

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORICAL REPRINTS

A HISTORY OF
Newark-on-Trent

VOLUME II

by
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served from the plunderings and spoils of that and other Royalist garrisons, and they be not suffered to march towards any parts of the Eastern Association to disquiet and alarm them."*

However much they might take "especial care," the Parliamentarians could not escape the onslaughts of the Newarkers, who were irrepressible and often irresistible. A publication entitled, "The General Account of the Proceedings in Parliament," † March 31st, 1645, says, "Though Cambridgeshire be secure, of Lincolnshire they have many fears. The Newarkers give often alarms upon the borders, and have come near these parts about Ely to plunder, and therefore the committee have taken care to draw a strong party that way in case Rupert, or Marmaduke Langdale should move that way, and have 20,000 men well armed." Another pamphlet of the period says: "Apr. 19, 1645. A party of his Majesty's forces from Newark took the fort at Nottingham bridge by a scarlado, taking some fifty rebels in it, besides an ensign, and ten others killed and drowned, 300 horses, 200 arms, and five pieces of ordnance. This fort they held about 11 days, and then quitted without any loss." This is evidently the assault described by Mrs. Hutchinson, but the dates do not tally, for she says it took place on a Lord's day in May, 1645. Another paper of April 26th, 1645, § gives some further particulars of this gallant capture of the Trent Bridge at Nottingham, when the Newarkers struck terror into the Nottingham garrison, and made Col. Hutchinson have fears for the security of the town, though he did not doubt he could defend the Castle. The writer says: "On Tuesday, April 22nd, 1645, Col. Hutchinson, Governor of Nottingham, being at the doore of the House of Commons, was called into the said House, where he informed the House that upon Lord's day last about 1600 of the Newark horse violently stormed the bridge within cannon shot of Nottingham, put all the souldiers which were therein to the sword, except three who swam over the river; that the said bridge is of so great concernment that the town is in great danger to be lost, especially if the fort between it and the bridge should be taken, which was yet kept; further adding that although the town itself should be lost, yet he doubted not to maintain the castle maugre the enemy. And according to his instruction and command, the said Colonel advanced this day towards Nottingham to his charge, and the further consideration of the safety of the town was referred to the Committee of both Kingdoms." The same publication says: "The Newark horse, since they took the Trent Bridge fort, with the two drakes and ammunition therein, and killed 30 of our men that were in it, have done much mischief to adjacent towns thereabouts, . . . and particularly at Bridgeford, where they did not only plunder the inhabitants, but carried away every man prisoner that they found in the town. Six of them fled into the church, thinking thereby to save themselves, but they brake open the Church doors, and brought them away prisoners. . . . The Nottingham forces are resolved to use all means for regaining the Trent fort, and for the curbing of the Newarkers."

In the constant battles between Newark and their enemies around frequent and futile efforts were made to surround the town. In May it was thought that the King would come to Newark amongst his loyal adherents, but instead of that he took up a position before Leicester, which he attacked. Fairfax hastened from Oxford to retrieve the loss, and met the royal forces at Naseby, where, on the 14th of June, 1645, the great battle was fought which shattered the King's prospects. The Newark Cavalry were present at the engagement, and fought gallantly, but without avail, for the Royalist cause.

It was to Newark—the best place remaining to the King—that many tired and dusty troopers rode direct from the fatal field. Unlike many Royalist centres, Newark was growing daily stronger

* Cal. of S.P.D., 1644-5, p. 355.

† London, printed by R. Austin for R. H.

§ "A Perfect Declaration," etc., printed for Thos. Bates, at the Maiden's Head, Snow Hill.