

**THE SQUIRE PAPERS; LIST OF THE LONG
PARLIAMENT; AND LIST OF THE
EASTERN-ASSOCIATION COMMITTEES;
AS ADJOINED TO VOLUME SECOND,
THIRD EDITION; LETTERS AND SPEECHES**

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The Squire papers; List of the Long parliament; And List of The Eastern-Association Committees; As Adjoined to Volume Second, Third Edition; Letters and Speeches by Oliver Cromwell

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OLIVER CROMWELL

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THE EASTERN-ASSOCIATION COMMITTEES.

AS ADJOINED TO VOLUME SECOND, THIRD EDITION,

OF
OLIVER CROMWELL'S LETTERS AND SPEECHES.

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THE SQUIRE PAPERS:

FROM FRASER'S MAGAZINE.

THE following Article in *Fraser's Magazine* had not the effect intended for it,—of securing in printer's types a certain poor defaced scantling of Cromwell Letters, which had fallen to my charge under circumstances already sorrowful enough; and then of being, after some slight peaceable satisfaction to such as took interest in it, forgotten by the public; I also being left to forget it, and be free of it. On the contrary, the peaceable satisfaction to persons interested was but temporary; and the public, instead of neglecting and forgetting, took to unquiet guessing, as if there lay some deeper mystery in the thing, perhaps foul play in it: private guessing, which in a week or two broke out into the Newspapers, in the shape of scepticism, of learned doubt too acute to be imposed upon, grounding itself on antiquarian philologies (internal evidence of anachronisms), 'cravat,' 'stand no nonsense,' and I know not what. The unwonted circumstances of the case, and the unsatisfactory though unavoidable reticences in detailing it, threw a certain enigmatic *chiaroscuro* over the transaction, which, as it were, challenged the idle mind. Since the public had not neglected and forgotten, the public could do no other than guess. The idle public, obstinately resolute to see into millstones, could of course see nothing but opacity and its wide realms; got into ever deeper doubt, which is bottomless, 'a sphere with infinite radius,' and very easily arrived at; could get into no certainty, which is a sphere's *centre*, and difficult to arrive at; continued fencing with spectres, arguing from antiquarian philologies, &c. in the Newspapers;—whereby, echo answering echo, and no transparency in millstones being attainable, the poor public rose rapidly to a height of anxiety on this unexpected matter, and raised a noise round itself which, considering the importance of the subject, might be called surprising. In regard to all which, what could an unfortunate Editor of Cromwell Letters do, except perhaps carefully hold his peace? The ancient housekeeper, in some innocent first-floor, in the still night-time, throws a potsherd which is in her way into the street of the village: a most small transaction, laudable in its kind; but near by, starts the observant street-dog, who will see farther into it: "Whaf-thaf? Bow-wow!"—and so awakens, in what enormous geometrical progression is well known, all the dogs in the village, perhaps all the dogs in the parish, and

gradually, even in the county and in the kingdom, to universal vigilant observant "Bow-wow, Whaf-thaf?" in the hope of seeing farther into it. Under which distressing circumstances, the ancient housekeeper understands that her one course is patience and silence; that the less she says or does, the sooner it will end!—This Squire Controversy did not quite terminate by nature, I think; but rather was suddenly quenched by that outburst of the European revolutions in the end of the February then passing, which led the public intellect into fruitfuller departments.

This is not a state of matters one would wish to reawaken! Scepticism, learned doubt, in regard to these Squire Papers, I understand is still the prevailing sentiment; and also that silence, and the reflection how small an interest, if any whatever, is involved in the matter, are the only means of removing doubt, and of leading us to the *least* miraculous explanation, whatever that may be. To myself, I confess, the phenomenon is, what it has always been, entirely inexplicable, a miracle equal to any in *Bollandus* or *Capgravius*, unless these Squire Letters are substantially genuine: and if their history on that hypothesis is very dim and strange,—on the other hypothesis they refuse, for me at least, to have any conceivable history at all. Antiquarian philologies &c. such as appeared in the late universal "Whaf-thaf?" or grand "Squire Controversy" never to be revived, had naturally no effect in changing one's opinion, and could have none. I have since had a visit, two visits, from the Gentleman himself; have conversed with him twice, at large, upon the Letters, the burnt Journal, and all manner of adjacent topics: and certainly, whatever other notion I might form of him, the notion that he either would or could have himself produced a *Forgery of Cromwell Letters*, or been the instrument (for any consideration, much more for none) of another producing it, was flatly inconceivable once for all. Nay to hint at it, I think, would not be altogether safe for Able Editors within wind of this Gentleman! So stands it, as it has always stood, with myself, in regard to this small question.

At the same time, I am well enough aware, the Gentleman's account of proceedings in the business has an amazing look; which only the personal knowledge of him could perhaps render less amazing. Doubt, to strangers, is very permissible; nay to all, these Letters, by the very hypothesis, are involved everywhere in liability to incorrectness; irrecoverably stript of their complete historical authenticity,—and not to be admitted, but to be rigorously excluded, except on that footing, in any History of Cromwell;—and, on the whole, are in the state of an absurd entanglement, connected with a most provoking coil of such. Out of which there is only this good door of egress: That they are intrinsically of no importance in the History of Cromwell; that they alter nothing of his Life's character,

add nothing, deduct nothing; can be believed or disbelieved, without, to him or to us, any perceptible result whatever;—and ought, in fine, to be dismissed and sent upon their destinies, by all persons who have serious truth to seek for, and no time for idle guesses and riddle-ma-rees of the Scriblerus and Nugatory-Antiquarian sort.

Accordingly I had decided, as to these Squire Papers, which can or could in no case have been incorporated into any documentary *Life of Cromwell*, not to introduce them at all into this Book, which has far other objects than *they* or their questions of antiquarian philology can much further! But, on the other hand, it was urged by friends who believe, like myself, in the fundamental authenticity of Squire, that hereby would arise a tacit admission of Squire's spuriousness, injustice done by me to Squire and to the antiquarian philologers; that many readers, disbelievers or not, would have a certain wish to see the Squire Papers;—that, in fine, under the head of the semi-romantic or Doubtful Documents of *Oliver's History*, and at all events as an accidental quite undoubtful Document in the history of *Oliver's History*, they would have a certain value. To all which arguments, not without some slight weight, the Printer now accidentally adds another, That he has room for these Squire Papers, and even need of them to preserve his symmetries; that he can maintain an impassable wall between them and the Book, can insert them at the end of Volume Second and yet not in the Volume, with ease and with advantage. Here accordingly these astonishing Squire Papers are: concerning which I have only one hope to express, That the public, thinking of them (in silence, if I might advise) exactly what it finds most thinkable, will please to excuse me from further function in the matter; my duty in respect of them being now, to the last fraction of it, done; my knowledge of them being wholly communicated; and my care about them remaining, what it always was, close neighbour to nothing. The Reprint is exact from *Fraser's Magazine*, except needful correction of misprints, and insertion of two little Notes which have hung wafered on the margin this long while, and are duly indicated where they occur.

7th May, 1849.

FRASER'S MAGAZINE FOR DEC. 1847: ART. I.

THIRTY-FIVE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

ON the first publication of *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, new contributions of Cromwell matter, of some value, of no value and even of less than none, were, as the general reader knows, diligently forwarded to me from all quarters; and turned to account, in the Second Edition of that work, as the laws of the case seemed to allow. The pro-

cess, which seemed then to all practical intents completed, and is in fact very languid and intermittent ever since, has nevertheless not yet entirely ceased; and indeed one knows not when, if ever, it will entirely cease; for at longer and longer intervals new documents and notices still arrive; though, except in the single instance now before us, I may describe these latter as of the last degree of insignificance; hardly even worth 'inserting in an Appendix,' which was my bargain in respect of them. Whence it does, at last, seem reasonable to infer that our English Archives are now pretty well exhausted, in this particular; and that nothing more, of importance, concerning Oliver Cromwell's utterances of himself in this world, will be gathered henceforth.—Here, however, is a kind of exception: in regard to which, on more accounts than one, it has become necessary for me to adopt an exceptional course; and if not to edit, in the sense of elucidating, the contribution sent me, at least to print it straightway, before accident befall it or me.

The following Letters, which require to be printed at once, with my explicit testimony to their authenticity, have come into my hands under singular circumstances and conditions. I am not allowed to say that the Originals are, or were, in the possession of Mr. So-and-so, as is usual in like cases; this, which would satisfy the reader's strict claims in the matter, I have had to engage expressly not to do. "Why not?" all readers will ask, with astonishment, or perhaps with other feelings still more superfluous for our present object. The story is somewhat of an absurd one, what may be called a farce-tragedy; very ludicrous as well as very lamentable;—not glorious to relate; nor altogether easy, under the conditions prescribed! But these Thirty-five Letters are Oliver Cromwell's; and demand, of me especially, both that they be piously preserved, and that there be no ambiguity, no avoidable mystery or other foolery, in presenting of them to the world. If the Letters are not to have, in any essential or unessential respect, the character of voluntary enigmas; but to be read, with undisturbed attention, in such poor twilight of intelligibility as belongs to them, some explanation, such as can be given, seems needful.

Let me hasten to say, then, explicitly once more, that these Letters are of indubitable authenticity: further, that the Originals, all or nearly all in Autograph, which existed in June last, in the possession of a private Gentleman whose name I am on no account to mention, have now irrecoverably perished;—and, in brief, that the history of them, so far as it can be related under these conditions, is as follows:

Some eight or ten months ago, there reached me, as many had already done on the like subject, a letter from an unknown Correspondent in the distance; setting forth, in simple, rugged and trustworthy, though rather

peculiar dialect, that he, my Unknown Correspondent,—who seemed to have been a little astonished to find that Oliver Cromwell was actually not a miscreant, hypocrite &c. as heretofore represented,—had in his hands a stock of strange old Papers relating to Oliver: much consumed by damp, and other injury of time; in particular, much “eaten into by a vermin” (as my Correspondent phrased it),—some moth, or body of moths, who had boarded there in past years. The Papers, he said, describing them rather vaguely, contained some things of Cromwell’s own, but appeared to have been mostly written by one SAMUEL SQUIRE, a subaltern in the famed Regiment of Ironsides, who belonged to “the Stilton Troop,” and had served with Oliver “from the first mount” of that indomitable Corps, as Cornet, and then as “Auditor,”—of which latter office my Correspondent could not, nor could I when questioned, quite specify the meaning, but guessed that it might be something like that of Adjutant in modern regiments. This Auditor Squire had kept some “Journal,” or Diary of proceedings, from “the first mount” or earlier, from about 1642 till the latter end of 1645, as I could dimly gather; but again it was spoken of as “Journals,” as “Old Papers,” “Manuscripts,” in the plural number, and one knew not definitely what to expect: moth-eaten, dusty, dreary old brown Papers; bewildered and bewildering; dreadfully difficult to decipher, as appeared, and indeed almost a pain to the eye,—and too probably to the mind. Poring in which, nevertheless, my Unknown Correspondent professed to have discovered various things. Strange unknown aspects of affairs, moving accidents, adventures, such as the fortune of war in the obscure Eastern Association (of Lincoln, Norfolk &c.), in the early obscure part of Oliver’s career, hitherto entirely vacant and dark in all Histories, had disclosed themselves to my Unknown Correspondent, painfully spelling in the rear of that destructive vermin: onslaughts, seizures, surprises; endless activity, audacity, rapidity on the part of Oliver; strict general integrity too, nay rhadamanthine justice, and traits of implacable severity connected therewith, which had rather shocked the otherwise strong but *modern* nerves of my Unknown Correspondent. Interspersed, as I could dimly gather, were certain *Letters*, from Oliver and others (known or hitherto unknown, was not said); kept, presumably, by Auditor Squire, the Ironside Subaltern, as narrative documents, or out of private fondness. As proof what curious and to me interesting matter lay in those old Papers, Journals or Journal, as my Unknown Correspondent indiscriminately named them, he gave me the following small Excerpt; illuminating completely a point on which I had otherwise sought light in vain. See, in *Oliver Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches*, Letter of 5th July, 1644; which gives account of Marston-Moor Battle, and contains an allusion to Oliver’s own late loss, ‘Sir, you know my own trials this way,’—touching allusion, as it now