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Bruce (John) : Observations on a Manuscript Account of the Treaty of Newport, A.D. 1648.

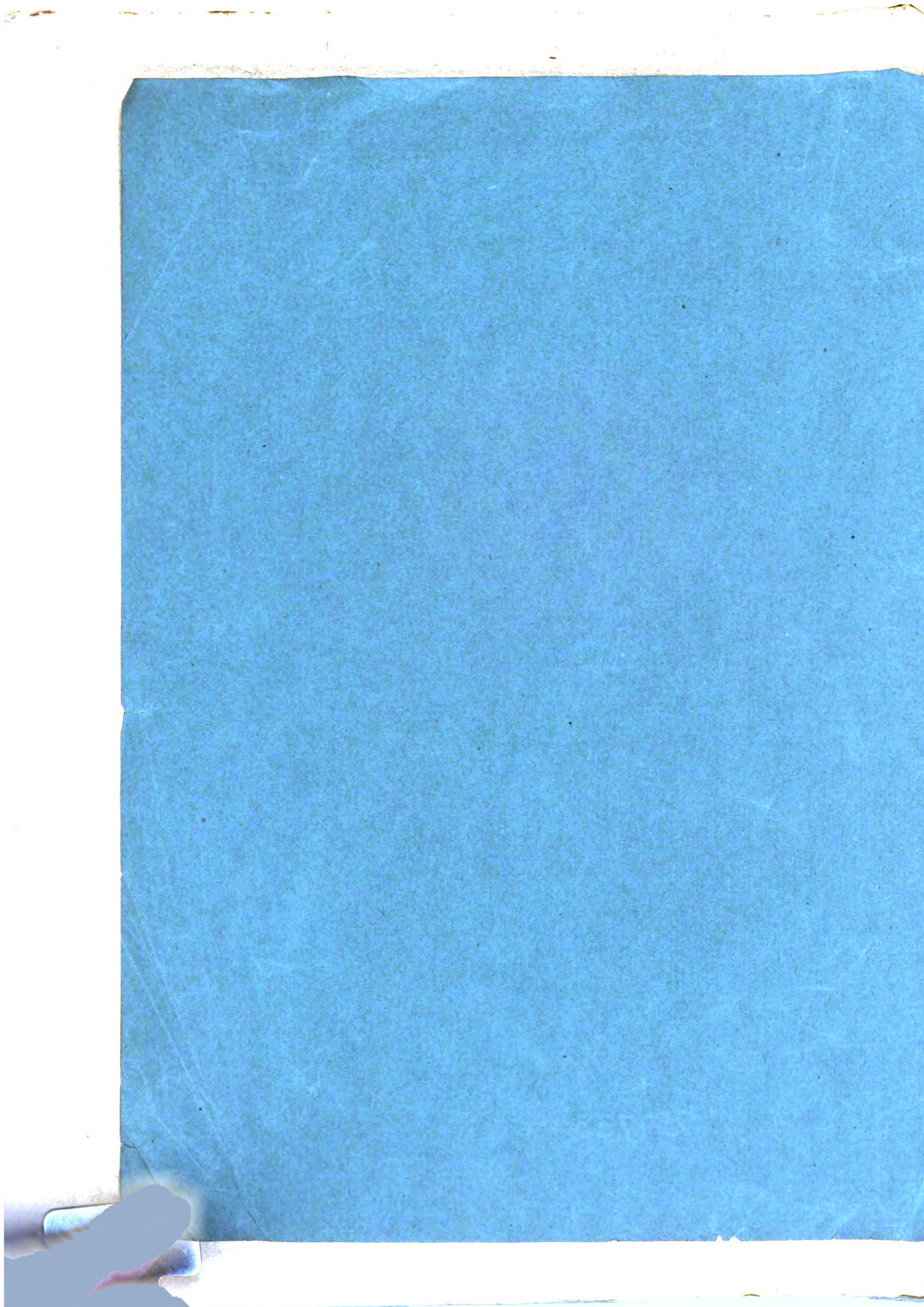
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*Observations on a Manuscript Account of the Treaty of Newport, A.D. 1648, in the possession of the Right Hon. the Earl of Verulam. By JOHN BRUCE, Esq. F.S.A.*

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From the *Archæologia*, Vol. XXXIX.

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By permission of the Right Hon. the Earl of Verulam I am enabled to exhibit to the Society of Antiquaries a folio MS. volume which contains an account of the Treaty held at Newport in the Isle of Wight in the months of September, October, and November, 1648, between King Charles I. and certain Commissioners appointed by the Parliament.

The principal accounts of this treaty with which I am acquainted are three: 1. That of Clarendon, printed in his State Papers; 2. That of Nicholas Oudart, printed in Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*, ii. 387; and 3. An account printed, London, fol. 1705, and entitled, "Perfect Copies of all the Votes, Letters, Proposals, and Answers . . . that passed in the Treaty held at Newport . . . by Sir Edward Walker, knight, Garter."

All these accounts proceeded from the King's friends. Nicholas Oudart had been secretary to Sir Edward Nicholas, and was present at Newport in attendance upon the King. The papers published by Sir Edward Walker were derived from the King himself, who handed them to him for preservation.

The account now placed before the Society is that of the Parliamentary Commissioners, and was made up in the same way as Sir Edward Walker's Collection, from the original papers which passed between the King and the Commissioners. Under the date of 25th Sept. 1648, the writer states, "This day the Commissioners gave me a Letter they received from the Speaker of the House of Commons." This passage seems to point to some secretary or clerk to the Commissioners as the compiler of the MS.

Lord Verulam's MS. contains, I believe, all that is in Sir Edward Walker's publication, and it also contains the Instructions given by the Parliament to their Commissioners—instructions which the Commissioners declined to produce to the King—and the correspondence which passed between the Commissioners and the Parliament during the Treaty. It is possible that these additional



papers may be in print, but I have not yet found them elsewhere than in the Verulam Manuscript.<sup>a</sup>

Sir Edward Walker's publication is a bare collection of documents. Although present at Newport, he made no notes, or none that were published. Oudart and the compiler of the Verulam MS. were both likewise present from day to day, and each has given occasional remarks upon the conduct or sayings of the King, with a little descriptive touches in relation to other people. An instance derived from Lord Verulam's MS. occurs under the date of the 2nd October, 1648. The question at that time in discussion was the apostolical institution of episcopacy. Marshall and several other presbyterian divines debated the question throughout a morning-sitting, and at its close another meeting was appointed for the afternoon to receive from Marshall and his companions a written statement of their reasons. As they were on the point of separating, the King tendered a paper to Marshall containing an extrajudicial statement of his Majesty's views. Marshall and his companions declined to receive it, saying that they could not accept a paper without the previous consent of the Commissioners. The King, we are told, urged the paper upon them a second time, and was again refused. He then laid the paper aside with the remark that he thought it was not so hot as to burn their fingers.

Another example of the same kind of quick and, in a certain sense, witty rejoinder on the part of the King is stated to have occurred on the 5th October, 1648. A morning was spent, on the King's invitation, in an endeavour to satisfy his objections to the Presbyterian Directory for Public Worship. In the course or perhaps at the close of the debate, the King is reported to have said, "As the Covenant," that "it was throughout interwoven with the Scotch interest, and, if that were taken out, it would be as thin as my Lord Say's countess's cheeses!" Lord Say, it will be remembered, was one of the Parliamentary Commissioners. The cheeses alluded to were those of Banbury, near which town Lord Say had a residence. Bardolph terms Slender, "You Banbury cheese" (*Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act i. Sc. 1), in allusion to the same characteristics attributed by the King, in a certain possible case, to the Covenant.

Again, on the 17th October, 1648, we learn that the King remarked to the Parliamentary Commissioners that the Parliament had voted his answer respecting the Church to be unsatisfactory, but that they had not shown where

<sup>a</sup> Another copy of the same account in the hand of W. Fulman may be seen in a MS. belonging to Corpus Christi College, Oxford (No. cccxvii.) which has kindly been communicated to the Society by the Librarian of the College.

it was so, nor why, and therefore his Majesty desired the Commissioners that he might know wherein he gave not satisfaction. After some further observations he added that "they were very honest and ingenious gentlemen, yet he knew no reason why he should bear more reverence to their consciences than his own." The writer of the Manuscript adds, "Whereupon they consented the divines should bring in their replication in the afternoon, which they did, being of five sheets of paper, and, after the divines were gone, the King said there was a great many of words but little of moment."

On the 8th November, 1648, when the Commissioners presented to the King the Shorter Catechism agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, it is registered that his Majesty inquired, no doubt with a gesture which suited the words, "Must he go to catechising again?"

Ten days afterwards, when he delivered a paper declining any further concession in reference to the Church, the King told the Commissioners that "he could go no further, and would suffer any misery rather than hazard the tranquillity of a quiet mind."

There is not much that is memorable in these and such like remarks, but they evidence that the compiler of the Verulam MS. was unquestionably present at the treaty, and they show the free, easy way in which the King carried himself during the transaction of the business, his acquaintance with the subjects in debate, and the clever, off-hand style of his more familiar conversation.

All the Commissioners named in the Instructions attended at Newport. They set out from London, as we are informed in the Verulam MS., on Wednesday the 13th September, 1648. They lay at Farnham that night. On Thursday night they lay at Southampton, and the next day took shipping for Newport. Their further adventures on their journey are detailed in the following, which is their first letter addressed to the Speaker of the House of Commons, and the only one that is worth quoting.

"Sir,—After wee had received yo<sup>r</sup> commands and our dispatch for this journey upon Wednesday the 13th instant, in which you are pleased to imploy our service, wee were careful to make the best haste wee could, and came to Southampton upon the Thursday night, where S<sup>r</sup> Peter Killigrew mett us, with a message from the King that his Majestie was glad wee were soe neere arriving, and was soe desirous noe tyme should be lost upon the Treaty that he would be ready to begin it either Satturday or Munday, but thought Munday would be the fitter day, in regard we might come late the Friday, and not be soe settled as



to beginn the Treaty next day. To w<sup>ch</sup> wee returned this Answer, which carried backe y<sup>e</sup> next morning, that the next day wee would speede our passage into the Island, and hoped it might be in good tyme, and then should be ready to attend his Ma<sup>tie</sup> and goe on with the Treaty either Satturday or Munday, if he would please to command us. Accordingly we passed the next day, but by tyde soe fell out as it was very late before wee got to Newport, when immediatly wee gave his Maj<sup>tie</sup> notice of o<sup>r</sup> arrivall, and that wee waited his pleasure for admission to him. He sent us word it should bee the next morning, Satturday betwixt nine and ten of the morning; att which tyme wee repaired unto him, where my Lord Northumberland acquainted him, That by order of both Houses of Parliament wee were come thither to attend him upon the Treaty, and were ready to begin it either that day or Munday. To which his Maj<sup>tie</sup> replied that he was very unwilling to loose any time in itt, but yett he did not thinke it expedient to begin such a businesse upon a peice of a day, therefore desired it might be begun upon Munday att nine of the clocke; w<sup>ch</sup> being the tyme appointed wee should faile to observe, as anything else hereafter which may give a dispatch or furtherance to the service, and to testifye o<sup>r</sup> obedience to all your commands. This is all hath yett passed; w<sup>ch</sup> wee thought it o<sup>r</sup> duty to give you an account of, and, that done, have nothing else to say but that wee are

“Yo<sup>r</sup> humble servants,

“Newport, 16<sup>o</sup> Sept. 1648.”

“THOMAS WENMAN, &c.

From this time the Verulam MS. details the progress of the negociation down to the 28th Nov. 1648, when the Commissioners “early in the morning . . . . sett onward of their Journey to London, where they arrived on y<sup>e</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> of y<sup>e</sup> same moneth, and y<sup>e</sup> next morning they made report of y<sup>e</sup> Treaty to both Houses.”

The MS. now exhibited has been traditionally regarded in the Verulam family as an account of the Treaty written by their ancestor Sir Harbottle Grimstone, who was one of the Parliamentary Commissioners. The only sense in which this volume can be regarded as Sir Harbottle Grimstone's is that it is probably a copy of the Book of Minutes of the transactions of the Commissioners furnished to Sir Harbottle by their Secretary. Sir Harbottle as a Commissioner was no doubt active and conspicuous, and sincerely desirous for the accomplishment of a peace; but I cannot see any reason for concluding that this volume was either written or compiled by him.

The Earl of Verulam is desirous that the Society should make any use

this MS. that may be for the benefit of historical literature. I therefore append a copy of the Instructions given to the Commissioners by the two Houses of Parliament; which is as follows:—

Die Sabbti 2<sup>o</sup> Sept. 1648.—Instructions for Algernoone Earle of Northumberland, Phillip Earle of Pembroke and Mount Gomery, William Earle of Salisbury, James Earle of Middx, William Lord Viscount Say and Seale, Members of the House of Peeres, Thomas Lord Viscount Wenman, Denzill Holles, William Peirpointe, Esqrs. Sr Harbottle Grimston, Sr John Potts, Barr<sup>ts</sup>, Sr Henry Vane, Junio<sup>r</sup>, Kn<sup>t</sup>, Jo: Crewe, Samuell Browne, John Glyn, John Bulkley, Esq<sup>rs</sup>, Members of the House of Coñions, Comittees nominated and appointed by both Houses of Parliament to Repaire to Newporte in the Isle of Wight, and there to Treatate personally w<sup>th</sup> his Majestye upon Propositions for a safe and well Grounded Peace.

First. You shall repaire to Newporte in the Isle of Wight, where you or any eight of you, whereof twoe Lords shall be p<sup>s</sup>ent, to treatate with his Majestie for the space of forty dayes from the beginning of the said Treatate, upon the Propositions which were p<sup>s</sup>ented to his Majesty att Hampton Cort, concerning the Kingdomes of England [and] Ireland, and for taking away of Wards and Lyveryes, now delivered unto you, and such other Propositions as by both Houses of Parliament shall bee agreed vpon.

Secondly. You shall receive such Propositions as his Maj<sup>tie</sup> shall offer, and forthwith transmitt them to both Houses of Parliament, that you may have further directions from them how to proceede thereupon.

Thirdly. You shall proceede to treatate upon the propositions for recalling Declaraçons, &c. the Propositions concerninge the Church, the Propositions concerninge the Militia, the Propositions concerninge Ireland, in the first place in order, and receive the King's Answere to each of them; And upon the rest in the same order they are now placed.

Fourthly. You shall use yo<sup>r</sup> best Endeavo<sup>rs</sup> that the aforementioned Propositions may be agreed unto without receding from the matter of them.

Fifthly. You shall deliver yo<sup>r</sup> demands and receive his Majesties Answere to them in wrytinge.

Sixthly. You shall give frequent Advertisements to both houses of Parliament of yo<sup>r</sup> Proceedings in this Treatate.

JO: BROWNE, Cleric.  
Parliamentorꝝ.

H: ELSYNGE, Cler. Part  
dom<sup>o</sup> Coñi:





