

**VERNEY PAPERS. NOTES OF  
PROCEEDINGS IN THE LONG  
PARLIAMENT, TEMP. CHARLES I.  
PRINTED FROM ORIGINAL PENCIL  
MEMORANDA TAKEN IN THE HOUSE**

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**SIR RALPH VERNEY & SIR HARRY VERNEY & JOHN BRUCE**

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*From Sir Harry Verney to Sir Ralph George Verney  
June. 1848.*

VERNEY PAPERS.

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 AYLESBURY,

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

writer, appears in the MSS., but they have long formed part of a very large collection of family papers preserved at Claydon-house in Buckinghamshire, the seat of the family of Verney. Two members of that family sat in the long parliament; sir Edmund Verney, knight, a gentleman of the privy chamber and knight marshal, who was member for Wycombe, and his eldest son, sir Ralph Verney, knight, member for Aylesbury. These notes were at one time attributed to sir Edmund Verney; but a comparison of handwriting places it beyond all possibility of dispute, that they were not written by sir Edmund, and renders it equally clear that they were written by sir Ralph. This fact is so entirely incontrovertible that the notes are assigned to sir Ralph Verney without question or hesitation.

It is proposed at a future time to publish a selection from the valuable letters of sir Edmund Verney, sir Ralph, and several other members of the same family, which will afford an opportunity for throwing together the materials which exist for biographical notices both of the father and the son. In expectation of that opportunity, I will at present only add a few sentences in reference to their position in the political struggles of the period, which may have influenced sir Ralph a little in his work of taking notes.

Sir Edmund Verney's offices in connexion with the royal household attached him personally to the service of the crown, and thus placed him, in public affairs, in a