This article was downloaded by: [JISC Collections]

On: 15 January 2015, At: 01:33

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Royal United Services Institution. Journal

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rusi19>

The Execution and Burial of King Charles I

Rev. Canon Edgar Sheppard C.V.O., D.D. ^a

^a Majesty's Chapels Royal

Published online: 11 Sep 2009.

To cite this article: Rev. Canon Edgar Sheppard C.V.O., D.D. (1909) The Execution and Burial of King Charles I, Royal United Services Institution. Journal, 53:378, 1019-1034, DOI: [10.1080/03071840909434557](https://doi.org/10.1080/03071840909434557)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071840909434557>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan,

sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

THE EXECUTION AND BURIAL OF KING CHARLES I.

*By the Rev. Canon EDGAR SHEPPARD, C.V.O., D.D.
(Sub-Dean of His Majesty's Chapels Royal).*

On Wednesday, 17th February, 1909.
Lieut.-Colonel A. LEETHAM in the Chair.

THE portrait before you is, as you see, one of the many portraits of King Charles I. The original of this one is at the present time in the Royal Palace at Hampton Court.

In the lecture which I had the honour (by invitation) to deliver here last year, I chose for my subject, as many of you I feel sure will remember, "The Old Royal Palace of Whitehall," with a special and somewhat lengthy review of many of the events connected with it, and at the end of my lecture I dealt with the site of the execution of Charles I.

In my lecture to-day I am going to continue this all-absorbing subject, and give you as full an account as I can, not of the site of His Majesty's execution, but of the actual execution itself, which is without doubt the most important event in the history of Whitehall, and one of the greatest tragedies in England, and I shall hope to put before you, towards the end of my lecture, not only full details respecting His Majesty's burial, but also one or two facts connected with the opening of His Majesty's coffin in the year 1813, which are not generally known.

I must begin by telling you, what many of you already know, that the day before his trial the King was brought in a sedan chair from St. James's Palace to Whitehall, where he remained during the time that his trial lasted. "His patience or insensibility," so Harris, an old historian, puts it, "was very great."

Bradshaw, the President, it seems, "gave sentence upon His Majesty to take his head, all the Court, to the number of 67, owing to it by standing up," so says Coke, in his "Court of England."

When the trial was over, the King was conveyed back to St. James's. There he passed the remaining days of his life.

On 30th January, 1649, the fatal day—the day of his execution—Charles was brought under escort through the Park and Whitehall, some say at eight o'clock, others say at ten

o'clock in the morning. He was dressed in a long black coat and grey stockings, and as a waistcoat is said to have worn a rich red striped silk. He had been placed under the charge of Bishop Juxon and Colonel Tomlinson, who, one on either side of him, accompanied him bare-headed, His Majesty walking very fast, according to Harris, and bidding them go faster, adding that he now went before them to strive for a heavenly crown with less solicitude than he had often encouraged his soldiers to fight for an earthly diadem!

Sir Thomas Herbert, in his *Memoirs*, published in the year 1702, informs us that "upon the King's right hand went the Bishop, while Colonel Tomlinson was on his left, with both of whom His Majesty had some discourse by the way. In this manner went the King through the Park."

Upon arriving at the spot where the Scotch Office now stands the King mounted the stairs which led up across the upper story of the Holbein Gate, and thence sought his usual bedchamber. It should here be mentioned by way of a note that the warrant for the execution was not signed till within a few minutes before the King was led to the scaffold. D'Israeli, in his "*Life and Reign of Charles I.*," further tells us that Cromwell stepped to a table and wrote what he had proposed to Colonel Huncks when he (Huncks) refused to sign the warrant.

Colonel Hacker, it seems, who supplied his place, signed it, and with the ink hardly dry carried the warrant in his hand and called for the King.

[I here give you a copy of the warrant to Colonel Francis Hacker for the beheading of King Charles I.]

Upon reaching his bedchamber, where he remained till Hacker summoned him to the scaffold, His Majesty at once commenced his devotions, and it seems that while thus engaged certain ecclesiastics of the Puritan party came to his room and offered to pray with him; but he refused this offer, saying "they had so often prayed *against* him, that he would not have them pray *with* him in his extremity." He, however, asked them to remember him in their prayers.

We learn that upon rising from his knees Charles said: "Now let the rogues come; I have forgiven them, and am prepared for all I am to undergo." Colonel Hacker came soon after to the bedchamber door and gave his last signal. The Bishop and Mr. Herbert (both of whom were weeping) fell upon their knees, and the King, according to Sir Thomas Herbert, gave them his hand to kiss, and helped the Bishop to get up, for he was old and infirm.

As Colonel Hacker was still attending at the chamber door the King took notice of it and said: "Open the door," and bade Hacker go, adding that he himself would follow. A guard was made all along the galleries and the Banqueting House. "Behind the soldiers," says Herbert, "were crowded abundance of men and women, though with some peril to their own persons, to behold," he adds, "the saddest sight that

England ever saw. And as His Majesty passed by with a cheerful look," Herbert continues, "they prayed aloud for him, the soldiers not rebuking any of them, but by their silence and dejected faces seeming afflicted rather than insulting."

[The picture now before you, called "The Execution of Charles I. in front of Whitehall," by Mr. Ernest Crofts, gives His Majesty's arrival on the scaffold.]

"The King strode the floor of death," as Fuller puts it, "with a cheerful countenance," and when at the scaffold is thought (says Heath) to have excelled himself, and to have died much greater than he had lived. He was attended by the Bishop, and also by Harrington and Herbert, Gentlemen of his Bedchamber.

[I here give you another view of the King's arrival on the scaffold, which I have had copied from a print in an old Prayer Book in my own possession, dated 1676.]

Upon reaching the scaffold the King donned a white satin cap, and meanwhile asked one of his executioners (there were two of them) whether his hair was in the way. Thereupon he was asked to brush it back with his own hand, and he did so with the assistance of the Bishop, to whom he said: "I have a good cause and a gracious God on my side."

"There is but one stage more," said the Bishop, in reply, "it will carry you from earth to heaven, and there you will find a great deal of cordial joy and comfort."

"I go," said the King, "from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown, where no disturbance can be—no disturbance in the world!" Charles then again asked the executioner: "Is my hair well?" Then, taking off his long black cloak and giving his "George" to the Bishop, made use of the expression "Remember," which we shall refer to later on. I should here mention, by way of a note, and to quote the words of Sir Ralph Payne Gallwey, that a "George," in the sense in which it is here used, is the jewelled pendant of St. George and the Dragon which is worn by Knights of the Garter. The Sovereign is, of course, head of the Order, and Charles I. was wearing his George when he ascended the scaffold to be executed. The question afterwards arose as to what had become of it, and it has since been given up as lost. Sir Ralph Payne Gallwey, however, makes out a very good case in his new volume for identifying the missing "George" with one that is now in King Edward's possession at Windsor. When the King had handed his "George" and turned once more to the executioner, he addressed him thus: "I shall say but short prayers and then thrust out my hands." This sentence he repeated twice, then, referring to the block, he added: "You must set it fast." He was told that it *was* fast. Whereupon he remarked that it might have been higher, and received, as a reply, that it was impossible. "Take care"—the King added to a passer-by at the time—"take care they do not put me to pain. Take heed of the axe; hurt not the axe which may hurt me."

[This picture before you is called, as you see, "A View of the Place and Manner of the Execution of King Charles I.," and, as you also see, there is a copy of the warrant to Colonel Francis Hacker for beheading His Majesty, which I have already shown to you.]

His Majesty then took off his doublet, put on his cloak again, and afterwards made a speech, which seemed much broken and confused in many places, in which he asserted his own innocence.

Having made a declaration of his faith at the request of the Bishop, King Charles knelt down, and was about to lay his head upon the block, when one of the executioners stooped down to put His Majesty's hair under his cap, so that it should not impede the force of the blow. The King misunderstood this act of the headsman's, and thinking that the fatal blow was about to be delivered, asked the man to await the sign, whereupon there ensued another short pause, during which the King spoke a few words, and *then* stretched out his hand, and the Royal head was instantly severed from the body, upon which (in sight of the great crowd that had gathered about the scene) the second executioner lifted up the King's head and exclaimed: "Behold the head of a traitor."

The scene upon the scaffold is thus described in the journal of the Earl of Leicester in the Sydney papers:—

"The King," he says, "being come upon the scaffold, looked very earnestly upon the block, and asked Colonel Hacker if there were no higher, and then, having made a profession of his faith, laid his head down, and the executioner, at one blow, severed it from his body, which the second executioner held up and showed to the spectators. The executioners," the journal continues, "were two, and, disguised in sailors' clothes with vizards and peruques, unknown."

[This picture before you gives the death of King Charles I., and is from an old print belonging to this Institution.]

Charles died (says Rapin) "with great constancy, without showing the least sign of weakness or amazement," while thus (says Sir Richard Warwick), "this saint and martyr rested from his labours and follows the lamb."

Immediately after the execution, the crowd was dispersed by cavalry, and it was thought advisable that the scaffold and everything connected with it should be cleared away as soon as possible. The Bishop and Mr. Herbert went with the body to the backstairs, where it was embalmed by one Topham (private Surgeon to Fairfax), who had previously sewed on the King's head to the body again.

After his execution (according to Clarendon in his "History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England") we learn that King Charles' body was, as we have already stated, carried immediately after his execution into a room at Whitehall, where (after the process of embalment had been carried out) he was

exposed for many days to the public view, that all men might know that he was not alive.

The body was then carried to St. James's, where again it remained for several days.

"Where to bury the King was the last duty remaining," says Wood in his "*Athenæ Oxonienses*." By some historians it is said that the King spoke something to Bishop Juxon concerning his burial. Mr. Herbert, however, who was Groom of the Bedchamber, and a faithful companion of the King, was frequently in company with the Bishop, both before and after His Majesty's death, and he affirmed that the Bishop never mentioned anything to *him* of the King's naming any place, where he would wish to be buried. Be that as it may, it was eventually decided to bury His Majesty's body in the Royal Chapel of St. George, within the Castle of Windsor, both because His Majesty was Sovereign of the Order of the Garter, and also because several kings had been interred there, among them Henry VI., Edward IV., and Henry VIII.

Mr. Herbert having made application to the Committee of Parliament, an order was given to him (bearing date 6th February, 1648), authorising him and Mr. Anthony Mildmay to bury the King's body there, provided that the whole expense should not exceed £500. Accordingly the corpse was carried to Windsor, from St. James's Palace (on 7th February) in a hearse covered with black velvet, drawn by six horses, covered with black cloth, in which there were about a dozen gentlemen.

On arrival, Mr. Herbert showed to Colonel Whitchcot, the Governor of the Castle, the Committee's order for permitting Mr. Herbert and Mr. Mildmay to bury His Majesty in any place within the walls of Windsor Castle, that they should think fit.

When they had done this, they carried the body (in the first place) into the Dean's house to the room now called the dining room, which was hung with black, and it was placed on the table which is still there in the middle of the room, and then later on they carried it thence to His Majesty's usual bedchamber in the Castle, where for the time they deposited it. When this had been done they then went to St. George's Chapel to find, as Wood describes it, "the most fit and honourable place for the Royal body to rest in."

At first they thought that the Tomb House (built by Cardinal Wolsey) would be the most fitting, but that place, though adjoining, was not *within* the Royal Chapel, so the idea was given up. They next pitched upon the vault where Edward IV. had been interred on the north side of the choir, near the Altar, as that King was one from whom Charles I. was lineally descended.

Orders were accordingly given to have that vault opened; but just as they were about to begin this work the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis of Hertford, and the Earl of Lindsay came upon the scene, and with them Bishop Juxon, Bishop of

London, who, by the bye, had had leave from Parliament to attend the King's body to his grave.

They visited the Tomb House and the vault just referred to, and the choir (together with Herbert and Mildmay), when one of those noble lords, according to Wood, "beating gently upon the pavement in the centre of the choir with his staff, perceived a hollow sound," and the stones and earth being removed, they discovered a descent into a vault where two coffins were laid near to one another, the one very large, of an antique form, and the other little. These they supposed to be—and indeed they were—the bodies of Henry VIII. and Jane Seymour, his third wife. The velvet palls that covered their coffins seemed fresh, though they had lain there for more than one hundred years.

It was finally agreed that the King's body should be interred in *this* vault, which was situated, as I have said, about the middle of the choir.

While the men were at their work in cutting in lead the King's name and the year of his death, for which orders had been given, the three noble lords went out and gave instructions to the sexton (Puddifant by name) to lock the door of the chapel and to allow no one under any pretext whatever to enter. It afterwards transpired, however, that a soldier had hidden himself in the building and (to quote Wood once again), "being greedy of prey, crept into the vault and cut so much of the velvet pall that covered the great body as he thought would hardly be missed, and bored a hole through the said coffin, fancying there was something well worth the venture."

The sexton later on, on opening the door of the chapel, discovered the man, who being searched was found to be in possession of a bone. The Governor having been informed gave this sexton a reward, and the Lords Commissioners and others present were thereupon convinced that a *real* body was in the said coffin, which some had previously doubted. The only words, and they were, as we have said, executed in lead, on the lid of the King's coffin were these: "King Charles, 1648."

When all the many preparations had been completed, the King's body was forthwith brought down from his bedchamber to St. George's Hall, and after a little delay slowly and solemnly carried in procession into the choir of St. George's Chapel by "gentlemen of quality" (as an old historian puts it), "dressed in mourning"; the noblemen, also in mourning, held up the pall, and the Governor and several gentlemen and officers and attendants came after.

[I now give you a copy of Mr. Ernest Croft's picture of the "Funeral of King Charles I.," and the arrival of the body at the west front of St. George's Chapel.]

The body was set down by the bearers near the place of burial, and the Bishop of London stood ready, with the Service book in his hand, to perform his last duty to the King, according to the order and form of the Burial of the Dead, as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer; but Colonel Whitchcot, the

Governor of the Castle would not allow it. And this is borne out by Clarendon in his "History of the Rebellion," which we have already quoted, where we read that "the King's body was laid in the vault without any words or other ceremonies than the tears and the sighs of the few beholders."

When the coffin had been lowered the black velvet pall that had covered it was placed over it, and the earth was thrown in, which the Governor stayed to see perfectly done, and then took the keys of the chapel.

"Thus," said Wood, "went the white King to his grave in the 48th year of his age and the 22nd year and 10th month of his reign."

Here the coffin remained undisturbed till the year 1813, when, on 1st April, by order of the Prince Regent, it was opened for the purpose of identification, and it is interesting to note that when the mausoleum, which was built in the Tomb House, as it was then called, and Albert Chapel now, was completed, it was necessary to form a passage to it from under the choir of St. George's Chapel. In constructing this passage an aperture was made accidentally in one of the walls of the vault of Henry VIII, through which the workmen were enabled to see not only the two coffins which were supposed to contain the bodies of King Henry VIII. and Queen Jane Seymour, but they also could see a *third*, covered with a black velvet pall, which, from Mr. Herbert's narrative, might fairly be presumed to hold the remains of King Charles I.

On representing the circumstances to the Prince Regent, His Royal Highness perceived at once that a doubtful point in history might be cleared up by opening this vault, and accordingly orders were given for an examination to be made on the first convenient opportunity. "This was done," says Sir Henry Halford, who was the King's chief physician, "on the 1st of April last," *i.e.*, in 1813, the day after the funeral of the Duchess of Brunswick, in the presence of His Royal Highness himself, who was accompanied by the Duke of Cumberland, Count Munster, the Dean of Windsor, Benjamin Charles Stevenson, Esq., and Sir Henry Halford.

On removing the pall a plain leaden coffin, with no appearance of ever having been enclosed in wood, and bearing in large legible characters on a scroll of lead encircling it, an inscription, "King Charles, 1648," immediately presented itself to the view. A square opening was then made in the upper part of the lid, of such dimensions as to admit a clear insight into its contents. These were found to be an internal wooden coffin (very much decayed), and the body, carefully wrapped up in cere-cloth, into the folds of which a quantity of unctuous or greasy matter, mixed with resin, as it seemed, had been melted, so as to exclude as effectually as possible the external air. The coffin was completely full, and Sir Henry Halford tells us that "from the tenacity of the cere-cloth, great difficulty was experienced in detaching it successfully from the parts which it

enveloped." When this came off, a correct impression of the features, to which it had been applied, was observed in the unctuous substance. At length the whole face was disengaged from its covering. The complexion of the skin of it was dark and discoloured. The left eye, in the first moment of exposure, was open and full, though it vanished almost immediately, and the pointed beard, so characteristic of the period of the reign of King Charles, was perfect. The shape of the face was a long oval, and a part of the nose had completely disappeared. Many of the teeth remained, and the left ear, in consequence of the interposition of the unctuous matter between it and the cerecloth, was found entire.

When the head had been entirely disengaged from the attachments which confined it, it was found to be loose, and without any difficulty was taken out and held up to view. It was quite wet, and gave a greenish-red tinge both to paper and to linen which touched it. The back part of the scalp was entirely perfect and had a remarkably fresh appearance. The hair was thick at the back part of the head and was in appearance nearly black. The hair of the beard was a redder brown. On the back part of the head it was more than an inch in length. On holding up the head to examine the place of separation from the body, the muscles of the neck had evidently retracted themselves considerably, and, to quote Sir Henry Hallford again, "the fourth cervical vertebra was found to be cut through its substance *transversely*, leaving the surfaces of the divided portions perfectly smooth and even—an appearance which could have been produced only by a heavy blow inflicted with a very sharp instrument, which furnished the *last* proof wanting to identify King Charles I.

[I here place before you a photograph of a sketch, by an unknown artist, taken at the time when His Majesty's coffin was opened in 1813.]

After this examination of the head (which served every purpose in view), and without examining the body below the neck, it was immediately restored to its situation. The coffin was soldered up again and the vault closed.

On examining the vault with some attention it was found that the wall at the west end had at some period or other been partly pulled down and repaired again, not by regular masonry but by fragments of stones and bricks put rudely and hastily together without cement.

Having given you this account of the opening of the King's coffin in the year 1813 and of all that took place at the time, we must pass on now to describe the replacing of certain relics in this grave of Charles I.

On Tuesday, 11th December, 1888, 75 years afterwards, the Prince of Wales (our gracious King, Edward VII.), then on a visit to his mother, Queen Victoria, at Windsor Castle, sent for the then Dean of Windsor, Dr. Randall Davidson (now Archbishop of Canterbury) and showed him a small ebony

casket. His Royal Highness told the Dean that this casket (which, by the bye, measured $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches in width, and $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in depth) contained certain relics believed to be part of the body of King Charles I.

[Here give again portrait of Charles I.]

It would seem probable, though it is not mentioned in the published Memorandum, that Sir Henry Halford, in the year 1813, when the coffin was opened for inspection, removed on this occasion certain articles, viz.: (1) A portion of the cervical vertebra, cut transversely with some sharp instrument; (2) a portion of the beard of the King (of auburn colour, with a bit of linen sere-cloth attaching to it; (3) a tooth. These relics, it seems, had come into the possession of Sir Henry Halford's grandson, Sir Henry St. John Halford, and had been by him presented to the Prince of Wales, in a small ebony box, which contained inside the lid an inscription engraved on a plate. When the contents of this box were examined it was discovered that the portion of beard and the tooth (already referred to were wrapped up in a piece of stained writing paper addressed thus: "The Honble. and Most Reverend the Dean of Windsor," which would seem to show that Dean Legge (who was Dean at the time) had in 1813 known of this abstraction of the relics, and had furnished a piece of paper at the moment in which to wrap up the beard and the tooth.

The Prince of Wales told the Dean that it was *his* wish to replace these relics in the vault or grave from which they had been abstracted, and, Queen Victoria's consent having been obtained, it was arranged that the relics should be replaced by His Royal Highness on the following Thursday, 13th December.

On the evening of Tuesday, 11th December, the Prince of Wales came to the Deanery and handed to the Dean the ebony casket, in which His Royal Highness placed an *autograph memorandum* in the following terms: "These relics of King Charles I. are deposited by Albert Edward Prince of Wales in the vault containing the coffin of the King on 13th December, 1888."

In the meantime the Dean of Windsor had had a leaden casket prepared, 10 inches long, 4 inches high, and 5 inches wide, and on the lid of this leaden casket the following inscription was engraved: "The relics enclosed in this case were taken from the coffin of King Charles I. on 1st April, 1813, by Sir Henry Halford, Physician to King George III. They were (by his grandson, Sir Henry St. John Halford) given to His Royal Highness Albert Edward Prince of Wales. On 13th December, 1888, they were replaced by His Royal Highness in this vault—their original resting place."

This casket was again enclosed in a stout oaken case, fitting closely. The small ebony box containing the relics was carefully deposited by the Dean within the leaden casket, and the oaken case containing all was firmly closed with screws.

On Thursday evening, 13th December, at six o'clock, after the close of evening service, the Dean of Windsor, with the two Canons, who happened to be in residence at the time, superintended the removal of the pavement stones above the vault. This was done, with the utmost care and reverence, by Mr. A. T. Nutt, surveyor to the Dean and Canons, and three workmen, and occupied a very short time. The vault is in the centre of the choir of the chapel, and *six* of the small squares of black and white marble on the south side of the pavement in this portion of the choir were lifted, and then the mortar that lay between them and the brick arch of the vault was removed. About 20 bricks were then taken out with the greatest care, so that no debris should fall on the coffin beneath. By this means an aperture of about 18 inches square was produced immediately over the centre of King Charles's coffin, which was covered still with a black velvet pall. The form of the coffin beneath it, which was of the usual plain oblong shape, was distinct.

The Prince of Wales came alone to the chapel soon after 7 p.m., and in the presence of the Dean of Windsor, the two Canons, and the surveyor, His Royal Highness lowered down the box containing the relics through the aperture, and placed it carefully about the centre of King Charles's coffin.

When the Prince had retired, the workmen came back again into the chapel, the aperture into the vault was at once re-closed, and the marble pavement re-laid, no one entering the vault. The whole operation was completed by 9.30 p.m. From the beginning to the end of what was done, everything was *personally* superintended by the Dean and the two Canons present, all of whom remained by the side of the grave till all was completed.

Having given you these details of the execution and burial, let me, in conclusion, pass on to one of the *debatable* points in connection with this tragedy. And, first of all, one of the most interesting of these is the meaning to be attached to the word "*Remember*," which the King, when upon the scaffold, addressed to Bishop Juxon after he had handed to him his medallion of St. George.

With regard to the vexed question of the *meaning* of this injunction "*Remember*," it has been suggested that King Charles used the word in reference to Queen Henrietta, from the fact that this jewel contained a portrait of her. Miss Strickland, in her "*Lives of the Queens of England*," after stating that the King handed to the Bishop the medallion containing the miniature of Henrietta, says: "The warning word, which has caused many historical surmises, evidently referred to the fact that he only had parted with the portrait of his beloved wife at the last moment of his life."

In the 8th series of *Notes and Queries*, May, 1894, the following appears over the signature "William Norman":

"In a quaint little book," he says, "called '*Medulla Historiae, Anglicanae*' (printed in London in 1694, the lives and

affairs of the Stuart Kings (1603-1688) occupy about one half of the work. With reference to the speech with which the King is said to have accompanied the 'George,' the following account is given: "Then the King asked the executioner: 'Is my hair well?' 'And, taking off his cloake and 'George', he delivered his 'George' to the Bishop, saying 'Remember to send it'—that is, to the Prince. This seems to be a *new* suggestion," says Mr. Norman, "and is as if it were intended to remind the Bishop of some *last* message which the King wished to have carefully delivered to his son and heir—a very likely thing to have happened under the peculiar circumstances."

Mr. Gardiner, the distinguished historian, also thinks that the King addressed that *one word* to the Bishop probably to impress on him the importance of delivering the messages to the Prince and others with which he had already charged him.

Another much disputed point in connection with this tragedy is the *identity* of the two men who took part in King Charles's execution.

We know that they donned "vizards," wore false hair, and were dressed as sailors, and thus they were effectually disguised. Immediately after the Restoration the Government made an effort to discover these masked headsmen; but we do not learn that they ever succeeded in doing so.

Some historians think that the blow was struck by a Captain Foxley, since the public executioner, Richard Brandon, had refused to perform the task.

We hear also that a certain *Henry Porter* was charged with the act. This man had been imprisoned in Dublin for two years, when Lord Ormonde and the Council of Ireland requested Secretary Bennet "to move His Majesty (Charles II.) that the said Henry Porter (standing charged, as he was, as being the person by whose hand the head of our late Sovereign King Charles I. was cut off) should be brought to trial in England."

Tradition again has attributed the deed to one *William Walker*, who died near Sheffield in 1700, after having at the Restoration retired from political life. The tradition, however, rests on no substantial foundations. Nor does the vague evidence of Colonel Hacker help us much. This Colonel Hacker had for a time in his possession the original warrant for the execution. He (so we learn from a communication in "Notes and Queries"), when he was asked who struck the blow, replied that he knew not, but that he had heard it was the "Major." He said, however, that he would endeavour to ascertain; but whether he ever did so, or who the said "Major" was, we are unable to state. But in spite of the foregoing evidence, which, indeed, amounts to little more than the idle gossip likely to spring up on such a subject, the probability is that the King was beheaded by the ordinary executioner, Richard Brandon.

From Ellis's "Original Letters" and from Wraxall's "Memoirs," we learn that Brandon *confessed* that he had received £30 within an hour after the blow was given for his

pains, which was all paid in half-crowns; and further, that he had an *orange*, stuck full of cloves, and a *handkerchief* which had come out of the King's pocket so soon as His Majesty was carried off from the scaffold, for which orange he was proffered 20s. by a gentleman in Whitehall, and though at the time he refused the same, yet he afterwards sold it for 10s. in Rosemary Lane.

Mr. Jesse, gathering his information from Cunningham's Handbook of London, gives us some interesting details concerning this man Richard Brandon. The following entry appears about him in the Burial Register of the Parish of St. Mary, Whitechapel. The entry runs as follows: "1649, June 21st, Richard Brandon, a man out of Rosemary Lane." To which the following significant note is added below: "This Richard Brandon is supposed to have cut off the head of Charles the First."

We pass on now to another doubtful point.

In regard to the block on which the King's head rested and the mode of execution, about which opinions have largely differed, a correspondent (giving the initials S.M.S.) sent the following some few years back to "Notes and Queries." He says: "A note worthy the attention and the investigation of any interested in the subject of the execution of Charles I. is given in Warburton's 'History of Prince Rupert and the Cavaliers' (Vol. III., p. 460), where it is stated that 'the block was so low the King was forced to lie on the ground.' I have seen two prints of the time," he continues, "in which the king is thus represented. This has not," he adds, "been generally noticed."

In the year 1890 a correspondence took place in the *Times* newspaper respecting this subject, viz., the method of execution adopted in the case of Charles I. The late Sir Reginald Palgrave (Mr. Palgrave as he then was) wrote as follows: "Did King Charles at the last moment kneel down and bend his head over the block, retaining in other respects an upright position? On the contrary, I venture to assert," he adds, "that to receive the headsman's blow, the King first knelt down and then stretched himself at full length upon the scaffold, and rested his back across a bar of wood, in height about six inches. It was the customary practice," he continues, "and the scaffold was prepared to afford the sufferer some comfort in that wretched position."

Mr. Palgrave then goes on to say that this is shown by the description in the State trials of the death of the Duke of Somerset in January, 1552, and of Lady Jane Grey, and he endeavours to show that the execution of Charles I. was carried out in conformity with what he calls the *Tudor* method, which compelled the sufferer to lie at full length upon the scaffold. At the same time, Mr. Palgrave admitted that he could derive no help from any contemporary account of the King's demeanour on the occasion, since all that we are told is that, "stooping down, he laid his neck upon the block."

To this letter of Mr. Palgrave's the late Lord Carnarvon, the fourth earl, on 12th May, 1890, wrote the following reply, which *also* appeared in the *Times*: "With your permission," he said, "I desire to offer a few observations on Mr. Palgrave's *remarkable* theory of the mode of execution adopted in the case of Charles I.—a theory based upon the doubtful use of the word 'lying' in two or three instances. I confess," says his lordship, "that without further guidance I cannot accept his view, that the historical 'block' was a low rail six inches high, and that the kneeling and dignified attitude of the martyr King in his last moments was the grovelling position which he (Mr. Palgrave) describes. In the Stuart and Georgian reigns, down to 1745," continues Lord Carnarvon, "I imagine the block to have been what the word indicates, and in the Tudor times, of which Mr. Palgrave speaks, more evidence is needed than any which has been given to show that the practice was different. There used to be preserved in the Tower," Lord Carnarvon goes on to say, "a hideous block of considerable size and height, on which it was said that the 'swan neck' of Anne Boleyn was laid, and on which many other noble victims perished. In the memorable case of Charles I., there is a curious account of the execution," he continues, "which, whether true or false, deserves to be cited. It is to be found in one of those interesting reports which the Venetian envoys (accredited to England) made to the Senate of Venice of all matters of note. In 1654 the Venetian Senate sent an embassy to this country, and in 1656 the then Ambassador, Giovanni Sagredo, laid before them a report of the Great Rebellion, its causes and results, and the character of the Protectorate. 'The scaffold,' the Ambassador says, 'was raised level with a window of the Palace and hung with black velvet; and (because they were afraid His Majesty might resist the execution of the sentence and might refuse to lay his neck on the block) two iron rings were fastened to the foot of the scaffold, through which a cord was passed, to be placed round His Majesty's neck, and so to compel him to extend his neck to the axe, should he refuse to bow to the fatal blow.' He added," concluded Lord Carnarvon, "that the King warned in time, agreed to yield to the law of necessity, and died 'with constancy.' This account, so far as it goes," says Lord Carnarvon, "neither impairs nor confirms Mr. Palgrave's theory."

On the day after this letter of Lord Carnarvon's had appeared in the *Times* came one on the same subject from Lord Rosebery, dated 13th May, 1890, and in this letter his lordship says: "I have a picture in Scotland of the execution painted by an eye-witness. He was a Dutchman who left England immediately afterwards, declaring that he could not live in a country which had killed its King. The painting represents the King in the attitude suggested by Mr. Palgrave. The head had just been cut off, and is being held up by an executioner who is in a mask resembling human features, not a black mask. In

each corner are medallions," continued his lordship, "one a portrait of Charles, one a portrait of Lord Fairfax holding an axe, one of the King walking to Whitehall, and one of the people dipping their handkerchiefs in his blood."

[I am now able, by the kindness and courtesy of Lord Rosebery, to place before you a copy of this print, already referred to, which his lordship has been good enough to allow me to have copied from his collection at Dalmeny.]

On 14th May, 1890, a certain Mr. Louis Fagan continued this correspondence, and wrote that "in a perfect diurnal of some passages in Parliament, and the daily proceedings of the Army, under His Excellency the Lord Fairfax, dated Tuesday, 30th January, 1648, page 2317, line 21, we read as follows: 'After which the King, stooping down, laid his necke upon the blocke, and after a little pause, stretching forth his hands, the executioner, at one blow, severed his head from his body.'"

It will be remembered that iron staples were mentioned just now which had been driven into the sides of the block in order to bind down the King in the event of his showing any resistance, and the suggestion has been made that from these staples, or the marks of them the block might be identified if it is still in existence.

Again, *à propos* of the block, an anonymous correspondent, "D.B.," in "Notes and Queries" (Third Series, Vol. XI., January, 1867) writes: "I was lately informed," he says, "on seeing a picture of a Lady Jane, that she was married first to Bishop Juxon, Chaplain of Charles I., and that on her death at Little Compton, near Chipping Norton, the block on which Charles I. had his head cut off was sold."

Some time ago a further correspondence took place in the *Morning Post*, but this time regarding the present whereabouts of the axe which was used when King Charles was beheaded.

A certain Mr. William Chapman stated that Giles Dekker was the executioner, that the axe was granted to *him* by Parliament, and that upon his death the instrument went to his son, who exhibited it at his tavern in Lambeth. This fact, having come to the King's ears, the axe was confiscated, and James II. became its custodian, who, when he fled the kingdom, took the axe with him to France.

Upon his death, Louis XIV. became the possessor of the instrument, and later on it fell into the hands of the Regent Orleans, who sold it to Ferdinand King of Naples. Finally the relic was deposited in the Museo Borbonico at Naples, where it still remains.

It would appear, however, from another correspondent that nothing is known whatever of the axe at the Museum in question, and that it could never have been deposited there; other correspondents also dispute Mr. Chapman's story, and we may, I think, conclude that *if* the instrument were at the Museum at Naples, proof of the fact would have been forthcoming.

I now conclude my lecture of to-day. I am sorry not to have been able to give you more illustrations bearing upon our subject, for they always lighten a lecture so considerably; but then, where is it possible to obtain such views? I have, however, done my best, and I hope you will consider that I have been fairly successful in my efforts.

What views you have seen have been taken from prints, except in three instances, belonging to the collection here. These have been most generously lent to me for reproduction by the Council of this Institution. Of the three special views referred to, two are from pictures by that well-known artist and Royal Academician, Mr. Ernest Crofts, and the third is from a picture in the possession of Lord Rosebery, and I wish to express my most grateful thanks not only to his lordship for his kindness in sending down to me from Scotland that picture, a copy of which you have seen, but also to Lord Winterstoke for his kindness in allowing a photograph to be taken of one of Mr. Crofts' pictures, "The Funeral of King Charles I. at Windsor," which has been given by his lordship to the Bristol Art Gallery.

I feel much indebted also to Mr. Ernest Crofts for permission to reproduce his two pictures here—the one already mentioned and a second one entitled "The Execution of King Charles I. in Front of Whitehall," and which, as I am led to understand, he still retains in his own possession.

You will allow me, I feel sure, before concluding, once again to assure the Council of this Institution how greatly I appreciate the honour which they have done me in asking me to undertake this delightfully pleasant duty this afternoon, and I should further wish to thank and express to Lieut.-Colonel Leatham my indebtedness to him for finding the time to preside on this occasion, and may I add also to you for the attention which you have given me.

Captain B. E. SARGEANT (12th Battalion The London Regiment):—I should very much like to ask Canon Sheppard if he can give an explanation of the disagreement which exists as to the date of the execution. One often comes across the date 1648 and also that of 1649, on old engravings and documents, and that is a question of very considerable importance when trying to identify the executioner. Richard Brandon, it is recorded, was paid £30 for the execution within an hour of the deed; he went home to Rosemary Lane and offered the money to his wife, who declined it, at the same time expressing her contempt for him at what he had done. It is, moreover, recorded that all Brandon's friends were very hostile towards him afterwards. He fell sick and gradually wasted away, dying on the 20th June, 1649. I do not think you mentioned the date of his death, sir, in your paper.

Canon SHEPPARD:—No, I did not; it is news to me.

Captain SARGEANT:—His death seems to have been entirely due to the matter of the execution of the King preying on his mind. He was buried in Whitechapel Churchyard, and on his tombstone the date of 20th June, 1649, was inscribed. The question of the disagreement of the

date in old documents is rather interesting in that connection, because it seems that Brandon's death was more or less directly the result of the execution, especially if it occurred only four months after the death of the King, which was in 1649.

CANON SHEPPARD :—That is very interesting. I have always been led to understand that 1649 is a mistake, and that the real date is 1648.

CAPTAIN SARGEAUNT :—Do you think that the 20th June, 1649, on Brandon's tombstone was a mistake, and meant for 20th June, 1648?

CANON SHEPPARD :—No doubt 1649 is right for Brandon's death, but I do not think there is any doubt that the execution took place in 1648. The fact that Brandon died on the 20th of June, 1649, would rather bear out the fact that the execution was in 1648. All the old historians, whose books I have looked up, give 1648. I am very grateful to you for telling me what I did not know.

COMMANDER W. F. CABORNE, C.B. :—How is it that nearly all the historians record 1649 as the date of the death of King Charles I.? I have a facsimile of the warrant, which is dated 1648; but I have noticed many times in other histories that the date is recorded as 1649.

CAPTAIN SARGEAUNT :—I think 1649 is the more usual date. Lord Rosebery's picture of the execution, which Canon Sheppard showed to us, is dated 1649.

CANON SHEPPARD :—That is very curious indeed; it puts me up a greater tree than ever. I am afraid I cannot explain it. The few books that I have looked up give the date as 1648.

MR. CHALLIS :—Is not the explanation with regard to the discrepancy in the date the fact that the official year commenced in March? so that the months from January to March might sometimes be put in one year and sometimes in another. Whether the date was 1648 or 1649 depends on the way that was reckoned.