

**VERNEY PAPERS: NOTES  
OF PROCEEDINGS IN  
THE LONG PARLIAMENT,  
TEMP. CHARLES I.**

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**SIR RALPH VERNEY**

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NOTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
IN  
THE LONG PARLIAMENT,  
TEMP. CHARLES I.

PRINTED FROM ORIGINAL PENCIL MEMORANDA TAKEN IN THE HOUSE

BY

SIR RALPH VERNEY, KNIGHT,

MEMBER FOR THE BOROUGH OF AYLSBURY,

AND NOW

IN THE POSSESSION OF SIR HARRY VERNEY, BART.

EDITED BY JOHN BRUCE, ESQ., F.S.A.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE wonderful events which took place in England in 1640 and the two succeeding years, were brought about by the instrumentality of men whose motives and characters are most inadequately understood. By what reasoning they justified, or by what necessity excused, the overturning of the ancient government of their country, we can but very imperfectly tell. A cloud of error and misstatement was thrown over their actions by the triumphant writers of the restored dynasty, who used their pens in the same spirit as they had wielded their swords, and took revenge upon their ancient rivals by representations of their conduct, which, if they could be believed, would make it a subject of amazement, how men so foolish and so wicked could ever have been even partially successful. But history has its periods of restitution. Truth, like Nature, will reappear, however forcibly expelled, and when the time for its appearance draws nigh, some heralds of its approach, some fragments and relics of the actual monuments of the past, will

present themselves, and from them, broken and mutilated though they be, will be deduced immutable laws which it is not possible for error to withstand. It is amongst such fragments and relics that the present volume must take its place. It is a plank saved from a wreck; but whoever will consider and study it, will find, that it contains a clue to the nature of the whole of which it is but a part.

With the exception of some few single speeches, and the brief minutes in the journals, we have little to which we may appeal, with any thing like an assurance of its fidelity, as a representation of the actual proceedings of the long parliament. The feeling of the house was against allowing any one to record what took place. Rushworth, the clerk-assistant, was prohibited from writing any thing but what was usually entered on the journal, and even the practice of members taking notes was discouraged, and, on special occasions, was controlled or put a stop to. The present volume, in its accounts of the cases of lord Digby and sir Edward Deering, bears testimony to the perils which environed members who dared to publish their speeches without leave of the house.

The notes now published are written upon sheets, or parts of sheets, of foolscap paper, so folded as to be placed conveniently on the knee, and carried in the pocket. With three exceptions, consisting of notes taken in committees, they are written in pencil. They are full of abrupt terminations, as if the writer occasionally gave up the task of following a rapid speaker who had got

beyond him, and began his note afresh. When they relate to resolutions of the house, they often contain erasures, alterations, and other marks of the haste with which the notes were jotted down, and of the changes which took place in the subject-matter during its progress towards completion. On several important occasions, and especially in the instance of the debate on the protestation, the confusion and irregularity of the notes give evidence (as I have remarked at p. 66,) to the excitement of the house; and when the public discord rose higher, the notes become more brief and less personal, and speeches are less frequently assigned to their speakers, either from greater difficulty in reporting, or from an increased feeling of the danger of the times and the possible use which might be made of notes of violent remarks. On several of the sheets there are marks evidently made by the writer's pencil having been forced upwards suddenly, as if by some one, in a full house, pressing hastily against his elbow whilst he was in the act of taking his note.

These minute circumstances constitute undesigned and most valuable marks of genuineness, and the character of the handwriting, as well as the orthography, (which latter is preserved in the following impression,) are further and corroborating evidences that these notes are of the period assumed, and are actual memoranda made in the house during the progress of the businesses to which they relate.

No writer's name, nor any thing which indicates the