CHESHIRE IN THE GREAT CIVIL WAR.

By A. M. Robinson, F.R.G.S.

Read 7th November, 1895.

CHESHIRE took a prominent part in the great struggle between King and Parliament, and Cheshire men influenced the course of English history more than would be anticipated from the geographical position of the county, or its size or its population. Whilst the King was at York, at the end of May, 1642, with thirty-two peers against forty-two who remained at Westminster, the Houses passed an ordinance for settling the Militia in such hands as they could confide in. The King, however, charged this to be against law, and required none should yield obedience thereto. He issued his Commissions of Array to the respective counties, appointing several persons of quality to array, train, and muster the people. This commission the Houses declared to be unlawful. As Rushworth says, the persons in the counties, acting by these opposite authorities, had many bickerings one with another. The King's proclamation given at York, 20th June, 1642, informed "all our loving subjects of the lawfulness of our Commissions of Array, "issued into the several counties of our realm of "England and dominion of Wales, and com- "manding them to obey our commissions therein
"named." Both Houses of Parliament issued, on the 1st July, 1642, a long "declaration" to prove the illegality of the King's action. And according to Hallam, the King's Commission of Array, although not strictly conformable to law, was "justifiable, as the means of opposing the Parliament's ordinance for the militia, at least equally "illegal." It appears that during June, July, and August of that year, "petitions" against the impending resort to arms were addressed to the King by the county palatine of Lancaster, and by other counties, and were all duly and separately acknowledged by his Majesty's order. Cheshire did not volunteer any such petition, but waited the course of events.

On Monday, August 22nd, 1642, his Majesty left his forces before Coventry and, with some lords and others in company, rode to Leicester, where he dined at the Abbey, the Countess of Devonshire's house. After dinner, again took horse and rode to Nottingham, where was great preparation for setting up his standard that day. The standard was taken out of the castle and carried into the field, a little on the back side of the castle wall. The likeness of the standard was much of the fashion of the city streamers used at the Lord Mayor's Show, having about twenty supporters: on the top of it hangs a flag, the King's arms quartered with a hand pointing to the crown, which stands above with this motto, "Give Caesar his "due." But efforts by men of light and leading to circumscribe the area of war still continued.

In some counties, as in Yorkshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire, there was an endeavour to make an association of neutrality. Lord Fairfax, Mr. Bellasis, Sir William Savile, and others in Yorkshire sent the heads thereof on the 29th September, 1642, to Parliament, but in vain. Parliament, by
a formal declaration in October, ordered that no such neutrality be observed. And so the eventful struggle proceeded.

A rare and valuable collection of Civil War tracts relating to Cheshire, which has lately been secured for the Birkenhead Free Library, throws a good deal of light on the inner working of events connected with the county. They range from 1642 to 1659.

No. 1 is a folio broadsheet, printed in London by Edward Husbands and John Frank, and is dated 20 July, 1642, a month before Charles raised the Royal Standard at Nottingham. It is a “Declaration of the Citizens and Inhabitants of the City of Chester whose names are subscribed summoned to appear before his Majesties Commissioners for the Array at the Roodey within the liberties of the said city for their cleer manifestation of their Allegiance to his Majesty, and duty to his parliament,” and appears to be a well-meant protest against the civil war into which the nation was drifting: pointing out that “in the Cordiall Union of his Majestic and his Parliament consists the safety glory and the happiness of the Kingdom,” &c. No names are in fact attached to the document; but it was “delivered by the Citizens of Chester to His Majesties Commissioners for the Writ of Array.”

No. 2 is the “Advice and Direction of Both Houses of Parliament to Sir William Brereton and to the rest of the Deputy Lieutenants for the County of Chester with orders of the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament for the regulating of those Souldiers that are gon or shall goe under the Command of His Excellency Robert Earle of Essex Lord Generall for this Expedition,” and was printed in London under date 19 August, 1642, by order of both Houses. Commencing with the argumentative preamble that the King, “Seduced by Wicked Counsell intends to make War against the Parliament,” it proceeds to give in six pages highly practical orders and instructions both as to the discipline of the forces, and as to the action to be taken against the “Popish Recusants in Cheshire who did not confine themselves to their dwellings according to the Statute in that case provided,” &c., &c.

No. 3 is a brief order, printed in London, by order of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, on the 2nd September, 1642, “for the Suppressing of Publike Stage Playes throughout the Kingdome during these Calamitous Times.”
It recites in quaint language that "Whereas publike sports doe not well agree with Publike Calamities nor Publike Stage Playes with Seasons of Humiliation this being an exercise of Sad and pious Solemnity and the other being Spectacles of Pleasure too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levi". "It is there fore ordened," &c., "that Stage Playes shall cease and bee forborne," &c. "Instead of which are recommended to the people of this land the profitable and seasonable Considerations of Repentance, Reconciliation and peace with God," &c., &c.

No. 4 embodies two declarations of the Houses of Parliament,—one concerning the release of certain Ministers in Cheshire, imprisoned for refusing to obey the illegal Commission of Array; the other for the Appropriation of Delinquents' fines; printed in London by order on the 9th September, 1642. The names of the Ministers are not given; but their discharge is ordered. Incidentally, as a postscript, the Lord General is requested to "take special care for the restraining and punishing disorders in the Souldiers according to the custome of War"; so complaints had evidently been made by the peaceable Cheshire folk as to the want of discipline in the Parliamentary forces stationed in their midst.

No. 5.—The indecisive battle of Edge Hill—where, in fact, the moral advantage rested with the King—took place, it will be remembered, on the 23rd October, 1642, about six weeks after the issue of the above Parliamentary paper; and our next is headed "Neutrality condemned by declaring the reasons why the Deputy Lieutenants intrusted by the Parliament for Cheshire cannot agree to the Treaty of Pacification made by that County. And may serve to prevent the like in other Counties." It was printed in London for Henry Overton, and "are to be sold at his shop in Pope's Head Alley, December 6, 1642." It is a closely-printed pamphlet of eight pages, in the style so admirably travestied by Scott in his Peveril of the Peak and in Woodstock. The argument is difficult to follow. There is a good deal of reference to the Old Testament as a matter of course, and the author was apparently proud of his acquaintance with dog Latin. A brief quotation or two will, however, no doubt, be sufficiently entertaining for this Society:—"Doe we not finde Abraham and Lot, Paul and Bar nabas, contending and divisions twixt the nearest relations occasioned even by the Prince and Gospell of peace when in the meantime we see Simeon and Levi. Fratres in malo—the rulers taking councell. Sanballat and Tobiah conspiring together and the Jews unanimously crying out 'Crucifiye,' and all against our Saviour and his living temples. Peace therefore in itselie is like riches," &c., &c. "It is observable that things of
"the neuter gender are without life . . . bats are beasts when they are upon the earth and birds when in the ayre, but these men are altogether unresolved how to name themselves: in a time of peace they can be content like the planet Mercury even to follow the motion of that starre to which they are conjoined, but in dayes of triall this Proteus cannot hide himselfe under the variety of shapes," &c., &c. "The well affected of this country to the proceedings of Parliament being jealous of the safety of their religion lawes and liberties and withall weary of their taskmasters resolved to get up and be doing and to couch no longer like Issachar betwixt their burdens. In number and strength they presently exceed their adversaries which makes their opposers first flie for refuge to Chester and being there for policy to the Bishop's Palace at the desire no doubt of the Popish party who conceived that what came from thence was † e cathedra and not capable of errour or miscarriage." . . . 

No sooner had the new Governour taken possession of his place but some of the people wondering to see another sun in their meridian were afraid it might portend some fatality to the famous Citie which their Recorder once told me was more ancient than the moone." Then follow eight articles, as they are called, advocating the "absolute cessation of armes, all prisoners on both sides to be released and the fortifications at Chester, Namptwich, Northwich, Stopford, Knutsford, and any other towne in Cheshire lately made by either party to be speedily demolished." It is further desired that a Joint Petition to His Majesty and both Houses of Parliament be presented with the renewed object of "putting an end to the great distractions and miseries fallen upon the Kingdom." Signed by Robert Kilmorre, William Marbury, Orlando Bridgeman, Henry Mainwaring. I find by Rushworth that Parliament alleged this "Agreement for neutrality was made without due authority and prejudicial to the public and declared against the same and set it aside as they had done another before of the same nature in Yorkshire."

The two names which are coupled together in the next Tract are those of the two Cheshire gentlemen who come most prominently forward in these troubled times; and I had better here give you the leading dates of their careers. Sir William Brereton, son of William Brereton, of Handforth, Cheshire, by Margaret, daughter and co-heiress of Richard Holland, of Denton, in this county (Lancashire), was born in 1604, and was created
Baronet on the 10th of March, 1626/7. The Diary of his travels on the Continent (Holland principally) was published by the Chetham Society in 1844, and is interesting reading. It shows a strong puritanical bias. The original diary, which it appears attracted the favourable attention of Sir Walter Scott, who was much interested in it, and urged its publication, was in the possession of the late Sir Philip Egerton, Bart., who lent it to the Chetham Society for publication. Sir William Brereton married Susanna, fourth daughter of Sir George Booth, of Dunham Massey, and was elected to represent Cheshire in 1627/8, and again in 1639-40. On the first symptoms of civil war he took the lead in Cheshire against the King; and the Pamphlet No. 2, already mentioned, is addressed to him as a Deputy-Lieutenant. He was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Cheshire and neighbouring counties to the south, and on the 28th January, 1642/3, defeated Sir Thomas Aston near Nantwich, which place he occupied, whilst Chester was fortified by the Royalists. Brereton's personal popularity seems to have served him in good stead in obtaining information from the country people; and six weeks later, viz., on the 13th March, he again defeated Aston at Middlewich, as will appear by Tract No. 7. But after the arrival of the Irish troops, Brereton was himself worsted at the same place. In the summer of 1643 he went southward, and during his absence Nantwich, while held by Sir George Booth, was besieged by Lord Byron; but with the assistance of Sir Thomas Fairfax, Brereton, on 14th February, 1643/4, routed the besieging forces; and in August he defeated Prince Rupert at Tarvin. Brereton's next important engagement was at Denbigh, in November, 1645, when he defeated the King's forces under Sir William Vaughan. In the
following March he captured Lichfield, and in May Dudley Castle. After the conclusion of the war he received various appointments and emoluments. Amongst other properties which came into his possession, was the Archiepiscopal Palace of Croydon. In one old pamphlet he is described as "a notable man at a thanksgiving dinner, having "terrible long teeth and a prodigious stomach, to "turn the Archbishop's garden at Croydon into a "kitchen, also to swallow up that palace and lands "at a morsel." He died at Croydon after the Restoration, namely, on the 7th April, 1661, and his body was removed for burial in the Handforth chapel in Cheadle church: but there is a tradition that, in crossing a river, the coffin was swept away in a flood; and as a matter of fact there is no entry of the burial in the Cheadle registers.

The second of these Cheshire worthies, Sir George Booth, whose daughter married Brereton, was one of the first Baronets created by James I. He was born in 1566, and achieved the patriarchal age of 86 years, dying at Dunham Massey, 24th October, 1652. His pedigree is in Ormerod. He was a strong Presbyterian, and "a person of the "best fortune and interest in Cheshire." His more famous grandson I will refer to later on.

No. 6 embodies the "Instructions agreed upon by the Lords "and Commons" for Sir William Brereton, Baronet, one of the Members and for Sir George Booth, Knight and Baronet, and the rest of the Deputy Lieutenants of the City and County of Chester. It is printed in London on the 11th January, 1642, by order.

The anxiety of the Parliament leaders is plainly increasing as the area of the war was widening during the winter, whilst the King, from his base at Oxford, had a firm hold on the Midland Counties, and the arrival of the Queen in Yorkshire with arms from Holland had strengthened the Earl of Newcastle, who was threatening the Eastern Counties. It commences by urging the Deputy Lieutenants of Chester to "arm traine and put in readi-"ness all and every the inhabitants of that County fit for the
Cheshire in the great Civil War.

"War as well trained Band as other Volunteers, both horse and foot," and to take "special care that the ordinance concerning the militia be put in execution," and to lead and conduct the same against all "Forraigne forces that shall in hostile manner invade the said Countie." They are also given full power to "search and examine all suspicious persons and carriages and to seize upon all horses armes and ammunition, money plate or other provisions whatsoever: and to suppress and oppose all rebellion and commotion whatsoever within the said County of Chester or in any other Counties in association with the said County of Chester." And as the instructions proceed they gain in strength of language, and the Deputy Lieutenants are ordered to "kill and slay all such as shall by force oppose you or any of you . . . and you shall pursue the said Traytors and Rebels and their adherents in the said County of Chester . . . or in any other places into which they shall retire themselves." But to conciliate the weak-kneed there is a special instruction to declare unto all men "That it hath ever been and still shall be the care and endeavour of the Parliament to provide for his Majesties safety and that they do not nor never did know of any evil intended towards His Majesties person," &c. They are further authorized to "fortifie the City Towne of Chester or any other place of the said County in such manner and sort as you shall think fit. Clemencie and favour" may be extended to any person who "shall come in within ten days, excepting only the Earle of Bristol, the Earle of Cumberland, the Earle of Newcastle, the Earle Rivers, Secretary Nicholas, Mr. Endymion Porter, Mr. Edward Hide, the Duke of Richmond, the Earle of Carnarvon, the Lord V. Newark, the Lord V. Falkland." Such is the gist of this important Parliamentary Paper.

No. 7.—Two letters were ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, under date 24th March, 1642: one was from "Alisbury," in Buckinghamshire, signed by Colonel Godwyn, Colonel Bulstrode, Colonel Hampden, and Thomas Ferrill, Esq., and related the appearance off that town of the King's forces from Oxford, under General Ruthin, Princes Rupert and Maurice, &c., and the apparent great relief of the Parliamentary forces, who were inferior in numbers, when the town was not attacked. The other letter was from Sir William Brereton, giving an account of a "Great Victory" on the 13th of March "at a Town called Mid-"dlewich in Cheshire," "and took prisoners Col. Ellis, "Sargeant Major Gilner, Sir Edward Mosseley, ten Captans and "five hundred others." Sir Edward relates that he was at Northwich, which place he "had begun to fortifie," and as the enemy "took the bouldnesse" to encamp themselves at Middlewich, he "conceived this attempt of most dangerous consequence," and
accordingly he sent out a party of horse to give them an alarm on the Saturday night, the 12th of March, but they were ordered not to attack, "they being very strong in foot and well armed, "and we had no foot at all then there." However, Sir William arranged to be joined by forces from Namptwich on the Monday morning "at six of the clock," and so the joint attack was made, the troops from Namptwich entering one end of the town and Sir William's forces the other end. The prisoners named as captured were all taken in the church and steeple, to which they had betaken themselves; and Sir William triumphantly records that it was "the most compleat victory and the largest number of "prisoners taken since the beginning of this unnaturall war."

No. 8 is "An addition to the Relation of some passages "about the Englis-Irish Army before they came to the siege "at Namptwich wherein are set down the occurrences at "Harwarden Castle. Done for the satisfaction of some gentle-"men and upon their request. Published by Authority in Lon-
don and Printed for Robert Bostocke dwelling at the signe of the "Kings Head in Paul's Church Yard 1643"; but no more precise date is given. A Preface adddressed to the Commanders, Mini-
sters and Inhabitants of Namptwich is signed "your serva
pray and doe for you to his power P.J." It recites the landing at Mostyn of the English-Irish army, who from thence marched up to Hawarden; Major-General Sir Thomas Middleton in command of the Parliamentary Forces in North Wales being in possession of " Holt and Wrexam with all the Countries of Den-
burghshire and Flint neer about those places." And then it gives copies of the summons to surrender Harwarden Castle by Sir Michael Morley and Colonel Wilson, dated 22nd November, 1643—with a further summons by Lord Capell, who came in the following day with additional forces, with the threat that "no "quarter would be given if you shal hold out untill by force or "other meanes I gain the same." The replies are unsigned, and the first boldly states "Whatever old wives may tell you, our "provisions will outreach your patience of a siege," &c.; and the second even more emphatically says "All this adoe might be "spared; our greatest want will be of inke and paper to answer "your demands if you multiply parles; if you continue the siedge "we shall drive that fancy of our necessities out of your head. "Sir, spare your paper and use your weapons and we will "use ours and make good the Castle were your force ten times "more than they are." Then followed what Rushworth calls an "absurd letter" from Captain Sandford, without date, and ad-
dressed "To the officer commanding in chiefe at Harden Castle "and his Consorts there." It commences—"I presume you very "well know or have heard of my condition and disposition, and
Cheshire in the great Civil War.

"that I neither give nor take quarter. I am now with my firelocks (who never yet neglected opportunity to correct rebels) ready to use you as I have done the Irish, but loath I am to spill my countrymen's blood wherefore by these I advise you. . . . to deliver the Castle into my hands for his Majestie's use. . . . I vow all hope of reliefe is taken from you and our intents are, not to starve you, but to batter and storme you, and then hang you all, and follow the rest of that Rebell crew. "I am now no bread and cheese rogue, but as ever a Royalist, and will ever be whilst I can write or name, Thomas Sandford"—all in the best Bombastes Furioso vein. This letter was endorsed with the comment—"This we counted unworthy any other answer than laughter and contempt." But it appeared the Castle did eventually surrender to Sir Michael Ernly with fair quarter for the lives of the garrison, and "a safe convoy to Namptwich or Wem or any other garrison within two days' march." Captain Thomas Sandford, I find, was killed before Nantwich on the 18th of January, 1643/4, and his body was removed to Chester and buried in the Cathedral.—See Burghall's Memorials, Record Society, 1889.

No. 9 is entitled "The True Informer containing a collection of the most special and observable passages which have been informed from several parts of his Majestie's Dominions from Saturday January 6 to Saturday January 13, 1643." Amongst them is a "Resolution from Cheshire of Sir W. Brereton's late successes against the Cavaliers and taking 900 of the Irish forces prisoners": and it recites how, on Friday, January 12, "Colonel Ashton was marching from Lancashire with his forces towards Middlewich, when Lord Biron sent forth a party from Chester, consisting of 3000 foot and 600 Horse—and they treacherously surprized Colonel Ashton's Regiment and tooke 4 or 5 of his Companies . . . but the rest escaped away." "The alarum of this skirmish" being brought to Sir William Brereton, he drew forth his forces from Nantwich, meeting the Irish forces and routing them, and taking 900 prisoners . . ., so that it is hoped that when he joins Sir Thomas Fairfax's forces he will be able to "stop the current of the outrageous proceedings of the Irish and English Cavaliers." The rest of this Tract recites proceedings of the Parliamentarians at Arundel, Bristol, London, and a relation from Rotterdam of the doings of their ships at Brill.

No. 10 is "Magnalia Dei": A Relation of some of the many remarkable passages in Cheshire before the Siege of Nantwich, printed in London by Robert Bostock, 1644, at the request of "Tho Middleton, Gilbert Millington, Will Ashurst," under date 3 Febr. 1643. These detail the relief of Nantwich
Cheshire in the great Civil War.

by Sir Thomas Fairfax and Sir Wm. Brereton, and the defeat of Lord Byron, whose army in great part escaped to Chester. Amongst the prisoners taken were Major-General Gibson, Sir Michael Ernly, Sir Richard Fleetwood, Colonel Monk (afterwards Duke of Albemarle), Colonel Warren, Lieut.-Col. Gibbs, Major Hamond; and slain were Lieut.-Col. Vane and Lieut.-Col. Boulton; and amongst the further taken are noted "Sir Ralph Done, Master Shurlock Chaplane to a Regiment, 120 women "many whereof had long knives, 1500 common soldiers, 20 "carriages and rich plunder." And a postscript mentions the defeat given by Colonel Massey to the enemy at Skepton, January 24, 1643, when were taken prisoners "Sir Henry Talbot, 3 captains, 3 lieutenants, 3 Irish Reformadoes . . . and 60 common "soldiers. Also there was taken a great barge with great stores "of sack and other wines . . . by a friggot which was man'd "by the soldiers of Colonell Massey."

No. 11 consists of the Mercurius Aulicus for the week ending 10th February, 1643, "communicating the intelligence and "affaires of the Court to the rest of the Kingdom." A page of this news sheet—the predecessor of our present daily newspapers—measures 7 inches by 5 inches, and there are eight pages. Under date of the 5th there is given copy of a warrant by "Jecamiah Abercromiy," sent from Hilsden in Buckinghamshire, "to the Constable of Brackley and other the "inhabitants," on which the Mercurius comments that Abercromiy will plunder "as compleatly as Sir William Brereton's Deputy "Rebells did the Lord Cholmondley's house (till at last they were "beaten thence), where they not onely pillaged whatever was in "the house, but most maliciously pull'd downe the walls, spoyled "all the fruit trees, and cut down the very timber of the Ban-
queting house to burne, though plenty of good wood lay in the "yard, and then (to shew they were the worst of Rebells) they "utterly spoiled that excellent garden, which cost the noble owner "many a large summe, and never left till they had made up their "basenesse in pulling down and spoyling His Lordship's Salt "Workes; for which the country will hereafter curse them as "Rebells that devote themselves to mischiefe the publicke as well "as particular persons." On the 6th it is recorded that Captain Steele, the Parliamentarian commander at Beeston Castle, and who surrendered that stronghold to the King's forces, was afterwards taken at Namptwich, accused of having betrayed the castle, and there shot to death "last week"; but not before, as is stated, he had "confessed many pretty particulars belonging to "his profession."

Full particulars of Steele's execution are given in the Record Society's volume for 1889, pages 117, 118; and Earwaker's
History of Sandbach, pages 17-20, contains a pedigree of his family. There are four more pages of the Mercurius dated 9th and 10th May, 1645, giving an interesting letter from the unfortunate Montrose, written on the 20th of April, and brought by express from Scotland, but it bears no direct reference to Cheshire matters.

No. 12 is a Parliamentary paper, printed by order of the House of Commons, 29 September, 1645, and entitled "The King's Forces totally Routed by the Parliament's Army, under the command of Major Generall Poyntz, and Cheshire Forces on Roulton Heath within two miles of Chester "Sept. 24." It consists firstly of a letter addressed to Speaker Lenthall by "G. Boothe, P. Mainwaringe, and Rog. Wilbraham," from "Chester suburbs Sep. 25 at 3 post meridiem," enclosing, secondly, an account of the great fight, written out by the Chaplain, as the Commanders themselves had "such earnest businesse upon us" they had not time to write full particulars themselves. To this is appended a list of prisoners taken. The incidents of this battle are so well known that I need only note, as a matter of historical accuracy, that the Chaplain in his haste mentions the 20th of September as "Saturday morning," and on the next page he says the King was at Chirk Castle on "Monday "Sept. 21."

It is curious that, after such a disastrous overthrow of the King's forces and his flight to Newark and Oxford, and after the surrender of Beeston Castle on the 16th of November, 1645, the garrison having had to eat cats and such small deer during the continuous siege of eighteen weeks, Chester was able to hold out for nearly three months longer, Lord Byron being buoyed up with continued hopes of relief from Ireland. At last, however, communications were opened between the two commanders at the end of January, 1645/6, and finally the city was delivered up on the 3rd of February, under elaborate conditions, carefully detailed in eighteen long articles, signed by twelve commissioners, authorized by Lord Byron. Colonel Jones was left Governor for the Parliament. Holt, Hawarden, and Ruthin Castle were all surrendered not long after.
That the allusions in the next two tracts may be followed more clearly, it is necessary to point out that it was in the years between 1645 and 1659 that so much had happened in the making of England: which had witnessed the conquest of the West by Fairfax, the defeat of Montrose, the delivery of Charles by the Scots to the English Commissioners, his flight to the Isle of Wight, his trial and execution, the period of the Commonwealth, with the brilliant foreign policy of Cromwell, his death, the short protectorate of his incapable son Richard, the deposition of the latter on the 22nd of April, 1659, and the restoration of the Rump of the old Parliament, with Lenthal still Speaker.

It was midway during this period, viz., in 1652, that the old Sir George Booth had been gathered to his fathers, and was succeeded by his grandson in the baronetcy; and this second Sir George Booth was 37 years of age in 1659. He took an active part in the abortive Cheshire rising this year, being one of the Cromwellian malcontents, called the New Royalists, who, with the Cavaliers, got up a plot for the restoration of Charles II. After the seizure of Chester by Lord Derby, Col. Egerton, and Booth, he, whilst on his way to York, was attacked by Lambert, and defeated near Nantwich, Booth escaping disguised in female attire; but his disguise being penetrated by an innkeeper at Newport Pagnell, he was apprehended and conveyed to the Tower. There is a pamphlet in the British Museum giving a "True narrative of the manner of taking of Mr. George Booth on Tuesday night last, being disguised in woman's apparel."

At the restoration, Booth was the first of the twelve members to carry to King Charles, in May, 1660, the reply of the Commons to His Majesty's Declarations. He received £10,000 as a reward for his services, and with five others was raised to
the peerage at the King's coronation, under the
title of Baron Delamer. He was also appointed
Custos Rotulorum of Cheshire, and survived until
1684, when he died at Dunham Massey, and was
buried at Bowdon in the family vault.

Before taking up the next pamphlet, of consider­
ably later date, I may first mention that 1647 was
the year when Chester, according to Rushworth,
was visited severely by the plague—“in every
“parish and part thereof, very few families being
“clear.” And Parliament ordered that “whereas
“the county of Chester is exceedingly impoverished
“by the late war whereby they are disabled for
“affording them any considerable relief,” it is
ordered that the respective ministers of every parish
of London and Westminster, within the counties
of Chester, and ten other southern and eastern
counties, do upon the next Lord’s Day publish the
distressed condition of the poor inhabitants of the
said city of Chester, and earnestly move their
people to contribute to so charitable a work for the
relief of the poor distressed inhabitants of Chester.

We now come to

No. 13, which was printed in London in 1659. It is entitled
“One and twenty Chester Queries or Occasional Scruples reflecting
“upon late affairs in Cheshire by Officers and Soul­diers under
“Lord Lambert,” and is placed with an undated “Dialogue
“between Sir George Booth and Sir John Presbyter at their
“meeting near Chester.”

Its characteristic seventeenth century style is shewn
by the following specimen queries, viz. :—

**Queries.**

1. — Whether a man can ever be sure of his meat before he have
   it in his mouth?
2. — Whether the late Insurrection in Cheshire was not like Hog-
   shearing, where there is a great cry and little wool?
Cheshire in the great Civil War.

3.—Whether he that penn'd the first Declaration for a Free Parliament were a Cavalier, a Jesuit, or a Fifth-Monarchy man? And whosoever 'twas, whether he had not better never have barked, than not have bitten?

7.—Whether the Bumpkins lost anything by lining the hedges with bits of Cheese, and running home to fall upon whole ones? it being very shroudly suspected, that their Wives bid them hye home again quickly when they went to field.

8.—Whether Sir George Booth's valour in the late Engagement near Warrington, or his Petticoats at Newport Pagnell, will make him seem most like a Woman in the eyes of the next Generation? And in troth that's a difficult question.

9.—Whether a man may not satisfie his conscience better, by being in a sojourning condition at Brussels, unattended, and unregarded, then in Westminster Hall with a great deal of attendance before an High-Court of Justice?

11.—Whether it would not be prudently done of the Parliament for the better un-deceiving of posterity, to make an Act to make void, and of none effect, the old Proverbial speech, Cheshire chief of men?

12.—Whether Richard Lord Protector (that was) and his Brother Harry, would not have made two stout Commanders in Sir George's flying Army?

16.—Whether John Canne did not see his brother Mercury to accommodate him with those four Latin words which he made use of in his Newsbook, (viz.) Bellum Episcopate and Bellum Presbyteriate? And if he did so, what such a scantling of the language of the beast might stand him in?

18.—Whether my Lord Lambert desir'd that Chirk Castle, Bever Castle, etc., should be defaced and demolished, to prevent harbour for a foreign Invader, or for fear of another Presbyterian Riot?

19.—Whether 'twould not be well done of the State to Fitz Payne Fisher a stipend for his encouragement to write as good a Poem on the fight at Nantwich, as he did on the battle of Naisby? wherein it is referr'd to their prudence to appoint him that he treat elegantly & directly of these subjects following. That he do first exactly describe the Situation of the whole Country and its Commodities, as Cheese, etc.

20.—Whether Mr. Peters had not rather the Funeral Sermon that was made upon him (being yet alive) should be in jeast, than in good earnest.
Cheshire in the great Civil War.

AN ADVERTISEMENT.

Courteous Reader,—Take notice there is a prophecy of the late overthrow of Chester lately printed since the businesse was done, by Mr. W. Lilly, Astrol. wherein he gives you a reason why Cheshire Cheese sweats so much here of late, being frightened by the Parliament's Army, together with several other things worth buying and reading if a man could tell where to have um. —FINIS.

Booth, you will observe, comes in for ridicule by the direct mention, in queries 8 and 12, of his recent adventures in disguise, and by the apparent reference, in query 13, to his flight after defeat by Lambert at Nantwich. John Canne is the Puritan divine, printer, and author, who spent a good deal of his life in Amsterdam; but about the date of this pamphlet was resident in London. He died about eight years later in Amsterdam. Payne Fisher, the poet, began his political life as a Royalist, abandoned the sinking ship after the battle of Marston Moor, and ratted again to the rising sun at the Restoration; but his character was not estimable. He never recovered the Royal favour, and he died in great poverty in a coffee-house in the Old Bailey in 1693, and was buried in St. Sepulchre's.

According to the final advertisement, the "overthrow of Chester," as it is called, was prophesied by the famous Lilly, the astrologer, whose life and curious adventures offer attraction to the student of the by-paths of history.

No. 14 is printed by Thomas Newcombe in Thames Street, 1659, and consists of the second and third letters from the Lord Lambert, dated at Chester August 21st, addressed, the one to the Speaker of the Parliament, and the other to the Lord President, describing the surrender of Chester, with names of the principal persons taken prisoners; and is supplemented by a letter from Major Waring, Governor of Shrewsbury, of the same date. These are mentioned in Ormerod; and the events therein chronicled are the defeat of Booth by Lambert at Winnington Bridge on the 19th of August, consequent on which the gates of Chester were opened to the Parliamentarians a second time. But
I notice in Lambert’s letter to the Speaker that he mentions, “Upon our march thither I met with two inhabitants from Leverpoole, and one Mr. Brown, who had formerly been in your service, who informed me the town hath continued very faithful to your service,” &c., &c. And after stating the steps he had taken to reduce that place, viz., Liverpool, he adds, “It is the earnest desire of those persons that the Castle may be demolished, which I humbly conceive may be for your service, and pray your directions therein.” And the Act was accordingly passed in that year for demolishing the castle, in fulfilment of Lambert’s suggestion.

No. 15, and last, is a “Perfect Diurnal, or the Daily Proceedings in Parliament,” printed by the same Thomas Newcomb as above, “by order of the House, 1660.” The only matter affecting Cheshire in the proceedings is that under date 12 March, 1659, it is ordered that “the Examination of Sir George Booth, his lady and servants be taken off the file and delivered to the said Sir George Booth.” Coming events were casting their shadows before. The strong will and iron hand of Cromwell no longer controlled the destinies of England, and the reaction against the rule of the Puritans was close at hand.

As I mentioned in my introductory remarks, I had the opportunity, during the past few days, of going carefully through nine volumes, together 370 pieces, of “Rare Tracts,” collected by the late Bishop Walker, of Glasgow, and now in private hands at Oxford. They throw a flood of light upon many important incidents during the Civil Wars, but they do not specially affect Cheshire men or Cheshire localities. I did not therefore make any extracts for submission to you; but in another volume in the same library, printed in London in 1644, and called on its title page, Jehovah Fireh—God in the Mount, or England’s Parliamentarie Chronicle, by John Vicars, I find some curious and interesting references to Cheshire, one or two of which I will quote, inasmuch as I understand the book in a perfect state is now exceedingly scarce.

With regard to the fighting at Nantwich in February, 1643/4, Brereton, who is called “That
"noble, religious, and generous gentleman .... 
"that most religious and pious patriot of their "countrie .... that most famous and success-"full pious patriot," &c., is highly eulogised for his generalship. The "well affected in the county of Chester" are described as being "miserably "infected and infested by the Commissions of "Array, whereof Sir Thomas Aston and Sir Vin-"cent Corbet were two principal and most active "instruments." Aston, in his attack upon the town, was five times repelled "most valiantly," the defenders only losing one man, "who was slain "by a poisoned bullet." Then on falling back he, with 400 men, fell upon Brereton, who "stood in "battalion" with only 150. Sir Thomas, it is stated, "let flie at him, but without success." Brereton discharged his drakes, which caused a panic amongst the Cavaliers, who cried out, "Let "us flie, for they have great pieces of ordnance"; and after details of hand to hand encounters with sword and battle axes, it is said, "All the work that "remained was the taking of prisoners, horses, "and armes." Aston fled on foot for three miles, and then got a horse on which he rode to Whit-church. Corbet "was so put to it that he was "fain to crawl on all fours, lest he should be dis-"covered, and then ran away on foot also, and bare "headed, to a place called Ower, six miles." .... One of the victorious party, with a strong stick or cudgel only, disarmed three men and took them prisoners, and two others also whom he met with, but two of them slipt away, whom he durst not pur-
sue, lest he should have lost the other three! This must indeed have been a very redoubtable Ironside. The cudgel must surely have been a remarkable one; or perhaps the hero of the episode in his account had taken a hint from Falstaff! This account goes on to say that Aston, after some days,
returned to Chester with about fifty or sixty horse, and there he was "congratulated on this his great victory over Sir William" (Brereton). The Parliamentarians, however, had a "solemn day of thanksgiving, and afterwards fell to the further managing of the weighty affairs of that county wherein the Lord gave us singular good successe."

Rupert was evidently greatly dreaded by the Parliament men. He is generally called in this book "Prince Robber," but sometimes Prince "Plunderer"; and his endeavours to strengthen his forces by compulsory enlistment are denounced in language brightened by a considerable proportion of forcible adjective. And it is asserted that the "King's eye was more fastened to fixe and augment his forces in this poore County Palatine of Chester than on any other county in the kingdom. . . . Witness his first sending thither that cow stealer, the unsuccessful atheistical! Lord Capel, who was soon beaten thence." . . . "Then the bloody Lord Byron, beaten as afore-said; and after all these pilfering, Prince Robber himself discomfitted, as you have heard by the "most valiant Colonel Mitton. Thus was this "county at last brought into a more quiet and "stable condition."

The valiant performances of Brereton's forces in the fight at Tarvin in August, 1644, are eulogised; and one John Cooper, a corporal in his troop, is immortalized by the recital how that he, "Seeing a most brave horse which the enemy could not get into the church in Tarvin town (where the fight was very hot and furious), but was fain to bee held by the bridle by one of the enemies under the church wall, this brave spirited corporal adventured to fetch the horse away, but they fired so fast out of the church upon him that hee was forced twice to retreat, but hee adventured the
Cheshire in the great Civil War.

"third time, pistolled the enemy, and so brought "away the horse, which was valued to be worth at "least fourscore pounds." . . .

There is a picturesque account of the capture of the city of Chester in September, 1645; but it is too long to quote more than the concluding paragraph, showing the North Gate was the last portion of the fortifications to hold out. The writer says, "One part of the enemie fled into "Saint Warburge Minster, some at the East Gate "and some at New Gate. We have gained all "between the Rack and the gate going into St. "Warburge. As for the North Gate, we doubt "not but we shall soone determine that. We have "also taken the Barn and the inner workes there, "together with the Maior of the Citie's house, "where we took his Sword and his Mace, which "it seemed for haste to flie into the city he had "left behinde him."

To the student of history these Civil War Tracts are interesting from another point of view also: that of the growing influence of public opinion on matters political. It never occurred to the arbitrary Tudors to appeal to the opinions of their subjects, nor could they easily have done so, owing to difficulties of printing and circulation. But in these tracts we see the precursors of those terrible pamphlets which fifty years later were, in Swift's polished and forcible language, such powerful engines in support of ministries in Queen Anne's time. They were perhaps the highest development of the tract or pamphlet proper: after a while came the mighty quarterlies; while now the "leaders" of the London dailies focus public opinion and, to such a large extent, shape public policy. Tracts have had their day, and are now mere historical relics.