

**POLITICAL BALLADS
PUBLISHED IN
ENGLAND DURING
THE COMMONWEALTH**

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Political ballads published in England during the commonwealth by Thomas Wright

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THOMAS WRIGHT

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THE COMMONWEALTH**

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POLITICAL BALLADS

PUBLISHED IN ENGLAND.

DURING

THE COMMONWEALTH.

EDITED BY

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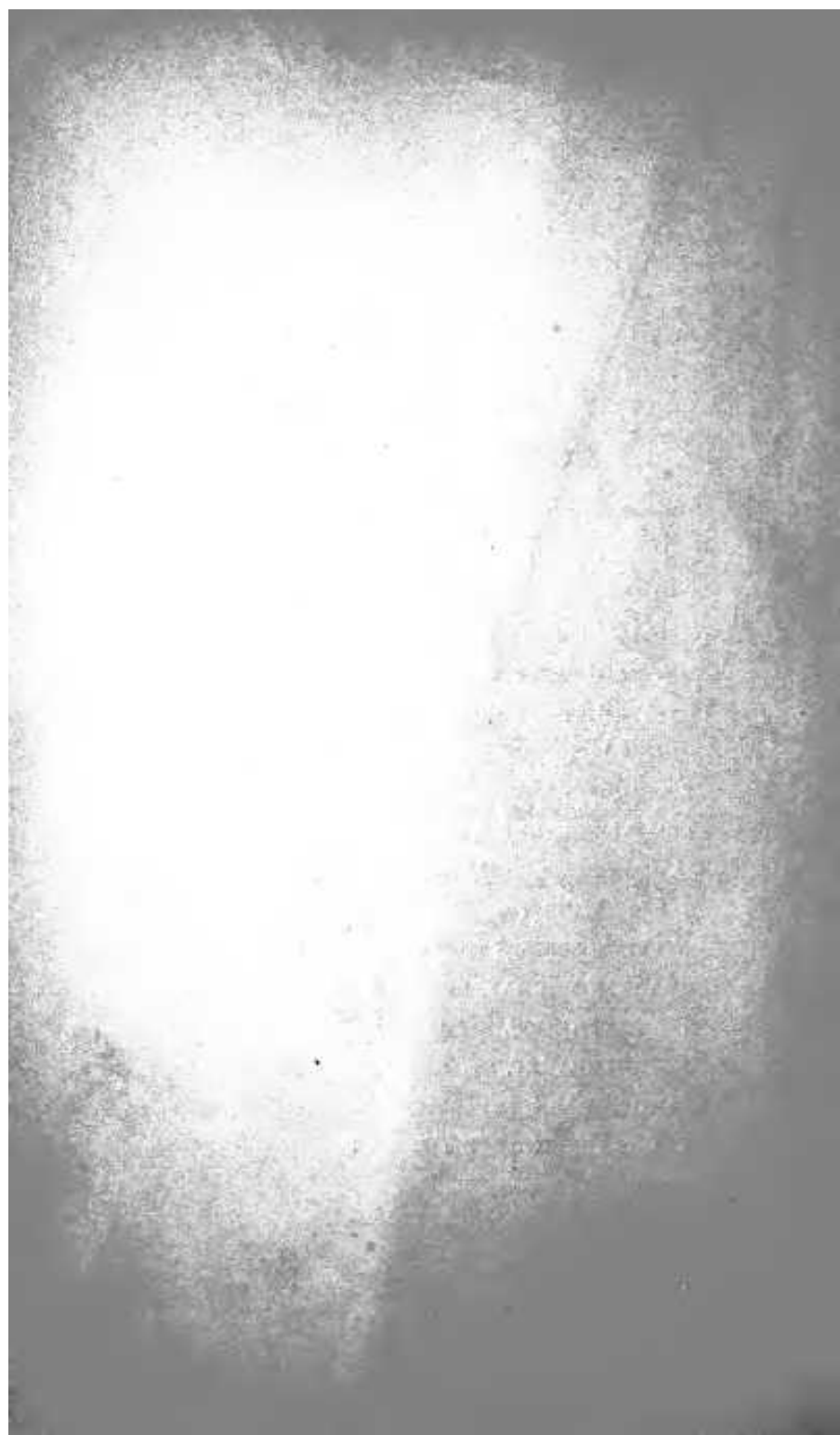
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TO

MONSIEUR GUIZOT,

Ministre Secrétaire d'État du Roi des Français au département des
Affaires Étrangères,

IN ADMIRATION

NOT ONLY OF THE GREAT AND HONEST STATESMAN,

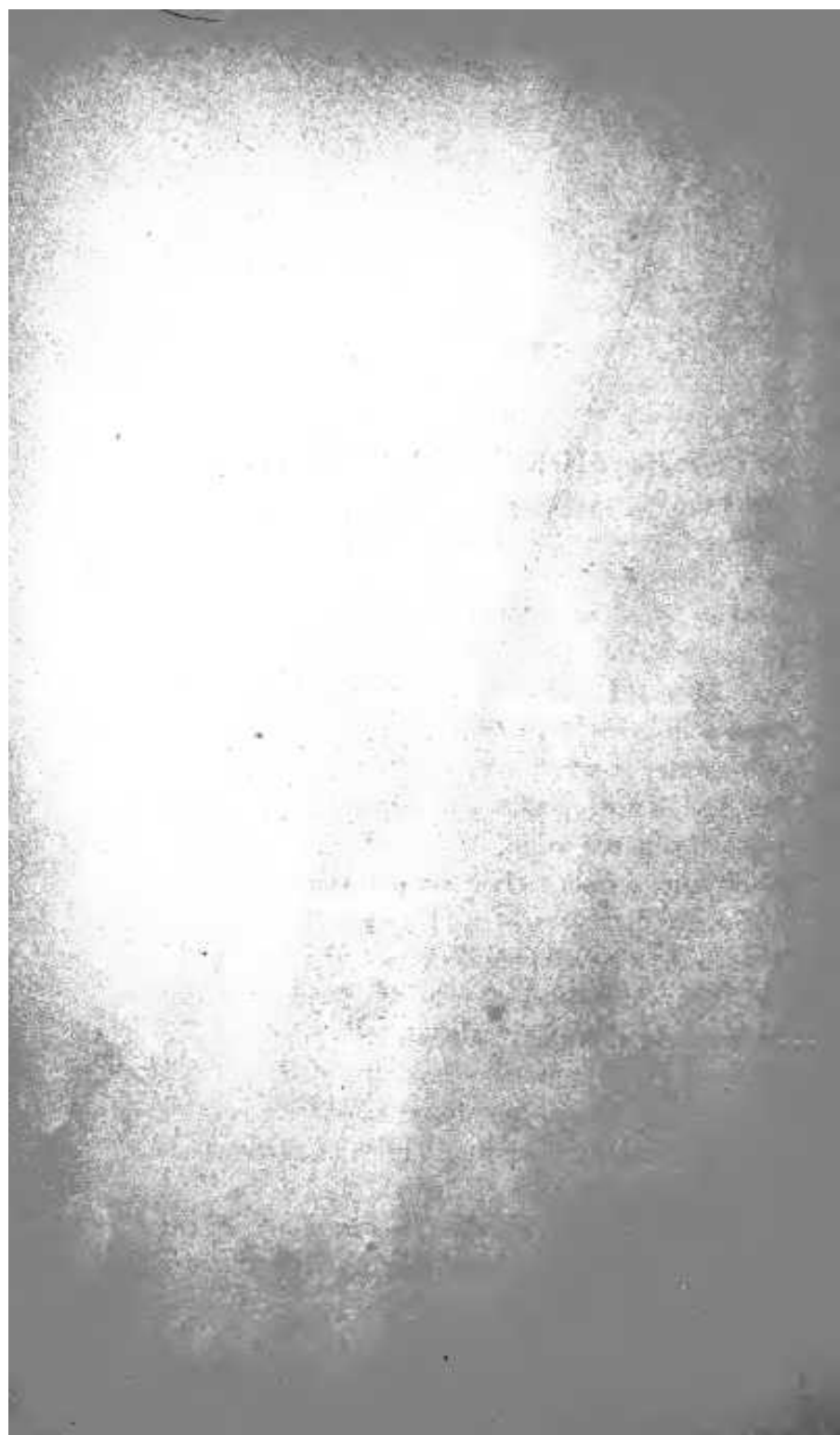
BUT OF THE PROFOUND HISTORIAN

AND THE ENLIGHTENED PATRON

OF LITERATURE AND SCIENCE,

THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE EDITOR.



PREFACE.

THE following selection of ballads has been made under the impression, that, while they form a valuable portion of the materials of the historian for this most important period of our annals, they will not be devoid of interest to the general reader. It is more especially in such documents as these that we can observe the spirit which moves the masses in great revolutions like that which tore our country in what is most fitly characterized as the Age of Cromwell;—in them we may contemplate the lesser feelings which were at work beneath the surface, while the greater motives of action are displayed to us by the more dignified historical memorials of the age. They are valuable also as illustrating many less important circumstances of history, which were passed over in silence by more serious writers.

Our little volume contains those most worthy of being reprinted among the Political Ballads which issued from the press during the agitated period from the Civil Wars to the Restoration. It will be seen that they belong chiefly to two distinct

phases of the great political struggle, and they may therefore be conveniently arranged in two divisions. The first relates to the period between the close of the Civil Wars (when Charles the First fell into the hands of the victorious parliament) and the king's execution. During this period, the intrigues of the royalists (from whom a large portion of these ballads emanated) were more dangerous to the safety of the parliament than their arms had been in the field. Charles ruined himself by his dishonest evasions and his indirect and underhand mode of acting. The following ballads show that even the royalists themselves were convinced of the sincerity of the parliamentary leaders in the intention of restoring the king on conditions which should effectually guarantee their liberties; yet they were in the mean time busy fomenting jealousies between the two great parties of the Independents and the Presbyterians; and the king with singular fatuity received the propositions of the parliament with one hand, and declared almost publicly his treacherous intentions with the other. The parliamentary leaders soon saw that the restoration of the king must be the signal of their own ruin, and they perceived at the same time that, so long as he lived unrestored, the state could hope for no tranquillity—they then resolved to bring him to the block.