

# Marius & Delia



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THE FIRST ENGLISH NOVEL

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# Marius & Delia

Or, A Pleasant & Profitable

History of the Times

*by* D. M.

ATTRIBUTED TO  
DEBORAH MILTON



*Definitive Text with Critical Commentary*

*Edited by Margo Quigley*

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## INTRODUCTION

**SOMETIME** IN the mid-1690s—some twenty-five years before *Moll Flanders*, more than forty years before *Pamela*—Deborah Milton, daughter of the poet John Milton, wrote *Marius & Delia*, the first English novel. Its astonishing literary quality and iconoclastic originality have yet to be fully assessed, as the critical essays included in this new authoritative edition will attest.

The story of the novel's recovery is, like the work itself, one of suspense and surprise. A single surviving copy was discovered in a private library and subjected to a hurried higger-mugger transcription. That discovery remained almost unknown for nearly two decades. An unexpected assertion of copyright to the transcribed and privately printed work limited its circulation to photocopies of photocopies, passed back and forth among a few specialists and their graduate students. Only now, with the successful resolution of that legal challenge, is it possible to introduce this remarkable novel to a broader audience.

The title page of *Marius & Delia* designated the author as D. M. The only known surviving copy amplified this byline in a crabbed but legible contemporary hand, inserted above and sloping clockwise around the initials:

[D.] eborā [M.] ilton y<sup>e</sup> Regicides daughter

Even without this contemporary attribution, we might well have inferred the identity of D. M. from what is known about John Milton's youngest child.

Deborah Milton was born on May 2, 1652. Her mother, Mary Powell Milton, died just three days later. Her father was by now totally blind. In 1656 he remarried but his second wife, Katherine Woodcock, died in early 1658. Five years later, in February of 1663, he married Elizabeth Minshull, who proved to be an unsympathetic stepmother to the three daughters of his first wife, Anne, Mary and Deborah. By 1670 household tensions had reached a breaking point.<sup>1</sup> John Milton moved out of the house into temporary lodgings with Edward Millington, a bookseller. His wife Elizabeth was thereby given a free hand to deal with her refractory stepchildren.<sup>2</sup> The elder two sisters, Anne and Mary, were apprenticed to embroidery workers. Deborah's mode of escape, or expulsion, is less certain, but she also left home and settled in Ireland as a lady's companion.

After her father's death in November of 1674 an oral will surfaced, purportedly declared to her uncle Christopher Milton, an attorney, well before John Milton's final illness, but only written down and produced after his death. This will disinherited the deceased's "unkind children," leaving the estate entirely at the disposal of their stepmother. The will was contested by the daughters. The deposition of Christopher Milton established that Elizabeth Minshull Milton had promised him a share of the estate if the will passed probate. She would collect the first thousand pounds, then the balance of the estate would be paid to *his* children—an arrangement

which he explained as an additional oral bequest that John Milton had confided to his wife. The only other deponents were an illiterate servant, still in the employ of Elizabeth, and that servant's sister. Their evidence consisted of remarks purportedly made by John Milton, confirming that his wife would get all when he was gone and that his children were disobedient and neglectful of their father. The ludicrous testimony of these obviously suborned servants has been taken seriously by too many John Milton scholars. It is irresistibly comical, all the same, to picture Milton, smacking his lips over a tasty dinner, telling his wife to keep the good food coming so she can get all his money when he's dead: "God have mercy Betty I see thou wilt performe according to thy promise in providing mee such Dishes as I think fitt whilst I live, and when I dye thou knowest that I have left thee all."<sup>3</sup>

This hazily documented oral will could not survive legal scrutiny, as Christopher Milton must have realized in advance.<sup>4</sup> But Elizabeth Milton landed on her feet: as widow and administrator, she was entitled to two-thirds of the estate; her three stepdaughters each received £100.<sup>5</sup> The two elder sisters signed releases on February 22, 1675, acknowledging receipt of payment. The release signed by Deborah is dated March 27 and written in a different hand, suggesting it was prepared and executed elsewhere, most likely in Dublin.<sup>6</sup> Deborah's release stipulates that she received, in addition, "severall Goods late of ye said John Milton Deceased." It may be that she bargained a little harder than her sisters. Or, there may have been a family understanding that these items had been designated as Deborah's by her father. One of these articles, according to Masson, was "a silver seal which Milton had used, bearing the family arms."<sup>7</sup> This intriguing bequest may signal a recognition of Deborah's potential as a writer whose work would carry on the family name.

The receipt for Deborah's small share of her father's estate was signed by both Deborah and her new husband, a Dubliner named Abraham Clarke, whom she had married on June 1, 1674, according to parish records.<sup>8</sup> He was said to be a silk mercer by John Aubrey, her father's earliest biographer; in the parish register his occupation is given as weaver.<sup>9</sup> We know nothing more about him or about their life together, except that they would have ten children, seven sons and three daughters, most of whom did not live to adulthood.<sup>10</sup> Deborah left Dublin for London not long after the birth of her daughter Elizabeth in November of 1688.<sup>11</sup> Boatloads of Protestants fled Dublin for England and other safe havens from late November through February of 1689, due to widespread fears of a Catholic uprising.<sup>12</sup> We know that the newborn, Elizabeth, was left behind in Ireland, and we never hear again of Abraham Clarke, her husband. The scanty facts available suggest that Deborah returned to London on her own, leaving her surviving children and her husband in Ireland. He may have died around 1702 or 1703, since the children dispersed at this time.<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth, now fifteen, came to England. A son, Caleb, was in India in 1703, where he remained until his death in 1719.<sup>14</sup>

Alternatively, Abraham Clarke could have died in 1688, prompting a homesick Deborah to return to London, leaving her children (the eldest could be no more



than fourteen) with her husband's family, who would be better able to maintain them. It is possible that husband, wife and older children migrated together in 1689, leaving the infant behind because she was sickly. That hypothesis would leave unanswered the question of why the family, if intact and thriving, would postpone Elizabeth's immigration until her sixteenth year. An Abraham Clarke was admitted to the London Company of Weavers on May 9, 1709.<sup>15</sup> That's the right name and the right occupation, although it would take an unusual set of circumstances to explain a twenty-year delay in his admission. But even if this Abraham Clarke was Deborah's husband, the couple may have been estranged, since we have additional information to indicate that Deborah was on her own during these years.

At some date between 1704 and 1708 Deborah Milton Clarke addressed a petition for financial aid to Robert Harley, then Secretary of State, later 1st Earl of Oxford. This petition is summarized as follows in a record of manuscript material in the possession of William Cavendish-Bentinck, the 6th Duke of Portland:

Deborah Clark, "only daughter of John Melton, author of *The Paradise Lost*."—Petitioner "is in a very low and destitute condition, but is far more desirous to maintain herself by her care and industry than to be burdensome to any honourable person who generosity might induce to relieve her for the respect had to her late dear father." Is capable of gaining her living had she a small stock to put her in a way to do so, and humbly prays his Honour to compassionate her distressed condition as shall seem meet.<sup>16</sup>

It is fair to assume that this précis excerpts and paraphrases the petition itself. It must have been a difficult document to compose, yet the excerpt exhibits literary skill in coupling words of ordinary speech to a crisp Latinate syntax. Deborah had the discernment to address her petition to a statesman who was also a major patron of the arts. At this early date, many public figures would be unlikely to compassionate the child of John Milton, whose post-Restoration reputation was as the infamous defender of regicide (witness the annotation to D. M.'s title page).<sup>17</sup>

No mention is made of husband or children: Deborah was living alone, dependent on her own earning power, and sought only to obtain the "small stock"—probably money to be spent on books and writing materials—that would enable her to make her own way again. In 1721, the engraver George Vertue sought her out to ask about portraits of her father.<sup>18</sup> He most likely learned her whereabouts from Oxford or from his son, Lord Harley, who was Vertue's patron. He found her "in a mean little street near Moorfields, where she kept a school for children for her support." Possibly Oxford had helped her start her school.<sup>19</sup> This mean little street must have meant home to Deborah. It is the neighborhood where she had lived with her father and sisters from 1661 until she left home in 1670. Age and failing eyesight eventually forced her to give up her school. She took up residence in Spitalfields with her daughter Elizabeth, who had married Thomas Foster, a weaver, in 1719.<sup>20</sup>

We next hear of Deborah, again in much reduced circumstances, near the end of her life. In April of 1727, a letter in *Mist's Weekly Journal* feelingly described her situation as a frail, destitute old woman, dependent upon her daughter and her son-in-law, a journeyman-weaver, for her support. An accompanying appeal to public charity on behalf of the surviving daughter of the immortal John Milton produced sufficient bounty to improve the family's comfort and provide a decent funeral. She died four months after that public notice, on August 24, 1727, at the age of 75.

The energetic wording of this public appeal is worth reviewing, if only because Deborah must have read it and considered its implications for how she should conduct herself. In it, two actions are demanded of the reader by the pseudonymous author, "Philalethes," for two distinct motives. First, go visit the great poet's daughter out of curiosity, as I did: she looks so astonishingly like her father. Second, don't go visit the great poet's daughter "out of mere curiosity, without a design of assistance." The word *curiosity* occurs three times: Deborah Milton Clarke is presented as both an object of compassion and a novelty well worth viewing:

I could not hear that a daughter of Milton was still living without a curiosity of seeing her, and making some enquiries about her father. I was not, indeed, without some doubts before I went, that she might have usurped the title of such descent; but the traces of her father's features appear so strong through her venerable age, that they immediately silence all doubts. The resemblance strikes you with that force, that I dare engage, any one who looks on the print of Milton in metzotinto, and then would go to see his daughter, should be able to pick her out from amidst an hundred other women of equal rank, and equally strangers....

... I am persuaded the same good-natured curiosity which prompted me to go and see this old matron, will excite crouds to follow the example; and that the finest geniuses and fairest faces in this great metropolis, will not be ashamed to meet one another in the kind office of lending her a little comfort. The same circle of coaches which glitter at one evening's ring in Hyde-Park, making a tour to the quarter of her residence, and leaving but the scanty pittance of relief, might set her above all future anxieties.<sup>21</sup>

Come one, come all: Take a good look but don't forget your pocket money. You'll find her at Mr. Foster's, next door to the Blue Ball, Pelham Street, Spitalfields. Suggested donation: "the expence of a single masquerade or opera ticket"; or, as a lesser amount, "the price of a pantomime and rope-dancing."

The language might be embarrassing, even humiliating, but it let Deborah know precisely what was expected of her. In order to win financial support for her family, she needed to enact the role of daughter of the author of *Paradise Lost*. Her performance was constrained by the fact that many of her visitors would have had definite expectations and must have cued her responses with leading questions. The family narrative had already been scripted by her father's biographers, only

they did not agree on her role. Four biographical accounts of her father had been published by this time, all making some mention of Deborah.

The earliest biographical information consists of notes recorded by John Aubrey, talented antiquarian, crank polymath, and avid collector of anecdotes. A perpetual bankrupt, Aubrey made ends meet by doing the odd literary job and by cultivating a set of friends and patrons who would invite him to stay, at least for dinner, sometimes for a year or two. He knew many members of the elder Milton's circle and was well situated to gather information. His manuscript notes for a life of John Milton, dating from 1681, state that "Deborah was his Amanuensis, he taught her Latin, & to read Greeke to him."<sup>22</sup> Further in his notes Aubrey returns to her again with the statement that Deborah was "very like her father" and "could read to him Latin: Ital. & French & Greeke," an elaboration that indicates he had encountered an additional source for his facts among John Milton's circle.<sup>23</sup> Without the later comments of Edward Phillips (see below) to bias us, the straightforward interpretation here is that Deborah knew Latin well enough to read it and to take dictation in that language. For the other languages mentioned, she presumably had a decent reading comprehension but lacked fluency. Aubrey, a genial Royalist with no strong religious leanings, was unlikely to have been on any intimate footing with Milton, but his notes do contain a few first-hand observations and recollections.

In the annals (*Fasti*) printed with his *Athenae Oxonienses* (1692), a chronicle of Oxford-educated bishops and authors, Anthony Wood incorporated an account of the Cambridge-educated John Milton, primarily for the sake of denouncing his republican and regicidal politics.<sup>24</sup> Although he characteristically fails to name the friend who was his source, Wood drew his information directly from Aubrey, who, he says, was well acquainted with Milton "and had from him, and from his Relations after his death, most of this account of his life and writings." Wood omits many details acquired by Aubrey but follows him in declaring that Deborah was "trained up by the Father in Lat. and Greek, and made by him his *Amanuensis*."<sup>25</sup>

The Milton family narrative changes abruptly when we come to the biography written by Edward Phillips, the son of John Milton's sister. It appeared anonymously in 1694 as the preface to an underground edition of Milton's letters of state.<sup>26</sup> In his biographical sketch of his uncle, Phillips denies that Deborah understood any language other than her own and implies she was incapable of wielding a pen. He presents Deborah and her elder sister Mary as compelled (his yet more strenuous verb is *condemned*) to perform a servile and passive task as readers of incomprehensible texts in a half-dozen languages. As Phillips underscores at the outset, this intolerably tedious task was redundant and unnecessary. Milton already had intelligent males in attendance, both men and boys, who were eager ("greedily catch'd at the opportunity") to serve him as readers:

Those [children] he had by the First [wife] he made serviceable to him in that very particular in which he most wanted their Service, and supplied his want of

Pages xii-xlix are not included in this preview.



# Marius & Delia

*Or, A Pleasant & Profitable*

History of the Times

by *Deborah* D. Milton *Regicides*  
*daughter*

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LONDON

To be Sold at the Sign of the Red Fish  
in Bride Lane near Fleet Ditch

*To Lord —<sup>1</sup>*

**MY LORD,** I was making a memorandum of my debts, when the printer sent for me. Where is the preface, he wanted to know. It cannot go forth without a preface or a letter. —It has a species of preface in its opening, I said. It has, moreover, a vindication and an epilogue; for it is an entirely new thing, never before attempted. Never mind that, said the printer. It must have some pages of stuff in the fore, being a letter to the reader or a dedication to some rich patron. A dedication is more mannerly and impressive-like. —I have no acquaintance with rich patrons, they know neither my face nor my name. Never mind that, said the printer again. (That a man who has the best language of the best authors put daily before his eyes should possess no more words than a parrot!) Never mind that, said he. Scarce one writer in a hundred knows the lord he makes his acknowledgments to. 'Tis only fooling the reader into a belief that the book and its author are something considerable and well worth his shilling.

I took up my pen readily enough but sat musing over the page. My wits were wrung so dry by the sweaty labor of writing my book, that I had none left to eke out a preface. I looked over my list of debts: so much for lodging, washing, beer, bread, coals, candles, paper, for my last good shirt, now well worn; then recalled with a blush the debts left out of my account, owed to the few friends I have, or once had. I excused myself with the reflection that all authors are debtors, if not downright thieves. This thought in turn started a most unblushing and impudent notion of how to accomplish my troublesome dedication to Lord I-Know-Not-Who. Full of my idea, I went at once to my most prosperous acquaintance, whose door has been shut against me these past six months. —I ask only the use of your library, I said, only a half-hour among your books and no more. I stood at the door whilst my entreaty was messaged by the footman to the housekeeper and by the housekeeper to her master, my heretofore friend. At last I was grudgingly admitted. (I would have tried to interest him in a dedication, a very fine dedication, fresh and good cheap, if I but had opportunity.) The insolent servant who admitted me lolled against the wainscot, so to keep an eye on sundry gilded toys of his master's. He gave no heed to the books that I took from the shelves and perused. That was fortunate for me, for I had my pen knife with me to aid in making a collection of choice phrases, certain that the master of the house would never notice the loss. Even supposing that in an idle moment he might open one of his books (most were with pages

uncut), he would never look upon the fawning beggarly preface. I took my purloined scraps back to my garret to lay them out upon my table. *Ex improviso*, altogether beyond my expectations, it was good!<sup>2</sup> I had the makings of a dedication that would compel any lord to open his purse in pure amazement and gratitude. But alas!, before I could pin the scraps to their places and copy them out, what should befall but that my landlady, bellowing to be paid, let fly the door. My snippets of servile compliment flew off the table and out the open window. There was nothing to do but make the best work I could from the remnants which I swept up from the floor.

My august and munificent Lord —, the Gaius Maecenas of this mercenary age, who peruses this little book with pleasure and instruction, it is not too late to become D. M.'s patron!<sup>3</sup> I have instructed the printer to leave a generous blank so that we may put in your name for the second printing. —God's oons! Damn this scribbler for a ninny! —Oh, my lord, we may know your honorable birth and breeding by your curses: you fear no Society informers.<sup>4</sup> —How the devil may that be, when neither the author nor the printer have put their names to the thrice-blasted thing! —'Tis true my lord, that, by reason of some little trifles that might be misunderstood, the printer and I thought fit to conceal ourselves. However, you have only to let it be known to your bookseller that you seek the author of MARIUS & DELIA. I shall hasten to throw myself at your feet and to accept a suitable acknowledgment. I am not so bold as to ask for guineas; nor would the chandler, the baker, the small-coal man, nor that foggy slut of a landlady, know what to do with a newfangled bank note. So let it be, my lord, of the new silver late come from the Mint. Your name will be instantly entered into the next impression, to your everlasting benefit and my own. In which expectation, I declare myself your much-indebted servant and obsequious well-willer, &c., D. M.

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## EXORDIUM SCANDALI

*In plain English, a false start, a stumble at the threshold.*<sup>1</sup>

**IN THE KINGDOM** of Nonestia there lived a gentleman called Marius, of distinguished birth yet declining means; for he was a man of too great character to prosper under the turpitude of his times. The last of his line, he lived very private with only one small daughter and a one-eyed maid for his family. His house, a stately hall of antique beauty, stood close by the great road that led to Illondro, the far-famed capital of the realm. This Marius was a learned man, whose health was impaired as much by his studies as by his misfortunes. He withdrew himself from worldly concerns, forsaking the society of friends and compeers, that he might devote himself to solitary contemplation and considerance. His waking hours were spent in studying history, law, divinity, and philosophy, as he sought enlightenment for questions that troubled him to the jeopardy of his health, both of body and spirit. Yet the more he read, the more perplexed and doubtful was his understanding. He grew neglectful of his already diminished estate. His daughter wore rags, and the maid made away with his goods.

One morning Aurora discovered Marius yet at his book, his head lowered upon his arms, not in sleep but deep reflection. He raised himself slowly (he was afflicted with the gout), murmuring of dukes and death and bloody insurrections. (He might do so safely for there was none to hear. The maid snored in a trundle bed by the ashes of the kitchen fire. His daughter lay quietly awake at the maid's side, the side farther from the fire, huggling her puppet.) He paused at the window. The hedge was ragged with fruit, sparrows chirped in its branches, but he neither saw nor heard. The rattling of a countryman's cart mingled strangely with his thoughts. Forebodings of murderous broils and tumults filled his imaginings. As he sat down again, he slapped his hand upon the table and exclaimed: Monmouth pardoned, Sidney sentenced to a traitor's death. Would it were reversed! Hampden clapped up still, peached by base informers. I fear they've done his business. Pray God I am not traced in this!<sup>2</sup>

Pox on't! Good paper wasted! My poor artifice exploded the moment my chief character parts his lips to express his thoughts! I must tell the story some other way, and tell it plainly, without the gilt adornments of fable and romance.<sup>3</sup> 'Tis a true story, I promise you, for I had it direct from the old man's daughter, a very ingenuous creature, scarce able to frame a plausible lie, or to comprehend much of what she witnessed. I myself have passed

on that road, it is the North Road, and looked up to see the old man at his window.<sup>4</sup>

But I will not tell it after her in selfsame words, which were by turns tiresome and scandalous. She was overmuch concerned with her own sensations in telling her tale, though she was but an inconsiderable actor in the events she related. As for scandal, however delightful to some, I must not allow it for her own and for her father's sake. I must falsify names and features and other such particulars. For many of the persons in her story are yet alive; and, though deserving of the gallows, I would not have their deaths upon my conscience. I shall call the old man Marius Bye; his daughter will be Delia; their maid may keep her right name of Jane. ✠

## CHAPTER 1

*Marius Bye: his birth and his mother's antipathy to him. His apprenticeship to a London corn-chandler named Boulton. His head turned by harkening to violent sectarian preachers and reading seditious pamphlets. After his rebellious scribblings are exposed, he is dismissed to make his own way in the world.*



**MARIUS BYE** is a man of vinegar wit and frustrate ambition: a Roundhead of our latter days, a belated but convinced republican.<sup>1</sup> He was born in the first year of the Great Rebellion. In the weeks following the battle at Edgehill, his mother, great with child, was much unsettled by the bands of soldiers tramping up and down the road.<sup>2</sup> Her husband assured her that the broken stragglers were rebels in flight; the well-appointed troopers were the King's own men. The rebellion, he said, was all but vanquished; so that she began to take heart and grow easy. Then it was that the sudden appearance of Hampden's regiment, on the march to Turnham Green, singing psalms with a savage fervor, caused her to shriek and fall down in a swoon.<sup>3</sup> Her womb dropped, her pains coming so quick and strong there was no time to send for the midwife. She turned away when her maid showed her the boy, small and weazen-faced but crying lustily. A fever that turned to a consumption kept her confined to her bed for many weeks. When her babe was brought to her, she felt no joy. She could not look upon him without a resentment of pain and sickness, or a shuddering recollection of hundreds of Roundheads in green cassocks, baying with full-throated fury for the blood of kings and Moabites. In vain did her husband tell her that Essex could not prevent his army of weavers and cobblers from deserting, and that the child was a healthy, likely boy: she only shook her head.<sup>4</sup> From her window she saw routs of masterless men, rampant, unchecked, seizing whatever they could win for themselves by fast legs or stout cudgels. She wept on her knees when the Roundheads conveyed the King, their captive, from Newmarket to Hampton Court, passing upon the road before the house. The news of his escape came on the eve of her son's fifth birthday, when she noticed him with a rare smile and a kiss. 'Twas fortunate Marius was away at school on the day that Parliament struck off the King's head.<sup>5</sup>

From a tardy beginning Marius came to be a tolerable good scholar; whipping made him obstinate in his ignorance, until a chance word of praise spurred him to apply himself. He at last mastered the *Carmen de Moribus* and had advanced to Tully's *Epistles* when Cromwell's Ejectors

made a visitation to his school.<sup>6</sup> They were not satisfied with the school-master's answers. When they proceeded to inspect his books and papers, they discovered a Book of Common Prayer shelved with the colloquies of Erasmus and Corderius.<sup>7</sup> The school was broke up, the pupils sent home until a suitable master could be found for them. In the event, Marius' schooling was come to an end; whatever plans his father had formed for his education were frustrate by his wife's indiscretions. Her devotion to the Royalist cause became notorious in the parish after she incited her eldest son to fly off to the exiled court.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Bye grieved for this unnecessary hazarding of his heir, and grieved as well that he would now be subject to the decimation tax on suspected royalists. He would have kept his youngest son at home if his wife were not as unfriendly to him as before. Instead he carried him to London, to apprentice him to his mother's cousin, a prosperous corn-chandler named Boulton, who had a house and shop on Elbow Lane, and a warehouse close by Queenhithe.<sup>9</sup>

His master was at first well satisfied with Marius. The close, solemn air that so displeased his mother was advantageous to business. His firm gray eye, turned upon ragged loiterers, discouraged pilfering; his headpiece, slow but retentive, could match his master's customers to the numbers in his ledger-book, though the keeping of the accounts was as yet beyond his abilities. Sundays he dutifully accompanied his master to church, where he gave the sermon little attention; for Boulton was no precisian and never catechized his family. One such Sunday, when the minister's hard and confounding words of reprobation and predestination had heads drooping and eyes winking, a young man stood up upon a bench and cried out: Heed not the falsehoods of hireling priests! The truth of Christ Jesus is not bound up in the dark sayings of an old book. It is the light within you that is Christ, and the light of Christ shall set you free. Rise up, rise up, I say to you, and come into the light! A pretty Quakeress who stood beside him bared her breasts and lifted her arms to heaven, saying, A sign, a sign!<sup>10</sup>

As soon as the responsible citizens were sufficiently roused from their stupor to take in what was happening, they clambered out their pews and rushed down the aisle to seize the wicked blasphemers. The apprentices were on their feet already, jubilant at the momentary triumph of misrule. The young man and woman scampered to the doors, supported by a blue-coated rabble of apprentices and servants. Marius was hurled forward by the throng, and, in the confusion, being shoved, put out his elbow into a farandine waistcoat that proved to belong to his master. That is at least what he told the indignant corn-chandler, who knew not whether to believe him. (He

had been until then a sober, diligent youth, noways prankish.) The boy was of an age when the sudden view of a woman's breasts might make his limbs unsteady, and cause his eyes to sparkle so, and his lips to tremble. In truth, I question if Marius took notice of the woman; he was unsettled rather by the words he heard, thrilled by their harsh, eruptive sense.

That selfsame day he sought out a Quaker meeting, where he met with disappointment; as the Friends did nothing but groan or hum to themselves, or utter a few disjointed phrases. The meeting house was known, however, and an unruly crowd soon gathered to hurl stones through the windows, a disturbance which little affected the tremblers, quivering in ecstatic communion. Marius left in some confusion. He had no appetite for martyrdom. It may be, too, that he did not know to which party he would choose to adhere; for he, at his young age, must have been stirred more by the mob without than the mystics within.

Marius was just turned of sixteen. In Somerset House a waxen Cromwell had at last taken the crown, set upon a graven head, the scepter fixed in a strengthless hand. His son and heir proved likewise to be a personage of soft and malleable stuff.<sup>11</sup> Army and Parliament tossed and touselled for supremacy; no one could say which government was worse. The masters of London, the lords and gentry of England, felt the frailty of their authority and were afraid. Soldiers, for want of pay, were dangerous; their officers were no better, and with less cause. Cottagers broke down hedges and dined on the lord's venison. Apprentices rabbled wealthy citizens. Merchants feared to open their shops; their wives and daughters kept withindoors. Sectaries preached on street corners, in cellars, taverns, and warehouses. Some erected makeshift pulpits in the church aisle and roared out blasphemies over the incumbent's sermon. Quakers cried up their unlettered promptings as superior to Scripture and Commandment. Back-lane printers poured forth a torrent of factious and impertinent pamphlets demanding the abolition of tithes, titles, and primogeniture, proclaiming the New Jerusalem, pleading the Good Old Cause.<sup>12</sup>

Marius partook eagerly of it all. His idle hours were spent in Coleman Street and at Allhallows the Great, or wherever the preachment suited his humor for extremes.<sup>13</sup> Yet it was the politicians who gained his ear more than the sectaries. His pennies were bestowed on seditious pamphlets and pint-pots of mum shared with a knot of like-minded youth, who combined in a league they called the Prentices Club; for they were ready enough to riot, though mostly given to grumbling and prating. They united in declaring their opposition to the tyranny of kings, lords, prelates, masters, and

fathers; but all positive principles were still to be canvassed and disputed amongst them. A soap-boiler's boy turned Ranting Quaker said that Christ Jesus was the light and the life within, and he who was guided by that light could never sin. A freshly hatched Fifth Monarchist said that was but prattling bibble-babble: Jesus was a tall handsome man with curling auburn hair, who would shortly return to rule over England as a second Eden. The earth will then bring forth fruit without men's labor and all will share equally, except the saints will be dressed in golden raiment and sit upon thrones.<sup>14</sup>

—Who then will bake the bread and weave the clothes?

—King Jesus himself will clothe his saints, and manna will drop from heaven as in Moses' time.

—The manna that fell upon the City would be too filthy to eat.

—The City will be purged in a holy fire. It will be a New Jerusalem, a city of golden pavements and tall towers gleaming with jewels.

The notion of such a transfiguration held them still, until they began again to wrangle and dispute.

Much about this time, Marius began to keep a commonplace book wherein he recorded a few such dialogues, as well as sentences he culled from sermons and pamphlets. This work, grown to many volumes from years of disputation and study, his daughter saw him often consult. At the top of the first page he wrote down the words of the insolent Quaker who interrupted the sermon. After it came a loose collect of scriptural ill names and fustian rant, then a half page filled with circles, squares and ciphers, which must have been his callow projection of a commonwealth.

That some such commonwealth was nigh at hand Marius did not doubt. His spirits, which heretofore were sluggish and cold, had been kindled to a hectic fever by the violent talk of tub-preachers and renegadoes. The broils and commotions, the calamitous tumults of this year, were to him the birth pangs of a republic that would endure until the end of time.<sup>15</sup> He despised swordsmen as a danger to liberty; but, nonetheless, cheered the fall of the Protectorate and the restoration of the Rump Parliament by the army. The removal of the Rump by the Nine Colonels he in turn applauded. Next he was crying out for a free and full parliament and hurling brickbats at soldiers. He showed already his genius for inventing taunts and jeers, which were eagerly taken up by the rabble about him. He must have heard some voices crying for the return of King Charles; but, in a mob, some call for one thing, some another. As he would say in after-years, Free is a great and lofty word. He did not then suppose it could signify its contrary, or that



men would choose to relinquish their liberty only to gape at kings and princes in luxurious trappings.

It is not to be supposed that Boulton, the corn-chandler, failed to observe the moonish behavior of his apprentice; but apart from laying a stick across his shoulders once or twice a day, his master let him be. (He himself held no fixed opinion: though he might prefer a settled government, it was undeniable that the late king had been no friend to corn-chandlers, whereas the distractions resulting from the rebellion had brought him great profit.) Boulton mistook Marius' distemper for the greenness of his years. When it was time for the boy to take up his indentures, Boulton intended to propose a marriage to his daughter, which he knew would be welcome to the boy's parents.<sup>16</sup> (I take that he was a widower with a daughter only; for that is all his family that Delia knew of.) Thus things stood, until an inquisitive maid fished his commonplace book from its hiding-place. She happened to open it on the page scribbled over with small-figures and circles, whereupon she gave a fearful screech and fell into a fit: for what could it be, if not a spell to summon the devil? When the chandler came to examine the book, it fell from his hand in his fright. It was the words that alarmed him, bitter railings against kings, masters and fathers, along with senseless abusions—"thou vile venomous Rabshakeh, I have new-edged the sword of righteousness to plant it in thy papistical bowels"—a madman's assassinating ravings, it seemed to him.<sup>17</sup>

Marius' father, summoned to deal with the boy, was as scandalized as his master. Boulton argued him a lunatic and proposed his committal to Bedlam. Marius then awoke to his danger and, in private to his father, discoursed of his principles and opinions with such efficacy that the father was at once convinced of the truth: his son was not a pitiful madman but something far worse. It seemed that his mother had taken his measure aright, and that the boy was predestinate to discord and rebellion. Incensed and aggrieved as he was, the father did not cast off his son, for fear that he might bring the family name to the pillory or the gallows. In exchange for a solemn promise to conceal his name and kindred in all his future doings, his father granted him a quarterly allowance, sufficient for a bare living and no more. These arrangements having been settled, Marius packed his gear and left, with neither father nor master knowing, nor greatly caring, whither he took himself. ✱

## CHAPTER 2

*Concerning the Bye Family: Their second son, Ferdinando, ventures life and limb in the Lammas Day uprising. Their lost son Roger returns, much altered. Marius begins his career as a pamphleteer. How he survived the twin scourges of Plague and Poverty. Roger killed in a brawl at Oxford. Mr. Bye goes to seek Marius in London but falls ill upon his return.*



**T**O SATISFY my readers, as well as my own curiosity, I have taken some pain to uncover more of Marius his history than he chose to impart to his daughter. His family was respectable though undistinguished: his father's father walked behind a plough and his mother's father stood behind a counter; but the estate was good, and among their neighbors, who were of like extraction, they passed for gentry. For some years, Marius' parents heard nothing from Roger, their first-born, who had obeyed his mother's prompting to offer his services to the King in exile. Fearing his loss, they fastened their hopes upon their second son, Ferdinando, who was, in his natural parts and temperament, much superior to his two brothers. At Oxford Ferdinando indulged himself more in books and less in debauchery than befits a gentleman, but his lively disposition won him many friends. Whilst his brother Marius was in Coleman Street hearkening to Levellers and Fifth Monarchy men, Fernando was home for the long vacation.<sup>1</sup> He had declined an invitation offered by a chum of a great landed family, not wanting to put his father to the expense such a visit would require. When a baronet's son, who left his college to acquire a smattering of law, invited him to his new lodgings in Gray's Inn, he thought he might safely accept.<sup>2</sup> Ferdinando would have cheerfully walked to town; his parents feared that doing so would disgrace him before his friend, and insisted he be mounted. Alas, their good saddle horses had all been taken from them; the clumsy, heavy-paced beast they put him on was only fit for the cart, and for the mockery of his friend, should it be seen.

The Inns of Court buzzed with rumor of an uprising set for Lammas Day. Some said it was to bring in the King; others, only to demand a full and free parliament.<sup>3</sup> During an evening of guzzling with good fellows, a ride to Tunbridge Wells was proposed for the morrow ('twas the last of July), in the hope of joining with the forces said to be assembling there. No gentleman of spirit and mettle could decline such a proposal; certainly none of the young sparks present dared to do so. Near Sevenoaks they encountered an army patrol; several of their party instantly turned and fled,

so that it was scarce possible for the rest to pretend to innocence. Whether their numbers and arms were sufficient to make a stand I could not learn: certainly their courage was not. In the rout Ferdinando's dobbin was startled into a gallop, but he was still far in the rear and soon to be caught. To save himself he turned his horse out of the road into a rough coppice-wood. He thus escaped pursuit, only to have his beaten horse founder on a steep slope. Ferdinando, encumbered by his lended sword, went down beneath him. He was found by a woodcutter, who laid him across his horse and bore him home. The goodman set his broken leg; the woodcutter's wife, skilled in herbs, applied poultices to the wound.

When Ferdinando, alone of all the party, failed to return to Gray's Inn, it was thought he had been captured, especially as the poverty of his steed had been generally remarked. His friend the baronet's son employed much of the next day in attempting to trace him among the prisoners being held at the Mews, Petre House, Scotland Yard, and other such places. Having dispatched a brief letter to Ferdinando's father, he considered the bonds of friendship to have been faithfully observed, and gave no further regard to Ferdinando's fate. The anxious parents knew not what to do, except await some word from their son. But he, in his dread of prison and a traitor's death, had begged the woodcutter and his wife for secrecy. His fears, though groundless, did him no hurt; for the bedstraw was clean, the goodwife's plasters innocuous, and his case incurable. The priest who came to minister the last rites took down a letter for his parents, wherein he regretted the sorrow he would cause them and asked forgiveness for his rashness. The honest couple followed the bier to the churchyard and shed some tears for the unhappy young gentleman. He had however left them a serviceable horse and a purse full of silver that was to them a fortune. They could not but reflect, with pious thanksgiving, on how well things fell out for them.

The grief of his parents was great, for he had been his father's favorite and was now his mother's also. His friend's letter said nothing of the party's headlong flight, and his own gave few particulars of his fatal injury. Her fancy, still pursuing its peculiar theme, saw her son beset and cruelly cut down by republican rascals in arms. Her husband consoled and quieted her as best he could; for despite his grief at the loss of his child, he did not fail to discern the risk of a sequestration.<sup>4</sup> With the utmost difficulty he persuaded his wife to curb her loud lamenting and to join him in concealing the circumstances of their son's death. They haggled over each particular, his mother persevering that they not sully Ferdinando's heroic action with

base, craven lies. In the end, they fixed upon a tale of a gallop and a stumble that was very near the truth.

Wrapped in sorrow and gloom, they little attended to the turmoil taking place in London and Westminster. How to pay the army tax was the only question of polity or governance to concern them. Upon All-Hallows they awoke to find the road occupied by file upon file of sullen redcoats.<sup>5</sup> These soldiers sang no psalms of vengeance or of victory; for the current quarrel was not God's but that of their officers, falling out amongst themselves. Stragglers and deserters infested the countryside, robbing and pilfering along the way. Another civil war seemed certain: even Mrs. Bye gave up all hope of the King's return. She withdrew to a small upper room in the rear of the house; there she slept and fed and prayed, leaving management of the household to her husband, and refusing all attempts at consolation. She would not be coaxed forth from her retreat. It was in vain to tell her that the Nine Colonels had been compelled to unlock the doors of Parliament House: It meant only that the men who beheaded her king ten years ago were once again in authority. She cared not, she said, whether 'twas the tub-preachers or the swordsmen who ruled. When Lord General Monck took the North Road into London, followed a few hours later by his entire army, Mrs. Bye refused even to look from a window. Eight days later, her husband, their servants and all the neighborhood went atop Highgate Hill to view the smoke of hundreds of bonfires, and, upon returning home, lit one of their own. Mrs. Bye came but half-way down the stairs before mistrust stayed her steps and occasioned a retreat.<sup>6</sup>

She was at last lured to the hall by unparalleled good news: a letter from their long-lost Roger. In it he expressed his hope of a sudden reunion and boasted of the favor of a great man of the Court. His mother's joy was uncontained. She extolled her own sagacity in sending him away, declaring that the family's prosperity was now secure. (Imagination advanced Roger to a knighthood, at the least, poor Ferdinando being now forgot.) She conjectured the identity of her son's patron, guessing at Lord Hatton or the Marquis of Ormonde. Here she was wide of the mark, not understanding which of her son's virtues had commended him to a protector. When, four years before, Roger arrived at the Court without money or friends, deficient in grace, dress, conversation, and birth, he cut no figure at all. What little notice he received was upon suspicion of spying for Cromwell. He might have perished from want had he not ventured his last few coins in gaming. He had in prior days shown superior skill at put, mumchance, fox-mine-host, and other such games, so that it required only his present necessity

to develop his genius. Roger shared Dame Fortune's favors with those he would have as his friends; in consequence he was taken up by Sir Phineas Dyce, a gentleman who little cared how he won, provided that he did.<sup>7</sup>

Their prodigal soon made his return. His mother nearly expired of pure joy to see her son; his father scarce knew him. His form was corpulent, his behavior coarse and sowish. Roger bore the news of his brother Ferdinando's death with great calm. He viewed Marius' disgrace and banishment with evident satisfaction, though he could not approve of the allowance money. His mother, no doubt believing her son to be inward with the great during his long residence in foreign lands, wished to learn the characters of the King and the principal courtiers. But Roger's familiarity with the Court was limited to the tattle of servants and hangers-on, all of it scandalous and some partly true. This he repeated with a depraved gusto, amplified by his own lascivious imaginings. (He had indeed a pretty talent as a storyteller of this sort.) His mother never before heard such filthiness, so openly related; but if her son told it, if His Majesty and the Great Ones of the Court enacted it, then such doings must be *ala mode*, and the fault was in her own rustic simplicity. Mr. Bye, having gauged his son's character, lamented to his friends how unhappy he was in his sons, the one a Libertine, the other a Leveller.

If young Marius felt any compunction for offending so excellent a father, he never acknowledged it in after-years. He may have been well pleased to escape his master and his neglected duties, and to have money all a sudden in his pocket. (He was yet to learn how quick 'twould be spent.) Besides which considerations, he now had leisure and solitude to pursue what he had come to believe his calling. He found cheap lodging in Blackfriars, unpacked his bundle, and at once set to work. He had his theme direct before him: The Long Parliament had dissolved itself at last.<sup>8</sup> Its successor required advice on settling the government, advice which Marius thought himself capable to provide. He wrote off two or three sheets, which he took at once to the stationers near St. Paul's, where he had often bought pamphlets that pleased him with their violence. I expect he had some words in the title about the Old Cause and the commonwealth, for the booksellers gave it but half an eye before they tossed it back to him with a mock. One, a little kinder than his fellows, told Marius to look about his shop to see what was selling. Such republican trash was no more the fashion: the call now was for satires on Cromwell or panegyrics on the martyred king, or on the young king that's coming in. But Marius (with money in his pocket) was no hireling. The printers in the alleys near the bridge were more accommodating, and among them he found one willing to take his virgin effort for a consideration. It

must have been irksome to discover that he must pay the printer, but he no doubt expected to recover the charges by its sale. He soon discovered that the petty chapmen would not take it, nor any common crier able to understand the title. He was forced to give his pamphlets gratis to beggar-girls to make any money they could. (Those who did had the wit to proffer Marius' paper at the Fleet and Thames-side privy-houses, where 'twas briskly taken up.)<sup>9</sup>

Marius had a passable good headpiece, slow to take impression but stubborn to quit. He applied himself now to learning his craft, frequenting the booksellers, thumbing the wares of chapmen, reading prints he found lying about in cookshops or alehouses, all the while scribbling in his commonplace book. The news of Lambert's sudden escape from the Tower rekindled his hopes, and he at once joined battle in the only way he could, by penning a pamphlet account of the hero.<sup>10</sup> This remarkable work was above one-quarter true: if the rest were lies, 'twas by no fault of Marius. He was acquainted with two or three cashiered officers, fellow Levellers and fanatics, who told him their stories of the general, which he faithfully related, rounded with blood-and-thunder threatenings of ruin to Cavaliers and changelings. This time he left the bookseller's shop with a purse made heavier by a few crowns. Shortly thereafter, he had the inexpressible satisfaction to see his work (*The Life and Principal Victories of Lord General Lambert by M. B.*) hawked about London and eagerly taken up by enthusiasts and neuters alike. This green success must have moderated his disappointment when, a bare fortnight later, the captive hero was made to stand under Tyburn tree before a mob that jeered and flouted him.

The Prentices Club broke to pieces about this time. Those whose expectation of a great alteration had caused them to be surly to their masters now repented on their knees. Most belonged to that pliable sect that wish only to shout and throw brickbats from the security of the multitude. They heartily joined in the May Day celebration; they drank of the beer and wine flowing from the conduits; they cheered the King and the Princes of York and Gloucester as if they were heart-whole and perpetual royalists.<sup>11</sup> The only one, beside Marius, who would not serve the time was a journeyman feltmaker named Gowler. The restoration of the monarchy delivered such a shock to his convictions that he would not credit it as lasting, as more than a final, fleeting test of the elect. Every violent storm had him rushing to the window, to look for King Jesus riding the thunderbolt. It was by means of this Gowler that young Marius became acquainted with a knot of Fifth Monarchy men—disbanded soldiers and discontented artisans, like this poor crack-brained feltmaker, that pined for a New Jerusalem in their squalid

courts and alleys. The executions of the regicides in October at first stirred up doubt and despair among them.<sup>12</sup> They loudly prayed and loudly disputed to seek the meaning of these events, deciding in the end that Major-General Harrison was one of the two witnesses heralding the return of King Jesus. The identity of the second witness was a dark question over which they quarreled mightily, some saying it was John Carew, others Thomas Scot, and yet others Hugh Peters. They laid a mad plan to recover the heads from London Bridge and the quarters from the Gates, believing, without doubt, that the corpses of the witnesses, once reassembled and committed to burial, would soon be resurrected, ushering in the Fifth Monarchy.<sup>13</sup>

On the Epiphany, after a day of raging sermons, they took up arms to recover the heads and quarters of the regicides, calling out all the while for King Jesus to descend. It was only some forty or fifty fanatics in all, but they possessed the fury and strength of madmen, scattering the train-bands and murdering twenty men before they were at last brought to bay.<sup>14</sup> Gowler was a rebaptized brother in this conventicle, but as for Marius there is no information. His daughter believes he never went out with any rebels to do murders, saying, he in no sort was a violent man, except in his writing, for he struck her but twice in all her life. She thinks he did no more than draft the heads of the declaration that was published for their rising. Notwithstanding her opinion, I read in Baker's Chronicle that the rebels twice hid themselves in the woods near Highgate, and I question whether Marius might have guided them to their lurking-places.<sup>15</sup> Horse and foot scoured the countryside in pursuit, passing up and down the North Road and the by-lanes thereabouts. Mrs. Bye thought certainly that Forty-One was come again.<sup>16</sup> Her husband feared that his youngest son was numbered among the conspirators. Their lunatic attempt came to an end on the third day, and within a fortnight thirteen more traitor-heads were set out to edify the public, among them Gowler the feltmaker's.

The spectacle of his friend's head upon a pike affrighted Marius sadly, but could not still his busy pen. Prudence, as well as his father's command, prompted him to change his name and his lodgings with some frequency. (His daughter insists that he never did so to escape his debts, only from a suspicion of spies, trepanners, and informers.) On quarter days he went to a goldsmith in Cheapside to receive his allowance.<sup>17</sup> His father (hoping for his reformation) said that he might leave a letter with the goldsmith, but he never did so, only noting down his street and his alias. Mr. Bye was unacquainted with the by-lanes of the liberties and suburbs, else he would have observed that his son's frequent changes made a steady progress

downwards to obscurer and shabbier lodgings. For Marius was impelled to scribble on every point of controversy that might support his cause. His fellow republicans, when they liked his writing, would subscribe some small sum toward its publication; but often he bore the cost, and withal found few willing to take his waste paper off his hands; so that he was fain to drop his seditious writings in alleys and alehouses. In common with other factious and unlicensed scribblers, he railed against the cruelty of Norman Law, the perfidy of Parliament, and the immorality of the Romish Court.<sup>18</sup> But he had no successes like to his history of the great General. Marius was possessed of a pretty way with insult and invective. A literate tripe-man might have paused over a strongly worded broadside before wrapping up his guts and garbages; the citizen on his seat of ease may have read a few lines before applying Marius' work to its proper end.<sup>19</sup> Yet he lacked a very necessary talent of the popular pamphleteer: he had no knack for bawdry. His muse was virulent, passionate, yet singularly chaste. If it were possible to pen a dull libel on the intrigues of the court ladies, Marius was the man to do it.

The coming of the plague made at first little difference to Marius.<sup>20</sup> He had no thought of fleeing to the countryside, for there was another plot afoot that summer. He received his quarterage at Midsummer, acknowledging it with his alias and his residence, although I question if he trusted the goldsmith with his right and full abode. If there were any signs of uneasiness, or preparations for departure in the goldsmith's establishment, he did not note it, and he would not have made a long stay. He had the habit, common to conspirators and other malefactors, of skulking in back lanes and alleys, avoiding the markets and the thoroughfares. Shortly after Lammas Day, a drumming and the clamor of a mob drew Marius into Cheapside. A Fifth Monarchy preacher named Danvers was on his way to the Tower, though but poorly guarded. His supporters, abetted by out-of-place servants and apprentices (whose masters left them behind in fleeing the plague), overcame his escort and carried him to safety.<sup>21</sup> Marius must not have taken part in the fray, or at least he had leisure to look about him. He was put in a toss to see that the shop of the goldsmith upon whom he depended was padlocked and boarded up; nor was there anyone who could tell where to find him, for most of his neighbors had likewise departed the City, leaving only a servant or two behind, who would not answer his knock. This was a great blow, for Marius barely eked out a narrow subsistence from one quarter to the next.

When Marius returned to his room, it may be that he intended only to set down his necessary expenses and figure how he might diet himself, or he may have contemplated writing to his father for aid. Once he took up his



pen, however, his ideas pursued a different course. His swelling indignation at the goldsmith took possession of his thoughts, mingling with public and impersonal grievances. King, courtiers, prelates, physicians, and magistrates, all had abandoned the poor of London as a sacrifice to hunger and disease. He considered the discarded serving-men and comfortless abandoned boys that mobbed Danvers' guards in Cheapside. In his mind's eye he saw them pushed into the streets with a scanty pittance of their overdue wages, but not before they had obeyed the commands of their masters and mistresses in loading carts and chariots with chests of plate and hoarded coin. He saw the carriages of the great piled high with trunks filled with rich draperies and other household goods. And none but a favored lady's maid or a lapdog, a footboy or a monkey, was allowed a place. There was matter here for a half-dozen pamphlets, which Marius whipped up, one after another. These little works were eagerly read and passed about among the populace; though in truth there were few left in the City who could afford a groats-worth of his satires. He scarce gained more than a few shillings; and now the plague carts were filled, the reeking graveyards were piled with bodies, and even the poorest attempted, in vain, to flee.

A learned apothecary has set down his observation that choleric and melancholy persons, and those with lean and dry bodies, were especially prone to succumb to the contagion. If so, I marvel that Marius survived, for he was all these things. But since he could not afford the apothecary's advice, nor his pomanders, his vesicatories, his diaphoretics or his plague waters, it may be that his poverty saved him, at least from being poisoned. His daughter said that his only antidote was to rub his body with vinegar, and to hold wormwood before his face when out of doors. In truth, I believe Marius may thank his own cunning for his escape. The plague, as is well known, began in Westminster, then struck with fury in Cripplegate and neighboring parishes, before it spread eastward by starts and leaps. By the time the plague was raging in Shoreditch, it had spent its force in the western and northern parts. Marius, who gave careful study to the weekly bills of mortality, quit his room in the Minories at the end of September, returning to a lodging he had formerly taken in Cripplegate.<sup>22</sup>

I doubt his parents gave much thought to him, even though they witnessed in July the northward commigration of wealthy citizens, their coaches and wagons heavy laden with goods. His father had notice of his obtaining his allowance at Midsummer, and that was all they knew of him. Their son Roger visited them about this time: to show a proper filial regard to his parents, no doubt, though these visits never concluded without a goodly number of

guineas passing from his father's purse to his own. He still pretended to be a courtier, and it may be his mother believed him; but all his years of seeking favor had procured him no further privilege than that of claiming a place at the servants table in the household of his dissolute patron. When the Court removed to Salisbury he followed after. This proved a most profitable stop for him, as his cogging and foisting tricks with dice, grown stale and unvendible in London, were new to the loutish roisterers of Sarum alehouses. When the Court progressed to Oxford, a verminous swarm of hang-bys and lick-trenchers, Roger among them, made thither as well, by wagon and foot (all other conveyance being pressed into the service of the Court). By the time Roger and his fellows reached the town, every inn and lodging-place was filled up from cellar to garret. They could find for themselves nothing better than a rough tipping-house in the outskirts of the town, and even here there were not beds enough for all. A dispute began that grew hot and then violent. Roger got the bed for which he quarreled, though he did not lie in it for long. The surgeon was too late to save him; the priest was never sent for. Some papers found upon him named his parents, to whom the surgeon addressed his condolences and his bill.<sup>23</sup>

The King came to Oxford about the Twenty-Fifth of September, in advance of the sitting of Parliament. The news of Roger's death must have reached his parents close upon Michaelmas. Mrs. Bye wailed and beat her breast; Mr. Bye was sorrowful but resigned. He saw the necessity of bringing Marius home, though it was not easy to bring his wife to his view. Mr. Bye was no politician; yet he understood very well that levelling notions suit poorly with full purses and fine expectations. He had therefore a reasonable hope that his heir would discard his quondam principles for a wholesome self-regard. He looked for the usual notice from the goldsmith, so that he might know where to send for his son. When no letter reached him, he began to feel some alarm for Marius, as well as for the deposit which the goldsmith was holding. He set out for the City, going first to Cheapside, where he found, as he feared, that the goldsmith was fled the plague. The goldsmith had last given him an address for Marius that was in the Minories, a place he did not at all know. Whenever he hesitated at a turning or paused to inquire the way, pestiferous women and starved children would come up to beg alms; he gave more from fear of contagion, to keep them at a distance, than from charity. He began to perceive how pinched and scraping Marius must be, to take lodgings in a place of such ill aspect. As he was passing near an open cellar, a stark-naked man, crazed by sickness and hunger, leapt up and attempted to pull him from his horse. He struck out with his

whip, which the madman seized and turned against him. His cries for help drew a band of idled seamen who beat the poor lunatic off. Mr. Bye was compelled to pay out a substantial reward to rescuers who were not much less threatening than his attacker. Troubled and much discouraged, doubting his son could long survive in such an evil place, he turned homeward. Upon passing through Aldersgate, he remembered that another of his son's shifting abodes had been in Red Cross Street. Turning towards St. Giles, he came upon Marius in the street as he was returning to his lodging.<sup>24</sup>

They did not embrace, this father and son, for each feared from his look that the other was infected. Marius said he could not then go home, but would come within a week. He gave no reason: it must have been some plot or pamphlet that he rated above compliance with his parent's wishes. Mr. Bye regretted having no money to supply his son's needs: For, he said, I have given away all I had to people who begged it from me in the streets. —God preserve you for your kindness to them, was the unexpected reply.

Upon returning to his home, Mr. Bye could not dismount without assistance. He went straight to his bed, and I do not believe he was ever again able to leave it. It may have been the plague; for, though the physician diagnosed a lethargy and prescribed Goddard's Drops, it was observed that he would not come into the chamber unless the maid first made a great fire and fumed the room with rosin. Howbeit, Mr. Bye never developed the fatal tokens, and no one else in the family was stricken.<sup>25</sup> He himself thought that he took a taint from the madman, whose touch had sent such a shudder through him that he sickened in an instant. Fitfully, in his waking moments, he related to his wife all that had happened, and got from her a promise to be kind to Marius and not to reproach him for what was past. When at last Marius came and was brought to his father's bedside, Mr. Bye roused himself to look upon his son, uttered the name of Ferdinando, and never spoke again. ✱