DURING the second half of the seventeenth century government in England rested more on the sanction of force than on the consent of the governed. The history of this period cannot be understood unless it is realized that throughout—under Cromwell, Charles, James and William—the character of each successive régime was in question, disputed by at least one section of the nation. From Thurloe to Trenchard the servants of the government were forced to spend much of their time and energies in the investigation of the innumerable plots said to be in existence. Yet, even allowing for the fact that many of these were shams, invented by informers for their own profit or officially fostered so as to implicate suspects, only two risings can properly be dignified with the title of insurrections. The story of Monmouth's rebellion is well known, but the other, that of Sir George Booth in 1659, has been almost forgotten, and is at first sight of comparatively minor importance. The surprisingly easy collapse of the Commonwealth a few months later has obscured the significance of this failure of a concerted attempt to overthrow the republican government by force of arms.

The reasons for Monmouth's defeat are obvious. He rashly undertook his expedition in a cause which was temporarily discredited, with insufficient arms and money and without adequate preparation or promises of support. But Booth's rising ended in an equally complete failure although it had at least the passive sympathies of the majority of the nation, and faced a government detested, disunited and unstable, financially bankrupt and unable to rely on the loyalty of its chief servants. The fact that even the despised Rump should be able to suppress a formidable rebellion shows how great were the advantages possessed by any government which disposed of armed support. The total
defeat of Booth contributed to the survival after the Restoration of a fear of an absolutism based on military force. Englishmen knew that even a comparatively modest army could make the sovereign independent of his subjects. The force which Charles retained might be far smaller than the army of the Commonwealth, but it was sufficiently strong to arouse persistent fears as to the use to which it might be put by the king or his ministers.

Booth was the only leader to rise in 1659 with any success, but originally his was intended to be only one, minor, part of a nation-wide insurrection. A great deal of material exists for the planning and progress of the other attempted risings, but, not surprisingly, little seems to have survived which relates to the preparations which Booth made. It must be assumed that he destroyed his papers in order to avoid incriminating his associates, or that some of them were captured by the authorities after his defeat. However, there is, in the John Rylands Library, a memorandum drawn up by one of the principals concerned with Booth which throws light on his rising, and on the more general problems of organization and political and military strategy, which had to be faced if the Commonwealth was to be overthrown by force.

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The nature of the problems which faced all royalist plotters had become clear by 1658. Cromwell and the Commonwealth were intensely and almost universally hated. The force of this detestation took by surprise even such a staunch royalist as Ormonde when he returned in secret after years of exile. Except for careerists and opportunists Cromwell had alienated almost all those who had once supported him. The question which the royalists had to solve was how to exploit his isolation and

1 The Earl of Stamford has very kindly informed me that there are no unpublished papers at Dunham Massey relating to Booth and his rising.
2 Bulstrode Whitelock, Memorials (1853), iv. 362; Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1659-60, p. 171; Clarke Papers (Camden Society, 1901), iv. 48. All mention papers of Booth's in the hands of the government.
3 Mainwaring Manuscripts, Manuscripts Books 24, in the hand of Colonel Roger Whitley and endorsed on the cover "Bruges 1658".
4 T. Carte, Life of . . . Ormonde (1736), ii. 179.
unpopularity. Those who had become disaffected were not auto-
matically ready to support Charles. The extensive plans which
were made for a general rising in 1655 came to nothing. Only
Penruddock succeeded so far as to declare openly for the king,
and his brave but pathetic demonstration lasted only four days.
But despite the ease with which he had suppressed the rising
Cromwell realized how dangerous his unpopularity had become.
His reorganization of public security under the Major-Generals
increased still further the detestation in which his regime was
held, and emphasized the oppressiveness of military rule. But
at the same time this new organization added considerably to
the difficulties of undertaking another rebellion.

This failure did not deter all royalists. The leaders known
as the Knot continued to show themselves dilatory, defeatist
and incompetent, but some younger men were eager for another
attempt. In the spring of 1658 the situation seemed to be
encouraging. By the quarrels and disputes which ended with
the dissolution of Parliament, Cromwell added again to the
number of his enemies. Moreover, there was at last the
prospect of military assistance from abroad, as Charles now
possessed several regiments under his control in the Spanish
Netherlands. Yet the failure in 1658 was even more abject and
complete than before.\(^1\) Preventive arrests broke up the royalist
organization before anyone could take the field. The king had
been assured that the chances of success were good, but when
at great risk Ormonde crossed to investigate he found that these
optimistic reports had little basis in reality.\(^2\)

First he met those of inferior rank, concealing his own
identity so that he could ascertain their real opinions and plans.
From their incoherent and uncertain narratives he soon realized
that nothing was to be expected from them. The shortcomings
of the more important leaders disturbed him even more. Their
plans were incomplete. In no case did they approach certainty.
As before, the members of the Knot emphasized the difficulties
which they encountered, and showed by their dissensions how

\(^1\) For the abortive attempts in 1658 see C. H. Firth, *The Last Years of the

\(^2\) Crale, ii. 176-8; Clarendon vi. 54-5.
bitterly they were divided both on the policy to be followed and on personalities. Ormonde discovered further difficulties when he tried to negotiate with the Presbyterians, who by this time were prepared to translate their hatred of Cromwell into action to secure his overthrow. The royalists had talked of seeking their help, but no agreement had been reached or even seriously negotiated, and the insistence of their leaders on the conditions of the Isle of Wight treaty of 1648 promised to raise endless difficulties. Certainly Ormonde found that there was little prospect of their giving assistance to an insurrection in the immediate future.

With such evident lack of preparation Ormonde had no alternative but to advise caution and delay. He had come ready to put himself at the head of a rising; before he returned to the king he urged the royalists to remain inactive until Charles invaded with an army. The Commonwealth command of the sea—ships were in 1658 blockading Ostend—made such an invasion impracticable.\(^1\) Ormonde's advice amounted to an expression of no confidence in the existing organization and leaders. The subsequent detection of part of the conspiracy, and the arrest of some of the leaders, confirmed his judgement and completed the ruin of the royalists. In the summer of 1658, when their fortunes were at their nadir, John Mordaunt arrived in England as a new leader. After surviving arrest and trial by the High Court of Justice he set out to reorganize the royalist underground. Despite, or perhaps because of, his youth and vigour the Knot did little or nothing to help him. Their obstructionism, and the defeatist attitude they encouraged, added further problems to those with which any royalist leader was confronted by the strength of the government.\(^2\)

The nature of the problems which confronted the royalists formed the subject of a memorandum drawn up in 1658 by Colonel Roger Whitley. At the time Whitley was a gentleman usher at the King's Court, but he had considerable experience as a royalist agent. Originally an attendant on Charles I he had fought in both the civil wars and had remained behind in

\(^1\) Firth, ii. 66.
\(^2\) Clarendon State Papers (CSP.), iii. 391, 452, 463, 482.
England as an agent and collector of intelligence. One of his most valuable—and puzzling—accomplishments was the ease with which he repeatedly crossed the Channel while acting as a courier for the king. A member of a Cheshire family with estates in Flintshire, he possessed connections throughout North Wales and the north west, and from his previous service. These assets made him a figure of local rather than national importance, and throughout his long life he never quite achieved the first rank.\(^1\) But at this time the prospects before a successful royal agent must have seemed almost limitless; most of those who were to play leading parts during the reign of Charles II were still private persons, often in obscure positions.

In default of further evidence it is impossible to say whether Whitley's memorandum had any direct influence on Mordaunt's plans, but the two men were closely associated and their views in close accord. The memorandum consists of four parts: suggested heads for a royal declaration, a discussion of the possibilities of foreign aid, an analysis of the problems and methods of organizing a successful rising, and, finally, long lists of those whose services could be used. Many of the names are endorsed as being already active, and Whitley added suggestions as to the commissions and duties with which they could be entrusted.\(^2\)

The fact that of these four sections the weakest is undoubtedly that on "forreigne Force and Ayds" is not without significance.\(^3\) At first sight Whitley's estimates can be dismissed as naive and improbable, some of his suggestions being quite absurd. Apart from their obligations to Cromwell, the Jews, for instance, could hardly be expected to finance a pretender whose credit stood so low as that of Charles. The Dutch

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\(^1\) After 1660 he was to hold a series of financial offices, the most important being that of deputy Postmaster. As an M.P. for Flint and Chester he became a moderate Whig, being one of those who welcomed Monmouth in 1682. After 1688, in association with the second Lord Delamere, he led the Whig interest in the north west, and served as Mayor of Chester for four years and entertained William III on his way to Ireland.

\(^2\) They total 686 names, of whom over 170 are endorsed as active. The counties with the most named are those with which Whitley was most familiar—Anglesey, Denbighshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Flint.

\(^3\) Mainwaring 24, pp. 76-7.
republican government had every reason to hinder, not to further, the restoration of the uncle of the young Prince of Orange. Whitley went so far as to note that some assistance might be forthcoming from so remote a potentate as the Tsar of Muscovy, since an English merchant had some influence with his chancellor. Nor was it very practicable to suggest that Poland and Transylvania might contribute money. The fact that Whitley laid comparatively little stress on the possibility of obtaining help from France and Spain gives us a clue to his attitude. He gave these two states prominence in the list only because of the geographical advantages which their territories offered for launching an invasion of the British Isles. Although he did not say so explicitly, it is clear that Whitley shared the views held by Hyde and Mordaunt that it would be better for the king to owe his restoration to his own subjects.\(^1\) He concluded that if foreigners played the major share in a successful invasion and rising they would become as formidable to the king’s friends as to his foes.

Whitley stressed the practical problems of collecting, feeding, paying and above all transporting foreign troops, and he saw how considerable the political repercussions were likely to be. As in 1651 their very presence might alienate Englishmen. Since most of those likely to be available would be Papists the king’s cause might suffer even more fatal and permanent harm. Without displaying obvious religious prejudice Whitley realized how considerable were the dangers of using Roman Catholic assistance. Many of the Cavaliers whom he listed were recusants, but these lay Catholics who had fought for the king had little influence on their leaders and higher clergy.\(^2\) Nobody at the royal court at this time could have been unaware of the difficulties which the leading Catholic laymen and priests associated with the Queen Mother were creating for the king and Hyde.\(^3\) The

\(^1\) Letter Book of John, Viscount Mordaunt (Camden Society, 1945) (Mordaunt), p. 6; CSP. iii. 496.

\(^2\) The highest proportion of Papists was in Lancashire, sixteen of the forty-two royalists listed, including Lord Mollineux, Sir William and Richard Gerard, and Blundell of Ince.

\(^3\) Whitley was in fact corresponding with one of the most troublesome, Nicholas Bodkin, CSPD. 1659-60, p. 37. See F. J. Routledge, England and the Treaty of the Pyrenees, pp. 42-3.
higher clergy had it in their power to subscribe large sums of money, of which Charles was as usual in desperate need, and the Jesuits could exert valuable diplomatic pressure, in particular on the Governor of the Spanish Netherlands. But they would act "upon no other account but to Improve the Interest of their Religion". This prospect hardly counter-balanced the certain propaganda value to the Commonwealth of any agreement with the Papists.

The failures of 1655 and 1658 showed conclusively that casual and haphazard preparations were certain to lead to the piece-meal suppression of attempts at uprisings. Whitley realized that the first task would be to raise the spirit of those who had become discouraged by repeated failure, inept leadership, severe punishments and treachery. A few royalists had turned informer, their eradication was the first essential. This problem was more easily stated than solved, and the name of Sir Richard Willis appears on Whitley's lists as an active member of the royalist underground. Equally important as a cause of defeat had been the divided counsels of the leaders, and the isolation of many of the principals. This had made an already difficult task of co-ordinating local risings almost impossible. A single rising had no hope of success; concerted action was made difficult by poor communications and a total lack of mutual confidence. Remembering Penruddock's fate, each group feared that if they led the way they would expose themselves to the first shock of the enemy, and might well be left isolated and defenceless by the failure of their friends. Even the question of timing raised almost insuperable difficulties. If the leaders allowed a generous margin of time for the notification of local leaders then information would certainly reach the government. The uncertainty of wind and weather made it virtually impossible to assure those willing to rise that they would receive assistance from abroad at any stated time.

These were the difficulties which faced anyone attempting to organize resistance to the government at any time during the

1 Mainwaring 24, pp. 77-8.
2 Willis' treachery has now been conclusively proved (D. E. Underdown in English Historical Review, ixix, "Sir Richard Willis and Secretary Thurloe").
century; they were to be encountered, but never solved, by Monmouth in 1685 and the Jacobites in 1715. Whitley’s solution to them lay in more efficient organization. Instead of relying upon vague assumptions that once a rising began the nation would gladly join in the overthrow of the tyrant, specific military plans must be drawn up in advance. At least two, and probably more, armies should be raised, one in the west to draw off the army, the other to seize London. Preferably other forces should be organized to create additional diversions and to prevent the intervention of forces from Ireland and Scotland. No one could say in advance where the king, or an army from abroad, would be able to land; therefore the plans must be flexible enough to provide for several alternatives. Wherever the invasion did come, and this would depend largely on whether the royalists could seize a convenient port, then all the king’s friends were to join him immediately. Their assistance would be particularly valuable in providing him with cavalry and mounts, the most difficult parts of an army to bring by sea. If the king did not land in their area, the insurgents should remain on the defensive, or even retreat to some stronghold. This would occupy the forces of the enemy, and keep him in a state of uncertainty, while waverers would come in if royalist forces could hold their own, even for a fortnight.

This plan of campaign resembles that which was to be followed in the next year, but before it could be attempted much preliminary work was necessary. Whitley advocated decentralization to solve the problems of co-ordinating simultaneous risings.\(^1\) England would have to be cantonized, that is, divided into associations of counties, grouped together for military purposes as in the civil war. Each was to be commanded by a single officer, advised by a small council, and given very wide powers to grant commissions and to treat with those who had formerly fought against the king. He should prepare for action in the minutest detail, issuing commissions to subordinates, enlisting men, procuring supplies, gathering intelligence and keeping the enemy under constant observation. Certain

\(^1\) Mainwaring 24, pp. 90-1. He suggested risings in Wales and the Borders, the Severn valley, the North West, the Home Counties and East Anglia.
districts could be used for the maintenance of horses without suspicion until the time of the rising. If failure was to be avoided local strategy must not be improvised at the last moment, a great deal could be done in advance to select towns, places and houses to be fortified or used as refuges. Lists of delinquents should be made so that their surprise and arrest would strip the enemy of leaders at the outset.

Whitley elaborated the organization necessary within each association. Officers were to be commissioned in every county and hundred. The elderly or unfit could serve as commissioners entrusted with the supply of men, money and victuals. In order to be able to calculate the exact strength of his forces the commanders were to decide how many men should be retained for defence within the association, and how many to be spared for service elsewhere. In the circumstances the scale of organization demanded by this scheme, which was obviously modelled on the parliamentarian organization in the civil war, proved to be quite impracticable. Whitley had to admit that the royalists were already, and as a matter of routine, kept under a close watch. All were known. The few who still enjoyed freedom of movement had for the most part abandoned the struggle and come to terms with the government. Moreover fines, compositions and differential taxation had so reduced the circumstances and spirit of many royalists that they could no longer give any assistance.

Whitley saw that there was no alternative but to seek an alliance with the Presbyterians. Like Mordaunt he argued the case for negotiation from necessity; he did not particularly relish the idea of combining with old enemies who had stood aloof in both 1648 and 1651. But though he appreciated the dangers inherent in such an alliance, for the Presbyterians had objectives of their own which it might be difficult to reconcile with the interests of the king, the advantages outweighed them. Whitley admitted that as a party they were more formidable than the royalists:

The Presbyterians have bin in power both in the Parliament and Armyes since the Royalists were defeated and consequently have had a latter influence on the

1 Mainwaring 24, pp. 81-9. He seems to have thought that this organization should continue after the king was restored.  
2 CSP. iii. 450.
nation; they were not broken by force (as the Royalist) but rather subplanted consequently not so many of them destroyed in their persons nor their estates sequestrated neither are they totally disarmed.¹

Few Presbyterians were subject to any particular restraints. They retained elementary but important advantages denied to former royalists; they kept good horses in their stables, corresponded freely, travelled to London and resided there when they pleased. Whereas Anglican services were officially prohibited, and in practice often suppressed, Presbyterian worship gave members of the party frequent opportunities for meeting. In contrast to the royalists Whitley rather enviously noted their greater coherence and unity. They were less divided by "faction, jealousy or emulation", their ministers playing an important part in preserving this unity. Not only did they still often possess their arms from the war, but some of the leaders claimed to retain influence in the army and fleet. On the whole they represented the better sort of those who had fought against the king in the first civil war. It is interesting to note that Whitley considered that they were particularly influential in the manufacturing districts, and significant in view of Booth's rising that he should have added especially in Lancashire and Cheshire.² Finally, the Presbyterians could depend on the active support and sympathy of co-religionists on the continent, unlike the Anglicans, "there being no other Church that professeth the Discipline of the Church of England".

The differences which obstructed an alliance with the Presbyterians were primarily political. Many royalists had not lost any of their old animosity. The Knot had toyed with the idea of such an alliance, but their sentiments did not allow them to go far, and Willis seems to have used his old animosity as a self-justification of his treachery.³ On the other hand, few of the leading Presbyterians would act unless they were first given certain assurances. This was not a new problem, but the difficulties of meeting and communicating with the exiled Court, together with lack of confidence, prevented any easy solution. Mordaunt was entrusted as the king's agent with very full powers, but he could hardly be given plenipotentiary authority to

¹ Mainwaring 24, p. 79.   ² Ibid.   ³ Mordaunt, p. 31.
conclude a treaty with the Presbyterians which might have considerable and permanent effects on the position and powers of the king. Whitley's suggestion had the merit of simplicity. Discussion with the Presbyterians should relate only to general principles and undertakings which would not commit the king on points of detail. In this way Charles could avoid conditions being imposed upon him which might prove crippling in the future. At the same time it would be safe to give individuals promises of personal rewards for their services.¹

In the declaration which he drafted, but which was soon to be made obsolete by the death of Cromwell, the greatest stress was laid on the tyrannical acts of the Commonwealth. Whitley identified the king's cause with the protection of the Constitution, and of the rights of the subject no less than those of the Crown. He proposed to circumvent the problems raised by religion, and it is interesting to see how closely he anticipated the words of the Declaration of Breda in doing so,

And to remove all Fears and Jealousies we doe here promise, soe soon as it shall please God to enthrone us to call a free Parlt and by their advice as that of Godly and learned divines to settle all differences in Religion for as shall be nearest to the word of God and having respect to tender concsiences of what persuasion soever.²

In expressing this opinion Whitley probably had the same purpose as Hyde in 1660, to engage and satisfy the Presbyterians until their support was no longer essential. Yet, as his career after the Restoration was to show, Whitley did not regard them still as enemies. His adaptability and tolerance fitted him for the task of establishing contact with both royalists and Presbyterians in the north west.

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The rising of 1659 has come to be associated with Booth, but in the original plans his was to be only a secondary part. Success depended on the participation of both royalists and Presbyterians. As in 1655 and 1658 the organizers planned simultaneous or successive risings in many parts of the country. But whereas the earlier plans had been defective, incomplete and irresolutely executed, Mordaunt's arrival and leadership

¹ Mainwaring 24, p. 90. ² Ibid. p. 69.
transformed the situation. He needed and enjoyed the confidence and support of the king. Despite their constant failures the Knot complained that they were being supplanted. His vigour and independence they described as rashness and impudence. They excused their continued inactivity by claiming that a suitable opportunity for a rising had not yet arrived. The increasing dissensions among the republicans encouraged them to advocate further delay. Furthermore, they did not conceal their distrust of the Presbyterians, and their dislike of Mordaunt’s intention to place so much reliance upon these former enemies.

Exasperated by their delays and refusal to co-operate, Mordaunt went even further than Whitley in his denunciation of the royalists; he described them as the laziest and most irresolute of parties. The attitude of the Knot made Presbyterian assistance all the more essential, and by reason of his family connections Mordaunt was well fitted to negotiate for their help. In the three crucial areas, which it should be noted did not include Cheshire, the chances of success depended on the enlistment of Presbyterian allies. As might be expected, they were strong in East Anglia, the citadel of the old parliamentarian cause, and an area all the more vital because of the ports through which an army could easily be brought from Ostend. Whitley had suggested Yarmouth and Harwich, but in 1659 the choice fell on Lynn. This was less convenient as a port, but the commander of the garrison had offered to come over on an agreed signal, and Lord Willoughby agreed to take possession of the town. An agent went to Holland to arrange shipments of arms to equip all those who came in as recruits. Lynn had an advantage in that the extensive estates of Sir Horatio Townshend were not far distant. He, a Presbyterian

1 CSP. iii. 460, 463.
2 Although Mordaunt’s puritan mother disapproved of his royalist activities he found no difficulty in approaching the Presbyterian leaders.
3 CSP. iii. 460; Booth, Lord Willoughby, Waller, Townshend and Howe received their commissions on 2 May. Ibid. 489; in June Manchester promised his assistance. Mordaunt hoped that through him the rest of the party could be engaged.
4 CSP. iii. 469-70; Mordaunt, p. 6.
5 CSP. iii. 472, 483.
and the first of the great Norfolk family to achieve more than county prominence, had been engaged by Mordaunt. But he would move only if Lynn were first secured, although if he did so Mordaunt believed that all Norfolk would fall into the hands of the insurgents.¹

In London, the chief objective of any rising, Major-General Browne proved to be still more cautious and wary. His reluctance to give any commitment made negotiation with him extremely difficult.² This need not be a fatal disadvantage. Until the royalists and their friends had taken the field in the provinces, and so drawn off the bulk of the army, London was to remain passive. Like Browne, the wealthier and graver sort in the capital, those who had a lot to lose in case of defeat, were in any case likely to remain spectators until they saw whether the rising would succeed. This was certain to be determined by what happened in the west country, particularly in the well populated and semi-industrialized areas around Bristol and Gloucester. As the civil war campaigns had shown, these two ports possessed immense strategical significance. A royal invasion here would pay even bigger dividends than a descent on East Anglia, even though it involved a longer and more perilous voyage. The king realized this and promised to come in person on news of a rising.³ These cities were wealthy. Both contained arsenals of arms and munitions, and large numbers of recruits had already been listed in them for service. Under their protection Devon and Cornwall could rise in relative safety.⁴

In the west, as in the east, success depended on the participation of the Presbyterians. Mordaunt’s two chief agents had both fought for Parliament in the first civil war, although they had then become members of the minority who had actively

¹ Ibid. p. 472; Mordaunt, p. 24. It was expected that Norfolk would supply the king with a thousand horses, which could be procured in Flanders and transported only with great difficulty.
² CSP. iii. 452; Nicholas Papers (Camden Society, 1920), iv. 74-6; Baker, Chronicle of the Kings of England (1730), p. 572.
³ CSP. iii. 471-2, 487.
⁴ Ibid. p. 482. These counties were not willing to rise unless they were assured that an army would land somewhere in the west.
supported the king in 1648 and 1651. Both retained contacts with the Presbyterian leaders. Massey, who had commanded the Gloucester garrison in its heroic defence in 1643, spent the summer months secretly in the neighbourhood. Silas Titus, without such local knowledge or influence, travelled to and from the Continent and London, bringing instructions and taking back reports. From the first the signs were only partially encouraging. At one stage plans seemed to be so far advanced and promises of support sufficiently encouraging for a promise to be made of action on receipt of forty-eight hours notice. Seamen were to seize the Bristol garrison, and to be reinforced by a small contingent from the country. The townsfolk were expected to help in the defence of the city in the event of a siege. At Gloucester a royalist physician undertook to open a gate, and it seemed that Howe, the Presbyterian ancestor of a great Tory family, could be relied to come in with a thousand foot. In addition, a surprise attack was to be made on Chepstow. The capture of this key point would enable the South Wales counties to send men and supplies.

Later developments exposed these estimates as over-optimistic. Massey began to suspect Howe when he found that persons reported by him as ready to come in had not even been approached. When Howe fell under suspicion and was summoned by the Council all his plans collapsed. Further complications arose when parallel negotiations with another prominent Presbyterian, Colonel Popham, broke down. Though Titus had concluded that the business was well advanced without Popham, his support was in fact indispensable. At

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1 Even at the time of the siege he had been prepared to betray his command to the king; like Monk he can be best described as a soldier of fortune.

2 Titus had written the famous pamphlet *Killing no Murder* advocating the assassination of Cromwell. Both he and Massey, although reputed to be Presbyterians, had joined the royalists in 1648 and 1651, unlike the vast majority of their co-religionists who remained inactive.

3 CSP. iii. 509-10. Report by Titus, 21 June/1 July.


5 *Nicholas Papers*, iv. 158-9, 23 June. The tone this of report is in striking contrast to the more optimistic account of Titus.

first hesitant, he had then apparently promised to raise very large forces when, and on condition that, the king landed in the west. But as the date for the rising approached his attitude changed. His wife showed a natural anxiety. Apparently he learnt something of the defeatism and caution of the Knot. Although still expressing devotion for the king's cause, and a readiness to act accordingly, he disavowed undertakings which had been made in his name and denied that he had given the king encouragement on the seizure of Bristol and Gloucester. Thus when Mordaunt made his report on 6 June, Charles quickly detected its deficiencies. Mordaunt claimed progress in the preparations in other parts of the country, but made no mention of the west. Later he put a more favourable complexion on the situation, but in doing so he relied more on hopes and aspirations than on definite promises of support and formulated plans.

During the summer of 1659 Mordaunt had to postpone the date fixed for the rising and send an express to the king telling him not to come over. This set-back seems to have decided him against any further delay for fear that this would produce the collapse of all his plans, and give the government time to discover the full ramifications of the conspiracy. After being brought with difficulty to act, and only after such protracted negotiations, the Presbyterians would probably distrust all future approaches. The consideration that the Knot supported a further delay must have helped to resolve Mordaunt in favour of immediate action. In the past their judgements had invariably proved to be wrong; their present caution could with some plausibility be attributed to spite and jealousy. Therefore, despite the uncertainty of the plans for the west—soon to be demonstrated by the complete failure of the rising there—Mordaunt refused to consider withdrawing the order for a general rising on 1 August.

Elsewhere preparations appeared to be further advanced. The only serious gap was in the extreme north where Mordaunt had few friends or associates, but instructions were sent to

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1 CSP. iii. 478, 505, 516, 517-18; Nicholas Papers, iv. 97-9, 158-9.  
royalists there on his behalf. In the rest of the country, Mordaunt had made extensive preparations for several local risings intended to support the main efforts around Lynn and Bristol, either by providing reinforcements or by diverting the attention of the enemy. In the Midlands attempts were planned for the seizure of Warwick, Worcester and Shrewsbury. Further risings had been promised in Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire. Mordaunt himself was to lead in Surrey, and royalists and Presbyterians were reported to be ready in Kent and Sussex.

The part assigned to Booth was only one among these comparatively less important risings, and consequently it did not receive so much attention in the general preparations as did the plans for Bristol and Lynn. However, in one respect it differed from the other local risings in that the details were left largely to Booth himself. The Presbyterians of Lancashire and Cheshire accepted him as their natural leader, no rival contested his influence with them. On the other hand, we do not have sufficient evidence to say how the royalists, as distinct from the Presbyterians, were contacted and organized. Whitley arrived shortly before the date fixed for the rising with instructions from Mordaunt and messages and commissions direct from Charles in Flanders. Furthermore, the majority of those royalists who took part appear on the list which he had compiled the previous year of those suitable to serve as officers. But there must have been more detailed organization, unknown to us, and it is not clear whether the royalists had any direct local connection with Booth for any length of time before the rising began.

The autonomy which Booth enjoyed, and was such as Whitley had recommended for each association, together with the closely knit Presbyterian connection in the north west, gave him his initial success. In May 1659 Booth received his commission from Mordaunt, and undertook to raise Cheshire and south Lancashire. He made a very favourable impression—

1 CSP. iii. 477. 2 CSP. iii. 489. 3 CSP. iii. 472, 477. 4 Ormerod, History of the County Palatine and City of Chester, 1819, ii. 180; Calendar Clarendon State Papers (Cal. CSP.), iv. 318. 5 Mercurius Politicus, 7 September 1659, gives a list of the most important prisoners. 6 CSP. iii. 460.
a Presbyterian, Mordaunt noted—and appeared worthy to be trusted to fulfil his promises.¹ Like the majority of his party, Booth had never before appeared for the king, but had stood aloof in 1648 and 1651. He had continued to serve as a Justice of the Peace, and had been elected to both of Cromwell’s Parliaments, only to be excluded as a member likely to prove hostile to the Lord Protector. In the extent of his influence, estates and wealth his family stood second only to the Stanleys.² This predominance, and his relative freedom from suspicion, greatly facilitated the organization and preparation of his rising. He could send his brother and uncle, both formerly officers in the parliamentarian army, as couriers to London without hindrance.³ When the time came his name and influence would carry the ministers of his persuasion. By means of a steady and systematic correspondence he secured the support of his tenants, relatives and connections. The only serious interruption to his plans came at the end of June and the beginning of July, at the same time that Popham became wary and doubtful. Booth’s confidence started to waver when he heard of Henry Cromwell’s unexpected submission to the new government formed after the fall of his brother, the Protector Richard. This news led Booth to fear that his rising would be easily and quickly suppressed by the troops which could now be expected to be sent from Ireland.⁴ Moreover, all attempts had failed to organize diversions across the channel to occupy the garrison. However, Booth’s hesitation did not last long; in the middle of July he assured Mordaunt of his constancy and determination.⁵

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During the summer of 1659 the republican government established after the fall of Richard Cromwell seemed to be on the point of disintegration. The Rump, the small and utterly unrepresentative corrupt fraction of the Long Parliament, feared the officers who commanded the army. They in turn regarded

¹ CSP. iii. 472, Mordaunt commented, “a presbyterian in opinion, yet so moral a man if ever any of that principle were to be relied on, I think Your Majesty may safely rely on him and his promises”.
² CSPD. 1659-60, p. 113.
³ Mordaunt, p. 27.
⁴ CSP. iii. 516-18.
⁵ Mordaunt, pp. 26, 27.
the members with unconcealed contempt, but were themselves bitterly divided by personal rivalry and political differences. Purges of the subordinate officers had reduced the military value and the morale of the troops. The pay of the common soldiers had fallen far into arrears; their dissatisfaction was greatly increased by the knowledge that their officers were speculating with the certificates issued to the men in lieu of pay. London and the nation at large showed themselves extremely restive under the burden of the heavy taxation imposed for the maintenance of the detested army.

All these factors encouraged Mordaunt to carry out his plans without further delay. Therefore he fixed the general rising for 1 August. However, on 28 July the military authorities intercepted letters from Mordaunt to Massey giving him his final instructions. Obviously this affected the plans for the attempt on Gloucester, but the fact that the government learnt of the imminence of the rising need not have been fatal. Admittedly orders were sent forthwith to all militia commanders instructing them to stand to their guard and arrest suspected persons. But the government had known for some time that a rising was being planned and had already taken precautionary measures. As early as 9 July orders had been sent to the militia. Vice-Admiral Lawson's ships already blockaded Ostend. On the day that the letters were intercepted the Council authorized a Proclamation ordering Mordaunt to surrender.

By the seizure of the letters the government did not learn anything, except for the one enterprise with which Massey was concerned, which it did not already know or suspect. The effect at first was rather to increase its uncertainty and anxiety than to make the whole rising futile from the start. But in one sense the warning which the government received did prove to be decisive. The orders sent to the militia, and the precautions which followed, would not have prevented a resolute execution

1 CSPD. 1659-60, p. 24; Mordaunt, p. 25. 2 Clarke Papers, iv. 28.
3 CSPD. 1659-60, p. 49, 29 July.
4 CSPD. 1659-60, pp. 15-16. Cal. CSP. iv. 295-7, precautions were already being taken by the local commanders.
5 CSPD. 1659-60, p. 31.
6 CSPD. 1659-60, pp. 46-7, 28 July; Commons Journals, vii. 739.
7 CSP. iii. 556.
of the plans for simultaneous risings, with the single exception
of Gloucester. But they did provide the faint-hearted and
defeatist with a ready excuse for inactivity. Success or failure
depended on risings being attempted in each part of the country
which would be too formidable for the local militia to be able
to put them down without having to appeal to the Council for
the assistance of the central army. All these local risings need
not succeed in themselves, they would play their part if they
attracted the attention and resources of the enemy. In some
cases it would be enough if they remained on the defensive or
even retired to some stronghold.

If several of the local risings succeeded, even for a time, the
government would soon become baffled, uncertain which was
intended to be the main rising, and so how and where to use the
central striking force. The mobile army, both in numbers and
in morale, had deteriorated in the months since the death of
Oliver. In the counties most of the troops were occupied in
holding the chief towns and forts, the mobile reserves were too
few to hope to be able to hold the field against a determined
enemy.1 Should the central force have to be scattered in order
to suppress dispersed, risings then London would be exposed to
internal subversion and Kent to an invasion from over-seas.
On the other hand, if the army were held back at first, the
insurgents would be given time to arm and embody their recruits,
and to concentrate the forces of several districts. The king, or
one of his brothers, would be given an opportunity to organize
and undertake an invasion.

Above all, any initial royalist successes, even the mere fact
of their being able at last to put forces into the field, would
certainly encourage waverers. The subsequent collapse of this
insurrection must not blind us to the fact that the position
of the government was extremely precarious. In fact, had
Mordaunt shown himself less precipitate, had the rising been
postponed only a few weeks, its success must have been inevit­
able. Once again the royalists paid dearly for the separation of
one section of their agents from another. At the time of the

1 In Kent there were only 250 horse and foot, apart from those necessary to
hold the garrison towns.
rising one agent was on his way to negotiate with Monk in Scotland, and another about to leave for Copenhagen to treat with Montague, the commander of the fleet in the Sound. Neither had any love for the new government, and of course in the next year these two men between them were to be primarily responsible for the Restoration. Both at this time gave promise of being ready to support the insurrection, and Montague went so far as to bring back his fleet without orders, but by the time that they were in a position to do so it had collapsed in failure.

Except in Cheshire and Lancashire, the risings planned for 1 August came to nothing in a way reminiscent of the fiascos of 1655. Some of the appointed rendezvous had become known to the government; the insurgents found them guarded and patrolled. But even where they were not known, the number who appeared in arms as they had promised was miserably insufficient. Groups such as the forty horsemen who tried to assemble at Tonbridge, sixty in Hampshire, the handful led by Mordaunt himself in Surrey, were easily and speedily dispersed. Small groups skulked in the woods around Tooting until they realized that the whole enterprise was futile. In the west 3,000 men should have assembled at Lansdown, only seventy came. A mere fifty men joined Charles Littleton and marched purposelessly as far as the Wrekin; they were far too few to attempt to surprise Shrewsbury as had been intended, although the townspeople were known to be sympathetic. The county troop chased small groups of royalists through Sherwood Forest, and although five of the fugitives actually seized Derby and tried to raise fresh forces, this piece of bravado soon came to an end.

1 CSP. iii. 543. The royalist emissary left to negotiate with Monk about 5 August; the king had been asked to give him plenipotentiary powers on 6 July (516). Monk made no positive move, but played a waiting game, refusing to send troops to assist his rival Lambert (C.S.P., Venetian, 1659-61, p. 57).

2 Carte, ii. 186; the envoy got to Copenhagen 23 August. Montagu had already been approached by Hyde (CSP. iii. 497) and had promised his support should circumstances be favourable (Cal. CSP. iv. 296-7).

3 T. Carte, Original Letters (1739), ii. 202. He returned in order to blockade the Thames, but on arrival learnt of Booth’s defeat.

4 For the various unsuccessful attempts at risings see Clarke, iv. 30-45, 285, 290; Mordaunt’s report in CSP. iii. 558-9; Cal. CSP. pp. 304 ff; CSPD. 1659-60, pp. 87, 113, 120.
The majority of those who should have risen, royalists for the most part, stayed at home and passively submitted to arrest. Infected by the defeatism of the Knot, they were not willing to risk their lives and property in local risings which might be suppressed even though the insurrection as a whole succeeded. Some were genuinely averse to a victory due mainly to Presbyterian help. Apart from lethargy, cowardice and personal rancour, one suspects that jealousy of Mordaunt played a large part.

The discouragement spread by the Knot effectively killed all real chances of success. They sent messengers to say that the whole kingdom had deserted the engagement.\(^1\) This message was accepted, apparently with relief, by many who had only a few days earlier assured Mordaunt of their preparedness. As a result of their inactivity the various local risings either did not take place at all, or were suppressed by the local forces, without fighting or casualties, and without their having to call on the assistance of the central army. This defeatism very nearly stopped Booth as well. On 30 July he met some of his confederates in Manchester and decided to rise the next day instead of waiting until 1 August.\(^2\) Had he not done so, it is doubtful whether any rising would have taken place in the north west. For soon after he had assembled his friends and tenants-in-arms, begun recruiting and declared for a free Parliament, he received a discouraging letter from Lord Bruce, one of those which had dissuaded others from carrying out their undertakings.\(^3\) In fact, the Knot had not greatly cared whether the letter reached Booth in time or not to prevent his appearing in arms, but even they were forced to regret their action when they learnt of his initial successes.

Booth naturally hesitated after reading Bruce's letter, but his colleagues remonstrated that there could now be no turning back; having once appeared in arms, they would face ruin if they tamely dispersed.\(^4\) Indeed, he soon gained control over south Lancashire and all Cheshire, and it is hard to avoid the

\(^{1}\) CSP. iii. 556.
\(^{2}\) Clarke, iv. 288-9. 31 July was a Sunday.
\(^{3}\) Carte, Letters, ii. 194.
\(^{4}\) Ibid. p. 195
conclusion that with more resolute leadership, the same measure of success could have been achieved elsewhere. The local authorities already suspected him, but had not been strong enough to take any action.\(^1\) The militia, although alerted, could not hold the field against the insurgents. Colonel Ireland, one of the officers who had just been purged, went over to Booth with two troops of horse.\(^2\) The remainder of the local forces retreated precipitately to the shelter of Chester Castle and sent appeals for help to London.

Booth's appearance in arms soon attracted very considerable support. Those who had already been enlisted before the rising—for the most part Presbyterians—joined Booth well armed and mounted. Directions issued in the parish churches on 31 July by the ministers produced numerous recruits.\(^3\) At the first rendezvous on 2 August at Rowton Heath 500 men were present, but this number soon rose to more than 3,000.\(^4\) Not all could be armed, and some at least of the tenants were there unwillingly, but Booth now found himself at the head of something more than a mere mob. Many had service experience, and enough officers came in to put them into some kind of military order. With perfect timing Colonel Whitley arrived bringing messages from the king and Mordaunt.\(^5\) Neither their contents nor Booth's reaction are known, but the fact that Booth was in touch with Charles is of significance. Later some royalists, whose animus against the Presbyterians had in no way diminished, asserted that Booth had never intended to restore the king. In fact, the whole question of whether the rising was to promote the king's restoration, and whether he should at once be proclaimed, was best left alone until victory had been achieved.

It seems that Booth did favour the eventual restoration of the king. He had come to an understanding with Mordaunt

\(^1\) Clarke, iv. 288-9. Colonel Thomas Birch heard rumours of the intended rising on 28 July, and learnt that arms were being moved to Dunham Massey.

\(^2\) CSPD. 1659-60, p. 24. On 13 July orders had been sent for the replacement of Ireland as one of the militia commanders for Lancashire.

\(^3\) Clarke, iv. 288-9. Mercurius Politicus for 7 September listed two ministers among those taken prisoner after Booth's forces were scattered.


\(^5\) Baker, p. 573.
and had twice received instructions from the king, which implies that he was in favour.\(^1\) Later, when Booth lay in the Tower, Charles wrote assuring him that he was not forgotten, and that he believed that Booth had always intended his restoration.\(^2\) At the time of the rising Booth wisely refrained from committing himself. The first essential was to organize against the coming offensive by Lambert with the main force of the army. Disputes over the king would make defeat certain, but all could at least unite on a declaration in favour of a free Parliament.

Therefore Booth was naturally furious when he heard that some of the Lancashire insurgents had proclaimed Charles at Warrington, and later he rebuked Middleton for his open espousal of the king’s cause.\(^3\) The immediate importance of this split can be exaggerated; it had little bearing on the military situation, but the political implications were immense. Booth’s statements of policy make it abundantly clear that his primary aim was to secure Presbyterian objectives; his arguments were calculated to appeal chiefly to his co-religionists. If these objectives were to be secured it was essential for the Presbyterians to gain control over Parliament so that conditions could be imposed upon the king before he returned. Moreover, to proclaim Charles at once would mean a fight to the finish against the regicides and doctrinaire republicans. A declaration for a free Parliament, and nothing more, might serve as a basis for negotiations with Lambert and other leaders, men who had already rejected royalist overtures. The Presbyterians might be convinced that the ultimate return of the king was inevitable and necessary, but they were clearly determined to entrench themselves in power before they recalled him.

In his speech at Rowton Heath,\(^4\) in the letter which he sent out, and in his Declaration, Booth carefully omitted any reference to the king. It was not his business to bid for royalist support—it presumably would come in any case—his appeal was

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\(^1\) CSP. iii. 489-90; *Mordaunt*, pp. 17-18. Booth, among others, signed the report sent on 7 June to the king.

\(^2\) *Mordaunt*, p. 141.

\(^3\) Clarke, iv. 38, 40. The report in a newsletter that Booth had consequently been deserted by most of his men is suspect as propaganda; there is no confirmation (*Carte, Letters*, ii. 196).

\(^4\) Atkinson, pp. 164-5.
directed chiefly to disaffected former parliamentarians like himself. In the letter Booth cleared himself of the charge of rebellion and concentrated on the grievances from which all sections suffered. He emphasized the heavy taxation and the corruption of the Rump. The members had complained that their dissolution by Cromwell in 1653 had been an act of violence; by their continued refusal to admit the excluded members—of whom Booth was one—they convicted themselves of the same crime. Booth therefore declared for a free Parliament. However he was willing, if it would avoid the need for fighting, to accept the Long Parliament on condition that the old, that is the Presbyterian, members were restored. Thus he would restore the position of 1648, and with it Presbyterian predominance, as the preliminary to the return of the king.

The Declaration had a wider appeal than the letter and was couched in more stirring language as a call to arms. Again he concentrated on grievances, justifying the recourse to force as necessary for the maintenance of the freedom of Parliaments. Subverted by the usurpation of the Rump and the ambition of the superior officers, without this freedom there could never be any settled foundation for religion, liberty and property. Declaring himself satisfied that he had the blessing of God, and the “cheerful concurrence” of the people, Booth made a bid for still more valuable temporal support. Somewhat inconsistently with his complaints against heavy taxation, he offered not only arrears but an increase of pay, and future promotion, to what he termed “the undeceived part of the Army”, that is, those who might be induced to desert.

Although this, like the proposal to restore the Long Parliament, could not be very acceptable to the royalists, Booth’s policy fulfilled its purpose. He received the support of almost all the gentry and nobility, Presbyterian and Anglican, both those who had been parliamentarians and old cavaliers. All

1 Atkinson, pp. 185-6. 2 August.
3 Among the royalists, the Earl of Derby, Lord Kilmorey, Colonel John Daniel and Cholmondeley of Vale Royal. The parliamentarians included Cotton of Cotton, Colonel Henry Brooks and Peter Brooke, M.P.
recognized him as leader, even the Earl of Derby accepting a subordinate position. The insurgents included men who had formerly been the bitterest enemies; for instance, both members of the cavalier bench and grand jury of 1643, and the parliamentarian leaders whom they had indicted of high treason. About a third of those who were subsequently listed as prisoners appear on Whitley's list of royalist officers. The leader of the contingent from North Wales, Middleton, came from a staunch parliamentarian family, but the area provided him with mainly royalist followers. The very mixed composition of the insurgents did not materially contribute to the failure of the rising, doomed in any case by its isolation, but it certainly would have been a different matter had Booth achieved any permanent measure of success. Political considerations did, however, weaken it in one respect. Booth, the only possible leader on whom all could agree, had few claims to military qualities. Political necessity led him to open his council of war to any gentleman who cared to attend, and some of those who received commissions showed their incompetence even during the brief campaign. It is unlikely that even a stronger figure than Booth could have held out for any length of time, but he hastened his defeat by one serious error. Chester welcomed him, but no attempt was made to storm the castle, which was weakly garrisoned and poorly provisioned. The blockade established did not prevent the commander sending and receiving messages; had he not learnt of Lambert's approach he might have been induced to surrender.

Booth could do nothing to prevent his position deteriorating as the enemy forces concentrated against him. A vigorous offensive would mean exposing a flank and dispersing his army. Substantial reinforcements crossed from Ireland to Beaumaris. The cavalry troops from the northern counties assembled out of reach of his forces before closing in. Despite incessant rain and men who were at first mutinous from lack of pay, Lambert

1 Atkinson, pp. 146-62.
2 Mercurius Politicus, 7 September, quoted in Ormerod, ii. xli.
3 Carte, Original Letters, ii. 199. 4 Carte, Life, ii. 185.
5 Clarke, iv. 45; CSPD. 1659-60, pp. 54, 73.
moved north with little delay.\textsuperscript{1} No hopes of relief existed for Booth. Massey was a fugitive; a second attempt to raise a force by Mordaunt came to nothing.\textsuperscript{2} The king, having heard of the failures elsewhere, moved from Calais to St. Malo in preparation to join Booth, only to learn of his defeat as he was ready to sail.\textsuperscript{3} Had Charles set out his chances of getting through would have been slight. From 15 August republican ships blockaded the Dee, and all the Welsh ports remained firmly in their hands.\textsuperscript{4}

Faced with imminent defeat, Booth attempted to negotiate with Lambert, which he could not have done had the king been proclaimed.\textsuperscript{5} He wrote expressing his surprise that Lambert should approach with an army, seeing that he had declared for nothing more than a free Parliament so that an accommodation could be arranged. Lambert’s ambitions made this approach futile; by suppressing the insurrection his own prestige and power would be increased. He replied that he had been ordered to force the rebels to submission, and that only by laying down their arms could bloodshed be prevented. A second approach by some Presbyterian ministers not only proved equally futile but, so far from gaining time for Booth to concentrate his forces, persuaded Lambert that his enemies were desperately afraid.\textsuperscript{6} Accordingly he advanced and on 18 August nearly surprised Booth’s forces, which had neglected to post adequate scouts. Had it not been for a rapid decision by Whitley, they would have been routed on the spot. But though the insurgents managed to withdraw in good order, they enjoyed only a brief reprieve.\textsuperscript{7}

On 19 August Lambert drove back Booth’s outposts as far as Winnington bridge over the Weaver, near Northwich. Before a determined cavalry charge the insurgents melted away after a skirmish of a most perfunctory sort. The infantry managed to escape through the enclosed land near the river, but in their

\textsuperscript{1} Atkinson, p. 168; CSP. Venetian, 1659-61, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{2} CSP. iii. 559.
\textsuperscript{3} CSP. iii. 560.
\textsuperscript{4} CSPD. 1659-60, p. 133. In addition the Duke of York was on the point of invading Kent with forces supplied to him unofficially by Turenne, when he too heard of the news of Booth’s defeat.
\textsuperscript{5} Whitelock, Memorials, iv. 358; CSPD. 1659-60, p. 136.
\textsuperscript{6} Clarke, iv. 45.
\textsuperscript{7} Atkinson, p. 168.
flight many of the cavalry were captured. Lambert had only one man killed, and Booth's casualties were not much greater. Small bodies of men escaped from the field only to be rounded up in the next few days. Chester surrendered without resistance; defence was made impossible by the ruinous condition of the walls. Belatedly Liverpool declared for Lambert. Many prisoners were taken by the country people, or gave themselves up voluntarily. Chirk Castle capitulated without a fight. With the exception of Whitley, who, as the only surviving eye-witness, was subsequently sent by Mordaunt to the king with his report, every notable was taken. For a time Booth evaded capture, but his detection at Newport Pagnall dressed as a woman (who apparently needed a razor and so aroused the inn-keeper's suspicions) added a final touch of farce to the whole sorry business.1

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The suppression of the rising did not lead to harsh or general punishments. Most of the minor prisoners soon regained their freedom, none of the leaders was brought to trial. Their estates escaped confiscation. The collapse of Mordaunt's plans did not discourage him or strengthen the government. By the time Monk reached London, early in 1660, the Presbyterians were in a position to assist him, to gain control of the militia, and subsequently of the Council of State. By that time even Booth had been freed; he went as one of the parliamentary commissioners to Breda. At first sight, then, his failure had little importance; at most the Restoration was postponed a few months. Even if he had succeeded it is doubtful whether he and his Presbyterian associates would have displayed sufficient political skill to have imposed conditions on the king and so secured the permanent predominance of their party.

Nevertheless Booth's failure had political repercussions which lasted for more than a generation. Success would have given him the importance which fell to Monk in 1660, and men like Whitley would also have profited. When the Restoration actually occurred Booth and his friends, although not unrewarded,

1 Atkinson, pp. 169-70, 173-6; Clarke, iv.46-7, 293; CSPD. 1659-60, pp. 136, 147.
were only one group with no particular claims to distinguish them from all the other supplicants for offices, pensions and dignities. Their initial disappointment, coupled with increasing distaste for the policy of the king after 1661, and with the local predominance of the Derby family, led them to the support of the "country" party in the Cavalier Parliament. In Booth’s group, before and after the Restoration, is to be found the origin and nucleus of the first Whig interest in the north west.

Booth, created Lord Delamere, became comparatively inactive in his old age; the lead passed to his able and courageous son, Henry Booth, later the first Earl of Warrington. Like his father, he showed himself sympathetic to presbyterianism and determined to defend the liberties of the subject, now against the attempts of the Stuarts to subvert them. At elections and in Parliament Booth spoke strongly for the exclusion of the Duke of York; unlike most Whigs he did not confine himself to words, but showed himself ready to take up arms if necessary. Dunham Massey, where the plans had been prepared in 1659, became the centre of conspiracy twice again. In 1685, alone among the Whig magnates, Booth tried to aid Monmouth by organizing a diversionary rising. Prevented by Monmouth’s early defeat and the precautions taken by the government, he was fortunate to be acquitted on a charge of treason. But undeterred by his narrow escape, Booth took the lead in 1688, and this time with success.

The Revolution brought Booth promotion in the peerage, but in more important matters it was an illusory triumph. His old Whig principles, his intransigence and determination, ill-suited him for the Court intrigues and opportunistic politics of the reign of William III. But he and his followers, like Whitley, did at last achieve a local predominance over their rivals, which in that century was often as satisfying as success in national politics.