How Colonel Blood Stole the King's Crown

By GUY MURCHIE JR.

The coronation of George VI. can take place May 12 next only by virtue of the laurel-wreathed crown of England.

- Imagine the decoration that would rock Britain if the crown, with all its wealth of gold and precious stones, were suddenly to disappear—stolen from under the noses of the king's guards! Such a daring crime would be the robbery of the century.

- And yet that was exactly what happened in 1671 when Charles II. was on the throne. More amazing still, when the robbery through ill luck was arrested. The royal lord in his possession, he so cleverly conducted himself that, despite his long record of treason, he received a full pardon and the king personally rewarded him with a handsome estate in Ireland. How any human being could accomplish this astounding combination of feats is a story.

- Thomas Blood was an inscruer with the heart of a gladiatrix and the wit of a courtier. His hair hung in long curls in the manner of his day. His nose was aquiline between large dark eyes. Although he was little known to the world at large, he was a source of unending anxiety to King Charles and the government because of his high-sounding habits and his revolutionary activity as a protagonist of the last cause of Cromwell's Commonwealth.

- When the civil war ended and the house of Stuart was restored in 1660 Blood found himself a colonel in the defeated parliamentarian army, a prominent Cromwell lieutenant, and a gentleman of large estate who had suddenly lost both wealth and position through the political failure of his cause. The Puritan regime of the Commonwealth had been replaced by the easy-going regime of “the Merry Monarch,” and all Cromwellians became objects of suspicion. Blood, having made no attempt at (Continued on page 2.)