least within a city of tradesmen. Cromwell hath opened the purses of the citizens so wide that not only their money but their hearts fly out."

"Would you have me believe," said Mr Rasterton, regarding him in great surprise and not a little interest, "that the merchant-princes of London are now ready to pledge their credit for our Master?"

"I will not take upon me to answer for them," replied Simon, with a shrug, "for I am not in their confidence, and all I can tell you in their regard is what I have heard and have observed for myself. Yet will I answer for my friends, who are for the most part 'prentices like myself, journeymen, small craftsmen, and the like, for these I know, I walk and talk with them daily, and I'll warrant you, sir, that if you will essay them, you will find more common honesty and zeal among them than is to be found in your quarrelsome country squires."

"You are pleased to jest, boy," snapped Mr Rasterton,

"Mr Jackson must be neglected indeed if he will come to depend upon a parcel of mechanics."

"We are all his subjects," said Simon with spirit, "and, if reports be true, he desires nothing so much as to be restored by his 'own people, whether they sleep between silken sheets in a mansion or under a tradesman's counter. The Sealed Knot is ill-advised——"

"When we desire to enlist tailors' bodkins and butchers' cleavers we will inform your honest mechanics," interrupted Mr Rasterton contemptuously. "Till then, they had best stay quiet or they will get them a hanging for their pains. Ay, and when we have need of advice in our own business, we will not fail to apply ourselves to Master Simon Guffin. And now, boy, prithee give me leave; I do expect another of our agents to visit me here, and would be private."

"I will go, sir," said Simon, fighting back the tears of disappointment and wounded pride, "yet take leave to give you this parting shot. There is one overseas who owes, 'tis said, for everything he hath eaten for the past three months, hath scarce in his treasury sufficient to buy him a faggot, and goes so threadbare that he is fain to walk abroad only under cover of night. I do not think, with all submission, that King Charles the Second is like to despise the poor men of London, or anywhere else, so their hearts be honest and their hands ready to serve him."

"I bade you have a care of your tongue," cried the other furiously. "You will hang us all by these titles."

"Nay, I would not have your Sealed Knot turn into a Tyburn-tippet," retorted Simon pertly. "Yet there are none present to spy on us save the dead, and I'll warrant you they are all good Cavaliers."

And with that, he bowed formally to the gentleman, and stalked out of the churchyard.

(2)

For all his pert defiance, Simon was inwardly so angry and humiliated that, after he parted from Mr Rasterton, he went

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into the porch of St Benet Fink and relieved his feelings in a good cry. After all, he was not yet seventeen. Then he felt better, and, making his way to Cornhill, he set off down it towards The Stocks at a brisk pace.

He had not gone far when he turned into another alley, a dark, mean place, with the houses on either side leaning so close to one another that the daylight had difficulty in filtering through. Half-way down it, he came to a tenement called The Pied Bull; here he entered as though he knew it well and was sure of his welcome. The sign of The Man's Hand indicated that the ground floor entertained Sodomites; the first floor displayed the three blue balls of the pawnbroker; but it was the second floor for which Simon was bound, and as he ascended he held his nose, for the odour of coffee, an odour rightly detested by the son of a tavern-keeper, grew quite overpowering. It was an odour abhorred at this time by the majority of the citizens, and the neighbours of this Mr Farr, the keeper of the coffee-house at The Pied Bull, had several times presented him as a nuisance to their ward-moot, on the excuse that he kept his chimney so hot that on several occasions it had burst into flames to the peril of the whole neighbourhood. And it was just precisely because of this general dislike of coffee-houses that the friends of Simon Guffin chose to meet in one.

He opened the door on the dark landing and came into a room with a sloping roof, and an atmosphere very thick and cloudy with the steam from a large earthenware pot which Mr Farr himself was tending upon the fire. It was a poor apartment, for Mr Farr was a poor man; it had bare boards upon the floor, and a few rickety tables and benches for furniture. Above the fire was framed a notice which stated that "coffee-drink" had been proved "a Sovereign Remedy for Fumes, Headaches, Spleen, Winds, Gout, Dropsy, Scurvy, and all other Plagues of Mankind."

As usual, there were only the regular customers present in the room, and of these there were not more than half a dozen. Sitting at the tables, sipping the hot fluid from little wooden bowls, was a hackney-coachman in a long overcoat which

reached to his feet, and his whip propped against the side of the table, a fishwife with her odorous basket, a baker's journeyman so covered in flour that he looked as though he had been out in a snowstorm, a butcher in the long woollen coat of his trade and with his bulldog snoring at his feet, a lad of Simon's age, obviously an apprentice, and a stout gentleman in an old-fashioned short round cloak, a steeple hat, and petticoat breeches, who looked like a master-craftsman. The company greeted Simon as an old acquaintance, and broke off their talk to listen, while he of the steeple hat asked him for the news.

"It is ill," said Simon, taking his place beside the butcher and stooping to rumple one of the bulldog's ears. "They are resolved to postpone their rising for that Mr Jackson cannot come with Spanish troops."

"A year since," grumbled the butcher, "they swore they would not rise if he brought so much as one foreigner with him."

"But what said Master Rasterton," eagerly enquired the journeyman baker, "when you told him of our brave company?"

"He was pleased to cry us down for a parcel of mechanics," replied Simon, with a high flush. "For my part, I am resolved to let gentlemen alone in future and to consort only with laborious men like to myself. Devil take this Sealed Knot! What are they that they should spurn us? Was it not woodcutters and ostlers and poor Popish priests that aided Mr Jackson when he was fleeing for his life after the Battle of Worcester in '51? I'll warrant you he still prefers their like to decayed Cavaliers and country squires who are so busy quarrelling among themselves, and telling him what he must and must not do, that they have no time to strike a blow for him."

There were murmurs of approval of this from all save the gentleman with the steeple hat. He opened his snuff-box, took out a piece of dry root of tobacco and scraped it upon the rasp on the lid, helped himself to a generous pinch, sneezed loudly, and blew his nose. Then he looked round upon the

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assembled company with the air of one whose right it was to pronounce judgment on any question which arose among them. They for their part regarded him with respect; his name was Mr Manley, he was a turkey-merchant of Three Needles Street, and he was accustomed to speak his mind in such company as this without fear of contradiction.

"You are but a lad," said he to Simon. (He had a big booming voice, and a habit of seeming to taste his words as he spoke them.) "And 'tis the weakness of youth that it is accustomed to condemn its elders without the understanding begotten by experience. 'Tis true the Cavees are passing quarrelsome, and ever have been; did we not see that in the late war? Likewise have they never gotten themselves discipline, which is a sad lack in them, and one that hath ruined many pregnant enterprises in times past. Yet are you to remember in what estate they are, milked dry with fines, beset with spies, their lands sequestered, their wives and children forced to beg their bread, their lives not worth a token if they so much as stir five miles from their houses without leave. They must give bonds for the good behaviour of their servants; they may not change their place of residence without licence from a justice of the peace; they are made outcasts and pariahs, and are naked to the spite of any man who chooses to lay an information against them. Such ill conditions, Master Guffin, are apt to make men think twice ere they draw the sword and try for a hanging."

"I meant no offence, Master Manley," said Simon, very subdued.

"And gave none, lad, and gave none," said Mr Manley kindly. "As for the Sealed Knot, methinks we are well free of it. It will have none of us, and thus may we escape its fate. For I must make known to you that there is a rumour abroad (how true I know not) that Sir Richard Willis, he who is the principal man therein, is a traitor in the pay of Thurloe, and betrays all its secrets to the Protector's Spy Master in Chief in return for a trifling pension."

There were horrified exclamations, but Mr Manley stilled them quickly with a gesture.

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"It is not men's titles," said he, rolling the words on his tongue, "will restore the King, but such men's courage and affections as will, with their swords in their hands, run all hazards to do his work for him, when he will give order to have it done. We are men enough to seize and to make good this *City* without any aid whatsoever from the Sealed Knot, if our acts keep pace with our words. What do you say, friends?"

There was a pause. They looked from neighbour to neighbour, unused to expressing themselves, each one shy of pushing himself forward. In the midst of this awkward pause, the bulldog, who was dreaming, uttered a low and throaty growl. It broke the tension, and they all laughed.

"There's a Royalist for you!" proudly exclaimed his master. "I'll warrant you, neighbours, there's not a bulldog in London but will wag his arse for Mr Jackson who would bring back the bulls to the Bankside again, but will lift a scornful leg at mention of the Lord Protector."

"I want my maypoles back again," suddenly shrilled the apprentice. "I do long to see a battle-royal at the cockpit, and a stage-play likewise, of which my father hath told me, and I would cuddle a willing wench in a garden-house if I am in that humour, without a parcel of crop-eared redcoats plucking me from under her skirts."

"And I," said the hackney-coachman, nibbling the end of his whip, "would earn my extra shillings by driving cits and their wives to Islington or Chelsea of a Sunday, and I would have my goodwife cook me my dinner first, a fine hot dinner *of salt beef and parsnips in the old fashion, without fear of being stood in the stretch-neck for a Sabbath-breaker."

"I do relish my ale of a Saturday night, neighbours," observed the fishwife, smacking her lips, "and would take as much of it as I please, so I am able to discharge my shot, whereas now I must have a care how I tippie lest there be some pesty spy in the room, awaiting to run to his masters with the tale of my guzzling."

"I'd take my wife to Morning Prayer of a Sunday," said the journeyman baker stoutly, though with something of a

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blush (for he was newly married), "and hear the organ play and the fiddles squeaking, and after a decent service would sit in a tavern garden and watch the skittles and the bowls."

"Fd go a-maying," said Simon dreamily, "and dance round the Great Shaft which used to stand yonder upon CornhiU, and kiss the pretty Queen of the May, and play at bucklers and dance for garlands, and cheer brave Robin Hood and all the mummers. And I would walk by the river and see no redcoats upon it but only a game of swans, and maybe the King himself and his fine company sailing past in their barge. And I would hear those who frequent my father's tavern speak their minds freely again over their ale, and the old sign hung out, and my father merry as he was aforetime."

Again there was silence, each nostalgically absorbed in his own private dream. Then the booming voice of Mr Manley roused them:

"Ye speak honestly, neighbours. 'Tis little ye ask; deny ye that, and the powerfulest tyrant in the world must look to hear from you. Yet words are not enough; the time hath come to show yourselves free men and to put off your slavery."

"There is scarce a man or woman in the City," cried Simon, with youthful enthusiasm, "but will join with us."

But Mr Manley shook his head at that.

"The common run of men, lad, are used to talk much but act little. Nor can you much blame them, for recollect, they have their wives and families to consider, and few of us are heroes when the security of these are at stake. Likewise are ye to remember that the general run of men are more used to the instruments of trade than to the sword, and that those who now oppress us are the same which defeated the horsemen of Prince Rupert, butchered the Irish, and altogether crushed the large army of the Scots. Yet let us take this comfort: We have a good cause, we have the favour of our royal Master, we have a brave army of recruits throughout the Qty which shall not disgrace themselves though it should come to push of pike, and those of our neighbours who will not fight with us certainly are in no mind to comfort and assist our enemies."

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He paused, and looked round upon the solemn, eager faces. "I have been in conference," said he importantly, drawing out a paper from his doublet, "with others of our friends who are in like mind with us, and here are the plans on which they are agreed. . . ."

(3)

It was the night of the fifteenth of May, a clear, fine night of stars, but with no moon. It lacked a quarter of an hour ere the taverns must close, for the City bells had just chimed the three-quarters past ten, but many of the houses were already in darkness, for the new heavy excise laid on ale and beer, and the order against the importation of Spanish wines, had made liquor very short in London.

Yet ever since dusk had begun to fall there had seemed to be an unusual number of people abroad this evening; they hurried along in twos and threes, not speaking much, nor staying to gossip, but walking purposefully in different directions, evidently very intent upon keeping their various appointments. Now, however, these people had disappeared, and only the ale-house and tavern customers were to be seen upon the streets, hastening home before darkness fell, and a patrol or two of soldiers, and here and there a prostitute, walking her beat at risk of being taken up and transported to the Indies, where it was hoped that she and her species might serve to allay the dangerous discontent among the soldiers stationed there.

Simon Guffin, who had slipped out of his father's tavern some ten minutes before, without saying a word to anyone, stood in the shadows cast by the two-storeyed cloister of the old Chapter House on the south side of St Paul's Churchyard. The Churchyard itself appeared to be quite deserted; only from one or two of the houses which enclosed it came beams of candlelight, and from the Deanery, on the south-west corner, there issued an occasional sound of men's voices and the clink of steel, for herein was lodged one of the innumerable small posses of redcoats appointed to "protect" the City.

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From the great church itself there was silence; the horses still stabled there had been bedded down, and their attendants had retired.

Yet Simon knew that around him in the cloisters of the Chapter House, and hidden by the flying buttresses of the church, and lurking under the wall of the Bell Tower, and under that of the Charnel House, were motionless and silent figures like himself, all with a white tape around their right arm, all grasping some sort of weapon, all waiting for the Jesus Bells in the Bell Tower to chime the hour of eleven. And he knew further, and thrilled to the knowledge, that in every alley in the vicinity of the Tower, and under the wall near the Artillery Ground, and surrounding the house of the Lord Mayor, and at each of the City gates, and at half a dozen other vital spots scattered throughout London, there waited the same companies of silent figures, all with the same white tapes, the same odd assortment of weapons, the same watchword, "St Paul," upon their lips, and the same resolution in their desperate hearts: to overpower the posses of redcoats, to capture the strong places, to impress all the horses in the inn stables, to seize on all the public treasuries, and at last to proclaim Charles the Second, by the grace of God King of England.

It was marvellous, he reflected, fingering the horse-pistol which had been assigned to him for his weapon, how secretly, how smoothly, how rapidly, this City plot had matured. None of them was a plotter by nature or inclination, these small craftsmen and journeymen and 'prentices who, organised by a smattering of merchants and shopkeepers, and holding their meetings in a variety of ale-houses, coffee-houses, cook-shops, and other rendezvous where the proprietors were known to be what the Government called "disaffected," had planned so formidable and so strange a rising. The Sealed Knot would have none of them, and indeed it had proved as well for them that it would not. For the rumour concerning Sir Richard Willis had proved only too true, and although the Royalists throughout the country had stayed quiet, Thurloe had known **all about** the proposed **and** postponed rising, and had fallen

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•with a heavy hand upon those who would have taken part in it.

On 3rd March a proclamation had ordered all who had ever fought for, or aided in any way whatsoever, Charles the First, or his son, to retire five miles from London; soon afterwards the City and its suburbs had been submitted to a most exhaustive search, and fifty arrests were made. On 8th April Dr John Hewit, a Church of England clergyman, said to have sent money to the exiled King, was sent to the Tower, as also was old Sir Henry Slingsby, and a few days later Sir William Compton and Colonel Russel (alias Mr Rasterton), both being members of the Sealed Knot, joined them in that fortress. On 4th May a new "High Court of Justice." in which all the Judges refused to sit, met to pass judgment on the principal prisoners, but for some reason not disclosed adjourned itself until the seventeenth.

The City plotters, meanwhile, undismayed by these stern measures, had continued to mature their plans. They had chosen their leaders, and had applied themselves through their agents to King Charles, who had sent them blank commissions enclosed in a gracious letter of thanks and encouragement. (Simon had managed to get a sight of this letter, and had thrilled to the signature, "Charles R.") Mr Manley, the turkey-merchant, was now a colonel of horse in the service of His Majesty, and had undertaken to deal with the soldiers stationed in the heart of the City, and to arrest the Lord Mayor and the two Sheriffs at their respective residences. Mr Edward Southcote, a draper in St Paul's Churchyard, had charge of the design to overpower the guard in the Deanery and to commandeer the horses stabled in the Cathedral. Mr John Sumner, a coach-maker of Bishopsgate, was to seize the arms and ammunition stored at the Artillery Ground. Mr Edward Ashton, a master-leatherworker, was appointed to surprise the Tower. And so it was all over London; each leader had his own particular task to perform, each had a certain number of men placed under his command. And at the sign of The Black Boy on Ludgate Hill was gathered now, to Simon's certain knowledge, a goodly company of young men who*

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under the direction of Mr Henry Cranton, would issue forth at the appointed time and guard the Lud Gate, so that when news of the rising reached Whitehall, the troops sent from thence by way of Fleet Hill would find their entrance to the Qty barred against them.

Simon was sweating as he crouched here in the shadows. He had always hated violence; his fellow-'prentices had sneered at him because he took no delight in a hanging-day or a cock-fight or other of the favourite bloody sports. He would see blood enough to-night, he knew that well; maybe within a few weeks he would be riding to Tyburn in the hangman's cart. He was afraid of the formidable and unfamiliar weapon in his hand; he was terrified when he thought of similar weapons in the hands of trained soldiers, the terrible, expert hands of the New Model. But his will to strike was stronger than his fear of striking, and he had an ally in the knowledge that his comrades-in-arms were as inexperienced as himself. They, like him, were come of their own free will from the workshop and the counter, from the kitchen and the forge, from the boxes of hackney-coaches and the thwarts of wherries, to destroy something grown intolerable, a tyranny no longer to be endured. They were a company of St Georges, not in shining armour, not mounted on chargers, but armed with a desperate resolution to slay the Dragon or die in the attempt.

His ears, strained to catch the first chime of the City clocks, now heard something else. It was the sound of men moving stealthily. He could not tell from what direction it came, and at first he tried to comfort himself with the idea that it proceeded from his own comrades, perhaps shifting their positions, or making a reconnaissance. But then he remembered that all had strict orders not to stir, once they had taken up their appointed stations, and his skin began to prick with apprehension. Almost immediately he heard one of his friends whisper, almost in his ear:

"What's to do?"

Simon shook his head, though the questioner could not see him *in* the darkness, and strained his ears once more, but

no longer for the sound of the City bells. Those other sounds, ominously stealthy, seemed now to come from every direction, and he began to strain his eyes as well, peering this way and that about the apparently deserted Churchyard.

"I'm a-going to reconnoitre," came the whisper again and, before Simon could bid him stay where he was, his comrade, an apothecary's apprentice, had slipped from the shelter of the cloisters into the open spaces of the Churchyard.

Next instant there came a muffled yelp, and then a man's voice said, low but distinct because so near at hand:

"Here's one of them; I have him fast."

What followed was so sudden, so dreadfully unexpected and inexorable, that Simon never afterwards could remember how it was he came to be running round the side of the Chapter House as fast as his legs could carry him, dodging figures which loomed out of the gloom at him, figures which might be those of friends or enemies, and rushing through St Augustine's Gate into Carter Lane. By this time the silent Churchyard was full of noise and light. There was a confused rushing of feet, the ring of steel, the bark of a musket, then of another, and another, the thud of falling bodies, shouts, screams, and cries of pain, the glare of torches illumining red-clad figures, windows thrown up in the surrounding houses, anxious questions tossed down, a brisk command: "Let none escape!" and the neigh of a frightened horse from the Cathedral.

His mind was filled with one resolve: he must warn Mr Cranton.

He had no time now to speculate as to how the plot had been discovered or whether it had been betrayed, no time to grit his teeth upon the humiliating knowledge that they the surprisers were become the surprised. He had got to warn Mr Cranton, his father's oldest friend; he must reach The Black Boy before the redcoats reached it and discovered there, at this late hour, so large a party of men assembled. If he hastened, it might not be too late; the hour of eleven, the appointed signal, had not yet struck. Mr Cranton and his friends, though doubtless ready, would not yet be making

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their way to the Lud Gate; unless the enemy's knowledge was very thorough indeed, isolated parties of the plotters could escape if they were warned in time.

He had slipped out of the Churchyard without being noticed in the general melee, and the darkness was his friend. Carter Lane was empty of folk, and he ran unimpeded; all he had to do when he reached the western end of it was to turn up Creed Lane and so to Ludgate Hill. But to do this he must pass the outer wall of the Deanery; and just as he came level with this building a side door in it opened, a glare of light shone forth, and against the glare was silhouetted a tall figure garbed in the all-too-familiar red.

The soldier, seeing Simon's flying figure, made a long arm to catch him, but the boy dodged skilfully sideways, and ran on at redoubled speed. He was young and agile, and he had but a very little way to go now before he reached his goal; but as he tore-up Creed Lane (the breath sobbing in his throat and his heart pounding against his ribs) he heard behind him another pair of feet running, and he knew that he was pursued.

They were long strides which followed him, and they were fast overtaking him. He put on a last tremendous burst of speed, wheeled to the left on to Ludgate Hill, passed his father's door, crossed the opening of Citizen and Soldier Alley, burst open the street door of The Black Boy, slammed it behind him, and stood, wheezing and gasping, in the barber's shop, unable to speak, but pointing frenziedly over his shoulder.

Mr Cranton, fully dressed, and with a sword belted round his waist, had been sitting in his elbow-chair, drawing on an empty pipe, and proudly reading for the hundredth time His Majesty's commission which made "Our Trusty and Well-beloved Henry Cranton, citizen," a captain of foot. There was no one else in the room, but Simon was well aware that somewhere in the house at least a dozen of his comrades were secreted, waiting for the sound of the Jesus Bells.

Simon had but time to gasp out "The plot's discovered! The redcoats are on us !" when the street door was again flung open, and Simon's pursuer stood upon the threshold.

The boy turned to face him; but the wild excuse he had

been framing died upon his lips. For his red-coated pursuer was none other than his eldest brother, Sergeant Thomas Guifin. .

(4)

"Simon 1" thundered Thomas, after he, too, had recovered from his first astonishment. "What dost thou here? Art one of yonder knaves? Thou fool I It is well 'twas I pursued thee, for otherwise thou mightest have looked for no mercy. But as for thee, Master Cranton, I must certainly take thee up, and must search thy house into the bargain."

"Nay, Tom," said Mr Cranton mildly, "here are harsh words from a neighbour. What have I done?"

"What thou wouldst have done had I not come timely upon thee I know very well," replied Thomas severely, "else why art sitting here at such an hour with a sword on thy haunch? Where are the rest of thy traitorous crew?"

"I know not what you would be at," said the barber-surgeon, staring at his "visitor in well-simulated surprise. "As for my sword, I did hear a disturbance in the Churchyard yonder, and therefore did arm myself, and did take up my station here, that I might protect my wife and maids if any lawless persons came prowling round my house."

"Trifle not with me!" shouted the angry Thomas; "for I know very well thou didst meditate mischief this night. As for thee, boy, get thee home, and quickly too, lest others of the military come hither and peradventure would throw thee into gaol, as thou dost deserve. I will deal with thee myself in the morning, as an elder brother should. Come, sir," he added, striding towards Mr Cranton and taking him roughly by the arm, "I must make search of thy house, and thou shalt accompany me."

With that, he propelled the protesting Mr Cranton towards the inner door, while Simon, raging helplessly, prepared to follow them, and to prevent, if he anyways could, his brother's design against his friends. But just as they came to the door it opened, and there stood Mrs Esther Cranton, with a night-

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rail on her head and a candle in her hand, and a bed-gown thrown somewhat negligently over her shift.

"Now marry come up!" cried Mrs Cranton. "What a touze is this?"

At the very first sight of the barber's wife Thomas had grown pale, and had taken a step backwards, though without loosening his hold upon her husband's arm. Now he made as though he would shield his identity behind Mr Cranton's person, a hopeless task since he was many inches taller, and in this fashion was endeavouring to push past the lady to the stairs, when Mrs Cranton, pretending a vast surprise and delight, held the candle towards him, and exclaimed:

"Lord! if it be not our kind neighbour, Master Thomas Guffin! Now, as I hope to be saved, here is a sweet surprise. For you are indeed a stranger, Master Thomas, and have not been to wait upon us these many years. And there is young Simon likewise; how do you, Simon sweetheart? Bless me, I do call this right neighbourly, the pair of you paying us a visit at such an hour."

"Mistress, prithee withdraw," commanded Thomas, trying to sound very gruff and dignified. "Your husband is taken in an act of treason, and I must make search of your house lest there be other seditious persons concealed therein."

"Heaven save us!" shrilled Mrs Cranton, not moving an inch. "What bear-garden answers are these? Nay, Thomas, you spoke not so currishly the last time I had the happiness to see you in my house. Dost remember the occasion, Tom? You were in a sweet merry humour then, I'll warrant you. And how doth the good King Solomon? Hast been reading any more of his Proverbs, neighbour?—or was it his love-song? Pest take me, my memory grows ill these days."

"Mistress, I say withdraw!" cried the now frantic Thomas. "I crave your pardon that I must seem to act unneighbourly, yet here is no time for trifling."

"You had time for trifling the last time you called," murmured Mrs Cranton, looking at him from under her long lashes.

"I have work to do," panted Thomas, "ay, the work of the

Lord, and I will do it for all any man may say to the contrary."

"Or any woman either?" enquired Mrs Cranton, honey-sweet. "Nay, that were a dogged answer, and I am assured you will not give it me. Come, let us leave such ill matters, and let us refresh ourselves with the recollection of former times. My husband there is in labour to know what was this merriment we shared when last we met, for I have not yet told him of it; I vow it must have slipped my memory. And now I do bethink me, 'twas ill done to keep so rare a tale from the neighbours, for they do dote upon such frolics, which they are sure to pass on (being mighty unselfish) when they linger at the conduit or in the market-place."

"Mistress Cranton!" shouted the wretched Thomas, all the bullying knocked out of him.

"And what is more," continued she, leaning negligently against the doorpost and twisting one of her ringlets round her finger, "I'll warrant you your colonel would relish the story, for t'fey tell me that the superior officers of the Army are mighty glad to hear how their men divert themselves in their spare time. I know your colonel well, Thomas; ay, I know him almost as well as I know you. When next he does me the honour to call upon me, I must——"

"You have no proof I" gasped Thomas hoarsely.

She gave him one of her most wicked smiles.

"And neither have you," said she. "So, the case being thus, let us dismiss it, and sit us down like loving neighbours for a gossip. Upon my soul, Hal, you look mighty fierce, girt about with that great sword. Permit me to divest you of it—so—for you must not frighten my sweet Simon. What's here?" she added, crossing to the table and picking up that damning commission which her husband, in the first shock of Simon's entrance, had most carelessly thrown down there. "Marry, you rogue of a husband, would you steal my curling-papers to make you spills for your pipe? Out upon you, villain, what next!"

"Give me that paper," commanded Thomas, striding over to her. (He had already caught a glimpse of it, sufficient to give him an idea of what it was, and although he would not

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dare to use it as proof of Mr Cranton's guilt, not after Mrs Cranton's veiled threats, he could keep it as a hold over her tongue in future, the Jezebel, the treacherous strumpet, the only witness of his only lapse from virtue.)

"What need have you of curling-papers, pray?" playfully enquired his tormentress, as she held the paper just out of his reach. "Will you put on love-locks and ape the Cavalier? Fie, Tom, fie," she simpered, as he strove to snatch it, "you must not play the gallant with me under my husband's very nose. Lord save us, Hal, I verily believe that this godly soldier hath designs upon my virtue; see how he takes my hand and makes as though he would embrace me. He would make you a cuckold, Hal; prithee beware of him. Nay, I will make an end of this dalliance. You shall not have my curling-papers for love-tokens, Tom; yet, so it will content you, I will not have this one myself."

And, with a neat twist away from him, she held Henry Cranton's commission to the candle-flame.

"And now, a glass of wine, Hal," said she, seating herself comfortably in the elbow-chair, and arranging the folds of her bed-gown so that it exposed a generous view of her person, "that we may pledge each other and part friends. Simon, my pretty youth, come hither to me and tell me what you have been doing; I love to hear of your innocent sports——Pox on't, it seems we are to have more company. Come in, sir, come in; stand not on ceremony, and pray excuse my undress."

The person she thus accosted proved to be none other than Thomas's captain, a lean, dyspeptic gentleman, who, having failed to arrest the leader of the rebels in the Churchyard, was in an exceedingly ill temper. He stood with arms akimbo, surveying the company, and then, catching sight of Thomas, who stood with his mouth open looking dazed and stupid, angrily demanded to know what he did there.

"And who are these persons, pray?" he continued, without giving his sergeant time to answer. "Are you for arresting them? Are they of the company of the rebels? Eh? Why don't you answer me? What a-pox ails you, man, that you

stand there goggling at me like a country bumpkin at the Tower beasts?"

"These persons are my neighbours, sir," muttered the miserable Thomas. "And I did wait upon them to pay my respects."

"How now, sirrah!" wrathfully thundered his officer. "Is this a time to be paying neighbourly calls when you should be confounding the enemies of the Lord and of the nation? Zounds, I'm minded to have you court-martialled for this. I demand of you once more, Sergeant Guffin, have you made search of this house?"

Thomas cleared his throat, licked his lips, and remained tongue-tied.

"The poor lad is confused, Captain," said Mrs Cranton, beaming kindly upon Thomas, "for that he was constrained to act unneighbourly. Yet will I answer for him that he did his duty like an honest soldier, and did carry his search even into my bedchamber (begging my pardon most prettily the while), that he might answer truly for our honesty. Did you not, neighbour?"

"Well, speak up, man," snapped the captain, as the luckless Thomas continued to open and shut his mouth soundlessly, like a fish.

"Ay, speak up, Thomas," added Mrs Cranton encouragingly. "And then will I entertain your officer with a merry tale, for I am sure that——"

"These persons are good honest persons, sir," interrupted Thomas, suddenly finding his tongue, and at the same time casting a venomous glance in the direction of his fair black-mailer, "and are very well affected towards His Highness the Lord Protector. I will answer for that."

"And since you must now be satisfied, Captain," chimed in Mrs Cranton, "prithee sit down with us and take a glass of wine, which I'll vow you'll relish better than my foolish stories. Husband, do you fetch the bottle-screw, and hasten; 'tis not often we have the honour to entertain such company."

"Mistress," said the officer, with obvious restraint, "I know **not** whether you are aware of it, but you were like to **have**

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your throat cut this night by a parcel of lawless scum who, but for the care of the good Lord Thurloe and his agents, and likewise for the zeal and courage of some of my soldiers (I wish I could say for all), would have fired the City, opened the gaols, robbed you of your goods and virtue, and fetched over die King and the Pope."

"Mercy on us!" shrilled Mrs Cranton, giving a most realistic shudder.

"And you sit there talking about neighbourliness and bottle-screws I" finished the irate captain. "Get you gone from here," he added, wheeling viciously upon his sergeant, "and assist in the search we are making of every house within the ward. As for you, mistress, you had best have a care how you sit in your parlour at eleven at night, entertaining my soldiers in your shift, for when we are done with rebellious 'prentices and journeymen, we shall not fail to cleanse this city of lewd Jezebels."

With that, he turned on his heel and stalked out by the street door, driving his discomfited sergeant before him.

"Sim," said Mrs Cranton, when the noise of their footsteps had died away, "get you home quickly, lad, for your father will be anxious. You are a good lad, Sim, and gave us timely warning; ay, but for your care, I was like to have been made an hempen widow," and she stretched out her hand to her husband with an affectionate smile.

"I marvel at Thomas," observed Simon, as he prepared to take his leave. "He lied most stoutly on our behalf, and seemed much changed from his former condition, being altogether low-spirited and tame."

"I am a witch, Sim," said Mrs Cranton, with a wink. "Have you not heard that I can make men into any shape I choose when I have cast my spells upon them? I made Thomas into a good shape once, but I much fear he hath lost it. Husband, to bed. But first, let forth the friends who are secreted in the attic, and have a care how you do it, for the soldiers will be on the prowl all night, like the wolves that they are. I have put your sword into the press yonder; you will not need it for a while, it seems."

"We have played our game and lost it," said Simon miserably.

"We will play another," Mr Cranton told him, patting him kindly on the shoulder, "and then you will see how the luck will change. Yet first," he added, half to himself, "we must pay the reckoning, and I much fear me 'twill be a bloody one."

CHAPTER II

(I)

MR CRANTON'S prophecy of a bloody reckoning proved only too true.

The "High Court of Justice," which had postponed its sitting because of the information given it by Thurloe's spies of a plot hatching in the City, now met again, and straightway condemned two of the principal Royalist leaders captured in April: old Sir Henry Slingsby and the parson, Dr Hewit, were beheaded on Tower Hill, June the eighth. Having despatched these, the Court wrote with a red hand a warning to the City. The great majority of the leaders had eluded capture, because the citizens generally were favourable to their cause and remained obstinately silent concerning their identity, but there had been between fifty and sixty arrests on that fateful May evening, and six of the leaders were among those taken.

Of these, Mr Edward Ashton, the master-leatherworker, was drawn on a hurdle from Newgate to Tower Street, hanged there on a specially erected gallows, cut down before he was dead, his bowels ripped out with the executioner's hook and burnt before his eyes, and his mangled body quartered. This was on July the seventh. Mr John Betteley, a brewer by trade, suffered on the same day the same fate in Cheapside; and upon the ninth, Mr Edward Stacy, a merchant who had had command of those among the plotters engaged to surprise the soldiers quartered in the Royal Exchange, was drawn, hanged, and quartered in front of that building. Three other of the leaders, condemned to follow their comrades on this

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path of blood, were reprieved at the foot of the gallows upon the eleventh, because Thurloe's spies had reported the likelihood of serious riots if the sentence was carried out.

Further to overawe the City, and to prevent any more attempts at active resistance, the Tower garrison was increased, some cannon and culverins were moved to the Artillery Ground, the Moor Fields, and other open spaces, and a proclamation was published threatening to batter down the gates and take away the Charter if the Protector had any more trouble with the City of London.

He seemed more supreme than ever, this military dictator, as the year 1658 wore on. By dissolving his second Parliament, only a fortnight after it had assembled, he had prevented the presenting of a petition, signed, it was said, by more than twenty thousand persons of all shades of opinion, but sponsored by the republicans, which had demanded the readmittance of the Members forcibly excluded by the soldiers. He had broken the Fifth Monarchists by a new arrest of their leaders. He had frightened the Royalists by the execution of Slingsby and Hewit and by the excellence of his spy system, and he had cowed the City by his threats and by his bloody treatment of Ashton, Betteley, and Stacy. He had stripped Lambert, his chief rival in the Army, of his commands, and had brought the other discontented officers to heel by cashiering seven of them, and by bluntly reminding the rest that they must choose between the Parliament which persistently had sought to filch from them their power, and himself who was sworn to maintain them. As for the people, the mass of the nation, those who belonged to no party, the ordinary, hard-working, simple Samuel Guffins, he kept them down by grinding taxation, by the firm hand of his Major-Generals, by the keen ears and ready tongues of his spies, and by the power of his vast Army. He had placed, as he said, a sword in the hand of the tenth man, and he could afford to laugh at the opposition of the other nine.

Yet there remained two enemies he could not so easily subdue: the tangible and increasing menace of debt; and the intangible but steadily increasing menace of popular hatred.

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In the month of July, that same month in which he had wreaked his vengeance on the City plotters, the debts of the nation stood at upwards of two million pounds. The pay of the Militia was eighteen months in arrears; the pay of the regular troops much more, and so loud rose the grumbling among the rank and file that Cromwell began to contemplate a return to the dangerous system of free quartering. His sailors had to be kept permanently at sea, because there was no money for their wages; the inhabitants of all coastal towns were forced to maintain the sick and wounded among them, and to care for their starving families; meanwhile, the Commissioners of Admiralty estimated the debts of the Navy at £573,474. Ten thousand five hundred soldiers must be garrisoned in Scotland, because that nation was simmering with revolt; sixteen thousand must be quartered in Ireland, Even if he could find the money for arrears, he dared not disband so much as one regiment, because unpopular rule demands a large police force. His capture of Dunkirk in June had alienated him still further from the Dutch; the repair of the town's fortifications would cost, it was reckoned, a fortune; and, even in a time of peace, seventy thousand pounds must be spent yearly on its upkeep. Meantime he went on quarrelling with his French ally, Mazarin, and his soldiers in Flanders deserted daily for want of pay.

So much for the menace of debt.

But that other peril, that whirlpool of discontent which was growing in strength beneath the iron floor under which he had locked the nation, that was more sinister still, had he but known it. Perhaps he had a suspicion of it, but he kept his own counsel at this time, afraid to call another Parliament, unsure of the Army officers, estranged from his old friends the republicans. Perhaps he was learning, all too late, that there is no such thing as the permanent repression of a freedom-loving people, that the more the tongues of a nation are fettered, the more its hands are tied, so ever the hotter and more dangerous grows the spirit of revolt within its breast. In the year sixteen hundred and fifty-eight England resembled nothing so much as a boiling pot with the lid sealed down to

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prevent the escape of steam; sooner or later an explosion was inevitable.

There were not lacking symptoms of this concealed boiling, had Cromwell walked the streets of the City of London at this time. A new sullenness was come upon the citizens; it was there in their faces, in their very walk. They had learned to keep their mouths shut in the tavern and in the street; they had no news save the doctored news contained in *Mercurius Politicus*; they had seen all their petitions ignored, and the petitioners threatened or punished; they had no Member of Parliament to articulate their wrongs; and their traditional rulers, the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen, and the Common Councillors, were all so many creatures of the despot. Yet freedom was in their blood and bones; denied it in their lives, it turned to a fever within them, mounting steadily to a crisis.

All parties began to catch the infection, Royalists and Commonwealth-men and Fifth Monarchists and Levellers, all began to draw together in their need of a remedy, any remedy, to free them from this intolerable disease. Here and there, some sufferer agonised beyond endurance cried out in his pain, as though tiny puffs of steam forced a way of egress from that fast-sealed pot. As when a young man stood up in Westminster Abbey and interrupted a minister who was praying for peace at home and abroad, by crying aloud that this could never be until they restored King Charles. Or when an anonymous pamphlet was scattered about the streets, at dead of night, inveighing against the executions of Ashton, Betteley, and Stacy. "We saw and smelt in our open streets," it raged, "the broiling of human bowels as an offering of a sweet savour to our idol." Again, the Protector's Arms on public buildings were defaced by unknown hands; and sometimes of a morning the 'prentices, going to take down their masters' shutters, would find slogans chalked upon them: "Down with the Tyrant"; "The City demands a free Parliament," and so on, slogans hastily erased by the beadles or the soldiers, but as often and as mysteriously reappearing.

And in the privacy of their own firesides the citizens indulged

in that free speech denied them in the shop and in the ale-house. Even the Samuel Guffins among them, the ostriches whose habit it was to bury their heads in the sand, even these now asked each other certain pertinent questions.

Is it not this man, they asked, this Cromwell, who spoke so large against the evils of Ship Money in the time of the late King, and who now, of his own will, imposes upon us taxes in comparison with which Ship Money falls into insignificance? Was not this he who was so hot for the privileges of Parliament, who dubbed King Charles a tyrant when he ruled without one, yet who, of late years, hath put down one Parliament after another by the power of the sword? Is this not the man who cried out so loud against the abuses of the Star Chamber, and who, when he would try his critics, sets up a High Court of Justice which is a thousand times more illegal and more tyrannical than the Star Chamber? Is not this he who railed against Archbishop Laud for imposing the Prayer Book, and who, once he got him the power, began to persecute Church of England men, sets up an inquisition to pry into the morals of everybody, connives at the readmittance of the chief enemies of Christianity, the Jews, tortures Quakers and imprisons Fifth Monarchists, and turns out Presbyterian ministers if he likes them not? And was not this he who took up arms in defence of law and liberty, he who hath now overturned all the fundamental laws, one after the other, and imposes upon a free people the intolerable yoke of the sword?

The dread dictator could not hear those voices where he reigned at Whitehall; he did not come into the City, and so he did not see the sullen faces. But he heard and saw other things which warned him that an enemy was approaching from whose attack all his punitive measures, all his vast Army, all his feverish precautions against assassination, were in vain. It was the voice of the last enemy; it spoke in the accents of death.

It had been a year of sickness, for the "new disease" had appeared again in the spring, suddenly, "as if sent by some blast of the stars," announced *Mercurius Politicus*. On February the sixteenth it snatched away the husband of the

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Protector's daughter, Frances, and on the selfsame night it carried off his niece, Lavina Whetstone. Early in the summer he was bereaved of his grandson and namesake, Oliver Claypole, and in August the boy's mother, Cromwell's favourite daughter, herself contracted the disease. He went to Hampton Court to be at her bedside, and rumour told of how she had reproached him for the deaths of old Slingsby and Hewit. It was said that he burst into tears, and threw the whole blame upon Secretary Thurloe. On the third of August it was announced that Mrs Claypole was out of danger, and that the Protector was returning to Whitehall. Three days later she died.

They gave her the funeral of a princess, conveying her corpse by water to the Abbey with ancient royal honours. Scarce was the ceremony concluded than London read in her single news-sheet a small item of domestic news:

"His Serene Highness, the Lord Protector," said *Mercurius Politicus*, as a postscript to its eulogy on the virtues of poor Mrs Claypole, "is suffering from a slight fit of the gout and other distempers, but is assured that the universal prayers offered up for him by his loving subjects will speedily provide a remedy."

(2)

On the night of Tuesday, the last day of August, Mr Guffin, going to bed at his usual hour, found himself unable to sleep.

The day had been oppressive, and this evening he and his customers had stood at the street door to gape at the most sensational sunset they had ever seen. The whole of the western sky had been the colour of blood, and over it there had marched a slow procession of clouds, seemingly solid, of a dark and angry blue, and of fantastic shapes, trailing their fiery draperies behind them; silhouetted against the ominous heavens had stood up the Lud Gate, its pinnacles adorned with the mouldering heads and limbs of Ashton, Betteley, and Stacy. Meanwhile upon the earth beneath there had remained a dreadful and unnatural stillness, which yet continued. The

leaves in the gardens of the Livery Halls were cut as hard as copper, and of much the same colour as that metal, hanging as though petrified. No rag or scrap of paper stirred in the littered kennels; no signboard gave forth the faintest creak. All Mr Guffin could hear, as he lay in his lonely bed, was the far-off howl of a dog, long-drawn, persistent, sinister.

Because he could not sleep, he began to worry over his family, and particularly over Thomas, who had gone off with his regiment to the siege of Oudenarde; there were reports of great sickness among the English troops in Flanders, and of Thomas there was no word. When he had made himself thoroughly miserable with these domestic meditations, Mr Guffin turned over in bed with a grunt, and began to think of public affairs as a distraction.

He had nourished a secret hope last week that the Protector was going to die a natural death after all, for it had been announced upon the twenty-fourth that he was suffering from a tertian ague, and fast-days had been appointed to appease an unaccountably offended Jehovah. On the twenty-seventh, the rumour ran round that he was dying; his ague had turned to a double tertian, and he was having violent fits of it, one upon the heels of the other. He himself, however, was reported to have informed his wife that he would not die of this sickness. "The Lord hath given me this answer; of this I am secure." Nevertheless his party was said to be full of fears and, under cover of meeting to pray for him, feverishly discussed the posture of affairs and implored the sick man to name his successor. This, however, he refused to do; there was no need for it, he said, because he was going to get better; and on this very day, the thirty-first of August, *Mercurius Politicus* had reported that "His Highness his fits are grown less frequent. The Lord hath been pleased to hearken to the prayers of his faithful subjects and to prolong his life."

Far from soothing him to sleep, these meditations of Mr Guffin had increased his wakefulness, and now he even contemplated getting out of bed and mulling himself some ale. More and more of late years had he flown to the refuge good ale provided; it washed away dull care and sharp anxiety;

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it induced sleep, begot a comforting though deceptive courage, killed the surface nerves, and bathed a drab world in rosy light. The very thought of it soothed him; and presently he dozed off, noting anew, as he drifted into unconsciousness, the strange eerie silence of the night.

It was still pitch-dark when he awoke, and he knew it must be long ere he need rise, though he was accustomed to get up soon after dawn in summer. As he wondered drowsily what had awakened him, he knew; the world, so silent when he had gone to sleep, was all alive with noise. It was not a loud noise, nor was there anything very startling about it, at least at first. It was only the sound of the wind, and he supposed that it had awakened him because it had been so conspicuous by its absence when he had gone to sleep.

But as he lay there it began to worry him. For it seemed to him to be a peculiar, unnatural sort of wind, and now he remembered that sunset. This wind was like that sunset become articulate; it was as a voice speaking, and though he could not understand its language, it made him afraid. His closed casements shook and rattled, not continually, but with periodic persistence as though someone strove to enter. The signboards moaned in chorus; then were utterly still. An evil whine, with a horridly human note in it, passed along the street below; and again, as in the evening, the dog began to howl.

This time Mr Guffin did not think of mulled ale. He was quite incapable of venturing below to prepare it. He buried his head beneath the bed-covers and sweated with a superstitious fear. Yet presently, again, he drifted off to sleep.

It was an unpleasant sleep, beset with nightmares. The smell of blood pervaded his dreams, and decapitated heads, half-corrupted, grinned down upon him from the bed-posts. The dead mouths opened and spoke words. "This," said they, "was a strong body and promised long life." He awoke shuddering, and remembered that those were the very words reported as having been spoken by Cromwell when he had viewed the dead King in his coffin and had lifted the severed

head to assure himself that the bloody deed had been accomplished.

But then Mr Guffin forgot all about nightmares and superstitious fears, as there broke upon him, in a deluge of sound, the voice of the storm.

At first he could hear only one continuous and sustained roar, like that of flames ascending or a vast multitude shouting in unison. Then, overtopping even this, there came, from near at hand, first a rending sound, terrible to hear, then a mighty crash, so great and so close that he felt his little house shudder with it. Mr Guffin sprang out of bed stark naked, groped for his bed-gown, and stumbled to the window. The world was black as a pit, the roar of the tempest battered at his ear-drums; then, when at last he could unhook the casement, he thought he could make out shadowy shapes below him, shapes which were daunting in their unfamiliarity, while into his eyes and nostrils there arose a cloud of gritty dust. Then the casement was wrenched clean out of his hand as though some giant had seized it, and went whirling away into the blackness; and at the same moment he was startled to feel a frantic tugging at his arm. He felt, but could not see, a human body at his elbow, and he supposed that it was speaking to him, but its voice was altogether lost in the awful cacophony which possessed the world.

It would be useless, he knew, to try to light a candle, because of that gaping hole where the casement had been; the bed-covers were being lifted as by invisible hands, and he stumbled over a broken jug which had been blown off the washing-table. With his unseen companion still frenziedly clutching at his arm, he groped his way to the door; no sooner had he opened it than he was pulled forward with it, and he had to exert all his great strength to get it shut again behind him. There was a light coming up from the kitchen, so that he saw it was Richard Chick who had invaded his bedchamber just now, and who now crouched against the wall beside him, whimpering and white-faced, with his cropped hair standing up absurdly on his bullet head, and his mean eyes starting from their sockets.

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"The house is a-falling down, master," sobbed Richard. "The house is a-falling down. 'Twill carry us along with it and grind our bones to powder."

The spectacle of this man of one-and-twenty behaving like a snivelling boy of ten inspired Mr Guffin with fresh courage,

"Then do you fall to your prayers, my lad," said he, with a sniff, gathering his bed-gown closer round his nakedness, "for I'll warrant you have need of them."

Then he stalked off down the stairs, with Richard still whimpering and sobbing at his heels.

There was a candle burning on the kitchen table, the little spearhead of light blown violently this way and that by the draughts which issued viciously through every crack and crevice. Julia bent over a copper saucepan on the fire, and the gratefiil fragrance of mulled ale rejoiced her father's nostrils. She was fully dressed and as composed as ever, with a mob upon her flaxen hair and a clean safeguard pinned over her bed-gown. She turned and bobbed at him, smiling a small smile; then she went back to her ale-mulling. Simon was standing by the fast-closed casements, as though he longed to open them and get a sight of the wild world beyond the shutters; he was in shirt and breeches, barefooted, with his curly hair dishevelled and his face still rosy with sleep.

"Leave the casements be," Mr Guffin ordered him sharply. "That in my bedchamber lies in the alley yonder, and I much fear that one of our chimney-stacks keeps it company."

"Hark to the river !" cried Simon, turning an excited face. "I'll warrant there'll be some wrecks to-night."

"Belike the tide will rise and swallow us," wailed the wretched Richard. "Let us get us abovestairs again, master, lest we be drowned."

There was a general laugh at this, and the sound of their own merriment, so natural and cheering, stifled the fear that lurked in their breasts, so that for the remainder of that night they were gay and cosy, sitting round the violently smoking fire, sipping hot ale, baiting the craven Richard, and commenting upon the individual crashes which sometimes vied with the howl of the storm.

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"'Twill blow itself out with the morning," said Mr Guffin comfortably.

But he was wrong. It was one of the great storms of history; it raged from the Orkneys to Italy; it was like one of the furies of Jehovah, sudden, wanton, and not easily to be appeased. The early dawn could scarce light her candles in the blackness of that heaven, and when at last a sickly radiance began to disperse the dark, it exposed a terrible scene of chaos and destruction. Nor was the gale in any degree abated. Simon, running eagerly to open the street door that he might take down the shutters as usual, was knocked clean over backwards by the fist of the wind, and had to be dragged indoors again and inspected for injuries. Mr Guffin, very cautiously, and clinging to whatsoever he could find in the way of support, braced his great body to deal with the shutters, and immediately he had got them unfastened had them lifted out of his hands; he watched in astonishment and awe as they went flying and careering away as lightly as bits of paper, till they splintered against the opposite wall.

He tried to settle down to his normal routine, but very soon he discovered that he could expect no customers while the storm was at this height. The milk-walker had not been upon his rounds, Little Julia informed him, nor the girl who collected kitchen refuse, and his daughter much feared that they would see no street-vendors on Ludgate Hill this morning. Standing at the window of his common-room, with the red lattice-work broken and banging against the casements, Mr Guffin gazed gloomily upon Ludgate Hill, as marooned as though he had been upon some desert island, cut off from his neighbours by this unprecedented tempest which permitted no man to venture forth without hazard to life or limb, while his old house creaked and shuddered and complained in every timber, his stout signboard danced frantically in its irons above his head, smoke from the kitchen fire penetrated everywhere and made him fall a-coughing, and the rushes on the floor swirled madly round his feet.

He could not tear himself from a contemplation of that shattered world without-doors, though it filled him with

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fear, dismay, and sorrow. There were signboards hanging dangerously from broken irons, there were glass-less windows and doors torn from their hooks. The street was become one vast rubbish-heap, full of fallen tiles from the roofs, broken bricks from the chimney-stacks, glass glinting evilly in the dull light, washing wrested from the lines behind the houses, a variety of goods snatched from shop-windows by this terrible inhuman marauder, branches of trees, the leaves still green upon them, rent from the gardens of the Livery Halls. Punctuating the steady roar of the wind was the fretful banging of doors and casements, a renewed tumbling of bricks and tiles, and southwards, from the river, a second thunder, even more dreadful than the first, as the swollen Thames raced upon its headlong course, bearing upon its tumultuously heaving bosom the hulks of every kind of craft, the bodies of watermen and seamen, and the carcasses of swans.

And in the very middle of Ludgate Hill, perched upon a great tumble of refuse, there lay a human hand and arm, blown down from the pinnacles of the Lud Gate by a power which defied the ordinances even of the great Protector, the military despot, the eminently successful tyrant, Oliver Cromwell.

All that day, and all the next, the storm continued, sometimes driving great sheets of rain before it, sometimes sending beams of lightning to search out the tale of its own mad destruction. No living creature was seen upon Ludgate Hill, no shop opened, no street vendor cried his wares, no thirsty customer battled his way to the taverns, no masterless dogs nosed in the kennels; even the crows and the pigeons, those most hardy scavengers, seemed blown away from London. Imprisoned in the tiny world of The Three Griffins, a world shudderingly insecure, Mr Guffin ate the food which the resourceful Little Julia managed to provide for him from her store-cupboard, and smiled vaguely in response to Simon's eager speculations as to what so phenomenal a tempest portended, and snapped at Richard Chick and his craven fears.

Upon the third day, which was also the third day of September, the velocity of the wind abated somewhat, and the imprisoned citizens began cautiously to poke their noses out-

of-doors. Finding that they could venture into the street in comparative safety, they straightway became as busy as rooks repairing last year's nests; the task of repair was formidable, and so was the business of replenishing empty larders; thus, all day long, upon the third of September, 1658, the citizens of London continued entirely absorbed in their own affairs. By five o'clock in the evening, Mr Guffin, who had spent the day doing first-aid repairs to his tavern, having failed to secure the services of the overworked and harassed carpenters, was trying with the aid of hammer and nails to piece together the shattered lattice-work in his common-room, when the street door opened and shut most violently, and he became aware that he had a visitor.

Starved for a gossip with neighbours over a can of ale, he turned in relief from his task, but beheld there only his youngest son, Simon, who stood panting and grinning, just inside the door, his eyes bright as stars, his face flushed crimson with the wind and his own emotion, and his shrill voice panting:

"He's dead!"

"Who is dead?" demanded Mr Guffin, who cared for nothing at this moment but to have a little peace and normality.

"Cromwell," cried Simon in triumph.

Mr Guffin let fall the hammer and nails from a hand gone suddenly nerveless.

"He died this day," continued Simon, in a low, rapid voice, "but an hour since—upon this day, the third of September, the anniversary of his triumphs at Worcester and Dunbar. He died of a tertian ague, he who for so long hath guarded himself against the violent hands of Cavees and Fifth Monarchists and Levellers and all the rest of them, he who cried, but a week since, that the Lord had given him a sign he would not die. He was fearful at the end, they say; he called upon those around him, demanding of them whether it were possible for a man to fall from Grace. They told him it was not so, yet his terrors returned; he raved idly of Ashton and Betteley and Stacy, of Slingsby and of Hewit; it is a fearful thing, he cried, all a-tremble, to fall into the hands of an angry God. He cried that he heard trumpets; they told him they were

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those of victory, of Dunbar and Worcester; but he swore they were the trumpets of Jehovah, summoning him before the Judgment Seat. He spoke no more; and at four of the clock he died. He is dead!" cried Simon, his voice rising suddenly to a note of hysteria. "I tell you, Cromwell is dead!"

But Mr Guffin was beside him by this time, and had caught him in his arms, laying a frantic hand across his mouth. The habit of caution, of repressing dangerous opinion, of hushing free speech, was grown strong; Mr Guffin had not yet really digested the fact that the tyrant was dead, but he was accustomed to the fact that his son Simon's tongue was indiscreet and rebellious. He released the lad cautiously, ready to gag him again if he gave vent to any more dangerous ravings. Simon looked at him and grinned; then pursed his lips and began to whistle a time.

His father, after he had listened to that whistling for no more than a couple of seconds, took Simon by the scruff of the neck and bundled him out of the common-room, for the street door was opening to admit customers. He had recognised the tune of that shrill whistle. It was the old Royalist air, composed in the dark days when the war had been lost and won: *When the King Enjoys his Own Again*.

(3)

Simon's optimism was premature.

Far from enjoying his own again, young King Charles (and not so very young now) was twiddling his thumbs in Brussels, having just pawned one of his few remaining jewels to pay his butcher's bill; and at Whitehall the late Protector's younger son, Richard Cromwell, was being hastily installed by the Protectorists in his father's place. He was a quiet country gentleman, distinguished by nothing except an uncanny knack of amassing debts; he was proclaimed Protector with all the ceremonies formerly used in announcing the accession of a new Sovereign, and *Mercurius Politicus* informed Mr Guffin that all was well. God, said *Mercurius Politicus*,

had taken Moses, but his son would prove a Joshua to conduct England into the full possession of truth and righteousness. Elijah had been caught up into Heaven; Elisha remained on earth, the inheritor of his mantle and his spirit.

In December there arrived home Sergeant Thomas Guffin, on sick leave from Flanders. A bullet had entered his right shoulder at the siege of Ypres, and because of the lamentable lack of surgeons in the English forces it had been neglected. Thomas's tough constitution had saved him, but he looked very thin and pale, and he had a certificate to present himself for treatment once a week at St Bartholomew's Hospital, which, with the other London hospitals, was supposed to receive, from the Treasury for Maimed Soldiers, a certain sum weekly for free treatment. This payment being now exactly forty-nine weeks in arrears, St Bartholomew's was not very pleased to see Thomas; and it was Mr Cranton, the barber-surgeon, who, for old times' sake, tended his wound.

Whatever it was that had made Thomas averse to living in the City, he seemed to have forgotten it; indeed he had no time for anything at present except a whole new batch of grievances concerning public affairs. It appeared that the Army was very unsatisfied with the new Protector, who had never so much as drawn a sword; it was disgraceful, raged Thomas, that this country squire should be their new Lord General, nor were they going to stomach it. They claimed the right to appoint one for themselves, and the only difficulty was the number of rival candidates for the honour. Honest John Lambert headed the list drawn up by the common men, but he did not seem to be in any hurry to come out of the retirement into which Oliver had forced him; he remained in his country retreat at Wimbledon, and was described by Thomas as "dressing the flowers in his garden and working at the needle with his wife and her maids." Then there was Fleetwood, the late Protector's son-in-law, said by many to have been promised the Protectorship by Oliver in a letter which had since most mysteriously disappeared; there was Desborough, brother-in-law to Oliver, and extremely popular with the common soldiers because he had been the first to

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threaten to resign his commission if Oliver took the crown; and there were at least half a dozen other candidates.

Meanwhile, Mr Guffin was relieved to hear that the new Protector was about to call a Parliament; he, like his father, was unable to invent a satisfactory way of obtaining money without one, and he could rely upon his party to see that the elections were carried on under the eye of the soldiers, and that no man dared vote for any of the "disaffected." This Parliament met late in January, and the first thing it did was to criticise the military government of Oliver's latter years, and to impeach one of his Major-Generals. Thomas Guffin's wrath when he heard of this ingratitude was, however, quickly turned to exultation; he returned home one dinner-time with the news that the Council of the Army had established itself at St James's as a rival to Parliament, and was drawing up a demand for a confirmation of all the late Protector's favours to the military.

Hereafter things happened so swiftly that Mr Guffin could not keep pace with them; every time he awoke in the morning it was to some new crisis. Parliament's retort to the Army's demand was to forbid any meetings of the Army Grandees without its permission. The Army Grandees straightway appealed to their men, who paraded the streets in a threatening manner, and insulted the Members as they went into the House with rehearsing to them the tale of Pride's Purge. Richard, dunned for private debts, frightened of the Army, and despairing of any help from the republicans, hurriedly dissolved the House after it had sat not quite three months, in accordance with a new demand from St James's. Having thus complied with the wishes of the military Grandees, he was immediately rewarded by seeing Lambert and Fleetwood deprive all his friends of their commissions, and was told that the Army had decided upon the abolition of the Protectorship and his own retirement.

"And what new-fangled government is now to be foisted on the nation?" querulously demanded Mr Samuel Guffin.

"Our godly officers," replied Thomas, "are devising a declaration wherein they are for inviting back the Members

of the Long Parliament, all save those rightfully excluded by Colonel Pride in 48, confessing that, in establishing the Protectorate, they did wander divers ways from righteous and equal paths."

"Death!" cried Mr Guffin, scarce able to believe his ears. "Are we to have the Rump restored?"

Thomas was shocked. With great severity he told his father that he must not call the godly Long Parliament by this insulting name, brazenly asserting that he and his comrades had never desired to get rid of it so long as it refrained from meddling with military affairs, and declaring that, with the fall of Tumbledown Dick, there was an end for ever of government by a single person.

"Tumbledown Dick?" repeated his bewildered father. "But is this not he who, but the last week, you were styling His Serene Highness the Lord Protector Richard?"

Thomas fell back upon Scripture, and spent the next ten minutes discoursing upon the eighth chapter of the First Book of Samuel, wherein the Children of Israel had demanded a king, to their own undoing. It must be confessed that Mr Guffin's attention wandered; the comparison of Saul with Oliver or Richard (he was not sure which) was laboured, and he was still in a maze of confusion from hearing Thomas cry up the republican Rump which, for so many years, had been the chief foe of the Army.

The Rump returned to its long-vacant seats upon the seventh of May; and within a fortnight poor Mr Guffin was thrown into a fresh bewilderment by hearing Thomas begin to murmur against it. It seemed that the Rump had resolved that commissions in the Army must be signed by the Speaker of the House; likewise was the Rump busy revising the list of officers, and already had rejected "many godly men"; and it was being perversely slow and reluctant in passing the Act of Indemnity which was designed to protect those who had supported the single government of Oliver.

"The good Lord Lambert," said Thomas indignantly, "hath complained that he and many others of the officers are left altogether unprotected by this neglect, and then did haughty

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Heselrig tell him, You are at the mercy of the Parliament, who are your very good friends. I know not, saith stout Lambert, why they should not be at our mercy as well as we at thdrs."

"Bless me," bleated Mr Guffin, "methought the Rump was of the Army's begetting. Yet now it seems this infant State babe will prove a parish brat, for albeit you have baptized it, you care not much to see it grow."

"It is an unnatural offspring," sternly retorted Thomas, "for it beginneth already to dictate to its parent. Yet we of the Army are stern fathers, as the Rump, if it mends not its manners, will shortly discover to its cost."

His prophecy was quickly fulfilled. The necessity to crush a new Royalist rising diverted the attention of the military potentates from their battle with the Rump during the late summer, but as soon as this was suppressed, Lambert executed a second Pride's Purge. On October the thirteenth he marched to the House with a great force of soldiers, put a guard about it, and turned the Members out-of-doors.

There was no need this time for Mr Guffin to ask what next was going to rule him, for that was only too plain. No sooner was the Rump ousted, than a proclamation was issued by Lambert and Desborough, stating that henceforth the government was to be in the hands of the Council of Officers, assisted by a "Grand Committee representing the armies of the three nations." This military clique drew up a constitution which was for the most part a series of negatives. There was to be no king, no government by a single person, no House of Lords; no Parliament was to be called except by order of the Council of Officers, and the Committee of Safety set up by them to administer civil affairs was to be obeyed only so long as it obeyed the Army.

"I know not what they will be at," sighed Mr Guffin, as he and Mr Cranton discussed the public chaos over a tankard, "only I dqspair of seeing a settled government come again. I am plagued with contradictory rumours, and know not what to believe, for my son Thomas tells me that Fleetwood will reign as Protector, though without the title, and my son James swears that Heselrig will shortly restore the Rump. We arc

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pulled all ways, and whatsoever faction hath the power of the moment, still are we like to perish without easement of taxation and government founded upon law. Where is that liberty so much pretended, so dearly purchased, by the Civil War? I care not whether it be what they call a commonwealth or when one man is Protector or when the Army seizes power, still the nation remains undermost, and still must it pay, howsoever its trade hath gone down the wind. There is sixty thousand pounds added to the public debts for the funeral of the first Protector, and the privy debts of the second, which, they tell me, run to the tune of twenty-five thousand pounds, must come likewise from out the nation's shrunken purse."

"We have had tossing times," agreed Mr Cranton, hugging The Bishop and drawing hard upon his pipe, "yet methinks we are near the end of them. Neighbour, I bid you look two ways at present: have your one eye on General George Monck, and t'other on the City of London."

And that was all he would say. Mr Guffin was justly annoyed with him, for what was the use of watching Monck, who, during all this tumultuous time, had sat up there in Edinburgh, giving encouragement to neither faction? As for the City of London, Mr Guffin had to confess to himself that he had begun to lose faith even in her. With her trade alarmingly diminished, her liberties ravished, her purse empty, her independence violated, what could she do to save the nation?

Little did he know how soon, or how surprisingly, his questions were to be answered.

CHAPTER III

(1)

THE air was cold with the bleak, bitter cold of December as James Guffin passed under the Lud Gate into the City; yet the young man did not appear to feel the inclemency of the weather. He was, it is true, very warmly wrapped in a fine broadcloth cloak, and his pair of thigh-boots kept out the

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slush, but from the expression on his face it seemed that it was rather some inner happiness which warmed him.

How glad he was to be in London again, and in such a triumphal fashion! How different was his return from his departure a fortnight since! Then, he and his patron Heselrig had fairly scuttled out of the capital, with the spiteful sneers of Lambert ringing in their ears, and the sight of the closed Parliament House making them despair of public or private liberty. How dreadful a morning had it been when brave Sir Arthur, warned by reports of the officers' meetings at Wallingford House, and expecting resistance, had stationed two regiments of foot and four troops of horse, all of men sworn to the support of his party, in King Street and Palace Yard; and then had had the mortification of seeing Lambert, with three thousand men at his back, stop the Speaker's coach, order that poor man back to his residence, cow Heselrig's fellow-republicans into agreeing to dissolve themselves, and command Heselrig's troops to disperse. They had obeyed gladly, those treacherous soldiers; that had been the bitterest blow of all. With his own eyes James had seen the two parties of redcoats fall on each others' necks, clasp hands, and swear to live and die together. But there, you could never trust these redcoats; they were birds of a feather; or, to change the metaphor, you might as well expect wolves to protect lambs, as the New Model to stand up for the liberty of the civilian.

But brave Sir Arthur, noble Sir Arthur, had not been daunted by this abominable treachery. No; he had ridden post to Portsmouth, taking James with him, had been admitted into that town by its republican governor, and at this safe distance from the capital had set about organising a counter-attack against the Grandees of the Army. He had dictated to James an admirable letter addressed to General George Monck, who had just been cautiously admitting that "the asserting of a commonwealth was the only intent of his heart," and who was sitting on the Border with ten thousand men; and another to Vice-Admiral Lawson, who had declared for the Rump and was advancing up the river with his squadron to Gravesend.

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Hastily collecting a volunteer force, Heselrig had then marched back to London, where he had arrived last night to find Lambert gone off to oppose Monck's progress, and the military clique at Wallingford House, shaken by the defection of Monck and Lawson, hurriedly debating the calling of a new Parliament and the abolition of the odious Committee of Safety.

Too late, reflected James exultantly, as he ploughed his way through the slush on Ludgate Hill, too late, my fine friends of the sword. You will not need to call a new Parliament, for very shortly you will see the Long Parliament restored again, and not this time by you for your convenience, but by its own Members, encouraged and supported by Monck and Lawson. Well may you cry, weak, foolish Fleetwood, that the Lord has spit in your face! Well may you think to flee to Lambert, O craven Desborough! Well may you rejoice, brave old Speaker Lenthall, when you hear the soldiers salute you, as they did yesterday, with three volleys from their muskets. Well may you smile with honest pride, valiant Sir Arthur Heselrig, when you see those who lately drove you from your seat with contumely begin to court your favours.

Happily preoccupied with such thoughts as these, James had reached Citizen and Soldier Alley (for he was bound for his father's tavern to cheer the old man with his good news), when his attention was attracted by a sound which seemed to come from round the corner of Creed Lane, and was obviously drawing nearer. It was the noise made by a crowd of people; he heard a confused thud of feet and a roar of voices intermixed with cheers and yells; at the same moment, windows flew open, and several shopkeepers appeared at their doors, including Mr Henry Cranton. James, catching sight of the barber-surgeon out of the tail of his eye, turned back, slightly raised his hat, and demanded to be told the cause of this commotion.

"Beshrew me, I think 'twill be the 'prentices again," replied Mr Cranton, wiping his hands upon his blood-stained apron. "We see much of 'em upon the streets nowadays, and always

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with the same cry upon their lips. Hark at 'em! Faith, there's lusty lungs for you."

"A Parliament!" exclaimed James, who had caught that word amid the general uproar. "Bless the brave, honest lads, they are calling for the Parliament! Ay, and they shall have it too, I'll warrant them that. Sir Arthur Heselrig hath sworn that——"

The remainder of his sentence was lost as, round the corner, like a human wave, there debouched the first of the mob, waving banners above their heads, laughing, cheering, booing and hallooing, an excited rabble of crop-headed 'prentices, all in their blue frocks, some with aprons round their waists, some with clogs upon their feet, some bloody from the butcher's counter, some floury from the baker's. And foremost among them, shouting harder than all the rest, his face flushed and his eyes dancing, ran James's brother Simon, flourishing above his head a crudely painted banner made from an old shirt, and with his free hand urging his comrades forward.

"Sim!" shouted James, suddenly forgetting all his dignity in the exultation of seeing the most troublesome of the City's population so hot for the Parliament. "Sim! what's to do?"

On hearing his brother's voice, Simon had stopped dead, and his face had hardened. Now, letting his friends stream and jostle past him, he waited for James to push a way through to him before he spoke. Then he said in a guarded tone:

"Why, we are bound for Wallingford House with another of our petitions. They will tire of seeing us there anon, I'll warrant you, and, like the neighbour of the importunate man in Holy Writ, will rise and open to us because there will be no rest from us until they do."

"My brave young brother!" cried James, embracing him. "Indeed they will rise and open to you when you cry for the restoration of the Long Parliament, for there are others, greater than you, who will join their voices with yours in this fine chorus. There is the champion of liberty, the father of the Commonwealth, Sir Arthur Heselrig——"

He stopped; for Simon had violently disengaged himself

from his embrace, and was staring at him with mingled incredulity and contempt.

"The Rump!" cried Simon in high scorn. "Think you we do call out for that rebellious arse of a dead Parliament? Nay, 'tis a stinking Rump, and hath brought sufficient plagues upon us in times past. As for your Heselrigs, let 'em be hanged, say I, and when they are cold meat let the Devil carbonate them for a breakfast. Hey, boys!" yelled Simon, turning to his comrades, "here is one mistakes us woefully; he thinks we would bring back the Rumpers!" He was answered by groans, shaking fists, laughter, and rude noises. "Nay," said Simon, turning to his brother again, and speaking loudly so that his friends grew silent to hear him, "what we do demand is a freely elected Parliament, such as hath not been seen in England since that cursed Long Parliament of yours laid the nation in blood in '41."

As James stared at him, scarce able to credit such ingratitude, a respectable mercer, who stood beneath his sign, spoke suddenly, addressing no one in particular:

"A free Parliament is what we would all wish to see. And we should make resolve not to pay our taxes till such be called and assembled."

"You are in the right of it, neighbour," called a tallow-chandler from across the street. "No taxes to be paid if imposed by any other than a freely elected Parliament."

"Huzza for a free Parliament!" screamed a plump housewife, pausing in the act of shaking a duster from an upstairs window.

"Down with the Rump!" yelled the 'prentices.

"Down with the Army!" responded half a dozen shopkeepers in chorus.

"An old King and a new Parliament!" shouted young Simon, turning a challenging glance from shopkeepers to apprentices, from apprentices to James, and back again.

There were several among his comrades who echoed the cry, but the citizens, the sober shopkeepers, were suddenly silent. The housewife withdrew from her window, the mercer and the tallow-chandler faded into their respective

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shops. They durst not, for their lives they durst not, join in such a cry as that. Not yet. Not till they kneto Monck's intentions, not till they had heard what he had to say, that silent, wary old soldier, endlessly chewing tobacco, keeping his own counsel, steadily advancing upon London from the North, he who was now the most powerful man in England, thanks to his habit of giving nothing away and his popularity with the common soldiers. But a free Parliament, that was a safe enough slogan. Everyone wanted a free Parliament. The new Common Council of the City, recently elected, had spoken openly for it, though so far they had done no more than talk. The rank and file of the Army began to favour it; the great merchant-princes debated it with approval upon 'Change. Yes, a free Parliament was a safe and popular cry; let them all stand together and demand unrestricted elections, and they could leave the rest to their lawful representatives.

Interrupting the awkward silence, the voice of a 'prentice from the rear ranks of the mob suddenly rang forth, loud and shrill:

"Hewson, champions, Hewson is a-coming out of Paul's with his scurvy redcoats. He'll put us down, he says; he'll chastise us and send us snivelling to our counters."

"Yah, the one-eyed cobbler I" yelled Simon, catching the momentary dismay of his comrades and determined to hearten them and himself for a skirmish with trained troops. "Walk, knaves, walk! Here's a hymn to the gentle craft. We'll make him walk, boys, nay, we'll make him run 1 We'll constrain him to wear out shoe-leather 1" and, stooping, Simon picked up a stone from the road and weighed it in his hand.

"Put that down, you fool!" commanded James, bewildered, not knowing whether he was on Hewson's side or the apprentices', but suddenly frightened for his headstrong brother. "D'you want an iron slug in your belly?"

But his voice was drowned in the general din, and his person pushed unceremoniously to one side, as the apprentices, picking up stones, clods of frozen filth, horse-dung, cabbage-stalks, and other refuse from the littered kennels, prepared for the affray. And here came the foe, those familiar red-

coated soldiers, pikes advanced, muskets levelled, lighted match flaring between their fingers, spare bullets ready in their mouths, steel caps glistening, and old Hewson leading them, that wicked-looking, one-eyed regicide, once a 'prentice like themselves, but knighted by Cromwell, with a seat in his "House of Lords," mark you, and now a member of the detested Committee of Safety re-created by the Army when it had turned out the Rump yet again.

"Disperse, knaves, disperse, I say!" thundered Hewson. "Or by heaven I will order my lads to disperse ye as far as your graves."

"Whoop, cobbler! Whoop, cobbler!" bawled the 'prentices. "Here's a stout club for you, cobbler; 'twill beat out your other eye, and make you look the neater. At him, boys, at him! A free Parliament! Down with the red-coated knaves!"

"Rear half-files, port your pikes!" roared Hewson. "Musketeers, blow off your loose corns! Cock your match! Give fire!"

"Stand fast, brothers!" screamed Simon at the selfsame moment. "Rather let's perish than have no answer to our lawful demands. Huzza for liberty! One and all!"

"One and all!" echoed the voices around him. "One and all!"

The musketeers had "cocked" their match with the thumb and second finger, had opened the pans of their muskets, and now, pulling down the "tricker," brought the match down into the pan. The front ranks of pikemen were closing up to form that steel hedge which had resisted the shock-charges of Rupert. But the 'prentices, maddened, desperate, stood their ground, and bombarded the troops with a sudden hail of rotten vegetables, stones, dung, filth, anything they could find; these missiles came from every direction at once, and not only from all sides but from above, for some of the lads had got into the houses and, from this cover, bombarded the foe from the upper storeys. Battering a hearing through the uproar came the rattle of musket-fire; flashes of flame and puffs of smoke obscured the scene from the spectators, but still they

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could hear Simon's voice rising in a piercing yell: "Victory, lads, victory! The rogues are retreating. At 'em again, champions, at 'em again! Walk, knaves, walk, I say! Huzza for a free Parliament! Huzza for liberty!"

It seemed impossible that the soldiers could be retreating, yet, when the smoke cleared a little, it was seen that this was indeed the case. Trained men though they were, seasoned veterans, they could not withstand that desperate, irregular assault which assailed them from every quarter at once, and they were retreating in a disorderly rout to St Paul's, from whence they had come, pursued by the army of boys and a last bombardment of missiles. But lying in the street were the inevitable casualties, a dozen blue-frocked bodies, some quiet and still, some groaning and writhing with a pike-thrust through the arm or a bullet through the shoulder.

Forgetting all about free parliaments and such-like matters, the shopkeepers and housewives, who had retreated into their houses during the fray, poured out upon the street again to inspect the dead and injured, and to search among them, with many shakings of the head and anxious enquiries, for any of their own apprentices who had joined in the battle. Mr Guffin's huge figure went blundering among the rest, and so concentrated was he upon his melancholy search for Simon that it was some time before he noticed the presence of his second son at his side. Having satisfied himself, however, that Simon was not among the casualties, he had time to return James's greeting, yet he would not return to his tavern until he had assisted his neighbours in tending the wounded and in bearing the dead away to Mr Knee's back-room, where the poor limp figures were laid out decently by the upholster's expert hands.

"'Tis a bad business, a bad business," muttered the old tavern-keeper, when at last he heaved himself down upon his own settle and received from Little Julia a pottle of strong-ale. "As promising lads as ever I saw, yonder poor dead ones, and now they have got their quietus only for calling out for a free Parliament, which is what all honest men desire."

"These are the rebellious Shechemites," observed Thomas,

who had watched the scene through the window of the common-room, "and they should be slain, every one of them, and their City sown with salt."

But he spoke without his usual assurance, for the poor young man scarce knew nowadays which was Abimelech and which was Shechem. The Army, of course, was still the Host of the Lord, but where was Moses, where was Joshua, where was Gideon? When the godly Lambert marched against the no less godly Monck, how was a poor sergeant to choose between them? When that doughty commander Fleetwood fell upon his knees before old Speaker Lenthall and resigned his commission, with what Biblical hero could he be compared? When your officer was cashiered by the Rump one day, restored to his command by the Army Grandees the next, promoted by the Rump the day after, because it had made up its quarrel with the Army, and immediately afterwards was cashiered again by the Grandees because they were in the thick of a new quarrel with the Rump, how were you expected to keep up with this general-post? On the whole, Thomas was inclined to regard General Monck as the Lord's new favourite, but he did not say so too loudly in case Lambert defeated Monck after all. It was obvious that Jehovah was in one of His fickle moods, and that therefore it behoved His servants to walk with discretion until He had definitely made up His mind.

It was James who now boldly began to cry up George Monck.

"Let that brave General come hither," said he, "who hath sworn to stand by the Long Parliament with his life, he and all his officers with him."

"Then, brother," retorted Thomas, "it is passing strange to me that he hath cashiered all those officers introduced by the Rump into his army, and hath restored all whom it expelled."

It was passing strange to James likewise, and presented, indeed, a very anxious puzzle to his party. However, Monck's promises to them had been definite enough, and he was now advancing to their defence; James, therefore, launched forth upon an enthusiastic eulogy of the General, in which he was

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interrupted by the sound of running footsteps on the **street** without, followed immediately by the violent opening of the door. It was Simon who stood there, his apron hanging in shreds about him, one coat sleeve ripped clean out, his face smeared with blood and dirt, and the breath wheezing in his throat with fatigue.

"Sim, Sim, art hurt, lad?" cried his father, springing up to greet his wayward offspring.

"Nay," panted Simon, "I do very well, sir. We beat those knaves back into Paul's, we did, and old cobbler Hewson will need to make himself a new pair of shoes, for that he ran so fast he hath worn out the others."

He flung himself down upon a chair, stretched out his legs, and beamed round upon his family.

"Stand ye all there and admire," said he, with his old pertness, "for in me do ye see the champion of your liberties. When Hewson was beat, I ran to Guildhall, for that I knew the Livery had met there in a special assembly of the Court of Common Hall, and I got me into the chamber where they were sitting, who did receive me very kindly."

"Pox on't, Sim," his father rebuked him, "you are but a rattle-headed sauce-box, and a liar to boot. What would you do in such company?"

"I will tell you what I did there, sir," replied Simon, not at all abashed, "and if you doubt me, you will hear it noised about the City to-morrow, and then will you know that I lie not. I got me in among their worships and did presume to give 'em the news, how that we apprentices, going orderly and peaceable to petition for a free Parliament, were set upon by Hewson and his ruffianly crew, who killed some six of us and wounded upwards of twenty. Their worships were pleased to resent this full sore, having good care of the City 'prentices, and when they had sent to discover the truth of what I had told them they used me very kindly, making me sit down among them and pressing wine upon me. Then did they fall to their debates, and in the end of it did thus resolve—mark well these words, sir, I have them pat, and they will cheer your heart better than a tankard of your best ale—**That**

they conceived the City of London to be in imminent and extraordinary danger; that they judged it absolutely necessary to put it into a posture of defence——"

"Zounds, Sim, is this sober truth?"

"Wait for the rest of it—That the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council should forthwith settle six regiments of Trained Bands, with officers and commanders of their own appointing, and their commissions sealed with the Common Seal of the City; and that commissioners be named who may confer with the officers of the Fleet, in order to the safety of the said City, and the peace and settlement of the nation, to give an answer to General Monck, and to propound the convention of a free Parliament."

"O faithless and rebellious City!" roared Thomas, "that would cast the nation into blood."

"O treacherous City I" lamented James, "that would clamour for a free Parliament, when she has the Long Parliament, the guardian of all her rights and liberties."

"Huzza for my stout old City I" shouted Mr Guffin, catching Simon in his arms and giving him a hug like a bear's, "for now she shows herself to be the same as resisted the Danes and stood stubbornly against the Norman Conqueror."

"Wait till General Monck comes hither," warned James, "he who is pledged to stand by the Long Parliament."

"Monck is a soldier and will never turn against the Army," asserted Thomas.

"Monck's wife's father was a freeman of London," declared Mr Guffin, "and for her sake he will not venture to deny the just demands of the City."

"Monck is a Royalist at heart," cried the indiscreet Simon, "and will restore the King."

They stood there glaring at each other, the old man and his three sons. There was no one to tell them the truth about this mysterious, infinitely secretive General: that he served one master only, whose name was George Monck.

W

A vicious wind chastised the signboard of The Three Griffins, and blew eddies of snow against the fast-closed casements of the common-room, on the morning of the ninth of February, two months later. The common-room was packed, the atmosphere charged with excitement, and for once the talk was free and open, for so chaotic had become public affairs that soldiers and spies alike knew not to whom, nor against whom, to lay an information. As Mr Guffin bustled round with tankards, thrusting his dripping way through the throng, he heard snatches of talk in which occasionally he joined, One name was being repeated over and over again, as it was being repeated in every tavern and shop and ale-house in the City, in every guard-room within the liberties, in the chambers of the great at Whitehall and Westminster: the name of General George Monck.

"They say he was deluged with petitions for a free Parliament all along his route upon his march south."

"He comes, he declares, to protect the Rump, yet the Rump trembles at his coming. He did receive their messengers very courteously when they came to him at Leicester, but never a word could they draw from him concerning his intentions."

"The Army trembles likewise, albeit he brings but five thousand men with him. I'm told he wrote the Speaker when he lay at St Albans a fortnight since, requesting that five regiments be sent forth of London, because he would quarter his own men herein."

"I know that to be true, for my son Thomas, who is now quite recovered of his wound, is among those ordered forth, and is hugely discontented thereat, albeit a portion of his arrears is just now paid him by the Rump, which durst not offend General Monck."

"They found not the sum for those arrears in the City, neighbour. The Common Council stands by its refusal of the least loan. Not a penny-piece, say their worships, until we have a free Parliament."

"Didst read this brave petition to the Common Council,

gossip? It was signed by near upon five hundred master-craftsmen. I have a copy here; hearken to what it saith. After thankfully acknowledging the Common Council's refusal of a loan, they do demand that no power or persons whatsoever shall impose laws or taxes on the cits until the authority thereof be derived from their representatives in Parliament assembled: 'By which means we doubt not, next under God, to have our languishing trades revived, and our hearts and purses together enlarged to a cheerful and liberal contribution towards our lawful government and protection, according to Magna Carta and the Petition of Rights.'"

"That's brave indeed. Yet I hear my Lord Mayor will not put it to the question."

"He is a timid man. Yet are we all agreed we will not pay so much as a groat of the taxes imposed upon us by the Rump, which contains not one of our representatives."

"There is a tale cried upon the streets, I know not how true, that when Monck went to the House on Tuesday, to receive the thanks of the Rump for its deliverance from the power of the Army, he refused the Oath of Abjuration of the House of Stuart."

"Nay, that I credit not, for I hear upon the best authority that he caned an officer at York for charging him with intent to bring back the King."

"For my part I believe it to be true, for I have it from one who is a footman to a Member of the House, who tells me likewise that Monck excused himself from taking the oath by saying that seven of the Council of State had not yet abjured, and experience had shown that oaths were as easily violated as taken. He hath given, said he, the strongest proofs of his devotion to the Rump, and if these be not sufficient, let them try him again."

"Hast heard the news, neighbours?" cried a new voice, as a fat little drysalter came squeezing his way into the common-room. The talk died, as everyone hung upon his words. "The Lord Mayor hath turned right-about, and now swears he will live and die with the Common Council and their noble resolutions."

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"Long live my Lord Mayor I"

"Huzza for the Common Council 1"

"Nay, forget not the brave Aldermen."

"Fill up the can of every man present, Sim," roared Mr Guffin. "Neighbours, I'll stand treat. The Three Griffins invites ye all to drink to our City scarlet."

"Huzza for The Three Griffins and its open-handed host!"

"I would we might drink to The Three Crowns, for I swear I like the old sign better."

"Peace! That's dangerous talk as yet."

"Nay, neighbours," cried the drysalter, who all this while had been struggling to get a word in, "ye have not heard me out. Our honest Lord Mayor hath made an order that the City put herself into a posture of defence, and he hath commissioned workmen who even now are driving posts into the principal streets and hanging chains from one to t'other, that if the Rump do send its horse-soldiers against us, they may not pass. And he hath ordered likewise that when the gates are closed at sundown, the portcullises shall be lowered, and that none be permitted to come within after that hour. I myself have viewed the work begun in Chepe, and they which are about it are the joy fullest workmen ever I saw. The cits give them food and drink and cheer them at their task, and the 'prentices have set up a gallows at the Standard, whereon they are hanging Colonel Hewson's picture."

When the tavern emptied a little, during the afternoon, Mr Guffin put on his flat-cap and his cloak, and sallied forth to see these marvels. Despite the inclement weather, he walked as far as Guildhall, and was rewarded with a sight of my Lord Mayor, who, in his robes and chain, appeared upon a balcony to acknowledge the applause of an excited and hilarious crows collected in Guildhall Yard.

Yet, proud as he was made by these new proofs of his City's independence and love of liberty, Mr Guffin could not but feel a trifle anxious. Whenever, during the past ten years, the City had defied Whitehall, brute force had overwhelmed her; she had been brought to her knees, again and again, by a power which worshipped liberty in theory and repudiated

it in practice. And now it was not merely the decayed old Rump that she defied, nor was it the half-disintegrated Army. For all his confident talk of Monck not daring to deny the City's just demands, Mr Guffin felt uneasy whenever he thought of that strange, reserved, powerful old soldier, who lay over there at Westminster, he and his five thousand picked troops, pledged to maintain an authority which the City was pledged to defy. And to the tavern-keeper's anxiety for his City was added anxiety for his sons. Whichever political party came out on top from this confusing whirlpool, it seemed to him that one or other of them was due for a hanging.

When he went to bed that night he slept quickly, for he was very tired; but he as quickly awoke, to find darkness all about him and the outer world noisy with some fresh alarm. It was like that night of storm when Cromwell had lain upon his death-bed, only that this new uproar was not of Nature but of men. There were shouts and the ring of steel, and casements unhooked and anxious questions, and then the dull blows of iron on wood. He dragged on his breeches, leaving the points untied, lit a candle with shaking fingers, pulled his bed-gown round him shawl-wise, and hastened downstairs. The brass clock in the common-room informed him that it was just after two in the morning; he pattered across to the street door, drew back the bolts, and pulled it open; then he stepped back dazzled by the light of torches which turned night into day on Ludgate Hill.

He had seen that hill under many strange guises. He had seen every kind of procession pass up and down it; he had seen street-fights bloody it, and a great storm work its wild will upon it; he had seen its familiar signboards give place to new ones, and soldiers usurp the place of the cits; he had seen it gay, and he had seen it melancholy; but never had he seen it like this: no, not like this.

It was packed with soldiers, in orderly ranks and files, all wearing the colours of General George Monck. Fringing them, elbowed out by them, stood some men of the Trained Bands, and from every door and window the citizens and their wives stared down upon the scene. In the midst of all, upon

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a tall white charger, sat one who could be no other than General George Monck himself, a weatherbeaten, stocky figure, the mouth stolidly chewing tobacco, the eyes watchful, veiled, infinitely reserved, the voice barking abrupt orders. And over to the right; a party of those men of his, armed with axes, hammers, and cleavers, were making an assault upon the Lud Gate. What precisely were their intentions, Mr Guffin could not at once discover; at first he supposed that Monck had turned right-about again, and was resolved to deface the Arms of the Commonwealth upon the gate, those Arms which lately had replaced those of the Protectorate; but disillusionment swiftly overtook him. The soldiers of Monck were battering at the Lud Gate itself, the gate which the citizens had locked and barred at sunset; they were crashing their hammers and axes against the stout, nail-studded oak of one of the principal symbols of the City's independence.

"Nay!" cried Mr Guffin suddenly, not knowing that he spoke. "Nay, by your leave, sir, harm not the gate. Let be, rogues, let be I Touqji not the gate at your peril."

Immediately there arose from all around him the sound of hisses, groans, and cries of rage; the Trained Bands made futile gestures with their partisans as though they would attack the soldiers but knew themselves helpless; and from one window an indignant housewife emptied the contents of a chamber-pot on to the helmeted heads beneath her.

Monck stood up in his stirrups and stared round upon the citizens; and still they could not make out from his expression what he thought.

"I have," he said loudly, "no choice in what I do. I but carry out the orders of the Parliament, whose servant I am."

The hostile cries rose louder than ever at that, but he paid no further heed to them, and presently they turned to shouts of triumph as those nearest to the gate cried to their friends that the soldiers were failing to break it down.

"Long live the Lud Gate! Up with King Lud and **his** two brave sons! They will not betray the City's liberties. St Paul and St George for the Lud Gate! The Lud **Gate** stands by **the** City I The Lud Gate wins the day!"

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But Monck's voice overtopped even that exultant chorus, as he bawled an order to his men:

"The gates must be dismounted from their hinges. Captain Truscott, bring up your troop. Every man to strip and lay down his weapon. Ensign Baker, make search of the houses and bring forth stout ropes."

The citizens were silent now, watching in dreadful fascination as a body of soldiers, stripped to the waist in the bitter night, heaved and wrestled with the vast oaken gates, the sweat streaming down their bodies as they attempted to lift the twin portals from off the great iron hooks on which they hung. While they strained and heaved and panted, the ranks which stood nearest to Creed Lane parted, the torches swayed and scattered sparks, and there came marching towards the General another posse of his soldiers, dragging behind them several iron chains. Immediately the word passed from lip to lip among the citizens, called across from the beetling upper storeys, shouted from doorway to doorway, that the barrier upon Cheapside was pulled down; and the groans broke out anew. Then it was observed that Monck was speaking to the officer in charge of this party, and at once the helpless spectators hushed one another, anxious to hear what new and dreadful order this potentate would give.

"Is the work done at the other gates?"

"They are broke and hewn in pieces, Excellence, all save the Alc}ers-Gate, which was too strong for us, and that we have dismounted."

"Shame I Shame!" raged the crowd.

"Then do you converge upon Guildhall with the rest."

"Guildhall?" echoed the citizens fearfully. "The Common Council sits there in late conference. What will befall these honourable men?"

Again Monck addressed them.

"Ye have no longer a Common Council," said he shortly. "'Tis dissolved by order of the Parliament, and the Councillors I am now to arrest."

But the frenzied protests which greeted his words were soon merged into one despairing and horrified groan, as,

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staggering, tottering, in peril of being crushed, the soldiers were seen at last to lift the portals of the Lud Gate from their hooks, and, leaning them up against the nearest house walls, prepared to hew and hack them with their axes.

"Bring forward the iron wedges," ordered the phlegmatic voice of Monck, "for the portcullis must now be rent and destroyed."

(3)

James paced up and down the ante-room to his patron's cabinet in Whitehall, his hands clasping and unclasping themselves behind his back, his mind in a fever of anxiety.

What in the world could Monck be about? He still swore he was the servant of the Rump; he continued to reiterate his devotion to republican principles; and yet, the very next day after he had punished the City in obedience to the Rump's commands, he had marched back there again, had sent his brother-in-law, Clarges, to request *{request, mark you!}* an interview with that knave of a Lord Mayor, to declare his sorrow for his acts of the previous morning, and to desire the favour of a conference with his lordship and the dissolved Common Council, "hoping thereby to make reparation for his late error." Then, entering Guildhall, he had excused the previous day's work on the ground that had he not carried out the Rump's orders he would have lost his command, "which would have prevented the execution of my intentions for the good of the City and the nation, whose happiness and prosperity no man hath more at heart than myself."

The City, of course, had received this powerful prodigal with open arms, and had promised to stand by him with everything she had. There had followed, James understood, a most improper, nay a disgusting scene, when the news of Monck's defection from the Rump had been given to the city. They had all gone mad for him, intermixing their cheers with cries for a free Parliament, ringing bells, lighting bonfires, and so far forgetting themselves as to sacrifice rumps in every street, to the tune of the butchers' knives and cleavers. Mean-

while Monck had sent a letter to the Rump, complaining that he had been made the instrument of their spite against the City, and requiring that, by the following Friday, the Members excluded by Colonel Pride in '48 be readmitted to the House, preparatory to a voluntary dissolution and the calling of a freely elected Parliament.

Yet he was a republican; he had said so over and over again. He had come all the way from Scotland on purpose to "assert a Commonwealth"; he was the friend of Heselrig and his fellows; he was staunchly Presbyterian; he had just beaten Lambert, the chief leader of the Army; he was . . .

James's thoughts halted abruptly, as a familiar footstep sounded in the passage and, a moment later, Heselrig himself entered the room. He took no notice of James; he did not seem to notice him standing anxiously there; he strode across the apartment and entered his cabinet, not bothering to close the door, and began straightway to pull open the drawers of his desk, muttering to himself as he did so. Emboldened by his own acute anxiety, James presumed to enter uninvited and asked tremulously:

"Sir, is all well?"

Sir Arthur raised his head and looked at him, but still he did not seem to see him. James for his part scarcely recognised his patron. His fine clothes were all dishevelled, his lips bloodstained and cracked as though he had been biting them, the sweat stood out in great beads upon his forehead and trickled down into his jutting beard, his hands trembled so violently that when he picked up a paperweight, in his distraction, it slipped from his fingers and crashed to the floor. The accident seemed to pull him together; he glanced again at James, and snapped at him:

"Well? Is all well, quotha? Get paper, pen, and ink, and write quickly, James. . . . Nay, we must not be hasty, for this is a great matter, yet write we must. . . . He must have it in writing; nothing else will do. I applied myself to him by word of mouth ere I left the House, but he only stared at me and answered nothing. . . . Where is the cursed paper? Stand not there gaping at me, sirrah; find what I require."

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"For pity's sake, sir," cried James, opening a drawer and taking out some blank sheets of paper, "let me know what is to-do."

"You were fortunate to have stayed at home to-day, James," raved his master, forgetting his need to write this mysterious letter and wandering over to the fire to warm his hands. "You missed the intolerable sight of the excluded Members, at least the eighty among them who reside in London, marching in triumphal procession to the House, escorted thither by Monck's guards. They scarce knew their way thither, they had been so long absent. Well is it for Pride, that honest soldier, that he lies in's grave, and sees not these Judases, the same that would have brought in King Charles by the back door in '48, and who are now hard at work, annulling all the votes relative to their former expulsion, ere they dissolve themselves and us and make way for some new-fangled Parliament."

"Under your favour, sir," said James, distressed beyond measure to see his patron so disordered in his mind, and searching for some comfort to offer in this strange crisis, "if the Long Parliament must indeed take farewell of the nation, the people shall elect a worthy successor, for what can they desire but to see the Commonwealth restored, for which General Monck is staunch likewise?"

"Get your pen and write," snarled Sir Arthur, wheeling upon him with extraordinary venom. "Nay, let me think upon it; how may I word it? Here is as tickle a letter as ever I writ in my life. It may hang me if my fears at this time have bottom; yet if I write it not I shall certainly be hanged. . . • List you, James, I am still the leader of my party. I have a little power. He must think I have more than I have, else will he scorn my offer."

"But what offer is this that you would make, sir, as I take it, to Monck?"

"Zounds, the offer of the crown, you booby. What else?"

James stood rigid, his hands clenched upon the papers so_x that they crumpled, his eyes huge with an agony of bewilderment.

"The crown?" he whispered.

"Nothing less will satisfy his huge ambition. The Protectorship hath shown itself to be a dangerous and uncertain office, as Cromwell found to his cost, and Monck is not to be snared with that. Yet how to word it I know not; it must be plain, yet not too plain. I must make blunt my intentions, yet leave a loophole to creep out again if he will have none of me."

"But—but your republican principles, Sir Arthur," stuttered poor James. "Your noble and consistent championship of the rights and liberties which only——"

His patron interrupted him with a harsh and mirthless laugh.

"Rights and liberties forsooth! In the present posture of affairs, my friend, there is but one person's rights and liberties of which I can afford to be tender, and those are mine own. It is George Monck or Charles Stuart, and if the last comes in he will have the halter round my neck in a trice."

"He will not come in, sir, he will not come in," babbled the distracted James, catching now at any straw which might save his illusions in a cracking world. "This new Parliament will be called by Monck, who is a republican like yourself——"

"And know you what is the first thing this new Parliament will do?" again interrupted Heselrig, pacing rapidly up and down the apartment. "It will call home Charles Stuart to sit upon the throne of England, and thus will it destroy us all, Parliament and Army alike. It will do this because it will be a freely elected Parliament, one chosen by every Tom, Dick, and Harry, who under the antique system have the right to vote, and these Toms, Dicks, and Harrys, my poor fool, desire Charles Stuart, long for tyranny and oppression, itch to lay their craven necks under the heel of this royal young pauper, because he will give them their maypoles and their bears again,"

"I will not believe it!" cried James.

"Then go you and listen to them chatter; you will learn soon enough what madness lies in their breasts. But first take down this tickle letter of mine—let's see, how do we address **our** worthy Monck nowadays? He is new appointed

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Commander-in-Chief of all the armies in Great Britain, and by this time I doubt not they will have voted him a score* of fresh honours. Faith, we must chance missing some of them. Write: 'To the Most Excellent and Noble the Lord General——' What a-pox ails you, boy, that you take not your pen in hand?"

"You must excuse me, sir," said James, in a strange, brittle voice. "I cannot do as you bid me. Your pardon, sir, I loved you well; I loved and I revered you. To me you were the embodiment of all my cherished principles, the pattern of a true republican. I would have none of those who whispered that you served but your own interest; I gave them the lie in their teeth. If any man had told me that you could ever stoop so low as to offer George Monck the crown (which in any case is not yours to offer), in order solely to the preservation of your own life and estates, I would have called him out for it, I swear to you I would. . . . But now from your own lips have I heard it, and albeit I love you still, my reverence is dead. I say I cannot serve you, sir, now, or ever any more. Pardon me, Sir Arthur—and farewell."

But when he had got outside the room, his lips which had spoken this stiff and dignified little speech began to tremble violently, and he could scarce grope his way into the passage so blinding were his tears.

(4)

He found himself, at some later period of time, at Holborn Bar. Some instinct, he supposed, must have prompted him to approach the City by this route and so escape having to pass his father's tavern. The posts and rails of the bar, lately taken down by Monck's orders, were up again by command of the selfsame man, and the long chain, which could be placed across the street as an obstacle to cavalry, lay curled round one of the posts. He entered the extra-mural City, and went slowly down Holborn Hill towards the New Gate.

When he had left Heselrig, one thought, and one thought

only, had floated clear of the chaos into which his mind had been thrown: he must go among the people, his own people, the citizens, and discover their will. Only once before had it ever occurred to him that these people might desire the restoration of the King; that had been after an evening spent in his father's tavern in the company of Mr Knee and his daughter Rose. But he had been able without any difficulty to dismiss so foolish an idea, placed in his mind by the ill-informed chatter of an upholster's wench.

Yet now some words of his father's echoed bitterly in his mind, drunken words indeed, but suddenly significant: "What do you know of the people, sir? Have you enquired of them whether they desire to rule themselves?" At the time he had not considered such a question to be pertinent; he had taken it for granted that the people desired a free Commonwealth. Now all was changed. Heselrig himself had told him that the people hungered after a restoration of the Monarchy, and in the shock of Heselrig's fall from grace James was suddenly become a realist. Hitherto his instincts, his prejudices, his book-learning, his association with the leading republicans, these had been his guides; now he must use his mind and not his emotions. Now he must discover for himself, once and for all, whether the people, whom he firmly believed to be the source of all just government, desired a republic or a monarchy. He was still himself convinced in favour of the former, only that was no longer the point. If the people had the supreme choice (and according to his genuine conviction they had), then they and not he must answer, they and not he must choose.

It seemed to him that the streets were unusually crowded, and that the folk looked different from how he had seen them these last eleven years. They spoke loudly and freely, without once glancing over their shoulders to see if they were overheard; they laughed a good deal and scattered oaths among their talk; they hummed songs as they walked, and from the taverns came great hearty bursts of merriment. Here and there a ballad-monger boldly cried her wares; James had not seen her species on the street these many years, and now he

noticed that most of the titles ridiculed the Rump. He winced a little as he heard them; he felt lonely and forsaken in a cheerfully hostile world. He was no longer the boy in his teens who had entered so proudly the service of Heselrig; he was in his late twenties now, but he felt things just as keenly, he was just as intense and solemn and sincere as in those far-off days of boyhood.

A group of workmen were hanging some temporary gates to replace those smashed by Monck at the New Gate, and a small crowd was gathered to encourage and applaud them. On Snow Hill there were the remains of one of the great bonfires lit in honour of Monck's betrayal of the Rump; a prostitute, lingering near it, boldly ogled him through her faceguard as he passed by. A chorus of God-bless-yous greeted a gentleman on horseback, and James heard one man tell another that this was one of the Common Councillors imprisoned by Monck one day and released by him the next. Here and there were the familiar red cassocks of the soldiers, but it was plain they were all Monck's men, for the citizens greeted them kindly and asked for news.

He was tired by the time he reached Cheapside, yet his feet carried him forward of their own accord, down the Poultry, across Stocks Market, and on to Cornhill. The crowds were great here, for it was the hour when the Exchange closed; hackney-coachmen drove slowly by, on the look-out for some fat merchant to carry home, and through the southern portico of the great building came a stream of those same fat merchants, many of them attended by footmen in livery, all of them finely dressed, pompous, solemn, aloof from the vulgar herd, obsessed with the business of making money, telling each other of their ventures on the high seas, of the ships they had chartered to carry their merchandise to foreign lands, with bejewelled fingers beckoning up their coaches or their saddle-horses, squashing themselves into these new-fangled sedans, waving aside the hordes of street-vendors who strove to tempt them with fruit for their wives, oysters and shrimps for their tables, cases for their hats.

James, suddenly conscious of fatigue, suddenly sickened of

an inconsistent and disappointing world, leaned against one of the white posts which protected the foot passengers from the traffic, and watched the scene. So far he had discovered nothing of the cits' desires, save that they wanted a freely elected Parliament; he had heard that phrase repeated over and over again upon his walk, but he was not going to accept, without solid proof, his late patron's assertion that a free Parliament was inevitably the prelude to a restoration of the King. After all, he reflected (watching in idle interest a painter's 'prentice pushing his way, with humorous sallies, through the crowd), it was the City which had been the birth-place of the Civil War; it had been these same fat and wealthy merchants who had lit the spark of rebellion by declaiming against taxation levied without a Parliament. No, he assured himself, they who drove out the father will never hanker after the son. They will elect good honest men who will restore the Commonwealth, a true and lasting Commonwealth, no longer in danger from the swords of the Army, from the ambitions of a Cromwell, from the self-interest of men like Heselrig; they will . . . What in the world is yon 'prentice lad up to?

He was not the only one who was asking that question. Passers-by stopped to stare and speculate; the hackney-coachmen shouted to each other from their respective boxes; even the fat merchants paused in their dignified conversations and gazed with aloof curiosity in the direction of the painter's apprentice.

For that youth had just borrowed a ladder from a passing workman; he had set it up against the wall of the Exchange, directly under the empty niche wherein had stood, before the Civil War, a bust of King Charles the First. The street-sellers had laid down their baskets to assist him; he turned and spoke to the gathering crowd over his shoulder, laughing and nodding as though he promised them some rare sport. James was too far off from him to hear what he said, but the crowd seemed to answer him back in the same vein, proffering advice, egging him on, counselling him not to break his precious neck but to save it for Tyburn, with other quips

representatives, freely elected, and who bestowed upon you the inestimable blessing of a Commonwealth?"

Poor Rose was near to tears. She had unwittingly offended this handsome and amiable Master James, and she disliked offending anyone. And she could not make him understand what she meant, though it seemed to her so transparently simple. She tried again.

"I am sure," said she earnestly, "that the gentlemen of whom you speak are good, honest gentlemen, yet they do not sail down-river in grand barges as the King used to do, and they wear not fine robes and glittering crowns, nor do they have trumpets sounding before them when they go to dine. Likewise did they forbid us to have our holidays, so that now we have no holidays, but only Days of Humiliation, as they call them. But we would have a wondrous rare holiday if King Charles came back. Why, they say the conduits would spout wine, which any man would be free to drink for the taking; and that would be a rare sight. I have never seen our City conduits spouting wine; have you, Master James?"

It was as well that the entrance of Sarah at this moment interrupted a conversation which threatened to degenerate into rudeness on the one hand and tears upon the other. Sarah swept in by the back door like a cold wind; she paused to cast a glance upon the jolly and convivial group about the fire, sighed with ostentatious pity, and was crossing to the inner door without a word, when her father kindly enquired of her whether she had supped.

"I have supped upon woe," dramatically replied his daughter. "I have been carried in the spirit with Theauro-John to the Mount of Revelation, and there have I seen the Seven Last Plagues poured into their vials, which same shall soon be emptied upon this wicked City."

Rose Knee gave a little scream, and clutched James's arm.

"Let London hearken," declaimed the prophetess, raising an admonitory finger, "let the merchants which were made rich by her stand afar off for fear of her torment, weeping and saying, Alas, alas, that great City that was clothed in fine

the City bells chiming the hour were drowned, the hoof-beats and the wheels were drowned, the whole of London City was submerged beneath the same repeated and ever more confident cry:

"God bless King Charles the Second!"

And again, even louder, battering at the ear-drums, making the very houses ring with it!

"GOD BLESS KING CHARLES THE SECOND!"

The people had spoken. James Guffin turned homewards. And all of a sudden his thoughts were full of Rose Knee.

CHAPTER IV

00

THE sun rose early on the twenty-ninth of May, sixteen hundred and sixty; but Mr Samuel Guffin rose earlier still.

It was yet dark when he heaved his great body out of bed, put on shirt and breeches, girded himself with his leather apron, and groped his way downstairs. There, having refreshed himself with a can of small-ale, he set about cleaning up the common-room; for the first time in his life he had kept his tavern open till long past eleven o'clock last night, and had retired to bed so gloriously fuddled that the cleaning of the room must wait till morning. He must do the work himself now; Simon was sleeping the sleep of exhaustion begotten by excitement, and Richard Chick was no longer employed at Mr Guffin's tavern. It was now a week since Mr Guffin, having convinced himself that the glorious news was really true, had taken Richard by the collar, marched him to the street door, and, having informed him in a few well-chosen words of the fate that would befall him if ever he showed his face there again, had enjoyed the exquisite pleasure of booting him into the street.

He hummed to himself as he worked, a deep, tuneless buzzing like a giant bee. He hummed the old ale-house catch for the singing of which, not so very long ago, he had

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found himself hauled to Guildhall to pay a fine of six-and-eightpence:

**" Bring us in no butter, for therein are many hairs,
Nor bring us in no pig's flesh, for that will make us boars."**

When he got to the chorus he sang it loudly, rather sorry now that he had dismissed Richard Chick without giving him the mortification of hearing his master bawling a "papistical" catch without fear of fines and spies and interfering redcoats:

**"But bring us in good ale, and bring us in good ale,
For our Blessed Lady's sake, bring us in good ale."**

The early dawn was breaking when Little Julia appeared, trim and smiling as usual, enveloped in a sacking apron, to sweep and scrub the floor. Her father straightway leaned against the ale-stand in a rank puddle of ale, and began to talk of the glories which awaited them all that day, but Little Julia kept disappearing in search of soap and flannels, and asking him, very respectfully, if he would please to come away from the ale-stand, because she wished to scrub it. He grew quite annoyed with her good housewifery at last, and went upstairs to rouse James and Simon; then he bustled down to the street door, that he might view the weather. It was going to be fine; undoubtedly, he reflected, snuffing in the pure clean air, it was going to be a fine day. A voice hailed him from across the alley, and there was Hal Cranton, likewise aproned, and with his spectacles upon his nose and his eternal pipe in his mouth, vigorously sweeping dust and hair from his shop into the kennel.

"His Majesty is fortunate in the weather." shouted Hal.

"God bless him!" bawled Mr Guffin, amazed at being able to say such a thing openly, unable quite to rid himself of a lurking fear that it would bring forth the familiar redcoats and land him in Newgate. But no redcoats appeared, and he remembered with renewed astonishment that all the redcoats of the New Model Army would even now be mustering on Blackheath, drawn up in their orderly ranks and files, with colours displayed and drums beating, to welcome the son of the man they had defeated in the Civil War.

He thought of Thomas, and could not suppress a small chuckle. There was no doubt about it, poor Tom had had an uneasy time of it of late. Soaked as he was in Old Testament morality, he could not properly convince himself that King Charles the Second really meant what he said when he promised to retain the officers and men of the New Model in his own service, and to pay their arrears in full. That was not the way of Jehovah; that was not the method of the Saints. Moses would not have done that, nor would Joshua; the Captains of Israel knew but one way with armies which had happened to serve upon the defeated side: to take and slaughter them, each and every one. However, there being no other way of saving his neck, not to speak of his face, Thomas had been obliged to accept Charles Stuart's word for it (only of course he was not Charles Stuart now, but His Most Sacred Majesty, King Charles the Second), even though this had entailed a complete re-reading of the Scriptures. It was very hard on Thomas; all the passages he had learned he had to forget, and all the passages he had by-passed he had to learn. He must note now the names of all the good kings of Israel, and he must collect a number of texts which seemed to indicate that Jehovah was favourable to Monarchy. From being Ahab, Charles Stuart had turned suddenly into David; and, what was really unfair, there must not be a word about Bathsheba. Yet Thomas had learned his new lesson; and then he had put on his uniform and gone off to Blackheath with the rest. Anything was better than that one of the Elect should condescend to learn the trade of tavern-keeping; and besides, King Charles had promised to pay arrears in full.

"Julia, my love," said Mr Guffin, resolutely shutting the street door upon the greetings of other neighbours, "give the pail and scrubbing-brush to Sim, and do you prepare us some breakfast. James, come you abovestairs with me to make the decorations. Where are the gay cloths, Julia? Where are the nails and the hammer? Do you hear me, Julia? Must I do all the work myself? Get you out of my way, Sim; go fetch the leather and polish the tankards. We shall be late

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if we have not a care; ay, we shall be late for the procession."

And regardless of the fact that the procession was not due to pass down Ludgate Hill till half-past two in the afternoon, Mr Guffin drove James before him up the stairs, and began as frantic a decorating of his tavern as though he had not a moment to lose.

He is as fussy as an old hen this morning, thought James good-humouredly, as that young man nailed coloured cloths from the windows, and ignored his father's orders and counter-orders which were bawled at him without a pause. But he is happy; and so, strangely enough, am I. A queer business, life, he reflected, struggling with a nail which had gone in crookedly and refused to come out again. Had you told him, even three months previously, that he would have been content to be decorating his father's tavern for the restoration of Monarchy, he would have laughed in your face. Yet he was content, though not because he had become a Royalist; rather that he had become a man. For the first time for many years he felt natural and easy and at peace. He would not allow himself to think of Heselrig, now writing whining petitions for mercy to the King, protesting that at least he had not taken part in the trial of Charles's father; for James had spoken the truth when he had told his patron that, though his reverence for him was dead, he loved him still. But as for himself, James had done the best he could by his ideals, and when he had discovered that the people of England, the sovereign people, really desired the restoration of Kingship, all he could do was to say, sincerely, and without irreverence, Thy will be done. Whether they were right or wrong, he did not pretend to know, but at least they had absolved him from responsibility.

And meanwhile he was doing an honest job of work in keeping his father's books for him (what a mess they had been in when he had come at them!), and he was in old familiar surroundings, and he had the laugh of that prig of a Thomas, and in his spare time he saw plenty of Rose Knee. She was not very intelligent, but James had made the surprising discovery just lately that intelligence was not such an important

thing as he had deemed it. At least there were other things just as important; kindness, for instance, and tolerance, and a sense of humour, and—yes, and humility.

Rose made him laugh at nothing, a thing he had never done before in his life, and which was oddly satisfying. Rose herself was eminently satisfying when you got to know her, especially when she taught him all about that strange and hitherto unknown thing called love. . . . He had promised to take her to a stage-play next week, when the theatre in Dorset Court reopened. This play was by Mr Tatham, and was called *The Rump: or the Mirror of the Late Times*. James had demurred at first, but Rose had begged him so prettily to read the newly published play to her, and then he had discovered that Heselrig was not among the characters, but that, surprisingly enough, his own brother, young Simon, was. He was not called Simon Guffin, of course; he was merely "First Apprentice," but it was Simon all right, and even some of his actual words were recorded when he had led the battle of the 'prentices against Hewson. And all the Army Grandees were most gloriously ridiculed; yes, James was going to enjoy *The Rump*, and even more was he going to enjoy holding Rose's hand when the candles were extinguished.

Mr Guffin, meanwhile, continued to barge about the house like a bull in a china-shop, calling unnecessary directions, fussing and interfering, beginning a task and forgetting to finish it, but so happy that none of his family lost patience with him. Every now and then he would go out into the street to take a look at his old sign. He had taken it from its hiding-place directly he had heard that the freely elected Parliament (the Convention Parliament, they called it) had voted unanimously an invitation to King Charles to come home; but what a job it had been to get it repainted! The sign-painters were furiously busy with orders; all the shop-keepers and tavern-keepers who, either willingly to get custom or unwillingly and for fear of the soldiers, had put up Puritan signs, wanted brand-new ones or the old ones repainted, and there had been such a crush of customers in

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Hoop Lane lately that a man could scarce get near the sign-painters' shops.

Mr Guffin, however, had managed to get precedence by pointing out that the royal procession would pass right by his tavern, for, contrary to tradition, King Charles was leaving the Qty by the Lud Gate instead of by the New Gate; he was coming down Cheapside and then through the Churchyard, to the extreme vexation of those cits who lived upon the other route. So there was the old sign back in its place, The Three Crowns, in all the glory of their new paint, replacing The Three Griffins. And there was the jolly little Bacchus, too, once more astride his tun, grinning down upon Ludgate Hill in his original nakedness, and giving the welcome news that there were good French and Spanish wines within.

Mr Guffin went upstairs to his attic presently, dragging behind him a long chain of paper flowers made by Little Julia's busy fingers. Mrs Ferguson, wife of the apothecary who lived opposite at the sign of The Bell and Dragon, was waiting for him in her attic; their respective dormer windows were so close that they could almost shake hands across the street. But they were not there to shake hands this morning; their purpose was to hang Mr GufRn's paper chain from one window to the other, and although the narrow space between them made this seem an easy task, it took a quarter of an hour to accomplish it. For Mrs Ferguson giggled so much that she kept missing her end of the chain as it was flung towards her, and Mr Guffin's hands were so clumsy with excitement that they got tangled up in the thing, which persisted in missing its mark and dangling down from his window like a long festive snake.

In nearly every attic of Ludgate Hill men and women were similarly engaged. All the main decorations had been completed yesterday, but the coloured cloths and the paper chains would have been ruined had it rained last night; the flowers, too, and the green boughs had had to wait till this morning lest they withered, and these must now be twined round every available projection on the wooden houses, nailed to the doors, **and draped over** the signs. Mr Cranton's barber's pole looked

really beautiful; his wife had dressed it most artistically with white may and red gillyflowers, the colours of the Barber-Surgeons' Company. Now, presumably, she was dressing herself with the same care; Mr Guffin had not had so much as a glimpse of her this morning, but he made no doubt that he would see her presently, even more perfumed and painted than ever, sitting in that window of hers. And he would not be surprised if, from all he had heard, King Charles did not see her too. . . .

All last week Ludgate Hill had been busy with workmen setting up rails along the street, behind which the Liverymen of the various companies would stand in their hoods and gowns to salute the royal cavalcade, and all the housekeepers in the neighbourhood had been in a whirl of activity, painting their houses, cleaning their windows, setting pots of flowers upon the pent-house roofs, each striving, in a friendly rivalry, to outdo his neighbour in the festive appearance of his residence. Day and night a small army of scavengers had worked at clearing the street of its customary refuse and filth, and at filling up the pot-holes in it; to-day it lay clean and swept, and even now there stood upon the sidewalk baskets of flowers and sweet herbs which would be strewn upon it at the first news that the procession was approaching. Meanwhile, in place of the ordinary street cries, a chorus of voices invited the cits to buy the King's picture, flags with the Royal Arms upon them, feverishly loyal ballads and humorous tracts ridiculing all the old Commonwealth-men and Protectorists, bowls and spoons made from the veritable oak-tree in which King Charles had hidden after the Battle of Worcester, and tankards engraved with portraits of himself and his two brothers.

By ten o'clock, those who had purchased window-seats in Mr Guffin's common-room and upstairs parlour were in their places, adding to the wild confusion in which the household was already thrown. The tavern was officially closed until after the procession had passed, because Mr Guffin was far too busy to be dispensing ale; yet he could not find it in his heart to deny a neighbour a drink, so down he must go in the

midst of changing his clothes, answer the importunate knocking at the street door, and draw a tankard of ale for his friend and himself that they might drink the health of His Sacred Majesty. No sooner was he back, than another summons would bring him down again; in this way the morning flew by, while from the kitchen came cheerful laughter as Little Julia and Rose Knee (who had come in to lend a hand) prepared the pies and the florentines and the custards and the bag-puddings with which, when all was done, Mr Guffin would regale any of his neighbours who cared to partake of them.

"Where is my clean shift?" roared Mr Guffin, lumbering about his bedchamber with his breeches-points dangling. "Julia! Julia, I say! What a-devil have you done with my clean shift?"

"Julia!" echoed Simon. "I warned you I had outgrown this doublet. It will not meet round my chest."

"Julia!" chimed in James. "My hosen have the moth. You should not have laid them in this press when I went to Covent Garden, for I told you how it would be."

Then up would scamper Little Julia, mob awry, hands all floury, but face as brightly smiling as ever; and the shirt would be found, and the doublet made to fasten, and another pair of stockings searched for, and for the moment all would be peace.

Dinner was snatched in mouthfuls between everyone jumping up from the table and flying in a body to the window of the common-room to see the Liverymen file into their seats behind the rails, or at the distant sound of a trumpet, or in alarm at a sudden crash which would turn out to be only a flower-pot slithering down from a pent-house roof. Simon's doublet buttons gave way with a heart-rending explosion in the midst of the meal, and then Little Julia must fetch her work-basket and try to sew them on again with Simon twisting and fidgeting to look out of the window.

"I would we might have got us to St George's Fields," sighed Simon, "to see His Majesty partake of the noble collation spread for him there in a tent by my Lord Mayor.

There is a boar's head, they say, and a peacock roasted whole, and a swan-standard, and a great pie which, on being opened——"

"Nay, I would have liked best to have been at Dover," interrupted James, with his mouth full of mutton, "and to have seen him land from the *Royal Charles* that used to be called *The Naseby*, and to have watched Monck greet him on his knees, that cunning old trimmer who is now the Duke of Albemarle."

"I wish we could have got to Cheapside," said Little Julia, busy changing plates, "to have viewed the brave pageant at the Great Conduit there, of Truth descending as it were from the clouds in a very glorious manner, and slaying Rebellion in the likeness of a dragon."

"And what," roared their father, crashing his hand upon the table, "what is amiss, pray, with being upon Ludgate Hill, where you may see the glories of this day without the inconvenience of standing for hours upon your feet and then maybe getting yourselves elbowed out by the sweaty multitude and seeing nothing for your pains?"

"Hark!" cried Simon. "There are the Tower guns a-firing a salute 1 His Majesty will have ended the collation and be starting 6*n* his way again."

"Abovestairs, all of ye!" thundered Mr Guffin, ignoring the fact that the procession would take at least an hour to wend its way to Ludgate Hill. "Pox take the lot of you, will ye fill your bellies when 'tis your eyes ye should feast with this most glorious sight?"

"But you have not yet tasted my bread-puff, sir," protested Little Julia.

She was swept upstairs with the rest, however, and firmly ensconced in her appointed place in the window of her bed-chamber.

(2)

Mr Guffin could have wept for joy as he sat there at the window with his family about him, a window all bedecked

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with flowers and coloured cloths, and **looked down upon the** festive scene below.

The Liverymen were in their places, very pompous and solemn in their hoods and gowns, and guarding the rails stood a company of the Trained Bands, brave in the City's own uniform, their partisans in their hands. The Jesus Bells of Paul's crashed out a joyous thunder, so loud that it drowned all the other bells in the vicinity, and how good it was to remember that the Cathedral was become a House of God again, the horses and the sectaries and the soldiers all gone, and the canting inscriptions erased from the tombs, and the communion-table back in its appointed place, and Mr Dean and his fellow-clergy, all in their canonical robes, standing there on the steps to greet the Head of the dear old Church of England as he rode by. The timbered houses and the crooked roofs seemed to rock with the cacophony of the bells and the distant guns, with the laughter and excited chatter of the citizens who made every window a cobble of heads, who clung to chimney-stacks, and stood squashed in every alley. The May sunshine poured down upon the gay cloths and the freshly gilded signs and the bright flowers and the Sunday clothes and the twinkling helmets and the Royal Arms once more restored to their ancient place above the Arms of the City on the Lud Gate, which still showed the scars of Monck's axes and hammers.

"I ever did maintain that His Blessed Majesty would return to us," asserted Mr Guffin very solemnly; and he really believed he had.

Everyone was saying the selfsame thing. The City Corporation was saying it, while they began an exhaustive search of their records in order to make a complete catalogue of all the proceedings, transactions, petitions, declarations, remonstrances, and agreements made by the Common Council since the beginning of the Great Rebellion (a task which was to take them more than twenty years), in order that they might pass an ordinance disavowing every one of them. The Parliament was saying it, solemnly declaring that, by the ancient and fundamental laws of England, "the government is

and ought to be by King, Lords, and Commons." The Army was saying it, drawn up on Blackheath, and concentrating hard on David and their own arrears. The Presbyterians were saying *it* secure in the promise of liberty of conscience contained in the Declaration of Breda. The fat merchants were saying it, preening themselves as they thought of the sixty thousand pounds they had advanced (on very good interest) to enable the pauper King to pay his debts abroad and come home in style. Rebels high and low were saying it, cropped heads concealed beneath these convenient new perukes, persons secured by the free and general pardon granted to all save the surviving judges of King Charles the First.

"We always knew His Blessed Majesty would return to us," said the City of London; and she, like Mr Guffin, really believed it too.

And here at last he came. The cheers were deafening as he passed through the Churchyard, drowning even the Jesus Bells. The folk at the windows craned out so far that they were in imminent danger of breaking their necks, the people in the alleys made a last effort to get better places. The shouts of "God bless Your Majesty I" became one sustained roar, as, winding its way along like a bright serpent, the head of the procession turned on to Ludgate Hill.

First came a troop of gentlemen in cloth-of-silver, dazzling to the eye, brandishing their swords, and led by Major-General Brown. Upon the heels of these another troop in velvet coats, attended by footmen in purple liveries. Then Alderman Robinson's troop in buff coats, cloth-of-silver sleeves, and rich green scarves, with drums throbbing and trumpets shrilling. They walked two and two, a moving kaleidoscope of colour and brave sound; the crowds applauded them, the flowers dropped a rain of petals on them, and then they were forgotten as everyone craned to see what came after.

There were the two City Marshals, riding spirited horses, and attended by the Waits in their scarlet jerkins and silver chains, and with the badge of the City embroidered on their sleeves. Then Mr Recorder carrying the great Banner of England and attended by twenty-six Gentlemen of the Black

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Robe. Next a company of javelin-men, peace-officers, and constables, walking before the Sheriffs, who were followed by the Common Hunt, the Remembrancer, the Chamberlain, the Water Bailiff, the Town Clerk, and the Common Crier.

The representatives of the Livery Companies followed, all in their correct order and colours, die Grocers first; between each company came a pair of trumpets, and borne between them a pendant with their Arms. Rich master-craftsmen, all of them, sitting their horses somewhat uneasily because they were incommoded by their gowns, but splendid in their velvet, their chains, and their furred hoods, with footmen and beadles attending in proper livery. The familiar emblems were cheered as they passed, the leopard of the Skinners, the ram of the Cloth Workers, the unicorn of the Apothecaries, the elephant and castle of the Cutlers, and all the rest. These were the real lords of the City, these gowned figures; these controlled trade, packed the Common Council, elected the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs, settled disputes between masters and apprentices, inspected and passed judgment on the master-pieces which the journeymen must submit to them before being admitted to a mastership, seized defective goods, and controlled prices. The Twelve Great Companies had their state barges, nearly as rich as my Lord Mayor's, and it was they who gave London her pageantry, with masques and shows on every feast-day.

But even they were quickly forgotten this afternoon, because London was greedy for the chief sight of all, the sight for which every man and woman and child there waited a-tiptoe: King Charles the Second, come home to London on his thirtieth birthday, absent from it for nineteen mortal years, the son of the man so many of them had seen slaughtered publicly before Whitehall, the ruler who was to give them peace and flourishing trade, and half-forgotten mirth and jollity, the embodiment of that old, tried and tested government which, with all its human imperfections, they knew and understood, and for which subconsciously they had hankered during a chaotic decade.

Here came the Aldermen in their scarlet, attended by the

Gentlemen of the Artillery Company, and with the City Banner borne before them. Here were the Heralds in their swaying tabards, trumpets to their lips; then the Mace Bearer carrying the Crystal Mace with its Saxon shaft and knobs of gold-mounted crystal; then the Sword Bearer balancing the City Sword upon a tasselled velvet cushion; and then the Lord Mayor himself, on horseback, while two footmen in livery led his richly caparisoned horse. There was a special cheer for him; and he smiled in answer to it, smiled mechanically, tired to death, hoarse with speechifying, feverishly rehearsing in his mind the part he must play in the great banquet which was to follow at Whitehall, already suffering the pangs of indigestion from the collation in St George's Fields, and hoping to God that he would remember all the new titles. On one side of him rode George Monck, now Duke of Albemarle, complacently recalling the magnificently accurate calculation he had made on the right moment to declare himself a King's man, but missing the familiar tobacco he really could not chew on such an occasion. On the other rode the Duke of Buckingham, vowing in his heart that not for any reason on earth would he go into exile again, and ogling all the pretty women he could spy.

But now at last—THE KING.

For a moment, at first sight of him, surprise held the cheers of the citizens suspended in their throats. For somehow they had expected a resemblance to his murdered father, someone slight and small, full of awe-inspiring dignity, pale and spiritual-looking from so long and starving an exile, grave and aloof. Instead, they saw an immensely tall young man as dark as a Spaniard, with a thin line of moustache above his full lips. He was dressed very splendidly in the French style, with his jewelled George upon his breast and the pale blue ribbon of the Garter crossing the puce satin of his coat. He was smiling, they noted, but not complacently like Monck, not mechanically like my Lord Mayor; he was smiling as though he were not only pleased but enormously amused. When he raised those great black eyes of his to the packed windows, it was observed that they were full of a kind of lazy humour, not untinged with

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cynicism; no one really would have been surprised had he closed one of them in a wink. He sat his dancing horse as though he had been born in the saddle; he held his hat in his hand and kept waving it, easily, cheerily, familiarly; and every now and then he would bend his tall lean body towards some merchant or pompous Liveryman, in a bow which only just missed being ironical.

The cheer for him suddenly became unpetrified and hurled itself forth in such a fashion that every horse in the procession reared. They cheered as though they could not stop, these citizens; and indeed, that was precisely how they felt.

For it was not only a political event they applauded, not even only King Charles the Second, this vital young man who seemed instantly to take them into his confidence and smiled at them as though he and they shared some jolly secret. It was the bears they cheered, and the gamecocks; it was honest oaths and free speech and stage-plays, and the right to get drunk when they pleased. It was maypoles and mummers and bawdy stories and surplises and organs and a free Press and the ousting of Jehovah. It was life lived as their fathers had lived it, with as little interference from above as was consistent with the safety of their goods and persons.

"God save the King!" roared London, frenziedly waving arms, and scattering flowers, and fluttering handkerchiefs, and flinging up caps.

And the guns and the trumpets and the bells threw back the cry:

"God save the King!"

London had been led to Heaven by the nose; but London had found her own way back to earth.

(3)

By twelve o'clock that night, Mr Samuel Guffin was very drunk indeed.

You really could not blame him. He had opened his tavern as soon as the procession had disappeared beneath the Lud Gate; and from that moment onwards he had spent his

time inviting neighbours to have a drink with him, or accepting a drink from them; it was not going to be his fault if His Majesty's health was not all it should be during his reign. He had given Simon permission to go and see the sights of the City, the setting up of the great maypole on Cornhill and the dancing round it, the building of the bonfires which would be lit in every street as soon as darkness fell, the conduits spouting wine, the mummers acting a droll at the Standard in Cheapside, the mock funeral rites of the Rump, the burning of the effigies of Cromwell, Ireton, and the rest at Smithfield Elm, and all the other jollifications. There would be fireworks on the Thames anon, and the Lord Mayor was to return from Whitehall in his state barge. You could not expect a young man like Simon (who, by the way, really had been a Royalist at heart for many years, and had even taken part in the City's attempt to restore the King in '58) to stay and serve ale on such an occasion. James, on the other hand, seemed only too glad to undertake this duty; possibly, reflected Mr Guffin, casting a benignant glance at his second son, that was because pretty Rose Knee had stayed to lend a hand with the serving.

When the tavern closed at last, there was supper to be dispensed to favoured neighbours, and more toasts, more pledging of each other, more healths to the heroes of this great day, beginning with His Majesty and working steadily downwards through his two brothers, the Lord Mayor, the Duke of Albemarle, and so on, to the City Waits at the bottom of the list. And when supper was ended, and the guests, with many cheerful good nights, and final expressions of loyalty, had gone off to their several abodes, Mr Guffin still sat on at the littered table, for the very good reason that he had lost the use of his legs. Not that he minded; he was perfectly content to sit here till Doomsday, with the glare of the bonfires reflected in his red and sweaty face, the roar of the tipsy crowds and the shouts of those who still drank His Majesty's health upon their knees around the conduits, mingling with the banging of his ale-can as he worked his way through the many verses of the only Cavalier song he could remember, *When the*

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King Enjoys his Own Again, his eyes, somewhat glassy, staring straight before him, and his soul filled with a profound satisfaction.

"Never such a day as this," pronounced Mr Guffin, his words slurring into one another. "Never such a day since the beginning of the world. Yet I ever looked for it; I mind me how I sat here in this very room upon the day when His Late Majesty was so vilely done to death by those same monstrous rebels who now scuttle out of the kingdom to save their wicked necks; I mind me—by cock, I have forgot what I was going to say."

"You are spilling ale down your fine coat, sir," said James, winking across at Rose Knee, who had stayed behind ostensibly to help Little Julia with the washing-up, when her father had taken his leave.

Rose tried to suppress a giggle.

"'Samuel.'" continued Mr Guffin, paying no heed, "'Samuel.' saith my good friend, Hal Cranton, 'you must needs take down that sign of yours, or bring your family upon the parish.' 'Then must I take *it* down.' quoth I, 'but harkee, neighbour.' quoth I, 'I will put yonder good sign safely in some privy place, for I am sure I shall be putting it up again not many years hence when King Charles the Second is restored.'"

"Father," said Little Julia, collecting dirty plates.

"Hal would not credit me," continued Mr Guffin, in an emotional voice. "Nor would my children credit me neither. Nay, they would get themselves commissions under Jehovah, and serve high-stomached Parliament-men, and gad after mad fanatics. They laughed in their sleeves at their wise old father, saying among themselves, What a beetle-headed fellow's this."

"Father," said Little Julia again, in a small, timid voice, "I have somewhat I would ask you."

"Yet I knew what I knew," announced Mr Guffin, laying a finger against his nose and Jiot so much as hearing the interruption. "I was wiser than my children, ay, and wiser than these almanack-makers and farting planet-gazers which saw not the least sign of a Crown in all their searching of the stars."

Then he broke into song again, accompanying himself by banging his ale-can loudly on the table:

"What Booker doth prognosticate
Concerning kings or kingdom's fate?
I think myself to be as wise
As he that gazeth on the skies.
My skill goes beyond
The depth of a pond,
Or rivers in the greatest rain;
Whereby I can tell
All things will be well,
When the King enjoys his own again,"

"Father," said Little Julia for the third time, and coming now to stand beside him, "will you do me the kindness of hearing me speak a word?"

He turned his head slowly in her direction, stared at her a moment as though he did not know her, then beamed upon her with a foolish smile.

"My Little Julia! My dove, my cherry-ripe, my jewel, my treasure I I will hear you speak as many words as there are in the English tongue, and swear I will never weary of that sweet gentle voice."

"I have a favour to ask of you, Father," said Little Julia (good Little Julia), casting down her eyes and pleating up her apron.

Mr Guffin extended wide his arms.

"You have but to ask me, and it is yours," said he largely, "Come, sit down upon your old father's knee, my dearest love, the comfort of my age, your dear.'dead mother's image. Your father loves you well, Julia, and he is not such a foolish old cit as sometimes you have imagined. He knew, Julia, that the King would——"

"Father," gently interrupted Little Julia, leaning her fair head against his chest in a most artless and engaging manner, "do you mean that you would grant me anything I ask?"

"Do you try me!" cried Mr Guffin, raising a dramatic

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finger. "There is nought I could deny my Julia though she demanded of me the sun out of heaven."

"Nay, sir," said Little Julia (modest Little Julia), "'tis only that I would be wed, and ask your leave to't."

Mr Guffin half smothered her in a hug.

"She asks but to be wed I" he repeated, apostrophising the world in general. "She would be wed, quoth she, and to some good honest cit, I warrant you, she that would grace the bed of a royal duke. Now tell me, Julia, what fortunate man is he that hath gained thy chaste affections? Eh? His name, Julia, his name that I may pledge him, the lucky young dog in a doublet."

"Why, Father, it is my Jack, so please you."

"It doth please me," said Mr Guffin definitely, as he beamed upon this steadfast and faithful maiden. "For I'll warrant you he is as honest a lad as may be found within the liberties. But list you, Julia," continued her father, becoming of a sudden very solemn and serious, "I must catechise you, wench, ay, I must put you upon the answering of some questions. Can your Jack support you in fitting style? Hath he chink in his purse, an honest trade in his fingers? Is he out of his 'dentures yet? For be assured, Julia, you shall not wed with any under the rank of journeyman."

"You will recollect, Father," said Little Julia (patient Little Julia), "that Jack is an under-turnjcey at Newgate. But now he is promised a fine new post with a good wage. For it seems that he was ever a loyal subject of His Majesty, though he never thought to mention it before."

"A fine new post under His Sacred Majesty!" cried Mr Guffin, regarding his daughter with drunken infatuation, and already seeing himself father-in-law to the Keeper of Newgate. "And what manner of post, my love? Beshrew me, wench," cried he, struck by a sudden thought, "now I do bethink me, here is a marvellous strange thing; I have not the lad's second name in my head. I must have heard it, yet cannot recall it, and this I must do since it seems he is to become my son-in-law."

"Why, Father," said Little Julia (deep Little Julia, sly Litde

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Julia), "his name, so please you, is Ketch, Jack Ketch, and now he is made common hangman of London."

Mr Guffin opened his mouth, but no words came. Instead, the sudden silence of his common-room was rent by a loud and anguished belch.

