RANDOM HOUSE eBOOKS

Rebels and Traitors

Lindsey Davis

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About the Book

Set against the terrible struggle of the English Civil War and the dark plots of the Commonwealth, *Rebels and Traitors* tells of soldiers, adventurers, aristocrats and kings, tradesmen, politicians, radicals and scavengers – and the hopes and dreams that carried them through one of the most turbulent eras of English history. Men who never imagined fighting a war risk their lives; women strive to keep families and businesses together through years of deprivation; innocents are caught up in bloodshed and terror.

After years of struggle, star-crossed lovers, on opposite sides of the Parliamentarian/Royalist divide, are brought together by fate on one of the significant dates of the struggles and its aftermath. But even after adversity and loss of war a dark shadow will lurk over them in peace the past is not far behind.

Rebels and Traitors is an absolute epic masterpiece, poignant and convincing characterisation and razor-sharp historical realism.

About the Author

Lindsey Davis began writing about the Romans with *The Course of Honour*, which tells the real-life love story of the Emperor Vespasian and Antonia Caenis. Her bestselling mystery series features laid-back First Century Roman detective Marcus Didius Falco and his partner Helena Justina, plus friends, relations, pets and bitter enemy the Chief Spy. She has also written *Rebels and Traitors*, a serious novel on an epic scale, set in the English Civil War and Commonwealth. Her books are translated into many languages, recorded for audio and serialised on BBC Radio 4. She has won the CWA Historical Dagger, the Dagger in the Library, and a Sherlock for Falco as Best Detective. She has been Honorary President of the Classical Association and is a past Chair of the Crimewriters' Association. In 2009 she was awarded the Premio de Honor de Novela Historica by the Spanish City of Zaragoza, for her career as a historical novelist. In 2011, Lindsey was awarded the prestigious CWA Cartier Diamond Dagger Award, which honours outstanding achievement in the field of crime writing.

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Rebels and Traitors

LINDSEY DAVIS

arrow books

For Richard
dearest and closest of friends
your favourite book
in memory

London from Southwark, 17th Century


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Prologue

Whitehall: 30 January 1649

The King would take his dog for an early morning walk in St James's Park. What could be more civilised?

Its name was Rogue. As the eager spaniel tried to run outside, the soldiers made it go back. Its master strolled on without the dog, going to his execution as if taking daily exercise.

Other deposed monarchs suffered greater brutality. Charles Stuart of Britain was never chained, starved, imprisoned in a bare cell or tortured. People would argue whether his trial was legal, but he did have a trial and it ended abruptly only because he refused to acknowledge the process. Once condemned, generally he continued to be treated with wary good manners. No silent, black-clad assassins would arrive by night to carry out violent orders that could be denied later. King Charles faced no slow neglect in a remote castle dungeon, no thrashing head-down in a wine-butt, no red-hot poker spearing his guts. Variants of all of these tortures had been perpetrated on his subjects during the bloodshed he was charged with causing, yet he remained exempt. His accusers were determined that calling him to account would be open, 'a thing not done in a corner'.

On that bitter January Tuesday, the King was given bread and wine for breakfast. Two of his children were brought for tearful goodbyes. Then he went on his final

walk, across the royal park. He had asked for two heavy shirts, in case he shivered in the cold and appeared afraid.

At about ten in the morning, he was taken from St James's Palace to Whitehall Palace fifteen minutes away. An escort of New Model Army halberdiers formed his guard, with colours flying and beating drums, while a few permitted gentlemen walked with him, bare-headed. Regiments of foot soldiers lined the route.

There were no tumbrels. No orchestrated mob spat and shouted abuse. Wearing a tall hat and the embroidered silver Order of the Garter on his dark cloak, King Charles reached the waiting crowds; he was protected by the halberdiers, but the people's mood was sombre, almost curious. Whitehall was packed. Dissidents, any known Royalists, were barred from London, so almost all of the people here were his opponents. When they first sided with Parliament, few had dreamed of an outcome like this. Few of them had sought it. Some were still uneasy.

The guard-party climbed the steps to the Holbein Gate. Its direct access to the old Palace of Whitehall brought the King to private apartments which he had last seen seven years before, when he first fled London as his subjects became rebellious.

Once indoors, he had to endure a delay of several hours. With him was the aged Bishop of London, William Juxon, who, as time went by, persuaded Charles to take some bread and a glass of claret, lest he should falter on the scaffold. Colonel Hacker, a particularly boorish Roundhead, had wanted to place two musketeers in the King's chamber, but had been prevailed upon not to do it.

Apparently, the reason for the delay was that Richard Brandon, the public executioner, had refused to act and his assistant had disappeared. There was also a problem with the execution block; the usual waist-high block could not be found, so a much lower one was brought, which was normally used only for dismembering dead traitors' bodies.

However, the execution axe had arrived safely from the Tower of London. Eventually two men agreed to stand in for the executioner and his assistant. They wore masks for anonymity and their identities were kept secret.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, Colonel Hacker knocked discreetly at the door of the private apartment, then rapped again, louder. With Bishop Juxon on one side and Colonel Tomlinson who had personal charge of him on the other, the King was led along a route he knew well into the Banqueting House, created for ceremonial occasions and celebratory masques.

The cold stateroom echoed and smelled of neglect. Motes of dust drifted in the winter light that crept wanly through cracks in the boarding that covered the elegant windows. Tapestries had been looted or officially taken away. Gone were the candelabra that had once filled the great space with warmth and illumination. As he walked past his one-time throne of state, the King's way was lit only by feeble lights carried by soldiers. A crowd of onlookers murmured sympathetically, and some prayed; the soldiers on guard allowed this without annoyance.

Overhead, quite invisible in the gloom, soared the fabulous ceiling paintings by Sir Peter Paul Rubens which Charles had commissioned to promote his belief that he was God's appointed Lieutenant, with a Divine Right to rule. After the panels' installation, no further masques had been performed in the Banqueting House, to prevent smoke from the torches damaging the work. Had King Charles been able to see them, the magnificent paintings must have mocked. They celebrated the union of England and Scotland – personified by Charles himself as a naked infant, beneath the conjoined crowns of the very two kingdoms which in the past decade he had repeatedly set against each other as he scrambled to keep his position and his life. These florid, heavily allegorical pictures extolled his father's successful reign. Peace embraced Plenty. Reason

controlled Discord. Wisdom defeated Ignorance and the serpents of Rebellion.

The party measured the length of the dark reception hall then emerged into more light through the tallest doorway at the end – the entrance through which ambassadors, courtiers, actors and musicians had once advanced to pay reverence to this monarch. He was taken out through it onto the stone staircase in the northern annexe. On the landing, a wall had been knocked out around one of the large windows. King Charles stepped outside, emerging onto a scaffold, surrounded by low posts upon which were hung black draperies. Although the swags partly hid proceedings from the street, the roofs of surrounding buildings were crammed with spectators. Down at street level, the scaffold had been lined, and then interlined, with Parliamentarian soldiers. Inevitably, the armed troops were facing the crowd.

Others, official agents, were watching the spectators, alert for any sign of trouble and seeking known faces. In uniform by the Horse Guards Yard stood a fair-haired man, just short of thirty: Gideon Jukes. He had been very busy that day and now kept to himself, shaken and avoiding contact with anyone he knew. Everywhere were soldiers whose faces he recognised. Always rather solitary, he felt himself to be a disengaged observer. Everyone around him seemed lost in the occasion. He was troubled by the event, not because he felt it to be treason, but because he feared the arrangements might go wrong. To Gideon Jukes, what had once been unthinkable was now the only course to take.

When movement caught his eye at the window, he raised his eyes to the scaffold with expectation and relief.

King Charles was met by the disguised executioner and his assistant. Heavy metal staples had been bolted to the scaffold floor in case it was necessary to chain him, but his

demeanour remained quiet. Still in attendance, the Bishop of London received the King's cloak and his Order of the Garter, giving him a white silk cap. Charles removed his doublet and stood in his waistcoat. The King attempted to make a speech to the crowd, but the noise was too great. To the bishop he said, 'I go from a corruptible crown to an incorruptible one.' Then to the executioner, who was looking at him anxiously, 'Does my hair trouble you?' The executioner and the bishop together helped position the King's long hair under the cap.

Eyeing the block, the King exclaimed, 'You must set it fast.'

'It is fast, sir,' replied the executioner civilly.

'It might have been a little higher.'

'It can be no higher, sir.'

'I shall say but very short prayers, then when I thrust out my hands this way –'

The King knelt before the block. He spoke a few words to himself, with his eyes uplifted. Stooping down, he laid his head upon the block, with the executioner again tidying his hair. Thinking the man was about to strike, Charles warned, 'Stay for the sign!'

'Yes, I will,' returned the executioner, still patient. 'And it please Your Majesty.'

There was a short pause. The King stretched out his hands. With one blow of the axe, the executioner cut off the King's head.

The assistant held up the head by its hair, to show to the people, exclaiming the traditional words: 'Here is the head of a traitor!' The body was hurriedly removed and laid in a velvet-lined coffin indoors. As was normal at executions, the public were allowed to approach the scaffold and, on paying a fee, to soak handkerchiefs in the dripping blood, either as trophies of their enemy, or in superstition that the King's blood would heal illnesses.

* * *

When the axe fell, a low groan arose from the crowd. Friends to the monarchy would call it a cry of horror. Others, including Gideon Jukes, thought it merely an expression of astonishment that anyone had dared to do this. He too had caught an involuntary breath. *Now*, thought Gideon, *now indeed, is the world turned truly upside down*.

Not far away, the young wife of an exiled Royalist also watched the grim scene. But she believed that the world is not so readily altered. The old order had not been destroyed, the old conflicts still raged. If this was a new beginning, Juliana knew, men like her absent husband would conspire bitterly to make it falter and fail.

After the blow fell, she stood lost among the crowds. To be at the Banqueting House had taken her back to the age of eight, one blissful night when she had been allowed to attend a masque played for the King and Queen. She remembered her entrancement, particularly with the Queen. Four months after the birth of her second son, Henrietta Maria was at that time radiantly returning to court life, a petite vision in silvered tissue, pointed slippers with beribboned rosettes, pearl necklaces and exquisite lace. To a child, this expensive doll-like creature sparkled with magic. Little girls love beautiful princesses and freely forgive heroines who have buck teeth and a lack of formal education. The Queen had brought the slightly raffish sophistication of her French upbringing to the wary English, along with a fixed certainty that a king’s authority was absolute. She would never understand her mistake.

Little girls grow up. The brightest of them come to loathe shortsighted policy, based on ignorance and indifference. The child who attended the court masque full of innocence and fun had learned this all too well.

The King was dead. His Queen would mourn. Trapped in the desolate struggles of a widow even though her husband was alive, Juliana wept on a London street. Though she pitied the King and his newly bereaved Queen, she was weeping for herself. She wept because she could no longer pretend: because she knew that the civil war had deprived her of all her hopes in life.

It was time to go. She was plainly dressed because of her poverty, worn by struggles and uncertainties, yet too firm-willed to seem a victim either to pickpockets or government agents. She was confident she could leave the scene quickly and go home without misadventure. Trying not to attract attention, she slipped down a side street to the river where she hoped to take a boat downstream.

Moments later, mounted soldiers swept through the streets, clearing the crowds. Once the area appeared deserted, a small escort party surreptitiously left the Banqueting House. Gideon Jukes led them, setting the executioner safely on his way home. So as the winter darkness closed in, he too went down the dark side street that led to Whitehall Stairs.

Chapter One

London: 1634

Gideon Jukes first publicly became a rebel when he put on a feathered suit to play a bird.

Few who knew Gideon later would have expected he started his defiance of authority by acting in a royal pageant. As his elder brother cruelly said at the time, the best thing about it was that Third Dotterel's costume included a complete feathered head with a long beak, which hid the boy's erupting acne.

They lived on the verge of political upheaval, but at thirteen adolescence overwhelms everything else. Gideon Jukes in 1634 knew little of national events. He was bursting out of his clothes with uncontrollable spurts of growth. He was obsessed with his ravaged complexion which he was sure repelled girls, his fair hair which at the same time attracted more female attention than he could handle, and the thunderous wrongs done to him by everyone he knew. He was convinced other people had luck in unfair abundance. He believed he himself lacked talent, friends, fortune, looks, likeability – and also that he had been denied any skills to remedy the situation. He was certain this would never change.

That year, he devoted himself to being obnoxious. His worried family railed at him, making his grudges worse. After one particularly loud and pointless family argument he decided to become an actor. His parents would be

outraged. Gideon was bound to be found out. But there is no point in rebellion if nobody notices.

The Jukes were tradesmen, hard-working and comfortably off. John Jukes was a member of the Grocers' Company of the City of London. His wife was Parthenope, née Bevan. His elder son was Lambert, his second Gideon, with fifteen years between them. Between Lambert and Gideon, Parthenope Jukes had borne nine other children. After Gideon there had been three more. None survived infancy.

So Gideon Jukes had grown up a younger son, separated by many years from his more fortunate brother. Lambert was also a grocer. As the eldest, he was in the English tradition his father's pride and joy; he was clapped on the back by fellow members of the Grocers' Company; he was greeted with familiar joshing by other grocers. Most importantly, Lambert would one day inherit the family business near Cheapside and their home, a substantial merchant's house in Bread Street.

Lambert had entered into his apprenticeship the year Gideon was born; Gideon never had a chance of sharing and this imbued him with a hatred of unfairness. As soon as Lambert completed his indenture and became a journeyman, he strutted around the family house and shop as if he already owned them. Becoming a master grocer was a particularly smooth process when your family had been in the fraternity for the past two centuries; Lambert seemed fair set to be an alderman before Gideon left puberty.

Lambert was a large character too. London apprentices were rowdy, opinionated youths, who revelled in their uniform of leather apron and short hair. They took to the streets in boisterous crowds whenever there was a chance to demonstrate their opposition to anything. King Charles gave them plenty of opportunity. Lambert had been thrilled

by apprenticeship life, and long afterwards, if the lads took to the streets for a riot, he liked to be there.

Lambert Jukes was a big, fair-headed tough, always popular and strong enough to roll a barrel of blue figs one-handed, which he would do all along Cheapside, aiming at butter wenches. He had large numbers of friends. He could have had many lady friends, but being known as a good steady fellow, he cast his eye over the prettiest, then settled for Anne Tydeman. She had stayed on his arm for a long time, but Lambert had now reached twenty-eight and after letting Anne sew her trousseau linen resignedly for years, he declared he was ready to marry her. That was more cause for despair in his younger brother.

In truth, Lambert kicked Gideon around no more than any elder brother would; Lambert had no need to be jealous and he was by nature reasonable. Only a churl would have taken against him. It was pointed out to Gideon at home that he was fortunate. His father encouraged him; his mother excused him; even his brother tolerated him. Gideon saw none of this, only his own bad luck. As soon as Lambert brought a wife home, Gideon knew, his own position must deteriorate. No chance of being a cuckoo in the nest: he had been tipped over the edge of it while still squirming in his shell.

He was due to leave home in any case. His father was fussing over arrangements for his apprenticeship. It would be with another member of the Grocers' Company, who would take the youth into his home and business for about seven years. In his current irritating phase, Gideon waited until almost the last moment, so that his father was under the greatest possible obligation. Then he refused to do it.

That was bad enough. Soon his great-uncle stepped in and blew up an even greater typhoon by suggesting that Gideon should *not* be a grocer.

The Jukes brothers were moulded by the aromatic trade of their father. As children they had mountaineered over barrels of dates and currants. They bartered for other boys' spinning tops with pieces of crystal sugar – the fine dust that surrounded sugar loaves when they arrived in their chests – and they swapped caraway comfits for conkers. Gideon had been scarred for life by falling off a delivery cart. His memories were dominated by a kitchen redolent with allspice and nutmeg. He was a toddler when he first learned the difference between cinnamon bark and a blade of mace. A good baked pudding would suffuse the whole house, buffeting anyone who opened the front door. It would linger for three days if nothing else was baked – but something always was.

His brother Lambert's very name recalled the moment his mother felt her first birth pang, which had happened most inconveniently when she was moulding the decorations for a Simnel cake.

'There I was, mopping up my waters with a pudding cloth. I knocked the pestle and the ground almonds right off the table – my hands were so oily from the paste, I could not open the door to call for the maid. Now I feel queasy if I ever look at marzipan balls –'

'And how was the cake?' young Gideon would ask gravely.

'Not one of my best. I had quite forgot the zest of orange.'

'And it had squashed balls!' Gideon would mouth at his brother, making this not just obscene but personal. In reply Lambert rarely did worse than throwing a cushion at his head.

They ate well. Generations of Jukes had done so, ever since their first member of the Grocers' Company set up a home and business just off Cheapside. The certainty of good dinners in the Jukes home had attracted Bevan Bevan,

Parthenope's uncle, who dined frequently with them while making irritating claims that *he* had organised their marriage. John rejected any idea that he owed his wife to anyone else. Most Jukes men assumed they could win any woman they liked simply by expressing an interest. Historically, they were right.

John groaned every time Bevan visited, but Bevan had promised to be a patron to Gideon. Bevan's will would generally be mentioned about the time in a meal when Parthenope served a quaking pudding or an almond tart. For over a decade, as his great-uncle gorged on the spiced Jukes cuisine, it was expected that Bevan would leave Gideon an inheritance. A bachelor for fifty years, he had had no other heir. Then with no warning he married Elizabeth Keevil, a printer's widow. From the moment they entered the marriage bed – or, as the Jukes always reckoned, from a couple of months beforehand – Bevan began prolifically fathering children of his own.

'Let him dine at his own table from now on!' snarled John, through a mouthful of 'Extraordinary Good Cake'. 'A little more ginger next time . . .?'

'I think not!' retorted Parthenope, tight-lipped. The set of her jaw was just like Gideon's.

Bevan politely kept away, especially after strong words passed between him and Parthenope. But once Gideon started to resist his father's plans, it was Bevan Bevan who added a fuse to the gunpowder by suddenly offering to pay for an apprenticeship with a printer his wife knew. John and Parthenope saw this as the ultimate treachery.

Robert Allibone, the printer, genuinely needed assistance with his business. Gideon was proposed to him by Bevan as a bright, honest boy who was keen to learn and would stay to a task. No mention was made of his troubled behaviour.

Bevan's intervention caused uproar. Gideon, of course, found it exciting to be at the centre of the quarrel.

Parthenope had already spoiled two batches of buttered apple pudding, and John accidentally set fire to the house-of-easement in their yard while gloomily taking too many pipes of tobacco as he brooded. The half-built house-of-easement had never been in use, because it was a long-term project of the kind that remains a project. Nonetheless, John had been able to sit in the roofless structure enjoying quiet philosophy and flaunting at their neighbours, none of whom had one, the fact that the Jukes were constructing their own dunny. Now they must continue to throw their slops into the street and to have their nightsoil collected by sinister men with carts who tramped foul substances into the hall floorboards. John Jukes, who was only allowed to smoke out of doors, had to sit on an old molasses barrel, grimly contemplating the burnt ruin as he blamed Bevan for seducing Gideon to an alien trade.

Gideon complained rudely: ‘It is the loss of the project that matters to you most!’

‘You are an ill-mannered boy,’ was his father’s mild reply. ‘Yet you are mine, dear child, and I must bear my disappointment.’

When Parthenope noticed that John’s mole-coloured britches had been irretrievably singed in the blaze, another tempest started, during which Gideon stormed out of the house close to tears. That was when he ran into Richard Overton, a casual acquaintance with a yen for causing trouble, who told him that bit-parts were being offered in a court masque.

This was a fine way to offend everyone. The Jukes saw the devil in theatricals, and royal entertainments were the most perverted. As respectable traders, they solidly opposed the debauchery and idleness of courtiers; like many Londoners, they were even starting to oppose the King himself. These were the years when King Charles struggled to rule without

a Parliament. His methods of financing himself grew ever more contentious. People in business viewed his ploys as interference. Even at thirteen, Gideon knew this. Royal monopolies were the sorest point. Whereas once patents had been granted only for new inventions, now all kinds of commodities were licensed only to royal favourites, who charged exorbitant prices and grabbed huge profits. Selling salt and soap had always been the prerogative of the grocers, so that rankled; beer was a staple and so was coal for Londoners. The City had also been outraged by Ship Money, the King's hard-hitting tax for the navy, not least because this tax was devised to finance a war about bishops, a war they disapproved of. John Jukes declaimed the cry of one Richard Chambers who had been imprisoned and fined for his part in a protest strike: 'Merchants are nowhere in the world so screwed and wrung as in England'.

'Screwed and wrung!' had chanted the Jukes sons, who had an ear for a catch-phrase.

The family also held Independent views in religion. They belonged to one of the puritan churches that lurked down every side street of the City parishes; Gideon was of course taken there every Sunday. John contributed to the fee of a radical weekly lecturer who was frequently in trouble with the Bishop of London for his unorthodox preaching. The Jukes believed in freedom of conscience and freedom of worship. People who never bowed the knee in church were sceptical of a civil ruler who expected his subjects to kneel to him. 'If God does not require ceremony, why should a king?' They feared that Charles Stuart, encouraged by his French wife, was trying to impose Catholic rituals upon them, and they hated it. They homed in on Queen Henrietta Maria as an object of hate because she loved theatre and masques. Theatres, every Londoner was certain (because it was true), were haunts of prostitutes and rakes.

So if there was one thing Gideon could do to upset his family, it was listening to Richard Overton and volunteering to take part in a masque – a masque, moreover, which the lawyers from the Inns of Court were to present to the King and Queen.

He had never acted before. Nevertheless, he came cheap, so he secured a very minor part as one of three dotterels, small quiet birds of the plover family. He was young and naïve enough to be embarrassed when his two acting companions, slightly older boys, made jokes that among dotterels it was the female bird who engaged in displays while the male tended the nest.

Gideon's own sense of humour was more political; he was smiling satirically over the masque's title, which was *The Triumph of Peace*.

Rehearsals were brisk. During them, Gideon soon realised that he was a player in a work of numbing obsequiousness. *The Triumph of Peace* had been written by the popular poet James Shirley. It relied on spectacle rather than a fine script. All anybody wanted from it was flattery for the King, with gasps of delight at the rich costumes and at the complex engineering of the stage machinery.

The best talent in London contributed. The music was by the King's favourite composer William Lawes, his brother Henry Lawes, and Simon Ives, who excelled at glees and part-songs. The indoor stage sets were by the tireless Inigo Jones, architect, painter and emblematic publicist of the Stuart monarchy. The pageant's enormous cost included payment to a French costume-maker, brought out of retirement to stitch bird costumes, plus the cost of many sacks of feathers, acquired by this Frenchwoman at inflated prices from the canny feather-suppliers with whom she had long been in league.

For Gideon and his two companions she had produced padded suits sewn with hundreds of grey, white and russet feathers, costumes which had to be kept pulled up tight under the crotch, to make their legs look as long and thin as possible. The suits were held on by braces over the shoulders and were topped with heavy heads that had to be applied very carefully, or they ended up askew. In his feathered costume, Gideon had a fine, bright-chestnut padded belly marked with a distinctive white bar across his upper chest like a mayoral chain and prominent white eye stripes, joining on the back of the neck; after his headpiece was fixed, he could dip and raise its narrow beak, though at risk of breaking it.

Once inside, visibility was almost nil. He felt hot and claustrophobic, and the bird’s head crushed down on his own with disconcerting pressure. Gideon began to experience regrets, but it was too late to back out.

Chapter Two

Whitehall: 2 February 1634

The blur of torchlight first became visible to the waiting crowds at Charing Cross. Spectators made out an occasional twinkle, then ranks of tarry flambeaux bobbed queasily in the darkness, finally filling the broad street with light. The horses and chariots made their slow, noisy way towards Whitehall Palace and the watching lords and ladies. A spectacular cast of players had spent hours preparing themselves in grand private mansions along the Strand and now they advanced towards the Banqueting House. Above the clatter of horses' hooves, a reedy shawm struggled to make its music heard in a hornpipe for frolicking anti-masquers, who were to present low-life comedy interludes. They wore coats and caps of yellow taffeta, bedecked with red feathers, and were ushering *Fancy*, the first featured character, in multi-coloured feathers and with big bats' wings attached to his shoulders. This quaint figure led the way for numerous curiosities, who were celebrating a tricky moment in history.

The Triumph of Peace was being presented to a King who certainly ruled without conflict. He had dismissed his truculent Parliament six years before. Now, though, his independence had an end-date for he had made himself penniless. To set the moment in context, that year of 1634 would see the notorious witchcraft trials at Loudun, the first meeting of the *Académie française*, the opening of the

Covent Garden piazza in London, and the charter for the Oxford University Press. North America was being colonised with permanent settlements. Europe, from Scandinavia to Spain, was a theatre of blood, rape and pillage in what would come to be known as the Thirty Years War. The previous year, Galileo Galilei had been tried in Rome and forced to recant his opinion that the earth went around the sun; he now languished in the prison where he would die. In London the world revolved around King Charles. In England, without apparent irony, its ruling couple could be hailed in song by Shirley as

'. . . great King and Queen, whose smile
Doth scatter blessings through this Isle . . .'

The masque celebrated the King's and Queen's recent return from Scotland. There, causing as much offence as he possibly could to his strait-laced and suspicious Scottish subjects, King Charles had been crowned monarch of two kingdoms. He had worn ostentatious robes of white satin and had outraged the fierce Scottish Kirk by using a thoroughly Anglican ritual, conducted by a phalanx of English bishops in jewel-bright robes. This display was not designed to win the hearts of sober Presbyterians. Although always convinced of his personal charm, King Charles saw no reason to show diplomacy to mere subjects. Why should he? He was accustomed to uncritical praise – for instance, the nauseous blandishments he was about to hear in Shirley's masque, calling him '*the happiness of our Kingdom, so blest in the present government . . .*'. Perhaps only lawyers could have endorsed this. Even some of those paying for the masque may have choked on it.

There were three kingdoms, in fact, some more blest than others. It was never thought necessary to have a coronation for the Irish, even to offend them. They were