

APPENDIX II – AUTHORITIES

RESEARCH has been, rather unkindly, defined as “taking something out of a book which nobody has ever read and putting it into a book which nobody ever will read.” This is a hard saying, calculated to annoy bibliographers. There is certainly a tendency nowadays for very detailed and minute bibliography which often results in one's not being able to see the wood for the trees. In compiling a bibliography of this kind, where it concerns the life of an individual, you begin by, referring to the entry in the books of the physician who saw your hero into the world, you indicate where his Glaxo bill is to be found and the sum paid for his first rocking-horse, and so you continue till you end with the undertaker's account. This form of enthusiastic, detailed, Scotland Yardish research reminds me of a saying of Sir Owen Seaman, who, dealing with the activities of a Bronte enthusiast, remarked that he collected every possible item connected in any way whatsoever with that amazing family, including “Photographs of Patrick Bronte's boots.”

I do not profess, like Sam Weller's “vision,” being limited, to have read all the books and documents in which John Burgoyne's name appears. The manuscripts which deal with his military career are to be found in the Public Record Office, and copies of many of his slightly verbose letters are in the Manuscripts Department of the British Museum. He made such a stir in his day that all the more important of his writings got into print, many of them being (rather as if they were eggs) “laid” before Parliament.

The United States is as rich in Burgoyneiana as England, and I should like to repeat here my great indebtedness to Mr. D. C. Mearns who, has sent me much and most valuable material which does not exist in this country, in the shape of extracts from many publications and from the Manuscripts in the Library of Congress. Without his help this book would have been but “a bald and unconvincing narrative.”

All the books which appear in the following list I have read, some of them under that Great Dome in Bloomsbury where the presiding genius, my old friend Mr. F. D. Sladen, will tell you where to find everything about anything. I believe that if you were to ask him what song the Sirens sang, he would, with no great delay, whistle it to you. Many of these books, of course, are in the War Office Library and, as librarian there, I have never hesitated to give myself permission, as a student of military history, to borrow and pore over at home anything I wanted. An “eminent” (to annex the epithet usually attached to “divines”) librarian, overwhelmed with the number of books which came under his care, once observed in despair, “The librarian who reads is lost.” I don't

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agree. I think it would have been more true had he said, "The librarian who does not read will be found out." In any case, I have read all I could discover about John Burgoyne, but I am painfully aware that I yet may be found out. And I say in all sincerity that I hope those who find me out will either come and see me and find me in, or else write and tell me of my shortcomings.

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