

**BOSCOBEL; OR, THE HISTORY OF THE
MOST MIRACULOUS PRESERVATION
OF KING CHARLES II. AFTER THE
BATTLE OF WORCESTER, SEPTEMBER
THE THIRD, 1651**

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Boscobel; or, The history of the most miraculous preservation of King Charles II. after the battle of Worcester, September the third, 1651 by Thomas Blount

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THOMAS BLOUNT

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BOSCOBEL



Arms granted to Col Carlos.

UNIV. OF
TORONTO

BOSCOBEL

OR THE HISTORY OF THE MOST
MIRACULOUS PRESERVATION OF
KING CHARLES II.
AFTER THE BATTLE OF WORCESTER
SEPTEMBER THE THIRD

1651

BY THOMAS BLOUNT

To which is added the KING's own
account of his adventures, dictated to
Mr. SAMUEL PEPYS

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION
AND BIBLIOGRAPHY BY
CHARLES G. THOMAS

WITH AN ARMORIAL FRONTISPIECE BY
C. W. SHERBORN

LONDON
TYLSTON AND EDWARDS
1894

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INTRODUCTION

ON September the 3rd, 1651, was fought at Worcester the last battle of the Civil War. A few weeks earlier Charles the Second had suddenly broken up his camp at Stirling and had crossed the Border at the head of 12,000 men, in the desperate hope of raising England against the Parliament. Meeting with little opposition on his march southward, but with no success in the enlistment of recruits, he occupied Worcester on August the 22nd, and on the following day was proclaimed king. On the 28th, Cromwell, who had followed rapidly from Scotland, appeared before Worcester with 30,000 men, and five days later, on the anniversary of Dunbar,—his lucky day—assaulted the city with overwhelming force. All day and far into the night the fight went on.

The overthrow of the Royalist army was complete: it is said that 3000 men were killed, and 5000 taken prisoners. Late in the evening, after a gallant but fruitless attempt to rally his broken forces, Charles rode off on the road to Kidderminster with sixty of his most trusty adherents.

The story of his subsequent adventures is, perhaps, the most romantic episode in the chequered history of the House of Stuart. No pains were spared by the Parliament to effect his capture. A reward of £1000 was offered for his apprehension; those who should harbour or assist him in any way were proclaimed guilty of high treason; magistrates were ordered to arrest all unknown persons found within their jurisdiction; and a strict watch was kept on the passages of rivers and at the sea-port towns. Nevertheless, Charles vanished so completely, that before the tidings came of his safe arrival in France, it was currently believed that after his flight from

Worcester he had been killed by peasants ignorant of his rank.

Something he owed to the route which chance led him to take. The common opinion was that he would endeavour to retreat to Scotland with the remnant of the army he had brought thence. Six days after the battle Colonel Birch wrote from Manchester to the Speaker of the House of Commons :

‘I think the Scots’ king came this way with
‘ Lieutenant-General Lesley and Lieutenant-
‘ General Middleton, who were taken on Black-
‘ stone Edge in the moors betwixt Karsdale and
‘ Halifax, and we believe that he escaped towards
‘ Yorkshire in some disguise. All search is
‘ made for him here that may be amongst the
‘ prisoners, but he cannot be heard of.’

Charles, however, had quickly decided that to retreat northward with a band of beaten and demoralised men was to court capture or destruction. His first plan was to push on with a few