

AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SMUGGLER.

By BALDWIN S. HARVEY.

In the middle of the Eighteenth Century large bodies of smugglers on the East Coast had their headquarters at Hadleigh and carried on a brisk trade. The following extracts from an "Official Return" give some idea of the extent to which this trade was carried on:—

1745, April 17th. 120 horses and 100 smugglers landed goods at Benacre Warren, Suffolk. The goods were carried off by the Hadleigh, Norwich and Yarmouth gangs.

1745, May 20th. The Hadleigh gang, well armed with 70 horses, landed dry goods at Sizewell Gap, out of Cobbe's cutter.

1745, May 27th. With 60 horses they carried off Tea from Cobbe's cutter.

1745, June 11th. With 63 horses they landed Tea and Wet Goods.

1745, July 2nd. Landed Tea with 83 horses.

Do., July 12th. Landed Tea with 80 horses.

Do., November 10th. Landed Dry Goods with 80 horses.

Do., November 23rd. Landed Dry Goods with 40 horses.

Having reason to suppose that John Harvey, of Pond Hall, Hadleigh, a direct ancestor of mine, was a leader of the "Hadleigh gang." I consulted the "Gentleman's Magazine" and found in volume 17, year 1747, the following notice:—

"Not one of the 28 smugglers who were required by His Majesty's Order in Council and proclamation in January last to surrender themselves within 40 days, pursuant to the late Act for preventing smuggling, having surrendered himself, whoever shall apprehend any one of them who are named in the said order, after expiration of the 40 days, will have a reward of £500, and whoever conceals or succours them will be liable to transportation for 7 years."

In the same volume, on Tuesday, 21st April, 1747, the following entry appears:—

"John Harvey, a noted smuggler, was committed to Newgate for not surrendering himself, according to notice given in the "Gazette."

Later, on Monday, 22nd June, 1747,

"Harvey, a smuggler of Suffolk, was tried at the King's Bench on several issues and for not surrendering according to the proclamation. He was found guilty of the smuggling but acquitted of the felony incurred by not surrendering, the proclamation not having been regularly affixed and proclaimed."

Having thus been acquitted of felony on technical grounds, Harvey was tried at the Old Bailey in October, 1747. The indictment states, "That he, together with a number of 80 persons, on the 30th June, 1746, in the parish of Shevertton, there carrying firearms and other offensive weapons in order to the clandestine running of certain uncustomed goods to wit:

About 50 hundred weight of Tea from parts beyond the sea from which goods were customs due to His Majesty."

The Attorney-General then says that he will call two witnesses who were present at that time and that if the prisoner is found guilty he will be transported for seven years. One of these witnesses gives evidence that "the prisoner was armed with a brace of pistols and that he was aiding and assisting in the carrying away Tea and Brandy." Harvey's own share was " $\frac{1}{2}$ an 100" of Tea and "he might have had 2 Anchors of Brandy or one." An "anchor" or "anker" was, I believe, a cask containing $8\frac{1}{2}$ imperial gallons. Two gangs were acting together, the "Hadley gang" and the "Waite gang." Harvey was one of the former, which consisted of 50 or 60 men. The landing of the goods took 6 or 7 hours and began at 7 o'clock on a Sunday morning.

The second witness having given corroborative evidence, the Court asks the prisoner what he has to say. His reply is that he "can make it appear that I was at home." For this purpose he calls two witnesses one of whom is an employee of his. But the alibi fails and he is found guilty.

This was in 1747. If John Harvey returned after his 7 years' transportation that would bring us to 1754. But I assume that, as is the practice with prisoners now, some remission of the sentence may possibly have been granted. Whether that was so or not, the family records shew that, "probably in 1755," he was outlawed for smuggling and that he paid a "hatful" of gold as penalty. The size of the hat is not recorded.

It is pleasant to add that, despite his transportation and his outlawry, he had four sons and two daughters.