A student's guide to the manuscripts relating to English history in the seventeenth century in the Bodleian library

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A STUDENT’S GUIDE TO THE MANUSCRIPTS RELATING TO ENGLISH HISTORY IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY IN THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY
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BY

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PREFACE

Before attempting to describe the seventeenth-century MSS. in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, it is necessary to enumerate the existing catalogues. In the first place there is the series known as the Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts, edited by Mr. F. Madan, and, for the most recent volume, Dr. H. H. E. Craster. This gives, in order of acquisition, a short description of each MS. unless it has been previously described in one of the 4to catalogues (the relevant volumes of which are mentioned below under the headings Ashmole, Rawlinson, and Tanner). The great defect of the Summary Catalogue, from the point of view of a student outside Oxford, is the absence of a printed index. This is in course of preparation; meanwhile a full slip-index is available in the Library. The 4to catalogues give details of the contents of each volume, indicate which portions were printed at the time of their compilation,* and have full indexes.

* Dr. Craster and others have attempted to keep this record up to date by entries in the annotated library copies of these catalogues, and students should consult these annotations before assuming that a document has not been printed.
Brief notices of each collection of MSS. are contained in W. D. Macray’s *Annals of the Bodleian* (2nd edition, 1890), and Dr. Craster has (since these pages were written) contributed to this series *The Western Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library*, an invaluable guide to the printed and MS. catalogues.

This guide makes no claim to be in any way exhaustive. It is only a selection, and a partial selection at that. With certain exceptions, no mention has been made of MSS. which have been printed in full, and MSS. relating to the New England States have been omitted, inasmuch as these are noted in the *Guide to the Manuscript Materials for the History of the United States to 1783*, by C. M. Andrews and F. G. Davenport, Washington, 1908. Furthermore, limitations of space have prevented the inclusion of private letters unless they are numerous, although there are some literary remains preserved, often of great interest, of nearly every individual of distinction who lived under the Stuarts. Isolated documents, too, which frequently contain valuable accounts of important events, have had to be excluded. Also many volumes of papers referring to the non-jurors have not been noticed, since they admit of no precise description. Similarly collections formed by antiquaries for the elucidation of local history have been neglected, because they almost invariably cover a longer period than the seventeenth century.
The plan of this guide has been to begin with a general account of the five large collections of seventeenth-century MSS., and then to arrange under headings separate items, dividing them into two sections, the first extending to 1660, the second covering the years 1660-1714. It is assumed that the student will read right through this guide, so no cross-references are given. An attempt has been made throughout to point out where considerable parts of a MS. have been printed. It will be seen that the most valuable materials are those relating to the Puritan Revolution, and these, although they have been carefully studied, would still yield a rich gleaning. But both before 1640 and, more especially, after 1660, there are vast stores of documents which have suffered an undeserved neglect at the hands of our historians.

It is my pleasant duty to acknowledge the assistance I have received from Professor C. H. Firth in compiling and arranging this little guide. Apart from much kind advice, I am, in common with others, much indebted to the article he contributed to the Mariner's Mirror in August, 1913, on "Papers relating to the Navy in the Bodleian Library." The existence of this article has enabled me to omit some of the less important naval MSS.

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ASHMOLE MSS.

This very miscellaneous assortment was collected by Elias Ashmole (1617-1692), and consists mainly of MSS. dealing with the Order of the Garter, genealogies, heraldry, local history (particularly of Berkshire), family history, horoscopes, and other papers appertaining to alchemy and astrology, and various curious pieces illustrative of English literature. Ashmole's Memoirs were published in 1717, but there are some papers and historical notes for the years 1633-1679 which would supplement the Memoirs in MS. Ashmole 1136. A catalogue of this collection, by W. H. Black, was issued in 1845, and an index, by W. D. Macray, in 1867.

CARTE MSS.

The collector of these volumes, which number about 250, was Thomas Carte (1686-1754), who borrowed many of them from Kilkenny Castle in
order to write his *Life of Ormonde* (last edition, 6 vols., 1851), and never returned them. The papers still at Kilkenny have been calendared by the Historical MSS. Commission (14th Report). Taken together, these two collections form the most important single source for Irish history in the seventeenth century after about 1640, and have been adequately used, at least for the period up to the Restoration. Carte published many papers in his *Life of Ormonde* (his *Collection of Original Letters*, 1641-1660, 2 vols., 1739, mainly relates to English history), and Lady Burghclere included some new material in her biography of Ormonde (2 vols., 1912). Sir J. T. Gilbert printed a large number of papers in his *History of the Irish Confederation* (7 vols., 1882-1891).

In addition to the Ormonde MSS. Carte secured other papers of value. Those of Lords Huntingdon and Wharton contain some good series of newsletters, some scattered letters from statesmen to Wharton, and some very interesting correspondence from English officers in Ireland in 1689-1691 (MS. Carte 79). There are also many reports to Wharton, who raised the art of electioneering to a high level, on parliamentary elections, and many accounts of proceedings in Parliament, some original, others merely extracted from the Journals. The papers of the Earl of Sandwich (MSS. Carte 73-5, 103, 223, 274; there are other Sandwich papers in MS. Rawl.