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XXV.—*On Percy Herbert, Lord Powis*

Charles Henry Cooper

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Read 3rd December, 1863.

PERCY HERBERT LORD POWIS is a noble author overlooked by Horace Walpole; a loyal sufferer unnoticed by David Lloyd; a Welshman omitted from the useful Biographical Dictionary of the Rev. Robert Williams; and a Roman Catholic who was apparently unknown to Dodd.

He was son and heir of Sir William Herbert, K.B., of Redcastle (anciently called Poole Castle and now Powis Castle) in Montgomeryshire, who in 1629 was created Lord Powis, by Eleanor, youngest daughter of Henry Percy, eighth Earl of Northumberland.

To the Parliament which met on the 30th January 1620-21, Thomas Sheppard, Esq., and William Beecher, Esq. (afterwards Sir William), were returned for Shaftesbury. Mr. Beecher, who had also been returned for Leominster and Tamworth, made his election on the 6th of February to sit for the latter place.^a Mr. Sheppard, described as a busy young lawyer, gave great offence by a speech which he made the 15th of February, on the second reading of a Bill for punishing divers abuses on the Sabbath-day, called Sunday. For this speech, characterised as profane, seditious, and arrogant, he was on the following day expelled the House.^b Percy Herbert and Ralph Hopton, Esq. (afterwards Lord Hopton) were elected to supply the vacancies for Shaftesbury thus occasioned.^c

Percy Herbert received the honour of knighthood at Theobalds, on the 7th of November, 1622, and on the 16th of the same month was created a baronet.^d

^a Commons Journals, i. 510.

^b Ibid. 521, 522, 524, 525.

^c Willis's Not. Parl. iii. (2) 178. Willis states Mr. Beecher to have been also expelled, and does not give his return for Tamworth.

^d Nichols's Prog. James I. iii. 781 (where he is erroneously stated to have been afterwards *Earl of Powis*).

He occurs as Lord of the Manor of Teirtref, in Cornwall, in 1623.^a In 1625 he was in the commission of the peace for Middlesex,^b and it is not unlikely that he then had the Manor of Hendon, in that county. It will appear in the sequel that he certainly held it in the lifetime of his father, to whom it is said to have descended from his father, Sir Edward Herbert, second son of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke.^c

Meredith Morgan and Sir Percy Herbert appear to have been concerned, in or about 1628, in raising the trained bands in the county of Montgomery.^d

Sir Percy Herbert was appointed one of the council of the principality of Wales and the marches thereof on the 12th of May, 1633.^e

The following passage occurs in a letter, dated 7th of February, 1637-8, from the Rev. George Garrard to Viscount Wentworth, Lord Deputy of Ireland:—

“ Since my last of December, here is a Proclamation come forth to hinder the Growth of Popery. But there was a proposition made at the council-table, which would do much good, were it put in execution over all England; which was, to take away the eldest sons of all who were popishly affected, and breed them up in the Religion established in the Church of England. My Lord Chamberlain’ fired at it, and moved the King, and since my Lord’s Grace of Canterbury, to have Percy Herbert’s son, who is heir to his estate should his son fail, taken from his father, and bred up in the Protestant Religion. My Lord Powis was not pleased much with this motion, gets access to the King, pleads hard for his son, humbly desires that his son may not be held the most jesuited Papist of England, and made the only example in this kind. He must submit to his Majesty’s pleasure, but he should do it much more willingly, if it were generally done. Nothing is done of this kind yet, but my Lord Chamberlain presseth my Lord of Canterbury often in this particular.”^f

In 1639 he was collector for Montgomeryshire of the moneys contributed by the Roman Catholics for carrying on the war against the Scots.^h

On the 29th of January, 1640-1, Sir John Price gave information to the House of Commons against Sir Percy Herbert and a servant of his, who had in his custody the public magazine in some place which is not distinctly specified, but was probably in Wales. The House referred the matter to a Committee, who were

^a Tho. Thorpe’s Cat. of MSS. 1836. No. 312. ^b Rymer’s Fœdera, xviii. 591.

^c Lysons’s Environs of London, iii. 3.

^d Bruce’s Cal. Dom. State Pap. Charles I. iii. 97.

^e Rymer, xix. 450.

^f Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery.

^g Strafforde Letters, ii. 147.

^h Rushworth, iv. 163.

appointed to meet on the following day ; and in the meantime ordered that Sir Percy Herbert should be forthwith sent for as a delinquent by the Serjeant-at-Arms attending the House, to answer such things as should be there objected against him.^a

The House, on the 13th of August, 1641, directed him to be summoned to appear at the Committee for the Recusants Convict, ordering that, if he took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and gave good security to appear within ten days after summons, he might have liberty to go upon his occasions.^b

On the 29th of April, 1642, it was resolved by the Commons, that the Serjeant be desired to bring in Sir Percy Herbert, who was a delinquent by a former order of the House, and Serjeant Wilde and Mr. Grimston were ordered to draw a charge against him.^c The House, on the 25th of June following, directed that he might be bailed, himself in £10,000 and sureties in £5,000 a-piece, the House first giving approbation of the bail;^d and on the 6th of July occurs an entry approving of John Craven, of Coombe, county of Warwick, Esq., and Thomas Bellingem, of Newtimber, county of Sussex, Esq., as his sureties. Sir Percy was, however, ordered to take the oath of allegiance before he was bailed.^e

He is designated a recusant convict in a document dated 1650, relating to the parsonage of Hendon, which had belonged to him.^f

His estates were included in the Act passed on the 16th of July, 1651, for the sale of lands forfeited for treason;^g it being provided that the Manor of Hendon, which had belonged to him, should be charged with a rent-charge of £60 a-year during the life of Margaret Hooker, widow of Nicholas Hooker, goldsmith and citizen of London.^h It would appear that he made an effort to get exempted from the operation of this Act. On the 23rd of April, 1651, was read a certificate of Chief Baron Wylde, dated the 14th of February preceding, touching Sir Percy Herbert's appeal to the Barons of the Exchequer,ⁱ and on the 15th of July a petition from him, the nature of which is not however set forth, was read.^k

The loss of his estates and the other hardships consequent upon his loyalty and

^a Commons Journals, ii. 75.

^c Ibid. 548.

^e Ibid. 656.

^g Scobell's Acts and Ordinances, 156.

ⁱ Commons Journals, iii. 565.

^b Commons Journals, ii. 253.

^d Ibid. 639.

^f Lysons's Environs of London, iii. 13.

^h Scobell's Acts and Ordinances, 169.

^k Ibid. 604.

religion were apparently borne with the fortitude of a Christian philosopher, and in 1652 he published a work in 4to. with the following title:—

CERTAIN
CONCEPTIONS,
OR,
CONSIDERATIONS
OF
SIR PERCY HERBERT,
UPON THE
Strange Change of Peoples
Dispositions and Actions
In these latter times.
Directed to his Sonne.

Deus primum honos proximè.

LONDON,

Printed by E. G. and are to be sold by Richard Tomlins
at the Sun and Bible neer Piccorner. 1652.

As this book is scarce^a an analysis of its contents is subjoined.

“For my Sonne Mr. William Herbert; subscribed, Your most affectionate Father, Percie Herbert (11 pages not numbered). To the Reader (2 pages not numbered). The Introduction, or Inducement of the whole Book (p. 1). Against Atheism (p. 4). That our Saviour was the true Messiah (p. 12). The punishment of the Angels against all vain Presumption (p. 18). Against sensual stupidity (p. 24). Considerations of gratitude in regard of God’s goodness and love shewed to man-kinde (p. 32). Christ’s particular persecution (p. 38). The Vertues of Abraham (p. 46). The Patience and sufferings of Job (p. 51). The Vertues of Moses (p. 53). The wonderful magnanimity of Jepthe and his daughter (p. 57). The extraordinary goodness of King David (p. 60). The constant Martyrdome of old Eleazer (p. 65). Strange sufferings of a woman and her seven sons (p. 68). The wonderful life of Saint John the Baptist (p. 73). The small satisfaction of earthly pleasures considered (p. 77). Whether or no when we have gained this victory there must not be something to direct us in God’s Worship, of an infallible nature (p. 84). Some general instructions concerning the practice of God’s own proper and immediate worship (p. 93). Of pride being the chief vice belonging to the

^a There are copies in the British Museum and in the Library of the University of Cambridge; the latter, from the collection of Bishop Moore, is marked W. 11. 16.

Soule (p. 103). Many dependences belonging to this infernal Lady Pride (p. 109). Some kinde of description of Sensuality (p. 121). Gluttony a chiefe effect of sensuality, with other vices also belonging thereunto (p. 127). Against the pernicious and ignoble custome of Dissimulation (p. 139). Of the breaches in conversation proceeding from the falsifying of words and promises (p. 146). Concerning the breaches of trusts upon special confidence and obligation (p. 153). The nature and property of entire friendship (p. 159). The nature and obligation of service (p. 171). Some kinde of demonstrations of the supernatural torments of Hell (p. 178). The wonderful properties and infinite felicities of Heaven in some sort described, according to humane apprehension (p. 188). Certain consideration of Eternity (p. 199). Considerations upon the shortnesse of man's life upon earth, with many other inconveniences thereunto belonging (p. 209). A most full, though figurative, story to shew that God Almightyes wayes and inscrutable decrees are not to be comprehended by humane fancies (p. 220). The wonderful confidence of old Tobias in the mercies of Almighty God (p. 235). The necessity of this noble vertue which was practised by our Saviour himselfe in a most particular manner during his abode upon earth (p. 246)."

The Introduction or Inducement mentions "the late Act of Confinement contributing very little benefit or opportunity to the delight of conversation." The Act here referred to was probably that for removing all papists, officers, and soldiers of fortune, and divers other delinquents from London and Westminster, and confining them to their dwellings. It was passed on the 26th of February, 1649-50, was subsequently renewed, but seems to have expired on the 1st of November, 1651.^a

He alludes with much feeling to the tragic fate of Charles I., and attributes the troubles in which the nation was involved to the divine judgment on the increase of sin and vice. Nor does he scruple to denounce the intemperance amongst the commanders in the late King's army, which he observes proved of such unfortunate consequence to his affairs. The tales and illustrations, somewhat profusely interspersed, show extensive reading, and the work may upon the whole be considered creditable to his literary ability.

In the address to the reader he says,—

"The book it selfe is so extreame short, that if I did not intend to enlarge it by a second part, I might be something ashamed that the presse under my name and solicitation have been employed with so small a pamphlet."

^a Scobell's Acts and Ordinances, 104, 152.

No second part appears to be known.

The most full but figurative story, which commences at p. 220, is a version of the old apologue *De Angelo qui duxit heremitam ad diversa hospitia*.^a It was soon after varied much for the worse in an undated letter to the Lord Marquis of Hartford, by James Howell, who cites Sir Percy Herbert (whom he terms a noble speculative knight) as the author, but makes no allusion to his own alterations.^b Condensed and improved by the learned Dr. Henry More,^c it formed the foundation of Parnell's *Hermit*, an admirable poem with which all are familiar.

William Lord Powis, his father, died in the eighty-third year of his age, on the 7th of March, 1655-6, when Sir Percy Herbert succeeded to the title. On the 22nd of May, 1660, the House of Lords, upon his petition, made an order for preventing all waste upon his lands, and against cutting of timber and carrying away what had been cut.^d

Lord Powis headed the petition of the nobility, knights, and gentry of the six counties of North Wales which was presented to Charles II. in or about June, 1660, praying not only that the regicides might be delivered up to public justice, but also that such persons as concurred in the death of the late King, or had been procurers and promoters of petitions and addresses in favour of his trial as had not given early testimony of their unforced repentance, might be disabled to bear any office of trust, civil or military.^e

His death occurred on the 19th of January, 1666-7, and he was buried at Welshpool.

He married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Craven, alderman of London, and by her, who died on the 8th of September, 1662, had William, his successor, who was advanced to the dignity of Marquess of Powis, and whom James II., after his abdication, created Duke of Powis; and Mary, baptised at St. Andrew Undershaft in London on the 10th of October, 1623.^f In January, 1639-40, she

^a See Koran, Surat 18; Warton's *Hist. Engl. Poetry*, ed. 1840, i. p. clviii-clx., ccv.; Wright's *Latin Stories*, 10, 216, 217; *Bluet d'Arbere's Œuvres*, 1604, lib. 5; Swan's *Transl. of Gesta Romanorum*, i. 274, 376; Dunlop's *Hist. of Fiction*, iii. 20; *Œuvres de Voltaire* (Paris, 1829), tom. xxxiii. 138; Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie* (2nd ed. Gottingen, 1844), vol. i. p. xxxvii.; Mr. Keightley, in *Notes and Queries*, 2nd ser. x. 841.; Alexander Craig wrote the *Pilgrime and Heremite* in form of a Dialogue, 4to. Imp. Aberdeene, by E. Raban. (Lowndes's *Bibl. Man.* ed. Bohn, 546.)

^b *Epistolæ Ho-Eliaenæ*, vol. iv. letter iv. First published in 1655.

^c *Divine Dialogues*, 1668, Dial. ii. 320—327.

^d *Lords Journals*, xi. 36.

^e *Kennett's Register and Chronicle*, 192.

^f *Malcolm's Lond. Redivivum*, i. 70.

married George Lord Talbot, eldest son of John Earl of Shrewsbury. He childless in the lifetime of his father, leaving her a widow, and it seems after the death of her mother she became insane.^a

There are or were at Powis Castle portraits of this Lord Powis and his the latter being represented in a curious dress of white satin embroidered butterflies and caterpillars.^b

Warton, who had never seen Sir Percy Herbert's work, apparently misled by Howell's giving only the initial of the Christian name, refers to him as Philip.

As a proof that this Lord Powis, although a Roman Catholic, was unknown to Dodd, it may be remarked that he states William Herbert, the titular Duke of Powis, to have been the son of William Herbert the first Lord Powis, whereas he was his grandson.^c

Powis Castle was in 1644 taken by the Parliament forces under the command of Sir Thomas Middleton, when the owner, Lord Powis, was made prisoner. Pennant^d states this lord to have been Percy. It was clearly his father, William, whom Pennant erroneously calls second son of the Earl of Pembroke, whereas he was his grandson, namely, son of Sir Edward Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke's second son.

It is not a little remarkable that the usually accurate genealogist Mr. Philip Yorke calls the first Lord Powis, the father of this Lord Powis and the husband of Lady Eleanor Percy, Charles, making him to be a son of Sir William Powis who was created K.B. at the coronation of James I.,^e the fact being that this person was himself the first Lord Powis, the husband of Lady Eleanor Percy and the father of Percy Lord Powis. In short, Charles Lord Powis is altogether a myth.

Mr. Beloe, who notices Sir Percy Herbert's book,^f seems to have known nothing of his history, nor to have made any inquiries respecting him.

According to Mr. Courthope, Percy Lord Powis died in his eighty-third year. This must be a mistake, for his father died at that age less than eleven years before him.

^a Green's Cal. Dom. State Pap. Charles II. iii. 4.

^c Dodd's Church Hist. iii. 447.

^e Yorke's Royal Tribes of Wales, 90.

^f Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books, vi. 324.

^g Historic Peerage of England, 389.

^b Topographer, iv. 33.

^d Journey to Snowdon, 378, 379.