# CHAPTER XI

## THE STUARTS AND THE PURITAN REVOLUTION

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SOURCE READINGS: GARDINER, Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution (1625–60) (contains all the important documents of the period); GEE and HARDY, Documents Illustrative of English Church History; ADAMS and STEPHENS, Select Documents, Nos. 181–238; COLBY, Selections from the Sources, Part VI.; PEPYS, Diary, 4 vols. (ed. Braybrooke); EVELYN, Diary, 4 vols. (ed. Bray) (this, as well as Pepys's work, gives a vivid impression of the time); ROBINSON, Readings, Vol. II., Chapter XXX.

The Scottish king becomes king of England.

WHEN Elizabeth died in March, 1603, she was succeeded by the son of Mary Stuart, who had been king of Scotland almost from his birth under the name of James VI., and figures among English monarchs as the first of that name.

This accession opened the prospect of an effective union between England and Scotland, which a few far-sighted statesmen had long advocated. However, the plan encountered opposition. So deep-rooted were the long-standing antagonisms and jealousies of the two nations that they refused to consolidate their institutions and fortunes, though James himself gave his ardent adhesion to the plan. In consequence, Scotland kept its own Parliament and officials, and the accession of James did nothing more for the present than give England and Scotland a common sovereign.

Character of James.

It was unfortunate that at a time when the sovereign exercised enormous power the crown should have descended to such a man as James. He had an ungainly figure, a shuffling gait, distasteful personal habits, and was obstinate, weak, and cowardly. A person less royal to look upon had not sat upon the English throne in many a century. He had crammed himself with a considerable stock of knowledge, which had not matured into wisdom, and which he prided himself on exhibiting upon every occasion in order to hear himself acclaimed by the flattering courtiers as the British Solomon. His display of pedantic information brought down upon him from Henry IV. of France the remark that he was the wisest fool of Christendom.

His conception of his office.

All this would have merely exposed him to more or less amiable ridicule if he had not made himself really dangerous by holding the most exaggerated idea of his royal office. It was he who first carried into English politics the theory of the Divine Right of kings. The English Constitution, which had grown from the seed of Magna Charta, vested the government of the realm in king and Parliament. Such was the system at the end of the War of the Roses. During the Tudor Period the Parliament had been eclipsed by the king but was by no means abolished. Its rights, which were partly in abeyance, might be reassumed, and probably would



be at the moment when the sovereign wantonly provoked the nation. And that was exactly what James did. Not content with the *substance* of absolutism, which he inherited from the Tudors, he desired also the *name* of it, and asserted his claims in terms so boundless that he seemed almost to be making a business of rousing opposition. On one occasion he edified his hearers with the following typical pronouncement: "It is atheism and blasphemy to dispute what God can do; . . . so it is presumption and high contempt in a subject to dispute what a king can do, or say that a king cannot do this or that." The Tudors, as has been said, held a similar theory, but they came at the time of a great national crisis and acted in the main in close harmony with the people. If James undertook to act against the people and their real or supposed interests, he might find his position challenged, and drive the nation to take refuge in the older conception of monarchy which the Tudor absolutism had supplanted. This development James brought about, precipitating thereby a struggle between himself and his people, based on two different conceptions of the English kingship.

The foreign and domestic situation at James's accession.

The accession of James occurred amid circumstances which augured a happy reign. The defeat of the Spanish Armada had placed the independence of England beyond question, and subsequent events had so weakened Spain as to remove all danger from that quarter. In consequence, James wisely inaugurated his rule by a favorable treaty of peace. In domestic affairs the great question was, What would be the attitude of James toward the Anglican Church, established by Elizabeth on the basis of the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity (1559)? At her death her creation had acquired an air of permanence. The Catholics were a waning power, and the Puritans, who inclined toward Calvinistic views, called for only a few concessions, based chiefly on their aversion to the surplice, kneeling in service, and similar

externals. It must be remembered that they were as yet very friendly to the national Church, accepted the religious headship of the sovereign and the Episcopal form of government, and merely believed in the simplification or purification, as they called it, of divine service. If James would know how to conciliate them, the religious troubles of England might be accounted as over.

**James and the Puritans.**

But James did not know how to conciliate them. Shortly after his accession in 1604 he called a conference at Hampton Court for the purpose of discussing a document they had sent in, called the Millenary Petition, from the fact that a thousand clergymen were supposed to have adhered to it. Unfortunately, he lost his temper during the debate and flared up wildly against the Puritans. He declared that they were secret enemies of Episcopacy—which they were not—and affirmed with unnecessary emphasis that that system of Church government had his entire support. His personal venom becomes explicable when we remember that he had been brought up in Scotland, where he had made the acquaintance of the Presbyterian system, by which the Church was withdrawn from the control of the king and bishops and put in the hands of the ministers and the people. In England he was delighted by the discovery that the sovereign ruled the Church through the bishops, and was jealously on the lookout against the importation of Presbyterian ideas. The cause of the bishops he identified with his own cause, and formulated his belief in the epigrammatic assertion, "No bishop, no king." Now the Puritans were emphatically not Presbyterians, but because they advocated a few changes savoring of radicalism James chose to regard them as such. Acting on this assumption he dismissed the petitioners at Hampton Court gruffly, and shortly after ordered every clergyman who refused to meet exactly and literally the prescriptions of the Book of Common Prayer



to be removed from his living. In this way the king made it clear that his manner of conciliating the Puritan opposition was to drive it from the Church.

**The gun powder plot. 1605.**

Toward the Catholics, whom James regarded with a tolerance much in advance of his time, he followed a temperate but unsuccessful policy. He began by holding out a prospect of lightening the burden of persecution, but when he failed to carry out his promises, owing to the pressure brought to bear upon him by his Protestant subjects, a group of desperate Catholics, enraged beyond endurance by the withdrawal of the one ray of hope which had shone upon them in many a day, planned to destroy the whole Protestant government, king, Lords, and Commons, by one gigantic stroke. They heaped gunpowder in barrels in the cellars beneath the House of Lords, and set November 5, 1605—the day of the opening in state of a new session—for the monstrous crime. Suspicion, however, had been awakened through a letter of warning sent by a conspirator to a relative who was a member of the upper house; and luckily, on the very eve of the planned disaster, Guy Fawkes, the hardiest of the conspirators, was discovered keeping watch among the explosives. He and his helpmates were hunted down and executed with all the barbarity characteristic of the period, and the English people were once more confirmed in that intense hatred and distrust of the Catholic faith which long remained the first article of their religious and political creed.

**James's second difficulty—the Parliament.**

Such was the relation of James to the religious question—the ritualistic wing of the national Church was vigorously sustained, the Puritan or reform wing was opposed and insulted, and the Catholics, not without a decent reluctance, were persecuted and crushed. However, the situation would not have become desperate, if James had not created a second difficulty by antagonizing his Parliament. To understand the development of that conflict, we have but to

remember that to the practical absolutism of the Tudors, to which he had fallen heir, he wished to give the force of theory and of law.

The question of the finances.

The quarrel began almost immediately. James needed money, partly for legitimate expenses, partly because he was extravagant. The required revenues had, of course, to be voted by Parliament, and if that body had been managed after the Tudor fashion, it would have granted supplies as readily as in the days of Henry or Elizabeth. But James's talk about a monarch being above the law had aroused suspicion, and the Parliament delayed. The king, thereupon, in a huff, began to help himself by arbitrarily increasing the duty imposed on certain articles of import and export. This is called the question of the impositions. When a merchant named Bate refused to pay, he was arrested, tried, and sentenced by the judges. Thus James triumphed, but the victory only added a limited amount to his revenue, did not settle the financial difficulties, and exasperated the Parliament so greatly that it prepared to oppose every demand, reasonable or unreasonable, which the king might make. The result was that James dissolved one Parliament only to find its successor still more unwilling to bow to his dictation. Out of what was originally a simple matter of supplying revenue for the crown's outlay, had grown by James's mismanagement an issue, at the core of which was, as everybody began to see, the all-important question of who controlled the resources of the country, the king or the Parliament. From that to the question of which was the stronger of the two was but a step, and that step might mean war.

Impeachment of Bacon, 1621.

Over this issue and others coupled with it James quarrelled with his Parliament throughout his reign, with the result of an increasing irritation on both sides. In the year 1621 the wrath of the Commons reached the point of a



savage attack on the whole administration, culminating in the impeachment of the highest judge in the realm, the Lord Chancellor. This was none other than the philosopher Francis Bacon, one of the greatest Englishmen of that or any age. By taking fees from suitors while their cases were still pending before him, he had become technically guilty of bribery. His excuse was that the acceptance of gifts was a long-established custom of his office, but with the candor we might expect from such a soul, he avowed that the practice was indefensible. "I beseech your Lordships," he added, "to be merciful to a broken reed." Bacon was fined and dismissed from office, the sentence being declared by himself "just, and for reformation's sake fit," but his disgrace would never have befallen him if he had not stood near the king, and the Parliament had not been set on reaching the monarch through his servants.

The revival of impeachment.

Bacon's trial took the form of an impeachment, in itself an ominous sign that the Parliament was raising its own claims as the best answer to the king's attempt to exalt his position. Impeachment was a means by which, in earlier times, the Parliament had exercised control of the king's advisers, but which had become obsolete under the Tudors, when the humbled Parliament was obliged to abandon all influence upon the royal ministers. Its revival at this juncture meant that the Parliament was furbishing up the old weapons with which it had once held the monarchy in check. An impeachment was a somewhat complicated process. The House of Commons appeared at the bar of the House of Lords to present to it the offender against the commonwealth, and the House of Lords, after listening to the charges, decided whether they were founded or unfounded and pronounced sentence accordingly. The bearing of the impeachment of Bacon was not lost upon James, who vaguely divined that a serious struggle was at hand.

James's foreign policy.

The unpopularity caused by his treatment of the Puritans and his quarrel with the Parliament was increased by the foreign policy of James. We have remarked that almost immediately on his accession he had concluded peace with Spain. Not satisfied with this, he resolved to further the cause of religious peace in Europe by maintaining a close friendship with his late enemy. But such a policy, creditable to his Christian temper, would depend for its success on Spain's willingness to meet him half-way. The test came in the year 1618. In that year occurred the Bohemian incident, which led to the Thirty Years' War. James was interested in that famous struggle not only because Protestantism once more locked horns with Catholicism, but also more immediately because Frederick of the Palatinate, elected king of the Protestant faction of Bohemia, had married his daughter Elizabeth. In spite of these circumstances, however, he permitted Frederick to be driven out of Bohemia, and only when Frederick was expelled from the Palatinate, too, was his father-in-law roused sufficiently to make a weak appeal to Spain for help. That power was delighted to find him so docile, made temporizing proposals. but was at heart too glad of the Catholic success in Germany to do anything to check it.

Charles and Buckingham journey to Madrid.

Thus matters dragged on until the year 1623, when the young and handsome duke of Buckingham, who was the king's all-powerful favorite, proposed to take a last step to bind Spain to England in a close alliance and to secure the settlement of the Palatinate difficulty without war. He developed the plan of a secret journey with Charles, the prince of Wales, to Madrid in order to take the Spanish court, as it were, by storm, persuade it to affiance the Spanish Infanta to the English heir, and cajole it into signing the desired treaty of alliance. It was a plan as hair-brained as it was impolitic, but James, teased and wheedled by the two



young men, at last gave his blessing to the enterprise. After many adventures Charles and Buckingham arrived at Madrid, but their reception was very different from what they had anticipated, and their hosts, although scrupulously polite, met them with evasion at every point. Utterly disgusted, they came back resolved to break with the useless policy of peace. James was plied till he consented to declare war against Spain, but died in March, 1625, before anything had been done.

American colonization.

The reign of James opens a significant chapter in English colonial history, for in 1607 the first permanent English settlement was planted in Virginia, and in 1620 the first band of radical Puritans, who had severed their connection with the Anglican Church and had at first taken refuge from persecution in Holland, set out across the Atlantic. From the valiant labor of these and subsequent bands of Englishmen who presently followed the Virginia and New England pioneers into the wildernesses of America, developed in time a number of prosperous colonies, the germs of that society which in the next century became the United States of America. Furthermore, in 1612 the East India Company, which had been chartered under Elizabeth, secured its first foothold in India. Thus, as soon as the victories of Elizabeth's reign had cleared the way, the Anglo-Saxon race planted the seeds of its expansion in the east and west, and laid the foundations of the English commercial supremacy of our day.

India.

### *Reign of Charles I.* (1625–49).

Charles I.

Charles I., who succeeded James in the year 1625, was outwardly very unlike his father. His face, familiar to us from Van Dyck's frequent reproductions, was handsome and his manner kingly. Unfortunately he was liberally endowed with the Stuart traits of perversity and obsti-

nacy and shared his father's exaggerated views of the royal prerogative.

Charles continues to antagonize Puritans and Parliament.

The two main difficulties created by James bore immediate and dangerous fruit in the new reign. James had roused the slumbering Puritanism of his subjects, and had raised the question with his Parliament as to who controlled taxation. Charles, by persisting in James's course of hostility to Puritans and Parliament, succeeded in an incredibly short time in developing the prejudices of his people into a violent opposition to himself, and in arousing the Commons, who had been servilely docile under Elizabeth and, even while protesting, had been deeply respectful under James, to the point where they plainly put the question: Who was sovereign in England, Parliament or king?

The rising tide of Protestant fervor.

Shortly after his accession Charles married Henrietta Maria, a sister of Louis XIII. of France. This marriage with a Catholic was extremely unpopular in England, and was rendered doubly so by the suspicion, only too well founded, that Charles had entered upon an agreement with Louis to offer the English Catholics his protection. When Parliament assembled, it showed immediately signs of restlessness, and presently grew still more excited on becoming aware that a small party of churchmen, closely associated with the court, were advocating views that seemed to savor of Romanism. These men were extreme ritualists, and were not favorable to Calvinistic views, being especially inclined to question the great doctrine of predestination. The king, by natural preference, supported them; and they, to show their gratitude, gave their adhesion to his theory of the royal prerogative. To the Puritans, who were falling into the usual exaggerations of party passion, such an association looked much like the alliance of popery and tyranny. They maintained with some justice that the Church of England had in doctrine held so far to a moderate Calvinism, and

The party cleavage.



they followed this declaration with the charge that the ritualists were innovators and were preparing to carry the Church back to Rome. Naturally, the Puritans, who opposed Charles on ecclesiastical grounds, joined forces with the men who resented his political claims; and thus the absolutist and High-Church parties had no sooner united than the two oppositions, Puritan and parliamentarian, fused their interests. Under this alignment of parties and issues Charles's tumultuous reign began; and under this alignment the country, after fierce and prolonged controversy, embarked on civil war.

Tunnage and Poundage.

In view of the strained relations between king and Parliament, it is intelligible why the Parliament took a most unusual course with regard to the chief revenue of the crown, called Tunnage and Poundage. Tunnage and Poundage was the name given to certain duties on imports and exports, which were usually voted at the beginning of each reign for the whole period of the sovereign's life. Partly from occupation with other business, partly from desire to bring pressure to bear upon the king, the Parliament now failed to make the usual life grant, but Charles, who could not well carry on the government without Tunnage and Poundage, continued, through his officials, to collect it.

Disastrous management of the war with Spain.

While the clouds were gathering over England by reason of these domestic infelicities, Charles foolishly invited additional criticism over his management of foreign affairs. The war with Spain furnished the occasion. He had inherited it from his father, and was bent on prosecuting it with vigor. The Parliament was not unwilling to give him support—for the war with Spain was popular—but it naturally expected that the money which it granted would be spent in giving the Spaniards a sound beating. But Charles, with his customary lack of insight, intrusted the conduct of the war to the duke of Buckingham, once his father's fa-

vorite and now his own, and the duke of Buckingham, who was handsome and dashing, but unfit for weighty business, reaped nothing but disaster. Two expeditions, one despatched toward the Rhine country and the other against Cadiz, ended in utter failure. Thereupon the Commons refused to give the king more money until the duke was removed from the council; and as the king refused to allow himself to be dictated to in the matter of his ministers, there ensued a deadlock which Charles ended abruptly by dissolving the Parliament.

**War with France.**

In the year 1627 matters grew worse. The king, not content with one war, allowed himself to be dragged into a conflict with France in behalf of the French Huguenots, who were being besieged by Richelieu in La Rochelle. As the Huguenots were hard pressed, and there was no other way of getting money for a rescuing expedition, Charles adopted a perilous device: he asked first for voluntary gifts, and when the nation failed to respond, forced the wealthy to make him a loan. When citizens could not or would not pay, he quartered troops upon them, and in order to frighten the bolder critics, arbitrarily arrested some of their number. Not only were these measures dangerous, but the sums thus extorted brought no blessing. A relief expedition which sailed for Rochelle under Buckingham failed as miserably as the attack upon Cadiz, with the discouraging total result that new disgrace was added to the ignominy already incurred in the war with Spain.

**The Petition of Right.**

The Parliament which met in 1628 was therefore amply justified in its outbreak of wrath against the government. Before granting another penny, it insisted that the grievances of the nation be redressed. In a document called the Petition of Right it made a formal assertion of its claims. The Petition of Right declared forced loans illegal, insisted that every man put under arrest should have a trial, and condemned the use of martial law in times of peace, as well as the quartering of troops upon householders. As there was no other way of getting money, the king had to swallow the bitter morsel. The Petition of Right, celebrated as a renewal of Magna Charta, was accepted by him and became the law of the land (1628).



**Murder of Buckingham.**

The Petition of Right, by limiting the exuberant powers of the king, cleared the atmosphere and opened the prospect of peace. But, unfortunately, it did not settle all questions at issue between sovereign and legislature. Apart from the fact that the Tunnage and Poundage question was not disposed of by the Petition, the mere fact that Charles continued to shower favors upon the High Church element and to support the obnoxious Buckingham, was enough to keep public opinion at a high pitch of excitement. Proof of the degree of hatred which the party strife had reached was offered soon enough. While a new expedition to Rochelle was fitting at Portsmouth, a fanatic patriot, John Felton by name, assassinated the hated duke (1628). The king grieved over the loss of his favorite, but his policy remained obstinately unchanged.

**The memorable session of 1629.**

The Parliament of 1629 had no sooner come together than it reopened the combat. The members complained vehemently that the king had continued to collect Tunnage and Poundage, though the duty had not been voted, and they were no less wroth at his continued support of the ritualistic churchmen. Their leading orators showed such fury of resentment that Charles, in mingled alarm and disgust, determined to break up their session, but before the order of adjournment could be carried out, three indignant resolutions were put to the house, and, while the speaker was detained in his chair, carried by acclamation. The resolutions declared that whoever introduced innovations into the Church, or paid Tunnage and Poundage, was an enemy of the English people.

The hopelessness of peace.

Thus, over the two questions of the ceremonial character of the Church and the control of Tunnage and Poundage, war was virtually declared between king and Parliament. In view of the dangerous excitement of the parties, there was small prospect of an amicable adjustment. One or the other, king or Parliament, would impose his theory, and the victor would be master and crush the vanquished.

Charles governs without the Parliament.

For the next eleven years (1629–40) the king had the upper hand by taking advantage of the extensive prerogatives accumulated by his predecessors. The central feature of his programme was that the presumptuous Parliament must not be given another opportunity to dictate to him. In this the laws played into his hands, for a king was not obliged to summon Parliament at stated intervals, and usually did not summon it unless he wanted a money grant. In fact, it should be clearly understood that Charles always prided himself upon acting within his rights as defined by the Constitution; not he, but the Parliament, was the disturber of the peace. But his plan of getting along without Parliament necessitated extreme economy and demanded the immediate termination of the expensive wars with France and Spain. Before the end of 1630 Charles had made his peace with these two powers. His outlook was now, on the whole, not unhopeful. Tunnage and Poundage, although condemned by the Commons, were regularly paid into the exchequer by a people who were not yet ready to renounce their king, and Tunnage and Poundage, with a number of other revenues regularly provided or scraped together by hook or by crook, were found to be sufficient for the current expenses of the administration.

Wentworth and Laud.

Charles's chief advisers during this eleven years' interlude of practically absolute government were Thomas Wentworth, for civil matters, and William Laud, for ecclesiastical affairs. As the king's person was still regarded with the old sacred



respect, all the unpopular measures carried in Church and state during this period were laid at the door of these two men, who, as the years came and went without a Parliament, became the target of an unreasoning hatred.

The ecclesiastical policy of Laud.

Laud stood for the tendency in the English Church which emphasized dignity and ceremony—the same tendency with which the king had already identified himself. In fact, it was because of his own love of ceremony and uniformity that the king had bestowed his favor upon the inflexible and earnest churchman, had made him, first, bishop of London, and finally, in the year 1633, had appointed him archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England. Therewith Laud was in a position to put his own and the king's ecclesiastical convictions into practice. By means of parochial visitations and one-sided judgments pronounced in the ecclesiastical court, called the Court of High Commission, he soon imposed upon all the ministers of the Church a strict adherence to the forms of the Prayer Book, and did not even hesitate to go beyond them. Thus, at his instigation, the communion table was placed in the east end of the church, and by being surrounded with an iron railing was given, in Puritan eyes, something of the appearance of a Catholic altar. As a result of Laud's policy the Puritan ministers either resigned or were dismissed, and the Puritan element was reduced to an enforced silence. Even many Englishmen, who welcomed the new *régime*, deplored the unwisdom which shocked the most sacred sentiments of their Puritan countrymen and drove them into hostility to the national Church.

The political system of Wentworth.

Wentworth was a man of far greater intellectual powers than either Laud or Charles. His theory of government was that a king who governs well is better than a babbling, distraught Parliament. As a natural corollary, he held that the executive should be strong, efficient, large-minded, and