

# William Penn

## Some Unsubstantiated Statements

THERE was recently published a book entitled *James Edward Oglethorpe*, written by A. A. Ettinger. In it there are six references to William Penn.

The first is on page 36. "On May 9 that strong Stuart supporter, William Penn, had escaped from prison and fled to Scotland." The authority for this statement is given as the MSS. of the late Allan George Finch (Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, Vol. II, p. 278). Actually the alleged escape is merely the gossip of a news monger "W.D." whose authenticity, apart from the fact that he was merely repeating gossip, is suspect from his later misstatements on another subject. There is no evidence that William Penn was ever in Scotland.

The second reference, on page 37, to the Royal Proclamation against William Penn, is correct.

The third reference is on page 41. ". . . Penn having expressed similar sentiments in favour of an expeditionary force of 30,000 men, James pondered . . ." All the other alleged agents and friends of the exiled James II had strangely enough suggested exactly 30,000 men. This exact agreement suggests at once that all the reports were manufactured by one man. Ettinger gives a formidable array of authorities, but they all come down to a manuscript (in Carte MSS. in the Bodleian Library, Oxford) alleged to have been compiled from a journal written by James himself. Anyone who is disposed to believe it should read the introductory chapter to *A History of the early part of the reign of James the Second*, by Charles James Fox. The author wrote that he doubted if Carte had ever seen the original journal. The same statement about Penn's being in favour of a force of 30,000 men is given in Macpherson's *Collection of original papers containing extracts of Memoirs of King James II by himself*, and Macpherson is the man who produced *Ossian*, supposed to be from the original Gaelic, about the authenticity of which controversy raged for many years. It seems clear that the Carte MSS. should be read very critically, and the only verdict must be one of "not proven". Certainly Penn's alleged statement should not be used without qualification.

On page 42 appears the following: ". . . Sir Theophilus Oglethorpe and William Penn again advocated a French invasion

to England to hasten the restoration of James II, and at least the former shortly thereafter attended 'a meeting at a tavern in Holbourn' . . ." The authorities for this statement are Dalrymple's *Memoirs*, etc. and the MSS. of the Marquess of Downshire. Neither of these mentions William Penn. Why then was his name introduced here ?

The fifth statement that William Penn submitted to William III in 1694, is hardly correct. Penn had been outlawed and at last the ban was withdrawn, but Penn had admitted nothing, and made no submission.

The sixth statement quoting Penn on the subject of American colonies is correct. So out of the six, there are two right, and the others are very ill-supported remarks which, though they cannot be proved definitely wrong, are nevertheless not proved to be correct. In a reliable work they should be omitted.

C. L. BOLTZ

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## Christian Lodowick

Henry J. Cadbury sends the following addition to his article (p. 20) in our last volume. It attests further Lodowick's mathematical ability. In the MSS. of the Rhode Island Historical Society at Providence (No. xiv. 323) is preserved a letter from Lodowick to Thomas Brattle of Boston, dated 31 April, 1694, which contains a carefully worked out explanation by trigonometry of "middle parallel sailing". The letter is printed in full in the *Rhode Island Historical Society Collections*, xvii (1924), 89f.