MILITARY MEMOIR OF COLONEL JOHN BIRCH: SOMETIME GOVERNOR OF HEREFORD IN THE CIVIL WAR BETWEEN CHARLES I. AND THE PARLIAMENT

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Trieste

MILITARY MEMOIR

OF

COLONEL JOHN BIRCH,

SOMETIME GOVERNOR OF HEREFORD IN THE CIVIL WAR BETWEEN CHARLES I. AND THE PARLIAMENT;

WRITTEN BY ROE, HIS SECRETARY;

WITH AN HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL COMMENTARY, NOTES, AND APPENDIX,

BY THE LATE

REV. JOHN WEBB, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.L.S.

EDITED BY HIS SON THE

REV. T. W. WEBB, M.A., F.R.A.S.

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PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

THE Commentary and Notes which illustrate the following Memoir were the production of an author the greater part of whose ninety-third year was employed in their preparation. But, whatever interest may be attached to them from this cause, they are still more deserving of attention from the scrupulous fidelity as well as the unwearied diligence which they express. Such, as is well known, had been the uniform character of the earlier works of the same hand; and during this last effort of a feebler age, neither vigour of thought nor truth of discernment failed. The editorial office which had been entrusted to the Reverend John Webb by the Camden Society was, at the time of its interruption, nearly fulfilled: the latter part, however, of his manuscript had not received his final touch, and the close was left very imperfect. These deficiencies could be ill supplied even by one who best knew his revered parent's intentions, but, having been honoured by the Council of the Society with permission to complete the design, he has done it to the best of his ability. A portion of illustrative material has been reluctantly omitted, which may, however, it is hoped, find a place in the future publication of another posthumous work by the same hand—the History of the Civil War in Herefordshire.

The extent of the present writer's responsibility has been indicated by brackets. The initials J. W. are attached to certain notes which the original editor had not appended to his manuscript, but which it did not seem desirable to suppress.

PREFACE.

The document now first published contains an account of events in which the person therein described acted a more or less conspicuous part. The period it involves is comprised between the years 1642 and 1645; a time during which England became the scene of violent political and military agitation. In all cases of this nature, in which the talents and passions of men are exercised with unusual force, there will ever be some whose powers will raise them to eminence. Colonel John Birch, in the sphere in which he moved, was among the remarkable personages of the time; by no means inferior to many whose names have been better known, though not more deserving of being recorded. He attained to considerable distinction in the field and in the senate, and after a long share of personal exertion and sufferings survived the troubles and dangers of a stormy and eventful struggle, and ended his days in retirement and peace.

Considering the part that he took in this drama, it is remarkable that so little direct information respecting his earlier life has been handed down to posterity. The mention, however, of his name, traditionally or otherwise, has always been coupled with that of low origin and of very humble calling. The fullest account of him, as far as the Editor's research has extended, is given in a note on pp. 203 *et seqq.* of Newcome's Diary (Chetham Society) by a very diligent antiquary, the late Thomas Heywood, Esquire, of Hope End in the county of Hereford. In this he shows his connexion with the Birches of Lancashire, though his statements with regard