



INTRODUCTION.



ALTHOUGH the possession of the city of Chester, occupying as it did a strong strategic position on the western lines of communication of the country, pre-eminently as the port for Ireland, was considered of the utmost importance throughout the Civil War by Royalists and Parliamentarians alike, but scant attention has hitherto been given to the part it played in that struggle. In the main, historians have been content to record the fight at Rowton Heath which hastened the collapse of the King's cause, and to refer to the surrender of the city: singularly enough they have been silent upon the effect of the siege. Admittedly the decisive battles were fought elsewhere, and probably the attitude of Chester and North Wales never affected the ultimate issue. Yet the lack of information regarding local activities, of which there is such a mass of evidence available, inevitably suggests that the published histories of the period are by no means complete, and that much of the material presented in the following pages requires careful study before a true appreciation of the progress of the Civil War in these parts can be obtained.

Chester was ever a loyal city. In the city as in the county, there were many who held puritanical views, and as the breach between King and Parliament widened, the increasing exactions of the King severely tested the loyalty of his staunchest supporters within the walls, but the faith which the majority of the citizens reposed in their sovereign could not be destroyed. Charles raised his standard at Nottingham, August 22, 1642, and a month later was received with great enthusiasm in the city. Avowed Parlia-

mentarians in a position to do so left with their families, and obtained such quarters as they could find in the country districts remaining firm for the Parliament; those able to bear arms augmented the Parliamentary forces at Nantwich and elsewhere. Following upon the King's visit active preparations for defence were set on foot, and every artifice known to military science was adopted to protect the city and suburbs in case of attack. Towards the end of the year many country Royalists took up their residence in the city on account of the increasing strength of the Parliamentarians. Meanwhile, after the indecisive Battle of Edgehill, October 23, 1642, the King made Oxford his headquarters and confined his operations to the west of England. Notwithstanding the peace-parleys during the winter of 1642-3, Sir William Brereton, the Parliamentary leader in Cheshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire, continued his campaign, making substantial progress in those counties, in view of which the King appointed Sir Nicholas Byron governor of the city. Prince Rupert was urged to oppose Brereton in the spring of 1643, but was called away to the assistance of the King at Reading.

Brereton made his first assault upon the city, July 18, 1643, but was obliged to withdraw owing to insufficient strength. By the end of the first year of the war he held practically the whole of the county, and early in November advanced into Wales as far as Hawarden Castle, which he held until the return of the English army from Ireland, at the end of the month. To counteract the effect of the augmentation of the King's forces by the army from Ireland, Parliament inaugurated the Solemn League and Covenant, hoping to end the war by calling in the aid of a Scotch army. The "Irish" army was disastrously defeated at Nantwich early in 1644 by the combined forces of Sir Thomas Fairfax and Sir William Brereton. The Royal cause was now faring so badly here that the King sent his nephew Prince Rupert, northwards, with an army to relieve the situation, and so brought what may be regarded as the first stage of the city's participation in the war, to a close.

Sir John Byron, the commander of the Royalist forces in these parts, who had just been created Lord Byron by the King, and was destined to hold the city throughout one of the longest and closest blockades in this country, whilst the inhabitants suffered the greatest hardships of disease and starvation, was now Governor. Advantage was taken of the respite and the greater facilities afforded by the presence of the Prince's army, which was growing daily, to replenish the stores of provision and ammunition and further improve the fortifications. For some months nothing could stay the successful progress of the energetic Prince through the northern counties, but on July 2, 1644, he met with defeat at Marston Moor, and retired into the Welsh marches where he was again defeated on August 5th. By the end of the second year Lathom House, Liverpool, Chester, Beeston Castle, Hawarden Castle, Shrewsbury and High Ercall, with Shropshire south of the Severn, still held out for the King.

In December, 1644, Brereton began the leaguer, encircling the city with garrisons at a distance of four or five miles. Two months later he drew in his cordon and made his headquarters at Christleton, but was obliged to withdraw on the approach of Prince Maurice, during whose short stay, February 19th to March 13th, the city's defensive lines were drawn in, in consequence of the reduced number of the garrison. Brereton resumed the siege with greater vigour, but to the delight of the citizens withdrew again in May, 1645, upon receipt of intelligence of the King's march northwards to their relief. Charles abandoned this project, however, on account of the danger to Oxford, and a month later, June 14th, suffered defeat at Naseby. With this withdrawal, the second stage of the memorable siege was brought to a close. In September, 1645, the end of the third year of the war, in addition to Chester: Beeston, Hawarden, Lathom House and Liverpool still held firm for the King, Shrewsbury having been lost at the end of February.

During the summer of 1645 the pressure of the siege was relaxed, and the garrison enabled to prepare for a vigorous defence. The final stage began with the storming of the

eastern suburbs by Col. Michael Jones on September 20th, followed four days later by the rout of the Royalist horse at Rowton Heath. Montrose, with whose forces Charles had hoped to unite, had been defeated at Philiphaugh, September 13th, and the King's position was now hopeless. Despite the rigours of heavy bombardment and a close investment the garrison held out with grim determination for no less than nineteen weeks, and it was not until all hope of relief was finally abandoned and the besieged were faced with starvation, that Lord Byron surrendered upon honourable conditions. Liverpool and Beeston Castle had surrendered in November, Lathom House early in December, Hawarden and High Ercall followed in March, and Bridgenorth and Ludlow in April and May, 1646, respectively. Oxford surrendered on June 24, 1646, and the war was over. The struggle lasted a few weeks longer at Lichfield and Worcester, and for some months in remote places in Wales, Harlech Castle being the last to capitulate on March 13, 1647.

During the short lived second Civil War a plot was hatched to seize the city and castle for the King, but being betrayed the ringleaders were arrested and shot in the corn market.

Sir William Brereton, the commander-in-chief of the Parliamentary forces in Cheshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire, was undoubtedly the outstanding personality of the Siege. The descendant of a knightly family long resident at Brereton and Malpas Hall, and owner of the manor of Hanldforth in Cheshire, Brereton imbibed puritanical teachings from his youth upwards, many of his kinsmen and neighbours being prominent Nonconformists. Far from being lethargic or morose in temperament, however, he was an enthusiastic follower of all manly exercises and country pursuits. He matriculated at Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1621, at the age of eighteen, and was admitted a student of Gray's Inn in 1623. In 1627 he was created a baronet by Charles I, and about this time married Susannah, daughter of Sir George Booth, knight, of Dunham Massey, a leading Presbyterian. She died in 1637. In 1634 and 1635

he travelled widely in Great Britain, Holland and the United Provinces, where in all probability he gained the rudiments of that military knowledge which was to stand him in good stead in later years. He was one of the representatives of Cheshire in the parliaments of 1628, 1640 and 1640-53, and was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of the county shortly before the outbreak of hostilities. Early in June, 1642, he undertook to provide four horses and £100 in ready money or plate for the defence of the Parliament, and in August he came to Nantwich from London with a troop of horse and a regiment of dragoons to set up the Militia. He was subsequently appointed commander-in-chief in this locality. His operations were not confined to Cheshire, however, but extended over all the adjoining counties, and although he was not engaged in the outstanding battles of the war, the part he played was no less injurious to the Royal cause. In the early part of the struggle it was with the utmost difficulty that he held his own, but from the summer of 1643 onwards he gradually became master of the situation, though continually hampered by shortage of money, provisions and troops. The country people were particularly devoted to him and kept him supplied with intelligence which he was able to turn to advantage. It was his singular fate to be ranged against one closely allied to him, for Lord Byron's brother and successor in the title, Sir Richard Byron, had married a sister of Lady Brereton. Brereton inherited, as part of his patrimony, a house on the site of the dissolved nunnery of St. Mary's in Chester, which he contended was free from tolls and murage and the imposition of ship-money, and he was so embittered by the opposition with which his claims were met by the civic authorities that the severity with which he pressed the siege has been regarded as an act of vengeance. However that may be it is certainly remarkable that towards the end, when he had the city in his grip he found time amongst his multifarious duties to write to a legal friend for advice on this vexed question. His house had been plundered and burnt by the enraged citizens early in the siege, in retaliation

for which Parliament ordered him to satisfy his losses out of the estates of Royalists in the county.

At the close of hostilities the chief forestership of Macclesfield and the seneschalship of that hundred was conferred upon him by Parliament, together with large allowances from the personal estates of delinquents. Although one of the commissioners on the trial of the King, he did not act. He died on the 7th of April, 1661, at the archiepiscopal palace of Croydon, of which he received a grant after the death of Archbishop Laud, and was buried at Cheadle, tradition asserting that his coffin was swept away by a flood. Brereton was twice married, and left issue by both his wives.¹

Three of the five folio volumes of Brereton's letters, formerly in the possession of Dr. Foote Gower, are now preserved among the Additional MSS. in the British Museum, and have been freely used in this account of the siege.

There is a very rude portrait purporting to be one of Brereton in Ricrafts' *England's Champions*. The one here reproduced, from a drawing by Robert Cooper, is in the Sutherland collection at the Bodleian Library.

Colonel Sir John Byron, first Lord Byron, the gallant defender of Chester and determined opponent of Brereton, was the eldest son of Sir John Byron, K.B., of Newstead, co. Nottingham, the representative of a long established north country family. He sat as member for the borough and county of Nottingham successively, was created a K.B. at the coronation of Charles I, and filled the office of High Sheriff for his county. In common with many of the leaders of the time his military experience and reputation was acquired in the Low Countries and in the expedition against the Scots. In 1641 he was appointed Lieutenant of the Tower of London and in 1642 joined the King at York. After the battle of Edgehill, where he was present with his own regiment, he participated in the honours which were showered on the Royalist leaders, being created D.C.L. at

¹ Foster's *Alumni Oxon.*, Ormerod's *Cheshire*, Earwaker's *East Cheshire*, *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

Oxford, a degree that was also conferred upon his uncle, Sir Nicholas Byron, commander of foot, who had likewise been engaged in the wars of the Low Countries and at Edgehill. On this occasion the degree of M.A. *honoris causa* was conferred upon Sir John Byron's brother and successor Sir Richard Byron, who had only been knighted a few weeks previously at Shrewsbury. During the following winter, spring and summer Byron witnessed the Royalist triumphs in the west country and was in command of the horse of the right wing at the Battle of Newbury, September, 1643. On October 24th the King created him Baron Byron of Rochdale, a title that has never been officially recognized, and shortly afterwards he was appointed Field Marshal of the forces in the counties of Worcester, Shropshire, Cheshire, and North Wales under Lord Capel, the Lieutenant General. Early in January he succeeded his uncle, Sir Nicholas Byron, as Governor of Chester, and save for a short period in 1644 when Col. William Legge was in command and he was with Rupert at Marston Moor, he worthily maintained that important trust to the end of the siege, stubbornly refusing to surrender until the last hope of relief had vanished and the city was faced with starvation. He retired to Carnarvon Castle, of which he was Governor, until May, 1646, and later joined the Queen in Paris, where he was appointed Comptroller General of the household of the Duke of York. During the rising of 1648 he attempted to raise North Wales for the King. He was twice married, but died childless in Paris in August, 1652. The portrait reproduced is from an etching by P. Paul at the Bodleian.²

Orlando Bridgman, eldest son of the Bishop of Chester, Attorney of the Court of Wards and Liveries, Vice-Chamberlain of Chester and M.P. for Wigan, was by far the most influential Royalist in the city, his fine for delinquency being fixed at £865 5s. 9d. He was created a baronet at the Restoration, became Chief Justice of the Common Pleas and Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, and died in 1674. From him descend the Earls of Bradford.

² Foster's *Alumni Oxon.*, *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

Chester was represented in the Short Parliament of 1640 by Robert Brerewood the Recorder, and Sir Thomas Smith, knight, of Chester and Hough, the latter being re-elected together with Francis Gamull of Chester to the succeeding parliament, afterwards known as the Long Parliament. They were superseded in 1646 by Alderman William Edwards and John Ratcliffe son of the alderman of that name.

Brerewood, whose grandfather and great-grandfather were Cestrians, was called to the Bar from the Middle Temple in 1615; appointed justice of North Wales in 1637; Recorder of the city in succession to Edward Whitby, 1639; Serjeant-at-Law 1640; King's Serjeant, 1641; was knighted at Oxford in 1643 and raised to the King's Bench later in the same year. His fine was fixed at £387 10s. He died in 1654, and was buried in St. Mary's, Chester.³

Sir Thomas Smith, who was mayor in 1622, and sheriff of the county in 1623, came of a family of merchants, noted for their benefactions, who had acquired extensive estates in the county by purchase. He resided at his house in St. Martin's parish during the siege. Both he and his son of the same name, later created a baronet by Charles II, were heavily fined by the Parliament.

Sir Francis Gamull, colonel of the city trainband, son of Thomas Gamull the Recorder (M.P. 1601, died 1613), and representative of a family long established in the county, was mayor in 1634, and was one of the foremost supporters of the King in the city. He resided in Lower Bridge Street, where he entertained King Charles on the occasion of the defeat at Rowton Heath. He is reputed to have been created a baronet some time prior to the death in 1644 of his son Captain Thomas Gamull, and at his death in 1654, when he was buried in the family vault at St. Mary's, Chester, he left four surviving daughters and co-heiresses, all of whom married prominent Royalists. On account of his loyalty he was deprived of his life interest in Buerton Hall and lands, and removed from the various offices he held in the city.⁴ He

³ Foster's *Alumni Oxon.*, *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

⁴ *Cheshire Sheaf*, II, 274.

is depicted in the centre compartment of the stained glass window in Farndon Church.

John Werden, of Foregate Street, esquire, Attorney-at-law, died 1646, and his son Col. Robert Werden compounded in the sum of £600. They came of a wealthy family of brewers, and acquired Burton Hall and lands by purchase. John Werden was one of the city commissioners who negotiated the terms of surrender. Col. Werden was taken prisoner at Christleton, January 18, 1644-5, and afterwards released. He was declared a traitor by the Parliament and a price set on his head, whereupon he joined the King in exile, and did not return until the Restoration. He was Major-General of the Horse under James II, and died in 1690. From him descended the Werden baronets and the Beauclerks, third and fourth Dukes of St. Albans.

Each of the successive mayors during the hostilities used every endeavour to advance the Royal cause.

Alderman Thomas Cowper, of Bridge Street, iron-monger, sheriff 1630, mayor 1641-2, was offered a knighthood, which he refused, on the occasion of the King's visit in September, 1642. He was then granted a coat of arms, the charges on which were taken from the arms of the first two Norman earls. He died in 1671, aged 76, and was buried at St. Peter's, where a tablet is inscribed to his memory. His portrait in the Mayor's Parlour at the Town Hall has been reproduced in the second volume of the *Journal of the Chester Archæological Society*. It is interesting to note that he is represented wearing the Carolus medallion and a death's head ring, the favourite Cavalier memorial of the martyr-king. He was succeeded in the mayoralty by his brother-in-law, Alderman William Ince, merchant, of Watergate Street, who represented the city in the Parliament of 1662. Alderman Ince's death in 1678 is recorded in an inscription at Holy Trinity. Randle Holme, the second of the four arms painters, heralds and antiquaries of the same name, lived in Castle Lane. He was sheriff in 1633, in which year his father was mayor, and succeeded Ince as mayor in 1643. He died in

1649, aged 59 years, and was buried at St. Mary's. A handsome mural monument, erected by his son Randle Holme the third, is still in existence. His father, who died in 1645 at the age of 84, was fined £160 for his delinquency.⁵

Charles Walley, innkeeper, the Mayor during the last year of the siege, had previously been mayor in 1630, when the Duchess of Tremouille, mother-in-law to Lord Strange, was entertained in the city. He owned the Red Lion Inn in Foregate Street and resided at his house adjoining The Bars, where Brereton found the sword and mace and established himself after the battle of Rowton Heath. He was one of the six city commissioners who refused to sign the Articles of Surrender, the others being Gamull, Cowper, Brerewood, Edward Morgell and Robert Harvey. Although an active Royalist, and fined £537, at a sixth, he succeeded in trimming his sails to the wind, obtained employment under the Parliament, being agent at Chester and Liverpool for the billeting and transporting of soldiers to Ireland, and was returned as Member for the city in 1654. He states in his Petition, amongst the Royalist Composition Papers, that he had acted very little against the Parliament and had been termed a traitor by Lord Byron. Brereton had received £35 from his wife, corn to the value of £760, twenty horses worth £100, five cows worth £24 and three silver basins worth £55. Many of his goods were either burnt, carried away or lost by the soldiers. Walley purchased Saighton Hall and demesne, after their sequestration from the Calveley family. He died in 1663.⁶

Of the remaining dissentients from the Treaty, Edward Morgell, Deputy Registrar of the Consistory Court, Commissioner to administer the Oath of Supremacy to the soldiers passing through to Ireland, 1642, who died in 1659, was fined £100. His cousin, Lieut. Edward Morgell, was killed upon his guard near the Newgate, November 7, 1645.

⁵ For a detailed account of the Holme family see the *Chester Arch. Journal*, N.S., Vol. IV.

⁶ *Cheshire Sheaf*, II, 282.

Alderman Robert Harvey, mayor 1639, the founder of the Almshouses in Clayton Lane, 1662, died in 1669 and was buried at St. Olave's.

Alderman Thomas Throppe, of St. Michael's parish, merchant, mayor 1637 and 1661, a brother-in-law of Alderman Cowper and Alderman Ince, was commissioned as sergeant-major of the forces in the city. His father before him had been sergeant of the keys. Throppe was one of those to whom Lord Byron's warrant was addressed for ascertaining the amount of provisions in the city three weeks before the surrender, a summary of which is given in Appendix II. This should be referred to for further particulars of residents and officers in command. It is stated in his Composition Papers that the chamber of premises of his in St. Peter's parish had been "torn by a granado," that he was a prisoner in the Castle from March 16 to July 2, 1646, and that he refused to leave, having many children and no means of subsistence elsewhere. His fine at a moiety, £443, was reduced to £177 10s. His will was proved at Chester in 1669.⁷

Alderman Richard Broster, sheriff 1631, mayor 1662, held a certificate from many of the best citizens testifying that he lost £2,500 personal estate when the suburbs were taken, and that he lost several fine inns and houses in the suburbs by fire, in addition to the water works which were of great benefit to him. Fine at a sixth £170.⁸

Ormerod also gives the following Chester Royalists with the amount of their fines⁹ :—

	£	s.	d.
Daniel Bavand, gent. - - - - -	90	0	0
Thomas Berrington, of Castle Lane, gent., attorney in the Exchequer ¹⁰ - - - - -	20	0	0
William Brocke, of Upton - - - - -			
William Gamull, gent. - - - - -	225	0	0
Edward Russell, gent. - - - - -	310	0	0
Thomas Weston, sen., sheriff 1637, buried at St. Mary's, 1646 - - - - -	190	0	0

⁷ *Ibid.*, (3rd Series), I, 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 12.

⁹ Vol. I, page lxiii.

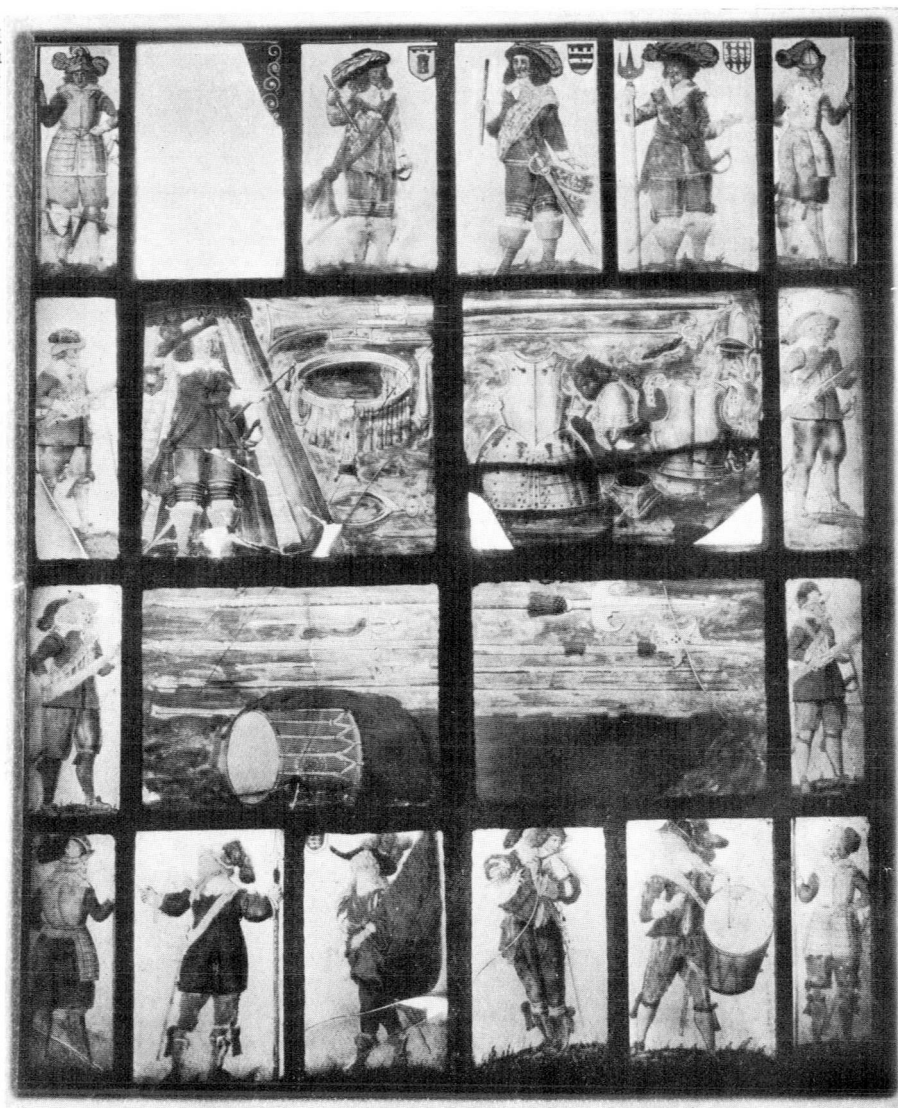
¹⁰ The Berringtons of Cheshire, *Chester Arch. Journal*, N.S., XIX.

John Wilson, gent.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	142	10	0
[whose leasehold property had been defaced, spoiled and pulled down by the soldiers, £285] ¹¹										
Richard Wilson, gent.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	0	0
Henry Bailow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	120	0	0
William Sparke, ald., mayor 1632	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	59	0	0
Thomas Bridge, rector of Malpas and vicar of St. John's, Chester, one of the City Commissioners, died 1682	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	0	0
Thomas and Edward Pershall (? Capt. Edmund Pearsall)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	300	0	0
Lord Cholmondeley, who was in Chester during the siege	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7742	0	0
John, Earl Rivers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1110	0	0

It is probable that the Berrington represented as an ensign and standard bearer in the third compartment from the left in the bottom row of the stained glass window in the Barnston chancel at Farndon church, here illustrated, is the before named attorney. The figures with armorial bearings on the top row from left to right, represent Richard Grosvenor, esq. (afterwards the second baronet), who raised the *posse comitatus* of Cheshire in 1644; Sir William Mainwaring of Peover, knight, slain at the siege October 9, 1644, and buried in the cathedral, where there is a large monument to his memory; and William Barnston of Churton, esq., who died in 1664.

The leading Parliamentarians in the city at the outbreak of the war, though fewer in numbers and influence than the Royalists, were no less determined. The well-known Puritan family long established at Bruen Stapleford, near by, was represented at this time by John Bruen, esquire, who died in 1647. His son Jonathan Bruen was one of Brereton's commissioners in the negotiations leading to the capitulation of the city. Calvin Bruen—note the christian name—a mercer of Chester, sheriff in 1635, a younger brother of John Bruen, was implicated together with Peter Ince, stationer, for befriending Prynne on his way through Chester to Carnarvon Castle. He was elected an alderman in 1646. Alderman William Edwards, merchant and ironmonger, the

¹¹ *Cheshire Sheaf* (3rd Series), I, 116.



Cyril H. Lodge, Photo.

Stained Glass Window in the Barnston Chancel
at Farndon Church,
depicting prominent local Royalists, Men-at-Arms and Military Trophies.
(See pages 9 and 12.)

friend of Brereton and most active supporter of his party in the city, was a younger brother of Evan Edwards, of Rhual, Mold, Baron of the Exchequer in Chester and son of Thomas Edwards of Rhual, his predecessor in that office.¹² Edwards was sheriff in 1627, and twice mayor of the city: in 1636 and again in 1646 on the removal of the Royalists from office, when he was returned Burgess for Chester together with John Ratcliffe, esquire, son of Alderman John Ratcliffe, the Member in 1620 and 1627, and mayor in 1628. Ratcliffe succeeded Brerewood as Recorder until 1651, was re-appointed on the death of Richard Haworth in 1656, but deprived in 1662 for refusing to take the oath enjoined by Act of Parliament. He sat again as Member for the city from 1660 to 1662. That he faithfully performed the duties of his office is evinced by the fact that a presentation was made to him in 1666 "for his great care and pains about the public good of this city," and after his death in 1672 a sum of money was voted towards meeting the expenses he had incurred.¹³

Alderman Thomas Aldersey, merchant, mayor 1640, and Alderman Richard Leicester, mercer, sheriff 1628, mayor 1650, were also prominent Parliamentarians, the former being named with Brereton and Edwards in the King's warrant of September, 1642, as a householder whose premises were to be searched for arms and ammunition.

Some reference should here be made to Brereton's commanders, Jones and Duckenfield. Col. Michael Jones left his studies at Lincoln's Inn for a more adventurous life with the army in Ireland. On the return of his regiment to England in 1644 he entered the service of the Parliament, probably more from a conviction of the justice of the cause rather than disaffection, and at once distinguished himself as a cavalry leader. He was engaged under Brereton until his return to Ireland in 1647, when he was appointed Governor of Dublin by the Parliament. So great were his successes that within two years he rose to the sole command

¹² Peniarth MS., 288, fol. 215.

¹³ *Cheshire Sheaf*, II, 274.

until the arrival of Cromwell, when he was appointed Lieut.-General of the forces. He died in December, 1649.¹⁴

Col. Robert Duckenfield, of Duckenfield, in Cheshire, joined Brereton on the outbreak of hostilities, and remained with him throughout the war, proving himself an able leader. He was High Sheriff of the county in 1649, and Member in 1653. In 1650 he was appointed Governor of Chester, and secured the Isle of Man in the following year. He helped to suppress the Booth rising in 1659, and spent the remainder of his days quietly at home. He died in 1689, at the age of 70.

Frequent mention is made of the Welsh soldiers at Chester. They were led by Col. Roger Mostyn and Col. Hugh Wynn. The former resided at Mostyn in Flintshire, and raised and equipped a body of men for the King's service. He was created a baronet in 1660, was appointed *Custos Rotulorum* for the County of Carnarvon in 1674, and died about the year 1690. Lord Mostyn is a descendant by the distaff. Col. Hugh Wynn, of Bodysgallen and Berthddu, co. Carnarvon, represented that branch of the Gwydir family. He died in 1674 and is also represented by Lord Mostyn. It is highly probable that Capt. William Morgan, of Golden Grove in Flintshire, and his son, Edward Morgan, were in Chester during the siege—and that one or other of them was at one time in charge of the gun mount bearing their name. The son was slain at Winnington Bridge, near Northwich, August 19, 1659.

In connection with the city's fortifications there can be little doubt that the mount to the right of Bache Lane took its name from Dr. Edward Wolley, of Shrewsbury, the Cavalier chaplain and combatant, whose fortunes and energies were devoted to the Royal cause. He was at the battle of Edgehill, after which he came to Chester, and was later with the King at Oxford and on the Continent. Two of his houses were plundered and sequestered. He became Bishop of Clonfert and Kilmacduagh, and died in 1684.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

¹⁵ *Cheshire Sheaf*, II, 391, 394.

With the Great Rebellion the feudal system of raising armies in this country disappeared, and after the Restoration the standing army gradually came into being. When it became clear that force would have to be resorted to, the trainbands were called out, the King issued his Commissions of Array and Parliament ordered the Deputy Lieutenants to enlist men under their respective banners. At the outset the Royalists appear to have favoured Dutch methods of warfare, but Swedish principles came to be universally adopted. The forces in the field comprised Horse, Foot, and Artillery Trains. The Horse were organised in Troops of 100 or 120; each troop having one Captain, one Lieutenant, one Cornet, three Corporals and two Trumpets. Dragoons were mounted infantry. They rode in march, but fought on foot. A troop was 132 strong, which allowed one horseholder to each eleven horses and therefore left 120 fighting men. The Foot consisted of companies of musketeers, with pikemen, grenadiers, fusiliers, etc. The Artillery ordnance ranged from small mortars, three to twelve pounders, the latter considered the heaviest mobile field pieces, to 12in. and even larger mortars, but there was no definite separation between field and siege ordnance, the need for siege guns not being great. Chester, however, was an exception and we read of siege guns being brought from Warrington and Shrewsbury to assist in its reduction. Transport and drivers were usually hired civilians. The chief difficulties lay in the scarcity of ammunition. At Chester, the gunners often had to resort to large and heavy stones. Strong as they were, the walls were badly battered and breached by the besiegers, and the timber built dwellings within suffered considerably. Contemporary reports state that hardly a single house in Watergate Street and Eastgate Street, two main thoroughfares, escaped damage. Despite the great developments which have taken place in modern warfare, it is remarkable that the military operations of the seventeenth century differ so little from those of our own time.

For an account of the manner in which the armies of the King and the Parliament were raised, and the organisation of the different arms, see *Cromwell's Army* (3rd edition, 1921), by Sir C. H. Firth, M.A., LL.D.

CHAPTER I.

Local Disaffection. The King in Chester. Defensive Measures.

FULLY to understand the position of affairs at Chester, and the feeling of the inhabitants of that loyal city at the beginning of the Civil War, we must go back a few years before the actual breach between King Charles and his Parliament. The citizens of Chester had borne themselves well under the attempts which King James made to supply his increasing need for money by claims upon customs, monopolies, and "benevolences." They had responded with fair willingness to the demand for shipmoney, but there was a small though active body of Puritans who were not well-affected to the King and Episcopacy. One of their leaders in Chester was Calvin Bruen, son of John Bruen, of Bruen Stapleford. A member of the City Council in 1629, he was elected one of the sheriffs in 1635, and in 1637 met Prynne on his journey to prison in Carnarvon Castle, and escorted him to Chester, for which Bruen and his associates had to do penance in December of that year [A.O. 426].

Another prominent supporter of Parliamentary views was the Reverend John Lea (Ley), Vicar of Great Budworth, Prebendary of Chester Cathedral, and afternoon preacher at S. Peter's. At first a favourite of Bishop Bridgeman's, he ultimately became "a great thorn in the Bishop's side," was one of the Assembly of Divines, and a promoter of the Solemn League [S.P. Dom., February, 1632].

These men, with Peter Ince, William Edwards, Sir Wm. Brereton and others were, doubtless, busy in propagating their anti-state opinions.

The Magistrates of Chester complain to Lords of Privy Council, Dec. 1636, that Sir William Brereton protected his tenant in his disobedience to the King's proclamation, by refusing to contribute to the public watches and refused to

pay his assessment for the late Shipp money (tho' rated very low). Therefore others who had promised payment refused until cause was taken with him. Sir William being no free-man of Chester sends two sacks of Oats to sell in the corn-market there—from which Bennet and his wife (being the City officer) took 2 quarts as a toll.

Reply: They grew in a close, "Le Geoffreys Halkes," formerly belonging to Nuns, and therefore free of toll [Harl. 2093].

The first indication of trouble to be found in the City Records is an Assembly Order of September 18, 1640 [A.O. 512], directing the Eastgate and Bridgegate to be repaired forthwith, a new door to be made for the Newgate, and ordering that "the present Watch should be continued in the night time." Hitherto this "Watch" had been called into active being as a precaution against a visitation of the Plague. At the same Assembly, Stephen Owen, a cutler, petitions for freedom, so that he might be enabled to supply arms and other commodities to the citizens [A.O. 511].

In the following month the civic authorities became fully awake to their unpreparedness in the "warlike and dangerous times" with which the country was distressed, and immediate steps were taken to remedy "the great want of Armes" within the city. At the Assembly held October 15, 1640, the Mayor and his brethren undertook to provide a certain number of corsletts, musketts, calivers and halberds, and it was ordered that all the inhabitants not already charged with this provision should "find armes for the better safeguard of themselves and the Citty, and appear before the Mayor and his brethren the next week on given notice." The number of the trainbands was to be "made up with all convenient speede," the arms required were to be provided within one month, and the Magazine money formerly assessed upon the inhabitants was to be used in purchasing shot and powder for the good defence of the city. The Treasurers were also directed to bring up at the charge of the city from Wirral "any ordinances and carriages with other necessaryes belonging unto them." Mr.

Francis Gamull, mayor in 1634, was requested to "take upon him to be Captayne of the Traynebands" with "free liberty to make choyce of his own officers, except that Captain Dutton's yearly pay was to be continued to him." This arrangement was acceded to by Mr. Gamull [A.O., 512, 513, 514, 516, 517, 518]. These trainbands were, at the time, not a large body, hardly exceeding 100 in number. They were provided with armour, muskets, calivers and halberds at the cost of the wealthier citizens. It would appear that in 1613 they included one carpenter, three maltsters, seven tanners, seven bakers, six hat-makers, six butchers, three drapers, thirteen shoemakers, five glovers, seven tailors [A.O. 325]. Wm. Maxey and Jacob Lingley were appointed respectively Lieutenant and Ensign in 1639, an allowance being granted of £5 and 50/- [A.O. 465]. This same allowance was continued in 1665, the Captain receiving £10 yearly [A.O. 1139]. The Treasurer's Accounts for 1638-9 contain the items

Paid Mr. Crosse for powder and match used to	
the Citye's trained souldiers xxxs x ^d
A quart of sack and cakes in the Pentice when	
Mr. Maior and Sir Thomas Smith came from	
viewinge of the Citty souldiers js iiij ^d

These arrangements and orders show the most admirable promptitude and activity on the part of the Mayor, Mr. Robert Harvey, and his brethren. Troublous and dangerous times had, indeed, come to them. The proclamations which reached the Mayor at this crisis for publication: (a) ordering the lords and others in the North to go to their own houses; and (b) directing the disarming of recusants [Treas. Accounts 1639-40]; warned the citizens that stern measures were being taken to check disloyalty. The "Short Parliament" to which Chester had sent up as its representatives Sir Thomas Smith, K^t, and Mr. Robert Brerewood, had met April 3, 1640, only to be dissolved on May 5th, after a session of three weeks. On November 3rd in the same year a Parliament was called together, in which Sir Thomas Smith and Mr. Francis Gamull were superseded December 14,

1640, by Mr. William Edwards and Mr. John Ratcliffe. This became noted as "The Long Parliament," which was so busy in its virulent opposition to the King, the Royalist party, and the Bishops; impeaching Strafford, recalling Prynne from his prison, sending out Commissioners into every county to deface "images, altars, and all monuments and reliques of idolatry." The Murengers, to whose province belonged the care of the city walls, reported to the Council at their Assembly on June 1, 1641, that the walls were in many places very ruinous, some part fallen down, and the remaining part "reddy to fall into further decaye unless it bee speedilie prevented." It was ordered that the work of reparation should be proceeded with at once, and the cost defrayed by "a generall taxation assessed upon the whole city" [A.O. 527].

The Irish rising of October, 1641, and the secret machinations of the Royalists, found an echo in Chester in the attempted conspiracy of Lord Cholmondeley, described in the following Tract:—

1641. London. Printed for John Greensmith.

A Bloody Conspiracy of the Papists in Cheshire, intended for the destruction of the whole Country.

There was an order made by the High Court of Parliament, that all Papists throughout England should be disarmed, which command the primate Officers in Cheshire went about to obey, but the Papists there were so resolute that they told them plainly they would not be disarmed, which answer being carryed to the Major of the City, he very wisely commanded the Trayned Bands to goe search, each one charging his Musket with a Bullet, and those Papists which would not yeeld to have their houses searched, presently to shoot downe their house about their eares, which was to be done the next day being the 20 day of November 1641, which the Papists having intelligence of, gathered themselves together to my Lord Chomes his house, the chief Leader was one Mr. Henry Starkey, and in the night time some of them having Armor on, the watch heard them to make a very great noise without the City gates, and going, to see what might be the cause thereof, they discovered fiftene in Armes, battering down the City Walles, at which the watch were very much amazed, and being for the most part old men, to goe to resist them they were fearefull, but went into the City gate againe and cryed

out Treason, Treason, against the City, upon which the Citizens presently did arise, the Trayned Bands presently were in readinesse, but thirteene of the Traytors escaped away, but two of them were taken, who confesse that the others were runne to the Lord Chomes his house, who were presently pursued thither, and taken at the Lord Chomes his house gate, for the Porter thereof and the guard thinking them to be some of the Trayne Band would not suffer them to enter in thither, away they were carryed to prison, a strong Guard being left at the Lord Chomes his house, that none of the Papists might issue out there.

So soone as those fifteene were layd fast, the Trayne Bands came to the aforesayd Lord Chomes his house, and commanded the doore to be opened, but they were denyed to have any entrance.

Then ten of the Trayne Band discharged their Muskets and battered downe part of the house, at which the aforesaid Lord made an escape by a posterne doore which opens into the fields, the Trayne Band most of them went into the house and searched it, wherein they were like all to have beene slaine, for comming onto a private Wood-house there stood fifty Papists with Muskets ready charged, and so soon as they saw the Trayne Band they discharged altogether, and slew twenty-five of the Protestants, and retreated back and runne out of a back doore which led into the Wood-house, but being met by the rest of the Trayne Band which were without, betweene whom grew a bloody skirmish, but at length the Papists trusted to the swiftnesse of their feet, but the bullets made great hast after them, and slew nineteene of them, Starky their leader was wounded in the thigh which forced him to yeeld, and was presently committed to prison. A great uproare there was in the City, & much lamentation of both sides for the losse of their husbands which were trayterously slaine in the aforesaid Wood-house, all being still the aforesaid Starkey the Leader of the Rebels was examined being ready to depart the world by reason of the multitude of his wounds. Who confessed what their intentes were, being urged thereunto by the Lord Chomes to have beate downe privatly the greatest part of the City walles, and before they could be possibly builded againe the Papists in Lancashire and Cheshire should have an advantage to use the Protestants as they pleas'd themselves, which would have been welcome Newes to the Rebels in Ireland, much more he did not confesse but dved, and he together with the other nineteene Rebels which were slaine, running away, were buried in the high-way together, but the Protestants in severall Churches; those Rebels which were taken awaite the Parliaments pleasure for their judgement, which will be very speedily [*Cheshire Civil War Tracts, I*].

The Treasurer's Accounts for this year, 1641, record payments to

Thomas Malbone, Smith, for the Irons in the
inward Pentice to hould the musketts ... *xxijs ix^d*
For a proclamation for Comand of obedience from
the souldiers to his Maties chiefe commanders... *ijs vjd*
Mending the stock of a muskett belonging to the
Cittie, and fitting it with other necessities ... *xviij^d*

These items are interspersed with the details of expenditure on the Shrovetide festivity, the Midsummer Show, making the giants, mending the city drum, and gifts of sugar loaves to the Judges, showing that the citizens did not allow the serious condition of affairs to interrupt the ordinary course of business or of pleasure. The records of the Council meetings for 1640-1 deal with grants of leases and aid to tradesmen out of the city charities, the admission of freemen and disputes between the companies and traders intermeddling. It is to be noted, however, that the attendance of members of the Council was often lax, and orders were more than once made for fining absentees [A.O. 529].

The breach between King and Parliament meanwhile was rapidly widening. The King had attempted to seize the five members on January 4, 1641-2, and in the following month issued Commissions of Array in the several counties. This was met by a proclamation, May 28, 1642, to suppress the raising of troops by any warrant, commission, or order, from His Majesty, without the advice and consent of the Lords and Commons in Parliament. After the King's demand to surrender on Hull, which was held by Sir John Hotham for the Parliament, the two Houses began their preparations for war, while nominally they maintained their allegiance to the King, and on July 12, 1642, ordered that an army should be raised "for the defence of the King and the Parliament," with the Earl of Essex as Captain-General.

We find Sir William Brereton writing July 27, 1642, to Oliver Cromwell, complaining

That the Commissioners of Array proceed with great violence, summoning by warrants, and committing to prison.

Thomas Bennet, Constable of Williston, refused to obey summons. Had sack at Sun tavern in Chester and is then committed to Castle, for opposing executive of Commissioners of Array. Warrant from Hugh Calveley, High Sheriff of Cheshire [Portland MSS., 45.]

On July 30, 1642, he reports to the Speaker, Wm. Lenthall :—

So soon as we were assisted by the addition of some other Deputy Lieutenants to join in the other Hundreds, we proceeded to assemble the Hundred of Northwich upon Tuesday last at Northwich—a full appearance about 320 musketeers and four score pikemen well armed and near 600 other volunteers who though they brought not arms so complete yet I believe their heads as well affected as the others to the safety and peace of the King and Parliament. Though the number was not so great as in the former Hundreds, which were much larger and more populous than this, wherein divers of the Trained Bands and some others charged with arms absented themselves by reason of their relation to the Commissioners of Array, yet the number of those that were completely armed was double to those that are ordinarily charged with arms, besides the other 600 volunteers so as you may be confirmed in the assurance of the good affection of many in this county if they receive encouragement and protection, and many more I am confident would discover themselves if they were not enawed by their remoteness from your assistance and exposed to more than ordinary peril in regard to the disaffected in Wales, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, and some other neighbouring counties [Portland MSS., 46].

Meanwhile the city and county had been much disturbed by the behaviour of the troops on their way to Ireland. As often had been the case, they were delayed for days and weeks by bad weather. The soldiers had not money to pay their way, and often resorted to violence and pillage, and were in their turn seized and hardly treated by the civil authorities. The officers in command complain that the mayor and county are so perverse that they will not trust the soldiers; the Mayor of Chester, though he knows the Captains are exceeding careful to pay, yet commands the town to trust no soldier beyond one meal.

“Some of my soldiers,” writes Captain Thomas Sandford, March 5, 1641-2, “for entreating billet were



Sir William Brereton, Bt.

From an engraving, after a drawing by Robert Cooper, in the Sutherland collection
at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

threatened, others sent to the gaol with much abuse and sufferance. Above 50 of my men want quarters, and abundance are lodged among extreme poverty and infection of the Pox, and many are so cruel that they thrust my men out of doors to perish in the streets. Money is wanting and none will credit or deliver a pint of beer or a penny loaf to a soldier without payment for the same. I endeavour to suppress disorder amongst my distressed men and their cruel landlords" [Portland MSS. 33].

The first overt act of rebellion in Chester took place when Brereton came by authority of Parliament to set up the Militia. On Monday, August 8, 1642, "a great tumult was caused by a drum beaten up by the direction of Sir William Brereton, Alderman William Edwards and others of the puritanicall (but rebellious) faction who garded the drum with halberds."¹⁶ This tumult was at once quelled by the Mayor. He is said in one account to have seized one of the Parliamentarians by the collar, and delivered him to the constables, and then to have run his sword through the drum and cut it to pieces. The Common Bell was rung, rousing the loyal citizens, who appeared with their halberds and headpieces, disarmed the Parliamentarian party, and brought them before the Mayor. Some of them were committed to prison, but Sir Wm. Brereton, with a strange want of foresight, or perhaps through some timidity in dealing with a powerful opponent, was allowed to leave the city without further hindrance. It is suggested that resentment at his defeat on this occasion, following upon bitter annoyance at being assessed for "shipmoney" on his property in Chester, the lands of St. Mary's Nunnery (which he claimed to be free of all imposts), made Brereton so relentless an enemy to Chester and its loyal citizens.

Sir Wm. Brereton, writing on August 13, 1642, to Ralph Ashton, makes his comment on this attempt at Chester:—

¹⁶ Contemporary account of the Siege contained in Harl. MS. 2155, which is to be taken as the authority when other references are not given. It is printed *in extenso* as Appendix I.

As the Mayor and citizens of Chester knew not how to prevent us but by raising a tumult, so it was also in the County, for when we had summoned an appearance for Nantwich Hundred upon Friday last, the Commissioners of Array being anxious to themselves of their own weakness to make any opposition in that Hundred sent out warrants for all their forces in the whole county. And the Sheriff extended his authority for the raising of the *Posse Comitatus* to suppress the rebellious assembly—so he stiled that which was appointed by us—not containing themselves in this county, but brought forces out of Wales, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and other parts. Wants a troop of Horse badly and power to commit to common gaols—and an order printed, commanding that no obedience be given to the Comm^{rs} of Array [Portland MSS., 51].

Moreover, very early in July the citizens had declared against the Array, on the ground that “as God and the fundamental laws of this Kingdom have joined his Majesty and the Parliament together,” so they could “not agree to a disjointed obedience” [*Cheshire Civil War Tract*, ix].

Mr. Cowper continued to show as much readiness of resource and determination as his predecessor in the mayoralty, Mr. Robert Harvey. At an Assembly held September 6, 1642, he moved that in consideration of the present and imminent danger, an assessment of 100 marks should be levied on the inhabitants of Chester for the repair of the gates and fortification of the wall [A.O. 555]. An active committee was formed for this assessment and the oversight of the work, probably consisting of the most loyal members of the council. “Magazine money” was ordered to be disposed of to buy “shott and powder” [A.O. 556, 557], and defaulters in payment were to be distrained upon. The State Papers, Domestic, under date August 30, 1642, contain a note of supplies required for Chester Castle: thirty-three beds and ten or twelve great guns with ammunition. To encourage the Royalist party, and to secure his interest in the city, which was a place of great importance as securing the communication with Ireland, King Charles determined to visit Chester, writing to the Mayor from Stafford on September 18th, in the following terms:—

CHARLES R.

Trusty and well beloved, We greet you well; whereas we have resolved to make repayre to our Citie of Chester, on Friday next; These are to will and require you to warne all the Trayne-bands of that our Citie, to be in readiness, and give their attendance to Us in our entrance into the same; and to take care that necessary provision be made for entertainment of Us, and our retinue: so not doubting of your diligence therein, we bid you heartily farewell.

Given at our Court at Stafford, 18th September, 1642.

To our trusty and well-beloved Thomas Cowper, Mayor of our Citie of Chester.

The King, in company with the Prince of Wales, and suite, arrived in Chester from Shrewsbury, September 23, 1642, his forces being augmented at Milton Green by Mr. Richard Egerton of Ridley, at the head of some six hundred musketeers, and at Hatton Heath and Rowton Heath by those of the Lords Rivers and Cholmondeley and Sir Thomas Aston respectively. He was met at Spital Boughton, where the liberties of the city begin, between 4 and 5 p.m., by the two sheriffs, Thomas Mottershead and Hugh Leigh, and their company of sheriffs-peers, and leave-lookers, all gowned in scarlet and mounted on horseback, and escorted by them into the city "with all the bells ringing and trumpets sounding." The trainbands and volunteers, well accoutred, were regularly drawn up on each side of Foregate Street, discharging as his Majesty passed by; and the city companies, with their respective colours and banners were arranged along the Eastgate street. The Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen in their robes of office, assembled on a raised platform, gaily festooned and decorated, on the south side of Eastgate Street, before the door of one Thomas Parnell, at the Honey-stairs, knelt down upon the King's arrival, while the Recorder, Robert Brerewood, serjeant-at-law, delivered the following address, which, however, could scarcely be heard above the tumult.

Most gracious Sovereign:

We your Majesties most humble and obedient Subjects, the Maior and Citizens of this Your most ancient City, do in all humility crave leave to take the boldness to bid Your

Majestie and our most noble Prince, our hopefull Earl of Chester, welcome to this place, the ancient seat of Your Majestie, and Your Majesties Royall progenitours, Earls of Chester. This ancient City, the Metropolis of this ancient County Palatine, though it hath been sometimes honoured by the residence of senior Earls thereof within it; yet it hath seldom (ever since) been so highly honoured, as to lodge a King and Prince of this Realm at once within it, though but one night: The honour, then, with the accesses of Your Royall person, and of the person of our noble Prince at this time unto this City doth bring such, that it doth transcend all former of this kind, and doth fill our hearts at once with a great deal of Joy and security; For we are in great fears in regard to the Rebellion in Ireland; as also in regard of a Malignant party that hath lately appeared amongst us; But we are as sensible that Your Majesties presence expells all dangers, and renders us secure from the dangers abroad, and distractions at home. And it is, most mighty King, the satisfaction of all our hearts that Your Majestie hath already sufficiently testified to all the world, Your Majesties indeered love unto all Your Subjects, and to the Protestant Religion, whereof Your Majestie is justly stiled The Great Defender; and we in this place, in thankfullnesse to the same, will be ever ready to adventure our Lives and Fortunes for the defence of Your Majestie, in whose safety rested onely our security.

And Mr. Maior of this City, humbly prostrate upon his knees, doth according to his duty, surrender and yield up to Your excellent Majestie all the Authority and Iurisdiction he holdeth under Your Majestie, and with it the Sword of this City, the Ensign thereof; And he and we all of this City shall ever pray, Long live King Charles victorious over all His Enemies.

The Mayor then came down from the stand, and upon his knees, delivered the city sword to the King, who graciously returned it; when the Mayor, bare-headed and mounted, carried the same before his Majesty to the Pentice, where he and his suite were entertained. A purse of two hundred pounds in gold was presented to the King by the Mayor, on behalf of the city, and half that amount to the Prince of Wales. These gifts were thankfully received, although according to some accounts a larger amount was hoped for. The King held his court at the Bishop's Palace.

About this time troops, equipment, and ammunition appear to have been continually coming into the city. The afternoon of the King's arrival witnessed that of two of the Lord Strange's troops of horse, together with 80 horse loads of muskets and bandoliers, which were laid in the Common-hall, 200 more being in Lord Strange's house. Five thousand men were reported to be coming to Chester through Lancashire. But despite the popular acclamation with which the King was greeted, his demands to make the city his chief place of residence, to take control of the fortifications and to appropriate the trainbands to the service of his person, created some consternation among the more thoughtful burgesses, who could foresee the hazardous position in which the city would be placed [*Cheshire Civil War Tracts*, xiv, xv.].

1642. September 23.

Good Sir,

The latter end of your letter is somewhat comfortable, in that you write there are some Dragoons coming into Chester for our relief, but surely they are not come, and now will come too late for we are all plundred and undone; Nantwich is taken by my Lord Grandisons Army, and the Town disarmed, and many houses plundred who stood for the Parliament and Militia, the owners of them driven to run away for safety of their lives, for they have threatened them much, and after they had disarmed the Town, they came into the Country and disarmed all the great houses: First Sir Thomas Delves, then my Lord Crews, then Sir Richard Wilbrahams, and so all the other Gentlemen round about us and plundred their houses, they being forced not onely to leave their own houses, but also the Town of Nantwich, and their poor Tennants and Country men, to the mercy of those mercilesse Villans who will have what they list, nay they will have what we have not for them, or else they will set a Pistoll to our throats and swear God damne them they will make us swallow a Bullet, some of them are not content to take what Arms they can find, but also Mony, Plate, Linnens, Cloaths, Writings, Meat, Drink, and not therewith content, but steale our horses and maers, drive our women and children into such feare that they overrun their houses, ly in the fields, ditches and woods, I do not heare of the like cruelty that hath been used any where but in that miserable and bleeding Kingdom of Ireland, we are like to be worse yet, for this day the King is at Chester, and all the whole

County from sixteen years to sixty, is to meet and attend his Majesty, and the Commissioners of Array within half a mile of Chester with all their Arms which they haue left, none dare refuse to come, the malignant party will inform against them, and then they are threatened to be all carried away with my Lord Grandisons Army, the best of it is, if we stay at home we are now their slaves, being naked they will haue of us what they list, and do with us what they list, however, I believe we shall be made the Seat of War, and so be utterly ruined and undone, for want of help in time and true hearts amongst ourselves, I thank God hitherto I have escaped, yet with much fear and danger, but I must confesse it is more of the goodness and mercy of my good God, then of any desart in me, God grant I may make a good use of it, and give Him the glory; The secundarie means was, I having acquaintance with some of the Cavaliers, who formerly were something beholding unto me, I now find it to be something better with me and some friends of mine then I or they expected, and yet our feares are great when houses nigh unto us have bin plundred twice over, and the owners thereof watched for, as the Cat watcheth for the Mouse, what they would do with them, or how they would use them, God knowes, I pray you pardon my errors in writing, for my feares and distractions are great; I onely desire you to pray for us, and let us heare from you; God knowes how long or short a time we shall heare one from another, the Lord fit us for these ill times, and worse which I much feare; So prayeth your much obliged friend, &c.

To heare the pittypfull shrieking, weeping, and howling of women and children, did more trouble me than any thing else; God grant I never heare the like [*Cheshire Civil War Tracts*, xiv].

The Kings Majesties Demands, and Propositions, propounded by His Majesty, to the Mayor, Knights, and Gentry of the City of Chester, Sept. 24, 1642.

Upon Satterday last, His Majesty with-drew Himselfe from Shrewsbury, and tooke His journey towards Chester, accompanied with the Prince and the Duke of Lenox his troope, and presently after came the Lord Chomleyes Regiment, togeather with twenty-two peeces of Ordnance, when His Majesty came to the Gates of the City he propounded these ensuing propositions to the Knights and Gentry that were within the City, Viz.

1. That His Majesty out of the Princely care and affection that he bore to this City of Chester, hath and is Resolved to make it his cheife place of Residence, and therefore desires the Knights and Gentry that are inhabitants thereof to give him admittance.

2. That since his comming from London he could find no place so convenient and meet to entertaine His Royall Person and posterity, as Chester, and that he hoped that they would prove as loyall to him as he hath been mercifull unto them.

3. That his desire is, That they would be pleased to resigne up the Magazine to his royall Majesty, and withall to deliver the keyes of the Gates of that City, and that they would condescend unto these his Demands, as to let the Trained Bands to goe alone with him towards Shrewsbury, but unto these Propositions and Demands of His Majesty they would by no means condescend alleadging that if the trained bands were gone and the Magazine resigned up, wherein consisteth the strength of the county, they should be left naked and exposed to the hazard of what dangers might befall in these troublesome times, and so would not by any meanes give consent to those his requests [*Cheshire Civil War Tracts*, xvi].

A muster of the Commissioners of Array and the trainbands, in fact, of all men between the ages of sixteen and sixty, was ordered for the following day, and reviewed by his Majesty on Hoole Heath, outside the city, when he received the following petition :—

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty. The humble gratulation and petition of the trained bands, and freeholders and others the gentry and communalty of the County Palatine of Chester, whose names are underwritten. Delivered upon Hoole Heath, by the trayned bands, a coppie of the same being hung upon the top of every colours; subscribed by the severall companies, and so presented to the King. London: Printed for M.T., 1642.

Your Petitioners,

With inexpressable joy of heart doe acknowledge and render all humble thanks, for this great pledge of your Majesties favour, and affection towards this countrey, that in this time of so much trouble and distraction, you have revived their dejected spirits with the reall comfort of your Royall presence, and intrusted Your sacred Person amongst them. And Your Majesties most loyall and affectionate Subjects, knowing there is no Seed so pure amongst which spring not up some tares, they humbly pray that by your Princely Wisedome and Providence, they may bee secured from the just jealousies of such malignant Persons amongst them, who envying the peace of the Country, they have too much cause to feare, waite but for an opportunity to make spoile of them, whiles they with such fidelity and diligence endeavour your

defence, as becomes their duties. And though they cannot but with great regret and sorrow of heart apprehend, that notwithstanding all those unexampled acts of justice, mercy, and grace, wherewith you have for ever obliged that Nation and People, in the greatest bonds of gratitude ever put by Prince upon his Subjects, that there should still remaine any cause, or shadow of fear and jealousies amongst any of Your Subjects, pretending loyalty or gratitude, much more that there should be actual levying of Armes, and waging of warre within this Nation to the barbarous assascination and ruine of one another.

Yet since divers of our fellow Subjects are destroyed, slaine, and plundered, by those forces under pretence of public good, and that Your Majesty hath thought fit to disavow Your assent to such leavyes, to prohibite them by your Proclamations, and to declare them raised against Your Sacred Person, and to take away Your Life, we being no Judges of the grounds of such jealousies as should justly occasion those armes, and declaring to all the world that wee see no cause for them, doe humbly pray that whiles Your Majesty is amongst us, you will bee pleased to call before you the Collectors of such moneyes as have beene levied upon this County, under pretence of reliefe to Ireland (whose miseries we see daily increase) to give account in whose hands the same remaines, or to whom transmitted, that by your piety and providence it may be so disposed, that the right end may not bee abused, nor the Subjects owne moneyes, inverted against them to their own ruine, whiles they are imployed in Your defence, who as they are bound by their oaths of Supremacy, Allegiance, and the late Protestation, are ready with their lives, fortunes and utmost power, to assist and defend Your Sacred Majesty, against all conspiracies, power, and attempt whatsoever, made or to be made against Your Royall Person, Crowne, and Dignity, or any of Your Princely issue, whose long, peaceable, and prosperous raigne, over all your three Kingdomes, in your full rights, power and glory, your Petitioners unanimously pray to God to continue [*Cheshire Civil War Tracts*, xvii].

The gentlemen who had opposed the Array had all been marked men. Among these Sir Richard Wilbraham, Sir Thomas Delves, Mr. Philip Mainwaring of Baddeley; Mr. Birkenhead the Prothonotary, and his son Henry, were placed in custody, and later removed to Shrewsbury.

A representation having been made to the King that a quantity of arms and warlike stores had been clandestinely

brought into the city by disaffected persons, he issued the following mandate :—

CHARLES R.

These are to will and require you and euery of you, takinge unto you or euery of you the Assistance of the Sherriffs of Our Citty of Chester, and such other Power of Our sayd Citty as the sayd Maior thereof, Earle of Darby, Earl Rivers, Lo : viscount Cholmondeley, Robert Brerewood, Recorder, William Gamull, Charles Walley and Thomas Thropp, Aldermen of our sayd Citty, or euery of you shall thinke meete, as soone as conveniently you may to search the seuerall Houses of S^r William Brereton, Baronett, William Edwards, Alderman, and Thomas Aldersey, Alderman, the Red Lyon and the Golden Lyon, scituate in Our sayd Citty, Wherein you or euery of you shall suspect to bee any Armes or Amunition intended to be used against vs or any Person or Persons deriving authority from vs, or against any Our louing subjects : And all such armes and Amunition that you or euery of you shall find vpon yo^r sayd search, to seize and take into yo^r Custodies for the vse of vs, to be disposed of as Wee shall appoint.

Giuen at Our Court att Chester this 26th of September in the Eighteenth yeare of Our Raigne [1642].

To our trusty and Welbeloued Thomas Couper, Maior of Our Citty of Chester, and to Our right trusty and right welbeloued Cosins, James Earle of Darby and John Earle Rivers, and to Our right trusty and welbeloued Robert Lord Viscount Cholmondeley, and to Our trusty and welbeloued Robert Brerewood, Recorder, William Gamul, Charles Walley and Thomas Thropp, Aldermen of Our Citty of Chester, and to all any or euery of them [*Cheshire Civil War Tracts*, xviii].

On the following day, his Majesty issued his Royal " declaration to all his loving subjects upon the occasion of his late messages to both houses of parliament, and their refusal to treat with him for the peace of the kingdom." His departure from the city was accelerated by the arrival of a messenger from Prince Rupert, who informed him of the important advantage before Worcester, and presented him with the colours which had been taken from the enemy. On September 28th the King proceeded to Wrexham, being escorted to the city boundary by the mayor and aldermen.¹⁷

¹⁷ The Cathedral Accounts contain a number of interesting items relating to the preparations made at the Cathedral for the King. The Organists of Chester Cathedral, by Dr. J. C. Bridge, *Journal of the Chester Archæological Society*, N.S., XIX, pp. 85-86. See Appendix I, p. 216.

In connection with the Royal Visit, the Mayor, Mr. Thomas Cowper, proposed at an Assembly, Friday [the A.O. has in error twice, Saturday] September 23, 1642, that the sum of £300 should be "assessed upon the cittizens and all other the Inhabitants of the Citty," of which £200 should be "presented to His Sacred Majestie, and £100 to the Prince his highness our hopefull Earle of Chester." Mr. Charles Walley and five other members of the council were "appointed cessors for the imediate cessinge of the same" and "for the present [*i.e.*, immediate] advancement of the said sume" (for the King and his retinue were to arrive in Chester that same afternoon). A promise of a loan to the amount needed was given by the Mayor and his brethren in sums of £10, £5, and £3, to be brought in by four o'clock in the afternoon. It is to be noticed that the names of Mr. William Edwards and Mr. Calvin Bruen do not appear in the list of contributors given below [A.O. 558, 559].

Mr. Thomas Cowper, Maior,	Miles Pemberton, £5
£10	Sir Thomas Smith, Knt, £10
Robert Brerewood, Serjeant at	Nicholas Ince, £10
Lawe & Recorder, £10	Charles Walley, ald., £10
Wm. Gamull, ald., £10	Randle Holme, sen., ald., £10
Christopher Blease, ald., £10	Robert Sproston, ald., £10
Wm. Sparke, ald., £10	Wm. Ince, ald., £10
Thomas Throppe, ald., £10	Randle Holme the younger,
Thomas Aldersey, ald., £10	ald., £10
Rd. Leicester, ald., £10	Mr. Sheriff Leigh, £10
Mr. Sheriff Mottershed, £10	Mr. Thos. Humphreys, £5
Mr. Hugh Whickstead, £5	Mr. Rob. Wright, £10
Mr. Wm. Jones, £10	Mr. Edd. Evans, £10
Mr. Rd. Byrd, £10	Mr. Jno. Wilding, £3
Mr. Jno. Johnson, £5	Mr. Jno. Leckonby, £5
Mr. Jno. Whitby, £3	Mr. Raph Davies, £5
Mr. Wm Whittell, £5	Thomas Wright, 40s.
Raph Burrowes, £3	Wm. Crompton, £5
Edward Reynolds, £5	Simon Lea, £3
Henry Young, £5	Gerrard Jones, £3

Mr. Cowper's successor in the mayoralty, Mr. William Ince, exhibited the same vigour and loyalty in caring for the defence of the city, and at the first meeting of the council, after his election, Friday, October 21, 1642, an

order was passed for raising forthwith a body of 300 men, fully armed, in addition to the trainband, the Mayor and Aldermen and others "freely undertaking to find the musketts with there appurtenances" [A.O. 565].

The Mayor with his brethren was requested to "viewe the said Armes upon Tuesday following at 2 o'clock."

This was followed by an Order of Assembly, Friday, November 11, 1642, on the proposition of the Mayor, Mr. Wm. Ince, that the city gates be guarded day and night by watchmen armed with muskets and halberds, and "a Courte of Guard kept at the High Cross, consisting of 12 persons who there shall remayne night and day to bee ready upon all occasions to give directions for the better ordering of the said Watch." Instructors from the trainband were to be chosen to put the watchmen through their exercises, the muskets to be kept in the Pentice, and the cost of a month's maintenance with powder, shot, match and pay for the Instructors, estimated at £66 13s. 4d., to be "borne by the whole Inhabitants of the city" [A.O. 567, 567a]. A general muster of "all the soldiers as well those of the trayne Band as of the Volunteeres" was ordered for the Monday following [A.O. 567b].

Still more vigorous measures were taken shortly afterwards, for at an Assembly held on Tuesday, December 6th, "It was agreed that wee shall all joyne together in a mutuall Association for the defence of this Citty against all fforces whatsoever that shall come in an hostile manner for to invade this citty or to disturbe the peace thereof" [A.O. 568]; and, as there had been recently a large influx into the city of noblemen and gentlemen and their following from Cheshire, and even from neighbouring counties, it was considered just that they should share with the citizens the burden of defence. It was therefore ordered [A.O. 569, 574] "that the Cittizens and all others that are inhabitants within this Cittie shalbe moved to contribute in making provision of armes and all maner of amunition, as also in makeinge of outeworke and planting of ordnance for the defence of the Citty." Thirty or forty pounds was to be

spent on these outworks at the discretion of the Mayor and the overseers of the work [A.O. 570]. The measures were instigated by Mr. Orlando Bridgman, the Bishop's son, who is said to have assumed the governorship of the city. Lord Kilmorey, Mr. Francis Gamull, and more especially the Lady Cholmondeley, without whom, it was said, nothing could be done, gave influence and power to this dictatorship; and in face of the danger which threatened the city, owing to its nearness to Manchester, where the Parliamentary party was very strong, the citizens were probably glad to see steps being taken to defend the town, were it only from plundering, without being inclined to question the authority. By December 17th the Commissioners of Array had got into the city three hundred horse and six hundred foot. [*King's Pamphlets*, 88-8]. But, as it was clear that even if those within would be able to defend the city, the combined forces of Sir William Brereton and the Manchester Parliamentarians would devastate the whole countryside and bring ruin upon those who had quitted their houses in the county to seek refuge in the town, a desire for pacification began to show itself, and was taken up with energy. Through the solicitations of Sir Richard Wilbraham, a meeting was arranged to take place between the Commissioners of Array and the Committee of the Militia to discuss terms of neutrality. The meeting was eventually held at Bunbury, and an agreement entered into whereby there should be an absolute cessation of arms; that the prisoners on both sides should be released; the fortifications of Chester, Nantwich, Stockport and Knutsford demolished, that goods plundered should be restored; and that both parties should obtain the ratification of the Article from the King and the Parliament respectively. Lord Kilmorey and Mr. Orlando Bridgman represented the Royalists, while Mr. William Marbury and Mr. Henry Mainwaring attended on behalf of the Deputy Lieutenants. This agreement, concluded on December 23rd, was however, impracticable under the circumstances, and the Parliament, without any hesitation, repudiated it as inexpedient and prejudicial [*Rushworth MSS.*; *Cheshire Civil War Tracts*, xxi].

Sir W. Brereton shortly after was proclaimed traitor by the King, and on January 12, 1642-3, a declaration of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament was issued for his protection, they having previously, on January 9th, issued their instructions for the rigorous prosecution of the war [*Cheshire Civil War Tracts*, iii].

A further contribution of £500 was ordered on Friday, February 3, 1642-3, to be levied forthwith towards the making of fortifications [A.O. 576].

Att an assemblie houlden in the Common-hall of Please, upon Friday, the third day of February—William Ince, Maior, *civit. Cestr. Anno Domini 1643—Anno Rex Caroli Decimo octavo*.

It is ordered by general consent, that the sume of five hundred pounds shall be forthwith assessed and levied upon all the inhabitants of this citie towards the making of fortifications for the defence thereof: and for all other publique charges requisite for the good of this citie, and in default of payment the same to be levied by distresse.

Wm. Ince, Maior.	Rd. Leycester, ald.
W. Crompton, } Sheriffs	R. Holme, jun., ald.
John Johnson }	Hugh Whitehead
Edwd. Hallwood } Leave	Thomas Humphreys
Wm. Bennett } lookers.	John Aldersey
James, Earl of Derby	Robert Ince
John, Earl of Rivers	Richard Broster
Sir T. Smith	William Jones
R. Brerewood, recorder	William Parnell
William Gamull, ald.	Robert Wright
Nicholas Ince, ald.	Richard Byrd
Richard Dutton, ald.	Edward Evans
Chr. Blease, ald.	Calvin Bruen
Ch. Mallory, ald.	Edward Bradshaw
Thomas Byrd, ald.	Owen Hughes
Wm. Sparke, ald.	Thomas Weston
Randle Holme, ald.	William Wilcocke
Fr. Gamull, ald.	William Drinkwater
Wm. Edwards, ald.	Richard Bradshaw
Thomas Throppe, ald.	John Whittle
Rt. Sproston, ald.	Edward Hulton
Rt. Harvie, ald.	Thomas Mottershead
Thomas Aldersey, ald.	Hugh Leigh
Thomas Cowper, ald.	Peter Goose
Rt. Flecher, ald.	William Gregory

Edmund Williams
 Alexander Byrd
 William Hincks
 Peter Ince
 Chris. Berneard
 John Wildinge
 Peter Leigh
 William Higgnet
 John Whitbye
 John Leconby
 William Whittle
 Randle Davies
 Richard Sproston
 Laurence Massey
 Randle Burroughs
 John Brookes
 Thomas Wright
 Edward Reynolds

Humphrey Philips
 Robert Anyon
 George Bennett
 Lawrence Flecher
 Hugh Monson
 John Sproston
 Richard Lea
 Lawrence Yonge
 Randle Richardson
 Henry Yonge
 Simon Lea
 Richard Dickinson
 Miles Pemberton
 Humphrey Lloyd
 Gerrard Jones
 William Ball
 Daniel Greatbach
 James Ravenscroft

The six assessors were Aldermen Sparke and Holme; Richard Broster, Hugh Leigh, John Leckonby and William Whittell. Collectors: William Jones, Owen Hughes, Edward Hulton and Thomas Mottershead [A.O. 576].

Some account is given in Harl. 2155 of the outworks and entrenchments directed to be carried out by the city authorities. The fortifications and defences of the city were made much stronger by the advice of Colonel Ellis, Major Sidney and other skilful engineers, who caused, according to the modern way of fortification, a trench to be cut, and mud-wall to be made from Deeside without the Barrs to Deeside at the new tower: the wall to be repaired and lined with earth, the Newgate and new Tower Gate to be mured up, diverse peece of canon to be planted in convenient places both for offence and defence; drawbridges at the Northgate, Eastgate, Bridge and Castle to be made and turnpikes at all the outworks, at Barrs, Cowlane end, without the Northgate, and at the Mount at Dee lane end, by little S. Johns, besides severall mounts, pit falls and other devises to secure the outworks and annoy the enemies approach to the city.¹⁸

¹⁸ Another account [Harl. 2125], under date about February 3, states that the Welsh soldiers under Colonel Mostyn and others who had been brought in to assist in defending the City, pillaged Sir William Brereton's house and committed great havoc there. The houses of persons suspected of disaffection were searched and the arms found taken away; and some citizens of note and other persons were committed to the Castle and to the Northgate prison, while others made their escape from the city.

While these preparations were being carried out in Chester, Sir Thomas Aston, of Aston, bart., made an unsuccessful attack on Sir William Brereton, which resulted in the capture of many gentlemen of loyalty, including Captain Cholmondely, and Captain Bridgman.

This was followed by skirmishes near Nantwich, and, February 20, 1642-3, on Tilston Heath, which were more or less favourable to the Royalists. They were, however, badly defeated the following month at Middlewich on March 13, 1642-3, when Colonel Ellis, the engineer who had supervised the entrenching at Chester, Sir Edward Mosley, bart., and a large number of officers and men were captured. The alarm occasioned by this rout is reflected in a resolution of the Chester City Council, March 23, 1642-3 [A.O. 581], by which in consideration of "the great danger this City is subject unto in these perilous tymes and the necessitie of having such cittizens as are become souldiers for the defence of this garrison duly paid," it was ordered that the soldiers' weekly payment should be continued, the necessary funds to be raised by assessment and collected by the constables of the respective wards with power of distraint.

Sir William Brereton was not without his anxieties and difficulties, for whilst large numbers were daily flocking to the King's standard, though the forces under his own command were considerably augmented, there was a want of discipline, and the scarcity of funds was found to be a great hindrance to success, as it was at a later period in the Civil War.

1642-3, February 4, Nantwich.—Sir William Brereton to John Pym.

Our enraged enemy lay in wait and had prepared an ambuscade for our destruction, but the Lord was pleased to watch over us and to deliver 100 of them into our hands, both men, horses and many arms. Difficult how to dispose of them as we have no place of strength whereunto to retreat, save only in the Nantwich, which we are about to fortify.

Complains two of his best horses with their saddles and pistols, 500 or 600 of his sheep at Chester and many horses had been seized, his house at Chester plundered, and divers

of his goods conveyed away and feather beds sold for 20/- a piece.

1642-3, February 10, Nantwich.—Sir William Brereton to Capt. Francis Rowe.

We have near upon five troops of horse in this county, but because they are independent troops and not subject to command, desires that a major be sent down, an honest and conscientious man. Officers much wanted.

Am much weakened by thronging in of foreign forces out of Shropshire, Wales and Lancashire, the Earl of Derby being now at Chester and making his strongest design for Chester, and the Manchester forces not doing anything to divert him. We must raise another regiment.

Captain Barkely, who commands the Kings pinnace, the *Swan*, is very officious to the Commissioners of Array, and hath promised them two pieces of ordnance to guard Chester. It is said the Comers have given him £500 or £1,000. If some speedy care be not taken to prevent him, he may do very much mischief. At extreme want of money and desire we may have benefit of like orders for raising money in our county as hath been already granted for Yorks., Bucks., Leicester and Somerset, giving power also to assess Malignants' estates in the said county, which, if it be not granted, we shall be speedily very much distressed.

1643, March 28.

House of Commons Order for Sir William Brereton to satisfy his losses out of estates of Sir Ed. Fitton and Thomas Leigh [Portland MSS., 94, 96].

As the taking of Chester was regarded by the Parliamentarians "a matter of very great concernement," and the Royalists in Chester were somewhat discouraged by the trend of affairs, King Charles, March 13, 1642-3, appointed Sir Nicholas Byron, kt., Governor of the city. He was uncle of Sir John Byron, who defended Chester so bravely in later years. Sir Nicholas was admitted into the freedom of the city *gratis* at a meeting of the Assembly, April 14, 1643 [A.O. 585], and he appears to have been continued in his post as Governor until he was taken prisoner by the Parliamentary forces in January, 1643-4.

Sir William Brereton sends to the Speaker, William Lenthall, June 15, 1643, information gleaned from letters of Sir Nicholas Byron to Lord Capel, taken at Whitchurch.

1643, June 15, Namptwich.—Sir William Brereton and William Mowbray to William Lenthall.

By the letters . . . from Sir Nicholas Byron, Governor of Chester, to the Lord Capel, taken amongst many others at Whitchurch . . . dated April 5 and . . . 28 . . . it appears that they then hoped shortly to receive good supplies out of Ireland, which are not to be taken notice of until they come.

Such is the expression of the letter dated April 5, 1643. In the other letter,

Sir Nicholas Byron expresseth, that next the business of Reading, if it should miscarry, our retreat must be into these parts with those forces the King can make and not stay in the midst of an enemy to be surrounded in all sides, but where we may countenance such succours as may easily come out of Ireland. In pursuance hereof some rebels are already landed and entertained, many more are daily expected, and this morning I was advertised from Liverpool that there were two barques of Irish rebels come into Chester Water, which our ships could not prevent, the wind having been constantly averse since their coming to Liverpool. The fortifications are as strong as the judgment and art of those men that command there can contrive them; their preparation of ordnance is suitable thereto, there being no less than forty cannons as we have heard and the Castle victualled for three years . . . Some of them in their letters which I have seen have affirmed this City impregnable.

We will only add the conclusion of Sir Nicholas Byron's letter:—

However things happen, Shrewsbury and Chester must be our last refuge, and so to provide for them in time as no thought of quitting them must be entertained.

There are indications of intrigue and disaffection within the city, for on June 3, 1643, Randall Walker, a felt-maker, of Chester, gave information before Alderman Nicholas Ince, and his brother Alderman, Randle Holme, that, on the evening of the previous day, Richard Dunbavan, clerk to the Recorder, Mr. Robert Brerewood, came to the deponent's house and in conversation with him, and one Peter Snead, of Chester, draper, asked what the deponent would say should Mr. Mayor (Mr. William Ince) be within the Castle in four and twenty hours, and a new mayor be

chosen in his place. And what if he, the speaker, should be High Constable of the Castle before to-morrow night? To which enquiries the deponent answered "that yf he could get into the steeple he would knowle the common bell, and that if there were neither rope nor clapper he would stricke it" [Letter Book]. All this may have been vapouring and perhaps without solid foundation, but naturally there would be an abundance of rumour and suspicion, especially in view of what had occurred earlier in the year. On June 5, 1643, all citizens of Chester, not enlisted in Colonel Gamull's regiment, were ordered to "assemble on the morrow at the Roodee at noone, then and there to be enlisted, and put under such commanders as the Mayor and Governor of the city shall appoint" [Letter Book].



CHAPTER II.

The First Assault. Reinforcements from Ireland.

THE anxiety of the authorities about the defence of Chester does not seem to have been lessened by the appointment of Sir Nicholas Byron. At a special meeting on July 5th it was proposed that Alderman Charles Walley and Sheriff Johnson should be sent as a deputation to the King, who was then at Oxford, to "solicit his Majesty concerning the affairs of the City" [A.O. 586].

Hardly a fortnight after this (Tuesday, July 18th), Sir William Brereton, accompanied by Mr. William Edwards, (mayor in 1636 and also in 1646) and "diverse fugitive citizens" commenced the memorable siege. They contented themselves for the first two days "pelting the outworks at Boughton with small shott." On Thursday, July 21st, he made an assault upon the sentries at Cowlane, but only as a feint to conceal his withdrawal in the direction of Tarvin.

To commemorate this success, a service of public thanksgiving was held in the churches on July 25th, and the bells of St. Mary's were rung by command of the Mayor.¹⁹

To deprive the enemy of any shelter for any future attack on this side, all the barns without the turnpikes at Boughton were fired by command of the Governor, the chapel, Spital Boughton, was pulled down, and the stone barn against it, all the houses in the neighbourhood "ruinated," the trees cut down and the hedges levelled.

It was quite evident that Chester would before long have to face a regular investment. The Commissioners of Array for Cheshire took measures to guard the passages on the River Dee, especially at Holt, Bangor and Overton.

¹⁹ Paid for Ringinge the evening after the publike thanksgivinge the 25th of July after the enemy was gone from before this City, by command of ye Mayor, xjs vjd

1643, August 9.—Commissioners of Array to Constables of Peace for Hundred of Chirk.

Hundred of Bromfield (as his Maj. enemies are now in a body upon the confines of this county) have raised 124 musketeers to guard the passages on river of Dee and levy £150 for the payment of their soldiers and officers for one month. We thought fit that 100 men be raised in H^d of Chirkland and Yale and £100 levied. Gather within your H^d sum of 100 marks, being your proportion.

1643, December 1.—Commissioners of Array to Constables of Peace for Hundred of Chirk.

Order to raise money to pay 300 freemen appointed to continue for a constant guard upon the several passages—Holt, Bangor and Overton—the safety of whole county depends on making good these passages.

Both sides understood the importance of this, as the King drew large quantities of provisions from North Wales, and reinforcements were daily expected from Ireland.

Brereton had taken up a strong position at Wem, and desired permission from Parliament to apply the revenues of the King, Queen, and Prince, in Cheshire, to the supply of necessities to his soldiers in that county.

1643, October 21, Nantwich.—Sir William Brereton to William Lenthall.

Desiring that the King's, Queen's and Prince's revenues in Cheshire might be applied for supply of necessities of the soldiers there.

1643, October 21.—Sir William Brereton and Sir Thos. Middleton to William Lenthall.

Wee with the forces which could bee spared out of Cheshire, having seized on Wem, we endeavoured the entrenchment thereof as a commodious and fitting place for our retirement if occasion should enforce us. Reports successful battle with Lord Capell's forces in defence of Nantwich. Important as North Wales, from whence the maggazyne of all his M's provisions of victualls and men doe proceed and alsoe of Chester whoe by reason of the cessaen of armes in Ireland dalye expect the rebells landing and arrivals.

We want but only 500 horse and 500 foote to help us, and a matter of £3,000 in money [Portland MSS., 140, 141].

The citizens on the other hand

“ Ordered that a peticon should bee preferred to his Majestie for reliefe towards the maintenance of this garrison, and for

the manner of framing the said peticon it was referred to Mr. Maior, Mr. Recorder and the rest of his brethren" [A.O. 593, Friday, October 20].

In response to this appeal, the King, writing from Oxford, November 7, 1643, to the Mayor and Aldermen of Chester, gives them or any four (Randle Holme, Mayor, being of the quorum) power to take lands and goods of Sir Wm. Brereton and W. Jolly and all others in actual rebellion against him within five miles of Chester, and to distribute the same for the maintenance of his garrison in the city and castle of Chester, and towards the entertainment of Sir Abraham Shipman, kt., commander there.

The city was meanwhile making strenuous efforts in preparation for the close investment which seemed now inevitable. At an Assembly, Friday, October 20th, propositions were made for raising three troops of horse for the defence, the expense to be defrayed out of contributions from strangers in the city, as well as from the free citizens [A.O. 594], and proclamation was made on November 9, 1643, strictly commanding all within certain townships to come "forthwith into the City of Chester with all their goodes and provisions of corne, cattle and victuall," on pain of being "reputed and proceeded against as adherents to the rebells and enemies to his Majestie."

Shortly after, King Charles writes from Oxford (Nov. 13th) to inform the Mayor of Chester that he "has given orders to Sir Abraham Shipman on approach of the rebels to command in chief."²⁰

Assembly, Friday, December 1.

Mr. Richard Dutton, ald. was desired by this Assembly that he would be pleased withall speede to repaire to Oxford to present to his Majestie a peticon from Mr. Maior and the Aldermen his Brethren, in answer to his Majesties most gracious letter; whereunto Mr. Dutton giving his consent, it was thereupon ordered that Mr. Dutton should bee furnished with money for his sayd journey by the Tresurers of this citty [A.O. 601].

²⁰ In a rough draft of an undated proclamation he is styled "deputy-governor of the city."

It is perhaps due to Shipman's initiative, seconded by the active loyalty of the Mayor, Randle Holme, that other vigorous measures were taken to guard against a surprise. All free citizens and inhabitants of the city having arms of any kind, and "not enlisted in Col. Gamull's regiment" of trainbands, were directed to repair on alarm given to the Abbey Court. Armed citizens were to repair on alarm given to the aldermen of their respective wards, and citizens and inhabitants not provided with arms to the Pentice.

Another proclamation directs

(1) Householders on any allarme given to have lanthernes and lights both in Roes and sellers. Women and children to keep indoors. (2) Citizens on an alarm being given to repair to the High Crosse and put themselves under the aldermen appointed to command them, the armed citizens to bring their armour with them and the unarmed citizens coming prepared to receive halbeards and such other weapons as are stored up for them in the Pentice.

This order was somewhat at variance with another order on the same paper commanding

(3) All inhabitants of Chester, strangers as well as citizens, to assemble promptly on alarm given at the Pentice, and there put themselves under the Mayor's orders—all such persons refusing or neglecting to do so to be banished out of the city as disaffected persons. (4) All soldiers in Colonel Gamull's regiment on alarm given to repair forthwith to their captain's colours; and all gentlemen with armed servants to assemble in the Abbey Court, with such servants, and there act in accordance with a former proclamation.

The question of victualling the city in anticipation of a siege was also considered. One proposition was to the effect "that warning be given to all Inhabitants within the Citty and suburbs to provide for their own famelyes (within eight dayes followinge) corne, meale, bacon, butter, cheese, and other necessary provision for three moneths to come, otherwise to be comanded to provide themselves habitacions elsewhere, and also with provision of Fewell for the like tyme."

The Mayor and Governor of the city issued a proclamation to all persons living near the city and frequenting its

market to bring all their stores of provisions within the wall of the city and store them away in their own places or in the common storeroom " [Letter Book]. The great trial was rapidly approaching. Early in November (Tuesday, the 7th), Sir Wm. Brereton had forced the bridge over the Dee at Farndon thus opening a door into North Wales. Holt Castle, which commands the bridge, was still held by the Royalists, and special efforts had been made by them to render the bridge impregnable. Brereton's report to the Speaker of the House of Commons, Nov. 11, 1643, is full of interest.

Wee drewe out upon Tuesday last [Nov. 7] five Cheshire foote companies and three or four troops of horse and three or four companies of country dragoons, wherewith there joined five companies of Lancashire foote and one or two troopes of horse and one or two companies of dragoons under the command of Colonell John Booth and Leutenaunt-Colonell Peter Egerton and about 200 foote and one troope of horse of Sir Thomas Myddelton's, with which wee advanced that night to Farne over against the Holt in Wales wherein the enemy kept a garrison in the Castle and had contracted all the strengthe and powre of Wales for our resistance for which purpose they runge their bells backward and fired the becons throughout Wales, for which end they had alsoe made a towre and drawbridge and stronge gates upon the bridge soe as both they and wee conceived it verie difficulte if not altogether ympossible to make way for our passage over the bridge, and therefore our design was to face them upon the bridge and in the meanetyme to attempt by boates to lande over some of our foote. To prevent which our enimy was soe watchful and circumspecte as that they placed their ambuscadoes in the hedges and soe soone as our boates appeared on the water, they gave fire and beate our men from their boates, soe as wee were in much danger to loose them, when there remayned unto us noe other way but to march down the riverside with our foote towards some cariages of ours—wherein wee had turnells which wee had purposely provided to amaze the enimy—as though wee had intended to have forced our passage there alsoe. To interrupt and prevent which intended designe of ours they brought their foote all alonge the riverside so farre remote from the bridge as that they gave us the opportunity to make a desperate assault upon the bridge by placing ladders to the toppe of the drawbridge and cutting the ropes. Which being done and the bridge falling down wee had

accesse to the gates and casting over some hand granadoes amongst the Welshmen—who there remayned—which struck such terror into them as that they all run away and could not be obtained to relieve. Whereby wee had a verie faire opportunity to force open the gates : which being done the enemy was without much difficultie beaten from theire double workes within the gates. . . . There was Colonell Ellis' regiment of foote, Major Trevor his regiment of horse and all the forces which could be raised in the adjoineing parts of Wales. Whom wee pursued, and routed both horse and foote, tooke about foure'tie comon prisoners—one captaine, foure or five lyfeten-auntes, one cornet, and some say one of them is a Leutenant-Colonell whom wee have not had tyme yet to examine. In this fight and pursuite wee lost few or none. About six o'clock Thursday evening, we entred Wrexham, which lyes within 7 miles of Chester verie comodious to hinder all the passages to Chester. The enemy fly apace and begin to remove all their goodes out of these partes, but Holt Castle holds out, butt is besiedged. Wee have likewise obstructe^d the passages neere Chester on the other sides att Tarvin and Wirrall soe as I hope through God's mercie wee may be able to give a good account thereof if care may be taken that the King's forces may not fall downe upon us to oppresse and swallow us up and that some from my Lord Generall's armye may waite upon and imploy them [Portland MSS., 151].

The loss of Farndon Bridge was a serious blow to the Royalist cause, but a more serious disaster followed close. In the same month, within four days Sir William Brereton and Sir Thomas Middleton marched from Wrexham against Hawarden Castle. Brereton writes as follows :—

1648, November 15, Hawarden Castle.—Sir William Brereton to William Lenthall.

Upon Saturday last, Nov. 11th, Sir Thos. Middleton and myself with some nine troops of horse and two small foot companies marched from Wrexham towards Chester, leaving the city two miles on right hand and advanced to Hawarden Castle, which is a strong castle and in very good repair, and is commodiously situated for blocking up Chester, which was so unprovided as that upon summons it was delivered up unto us, and the gentlemen and others thereabouts did submit themselves and are admitted into the Parliament's protection. Sir T. Middleton is returned to Wrexham to a general muster, myself remaining here in the Castle, which is unfurnished and wants a new Draw Bridge, which I desire to secure and victual with

all possible speed. The whole country hereabouts tremble and dare not make any opposition, and Col. Davies and Col. Mostyn are fled and their commanders dispersed. The Bp. of York, Bps. of Chester, S. Asaph, and Bangor, and the Grandees of the country are at Conway, which they have exceedingly fortified, expecting the landing of the Irish army under the command of the Earl of Ormond [Portland MSS., 153].

According to the account in Appendix I., Hawarden Castle was delivered up by the treachery of "the faithless Col. [Thomas] Ravenscroft [of Bretton], and Mr. [John] Aldersey, without a gun shott: the delivery whereof was very discommodious to the City of Chester by stopping of corn, coals, lyme, and all sorts of victuals, which by ye Welsh was brought in while that side was open."

It is stated that this Thomas Ravenscroft, on the afternoon of the same day that Brereton entered Hawarden, came to Chester, pretending to be of the King's party, and applied to the Governor for a barrel of gun-powder and a quantity of match, which were unsuspectingly delivered to him by the storekeeper of the garrison [Pigott's *Chester*, p. 292].

Sir Wm. Brereton, with the promptitude which marked his campaign throughout, at once sent to Sir Abraham Shipman a summons to surrender, coupled with severe threatenings in case of refusal. This was rejected with scorn, but as a precautionary measure the buildings in Handbridge were, by the Deputy Governor's order (Nov. 16th) pulled down and "burned unknown to the Maior by Colonel Marrow and his company that the rebels might not shelter there from Hawarden Castle" [Harl. 2125]. Bache Hall (Mr. Whitby's house) and Flookersbrook Hall (Sir Thomas Smith's) were burnt down on the following day lest they might afford lodgments to enemies from another quarter.

This stern but necessary precaution caused much distress in the crowded city, and no little alarm. It was therefore judged necessary to issue a formal explanation in which it was pointed out that "the military commanders and aldermen of Chester have no purpose of destroying the fortified suburbs of Chester, but on the contrary will with their lives

preserve them from violence, this proclamation being issued to discredit certain seditious reports arising out of the recent demolition of the unfortified suburb of Hanbridge (at the advice of Sir Abraham Shipman, Deputy Governor of the said city), lest it should be occupied by the rebels" [Letter Book].

The Parliamentarians were, meanwhile, not a little disturbed by the news of the landing of a large body of troops which had been recalled from the campaign in Ireland. About 3,000 of these landed at Mostyn, in Flintshire, others in the Wirral. This interfered seriously with Brereton's plans for reducing Chester, and he describes his condition as "very desperate. Unless speedy aid be sent by sea to prevent the landing of more forces, the preservation of these parts may be much endangered."

1643, November 20.—Sir Thos. Stanley, etc. to William Lenthall.

Received certain intelligence that eleven ships laden with Irish soldiers are discovered near our coast and already landed in Worrall.—altogether nineteen ships with 10,000 to be landed.

1643, November 21.—Sir William Brereton to William Lenthall.

If these [Irish troops] had stayed but ten days longer, it is conceived the city of Chester could not have subsisted, whereas now we are constrained to draw our forces together and to unite them into stronger bodies to prevent their landing which they seem not yet to attempt upon our Cheshire coasts, but on the Welsh shore about sixteen or twenty miles below Chester. We desire some thirty or forty barrels of powder whereof we have great use, having been in continued action in Shropshire and Wales ever since Col. Mitten came down, middle of September.

1643, November 22, Wem.—Col. Mytton to Earl of Denbigh.

Rebels now landed in Flintshire about Mesten [Mostyn] to number of 3,000, and Lord Capell is preparing to receive some part into Shrewsbury, his confidence being more in them than the foot of this county.

Since this news the Cheshire commanders sent to withdraw the companies they lent us and which are the only stay of our garrison.

1643, November 24.—Col. Mytton to Earl of Denbigh.

Sir T. Middleton hath taken the Fort (? Farndon), Wrexham, Harding Castle and divers other places—all the Welsh

are fled and dispersed, not an enemy near him save the Castle of Holt, which can have no relief. Chester is beleaguered round and can have no assistance. 500 Horse will clear this county and bring the country to subjection. Send arms.

1643, November 26.—Col. Mytton to Earl of Essex.

Send 200 case of pistols, 200 dragoons, 600 muskets with 50 barrels of powder.

1643, November 28.—Sir William Brereton to his brother, Sir Rd. Skeffington, at Coventry.

The condition of these parts are not so hopeful as of late, when God was pleased to make way for us into Wales through great difficulties and by our proceedings there to make way for the recovery of Chester and reducing all these parts, likewise the Lord Capell's army, being almost routed, so as we had no opposition in Wales nor our proceedings against Chester till the Irish army landed, which consists of more than 2,500 foot, and these ships are returned by whom is speedily expected Col. Berne an Irish rebel with 3,000 rebels. The Earl of Newcastle's army presses near upon us upon the other side of the county so as we were recalled out of Wales to defend our county and expect daily invasions on each side. Our condition may therefore be accounted very desperate. Unless speedy aid be sent by sea to prevent landing of more forces, the preservation of these parts may be much endangered [Portland MSS., 156-162].

1643. November 29. Beaumaris.—Mr. Orlando Bridgman to the Marquis of Ormond.

May it Please your Excellency,

Your Excellency's letters by Mr. Brent found me at Oxford, and immediately upon the receipt of them I acquainted his Majesty with the contents. Both your letters, and the experience we had from Bristol, quickened their care at Court for the accommodation of the soldiers upon their landing, so that his Majesty sent down letters to the several counties of North Wales as also a gentleman (one Col. Tildesley) to those of Lancashire residing in these parts, for a present supply of clothes, victuals and some proportion of money, to which there was a fair return of promises; but the enemy having fatally (whether through abominable cowardice or treachery or both, I cannot tell) forced a passage into Wales over Holt bridge, a place of great import, within five miles of Chester, and dividing that shire from Denbighshire, when there were as many (and those backed with a strong castle at Holt) to guard it, as [there was] to assault it. By this means [they are] for the present forced to lay aside their preparations for the public

service, and provide for their own particulars. And by this means, Chester itself being in a manner blocked up, they were forced to burn all that part of their suburbs which were on the Welsh side of the city.

Their condition being represented by his Majesty, he commanded me down this fortnight, and I came happily to the landing of the forces which were sent with Sir Michael Ernley and Colonel Gibson. I presume they have related to your Excellency with what number they landed, and in what condition they now are. The enemy have wholly deserted Wales (for Holt Castle they had never taken), except Hawarden Castle, which was betrayed to them, and is now blocked up by 1,000 men, most of them of the country, and we are in hopes to starve them out. So that now your forces are at Chester, where we endeavour all that is possible for their accommodation, hitherto retarded by this unhappy irruption of the rebels into Wales. I have provided shoes and stockings for 1,000 or 1,200 of them, already delivered, and the rest were in making, which I hope they have by this time. I have gotten cloth and frieze sufficient for them all, not yet made into apparel, but hastened it to Chester, where I hope to have it fitted up this week and the next. And I am now purposely in these parts to raise some proportion of moneys for the officers and soldiers, and have gotten about 1,000*l.* which I shall distribute with their advice to the best advantage of his Majesty's service.

I am bold to give your Excellency a more particular account of this business, both for my excuse in the unreadiness of those accommodations, which might justly have been expected, and to give your lordship an assurance that I shall be so provided for those that are now to come over, that I shall have all the shoes and stockings, and I hope, most, if not all the apparel, if they be not above 2,000 men.

And in truth, all that can be done is little enough, for the rebels do so much tamper, and underhand[edly] infuse such dangerous notions into some of them, that were it not the discretion, loyalty, and moderation of the officers, which kept them in, many of them would turn to the enemy through hopes of their arrears (which he hath cunningly promised them) though they would soon find themselves deceived, God be thanked, that treasury being now as empty as ours.

The said conditions of these parts, as they were before these forces landed, hath hastened down my Lord Byron with some 1,200 horse and foot, most from Lancashire. He is advanced to Shrewsbury, and comes in the quality of Field Marshal of Cheshire, Shropshire, and North Wales, and so under my Lord Capel in those parts, who is Lieut-General under the Prince.

I shall stay about Chester about a month or six weeks, during which time I shall apply myself to provide all the accommodation which I can for these soldiers, sent and happily arrived for the relief of these parts, which have reason to bless God for you as the happy instrument of their deliverance from oppression.

I humbly remain,

Your Excellency's most humbly devoted servant,

ORL. BRIDGMAN.

[*Carte's Life of Ormond*, v. 525].

In Harl. MS. 2125, fol. 135, it is stated that when the English-Irish soldiers came to Chester, they were "faint, weary, and out of clothing. The Mayor sent through all the wards to get apparel of citizens, who gave freely, some whole suits, some two, some doublets, others breeches, others shirts, shoes, stockings, and hatts, to the apparelling of about 300."

The landing of what is termed by Brereton the "Irish Army" certainly made a welcome diversion, and, supported by 300 of the citizens and trainbands and the companies of Captains Throppe and Morgell, they attacked Hawarden Castle on December 3rd with such spirit that the besieged capitulated the following day to Sir Michael Ernley, Kt., and Chester was on that side once more open for relief. The same opportune arrival brought about the recovery of Beeston Castle. "The Irish souldiers after this came to Chester to refresh themselves, being extremely harassed and out of cloathes, and were in both wants supplied to the utmost ability of the citizens, and whilst these were refreshing themselves Colonel Gamull with the assistance of Captain Sandford and his firelocks, in the middle of a dark night surprised the innermost ward of Beeston Castle, and garrisoned it for the King."

At a council holden at the Council Chamber within his Majestys Castle at Chester, this first day of December, 1643, We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, having duly weighed and considered the application and request of Sir Michael Ernley, knight, and Major General Richard Gibson, for aid and assistance, whereby to enable them to reduce the rebel garrison at Hawarden, it is hereby ordered, that on the morrow by break of day, 300 of the citizens and train-bands,

with their proper officers, together with the companies of Captain Thropp and Morgell, do march to the assistance of the Kings forces now at Hawarden, and that this detachment shall be commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel John Robinson.

(signed)

ABRAHAM SHIPMAN	FRANCIS GAMULL
ROB. CHOLMONDELEY	R. GROSVENOR
WILLIAM MANWARING	THOMAS THROPP
ROBERT BREREWOOD	CHARLES WALLEY
THOMAS COWPER	

[Pigott's *Chester*, 294.]

1643. December 12. Chester, at the Red Lyon, Without Eastgate.—Capt. Byrch to G. Carr, Secretary to the Marquis of Ormond.

Sir,

I had forgotten more than I should if I had not remembered you. I had intended to have written to more friends, but you and they must remember how great a perindinator (*sic*) I am. This morning we are to march against as contemptible an enemy as ever we had in Ireland. Some experience we have had of it already, and I hope before to-morrow night we shall see more what valour rebels possess.

At our first landing we met with several disrespectful (*sic*) warrants from Sir William Brereton, requiring from sixteen to sixty to be in arms to defend themselves from the invasion of 4,000 bloody Irish rebels. He could not have done us a greater courtesy than telling so loud a lie. (The honest Welsh received us very courteously, who were then ready to yield the bucklers, not for love, but fear of the faction). This was required to be published through Wales that we were such; that is, as far as Sir Thomas Myddleton's faction prevailed. This caused several of the religious ministers that loved conscience and the King to withdraw themselves, and not a few of the laity; Though we found enough besides to bid us heartily welcome.

At Holywell, the first place we came to, though the town were mostly Papists, we were told they pillaged none but the churches (in want of linen) and the poor curate. At Northop (thither we came next) they took away the surplice again, and did no other harm. It was then time of probationship amongst disarmed people; and you must understand the minister staid, and was a Scotchman. Thence to Hawarden we came, where our men besieged the castle there (but lately and falsely betrayed by its owner a week before we came, a man entrusted much by the King and his officers, the more is his sin, one Ravenscroft), where we stayed three days; in which time we

had very happily six men killed, for at no less cost would our men believe that Englishmen would fight with any Englishmen, but Papists. And I cannot honestly conceal from you that three of these were killed more basely than ever you heard of any killed by the rebels in Ireland; for while some called unto them from the top of the wall, upon pretence of old acquaintanceship, and promised them sacredly they should receive no harm by their approaching, others shot at them, and missed not. The practices of their ringleader, Brereton, were not more honest nor honourable, who, the very same day that he sent his warrants as far as they could reach in Wales, with a letter to our commanders (then on ship board), almost in form of an humble petition, extolling to the skies their brave adventures in Ireland in defence of the Protestant Religion (which God knows he is sick of), confessing the unworthy reward the Parliament gave them for that service, desiring to have them excused, promising them, if they would adhere unto them, they should have their arrears undoubtedly, and humbly entreating that it would please them to accept of a parley. It was answered as nobly as men could answer rebels. I will not trouble myself to repeat this, because I believe copies are sent over by this. Well! Sir William receiving a short and flat answer what he was to trust to, and our men denying parley with rebels, he being at Wrexham, and having an army that might have done something with our men, they being newly landed (after six days being at sea many of them), many arms unfixed, many of them disaffected to ourselves, and very many straggled among their friends (though now we miss scarce any that came over with us), yet it please God to add such fear to him, that, we being many miles from him, for fear the Devil should take the hindmost, he made proclamation through his camp, that no man should stir, on pain of death, till further directions. As soon as that was done, lest he should be jostled at the bridge of Holt, the utmost term of the Welsh border, he most valiantly went over first, and then suffered the rest, routed only by conscience, to follow him. Flushed thus with his miraculous escape, the spirit enlightened him to look back again into Wales (which I believe he will see no more but in a map, or out of Beeston Castle), he commanded that the draw-bridge should be broken down, which had been enough to make our men seek another way if they were minded for Cheshire. Which done, our much respected forces ten miles off not yet appearing, he most desperately adventured to see an arch of the great bridge broken down, for the country's good and the liberty of the subject. Good man! he says there is no fighting against us: we are Devils.

I return to Hawarden Castle (though now going a contrary way). The besieged there expected daily succours. Our men knowing the contrary fed them in that expectation to starve them. There were therein about 120 men, being all that was left of Sir Thomas Myddleton's regiment, seditious chaplain and all, except himself. Their necessity was of nothing more than water. It was taken for a miracle that it rained in winter, and they had leads to preserve it; and (which is strange) they were persuaded the water came from heaven. Our men, most part, withdrew to Chester, leaving only two companies of our own, and as I take it, 500 Welshmen to watch them. After eleven, or twelve days at most, they delevered the castle, on condition they should march away with half their arms, one colour, and £25 worth of goods. Which articles were not so well performed as I could have wished, but our men profess they could not help it, but it was the fault of some of the Lord Cholmley's men, who bid them remember Reading. For which fact, they say, Captain Sandford hewed some of our own side sufficiently, and (which was more than the articles required) guarded them out of Wales, where they will have no cause to fear the King's enemies again, we having now garrisons in all the Marches.

Now, if you desire to know what I find by my little experience in Britain of the behaviour of our zealots, I can do no less (if no more) than confirm what you have often heard. All the honest and religious clergy of Wales were fled to Conway and other safe places, till our landing set them at liberty, which was every whit as welcome and seasonable, and even more needful in this than the weakest part of the Kingdom. All the orthodox clergy of Cheshire and Lancashire are either here, or in Yorkshire, or in prison. They say that they have lately seized upon some men that would not publish in their churches that we were Irish rebels. I myself coming into the church of Hawarden the morning after they were there, found the Common Prayer-Book scattered up and down the chancel, and some well read man, without doubt, conceiving that the Common Prayers had been in the beginning of a poor innocent old church bible, tore out almost all Genesis for failing. It stood so dangerously it was suspected to be malignant. In windows where there was oriental glass they broke in pieces only the faces; to be as frugal as they could, they left sometimes the whole bodies of painted bishops, though in their rochets. But if there was anything in the language of the beast, though it was but an *hoc fecit*, or at worst, *orate*, etc. (and I but guess for I could not read it when it was gone), which had stood many years, and might many more, without

idolatry, that was dashed out. They had pulled the rails down about the table, and very honestly reared them to the wall (it was well they were in a coal country, where fuel was plentiful), and brought down the table to the midst of the church. Some of our soldiers came and swore it was not right (alas! that we have no better information), and set it close to the east wall again. At Wrexham they say (I was not there) they did the like villany almost in all points, and broke in pieces one of the best pair of organs in the King's dominions, which Sir Thomas Myddleton took for his proper pillage, to make bullets of. I am weary of these truths.

This day we march out, 4,000 foot at least, and 1,000 horse. We may go where we will for our enemies, if we have God's blessing, which I hope we shall not want, if not for our own for our enemies' sake. One thing I had almost forgot. On Saturday last we received a most gracious letter from his Majesty (which, if I had so much time, I would have sent you, and I hope some good man will), expressing his joy for our landing; his thankfulness for our so honest refusal of the rebels' propositions; his hopes that the time would be he might be more able to reward us for our service in Ireland; his sense of the unworthy desertion of him by the Parliament, from whom he expected better when he trusted them; his fear lest the report that they were Irish rebels might do some harm; his desire that therefore they should express in all places the detestation they have of the odiousness of that rebellion, and that by their constant prayers and sermons they would make men understand what religion they fight for.

I am, etc.,
HARRY BYRCH.

The civic authorities were not without anxiety in connection with this large addition to the garrison. There was much licence and disorder. It was therefore deemed necessary, December 1, 1648, to issue a proclamation against the pillage lawlessly and criminally practised by his Majesty's soldiers, and against the action of "divers evill disposed persons inhabiting within this citty and elsewhere who have receaved such plundered goodes and cattle, and buy or otherwise obtaine the same att under values." In the same draft is a proclamation also against the practice of divers persons of the city of Chester, who buy of the King's poorer and more improvident soldiers the stockings, shoes and other apparel delivered to the same soldiers for their clothing equipment [Letter Book].

It is therefore no matter of surprise that an Assembly Order should be passed Friday, December 1, 1643, in which it was agreed by general consent that £100 worth of the City's ancient plate should be delivered to Lord Capel for his Majesty's service *on condition* "that the souldiers be removed forth of this Cittie to quarters else whiere by Monday next [A.O. 599]." A receipt is given for this plate, December 7, 1643 [Harl. 2135].

1643, 7 December.

Received the day and yeare above written of the Maior and Aldermen of ye Cittye of Chester foure hundred ounces of guilt plate by way of advance or contribution to the pay and provision of and for the forces arrived from Ireland and now in His Maties service in these partes.—Arthur Capell.

1643, December 16.

Received 400 ounces of Guilt Plate.—Brian Pretious.

About this time fresh reinforcements from Ireland landed in Chester, under the command of Colonel Robert Byron, a brother of Lord Byron, and Colonel Henry Warren.

1643. February.

An Irish soldier was hanged on the gibbett for killing his fellow souldier desperately in Ran. Ashbrook's house, Taylor, in Estgate Street.

1643. March 17.

Another soldier was hanged for making a mutiny on Saboth day; about same time an other souldier was hanged at two mills of the heath for the like offence.

William Wilcock, a rich man in lands, goods, plate, etc., who was sheriff 1637, for what reason is not knowne, but some inward discontent, arose in the night from his wife out of bed and willfully drowned himselfe in a well of his owne in his backside, his goods and personall estate after crownrs quest found him *felo de se*. The sheriff did sease on all his houshold goods, plate, corne for citty's use according to charter and sould the same. This contentious person against the Mayor, Citty and privileges of the City could come to no better end [Harl. MSS., 2125, 320].

Two days after Christmas, Lord Byron defeated the Parliamentarians between Middlewich and Northwich,²¹ but

²¹ S. Mary's Churchwardens' Accounts—"Paid for ringinge for joy of the Victory neere Middlewich on St. Steven's Day, iis vid."

suffered himself a serious repulse in his attempt on Nantwich, "losing many brave soldiers and commanders, besides many cartloads brought to Chester that were wounded and maimed."

On January 12th, Col. Mytton surprised and defeated at Ellesmere a large party of Royalists who had been sent from Chester to Shrewsbury to fetch arms and ammunition for carrying on the defence. Sir Nicholas Byron, among others, was taken prisoner. He was succeeded by his nephew, Lord Byron, as Governor of Chester.

1643-4, February 21, Chester.—John Lord Byron, to Dep. Lts of Flint.

Order that horses be provided for a regiment arrived from Ireland, many of their horses having been lost on the passage. [Puleston MSS., 308].



List of the prisoners taken in the rout of the Royalists before Nantwich, January 25, 1643-4, enclosed in a letter of Sir Thomas Fairfax to the Earl of Essex.

Major-General Gibson	41 Serjeants
Sir Michael Ernely	40 Drummers
Sir Richard Fleetwood	4 Canoneers
Col. George Monk	22 Colours
Col. Warren	1,500 Common Soldiers
Sir Francis Butler, lieut.-col.	6 Ordnance, whereof five
Sir Ralph Done	Brass
Major Hammond	20 Carriages and divers
14 Captains	Wagons
20 Lieutenants	120 Women that followed the
26 Ensigns	Camp; of whom many had
2 Cornets	long knives, with which
2 Quarter-masters	they were said to have
Mr. Sherlock, Chaplain to a	done mischief
Regiment	

[Rushworth, pt. iii., vol. ii., 302.]

Lt.-col. Boughton and Capt. Thomas Sandford were killed in scaling the mud-walls at Nantwich—their bodies were brought to Chester, and with others deposited in the "great aisle of St. Wyburgh's" [Harl. MS. 2125, fol. 125].

CHAPTER III.

Prince Rupert.

AFTER this disaster the King's supporters were for the time very hopeless until the arrival of Prince Rupert, who entered Chester on Monday, March 11th.²² The streets were lined with soldiers, the justices of the peace appeared in scarlet robes, the sheriffs in their best habit, the aldermen in mulberry, and the other civic dignities in the robes of their several offices; while the Prince, accompanied by the Lord Byron and others on horseback, rode up and was met at the Cross by Randle Holme, the Mayor, who, owing to his lameness (having "been ill of a payne in his legg") came in a coach. The Mayor addressed the Prince in a becoming speech, welcoming him amongst them, and offering him what poor entertainment they could give him, which would not be what he deserved, owing to the reduced state of the city; and prayed him to ease the citizens of the free billeting of soldiers, which had been so very burthensome to them. This speech the Prince "took very kindly," and at its conclusion the people gave a shout for joy. The Prince answered graciously, ungloved his hand for the Mayor to kiss, and so went to Mr. John Aldersey's house in Watergate Street, where he rested, having previously asked the Mayor and his brethren to come to him on the morrow. The outspoken words of the Mayor do not appear to have been approved of by "his brethren" and the justices of the peace, wherefore they refused to call upon Rupert in the morning; and inasmuch as the Mayor's "payne in his legg" had increased during the night, whereby he was incapacitated from going himself, he seems to have amused himself at home by writing an explanation of his speech; and the Prince, with Lord Byron and others, rode about the city and

²² Paid for ringinge at the cominge in of Prince Rupertt, March 11th, 1643, iis vid." *Ibid.*



From an etching in the Sutherland Collection at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

inspected the mud-walls, the castle, and the other works which had been effected for its defence [Harl. MSS., 2125, fol. 320].

Portions of the old trenches made in 1642 were abandoned and new lines sited and cut to greater advantage. The escarpments were deepened and widened and the parapets raised in order to provide complete cover for the defenders. A number of new mounts were made in the vicinity of Cowlane and a trench cut in "the Rock without the Northgate beyond Dutton's turnpike," this last probably being the site of the present Rocky lane.

In the meantime, notwithstanding all this excitement and bustle in military affairs, the city business was conducted with quiet confidence under Mr. Randle Holme, jun., the Mayor. The city records tell us how the vacancies in "the 40" caused by death were duly filled; how various applications for the freedom of the city were dealt with, being granted: three for £20, or five £10, £5 or £3 6s. 8d. "with such fees as are due for Bucketts and other duties thereunto belonging"; how other applications for admission were denied or deferred; the Sunday afternoon preacher at St. Peter's and the Friday lecturer appointed; leases of shops in different parts of the city granted. It is noteworthy that attention was given to sanitary requirements, and the cleansing of the streets [A.O. 614]. Two aldermen were appointed as a deputation to acquaint Lord Byron "of the noysomeness of the puddle neere the Eastgate and to move his honour that the same may be stopped up" [A.O. 613]. Consideration was paid even to regulations for the dignified conduct of public business. Citizens were ordered (May 24, 1644) to appear at Assemblies "in their Gownes and Liveries according to their several degrees and callings, and such fynes as are forfeited by any heretofore offending in that behalfe are hereby remitted in hopes of their future conformitie to the orders of this house" [A.O. 616]. None the less, the stern business of defending the city is in no wise neglected. A levy is made by order of the Assembly July 19, 1644, "towards the reparation of the Mudwalls,"

to be paid weekly until further order to the contrary, and assessed according to the quality of the citizens [A.O. 624]; and a further sum of £50 to be spent on "the speedie repairing of the Cittie Gates, making of perculles, cleansing of the dicke by the Eastgate," etc. [A.O. 625]. Two months later, September 3rd, it was ordered that £100 a week (for 6 weeks) required for the maintenance of the Garrison, should be raised, £60 by assessment on the free citizens and ancient inhabitants, and £40 "upon such nobilitie, gentrie, clergie and others which are come for protection into this Citie." It is directed that in making the assessment, regard should be had to "such as have most gainful trading in the city, whereby the poor may be eased in these assessments" [A.O. 628]. The work on the mud-walls was to be carried out under the supervision of the Treasurers and arrangements were made for the importation of coals from Flintshire by water and land [A.O. 629].

Assembly. Tuesday, September 3.

By general consent it was ordered that Mr. William Sparke and Mr. William Ince, aldermen, shall be auditors to take and receive the Muringers accompts to this present, and likewise ye accompts of Alderman Holme the elder, concerning his disbursements, on the citties behalfe, towards the entertainment of his highness Prince Rupert; as also his accompts of what he hath disbursed for repaying the mudwalles of this cittie [A.O. 627].

And lastly Mr. John Adlington and others of the inhabitants neere the Eastgate preferred their petition thierby shewing that since the erecting of the drawe bridge att the same gate, the said petitioners sellers (when any raine falls) are drowned and such noysome smell proceed thierby that they are not able to abide in their houses, much lesse to make use of their said sellers, and the reason is that the drawe bridge ditch is dampned and choaked up with filth, having no way to evacuate, and thierfore they humbly besought this Assembly that some course might be thought upon whierby the defects aforesaid might be amended for prevention of infection; which petition being taken into consideracon it was by general consent ordered that the said ditch shalbe cleansed and a percullis made for the Eastgate aforesaid; And for to oversee the said works, Mr. Robert Harvie, alderman, is by this house desired to take the paines: and thierin to follow such directions as he shall receive from the Governor of this cittie [A.O. 631].

It will be helpful to put on record here a short reference to the movements of Prince Rupert at this period.

Whilst the Prince was at Chester he was beset with applications for aid from all quarters. The most pressing appeal came from the Earl of Derby, whose brave Countess was defying the Parliamentarians of Lancashire at Lathom House, and for whom he in person vainly petitioned help. Rupert considered that Lathom could hold out yet awhile, and that other business of the King's was more pressing.

On March 13th Prince Rupert left Chester for Newark, which he succeeded in relieving on the 21st. After this brilliant achievement, he went back in a few days to Wales to raise an army. Early in May he is off again, like a meteor, on his way to relieve York, marching from Shrewsbury on May 16th, through Whitchurch, Market Drayton, Sandbach, and Knutsford. On the 19th he writes from Whitchurch to the Mayor of Chester appointing William Legge, Governor of Chester, and on the 23rd, "Mr. Mainwaring certifies to Randle Holme, Prince Rupert's pleasure that Handbridge be forthwith levelled to the ground and that none be permitted to build or repair any houses" [Harl. 2135].

On May 25th he seized Stockport; three days after, with Lord Derby at his side, he stormed Bolton, and thence despatched a messenger to the Lady of Lathom House with twenty-two standards which had lately waved over the heads of her besiegers. Then through Wigan he advanced upon Liverpool, which he captured on June 11th, the greater part of the garrison having taken ship and sailed away out of his reach, for he was not in the mood to spare any, and his track is said to have been marked with more than usual blood and desolation.

From Liverpool he sends orders under the same date commanding the Mayor and Aldermen of Chester to "make a rate for the maintenance and pay of the soldiers and officers of the Regiment of the City, and also of the Officers and mynisters of the Garrison and to pay the moneys to their Governor" [Harl. 2135].

By June 30th he had reached Knaresborough, about twelve miles from York, and on July 2nd his victorious progress was checked by the disastrous defeat on Marston Moor.

A draft Commission dated July 10, 1644, is extant, appointing Sir Michael Ernley temporary Commander-in-Chief in North Wales, Cheshire and Salop during the absence of the Prince and Lord Byron [*Cheshire Sheaf*, 3rd Ser., 4914].

The citizens busied themselves also in more peaceful occupation. "April 1, 1644. The body of William, Earl of Derby, that dyed September 24, 1642, and all that while had stood in his own house at Dee Side where he dyed was translated to S. Werburgh's Church and sett in one of the Confession houses on backside the quire on the south side under the seate where he usually sat to heare divine service at the back of the bishopp seate: his body beinge in a coffer of leade to stand there till more peaceable times to be conveyed to the Church in Lancashire where his ancestors are interred" [Harl. 2125, fol. 320].

The "more peaceable times" adverted to by the annalist did not come until the surrender of the city, one of the conditions as it was formulated Jan. 30, 1645-6, being "All the dead bodyes uninterred to be delivered if demanded within eight weeks, not any of them to be attended with above twenty horse." In the Articles of Surrender finally signed, the ninth article stipulates "That the friends of the Earls of Derby and Lichfield or any of those whose dead bodies are not yet interred in Chester shall have two month time to fetch them thence whither they please, provided that none of them come attended with above twenty horses."

The people of Chester naturally followed the rapid and apparently irresistible march of the fiery Prince with unflagging interest, and, after the example of God's servants of old, brought their trouble and anxiety as well as their thankfulness before the throne of grace. "22 May, beinge Tuesday," writes the Chester annalist,

was a general fast in the great Church kept for the prosperity of Prince Rupert's army being advanced towards Cheshire and

thence to Lancaster. 6 June, being Thursday, was a Thanksgiving Sermon made to God in St Werburgess for this victory of Prince Rupert [the taking of Bolton, May 28]. The bells range and bonfires were made at almost every dore for joy of his highness good successe. The Sermon was preached by one Mr. Raulinson [Harl. 2125].

So in the Churchwardens Accounts of St. Marys:—

“ Paid for ringeing the 25th March for joy of the
victory by Prince Rupertt over the enemy at
the siege of Newarke by special command
of Maior and Governor iijs iiijd

Sir William Brereton's letters to the Committee of both Kingdoms, dated Nantwich, August 2 and 3, 1644, give his account of what was being done by this untamed warrior a few weeks later [S.P. Dom.]

Prince Rupert's forces, which consisted mainly of horse and dragoons, were quartered some on the other side of the Dee in Wales, and a small contingent at Tarvin under command of Colonel Marrow. The Prince himself occupied the Bishop's palace, and busied himself during his short stay in impressing men for the infantry, which had suffered much at Marston Moor. He continued his plans for fortifying the city, which included the demolition of Eastgate and Northgate Streets, Cowlane and the northern suburbs. This, doubtless an unpalatable suggestion, was not carried out, but sore feeling was produced by an attempt to exact an “excise, which,” observes Brereton “gives mighty offence, being almost double that settled by Parliament. This has naturally caused a reaction amongst those who were most vehement in their cause.”

1644, August 2, Nantwich.

Prince Rupert's residence is at the present in Chester where great preparation is made for his housekeeping, intimating therein his intended stay there.

His horse out of Lancashire consisting of about 5,000 horse and dragoons are quartered on the other side of Dee in Wales and Col. Marrow with his forces of horse about 800 lies near Tarvin. The Prince's foot are yet but few but he presses new men daily in all parts within the verge of his command for the recruiting of his losses at the late battle near York [Marston

Moor, July 2, 1644]. He keeps himself yet quiet in Chester without troubling of us, quartering somewhat remote thence, but the assured loss of all his carriages and especially the want of gunpowder and ammunition we find to be the cause. We hear the enemy expect a supply of these out of the magazine in Dublin. Considerable reinforcements are needed. All the several parts of the Counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, Salop, Staffordshire, and North Wales now under the power of Parliament, if all conjoined, are not able to raise 1500 horse for present service.

1644, August 3, Nantwich.

Prince Rupert is fortifying Chester, and, as some say, is erecting his Court there in the Bishops palace where provision is making for his entertainment and housekeeping. Great impressing of men and almost as great a number running away from them. They are consulting about pulling down East and Northgate streets, the Cowlane and the northern suburbs, which are almost half the city. They have likewise attempted to exact and settle an excise which gives mighty offence, being almost double that settled by Parliament. This has naturally caused a reaction amongst those who were most vehement in their cause who now repine and murmur against them, thus supplying a good preparative for the welcoming thither of those who desired rather that they should be reformed and reduced to the obedience of the King and Parliament than ruined and spoiled [S.P. Dom.]

The "reaction" to which Brereton refers is noticed in Harl. 2125, as being so marked that the Mayor, Randle Holme, junr., caused all citizens of every ward to report themselves on the Roodee with their arms.

About 10 June the King made proclamation for the taking of excise on severall commodities bought or sould. There was much dissatisfaction. . . . So the Mayor caused all citizens of every ward with their ward to bring all citizens inhabitants and others with all their armes to Roodee—the soldiers keeping strict watch in mean season at the outworks. The Royalists came willingly, the suspected malignants came creeping to shew themselves, more for fear than love. The whole citizens set on by the sayd malignants called on the maior much to desist further prosecution of the said proclamation of excise—he promised to represent their desires. At same time came a runner that Sir W. Brereton and his forces were coming again and nigh the town which caused each man with all expedition to his ward and guard, but the alarm proved false.

Some days before August 21st, Brereton and Sir Thomas Myddelton, who were at Northwich, marched thence to Frodsham, where they expected to find the enemy, thinking that their design was for Lancashire. Finding them not, they crossed Delamere Forest, which was not then so contracted as it is now, and came to Ashton, where they received definite intelligence that the Cavaliers were at Tarvin. Thither they at once proceeded, and on their way they came upon some of Marrow's men, who had been sent out as scouts. These they pursued to Tarvin, where they fell upon the body of the enemy and worsted them. Some of the latter fled into the church, and others betook themselves to Chester. The latter were followed with good effect by Colonel Sankey, and the attack upon the church was left to Colonel Jones. Many prisoners were made, some were slain, and a number of horse were captured. Colonel Marrow himself was mortally wounded, and died as soon as he was taken back to Chester. This officer, even by those who were opposed to him, is spoken of in high terms as a gallant soldier. He had come from Ireland in the previous December, and what made his death at this time especially sad was the fact that he had "married a wife with a good fortune" but three weeks before. Chester was frightened at this ill-luck, and the military authorities there saw that they would be placed in great danger if they did not stem the enemy's progress. Two regiments of horse, or according to another account, about 800 horse and foot, went out next morning to avenge Marrow's death. Brereton and Myddelton, expecting that they would be attacked, were in readiness to receive their opponents. A desperate fight ensued, and in the end the Royalists gave way and fled, having sustained a loss of about 400 men, of whom 300 were slain, the rest being made prisoners. In all the Parliamentary newspapers Prince Rupert is stated to have been engaged in this fight. But it is tolerably certain that the Prince was not in Chester at this time, for Colonel William Legge, the Governor of Chester, writing on the 22nd August—the very day upon which the second battle was fought—to "his most dear

Prince," states that "the night your Highness lay at Ruthin, Marrow's horse were beaten." The Lord Byron also gives an account of that action, which, he says, took place "on the spot where your Highness killed the buck as the horse were drawing out." Had the Prince taken part in the fight there would have been no occasion for these letters. According to Legge he was at Ruthin at the time, and this is confirmed by a pamphlet published on the 27th August, which states that Rupert had gone to Ruthin for fear of the Earl of Manchester, rumours of whose advance towards Chester had been prevalent for several days. The defeat was so serious that Prince Rupert gave up all idea of going back to Chester.

The Committee of both Kingdoms, upon Brereton's report of Prince Rupert's activity, at once directed the Earl of Manchester to march against Prince Rupert with all his available force, and follow him wherever he should go. Manchester replies, August 10th, giving reasons in which he is supported by his officers, why he should not do as he was ordered. The Committee repeated their orders, August 21st, bidding Manchester send off at least a small party of horse to assist Sir William Brereton. Manchester's reluctance to try conclusions with Prince Rupert was at length overcome, but on September 2nd, when arrangements had been made for the dispatch of a body of cavalry, the order was countermanded, as Prince Rupert turned south with the greater part of his army [S.P. Dom]. He did not, however, get off scatheless. Sir Marmaduke Langdale, with some 3,000 horse, having quitted Cumberland, passed through Lancashire, where he was much harassed. When he entered Cheshire his strength scarcely exceeded a third of the number he originally started with. He was met at Malpas, August 26th, by Col. Jones, whose force only comprised about 800 men. Notwithstanding the disparity in number, Col. Jones did considerable execution; but he would doubtless have been worsted were it not for Brereton's timely appearance. Even with this reinforcement they numbered less than the Royalists. The latter, however, lost several of their officers, which disheartened the soldiers. So they beat a retreat to

Chester instead of pursuing the road to Shrewsbury as they intended. Sir Marmaduke was himself wounded. Two colonels and three majors were slain, and several other officers made prisoners. The Committee wrote to Essex, September 5th, with some glee that "Sir William Brereton has lately encountered forces that were with Prince Rupert and has slain and taken divers of their principal officers, among whom was Sir Marmaduke Langdale, who commanded the party in chief, wounded dangerously and carried to Chester, without losing a single man of his. This was about Malpas. The rest of Rupert's forces, about 2,000 horse [he left York with 6,000 horse], are marched through Wales towards Bristol" [S.P. Dom.]

Randle Holme's valedictory address on going out of his office of Mayoralty is interesting:—

Gentlemen—I am glad of this yeare's period that I am come to give you of the commons thanks for your election, you of the howse or counsell thanks for your approbation, and you of the bench thanks for your confirmation of this great honour on me to be your magistrate beinge farr unworthy thereof: which honour brought a great burden with it in respect of the tymes troublesomness: for what my predecessors only or with the finger touched I have heavily felt, but by God's mercy have ran through the same, although with many an akinge hart: for to see our anntient plate diminished, our benefactors' money exhausted, the cittizens estates impoverished, our suburbs fired and cittizens oppressed (the necessity of the tymes requiring it and I much greeved I could not remedy it) only our comfort was, it was for a good Kinge and in a good cause; and though in all things I could not do what I would, yet I have done what I promised in performance of my lialty and preservation of this citty for his Majesty, and hope my successor will doe the same to whom I leave the citty and privileges in good order; the stone and mud walls in good condition far better than I found them; and as a dying man I bequeath my staffe, place and authority to you and you to God, and God give you much joy and peace therein to God's glory, the Kinge's honour and tranquillity of the citty and so I take my leave [Harl. MSS., 2125, 318].

In October Brereton had his quarters at Stanney and Great Neston, and was busy in fortifying Hooton House, keeping an eye meanwhile on what was occurring about

Liverpool, which ultimately surrendered to Sir John Meldrum on November 1st.

9 November, 1644, being Saturday in the forenoone the gibbet was by the Lo: Bishoppe's meanes removed from the Abbey Gate field to the side of the pillory by the cornmarket house. Four souldiers with papers on their brests were hanged, whereon was written in text letters *Theis men dye for trechery in betrayinge of Liverpoole* [Harl 2125, 320].

As the force under his command was not sufficient for very vigorous measures, Brereton seems to have amused himself by giving the Royalists "strong and frequent alarms, taking away cattle from their very works."

Thus October 28, 1644, he reports—

Upon Thursday last we took above 100 cattle, when their horse and foot issued out to rescue them, but were beaten back with the loss of two cornets Hopton and Slegge, and several men slain, besides seven taken and twelve horses, without any loss on our side. On Saturday a party of our men fro Tarvin took away divers cattle belonging to Governor of Beeston Castle, and enticed the enemy into an ambuscade, killing several and taking seventeen prisoners, whereof one was an ensign, besides thirty stand of arms, without the loss of one man. On Monday the enemy, whose strength begins to increase, issued out of Chester against our guard at Backford, but were beaten back with one lieutenant of horse taken prisoner. Our garrison at Tarvin is in good forwardness, and we proceed with all expedition in fortifying Hooton in Wirral. The enemy is raising all the forces possible in Wales, with which they hope to be able to struggle with us until the arrival of the forces expected to come down with the Prince [Rupert] from the King's Army, which is not to be doubted is a great part of their care.

1644. October 30. Conway.—Archbishop of York to the Marquis of Ormond.

Chester was set upon on Monday last, and the outworks entered but regained again. Fourteen of the enemy killed, [but they] are not retired far from the works. It is thought that that city is full of disaffected persons, and certain [it is] that they do not love their present Governor [Legge] as it is also that the enemy knows too well what little accord there is between Legge and the Prince's creatures with that poor Lord [Capel] who commands, or should command in chief in these parts. A most worthy man, but unfortunately matched in his Government.

God Almighty bless your Excellency in all your endeavours,
and I do, and shall ever, remain

Your Excellency's most humble and obliged servant,

JO. EBORAC.²³

[*Carte's Collection of Letters*, i., 67.]

1644, November 2. Sir William Brereton to Committee of Both Kingdoms.

The town of Liverpool is now recovered. Many of the muskets, trunks, treasures and best goods were being conveyed away by boat to Beaumaris, but some long boats were sent from our ships and seized upon them. Amongst them were very many commanders. Now that Newcastle is reduced, if there may be assigned 3,000 or 4,000 Scots towards the taking in of Chester and clearing these parts I doubt not a good account may be given thereof, and a small army may be expected to do much more service now before they are strengthened and recruited than the whole army hereafter. I shall not think fit to urge this any further but humbly submit myself herein to your Honours. P.S.—The character [cipher] sent by the last express I cannot understand, or make any use thereof, having no key sent me, otherwise none should be more faithful in observance than myself [S.P. Dom.].



²³ John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, 1621, translated to York, 1642.

CHAPTER IV.

Brereton begins the Leaguer. Prince Maurice. The Siege Resumed. Withdrawal.

EARLY in December, Brereton began the leaguer of Chester, posting garrisons at Aldford, Tarvin, Hawarden, Trafford, Upton Hall, and other places within three or four miles of the city, to prevent the importation of provisions. In January, 1644-5, they were obliged to draw closer in, Colonel Jones and Major Lowthian having a strong force at Christleton "which they secured by mud-walls" [Harl. 2155, 24], and later another detachment on the Welsh side at Dodleston and Lache.

1644-5, January 16, Nantwich.—Sir William Brereton.

The garrison of Chester have been lately more active than formerly, and have fallen upon some of our quarters and taken twenty or thirty men besides horses at several times, which we have not been able to retaliate because none of them are quartered on this side the Dee except those within the walls of Chester and Beeston Castle.

1644-5, January 17. Nantwich.—Sir William Brereton to Committee of both Kingdoms.

In order to secure our quarters against the enemy we have therefore advanced nearer to it. Lt. Col. Long and Major Louthiane being now at Christleton and a little above a mile from the city's works with my regiments of horse and foot which will be a mighty annoyance and vexation to the besieged if we can maintain the same. Beeston Castle is every day more and more distressed so, unless speedily relieved, I hope a good account may be given thereof. If the force we are expecting come to our aid to make good the Welsh side, I hope to give a good account of Chester and all these parts. Care that no forces from King's army be suffered to approach. [S.P. Dom.]

The citizens began, January 18, 1644-5, to feel the pinch, and determined to beat up the Parliamentary quarters at Christleton and burn the town. According to Brereton, there was also an intention of relieving Beeston Castle, which

was now hard pressed. The design was projected by Lord Byron, who went with the horse then in the city, the force employed numbering 1,500 well-appointed troops. The writer of the account in Harl. 2135, declares that "it was ill-managed, the rebels had notified ere the design was effected and were in readiness for encounter. They trifled so long in Chester that ere the body wrought the Barrs their forlorn hope was cut off, about 180 taken prisoners, Col. Wyrden, Lt Humphrys, Coll. Vayne. The pace was so slow, a march rather for May show than a warlike expedition. The blew-cotes ran ere they shott, and flange away their drumes, wheling toward the waterside to save themselves."

Brereton was not to be caught napping—in truth, he appears to have been constantly supplied with intelligence, perhaps from his great popularity with the Cheshire folk. His report to the Committee of both Kingdoms is interesting:—

1644-5, January 18, Nantwich.—

This day twelve months Nantwich assaulted and Byron repulsed. These lines may present you with the success of this day when the Lord did work wonderfully and fight for us to the amazement and discomfiture of the enemy.

This day, about two o'clock, the enemy issued out of Chester intending to fall upon our quarters and so break through in order to relieve Beeston Castle. For which purpose, uniting about 800 foot and 300 horse, they prepared a strong ambuscade through which our horse charging very resolutely fell fiercely upon their horse which were placed in the rear of their ambuscade, routed them, slew many, and performed great execution even until they [the enemy] entered the gates. We have taken more than 200 prisoners, amongst whom are two cols, two lieut-cols, and ten other officers, besides good store of horses and arms. The foot led on by Adj^t [Major] Louthiane performed gallant service, they came on valiantly, beat the enemy from their ambuscade, slew many of them almost within the range of their cannon which saved them from being so totally taken and slain as otherwise they would have been. Lieut.-Col. Jones led on the horse with much judgment, valour, and success. I do not hear of any of our commanding officers being slain, but Capt. [John] Blackwell is missing and Capt. Zanchie who is a very valiant man and commands my own

troop being without his arms was wounded but it is hoped not mortally. This may have a good effect on Beeston Castle, and we will endeavour to improve time and advantage by all means in our power. [S.P. Dom.]

Malbon states that on Sunday night, January 26th, some forces marched towards Chester with intent to storm the city, but that on reaching the outworks between four and five the following morning they found, by the light of their match, the walls [? works] well guarded with soldiers. They had been betrayed by one of their own soldiers, were subjected to heavy musket fire, but retired without loss [*Civil War in Cheshire*, p. 159].

Lord Byron, writing to Sir John Owen, the Governor of Conway, on January 27th, complains of "having made journies and written volumes of letters to Wales, and only received promises but no performance to help to relieve Chester." He makes another appeal, stating that the garrison is weak [Brogynntyn MSS.].

The civic authorities themselves were forced, January 31, 1644-5, to order £100 of the ancient plate of the city to be converted into coin for the expenses of the defence [A.O. 636]. This was made an occasion of an action against Mr. Charles Walley, Mayor, and Mr. Randle Holme, junr. [A.O. 714]. At the same Assembly an assessment of £160 was ordered to be levied "by £20 a weeke for perfecting the works, providing match, coals and candles and other necessities for the use of the garrison. Of this sum £15 a week was to be levied on the citizens, and £5 on the strangers [A.O. 637]. An order was also made at the same Assembly that "inasmuch as diverse of the inhabitants of the city had refused to pay" the assessment ordered on July 19th, and September 3rd, the arrears should be collected forthwith, as well as the arrears of the assessment [A.O. 638], for the gift to the King on his visit to Chester [A.O. 640]. Four days before (Monday, January 27th) an attempt was made by Brereton to storm the outworks. "The Mayor caused that day a generall fast to be kept in four Churches, St Werburg, St Peters, St Johns and St Maryes." "The same morning about 6 o'clock, an



Cyril H. Lodge, Photo.

Charles I Half-crown.
(Enlarged 3 : 2)

Obv. CAROLVS D. G. MAG. BRI. FR. ET HIR. REX. *Rev.* CHRISTO AVSPICE REGNO.
Showing the three garbs and sword erect, and the initials C H S T, the marks of the Chester Mint.
This coin, minted in 1643-4 from the Corporation plate melted down, is in the British Museum.
(See Assembly Order 636, page 72.)

alarm was given at the Northgate Turnpike gate. The rebels came with scaling ladders to scale the walls, but they had so hot a breakfast as divers went with bullets for concoction which hindered their drinking ever after. Eight lode of scaling ladders were brought but two served of them, for ere any more could be brought, they were forced to leave these behind them with two muskets, three swords, one corslett, given to Sir Francis Gamull the City Coll: and Dep^y Governor under Lord Byron, and were set at High Cross to be viewed " [Harl. 2125].

How pathetic this conjunction of hard fighting with humble devotion in prayer and fasting! Let us turn to the besiegers' account of the same occurrence.

1644-5. February 3, Nantwich.—Sir W. Brereton to the Committee of both Kingdoms.

27 Jan. before daybreak we prepared and attempted to storm the outworks of Chester, but failed to enter: nevertheless we escaped without damage though our body of horse stood within musket shot and the foot within pistol shot of their works, yet not one man was wounded or taken. On 29th ult I sent a strong party of horse and foot under Lt-Col. Coote which marched through the adjoining parts of Wales, where they saw no enemy and possessed themselves of Holt bridge which is a passage of much consequence. They brought back good store of cattle out of the enemy's quarters including sixty or eighty fit for slaughter which will be very serviceable to our garrisons. Prince Maurice at Worcester and expected to relieve Chester—which much encourages the enemy.

Advises effort to prevent Maurice gaining head.

The Committee forthwith acted upon this advice, showing how keenly they realised the peril of the situation. On February 7th they direct Ferdinando, Lord Fairfax, to send with all expedition into Cheshire 500 horse, or more if he can spare them, to oppose Maurice's progress; also to the Committee at Leicester to send 100 horse; to the Committee at Warwick 150 horse; Derby 300; Stafford, Lancashire, and Salop, each 100 horse and 200 foot.

Meanwhile Brereton maintained his quarters at Christleton on the Cheshire side, with a larger body at Wrexham to watch Wales. A detachment was posted at Farndon to keep in the Royalist garrison in Holt Castle, and further he

"endeavoured to make the best advantage of the time" (as he terms it) by marching up and down the counties of Flint and Denbigh, in order to scatter the forces collected there and intended to join Prince Maurice's army.

1644-5, February 10. Wrexham.—Sir William Brereton.

Still maintain quarters at Christleton on Cheshire side, and at Wrexham in Wales, but expect every hour to hear of Maurice's advance.

In meantime endeavoured to make the best advantage of time by marching up and down counties Flint and Denbigh in order to scatter the forces collected therein and intended to join with the Prince's army. These are three or four thousand in number, but the greater part being unarmed they fled on our advance first to Ruthin and then to Denbigh.

We have divided the few men we have here, locating the greater part at Wrexham, another party at Farndon to secure that passage and keep in the enemy's garrison in Holt Castle, another is quartered at Christleton on the Cheshire side and we still maintain the siege of Beeston Castle, which we hope cannot hold out long [S.P. Dom.]

These precautions, so energetically devised and carried out, were of no avail in stopping Prince Maurice's advance, which resulted in raising the siege, February 19, 1644-5. He was not in quite a position to attempt the relief of Beeston, but ordered Col. Robinson, the Governor of Holt Castle, to make an attempt, which was done accordingly, but without success, Brereton defeating them and killing Col. Owen, one of their officers. For three weeks the Prince lay between Chester and Maylor [in Flintshire] plundering and impoverishing the country extremely,²⁴ and during his short visit he assisted materially in arranging for the future defence of the city. The outworks were brought within a shorter compass for the convenience of the garrison; Great Boughton and Christleton were burnt down in revenge for treachery; and the chapel of St. John without the Northgate, together with the rest of the buildings belonging to the hospital, was razed to the ground, lest the enemy should find shelter there [Appendix I., p. 222].

²⁴ Wm. Maurice's MS. in *Arch. Camb.*, i. 39. His brother, Prince Rupert, had reached Ludlow, March 11, hoping to join Maurice, and raise the siege of Beeston Castle.

The Prince on the last of February, being Friday, caused "a solemn fast to be kept in the quier [of St. Werburgh], St. Peters and St. Maries, and was at quier both fore and afternoone" [Harl. 2125]. He also directed a test to be tendered on March 4th, to all the inhabitants of the city, protesting against the Rebellion against the King, and declaring their resolve to defend his cause with life and fortune, and their abhorrence of "the damnable and late invented covenant, commonly called the National Covenant."

To the Mayor of the city of Chester, Sir Francis Gamull, Sir William Manwaring, Lieut.-Col. Robinson, Alderman Thomas Cowper, Lieut.-Col. Grosvenor, Colonel Mostyn, Captain Thomas Thropp, Captain Morgell, or to any two of them:—These are to will, authorize, and require you, or any two of you, to administer the protestation hereunto annexed, lately made for the security of this city, to all the nobility, gentry, divines, citizens, and all other the inhabitants of this city; and to all and every the officers, soldiers, and others, that shall come into or have any commerce within the said city. And in case any person or persons refuse, deny, and will not take the same, you are hereby required to give in a list of the names of all and every person so refusing, unto me. Herein you are not to fail. Given at Chester, under my hand and seal at arms, this 4th day of March, 1644.

MAURICE.

THE PROTESTATION.

I, A. B., do vow and protest, in the presence of Almighty God, that I believe in my heart that the Earl of Essex, Sir William Brereton, Sir Thomas Middleton and Mr. Thomas Mutton, and all their party and adherents, are in actual rebellion against the King, and that I will with myself, life, and fortune, and to the utmost of my power, maintain and defend his Majesty's cause against the said rebels, and all others who are now in arms without his Majesty's express consent and command; and that I will not give, nor by any privity and consent suffer to be given, any aid, assistance, or intelligence to the aforesaid rebels, or any of their parties, to the prejudice of the safety of this city of Chester, to the betraying of it, or any forces, castles, garrisons, or forts under his Majesty's express command and government, or any of his dominions, into the said rebels hands or power. And I do likewise from my soul abhor the taking of the damnable and late invented

Covenant, commonly called the National Covenant, enpressed by the rebels upon many of his Majesty's subjects; and to all that I have protested I call God to witness, believing that I cannot be absolved by any power, mental reservation, or equivocation, from this my vow and protestation. So help me God, and by the contents of this book.²⁴ [Pigott's *Chester*, pp. 297-8].

Whilst in Chester he is reputed to have invented a new-fashioned bridge of a sort never seen before in England. He placed a boat on each side of the river Dee, and fastened cords to them from one side to the other; and upon the cord laid strong canvas drawn out and stretched so stiff and hard, and which was so firm, that three men could walk abreast on it.²⁵

The Parliamentary Committee were greatly alarmed at his success and the news of possible support from Sir Marmaduke Langdale, and also from Prince Rupert, who had reached Ludlow, March 11th, hoping to join Maurice and raise the siege of Beeston Castle. For ten days (March 11th to 21st) they are busy despatching orders hither and thither, to Lord Fairfax, General Leslie, General Crawford, to the Committees at Leicester, Warwick, Stafford, Salop, and Lancashire, to "send with all expedition what forces they can spare to oppose the Prince's progress." Crawford is desired "to march with the horse, for the relief of Brereton, not waiting for the two regiments of foot for whom money is providing." "Persuade the foot if you can," they add, "to march along with you and money will be sent after them." Brereton receives from the Committee (March 17th) the comforting assurance that the reinforcements he had so repeatedly and hitherto vainly begged for were to be granted. "Four regiments of Scottish horse and 2,000 foot are upon their march to your assistance under General David Leslie."

²⁴ In the Churchwarden's Accounts for St. John's is the entry:—

Paid for the book to take the names of those that
took the test 00 00 06
Canon Cooper Scott's *Hist. of St. John Baptist*, p. 76.

²⁵ From an article by the Hon. J. W. Fortescue in *Macmillan's Magazine* for August, 1894, Mr. Fortescue's authority being an old newspaper of March, 1645.

1644-5. March 11.—Committee to Lord Fairfax.

Information that Sir Marmaduke Langdale is marched towards Cheshire to join Prince Maurice. Observe his motions and if he shall march that way, Sir W. Brereton will be in danger by so many united forces. In that case send after him [Langdale] all the forces you can spare. [S.P. Dom.]

Prince Maurice left Chester on March 13th. The Parliamentarians at once (March 19th) resumed their siege, taking up positions at Eccleston, Dodleston, Pulford, and "as near as Netherlegh from whence, the 7th of April being Monday in Easter Week, 1645, they gave an alarm at the further Bridge House, and pillaged Handbridge."²⁷

They were however, stoutly repulsed without loss to the citizens, but Handbridge was burned by Lord Byron's command "to prevent the enemy nesting there, as were all the Glovers' houses under the Walls by Dee Side and the houses without the Watergate."

Additional supplies of money were called for. A sum of £40 out of delinquents' estates had been granted on February 18th for the support of Prince Rupert's foot regiment then "resident in the Garrison," the levy, for the first time being intrusted to the soldiers to collect [A.O. 641, 642]. On the proposition of the Mayor, Mr. Charles Walley, April 8th it was ordered [A.O. 644] that an assessment should be made of £20 a week (for eight weeks), on the inhabitants "for the better fortification of the garrison and making a drawbridge at the Bridge Gate."

Four days later, April 12th, Lord Byron wrote to the Sheriffs and Commissioners of Array of the Counties of North Wales directing them to have troops ready at an hour's notice to aid the Prince in the relief of the city [Brogyntyn MSS.]. At this time Sir Edmund Verney was Deputy Governor [Verney MSS.].

Fresh provisions in the city were very scarce and dear (though the Parliamentary forces were no better off in this respect), the store of ammunition had become dangerously low, and Brereton confidently hoped that with this "greate

²⁷ The two Princes are reported, March 22, to be moving southward through Newport toward Bridgenorth. [S.P. Dom].

increase of their wantes " they would speedily be forced to surrender.

A letter from Lord Byron to Digby, the King's principal Secretary, written just after the raising of the siege, shows very plainly the brave Governor's attitude of mind at this time. With the gallant resolve to do his duty as a staunch and loyal soldier of King Charles, there runs throughout a tone of despondency and irritation at the manner in which the King's cause is being mismanaged, and the want of proper leadership. He points out how it is that the opportunity was not seized for re-victualling the city sufficiently ere the siege was resumed; how insufficient in number and quality were the troops left behind when Rupert left on account of the rising in Herefordshire. He writes sharply of Colonel Mostyn's officers and men—"ignorant Welsh gentlemen, and unwilling to undergo any strict duty"—and he complains, not without reason, of the want of spirit and vigour of the Welsh forces.

1645. April 26. Chester.—John Lord Byron to George Lord Digby, Principal Secretary.

Complains that the burden has grown too unwieldy for his thoughts to bear—urges necessity for speedy and powerful relief.

I know it is usual for men to exaggerate the importance of those places where their commands lie, but without any such self partiality this place stands unrivalled in relation to his Maj's affairs. The two princes [Rupert and Maurice] having united their forces and relieved Beeston Castle were earnestly entreated by me to clear this country before they departed of those petty garrisons which infested Chester, but other considerations at that time hindered the effecting of it and therefore with a promise that the army should continue within a [moderate] distance, till Chester were furnished both with victuals and ammunition, I was contented to return and undertake the government of that garrison. But the business of Hereford interfering, Prince Rupert was suddenly called away before either amunition or victual could be brought into Chester, and together with his Highness marched away the remainder of the old Irish regiments with some other horse and foot to the number of at least 1,200, so that I was left in the town with only a garrison of citizens and my own and Colonel Mostin's regiments, which both together made not above 600 men, whereof one half being Mostin's men, I was forced soon after

to send out of town, finding them by reason of their officers, who were ignorant Welch gentlemen and unwilling to undergo any strict duty, far more prejudicial to us than useful. The rebels, finding the Prince retreated with his army and the country emptied of all soldiers but such as were necessary for keeping the garrisons, returned with all their forces to block up Chester on all sides which ever since they have continued, and withal laid siege to Hawarden Castle. The Welch though they have men for number and army sufficient to beat the rebels out of Wales yet either will not or dare not stir, notwithstanding the many orders I have sent them. The truth is that so long as that cursed Commission of Array or at least such Commissioners as are put into it have any power there, the King must expect no good out of North Wales, and I am confident were it not for the castles which are well provided both with men victual and ammunition that country wd long since have taken part with Brereton and Middleton. Thus you see I am left in a condition neither to offend others nor defend myself, if pressed by a considerable army by the enemy, which I am advertised now is advancing towards me, the Scots being invited by the Ordinance of Parliament, which gives them Chester if they can win it, to join with the Lancashire and Cheshire forces. Besides this, if speedy relief come not, the want of gunpowder will be sufficient to blow me up there, there not being full 18 barrels in store neither any public magazine of victual nor money for public service. I have the more fully related my condition to your L'ship to the end that if any misfortune should befall me before relief come, it may appear how little accessory I have been to it; and for these poor means I have left to maintain this place, you may be assured I shall improve them to the utmost, and how unfortunate soever I may be, you shall have an account of my charge befitting an honest man and one whom I hope you shall not blush to own [S.P. Dom].

The Committee write to Brereton, April 15th, that they had "received this day a letter from Coventry signifying the return of Princes Rupert and Maurice towards his quarters. We have seconded our former letters to the Earl of Leven, General Leslie, General David Leslie, Lord Fairfax, and the Committee of Lancashire to send what forces they can spare."

Sir Wm. Brereton's letters indicate how greatly the reduction of Chester depended upon the movements of Rupert and King Charles, and the supply he so much needed of additional troops and victuals.

1645. April 4.—Sir William Brereton to—
Sir,

I had intelligence that there was some ammunition come from Anglesey towards Chester, and being come on this side of the Dee I marched into Flintshire to meet them, but they hearing of us got into Hawarden Castle, whither the country people drove in many carriages, and the malignants fled thither with their wives and children, thinking that we would only have faced that place; but I have left a strength before it, who are undermining it, which stands upon sand, therefore the more easy to dig. There is good store of powder and ammunition in it. And leaving a party there I marched to Goozanna, and fell upon the enemy there, which garrison I took from them, and therein all the Governor (a Captain) and 27 prisoners more, amongst which some officers. And from thence we marched to block up Chester on the Welsh side, which we have done. The enemy at our approach set fire to Handbridge, but by reason of our speedy march we gained Manly House from them, killed divers, took a captain and many other prisoners, and wounded many more besides, and pursued them to the bridge over which they fled into the city. Of which, if the Irish rebels come not, I hope shortly to give a good account.

WILLIAM BRERETON.

1645. April 18.—Sir William Brereton to Mr. Ashurst.

Hopes speedily to give a good account of Chester and Hawarden if not interrupted by ye accession of forces and constrained to raise ye siege. . . . Our hopes being much encreased of reducing ye places before named by the encrease of their wants which I believe in a few days may swell to yt height as yt those inclosed may be thereby made sensible and induced better to understand themselves.

Movements of Prince uncertain but meantime continue the siege agt Chester which will be sufficiently blocked up if wee can obtaine any encrease of foote from Lancaster and if the intended supply of victualles be brought in to us."

Poste.—Ye Darby horse are gone from us. I desire order might be given for their speedie returne. Wee are at great want of them in Wales [Add. MSS. 11,331, fol. 4].

1645. April 21.—Sir William Brereton to Sir Gerald Lesley.

As touching ye condition of Chester they become every day more and more necessitated fresh provisions being much wanting and very deare and the poorer sort are already much distressed, their provisions being spent, soe that ye Ritch must either supply them out of their store or turne them out of Towne which wee will not suffer. It is most probable they will be in a mutinie and high discontent soe as if your army were in

these partes their distracons and apprehensions of dangers would not only be so much increased but they wd thereby be much inclyned to accept condicons It is confidently believed yt after your appearance before them or ye quartering betwixt them and their expected releife ye citty wd not hold out six days. . . No great hopes there of Hawarden Castle.

Intelligence was sent on April 15th to the effect that he had taken Col. Sir Richard Byron, and Col. Sir Robert Byron with some other prisoners, five hundred pounds in money, and some horse who (as spies) had been in his quarters. Writing to the Committee on April 21st, he refers to the uncertainty about the King's march, and the importance of keeping a grip upon Chester, which he doubts not will before long be surrendered.

1645. April 21.—Sir William Brereton to Committee of both Kingdoms.

Not certain when King comes now hither or an army advance acrosse ye country and we meete them. They have pressed most of ye horse in these counties, and fitted themselves for a swift and quicke march. Report that their first worke is to relieve Chester, cleare Wales and for to fall in to Lancashire where they are sure to forme a potent party to joyne with them in ye reliefe. . . . The wantes of ye inhabitants of Chester increase every day more and more and wee are proceeding with all possible speede in ye undermoyning of Hawarden. I confidently believe that they will never loose their whole interest at once in all these northwest partes of ye Kingdome which depend upon Chester which may be as easily relieved as attempted if these Armyes fall downe upon us and ye Scottish forces come not up in tyme to our assistance. Wee are soe neare Chester on all sides and yt ye inhabitants therein are much pinched and yet soe confident of speedy releife from ye Princes Army. If at this tyme they be disappointed in their expectacons, as it is not much doubted but ye Citty will before long be surrendered [Add. MSS., 11,331, fol. 5].

At the same time, pinched though they were, they had strong hopes of relief from Prince Rupert or the King, and the frequent rumours of the advance of the Royalists in strength caused anxiety to the Committee of both Kingdoms as well as to Brereton.

Early in May the Committee received intelligence from many quarters of the King's advance to relieve Chester, and

wrote to Brereton under date May 9th,

The King is advancing your way with his army. Furnish your garrisons with all necessary provisions, and keep a vigilant eye on the enemy's motions, that you may not be surprised by them or endangered.

The same warning was sent, May 12th, to the Earl of Leven and to Fairfax; May 15th, to the Committees of Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Lincolnshire and Notts.

While every effort was being directed to prevent any junction with Montrose, who hoped, after his success in Scotland, to be "in a position before the end of the summer to come to the King's aid with a brave Army," Brereton was in constant apprehension of an attack on the Welsh side,²⁸ and greatly disappointed that the King should be left at liberty to interrupt his carefully arranged plans for reducing Chester and Hawarden. The siege of Hawarden was being prosecuted with vigour and success. Chester was closely invested and the inhabitants "in great distress, having little to support them besides the expectation of speedie reliefe." Notwithstanding, he writes to John Bradshawe, May 14th, "the condition of things stands soe hazardous that I thinke it not soe fitt to leave them yet till this storme be over though my power here be soe weakened that I cannot act as I would."

1645. May 14. Tarvin.—Sir William Brereton to John Bradshaw.

Our trenches have been driven up close to ye walles of Hawarden Castell—our mynes proceed on very hopefull—our batteries are very sucksessfull—have done very great execution and made two very large breaches soe that our officers assure me that in three or four dayes the possession of it would be ours.

²⁸ Col. Chidley Coote writes from Hooton, April 25, 1645, to Sir W. Brereton, "If some speedie course be not taken, Chester will be relieved from Flint. Everyday there lying bootes, and one vessel able to carry eight pieces of ordinance, which had her sayles hoysted up yesterday and would have attempted to come out of ye harber if ye wind had served: as for any provision yt was sent to Chester there is not any such thing and if there were Wyrhall could not take it nor is there men or Boates to hinder it. Therefore you must take some better course to besiege it by sea then by a stinkeinge boate or two yt are not able to doe any good."

The siege is drawne up close to Chester and ye last evening I had intelligence that ye people there was in great distresse, having little to support them besides the expectation of speedie reliefe. Much disappointed that King is at liberty to interrupt all this. I had intended to come up to London in a few dayes, but the condicon of thinges stands soe hazardous that I thinke it not soe fitt to leave them yet till this storme be over though my forces here be soe weakened that I cannot act as I would and thinke if I come up I might doe that service for my country which will not otherwise be done.

Owing to the withdrawal by Prince Rupert of the Irish Regiments and his own horse, and Lord Byron's dismissal of Colonel Mostyn's men, the garrison was insufficient for such a large circuit of wall. The noblemen and gentlemen who had come into the city at the commencement of the trouble "have converted all their best horse into troop horses and have mounted their best soldiers upon them, and now in readiness with 120 horse as good as any in the Kingdom to fall upon our guards." They succeed "continually in bringing in cattel that are good beefe, those in the city being not good dogges meate"—"they have no fresh meate and little fish."²⁹

They were able also to supply themselves with milk, as they could put all their cattle out to grass on the Hoole side of Chester without interruption from the besiegers, who had not horse enough to keep them in.

A letter from Brereton to the Committee on May 8th reveals more despondency than he had hitherto shown. He adverts again to the want of men sufficient to keep up the blockade, which becomes more serious in view of the expected advance of a strong force from Wales, and the repeated losses which he had sustained and which were by no means balanced by his own successes. He continued to press closely the siege of the two castles, Hawarden and Beeston. He had completed the trench round Hawarden Castle and was busy driving a mine under the round tower.

²⁹ Information from Nantwich to Sir W. Brereton, May 8, from "A friend of ours that was this day at 11 o'clock in Chester."

1645. May 6. Stafford.—Henry Stone and Phi: Jackson to Sir William Brereton.

Ready to march with their forces to-morrow towards you. Have written also to Col. Ashenhurst and Lt.-Col. Watson, who will observe your commands also.

1645. May 7. Dunham.

Col. John Booth, prepared to bring up to leaguer at Chester, 300 foot and a troop of Horse.

1645. May 8. Dodleston.—Sir William Brereton to Committee.

Asks that Yorkshire horse may remain and obey orders—that Derby horse which never returned be commanded to return. Difficult without assistance to keep up leaguer, ye country generally so malignant or overawed they will not bring in any manner of provisions and now very little remains within eight or ten miles on this side the water. Great preparacon made by enemy, now bringing down ye forces of Anglesey, Carnarvon and Denbighshire to joyne with those in these parts. They have taken April 29th in the night Capt. Bulkely and about forty of his troope and ten of my firelocks and before that they had surprised more than twenty of Capt. Farrer's men, under com^d of Sir T. Myddleton and upon Tuesday, May 7th, Capt. Massey Brother to ye Gen. of Gloucester and neare twenty gentles and officers and about forty common souldiers taken in and about Wrexham by ye Welsh forces united under ye comand of Col Trevor, in all which successes they have noe great cause of Triumph and rejoicing. For when Capt. Bulkely was taken it is reported that neare sixteen were slaine and divers more wounded and Sir Thomas Myddelton's men on Monday took Capt. Edwards and Capt. Dewell and on Tuesday Major Morris was wounded and Capt. Kinaston and Capt. Lloyde slaine and divers others wounded. Upon the Cheshire side on Tuesday May 6th we took divers and slew five or six of those whom they tried to guard the Castell. Wantes are much encreased insomuch as a quarter of veale last Saturday was sould (as it is reported by Wm. Sellbrye, a Chester butcher) for 10^s, some say 13^s 4^d. We have perfected our trench round about Hawarden Castell and are going on with our myne and have brought a piece of ordinance to be employed against ye same. Wee have almost finished a mount before Beeston Castell Gate, which is incompassed with a stronge deepe trench which will comand and keepe them in ye Castell soe as they dare not issue out in stronge party to annoy ye country or bring in provision. We hear nothing of ye Scotch force approaching any nearer then their old quarters.

Writing from Dodleston, May 11, 1645, to Sir Harry Vane he states :—

Our good success with batteries give good hopes agt Hawarden. Chester in want of ammunicon and provision. Those cattel they keepe within ye Citty, where there is very great scarsity of salt as well as Ammunicon.

Upon Friday night we began to batter [Hawarden] and with good suckesse, soe as perhaps we may not stand in neede of ye helpe of our mynes to gaine ye place. Complains that Derbyshire horse have not returned—Yorkshire quartered so far as to be useless—have hoped for assistance from Scottish but in vain [Add. MSS. 11,331].

1645. May 12. Hoole Hall.—Col. Duckenfield to Sir William Brereton.

The Yorkshire horse under Col. Spencer quartered about Stockport and in Mottram parish and intend to ruin these parts as well as about Maxfield. They take very many horses and much money and goods and neglect your orders.

Besieged in Chester put all their cattel forth to grass on this side of ye town without interruption. We have not horse enough to keep them in, and as long as they have benefit of ye milke of soe many cowes the besieged will be unwilling to yeald which may easily be prevented with six troopes of horse and those foote wee have.

Our horse are unwilling to do dutie, because they have lost soe many horse and ventured themselves but for little thanks or reward.

Sir Wm. Constable's regt. is alsoe marching towards our parts soe that unless you take some course to helpe they will ruine us.

A touching letter from Lady Neale to her husband, Sir William Neale, which was intercepted by the Committee of Shropshire, shows how very desperate was the condition of the Royalists, yet declaring her purpose to hold out as long as there is victual for the besieged.

1645. May 9. Hawarden.

My Hart, I wonder infinitely that sending for intelligence I could not heare from you. Our condition is at this tyme very desperate for besides the approach of their myne which is very neare ye great Round Tower they have brought over great peeces for five carriages we discovered, but whether they be all for Battery wee know not because ye worke they are making for one of them is conceived by ye Captaine for a mortar peice and that is making in the field above your seate. I am purposed to hould out as longe as there is meate for man for none of these eminent daingers shall ever frighten mee from my

loyalty but in life and death I will be y^e King's faithfull subject and thy constant loveinge wife and humble servant.

HELEN NEALE.

But as Major Lowthian's report to Colonel Jones shows, Hawarden Castle was not to be taken by means of mine or battery, and was to prove a most valuable garrison and support to the end of the siege of Chester.

1645. May 16. Hawarden.—Major James Louthiane to Col. Jones.

Yesternight y^e enemy discovered our myne, and pierced y^e side of it forth of theirs, whereupon our men for present fled but upon my coming downe I brought them to y^e trenche againe, and thereupon y^e enemy left theirs and have broken down y^e mouth of it which buttes upon ours and stopped up y^e trench yet neverthesse our men all are very fearfull to worke. I desire your speedy repaire hither to advise what to be done that wee may resolve of some speedy course, for I apprehend y^e enemy to be much daunted.

Colonel Jones communicated to Brereton his opinion that there is little hope of the mine. Three days before he had intimated his pressing need of speedy reinforcements in view of the Royalist succour advancing from Llangollen. If he had this support, he would seek the enemy and offer him battle. Brereton rejoins that the danger is not so imminent as to require removal. If any it is from Wales. But apparently the decision to raise the siege of Hawarden was left to the officers on the spot.

1645. May 18. Dodleston.—Col. Mich. Jones to Sir William Brereton.

Capt. Wright with me last night [stated] that a friend of his came from Llangoughlan [Llangollen] where Vaughan's, Trevers and other forces were joyned with intent to fall on us. You have not sent us forces. You might spare Col. Dukinfield's, Coote and Carter's troopes untill this fitte were over (which cannot last three or four dayes), alsoe Vennables your owne foote company and some of Duckinfield's Regt. Sixty in each place will maintaine that side for a short space agt all y^e power of Chester. The Cattell there will not be much y^e fatter if they grasse three or four dayes longer. If horse must be on that side Col. Leigh Marbury and Stafford's troopes will for y^e present be sufficient. I pray God y^e stronge guard kept on that side be not as disadvantageous unto us as y^e keeping of Christleton

was when Prince Maurice was in Wales, the Comee of Tarvin I conceive were ye cause of that and I believe will be of this, and where are ye Yorkshire horse if ye King and Princes be leading this way? Why are not ye Scotts sent on, and notice given to ye Comee of both Kingdomes? If you manage this business well and give ye King and Princes a defeat to your immortal fame you will be continued in your command. If you will bring over Vennables, Duckinfield and Louthian's foote there may be sent over Baskerville, Colton and Hardware, whose men may prove well in houses though not in field. Victualls should be provided for ye army for three or four dayes.

1645. May 13. 9 o'clocke. Dodleston.—Col. Jones to Sir William Brereton.

Your letter came to me before six this morning. Ye peece shall be drawne off this night. Ye enemy still together. Hasten over what horse and foote you can—the myne shall goe on.—Provisions should be sent. If you did speedily send over ye force mencioned in my letter to you this morning we would seeke the enemy and offer him battaile. Had ye Yorkshire horse continued here they should never have drawne to a head.

1645. May 16. Tarvin.—Sir William Brereton to Col. Jones and Major Louthiane.

The danger not so imminent as to require removal. If any, it is from Wales—But Col. Moston's force has been (we heare) disbanded there will be very few foote to come against you.

Whether Col. Ashton's men should leave Eccleston or Louthian to leave Hawarden—serious debate—either Eccleston or Hawarden should be preserved.

We hear that not more than three or four barrells of powder in Chester. If Hawarden be released, Chester will be relieved.

Q^y whether to make some attempt on Chester before you rise.

A council of war is held May 16th, "at which the majority hold that the mine could not be ready for eight days, and that they should fight."

1645. May 16. Hawarden Castle.—Council of War.

I conceive that ye mine may be springed within eight dayes.

Wm. Mydleton.

Little hope of ye mine & therefore that we draw into a body very speedily.

Thos. Ravenscroft.

Mine not ready for eight days—fight ye enemy.

Jas. Louthiane.

Best to draw into a body and fight.

E. Garrard.

Mine being hazardous—fight.

Jno. Hawkeridge.

No hope of mine by reason of countermine.

Wyn. Finch.

Mine not like to take effect this eight dayes.

Mine—very small hope. Fr. Acton & Hugh Holt.
 „ Rand. Radman.
 „ Sam Ratcliffe, Rich. Browne.

The next day a second council of war was held “ at Dodleston to determine whether as things now stand it be better to continue y^e siege before Chester and Hawarden, or to withdraw.” The votes were as follows:—

To withdraw	To joyne or withdraw
Jer. Zanchy	Jo. Bowyer
Mich. Jones	Thos. Ravscroft
James Louthiane	Hen. Brook
John Leigh	

I conceived not to withdraw except an enemy appeare

To withdraw into a body. W. Brereton. W. Myddleton.

According to y^e judgment of y^e counsell of warre held at Dodleston May 17 1645

It is ordered that all y^e forces now on y^e Welch side the river doe draw together into a body tomorrow at such tyme as Lt Coll Jones and Major Louthiane shall thinke most convenient and shall march into Cheshire as they shall thinke fittest. Provided and it is left to y^e discretion of Lt Coll Jones and Major Louthiane whether Coll Ashton's regiment march to y^e body or march over y^e boate at Eccleston and soe to Huntington or shall march to Dodleston and Hawarden and soe with y^e rest of y^e army.

Dated May 17, 1645.

WM. BRERETON.

Before carrying out this resolution several matters of importance had to be decided. Colonel Jones writes (May 16th) to Brereton to ask “ If you think it meete that wee march off it is worthy of consideration what should be done with the boates.”

“ Y^e best course” he suggests “ were to sink them all, when it is a-doing, noe countrymen must be by. Because y^e march will be too tedious for y^e Lancashire foote I thinke it the best course for them to march to Huntington Hall, thence to Tarvin; but all the rest march over y^e fords to-morrow by six in the morning. The tyde will serve. At our landing we shall expect to heare from you. All y^e provision need not be sent ” [Add. MSS. 11,331].

This plan was carried out.

CHAPTER V.

Criticisms and Complaints.

WE may with advantage pause here to survey the condition of affairs outside Chester.

The whole neighbourhood for many miles round had been brought to a miserable pass. Three years before, complaint was made that Cheshire, and the Wirral especially, was "so eaten up that it is almost impossible for 100 horse to subsist in all Wirrall" [Portland Papers]. As the war continued, the county became still more impoverished, and the scarcity was felt quite as much among the besieging army as by those beleaguered at Chester.

1645. April 20.—Sir T. Middleton to Sir W. Brereton.

Reports an intended march of discovery and pursuit of the enemy up towards Carne and ye higher parts of ye counties of Flint and Denbigh, from whence we shall endeavour to send what provision we can to our Army here which is put in a bad condition for want of provision of victualles and other necessities for Horse in these parts.

Hopes to get a fortnightly provision of all sortes of victuals and other accommodacon [Add. MSS., 11,881].

The want of money also interfered seriously with discipline. The arrears of pay were as great as they could have been under Turkish pashas, though Brereton made continual appeals to the Committee of Parliament for funds. His letters are full of earnest representations of this great hindrance to the cause. The Yorkshire horse refuse to march unless they receive their pay. They will not even return home and at least to that degree relieve the county of Cheshire which is groaning under the burden of their keep. Lord Fairfax writes from York, April 10, 1645, that the Yorkshire horse "complain of their great necessity and want of all meanes of accommodation for their subsistence." They are like Falstaff's ragged regiment—for, "they have not had time since their departure from hence to make up

their cloath assigned them here into cloathes." Many have "lost their horses by their hard dutie and service" [Add. MSS. 11,331, fol. 28].

These troops were a trouble to their own officers as well as to the Commander-in-Chief.

Fairfax writes, April 15, 1645, to their officers, counter-manding order for return of the Yorkshire horse, and directing officers to warn men to be careful not to

spoyle or plunder ye country which they are much condemned for. They should be punished, that you may show your dislike of such wicked courses.

Col. William Spencer writes, April 30, 1645, from Macclesfield, to Sir William Brereton :—

Our Officers and soldiers are unwilling for the most part to go into Wales. They have no more faith or patience left.

Brereton replies :—

I cannot dismiss them or send money at present. Some of the Officers of your regiment have given out very ill and unbecoming words against me. I desire that some of them be brought to trial for it, as some of ye other regiments have bin, since when they have carried themselves so as noe complaints have come against them.

Major Goodricke complains to Brereton, May 1st, of the mutinous conduct of the Yorkshire horse quartered at Overton. They are impatient of delay in payment—refuse to march into Wales.

1645. May 5. York.—Lord Fairfax to Sir William Brereton.

Desires return of his horse if they cannot be accommodated better and have some money. Complaints and petitions had been received from them, wishing to return home.

1645. May 8. Dodleston.—Sir William Brereton to the Committee.

Asks that the Yorkshire horse may remain and *obey orders*, and that the Derbyshire horse which never returned be commanded to return. Difficult without assistance to keep up leaguer. The country generally so malignant or overawed they will not bring in any manner of provisions and now very little remains within eight or ten miles on this side the water [S.P. Dom.].

1645. May 16.

Officers of Yorkshire Regiment hear that £5,000 has come from London and demand their share and then are ready to move.

1645. May 16. Tarvin.

Brereton replies that their unwillingness to move into Wales without pay has much retarded ye present design against Chester and the loss of many of our forces and also to great prejudice and discontent of that part of the County where they have been quartered. I hoped when you had received the £200 you wd not have continued to lie in ye County and not doe service but wd cheerfully have marched into Wales where you have bin expected and is much neede of you. Please march without delay,³⁰ the balance shall be paid [S.P. Dom].

These ill-paid and ill-fed soldiers conceive that as no one in authority appeared to care for them they must needs care for themselves, and the natural consequence was a series of bitter complaints against the army of plundering and violence.

The Committee at Tarvin complain to the Committee at Stafford that Rigsley's troop "had left without leave from Sir Wm. Brereton, plundered many houses near to our garrison, from our best friends, and used much violence to them." They ask for restoration [Add. MSS. 11,331, fol. 28].

The London Committee (April 22nd) complain to Brereton that they had

received information that since your late march into Wales some exorbitancies have been committed by your soldiers towards these poor people without due distinction between those well-affected to Parlt and such as are disaffected. Among other spoil—that of Plas Teague [Plas Teg, Sir J. Trevor's house].³¹

³⁰ May 14, he notes that of £300 in hand, £200 for the Officers, and £100 for the soldiers, 5/- a week during their stay to the soldiers and proportionate sum to the officers cannot do it all.

³¹ The number of ye particular goods that were plundered from Plas Teage :—

- 20 Bedtickes, whereof received back 7.
- 19 Boulsters, whereof received back 3.
- 1 Couchbed tick wh. is restored 1.
- 34 pillowes — 28 Blankets — 6 Rugges.
- 6 Testernes, except a little piece of one & one Canopie.
- 3 Vallence & ye silke fringe of ye Canopie.
- 7 Bed Curtaines and 2 window Curtaines.
- 14 Bedpillowes. 5 Couch pillowes. 28 Bed Blankets.
- 6 rugges for beddes. 7 Covers of Chairs. 28 Covers of Stooles.
- 4 Covers of Couches. 18 paire of flaxen sheets.
- 6 Holland pillow beares. 2 Turkey Carpetts.
- 1 faire Bible (what besides out of closet is not known)
- 1 Crossbow. 1 fowlinggunne. 1 great Iron Racke.
- Brasse of divers Andirons. Brasse Candlesticks.
- 3 powndes in money. The Cabinet.

Since then ye foote tooke 3 sheets and one old horse besides such provisions as they found in ye house. [Add. MSS., 11,331, fol. 28].

We desire there may be especial care had in that case of full restitution and that such as commit these insolencies may be exemplarily punished, otherwise the consequence can be no less than the exasperating of their spirits against you and the loss of their service to the Parliament. In all places there are some disaffected and so it is like there are among them, yet all shd not suffer for the fault of some. Give order to your forces so to carry themselves that the inhabitants be not further alienated, nor have cause to complain while your forces are there [S.P. Dom].

To these complaints Brereton pleads (April 26th, Dodleston), that he had not the power to hold the reins of discipline. The men are not his own soldiers, and owing to the extreme want of all necessities, which inflamed the soldiers' discontents to an unmasterable height, it was hard to prevent outrages. He had remonstrated, even used blows, laid hold of the most incorrigible and tried them by councils of war. Four malefactors had been judged to die, of whom two were executed forthwith, the other two (Lancashire men) were sent into Lancashire to be executed to prevent mutiny. The property taken had been restored as far as possible [Add. MSS. 11,331].

Writing to Sir John Trevor (April 30, 1645), he declares that he had not been negligent in repressing disorder. "I had desperate threats to y^e hazard of my life, which yet have not abated my endeavours to prevent y^e spoyle of y^e country yet all my endeavour did not prevaile."

Brereton's letter of May 6th from Dodleston to Major Lowthian shows that this plea is no evasive one. "I heare there is such spoyle made by y^e souldiers amongst cattell and sheepe as that I have no more hart to come amongst them. Care should be taken to reform such destructive courses, which will bring y^e judgment and curse of God upon the whole army." "Punish any who kill sheepe for their skins." "Any skins found in soldiers' quarters to be seized for the public benefit." "Soldiers are not to be their own carvers" [S.P. Dom].

Strong parties were sent into Wales for provisions, about which there was great anxiety, as the following report from

Colonel Michael Jones indicates.

1645. April 17. Dodleston.—Col. Jones to Sir W. Brereton.

By ye blessing of God ye army is safely returned with 6000 sheep and 500 cowes, but they will soon lessen unless you have an eye to Wyrhall, Ince, and other places. I heare yt 200 of ye best are now a driveing over ye watter to Wyrhall.³²

A gentleman's house neare Holliwell was fired for that it had souldiers in it that killed a man of your regt. The widdow Hammer's house neare Hollywell [between Northop and Caerwys] that did soe much prejudice is taken, fired and all that refused quarter viz. twelve put to ye s[w]jordd nine whereof were rosted.

Some correspondence is introduced here as illustrating the stern unrelenting spirit with which Sir William Brereton prosecuted the siege of Chester. It is written just at the time when there was every prospect that the city would once more be rescued from his grip. But he will not relax his hold until he is actually forced. An appeal is made on a certificate signed by no less than seven medical men at Chester, that one Mr. Harper may leave the city to undergo an operation of importance. But Brereton refuses unless the invalid takes the Oath of the Covenant. The document is interesting as giving the names of surgeons in Chester and London.

³² The report subjoined shows how such spoil was distributed.

" Report by Geo. Parker and John Chadocke to Sir W. Brereton, Dodleston, Ap. 30, 1645, of cows and sheep brought out of enemy's country.

Cowes

Mr. Ball and on [one] of Lt Coll Garrard	
his souldrs. three cowes	
The poore weomen restored	23 cowes
To Mr. Hinde ye rest wh were	354

The whole number	380
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Sheepe

Sr Tho. Middleton's Officers	160
to Mr. Manlies Quarterers	020
Major Croxton's men at	002
Hanbridge	
Mr. Hinde ye rest wh were	1712

The whole number	1894
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Concerning Captaine Bulkely I dont no but
Coll. Jones will give ye newse."

1645, May 2.—Certificate by

Drs Hugh Parry M.D.	Chirurgeons
Roger Pulston	Rob Thornely
J. Bray M.D.	Rob Morrey
James Read	Edw Hallis

That Mr Harper is suffering from an Infirmitie in ye left eye called Ayglops or fistula lachrimans wh if not tymely prevented may endainger ye bone & grissle of the nose & then be irremediable the cure whereof requires exquisite manuall operation. We advise that he repaire to Mr Watson the Kinge's Chirurgeon or to the Colledge of Physitions or Chirurgeons.

1645. May 6. Dodleston.—Sir William Brereton refuses—

Your desire to have my passe both to Oxford & London cannot be granted by me, nor to London onely unlesse you please to take ye oath yt ye Parl^t hath appointed in such cases wh is all ye answer yt can be yours at ye present by your loving friend, WM. BRERETON [Add. MSS. 11,331].

There were other difficulties about obtaining passes called "drums," and complaint is made of violence shown them. Lord Byron is in conflict with Brereton about the exception made in favour of chaplains, chirurgeons, drums and trumpeters, who, he maintains are released without exchange, fee or ransom. Brereton disputes this, and goes on in his turn to complain of the exactions made by the marshals in Chester upon prisoners.

Mr. Thomas Savage, Chester, April 16, 1645, procures a drum from the City to attend Sir W. Brereton to desire his pass for his servant to carry a letter to his cousin Anne Savage about the non payment of certain monies.

22 April.—Lord Byron complains to Sir William Brereton that violence was shown to a drum sent with a passe to Tarvin, also to two sent to Dodleston to Sir Thomas Middleton touching exchange of prisoners [Add. MSS. 11,331].

1645. May 8.—Dodleston.—Sir William Brereton to Lord Byron.

Your statement that all chaplains, chirurgeons and Drums and Trumpets should be freely released without ransom was but an overture of yours never consented unto by me.

Have rec^d many complaintes from my men that have bin prisoners at Chester that your marshiall and advocate exact of them extraordinary sumes of money for fees and charges which my marshialls are to apt to imitate them in, because of my command to them to use your men that are prisoners with me

in like manner as mine are used. But I could desire (though it be in a time when there is a great inequallity in ye number of prisoners both you and me) that you would send a particular of fees and charges for prisoners men and weomen to paye to advocate and marshiall that soe we may observe ye like.

1645. May 9. Tarvin.—Sir W. Brereton to

Here is stayed in Tarvin three horses with three loads of sheepe skins and shewes a warrant for his passe with your name subscribed, but whether by you or without yr knowledge is not knowne by me. It is that which tends to ye destrucon of all provision. It is not unknowne to all at Eccleston there hath bine orders that none should passe and I have stayed my owne souldiers Namptw^{ch} men parishioners at Eccleston, and as your souldiers know have taken their skines from them: his name is John Collinge the passe beares date May 8, 1645.

Your very loveing freind, WM. BRERETON.

These are to will and require you to permitt and suffer ye bearers hereof Ambrose Jackson and John Collinge of ye parish of Ratchdale in ye county of Lancaster to passe your guards and scoutes with three packes of sheepeskines bought of ye Commissary at Dodleston and three nagges to their owne habitacon. Dated at Eccleston ye 8 Day of May, 1645.

[Lt Col.] John Bradshaw.

Gentlemen,—I have sent you three horseloads of skines and three horses which were brought in Eccleston and these are ye abuse of Cheshire men that Lancashire men shall keepe ye fords soe with my service to you all I rest yours in what I may,

RICH HOLFORD.

These comeing in ye Comissary's name which is noe such thinge.

Exchange unequal between a Captain and a Colonel who hath a regiment depending upon him [Add. MSS. 11,331].

We have seen the difficulties which Brereton met with in enforcing discipline and preventing disorder. He had trouble also with his superiors. He was not on the best of terms with Leslie or with Sir Thomas Myddleton. He complains April 30th, to his friend Mr. Ashurst that "divided authority is as bad." The Scots under General Leslie will not obey him as is proper, but follow their own commanders, and he proposes that the entire command should be vested in General Leslie. Sir Thomas Myddleton was dissatisfied with him and took no care to conceal his unfriendly feeling.

Complaints were made to the Committee of both Kingdoms of Brereton's management of the siege. Sir Thomas Myddleton would appear to have urged storming the city, and to have spoken freely to his friends of what he would have done. There was doubtless an abundance of critics in London who had the ear of influential members of the Committee. The upshot of the intrigue was that in a letter to his friend, Mr. Wm. Ashurst, dated Tarvin, May 15th, he speaks of himself as "dismissed by y^e late great ordinance [the self-denying ordinance] from my command."¹⁷ While Sir Wm. Brereton was to continue in command of the troops in Cheshire he was to act with a Committee consisting of Sir George Booth, kt. and bart., George Booth, Hen. Brooke, Robert Duckenfield, esquires, the Governor of Nantwich (for the time being), and Sir Wm. Brereton, bart., who or the major part of them being three or more present "are to order and direct all y^e forces now under Sir Wm. Brereton's command forty days after y^e xiiith day of this instant May."

1645. May 8.—William Ashurst to Sir William Brereton.

Houses have resolved Col. Jones should command y^e horse, and Louthian y^e foote and that to supply a Commander in Cheshire a Com^{ee} chosen (wherein y^e advice of y^e Cheshire Gent here at London was taken) and they have resolved upon Sir Geo. Boothe K^t and Bart Sir William Brereton B^t, George Boothe, Wm. Brooke, Robert Dukinfield and John Leigh, Esq. and G^l Governor of Nantwich (for y^e tyme being) who or y^e major part of them being three or more present are to order and direct all y^e forces now under your command for forty days after y^e xiiith day of this instant May.

³³ The First Self-Denying Ordinance was moved in Dec. 1644 by Zouch Tate, who was strongly supported by Cromwell. It was to the effect "That during the time of this war no member of either House shall have or execute any office or command, military or civil, granted or conferred by both or either of the Houses of Parliament, or any authority derived from both or either of the Houses."

By the Second Ordinance, passed April 3, 1645, members of either House were no longer to be disqualified from office, but required within forty days after the passing of the Ordinance to resign any post conferred by the existing Parliament. There was no prohibition against their re-employment, and thus Cromwell was continued in the Lieut.-Generalship for three months longer, Sir Thomas Middleton in his command in North Wales, and Sir W. Brereton's appointment extended as above.

If you should offer to come up to London and leave Chester before you be called hither, it would not only be contrary to y^e desire of all your friends here but y^e house would take it ill for they doe depend upon it that you will continue to be a stay to that worke and be actively as formerly, tho in another capassity.

Colonel Michael Jones, in a long letter to Sir Robert King from Dodleston, April 29th, replies to some of the criticisms referred to. The charges may be reduced to three : 1. The Parliamentary army was allowed to lie in open quarters, without entrenchments ("no spade upon the ground.") 2. Brereton's men were backward in doing duty and serving on guards near Chester where the danger was. 3. The unrestrained pillage, especially in Wales. Colonel Jones answers these complaints in a straightforward way, showing that Chester was closely blockaded on all sides, and that entrenchments were made at necessary points. The losses sustained by pistol shot on the Chester side disprove the second charge, whereas the danger was chiefly from the Welsh quarter. The pillage and pilfering which went on did not pass unpunished, and was not greater than usual in armies obliged to gather in provisions. Brereton writes much in the same terms to his staunch friend in London, Mr. Ashurst.

1645. April 29. Dodleston.—Col. Jones to Sir Robert King.

Aspersions have been cast upon our proceedings. 1. 'That our army lie in open quarters without defence or putting spade in ground.' True that our remote quarters are not now defensible after the Low Country manner. But noe citty in England has been closlier blocked up than this, considering the weakness of our army : on Cheshire side they are kept in by three garrisons or quarters each within half a mile of that citty all fortified. On the Welch side there are five quarters, two of them not a mile distant from the city of sufficient strength to oppose y^e enemy. But the quarter at Iron Bridge not distant half a mile is sufficiently fortified. Those y^t lie at Hawarden have with Trenches almost environed it round and this day begin to mine.

It was offered by some that a fort should be made before Handbridg to hinder their passage over y^e Bridg into Wales. But it was y^e major opinion that it was as well blocked up as if y^e fort had been made and before y^e fort could be made y^e place

designed for it being within musquet shott of ye walles wd have lost us most of our Armeý. It was alsoe ye opinion of most yt if a fort had bin made and ye citty had bin relieved it would be advantageous to them and very prejudiciall to us until Hawarden be taken where wee have 600 men, wee cannot lye so close to ye citty as wee would.

The 2nd informa'con was 'that our men were backward to doe dutie or to goe to these guards neare Chester where danger was.' The losse of our men slaine within pistoll shott of ye bridge and in other sundry places will disprove that. I am confident noe men in England are willinger to doe dutie or to expose themselves to dainger than ye men then before Chester, were it not soe ye officers yt command here would never with the small force have undertaken soe great a worke. Lt Generall Lesley said hee would not undertake it under 10,000 men.

The 3rd charge is 'yt ye souldiers pilladge ye country.' 'Tis true yt they going abroad for provisions doe some tymes pilfer (noe armie is free of it) for which they passe not unpunished, four already being executed for it. I dare say ye whole army since their comeinge into Wales have not taken goodes to ye vallue of 10^{li} all but blankets and such like being connvayed in to their strongholds except ye goods of Sir John Trever which Sr W. B. had protected and now laboureth with all his power to have restored and some jewells found in Barron Edwards howse⁸⁴ vallued by ye informer at 7000^{li} they are not worth 500 but if they be it is ye better for ye publike being in the Treasurers hands. Hee alsoe informeth yt cattell valued at 4000^{li} hath bin taken. I have inquired after it and doe find yt some cattell belonging to ye souldiers that are in Hawarden Castell were taken from under ye command of it not worth above 100^{li}. But in regard they were wonne by ye sord, ye souldiers and officers had sent them into Chesshire without ye Privately of any commanding in Cheefe. The informer further saith yt there is a brute of some Irish landed in Wales and now yt ye Country is pilliaged our army as formerly will march away. The army marched out of Wales when ye Prince came this way is not I am confident unknowne to you but as yet ye Brute of them hath not removed.

The last inform^a was 'yt at a Counsell of Warre houlden at Namptwich it was resolved to be lawfull to take all yt belonged to ye Welsh.' There never was any such resolucon nor speech to yt purpose. This informer's letter beareth date ye 14th of this

⁸⁴ Letter from Baron [Evan] Edwards that his house had been plundered by Capt. Coltham and Capt. Viner's men, wife stript out of her cloaths by ye Yorkshire men, a box of jewels taken now in Sir W. Brereton's hands—will he make restitution [S.P. Dom.].

mounth (his name is John Jones one of Sr Thomas Middleton's Captaines) since which tyme viz. on 23rd of the instant a party of 500 horse and 400 foote marched into S. Asaph twenty miles distant from Chester where they heard the enemy was. But finding it impossible by reason of their mountaines and castells to overtake them being fled thence, ye County was driven by ye assent of Sr Tho. Middleton for ye gaineing of provisions for ye Army which in a manner until that tyme was provided for by Cheshire, most of which cattel, the whole number of good Cowes not amounting to 400 nor ye sheepe to 2000 being not fitt to be slaine (and if endeavoured to be kept untill they had bin meate, most of them wd have bin stolen) were by diverse honest men employed for yt purpose sould into Cheshire and sheepe and other provisions bought with ye moneyes for ye Army and noe parte converted to private uses. In our returne whence parte of ye Armeie passing before Hugh Pennant's house divers of them were shott and one killed, a party being on their march towarde it they forsooke it.

To deter others from doing ye like with ye consent of Sr Tho. Middleton ye howse was ffiled.

Alsoe at ye widdow Hanmer's howse there was a garrison of ye enemies which killed divers of our men and hindred provisions to be brought unto Hawarden. The howse being summoned and they refuseing quarter it was stormed and all but two put to the sord and ye howse ffiled.

I am still of opinion that if North Wales be not annexed unto Cheshire these parts cannot subsist, for Wales is able to ffurnish these with victualls and to maintaine more men than Cheshire now can, it being very much impoverished by ye auxilliary forces sent to our assistance. As long as there is any possibility of subsistence and doeing of service here I will not leave it but if I be constrained I hope I shall never forsake ye service of ye Parlt as some have done though I serve as a common souldier : if ye gentle : proposed for ye command of North Wales obtaine it he will doe as little good as Sr Thomas Middleton hath. If forces must now be raised for him, ye summer will be spent and ye money must be gotten : he hath noe considerable fforce, although he vaunted of his and Sr Tho : great fforce in ye parliamt howse. There are not left of Sr Tho. Middleton's 160 foote and seventy horse. This is ye grand Army supposed to be joyned with ye Chesh : fforce. Chester is in some straighte if relief come not. I am confident wee shall carrie it. But a small force will reprice it unlesse tymelie supplies of men monies and victuall from ye adjacent countiees be sent unto us. Noe newse of ye Scotch marcheing this way. I am confident if they came hither before ye Prince

and would joyne with us wee should carrie ye Citty by assault. If ye Prince come he cannot in a month furnish ye Citty with provisions and as soone as he is gone if he be not able to fight with him and wee will soone be before it againe. Soe that this petty army will endainger ye ruineing of ye Kinge's army if it releive Chester as often as wee distresse it. I am very glad to heare yt ye militia is to be guided by souldiers and ye civill power by ye eminent gentry and if they agree as I hope they will all thinges will prove as well as if there had bin noe chainge.

MICH JONES.

Notes of a letter of Sir William Brereton to Mr. Ashurst in answer to complaints against him, April 30, 1645.

1. No spade upon ground upon 19th instant.

Besides our elder works at Tarvin, there are our defensive works at Iron [Heron] bridge and at Hoole, Upton, Huntington, &c.

2. Souldiers are backward to do duty and serve upon those guards next Chester.

The guard nearest Chester is not most dangerous: we are placed between two enemies, Chester and Wales. The enemy from Ruthin, Houlthwaite and their other castells besides ye disaffected country who gather into parties are continually ready to beat upon our quarters and this week have taken twenty of Sir Thomas Middleton's in their quarters in Wales.

3. Soldiers scatter all over Wales and take all they can carry or drive away—Plate and jewels of value £7000; Beasts of value, £4,000, &c.

Herein is something of truth but is represented by an extreme Hyperbole. The Welch refuse to supply provisions; therefore warrants are issued. But as for the plate and jewels, they are safely kept by ye Publique Treasurer for ye States use [Add. MSS., 11,331].

A letter from the Captain John Jones, referred to by Colonel Jones, is given here as a specimen of the carping criticism to which military commanders were subjected in the seventeenth century.

1645. April.—Mr. John Jones to Col. Barton.

We doe still continue our quarters in a loose and unsettled maner before Chester and Hawarden Castell and by improvidence and licentious carriage of the souldiers are in greater want that ye besieged. We were informed that Chester was in great want of powder and match and that they had but 60

Irish in ye Towne besides ye Townsmen which together with our own wantes and discordes made Sir Thomas very earnest to have the Town stormed and offered that his owne men should leade, but it will not be untill hunger drive us to storme it for their victualls for ye Country is scarce able to afford us any. Last night a boat went with ye Tide to the Towne and thereby their want of powder and match (I believe) is supplied. It was moved tyme enough that ye River might be guarded to provide supplies but then it was conceived either not necessary or not desirable [Add MSS. 11,331].

Finally Brereton was summoned to Parliament to answer these charges in person and to fulfil his obligations as knight of the shire. He left Nantwich for London June 13, 1645, the responsibility for the conduct of military operations in the counties in which he had formerly been in sole command being vested in the newly formed Committees, and it was not until the middle of October, 1645, that he returned to command the forces before Chester in collaboration with the Chester Committee.

