

# **XI. THE TENURE OF KINGS AND MAGISTRATES**

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XI. The tenure of kings and magistrates by John Milton & William Talbot Allison

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**JOHN MILTON & WILLIAM TALBOT ALLISON**

**XI. THE TENURE OF  
KINGS AND  
MAGISTRATES**



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YALE STUDIES IN ENGLISH  
ALBERT S. COOK, EDITOR.

XL

THE TENURE OF KINGS AND  
MAGISTRATES

BY

JOHN MILTON

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Yale  
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## PREFACE

It is not a little surprising, when one considers the amount of attention that has been bestowed on Milton's poetry, that his prose tracts, with a very few exceptions, have lain so neglected in recent times. The present edition is an attempt to remedy this neglect, so far as one of these treatises is concerned. Others, it is hoped, will follow; indeed, *The Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth* has already been taken in hand.

A portion of the expense of printing this book has been borne by the Modern Language Club of Yale University, from funds placed at its disposal by the generosity of Mr. George E. Dimock, of Elizabeth, New Jersey, a graduate of Yale in the Class of 1874.

ALBERT S. COOK.

YALE UNIVERSITY,  
*January, 1911.*



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## INTRODUCTION.

### I. DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

To George Thomason, bookseller of the Rose and Crown in St. Paul's Church Yard, friend of Rushworth, Calamy, and Milton, and keen observer of religious and political affairs, we owe the British Museum collection of tracts which bears his name. From 1640 to 1661 Thomason collected each day's output of tracts, broadsides, newspapers, books, even fly-leaves of doggerel verse, and stored them away for the edification of future ages. Few of the publications relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and the Restoration eluded his vigilance. As the flood of this voluminous period bore in upon him, he carefully noted the exact date of each publication in his catalogue, and often wrote out the full name of the author where the treatise or book gave only the initials. On this account, Thomason is the sole authority for the dates of first and second editions of many books now regarded as classics of English literature.

Among eight publications which came into Thomason's hands from the presses of London on Feb. 13, 1649, one small quarto, the work of a friend, must have been noted by him with special pleasure. The entry was as follows;—'The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates: proving that it is Lawfull for any who have the Power to call to account a Tyrant or wicked King and after due conviction to depose, and put him to death. The Author, J. M. [i. e. John Milton.] *Printed by Matthew Simmons (13 Feb.)*' A year later,

on Feb. 15, 1650, he notes the arrival at the Rose and Crown of a copy of the second edition:—'The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, proving that it is Lawfull to call to account a Tyrant, or wicked King, and put him to death. Published now the second time with some additions. The author J. M. [i. e. John Milton] pp. 60. Printed by Matthew Simmons (15 Feb.)'

We are thus certain of the exact date of publication of this treatise, the first apology for the Commonwealth. Thanks to another contemporary witness, we have most interesting information as to the place of composition, the author's motive, his political sympathies, and the effect of the publication on his own personal fortunes. Our authority is Milton's nephew, Edward Philips, who gives a more extended reference to this pamphlet than might have been expected in the brief compass of his charming sketch of the life of the poet. 'It was not long after the march of Fairfax and Cromwell through the city of London with the whole army, to quell the insurrections, Brown and Massey, now malecontents also, were endeavoring to raise in the city against the armies proceedings, ere he left his great house in Barbican, and betook himself to a smaller in High Holbourn, among those that open backward into Lincolns-Inn Fields. Here he liv'd a private and quiet life, still prosecuting his studies and curious search into knowledge, the grand affair perpetually of his life; till such time as, the war being now at an end, with compleat victory to the Parliament's side, as the Parliament then stood purg'd of all its dissenting members, and the king after some treaties with the army *re infecta*, brought to his tryal; the form of government being now chang'd into a free state, he was hereupon oblig'd to write a treatise, call'd *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*.'