

[Bruno Ryves]  
Mercurius rusticus  
Oxford  
1646

<i>

Mercurius Rusticus:  
OR,  
The Countries Complaint  
of the barbarous Out-rages  
Committed by the  
SECTARIES  
of this late flourishing Kingdome.

Together with  
A briefe CHRONOLOGIE of  
the Battails, Sieges, Conflicts, and  
other most remarkable passages  
from the beginning of this un=  
naturall Warre, to the  
25. of March, 1646.

JER. 15. 13.

*Thy substance and thy treasure will I give to the spoile  
without price, and that for all thy sins, even in all thy  
borders.*

Printed in the yeere,  
1646.

.....

<175>

MERCVRIVS  
RVSTICVS:  
OR,  
The Countries Complaint of  
the Sacriedges, Prophanations,  
and Plunderings, Committed by  
the SCHISMATIKUES  
ON THE  
Cathedrall Churches of  
this Kingdome.

MATTH. 21. 13.

*My house shall be called the house of Prayer, but  
ye have made it a den of Theeves.*

OXFORD,  
Printed in the Yeare,  
1646.

.....

182

Mercurius Rusticus, &c.

I.

*The Cathedrall Church of Canterbury horribly abused and  
defaced by the Rebels under the conduct of Col: Sandys  
and Sir Michael Livesey: Together with the miserable  
end of the said Colonel at Worcester, &c.*

The City of Canterbury, the Ancient seat of the  
Kings of Kent, while the Saxon Heptarchy flou=  
rished in this Island, was by King Ethelbert gi=

ven, together with the Royalty thereof to Augustine the first consecrated Arch-Bishop of the English Nation, who there fixed his seat for himselfe and his Successors: for whose sake Gregory the great, then Bishop of Rome, translated the Metropolitan dignity, together with the honour of the Pall, from London to Canterbury: This City (as the rest) had its share in that spoyle and devastation, which Warre and the sword, in the Innovations of Forraign nations and domestick broyls, brought upon it: the greatest impressions of desolation made on it, were in the Danish Warres, but the Normans succeeding, through the piety of Godly religious men, residing there, and the bounty and liberality of the Bishops, it did suddenly start up, not only into its primitive beauty, and Lustre, but outstripped all other places, as in the number and sumptuousnesse of Private houses, so especially in the magnificence and splendor of Religious houses: amongst which, two were most famous, far exceeding all the rest, viz. Christ-Church, & *hujus pertinacissimus æmulus* (as learned Cambden speaks) the eager rivall of Christ-Church, St. Augustines. This Church by the injury of Sacriledge, and

183

time, (two greedy devourers) lies almost buried in its own Ruines, presenting nothing else to the eye of the beholders, but a sad spectacle, how spacious, and ample a structure it once was, when now, a piece of it hath the honour to be stiled (though seldome employd as) the Kings House. But Christ-Church, placed as it were in the Navell of the City, raiseth it selfe to so great a Majesty, and Statelinesse, that Erasmus, a man not too much taken with magnificence in this kind, I am sure not doting on it, saies, that this doth present it selfe with so Majestick state, *ut procul etiam Intuentibus religionem incutiat*, that it occasions that devotion, which should be used there, and strikes a sensible impression of Religion, in their hearts that behold it, though a farre off, and at a distance. This Church built in old time (as Beda saies) by the faithfull and beleeving Romans, and by King Ethelbert given to Augustine, in processe of time needed the like piety to support it, as at first built it, and workes of that Nature in those daies, did not long lye neglected, for want of benefactors: Lanfranke therefore, the thirty third Arch-bishop of this Sea (whether more famous for repairing of decaied Churches, as this of Canterbury, Rochester, and Saint Albans, or his indefatigable pains in correcting the corrupt translations of the Holy Bible, scattered every where through the Kingdom in his daies, is uncertain.) William Corbet, or (as others will have it) Corbois, the thirty sixth Arch-bishop of the same Sea, reedified the Quire, and the upper part of this Church, and the piety of succeeding Bishops built and joyned the Nave or body to the Quire, and brought it to this Magnificence, and splendor, in which we now see it. But what our forefathers thought Religion to build up, we, their degenerate posterity, think Piety to pull downe, so that while some leading Atheists (enemies to God and his Religion, and *reprobate to every good worke*) are busy to Vote and cry downe Episcopacy, with the Sacred Hierarchy, Root and Branch: their Emissaries encouraged and set on by them, first deface these

184

Churches, and in the next place, will utterly ruine them, that so, the places where God is worshipped, being demo=

lished, the revenue that maintains the worship, may become a prey to these Sacrilegious Cormorants: *But my God shall make them like a wheele.* Now, how the Rebels behaved themselves in their first attempt, in this kind, on the Cathedrall Church of Canterbury, under the conduct of Colonel Sandys, I cannot better expresse then in the passionate elegancy of Reverend Doctor Paske, one of the Prebends, and at that time Subdeane of that Church, to the Earle of Holland, the most ingratefull, and most unthankfull of men.

*My ever honoured Lord,*

*Did it not conduce unto the Publique, I should not presume to interrupt your Lordships weighty affaires; but the long experience of your Lordships zeale for Religion, and vigilancy for your University of Cambridge, hath assured me of your Lordships Patronage of our whole Church in generall, and (as the case now stands) of this Mother-Church in particular, we expected peace, but have found much trouble from the Troopers sent amongst us; with what barbarousnesse they have behaved themselves at Rochester, and in other parts of this County, I leave to the Relation of others, and begge your Lordships patience, only to be informed what hath happened here with us: and wherein I am more neerly concerned, by mine office in the absence of the Deane.*

*Colonell Sandys arriving here with his Troopes, on Friday night, presently caused a strict watch and Sentinells to be set both upon the Church, and upon our severall houses, to the great affright of all the Inhabitants: this done, Sergeant Major Cockaine came to me, and in the name of the Parliament, demanded to see the Armes of the Church, and the Store-powder of the County, which I presently shewed him; when he possessed himselfe of the keyes,*

185

*and kept them in his owne custody: the next morning we were excluded the Church, and might not be permitted to enter, for the performance of our divine Exercises, but about eight of the clock, Sir Michael Livesey attended with many Souldiers, came unto our Officers, and commanded them, to deliver up the keyes of the Church, to one of their Company, which they did, and thereupon he departed, when the Souldiers entering the Church, and Quire, Giant-like, began a fight with God himselfe, overthrew the Communion Table, toare the Velvet cloth from before it, defaced the goodly Screen, or Tabernacle work, violated the Monuments of the dead, spoyled the Organs, brake downe the ancient Railes, and Seats, with the brazen Eagle which did support the Bible, forced open the Cupboords of the Singing-men, rent some of their Surplices, Gownes and Bibles, and carryed away others, mangled all our Service-books, and Books of Common-Prayer; bestrowing the whole pavement with the leaves thereof: a miserable spectacle to all good eyes: but as if all this had been too little, to satisfie the fury of some indiscreet zealots among them (for many did abhor what was done already) they further exercised their malice upon the Arras hanging in the Quire, representing the whole story of our Saviour, wherein observing divers figures of Christ, (I tremble to expresse their blasphemies) one said that here is Christ, and swore that hee would stab him: another said here is Christ, and swore that he would rip up his bowells: which they*

*did accordingly, so farre as the figures were capable thereof, besides many other villanies: and not content therewith, finding another statue of Christ in the Frontispiece of the South-gate, they discharged against it forty shot at the least, triumphing much, when they did hit it in the head, or face, as if they were resolved to crucifie him again in his Figure, whom they could not hurt in truth: nor had their fury beene thus stopped, threatning the ruine of the whole Fabricke, had not the*

186

*Colonell, with some others, come to the reliefe and rescue: the Tumults appeased, they presently departed for Dover, from whence we expect them this day; and are much afraid, that as they have already vilified our Persons, and offered extreame indignity to one of our Brethren, so they will Plunder our houses at their Returne, unlesse the care of the Major, the Colonell, and some Members of the House of Commons (Sir Edward Masters, and Captaine Nut, now with us, who have promised to present their knowledge to that honourable House) doe prevent the same.*

*Your Lordship will be pleased to pardon my hasty expressions, which proceed from a grieved heart, and I am confident the honourable Houses of Parliament, being rightly informed herein, will provide against the like abuses, and impieties in other places, in the meane time we submit with patience to the providence of him, who can, and will bring good out of evill, which is the earnest prayer of*

*Your Lordships most  
obliged Servant,*

*Thomas Paske.*

*Christ-Church, Cant:  
Aug. 30. 1642.*

What effect this just complaint wrought, how it prevailed either with that Lord to whom it was addressed, or with the pretended Houses of Parliament, whose authority, and assistance was implored to prevent further outrages, either here or elsewhere, we have too cleare testimony, not only in the like sacriledges, and prophanations every day acted, without any the least check, or restraint from the heads of this Rebellion, but more especially from their Votes and Ordinances, for the abolishing all remainders of Popery and Superstition, as they call it: in all which, *Intelligi malunt quam Audiri*, they would have their creatures understand, more then they speak, being certaine politike Litotes, in which, *minus dicitur, plus intelligitur*,

187

signifying more then the Grammaticall construction will permit, and carry in them a hidden, secret sense, and meaning, which their own Emissaries know how to interpret, and inlarge, according to the full intention of the Authors. But before we passe from the relation of this horrid Sacriledge, committed on the Church of Canterbury, I could not free my selfe from being guilty of that great sinne of obscuring the great manifestation of Gods Justice, if I should in silence passe over that most exemplary vengeance, which persued to death, that unfortunate Gentleman Colonell Sandys, the ringleader to that Rebellious rout, which were Actors in that more then Barbarous outrage.

Whether the cunning perswasions of others, or his own ambition first imbarked him in this fatall undertaking, is uncertaine, . . .

<an account of the lingering death of Edwin Sandys, from wounds received September 1642, in a skirmish near Worcester>

.....

197

Mercurius Rusticus, &c.

II.

*The Cathedrall Church of Rochester violated: the Sacri= lege and prophanenesse of the Rebels under command of Sir William Waller and Sir Arthur Haslerig, acted on the Cathedrall Church of Chichester, &c.*

As when the Spirit brought the Prophet Ezekiel in= to the Holy Temple, he led him from place to place, and each place entertained him with greater Abo= minations than the former, so that the farewell to the last Vision, and the invitation to the next is, *Turne thee yet a= gain and thou shalt see greater Abominations than these:* so having brought you in the Cathedrals of this Kingdome, Temples (in despite of Atheists, Rebels and Anabaptists) of God too: and having shewed you the *abomination of desolation* in one of them, viz. in Canterbury, the first instance of their accursed rage, and having viewed that, I must now lead you on as the Spirit did the Prophet, from place to place, and the incitement may be the same, for though you have seen great profanations in the former relation, *yet you shall see greater abominations than these.*

198

The next instance of the Rebels profanenesse, which I shall offer unto you, is in the Cathedrall of Rochester, re= compensated for the smalnesse of its revenue, with the ho= nour of its antiquity, as boasting of Ethelbert King of Kent, a common Founder to this Church, with those of Canterbury and London. The unhappy losse of Earnulphus History, the thirty second Bishop of this See, deprives us of that light which discovered the various condition of this Church, how long in the beginning it struggled with its own poverty, and in after ages with the injuries of Time and Warre, remaining some yeares in a kind of widowhood, without the government and superintendency of a Bishop; till at last Gundulfus the thirtieth Bishop of this See, re= edified this Church from the ground, and brought it into that magnificence, in which we now see it: to which pious worke, he brought so good, so vigorous affections, that as Malmesbury records of him, *Prævenerat vivacitas Gundulfi omnium successorum diligentiam*, Gundulphus ala= crity in that work did so prevent the piety of his successors, that he hardly left them any place in this kinde, wherein to exercise their bounty. Little did the overflowing zeale of our Ancestours to the house of God, like that of the old Israelites, powring out their wealth and precious things to adorne the Tabernacle, in so great measure, that Moses was fain to publish a Proclamation, to restraine their libe= rality, *for the stufte they had was sufficient for the work to make it, and too much*, Exod. 36. 6, 7. little (I say) did they thinke, when they did this, that what they thus boun= tiful gave unto God, should ever, while this Kingdome

remained Christian, become a prey to those, which as Tertullian speakes, *Gentes agunt Christi nomine*, have not so much as a forme, but the bare usurped name of Christianity, which they sulley and pollute with those worse than heathenish crimes of sacrilege and profanenesse: had the sacrilege lately committed at Canterbury been applauded by the people, (to gain whom, no arts though never so re-

199

pugnant either to Religion or common honesty were left unattempted) certainly, this Church which next stood in their way, and immediately after Canterbury tasted of their fury, had been utterly demolished, and offered up a sacrifice to Popularity. But Plundering being then but a stranger in England, newly arrived here from desolate Germanie, especially Plundering of Churches, which heretofore were held inviolable Sanctuaries for offenders, but much more for their owne innocent ornaments; this made a generall outcry, every man detested so foule impiety; nay, their owne party (some of them) not yet so deeply leavened with their Anabaptisticall Doctrines, nor given up to so reprobate a sense to believe monstrous lyes for truth, did not onely not approve, but sparingly condemne the Fact: and the generall vote of the people, awakened by Doctor Paske his Letter, declared it barbarous and wicked; nay, the dislike of such proceedings grew to so great a height, that some wise men were deceived into an opinion, that the Houses would punish the offenders for the present, and publish an Order to restrain the like outrages for the future; and indeed, though some good men, Members of both Houses, did earnestly desire it, yet by experience they quickly found how unequall they were to effect any thing, in which they had not the concurrence of the heads of the Faction which ruled in both Houses, but much lesse when they rowed against the streame, and had them for their adversaries. The Rebels therefore comming to Rochester brought the same affections along with them which they expressed at Canterbury, but in wisdom thought it not safe, to give them the same scope, here as there; for the multitude though mad enough, yet were not so mad, nor stood yet so prepar'd to approve such heathenish practices: by this means the Monuments of the Dead; which elsewhere they brake up and violated, stood untouched; Escoucheons and Armes of the Nobility and Gentry (upbraiding eye-sores to broken, mean Citizens, and vulgar Rebels) remained

200

undefaced, the Seates and Stalls of the Quire escaped breaking downe, onely those things which were wont to stuffe up Parliament Petitions, and were branded by the Leaders of the Faction, for Popery and Innovation, in these they took liberty to let loose their wild zeale: they brake down the raile agout the Lords Table, or Altar, call it which you please; and not only so, but most basely reviled a now Reverend Prelate, who being lately Deane of that Church, had for the more uniforme, and reverend receiving of the blessed Sacrament set it up, with the odious name of Rogue, often repeated: they seized upon the Velvet Covering of the holy Table, and in contempt of those holy Mysteries which were Celebrated on the Table, removed the Table it selfe into a lower place of the Church, in this, perfect Disciples of that profane Author of the book called, *Altare Damascenum*, who in the 718. p. devoutly resolves thus.

*De loco ubi consistat cur solliciti, cum quovis loco vel Angulo extra Tempus Administrationis collocari possit;* 'Concerning the place where the Lords Table shall stand what need we to be solicitous, when out of the time of administration of the Sacrament, it may be set aside, in any place, or obscure corner.' And to shew what Members they are of the Church of England, they strowed the Pavement with the torne mangled leaves of the booke of Common-Prayer, which, with the Book of Homilies, and the 39 Articles, makes up the third Book, wherein the Doctrine of the Church of England is fully contained: understanding that the Deane that then was, was to Preach on Sunday morning, Colonel Sandys and Sir Iohn Seaton, that false traiterous Scot, sent unto him to command him to forbear the wearing of the Surplesse, and Hood; to which Message the Deane stoutly, and like himselfe, returned this answer, that if they would expect any Sermon from him, they must permit him to appeare in such Ornaments, as the Church, and his degree required: and accordingly did so: afterwards Sandys and Seaton, com=

201

ming towards the Church and hearing the Organs, Seaton started back, and in the usuall blessing of some of his Country, cryed, 'A Devill on these Bag-pipes:' perhaps he never read so farre in Davids Psalmes, where it is written, *Praise God upon the Strings and Pipe*, Psalme 150. 4. or if he had, it is more then probable, that it had been all one to him: however, this served them both, as a pretence to cloke their Irreligion, and refusall to joyne with that true Protestant Congregation. While the Rebels were pulling downe the Railes about the Communion-Table, one of the Prebends of the Church, Master Larken, interposed, and attempted to stay their madnesse by reason, and perswasion; but he quickly found, that he did not only prophane Reason, by urging it to Saint Pauls, *Absurd, unreasonable, wicked men*, men made up of Jncongruities, but that he did it to the hazard of his life; for one of the Rebels, instead of returning a reasonable answer, discharged a Pistoll, or Carbine at him, to have murdered him at the very Altar, but by the good providence of God he miss'st his mark. Thus having done some spoyle, that they might render themselves not altogether unprofitable to their party, and not daring for the present, to doe any more, for feare of losing that party which they hoped to gaine, for that season, they left the Church: but into what further outragious Impieties, their Schismaticall fury hath since transported them, or what else they have practised on this Church, to compleat their Monstrous Reformation, is not yet made knowne unto us.

The third Instance, which I shall give of the Rebels Sacrilege and Profanenesse, is in the Cathedrall Church of Chichester; ...

.....

<'Mercurius Rusticus' first appeared as a series of 21 news-books, mostly of eight pages each, published between 20 May 1643 and 16 March 1644. It was reprinted as a book in 1646 (Wing R2448), reprinted again more than once with the title 'Angliae ruina' (R2446–7). These extracts come from the 1646 edition. The account of events at Canterbury was originally published in issue 18, dated 16 December 1643; I find only three variants worth noting (see below). The account of events at Rochester was in the following issue, which I have not seen. – C.F. March 2011.>

183/27 the upper 1646 : upper 1643

184/26 neerly 1646 : meerly 1643

185/25 that here 1646 : here 1643