

INTRODUCTION.

I. DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

To George Thomason, bookseller of the Rose and Crown in St. Paul's Church Yard, friend of Rushworth, Calamy, and Milton, and keen observer of religious and political affairs, we owe the British Museum collection of tracts which bears his name. From 1640 to 1661 Thomason collected each day's output of tracts, broadsides, newspapers, books, even fly-leaves of doggerel verse, and stored them away for the edification of future ages. Few of the publications relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and the Restoration eluded his vigilance. As the flood of this voluminous period bore in upon him, he carefully noted the exact date of each publication in his catalogue, and often wrote out the full name of the author where the treatise or book gave only the initials. On this account, Thomason is the sole authority for the dates of first and second editions of many books now regarded as classics of English literature.

Among eight publications which came into Thomason's hands from the presses of London on Feb. 13, 1649, one small quarto, the work of a friend, must have been noted by him with special pleasure. The entry was as follows;—'The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates: proving that it is Lawfull for any who have the Power to call to account a Tyrant or wicked King and after due conviction to depose, and put him to death. The Author, J. M. [i. e. John Milton.] *Printed by Matthew Simmons* (13 Feb).' A year later,