

APPENDIX XI

The Drumming Well

The earliest account of the Drumming Well is to be found in a letter of 29 February 1667/8 written from Coventry by Ralph Hope to 'Joseph Williamson Esq^r. Secretary to the R^t. Hon^{ble} the L^d Arlington at Whitehall'. This reads:

"... Here is much discourse of a strange well at Oundle in Northamptonsh: wherein has bene heard by many a kind of Druming in maner of a March for ye most part; and is said to be very Ominous, haveing bene heard heretofore, and always precedes some great accident. I wrote toth towne for an account of it, from whence I was informd of ye certaine truth of it, that it beat for about a fortnigh the latter end oth last moneth and the begining of this, and in the very same maner was heard before the King's death, the Death of Crumwell, the King's coming in, the fire of London; this I had from a good hand, an inhabitant there: ye well is in the yard of one Dobbs. . . ."

(State Papers (Car. II) 29-235-126.)

The *Calendar of State Papers* prints the name as Dabbs: the original *might* be so read, but the earlier evidence for the name Dobbs (or Dobbes) is decisive.

It is worth while dating these seventeenth-century drummings:

1. Scots crossed the Tweed 20 August 1640.
2. Charles I executed 30 January 1648/9.
3. Cromwell died 3 September 1658.
4. Charles II returned 29 May 1660.
5. Fire of London 2-7 September 1666.
6. Hope's report end January-beginning February 1667/8.
7. Charles II died 6 February 1684/5.
8. Woodcock's "once since" before 1691.

This suggests that the drumming was seasonal: January-February, and August-September.