

## The Siege and Defence of Taunton, 1644-5.

BY EMANUEL GREEN.

FROM the commencement of the troubles between the King and the Parliament in 1642, Taunton trained and drilled men on behalf of the Parliament, a service for which the mayor received especial thanks, and the town a special grant of money towards its careful fortification. It continued to be held for the Parliament to the summer of 1643, being then garrisoned by five thousand of the county trained bands. But the intended outworks were not finished, nor the cannon in place, when, in May, Sir Ralph Hopton, coming with a Royalist force from Cornwall, was joined at Chard by the Marquis of Hertford with another body from Oxford. The two united formed a force of 4,000 foot, 2,000 horse, 300 dragoons, and 16 field pieces. Col. Edward Popham, commanding in the district for the Parliament, seeing that he could bring up no force strong enough to encounter them, sent orders from Glastonbury for all the soldiers to quit Taunton, bring off the ammunition, and throw the ordnance into the Castle moat. The townsmen, however, determined against this. They rose, took and kept the guards themselves, and so prevented the soldiers from leaving. In the midst of this disturbance the enemy suddenly appeared in force, and "stroke such a terrour," that when the town was summoned, two of the principal inhabitants—Mr. George Powell, an apothecary and justice of the peace for the borough, with Mr. Nicholas—were sent out to treat. They agreed to surrender on condition that the town should be free from plunder, and the inhabitants free from imprisonment; that the Castle should be delivered with the ordnance, arms, and ammunition therein; and that the victors should have free quarters and a whole week's pay.

The consequences of this surrender, and how the terms were kept, must be passed here. It must suffice to say that the town was held under Sir John Stowell or his deputy, Col. Reeve, until,

by the arrival of the Parliamentary General, the Earl of Essex, in the summer of 1644, the King's Association of the Western Counties was broken up. The Royalists then retiring somewhat, a party of horse and foot under Sir Robert Pye and Col. Robert Blake, went from Lyme to Taunton, and had it surrendered to them on the 9th July, after an uneventful siege of about a week.

First under Sir Robert Pye, then under Col. Blake, Taunton now remained a garrison for the Parliament; and although it was an open town, and not much fortified, it was always a sharp thorn in the side of the Royalist force, which at this time held all else in Somerset.

On the King's return march from Devon, in October, 1644, when the Royal army passed by Chard, towards London, it was determined to "restrain" this garrison, and a force of three thousand men (besides others from Devon) was told off, under the command of Col. Edmund Windham, to block it up. The town was soon surrounded, and cannon, got from Bridgwater, were placed, some on the eastern side, on a hill about half a mile off, and others, brought from Exeter, on the western side. The defenders, with a troop of horse, and the coming in of the country people, numbered about a thousand strong, determined, according to a covenant among themselves, to lay down their lives rather than surrender. As evidence of their activity, a sally was made on the north side, and a hundred prisoners taken; a message being then sent to the Royalist commander, that, if he wished these fed, he must send in provisions for them, as else the garrison could not be starved to help them.<sup>1</sup> The besiegers soon made their first attack, which was bravely repulsed, to be again repeated, with the same result; but at the third attempt, there not being sufficient defensive outworks, the town was taken, after a brave and stubborn resistance. The Castle, however—the Castle alone—was still held intact, and this the victors now so closely besieged that its early loss seemed certain.<sup>2</sup> The townsmen were forbidden to buy provisions, lest any should

(1). *Perfect Diurnal*, No. 64.

(2). *Perfect Diurnal*, No. 67.

be got into it, which was "like starving all Somerset to make Taunton Castle yield."<sup>3</sup>

In London the west-country gentlemen begged energetically that immediate aid should be sent ; but this, the only spot in the county held for the Parliament, was so isolated, and surrounded by the enemy, that to approach it with a small force was not easy, even if there had been one near, and so relief could only be managed by sending a strong one from a distance, or direct from London. But, unfortunately—for this purpose at least—there had arisen important divisions among the Parliamentary commanders, which caused every warlike movement to be much hindered. It was only by the strenuous and continued exertions of Mr. William Strode, that an order was at last obtained for sending off both money and necessaries, and not until the 4th December were any preparations completed.<sup>4</sup>

Col. Blake got notice of the intended relief, and his men determined to hold out as long as they had breath, and to fast two days in the week, if necessary.<sup>5</sup> Before any force could leave London, Col. Holborne, Col. Vandrusk, and Col. Ludlow, with twelve hundred horse and foot, had been ordered to march for Taunton, from Chichester ; but for some reason, to the great annoyance of all who now so anxiously waited and watched for them, they did not at once advance. So that it seemed, after all, that the gallant little band in Taunton Castle would be left without their promised help.

It must be remembered here that winter campaigns were not usual at this time, and possibly the commanders may have hoped that some other force, nearer the scene of intended action, might be found to replace them.

Eventually, however, they set out, and, after a long and hard winter's march, on Monday, the 9th December, safely reached Dorchester. The Royalists, on hearing of their coming, raised the siege at Taunton, and drew off in a body to Chard to meet

(3). *Parliament Scout*, No. 76.

(4). *Mercurius Civicus*, No. 80.

(5). *Perfect Occurrences*, No. 17.

them. Col. Holborne, continuing his march, came also to Chard. His opponents then thought fit to retreat, at first orderly enough, but in a short time they broke up and dispersed, and fled towards Bridgwater, leaving behind them a hundred arms, besides hay, oats, and other provision. In the short pursuit they also lost a whole troop of horse and twenty men taken prisoners.<sup>6</sup> Without further opposition, after enduring a siege of three months, the Castle was relieved on Thursday, the 14th Dec., and supplied with provisions and other necessaries. It was then fully seen what a great scarcity there was of these, as well as of ammunition, and with what admirable bravery the little garrison had held out so long against so potent an enemy.

The governor had been many times summoned to surrender; terms being always offered, and always refused. Just before the relief came he received the following letter, addressed to himself and the mayor and aldermen :

GENTLEMEN,

Having been employed hither by his Majesty's command for the reducing of the town and Castle of Taunton under his obedience, I have hitherto made it my endeavour to doe that work with as much gentlenesse as the discharge of my trust would admit of, chusing rather by way of siege to effect this businesse, rather than by the just extremities of Fire and Sword. I have therefore thought fit to send you this Summons to prevent (if possible) those two sad calamities of Warre, which I shall never be induced to put in execution till your refusall of such safe conditions, both for your persons and estates, as I doe profer you, shall render you incapable of all Clemency, and make that an act of necessitie and justice which otherwise might have had the appearance of cruelty.

If you, therefore, shall send two hostages of qualitie out of your Garrison, I shall appoint two Gentlemen from hence to treat with you about the surrender of the place, and doe hereby engage myselve, upon the honour and reputation of a Gent., to ratifie and preserve inviolable what conditions they shall agree to ; but if this sure offer shall be refused, you must then expect such extremitie as in order

(6). *The Burning Bush, &c.*

to the business for which I am here I shall cause to be put in execution. And all the blood and other miseries which shall happen unto you cannot but fall heavie on the heads and consciences of the refusers, and let you see how little hopes of reliefe you can have, and how unwilling I am to put that in practice which must necessarily prove the ruine and destruction of your Towne.

I shall defer the execution of what I have power to inflict for ten days longer, and give you liberty to solicit relief if you shall deliver Hostages for the surrender of Towne and Castle; if you faile of succour in that time, if this be not accepted, God's will be done, and every man's blood rest on his owne head.

I rest as farre as honour will give me leave,

Your well-wishing Neighbour and Countryman,

EDMUND WINDHAM.

To this appeal an answer was returned from Taunton Castle, addressed :

For Colonel Edmund Windham, at his quarters at Orchard, these :  
SIR,

We have examined all our actions and deportments from your first approach before this place as much as we can doe in so short a time since the Receipt of your note, and doe much wonder upon what ground, after so much experience of ours, and vanitie of your resolutions, you should conceive it possible to prevail over us by a meere paper project, either by threats to affright us from that duty we owe to God and our Country, or by artificiall persuasions to induce us to a treaty so dishonourable, so unwarrantable. The power and mercy which God hath pleased hitherto to make manifest in the defence of this Towne, how weak soever in your eyes, hath not beene so ineffectuall unto us, as that now we should entertaine thoughts of surrender, or confine ourselves to a ten daies expectation, or prefer the honour and reputation of Gentlemen before the goodnesse and power of an Almighty Saviour, or should be more fearfull of rendering ourselves incapable of your clemency, than of making ourselves odious both to God and man by quitting a Fort, so wonderfully delivered into our hands at first, so mightily preserved ever since, and for the future so strongly provided and fortified. If, therefore, your resolution be so settled as your summons doth

impart, we would wish you not forbear to put them in execution upon supposition that it is possible to draw us to accept of any your proffers, but otherwise, if you have any inclination to prevent the effusion of more blood and other calamities, you may do well to withdraw your forces and leave us to the discharge of our dutie here and possession of our liberty, rather than by the continuance of your violence and outrage to enforce us to that which we are unwilling to do even to our enemies. In a word, whatever your resolutions are, these are to let you know, that as we neither feare your menaces nor accept your proffers, so we wish you for time to come to desist from all overture of the like nature unto us, who are resolved to the last drop of our blood to maintain the Quarrell we have undertaken, and doubt not but the same God who hath hitherto protected, will, ere long, blesse us with an issue answerable to the justness of our cause; howsoever, to Him alone shall we stand or fall.<sup>7</sup>

ROBERT BLAKE, SAM. BLAKE, HEN. THOMPSON,  
SAM. PERREY, JOHN COLEBORNE.

Having settled matters in Taunton, Col. Holborne retired towards Dorset, leaving behind him two thousand muskets, forty barrels of powder, Col. Popham's regiment of horse, and seven companies of foot. By this retirement Somerset was again open to the King's forces, and under Lord Hopton—hardly allowing the townsmen time to feel their relief—they at once commenced to concentrate around Taunton, but their work was much frustrated by the divisions and quarrels among the officers, and by mutinies of the men. Thus, when Col. Holborne returned suddenly, he made a successful attack on the party nearest the town, and forced the others to draw off somewhat, so giving the townsmen enlarged quarters; then, leaving Col. Blake, who "feared not the access of any enemy," still in the Castle, he took up his quarters at Ham, and continued to send out parties to keep the town free and the country open. The command of the King's force now passed to Lord Goring, and from his incompetence, and the divisions, quarrels, and intrigues which

arose, especially between himself and Sir Richard Grenville, its power for conquest, or for any success, was almost annihilated. The Parliament force gathering round was strong enough to keep him continually employed, and prevented him from doing more than harass the garrison, a want of success which greatly annoyed both officers and men, and increased their mutual jealousies. Various suggestions were made for the attack. Sometimes it was planned to take the town and burn it; as if this could be as easily done as talked about. Sir Richard Grenville proposed to take it by approach, considering that ten days would do the work; but, amidst other difficulties, which must be passed here, all action was constantly deferred. So passed away the winter months of 1644 and the early part of 1645.

The struggle for supremacy between Goring and Sir Richard Grenville culminated about the 11th April, when the former received orders to march with his horse into Wiltshire, and to leave his foot with Sir Richard, who, since the 2nd April, had been before Taunton. For a time Grenville kept off at a fair distance, not attempting a close siege; then, after two attempts to storm, which resulted in defeat and loss, he applied himself to sweeping the district of all provisions. In this matter Col. Blake had also been busy, and every opportunity had been taken to obtain supplies. Not only was the town and Castle in a good state for defence, and sufficiently manned, but they had provisions, carefully reported as enough for three months.<sup>8</sup> The chief difficulty was that food would probably be short for the hundred and fifty horses within the works.

In London it was seen that the position at Taunton must soon again be critical. "Bills were put up" in several churches for its preservation from so cruel an enemy; cannon were ordered to be sent, and Sir William Waller was urged to advance to its relief. Meantime the Royalist army had been increased, and was reported to number six thousand men, having besides, a body of horse near Yeovil to prevent surprise from

(8). *Scottish Dove*, No. 78.

that quarter. By this force the town was now closely surrounded with all possible care and skill, and no news could be got in for four or five days.

It was on the 10th April that the besiegers began with great labour and diligence to entrench themselves within musket shot of the defensive works; and after continued exertion, working night and day, they closely begirt the town with about twelve fortified guards, to which approaches were afterwards added. Cannon and musketry began to play upon it, volley growing upon volley, both by day and by night, until it sometimes appeared "as if besieged by a wall of fire," and as if escape would be impossible, except by "a miracle of Providence."<sup>9</sup> Sir Richard Grenville having been wounded in an attack on Wellington House, Sir John Barkley was given the command; but Grenville's men, in their savage anger at his absence, hung up every man, woman, or child, who came out, and threatened to give no quarter when they got within.<sup>10</sup> But by those who had to watch the defence, every confidence was felt, not only in the garrison, "as being men who would stand to it whilst they had breath," but also in the townsmen, as being men staunch and determined, and worth four times their number of neutrals or cool friends.<sup>11</sup>

Leaving the town for awhile, besieged, it is necessary to trace the proceedings taken for its relief.

The result of a cry for peace, raised at the end of 1644, was a new modelled army, determined more than ever to fight to the last. The debates held on this subject during the first quarter of 1645 prevented energetic action against the King's force in Somerset, but, matters being arranged, and the new army fairly ready, it was considered what should first be done, and the relief of Taunton was concluded to be the most important duty. On the 24th of April, Sir Thomas Fairfax, the commander-in-chief of the new force, was consulted on this

(9). *Weekly Postmaster*, No. 3.

(10). *The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer*, No. 97.

(11). *Moderate Intelligencer*, No. 8.



project,<sup>12</sup> and, on the 28th, the Parliament, after being busy all day on the same subject, ordered that Sir Thomas, with Major General Skippon, should at once advance to its relief.

On the 30th Fairfax accordingly set out on his march, and arrived at Salisbury before his enemy knew that he had moved. On the 4th May an order reached him not to continue his advance, but this he chose to disobey, and on the 7th arrived at Blandford, without meeting with any resistance. Here he received a second order, this time passed by a special vote of the Parliament, to send on a party of four thousand five hundred only to Taunton, and himself, with the remainder, to return and watch the movements of the King towards Oxford. This he now obeyed, and next morning a brigade of four regiments of foot was told off for the advance, viz., those of Colonels Welden, Fortescue, Floyd, and Ingoldsby. This separation was a cause of much grief to both officers and men, and a source of some little confusion at first, as difficulties arose on the question as to which colonel should be in command. Being joined by a battalion of six companies from Lyme, the whole together numbered about five thousand foot. With them were about two thousand horse, viz., those of Cols. Graves, Cook, and Popham, and Col. Boscawen's regiment from Plymouth. These at once marched willingly away, thinking of nothing but the work before them. With only the hedges for their shelter at night, they marched on by Ford, "over the bridge," and so by Winstead, and on the 9th May quartered at Chard, having neither seen nor heard anything of their enemy. Here they got notice that the besiegers were still at their work, and that Taunton must be lost if not speedily relieved.<sup>13</sup> A messenger was at once despatched with intelligence of their coming, and a promise that the firing of ten cannon should announce their arrival.

Meanwhile Lord Goring had re-assumed the command before Taunton, his force being about eight thousand men; with them

(12). *Kingdom's Weekly*, No. 94.

(13). *A Great Victory before Taunton*, &c.

however were included the country people, pressed to the service against their wills. These were put in the front and driven to the assault, but many chose to be hanged rather than obey.<sup>14</sup> The gross outrages, the "constant butcheries, rapes, and robberies," of his "crew," as Goring's men were called, caused a miserable outcry against him. It made "one's heart ache to hear the talk of any who came from Somerset."<sup>15</sup> With this, intrigue was again successful, and he received orders to hasten away to Oxford with all possible speed, and to take with him as large a force as he could. He obeyed and set out with three thousand horse, leaving Lord Hopton in command before Taunton.

The preparations being advanced, on the 25th April a slight experimental assault was made. This was repulsed, but it was evident from that time that the attack was to be in earnest.

But the defenders had worked as hard as their enemy, and Taunton was no longer an "open" town. Every possible entrance was stopped, and the principal ones guarded without by earthworks. Within, the streets were repeatedly barricaded, and could only be gained piece by piece, and after them was the Castle, with its regular strength and the inspiring remembrance of how nobly and successfully it had been held in the former siege.

On the 6th May was made the first determined attempt to storm, and an outwork called the Vicar's House on the east side of the town was lost, the defenders being driven out by the continual play of cannon upon it. Across the end of East Street, outside the gate, "upon a small square by it," a great defensive work had been made, and this, on the 7th May, after being much battered by the expenditure of nearly three hundred shot, was fiercely stormed, but the assailants being met with stones and scalding water were repulsed.

Thursday, the 8th, opened with a sham fight between two parties of Royalists, who for some time skirmished against each other with blank cartridge. They hoped that those within

(14). *Scottish Dove*, No. 79.

(15). Oldmixon.

would suppose one side to be their friends, and coming out with succour would be trapped in an ambuscade prepared for them.<sup>16</sup> Col. Blake, however, kept all within his walls, and the ruse failed.

Advice was now received by Hopton that Sir Thomas Fairfax was advancing with a relief. As this force was supposed to be strong, a retreat to Bridgwater, Burrough, and Langport was planned, there in "those fast quarters to refresh themselves" and attend the coming of Lord Goring, whose return was expected, but of whose whereabouts not one word was known.<sup>17</sup> But before they moved it was resolved, as their batteries were so well placed against the three approaches, to adventure a general assault.

Accordingly, at seven in the evening, a most desperate attack was made all round the town, the part by the Castle excepted. After a furious fight the besiegers succeeded in entering both at the west and also at the east ends, and became masters of the whole of East Reach, and a great part of "the line." At one place only were the King's men repulsed. Having got possession of the gate at the west side and the small sconce by it, they were opposed and harassed by a guard, sheltered behind some entrenchments and barricades cast up purposely to protect it, and after a very hot fight were beaten out of this part of the line.

Seeing their enemy thus in possession of their strongest works, the spirits of some began to fail, but being encouraged by others, it was resolved, by using all extemporary shelter, even the garden hedges and banks, to stand stubbornly on their defence. Hoping to terrify the garrison, the conquerors now fired the part of the town they had taken, being altogether about a hundred houses, but the wind setting contrary, no great harm was done. This act seemed, however, to operate against them, for the townsmen concentrating their forces, became desperate in their resistance, and determined to hold at all hazards what still remained to them.

(16). *Anglia Rediviva*.

(17). Clar. MSS. Culpeper to the King.

On Friday, the 9th, the Royalists held all the barricades up to the "New Hospital," in East Street, and getting information that Fairfax had returned and was not advancing, they made another furious onslaught, crying out as they neared the defenders, "You Roundhead rogues, you look for relief, but we have relieved them, and Goring is coming on. We will not leave a house standing if you do not yield." Then, with the "bullet for their compliment, and the cannon for their orator," they played upon the town so hotly that other houses were taken, and some burned. Nothing "was heard but thunder, and nothing was seen but fire." This fighting and storming continued for eight hours, when the besiegers were again the victors, and entered the defensive line at the Priory. This was their third success, and although they were charged time after time, with both horse and foot, and were several times repulsed, in the end they kept possession of the works, took a good part of the town, and fired about a hundred and fifty more houses. At six o'clock the defenders retained only the Church, the Castle, the Maiden's Fort, and one entrenchment in the market place.<sup>18</sup>

But the more the enemy gained, and the nearer and more formidable he seemed, the more the courage of the defenders rose. They now determined, if necessary, to retire to the Castle, to fight it out to the last man; and not to yield whilst there was a stone to throw. Although all their bravery could not prevent the losses of the day, they were content with having given their opponents "showers of lead, which filled the trenches with their filthy carcasses, making them exchange the height and fury of their gallantry for the humility and silence of death."

The morning of the 10th May opened quietly, as Goring was hourly looked for to return with his reinforcements. Hopton early sent in a message, offering fair terms if the town would yield; but Blake returned answer that he had four pairs of boots left, and would eat three of them before he should have it.<sup>19</sup>

(18). *State Papers*, vol. 317.

(19). *Narrative of the Expedition to Taunton*.

On receiving this refusal the assault was repeated, but not so furiously, and without any fresh success. This repulse amounted to a defeat, as, on being now assured that the relief had advanced to Blandford, Hopton at once sent off his battering pieces, intending to march away to collect and concentrate his dispersed men. But the return march of Sir Thomas Fairfax, with a part of his force only, being misunderstood, new advice came in that the relief had certainly retreated, and that in some disorder. On this the cannon were recalled, that one more essay might be tried.

Although nothing was gained by the last attack, it had been made to cover the attempt of some traitors within to fire the town. Two of the treacherous villains were taken in the act; one, from the fury of the people, was brained at once, the other was cut to pieces by the soldiers; and the women made "quick despatch" of a woman who was acting with them.<sup>20</sup> Before they died they implicated some fifty others, and confessed they were to receive ten pounds each for their work. Some of their accomplices, taken afterwards, were hanged. The fire had been kindled in a most dangerous place, but by this prompt discovery, and the united exertions of the people, it was soon extinguished.<sup>21</sup>

Within three hours after, to the surprise of the besiegers, the relief appeared, and after all their labour and gallantry they were obliged to draw off hurriedly, unsuccessful, and disappointed. Lord Culpeper, judiciously writing on the 11th May, the day of the failure, told the King concerning Hopton's proceedings, but "what success hath been we know not yet, but believe the great game will drive these perverse men from all their holds, except the Castle."

Cols. Weldon and Graves, leaving Chard, continued their advance to Pitminster, where, on account of the lanes, their movements were slow. The men, most of them recruits, and having hardly shoes to their feet, had suffered greatly from hard quarters, cold nights, and hot days, yet the strictest discipline

(20). *Perfect Passages*, No. 30.

(21). *Perfect Occurrences*, No. 21.

was maintained, death being the punishment for theft. The officers, giving every encouragement by example, put aside their horses, and tramped it with their men, all marching on in perfect unity of purpose, resolved to complete the work they had undertaken—to fight or die. Quarters a night about Pitminster, Pounsford, and Trull, on the 10th May the march was continued unchecked to Orchard, where an outpost of the Royalists, on being taken prisoners, could not believe that an enemy was so near.

Up to this time not a word had been received from the town, and on the promised ten guns being fired no expected answer was heard. The reason was afterwards found to be, that the firing was not certainly known to be from friends; and, besides that, the powder and ammunition were so nearly exhausted that there remained but little more than what the soldiers actually carried.

Under the impression that the new comers were the whole of Sir Thomas Fairfax's army, about four o'clock the siege was raised; and this, just as it was certain that in a few days more the place must have yielded.<sup>22</sup> Col. Blake, from a "high place," with a "prospective," had discovered his friends, and, encouraging his men, sallied out on the rear of his retreating foe. But, being too weak, and not in condition to follow, and the others being better of foot, they fled too fast for them.

As no advance beyond Orchard could be made that day, the relief men camped out as best they could, some being quartered at South Petherton, and other places round. There was but little rest among them that night, and all, in their anxiety to go on with their work, thought it long before daylight came. In the morning, being Sunday, the 11th May, they again attempted to move; but the Royalists, in their retreat, had cut down the trees, and so much blocked the road, to prevent pursuit, that it had to be reopened afresh. So great was the hindrance from this cause, that twelve hours were occupied in getting four miles,

(22). *Two Letters from Sir Thos. Fairfax, &c.*

and when Taunton was reached the enemy had entirely disappeared. Some horse sent on in advance were able to go quite up to the walls. Lord Hopton had just sent the town a summons, and threatened, if it did not surrender, to take it by force and put all to the sword, except seven persons only. But those within had resolved, with their governor, to hold out "to the uttermost of their dearest heart's blood"; and Blake replied that he would not deliver it, but would keep it to the last man; and as for the seven persons to be spared, if Hopton would send in their names, he would presently send him out their bodies.<sup>23</sup>

Thus was Taunton relieved a second time just in the "nick of time," just at the "pinch of their utmost straits," after being five times stormed, and after a general siege of about fifty-four, and a close one of about forty days. On being viewed, the town was found one of the saddest spectacles eyes ever beheld. Two-thirds of it were consumed by fire, especially about East Street, and the people almost starved. The thatch had been taken from the houses to feed the horses, the bed-cords had been used for match, and only two barrels of powder remained.<sup>24</sup> On the very day that the siege was raised, Lord Goring was actually at Bath, and was expected at Wells, on his way back. It was not forgotten by the defenders that Taunton had long been the object of his highest malice, and that, had it fallen, its punishment and disgrace would have been horrible, and hardly to be imagined. During the siege, of the garrison, about one hundred had been slain outright, and two hundred were found lying badly wounded. Of the besiegers, from five hundred to a thousand were supposed to have been killed.

On the 12th Col. Weldon entered the town, the inhabitants being joyed beyond expression. The country people, to the number of about a thousand, came in from their hiding places in the woods, and with "broad eyes of wonder," gazed upon the works which had defended the place, and upon the soldiers who

(23). *Burning Bush. Life of Blake.*

(24). Wood's *Life of Charles I. Perfect Occurrences*, No. 19.

had defended the works, looking upon them as giants rather than men.<sup>25</sup> Thanksgiving services were held in all churches and chapels, and letters of thanks were sent to Fairfax, Weldon, and Blake, with money for distribution amongst the soldiers, whilst a public collection was ordered and made for the poor distressed inhabitants, who had suffered so much by their "matchless magnanimity."

The eleventh of May was long kept as a memorable day; a day of earnest thanksgiving for this most fortunate deliverance. "Thanks to the Lord," cried one preacher, "for He is gracious, and His mercy endureth for ever; who remembered us at Taunton, for His mercy endureth for ever."

(25). *Parliament Scout*, No. 2.

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