

England—The Beginnings of Democracy

“Democracy, democracy!” Jack said. “Why do we have to hear so much stuff about democracy?”

“How can you ever hear too much about democracy?” asked Mr. Miller.

“Why should I care about democracy outside the United States?” asked Jack. “We have a democracy. Isn’t that enough?”

“Well, Jack, what does democracy mean to you?”

“Come on, Mr. Miller. I know that democracy means that the people rule.”

“Oh, you mean that the people all get together and pass laws.”

“Now you’re saying impossible things!” said Jack. “I know that there are too many of us to do that. We elect people who make our laws for us. You would say they represent us.”

“That’s great, Jack! What else do you know about democracy?”

“No one person can take over. No person can become a dictator or a tyrant,” replied Jack. “It’s just not possible under our Constitution!”

“Where do you think all of this came from?” asked Mr. Miller.

“Oh, we had a revolution about 200 years ago. We beat the English and won the right to govern ourselves.”

“Believe it or not, Jack, but we owe a lot to the English. Many years before our Revolution, the English kings ran their government. They controlled their people. The king’s power was total, or absolute. His word was law. He ran a one-man show.”

“There must have been a lot of changes,” said Jack thoughtfully. “How did the English kings lose their power? How did England become a democracy? And what does that have to do with the United States?”

“Slow down, Jack,” smiled Mr. Miller. “Read the unit on democracy in England. You’ll soon see how it all happened.”

1. Forcing a King's Hand

In our unit on the Renaissance we saw that many changes were taking place in Europe in the arts, in the sciences, and in religion. People wanted to know more about themselves and the world around them. They looked and studied and realized how little they really knew. There was so much more to discover. For example, how should large numbers of men and women be governed? Should people accept the decisions of kings merely because they were kings? Should any one man on earth be all-powerful?

In the early 13th century, England was ruled by King John. We should not be surprised that he didn't care about the average English man and woman. His control was total. A person lived or died because of a nod of the head or a wave of the hand by John. You may be surprised, however, that even the nobles or upper classes were afraid of the king. He was unpredictable. His ideas changed from day to day. The nobles' lives, lands, and fortunes were in the king's hands.

In 1215 the English nobles refused to stand any longer for John's mistakes and taxes. They insisted that there must be limits to what an English king could do. They forced John to sign the *Magna Carta* (MAG-nuh KAHR-tuh), the Great Charter. The powers of the king were no longer absolute.

In this story four English nobles and a Frenchman discuss King John and the Great Charter. Ask yourself why King John agreed to sign away some of his powers. Did he do the proper thing? How did the *Magna Carta* help the common people of England?

Egham, 1215

(A Frenchman enters the dining room of an inn. The room is hot and noisy. The Frenchman hesitates for a moment. Then he walks over to a table where four English noblemen are eating dinner.)

PHILIPPE. Good evening, gentlemen. May I join your group?

BARON HOWARD. Yes. Please sit down. Your speech and clothes tell us you are French. It isn't often that English barons have a chance to speak to a Frenchman. Join us for dinner.

PHILIPPE. Thank you very much. *(He pulls a chair up to the table. After several minutes of exchanging introductions, the Frenchman is still not sure of how to begin. He is a stranger in a foreign land, yet he wants to ask his hosts about recent events in England.)*

PHILIPPE *(hesitating)*. What's this I hear about your good King John?

BARON ROGER. What do you mean, "What's this I hear?" There are so many things he's done. Who knows where to begin with our good king? If we wanted to talk—

PHILIPPE. I meant about John and the Magna Carta. *(He pushes a pitcher of ale toward the English barons.)* What is it all about?

BARON ROGER. A better question might be, What's King John all about? He's dug himself into a deep hole. He did too many things unworthy of a king. John *had* to sign the Magna Carta.

PHILIPPE. Well, what did he do?

BARON REGINALD. You name it and he has done it. Murder? He did away with his nephew! Divorce? He's your man! Why not marry someone else's fiancée?

BARON ROGER. Yes, and the man he took the woman away from was his best friend. How do you like that?

PHILIPPE. I don't like it one bit. But shouldn't kings have more power and rights than people like ourselves?

BARON EDWARD. Maybe kings should have more power, but there have to be limits on what anyone can do. Because a man is a king is no reason to let him do whatever he pleases. He had no right to raise so many taxes and try to force us to pay them.

PHILIPPE. But didn't he need the money to fight his wars?

BARON ROGER. Yes, he needed money, so that he could lose more land and more men to your French armies.

BARON HOWARD. And don't forget the run-in he had with Pope Innocent III!

PHILIPPE. What was that all about?

BARON REGINALD. It was a mess. The question was, Who was to be Archbishop of Canterbury, the most important churchman in England? Innocent took a firm position and insisted upon his



"John had to sign the Magna Carta."

own choice. King John had other ideas and refused to listen to the pope. But Innocent answered him by cutting English people off from all the blessings of the Catholic Church. Then to be certain that John understood him, he also excommunicated our beloved king. John could no longer be a member of the Catholic Church. But that didn't scare John. I guess he figures that he's doomed anyway!

BARON HOWARD. There's nothing like using force to solve a problem. Innocent asked your king to invade England. That made John see the light. He backed off and accepted the pope's archbishop.

PHILIPPE. Your King John doesn't sound like a good person. (*Philippe looks carefully around the crowded room and whispers to the Englishmen.*) Why didn't you get rid of him?

BARON ROGER (*angrily*). Careful, Frenchman! He is our king. We are pledged to support him. But he went too far. He had to understand that there is a moral law. There are certain things that even kings cannot do!

BARON REGINALD. We had to show him that we have rights. If he had not agreed, then we would have gotten rid of him.

PHILIPPE. But how does the Magna Carta put the king in his place?

BARON HOWARD. I'll try to explain. Let's take taxes. Taxes can be ordered only by the king's Great Council, not by the king himself. He can ask for taxes, but the Council must approve them. And the barons are the Council.

PHILIPPE. Suppose the king controls the Council?

BARON ROGER. The Magna Carta takes care of that too. We have made certain that every one of the barons will be called to meet at a certain time in a certain place for a definite purpose. We will meet 40 days after getting the call for the meeting.

PHILIPPE. Is that all?

BARON ROGER. If we are to be fined, only people of our own class—our peers or equals—can fine us.

PHILIPPE. Sounds great, but haven't you forgotten the common people?

BARON REGINALD. Absolutely not! There's something for them too. Suppose a merchant, a free peasant, or even a serf does something wrong. Now he may be fined only according to how serious his crime is. His neighbors will decide on the fine. But no

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

- A. Write T for each statement that is true and O for each statement that is an opinion.
1. The Magna Carta was the best thing that ever happened to England.
 2. King John did not care for the English people.
 3. English nobles should not be afraid of a king.
 4. English nobles forced King John to sign the Magna Carta.
 5. The Frenchman in the story felt that kings should have more power than ordinary people.
 6. The English nobles should have asked the common people to help them replace King John.
 7. Guilty people were to be punished according to the seriousness of their crimes.
 8. According to the Magna Carta, a merchant's goods and a serf's tools could not be taken away as punishment.
- B. Which statements show how the Magna Carta started England on the road to democracy?
1. The king alone could not order new taxes.
 2. Every baron had a chance to become king of England.
 3. The size of fines to be paid was decided by the guilty person's peers.
 4. Trials of accused people were to be held as soon as possible.
 5. The king could interfere with the Church.
 6. English people were given freedom and protection from evil kings.
 7. Widows could be forced to marry again.
 8. People would be tried by members of their own class.
- C. The English are very proud of the Magna Carta. It limited the powers of the king. Does the United States need a Magna Carta to limit the power of the president? Explain.

ACTIVITIES AND INQUIRIES

1. Imagine that you are one of the barons responsible for writing the Magna Carta. Your job is to make a list of the powers of the king that hurt the people. List these powers.
2. Look at the illustration on page 86. Describe what is happening. Write your own title for the picture.

2. The Right to Rule

A year after he signed the Magna Carta, John died (1216). He had been a bad king. He is remembered chiefly because the Magna Carta had been forced upon him. The English people now knew that law was more important than the king.

Something was still missing from the English government, however. There was no representative group of people who would meet, discuss, and pass laws. At last, in 1265, Simon de Montfort called together a *parliament*. For the first time, representatives of the minor nobles were able to meet with others. In 1295 King Edward I called together a group called the Model Parliament. This group served as a model for later Parliaments. Edward's Parliament included bishops, barons, knights, and town representatives. Later the first two groups formed the upper house of England's Parliament, which is now called the House of Lords. The last two groups became the lower house, or the House of Commons.

In the story of Joan of Arc; we saw how the Hundred Years' War raged during the 14th and 15th centuries. The English Parliament used this war as an excuse to increase its power. It insisted once again that kings must get the approval of Parliament to raise new taxes. (Wars cannot be fought without a great deal of money.) The Hundred Years' War was followed by a bloody civil war between two groups of Englishmen. This war was called the War of the Roses. At last, in 1485, Henry Tudor, a member of the house of Lancaster, became King Henry VII, and the power of Parliament was once again limited by a strong ruler. In fact, during his last 20 years, Henry called a meeting of Parliament only once! Parliament had become a rubber stamp; Henry VII controlled it completely.

Elizabeth I was the last of the Tudors. During her rule (1558–1603), the Renaissance came to England. She was a

very powerful ruler who had the good sense to ask for the approval of Parliament and the people.

Now we turn to the subject of this story, James I. The first of the Stuart kings, he came to England from Scotland. He was crowned a few weeks after the death of Elizabeth. At first James was very popular, but his popularity soon dimmed when the people saw how weak and peculiar he was. He insisted that he ruled by divine right. It was God's will that he be king of England. He was certain that whatever he did was right. He never thought he might be wrong. However, English people found it hard to accept James' disregard for Parliament and English common law.

James writes to his adviser, Buckingham, and expresses his feelings about England and his rule. He wonders why he is not popular.

Ask yourself why James' idea of divine right made him unpopular. Is there such a thing as the divine right of kings? Why was the creation of Parliament so important to English democracy?

London, 1612

DEAR BUCKINGHAM,

Perhaps you can explain to me why so many Englishmen hate me. I was brought down from Scotland to rule England. Believe me, it was not my idea to leave Scotland. I was happy there; the people appreciated me.

Here in England, I have studied and worked hard to be a good king. I have had a new translation made of our holy Bible. What was my reward? That fool Guy Fawkes sets a murderous charge of blasting powder in the Parliament building to blow my body to pieces. People call it the Gunpowder Plot, but I call it the King James Plot.

Evil men wanted me dead so that they could replace me with a Catholic king. They didn't care whether I was good or bad. They did not like my religion. But God would not allow me to die. Thanks to him, the plot was discovered. I asked Fawkes how he could plot to kill so many innocent people. The wretch replied, "A

dangerous disease required a dangerous remedy"! I am dangerous! I who work and sweat for my English people! I knew I was right when I ordered all Catholic priests out of England. They were all plotting against me. Not one of them could be trusted!

For years I heard that King Henry IV of France called me a wise fool. It hurt to be called a fool, but I kept the hurt to myself. No doubt you heard what happened to poor King Henry last August. He was stabbed to death! Now who is the fool? Tell those people out there that fools do not live too long on the throne of kings!

You say that some Englishmen dislike me because I insist I have been placed on the throne of England by God. But is it not obvious that this must be so? Could I have lived through the Gunpowder Plot? Did not God protect me against last year's plague in London? People were dying all around me, but I lived. It was God's will.

Is it not clear that I am God's messenger on earth? It is my duty to carry out his wishes. Anyone who argues with what I say and do is denying God. You cannot dispute what God says. If you do, you lack respect for God, and you know that that is blasphemy! That is why all those who plot against me must die. They must be tortured, they must be hanged, they must be quartered! Oh, how I would love to do that to all of those traitors in Parliament. I talk to them, but they do not listen.

You write that people in England want laws to be passed by Parliament. They object to my issuing *proclamations* (announcements) without the consent of Parliament. They say this is not the way things are done in England. They accuse me of being a dictator and a tyrant because I must do things my own way in my own time. Tell the English people that they do not know what it is like to deal with members of Parliament. They are impossible.

Members of Parliament try to tell *me*, the king of England, what to do. They refuse to accept my divine right to be king. They seem to think that they have as much power as I do. The fools keep looking back to Magna Carta, as though I should be guided by what happened 400 years ago. Why should I have to worry about raising money? Why should I have to ask Parliament for taxes? Why does Parliament have to meet at all?

Why won't they let me spend as I please? Why can't I decide how much the government of England needs? When Elizabeth was queen, she threw money around. She bought jeweled swords for

her lover. Who had the nerve to tell her to stop, or even to question her? Why do they pick on me? Why can't they trust me the way they trusted Elizabeth?

I think, Buckingham, that Parliament too often forgets who is king. Well, I am the king. I have the right to make decisions and to tell my people what to do. I did not want wheat wasted in making starch. I forbade it. I felt that there were too many buildings in London. I ordered that no more be built. What's wrong with my ordering that all Englishmen take an oath of allegiance to me? Are they afraid to show their loyalty to their king? I insist upon it!

Do you remember the scene at the palace in 1610 when Francis Bacon unrolled a petition from Parliament? The thing was four feet square, and he could scarcely handle it. I was sorry, but I could not help laughing. Parliament wanted me to stop issuing my own proclamations. Parliament is afraid that my orders will become as strong as the common law.

It was all nonsense, but I pretended to agree. I am sure that you will agree that a king's proclamations are necessary in times of emergency. Where there is danger, shall I wait for laws of Parliament? Should the king not have the power to govern his country in any emergency? And you know, Buckingham, there are many emergencies in a king's life!

Chief Justice Coke said that the common law is above both Parliament and the king. I refuse to accept that decision. I have said it many times, and I will say it again: The king is above Parliament. The king must be above the law.

I shall judge all, but none may judge me.

God be with you.

JAMES I

King of England

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

A. Write T for each statement that is true and F for each statement that is false.

1. In England, a group of people who meet and pass laws is called a Parliament.
2. The first Parliament was called by Simon de Montfort.

3. In the Model Parliament, there were three houses: the rich, the poor, and the nobles.
 4. Under Henry VII, Parliament met at least ten times a year.
 5. Queen Elizabeth I asked Parliament to approve her requests for taxes.
 6. King James I said that a king was never wrong.
 7. James was killed in the Gunpowder Plot.
 8. James felt that he was more important than Parliament.
- B.** *Do you think that King James would have agreed or disagreed with the statements below? Write A for each statement King James would have agreed with and N for each statement he would not have agreed with.*
1. The king rules because God wants him to rule.
 2. Guy Fawkes was right in saying that King James was dangerous.
 3. I am happy to be a Catholic king.
 4. I am God's messenger on earth.
 5. I really enjoy working with the members of Parliament.
 6. It is only fair that I ask Parliament for tax money.
 7. Parliament is always picking on me.
 8. All Englishmen must swear that they are loyal to the king.
- C.** Would King James be successful as a president of the United States today? Explain. How do you think Congress would deal with him?

ACTIVITIES AND INQUIRIES

1. Go to the library. Prepare a report on a ruler of England such as Edward I, Henry VII, Henry VIII, or Elizabeth I. Compare that king or queen with James I. Who was a better ruler? Why?
2. Pretend that you are Lord Buckingham. Write a letter to King James I. Explain why so many Englishmen hate him.
3. Bring in pictures of England in the 17th century, particularly of London. Be prepared to describe what you see. Was King James right that there were too many buildings in London? Explain. Try to find out why there were so many buildings in London.
4. Imagine that you are a member of Parliament at the time of James I. What do you think of your king? Why? Do you agree that your king is above both Parliament and the law? Explain.

3. A King Is Executed

James I died in 1625. Few English people were sorry. Many hoped that his son, Charles I, would be a successful replacement. Charles worked long hours, did not waste money (as his father had), and even looked like a king. But the job of being a successful king was simply too much for him. Before long, the people knew that he could not and would not understand them.

Charles believed even more strongly in divine right than his father had. He could not stand anyone who opposed him. He fought constantly with Parliament. For their part, the members of Parliament did not trust him. Charles' wife was a Catholic, and Parliament was afraid that Charles would convert to Catholicism and possibly turn England away from the Protestant faith.

For a period of 15 years, Charles struggled with Parliament. It refused to obey him. In return, he did not permit it to sit. In fact, for 11 years, he did not call Parliament at all. He ruled on his own, without the approval and support of Parliament. But he was able to raise enough money to keep his government going, fight wars, and live the way kings were expected to live.

By 1640 Charles was forced to turn to Parliament for money. In return for taxes, he agreed that the Parliament would meet at least once every three years. It could not be *dissolved* (sent home) unless it agreed. But Charles would sign anything without the slightest intention of keeping his word. He even personally tried to arrest the leaders of the House of Commons who were against him. Parliament now knew that Charles would not obey the law. Promises were empty words.

A civil war followed (1642–1645). The army of the king (the Cavaliers) was defeated by the forces of Oliver Crom-

well (the Roundheads). The king was finally captured, tried, and sentenced to die.

In this story, we find King Charles preparing to face his executioner. Ask yourself whether Charles really had to die. What, if anything, was accomplished by his execution? Was Charles really a *martyr* (a person who gives up his or her life for a noble cause)?

The Tower of London, January 1649

"What time is it, Father?" asked King Charles.

"We have plenty of time," said the priest. "Have no fear."

"Fear!" replied Charles. "Don't be a fool. I am the king of England. I will not be afraid . . . not even when I walk up to the head-chopper. I know that I will soon pass through the gates of heaven."

"Perhaps, sire, you might have been better off if you had been a little afraid."

"Afraid of what? I was—I am—the king. I am God's representative on earth. God walked beside me; he guided me."

"We are all human," said the priest. "We all make mistakes. Can you not understand that even a king cannot be perfect?"

"You are right, Father. Perhaps, I have made a few mistakes. But do I belong in jail because Parliament would not agree with me? Shall my neck feel the ax because Parliament would not give me the money to hold court? Were they not traitors when they refused me the money to fight the war against Spain in 1627?"

"Sire, you must have known that Parliament represented the English people. You should have been more understanding. Why couldn't you give in—at least some of the time?"

"You are like all the rest of them!" answered the king angrily. "To you, I am just an ordinary man. To Parliament, I was sometimes less than a man. It needed someone to push around. There I was, the king of England, and it treated me like a fool. It made things as difficult as possible for me to reign. Parliament never listened when I asked for something."

"Your Highness, please do not excite yourself."

"You are right. I will try to calm down. You want me to admit

that I made some mistakes in my lifetime. I confess that I have been thinking of my life during the past week. Each year passes before me in review. I think—where did I go wrong? Where were my mistakes? I was—I am—a king. I was sent by God to do a job. Perhaps I was too sure of myself. Perhaps I kept myself too much apart from my people. But then I could never get too close to anyone. Perhaps I listened too much to my advisers. I thought that Buckingham and the others wished me well. . . . Now, I wonder—”

“Think of how you might have changed your feelings about Parliament,” suggested the priest. “Could you not have tried to get along better with some of the members? Could you not have understood that all men are jealous of their rights? Would you be feeling the ax if you had been willing to give in a little here and there?”

“But, Father, I gave and gave. I promised and promised. What more could I have done? They were interested only in driving a hard bargain. Shame the king; push his face in the mud! Did I not agree to the Petition of Right?”

“Yes, and it was the high spot of your rule as king. Was it so difficult to agree to these things?”

“Of course not,” said Charles. “I agreed with Parliament. I would never order a man imprisoned without a fair trial. But they would not believe me! They would not trust me! They would not accept my promise to do these things. They had to write it all down and take those powers away from me! Why did they have to make a long list of the rights of Englishmen? Habeas corpus (HAY-bee-us KORE-pus), where an accused person must be charged in open court, sounds important. But is it necessary? Bail or freedom for a prisoner brought to court on a writ of habeas corpus? Ridiculous! All that does is encourage more crime. Steal and be free! Is this to be the basis of English law?”

“Do you really mean all that, Your Highness? I’m sure that you know as well as I do that these are guarantees that must be given to every free Englishman. Innocent men must be kept out of jail; all must be given a fair trial. This is a nation of laws, not of men. Your promise was not enough! Men come and go. They say and do different things from year to year, from day to day. The law remains. It is our God-given right!”

"Your God-given right!" shouted the king. "A listener might think that you were going to lose your head, and that I was the priest. I can see that it's a waste of time talking to you. I could not even levy a tax without the approval of Parliament."

"Your Majesty, talking to me is not a waste of time. I understand how upset you are. You have gone through life feeling that people—especially those in Parliament—were using you. You fought constantly. You were—are—the king. Did it never occur to you that you could ever have been wrong about Parliament—just a little wrong?"

"Members of Parliament are power grabbers," said the king. "They fought me and I fought back. Would I be here if they weren't out to steal my powers? Who are Cromwell and all the others? Did they fight me to protect Englishmen? No sir, they are rebels, traitors! They are mad for power. They have overthrown the king, the monarchy, the representative of God on earth! And Cromwell is the worst of the lot. I would not want to be Cromwell when he tries to get into heaven!"

"Your Highness has a way of turning things around. You signed the Petition of Right. You knew very well it said that tax bills had to be passed by Parliament. How then could you expect to raise money when you dismissed Parliament? You would not let it meet for years."

"I refused to meet with traitors," said the king.

"But you promised," replied the priest.

"If you promised me a happy day on earth tomorrow, should I believe you? I promised Parliament what it wanted to believe."

"Sire, I give up. You are the king. You will do as you wish," said the priest wearily. He got up to leave the cell.

Suddenly there was a harsh shout from outside the cell. "Get ready, Your Highness! Your time has come!"

Charles looked at the priest. "Will you stay with me, Father? I am cold and weary."

"I will stay, if you wish."

"What happens today is against the will of God," insisted Charles, for the last time.

"No," thought the priest. "Today a tyrant loses his head."

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

A. *King Charles and the priest have many different points of view. Decide who made or might have made the remarks that follow. Write KC for each statement that the king made or might have made and PR for each statement that the priest made or might have made.*

1. I am not afraid to die.
2. No person is perfect.
3. Parliament represents the English people.
4. Members of Parliament are power grabbers.
5. You should have tried to get along better with Parliament.
6. No person should be sent to jail without a fair trial.
7. Habeas corpus encourages crime.
8. Keep innocent people out of jail.
9. Cromwell is a rebel and a traitor.

B. *Match each item in Column A with its answer in Column B.*

| COLUMN A | COLUMN B |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. habeas corpus | (a) followers of the king |
| 2. James I | (b) Roundhead who became ruler of England |
| 3. Charles I | (c) fought between Cavaliers and Roundheads |
| 4. civil war in England | (d) right of an accused person to hear charges against him |
| 5. Cavaliers | (e) granted right of habeas corpus |
| 6. Oliver Cromwell | (f) father of Charles I |
| 7. Roundheads | (g) English king who lost his head |
| 8. Petition of Right | (h) followers of those against the king |

C. *Some people today say that we have so much crime because our leaders are too weak. They are said to worry more about the rights of accused criminals than the rights of the victims. Would Charles I serve as a good model for the leaders of our country in the fight against crime? Explain your answer.*

ACTIVITIES AND INQUIRIES

1. Use each of the following key terms in a sentence.
bail Parliament writ
habeas corpus petition
2. Go to the library. Prepare a report on either the Cavaliers or the Roundheads. Would you be willing to fight for that side? Explain.
3. Look for pictures of Cavaliers and Roundheads. Bring them to class. Be prepared to talk about why they dressed and looked different from each other.
4. Imagine that you are present at the trial of Charles I. You are Charles' lawyer. Prepare his defense. Now pretend that you are Charles' accuser. Prepare the case against him.
5. Suppose Charles had been told that his life would be spared if he agreed to certain things. Write down what you think those things might be.

4. The Glorious Revolution

Soon after Charles I was executed, the monarchy and the House of Lords were abolished. The government of England was changed to that of a free *Commonwealth*. In theory it was a republic, but in reality the army was in control. Oliver Cromwell was the head of the army. Therefore, he was the ruler of England. He was the man who had crushed and executed Charles because he was a tyrant. Now Cromwell turned around and did some of the things for which Charles had been put to death. Cromwell became the Lord Protector—a military dictator. He believed, as the English kings had, in his divine right to rule. He felt that God had called upon him to rule England.

After Cromwell died, the people were happy to see a king once again. Charles II, son of Charles I, became king. Parliament went back to its usual pattern of struggling with the king about money matters.

Charles II was followed by his brother James II in 1685. He was sincere and honest, but also narrow and stubborn. He was very much like his father, Charles I. He had no idea what people wanted and never tried to find out. He had decided to become an absolute ruler and restore the Roman Catholic Church to England. But the English people found these two things unacceptable. They would not agree to be ruled by an all-powerful Catholic king.

Leaders of Parliament felt that drastic steps had to be taken. In 1688 they asked William of Orange (the Netherlands) to come and rule England. William was married to James' Protestant daughter, Mary, and was acceptable to the English people. William landed in England and defeated James' armies. William and Mary were offered the English crown as equal rulers. This marked a very important step in the march of English democracy. Parliament had shown that it had the rights to crown and remove the crown of the country's rulers.

In this chapter, William and Mary discuss with John Locke their feelings about coming from the Netherlands to rule England. Locke was a famous writer who had opposed James II. Ask yourself why William and Mary were willing to come to England. How did their becoming king and queen affect the theory of divine right? Why is this change in the English government called the Glorious Revolution?

London, 1690

"Sire," said John Locke, "I must tell you how much I appreciate your allowing me to come back to England with you."

"It's nothing at all," replied William of Orange. "After all, this is your home. You were forced to leave England by bloody King James. Besides, I am happy that you can advise me about things here in England. This is my first visit, you know."

"I'm sure that Queen Mary can give you all the help you need about England," said Locke. "As for me, you summed it up when you said 'Bloody King James.' Without your protection, there would have been one less loyal Englishman on this earth. He meant to kill me—along with all other protesters!"

"Yes, I'm told that he killed at least 300 men," said the king. "They said that he enjoyed watching prisoners being tortured."

"And don't forget the thousand or more shipped off as slaves to the West Indies," added John Locke.

"I don't think that King James cared at all about England and the English people!" laughed William.

"William, do you really care about England?" asked Queen Mary, as she entered the room. Locke wisely left by another door.

"How can you ask me a question like that?" William said. "Would I have left my beautiful home in Holland to come to this God-forsaken land if I didn't care?"

"You certainly would, William. You certainly would. Power is your life—power and money. England is where you can find both. What an easy way you found to line up an ally against your enemy, France!"

"Nonsense," replied the king. "I came to England because I was asked to come by Parliament. I forced no one to accept me!"

"Accept you? Force you?" asked Mary. "Whom do you think you are talking to? You are king of England because I am the queen! I am the daughter of King James. Without me, you would be the third-rate king of a fourth-rate nation!"

"All right, then. You are the queen. But do you have to talk at me as though I'm an outsider? I am at least your equal on the throne. Your friend John Locke is always talking about liberty and equality. Why don't you start by practicing a little equality with your husband?"

"You may complain about John Locke all you want, but without his ideas, I doubt that you would ever have been asked to be king of England."

"Mary! Now you want me to say that Locke put me on the throne! You seem to forget that he wasn't even in England. He lived under my protection in Holland. I agreed to permit him to return to England."

"Don't be a fool, William. I am talking about his ideas. His brilliant mind found an acceptable excuse for you, a foreigner, to become ruler of England. That's why you are here!"

"You're going soft in the head!" shouted the king, his face purple with anger. "His ideas may be interesting, but they are not why I am here in England."

"All right, Mary, call your hero Locke back into the room. He's probably right outside the door listening."

John Locke entered the room. "Your majesties, did I hear my name mentioned?" he asked.

"Yes, John," said Queen Mary. "Perhaps you can help clear up a disagreement that the king and I are having. Why were we asked to come and rule England?"

"Your highnesses, may I explain? The people of England cannot allow any part of their government to be too strong. No one branch can do solely as it pleases. We cannot accept the tyranny of the Parliament, nor can we accept the tyranny of the crown. James had gone too far. We could not permit this. He had to go."

"Then," said Mary, "you are encouraging revolution, are you not?"

"No, I am not encouraging a revolution," said John Locke. "I am merely describing one that has already taken place. The king of England went far beyond the powers given him by the English

people. He abused the people's trust. Therefore, it was only fair that he lose his right to be king."

"Well spoken, Locke," said King William. "But where does this leave us?"

"It's very simple, Your Majesty," replied Locke with great patience. "James' powers were taken from him and given to you and Queen Mary."

"Then," said the queen, "this means that we have all the powers of my father, King James. Now we can do whatever we wish to do."

"I'm sorry to say no, you may not, Your Highness," replied Locke. "That would defeat the purpose of the revolution. Surely you remember the limits you placed upon your powers when you took over the throne?"

"We signed the paper willingly. Have we signed away too much of our power?"

"Not too much of your power," said Locke. "But just enough so that the people and the Parliament will not permit you to go too far."

"Are you sure that we haven't signed our lives away?" asked the queen.

"Not at all, Your Majesty. You merely agreed that Parliament will have certain powers. It will prevent all future kings and queens from going too far. The Bill of Rights passed last year says that you cannot interfere in elections for members of Parliament. You cannot stop members from arguing with one another or having a debate. Now only Parliament has the power to tax and keep up the army. The English now have guarantees of jury trial and fair bail while waiting for trial. People may not be thrown in jail unless they have been found guilty in a court open to the public's ears and eyes."

"What you are saying, John, is that Parliament has as much power as we have. We are not as powerful as the kings and queens who once ruled this great country. It is a shock, but we will live up to our agreement. We can survive with it. But don't you really think that some future ruler of England will feel that the Parliament has gone too far?"

"No, Your Majesty," answered John Locke. "Parliament cannot go too far, and neither can the crown. Each part of the government has been given some powers by the people. The Parliament

and the crown have an agreement with the people to use their powers wisely. This is called the social contract. The powers that have been given can be taken back. Anything else is tyranny! This country will not stand for a king, or even a Parliament, that has gone too far!"

"This is a glorious country," said King William. "It deserves a glorious revolution!"

"I see that you are beginning to appreciate our England," said the queen. "Now do you understand that we are protecting the lives and happiness of future generations of English men and women?"

"Yes, I understand," said William.

"Your Majesty now sees that he too is part of the revolution!" said Locke.

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

A. Write T for each statement that is true, F for each statement that is false, and N for each statement that is not mentioned in the story.

1. Cromwell was the best ruler that England ever had.
2. Cromwell was both Lord Protector and military dictator of England.
3. Cromwell was the last king of England.
4. The leaders of Parliament asked William and Mary to rule England.
5. A queen should never have the same power as a king.
6. The rule of William and Mary was part of the Glorious Revolution.
7. John Locke was an American adviser to William and Mary.
8. Queen Mary felt that William agreed to become king of England because he loved the English people.
9. Locke believed in liberty and equality.
10. Locke was the most important English writer of all time.

B. *The Glorious Revolution was a big step forward on the road to democracy. Tell which statements show how in the Glorious Revolution England became more democratic by limiting one-man rule.*

1. Cromwell became a military dictator.
2. Parliament chose the new king and queen.
3. William and Mary were elected by the English people.

4. John Locke could speak freely to William and Mary.
 5. No one part of the English government could become too strong.
 6. The Bill of Rights protected the liberties of English men and women.
 7. The king and queen decided how long members of Parliament could debate.
 8. The king and queen could not interfere in elections for members of Parliament.
 9. Jury trials, fair bail, and habeas corpus were rights of the English people.
 10. The social contract was an agreement between John Locke and William and Mary.
- C. The United States form of government borrowed many ideas from the English form of government. Make a list of ideas that were borrowed from England.

ACTIVITIES AND INQUIRIES

1. In our story John Locke speaks of a social contract—an agreement between government and the people. Write a contract between the people of the United States and the government.
2. Here are a few statements taken from the English Bill of Rights.

It is not legal to raise taxes without the permission of Parliament.

English people may send petitions to the king.

Keeping a standing army in time of peace without the permission of Parliament is against the law.

Bail and fines should not be so high that people cannot pay them.

Why are these rights important to democracy? How would the lives of Americans be different if the English people had not gained these rights?

3. Pretend that you are William of Orange. You can become king of England if you sign the Bill of Rights. Write down your true feelings. Be ready to explain.
4. Imagine that you are Mary. Your father has lost his throne as king of England. How do you feel about your husband signing an agreement with Parliament, the enemies of your father?