

## ‘A sort of appeal to the people’ a recent acquisition of English broadsides and broadsheets 1641-1714

J. E. TRAUER

The Turnbull Library acquired\* from a London dealer late in 1976 an assortment of 289 English broadsides and broadsheets published between 1641 and 1714 consisting of almost a hundred official publications (proclamations, declarations, instructions and orders of the executive from Charles I through the Council of State and Oliver Cromwell to the later Stuarts; acts, votes, orders, resolutions, ordinances and declarations of Parliament; etc.) together with political and religious tracts, news-sheets, accounts of crimes, trials and executions, and satires and ‘lybels’ in verse and prose. The term ‘broadside’ is used here to denote single sheets printed on one side only and intended, in general, for public display and ‘broadsheet’ for single sheets printed on both sides.

The subject emphasis is overwhelmingly political. The religious pieces are, as one would expect of this period, permeated with the political threat from popery at home and across the Channel; the two pieces of verse are both political, *A Panegyrick Upon Oates* and *The Sale of Esau’s Birthright, or the New Buckingham Ballad*; and the arrests, trials and executions are predominantly for alleged attempts on the life of the head of state. Titus Oates and the Popish Plot are well represented with 24 items published between 1680 and 1684 and the Rye House Plot and associated arrests and executions with another 24. The progress of Lord Russell, Algernon Sidney, and Sir Thomas Armstrong to Tyburn are recorded together with the death of the Earl of Essex in the Tower. The popular agitation in favour of Charles II’s illegitimate son, the Protestant Duke of Monmouth, and against the legitimate and Catholic heir James Duke of York is represented by 7 items between 1681 and 1682, but Monmouth’s luckless rebellion of 1685 is represented by only two. A number of minor but diverting episodes in the history of the time are recorded. The murder of Thomas Thynne of Longleat (1648-1682) which aroused the popular imagination with its potent blend of rivalry in love, duels, foreign connections and a hint of treason is represented by three pieces. The departure for France in 1682 of one of the accused, Count John Philip Koenigsmark, the

\*The purchase was made by the Alexander Turnbull Library Endowment Trust.