

**OXFORD HISTORICAL AND
LITERARY STUDIES. VOLUME 8.
POLITICAL BALLADS ILLUSTRATING
THE ADMINISTRATION OF SIR
ROBERT WALPOLE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649179350

Oxford Historical and Literary Studies. Volume 8. Political ballads illustrating the administration of Sir Robert Walpole by Milton Percival

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HISTORICAL AND
LITERARY STUDIES
Journal of the American Society of English Teachers
VOLUME 8

Oxford University Press

London Edinburgh Glasgow New York

Toronto Melbourne Bombay

Humphrey Milford M.A. *Publisher to the University*

O X F O R D
Historical and Literary
S T U D I E S

Issued under the direction of C. H. FIRTH
and WALTER RALEIGH Professors of
Modern History and English Literature in
the University of Oxford

V O L U M E 8

P O L I T I C A L B A L L A D S

Illustrating the Administration of

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE

Edited by *MILTON PERCIVAL* Ph.D.

O X F O R D

At the *Clarendon Press*

1916

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PREFACE

No important collection of contemporary political ballads was made during the Walpole Administration. As a consequence, the majority of them are beyond recovery. Broad-sides—with the exception of a few in the British Museum, the Madden Collection at the University of Cambridge, and one or two private collections—have almost wholly disappeared. Folio pamphlets stood a better chance of preservation; but these have hitherto been scattered among various libraries, where, owing to their anonymity and comparative insignificance, they have been practically hidden. The collection here presented—including the titles listed in the Appendix—has been garnered in from the Harvard Library, the British Museum, the Public Record Office, the Bodleian, the Madden Collection at the University of Cambridge, the John Rylands Library and the Chetham Collection at Manchester, and the private library of Professor Firth. It was not possible—hardly even desirable—to publish the entire collection; but I have deposited it in the Harvard Library, where it may be consulted.

An explanation may be needed for beginning this collection with the year 1725. It is true that Walpole was called to the position which he held so long several years earlier, and that ballads issued in that interval can still be found. But it was not until 1725 that satirists and others concerned themselves especially with Walpole. The earliest ballad I have seen in which he has any prominence is that with which the collection opens. In that production (*Robin's Glory; or, The Procession of the Knights of the Bath*) Walpole is called 'King Robin'. The revival of the Order of the

Bath marked his accession, and is an event with which a collection of Walpole ballads may appropriately commence.

In order to make the references as brief as possible, certain specifications in regard to three works frequently quoted have been omitted and should here be stated. The edition of Coxe's *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole* cited is that of 1798 in three volumes, volume one containing the Memoirs, volumes two and three the Original Correspondence. The edition of Hervey's *Memoirs of the Reign of George II* cited is that of 1848 in two volumes. *The Political State of Great Britain* was conducted by Abel Boyer until his death in 1729, and is usually catalogued under his name.

The titles of the ballads have sometimes been rearranged by the printers, and in two or three cases abbreviated; the long s has not been reproduced; the statement of the tune has been made in a uniform way; stanza numbers (if any) have been omitted; and the punctuation, in a very few instances, where the sense demanded it, has been silently altered. In other respects the texts have been followed faithfully, except where notice of change is given.

The dates of the original issues of *The Craftsman* are not always the same as those of the collected edition. I have, of course, used the former.

This work was begun and largely carried out under the direction of Professor G. L. Kittredge, of Harvard University, to whose teaching whatever is good in the workmanship is chiefly due. I am indebted for some assistance to Professor C. N. Greenough, of Harvard University, and for friendly counsel to Mr. H. W. V. Temperley, of Cambridge University. My deepest obligation, however, is to Professor C. H. Firth, who has given me valuable aid and advice, and who placed his collection of ballads at my disposal.

M. P.