was widespread, and the parliamentary regime and army were far from loved, Scottish invaders were more detested still and found little aid – only 2,000 joined the 12,000 Scots, and the militia turned out against them. The royalists were forced to dig in at Worcester, where Cromwell, pursuing them with 40,000 men, attacked in September. The Scots were defeated, and Charles, who had been in the thick of the fight, fled.

His wanderings became part of royalist legend. He was harboured in Shropshire and Staffordshire by loy[illegible] [illegible]bjects, Catholics prominent among them, in particular the Penderel br[illegible] [illegible] miller and the others farm workers. He hid from searche[illegible] [illegible] Shropshire, in the boughs of a 'royal oak' (comme[illegible] [illegible]mes) and was taken down to Dorset disgu[illegible] [illegible]nce he escaped to France. He did no[illegible] [illegible]o he talked of his escape and th[illegible] [illegible] dying thirty-four years after his [illegible] [illegible]ped to hide him, John Huddles[illegible] [illegible]. A trust fund he set up for the [illegible] [illegible]enturies.

The Civil War wa[illegible] [illegible]fered since the Conquest. A recent [illegible] [illegible]d in combat, nearly all soldiers; another 12[illegible] [illegible]umbed to the diseases that accompanied war; and [illegible] [illegible]hed the highest level ever recorded. These losses, in a popu[illegible] [illegible] million, are proportionately much higher than those England suff[illegible] in the First World War, though they are far lower than those on the Continent during the Thirty Years' War or in Ireland.[103] Things could certainly have been worse. We have observed that the conduct of the war was mostly restrained. Violence, iconoclasm and looting were generally politically or religiously motivated and imported from outside, by the armies – something that reinforced local solidarity and passive resistance. There was no class war: looting and vandalism cannot be found on any scale; tenants and neighbours did not inform on royalists to pay off old scores or win advantages – the parliamentary authorities had to send in professional informers. There was little violence even inside divided communities, and the war did not give rise to later vendettas like the 'White Terror' in post-Revolutionary France: former enemies were soon intermarrying, and split families made up.[104] This testifies to the solidity of English society and its local communities. It makes phenomena such as the 'clubmen' (see p. 229) understandable, and also the survival of fervent popular royalism, identified with a return to normality.

THE RULE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

The execution of Charles I and the defeat of his son postponed any prospect of such a return, and confirmed the country as a republic, the Commonwealth of England, the first British state, to which devastated Ireland was officially regarded as 'belonging'.[105] Scotland came under the military government of the Englishman General Monck. This was not, however, an end to England's political instability. One problem was still the army, which dominated the shrunken Rump Parliament (only 60–70 members met) and demanded that it should be both radical and popular – an impossible combination. Parliament merely reacted to events. Although much criticized for inertia, corruption and selfishness, not without justification, it had a genuine political problem – one that was to confront later revolutionary regimes in France and Russia: how could a revolution be preserved when most people disliked it? The revolutionaries had no means of creating a new political system because any attempt to do so would restore the old one.

This barren political landscape produced intellectual flowering. Thomas Hobbes, a royalist squire in exile in Paris in 1649, wrote *Leviathan*, in English and at great speed, which responded to the political breakdown of the 1640s with searing frankness. Its argument was that humans originally lived in a barbarous 'state of nature' in which 'every man is Enemy to every man . . . [in] continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short'. They emerged from this by yielding individual rights of self-preservation to an all-powerful sovereign, individual or collective – 'sovereign authority is not so hurtful as the want of it'. The sovereign protects common peace and security, including by defining a minimum and non-threatening religious belief. Hobbes attacked political opposition as 'destructive of the very essence of Government'.[106]

Leviathan was intended to promote consensus, and Hobbes presented it to the exiled Charles II, whose tutor he had been. But it managed to upset all parties. Its minimalist religious view, and insistence that religious life must be subordinate to the civil power, caused Anglicans and royalists to reject it. Republicans condemned Hobbes as an apologist for tyranny and he was attacked as scandalously pessimistic, even atheistic. *Leviathan* was burned as heretical in Oxford. It is today widely considered 'the masterpiece of English political thought, and a work which more than any other defined the character of modern politics'.[107] This is because it based

it based the legitimacy of the state on a secular idea of necessity, not on divine institution or patriarchal authority. After 1650 Hobbes accepted the Commonwealth as the de facto sovereign.

In the other political camp, a group of active republican intellectuals – including the poet and political pamphleteer John Milton (Latin Secretary to the Privy Council), Sir Henry Vane the younger (imprisoned briefly by Cromwell), and Algernon Sidney – drew inspiration from classical thinkers and from Machiavelli, and argued for an enlightened oligarchy to rule like the patricians of the Dutch and Venetian republics, in a 'new Rome in the west', in Milton's phrase. Milton (1608–74), the son of a London scrivener, had been an active polemicist during the Civil War, advocating the right of husbands to divorce, and arguing in *Areopagitica* (1644) for 'the Liberty of Unlicenc'd Printing'. This has often been taken as a pioneering defence of press freedom; but Milton was arguing for freedom of discussion within the republican elite, and he did not of course favour extending this to royalists or Catholics.[108] James Harrington, in *The Commonwealth of Oceanea* (1656), produced a utopian blueprint critical by implication of the shoddy reality of dictatorship, and aiming optimistically to persuade Cromwell to institute a true Commonwealth. Milton saw it as a duty of poets to 'deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship', though some of his most powerful and moving poems are personal meditations, including on his own blindness. His principal work, *Paradise Lost*, by far the greatest religious and philosophical work of poetry in the language, was begun as the Commonwealth neared its end, and through it 'the self-destruction of the Puritan cause obtrudes' in Satan's fall from grace.[109] However, *Paradise Lost* was completed and published only after the end of the Commonwealth (when Milton briefly went into hiding), when it was acclaimed by political enemies as well as friends.

The army during the 1650s was thinking not of a new Rome, however, but of a new Jerusalem. It wanted the Rump out of the way so that it could anticipate Brecht's solution: if the people reject the government, change the people. But the Rump was not eager to dissolve itself. On 20 April 1653 General Cromwell, still an MP, attended the House 'clad in plain black clothes' and with a military escort, and there took place one of the most famous, if least glorious, scenes in parliamentary history. After fidgeting through several speeches, Cromwell stood and made an increasingly angry one of his own, saying that some members were whoremasters and drunkards, 'corrupt and unjust Men and scandalous to the Profession of the Gospel', adding, 'I will put an end to your prating.' He called in his

his chayre, said ... "Fetch him downe" ... Then the Generall went to the table where the mace lay ... and sayd, "Take away these baubles."'[110] The army installed the logical culmination of the Puritan revolution: a 'Sanhedrin' of the godly, nominated by the Independent congregations, vetted by the Army Council, and nicknamed 'Barebone's Parliament', after Praise-God Barebone (or Barbon), one of its members. Optimists hoped that it would be a prelude to the Second Coming. Cromwell expected the Assembly to 'usher in things God hath promised'.[111] It could hardly fail to disappoint. In fact, it was not wholly different from earlier parliaments, being largely made up of gentry, JPs and lawyers. It split over religious policy, and its moderate wing (profiting from the absence of the radicals at a prayer meeting) went to Cromwell and surrendered their powers to him, formally ending the Commonwealth. This seems to have forced an agonizing reappraisal: God, and godliness, had not shown the way, and saints had proved inadequate politicians. Senior army officers drew up a new constitution, the Instrument of Government, in December 1653, making Cromwell, aged fifty-four, a somewhat reluctant Lord Protector – an outcome greeted with general silence and indifference.[112] Like many republics, the Commonwealth had drifted into quasi-monarchy.

Cromwell's legendary instruction to Sir Peter Lely to paint him 'warts and all' encapsulates his reputation for uncompromising integrity. Yet despite his fame he remains an enigmatic figure. In his own time and long afterwards he was notorious even among his followers for trickiness, even hypocrisy, a zealot for all seasons: 'he will lay his hand upon his breast, elevate his eyes and call God to record; he will weep, howl and repent, even while he doth smite you under the first rib'.[113] Yet his religious fervour was heartfelt. One explanation is that he had no fixed vision, and ascribed his changeableness to the promptings of Providence. His ideas and policies came from others: 'every man almost that talks with you is apt to think you of his opinion, my Lord, whatever he be'.[114] This made him an effective conciliator: he sought consensus among the ruling group of officers and politicians, and turned out to be the only man who could keep them together. Similarly, he favoured freedom of conscience for the godly – 'Scots, English, Jews, Gentiles, Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, and all'[115] – as a route to eventual truth, unity and the Millennium. His distaste for 'the raging fire of persecution', his desire to reconcile, and his respect for others' beliefs (not, of course, extending to Catholics, though even them he left alone) are his attractive qualities. His other great strength was in battle, when he was prompt, bold and decisive, and found an almost manic fulfilment; and it was his victories and standing within the army that

(playing down his usually superior numbers), thus proving his own righteousness. As a politician, he showed no long-term vision, and finally, like other disillusioned zealots (including his old friend and enemy John Lilburne), subsided into 'pious resignation to the ways of providence', which had not seen fit to usher in Christ's kingdom – a judgement on their own unworthiness. Cromwell remains concealed rather than revealed by his voluminous letters and speeches, whose nineteenth-century publication founded the heroic reputation for which he 'wrote and spoke the script'.[116] For the nineteenth century, he became simultaneously a defender of popular rights, a moral exemplar and a patriotic hero (see p. 267).

The Protectorate was a godly dictatorship, backed by the army, and justified by necessity. Like Charles I, Cromwell thought that 'government is for the people's good, not what pleases them'.[117] But he felt the need for parliaments, which he regularly hoped would be more worthy than their predecessors, and regularly dismissed when they were not. Niceties of law and procedure had to give way: 'the throat of the nation may be cut while we send for some to make a law'. Opponents were imprisoned without trial; the judiciary was purged to an unprecedented extent; awkward lawyers were arrested; rebels were sent into slavery. Cromwell attacked those who 'cry up nothing but righteousness and justice and liberty'.[118] It was he who was obeying God's will, not they, and to claim otherwise was blasphemy. Genuine blasphemy, however intended, was not advisable. When James Naylor, a radical sectarian, re-enacted Christ's entry into Jerusalem by riding into Bristol on a donkey, Parliament demanded his blood. Cromwell saved his life; but he was branded, pilloried, bored through the tongue, flogged twice, and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The dominance of the military and its religious assertiveness made the Republic a formidable enemy. Moreover, it had far more money than any of the Stuart monarchs – perhaps five times that of Charles I – due to punitive taxes on royalists and the sale of royal and Church lands. The Republic was enthusiastic for trade and colonies, and hence for ships, and both the merchant and war fleets grew rapidly.[119] In 1651 Parliament passed the epoch-making Navigation Acts, giving a near monopoly of trade to British ships. Perhaps due to Puritan frugality and devotion to duty, both the army and navy and their civilian administrators showed a professional efficiency against Dutch, French and Tunisians with few parallels in English history. Several monarchs from Alfred to Henry VIII have been hailed as 'fathers of the navy'; but Cromwell has a better claim than most. In 1651 a Venetian envoy reported that 'Owing to the care of parliament they have 80 men of war which are certainly the finest now afloat, whether for con-

French, in 1654 Cromwell launched an attack on Spain in both Europe and the colonies, motivated by a mixture of religious zeal and opportunism. Spain was the perfect target for a holy war, the enemy of 'whatsoever is of God', involving 'all the wicked people of the world, whether abroad or at home'.[121] To Cromwell's consternation, the forces of righteousness, although hanging on to Jamaica, were defeated at Hispaniola, forcing the conclusion that England had 'provoked the Lord'.

The remedy was compulsory national repentance. In 1655 eleven major-generals were appointed as provincial governors to oversee security and punish 'all manner of vice'. They were busily virtuous: 'I cannot but please myself,' observed one, 'to think how greedily we shall put down prophaneness.'[122] This was the most sexually repressive regime in our history, making adultery a capital offence. Swearing, fornication and drunkenness were also punished, 'dens of satan' (pubs) were shut down en masse, and 'loose wenches' rounded up for slave labour in Jamaica. Susan Bounty, convicted of adultery in Devon in 1654, was allowed to give birth to her baby, which was then taken from her and she was hanged.[123] Racehorses were confiscated. Fighting cocks, bears and dogs were slaughtered, inspiring Macaulay's quip that Puritans were concerned less with the pain of the animal than with the pleasure of the spectator. Banned were 'revellings at country weddings' and traditional saints' days festivities – ending the miniature baby booms nine months after.[124] The deserving poor were succoured and the dissolute whipped and put to work. A 'Decimation Tax' (10 per cent of income) was imposed on former royalists. Willing helpers – usually minor gentry, former army officers and sectarian zealots – were recruited as 'commissioners' and official 'ejectors', and given sweeping powers to identify and remove ministers or schoolmasters guilty of lewdness, using the Book of Common Prayer, playing cards, encouraging traditional pastimes, or scoffing at the godly. One 'ejected' clergyman described them as 'oppressing, hungry, barking, sharking, hollow-bellied committee men [who] tyrannize ... scratch and bite and test and worry the lives and estates of the peaceable subjects'. As this outburst may suggest, they inspired more fury than terror. Despite their labours, 'drunkenness and wickedness rageth in our streets',[125] and parishes resisted orders to replace the now traditional Book of Common Prayer with a 'Directory of Public Worship'. When Cromwell had to call new parliamentary elections to get money for the Spanish war, there were shouts of 'No swordsmen! No decimators!' and the major-generals had to be abolished.

In March 1657 Parliament offered Cromwell the kingship, and his refusal is usually seen as the triumph of principle over ambition. In fact,

by charters, precedents and the Common Law of England, whereas a Lord Protector existed in a dangerous legal vacuum.[126] For this reason, and because the army disliked the idea, he declined after long hesitation; though so powerful was the culture of monarchy that at his funeral he was portrayed in effigy wearing a crown and holding a sceptre. After his sudden death in September 1658 the regime began to unravel. His son Richard, who succeeded as Lord Protector, was easily persuaded to bow out. The Army Council fell back on recalling the Rump Parliament in May 1659, but only forty-two turned up. Amid bitter wrangling between soldiers and politicians, and disturbances by both royalists and republicans, a Committee of Safety was set up to take control, but it soon ceased to meet. For a week, England had no central government, though few seemed to mind. 'Boys do now cry "Kiss my Parliament" instead of "Kiss my arse",' noted the young civil servant Samuel Pepys in his diary.[127] The highly competent General George Monck, commander of the army in Scotland, with whom royalist emissaries had been in contact, marched south, reaching London in February 1660 amid popular rejoicing at what would almost certainly mean a royal restoration. Monck called on MPs excluded in 1648 to resume their seats and summon fresh and free elections, and managed the delicate transition to monarchy. Charles II, from Holland, issued the conciliatory Declaration of Breda, promising pardons, religious tolerance, and payment of arrears to the army. On 8 May 1660 a 'Convention Parliament'* unanimously declared Charles II king. The formerly republican fleet escorted him in to Dover on 25 May, the flagship *Naseby* being renamed *Royal Charles*. Pepys was on board in a state of high excitement:

> By the morning we were come close to the land and everybody made ready to get on shore . . . I went . . . with a dog that the king loved (which shit in the boat and made us laugh and me think that a king and all that belong to him are but just as others are) . . . Infinite the Croud of people . . . A Canopy was provided for [the king] to stand under, which he did; and talked awhile with Gen. Monke and others . . . The Shouting and joy expressed by all is past imagination.[128]

In London, the celebrations were far more lavish, but the outburst of public rejoicing was the same. The diarist John Evelyn noted: 'I stood in the Strand & beheld it, & blessed God: And all this without one drop of bloud . . . so joyfull a day, & so bright [was never] seene in this nation.'[129]

AFTERSHOCKS, 1660–89

It was too good to be true. A whole generation of resentments had accumulated. There were enemies and dangerous friends across the Channel. The Commonwealth had left huge debts, and there were unpredictable accidents. But Charles – 'A prince of many Virtues, & many greate Imperfections . . . not bloudy or Cruel'[130] – held the country and the government together as long as he lived. This service he rendered as much through his 'Imperfections' as his 'Virtues'. Those who like identifying prophets of modernity might see in him a prototype of contemporary politics. He was cynically realistic ('he had a very ill opinion of men and women,' wrote Bishop Gilbert Burnet, and 'thinks the world is governed wholly by interest') but concealed this behind an appearance of affability. He did not take religion too seriously – he was more or less Catholic, the clearest repudiation of Puritanism – and was indulgent to others as to himself: 'God will never damn a man for allowing himself a little pleasure' (which in his case included fathering at least fourteen illegitimate children). All this – which outraged Puritans – was politics as well as personality: he wanted to defuse religious conflict by favouring an inclusive Church of England, with tolerance for law-abiding dissenters and a lessening of petty moral persecution. He worked hard at his image,[131] for example 'touching' some 90,000 people for scrofula – 'the King strokes their faces or cheeks with both his hands at once'[132] – a highly popular activity. He was determined to restore and maintain legitimate monarchy with hereditary succession, and believed that this required conciliation. The rest was subordinate to this: policies and ministers were secondary – 'he lived with his ministers as he did with his mistresses,' quipped the waspish politician George Savile, Marquess of Halifax; 'he used them but was not in love with them.' As one of Charles's friends put it:

> Restless he rolls from whore to whore
> A merry monarch, scandalous and poor.[133]

Notwithstanding inevitable disillusionment, few restorations have been so successful as what Daniel Defoe called 'his lazy, long, lascivious reign'.[134]

In August 1660 Charles pushed through an Act of General Pardon, Indemnity and Oblivion, which recognized changes in ownership of land and gave an amnesty covering the Civil War and republican period. Excluded were surviving regicides: nine were executed, and efforts made to hunt down the rest. Pepys went to Charing Cross to see General Har-

could do in that condition'. John Evelyn 'met their quarters mangld & cut & reaking as they were brought from the Gallows in baskets'.[135] Otherwise revenge was symbolic. Cromwell's body was dug up, hanged and beheaded (the head, by a long and circuitous route, is now somewhere in the chapel of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge). There was no attempt to turn the clock back far: Charles I's anti-absolutist concessions of 1641 were kept; confiscated royalist lands were left with their new owners; former parliamentarians stayed in office – they made up nearly half of Charles's Privy Council and formed the majority of JPs. This, said disgruntled loyalists, was indemnity for the king's enemies, and oblivion for his friends. True, but safer and wiser than the attitude of the French Bourbons restored after the Revolution, who 'had learned nothing and forgotten nothing'.[136]

However, the king's friends were not willing to let go of everything: they would not let the detested Roundheads continue to run their parishes and towns. A series of statutes – an Act of Uniformity (1662), imposing the use of the Book of Common Prayer; a Corporations Act (1661), which excluded religious dissenters from town government; a Test Act (1672), requiring all public employees to take public oaths of allegiance and Anglican orthodoxy; and the Conventicles Act (1664), banning private Nonconformist worship. Thus, non-Anglicans were forced to conform to the Church of England or give up public office. About 1,000 ministers (one in six) gave up their livings, and about 2,000 clergy and teachers were ejected. Charles's attempts to circumvent this legislation were blocked. Intended to restore unity, these acts on the contrary created a permanent religious schism in England, the long-term legacy of the Civil War.[137] Disillusioned by the failure of the godly revolution, Dissenters went underground and turned inwards. This was the atmosphere in which John Bunyan, imprisoned for illegal preaching, wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), one of the greatest and most popular works of Puritan piety – a work not of revolution but of individual salvation and stubborn righteousness. There was no attempt to silence Dissenters politically, however – they had the same right to vote and sit in Parliament. Some leading Anglicans were moving away from rigidity and compulsion towards what opponents called 'Latitudinarianism' – a more tolerant and rational religion. Even in oppressed Ireland and divided Scotland there were signs of greater tolerance, for which the king deserves some credit.

Then came a series of unpredictable disasters. Ever since the Black Death, there had been sporadic recurrences of bubonic plague. But a devastating outbreak, the 'Great Plague' in 1665, killed 70,000 people in

raged for five days, devastated a large part of the City of London, destroying 13,200 houses, eighty-seven churches, the medieval St Paul's Cathedral, four bridges and a vast quantity of goods, including a treasure of art, books and documents. Samuel Pepys

> saw the fire grow . . . upon steeples and between churches and houses, as far as we could see up the hill of the City, in a most horrid malicious bloody flame . . . one entire arch of fire . . . churches, houses, all on fire and flaming at once, and a horrid noise the flames made, and the cracking of houses at their ruine.[138]

It left 250,000 people homeless. The fire showed Charles, a big vigorous man, at his best, leading the fire-fighting in the streets, and reassuring people that there were no plots 'by Frenchmen or Dutchmen or Papists . . . I have strength enough to defend you against any enemy.'[139] Yet these disasters were a terrible psychological blow, especially when inevitably seen as divine punishments, if not popish plots. They darkened the optimistic beginning of the Restoration. The reeling country suffered another disaster, a humiliating defeat by the Dutch, the foremost commercial and naval power and a bitter rival, whose ships in June 1667 sailed up the Medway, piloted by republican exiles, sank most of the English fleet and towed away its flagship, the *Royal Charles*. There was a shock of panic and recrimination. 'The dismay,' wrote Pepys, 'is not to be expressed.'[140]

The fire produced benefits, for which Charles deserves some credit. The old insanitary wooden city was rebuilt, and Charles put Christopher Wren in charge. Wren's style of elegant plainness consciously drew on a tradition of English Protestant simplicity, as well as following a more general classically inspired trend against over-decoration. He left a magnificent heritage in the new St Paul's Cathedral, fifty-two smaller City churches, Chelsea Hospital and the Monument to the fire. In other ways, Restoration culture was very un-English, and not very Protestant. Literary style, music and other cultural influences (including men's wigs) came from France. For the republican Algernon Sidney, this had political significance: 'those are most favoured at court, that conform to the French manners and fashions in all things'.[141] For this reason, the French writer Voltaire later judged the Restoration to be the historic pinnacle of English culture. Poets such as Dryden agreed: wit, elegance and polish were the aims. The theatre was restored, and Restoration comedies by William Congreve, William Wycherley, John Vanbrugh and others outraged the godly by their cheerful amorality. For the last time, England had a court culture, which nurtured painters such as Sir Peter Lely, and at the tail end of Charles's reign Henry Purcell, its

critics such as John Evelyn, all this was the root of England's disasters, which were 'divine judgments . . . highly deserved for our prodigious ingratitude, burning Lusts, dissolute Court, profane & abominable lives'.[142]

A minor figure of this newly permissive culture was the naval administrator Samuel Pepys, the first Englishman intimately known in history. His secret diary, perhaps a development of the godly habit of daily self-examination, developed into a very different saga of triumphs, failures, amorous adventures (including sexual harassment verging on rape) and social climbing, occasionally with a tinge of Puritan remorse; but above all it was an anxious assessment of social, not spiritual, ascent from plebeian origins to gentlemanly status.[143] Not intended to be read by others, it is probably the most vivid and complete self-exposure in the language and a unique insider's history of the time.

In the early 1670s, as in the most dangerous times in England's past, European and domestic politics began to mix. This time, it began a process that would transform England, Britain and eventually the world. The connection, as over the previous hundred years, was 'popery', the feared combination of religious and political oppression. Wars against the Dutch had caused a rapprochement with France, even under Cromwell (who had argued that the French were not really 'popish', as their ties with Rome were loose). Charles, whose 'mental map of Europe had its centre not in England at all, but France',[144] where he had spent part of his exile, was eager to deepen the relationship. He admired the young Louis XIV, who after long civil wars had made himself a complete master, and he felt that his security ultimately depended on French support. The French, aware of England's commercial and naval strength, wanted a pliable ally on the British thrones, and offered support, including cash, sometimes brought to Charles by his valet[145] – precious when Parliament was difficult. Louise de Penancouët de Kéroualle, to whom Charles took a fancy in 1670, was ordered into his bed as an agent of influence. In 1662 Charles sold recently acquired Dunkirk to France. In 1672 he signed the Treaty of Dover, in preparation for a joint war against Holland. It contained a secret agreement that he would restore England to Catholicism with French military aid. It is most unlikely that he took this seriously. Yet, on the surface, such an enterprise looked plausible: Charles's mother, his wife, Catherine of Braganza, and his mistress, Louise de Kéroualle, were all Catholics, and he himself was sympathetic. So was his heir, James, Duke of York, and James's second wife, Mary of Modena. The attraction of Catholicism, as Charles remarked to the French ambassador, was that 'no other creed matches so well the absolute dignity of kings'.[146]

France, whose population, armed forces and revenue far exceeded those of any other state. It no longer had serious rivals in Europe. Its monarch was absolute, its administration professional. Catholicism was being ruthlessly imposed on its once formidable Protestant community. Louis XIV was increasingly suspected of aiming at 'universal monarchy' – what we might call being the sole superpower.

In 1672 a French army attacked the Dutch Republic, with English naval support – to royalists a natural alliance, and at first a popular one. But opinion shifted. 'No one is able to explain,' reported a Venetian diplomat, 'why the people of England detest the French alliance so violently or why they wish for peace with Holland at any cost.'[147] The reasons were that the French land invasion went worrying well, while their navy was accused of shirking battle so that the British and Dutch fleets would destroy each other. England, many suddenly thought, had been duped into abetting French aggression, with the connivance of a corrupt, Francophile and Catholic court. When Parliament refused finance to pursue the war, peace was signed in 1674. Charles prorogued Parliament and drew on French subsidies, assuring Louis that he was 'standing up for the interests of France against his whole kingdom'.[148] This was the context of a revival of anti-popery, which indirectly led to a second revolution and permanently transformed the state.

'Popery' was a political concept, as we have noted, not solely a religious one. When the Duke of York had planned to marry a Habsburg, this had been welcomed, although she was a Catholic. But his marriage with the Duchess of Modena in 1673 was unpopular, not because she too was Catholic, but because she was a protégée of France. The existence of an apolitical Catholic minority inside England was not the problem: 'Our jealousies of Popery, or an arbitrary government, are not from a few inconsiderable Papists here, but from the ill example we have from France.'[149] This atmosphere of international tension explains the panic over the Titus Oates 'plot', which exploded in August 1678.[150] Oates was a fantasist and crook who had briefly trained as a Jesuit, which gave credence to his claim to know of a 'popish plot' supported by France to assassinate Charles and place James on the throne. The story inevitably aroused echoes of the Gunpowder Plot and Mary, Queen of Scots. Its plausibility increased when the magistrate to whom Oates had told his story was mysteriously murdered that October. A former secretary of James and Mary of Modena, accused by Oates, was in fact found to possess letters from Louis XIV's Jesuit confessor, seeming to implicate James himself. There was a violent public and political reaction, and the last spasm of religious persecution in English

be 'proved' a Jesuit – even by public rumour – could be fatal. Following further accusations by Oates, five Catholic peers were impeached, and accusations were made against the queen herself. An aggrieved former diplomat, dismissed after a sex scandal, revealed to the House of Commons in December the details of Charles's financial arrangements with Louis – details that Louis had provided him with in order to punish Charles for contacts with the Dutch.[151]

The political storm was directed by the Earl of Shaftesbury and his able secretary, John Locke. Shaftesbury was a Presbyterian, and a former minister of both Cromwell and Charles. He now demanded the exclusion of Catholics from Parliament and forced Charles to agree to stricter enforcement of anti-Catholic legislation. James, on Charles's advice, left for Brussels. Parliament took a series of measures for 'the better securing [of] the liberty of the subject' in case a Catholic became king: habeas corpus was made statutory by an Act of 1679, requiring prisoners to be charged within three days, and making it illegal to send them 'beyond the sea' to escape English jurisdiction (governments had been sending suspects to Scotland, where they could be tortured). It is interesting that some of our most cherished civil liberties owe much to the paranoia of bigots. Paradoxically, however, when Parliament made the ancient Common Law practice of habeas corpus statutory, it made it less secure, because what Parliament could give it could also take away by suspending habeas corpus, and at times of war and rebellion it did so.[152]

Shaftesbury also aimed to exclude James from the throne. Two Exclusion Bills were presented to Parliament, one in May 1679, another in October 1680. This prolonged 'Exclusion Crisis' of 1679–81 helped to define English political culture: the derogatory terms 'Whig' and 'Tory' (from *whiggamore*, Scottish Presbyterian rebels, and *tóraigh*, Irish Catholic rebels) were now applied to the king's opponents and supporters. Some of their fundamental ideas were taking shape – for the Whigs, theories about resistance; for the Tories, about legitimacy. In Scotland, an archbishop was lynched by a psalm-singing mob. Charles repeatedly dissolved or prorogued Parliament. He told the French ambassador that 'his one and only interest was to subsist'.[153] The French, however, were also funding the crypto-republican opposition to give themselves leverage over Charles.

Few could have missed the sense that the 1640s were being replayed, and hardly anyone wanted another civil war. It became increasingly clear that Oates's 'Popish Plot', the catalyst of the crisis, was an invention. Parliament was summoned to Oxford in 1681, away from the London mob, and MPs arrived with armed bodyguards. The public began to rally to the

Whigs, reported a dramatic scene when on 28 March 1681, as the Lords were assembling, Shaftesbury handed Charles a letter urging him to make his illegitimate but Protestant son James, Duke of Monmouth, his heir. The king publicly responded:

> My Lords, let there be no self-delusion. I will never yield, and will not let myself be intimidated. Men become ordinarily more timid as they grow old; as for me, I shall be . . . bolder and firmer, and I will not stain my life and reputation in the little time that, perhaps, remains for me to live. I do not fear the dangers and calamities which people try to frighten me with. I have the law and reason on my side. Good men will be with me.[154]

The Oxford crowds shouted, 'Let the king live, and the Devil hang up all Roundheads.'[155] Charles appealed publicly for loyalty: 'we cannot but remember, that Religion, Liberty and property were all lost and gone when monarchy was shaken off'.[156] Shaftesbury fled abroad in 1682, and Locke drafted a *Treatise of Government* asserting the right to resist monarchs – a 'scenario of civil war'[157] which later became a Whig sacred text. In the 'Rye House Plot' in 1683, republicans planned to assassinate Charles and James as they returned from Newmarket races. In another half-baked conspiracy, the Earl of Essex (son of the Civil War commander), Lord William Russell (heir of the Earl of Bedford) and Algernon Sidney (son of the Earl of Leicester) planned to seize the king, take power with Scottish support, subjugate Ireland, and go to war with Holland. When they were caught, Essex committed suicide and the other two were executed. Algernon Sidney declared on the scaffold that he was willing to die for 'the Good Old Cause' – a name that stuck. He was long revered as a Whig martyr.

Moderates, however, denounced Whig designs: 'more wicked', said one MP, 'than their malice could invent to accuse the papists of'.[158] There was a grass-roots backlash against Whigs and Dissenters. So when Charles died suddenly on 6 February 1685, aged fifty-five, his brother's succession was assured. Charles has been much criticized, but one modern historian pays him a tribute that few British rulers could claim: 'He was a king under whom most people in the three kingdoms were happy to live.'[159] In the long run, the monarchy won the Civil War.[160] But the great divide had not been healed.

James II and VII ripped it open again. Yet his accession as the Catholic king of Europe's largest Protestant realm was welcomed by most people: 'Never king was acclaimed with more applause,' wrote the Earl of Peterborough. 'I doubt not but to see a happy reign.' Titus Oates, finally exposed as a liar, was branded and ferociously flogged. But religion remained the

misgivings, accepted. The problem was his ambition to turn England back towards being a Catholic state. This seems so unlikely an outcome that it is difficult to believe he meant it: but modern historians agree he did. His Catholicism was far more rigorous than that of Charles or Louis XIV. Like them he had mistresses; Charles joked that they were so ugly they must have been imposed on him as penances by his priests. Catholicism could accommodate such human frailty, especially among the great – a significant part of its attraction. But James agonized about his guilt. Catholicism also understood politics, being governed by a territorial prince who knew the world. But James, more Catholic than the Pope, challenged political reality, pushing on further and faster than his Catholic subjects and Rome itself thought prudent. He was more authoritarian than Charles, and more brutal than any of his Stuart predecessors, as he had already proved in crushing Presbyterian rebellion in Scotland. Less intelligent than his brother, he was a formidable man of action. He must have thought that history was on his side. Catholicism and Catholic powers were rising. Protestantism was being eliminated in Italy, Hungary, Spain, France and Bohemia. The Treaty of Augsburg (1555) established that the religion of a state followed that of its monarch. James convinced himself that England would follow a strong lead, and that there would be massive voluntary conversions, which he would encourage by appointing Catholics to influential positions in the state: 'patronage,' he declared, 'would make more converts than sermons'. English history under the Tudors suggested the same. The Stuarts, of course, had been less successful, but James blamed 'the yielding temper which had proved so dangerous to his brother and so fatal to his father'.[161] Catholicism would restore the absolute power of monarchy: for James, these two objectives were inseparably linked.[162] So fears of 'popery and arbitrary government', though shrill, were not groundless.

There was almost at once, in June 1685, a Whig/Protestant attempt on the throne, led by the Duke of Monmouth. Its pathetic weakness testifies to James's strength. Monmouth rallied 4,000 untrained men among the Dissenters of the West Country – farmers, cloth-workers and tradesmen. They were slaughtered at Sedgemoor in Somerset in July by 8,000 regular troops. Monmouth was beheaded shortly after. During nine days in September, Lord Justice Jeffreys heard 1,336 cases in so-called 'Bloody Assizes' in Somerset. A woman, Alice Lisle, was burned at the stake for harbouring traitors; 800 men were sentenced to slavery in the West Indies, and 250 to death. After the first batch had been hanged, drawn and quartered, even Jeffreys assumed that the rest would be reprieved, as was customary. But [illegible] the full bloody ritual which left the execution ground

Politically, this tragedy strengthened the king: Parliament, alarmed at the renewal of civil war, voted him money and an army, making him the first monarch for more than a century with no financial worries. His first aim was to legalize Catholicism by statute, to make it more difficult to reverse when, as then seemed inevitable, his Protestant daughter Mary became queen. He began by trying to charm and bully Anglicans, meeting every MP personally. He thought that Anglicanism and French-style Catholicism ('Gallicanism', largely independent of Rome) had much in common and could form a common front against the detested Dissenters.

In October 1685, at the worst possible moment for James's policies – though he approved of the act itself – Louis XIV revoked the 1598 Edict of Nantes, which guaranteed French Protestants religious, civil and political rights. French Catholics joyfully demolished Protestant churches and desecrated cemeteries. There was some armed resistance, and troops were ordered to 'take very few prisoners . . . spare the women no more than the men'.[163] French troops also attacked Protestants in neighbouring Piedmont, where 2,000 were killed and 8,000 sent to the galleys. Fifty thousand refugees flooded into England, bringing harrowing stories of persecution. A French court preacher, congratulating Louis for the victory of Catholicism, urged him in a widely publicized sermon to be ready to do the same in England.[164]

James used the royal prerogative to exempt Catholics from discriminatory laws, and dissolved the protesting English and Scottish parliaments, which never met again during his reign. He began to run down the militia (embodying the citizen's right to bear arms) in favour of a large regular army, in which he began to commission Catholics as officers in all three kingdoms. Catholics also commanded the fleet and the Tower of London. Jeffreys was made Lord Chancellor; the Catholic Earl of Sunderland became Secretary of State; and other Catholics were appointed to the Privy Council, including a Jesuit priest, Father Edward Petre. In Ireland, James appointed the Catholic Earl of Tyrconnel as army commander and Lord-Lieutenant, ordering him to recruit Catholic soldiers – guaranteed to cause maximum alarm to all Protestants. By September 1686, 67 per cent of soldiers and 40 per cent of officers in Ireland were Catholics. The choice, as one peer saw it, was 'whether I will be a slave and a Papist, or a Protestant and a free man'.[165] Faced with Anglican opposition, James switched tactics and appealed to Dissenters to support repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, to the benefit of both themselves and Catholics. He aimed to pack a future House of Commons with Dissenters and Whigs. Royal

James brought matters to a head in the early summer of 1688 by a Declaration of Indulgence, announcing that he would not apply discriminatory laws against Catholics and Dissenters but would allow them 'the free exercise of their religion', and ordering this to be read out twice from the pulpit of every church.[166] Until now, Anglicans had not openly resisted: their royalist principles and fear of civil war held them back. But now the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Sancroft, and six other bishops petitioned James to withdraw his instruction, on the grounds that the Declaration was illegal. His response was to charge them with seditious libel for suggesting that the king could act illegally.

At this very moment, the political outlook was transformed. On 10 June 1688 a healthy son was born to James and Mary of Modena after fifteen years of marriage, their first five children having died young. He was baptized a Catholic. This meant, of course, that James's policy would not cease with his death, for the boy took precedence over his Anglican half-sisters Mary and Anne, born to James's first wife, Anne Hyde. The rumour was spread that the baby was not the queen's, but had been smuggled into her bed in a warming pan. This was a matter of European importance, because Princess Mary, now aged twenty-six, was the wife of Willem III van Oranje – 'William of Orange' – grandson of Charles I, *stadhouder** of the Dutch Republic and leader of resistance against Louis XIV. Another war was looming between France and Holland, which would probably involve much of the Continent. England, thanks to James's interest in maritime and colonial affairs, had again become the strongest naval power in Europe. Would it join in? And on which side? James needed French money to pursue his Catholic revolution in England, and in April 1688 he had signed a naval agreement with France. The Dutch decided that they must at all costs prevent England from joining in a French attack on them. So foreign and domestic issues met.

On 30 June 1688 the seven bishops were acquitted of seditious libel by a London jury: 'Bon fires made that night, & bells ringing, which was taken very ill at Court.'[167] The same day, the Earl of Danby (a former minister of Charles II), Admiral Russell, Henry Sidney, Bishop Compton of London, the Duke of Shrewsbury, the Duke of Devonshire and Lord Lumley – five Whigs and two Tories, later known as 'the Immortal Seven' – wrote to Willem promising support if he intervened to secure a free Parliament and to investigate the genuineness of James's new son. Willem had been waiting

* The *stadhouder* was a partly elected and partly hereditary leader appointed in emergencies

for this assurance – indeed, he had made it a condition of taking action. The Pope, the emperor and the king of Spain – Catholic enemies of France – tacitly approved, on condition that British Catholics were not harmed. The French were preoccupied by events in south-eastern Europe, where their Turkish allies were retreating before the armies of the Holy Roman Empire. So French ships concentrated in the Mediterranean, and troops were sent, not to attack the Dutch and protect James, but to help the Turks by launching a diversionary attack across the Rhine against the empire.[168]

The biggest seaborne invasion force in northern waters until D-Day 1944 first set sail from the Dutch Republic on 19 October 1688 but was driven back by high winds. At its second attempt to beat the weather on 1 November, it was blown down the Channel by what entered legend as 'a Protestant wind' that also kept James's navy stuck in the Thames estuary. The fleet reached Torbay on Guy Fawkes Day: 463 ships, 5,000 horses and 20,000 Dutch, German, Danish, French, English, Scottish, Swedish, Finnish, Polish, Greek and Swiss troops. No nation but the Dutch had the sea-going abilities for such a feat. Willem's army then marched on London. Facing it was James's much larger army of 53,000. People hesitated, frightened of another civil war. But 'Hardly any one will voluntarily enter into the King's service', and spontaneous actions were for Willem. Armed meetings of citizens were called in the Midlands and north. 'We count it rebellion to resist a king that governs by law,' declared one such group in Nottinghamshire, 'but . . . to resist [a tyrant], we justly esteem it no rebellion, but a necessary defence.'[169] More and more towns and counties declared against James, who had some sort of breakdown, sent his wife and son to France, threw the Great Seal of the kingdom into the Thames, and – escorted to the coast by the Dutch – sought asylum from Louis XIV in December. Unlike Charles I and II, he did not try to raise popular support, and he left his troops leaderless and unpaid.

Riots had broken out, most seriously in London, where Catholic embassies and their chapels were attacked. It was rumoured that Irish Catholic troops had burned down Birmingham and were massacring Protestants. Disturbances persisted for weeks. Willem was welcomed in London as a saviour, and he tactfully let his English and Scottish mercenaries, commanded by General Mackay, lead the way into the city. Nevertheless, it was really the Dutch army and navy that had forced King James out of England without a fight in the most momentous invasion – part conquest, part liberation – since 1066. If this was a Protestant victory, it included what Willem called 'our allies of the Roman communion', among them the Pope, who also opposed French hegemony.[170]

319 Whigs and 232 Tories What divided them now was how to define and justify what had happened. Whigs saw James as being deposed after breaking his 'contract' with the people. Tories wanted to preserve the principle of monarchy as God-given, permanent and governed by lawful succession: James was 'incapacitated', and Willem and Mary were regents. But Willem threatened to go home unless he was made king, and so he was, as co-sovereign with his Stuart wife, Mary. A Whig–Tory compromise emerged. James was declared both to have 'broken the original contract between king and people' and also to have 'abdicated' and left the throne 'vacant'. By leaving the country he had enabled divisive political questions to be fudged.[171] It could therefore be agreed that what had happened was that the existing constitution, which James had tried to destroy, had been preserved, not overthrown. These events, now often downplayed or forgotten,[172] were long extolled as the 'Glorious Revolution' which, almost without bloodshed in England, ended monarchical absolutism, established the primacy of Parliament, and preserved the Protestant religion.

Thus England emerged – one of the last countries in Europe to do so – from two centuries of religious and political turmoil, after a unique succession of religious reformation and counter-reformation, conspiracies, civil war, regicide, republic, military dictatorship, restoration, renewed civil conflict, invasion and a second revolution. The outcome was an uneasy and ill-tempered compromise which soon included an unpopular union with Scotland. The possibility of a state and society based on enforced uniformity of belief and practice, whether Anglican, Presbyterian or Catholic, turned out to have gone for good. Pressure from Dissenters to reinstate republican moral sanctions (for example, by restoring the death penalty for adultery, abolished at the Restoration) was rejected, and England remained on the whole less repressive, for example, than Holland, Scotland and New England.[173] Disunity was institutionalized, both in religion, the dominant cultural arena, and in 'Whig' and 'Tory' political identities. This made England (together with the other island kingdoms) unique. Most of Europe moved towards confessionalization, the identification of a state and its people with a single religion; but England became legally divided. It would never recover religious, and hence cultural and political, unity or even consensus: it could never become like Scandinavia.

We like to think that liberty is fought for. Judging by occasional comments in the media and by politicians, a widespread belief is that liberty was won during the Civil War. The reality is different: the war almost destroyed liberty. Only when the country rejected fighting, and zealots had to abandon their visions of a compulsory New Jerusalem, was liberty pos-

form – that rulers must obey the law and that legitimate authority requires the consent of the people. From the Tories came the principle – fundamental to any political order – that people have no right to rebel against a government because they disagree with it. Combining these seemingly conflicting principles produced characteristics of English political culture: suspicion of Utopias and zealots; trust in common sense and experience; respect for tradition; preference for gradual change; and the view that 'compromise' is victory, not betrayal. These things stem from the failure both of royal absolutism and of godly republicanism: costly failures, and fruitful ones.

The Civil War and 'Whig History'

We are Cavaliers or Roundheads before we are Conservatives or Liberals.

W. E. H. Lecky, *The Political Value of History* (1892)

The great divide of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries continues to shape our ideas of who and what we are. It has been enshrined in historical writing of unique importance, which more than any other historical narrative or political ideology shaped England's identity for at least two centuries, and still has echoes today. From the time of the Restoration onwards, royalist histories, memoirs, petitions and sermons defended Charles and attacked his enemies as power-hungry fanatics. Commonwealth histories, let off the leash by the 1688 revolution, dwelt on Stuart tyranny, Puritan sufferings, and Parliament's defence of ancient liberties.[1] Each side had its dead heroes. On one side 'King Charles the Martyr', celebrated by the Church on 30 January. On the other, John Hampden and Algernon Sidney: the 'Good Old Cause' was long summed up as that for which 'Hampden bled on the field and Sidney on the scaffold'.

The first monumental history was by a councillor of Charles I, Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon. His *History of the Rebellion*, acknowledged as a masterpiece, was begun in the 1640s but published only in 1702. It analysed the conflict as a sudden and avoidable political crisis – remarkably close to today's scholarly consensus. What was later called 'Whig history' took a more ideological view – declared the Whig pamphleteer and historian John Oldmixon in 1726: 'The laws and customs delivered down to us from our British and Saxon fathers, justified the practices of those brave British heroes' who fought against the king.[2] The pioneer Whig history was by a French Protestant soldier in William of Orange's invading army, Paul Rapin de Thoyras – one of a line of French, Scottish, Irish, Polish and German-born thinkers who have written so much of England's history.

While recovering from his wounds, Rapin embarked on an *Histoire d'Angleterre* (1723–7). He wrote 'uniquely for Foreigners', but was soon published in English. He was the first author for centuries to encompass the whole of English history in one continuous (and moreover clear and racy) narrative, including Alfred the Great, Magna Carta and the final struggle against the Stuarts.[3] Rapin's became the standard interpretation. It set out the Whig view of English history as a continuous struggle to defend ancient freedoms: 'The English have been at all times extremely jealous of their liberties', but Charles I had tried to 'enslave England'.[4] The climax of the story was the Glorious Revolution, re-establishing Anglo-Saxon liberty. Parliament and its defenders were made the embodiment of the nation and its history.

David Hume, one of the greatest of Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, used history as a powerful weapon against what he considered pernicious political myths.[5] His *History of England* (1757) provided an accessible and 'rapid' narrative for readers with only a six-volume attention span. His Scottish publishers, convinced that they had a best-seller on their hands, claimed that Hume was 'truely imparshal'. Some of the clergy condemned Hume as irreligious, not without reason; and he openly despised the religious quarrels of the Civil War period. He advised his readers that 'extremes of all kind are to be avoided'.[6] His core idea was that societies progressed through stages of development by improving education, government, law and economic organization. Hume wanted to efface the dangerous Whig–Tory 'party rage', which celebrated conflict and was not in his view a basis for rational and peaceful politics. He went about this principally by demolishing every Whig shibboleth with grim relish. Saying that he would 'hasten thro' the obscure and uninteresting period' of Anglo-Saxon England, he dismissed it as 'extremely aristocratical', oppressive and violent. There was no 'Norman Yoke': the Conquest had been beneficial, teaching the 'rude' Saxons 'the rudiments of science and cultivation'. The medieval struggles of parliaments were the work of a 'narrow aristocracy' and gave no benefit to the people; and Magna Carta brought 'no innovation in the political or public law of the country'. Anyway, freedom was not born in England: 'both the privileges of the peers and the liberty of the commons' were copied from France. As for the father of Parliament, Simon de Montfort, his 'violence, ingratitude, tyranny, rapacity and treachery' made his death 'the most happy event which could have happened to the English nation'.[7] Thus Hume hoped to cut the umbilical cord connecting the English political imagination to an idealized past, which should be left in 'silence and oblivion'.[8]

Liberty, said Hume, came not from resistance to the Crown, as the Whigs

maintained, but from its growing power: 'It required the authority almost absolute of the sovereign . . . to pull down those disorderly and licentious tyrants [the barons] who were equally enemies to peace and to freedom.' The Tudors (as he was the first to call them) had laid the foundations of a civilized absolute monarchy, for Hume the best form of government then available. In the Civil War, the royalists had been right to defend legal authority, on which true liberty depended. The ideas of Pym and Hampden were 'full of the lowest and most vulgar hypocrisy'. 'Cromwel' [sic] had taken power by 'fraud and violence'. The Puritans 'talked perpetually of seeking the Lord, yet still pursued their own purposes; and have left a memorable lesson to posterity, how delusive, how destructive that principle is by which they were animated'. True liberty, he insisted, was not ancient but modern, a result especially of the growth of commerce and towns. It was not, therefore, an ancient Teutonic inheritance.[9]

Hume's boasted impartiality amounted to being scathing about everyone. But while claiming to be a 'sceptical Whig' he trampled on the Whigs with particular gusto: their 'pretended respect for antiquity' was only to 'cover their turbulent spirit and their private ambition'. Observing the political agitation of the 1760s (see p. 344), he wrote that the English 'roar Liberty, tho' they have apparently more liberty than any people in the World; a great deal more than they deserve'.[10] History should teach them to be grateful for what they had, which was not the product of heroic struggle, but of 'a great measure of accident with a small ingredient of wisdom and foresight'.[11]

Hume claimed that he had been 'assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation'. Yet his book rapidly became the biggest-selling work of history to date, and it made him 'not merely independent, but opulent'[12] – a reflection of most people's anti-Roundhead sentiments. Hume was indeed detested by Whigs, who accused him of being a Jacobite; he was even attacked in Parliament by Pitt the Elder. He retorted that 'I have the impudence to pretend that I am of no party'; but it is hard to imagine a more effective Tory history than one that ascribes liberty to the power of the Crown.

Hume's version prevailed intellectually, to the frustration of Whigs, for nearly a hundred years. But it could not efface the political and religious divide. Grass-roots dislike of 'Roundheads' and of Whig wars and taxes – almost certainly the majority view – meant that crowds at elections a century after the Civil War still shouted 'Down with the Long Parliament!' and London street gangs in the 1750s called themselves 'Cavaliers' or 'Tory Rory Ranter Boys'. British and American opponents of George III claimed

'Roundheads' by the king's supporters. The most provocative and popular radical, John Wilkes, produced a *History of England* (1768), copied from Rapin, insisting that 'liberty is the character of an Englishman'. Catherine Macaulay attacked Hume in her popular *History of England* (1763–83) and reaffirmed the eternal struggle for Saxon freedoms against the Norman Yoke – already an ancient idea. She was feted by radicals, Whigs and Dissenters, including Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, and later admired by French Revolutionary leaders. The 1780 Gordon rioters, pro-American and anti-popish, reminded Edward Gibbon of 'forty thousand Puritans, such as they might be in the time of Cromwell . . . started out of their graves'.

The 1789 French Revolution widened the existing division in England. Would it revive England's revolutionary spirit, dormant since the previous century, and begin a new era of radical change? The Whig Edmund Burke gave a provocatively negative answer in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), a book as much about England as France. Burke wanted to defend 1688 – a unique 'act of necessity' to preserve ancient laws and liberties – while attacking 1789 as a gratuitous assault on a legitimate government. His argument revived ideas about custom and Common Law, as in the writings of Sir Edward Coke, but using them to support, not undermine, the legitimacy of the state. England, he argued, had built up since Magna Carta an evolving 'inheritance' of concrete rights and freedoms. Unless people willingly accepted that none had the right to 'separate and tear asunder' this political partnership, government could depend only on force. He famously warned that this would be the fate of France until finally 'some popular general [is] the master of your whole republic'[13] – a prediction perhaps recalling England's experience of Cromwell.

Reflections at first aroused indignation among opposition Whigs and began an angry debate (see p. 383). But when France descended into terror and war with England, Burke's warnings seemed vindicated: the *Edinburgh Review* lamented that 'it was thought as well to say nothing of Hampden or Russell or Sidney, for fear it might give spirits to Robespierre, Danton or Marat'.[14] England's age of revolutions was indeed over, and Burke's book signalled its passing. The change was precipitated by the challenge of the French Revolution, which most of England, both rulers and people, finally rejected and fought against. Thus, in fact and in the perceptions of its own people and the wider world, England changed from being a byword for political change and turbulence into the defender and exponent of continuity and peaceful politics. Its modern political sensibility, with its respect for the law, pragmatism, and suspicion of 'ideology' and 'extrem-

This sensibility was translated into powerful historical form by Thomas Babington Macaulay. Hume still reigned supreme in narrative history despite the efforts of his eighteenth-century Whig critics. Macaulay picked up the Whig baton, and deliberately set out to replace Hume as the most influential modern historian of England. He centred the national story on resistance to the Stuarts, with 1688 beginning the modern age. Indeed, for Macaulay the seventeenth century *was* English history: five of the six volumes of his *History of England* (1848–55) were on 1685–1702; he disposed of the first thousand years in a few briskly dogmatic pages. He even pushed the Whig cause into the forefront of the history of humanity, declaring it 'entitled to the reverence and gratitude of all who in any part of the world enjoy the blessings of constitutional government'.[15]

Macaulay, like Burke, was an intellectual MP who harnessed history to politics. He was a literary celebrity of forceful personality and decided opinions – 'I wish I was as cocksure of anything as Tom Macaulay is of everything,' remarked the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. He was unashamedly partisan:

> when I look back on our history, I can discern a great party which has, through many generations, preserved its identity; [which] has always been in advance of the age, [which] steadily asserted the privileges of the people, and wrested prerogative after prerogative from the Crown . . . To the Whigs of the seventeenth century we owe it that we have a House of Commons. To the Whigs of the nineteenth century we owe it that the House of Commons has been purified.[16]

His response to Hume's philosophical model of progress was to ignore it. His strength was not analysis but narrative. He aimed at a large readership, to 'supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies'. He applied literary narrative techniques to a major work of English history for the first time, concentrating on vivid descriptions of events and people, lauding heroism and denouncing vices (above all those of the Stuarts – 'inconstancy, perfidy, baseness', etc.), and dwelling on heroic and pathetic ends; death scenes were a speciality. He was brilliant on memorable sayings and details, not least the gruesome: rebels hanged from a pub sign (the White Hart); a woman about to be burned at the stake arranging the straw herself so that she would die quickly. How much was true? Macaulay was not interested in testing evidence, but exploiting it. Popularity came: and a cheque for £20,000 from Longmans in 1856 – worth several millions today – was preserved by the publishers as the relic of a prodigy.

Macaulay downgraded the idea of an 'ancient constitution' inherited

from the Anglo-Saxons – he considered it too democratic a notion. Progress was brought not by popular agitation but by the enlightened Whig elite, and it took the material form of trade, factories, libraries, public baths, 'the effect of gradual development, not of demolition and reconstruction'.[17] Other views of history he dismissed as 'mythological fables for the vulgar'. Macaulay defined the English not by race, religion or culture, but politically, as a free nation with parliamentary institutions, and as the world leaders of modernity.

Above all, Macaulay wrote a gripping national drama. He told the story of a victory of good over evil eventually won in the Glorious Revolution by ordinary men and women as well as by Whig grandees. The Liberal MP Robert Lowe summed this up in 1878: 'the history of the English constitution is a record of liberties wrung and extorted bit by bit from arbitrary power'. This Whig history was a powerful tool for the emerging Liberal Party and a stirring mythology for the politically aspiring and often Nonconformist middle classes. It became the national history, not only of England, but of Britain and the United States. It aroused admiration among Europeans envious that 'the English Revolution' (a term coined in 1830 by the French historian and liberal politician François Guizot[18]) had, unlike its Continental counterparts, engendered peace, power and plenty.

Thomas Carlyle, like Macaulay (though they detested each other), helped to shape this version of the English past by publishing, almost simultaneously with Macaulay's *History*, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845), with a long biographical commentary. This best-seller was said to have 'reversed the verdict of history'. It enabled Cromwell, previously considered a duplicitous and bloodstained dictator, to rewrite the story posthumously in his own words. He became a hero of progressive struggles, especially those of newly enfranchised Nonconformists waging a godly war on drink, vice, poverty, the Establishment and popery: 'We have reigned with Cromwell,' wrote *The Congregationalist* in 1873.[19] In 1875, when a memorial was raised on the battlefield of Naseby, the ceremony was attended by 2,000 members of the Agricultural Labourers' Union, recently founded by Joseph Arch, a Methodist lay preacher and later Liberal MP very proud of his Roundhead descent. Statues of Cromwell multiplied across the land. A Liberal proposal in 1899 to erect his statue with public funds outside the Palace of Westminster itself – the man who had used troops four times against Parliament reinvented as its defender – was defeated by Irish MPs mindful of Drogheda and Wexford. So the Liberal Prime Minister, Lord Rosebery, offered to pay for it out of his own pocket.

A scholarly seal was placed on the Whig account by S. R. Gardiner, a

reclusive religious eccentric, descendant of Cromwell and professor at University College, London, who published the first thoroughly document-based *History of the Great Civil War* (1886–91): 'he found the story ... legend, and left it history,' declared a contemporary. Gardiner characterized the conflict as 'the Puritan revolution', for Puritanism 'not only formed the strength of the opposition to Charles, but the strength of England itself'[20] – a remarkably audacious claim. J. R. Green had popularized this view in his *Short History of the English People* (1874), the first genuinely short and popular survey ever written. 'Modern England began,' he declared, 'with the triumph of Naseby', and Puritanism made the English 'serious, earnest, sober in life and conduct, firm in their love of Protestantism and freedom'.[21] An 1860s political song proclaimed that 'The cause that charged with Cromwell on Marston's bloody Moor' was still fighting the Tories.[22] Isaac Foot (1880–1960) – Liberal MP, leading Methodist, president of the Pedestrians Association, president of the Cromwell Association, temperance crusader and father of a future leader of the Labour Party – considered that to judge a man politically, he had only to ask himself on which side he would have fought at Marston Moor.

By this time, those who might have fought on the losing side at Marston Moor had long ceased to have an alternative history. Although many people disliked what Charles I had been against, few advocated what he had been for.[23] W. F. Yeames's famous painting *And When Did You Last See Your Father?* (1878) encapsulated dislike of Roundhead oppression, as did Frederick Marryat's children's novel *The Children of the New Forest* (1847), popular for a century. The Civil War inspired a torrent of nineteenth-century paintings, plays, novels, even operas. But such expressions of traditional royalism were only sentiment. Toryism, apart from scepticism about democracy and free trade, and loyalty to certain symbols – most obviously the Crown and the Church – had not had since Hume, and perhaps did not want, its own historical narrative. One of the most popular twentieth-century Tory politicians, Stanley Baldwin, boasted of his 'Puritan blood',[24] and one of the most historically aware Conservative ministers of the early twenty-first, Michael Gove, regularly proclaimed himself 'a Whig'.

Over the nineteenth century the Whig vision expanded chronologically and geographically. The Oxford regius professor E. A. Freeman identified embryonic Whigs and Tories as early as the eleventh century. The foundation of the empire, with Elizabeth I and Cromwell as oddly assorted heroes, became the apotheosis of the Whig saga, seen as the global spread of [...] and parliamentary government. John Seeley

[was] a completed development', proposed imperial expansion as now the 'goal of English history'.[25] A variant of this view became part of the national myth of America. A popular synthesis of British and American patriotism was Winston Churchill's best-selling *History of the English Speaking Peoples*, reflecting ideas going back to the 1860s, largely written in the 1930s, and published in the 1950s. In recent years Anglo-American 'neo-conservative' history has revived a modernized Whig narrative.

So Whig history, in origin that of a party, became the national and imperial history, with pretensions to being the history of the world. In England and America it still permeates textbooks, political rhetoric and popular history. But its intellectual sinews have long since atrophied. The final flowering came with George Macaulay Trevelyan's *History of England* (1926), his *Shortened History* (1942) and his *English Social History* (1944). They were read by millions – he was, thought a colleague, 'probably the most widely read historian in the world: perhaps in the history of the world'.[26] Trevelyan, Macaulay's great-nephew, was the embodiment of the Liberal Establishment: a patrician family, regius professor and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and loaded with unsought and sometimes refused honours. His smooth Olympian prose suggests not a mind grappling with problems, but one dutifully reaffirming the Whig pieties – the familiar Parliament-centred story of continuity, freedom and progress, 'the natural outcome, through long centuries, of the common sense and good nature of the English people', in a 'sphere apart' from the Continent, where free institutions had 'withered like waterless plants'.[27] A French reviewer found these patriotic fanfares 'xenophobic ... complacent and self-satisfied'.[28] Yet there was a whiff of nostalgia, even defeat: 'I don't understand the age we live in, and what I understand I don't like.'[29] The twentieth century had destroyed his faith in the happy endings that Whig history promised, and his mood was at best defiant rather than triumphant.

Intellectually, the Whig saga was moribund. The Cambridge historian Herbert Butterfield (later Master of Peterhouse) wrote a pugnacious pamphlet, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931), condemning it as a 'caricature' of the past pandering to the 'ideas and prejudices' of the present.[30] A real caricature had appeared a year before Butterfield's manifesto, *1066 and All That*, by W. C. Sellar and R. J. Yeatman, which made Butterfield's point more amusingly and to a vastly wider readership: almost every episode in history was 'a Good Thing' as it advanced Britain's progress to 'Top Nation'.

Another swipe came from socialist historians. R. H. Tawney saw the

with capitalism. Puritanism was a template for the hard-nosed businessman. Christopher Hill, Tawney's admirer, impressed by a visit to Russia in the 1930s, published *The English Revolution 1640* (1940), which described it as bourgeois revolution and 'class war'. 'My virulence against Charles I,' Hill later explained, 'was I fear caused by conflating him with Neville Chamberlain.'[31] The charismatic Hill, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, and his many disciples of the 'New Left', wrote history that was emotionally as well as ideologically committed. They wanted 'history from below', rescuing from oblivion the revolutionary 'masses' blotted out of Whig history. The idea of a simmering English social revolution that never quite boiled over was now a source of regret. Hill turned the Whig saga upside down: 'When we ask ourselves what has gone wrong with England in the past three centuries, one part of that answer is that the arrogant self-confidence of the ruling class . . . was for too long unchecked.'[32] The Levellers and the Diggers (rediscovered by Karl Marx's disciple Eduard Bernstein in 1908), their religious fundamentalism interpreted as social radicalism, were hailed during the 1960s and 1970s as 'freedom fighters' and spiritual 'founding fathers of the Labour Party'. In this guise, they have inspired many books and at least one film.[33] Though discredited academically, such views still colour popular perceptions.

A preoccupation with 'what has gone wrong with England' gave a body blow to Whig history as the national narrative. It had been a history of success: that is why the American version outlives the British original. It had shown England and its overseas offshoots as leading the world towards freedom, the rule of law and representative government. The First World War shook such confidence. The Second provided a last defiant flourish – Butterfield even wrote that it had made the myth true[34] – but the postwar torrent of 'declinism' (see p. 759) gave the coup de grâce. The end of empire and the spread of democracy ended British exceptionalism. The successes of recently democratized states such as Germany negated the idea that long historical experience was a source of unique political wisdom. The prestige of ancient institutions dwindled. European integration pushed English and British law and institutions – now often presented as embarrassingly archaic and ripe for 'modernization' – towards alignment with Continental norms. Anti-establishment historians could now recast the Whig story of centuries of noble political struggle ending in triumph into one of centuries of bitter class conflict ending in failure.

In the history of the Reformation, the old Protestant triumphalism has long gone, replaced by secularist indifference, ecumenical goodwill, and acceptance that Reformation was imposed by the Crown on a mostly Catholic nation. On the Civil War, a post-Marxist 'revisionist' approach

largely dominates serious history. Whereas Whigs or Marxists interpreted religious conflict as secondary to political or socio-economic struggles, revisionists took religious conflict as a reality; indeed, political and social tensions were often a consequence of underlying religious differences, not the other way round. This modern consensus shows some striking similarities to the interpretations of Clarendon and Hume. The Civil War was a political accident arising from Scottish, Irish and Continental, not solely English, causes – it was the last in the series of European wars of religion. England was not a revolutionary society: there was no class war, and the two sides were not socio-economically defined. Parliament and the Crown were not pursuing a centuries-old constitutional struggle of liberty against tyranny.

The disintegration of Whig history reflects the waning of an important English and British strain of self-confident Protestant Progressivism, which dominated in the nineteenth century and drained away during the twentieth. Is there still an underlying divide between 'Cavalier' and 'Roundhead'? In a culture and society secularized since the 1960s it is hard even to understand what the quarrel was about – a recent widely praised bodice-ripping Civil War television drama managed to leave out religion completely,[35] as did the 2013 proposal for a new National Curriculum in History. One distinguished historian nevertheless believes that 'the self-conscious division of the modern nation into "them" and "us" has drawn, however distantly, on civil-war memories and civil-war stereotypes'.[36] It was the Civil War that created the Whig–Tory divide moulding our deepest political identities, and it also bequeathed a sectarian bitterness that long enlivened and envenomed political culture. The tang remains as part of what it is to be English.