

ON April 9th, 1649, a baby boy was born at Rotterdam who was destined to bring ruin and death to thousands in the West-Country, and to embroil Englishmen in a rebellion which, though speedily quelled, was lamentably fruitful in disastrous consequences. This child was James, the son (as was believed) of Charles II, the mother being one Lucy Walter, *a browne, beautifull, bold, but insipid creature.* * After the Restoration the boy was brought to England** with Queen Henrietta and Lord Crofts, the latter of whom acted as his guardian. In 1662 the handsome lad was taken to Hampton Court with the suite. He was received with extraordinary fondness by the King, and Pepys described him *as a most pretty spark of about fifteen years old.**** Even thus early Charles had been busy about scheming a matrimonial alliance for young James. In the previous year he had written to the Countess of Wemyss, acknowledging *the affection which you shew to me in the offer you make concerning the Countesse of Buccleugh, which I do accept most willingly, and the rather for the relation she hath to you.***** Within a year of the writing of the letter the Countess of Wemyss and her daughter, *a lively tall young lady of her age,*" came to London, and preparations were made for drawing up the marriage contract.

In the draft of this contract ran, by Charles's own order, the significant phrase *Filio nostro naturali et illegitimo.* In November, 1662, the boy was made Duke of Monmouth, Earl of Doncaster, and Baron Tynedale. In April of the following year his marriage with the Lady Anne, daughter and sole heiress of Francis Scott, second Earl of Buccleuch, was solemnized at Whitehall, and on the same day the bridegroom was further created Duke of Buccleuch, Earl of Dalkeith, and Lord Scott. ***** He was fourteen years of age, his bride was twelve. It was a great start in life, indeed, for Lucy Walter's son.

But there was more to come. He now took precedence over all dukes not of the blood royal, and honours and distinctions multiplied upon him. He soon became Knight of the Garter, Chancellor of Cambridge University, Captain-General of the King's forces, Privy Councillor, Lord Great Chamberlain of Scotland, Governor of Kingston-upon-Hull, and Lord-Lieutenant of East Yorkshire. The King doted upon him, and they were constant companions everywhere.

From very early days there was always the possibility of trouble arising about the Duke of Monmouth. The failure of the King in

regard to legitimate offspring rendered the succession to the throne a disputable matter, and it soon transpired that many about the Court held to the belief that Monmouth was Charles's lawful son. The King's brother James, Duke of York, not unnaturally conceived a violent aversion to the young Duke, which he made no effort to conceal. Charles's fatally easy nature complicated the *status quo ante*, and there can be little wonder that Monmouth, surrounded by flatterers, and by others whose designs were more far-reaching, conceived ambitious notions as to his future. The King, however, when it came to an issue, peremptorily settled the knotty point. *Much as I love him,* said he, *I had rather see him hanged at Tyburn than I would confess him to be my heir.* A disgraceful intrigue which occurred just then, in which Monmouth, the Duke of York, and the Earl of Mulgrave were all implicated, further widened the breach between the King's brother and the King's son. Strife is quickly bred, and tardily allayed. The uncle and nephew were at enmity as long as the latter lived.

Meanwhile Monmouth gained no small reputation as a soldier in the second Dutch War of 1672, and seven years later his politic action — and his clemency to the rebels — at the battle of Bothwell Bridge told immensely in his favour.***** He was beginning to pose, too, as the champion of Protestantism. Lord Shaftesbury, always eager to oppose the Catholic Duke of York, fanned the hatred already existing between the two men. Charles grew weary of all the strife. At length he cut the Gordian knot by sending Monmouth to Holland for a while, at the same time insisting that the Duke of York should be despatched to Scotland. The leisure-loving King wanted only to be left in peace.

However, both men were soon back again, and Monmouth, now the admitted champion of the Protestant party, scored a magnificent success by setting out, at Shaftesbury's instigation, upon a grand tour in the west of England. The West-Country folk were then great manufacturers of woollen goods, and amongst them were many Nonconformists. Charles's attitude to the Nonconformists had never been quite fair. The Acts against Dissenters were too rigid in many ways, and their meeting houses were being suppressed. No doubt this was partly owing to the Dissenters' own hardness to churchmen in the time of the Commonwealth, yet to retaliate with hardness for hardness is always an error. It merely perpetuated the grievance. Monmouth was received in Wiltshire,

Somerset, and South Devon, as a popular hero. Just over thirty years of age, handsome, with fascinating manners, well travelled, the son of a king, and withal possessing a *penchant* for Protestantism — what could be better? His progress was like a royal progress; he stole the hearts of Israel. To Longleat, to White Lackington, Barrington Court, Chard, Ford Abbey, Colyton, Otterton House, he went and was most hospitably received. At Hinton Park he touched a poor girl — one Elizabeth Parcet — for the king's evil. The girl was declared cured, and the belief in Monmouth's legitimacy was thereby vastly strengthened. On his way he was received with acclamation, *God bless King Charles and the Protestant Duke*. It was this tour in the west which determined him to strike a blow for the crown when the right time should come.

Events quickly culminated. Disaffection grew, and the wretched Rye-House Plot, which but for an accident would probably have cost Charles his life, implicated many persons. Monmouth was tinged with suspicion, and no wonder, for many were only too eager to make him their tool, and he had not wit enough to perceive it. The King temporized; he seemed to be surrounded by traitors, yet knew not what or whom to believe. Ultimately, after much correspondence and plotting, interspersed with visits to Lady Henrietta Wentworth, Monmouth fled, leaving his duchess behind in England. At the last the King had been roused, and in a towering passion had bidden the Duke quit the Court immediately. The latter embarked in a fisher-boat at Greenwich, and escaped to Brussels. There Lady Henrietta joined him,* and there, we read, the Prince of Orange welcomed him with open arms. This was in 1684.

Poor Charles! Wronged as he had been by Monmouth, he could hardly bear to have him out of his sight. He yearned over his son, as David yearned over Absalom. But it would never do, he thought, to have him back yet. He must wait a little while. Then Monmouth should return. One hasty but secret interview, indeed, took place between them in England, yet unknown to the Court. The days passed by, and the King grew ill. It seemed to be nothing. Yet he did not rally, and Father Huddleston was hastily brought in to his bedside. Charles received extreme unction at the priest's hands, and then passed peacefully away. At two o'clock on the 6th of February, 1685 James Duke of York was proclaimed to be, *Dei Gratia* of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland King.

When men mean to strike a blow for power, it is well to minimize delay. London and Amsterdam were thick with plotters, yet there was more talking than acting. Three months elapsed before Argyll's expedition, which was to accomplish so much for Monmouth, set out to raise forces in Scotland. It was a failure from the very beginning, and ended in Argyll's** capture, after a desperate resistance, and his safe detention in Edinburgh. Monmouth himself, with the erratic Lord Grey and Andrew Fletcher, a Scottish laird, sailed from the Texel on May 30th in the frigate *Helderburgh*, with two other vessels, and landed at Lyme, in Dorset, eighty-three men all told. With these, and with the aid of the huge numbers of men who, he had been informed, were eagerly waiting in England to join his standard, he hoped to seize the English crown. Never was a wilder expedition planned by man. The very day after the Duke's departure from Holland the Prince of Orange sent Bentinck post-haste to London to give information to King James that his rebellious nephew had now irrevocably taken up arms.

Lyme, however, welcomed Monmouth warmly,** and his manifesto, which was the ill-judged handiwork of the fanatical Ferguson, was read in the market-place. It did not mince matters. *We do solemnly declare and proclaim war against James Duke of York, as a murderer and an assassin of innocent men; a Popish usurper of the Crown; Traitor to the Nation, and Tyrant over the People*. James was accused of poisoning the late King, and of every other sort of crime. Englishmen were called upon to rise against him. Meanwhile Monmouth stayed four days in Lyme, and there lost two of his ablest supporters. One was Fletcher, who in a quarrel killed Dare of Taunton, a man of some influence there, a goldsmith, and withal devoted to Monmouth's cause. Fletcher took flight to Holland to escape the vengeance of Dare's son, and the moody Duke saw nothing but ill-omen in the disaster. Recruits, however, came in, and by the 12th of June 1000 foot and 150 horse had joined the rebellion. A little skirmish, wherein Grey's horse hardly distinguished themselves, occurred the next day near Bridport, but this was more than compensated for at Axbridge, where Monmouth's numbers, having greatly increased, caused the Royalist forces under Albemarle to fall back in some confusion. On June 18th, the Duke having just passed through the district full of happy memories of his visit five years before, Taunton was entered, amidst the wildest acclamations and manifestations of

joy.* The populace yelled, shouted, cheered, and waved green boughs. All promised well, save that the country gentlemen held aloof. It was the rank and file who mustered, but the rank and file could not carry all things before them, unaided. The Duke stayed at the house of Captain John Hucker, a serge manufacturer. It was then that the Taunton school girls presented to him their banners, prettily worked and bearing the initials J. R. Then, too, Monmouth, receiving the present of a sword and a Bible, declared that he came now into the field with a design to defend the truths contained in that book, and to seal it with his blood, if need be. Then he was proclaimed *our lawful and rightful Sovereign and King*. All this was delightful : *c'est magnifique, mais ce n' est pas la guerre.*" A council of war was held, and it was determined to push on to Bridgwater with the army (now 7000) with all speed. Meanwhile Churchill was watching his movements, and the Earl of Feversham was on his track.

At Bridgwater (June 21st) Alexander Popham, who was mayor that year, and the corporation, *dressed in their formalities*, were effusively eager to welcome the Protestant Duke. Taunton, their old rival, must not be allowed to outdo them, and they boisterously proclaimed him king before the old High Cross then standing in the market-place. Of King James they knew but little, and that little they did not like; of Monmouth they knew less, but he was a Protestant, or at least they thought he was. Hence his popularity. Weapons were forged, pledges were given, and all seemed to bid hopefully for him in the old town. Yet, moving on in pursuance of their plan to Shepton Mallet, by Wade's advice it was thought necessary to go towards Bristol, and the army encamped at Pensford near Keynsham. But the attempt was given up. Bath would have none of them, and shot their herald. Retreating to Philip's Norton, and thence to Frome, his followers began to melt away. All this marching about seemed to lead to nothing. It was seriously considered whether the attempt had better not be abandoned. To Shepton Mallet again, to Wells, to Glastonbury ; then back again once more to Bridgwater, to make the final stand. Monmouth had erred ; he should have pushed forward via Gloucester to London, where aid was ; or attempted Bristol ; or he might have made for Exeter, a strong city with many adherents to his cause. Meanwhile Lord Feversham was at Somerton, and was preparing to march on Weston Zoyland, ready and eager to attack the rebel troops. By July 5th he had encamped his foot soldiers

there (five regiments) and his five hundred horse, while five other regiments were near at hand on the moor. A force of militia was stationed at Middlezoy, and at Othery hard by. The net was being fast drawn around the Protestant Duke.

It was on Thursday the 2nd of July that Monmouth entered Bridgwater for the last time, and his forces, depleted as they were, amounted then to about 3500 men. The town was strongly in his favour, and did everything it could to succour him.** Taunton, it would appear, had wavered, since on his way back from Glastonbury it had sent a deputation urging the Duke not to return thither. Monmouth sadly retorted that it would have been better if they had induced him not to go there when he first landed at Lyme. However, Goodenough, paymaster of the rebels, issued an injunction commanding the aid of carpenters and labourers, with pickaxes, barrows, saws, and other implements, with corn and all kinds of provisions. Roger Hoar, the merchant, was most generous in his assistance ; so were the inhabitants. Monmouth lodged in the Castle, or in what remained of it after the siege of twenty years before ; his army lay in the Castle field on the east side of the river. His cannon and ammunition were placed on the road leading out of the east end of the town. According to Colonel Wade, the forces were : Grey's Horse, 600 ; Blue regiment, 600 ; White, 400 ; Red, 800 ; Green, 600 ; Yellow, 500 ; with an independent company of 80 more. Besides these were the scythe-men, and four guns. As things now were he had but two courses to adopt ; either to give battle to Feversham's troops, or to break away northwards. The latter, it transpired, he could not do. Feversham had the roads watched too well.

The Royalist army (excluding the militia, who took no part in the battle) are stated to have numbered about 700 less than Monmouth's forces. There were fourteen troops of horse and dragoons (about 700), and thirty-four companies of foot (2100) with sixteen field-pieces. Feversham's artillery, with Churchill's dragoons, lay on the left of his line of defence. His camp was well chosen, for it was protected on the north and west by a great ditch. Moreover in order to attack the Royalist forces on their right and rear it was necessary for Monmouth to make a circuit of some miles, passing north of Chedzoy, in order to outflank them. The danger of a slip lay in the presence of the great rhines, or ditches, and into this very danger the rebel army fell.

On Sunday morning at noon news reached Monmouth from Chedzoy as to the location of Feversham's troops, whereupon a consultation was promptly held. All notion of a dash to northwards was abandoned, and it was agreed to make a night attack upon the Royalists if upon further examination it should be found that they were not entrenched. Monmouth and Lord Grey rushed up the steps of St. Mary's tower to reconnoitre, and by eventide further news was brought to them by the spy Godfrey. The Royalists were *not* entrenched, it was said; the infantry and artillery were separated; moreover the men had been drinking, discipline was relaxed, and the duty of sentries was being neglected. Monmouth's spirits rose, for indeed there seemed to be a chance for him. He and Grey formulated their scheme. Grey's Horse were to make a circuit via Peasy Farm round to the back of Weston Zoyland, which was to be set on fire. Then he was to attack the enemy's right flank and rear, Monmouth's infantry in the meantime coming up and making a frontal attack on their line. It was a bold plan, and an excellent one. *We shall have no more to do*, said he, *than to lock up the stable doors and seize the troopers in their beds*. Godfrey was to show the way. Quickly the news was circulated, and Ferguson preached most fervently before setting out. His sermon was ingenious, for it implied that the Royalists, and not his own party, were in rebellion. Yet that it had an immense effect, none can doubt. Protestantism was then the dominant view in Bridgwater. It was only twenty-five years since Cromwell had ruled, and the Puritan position had by no means lapsed. Ferguson knew his men, and he knew exactly what he ought to say.

At eleven at night the Duke set out, and Oldmixon, then a boy, noticing him pass by, saw an alteration in his look, *which*, said he, *I did not like*. Colonel Wade led, followed by the infantry; then came Grey's Horse; lastly the guns and baggage. Along the Bath road, to the right down Bradney Lane, past Bradney Green, by Peasy Farm, on to the North Moor, keeping Chedzoy* on the right, they went. It is not easy to follow the exact route here. For some, beyond doubt, passed down War Lane (hence the name). At any rate. Grey's Horse now took the lead, and passing along by the Black Ditch to Langmoor Rhine, crossed it, and aimed at passing to the rear of Feversham's artillery. The guide, it is said, was dismissed at Langmoor Stone, and then, in the silence of the night, a pistol-shot suddenly roused its weird

echoes over the moor. The mystery as to who fired the shot will never be known; the Rev. Andrew Paschall,** then rector of Chedzoy, says that it was currently reported that Captain Hucker was the man. However that may be, the Royalists heard it, and spread the alarm. Lord Grey urged on his horse to attack, but he was stopped unexpectedly by a rhine (the Bussex Rhine) which they could not cross, and on the other side of which lay Dumbarton's regiment and a battalion of foot-guards. Great confusion at once arose. Feversham's forces were no doubt taken completely by surprise, but the shot, and the terrible bungle on Monmouth's part about the crossing of the rhine, spoilt all. He brought up his men as quickly as might be, and they opened a furious fire across the rhine. But little execution, however, was done, as the firing was too high. His cannon, nevertheless, did deadly work upon Dumbarton's company and the foot-guards, until the Royalist cannon, by the aid afforded by Bishop Mews of Winchester (formerly of Bath and Wells) in sending his horses to get the guns in position, wrought terrible havoc in the ranks of Monmouth's followers. Powder began to run short on the rebel side, yet, being attacked by Oglethorpe's troop, they held their own, compelling him to retreat. But Lord Grey's fiasco with his horse ruined all. The foot were unprotected, and could not resist the swarm of infantry which now rushed over the ford, and charged. The wildest confusion ensued, culminating in panic, and a retreat. Retreat it could hardly be called; it was a *mêlée*, a flight. The poor scythe and pike men, untrained and without proper weapons, were driven into the ditches, and perished. Utterly at the mercy of the royal troops, they were slain in heaps. It was all over so far as fighting went, yet the victorious Royalists pursued vagrant bodies of Monmouth's men hither and thither, as they sought to escape by flight, hurrying along the Bridgwater road. By half-past two o'clock they were carrying the wounded and dying into Weston Zoyland church, which was soon filled with men. The battle was over. An hour and a half's fighting had scattered the unhappy forces of the ambitious Duke, ill-trained, ill-led, and ill-guided as they had been.

But what of Monmouth? *Proh pudor!* He and Grey, disarming before the battle was over, had taken to horse and fled away by the Polden Hills, leaving their wretched followers to escape, to be killed, or to be captured as they list. About two thousand of them, it was estimated, perished, more in

their flight even than in the actual battle. The Royalists lost still more; 2300 and upwards, it is said. Huge graves were dug : a great mound was thrown up, and to-day it is not difficult to find skeletons a little beneath the earth. The Weston Zoyland church registers tell their own story. One entry records how 500 prisoners were taken into the church, *of which there was 79 wounded, and 5 of them died of their wounds*. Another entry records the expenditure, *upon the day of Thanksgiving after the fight, 11s. 8d. for the ringers*.

Most of the details of Monmouth's flight are known, yet they hardly seem worth recording. On Wednesday, the 8th of July, he was found hidden away in a ditch in the wild and remote country near Ringwood, in Dorset. Utterly exhausted from want of rest and food, he presented a broken, a dejected and miserable appearance. Five thousand pounds, he knew, were offered for him, *dead or alive*. They carried the poor creature, almost in a state of collapse, to the house of the nearest magistrate, one Anthony Ettrick, of Holt Lodge. He plucked up courage enough to say, in faltering tones, that if he had but a horse he would still bid his captors defiance. Two days later he was taken from Ringwood by stages to London, which he reached on Monday, the 13th. The Earl of Aylesbury chanced to see him being led up the stairs from the river. *I wish that I had not seen him, he wrote, for I could never get him out of my mind. I so loved him personally*. Monmouth wrote the most pitiable appeal to King James. *"I do assure your Majesty it is the remorse I now have in me of the wrong I have done you in several things, and now in taking up arms against you. For my taking up arms, it was never in my thought since the King died.... But my misfortune was such as to meet with some horrid people that made me believe things of your Majesty, and gave me so many false arguments, that I was fully led away to believe that it was a shame and a sin before God not to do it. ... I hope. Sir, God Almighty will strike your heart with mercy and compassion for me, as He has done mine with the abhorrence of what I have done*. A letter to the Queen was also despatched. *I hope, Madam, your Majesty will be convinced that the life you save shall ever be devoted to your service*. Another letter was written to Hyde, Earl of Rochester, beseeching his intercession with James. He pleaded that Hyde would not refuse interceding for me with the King, *being I now, though too late, see how I have been misled*.

But all was in vain. Monmouth prevaricated to the very end. If any man had ever hopelessly sinned against his sovereign, Monmouth was that man. His proclamation

had loaded James with the basest calumnies, and with a charge of murder, and it had called on his subjects to rise in rebellion against him. He had assumed the kingly title ; he had invaded his sovereign's realms. One chance was left; there was to be an interview with the King. It was an awful, a fearful and degrading scene. Monmouth, with arms bound, crawled in on his knees towards James, seeking to embrace his feet. He fawned upon him, imploring life with the frantic plaintiveness of a man who has lost his manliness, and who stoops to any degradation, any bitter humiliation and servility, in order to escape the due reward of his misdeeds. The two men had hated each other for twenty years ; they had been rivals in amours, in the race for fame and popularity, and in the long keen struggle for power. Monmouth had staked all upon one last mad throw of the dice; he had failed miserably ; now he was abjectly, finally, and completely in the clutches of the man against whom his own life had been one incessant revolt, one bitter and deadly feud. James was fifty-two years old; his nephew was thirty-six. James was now a king, Monmouth was a rebel, bound at his feet, wailing and in utter despair.

There is no telling what a great man might have done, but James was never great. He turned sullenly away from his captive, and Monmouth surmised that his doom was come. One frantic promise which he urged, that he would become a Roman Catholic if only they would spare him, was refused with the scorn which it deserved. They told him, truly, that he was seeking to save his life, but not to save his soul. This was the final falseness of the Protestant Duke. On Tuesday, July 14th, he was told that he must die.

On the day following he plucked up a little courage for the final act. As they led him out to Tower Hill his wonderful fascination over the people revived, and the crowds, as they watched him being led by, guarded by officers with loaded pistols in their hands, bewailed his fate when they saw their old favourite in such dire plight. Sounds of lamentation arose on every side. He picked up the axe and tried the edge with his thumb, giving the executioner six guineas, with the promise of six more if the work should be well done. Refusing to be bound or to have any covering for his head or face, he prayed fervently for a while, and then laid down his head, fitting it with much composure into the block. The awful scene that followed is indescribable. The executioner, utterly losing his nerve, gave a false blow, and Monmouth

turned his mangled head and looked reproachfully up at the man. Again the blow failed, and again. Five strokes were given upon the wretched victim, and then the butchery ended. Six horses drew his body away in a hearse, and the head having been sewn on to the trunk, he was buried within the Chapel of St. Peter in the Tower. His burial entry is simple enough. 1685, *James Duke of Monmouth, beheaded on Tower Hill ye 15th and buried ye 16th July.*

Well would it have been for the West-Country, and for Bridgwater, if the consequences* of Monmouth's folly and insincerity had perished with him. But they did not, as such things never do. Colonel Percy Kirke who had only returned from Tangier the previous year, promptly set about wholesale hangings of the insurgents, and Bridgwater and its neighbourhood were filled with his victims. There has been, it cannot be doubted, some exaggeration as to this, as was inevitable, yet his brutalities were great, and he seemed to rejoice in them. Men were hanged in chains ; their bodies were mangled ; they were executed with many tortures ; they were derided as they suffered. It was a brutal age, and civil war is worse than ordinary war. Men became devils, and forgot their manhood. The victorious party grew blatant in their triumph, for religion had played a large part in the insurrection, and the very deepest feelings of men were aroused. It was no hatred for a foreign foe, when men combine, and when the virtues of patriotism and generosity are evolved ; it was the feud of neighbours at home ; the bitter hatred of Protestants against Royalists, and Royalists against rebels. In this case the feelings of animosity were deepened by the knowledge that the Protestants had been fooled by following a fascinating libertine, a man to whom religion was as nothing) and who was eager to renounce the faith which he had sworn at Taunton to maintain, when the pinch of trial came.

Judge Jeffreys started on his journey westwards towards the end of August.** In our neighbourhood the work of what is known as the Bloody Assize began practically on September 3rd at Dorchester, which provided, it is reported, seventy-four victims. At Exeter on the 14th he resumed his trials ; then came Taunton. Five hundred and twenty-six rebels awaited him, and of these 139, it is said, were condemned. He left for Bristol on Monday the 21st, where there were no prisoners to be tried for rebellion, but where he gave the corporation of the city a most drastic and prolonged castigation.

Proceeding to Wells, he found some 500 waiting for trial, of whom ninety-nine, it is alleged, were executed and 283 transported. From Wells he returned to London to report himself to the King.

It does not appear that Jeffreys actually held any assize in Bridgwater, and it is probable that the Bridgwater prisoners were tried at Taunton. Kirke took six prisoners and two cartloads of wounded men there before the assizes began. Stories are rife, in scores of books, of his utter callousness, his cruelties to those whom he had to try, and his brutal conduct on the bench, and many of these stories are miserably true. But here again there has been exaggeration,** so that it is by no means easy to state with accuracy how many were really executed. The number was great, and it was appalling. All the West-Country ran with blood. It was a short reign of terror, which our place can never forget. Yet it is sometimes forgotten that the chief actor in the dreadful drama was the King. Kirke and Jeffreys were two butchers who enjoyed their task, yet it was James who sent them to be butchers. *I was not half bloody enough*,**** said Jeffreys when in the Tower, *for him who sent me thither*, i.e. upon the Western Assize. The stern judge, indeed, was set a horrible task to do, and a task incompatible with the rules of justice. He was sent to condemn the rebels, and to hang as many of them as he could. The trials were a mockery ; it was a foregone conclusion. He must cry havoc, and let loose the dogs of war. Jeffreys had no choice. At the head of things was the saturnine, maddened King, who would be obeyed. Unhappily Jeffreys was only too eager to obey ; for him the awful task of hanging men was as pleasant a thing as when trout rise to fly after fly in the calm waters of a summer day. It was this dreadful ferocity, this unrelenting joy in what he did, that has made his name loathed and his memory abhorred in western counties even until to-day.

It was very long before calm reigned again in Bridgwater. Never will it be known how many poor Somerset lads lost their lives in following the wild Duke, who seemed to cast a spell over every one. Many, indeed, refused to believe that he was dead, and were certain that he would come again. The pike and scythe men did bravely indeed at Sedgemoor ; would that they had had a worthier cause and a better leader ! What, we may ask, were the feelings of the municipal authorities of the old borough, who had so grievously failed both in judgment and in loyalty ? It might have cost them their lives, even as their

action in upholding the rebel Duke cost many lives. They escaped, albeit, one imagines, with trembling hearts and guilty consciences. Never did men come much nearer to laying their heads on the executioner's block, or to hanging upon a gibbet, than did Alexander Popham and the aldermen of Bridgwater, when they fostered the rebellion and proclaimed Monmouth to be king in the year of grace 1685.

NOTES

Monmouth was granted two interviews with his Duchess previous to his execution. They were of a painful nature, and the poor lady was terribly overcome. She was superior to him in education and in everything else. By her he had four sons and three daughters. By his mistress Eleanor Needham, youngest daughter of Sir Robert Needham, Bart., he had four children. And he also left a son by Lady Henrietta Wentworth, only daughter of Lord Wentworth. She succeeded to the barony in 1667. Nine months after Monmouth's execution she died. (Fea's *King Monmouth*,)

Before his death Monmouth (in order that further trouble might be spared to the throne from any future action of his heirs) signed a declaration in the presence of the bishops, thus : *I do declare that the late King told me that Hee was never married to my Mother.* From the original document in the Bodleian Library.

The sentences upon the rebels were carried into execution with great severity. The High Sheriff's letter to the officials of Bath directs that they shall erect *a gallows in the most public place, with halters to hang them with, also faggots to burn the bowells of the Traytors, and a cauldron to boyle their heads and quarters,*" etc etc. The executions in Bridgwater, no doubt, were carried out on similar lines. See Letter dated 16th November, 1685.

Another note directs that *you are also to provide an axe and a cleaver for the quartering the said Rebels.* (Collinson's *Somerset*)

The following extract is from the Report of the Hist MSS. Commission, 1874, p. 108. Wells Corporation Papers. " *The Receivers' Books, Second Volume, 1684-1755.* — *Under the date of September 1685 is an account of the town's expenditure for the entertainment of Jeffreys and the other four Judges at the Special Assize for the trial of the Duke of Monmouth's adherents. Among them is the item : "Paid to Johnson 4 days and nights attendance on my Lord Jeffries his coach horses"*

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* Evelyn's *Diary*,

** In 1656 he had previously been in England with Lucy Walter. '

*** Pepys's *Diary*,

**** Copied from a transcript of the original letter at Wemyss Castle.

***** Calendar of State Papers, 1663

***** He received the freedom of the city of Edinburgh in a golden casket, and banquets were given in his honour. — Allan Fea's *King Monmouth*, p. 70.

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* Lady Henrietta Wentworth stayed in Holland with Monmouth - save for one short visit to England — until he sailed for Lyme in May, 1685. She never afterwards saw him again.

** Archibald Campbell, ninth Earl of Argyll

*** William Stradling's *Priory of Chilton-super-Polden, with a Miscellaneous Appendix*, 1839, p. 53.

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* Stradling's *Priory*, p. 59.

** *Stradling*, p. 69.

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* In 1683 the total population of Chedzoy was 398. *Stradling*, p. 168.

** The Rev. Andrew Paschall, B.D., Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, was inducted parson of Chedzoy on November 30th, 1662. He *did toll the Bell when he took possession, and did read his Articles on the Sunday following.* "He was inducted by George Wotton, vicar of Bridgwater (Chedzoy Church Registers).

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* Stradling, quoting the authorities of his time (1839), gives the total number of persons (coming from thirty-six parishes) executed as rebels to be 239. The following eleven were Bridgwater men : Robert Fraunces, Joshua Bellamy, William Moggeridge, John Hurman, Robert Roper, Richard Harris, Nicholas Stodgell, Richard Engram, John Trott, Roger Guppy, and Isaiah Davis. Roger Hoar was reprieved. (*Stradling's Priory*, p. 130)

** H. B. Irving's *Life of Judge Jeffreys*,

*** *Ibid.*, p. 266.

**** Woolrych's *Life of Jeffreys*.