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PART II.—PAPERS, ETC.

Monmouth at Philip's Norton.

BY MISS H. C. FOXCROFT.

THE events which led to the fight at Philip's Norton are familiar to all students of Macaulay; of Macaulay's authority, Roberts; or of Monmouth's more recent biographer, Mr. Allan Fea. About a fortnight before the fight—on June 11th, 1685—the exiled Duke of Monmouth, illegitimate nephew of the reigning James II, had landed at Lyme in Dorset, and raised the standard of revolt. He brought but a modest following, and very scanty supplies. But the West country knew and loved the brilliant adventurer, the champion of the Protestant faith; and within twenty-four hours his recruits numbered 1500. As he crept slowly northward the disaffected militias of Dorset and Devon fled from before him. Hundreds deserted to his standard; and ere he reached Bridgwater he commanded 6000 men. But these were ill-accoutred; few possessed muskets; most bore the mower's scythe, set, bayonet-wise, on its pole, or the pick of the Mendip miner.

Meanwhile more imposing forces closed around the doomed array. The South Somerset militia dogged its rear; the Wiltshire militia marched on Chippenham; the Gloucester and other trained bands, under Beaufort, made for Bristol; while contingents from the Midlands and south-east also converged upon Wessex.¹ The regulars, meagre in number, were in great part needed at the capital, of which the temper seemed somewhat uncertain. But Lord Churchill (afterwards famous as the Duke of Marlborough) was hurried south with eight troop of horse, subsequently raised to thirteen, and five companies of foot. With his horse alone he pressed ahead; and thenceforth harassed, with characteristic skill and energy, the flanks of the rebel force.²

Greatly to his disgust, however, Lord Feversham, who followed with reinforcements, was appointed over his head to the supreme command. From Maidenhead the new general despatched a scouting party of fifty, under Colonel Oglethorpe, to locate the enemy; and after a flying visit to Bristol (where he viewed the city and conferred with the militia leaders), he met the bulk of his own forces at Bath. He had now 160 horse guards and horse grenadiers, with three mounted troops. His infantry (three battalions of foot) and his sixteen brass pieces had not yet reached him, being detained by the state of the roads. But the North Somerset militia, under the Duke of Somerset, were quartered in the town. And soon after his arrival there (which took place at four o'clock on the morning of the 24th), Colonel Oglethorpe, the head of the scouting party which he had despatched from Maidenhead, rode into Bath to collect stragglers, and reported progress. He had proceeded, by Andover and Warminster, to Philip's Norton.³

1. Hatcher and Benson's "History of Salisbury," p. 813; Wolseley's "Marlborough," I, 282, 284.

2. Wolseley's "Marlborough," I, 277-80.

3. Anonymous Report, Stopford Sackville's Mss., *Hist. Mss. Com. Rep.*, IX, pt. iii, p. 3.

Philip's Norton has since then greatly declined in dignity and population; for in coaching and pre-coaching days it was a centre of some importance. The London road, which passes through Devizes on its way to Wells, goes through it, and is

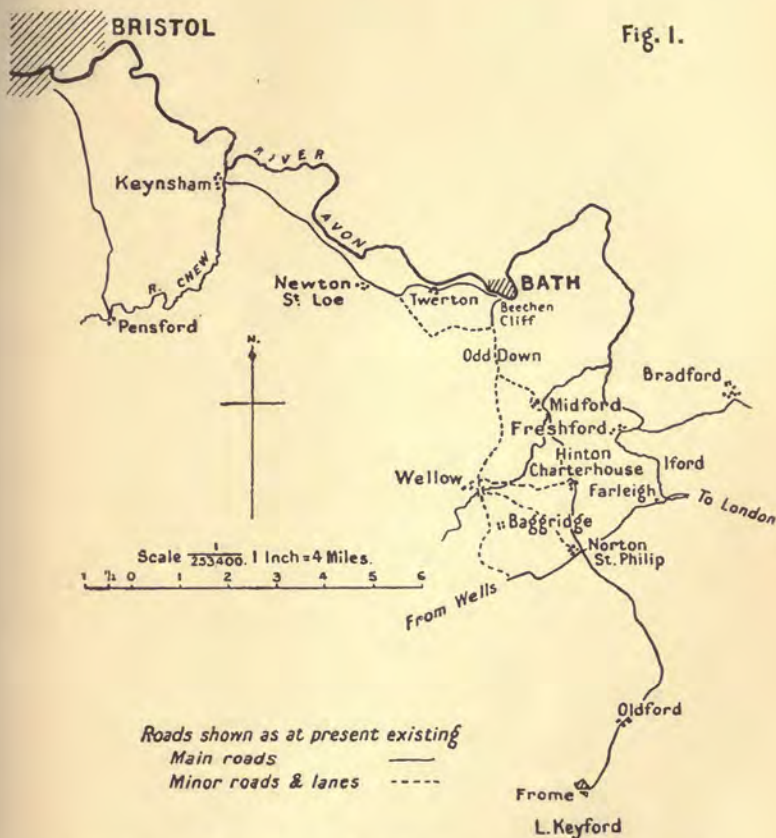


Fig. 1. General Map of the Area of Operations, June 24-28, 1685.

crossed by the highway which runs from Bath and Bristol, through Warminster, to Salisbury. Thence, no doubt, the significance of Norton's three yearly fairs; one of which, the wholesale fair of the cloth district, was considered, for a one-

day fair, as great as any in England.¹ The "George" and "Fleur-de-lys" ranked, even then, as very ancient inns;² the "George" recollected with pride how Henry VIII's elder brother had slept within its walls; and in its ample loft or garret the wool bales for the great fair were yearly housed.

The market cross of such a local centre was naturally a focus of gossip; and here Oglethorpe had learnt that Monmouth had crossed Mendip, after sleeping a night at Shepton Mallet.

Feversham, says his reporter, on receiving this intelligence, despatched Oglethorpe with "forty fresh horse and a militia troop" to his party at Philip's Norton "to observe the enemy's march; and in the afternoon rid out himself towards Philip's Norton, where from the market people we heard that a small party of the Duke of Monmouth's horse had that day at Frome proclaimed him king, and fixed up their proclamation in the market place; which my Lord Pembroke with some of his militia pulled down the day following and put up the king's proclamation in its place, although above a thousand inhabitants of the town and Warminster were in arms to oppose him."

Feversham no doubt returned at once to Bath, and thither "About 12 at night came intelligence from Colonel Oglethorpe that the Duke of Monmouth with his army were at Pensford within six miles of Bristol," which, being then the second city of the kingdom, was the main object of the duke's plan of campaign. This news, continues our authority, "made my Lord Feversham march back the horse under his command with great expedition from Bath into Bristol," which he reached before four o'clock in the morning.³

1. Ogilvy's "Britannia," 1675, p. 35.

2. Parsons' "Mss. Survey of Norton and Henton, 1638," in the possession of Mrs. Withers, of Norton.

3. All this from *Hist. Mss. Com. Rep.*, IX, pt. iii, p. 3 (as above). The account of the affair at Frome is not very correct. For the true version see Hatcher and Benson's "Salisbury," p. 813.

Meanwhile Monmouth had determined to cross the Avon at Keynsham, and thus assault Bristol on the northern and weaker side (Fig. 1). But at Keynsham he came into contact with Oglethorpe's party, which was probably on his track; and which blundered into the village, not knowing by whom it was held. The rebels were no less surprised. Mistaking the little party for Churchill's force (which had really received orders from Feversham to concentrate on Bath, and was still in their rear), the raw levies fell back; and Monmouth, in alarm, abandoned the attempt on Bristol.

This decision meant the renunciation of all chance of success; for only the capture of Bristol, where his sympathisers were many, could have given the rebel leader dangerous prestige. A vague *détour* into Wiltshire, on the mere chance of reinforcement, was but a forlorn hope. But this desperate plan was adopted by the vacillating leader; and at midnight, June 26th, still dogged by Churchill, the fatal march began. As they had failed to cross the Avon, the insurgents perforce took the lower Bath road. But it seems improbable that they proceeded through Twerton to the old Bath bridge, which then rose, in fortified grandeur, beyond the South Gate of the little walled city. More probably they took the short cut through Newton St. Loe to Odd Down; turning aside, perhaps, towards Beechen Cliff at the top of Holloway (Fig. 1). For it is distinctly stated that "they halted upon the side of a hill above the town, which they required by a trumpet to surrender."¹ Confident, however, in its strong walls and stout-hearted defenders, which by now included Feversham's newly-arrived foot, besides several militia regiments, the city defied him and put his herald to death. Lord Churchill, obeying instructions, now retired into the city and left the rebels temporarily unmolested;² while Feversham, who had discovered the Duke's evasion,

1. *Hist. Mss. Com. Rep.*, IX, pt. iii, p. 3 (as above).

2. Wolseley's "Marlborough," I, 300.

and had left Bristol by the north road in pursuit of him, entered Bath by the West Gate as the rebels left the



Fig. 2. Probable Route of the Duke's March from Midford to Norton.

heights.¹ It is here that the interest of our story really begins.

1. See Feversham's Despatch in our Appendix.

The rebels proceeded towards Frome ; which line did they take ? To those who now survey the noble breadth and well-graduated curves of the Old Warminster road the question seems absurd ; but in Monmouth's time it was narrow, and very badly engineered. We presume, however, that the rebels descended its former precipitous course, now degraded into by-roads, as far as Midford. Near Midford begins the ascent of the steep plateau on which Hinton Charterhouse and Norton stand, and which is surrounded on all sides by hollows, each hiding its own little brook (Fig. 2). The road even now rises 270 feet in the course of a single mile. But it then turned sharply to the left, near a field called "Money Quar," which is still vaguely connected with soldiers, coin and the erection of a temporary shoeing-forge.¹ Thence, after running along the water-meadows, it rose abruptly to the crest of the hill, by a gradient which, at the best, must have been cruelly severe.² From this, presumably, the rebel leaders shrank ; preferring to follow the water-meadows to Twynhoe Ford, with which vague rumours still connect their march (Fig. 2). By crossing the ford, they could have entered an old road, now partially disused, leading to Wellow village ; and from Wellow, through the next hollow, they could have followed the Norton lane. Wellow, at any rate has preserved the tradition of the march ; and men now alive, passing down Wellow street, have fled affrighted to the pavement when a jingle of airy bridles and a clatter of unseen swords appeared to herald the passing of Monmouth's ghostly train.

But it is far more probable that the rebels never traversed the ford ; that they pursued their way along the water-meadows, still on the right of the stream ; that they crossed the Wellow-Hinton road above the bridge, where the little Norton rivulet falls into the brook they had hitherto fol-

1. I heard this story from an old woman named Jane Swift.

2. Mr. Withers of Norton, now dead, told me the field-way, known locally as "The drang-way," represents its termination.

lowed ; and that they traced this smaller rivulet through its water-meadows, following an old track which is still discernible, till they struck, at Tuckston Bridge, into the Norton-Wellow lane (Fig. 2). This would have been the shorter route ; and Henry Rose, Mr. Foxcroft's keeper, tells me that at one spot the noise of the brooklet running through a pool recoils from the hill and sounds like the rumbling of cannon. This, old men have informed him, is the echo of Monmouth's guns.

Near Tuckston Bridge the lane is still sometimes under water. The summer of 1685 was exceptionally wet ; and at this point the guns seem to have become bogged. The local etymology which connects the ancient name "Baggeridge," on the right-hand slope, with a bivouac of Monmouth's *baggage*, is idle enough. But Baggeridge is just above the lowest and, consequently, the wettest part of the road, where an involuntary halt may have taken place.¹ A ford recrosses the streamlet to the right-hand bank again and gives access to Spy Close, half-way up Baggeridge heights. This field is still the favourite look-out of gamekeepers and shepherds ; for from it three combs can be seen. Thence, it is said, Monmouth's scouts looked on ahead, and may have detected the field-ways on the opposite slope which lead up, past Norton Barn and Hinton Field, to the high road above. Up one of these, says tradition (probably the latter), the four guns were hauled. Fields, close to where they debouch, are still called "The Camp" and "Monmouth"; and an intelligent old Hinton labourer, named Samuel Huntley, who died in 1891 at the age of 94, told me he could remember a

1. A third route is just possible. Both old Huntley and an old woman quoted by Mrs. Akery, of Norton, supposed the guns were hauled *down from Baggeridge*. This is probably an error induced by the false etymology. But it is in fact possible to go to Norton from Wellow by leaving the lower lane at Gooseberry Buildings, ascending the steep Baggeridge hill, and descending to the ford by the farm track, passing through the field next Spy Close, called King Copse.

Norton man, named Charles Pearce, whose grandfather had assisted in the operations.

On the way may have occurred a tragic incident, related to Monmouth's biographer, more than 60 years since, by Mr. Robert Singer, of Frome. Near Norton, says the story, a countryman opened the gate. The rebels, after their custom, asked for whom he stood; and as he answered "*For the King,*" they slew him.¹

The bulk of the force, says the Hinton legend, struggled on, along the lower lane, and it was late in the evening when the weary crowd entered Norton. Since the preceding midnight, it had marched fourteen miles, most of it over the execrable roads of the period, in their worst state.

Monmouth himself now took up his quarters at the "George," where his room is still shown. The four field pieces were planted before it, near the old market cross, then still standing.² The horse found billets in the "town" (for so was Norton then described); the foot were posted in the fields, near the manor house below.³ There seems to have been some attempt at military precaution, since we hear of a "barrier"; but, as usual, the insurgents lived at free quarters, and were under little discipline. Mrs. Sarah Andrews, of Hinton Charterhouse, relates on the authority of her late father-in-law, old Mr. Charles Andrews, that the house of his great-grandmother (then living at Norton), was stripped bare by them as the housewife sat by the fire. But they got no money; for the astute good wife sat on a huge "crock" or earthen pitcher in which she had secreted her coin.

The night passed quietly; for Feversham, on his arrival in Bath, had contented himself with sending out a party of observation "with orders to see the start of the enemy on [the

1. Roberts' "Monmouth," II, 21.

2. *Ibid.*, on the authority of a Norton man, then living, whose great-grandfather had been in the fight.

3. Roberts, II, 16, apparently from Wade.

following] morning, if he *did* march, and to bring intelligence of the fact, and of the direction in which the van advanced."¹

In Bath, Feversham had found, as we have already seen, besides his own foot, the North Somerset, Dorset, and Oxford militias, Churchill's contingent, and a part only of his own belated artillery.

Next morning, Saturday, June 27th, "My lord Feversham," says a contemporary informant,² "drew all his forces out of Bath (it being the first time they met) into a meadow near the town," and started for Philip's Norton. The country was then "very wooded," for the hill slopes were covered with woodland, much of which, in the time of the Napoleonic wars, was turned into inferior arable. He therefore divided his force into two parts. Under his own immediate command he took most of his horse, all the dragoons, and a detachment of 500 musketeers; these included five companies of grenadiers, and was commanded by the Duke of Grafton and the notorious Colonel Kirke. In its van Feversham placed a company of horse grenadiers. The remainder of his force, including the militia regiments, a few horse and his scanty artillery, followed at a slower pace some considerable distance in the rear.

We are not told by which route the little army advanced, nor at what point Feversham met his returning vedettes. The officer says Feversham (in a hitherto unpublished despatch, of which Mr. Stopford Sackville has kindly given us a copy), "only told me he had been assured" that the rebels had not left Norton. "I do not think," proceeds Feversham, "one should ever rely on hearsay, but trust to one's own eyes; so I first despatched another party on the same errand, who did as I had directed, and drew the enemy's fire. But . . . the place was on my line of march, and [I was] indeed so near that the vanguard, which was confident of beating the enemy,

1. All that follows from Feversham's despatch (see Appendix), save where otherwise stated.

2. *Hist. Mss. Com. Rep.*, IX, part iii, p. 3.

if it should encounter them, had advanced so fast and in such close order that it was at the entrance of the place within the very hedges, where there was a barrier."

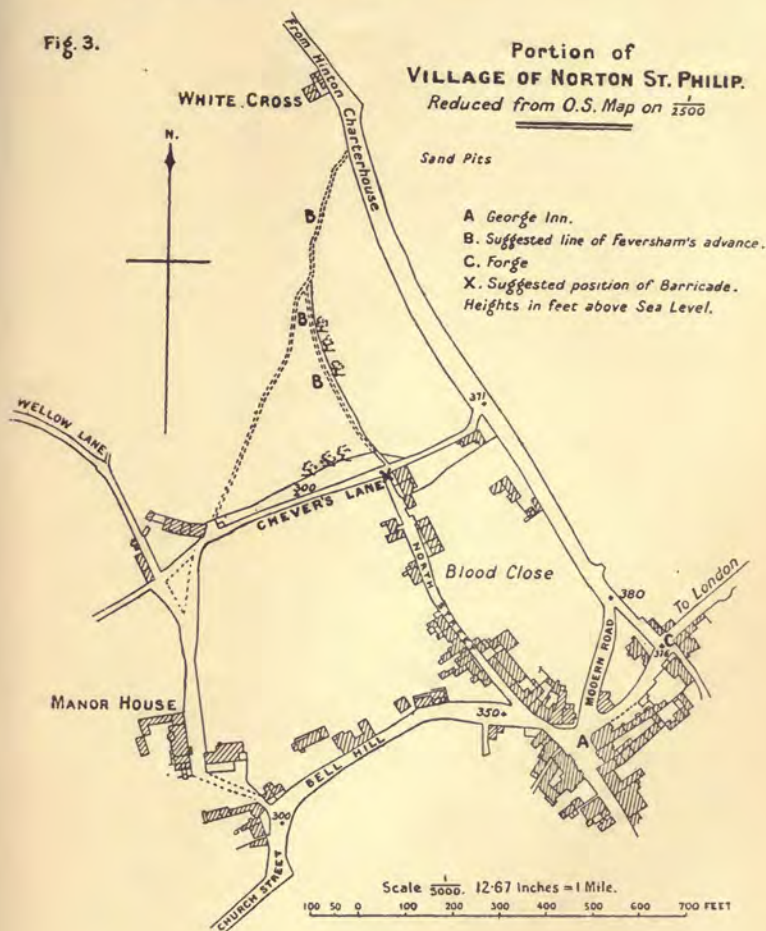


Fig. 3. The Scene of Norton Fight.

It is not easy to define the exact area of Norton in the XVII Century; but it was certainly much better adapted than at present for purposes of defence. The old line of the

Bath road (which now descends by a broad sweep from the crest of the plateau into the heart of the village near the "George") is seen in the short piece of lane which joins the London road, above the village, at the forge. Parallel to the high road, but lower down the slope, runs the North Street of the village; in the hollow, houses cluster round the church and the Wellow lane entrance. All three streets are connected on the south by the steep descent of the London road, now known as Bell Hill, and parallel to it, on the Bath side of the village, straight down from the high road, passing the mouth of North Street on its way to the Wellow lane, runs a steep walled passage (Fig. 3). This is called Chivers Lane; but is sometimes known, in memory of the fight, as War or Bloody Lane.

Tradition connects the fight with all three localities. On the plateau, to the left of the highway, is a field called "Sandpits," in which a sword, a cannon ball, and bones, have been found;¹ and a paddock almost opposite, within the village, was once (Mr. Humphreys tells me) known as "Blood Close."

The steep slopes of Chivers Lane and Bell Hill are said to have "run with blood;" and the dreadful torrent, we are told, even swept into the house on Bell Hill, which was formerly an inn, but is now Mr. Grist's shop. This also would suggest that the main struggle took place on the plateau above; but the fall of a wounded man in a rain-swept gutter would suffice to justify the tale.

In the hollow, Norton mill² and the old manor house are traditionally concerned.

With all these indications it would seem easy to realise the battle, but it is very difficult to do so because we are not certain of the route by which the Royal troops advanced, nor of

1. Information received from the late Mr. Burney, Vicar of Norton; Mrs. Akery, Norton Post Office, had heard "Sandpits" mentioned by an old Miss Puckstone, who died about 1880, and was full of stories of the battle, heard from her father and grandfather.

2. Miss Puckstone.

possible alterations in the approaches to the village. I confess, I cannot, with anything like certainty, identify the "lane a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile long," with thick hedges on both sides, which led out of a "ploughed field" to the "barrier." It has usually been identified with the Norton and Wellow lane;¹ but it occurs to me that a lane may formerly have run, by the present foot-way, from the high road at White Cross to the entrance of North Street. This would have then been the most vulnerable point, leading straight to the "Duke's quarters" at the "George," which the barrier, we are told, was intended to protect.

The barrier was guarded by fifty of Monmouth's musketeers. "I halted the party," says Feversham, "which I had sent to draw the enemy's fire, and as but two or three shots had been fired, I ordered my Lord Churchill to move forward a company of grenadiers. . . . The Duke of Grafton commanded the detachment, and showed great courage . . . for he marched at the head of the grenadiers company of his regiment of foot-guards, of which Hawley is captain, and which advanced to the entrance of the village, where they encountered a very heavy fire."

Here we have an instance of the occasional accuracy which, amidst ludicrous errors, can dignify tradition. Samuel Huntley, discussing the skirmish, told me "it was a fight *between two brothers*." The Duke of Grafton, son of Charles II by Barbara Villiers, was Monmouth's half-brother.

"When," continues Lord Feversham, "I saw that the affair was serious, and those ahead were certainly in great danger, I ordered the horse grenadiers to pass the barrier and cover their retreat, as this seemed absolutely necessary; and at the same time commanded the musketeers to line the hedges. I was at the barrier when they told me of the Duke of Grafton's danger. I hurried on the horse grenadiers, who had already passed the barrier, and they arrived just in time. For there

1. As by Mr. Burney.

was a considerable body of Monmouth's cavalry, who were approaching by another way to cut off their retreat." Wade,¹ one of the Duke of Monmouth's force, says these horsemen, composed of the Duke's own regiment, went through the gentleman's court by a little byeway. If the barrier was at the entrance of North Street, they could have reached it by riding half-way up Chivers Lane.

But to quote the words of Feversham, these rebel reinforcements "halted and even retired rapidly before the grenadiers. There was already a troop there, which would have cut off the Duke of Grafton. A quarter-master of Oxford [’s horse]—the same man who was at that affair near Taunton—commanded the first twenty troopers, and he, seeing the Duke of Grafton in such peril, offered him his horse. He would not take it, but found another horse, which was wounded, I fancy; for when he returned to the barriers [where I was], the horse was stumbling . . . [and] the Duke much out of breath; and I begged him not to act so again, for it was too much of a good thing, though all very well once in a way."² The courtly general evidently realised that the young man was a favourite with his uncle.³

"When," proceeds Feversham, "I saw that the Duke of Grafton had returned, and that the horse grenadiers were not pursued, I realised that it was not so serious a matter as it might have been, for the dragoons and the cavalry were so huddled together, that I do not know what would have happened if they had fallen upon us from any other direction. Seeing that, I was only anxious to get them into a position of greater safety, and withdrew them one after another, without betraying their evil plight, for fear of causing a panic, even

1. Quoted in Roberts' "Monmouth," I, 18. *Hist. Mss. Com. Rep.*, IX, pt. iii, p. 3, also mentions a 'lane' in a manner which is not very easily reconciled with the other accounts.

2. We have had to alter a little Feversham's grammar and arrangement, which are very confused.

3. Fountainhall, March, 1685.

without the enemy's approach. My Lord Churchill remained at the barrier . . . to repel anything approaching from that side, while I was posting the cavalry where I thought best ; which was on a height behind us, a musket shot away, where I drew it up in battle order. My Lord Churchill then withdrew with the infantry, without sustaining any attack, for I left behind the three squadrons of guards, having separated the detachment into three troops on their original ground, only in somewhat open order, to assist the infantry in case of attack, which did not happen. The rest of the infantry and the cannon had not yet arrived. I ordered the infantry to advance without waiting for the artillery, which it did. I posted it in battle array on the height where the cavalry was, and placed the cavalry in the rear, and on one flank, the other being protected by hedges and ditches ; and there we remained to see if we should attempt anything more.¹ The cannon had not yet arrived—small blame to Mr. Sheres, whom I find very diligent in all things ; but the roads are bad. As soon as the cannon arrived, I ordered discharges, which disquieted them much. They made some answer to our fire by means of two very small pieces, I think two-pounders. An hour afterwards they brought up two others, rather better, but very insignificant.”

The sound of the firing was heard by a body of Wiltshire militia, then marching between Farleigh and Freshford along the Iford road,² and tradition still avers that on the anniversary of the day, the woods above repeat the sound.

“I once,” continues Feversham, “thought of remaining face to face with the enemy all the night, but we had very heavy rain, which would have caused much inconvenience, as we had no tents ; so I decided, with the concurrence of the colonels ”

1. It is possible that the cavalry was posted as far back as the field called “The Camp” on the Norton-Hinton high road. It is traditionally connected with the battle ; it would answer to the “Hill about a mile north-west of the town” pointed out by Rossiter to Roberts (II, 21) ; and old Huntley told me military relics had been dug up there.

2. Hatcher and Benson, p. 813.

(the omission of Churchill's name seems significant) "that the very best thing we could do was to march, which we did" (about 4 p.m.), "leaving Oglethorpe with 80 horse dragoons to collect intelligence. . . . He met a man who came . . . from Philip's Norton who was in the place the whole time. He told him that the enemy's army was actually marching when I arrived, and that incontinently all returned. I fancy he had not marched far, if he had done so at all; I mean the Duke of Monmouth. It is true, however, that his cannon never fired till two hours after we had arrived. We saw five white standards and a battalion of pikemen, but all protected by hedges; he had pioneers at first, for they were ordered to work at the spot where his cannon were posted, of which I was very glad, since it assured me he had not stolen a march on me, for I think he would not leave his cannon behind. I only saw one man on a white horse, who showed more activity than the rest. Parker assures me that he saw the Duke of Monmouth, who came to watch us as we marched—they were only five, which makes me think they marched at the same time."

The royal army retired, no doubt, by way of Hinton Charterhouse, to Bradford, where it stayed all Sunday,¹ "to clean our arms and recover the fatigue of the foregoing day." Thence Feversham wrote the long despatch we have so freely quoted. His loss he estimates as low as seven or eight killed and about twenty wounded, no officer being among the number. Other authorities, however, some apparently well informed, place it higher—some as high as eighty. Monmouth had lost eighteen men, including several officers. Many of the wounded, it is said, crawled away into the standing corn, where their dead bodies were subsequently found by the reapers.²

Several anecdotes of the fight are preserved. Among the

1. *Hist. Mss. Com. Rep.*, IX, pt. iii, p. 3.

2. Roberts, II, 20, on the authority of Mr. Singer.

rebels, a "ne'er-do-well" French gamester called "Shevalier" (perhaps The Chevalier), fell mortally wounded in the back. He believed he had fallen by the hand of one of his own men, among whom he was unpopular. "Ah," said the dying man, in his broken English, as a King's officer approached, "Dis is none of my *foe* dat shot me in the back." "By God," replied the other, "it is none of your *friends*."¹

Major (or Colonel) Holmes, an old Cromwellian, lost a son in the affair, and was himself badly wounded in the arm. He went straight to the kitchen of the "George," borrowed the cook's cleaver, and himself amputated the limb.² The fine old soldier lived to be hanged; for, though the King would have pardoned him, Jeffreys proved obdurate.

But Monmouth, despite his losses, could claim the honours of the day. The enemy had retired; and Feversham's despatch is distinctly apologetic in tone. In some quarters, indeed, too much stress was laid on the event. The historian Burnet, in his formal history, does not mention the encounter; but the contemporary memoirs, recently published, magnify the skirmish. "If," he says, "[Monmouth's] men had pursued the advantage that they had at Philip's Norton, matters had gone much otherwise."³ Burnet, however, who was abroad at the time, relied on exaggerated reports. The victory, whatever its scope, was but a flash in the pan. At eleven o'clock that night, in the drenching rain, Monmouth's weary followers resumed their march towards Frome, leaving the camp fires burning to delude the enemy, of whose evasion, seven hours earlier, they seem to have been ignorant.⁴ Their progress through the miry ways was pitifully slow; for, though the distance is but six miles, it was not till nine hours later that

1. The story occurs in "Memoirs of Gamesters," by Theophilus Lucas, 1714; and the extract was given me by the late Canon Jackson.

2. Roberts, II, 19; and Mr. Burney, who vaguely quoted "a writer in *Nooks and Corners*."

3. Supplement to Burnet's "History," 1902, p. 167.

4. Roberts (from Wade), II, p. 21.

the exhausted rebels struggled into Frome.¹ The house at which the Duke lodged has been variously identified ; but Roberts declares that many of the cavalry stayed at Lower Keyford. Others took possession of the old Nunnery House, and, turning the oak tables upside-down, used them as a rack and manger. Roberts also tells, on the authority of the Mr. R. B. Singer of his day, how a man at Oldford, named Toop, hid his money in the brewing tub. Monmouth's men demanding the grains, he asked a skittleful for his pigs, and skilfully dipped out the purse which held the money. Parties are said, on the same authority, to have been placed on the Roddenbury and Marston Hills, with a chain of sentinels between. One drew his sword to kill a snake, the glittering of which, suggesting a surprise, alarmed the Marston party. Discipline, as usual, was bad ; and the rebels are said to have committed murder and robberies near Cottell's Oak.²

The rebel army, however, stayed at Frome for but two days. News from Scotland and Wiltshire showed the hopelessness of the situation, and initiated the pitiful retreat, by Shepton to Bridgwater, which ended a week later in the awful rout of Sedgmoor. And this was but the prologue to the tragedy of Tower Hill, and the horrors of the Bloody Assize.

On Norton, as might be anticipated, vengeance fell heavy. Only *twelve* victims suffered at Frome, *six* at Bath, and *twelve* at Norton St. Philip.³ They were hanged in a field near the "Fleur-de-Lys,"⁴ and the last of the long list is one Thomas Pearce, perhaps the very man mentioned by old Huntley. These men did not receive Christian burial, so their deaths do not appear in the register ; but the Churchwardens' book notes the sum of twelve shillings paid for the faggots of the

1. Roberts (from Wade), II, p. 23.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

3. Bloody Assize.

4. Norton tradition.

fire then required for the last hideous details of a traitor's execution.

From these dreadful scenes, let us turn to pleasanter episodes. An officer, old Huntley declared, left behind him at Hinton Charterhouse, a valise never claimed. It proved to be full of coin, which made the fortune of a yeoman family, long flourishing, of which offshoots still exist.¹ Two Norton fellows, says another legend, caught a loaded sumpter mule. Its value never transpired; but its captors, as their visits to the "George" and "Fleur-de-Lys" increased and their potations deepened, had often to face the sarcastic query, "How 'bout thic there *sumptuous* mule?"² The name *Monmouth Street* long clung to a Norton lane; and as late as 1825 fragments of a song still lingered, which told how

The Duke of Monmouth is at Norton Town,
All a-fighting for the Crown—
Ho! boys, Ho!³

Early in the XIX Century the philanthropic Misses More found still among the rude miners of Mendip, a wild legend that King Monmouth the Deliverer was at hand, to right all wrongs. Thirty—even twenty—years ago, unpublished traditions still lingered; one or two were recovered, only the other day, for the purposes of this paper. A few years more, and the last echoes of local history will have died away.

1. The Morgans.

2. This story I had from Canon Jackson; his authority, the Rev. H. Ward, curate of Farleigh, had heard it from James Packer, an old labourer of Norton, "full of stories about the battle."

3. Roberts, II, 21, note.

APPENDIX.

Copy of a Despatch from Lord Feversham to James II, kindly forwarded by Mr. Stopford Sackville (mentioned in *Hist. Mss. Com. Report*, ix, pt. iii).

From Bradford, June 28th, 1711.

Je suis bien fâché que la relation que je fais à Votre Majesté ne soit pas comme je la souhaiterais quoique je la crois fort bonne puisque j'empechai les ennemis de marcher tout hier et que la perte que nous avons fait est si inconsiderable que je ne l'appelle pas perte n'ayant eu de tués que sept ou huit hommes et environ trente de blessés dont je n'ai pas un officier, Dieu merci, au nombre. J'ai voulu commencer comme je fais ma relation ne doutant point que le bruit ne soit allé jusques à Londres d'un grand combat et même battue puisque je me suis retiré le premier, ce que j'ai fait il est vrai, mais serais bien fâché de ne l'avoir pas fait et j'espère que Votre Majesté ne m'en blamera pas, je lui dirai la vérité tout comme elle est. Dans ma dernière lettre à my Lord Sunderland datée du 26^{ième} de Bathe je marquais comme quoi j'avais vu marcher les ennemis en arrivant à Bathe droit à un lieu qui s'appelle Phillips Norton qui est le chemin de Frome, je marchai hier au matin droit à Phillips Norton ; j'oubliais de dire à Votre Majesté que j'avais envoyé un parti la nuit avec ordre de voir marcher l'armée des ennemis hier au matin, si elle marchait et de m'en donner avis, et de quel côté la tête tournait—mais celui qui le commandait se contenta de revenir, et de me dire que des gens l'avaient assuré qu'ils n'avaient point marché. Je ne crois pas qu'on doit jamais tenir à un oui dire mais qu'il fallait voir soi-même, de sorte que je commandai d'abord un autre parti pour la même chose qui alla comme je lui avais dit, et se fit tirer, mais comme c'était dans ma marche et même si avancée que l'avant garde qui ne doutait point de battre les ennemis s'ils les trouvaient, avait marché si vites et si pressés les uns sur les autres qu'ils étaient dans l'entrée du lieu jusques dans les haies où il y avait une barrière où je fis faire halte le parti que j'avais envoyé avec ordre de se faire tirer s'il y avait des troupes, mais comme ce ne fut de deux ou trois coups je dis a My Lord Churchill de faire avancer une compagnie de Grenadiers pour voir ce que c'était—j'avais oublié de dire à Votre Majesté que j'avais commandé cinq cent mousquetaires et les dragons pour marcher à la tête étant en pays fort couvert, les cinq compagnies de grenadier étaient dans le nombre des cinq cent mousquetaires, les grenadiers à cheval avaient la tête de tout. Le Duc de Grafton commandait le dé-

tachment qui s'y est comporté avec une forte grande valeur, et tellement que je le priai de ne le vouloir plus faire, car tout de bon c'était trop, mais que pourtant c'était fort bien de l'avoir fait une fois, comme il revint à la barrière où j'étais il était fort essoufflé et avec raison, car il alla à la tête de la compagnie des grenadiers du régiment des gardes qu'il commande dont Hawley en est capitaine qui alla jusques à l'entrée du village où il trouva un fort grand feu. Comme je vis que la chose était tout de bon et que ce qui avait marché était sûrement en grand danger je commandai les grenadiers à cheval de passer la barrière et de favoriser leur retraite croyant bien qu'il la fallait faire et en même temps commandai de couler des mousquetaires le long des haies ; ce fut la barrière où l'on me dit que le duc de Grafton était en danger je fis doubler le pas aux Grenadiers à cheval qui avaient déjà passé la barrière, et ils arrivèrent si à propos qu'il y avait un assez gros corps de cavalerie qui venait par un autre chemin pour les couper mais qui s'arrêtèrent et même se retirèrent fort vite devant les grenadiers, il y avait déjà une troupe qui aurait coupé le duc de Grafton, et les vingt maistre qui avaient pousse les premiers—c'était un maréchal de logis d'Oxford qui les commandait, le même homme qui était à cette affaire près de Taunton, qui voyant le duc de Grafton dans ce danger lui offrit son cheval qui ne le voulut pas prendre mais trouva un autre cheval qui était blessé je crois, car quand it revint à la barrière le cheval boitait. Comme je vis que le duc de Grafton était revenu et que les Grenadiers à cheval n'étaient point poussés je vis bien que ce n'était point une si grosse affaire qu'elle pouvait être car les dragons et la cavalerie s'étaient tellement pressés les uns sur les autres que je ne sais ce qui serait arrivé s'ils étaient sortis par quelque autre endroit sur nous. Voyant cela je ne songeai plus qu'à les mettre en état de n'être plus battu, et les fis retirer les uns après les autres et sans montrer trop qu'ils n'étaient pas bien, de peur de les effrayer sans que les ennemis vinsent. My Lord Churchill demeura à la barrière avec l'infanterie pour arrêter ce qui viendrait de ce côté là, cependant que je mettrals la cavalerie où je la croyais mieux, qui était sur une hauteur derrière nous à la portée du mousquet, où je la mis en bataille. My Lord Churchill revint avec l'infanterie sans qu'elle fut poussée, car je fis toujours demeurer les trois escadrons des gardes, ayant séparé le détachement en trois troupes la où ils étaient d'abord, seulement un peu enlargis pour favoriser l'infanterie en cas qu'on la voulut pousser, ce qu'ils ne firent point—le reste de notre infanterie ni le canon n'étaient point encore arrivés j'envoyai à l'infanterie d'avancer et même avant le canen ce qu'elle fit ; je la fis mettre en bataille sur la hauteur où la cavalerie était et mis la cavalerie derrière

et sur une aile, l'autre étant couverte par des haies et fosses, et là nous demeurames pour voir si nous entreprendrions quelque chose d'avantage—le canon n'était point encore venu ce n'était pourtant manque de soin de M^r Shiers que je trouve fort diligent en tout, mais les chemins sont méchants. Dès que le canon fut arrivé je leur fis donner quelques volées qui les inquiétaient fort ils nous répondirent un peu après que le notre eu tiré, de deux fort petites pièces, je crois de deux livres, une heure après ils en eurent deux autres un peu meilleures mais fort inconsiderables, je croyais une fois demeurer là devant eux toute la nuit, mais nous eumes une forte grande pluie qui nous aurait fort incommodé n'ayant point de tentes, de sorte que je jugai avec l'opinion des Colonels qu'assurément le mieux que nous pourrions faire ce serait de marcher, ce que nous fimes. Je donnai ordre au Marechal de logis de l'armée qui est Capitaine Coleford de qui je me sers pour cela, d'aller au logement et que j'étais résolu de venir ici qui est un lieu qu'on appelle Bradford où M^r Hall, beaufrère de feu M^r Thomas Thin qui n'est pas des mieux affectionnés comme Votre Majesté sait, a une fort jolie maison où l'on m'a logé, mais avec le consentement de ceux qui ont soin de la maison et même je leur ai dit moi-même que tout ce qu'on prendrait serait payé, c'est la maison où il demeure ordinairement ; je me suis mis ici parceque c'est à portée et pour Londres et pour Bristol et pour l'artillerie que j'ai fait marcher hier de Marlborough à un lieu que se nomme Devizes qui est à sept milles d'ici, je ne marche point daujourd'hui à moins d'une nécessité, car les troupes ont eu une fort rude journée hier car il était onze heures du soir avant que mon arrière garde n'arriva, et Votre Majesté sait que cavalerie ni infanterie n'a pas eu un jour de repos depuis que je suis parti de Londres, et voici le neuvième jour, la cavalerie que j'ai eu avec moi n'a pas eu trop de repos Ce n'est pas jusques à hier elle était en fort bonne état ; un jour de repos la remettra assez bien, car je reglerai ma marche selon les avis que j'aurai de celle des ennemis Des que j'eu résolu de marcher hier de devant les ennemis je détachai Oglethorpe avec quatre vingt chevaux ou dragons pour aller savoir des nouvelles si les ennemis marchaient aussi bien que moi, ce qu'ils firent, car Oglethorpe revint hier au soir après minuit qui me rapporta que les ennemis marchaient droit à Frome, je l'ai renvoyé ce matin avec le même parti, et lui ai donné ordre de prendre cinquante maistre de la milice de M^d Pembroke qui est sur son chemin à un lieu qu'on appelle Troubridge et de la il s'en ira vers Frome, pour me faire savoir des nouvelles et la dessus je me reglerai, Oglethorpe rencontra un homme qui venait hier de Philips Norton qui était dans le lieu tout le temps, il lui dit que l'armée des ennemis avait commencé

à marcher quand j'arrivai et qu'incontinent tout revint, je crois qu'il n'avait pas marché fort loin s'il l'avait fait ; j'entends le duc de Monmouth—il est vrai que son canon ne tira que plus de deux heures après que nous fumes arrivé il nous fit paraître quatre drapeaux blancs et un bataillon avec des piques mais le tout couvert de haies, il eut d'abord des pionniers car il fit travailler où était son canon, de quoi j'étais fort aise car j'étais sur qu'il ne m'avait point dérobé sa marche car je crois qu'il ne voudrait pas laisser son canon derrière, il ne me parut qu'un homme sur un cheval blanc qui se remuait plus que les autres. Parker m'assure qu'il vit le duc de Monmouth qui vint nous regarder comme nous marchions ; ils n'étaient que cinq—cela me fait croire qu'ils marchaient en même temps se qui s'accorde avec Oglethorpe [name illegible, query Mr. Turner] m'assure qu'il tua Capitaine Mathews quand je fis avancer les grenadiers—si le duc de Monmouth marche vers Bridgwater et je crois dans quel lieu qu'il marche il me serait de la dernière nécessité d'avoir des tentes, si j'en avais je suis sur qu'il ne durerait pas six jours, et sans cela il me faut regler par les villages où je puis loger, je croyais qu'elles étaient venues avec le duc de Grafton, j'espère que Votre Majesté ne trouvera pas mauvais que my Lord Dartmouth m'envoie en toute diligence car si je n'en ai point je suis assuré que je pourrais fort bien être blâmé de ne pas finir la chose viteement, car Sire si j'avais des tentes je m'irais camper à un demi mille de lui et comme cela il n'oserait jamais marcher et n'aurait point de provision, au lieu que comme je suis il me faut toujours être à trois ou quatres milles de lui pour le plus près et est toujours en état d'aller presque où il voudra où bien de m'arrêter dans le moindre village du monde et puis de s'en aller quand il voudra ce qui peut paraître au monde un peu extraordinaire, de le laisser subsister si long temps, je crois bien qu'avec les troupes que j'ai je le battraï partout mais pourquoi hasarder d'honnêtes gens quand assurément on le peut ruiner autrement, et fort aisément je supplie très humblement Votre Majesté de me pardonner de la presser comme je fais, mais c'est qu'il paraîtra fort extraordinaire qu'on aie l'honneur de commander nos troupes contre une compagnie de vagabonds qui se moqueront de lui Major Ramsey m'a rendu la lettre que Votre Majesté m'a fait l'honneur de m'écrire Je suis confus de tant d'honneur qu'elle me fait je tacherai à le pouvoir mériter, si j'ai nouvelles que le duc de Monmouth soit à Frome, et qu'il montre qu'il croit être la en sureté, je le dis par avance à Votre Majesté que je crois qu'il est assuré qu'il serait mieux ne le point tant presser, car c'est un lieu ouvert jusques à que les tentes viennent de peur qu'il n'aille marcher vers Bridgwater, où dans quelque autre endroit qui nous donnera plus de peine. Par la lettre

de Votre Majesté vous me commandez de prendre garde à Londres et à Bristol je crois que si je ne le presse pas présentement mais détacher M^d Churchill pour se mettre sur le chemin de Bristol et moi sur celui de Londres mais pourtant à portée de se joindre l'un à l'autre si nous pouvons trouver des villages propres je marcherai toujours demain pour me mettre à portée de l'un et de l'autre s'il ne marche pas lui même avant ce que je saurai par Oglethorpe je ne sais ce que je ferai touchant Major Ramsey et Colonel Conon car n'entendant rien dire de Ramsey le jour que je devais joindre l'infanterie j'ai prié Conon de faire la charge qui était destinée pour l'autre, et il était en possession quand il arriva, j'ai dit à Ramsey je crois que ce que Votre Majesté pourrait faire la-dessus c'est de renvoyer chercher Conon parce que son Régiment doit revenir d'Hollande qui est une bonne raison, je fais faire à M harpe le détail de la cavalerie, M^r Shales venant et l'artillerie étant dans l'ordre où elle est je ne manque qu'un Capitaine de charois qui me serait absolument nécessaire je ferai toujours du mieux qu'il me sera possible, Je suis si long que j'ai peur que Votre Majesté me trouvera ennuyeus mais j'espère qu'elle me pardonnera ne le faisant que pour connaitre les intentions de Votre Majesté qui seront exécutées avec toute la ponctualité imaginable par la personne du monde qui est et sera toute sa vie avec toute la soumission imaginable de V.M. &c., &c., &c.

FEVERSHAM.