



AN UNPUBLISHED DIARY OF THE REV. PETER WALKDEN IN 1733-4.

BY HENRY TAYLOR, F.S.A.

(Read 26th June, 1889.)

THE MS. Diary, which I now exhibit, is the property of our Society, having been presented by our late respected Vice-President, Dean Howson. I was informed that it was the original diary of Bishop Peploe; but, on examination, I find it is an unpublished diary of the Rev. Peter Walkden, a Presbyterian minister and a well-known Non-conformist clergyman of the borderland of Lancashire and Yorkshire and the north-eastern corner of Cheshire. The MS. itself, it will be observed, is written in a clear but very small hand, so much so that it is very difficult to decipher the handwriting without the aid of a magnifying glass.

Mr. Peter Walkden was a native of Manchester or its neighbourhood, and was born 16th October, 1684. From 1706 to 1709 he was at "ye famous school at Manchester," under the Rev. James Cunningham. In the latter year he entered on his first cure in the Presbyterian ministry at Garsdale, where he remained until 1711. From there he removed to a farm at Thornley, near Chipping, which is situated in the borderland of Lancashire and Yorkshire, is

watered by the river Hodder, and is surrounded by Longridge and the other fells of that hilly and unfrequented district, which I believe is even yet uninvaded by railways. It was during this period of Mr. Walkden's life that this diary, together with others to which I shall presently refer, were written. In 1738 Mr. Walkden removed to Holcombe, near Bury, where he remained until 1744, when he assumed the charge of the Old Tabernacle at Stockport, in which town he died on the 5th November, 1769, in the eighty-sixth year of his age, and was buried inside his own chapel. Over his tomb his son Henry, afterwards a Dissenting minister at Clitheroe, wrote a Latin inscription setting out his virtues, according to the custom of the time. We are thus entitled to claim the diarist as being in part a Cheshire man, and this MS. diary has therefore an interest to the members of our Society.

In 1866 Mr. William Dobson, of Preston, published extracts from two of Mr. Walkden's MS. diaries for the years 1725-1729 and 1730, which had then recently been discovered in the rubbish heap of a cottage at Slaidburn, in the Forest of Bowland. Mr. Dobson mentions that some others of the diaries had been burned, and from the marks upon this MS. I judge that it has narrowly escaped such a fate; perhaps it is one of those which are supposed to have been destroyed.

In 1880 Mr. James Bromley read a paper upon these extracts of Mr. Dobson in illustration of the "Rural Life of a Lancashire Minister." This paper is printed in vol. xxxii. of the *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Historic Society*. Mr. Bromley's paper is a very able one, and sets out from these extracts the laborious hardships Mr. Walkden endured, and the variety of his occupations. In it will be found much valuable information respecting the prices current in 1725-30 of rents, live stock [the average

price of a cow was £5. 3s. 9d.], produce, agricultural requisites, labour [bricklayers were paid eightpence per day, and farm-labourers fourpence per day with their meals], food [beef was twopence per pound and mutton elevenpence per leg], drinks [ale was twopence per pint, claret five shillings and eightpence per gallon], and professional fees [counsel's fee £1, scholastic tuition two shillings and sixpence per quarter, while a funeral sermon was preached for the small sum of two shillings and sixpence].

Our diary begins in 1733, and bears this title on the parchment binding: "A Diary for the year 1733. The Lord Bishop of Chester's Sermon in this Book at Page 90 Preached before the House of Lords January ye 30th 1732/3." This sermon is copied out in full at page 91, and perhaps this is the reason why the MS. was supposed to be Bishop Peplow's diary. It is, however, a diary for the year 1734 as well as for 1733.

To give the whole contents or even a great number of extracts from it would be far too tedious, but as the diary was not only a record of the diarist's private concerns, but also of the public events of the day, I have culled from it such entries relating to Chester as I have been able to find, which are as follows:—

"Feby ye 12th (1733). We are told from West Chester y^t on ye 31st of January Last ye Poll ended there for members of Parliament: M^r Grosvenor Poled 684 M^r Manley Poled 518. But when the Paupers and Minors are taken out of M^r Grosvenor's votes y^t will be near a Ballance but y^t ye higher powers are to decide on Thursday. Likewise 23 Constables kept in pay as its said: Time will discover the truth of all: However those Constables voted for M^r Grosvenor.

"Feby 20th (1733). From Chester we hear y^t ye corporation has been required to lay before the Parliament an

Account on all proceedings on y^e Act past in y^e 11 & 12th year of King William to make y^e River Dee navigable. And in y^e return there to y^e Trustees charge £118 to be payd in one year for interest money, whereas y^e said Act gives no power to y^e Trustees to borrow money. The Trustees by the said Act are empowered to allow no more than one shilling in the pound for collecting y^e duties thereby imposed and it appears by their accounts for recovering £1274 between the years 1716 & 1721 they charged £346-6-8 which is 6^s in the Pound. That in y^e account afs^d taken from y^e works and sold they charge themselves with no more than 6^s a pile which piles had generally 20 feet of Timber in them and could not be less than 10 or 12^s a pile. These hints are submitted to the consideration of every honest citizen."

"March y^e 6th [1733]. This morning being in health I rose and prayed and praised God so provended the Nags; and being early in y^e morning I foddered not y^e Cows yet but Light my Candle and went into my closet and reviewing the newspaper I find y^e observables following viz. that on y^e 24th past Sir Thomas Grosvenor Bart died at Naples: he was newly elect member of Parliament for y^e City of Chester so y^t another Russle is expected to West Chester at y^e election of a Representative for y^e City in his room. M^r Manley was gone to London but its said he's gone down to stand candidate again but who will be y^e other we do not yet hear tho' some talk of Sir Charles Bunbury. Sir Thomas is succeeded in honour and estate by y^e only surviving brother now Sir Robert Grosvenor Baronet.

"Its writ from Chester February y^e 27th past y^t a Petition of y^e several persons whose names are there unto subscribed being freemen of y^e City of Chester resident within ye said City and Libertys there on behalf of them-

selves & many others Freemen and inhabitants of y^e said City was presented to ye House of Commons and read; complaining y^t at y^e late election of a member of Parliament for Chester in y^e room of Sir Richard Grosvenor deceased at which election Rich^d Manley Esq^r and Robert Grosvenor Esq^r stood candidates a majority of y^e Freemen resident within y^e City and suburbs of Chester in whom only y^e right of election is vested w^d have Poled for and chosen M^r Manley to have been their representative but several illegal and arbitrary measures being entered into, destructive to y^e safety and common rights of y^e citizens, some of them were influenced and others deterred from voting for y^e said M^r Manley: That a number of freemen and others were bribed and corrupted by being unnecessarily made constables and as such insulted and intimidated treated several persons for their intention to vote for y^e said M^r Manley, when at y^e same time no disturbance was attempted or outrages committed but by themselves. By such arbitrary proceedings not only y^e petitioners are injured but y^e rights and freedom of electing members to serve in Parliament for y^e City of Chester will become precarious and therefore they pray y^e House to take these extraordinary proceedings into consideration and to relieve them in such manner as to y^e House shall seem meet. And we hear y^t y^e matter of y^e said petition will be heard at y^e Bar of y^e House of Commons on Thursday y^e fifth of April next."

"March y^e 12th [1733] being Tuesday. That George Earl of Cholmondeley is appointed Lieutenant of & in y^e Countys of Montgomery fflint Merioneth Carnarvon and Anglesea and likewise to be Lieutenant of and in y^e County of Chester, City of Chester and County of y^e same and to be Custos Rotulorum of y^e said City and County and Vice Admiral of Cheshire."

“Chester March y^e 13th [1733] This day M^r Manley arrived in this City and great numbers of gentlemen and freemen met him on y^e road and conducted him into y^e City, Thro’ y^e joyfull acclamation of y^e people in y^e following manner viz First were carried 3 ships fully rigged wth Ribbons streamers &c alluding to his services in endeavouring to procure a Bill for recovering y^e navigation of y^e River Dee. Then followed about 300 men on foot. Then all the gentlemens servants on Horseback. Next came M^r Manley with y^e Dean of Chester on his right hand and another clergyman on his left. Then Alderman Bennet & Alderman Manwaring and all y^e gentlemen and citizens on horseback 4 in a brest between 6 and 700 and last came M^r Williams and y^e other gentlemen in their coaches. And it is observed y^t there are but about 12 or 14 Coaches in y^e Town and that nine of them attended y^e cavalcade.

“June. The River Dee Bill has at last past y^e House of Lords y^e news of which caused great joy in y^e City of Chester.

“June 23rd [1733] Y^e King went to the House of Lords and gave his assent to the following bills, the Commons being also present (inter alia)

“3rd The Bill for making the River Dee navigable.

‘7th A Bill for regulating Attorneys and Solicitors.”

It is a very curious circumstance that these two Bills received the Royal assent together, especially by the light of what fell from Mr. Alfred O. Walker in this room in March last, when Mr. John B. Webster read his paper on “The Improvement of Tidal Estuaries.” Mr. Walker is reported to have said, “It appeared to him the lawyers had been the great enemies of the River Dee. Had all the monies that had gone into the lawyers’ pockets been spent in improving the navigation of the river we should have had a fine river before this.” If Mr. Walker is to be

credited, therefore, it is clear that the last of these two Bills was wanting in regulating power. I, of course, differ with Mr. Walker in his premises, but further I differ from him and his co-promoters of the present Bill, who appear to have very visionary notions respecting the River Dee. All engineers of any eminence, who have experience of our river, will tell you that to make the River Dee navigable for modern vessels to Chester and to maintain it so will entail such an enormous outlay of capital as the small trade, which under the most favourable circumstances can be expected from Chester, will not justify.

But to resume the extracts from the diary:—

“July y^e 23 [1733] being Monday. And tis writ from Chester that tis credibly reported y^t several emisaries of y^e Tory Party are employed Night & Day in raising a vast number of men from different Countys, who are to enter the City in a few days headed by a person of this County. The inhabitants are very much surprized at y^e report and are at a loss to know w^t can be y^e design of bringing in such a multitude from different places. Some imagine it is to amuse the citizens wth a show of strength of y^e party and to confirm their interest by a popular appearance from adjacent countys. Tis true indeed; their declining cause has great need of their skill and to support it. But surely this is too coarse an arrangement for gentlemen of their refined sense & understanding. Some are apprehensive of another foreign Mobb assaulting us but a fancy of y^e defeat of y^e poor Welch Mobb will be no real encouragement for any to attack us again. Others are alarmed with fears of a worse design than this & imagine it to be a scheme laid to try what they can do upon occasion in favour of a poor exile [the old Pretender], who is forced to beg his bread from Court to Court. What truth there is in this we cannot positively say. But it is certain y^t

there are a great number of Jacobites, Republicans and such like venturers engaged in y^e scheme who are extremely industrious in raising men to appear with y^e disaffected person at a certain place and time appointed.

“August 1 [1733] being Wednesday. Y^e men said in our last to be raised by y^e Jacobites &c. out of 9 Countys with a design to visit Chester & to be headed by a Cheshire gentleman were hired to attend Sir Robert Grosvenor in his publick entry into Chester which was done on Saturday y^e 1st of July past. Few of the city which he represents in Parliament own him but he is reduced to y^e necessity of collecting foreigners to make their attendance. The place of general Rendezvous was upon Millers heath about 2 miles from Chester: Sir Robert entered y^e City about 3 in y^e afternoon attended by a very few Cheshire gentlemen & several Welch. Their numbers which were about 3,000 were hired from y^e countys of Staffordshire Shropshire Flintshire Montgomeryshire &c. Tis said that a great many of the countrymen were hired to attend.”

The question of the navigation of the River Dee was at that time interwoven with both Municipal and Parliamentary contests in the City. Kinderley's Act was passed in 1723. The first sod of the navigation was cut 20th April, 1733, by Mr. R. Manley, and the water of the old channel was turned into that of the new in April, 1737.

In the Monthly Intelligence of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1732, there is the following item of news:—“Ended the Poll for Mayor of Chester when the numbers were for Alderman Johnson 1097, Alderman Ellames 1095, in the Grosvenor Interest: Alderman Maynwarding 858, Alderman Bennett 858 for Mr. Manley and navigation. The two first were return'd and the former swore into office. On this occasion the contest was so great that £20 was given for a vote, about £6000 spent and as reported

some lives lost." From the *Craftsman* of February 24th [1733], No. 347, a letter from Chester is quoted "wherein the writer sets in true light, against the misrepresentations of the *Daily Courant* and other Court Papers, some Transactions at the late Elections of a Mayor and Representative in that City." The letter says:—"The Riots and Outrages had their beginning from the private views of Mr. Manley, in his negotiating the business of making the River Dee navigable. That from that time numbers of vagrants and disorderly people were taken into regular pay, who insulted and abused the Magistrates and the Grosvenor Family; that Mr. Manley appear'd several times in the streets at the Head of the Mob arm'd with broad swords and other weapons; that at the Election of a Mayor great numbers of officers in different Branches of the Revenue, as well as common Soldiers, were detach'd from every Quarter of the Kingdom to vote in favour of Mr. Manley. . . . At the election for a Member the Mob discovered the same Inclination to Riots; but by the resolution of the Constables, who were then increased, the better to preserve the peace than it had been at the election of a Mayor, the Rioters were disarm'd to the great satisfaction of the Inhabitants; who having the Freedom of polling without Danger, Mr. Grosvenor (now Sir Robert) had a majority of Resiants¹ 166, and of votes in general 361. These facts can be justified by undeniable Vouchers and affidavits."

The *Daily Courant* referred to in this letter was that of October 25th preceding, just after the election of Mayor. It was there stated "the mobbing at Chester was begun in Mr. Manley's absence, and even before he declared himself a candidate; that an attempt to make 300 Honorary Free-men, to deprive the citizens of their rights, highly exas-

¹ So in the MS. "Resiant" is an old word meaning "resident."

perated them, and was the cause of their violent proceedings, which Mr. Manley did not promote but restrain; some gentlemen in Mr. Grosvenor's Interest coming into Chester with their Swords drawn, at the head of 500 Welshmen, the Citizens stood on their defence, and that 20 or 30 guineas was given for a vote at the Election of a Mayor by the Grosvenor Party: the Truth of which Facts would be made appear on legal and full evidence." At the election of a representative, the *Daily Courant* says that "of the pretended Majority for Mr. Grosvenor (against whom Mr. Manley has petitioned), there are a considerable number of Paupers, and several entered on the Poll-Books as Inhabitants who were properly Foreigners, and were polled as such at the Mayor's last Election, besides Minors and Honorary Freemen: So tis apprehended on a scrutiny the number of Freemen Inhabitants (paying ¹Scot and Lot) for Mr. Manley will be near equal if not superior besides the Constables. That the Appointment of these Constables is a proceeding of a very extra ordinary nature in the Magistrates; who, instead of making an equal number, named by each Candidate, as has been usually practised on the like occasions, have turned out such of the 36 standing Constables of the City as were in Mr. Manley's interest; and not only made others in their room on the Grosvenor side, they being paid Half a Crown a day under Pretence of acting as Constables; and at the same time effectually discharged Mr. Manley's Friends, many of them threatened, obstructed, beaten, and terrified by those Constables, under the pretence of Authority, from voting for him."

The *Gentleman's Magazine* has the following on Tuesday, the 31st July [1733]:—"A great stir was made in Cheshire upon the arrival of the Earl of Cholmondeley, Governor of

¹*i.e.*, Ratepayers.

Chester Castle, and Sir R. Grosvenor, one of the Representatives of that City; the former was met by 1000² Gentlemen and Citizens on Horseback and in Coaches, and conducted thro' the City with great acclamations to the Castle. The cry was 'Confusion to the Male Contents, and Prosperity to the navigation of the River Dee.' But Sir Robert was attended by nearly 4000 Gentlemen and Freemen on Horseback, about 40 Coaches, 19 with 6 Horses, who were two hours passing thro' the City; many of the Freemen had gilded Tobacco Leaves in their Hats. The cry was 'no excise,' and the Music played to the Tune of 'a begging we will go.' The Gentlemen and Freemen [present unan- imously agreed to Vote at the next Election for Charles Cholmondeley and John Crewe, Jun^r Esq^{rs} against Sir Robert Salisbury Cotton, Bart., who was for the Tobacco Bill." These are the contemporary newspapers' accounts of the entries in the diary I have referred to.

