

**THOMAS
BLOUNT**

BOSCOBEL

Thomas Blount

Boscobel

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Thomas Blount
Boscobel / Or, The History of his Sacred
Majesties most Miraculous Preservation
After the Battle of Worcester, 3. Sept. 1651

BOSCOBEL

ADVERTISEMENT FROM *THE EDITOR*

The book which is here republished contains an account of the sufferings of Charles the Second, after the battle of Worcester, until his escape to the continent; – written by a co-temporary, and dedicated to that monarch whose misfortunes he records; we may therefore naturally infer, that the book is a true relation of the same.¹

As this work has become so scarce that a copy can with difficulty be procured, the editor thought he should do a service to the curious by having it reprinted *verbatim*² from the edition of 1660.

The subject of this tract is interesting: it teaches us the instability of human greatness. We are presented with a picture of the sufferings of one, by lineal descent born to be the governor of a kingdom, reduced to the alternative of either suffering on a scaffold, or quitting the kingdom in habits of disguise.

When princes forget their subjects, or they their king, then both lose their former allegiance and respect, they become mutual enemies, and their inveteracy does not diminish until one or both are on the precipice of destruction.

When Charles the First ascended the throne, his subjects were tenacious of that religious freedom which they had procured under the reign of a sovereign, whose name will ever be revered by innovators in theoretical principles of religion. They had shaken off their subjugation to the Roman Pontiff, and when he shewed signs of partiality to that persuasion, they dreaded the consequences. They had not yet forgot the atrocities committed in the reign of Mary; and were fearful, that if their liberties were abridged, the same enormities would ensue. They struggled for liberty, and he for power: both felt the lash of civil commotions.

When men are enthusiastically partial to an opinion, they are so zealous in its cause they will die in its support. How many people have suffered on this account, in all classes of religious opinions, in different nations? Such was the case at that period. A rage for polemical divinity took place, and brother against brother fought in support of each other's tenets; each fully assured he was in the right. The same spirit of innovation is too prevalent in the present day: the principles they profess are at variance with the prosperity and happiness of the country. They have made their way into our possessions in the East Indies; and by their influence have brought on disaffection among the native troops. From the organization of their native laws, they are particularly tenacious of their theological principles; according to which a man had better die than be a sceptic; for on embracing any other

¹ This is not the only account that is published, for we find it related by Bates, in his *Elenchues*, and by the Earl of Clarendon, whose account he received from the king himself.

² The original style, &c. being preserved, will account for the very erroneous *punctuation*, to which it was deemed necessary to adhere.

faith, he must first lose his cast;³ and in that case he is deserted by all his relatives and countrymen, and driven from the society of all he holds most dear on earth, so that his life becomes insupportable.

In the present state of civil commotions in the European countries, caused by the ambitious views of Napoleon, it is exceedingly impolitic. It is well known that he wishes to add India to his possessions, and in the present disaffected state, nothing is more favourable to his designs; as they would immediately flock to a leader, who would hold out universal tolerance of religion; which has always been his maxim where he has extended his arms. Thus, through the enthusiastic zeal of a few, we may ultimately lose one of our finest possessions.

These people have universally promulgated such doctrines, that they affect the organization of the brain; and have been the ruin of many a happy family, by turning those who unfortunately had weak intellects mad. And, such progress have their tenets made, that we may infer, the period is not far distant when we shall see the orthodox church completely deserted by the middling and lower orders of people.

"For modes of faith, let graceless zealots fight;
"His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right."

Pope.

TO THE KINGS MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

Sir,

Among the many addresses, which every day offers your sacred Majesty, this humbly hopes your particular gracious acceptance; since it has no other ambition, then faithfully to represent to your Majesty, and, by your royal permission, to all the world, the history of those miraculous providences that preserv'd you in the battle of Worcester, conceal'd you in the wilderness at Boscobel, and led you on your way towards a land, where you might safely expect the returning favours of Heaven; which now, after so long a tryal, have graciously heard our prayers, and abundantly crown'd your patience.

And, as in the conduct of a great part of this greatest affair, it pleased God (the more to endear his mercies) to make choice of many very little, though fit instruments: So has my weakness, by this happy president, been encourag'd, to hope it not unsuitable for me to relate, what the wisest King thought proper for them to act; wherein yet I humbly beg your Majesties pardon, being conscious to my self of my utter incapacity to expresse, either your unparallel'd valour in the day of contending, or (which is a vertue far less usual for Kings) your strong and even mind in the time of your sufferings.

From which sublime endowments of your most Heroick Majesty I derive these comforts to my self, That whoever undertakes to reach at your perfections, must fall short as well as I, though not so much: And while I depend on your royal clemency more then others, I am more obliged to be

*Your Majesties
Most loyal Subject,
And most humble Servant,
THO. BLOUNT.*

³ Excommunicated by an ecclesiastical court similar to ours, only more rigid in its effects.

TO THE READER

Behold, I present you with an History of Wonders; wonders so rare and great, that, as no former age can parallel, succeeding times will scarce believe them.

Expect here to read the highest tyranny and rebellion that was ever acted by subjects, and the greatest hardships and persecutions that ever were suffer'd by a King; yet did his patience exceed his sorrows, and his vertue at last became victorious.

Some particulars, I confess, are so superlatively extraordinary, that I easily should fear, they would scarce gain belief, even from my modern reader, had I not this strong argument to secure me, That no ingenuous person will think me so frontless, as knowingly to write an untruth in an history, where His Sacred Majesty (my dread Sovereign and the best of Kings) bears the principal part, and all the other persons concern'd in the same action (except the Earl of Darby and Lord Wilmot) still alive, ready to poure out shame and confusion on so impudent a forgery.

But I am so far from that foul crime of publishing what's false, that I can safely say, I know not one line unauthentick; such has been my care to be sure of the truth, that I have diligently collected the particulars from most of their mouths, who were the very actors themselves in this scene of miracles.

To every individual person (as far as my industry could arrive to know) I have given the due of his merit, be it for valour, fidelity, or whatever other quality, that any way had the honour to relate to his Majesties service.

And though the whole complex may want elegance and politeness of style (which the nature of such relations does not properly challenge) yet it cannot want truth, the chief ingredient for such undertakings. In which assurance I am not afraid to venture myself in your hands.

Read on and wonder

THE HISTORY OF HIS SACRED MAJESTIES MOST MIRACULOUS

Preservation

AFTER

The Battle of Worcester, &c

It was in *June* in the year 1650. That Charles the Second, undoubted heir of Charles the First, of glorious memory, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, (after his Royal father had been barbarously murdered, and himself banished his own dominions, by his own rebellious subjects) took shipping at *Scheevling* in *Holland*, and, having escap'd great dangers at sea, arrived soon after at *Spey* in the North of *Scotland*.

On the first of January following, his Majesty was crown'd at *Scoon*, and an army raised in that kingdome, to invade this; in hope to recover his regalities here, then most unjustly detain'd from him, by some members of the *Long Parliament*, and *Oliver Cromwell* their general; who soon after most

traiterously assum'd the title of *Protector* of the new minted Common-wealth of England, Scotland and Ireland.

The first of August 1651. his Majesty with his army began his march into England, and on the fifth of the same month, at his Royal Camp, at *Woodhouse* near the Border, publish'd his gracious declaration of general pardon and oblivion, to all his loving subjects of the kingdom of England and dominion of Wales, that would desist from assisting the *usurped* authority of the pretended Common-wealth of England, and return to their obedience. Except only Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton, John Bradshaw, John Cook, and all others, who did actually sit and vote in the murder of his royal father.

His Majesty, after the publication of this gracious offer, march'd his army into Lancashire, where he received some considerable supplies from the *Earl of Darby* (that loyal subject,) and at Warrington Bridge met with the first opposition made by the rebels in England, but his Majesties presence soon put them to flight.

In this interim his Majesty had sent a copy of his declaration, enclosed in a gracious letter to the Lord *Mayor* and *Aldermen* of the city of London, which, by order of the usurpers then sitting at Westminster, was (on the 26. of August) publickly burnt at the Old Exchange by the Hangman; and their declaration proclaimed there and at Westminster, by beat of drum and sound of trumpet; by which his sacred Majesty, (to whom they could afford no better title than *Charles Stuart*.) his abettors, agents and complices, were declared traytors, rebels and publique enemies. – Impudence and treason beyond example!

After a tedious march, his Majesty with his army arriv'd at Worcester on the 22. of August, (being near three hundred miles from S. *Johnstons* in Scotland,) having left the Earl of Darby in Lancashire, as well to settle that and the adjacent counties in a posture of defence, against Cromwell and his confederates; as to raise some auxiliary forces to recruit his Majesties army, in case the successe of a battle should not prove so happy as all good men desired.

But (such was Heavens decree) on the 25. of August, the Earl's new rais'd forces were totally defeated near Wiggan in that county by Col. Lilburn, with a regiment of sectaries. In which conflict the Lord Widdrington, Sir Thomas Tildesley, Colonel Trollop, Lieutenant Colonel Galliard, (faithful subjects and valiant souldiers) with some others of good note, were slain, Col. Roscarrock wounded, Sir William Throckmorton, Sir Timothy Fetherstonhaugh, (who was afterwards beheaded by the rebels,) Colonel Baines and others taken prisoners, and their General the Earl of Derby forced to fly to save his life; In which flight he made a sad choice of the way towards Worcester, whither he knew his Majesties army was design'd to march.

After some days my Lord, with Colonel Roscarrock and two servants, got into the confines of Staffordshire and Shropshire near Newport, where at one Mr. Watsons house he met with Mr. *Richard Snead* (an honest gentleman of that country, and of his Lordship's acquaintance,) to whom he recounted the misfortune of his defeat at Wiggan, and the necessity of his taking some rest, if Mr. Snead could recommend his Lordship to any private house near hand, where he might safely continue, till he could find an opportunity to goe to his Majesty.

Mr. Snead brought my Lord and his company to *Boscobel-house*, a very obscure habitation, situate in Shropshire, but adjoining upon Staffordshire, and lies between Tong-castle and Brewood. John Giffard, Esq. having built this house about thirty years since, invited Sir Basil Brook with other friends and neighbors to a house-warming feast; at which time Sir Basil was desired by Mr. Giffard to give the house a name, He aptly call's it Boscobel (from the Italian *bosco bello*, which in that language signifies *fair wood*) because seated in the midst of many fair woods. It is now the inheritance of Mr. Basil Fitzherbert, by Jane his wife, daughter and heir of Mr. John Cotton, by Frances, daughter and heir of the said John Giffard.

At this place the Earl arrived on the 29. of August (being Friday at night,) but no body was found at home, except William Penderel, the house-keeper and his wife, who, to preserve so eminent a person, adventur'd to receive my Lord, and kept him in safety till Sunday night following, when

(according to my Lords desire of going to Worcester,) he convey'd him to Mr. Humphry Elliots house at Gataker Park, (a true hearted royalist,) which was about nine miles on the way from Boscobel thither. Mr. Elliot did not onely freely entertain the Earl, but lent him ten pounds, and conducted him and his company safe to Worcester.

The next day after his Majesty arrival at Worcester, being Saturday the 23. of August, he was proclaimed King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, by Mr. Thomas Lisens Mayor, and Mr. James Bridges Sheriff of that loyal city, with great acclamations.

On the same day his Majesties sent abroad a declaration, given at his city of Worcester, summoning, upon their alleageance, all the neighboring nobility, gentry and others, from sixteen to sixty, to appear in their persons and with horse and armes at *Pitchcroft* on the Tuesday following, where his Majesty would be present.

Upon Sunday 24. August, Mr. Crosby (an eminent divine of that city,) preach'd before his Majesty in the Cathedral Church; and in his prayer stiled his Majesty *Supreme Head over all persons in his Dominions*: At which some of the *Scots* took exception, and Mr. Crosby was afterwards admonish'd to forbear such expressions.

Tuesday the 26. of August was a Rendevouz in Pitchcroft neer the city, of such loyal subjects of that and the adjacent counties as would come in to his Majesties aid; Here appeared Francis Lord Talbot (now Earl of Shrewsbury) with about sixty horse; Mr. Mervin Touchet, Sir John Packington, Sir Walter Blount, Sir Ralph Clare, Mr. Ralph Sheldon of Beoly, Mr. John Washburn of Witchingford, with forty horse, Mr. Thomas Hornyold of Blackmore Park, with forty horse, Mr. Thomas Acton, Mr. Rob. Blount of Kenswick, Mr. Rob. Wigmore of Lucton, Mr. Francis Knotsford, Mr. Peter Blount and divers others. Notwithstanding which access, the number of his Majesties army both *English and Scots*, was conceiv'd not to exceed 12000. men, (viz.) ten thousand Scots and about 2000. English, and those too not excellently arm'd, nor plentifully stored with ammunition.

Mean time Cromwell (that grand patron of sectaries) had amass'd together a numerous body of rebels, commanded by himself in chief, and by the Lord Grey of Groby, Fleetwood & Lambert under him, consisting of above thirty thousand men, (being generally the scum and froth of the whole kingdome;) One part of which were sectaries, who through a fanatique zeal, were become devotes to this great *idol*; the other part seduc'd persons, who either by force or fear were unfortunately made actors or participants in this so horrible and fatal a tragedy.

Thus then began the pickeerings to the grand engagement. Major General Massey with a commanding party, being sent by his Majesty to secure the bridge and pass at *Upton* upon *Severn*, 7 miles below Worcester. On Thursday the 28. of August, Lambert with a far greater number of rebels attaq'd him, and after some dispute gain'd the pass, the river being then fordable. Here the Major General behav'd himself very gallantly, receiv'd a shot in the hand from some muskietiers the enemy had placed in the church, and retreated in good order to Worcester.

During this encounter, Cromwell himself, (whose head-quarter was the night before at *Pershore*.) advanc'd to *Stoughton* within 4. miles of the city on the southside, and that evening a party of his horse faced it.

The next day (August the 29.) the Sultan appear'd with a great body of horse and foot on *Redhil* within a mile of Worcester, where he made a *Bonnemine*, but attempted nothing; and that night his head-quarters were at Judge Berkleys house at *Speachley*.

Saturday (August 30.) it was resolv'd by his Majesty, at a council of war, to give the enemy a *Camisado*, by beating up his quarters that night with 1500. select horse and foot, commanded by Major General Middleton, and Sir William Keyth; all of them wearing their shirts over their armor for distinction; which accordingly was attempted, and might in all probability have been successful, had not the design been most traiterously discover'd to the rebels by one *Guyes*, a tailor in the town, who was hang'd afterwards as the just reward of his treachery: In this action Major Knox was slain and some few taken prisoners.

A considerable party of the rebels commanded by Col. Lambert, Col. Ingoldsby, (not yet a convert) and Col. Gibbons being got over the Severn at Upton, march'd the next day to *Powick Town*, where they made an halt; for *Powick bridge*, lying upon the river *Team* (between Powick Town & Worcester,) was guarded by a Brigade of his Majesties horse and foot, commanded by Major General Robert Montgomery, and Col. George Keyth.

The fatal 3. of September being come, his Majesty this morning holds a council of war upon the top of the Colledge-church-steeple, the better to discover the enemies posture; Here his Majesty observ'd some firing at Powick and Cromwell making a bridge of boats over Severn under Bunshill, a mile below the city towards Team mouth; his majesty presently goes down, commands all to their arms, and marches in person to Powick bridge to give orders, as well for maintaining that bridge, as for opposing the making the other of boats, and hasted back to his army in the city.

Soon after his Majesty was gone from Powick bridge, the enemy assaulted it furiously, which was well defended by Montgomery, till himself was dangerously wounded, and his ammunition spent, so that he was forced to make a disorderly retreat into Worcester; and Col. Keyth was taken prisoner at the bridge.

At the same time Cromwell had with much celerity finisht his bridge of boats and plancks over the main river, without any considerable opposition, whereby he might communicate with those of his party at Powick bridge, and was the first man that led the rest over, and then went back himself and rais'd a battery of great guns against the Fort-royal on the South-side the city.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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