A COTSWOLD FAMILY

SIR ELLIS HICKS.

(From a picture at Witcombe Park.)

A COTSWOLD FAMILY: HICKS AND HICKS BEACH. BY MRS. WILLIAM HICKS BEACH, AUTHOR OF "AN INLAND FERRY." LONDON WILLIAM HEINEMANN. 1909

TO

MY HUSBAND

PREFACE

It will be obvious enough to anyone who reads it, that "A Cotswold Family" could never have been written unless I had made myself troublesome to a great number of people; but when I look through its pages I realise that a list of all those to whom my thanks are due would be an endless one. Two people, however, must be named. Without the invaluable help of Miss Ethel Grogan, the documents in the Record Office and the British Museum could never have been deciphered by me; and gratitude to Viscount St. Aldwyn for his careful criticism and his corrections of details must certainly be recorded.

To Hicks and Hicks Beach ghosts I offer an apology for all that I have said about them which is wrong-headed or unskilful; to the present Hicks Beach generations I apologise for all that I have left unsaid; and to Hicks Beach posterity I make the promise that I will try to leave behind me material sufficient to carry on the story from the point I have left it off.

SUSAN HICKS BEACH.

Witcombe Park,
August 6th, 1909.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER I.

SIR ELLIS HICKS.

THE story of the Hicks of Witcombe Park, in the county of Gloucester—the story, at least, as it will be told here—begins and ends with the proprietorship of a solitary woman. And it was the grandson of the first Lady Hicks of Witcombe Park who must have contrived the existence of the portrait of Sir Ellis.

To-day the portrait hangs in a room strait and high, with windows which look eastward. Beneath the windows lies a grass plot, and a sundial pedestal is in the middle of it. On the four sides of the grass grow monthly roses, pinks, lavender, and lilac violas, and in the spring crocuses come to flower at the foot of the stone pedestal. To right and left, under vine-covered pergolas, are gravel paths, and on the further side of the square garden, opposite to the house, a clipped privet hedge is backed by the perennial glory of an orchard, and beyond that by the Cotswold Hills.

Sir Ellis looks out on to this quietude with eyebrows acutely arched. He is not sorrowful, nor is he arrogant, nor is he disdainful, but he is aware that neither the pair of banners he took at Crécy nor the seventeenth century armour in which he sat to have his picture painted, has been preserved among the family relics. Is he to discover no surprise thereat? Yet it is a far cry from this Gloucestershire garden-patch to the field of Crécy and the windmill which overtopped the battle.

Hans Christian Andersen gave to literature a windmill which philosophised about itself, but made thereby no great contribution to philosophy—unless it be the

thumb-nail sketch of the miller's wife, who "does not run about stupidly and awkwardly, for she knows what she can do; she's as soft as a zephyr and as strong as a storm; she knows how to begin a thing carefully and to have her own way." There, perhaps, Andersen did essay to come near to the heart of that he wished the windmill to express about itself in relation to the world; but his words remain an essay only, and serve to warn from a venture into a maze of metaphors, from any attempted contrast between the windmill at work on the hill and the battle, which, the historian John Richard Green says, "was to England the beginning of a career of military glory, which, fatal as it was destined to prove to the highest sentiments and interests of the nation, gave it for the moment an energy which it had never known before. Victory followed victory."

But "the highest sentiments and interests"—aren't they represented by the miller, the civilian, the man of endurance, tough, slow, and sure? By the man who knows every secret of labour, and who "placed on a new planet would know where to begin"? * By the man who has for wife a woman "soft as a zephyr and strong as a storm"? Robert Hicks, who, in a later century, laid the foundations of the fortune which gave the family its effective *momentum*, was one of those who "placed on a new planet would have known where to begin." He knew where to begin on this planet at least. Wealth is one of the forces of Nature, and he made that force his own, and a possession which enabled those who came after him to carry out their plans and purposes and to achieve their ends. No son of his needed to go about the world cap in hand, to eternally ask permission.

It is in some ancestor such as this that any family with a consecutive record has its real beginning, and yet no portrait of Robert Hicks hangs at Witcombe Park to-day in the narrow room which looks eastward. In its place has been contrived the painting which later

* Emerson.

Hicks have learned to know to be Sir Ellis, who fought long ago under the Black Prince's banner on the sloping land in Ponthieu, with the windmill on the hill behind him and the French host in front. From the vantage ground between the windmill walls the English king watched the battle and his son's hard passage of arms serenely, for he could see that all went well. Perhaps he could see quite plainly, too, Ellis Hicks' great deed and the desperation of the "energy" which made him possessor of French banners. We are to believe that when the battle was over Ellis Hicks was knighted there and then, kneeling on the ground in the shade of the windmill sails. And this legend of foolhardy Sir Ellis has had more meaning for his descendants than the tale of the material achievement of the later Robert. And to seek for the reason of this one need not go into bye-ways of human consciousness.

"Delightful heroism! Delightful self-indulgence!" That is how a writer in nineteenth-century Oxford talks of the taking of standards in battle. But in the seventeenth century Sir William Temple writes, "whether it be wise in men to do such actions or no, I am sure it is so in States to honour them"; and his words have been placed by Robert Louis Stevenson at the head of the essay in which he says, "it is at best but a pettifogging, pickthank business to decompose actions into little personal motives and explain heroism away. I desire to see nobility brought face to face with me in an inspiriting achievement. The finest action is the better for a piece of purple. We desire a grand air in our heroes; and such a knowledge of the human stage as shall make them put the dots on their own 'i's,' and leave us in no suspense as to when they mean to be heroic."

Was Sir Michael Hicks of the seventeenth century singular when he desired for the family an ancestor with the grand air? Sir Ellis had dotted his own 'i' quite conclusively!

CHAPTER II.

"THE WEB OF FATE IS OF A MINGLED YARN."

THE publication of books which need a small hand-cart to take them from one room to another has gone somewhat out of fashion; but in 1811 it was not so, and one William Playfair, Esq., *Inventor of Linear Arithmetic; Author of an Inquiry into the Causes of the Decline and Fall of Nations; Editor of the last Edition of Dr. Smith's Inquiry, with Notes and a Supplement, etc., etc.*, did with the aid of the publishers, Thomas Reynolds and Harvey Grace, of No. 13, Thavies Inn, Holborn, issue a stupendous work entitled *British Family Antiquity, Illustrative of the Origin and Progress of the Rank Honours and Personal Merit of the Nobility of the United Kingdom, accompanied with an Elegant Set of Chronological Charts.*

Among the Nobility on the 121st page of the sixth volume of this work we get an account of the Hicks family prefaced by the usual legend of Sir Ellis, and, in his *Introduction*, the prolix, but by no means wholly irrelevant, remarks which William Playfair makes on the topic of ancestry in general.

> "No sooner do we see a stranger than we wish to know from whom he is descended. The very important enquiry of what he does? is in general a secondary question.
>
> "Although the actions of a man himself are the truest proof of his merit, yet it is impossible for the mind not to connect them with the opinion we have of his extraction; and whoever pays due attention to

the natural sentiments of mankind (while he keeps clear of the absurd prejudice which gives honour and respect to extraction alone) will acknowledge, that the actions of men are not the only ground of respectability or estimation in the world. It is true, that a respect for ancestors seems to be founded on what (in the present times) is called prejudice; and respect for actions on what is termed reason, but this is not altogether the fact.

"It is to be considered, that the motive of a man's actions not being always known, and even the real merit of an act being frequently uncertain, it is, in a vast majority of cases, impossible to form a very decided conclusion. On the other hand, though it is absurd to honour and esteem a man merely because he is descended from great and good men, yet, even in doing so reason mingles with prejudice; for personal merit or blame cannot, in almost any case, be measured so accurately as not to require all the assistance which circumstances will afford, in forming an opinion on this subject; it becomes therefore necessary to take into account all the collateral circumstances, of which extraction is incontestibly one."

"*It becomes therefore necessary to take into account all the collateral circumstances, of which extraction is incontestibly one.*"

This is the austere call to those who would trace too light-heartedly the fulfilment of fatality! For the telling of the history of the dullest of families is always an attempt, be it conscious or unconscious, to unravel the mystery of fatality or of destiny—the Destiny of Race. In such a history, consciously or unconsciously, all the collateral circumstances are catalogued, and not always apologetically, in order that the family as it *is* may render its account of itself beneath the stars.

In prose born of the enchanted mind, Mr. William

Sharpe* has tried to translate the spell which the sense of destiny has always cast over men's minds, the sense which, as he says, "finds its expression in a deep and terrifying sigh throughout literature, from the fierce singers of Israel to the last Gaelic Rhapsode." And here and there he touches on that mystery of the destiny which becomes native to certain localities where it has been too slowly worked out, the sense of a doom —and it is not necessary to think of that in its tragic meaning—which is not only a personal fatality, but which incomprehensibly will involve a whole family, and will give its quality to the very wind round the house-roof and the rain on the windows. And then from this curious truth, and from other half-truths, with which, as the old Greek tragedians knew, the subject is packed, he turns away, and energetically he cries to us:

> "Is there any wave upon the sea or leaf before the wind more feeble than the aimless will?—or is there any disaster of the spirit worse than that by which a Winged Destiny may become a wingless and obscure fate? . . . it is borne in upon me that, in its final expression, the Secret of Destiny must be sought within, in the interior life; in a word that Destiny as we commonly understand it, is but the vague term of a quality of spiritual energy."

But this can be said more tersely. Character is Fate: Fate is Character. The words transpose and repeat themselves easily, and either transposition is a truth. And yet at what precise juncture in the history of a family is it possible to lay an arresting finger on the page, to declare this, then, is the character of the race, and these the circumstances which forged it? The thing has been done, for much brilliant history has been written, but it can only be achieved by laying

* "The Winged Destiny," Fiona Macleod.

accurate boundaries to the stage, and the older heraldic motto of the Hicks admonishes of the fictitious brilliancy of final judgments!

Nondum metam is a motto which, for a short time, seems to have been connected with the arms. Mottoes, as most people know, are not usually recorded at the Heralds' Office, because they are a personal choice and are not hereditary. No motto appears with the grant of arms to Sir Michael and Sir Baptist Hicks in 1604, but Sir William Hicks of Beverston recorded a pedigree at the Visitation of Gloucester in 1623, and in the Harleian MSS. *Nondum metam* is quoted, together with what represents itself to be that pedigree, and with the description of the arms. At the Visitation of London in 1687, however, the jauntier, more determinate and ungrammatical *Tout en bon heure* appears and is recorded. It is somehow a little too triumphant, and yet it does not reach out far enough, and the present owner of Witcombe, when he put a sundial on the new south front of the house, returned to the older legendary form, and *Nondum metam* is painted below the dial face.

"Not yet the Goal"—but where was the beginning?

The Hicks are what is vaguely called an old county family. A scrutiny of any county history will reveal that landowning families, as a rule, retain possession of any given estate for a very short time, and that the adjective 'old' when applied to them is, for the most part, only a comparative term. Sir Robert Atkyns wrote his "History of Gloucestershire" in 1712 and prefaced it with some three hundred and odd coats of arms of nobility and gentry living in the county. Of these, to-day, only twenty-eight are in possession of the whole or part of their residential estates, while the hold of many of these twenty-eight on the land is visibly weakening, and those who seem to be securely seated are so, either because they or their ancestors have married heiresses, or because the property was, in

the first instance, so large that the diminishing processes of time have not yet completed their work.

Atkyns is not to be relied on absolutely for all his facts, but, in the main, he is borne out by earlier and by later histories. It seems to be the case that only one Gloucestershire family owns its lands in succession from the Norman Conquest. This is the family of Clifford, of the Grange, Frampton-on-Severn; the youngest branch of the family descended from the Norman Pontz, to whom the manor was granted by William I.—the family whose most notorious daughter was Fair Rosamond. The Berkeleys of Berkeley Castle, now represented by Baron Fitzhardinge, have an older family tree. They claim descent from Ednothus, an English thane. They owned manors in Somersetshire and in other counties, but not in Gloucestershire, it seems, until the reign of Stephen. The Guises of Elmore date, as landowners, from Henry III. (though their pedigree, too, goes further back). The Kingscotes of Kingscote owned land there in the time of Edward II., and the Estcourts of Shipton, now represented by Baron Estcourt, possessed the manor of Le Estcourt in the reign of Edward IV.

The Leighs of Adlestrop are the well-known Cheshire family which dates from before the Conquest. The Chamberlaynes of Maugersbury and the Duttons of Sherborne are of Norman descent. The Somersets are directly descended from John of Gaunt. But none of these—to make a loose statement—became Gloucestershire landowners until about 1600.

Of the remaining twenty families, some can carry their family trees further back than the dates of acquirements of property, but only one or two can make precise statements about anything previous to 1550 or 1600. These twenty families are:—

The Barkers of Fairford.

The Bathursts of Cirencester (now represented by Earl Bathurst).

The Boveys of Flaxley Abbey (now Crawley-Boevey).
The Blathwayts of Dyrham.
The Chesters of Almondsbury (now Chester Master).
The Codringtons of Dodington.
The Colchesters of Westbury (now Colchester-Wemyss).
The Dightons of Clifford.
The Freemans of Batsford (now represented by Lord Redesdale).
The Fusts of Hill (now Jenner-Fust).
The Hales of Alderley.
The Hicks and Hicks Beachs of Witcombe and Williamstrip and Coln St. Aldwyn (now represented by Viscount St. Aldwyn).
The Holfords of Westonbirt.
The Mortons of Tortworth (now represented by Earl Ducie).
The Noels of Campden (now represented by Earl Gainsborough).
The Jenkinsons of Hawksley.
The Rogers of Dowdeswell (now Coxwell-Rogers).
The Rushouts of Upper Swell.
The Whitmores of Lower Slaughter.
The Winnyats of Dymock.

So it can be calculated that in Gloucestershire, and in the course of two hundred years, 90 per cent. of the owners of land have disappeared and their places have been refilled, and there is no reason to doubt that the process is still going on, and perhaps at an increased rate, and that Gloucestershire is not a solitary instance among counties.

A seeming stability, even if it dates from only the day before yesterday, has, therefore, quite a consequential air in the middle of so much that has slipped away; and it is perhaps only an ungracious mind that tries to unravel the shadowy threads of consequence, of that web of tradition loosely woven of names,

monuments, fragments of stories, family portraits, the ambiguous statements of county histories.

The unravelling process has a fascination, even if it is without practical value, and destructive only—there lie the unravelled threads! Are they worth replaiting?

The Witcombe tradition has been vaguely that of perpetual existence in Gloucestershire, and there has been no insistence on the existence of Robert Hicks of Cheapside, the first authentic ancestor. And yet the tradition, like so many other traditions, has its foundation in fact, as the will of Robert himself proves. The little document, folded to a square of four inches and stained with the dust of three-and-a-half centuries, shows that, in the first place, Robert had land in Gloucestershire to dispose of, and, in the second place, that he was of kin to a Gloucestershire family of the same name. Hicks, Hick, Hickes, Hicke, Hyckes, Hycks, Hyks, Hyx, Hix, Hixe, Hikes, Hicckes, Hikkes, Hikkys, Hecks are some of the ways of spelling it in records and registers.

CHAPTER III.

THE HICKS OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

THERE is an attractive theory about the origin of the name of Hicks.

The Hwiccas were a Saxon tribe inhabiting the greater part of Gloucestershire to the east of the Severn and Avon up to near Warwick, including most of the Cotswolds. When family proper names came into use, it would have been a natural thing that a person clearly belonging to that tribe should have been called Hicks.

The dictionary reminds us that Patronomatology is a doctrine and not a science! But it is not in the least improbable that Hicks is a tribal surname; and Hwicca or Huicca is said also to be transmitted in the names of several places, such as Warwick and Wickwar.

(Worcester = Wigorceaster = Hwicca's Chester.)

For proof of the existence of the kingdom of Wiccia (the spellings are numerous) we can go to the "Ecclesiastical History" of the Venerable Bede, where it is mentioned three times. In the "Saxon Chronicle," too, that confused history of invasion and bloodshed, we are told that "Ethelmund, ealdorman, rode over from the Wiccians at Cynemeeresford" (Kempsford). The sequel to that being that there was a "great fight"!

It is as impossible to keep arranged in the mind the story of Anglo-Saxon Britain between the withdrawal of the Roman legions in A.D. 411 and the Norman Conquest as it is to retain the tale of the Italian Republics in the Middle Ages. The Romans had

civilised Britain, and it had been converted to Christianity by missionaries from Iona ; but the Romans had not encouraged the Britons in proficiency in the art of war, and they found themselves, after the withdrawal of the Roman army, at a disadvantage among their piratical neighbours. The Scots of Ireland, the Picts of Scotland, and the German pirates of the North Sea were a formidable combination. To their undoing, it was with the Germans that the Britons made alliance against their other foes.

The German pirates were of three nations—the Jutes of Jutland, the Saxons of Holstein, and the Angles of Sleswick. They are named in the order of their respective conquests of Britain. The Jutes, under Hengist and Horsa, landed in the Isle of Thanet and established themselves in Kent.

In 477 Saxons under Ella invaded Sussex. In 495 two Saxon ealdormen, Cerdic, and Cynric, his son, came up Southampton Water with five ships ; and if the fortunes of this particular band are followed up in the "Saxon Chronicle," it can be discovered that, under succeeding leaders, it fought its way slowly westward and reached Gloucestershire in 577, eighty-two years afterwards. It can be accepted as a fairly well-established fact that these pirates were the tribe of the Gewissas, or Hwiccas, and the ancestors—to dispense with all boring criticism—of every Gloucestershire Hicks ! More than that, there need be no further discussion as to the exact person with whom the Hicks family tree should begin, for the Chronicle traces the descent of Cerdic from the god Woden himself !

The native inhabitant, defending his own hearthstone, has never failed to be a valiant foe, and the final Huiccian victory at Dyrham in Gloucestershire, when the three British kings of Gloucester, Bath, and Cirencester were killed on the field, was probably a battle tough and savage enough. There must have been a tremendous struggle for the pleasant land which the

River Severn, the Malvern Hills, and the River Teme enclose on one side, and which the Roman Foss Way, along the crest of the Cotswolds, bounds upon the other. The soil itself yields up its evidence of the stout defence of the Romano-British, and there have been dug out of it

> "Skeletons with the iron bosses of their mouldered wicker shields under their heads; with gilded bronze brooches; with iron spear-heads by their sides, and clay or wooden cups in their hands. These were the skeletons of the heathen Saxons, pursued by those they invaded, and buried where they fell, ready to renew their fierce conflicts and drinking-bouts in the Hall of Walhalla."

So say the *Records* of the Gloucestershire Archæological Society, and the bosses, the brooches, the spear-heads, the cups may be seen in the Museum at Gloucester.

Roman civilization had not made the British effete—they could resist stoutly, it seems. But they must have been in every way so much more respectable than the Viking savages. One test of Huiccian lineage ought to be the existence of a lurking grudge against respectability, and the occurrence—if not infrequently—of atavistic dreams of galleys and landings and of respectable persons sprinting before a thirsty blade!

There are surmises by which we live; and there is a picture of a woman of Hicks lineage at Witcombe which makes the Saxon savage not a probable, but the only possible, ancestor. The savage may die out in man, but it will never die in woman; and this truth the picture of Kneller's declares. The Countess of Longford has a narrow head and a very long, narrow nose. Her lips are red and full, and are pinched together to suppress laughter, and on either side of the mouth, at a distance from the eye, the cheeks are bulbous, and the colour in them is most likely artificial.

The eyes themselves, high in the face, are of the purple of sloes, and the lids above are thick, and are fringed only by slight lashes. The hair is coarse and is of red gold, and it is massed in carefully made puffs over each ear and falls in carefully disarranged curls over the clumsily modelled bosom. There are great pearls hooked into the ears, and jewelled clasps hold the satin dress rather insufficiently together. The Countess of Longford is the Huiccian savage reincarnate, with the savage's compressed intellect and generous talent of *savoir vivre*, the savage's instinctive shrewdness and lack of the virtues which Christianity has fostered and hallowed.

The elimination of Christianity from the conquered territory shows how complete the Huiccian conquest was. The Christian British collected themselves together again into a nation, but it was on the further side of that wide river which, as hunting people know too well, divides the land upon one side of it from the land upon the other as completely to-day as it did then. They took their language with them across the river, as well as their religion. It is impossible to pretend that the Hwiccas did Gloucestershire a lingual wrong when we chant to-day the resonant Saxon:

"Before the mountains were brought forth or ever the earth and the world were made, Thou are God from Everlasting and world without end."

But it is equally impossible to regret that one has no heritage in its Welsh equivalent:

"Cyn gwneuthur y mynyddoedd a llunio o honot y ddaear a'r byd; ti hefyd wyt Dduw, o dragywyddoldeb hyd dragywyddoldeb."

The people among whom this language has survived have had no mean vitality! And that it has survived is evidenced by the fact that the sale of the Welsh Scriptures during the last century amounted to three and a half millions. It is a sturdy resistance of nationality, and in early days there was a persistence, too, in

THE COUNTESS OF LONGFORD.

By Godfrey Kneller.

(*From a picture at Witcombe Park.*)

their own religious customs, which drew down upon them the exhortation of the Roman Church. Bede gives an account of the matter.

In 603, after the conversion of Kent and its king, Augustine, for the furtherance of the conversion of the rest of England, seems to have conceived the idea of a conference with the bishops of the older Christianity. The Hwiccas, by this time, were under the rule of Anglian Mercia, and it was the Mercian king, Penda, who gave the safe-conduct both to Augustine and to the Welsh bishops. It was somewhere on Huiccian soil that the meeting took place, and one legend has it that it was at Aust, on the eastern bank of the Severn, where was the Roman ferry (Trajectus Augusti). It is permissible to conjure up the picture of the boat-load of seven bishops in their copes and mitres, huddled together, crossing the wide water between the high cliffs on either shore. But—

> "When they came, Augustine was sitting on a chair, which they observing were in a passion, and charging him with pride, endeavoured to contradict all he said."

This "sitting on a chair" was decidedly an indiscreet assumption of ecclesiastical superiority. The seven fiery provincial Celts would listen to no terms whatever from this ambassador of the Universal Church. Hwiccian churls, spear in hand, would be there to police the occasion and to take Augustine back to the Hwiccian marches, but it is not recorded that the Roman bishop found the opportunity to make a convert of any Hicks, and Gloucestershire remained defiantly pagan for another sixty years. Then Mercia (of which it was now a part) fell under the dominion of Christian Northumbria, and with the northern army came the missionaries from Iona. "Like a tidal wave," says the History Book, "the Faith spread across Mercia."

Between the first Hwiccian convert—for such a man there was—and Nicholas Hickes of Hampton Maysey, who, in the first year of King Edward III. (1327), is mentioned in a taxation of one-twentieth granted to the king by the laity, the gap is one of six and a half centuries, of time, which itself does so little for us except to make destitute. This Hickes of the fourteenth century would be bereft of the simplicity of the Viking nature; instinctively, we seem to know, he was not the man who would do battle for an egg, or would die for an idea: a primitive nobility had inevitably gone from him, and the pertinent question is whether, in its place, was that moral originality and strenuousness which man finds so much more burdensome than physical endurances. Was the age one of which the strenuous person was a natural product?

There is in existence, and now in the British Museum, a manuscript book full of pictures which makes the question not a bit a vain one asked to the air. The *Athenæum* of December 29th, 1888, gives an account of it:

> "This MS. is known to students as MS. ROY 10 E. IV. It consists of 314 folio leaves of parchment upon which are written Gregory IX.'s Decretals. MSS. of this sort, as is well known, were written in Italy and sent with blank margins to the various parts of Christendom to be illustrated according to the taste of each place. This copy was meant for France, as its first words show:—
>
> "'*Gregorius episcopus, servus, sevorum Dei, dilectis filiis doctoribus et scolaribus universis parisiis commorantibus salutem, et apostolicum benedictionem.*' But the work of illustrating the book was scarcely begun in Paris when the volume found its way to England, where it was thoroughly illustrated from the first page to the last. This book came into the possession of the famous St. Bartholomew Monastery

in London, as testified by this mention on the fly-leaf, *Liber domus sancti bartholomei in Smythfylde.* According to the style of dress the illustrations appear to have been painted during the early part of the fourteenth century. This can be fixed by the fact that *ailettes* are worn by knights (fol. 305) and these are known to have been in fashion from the closing years of the thirteenth century to the middle of the reign of Edward III. The pages are ornamented with scrolls, grotesques, etc., the margin at the foot of the page being reserved usually for scenes with personages, and in these especially lies the great interest of the book. There is no exaggeration in saying that all English mediæval life is to be seen there. There are scenes of peace and war, of public and of private life, battles and sea-fights, storming of castles and jousts to please ladies: all the games of England are there; all its sports too; there is hawking, deer-stalking, rabbit, bird, and squirrel shooting, fishing in rivers and ponds, games of bowls, tops, ninepins, dice, dances of every sort, tricks of tumblers, minstrels, jugglers, bearwards without end. All trades are represented, such as spinning, corn-grinding (several representations of hand-mills), house and church building, shoe-making, carpentering, baking, begging, etc. Private manners are profusely illustrated; people are shewn at their dinner-table, in bed, sitting in their room, attending to kitchen business, dictating letters. Then you see a letter taken by a messenger to a lady, the lady dictates in the same way her answer, and a little further on the result of all this dictating is perceived, as well as what the writing was about: the lady and gentleman have each mounted their horses and meet at a lonely place; they leave their horses to pages and kiss most lovingly. The saddles are to be noted, for being now empty, their shape is to be seen to advantage; they are exactly similar for the man and for the woman, being shaped

like an arm-chair, for people to sit in them and ride astride, as was then the custom for ladies as well as men."

So the account goes on, and as one turns over the pages of one of the most fascinating picture-books in the world, one echoes the final words, that—

"It is greatly to be desired that this book may be taken in hand by a competent scholar for the purpose of identifying the illustrations throughout. Everyone who has looked over these pages of so much historical and literary importance will agree that they should be put beyond the possibility of destruction, because they form one of the most abundant sources of information concerning English life at the time of the Edwards available at the present day."

But it isn't because it is illustrative of the time of the Edwards that the manuscript is of transcendent value. It is illustrative of the age of Chaucer, and with that remembrance, and with the pictures of the *Decretals* as an index, the *Taxation of a Twentieth* (*Lay Subsidy. Gloucester. Roll* $\frac{113}{5}$) in the Archives of the Record Office glows with a thousand colours. Gloucestershire of the fourteenth century becomes a land where there was a perpetual May-time, and the grass was always green; where birds sang in the trees, and there was a gay avoidance of all that was too serious and moral. Life was simple and full of humour; it was picquant, full of sentimentality, full of everlasting talk, of mirthful idleness and the love of women. It was a life not concerned with great conflicts nor great causes; it was simply very glad, with the gladness of a people rejoicing as children, who rejoice without reflection, in the completion of a unity and freedom towards which all their slow seven centuries of history since the Hwiccian conquest had led them. It was a life, a gladness, not aware of shadows across it of great things from which it shrank.

But the complete list of Hicks who were taxed in 1327 ought to be given.

From	Nicholas Hickes of Hampton Meysey . .	viijd̄.
„	Robert Hickes of Kynmaresforde . .	xixd̄.
„	Alice Hickes of Barndeslegh . . .	vjd̄.
„	John Hickes of Tettebury	xviijd̄.
„	John Hickes of Guytyngs Poer . . .	xiiijd̄q.
„	Walter Hykes of Hynelden . . .	xijd̄.
„	John Hickes of Little Whyticombe . .	xd̄.
„	Robert Hickes of Aston Super Carent. .	ij§q̄.
„	John Hickes of Asshton	iij§.
„	Robert Hikkes of Wynterbourne . .	viijd̄.

Anyone with a geographical knowledge of Gloucestershire will see at once how widely diffused the name was —that it was not merely a local one. Hill and Vale—the whole territory of the Hwiccas—are equally represented on the list.

Fourteen years later the name appears twice again in "*Inquisitions taken before the Abbot of Wynchecumbe to enquire into the true value of the ninth of sheaves, fleeces and lambs granted to the King in the County of Gloucester.*" Roger Hickes is one of the jurors for the Chapel of Horefield; and in a very torn Inquisition of the Deanery of Stonehouse, with Church and Christian name gone, one Hikkes appears as another juror.

Nicholas, Robert, Alice, John, Roger, pass in Chaucerian procession in the sunshine, with wimple and kirtle and pointed shoe and doublet and hose—crimson, and blue, and green, and yellow. There is a castle with turrets on a hill behind them in the picture; a mill is beside a brook, and star-like daisies grow along the wayside in the foreground. They go gaily, and chatter as they go—and then the brief glory of Crécy, and the radiance of the *Canterbury Tales* which illuminates them, fade, and we are at once in that direst age of English history, which ended with the tyranny of the Tudors.

The Black Death swept away Chaucer's England as effectually as a sponge will obliterate the devices on a

slate. Two years after the triumph of Crécy, this plague came from the East across Europe, and reached Britain from the shores of the Baltic. The tradition of its ravages has been borne out by modern research. More than half the population of England perished. Smith, in his *Lives of the Berkeleys*, says: "Soe great was the plague within this lords manor of Hame, that soe many worke folks (as amounted to .1144. days worke) were hired to gather in the corn of that manor alone, as by their deaths fell into the lords hands, or elce were forsaken by them"; while in Bristol, in the south of the county, the living were scarcely able to bury the dead.

That uncouth poem, *The Complaint of Piers Ploughman*, tells of the realities of the years which followed; and the very next list of Hicks in the Record Office is a list of lives bound down to those realities.

Behind the lives, as on some gloomy arras, is the perpetual war with France—the Hundred Years' War of history—which, although lighted here and there by English heroisms and triumphs, lost all national meaning, and became an endless struggle of European dimensions, with endless demands on the national finances. Now famine had followed on the heels of plague. For scarcity of hands to gather them harvests rotted on the ground, cultivation of the land became impossible, and when the first panic was over, there was such a sudden rise in wages consequent on the diminution in the supply of free labour that landowners and craftsmen were threatened with ruin. The strife between Capital and Labour was nakedly visible for the first time, and Capital began a desperate struggle to reduce the labourer to fresh serfage. Life had no economic outlook; and no other outlook either. Its narrowness, its misery, its monotony, Longland sets forth with grim intensity. Its pleasures were Hogarthian. Its religion the religion of common

sense and despair. Edward III.'s dishonoured death in old age was followed hard by the raising of a subsidy; and then, three years later, in 1380, the grant was renewed, and a Poll Tax, graduated from £1 to 1*s.* per head, was imposed on every male and female. Its exaction set England on fire. It goaded to frenzy the labouring class already seething with discontent, and the great peasant rising known as Wat Tyler's Rebellion was the result.

Here is the list of the Hicks whom the Plague spared to pay the tax—or, at least, to have the tax demanded of them. The roll is numbered *Gloucester* $\frac{113}{13}$, is dated 2 *or* 4 *Richard II.*, and is labelled *Poll Tax.*

HUNDRED OF SALEMUNDESBURY.

Stowe St. Edward.

vjs̃. Philip Hickus,* merchant.
xijd̃. Emma his wife.
vijd̃. Robert Hickus.
vjd̃. Jut his servant.

Donynton.

xijd̃. Robert Hickus.
xijd̃. Agnes his wife.

HUNDRED OF HOLFORD AND GRESTON.

Wykewone.

xijd̃. Richard Hyccke.
xijd̃. Cecilia his wife.

Staunton.

xijd̃. John Hickus.
xijd̃. Christine his wife.
xijd̃. Sibilla his daughter.

Stanleye.

xijd̃. John Hickus.
xijd̃. Margery his wife.

Guytyng Power.

xijd̃. Walter Hickus.

* In this roll "us ' seems always to be used instead of "es," *e.g.* Hobbus for Hobbes, Gibbus for Gibbes, etc.

HUNDRED OF KYFTESGATE.

Clopton.

xijd. John Hickus.
xijd. Thomas Hickus.
xijd. Anic (Avice ?) his wife.
xijd. Robert his son.
xijd. Richard his servant.

Social denunciations of some sort ought to follow on a list like this—a fragment of the literature of a great social crisis. It is trivial to be diverted to the contemplation of the existence of Hicks wives—but they have such alluring names. Emma, Agnes, Cecilia, Cristine, Margery, and Avice. Mr. Abbey could fashion for us their head-dresses and sweeping sleeves, their tight, short-waisted corsages and voluminous skirts. Shakspere could have given us the human nature of them—of the six woman souls. George Eliot would have delighted to philosophise over their narrow lives :—

> "Yet these commonplace people bear a conscience, and have felt a sublime prompting to do the painful right; they have their unspoken sorrows and their sacred joys; their hearts have perhaps gone out towards their first-born, and they have mourned over the irreclaimable dead. Nay—is there not a pathos in their very insignificance—in our comparison of their dim and narrow existence with the glorious possibilities of that human nature which they share?"
>
> *Amos Barton.*

And it is pretty certain that of Sibilla, slender daughter of John Hicks, she would have exclaimed :—

> "Could there be a more insignificant thread than the consciousness of a girl, busy with her small inferences of the way in which she could make her life pleasant?—in a time too, when ideas were with fresh vigour making armies of themselves, and the universal kinship was declaring itself fiercely: a time when the

soul of man was waking to pulses which had for centuries been beating in him unheard, until their full sum made a new life of terror or of joy. What, in the midst of that mighty drama, are girls and their blind visions? They are the Yea or Nay of that good for which men are enduring or fighting. In these delicate vessels is borne onward through the ages the treasure of human affections."

Daniel Deronda.

So we come abruptly to the crude wonder who Sibilla Hicks married! And in a *Pontifical*, done for the use of a Bishop of Exeter towards the middle of the fifteenth century, there is a miniature enclosed in an initial which gives us in glowing colours, and in microscopic detail, what might have been the very wedding of Sibilla herself, for it is the wedding of just ordinary folk. The bride's great, winged head-dress is of gold wire, and her frail neck bends beneath it. No hair is visible, and the high forehead must surely have been shaved. With raised eyebrows and puckered mouth, and yet with self-possession, she seems to give a hand that shrinks a little to the eager bridegroom. He is gay in scarlet hose, with crimson vest and blue tunic. There is no lack of colour. The mitred Bishop wears a green cope over his scarlet cassock, and the copes of the other priests are respectively blue and scarlet. The two elderly witnesses betray yet further the fashion of the day—behold the woman's glorified 'Eton' collar, and the sleeves falling to her knee and lined with white. How healthy such pre-occupation with detail and with human functions must have been in those dismal days! Historians hail down so many objugatory adjectives on the age that it is a revelation to turn over these old missals. They betray so quietly and effectively in their minute illuminations that, beneath the historical turmoil, real life itself—the thousand unrecorded lives of inhistorical souls—persisted obstinately.

'Real life,' we say—for is not Destiny complete in itself? Has not the hearth its flame—that imaginative solace? There, on a headland, a beacon blazes, but the road runs by it—and past. To live as a man, to carry the burden of his class and time, to keep hold of common sense—isn't that man's wisest choice? Isn't that the life for all of us? We can only live as part of ourselves.

In an *Alien Subsidy* of 1439* appears the name of Robert Hicckes of the Hundred of Berkeley, who was taxed for his servant Hankyn, a Frenchman. Robert plainly had a little homestead and a household, but there is no reason to suppose that he lived as part of himself only. For there is a mysterious Gaelic saying, "It is not everyone happy or unhappy, good or bad, who has a living soul!" On a headland, in that decade, a beacon had blazed fiercely. Europe saw it, and in its light rode a woman clad in white armour and bearing a banner. Robert Hicckes and Joan of Arc were contemporaries, and fast wedded to common sense were the Englishmen who burnt her at Rouen as a sorceress.

With her death, which had been preceded by the death of Henry V., the Hundred Years' War came virtually to an end, leaving the French masters of France; and the next date at which a Hicks is mentioned is 1452, the year of the beginning of the Wars of the Roses, when—

> "England presented to Phillippe de Commines the rare spectacle of a land where brutal as was the civil strife, 'there are no buildings destroyed or demolished by war, and where the mischief of it falls on those who make the war.' The ruin and bloodshed were limited in fact to the great lords and their feudal retainers. Once or twice the towns threw themselves into the struggle, but for the most part the trading and agricultural classes stood apart from it."
>
> *J. R. Green.*

* *Roll* $\frac{113}{102}$.

Simon Hykkys, no doubt, stood quite apart from it. He appears among the names of farmers and tenants of the Royal College of St. Mary of Eton by Windsor assessed for a whole fifteenth and tenth, and for a half of a fifteenth and tenth granted in 31 Henry VI. by the laity of Gloucestershire. His land was at Aston-upon-Carent in the Hundred of Tewkesbury, where Robert Hickes was taxed of a 'twentieth' more than a hundred years before. Simon lived, possibly, to see in old age the advent of the Tudors with the accession of Henry VII. in 1485, and thus the definite end of the Middle Ages.

This is a historical full-stop, and a place where a category of surmises can be made.

Hereditary surnames (*supra nomina*, because, when written, they were placed over the Christian name, $\frac{\text{Hicks}}{\text{John}}$), did not come into use until some time after the Norman Conquest. It was probably about the time that the Domesday Survey was made that, here and there in Gloucestershire, certain men of Huiccian lineage, who, unconsciously and in slipshod manner, had been wont to make use, if occasion required, of the name of the vanished tribe, adopted it definitely, in terse form, for the better security of their holdings, and handed it on as a legacy to their sons.

It is a distracting annoyance that Domesday Book is nothing but a rate book: William the Conqueror's whole object in compiling it was revenue. The names of the owners of manors are given, but the names of the tenants are not; the latter are only numbered and classified.

William had been forced by the resistance of the English to a wholesale confiscation of the soil. The English nobles either fell in battle or escaped into exile, but there was no new partition of their lands—a Norman was simply put in the place of the dead or outlawed Englishman, who was regarded as his legal

ancestor. In the Domesday Survey of Gloucestershire about fifty names are given of barons of greater or lesser degree, who were lords of manors and freeholders, and these names are all Norman. The rest of the manors in the county were vested either in the Crown or in the Church. It was William's policy to make changes only in essentials—besides the tenantry of the manors were too insignificant to be disturbed. There is no possible doubt that the Domesday dry classification of nameless tenants of manors deprives many a family of the right of claiming descent from freebooters who had navigated the Channel and had landed, sword in hand, six hundred years before these Norman *parvenus!*

The Hicks are so fortunate in having a name which makes any attempt to foist a comparatively modern Norman ancestry on them futile!

Saxon, husbandmen, and impervious they: *Saxon* decidedly by name. *Husbandmen*, distinctly, too. Every place we find them in is rural—is a village, and sometimes a very tiny village, to this day; and the amounts for which they were taxed point to the fact that, for the most part, they belonged to the yeoman and not to the cottar class. What Bishop Latimer describes his own house to have been would have fitted many of them perfectly:—

> "My father was a yeoman and had no lands of his own; only he had a farm of three of four pounds by the year at the uttermost, and thereupon he tilled so much as kept half-a-dozen men. He had a walk for a hundred sheep, and my mother milked thirty kine. . . . He kept me to school: he married my sisters with five pounds apiece, so that he brought them up in Godliness and the fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbours, and some alms he gave to the poor."

Here and there in Gloucestershire, houses of architecture Saxon in origin still exist—black-timbered

dwellings with roofs of thatch, such as may be seen along the shores of the Baltic. The Normans brought with them the art and the custom of building castles in stone, but it was only with the increased prosperity of the middle-class under the Tudors that there arose those grey, gabled farmhouses and cottages with stone roofs which are the peculiarity and glory of Cotswold villages, and round which, to-day, a whole literature clusters. It was under thatched roofs, behind walls of wattle and plaster, that the Hicks of the Middle Ages lived out their impervious lives.

Imperviousness was, perhaps, not more their key-note and strength than it is that of a rural existence to-day —than it was that of the German race from which they sprang and of whom Tacitus has recorded his impressions: "They live apart, each by himself, as woodside, plain, or fresh spring attracts him"—their love of independence, even within their little settlements, was, he marked, that which parted them from the world to which he himself belonged. Round the flame on the hearth the whole of life revolved. And we can say about such men that here were those who did the real work of the country, while the barons, their landlords, were at the wars. It's not so long ago. Wars abroad and social revolutions at home are still a perpetual experience—so is the imperviousness to them of the life of husbandry and of the attitude it breeds. It breeds a quality which gives a clarity to the character—an irony which is aware of things and is not unsatisfied with them: a conclusiveness of point of view: an intelligence of the views of others which is without self-consciousness: a nature in which nothing is left vague.

A chapter in which quotation has a large place, shall end with quotation from a modern mystic:—

> "The earnest wayfarer along the road of life does but become more deeply convinced as his travels extend of the beauty, the wisdom, the truth of the

simplest lives. He no longer vexes the hours as they pass with prayer for strange or marvellous adventure, for that comes only to such as have not yet learned to have faith in life and in themselves. . . . And yet he is the poorer for lacking the efforts he might have put forth, the memory of what might have been done; for in these lies a force that is precious and vital, that often indeed will transform many more things within us, than a thought that is morally and mentally worth many thousand such efforts and memories. And indeed it is therefore for that alone that we should desire a brilliant feverish destiny; because it summons to life certain forces and feelings that would otherwise never emerge from the slumberous peace of an over-tranquil existence."

CHAPTER IV.

THE HICKS OF CROMHALL COURT HOUSE.

It is a commonplace of most family histories that it is impossible to produce definite proofs of a consecutive existence before the time of the Tudors; and it is a commonplace which everyone who sets out to write a family history boldly determines to reduce to cinders. That it doesn't generally undergo this withering process is probably due, as in the present case, to the fact that, in most localities, neither wills nor Church registers are available before 1500. (It was Thomas Cromwell who made the keeping of them compulsory). This chapter is full of evidence of the existence of the Gloucestershire ancestors of Robert Hicks, of Cheapside, but it may as well be confessed at once that it altogether fails to put a name either to his father or grandfather; and the provocation of the failure is intense, because a certain will was once in existence which, could it be found, would probably reveal the names of both.

Robert, in his own will of 1557, leaves a gold ring to his cousin, Richard Hicks, of Cromhall.

Now the will of this Richard Hicks, described as 'yeoman,' was proved November, 1558, and is in the Diocesan Registry at Gloucester. He had no children; and gives and bequeaths to Edithe (Neale), his wife, for term of her life, according to power given him *by his father's last will and testament*, after the decease of his mother, the "syte and manner" of Cromhall and all other the premises with their "appurtences" in as large

and ample manner as in that said will and testament is specified. And after her life is ended, the rest of the year not expired, the lease of it he gives to his brother Morgan.

Morgan Hicks is thus another cousin of Robert. His will is also at Gloucester, and was proved June, 1565. *He mentions his father by name as Thomas.*

It is thus plain that Richard and Morgan had a father, Thomas Hicks, who owned Cromhall Court House, in some sort the 'family place'; that he was the uncle of Robert, and that if his will, which existed, could be unearthed, we should probably get at Robert's grandfather, and perhaps his father (brother to Thomas) as well.

The search for the will has been fruitless. It is not in the Diocesan Registry at Gloucester where the old wills have been sorted and indexed of late years, nor at Worcester, where Gloucestershire wills were proved before the formation of the separate See in 1541. It is not in the Probate Registry at Bristol, where the first Hicks will is dated 1631. It is not at Somerset House, where many old wills were deposited when the Court of Probate was created in 1858. It is not at Lambeth; the Registry there contains a great number of old Gloucestershire wills, but the name of Hicks does not occur once in the index. There do not seem to be any local Peculiar Courts in which it could be interred. It has to be taken for granted, therefore, that it is no longer in existence; and all that can be proved is the fact that Robert's father was a younger brother of the first Thomas Hicks, of Cromhall, of whom we have documentary evidence.

Anyone with knowledge of manorial history will wonder exactly how, and from whom, Thomas Hicks and his father, and, probably, his grandfather and great-grandfather, held the Court House at Cromhall.

Cromhall is mentioned in Domesday Book as being part of the great Manor of Berkeley:—

"*Two brothers held five hides in that manor in the time of King Edward. In demean are two plough-tillages, and six villeins, and five borders having six plough-tillages. Those two brothers might do as they pleased with themselves and their land. Earl William committed them to the care of the Steward of Berchelai that he might have their service as Roger says.*"

In another place it says, "*Two hides in Cromale belong to Berchelai.*"

The object of the Norman Survey was to ascertain the revenue of the country and not the conditions of its inhabitants, and so its social conditions cannot be trusted.

Mr. Hone, in his "Manor and Manorial Records," says :—

> "It is clear that the Commissioners, looking upon the ploughs as the important units of taxation, and taxing by carucates and hides, described many who were personally free under the generic term of villains. . . . Freemen holding in villainage and villains born getting mixed up under the same name."

It is an involved subject, and the more one goes into it, the more difficult does it seem to draw hard and fast lines between the tenants on an Anglo-Norman manor. Here, in Cromhall, however, it seems clear that the two richest and most important men in the village were two nameless brothers, free and independent landowners evidently, but who were henceforth to owe service to the Lord of Berkeley; then we have six nameless villains, either full villains with farms of thirty acres, or semi-villains with holdings of fifteen; then five nameless borders, or cottars, with some five acres. There would be further gradations down to the man with his quarter of an acre.

> "These all occupied the places their forefathers had formed for themselves, places gradually shaped by

circumstances rather than by system. Poverty had depressed one to the verge of slavery, while success had raised another to almost independent position."

Bateson, "Mediæval England."

What percentage of Huiccian blood was there, one wonders, in Cromhall at the time of the Norman Conquest? Thirteen people of Saxon blood are alluded to in the Survey, and it is a sure inference that some of them were lineal descendants of the first Saxon invaders and came to be known by the tribal name. No one who has ever given a thought to the miracle of the persistence of life, or a thought to the insignificance of that which is called Time, will question the surety. "We wake, and find ourselves on a stair; there are stairs below us which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upwards out of sight." *

Thomas Hicks of the Court House (Robert's uncle), stands on the stairway of the family history, and is no very unsubstantial wraith. In a *Lay Subsidy* of 1542 (*Roll* $\frac{114}{235}$), which is very imperfect, his name occurs:—

Cro — all.
Thomas Hyckes in goods — . . . — Xs.

In a *Court Roll* (Portfolio 175, No. 4), he appears again:—

Hundred of Berkeley.

View of frankpledge held there on Monday after the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude 35 Hen. VIII. (A.D. 1543).

Cromehale.

The tithing man there presents that Thomas Hycks holds a water mill and takes (excessive toll) of the grain to the injury of the King's lieges, therefore he is in mercy viijd.

Thomas Hyckes is elected in the office of constable and sworn.

Thomas, in the reign of Henry VIII., descended from either villain or bordar of the time of William I.,

* Emerson.

was one of that yeoman class, the direct product of the social crisis of the Black Death. 'Yeoman' is what his son describes himself in his will. The prosperity of the family had undoubtedly been built along a historical groove. Long ago the services by which they held their plot of land, would have been commuted for a money payment. Then came the plague and its devastation of life, the scarcity of labour, and the rise in wages. The tenants of a manor were no longer able to work their farms at a profit sufficient to meet their rentals; there was a universal lowering of rents, and in the end the lord of the manor was content to give up the cultivation even of his demesne lands to them.

The whole question of tenure under a manor is a most intricate one, as many a present-day lord of the manor knows well. There does not want an ample literature on the subject, but *Chambers' Encyclopædia* —it sounds a prosy source of information—puts the matter clearly.

> "*MANOR* in English law is a freehold estate held by the Lord of the Manor who is entitled by immemorial custom to maintain a tenure between himself and the copyhold tenants, whereby a kind of feudal relation is kept up between them. As, however, sub-infeudation in England was prohibited by the Statute of *Quia Emptores* in the reign of Edward I. and no manor could be created since that date, it follows that all existing manors must trace their origin from before that time."
>
> "*COPYHOLD* is expressed technically as 'tenure by copy of Court Roll, at the will of the lord according to the custom of the Manor.' This means that it is tenure of land being part of a manor, the title being evidenced by the Court Rolls of the Manor, and the right of the owner being in conformity with the manorial customs of the Manor which form the

law of the tenure; as this custom must be immemorial, *i.e.*, extending to the reign of Richard II., no copyhold can now be created.

The custom of each manor may vary in important particulars. In some, the copyhold lands are held for life only; in some they descend according to particular rules of their own; in most however, they descend according to the ordinary rules of succession. But the custom, whatever it may be, cannot be altered by the holder of the copyhold. He cannot, for instance, entail his land unless the custom warrant him."

Cromhall Court House with its surrounding acres was not entailed. Thomas Hicks left it to his wife for life, and then to his son Richard. Richard left it to his wife Edithe (*née* Neale) for life, and then to his brother Morgan. Morgan left it to his wife for life, and then to his son Arthur. If Arthur died without issue it was to go to "William Hixe son of my cosen Thomas Hixe." "If he die," it is left to a succession of Neales—and why is not clear, for there were other Hicks cousins who had children: Robert of London in the first place, and then a Richard who had a son Adrian, and a certain Christopher also.

But Arthur did not die without issue. This is to be discovered in that wonderful example of what a Family History ought to be—*The Lives of the Berkeleys*, from 1066 to 1639, by John Smyth of Nibley, who was steward of the hundred of Berkeley and of all the manors of the great Berkeley estate. For two and a half centuries the MSS. were closely preserved by successive Lords Berkeley in the Muniment Room at the Castle. In 1883 Lord Fitzhardinge allowed the Gloucestershire Archæological Society to print them, and a limited number of copies of the book were published by subscription. It is a unique book. Irrespective of public events, it reflects the manners,

habits and customs of all classes of the community within the Hundred during the period over which it extends. It traces the devolution of lands and gives valuable genealogical details—so truly says its Preface. In Vol. III., in the course of a description of the parish of Cromhall, there is definite information about Arthur's sons. Their names were Thomas, Arthur and Morgan, and in 1606, Thomas, the heir, altered and built on to the Court House, and entered into a fresh agreement concerning the property with Sir William Throgmorton, then lord of the manor. The said agreement is now in the possession of the present lord of the manor, the Earl of Ducie (lineal descendant of Sir Robert Ducy), who has kindly allowed a copy to be made of it:—

"1616. Dec. 18. Agreement between Sir Wm Throgmorton and Thos: Hicks, Clothier.

"By Indre of Feoffment—between Sir Wm Throckmorton Knt and Bart. Wm Tracey Esq and Urian Wise Gent: of the one part and Thomas Hicks, Clothier of the other part—In consideration of £150 —paid to Sir W. Throckmorton and 20/- to s^{d} Wm Tracey and Urian Wise by s^{d} Thos: Hicks they granted enfeoffed released to s^{d} Hicks his Heirs and assigns. The Cap^{l} Megse or Site of the Manor of Cromhall with the appurts in Cromhall afs^{d} with all Houses, Gardens, Orchards &^{c} belonging.

"A close of Arable with a meadow and Grove at the end called ——— and all such comon Liberty and Feeding in the Wastes as usually enjoyed with s^{d} Lands—And all Houses &^{c} And the Rev^{n} &c. And all the Estate saving and excepting to and for the s^{d} Sir W. Thr^{n}, his H^{rs} and Ag^{s} full Liberty to *hawk, hunt, fish and fowle** at all convenient and seasonable times in or upon the s^{d} premises or any part thereof except only in such Ponds as are or shall

* Italics inserted.

be upon the several grounds of the s^d^ Thos Hicks before thereby granted, To Hold except as aforesaid unto and to the use of the s^d^ Thos Hicks, his Hrs: and Ag^s^ for ever—At and under the yearly rent of £6. 11. 2 payable half yearly and for non-payment 28 days the further rent of £3. 5. 7 with power of distress for both rents."

The 'chief rent' was paid to the lord of the manor until 1874, but the sporting rights, so stringently reserved in the deed, had been allowed to lapse. In order to recover the rights of his ancestors, Lord Ducie was obliged to buy the freehold of the Court Farm, for it was a tongue of land running right up between his coverts.

Thomas is called clothier, not yeoman, in the deed. This means that the family had moved with the times and had their part in the prosperous cloth trade of the Gloucestershire of the Tudors.

If one wishes sometimes that somebody would write a History of the Gloucestershire Cloth Trade, it is because of the thought of the pictures such a book would have. The history of the trade really comes to the mind in a kaleidoscopic series of pictures.

1. A woodcut of a Saxon loom on a Saxon manor,* where the yarn spun and woven supplied the rough frieze for the clothes of the lord and his dependents.

2. The great wolds which the Norman landowners turned to profitable use as sheep-walks—and not only they, for after the Conquest the tenants' sheep ceased to form part of the royal rent, and remained at the tenants' own disposal, so that sheep-shearing became 'worth while' to everyone.

3. A twelfth-century company of Flemish merchants with their train of packhorses, journeying over the Gloucestershire hills to the Gloucestershire wool

* There should be previous pictures; for the Romans, and the British before them, wore woven cloth.

marts. The cavalcade is seen in silhouette, with angles of quaint head-gear standing out against the sky.

4. The Cotswold wool-markets of Campden, Northleach and Cirencester, with their Woolstaplers' Halls and warehouses—but who that does not know these Cotswold hill towns personally can ever realise their charm?

5. The market-places of Bruges and Calais, from whence the wool was dispersed over Europe—first at Bruges, then at Calais, the staple was.

6. An interlarded portrait of Edward III., who imported Flemish weavers and their methods into England, so that English wool might be now manufactured into fine cloth at home.

7. A series of scenes in a Gloucestershire vale village, through which there ran a stream of sufficient force to turn the wheel of a fulling mill. The wool, brought from the hill markets, was weighed out to the weavers in the mill yard; it was woven on their cottage looms; it came back to the mill to be scoured and put under the fulling stocks to be sheared and scalded. (From first to last there were twenty-eight processes.)

8. A series of pictures of the princes among the wool merchants and all that they achieved: William Grevel, ancestor of the houses of Warwick and Willoughby de Broke, John Tame of Fairford, and others. Theirs was the wealth which built the splendid churches of Campden, Northleach, Fairford, Cirencester, and many a great Cotswold house.

Gloucestershire in Tudor days was at an apex of prosperity. Look at the prints of the gabled Tudor palaces in Atkyn's "History." Who has wealth to build such houses now? If there are wealthy men still, the source of that wealth is not the invigorating one of a local industry.

With the dawn of the nineteenth century and

machine-made modern life the tide of the Gloucestershire wool trade began to ebb. The Gloucestershire clothiers had not divested themselves of their yeoman predilections—"impervious they!" It was imperviousness which kept them long unaware of the revolution in trade which the introduction of railways and of steam-driven machinery in the cloth factories in the north of England would entail. On account of the great distress prevailing a Royal Commission sat in 1849, and a Mr. Samuel Sevill gave evidence. The *Blue Book* quotes him:—

> "The foundation cause of loss of trade in Gloucestershire lies in the coal pits of Yorkshire, where coal is only one-half the price, besides the great advantage of being able to say for certain when an order could be executed. Now this is not the case with the water-mills of this county. In the summer months the supply (of water) was uncertain, not enough to employ the people in the mills above five or six hours in the day. This state of things gradually led to the erection of steam-engines to equalise the power of the water-mills. But by the time these changes had taken place the capital of the leading clothiers was nearly exhausted. The cause of this exhaustion might be traced in a variety of ways, but the principal undoubtedly was the large establishments and expensive habits of living in which they indulged. While the men of Leeds or Huddersfield were constantly in their mills, and taking their meals at the same hours as their work-people, the clothiers of Gloucestershire—some of them—were indulging in the habits and mixing with the 'gentle blood' of the land."

The lust of land was in their yeoman blood. Mr. Wyatt of Stroud, banker, stated that—

> "In his opinion many of the manufacturers failed through an ambition to become large landed

proprietors before they had secured sufficient capital, inasmuch as they frequently borrowed half the purchase money at five per cent., when the land did not yield more than three per cent."

The Commissioner himself says :—

"In Yorkshire there is more capital and more speculation. In Yorkshire the manufacturer makes to force or find a market, in Gloucestershire he waits for a demand and then prepares the supply."

The whole subject of the practical extinction of the Gloucestershire trade is, of course, far more intricate than these scattered extracts from the Report of the Commission can demonstrate. Between 1820 and 1840 one firm after another failed. Shephard's at Cam was the largest failure, and 'the year Shephard's failed' was, until quite lately, a commonly quoted date. The Hicks firm at Eastington failed about the same time.

Eastington is considerably to the north of Cromhall, and two miles from Stroud, round which town, in the eighteenth century, the Gloucestershire cloth trade had concentrated itself. But there is evidence, logical enough, that the Hicks of the Eastington mills were the outcome of the Cromhall clothier of the deed of 1616. The cloth mill of 1600 was not necessarily in Cromhall itself, and Cromhall is not mentioned in the list of mills given in the Report of the Commission. It is probable that Thomas Hicks of 1616, who married Elizabeth Clutterbuck of Eastington, as the Clutterbuck pedigree proves, had several children, and that, when the Court House descended to the eldest son, the cloth mill went to a younger.

Both branches have now died out in the direct line. The far-away representative of the Cromhall branch to-day is Mr. Samuel Dyer of Paignton. The representative of the Eastington branch is Mr. Hicks Austin of Ashleworth, Gloucestershire. In a correspondence

which lately passed between them on the subject of their common Hicks ancestry, Mr. Dyer, unable to supply facts, or not interested in them, yet unconsciously gave proof of the relationship by regretting the "jolly family party" of by-gone days. The Eastington plate, which Mr. Hicks Austin now possesses, carried the Hicks arms. As the monuments in the church there show, the Cromhall family quietly used the arms granted to Robert Hicks' descendants, although when Thomas Hicks of Cromhall claimed the right to them at the Visitation of 1623 he was put in a list of those "disclaymed" somewhat abruptly as "no gent." The Eastington family had no doubt in their own minds as to their descent, through Cromhall, from Sir Ellis, and their cousinship to the Hicks of Beverstone and Witcombe; and Mr. Hicks Austin relates that, as a boy, he was one day impressed with the sight of the Witcombe chariot, driving through Gloucester with its somewhat startling liveries of sky-blue and scarlet facings, and that his father told him that his grandfather, Henry Hicks of Eastington, had used the same.

With vitality and a single mind, there was no reason why the Cromhall family should not have far out-reached Robert's descendants in wealth and importance. With its cloth mill it held the torch of opportunity in its hand. Why did the torch flicker and go out?

Mr. Hicks Austin possesses a diary kept by his ancestor, John Phillimore Hicks, in 1823, and it bears out all that the Commission Report states. J. P. Hicks (who gives evidence before the Commission) was partner with his father in the mill, but "business" is the very last thing he mentions. The diary begins on the day he leaves home to stay with his relations, the Phillimores, at Kendals, in Hertfordshire. He arrives on January 23rd and on the 25th makes the trenchant remark: "The day passed in perfect vacuity." On the 28th he goes to a ball at Hatfield, and is pretty trenchant again:—

"Lady Salisbury's appearance bespeaks a life spent in dissipation, and her countenance suggested to my mind ideas not very favourable to her—her figure is tall and well formed. A Mrs. Field was the only handsome woman in the room, and she is not to be compared with some of our Gloucestershire belles—The evening went off rather flat, and the company broke up soon after twelve o'clock."

Was the clothier a tedious prig, or are his sentiments merely pre-Albertian?

"A chaise brought us home soon after two o'clock, and I do not envy the feelings of those who can return to a Wife and Children, even after a short absence, without emotion. There is something intoxicating in the constant succession of new objects and the whirl and bustle of travelling, but to a mind fond of reflection, the repose of home affords a tranquil happiness of a most delicious kind."

He discourses on Dr. Jenner, on Dutch pictures, fossils, melon frames, and *Peveril of the Peak*, and always on the Sunday sermon—it were irreverent to quote. He goes to the Gloucester ball and dines out continually. He is sinful, and repents of the sin:—

"Went to Church in the morning—the afternoon badly spent—evil thoughts possessing my whole mind, and I so far forgot the Sabbath that I wickedly assisted in hunting a rat with the servants."

Here and there we get the entry: "A day of business." But all was not going smoothly. There is—

"A day never to be remembered without regret from having been betrayed into a violent dispute with my father on the subject of the business. May God grant me pardon for this and many other acts of undutiful behaviour, and dispose my heart to bear

the reproof of my parents (however unjust or harsh) with meekness."

Later on there is a quarrel unrepented of:—

"A violent discussion in the Counting House respecting a new brushing machine."

The disputes were evidently all about the introduction of the newly-invented machinery, and there is a short account of a journey he took to inspect Yorkshire mills. But although bankruptcy was impending, no vein of mundane anxiety runs through the diary. Disputes disturb the facile tenour of life, and ruffle the temper before dining out, but the *issue* of the dispute never obtrudes itself; there is, in all the diary, no consciousness of "that salt tide of life that streams for ever past the sands and shoals of pleasure and echoes upon the rocky shores of time!"

That swift "salt tide of life"—well, it has receded far from the mills at Eastington, and far away from Cromhall Court House to-day.

There is no Cromhall Court House any longer. The ruined garden walls and some farm buildings still stand, but of the house itself not even the foundation stones are left. The village is a scattered one, and the church, at the extreme end of it, is isolated on sloping meadows beyond which rise Lord Ducie's woods. It is a green, lonely spot, over which, for ever in the memory, a gleaming grey sky broods. The church stands out so boldly against the background of woods and sky that it would be more appropriately the fitting shell for the monuments of a fighting race than of those of a family whose only history is that it let go of life. It is almost a great surprise not to see leaning walls, a moss-grown roof, and the whole below the churchyard level. In the church are mural monuments, and flat stones in the nave cover the bones of those whose lives were lived within a few yards of their graves. Against the

churchyard wall—or even within the boundary of the present wall—the Court House stood. It faced south, seemingly, and in the court in front of it was the well, now filled in, but its site still visible. Behind the house was the enclosure of the flower-garden, and beyond that again the larger enclosure of the vegetable garden—that was the well-planned and invariable sixteenth century arrangement. The garden walls are crumbled, and in places broken down, but there they are: although the turf that lies between them now links the vanished pleasaunce to the surrounding pasture. Mr. Bennett, Lord Ducie's tenant, who now farms the land, remembers the house. "You went straight into a big, low room something like a hall"—and that is exactly what you would do in the house of a mediæval manorial estate, where the plan and construction of the better homesteads approached that of the lord's, who was only "an essential unit of the composite whole," says Mr. Hone. Even in the manor house itself—

> "The hall served as the common sitting-room and dining-room for the family and domestics. The furniture was scanty. From inventories we find that the tables were simple boards laid on trestles so that they could be easily removed when not in use. Some forms and stools, or, perhaps, a long bench stuffed with straw, a few chairs of wood with chests for linen and other household stuff, formed the ordinary suite. Around the walls hung the instruments of husbandry, as scythes, reaping-hooks, corn-measures, and empty sacks, interspersed with some weapons and trophies of the chase. In some of the larger mansion houses, we find the "solar" or apartment where special guests were entertained—the parlour of the later farmhouse—generally built towards the south, as its name implied. A winding stair of stone, in many instances exterior to the

building, led to the dormitory which was usually divided by rude partitions. A lean-to kitchen and oven completed the main structure."

The rector of Cromhall has inherited from his predecessors a book of parish "Memoranda" and on the fly-leaf of that is pasted a picture of the church, showing, beyond it, the outline of the gables of the Court House. But the picture leaves one cold. Only between the ghost walls, on the cropped turf itself, with the ghost gables overhead, comes the moment when the passionate word explaining the inexplicable misadventure in things is half betrayed—half!—no: the silence holds; the spell is unbroken; the instant fades. Another word takes the place of that mute, estranged, that broken one—

> All ends in song—the doing and undoing,
> The taken fortress, and the lost campaign;
> The patient waiting, and the hot pursuing,
> The pride of life, the peril and the pain;
> All ends in song—love, honour, bliss and woe,
> The glad heart's thrill, the sad heart's bitter throe.

"All ends in song"—song set to music: song set sometimes to cold music.

Inside, the crumbling garden walls were once pathways for lovers' feet. Two pastures' length from the walls a space is reached where brambles grow thickly, and there, austere in the midst of the sprawling shoots, stand gate-posts topped by stone balls and with the iron gates still hanging on the hinges. These were the gates to the fore-court of another vanished homestead—the dwelling of the Webbs, as anciently seated in Cromhall as the Hicks themselves. And by the monument, which is in the corner of the south transept of the church, you shall discover that, in the reign of William and Mary, Thomas Hicks of the Court House took to wife Mary, the daughter of Thomas Webb of Abbotside. Pull the rusty gates ajar

"THOMAS HYCKS HOLDS A WATER MILL."

THE VANISHED HOMESTEAD.

—Mary Webb, in her hoop, and curls dipping to her kerchief, has slipped through them—

Phyllis and Damon met one day
(Heigh-ho!)
Phyllis was sad, and, who can say,
Tired with treading a separate way.

Damon sighed for his broken flute:
(Heigh-ho!)
Phyllis went with a noiseless foot,
Under the apple-trees stripped of fruit.

Met they, parted they, all unsaid?
(Heigh-ho!)
Ah, but a ghost's lips are not red:
Damon and Phyllis both are dead—
(Heigh-ho! Heigh-ho!)

Heigh-ho! Come away. There needs to be no lingering on a spot where one is reminded only fruitlessly of the strife between Destiny and the will of man. Neither does it serve any purpose beyond that of finishing the long-winded story diligently, to pursue the matter of Cromhall Court House and its owners any further. But the material for a diligent conclusion exists, and a conclusion that starts again at the beginning and gives a complete list of all the Hicks who lived at the Court House during two and a half centuries, will prove that, important as are the virtues of the limpet when a foothold on a given spot is to be maintained, yet are such virtues, in the long run, not all-sufficing.

1. *Thomas Hycks I.* is mentioned in a *Lay Subsidy* of 1543 in Record Office. He is mentioned in his son's wills as having made a will leaving the Mansion House and grounds at Cromhall to his wife for life. The said will is not to be discovered. He had two sons, Richard and Morgan.

2. *Richard Hickes* left a will proved at Gloucester, 1558, in which he leaves the Court House to his wife Edithe (Neale) for life and then to his brother Morgan.

He is mentioned as a cousin in the will of Thomas Hicks of Cheapside, the ancestor of the Hicks Beach family.

3. *Morgan Hixe* left a will proved at Gloucester, 1564, in which he leaves his lands and tenements to his son Arthur. He was evidently married twice: (1) to a Mrs. Lawrence, to whose three children by her first marriage he leaves one heifer, and (2) to one Marget Crewe whom he makes his executrix.

4. *Arthur Hixe*, son of Morgan, was reigning at the Court House in 1608. He is mentioned in a manuscript in the possession of Lord Sherborne. This MS. was compiled by John Smyth who describes it as—

> "*Three bookes in folio containing the names of each inhabitant in this County of Glouc' how they stood charged with Armor in A°6 Jacobi. And who was Lord or owner of each manor or Lordship within the County; which you may call my Nomina Villarum.*"

The names of sixty-one male inhabitants of Cromhall and one widow are given, and the list begins with—

> Arthur Hixe Clothier 3. ca. hath one Corslet and a Calyver furn' sub.
> Thomas Hixe sonne of Arthur Hixe aforesaid.
> John Curnocke servant of the said Arthur Hicks.
> John Awpas servant unto the said Arthur Hicks.
> William Crewe apprentice unto the said Arthur Hicks.

A key is furnished to the numbers and letters, so we learn that Arthur Hixe was (3) "betwene fifty and threescore," was (ca) "of a lower stature fitt to serve with a Calyver," and was (sub) a subsidy man as distinguished from a trained soldier. He was apparently the first Hicks, clothier. He had three sons: Thomas, Morgan, and Arthur, all mentioned in *Lives of the Berkeleys*, Vol. III., p. 163. Thomas succeeded him. Morgan and Arthur both married and had families, and both were buried at Cromhall. Births and deaths of their children are in the Diocesan Records at

Gloucester, and the Cromhall Register begins in 1653 in time to record the deaths of them both. A flat slab in the nave of Cromhall Church covers the remains of Arthur.

5. *Thomas Hicks II.* had succeeded his father in 1616, when he entered into a new agreement with the lord of the manor in the deed given previously in this chapter. The deed calls him 'Clothier.' He married Elizabeth, daughter of William Clutterbuck of Eastington, Bradly and Bristol (*vide* Clutterbuck pedigree). This makes a connection with Eastington, and the Hicks cloth mill which existed there in 1823; and the surmise is that the Hicks mill was never in Cromhall, but at Eastington always, and that it became the property of a younger son, from whom John Phillimore Hicks, the keeper of the diary, was descended. After this date no Hicks of the Court House is called 'Clothier.' Elizabeth Hicks died July 28th, 1629, and lies beneath a slab in the church floor near the present stove.

6. *Thomas Hicks III.* must have been her eldest surviving son. His wife's name was Joane. The Cromhall baptismal register records the birth of two sons and a daughter to "Mr. Thomas Hickes and Joane his wife" in 1654, 1655 and 1660. The burial register contains the entry: "1718 Feb. 11 Joane ye wife of Tho: Hicks." She outlived her eldest son.

7. *Thomas Hicks IV.* had a wife Martha. Flat stones in the nave of the church relate that Thomas died in 1707, and Martha in 1730 aged 86, and that their daughter, Esther, whom the register says was married to Ambrose Marklove in 1697, died in 1707. The baptismal register shows that they had also two sons: Thomas, born 1671, and John, born 1678.

8. *Thomas Hicks V.* was married to Mary Webb of Abbotside. The entry of this in the marriage register is dated "1700 April 25th." The baptismal register contains the names of their five children; and a

monument in the corner of the south transept, and now hidden by the badly placed organ, gives a summary of the fate of all of them :—

In this Church, the Sepulchre for many ages of the family of Hickes of the Court House in this parish, lie interred the remains of Thomas Hickes who died 11 Jan 1726 aged 53. Mary his wife March 1749. Also the following children. Mary and Richard died in infancy. John died 1741 aged 36. Thomas, the eldest son died in London and was buried there.

In filial remembrance of her beloved parents, this monument was erected by Mary, daughter, and heiress of the above Thomas Hickes and Mary his wife, daughter of Thomas Webb of Abbotside in said parish 1777.

Mary Hickes died 25th day of May 1783 aged 76.

9. *John Hicks* was the ninth owner of the Court House. "1741 Mr. John Hicks of the Court," in the burial register, is his sole record. He died intestate.

10. *Mary Hicks*, his sister, succeeded him, and lived to be a spinster of 76. And with her, in 1783, the Hicks of Cromhall Court House came inconsequently to an end, perished of that disease which is as fatal to families as to individuals—the disease of perpetual adolescence.

Mary Hicks left an elaborate will and small legacies of £10 and £20 and £30 to an enormous number of cousins and cousins' children: Webb, Austin, Wharton, Marklove, Pill, Cook, Shepherd, Witchell, Turner, Davis, Pew, Prankard, Pratlington, Dyer, are the names of relations that occur. There are also legacies to friends and servants, and in a codicil dated the year of her death, she says, "I desire to be buried in the Hickes chancel which is my own." The Cromhall property, with land in Siston, Wick, Abson and Falfield, and a house in Bristol, she leaves to "Cousin Thomas Webb of Stone-Berkeley, Gentleman."

There is a Webb monument in the nave of Cromhall Church which shows that Robert and Lucia Webb of Abotside (the parents of Mary Webb who married Thomas Hicks 1700) were succeeded by their son Robert,

and that he was the father of Thomas Webb of Stone. Thomas married Catharine, daughter of John Llewelin of Bridgend, Glamorgan, who predeceased him in 1780. Thomas died in 1802, aged 77. He had evidently no children, for the Cromhall property passed to his sister Elizabeth, who had married John Dyer in 1746.

From a Mr. John Dyer Lord Ducie purchased the property in 1876.

NOTE:—The most important-looking Hicks monument in Cromhall Church has not been mentioned. It hangs in the chancel, and bears the arms and a long Latin inscription relating to one Nicholas Hicks, who was rector of Charfield (the next village) and who died in 1710, aged 75. As he was born in 1635, before the baptismal register begins, and as the monument does not reveal his parentage, it is not possible to give him a place in the skeleton family pedigree which has been sketched out. The family, of course, had its innumerable ramifications as the registers show

CHAPTER V.

ROBERT HICKS OF CHEAPSIDE.

CHEAPSIDE of to-day is one of the seven arteries which pour their roaring human tide out into the space in front of the Royal Exchange. Halfway down Cheapside is Queen Street, a street re-christened in honour of Queen Henrietta Maria, but known, when Robert Hicks lived, by the name of Soper's Lane. Robert's shop, the *White Bear*, was at 'Soper's Lane End,' and, as the registers there show, Robert lived in the parish of St. Pancras; the *White Bear*, therefore, was clearly at that angle of the two streets which is nearer the Exchange, for the opposite corner is in the parish of St. Mary-le-Bow—Queen Street divides the two parishes. The shop of one Gladwell, a seller of cheap prints, and constructor of cheap picture frames—all as unpicturesque as can be—now stands on the spot where Robert Hicks hung out over the rough cobbles the effigy of a white bear, and carried on, in a low raftered space open to the street, a retail mercery. And above, where once was the over-hanging dwelling house, storey on storey, with leaded casements, and sixteenth-century gables, are now the plate-glass windows of a Scottish insurance office.

There was more space and leisureliness in sixteenth-century Cheapside than belongs there to-day. Then a man might stand, without being hustled, before his door, with feet apart and arms akimbo, in the attitude inherited from a yeoman grandfather. The dark jerkin, the hose, the soft shoes, the flat cap which such a citizen would wear, may all be seen in the Guildhall Museum.

CHEAPSIDE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

(From a print in the British Museum.)

Signs similar to that above his head may be seen there—there, too, the furniture, the utensils, the very knives and forks belonging to the family life in the casement rooms over his booth. Material exists sufficient to rebuild all the outward show of the life of Tudor times, and Robert Hicks can be come at too—standing on the cobblestones, beneath the *White Bear*, with feet firmly planted.

For his, after all, was only a repetition of the patient adventure of his Hwiccian forefathers. The fierce ancestors of the Saxon race had fought their way westward through Europe to Saxon soil, had fixed themselves there tenaciously, and had become of the soil with amazing stolidity, aware of, but impervious to, the world beyond the guarded homestead. Existence became stable and limited; life was a thing measured, calculation an element in it; and then of it spirits were bred who were superfluous, and an exodus of adventurers with atavistic instincts took place. They crossed the sea this time. And the adventure was a patient one; was a century old before the limpet-like occupation of conquered land began all over again, and the stakes were re-set round isolated communities once more—Cromhall one of these.

Within the boundaries of Cromhall and other Gloucestershire villages the impervious life of husbandry was again enshrined, and went on from generation to generation, its continuity unaffected by any waves of religious or civil revolutions. And, from time to time, superfluous spirits were ejected from it, and Robert Hicks and, perhaps, his father before him were of these. And Hwiccian-descended Robert, planted on the London stones, was the pioneer of a third patient adventure which should end for his descendants only in the hedged life of security all over again—only in that; even if the hedges swept a wider circle, and the life within them had more colour and luxury.

The explanation of Robert's life is his will. It is in his own handwriting:—

IN NOMINE DEI AMEN. I ROBERTE HYCKES Citizen and Iremonger of the Citie of London, wholle of mynde and of parfit remembrance, thankes be given to God, do ordeyne make and delare this my last Will and Testament as hereafter foloweth, renouncynge and denyinge all other former Willes and testamentes heretofore by me made and declared. Ffirst I bequeath my soule to Almightie God the Ffather and to Jesus Christ his Sonne my Redymer. My boddie I will honestlie to be buryed after the order of the Catholick Churche, and by the discrecon of myn Executrix, within some convenyent place of my Parryshe Churche, yf yt shall please God to suffer me to die within the same parryshe Churche in London. All my landes tenements, Rentes, Reverc̄ons, services, and hereditamentes with all and singler their appurteñnces, sett lyinge and beinge within the Cittie of Bristowe and the Countie thereof and within Barkeley Hornes and Tedburye in the Countie of Glōs I will and bequeth and devyse hereby to Julyan my welbeloved Wief and her assignes for terme of her lief, and upon condicon that she pay to Margaret Hickes myn owne Mother tenne powndes yearelie duringe the said Margarettes lief at foure termes of the yeare by eaven porc̄ons, the remaynder thereof after the said Julyans death, Mighell Hickes my eldest Sonne and to the heirs males of his boddie lawfullie begotton; and for fault of suche issue the remaynder thereof to Clement Hickes my seconde Sonne and to the heires males of his boddie lawfullie begotton; and for default of shuche issue the remaynder thereof to Babtiste Hickes my third Sonne and to the heires males of his boddie lawfullie begotton; and for default of suche yssue the remaynder thereof to Richarde Hickes my brother for terme of his lief; and after his decease the remaynder thereof to Adryan Hicks my said Brothers Sonne and to the heires males of his boddie lawfullie begotton; and for lack of suche issue the remaynder of all the premysses to the Maisters and Governours of Christes Hospitall within the said Cittie of London and to theire successours for ever to the use of the poore their and within other of th'ospitalls of the said Cittie. The residewe of my landes tenementes rentes and hereditaments with all and singuler there appurtennces nowe lyinge within the parryshe of Saint Katheryns Colman within the said Cittie of London I devyse will and bequethe to my fforesaid brother Richard Hickes and his assignes for term of his lief the remaynder thereof after his decease to Julyan my wellbeloved Wief and her assignes for term of her lieff and after her decease the remaynder to Mighell Hickes my said eldest Sonne and to the heires males of his boddie lawfullie begotton and for default of suche issue the remaynder of the same to Clement Hickes my seconde Sonne and to the heires males of his boddie lawfullie begotton And for lack of such issue the remaynder thereof to Baptist Hickes my said third

Sonne and to the heires males of his boddye lawfullie begotton And for lack of such issue the remaynder thereof to Adrian Hickes my said brothers Sonne and to the heires males of his boddie lawfullie begotton and for default of suche issue the remainder thereof lickwyse to the Maisters and Governers of Christes Hospitall foresaid and to their successours to the use of the poore their and within other of th'ospitals of the said Cittie for ever. All my goodes, chattells, leases, plate, Jewells, monye, howshold stuff, debtes, due to me. All other my things movable and unmovable whatsoever and whearsoever they be, my debtes dewe to my creditours and funerall charges first paid discharged and allowed out of my wholl substaunce, I will apploint and devise to be devyded and apporcyoned into thre equal partes accordinge to the custome of the said Cittie of London for Ffreemens goodes in that case provided whereof one full thirde parte I devyse and bequeth to Julyan my said Welbeloved Wieff her Executours and assigns, one other thirde parte thereof egallie in thre partes to be devided I devise and bequeth to Mighell, Clement and Baptist my said thre sonnes, and to the survivour and survivours of my said children I will and devise his or theire parte or partes aforesaid that of theyme shall fortune to dye before he or they come to full age or before the delyiverye of theire said parte or partes owt of the Chamber of the said Cittie of London accordinge to the full order in that case appointed. And if all my said thre children do happen to dye before theire said full age or deliveraunce of theire partes aforesaid, Than I will and devise all my said childrens thirde parte of all my goodes and substaunce to Julyan my said welbeloved Wieff her executors and assigns. The laste third parte of all my said goodes and chattells I reserve Keape and appointe for myn owne legacys and distribucon out of which I geve and bequeth to my said Brother Richarde Hickes his executours and assigns all manner myn apparrell whatsoever and whearsoever it bee as yt shall be praised without payinge peny or pennys worth for the same. And also I lickwise will and devise hym my best sherte of meale my Corselett my best halberte my sworde and my buckeler to be delyvered with my said apparrell to my said brother his executours or assignes within one month after my decease And further I geve and bequeth to my said brother Richarde Hickes owt of my said thirde parte one hundreth powndes of currannt monye of Englond the one moytie or half thereof to be paid to my said Brother Richarde Hickes his executours or assignes within one halfe year after my decease an th'other moytie or half deale at the yeares ende after my decease without any longer delay or puttinge of. I devyse also to the Maister and Wardyns of oure Companye of the Iremongers within the said Cittie of London as to the use of oure Hall my best standinge Cupp with a cover of silver and all gilt as yt shall be praysed for a token and remembraunce of my poor good will towards theym to be delivered within one month after my decease Item I

will and devise to the poore enhabitauntes of Tedburye aforesaid fyve markes to be devided to the poore howsholdes there by two shillinges or 12d. to one howshold and not above nor under and to everye of theym poore howsholdes of my one parryshe here in London I devise five shillinges a peace to be paid and distributed wth the said five mkes within one half yeare by my Executrix after my death Moreover I geve and bequeth to the said Maisters and Governers of Christes Hospitall before mencyoned as to the use of the poore theare and as aforesaid twentie powndes of currannt monye of Englonde to be paid by my Executrix at yeare and yeare after my decease by eaven porcõns. Also I geve and bequeth to my Cosen Xpofer* Hickes, Symon Melsambye my Cosen Richarde Hickes of Cromwell Thomas Richardes, John Sprynt, and Alice Grigge gold Ringes of two Angells waight and value a peace besides the ffashion Item I geve and devise to my ffrynde Maister Anthonie Penne one black gowne one coate cloth to it and a licke gold ringe And to my old Servanntes Willm Rowe and John Rosewell eache of theym a black gowne To Goodwife Hockey a gowne of Bristowe ffreese and fortie shillinges in monye for her paines taken with me in my sickness And to my Srvannt Austen I devise eight powndes And to my Srvannt Walter Thomas tenne pownds to be paid unto theym at the comynge owt of theire yeares of prenticeshipp so as all the meane tyme they trulie diligentlie willinglie and faithfullie serve my said Wief and otherwise not The residue of all my goodes and chattells and of my said third parte of all my substannce not before devised geven or bequethed I will and devise to Julyan my said welbeloved wieff her executours and assignes whiche said Julyan my Wieff I ordeyn make and appointe to soole and onlie Executrix of this my last Will and testament And overseers thereof my ffrende Mr. Osborne and my said Brother Richard Hickes In witness whereof I the said Robart Hickes have sealed subscribed and delivered this my present last Will and testament the 20th day of November 1557 et Annis Regnim Philippi et Marie Regis et Reigne quarto et quinto

By me Robart Hickes Iremonger.

The will wants categorical comment.

1. "*Citizen and Iremonger.*" Although Robert Hicks carried on a mercer's business at the *White Bear*, he was apprenticed to an ironmonger as a boy, and was a member of the Ironmongers' Company. The earliest book the Company possesses is a "Presentment Booke"

* Christopher.

from the year 1515 to 1680, and it contains the following entry:—

> "Item That I Robert Hycke — — Apprentyce with Thomas Bartylmew Ironmonger of London promysed by my faith and truth to be obedient to the Master and Wardens of the Fellowship and Crafte of Ironmongers and to their successors for ever. In witness hereof I have wrytten this with my hone hand the fourth daye of Auguste Ano 1538
>
> "P me Robert Hycke."

The name of his master, Thomas Bartylmew, appears on a list of the Company for the year 1537 deposited in the Chapter House at Westminster, but no particulars of him are given.

"The History of the Ironmongers' Company" says that the Guild is first mentioned in 1351, and that their warehouses and yards were chiefly in Ironmongers' Lane and the old Jewry. They exported and sold bar iron and iron rods, but they had also shops where they sold manufactured articles. Ironmongers' Hall (which has been rebuilt three times) was in Fenchurch Street, on the spot where the present hall stands. Robert was the first and last member of his family who belonged to the Company. The quotation from the "Presentment Booke" shows that he took up his Freedom by "servitude," and not by "patrimony"—*i.e.*, did not inherit it —and the record of admissions does not include the names of any of his descendants. There are no means of tracing how the apprentice to the ironmongers became a mercer, but in the books of the Mercers' Company, under the date 1580, is mention of—

> "Baptist Hyckes, the son of Robert Hyckes, late of London, Ironmonger, but while he lived he occupied a retail mercery: made free with us and of the City of London by redemption gratis."

Baptist Hicks, his son, became Master of the Mercers' Company, and carried on his father's business in the same house. The proof of this being that, after the death of Robert's wife Juliana, who had a life interest in it, Michael, the eldest son, in a deed dated December 10th, 1592 (now at Witcombe), made an assignment to Baptist of "all his interest in the Whyte Beare in Chep-syde."

2. "*I will honestlie to be buryed after the order of the Catholick Churche.*" Robert died in the last year of Queen Mary's reign. The innovations of the Reformation of Henry VIII. had been too harsh and too precipitate. The reformed doctrine made progress in the reign of Edward VI., but, says Hallam, "it is certain that the re-establishment of Popery on Mary's accession must have been acceptable to a large part, or perhaps to the majority of the nation." It had been "acceptable" to Robert, no doubt.

3. "*Within some convenyent place of my Parryshe Churche.*" The *White Bear* was in the parish of St. Pancras, Soper Lane, but there is no entry of Robert's burial in its registers. St. Pancras was destroyed in the Great Fire and was not rebuilt. The parish was united with that of St. Mary-le-Bow, in which Church the old St. Pancras registers are now kept. The little burial ground of St. Pancras is still in existence. Out of Queen Street of to-day you turn into Pancras Lane, and there it is, railed in, hemmed in by precipitous warehouses, and with three altar tombs with illegible lettering still remaining in the corner. Two of Robert's children and two of his servants are entered in the burial register, and lie beneath the bushes in the black soil and the moss-grown gravel edged with tiles. Registers were not rigidly kept in those days—Robert may be there too.

4. "*All my landes . . . within the Cittie of Bristowe and the Countie thereof and within Barkeley Hornes and Tedburye in the Countie of Glōs.*" That Robert

owned property in Bristol is groundwork for the legend which Burke and others have in print, that he began life in the trading port of the West, and that the exodus from Cromhall was to Bristol in the first instance. Robert's wife came from the neighbourhood of Bristol, and it seems to be a workable theory that his father, a younger brother of Thomas Hicks of Cromhall, who was alive in 1543, went to Bristol, had some success and position there, and so was able to apprentice his son Robert (perhaps a younger son too) to a London ironmonger—because it was only youths of good family who might be so apprenticed. Bristol has thirteen churches whose registers date from 1538 to 1589. It was within the Hwiccian zone, and the name of Hicks occurs constantly in them; but they do not go back far enough. Robert would not have been born later than 1523, for his eldest son was born in 1543. The entry of his baptism, which would give his parents' names, is therefore not in existence.

As to wills, the earliest Hicks will proved in the Bristol Diocesan Registry is Mary Hicks, 1631. Every way to a discovery of a Robert's Bristol parentage seems to be barred. From the Patent Roll Calendars it is to be discovered that, in 1571, William Hickes, Mercht., was one of the sheriffs of Bristol; in 1586 he was a constable of Bristol, and in 1587 he was mayor. In the Bristol Directory of to-day is a considerable list of persons of the name of Hicks, and they are in all walks of life.

"*Barkeley Hornes.*" John Smythe spells this Berkeley "Hernerse," and calls it "nooks or corners of Berkeley": of the Hundred of Berkeley, he means.

"*Tedburye.*" In Tetbury there must have been considerable property, and to it Michael Hicks, on whom it was entailed, added at a later date the neighbouring castle of Beverstone.

5. "*Julyan my welbeloved Wief,*" is described in every Hicks pedigree as Juliana Arthur of Clapton in

Gordano, near Bristol; and the inference certainly is that that was her maiden name, because in the earliest edition of the Hicks arms, the arms of the Arthurs of Clapton, gules, a chevron argent between three rests (or clarions) or, are impaled. In Collinson's "History of Somerset" is a long account of the very ancient family of Arthur of Clapton. And the account states that John Arthur, who was lord of the manor in the time of Henry VII., had a sister Juliana. She married Hugh (or Richard) Mead of Mead's Place in a neighbouring parish, and neither the history nor the pedigree in the "Visitations" of Somerset gives any other Juliana. The Clapton registers, however, show that it was a favourite name in the Arthur family. Unfortunately one has to repeat the old story that the registers do not begin till 1559. The manor became at last the heritage of a Mary Arthur, who married William Winter, and so the name died out. The Arthur monuments are in a chapel on the north side of Clapton Church. Clapton is a straggling village of thirty-five farms and cottages near Portishead. Part of the old Manor House still stands, and is now called the Court Farm.

6. "*Margaret Hickes myn owne Mother.*" At Gloucester there are the wills of two Margaret Hickes who died in 1562 and 1568 respectively. They rouse a sense of aggravation, because one of them might so easily have been the will of the right Margaret. But the first lady (of Tewkesbury) mentions no relations, leaves most of her money to the curate of Tewkesbury, 20*s.* to the 'reparation' of the Abbey, and 20*s.* to the 'reparation of the long bridge' (the beautiful red-brick bridge that spans the Avon and the water meadows). The second lady (of Marche in Berkeley) leaves her property to her son Richard; but he is a minor at the time of her death, so could not have been the Richard who was Robert's brother and a married man in 1557.

7. "*Mighell Hickes . . . Clement Hickes . . . Babtist*

Hickes." The registers of St. Pancras do not contain any mention of Clement and Baptist, only of Michael and of three other sons who died.

"The xxj^{ti} day of October A^{d} XXXV° Regis Henrii Octavi (A.D. 1543) was Mighell Hycke the sonne of Robert Hycke borne, whose Godfathers were Robert Bowser and Edward Sprynt and Sybell White godmother."

"Item the xxix^{ti} day of January A^{o} xxxvj Regis Henrici octavi was Fraunces Hykke son to Robert Hykke of this parisshe cristened. Fraunces [blank] the Kinge Maties Foteman and John Haskyns beyng godfathers and Margaret Nevyll godmother."

"Item the xiiij day of January an^{o} 1545/6 was Illary Hyggs the son of Robert Hyggs crystenyd. John Broke and Anthony Hykeman godfathers and one Bartellma godmother." *

"The xvij day of Marche A^{o} secundo Regis (Edwardi sexti) was John Hycke (borne) and buryed in the churchyarde."

"The xiiij day of July a^{o} predicto was Hyllary Hycke son to Robert Hycke buried in the churchyarde."

The history of the three surviving sons of Robert briefly is, that Michael became Secretary to Lord Burleigh, and was knighted; Clement became Searcher of Customs at Chester, and died there; and Baptist, who stuck to the shop, became Master of the Mercers' Company, and was created Viscount Campden.

8. "*Richarde Hickes my brother . . . and Adryan Hicks my said Brothers Sonne.*" The Gloucestershire property was entailed on brother and nephew failing heirs to the three sons. The London property was left to the brother Richard for his life, and then entailed on the sons. The inference is that Richard was involved in the management of the property in some way, and that, as the sons were all young (Michael fourteen) at the time of Robert's death, Robert judged it better that the management should remain in Richard's hands.

9. "*My landes . . . within the parryshe of Saint Katheryns Colman.*" St. Katherine's Coleman is in Church Row out of Fenchurch Street where the

* No doubt wife or daughter of "Thomas Bartylmew."

Ironmongers' Hall is situated. Robert's property was therefore round about the Ironmongers' Hall, in the heart of the City. The register does not begin till 1559, so it is not possible to find out if Robert was buried there instead of at St. Pancras.

10. "*Christes Hospitall*" did not stand much chance of benefiting under the will, except to the extent of the small definite legacy out of the personal property. The school was founded in 1553, so that it was quite a new institution when the will was made, and the well-known blue dress was, of course, the very dress of a London citizen of the time.

11. "*All my goodes, chattells . . . I . . . devise . . . accordinge to the custome of the said Cittie of London for Ffreemens goodes.*"

> "Every freeman of the City of London might make a will and alter it as often as he pleased. In disposing, however, of his personal estate, it was necessary for him to follow the custom of the City by leaving to his wife one-third of such estate, and to his children, if any, another third; or, if he had no children, by leaving one-half to his wife. If on the other hand he left children and no wife, the children were entitled to the same proportion of his property. The residue in each case was at the free disposal of the testator, and was known as the legatory or dead man's portion; if left undisposed of by the testator it fell under the direction of the Statute of Distributions, and was no longer controlled by the custom of London, but as a matter of fact it was usually devoted to pious uses for the benefit of the testator's soul. The shares of the wife and children were called their *reasonable* parts, to recover which there was at Common Law a *writ de rationabili parte bonorum.*"
>
> *From* "Calendar of Wills in the Court of Hastings," *edited by R. R. Sharpe.*

12. "*My best sherte of meale my Corselett my best halberte my sworde and my buckeler.*" The City Companies could each provide a certain number of armed men for war and for various other purposes such as pageants, May games and plays. In 1497 the 'Yemenry' sent a petition to the Master of the Ironmongers for certain rights. In 1524 the names of fifty-six 'Yemenry' are recorded. In 1544 a list is given of the plate that was pledged when "the Co ffound xiiij men in harnes to go over the sea wth the Kyng's army in to France." In 1559 the Ironmongers sent forty-two men in armour to the May game when the Queen went to Greenwich. Richard Hicks, dressed in Robert's armour, would not be among them, for he never was a Freeman of the Company.

13. "*To the use of oure Hall my best standinge Cupp with a cover of silver and all gilt.*" In Vol. I. of the Court Book (the Minute book) of the Ironmongers' Company is the entry:—

> "At a Quarter Court holden the 26th day of April 1558 being the next working day after Saint Mark's day
>
> "Received at this Court a standinge Cupp with a cover gilte waying xxvj ounces three quarters and a half, which was given unto this Company by Robert Hyckes deceased late one of this company."

The cup is not now in the possession of the Ironmongers. On various occasions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they sold plate to meet the requisitions of the Crown and their own liabilities. Several gilt cups and covers were sold in 1644, and the names of the donors are given in the Court Book. Robert Hicks' cup is not mentioned, so it was probably sold at an earlier date.

14. "*Gold Ringes of two Angells waight.*" Of the relations and friends to whom these are left, only Richarde Hickes of Cromwell and John Sprynt can

be identified. The Sprynts were relations: Edmond Sprynt was the son Michael's godfather, and the name comes into the family correspondence in later years. Nothing is left to Robert's godchildren, and the St. Pancras register shows that he had at least two, Robert Stylle and Thomas Robyns. Juliana, too, was in great request as a godmother; she appears constantly in that *rôle*—'Gillyan Hyggs' she is spelt in one place.

15. "*My ffrynde Maister Anthonie Penne*" not only got a black gown and a cloth coat, and a thick gold ring, but he eventually had the use of the whole property too by becoming the second husband of "my welbeloved wief Julyan."

The life of professional success, with its hard-working days on a narrow and often dreary stage, and its conventional domestic background—that was Robert's life as the will betrays it. But the will betrays more than that. It shows a clearness and strength of temperament, and a high-hearted dealing with life—faith in the security of the small platform he had built for his family, but faith also out-reaching, faith in time and the will of man. The manufacture of an entail by the Cheapside tradesman, and the discovery of his affection for the continuance of a name not at all distinguished, might have had a comic air after three centuries. It hasn't a comic air because what he desired has become fact: he meant to found a family: he did found a family. There is no ambiguity either in the wish or in its fulfilment: there is no vagueness, no stretching forth helplessly to life beatific. It is life under the limitations and conditions of time that the will, in its blind language, means to establish firmly in continuity.

Such established continuity has its inimical quality; as time goes on, it is apt to breed parasites and not

individuals. The Cromhall family, after the exodus of Robert, became parasitical only, and then perished.

On the other hand, the individual who is to be really individual (for whose sake alone the human race was called into being) must have his beginning, and why should not that beginning be in those pleasant places where the best sort of family life is enshrined?

Behind the cramped phraseology of an Entail, a vision lurks: the founder of an entail always knows, in a thick-sighted way, that it is there. However unskilfully, he has tried to ensure that, generation after generation, man and woman shall dwell in the garden he has created and make it bloom; pleasure—pleasure in the earth and the rapturous uses of it, their portion. And the vision has its further element—the possibility that, here and there, in the story of generations shall be the coming of a Soul Elect; for whom no provision can be made; who will leave the garden and have for portion not happiness, but the beckoning freedom of unknown things—of all that is profoundest and most illogical, most impossible, and most eternally true.

Does the will of the retail mercer of Cheapside say much of all this? Did he mean much of this? Does he carry himself on that account to-day with sprightly port that makes the ghosts gaze?

CHAPTER VI.

JULIANA AND CLEMENT HICKS.

ENOUGH material (mainly in the form of letters) exists to make of Robert's surviving family a book to themselves. There is, in fact, an embarrassment of material, and this is owing to the fact that the Hicks family letters have been preserved among the letters of Lord Burghley, to whom Michael was Secretary, and who left behind him stupendous masses of manuscript. In the possession of Lord Salisbury at Hatfield are over 30,000 manuscripts. These have been calendered up to 1600, and published by the Historical MSS. Commission. They contain 25 letters of, or relating to, Michael and Baptist Hicks. The uncalendered manuscripts at Hatfield contain 14 Hicks letters. In the British Museum is a collection known as the Lansdowne MSS. This contains 852 Hicks letters. A preface to the collection, dated March 15th, 1819, states that it is divided into two parts, the first consisting of the Burghley papers only. Of the Burghley papers, one volume contains copies of charters and other documents of an early period; but the remainder, amounting to 121 volumes in folio, consist of State papers interspersed with miscellaneous correspondence, and among these is the private memorandum book of Lord Burghley. The Burghley papers descended from Sir Michael Hicks to his great-grandson, Sir William Hicks, who, about 1682, sold them to Richard Chiswell, a stationer in London, who again disposed of them to the Rev. John Strype, Vicar of Low Leighton in Essex. On Mr. Strype's death they were sold to

Mr. James Webb, and from him came into the possession of Lord Lansdowne. Mr. Strype wrote what he called "An Historical Account of the Family of Hicks," which is now in the British Museum with the other papers. In it he quotes letters which are not now in existence, and there can be no doubt that, in passing from hand to hand, many of the letters have been lost or stolen.

In order to make a consecutive story out of this disjointed mass of material, it would be necessary to write, not only the history of the reign of Elizabeth, but also a Life of Lord Burghley! Nothing so comprehensive will be attempted. Only a very drastically weeded-out selection of the letters will be given, and a decision has been come to that, with few exceptions, the letters shall be transcribed. They lose enormously in character thereby, but the task of reading them becomes less tedious.

The letters to and from Juliana Hicks, who became Juliana Penn, are few in number, but, if they illuminate her only partially, they illuminate her rather vividly. They show her to be the mother of her son, Baptist, money-lender to kings, builder of palaces; the mother of her son Michael, who walked in tortuous political paths. She was alive with the life of her age—the spacious, gorgeous, dramatic Elizabethan age.

There was no attempt on the widow's part to live a life of sober thrift over the Cheapside shop. Two years after her husband's death she acquired a messuage on Peter's Hill, on the land sloping from St. Paul's to the river. In a list of deeds at Witcombe, made by Howe Hicks four generations later, the conveyance of the messuage is stated to be from John Broke* and his wife, and the date is August 5th, 1559. Two further deeds, relating to the recovery and settlement of the same are dated 14 and 30 Eliz. The land may have been bought to add as garden to a house already

* Godfather to Juliana's son Hilary (see p. 59).

there, or it may have been acquired to build a house which was certainly in existence later; for more than one letter to Juliana is endorsed, "To the worshippfull M^ris^ Penne at hyr house on Snt. Peeters hyll in London." All kinds of narrow old lanes wind down this hill to the water, says Mr. E. V. Lucas in his book about London. Godliman Street, Sermon Lane, Trig Lane, Distaff Lane, Garlick Hill, Stew Lane, are names of some of them. "All make for the wharves and the river and ultimately the open sea." John Strype says that after the Great Fire the house was divided into two tenements, and it must have been thus divided when, together with Witcombe Park, it was settled, at his marriage, on Juliana's great-grandson, Sir Michael Hicks. At a later date it was sold, and it is certain that the tapestry with floral border, now in the hall at Witcombe, is that mentioned in the following fragment in Juliana's handwriting:—

"This wretyng made the xix of the rane of the qwne grase.

"The xij. daye of July last I haue in wretyngs I thynke they be good debts the some of . . . xviij^c^^ti^

"be side platt Juels and my lese of the Whight bere in Chepes syde and my house that I now dwell in be syde tapstre and lenneng and all the forneture of my howse/ I geve God thankes for ytt/ I knolege my selfe from the fwrst daye of my berthe I never deserued pene or pese of brede butt Rightt damnacion and tru to me/ butt his marce ys on home he will haue marce

"I haue lost since that tyme by Mr. Hardyke and Churman and other yll dette and furneture of the Whigte bere . . . of this mone . . . vj^c^^ti^

"I thanke God for bothe by case God hath don ytt all/ geyeng and taken."

HALL OF WITCOMBE PARK.

(With Juliana Hicks tapestry.)

This fragment reveals three things. Firstly, that, in an age of growing domestic luxury and personal splendour, Juliana, with her tapestry and her plate, her linen and her jewels, had not been left behind. Secondly, that in the era of the creation of Shakspere's heroines, before the days of the Puritan ideal, Juliana had an individuality not self-conscious, but not involved in that of any husband whatever. She managed her own income, and we become (thirdly) aware that she tried to increase that income by loans to the impecunious.

Anthony Penn, her second husband, seems a strangely ghost-like factor in her life. The date and place of their marriage are not known, but he lived, probably, until 1572, in which year his will was proved. In it he leaves everything without specification to his wife, and the only trace of character is an anxiety to have something of a funeral—fifty gowns are left to fifty poor men to bring his body to the church—but that only at his wife's discretion. He mentions a sister, a brother, and his son; also an Anthony Penn, who may, or may not, have been Juliana's son too—she, in the only other communication with her husband that exists, calls him "Anthony your sone." This letter is undated and is simply one of phrases, some of which are a little obscure in sentiment. Juliana is glad to get her husband's letter; there is no greater grief than absence, she says, and she feels for him the same affection that he writes with, is sorry when he is moved to heaviness and glad in his cheerfulness. Her mind leads her hand to make an end; his son is in health; she sends him two barrels of beer and a glass of preserved cherries, prays him to eat them, and is his friend of all others the assuredst.

This is the only one of Juliana's letters that is at all domestic. There is a letter to her signed 'Francis Howarde' and written on behalf of a daughter whom he calls "your cousin," and who, he says, is much beholden for friendly courtesy, makes bold to ask for

some more of the jelly, but desires that it may be red jelly, and not too much rose-water in the taste, but as plain made as may be. There is another letter which must be quoted, entirely for the sake of the name of the writer. John Gilpin of classical fame might have written it himself.

"Mistress Penne, your old servant John Guylpyne desires you, for God's sake, to be pitiful to this bearer, my wife's nurse, that her mother, a woman of fourscore years, may have a simple goun as a mourner for the right worshipful Mistress Alderman Roo. I am sure you will grant me this Request in Recompense of many good dinners and suppers that I have had at your house, for (by any other merit) otherwise I can crave nothing at your hands. Your assured loving and dutiful '*Jo Guylpin.*'

"This old woman's name is Alice Patt, and she is the first body that I ever craved your good word for."

But it is Juliana's business letters that betray the vivacity and the driving power which her son Baptist inherited. In the inventory of her property made in 1576—7 she says she has lost money by Mr. Hardyke (Hardwick), and she gives a long technical account of the matter in a paper whose probable date is 1580, because she mentions that Mr. Penn died eight years before 'this present examination.' To Mr. Hardwick himself, in the Debtors' Prison, she does not hesitate, in all calmness, and in a very long letter, only part of which is quoted, to speak her mind.

" . . . Only my request is because I neither have present money to defray my necessary expenses, and am daily driven to pawn my plate to supply ordinary charges. And further . . . (because my son being now ready to trade and to set up for himself) the want thereof will be a let and stay to his detirmination, and so consequently both turn to his discredit and hindrance, and to my no small reproof, who am

bound both by nature and the laws of this City, to see him instantly and truly satisfied . . . Concerning the causes between you and your creditors, I am very glad to hear that they grow well towards an end . . . The summer comes on apace, hot seasons are contagious, especially in prisons and such melancholy places; yourself, a man brought up in other sort, and unacquainted with so hard lodging and so homely fare . . . And further you are to consider how, by your absence from your own house, the state of your things will go to rack and to havock. The master's eye makes a diligent servant, and the landlord's presence makes a dutiful and thankful tenant. But, above all, you are to consider that, being a Justice of Peace, the county claims a right in you, and finds a want of you. Being of an ancient house, and of so great revenue, the poor lack relief and hospitality; being of understanding and experience, the ignorant and rude people lack a counsellor and director; being of credit and authority, wronged and oppressed these want a protector and defender. All of which causes laid together . . . hath moved me as your poor and true friend to entreat you to seek all the good ways for your speedy deliverance out of trouble . . . So that having liberty and a quiet life, and a worshipful estate of living besides, you may be the better able, now in your old days to pass the remainder of your life in the service of God with a good and quiet conscience. And these much have I been told as your careful friend to advise you, how well I know not, but in very good will I am sure."

To the Earl of Kildare * she sends a dunning letter written with less placidity :—

"'My lord a Keldar.' I will be no more a suitor to you to sue for my own, in whom there is no truth

* Henry, twelfth Earl of Kildare. The title is now merged in that of the Dukes of Leinster.

nor honour towards me. Do you forget the great swearing and oaths, denying God if you did break one of them with me (?) You could not be content with yourself, but brought in 'my lord a Tomontt,'* who is as true of his speech and swearing as the rest is. My lord do you believe in God, 'and (does) my lord Tomontt' (also) and in His whole law, and that he will perform every word that He hath spoken upon the Just and the wicked (?) As sure He will, then are you both undone. But sure I believe you believe in none of them, which is sorrow to my heart for that latter day which you both shall come to, and I (also) For you never durst offend His Majesty without you thought there were no salvation for you. 'My lord Ammarll'† and your wife I honour and love; but your false swearing and promise I utterly abhor (hoterle a pore). 'My lord a Keldar' but for the love I bear to 'my lord Ammerall' and my lady, your wife, I had ended my suit; for I had complained to the Queen, who hath promised me that I shall take no wrong at man's hand."

Lord Kildare's reply to this exhortation is as conciliatory as may be. It is addressed to "my very lovinge frende Mrs. Penn." He writes from Greenwich on June 23rd, 1591. The Court was there, and it is, he says, a place of great charges, and he has been obliged to spend the money with which he had meant to pay his debts.

"I desire you now to bear with me, but till my man return with money out of Ireland, which will be within this fortnight."

Reference to the Day of Judgment was evidently a frequent form of appeal with Juliana. In a letter to

* Thomond, an extinct Irish peerage.
† Admiral.

the Earl of Oxford written in the same year, "that dredfull day" plays its part again; but the widow hints pretty plainly that she does not mean to leave the settlement of the affair to so distant a date. The Earl of Oxford married Anna, eldest daughter of Lord Burghley, in 1572. The marriage was an unhappy one. Oxford had danced himself into the good graces of the Queen, and his mother-in-law openly condemned the philandering. Elizabeth was much enraged, but, says Gilbert Talbot in a letter to Lord Shrewsbury in 1573, "at all these love matters my Lord Treasurer winketh and will not meddle any way." Prudent he! In 1575 there was a tremendous family quarrel, and the whole of the documents are in the Hatfield papers. Oxford, on his return from a mission to Germany, had declined all communication with his wife, saying that her parents had influenced her against him. It is plain that Burghley treated his son-in-law with inexhaustible patience. Oxford was extravagant, eccentric, and quarrelsome, and had not been able to keep the Queen's favour. In 1582 Burghley interceded for him with Hatton, and again, in 1583, with Raleigh, the Queen's new favourite, who replied, "I am content for your sake to lay the serpent before the fire, that, having recovered strength, myself may be in most danger of his poison and sting."

This "serpent" Juliana had lodged in her house, and it is to recover money due for board and lodging that she takes up a respectful but plainly angry pen:—

> "You know my Lord you had anything in my house whatsoever you or your men would demand, if it were in my house; if it had been a thousand times more, I would have been glad to pleasure your lordship withall."

That the debt remained unpaid is clear, because one Thomas Churchyard, who had become surety for it, writes to Mrs. Penn that he has taken refuge in a

Sanctuary for fear of her arresting him. It seems that Churchyard, acting on behalf of the Earl, had taken the rooms by the quarter at the rent of £100 a year (in the money of the time), with such necessaries "as were named," but that napery and linen were not included, nor, apparently were coals, fagots, beer or wine, as they are part of the debt. And there, as far as the twentieth century is concerned, the matter ends.

Other letters of a like nature to and from Juliana there are, but they are only variations of the same theme. Yet among the many excuses for non-payment which the widow received, one deserves humorous mention. It is from Thomas Reade, a citizen of St. Helen's (Bishopsgate):—

> "I would willingly myself come if I might to see you, but my sore leg makes me unable (unhable) to visit you at this present."

There are two letters, one from and the other to Juliana, which take us away from these money matters into the wide spaces where English ships swept the seas. The first letter, signed "Yo^r haltinge and uprighte frend Julyan Penne," is to an acquaintance in the West of England:—

> "You discharge yourself so thankfully and so 'clenly' withal, for my small remembrance to yourself and others, that I must needs account you wise that can make full recompense with so little a charge. Your rich return that you certify of Drake's arrival in the west, though long before I heard it for certain in the east, that I take it from you as thankful and fresh news."

This puts a date to an undated letter. It was in September, 1580, that Francis Drake finished his voyage round the world, and brought the *Pelican* quietly to an anchorage in Plymouth Sound. The

story of all that led up to that adventure is too long a tale to be repeated here, but the Queen had sworn a great oath to have the head of him who should inform the King of Spain of it, and had given commandment that the Lord Treasurer should be kept in the dark. (Burghley's spies served him too well to make that possible.) A syndicate financed the expedition. Juliana may have been one of the shareholders "besides themselves for joy" (says Mendoza) when the news came to Europe that the tiny ship with its crew of adventurers had passed the Straits of Magellan, had ravaged the coasts of Chili and Peru, had seized the galleon which sailed yearly for Cadiz with a cargo of precious stones, had rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and was homeward bound with treasure of over half a million in her hold.

Of Spanish booty the following letter speaks, and the date at the foot of it is that of the year of the Armada, and of a month when the Armada was of the past:—

"Good Mrs. Penn. I do receive from you many kindnesses, for which I heartily thank you, and yet at this time must I make bold with you for a thing which you may get, and to which I would be beholden to no other but yourself. So it is my Lady Gorge hath a pretty silver bell, that was Don Pedro's the Spaniard. It was taken at sea. The weight of it in silver is all that to her it can be valued at. If you of yourself would desire to buy it, I would willingly pay whatsoever she will ask, so that it might not be known unto her that I am to have it, for I would not be beholden unto her; you see how bold I am with you. If I may pleasure you or yours I will be most ready. And thus wishing you health and long life for my friend's good your eldest son, I commit you to God. From my Lodging this 3 of Obre 1588.

"Yo^r loving frend

"Robt Cecill."

This letter leaves one in doubt whether it was the gentleman who wrote it, or Mistress Penn to whom it was addressed, who was devoid of a sense of humour.

Sir Robert Cecil was the younger son of Lord Burghley, who was twice married. Burghley's first wife was Mary Cheke, sister of his great friend at Cambridge, John Cheke the scholar, whose widowed mother kept a wine shop in the town of Cambridge, and who became Regius Professor of Greek and tutor to Prince Edward. Mary Cheke died about a year after she had given birth to a son Thomas. Thomas Cecil was an ill-conducted and unmanageable young man ; unworthy, unruled, lewd, are some of the epithets his father sadly applies to him. He married a daughter of Lord Latimer, and was created Earl of Exeter by James I. He is the ancestor of the family of the Marquis of Exeter of Burghley.

Lord Burghley's second wife was Mildred Cooke, eldest and learned daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke of Giddy Hall, Essex, the Governor of Prince Edward and one of the pioneers of the new learning. By her, Burghley had several children, of whom there survived two daughters (Lady Oxford and Lady Wentworth) and a son Robert, who married a daughter of Lord Cobham, became eventually Earl of Salisbury, and is the ancestor of the present Salisbury family.

Robert Cecil had character and brilliant talents. From youth he had imbibed his father's policy and methods, and towards the end of Burghley's life relieved his father of much of his laborious work. He entered Parliament as member for Westminster in 1584 and sat for Herts from 1588 to 1601. He was made a Privy Councillor and was knighted in 1591. He became Secretary of State in 1596, Lord Privy Seal in 1597, and Lord Treasurer, like his father before him, in 1608. He held these offices conjointly until his death. He died in 1612, in the very same year as died Michael Hicks, his father's secretary and his own life-long friend.

It is his friend's mother to whom Robert Cecil writes, and there are letters (three to Juliana and one to Michael) which show how various were Juliana's activities. It is certain that, on a wider stage, she would have intrigued with gaiety and success. The letters, dated 1592, relate to one Charles Chester, whom Sir Robert accuses Mrs. Penn of harbouring under her roof. Now the Chesters were a very well-known family in Bristol and its neighbourhood, and it will be remembered that Juliana herself was native there. Thomas Chester (third in descent from a Henry Chester, who died, sheriff of Bristol, 1470) was a great Bristol merchant, was successively Sheriff, M.P. for and Mayor of Bristol, purchased the manor of Almondsbury (which his descendant, Colonel Chester Master, still possesses), and was High Sheriff of Gloucestershire 1577. He was one of the four Bristol merchants who contributed (in the same year) £25 each to the second voyage of Martin Frobisher in search of the North-West Passage. A nephew of his, Charles Chester (son of his younger brother Dominick, who was M.P. for Minehead), accompanied the expedition, and in his will, dated September 18th, 1577, Thomas leaves money to all Dominick's children, and to Charles, "if he comes home in safety," £20. Apparently he did come home in safety—here he is, fifteen years later, a prisoner in the Gate-house at Westminster. It must surely be he, for there is no other Charles on the Chester pedigree at that date, and the reference to "my Lord Admiral" in the first letter shows that the culprit was connected with sea-life. His father, his uncle (who knows?), may have been an old lover of Juliana's in Bristol days—who knows, indeed!

Robert Cecil's first letter is conciliatory, but firm:—

> "Mistress Penn because you are my very good friend, I have thought good to make a difference between your house and others in like cases;

presuming so much upon your discretion as that you will surely deliver up all such papers, books, caskets or other things belonging to Charles Chester (who is by my Lord Admiral and me committed close prisoner to the Gate-house), upon this my private letter as if I had sent expressly a Pursuivant to make a search: which I will not offer unto you, although it be creditably informed that your house hath been of long time his chief receptacle, and that there are in your house divers things of his fit to be reviewed. And thus requiring you that they may be all forthcoming, I leave you to God. From the Court, this 20th of June 1592. Your loving friend Ro. Cecill.

"You shall do well to deal clearly in the discovery of such things as be in your house, for his confession will otherwise discredit your denial."

It is to be deplored a million times that Juliana's answer to this is not in existence. It is clear that she was able to convince Sir Robert that she was not really privy to the affair, and of her sincerity he has no doubts. The next letter he writes her is from Theobald's, Burghley's country house:—

"good Mrs. Penn. I am very sorry to hear how extreme sick you are by your son Michael my friend; and the rather understanding that you have not been well ever since you were here. If you took any cold by coming to my lord's house, being not very accustomed to stir abroad of long time, I hope it will away with discreet and warm keeping. If any other conception should trouble you, surely this letter may assure you that there was not, nor is, the least suspicion conceived of any privity of yours to any ill of his who is now a Prisoner in the Gate-house. For my part I do wish the poor soul no harm. Some things there are found out of his lewd disposition to the State, which is the cause of his Restraint. With time it may be qualified; wherein, though no private

respects shall make better or worse my conception of any man's offences, yet shall I be the more apt in pity to deal for him (I must confess) if he do forbear, according to his vile humour, to rail at my (?) Henry Cecil out of prison by letters whereof I am imformed; being of my blood, and one who never deserved of him but too well. For the letter you sent, it showed your sincerity, of which I was never doubtful, as I have told your son often when he sued to me for him. I wish you health and contentment and so do bid you heartily farewell. Your loving friend Ro : CECYLL."

This was all very well; but Sir Robert was quickly convinced that he had been hoodwinked, and the next letter shows him in a very different temper :—

"I have foreborne for your children's sake to do by you as I would have done by your betters. And, in that your answer was that you wanted spectacles, I have forborne to send to you. But I do fear it will prove that your house has fostered him to no good purpose. And it will go near to be proved that in your hearing his tongue hath walked further than to speak of subjects. Your silence in answering me, as though you scorned me for dealing friendly with you, and your privy intelligence with him since his apprehension, I can assure you must be answered. I love (I confess) your sons well, but do not imagine that any of their credits with me shall make me blind when I am ill-used. And thus I bid you Farewell.

Ro : CECYLL.

"I will expect your answer, and that such you will affirm in writing to be true. And if it come not the sooner I will send a Pursuivant to your house which I would be loath (to do)!"

Yet behold! Juliana again cozens Sir Robert into believing that she has been suspected wrongfully, and

that she is really not guilty of privity to the affair. The next letter is to her son Michael:—

"Mr. Hycke. I pray you thank your mother for her apricots. And for any matter of suspicion that I conceive against her for being an accomplice or an allower of his villany against the state, I think you know that I ever cleared her. This, nevertheless, which of good will I made you show her, I pray you require her not to speak of. For I am not able to answer it that I should show it to anybody. Your loving friend Ro: Cecyll."

The State papers make no mention of the affair, and it was evidently of minor importance as a State affair, although, as a personal affair, it must have agitated several lives. It made no permanent breach in Juliana's friendship with the Cecils. Robert continued to be the widow's useful friend. Some buildings to which she objected had been put up next her house, and Sir Robert, in a letter to Michael, says that he has been to see them, and protests that they are most maliciously begun and most negligently tolerated by the mayor. He has "rattled up the young, lusty builder as well as ever he was in his life," and in conclusion bids "good Michael" deliver this letter so as "my lord" may read it.

The road to 'my lord's' eye and ear was not always such a direct one. Thomas Lychefeld, who had a "suyte" he wished to further, found it devious. He writes from the Charterhouse, so he was probably of the household of the Duke of Norfolk, who bought the Carthusian buildings in 1565 from the Norths. He writes to "ye Lady Gerrard":—*

"Madam. Whereas I delivered unto your Ladyship two silver salts for my very good friend Mistress

* She must have been the wife of Sir Gilbert Gerard, the Attorney-General, and not the wife of his cousin, Sir Thomas Gerard of Bryn, committed to the Tower for complicity in one of those many plots concerning the Queen of Scots.

Penn, to the intent your Ladyship should further her in the suit I brake with you concerning her son, the which I understand may no ways be obtained : therefore, at this instant lying on my deathbed, I am earnest to request your Ladyship to redeliver the said salts, that the gentlewoman have me not in suspicion. And so, living at the Pleasure of the Almighty, with my humble commendations I commit you to God. Charterhouse the xxth of September.

"Your Ladyship's in all humbleness

"THOMAS LYCHEFELD."

It is thus possible to leave Juliana with the knowledge that she was not quite easy of access when it came to the very usual matter of bribes. She was buried in the church of St. Mary Magdalene close to the Guildhall, in which parish her son Baptist was then living. This is the entry in the register (which is now kept in the church of St. Laurence, Savoy) :—

1592. Mrs. Julian Penn was buried Novembris vicesimo tertio.

Juliana's will, dated 1592, is in the list of documents at Witcombe which Howe Hicks made ; but it is not to be found. There is, however, a paper of the same date, signed by her sons Michael and Baptist, which contains ten articles of agreement concerning the administration of their mother's estate. The articles are not particularly interesting except that Michael makes a deed of gift of all his interest (under his father's will) in the *White Bear* to Baptist, and that they each agree to pay an allowance of £20 a year to their brother Clement (the second surviving son of Robert and Juliana), who is also to have any money that can be recovered from Sir Thomas Ffynche and Edward Churchman. It would seem as if Clement did not find this agreement a very satisfactory one. In 1595 he writes to Michael that he has heard nothing from Ludlow, who promised to serve the process on Churchman,

and fears that Ludlow "makes his benefit" by Churchman. And apparently it was not until 1596 that Baptist began to pay the allowance—or, at any rate, to promise to pay it. Clement tells Michael in that year that he has received the promise and has written to thank Baptist for it. However, in 1612 he acknowledges the receipt of £10 for his "annuity."

Clement's letters are all dated from Chester. He was Searcher of Customs there, and it is evident that it was Michael's influence with 'My lord' (Treasurer) which had obtained him the post, for he thanks his brother for his own good opinion, and hopes to justify it while he remains in office. Of its emoluments he does not speak highly. He had, it would seem, to make what he could out of it, and he apologises that he has troubled Michael too much in the matter of obtaining from my lord a fee to the office, but will be very grateful if he will renew the same suit. He is greatly hindered, he says, by the smallness of the traffic at Chester, which is occasioned by the wars (in Ireland), and will be worse every day. He has to live for the most part at his own charge, and, says he, "I am not able to maintain my credit in this strange place where I dwell."

The registers of Holy Trinity Church, Chester, show that Clement was living in that parish from 1597 to 1603 and again from 1610 to 1627. In 1619 he, together with a number of other parishioners, subscribed to a fund for the rector and parish clerk in order that Morning Prayer might be said daily. The old Customs House of the port of Chester stood at the south-west corner of the old church, with its back looking on to the (then) rectory gardens, and references to its neighbourhood occur in the parish books. Holy Trinity Church is in Water-Gate Street, and Clement's later letters are dated from "my house in the Watter Gatt Street," which, he says, he has taken

on a lease of twenty-one years, but cannot put in repair unless his brothers will help him—as they have already done by upholding the front part of his house which was ready to fall on his head. He prays for £10 to repair his house. He mentions that Sir Baptist has sent him a letter of attorney for £9 and odd money that Mr. Arthur Cotton owes him, which he freely gives to him (Clement) if he can get the same; but it is no use to him as he cannot find Mr. Arthur Cotton. The last letter, dated June 29th, in the year of Michael's death, 1612, says that the bearer has seen his house, and can certify how much it needs repairing, and also how dear everything is in Chester (double the price), because of knights and gentlemen who have left their houses in the country, and are in Chester to ease themselves, and who raise the price for others.

Clement Hicks' will was proved at Chester, 1628. He leaves "unto everie godchild now living and remayning in this Cittie of Chester, two shillings and sixpence a piece." Ten shillings goes to Mr. Hopwood (who was rector of Holy Trinity, 1615 to 1632), entreating him to preach at the funeral, and there are other small legacies. All the rest of his property (it amounted to £102 17*s.* 2*d.*) goes to his second wife, Margaret, and he wishes to be buried in Trinity Church in the place where his former wife is buried.

In 1865 the ancient church of Holy Trinity, Chester, was pulled down and an entirely new one was built on the site. At the east end of the north aisle of the old church was a chapel dedicated to St. Patrick, with a painted altar. Here, says Webb, in his "Description of the City and County Palatine of Chester," published 1650, was a little monument of brass in the wall. On the brass was this engraven :—

> "Here lyeth the body of Ellen Hicks, wife of Clement Hicks Gent, her Majesty's Chief Searchers of the port of Chester and Liverpool, being of the age of 35 years who deceased the 11th day of April Anno Domini 1598."

Without, the street of old Chester leading to the waterside. Within, the chapel at the end of the aisle with its crudely painted altar, the space re-opened in the flags beneath the brass monument on the wall, the mourners in their cloaks, the second wife in her provincial ruff and black hood—that was the end of Clement Hicks; and it is all blank and obliterated for us. The thoughts there round his grave, the feelings there, are things quite dead.

CHAPTER VII.

BAPTIST HICKS.

NEITHER Clement nor Baptist Hicks belongs really to the thread of this story, which, after Juliana, should concern itself at once with her eldest son Michael. But anyone who has seen Baptist's monument in the church of the Cotswold town of Campden, will realise that some sort of account of him there must be.

It is perfectly plain that, of Juliana's three sons, the youngest most resembled her in capacity, in vivacity, and in an inherent liking for the splendours of life. He had neither the education nor the social opportunities of Michael, but he out-distanced him in worldly success. If, of the three brothers, Clement had obviously the least vitality, Baptist as certainly had the most.

It was Baptist's appointed lot to go back to the Cheapside mercery, and to live a citizen life in the rooms over it which his mother had deserted. That he did live there, and that a dwelling-place over the shop was not for the socially ambitious, a proposal of marriage, which will be presently quoted, gives evidence.

He was admitted as a Freeman of the Mercers' Company in 1580, and he was Master of the Company in 1611 and 1622. His arms with the Fleur-de-Lys hang on the dark panelling of the Mercers' dining hall to-day.

Of Baptist as a mercer we only get fleeting glimpses in the Lansdowne and Hatfield letters. Thomas Cecil, the Lord Treasurer's prodigal heir, was one of his

customers, and there is a letter from Baptist to Michael in which he begs his brother to 'prevail' with his lordship to pay him the money for the goods bought, which had long been owing. The wife of the more powerful Robert Cecil found it economical to deal at the *White Bear*. In a letter to Michael, Sir Robert says :—

> "Sir W. Rawley and I dining together in London, we went to your brother's shop, where your brother desired me to write to my wife in anywise not to let anybody know that she paid under £3 10*s*. a yard for her cloth of silver. I marvel that she is so simple as to tell anybody what she pays for everything."

In another letter Baptist openly sends Sir Robert Cotton "a little present," in order that he may have his favour in a cause wherein he is "malisciously prosecuted by a lurking proud enemy." The silk is a piece he has had specially made for his friends, and, says he, "I persuade myself out of the judgement and skill that I have gathered in process of time touching the commodity, you shall find it very extraordinary for the goodness." Everybody knows how tiresome relations are to do business with, and how difficult striped material is to manipulate, and how the polite tradesman must keep his temper, even with relations. Baptist writes to his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Hicks :—

> "Sister Hickes. I did not know that the purple striped stuff with gold had been returned me again, unless my brother had told me thereof, and that you did not cut it to serve your turn for marring of the pattern : I pray you give me leave to tell you that no pattern comes amiss to me to pleasure you."

This is a little too much the bowing mercer behind the counter. "Assuring you at all times of our best services," as the modern phrase has it.

Baptist's silks and satins played their part in very varied scenes. In 1598 an embassy was sent to France to negotiate peace with Spain, and it consisted of Sir Robert Cecil, Sir Thomas Wilkes, clerk of the Council, and Dr. Herbert. The instructions taken by them are contained in the very last State paper written by the dying Lord Treasurer. For this expedition Baptist supplied Wilkes with silks and satins, velvets and taffetas; and the bill for them, which is among the domestic State papers, came to £68 3*s.* 2*d.* This was the last earthly journey of poor Wilkes, who had so often crossed the Channel on similar errands. He died at Rouen on the way to Angers to meet King Henry.

The death of Queen Elizabeth brought Baptist an order to provide "velvets damasks and satins of the colour crimson, to serve the coronation" of James I. A warrant to pay him £3,000 for them is dated August 7th, 1603; but in 1606, in a petition by him to the Privy Council, which is among the Cecil papers, and which concerns the King's debts to him in general, he mentions that the proportion of stuff ordered was altered, whereby, he protesteth upon his faith, there was left upon his hands more than 1,400 yards to his very great hurt and damage.

The same petition, and the Calendars of Close Rolls, reveal that the great fortune which Baptist eventually built up, was by no means the product of mere trading in silks. Like his mother, he was a moneylender (in a day when it was one of the few forms of investment), and it is perfectly clear that, in order to lend on a scale that gradually became princely, he himself borrowed large sums of money. To borrow at low interest and lend at high interest—that is financial genius! He was often in difficulties in early years—often in "a very tight corner," as we should say—his letters to his brother Michael reveal that. He borrowed even from Michael, and vehement are his remarks about his own creditors—the Lord Treasurer's interest again and again is invoked through the secretary. The Close Rolls

contain (as near as may be counted) ninety indentures, where, buried in the most tedious of all language—legal language—lies the history of Baptist's monetary transactions with all sorts and conditions of men, and with the king himself—some of James' bonds are for £24,000, £150,000 (this is together with Sir Thomas Hayes and others), £30,000, and for many and various sums.

Another form of investment, investment in land, he did not neglect. The Close Rolls contain about fifty indentures where estates, portions of estates, and Church livings all over England are either mortgaged or sold to him. The most interesting of all these is an indenture dated November 25th, 1612, by which the Treasurer and Company of Adventurers and Planters of the City of London for the first Colony in Virginia, bargain and sell to Sir Baptist Hicks and ten others, "the islands called Bermudas, and now Somer Islands, being in the Ocean bordering on the coast of the said first Colony, with all havens, fishings, mines, etc., in the said islands."

Success in business brought the inevitable corollary of want of time for the amenities of life. There is a letter to Michael which is evidently an answer to a pressing invitation:—

> "—— yet notwithstanding can I not possibly be with you and be here again to dispatch business: which I know you will wish me to omit no opportunity to accomplish it: entertainment of Friends are very pleasing and comfortable, when more serious affairs are not impeded thereby. . . . In my absence I would have you give your friends the best entertainment you can, and not stick to venture your money where so much is to be gained. . . . I wish myself with you at your mask, some furniture thereunto I send you."

He has so much private business on hand that he will by no means be made an alderman. He sends for his brother in all haste:—

"If I were not ill at ease by reason of a cold I have taken, I would come to you myself. And therefore I have written these few lines to let you understand that, very suddenly, and very much unexpected, there is a bill delivered up unto my L. Mayor with the names of 4 Commoners for the choice of an Alderman, amongst which four I am nominated, and do very greatly fear that, if speedily I make not the better friends it will be my hap to be chosen, and then will turn me to a far greater trouble and suit than now it will do. Therefore I pray you do me that brotherly kindness, as to come to London this present Monday (for it requires expedition) and that I may find that friendship at your hands by your friends as may stay the course pretended against me which I know by some is done of malice, as more particularly you shall understand when I confer with you."

The result of the brotherly conference is to be discovered among the State papers, in the draft of a paper requiring the lord mayor and aldermen to forbear to elect Sir Baptist Hicks because he is employed in the King's service. This was in 1603, and in the next year there is the same sort of business again over his election as sheriff, and again the King's intervention. But he was not always able to wriggle out of his public duties. In 1606 he was foreman of the jury at the Guildhall which convicted the Jesuit Father Garnet of Gunpowder Plot fame. In 1611 he was actually elected alderman of Bread Street Ward, and though he brought forth the King's original letter, he was obliged to pay a fine of £500, and to pay again in 1613, when he was finally discharged from the incubus of municipal service—a service which he had calculated would serve him not at all. The talent for eliminating that which is not of import is necessary for success in life.

But a prudent marriage was not among those things to be eliminated. The lady to whom the following letter was addressed may, or may not, have been a widow, but it is evident that she had a large and independent income. The letter is enormously long, and is only partially quoted (and part of it is too Elizabethan to quote). There is a tremendous preamble, and then he says :—

"I will be bold to enter into an answer of such some particular objections as I remember have been made touching the inequality of our intermarriage.

"And first, whereas they allege that there is nine or ten years difference in our ages, there is none I think that hath but half an eye, and doth behold us both, that can so judge. And yet if any man should be so far mistaken, since we were both born in this City, the Register books of our birth will both readily and evidently convince their error. And albeit the truth were, that I were so many years younger than you are, yet what harm can come thereof. . . .

"Another matter which they urge both very earnestly and very often, is, the difference of our estates, both in wealth and worldly reputation. For your wealth—as it is not that I seek after, so it hath not been the thing that I have enquired after. That which I know concerning it is only by common report, as all men know besides that have ears to hear. Whatsoever it is, I wish it for your sake with all my heart a thousand times more; but in respect of myself (rather than it should be any impediment to my proceeding with you) I protest unto you I wish it a great deal less.

"But as touching mine own, (estate *sic*) as I acknowledge that it is a great deal more than I am worthy of, so I know it is not so little as they would make you believe. And I would to God that you

could find no other unworthiness in me than want of wealth, then I would not doubt (when it pleased you to call my estate in question) to be able to prove myself of such ability, as in any indifferent man's judgment I shall be thought meet to match with a woman of reasonable good substance. What other benefit or advancement is likely to come unto me hereafter by some of my friends, I will not now speak of, because they are but things in possibility, and not in present possession.

"And now, whereas they object that to marry a man of my trade were a great embasing of your credit and calling—Truly, methinks (as they may worst do it that have risen themselves from meaner beginnings) so they do great wrong to the trade itself, which in reputation all men know to be of chiefest account in this City. And as it cannot be denied that there are some which bear office now in this City which have been of that trade, so is it as evident that there are more which have been called to that place, and might worthily have accepted of it, if they had not preferred a quiet life before glorious titles.

"But howsoever the trade itself, is in itself, yet it is not necessary that your marriage with a Mercer should make you keep a shop, or sell a yard of silk (as some have in a disdainful and scornful manner objected). For there is a(n) example not far off from me, of a woman of good wealth and credit who married with a man of my trade, yet she neither makes nor meddles with shop nor silk, but having all things allowed her as are fit for a gentlewoman, she passeth her own time at her own pleasure, either here, or at her house in the country, as she herself thinks good.

"But, if in your eyes and judgment, the trade itself doth seem too mean for him whom you mean to make your husband, I see no impediment to

satisfy your mind wherefore I may not, of a mercer, become a merchant; and traffic as profitably and conveniently in that course as in this I am in. Of the which also, there is one example not far off from me, that, of a well traded mercer is become, and proves, both a good and skilful merchant.

"But alas! what need I labour thus to persuade you in these points, considering that the best hope and encouragement that ever I have had of my suit, hath been the persuasion that I have gathered and grounded upon your wisdom and humbleness of mind. That it is not money that you shoot at, but the man. That it is not worldly dignity, and worshipful titles that you desire, but a husband with whom you may lead a quiet and contented life in the fear of God; who will love you for yourself, and not for that which you have; who will allow you to the uttermost of his ability, and will use you in all gentleness and kindness, as becomes an honest man and a good husband. Than the which, if you might have your own heart's desire, what could you wish for more or better?"

Another letter, which starts with "Swete Wedow," is much shorter, is in a different key altogether, and is obviously addressed to a different lady! "Next v̌nto God you ar dearest v̌nto me," is the impassioned text of it.

A third unsuccessful proposal is to a Mistress "Katherin." It would appear that he has sent the lady a letter and a "token," and that she has returned the latter with a reply on the "modesty" of which he compliments her effusively, and assures her that—

"it was the least part of my thought either to pry into your goodwill without your favourable leave, or to press upon it towards any point of perfection without the privity of your good parents and friends. No

truly Mistress Katherin, my only meaning was to sound, if I might, the inclining disposition of your mind, and not to require your final resolution in the matter."

A long essay on the young lady's duty towards her parents then follows, quite obviously intended for these parents' eyes. Indeed, it needs not much penetration to surmise that the "token" had been waylaid, and had been returned by parental command. The sequel seems to say that the following highly meritorious sentiments were quite wasted. He has remarked, Baptist says, with—

"special good liking that godly and earnest care you have in the applying of your whole actions and thoughts to the pleasing of your parents, the which as it is a thing highly acceptable before God, and greatly commendable towards the world, so, without the continuance thereof will breed in time, both a sweet contention (content *sic*) to yourself, and a singular comfort to all your friends."

And so on, gliding at length gracefully into saying that his next care now consists in making known his suit to the said parents, together with a true and full discovery of himself and his estate.

"This done, I doubt not but, upon the hearing of my cause, to have the conquest of my suit. If not, what remains, but that I sigh and say, that a happy end doth not always follow a well meaning mind in an honest matter."

These rejected addresses are so delightful that they make one wish heartily that the letters which eventually won him a wife had survived too. Or did he learn wisdom of experience, and the perfect futility of pen and ink in such a service?

Baptist married in 1585, when he was thirty-four years old, Elizabeth May, of good citizen stock like

himself. Her father was a member, and sometimes Master, of the Merchant Taylors' Company. The proofs that she was precisely the wife he needed for his ambitions are very slight, but they do exist. "Burstling" and "imperious" are two lucid words applied to her in contemporary letters which tell of a tedious dispute about precedency, which she and Baptist, as knight and lady, carried on in their City circle. Her marble effigy in her ample peeress' robes in Campden Church does not give the lie to the description, and she had a successful brother too—these things are in the blood. Sir Humphrey May, as he became, was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and had the ear of James I. "Sir Hum. May can make any suitor, be they never so honest, disliked by the King," says a letter among the State papers.

The succession of James to the Crown of England was an event on which Baptist had staked a good deal. James had knighted 237 gentlemen in the course of his month's progress from Edinburgh to London, so that the knighting of the City mercer at Whitehall on July 24th, 1603, the day before the coronation, cannot have been a conspicuous event! Sir Baptist Hicks, no doubt, had for the honour that confident gratitude which is described as "a lively sense of favours to come." He had undoubtedly helped James, and other needy Scotsmen too, in a day when that form of investment was very speculative indeed. He sets forth the matter in his petition to the Privy Council in 1606, of which the following is a partial abstract:—

> "Considerations to move his Majesty and their Lordships to have a more special regard to Baptist Hicks for his debt due to him, than to any other creditor.
>
> "The debt that now remains due from the King to Baptist Hickes is between 16 and 17 thousand pounds, whereof there is above £6,000 in the account

of Sir John Fortescue. The said B. H. hath done to his Majesty many good and acceptable services before he came into England, not only in giving him large credit, but also in helping his Ambassadors and Ministers with money . . . All which his ready services and affection to serve his Majesty, his Majesty then graciously accepted, as by divers his letters written to the said B. H. doth appear . . . His Majesty of his own royal consideration, before he came into England, did allow consideration always to the said B. H. for forbearance when his Majesty failed of payment at his day, as sometimes he did . . . If his Majesty should deal so graciously with him for the debt now owing, the interest would arise to above £4,000."

The petition goes on to say that Baptist has not been "clamorous or importune," to complain that part of his daughters' marriage portions are still owing and he has to pay interest on the same; and finally he brings up the 1,400 yards of stuff left on his hands from the coronation.

"Fayre speakers and slow performers" is what he labels his lesser Scottish creditors in a letter to Michael, but it is certain that out of this tangled web of money-lending Sir Baptist did not eventually step forth the loser. He was fifty-two years of age at the time of James' accession, and his shrewd optimism had brought him to the point from whence the search for the final purpose of all this gathering together of wealth might begin—a final purpose, an end, which must be adequate to justify the means employed to gain it. The heart and will to gain it were there; the man was one of those, unique, incalculable, to whom accomplishment does seem to become a reality; and yet the end could be overtaken only along accepted paths, and it is certain that, when Baptist died at seventy-eight, he knew that it had eluded him. And if he left this

world without angry impatience at the mortality of men, it must have been with the other sense of the inconsequence of things; of the insignificance of the individual, of his happiness, of his usefulness—of the perplexity and confusion of it all. *But the effort was worth while.* And that, three hundred years later, is still as far as men have got. The effort must be staged among the sincerities of human life, and be vital, and be fragrant, and then, "Vanity" be it, but "there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that is his portion." That was Baptist's portion. It is quite impossible to doubt that any sense of the elusiveness of things ever made him feel that he had inherited the wind, ever made him come to any other genuine conclusion than that it was all tremendously worth while.

To a zest for life as keen as his was, the titles he earned, the palaces he built, the liberalities he practised, are but as the algebraic *xyz*, and only an exercised imagination can make a catalogue of them at all impressive.

1. 1609. He was made contractor for Crown lands, and between that date and 1612 was made Justice of the Peace for Middlesex.

1620. He sat as M.P. for Tavistock, and in the same year was created a baronet.

1624. He sat as M.P. for Tewkesbury, until 1628, when he was succeeded there by his nephew, Sir William Hicks, first baronet, whose heir, tenth in descent, the Hon. Michael Hicks-Beach, is member for the district to-day.

1625. He was made Deputy Lieutenant for Middlesex.

1628. He was raised to the Peerage by Charles I. under the title of Baron Hicks of Ilmington, in the County of Warwick, and Viscount Campden of Campden in the County of Gloucester (Ilmington and

Campden are adjoining parishes), with remainder to his son-in-law, Edward, Lord Noel, Baron Ridlington, in the county of Rutland.

2. It may have been at the time of his marriage that Baptist ceased to live over the mercery in Soper Lane, and took a house in Milk Street, in the Old Jewry, close to the Guildhall, in the parish of St. Mary Magdalene. In 1605 he had moved along the street into the parish of St. Laurence, Jewry, whose vestry meetings he attended regularly from 1605 to 1627. He was sometime churchwarden of St. Laurence, and the church records mention him continually. To the end of his life—indeed he died there—the house in Milk Street was the centre of his business activities. It is expressly mentioned as his residence in two mortgages of land to him, dated respectively 1620 and 1628.

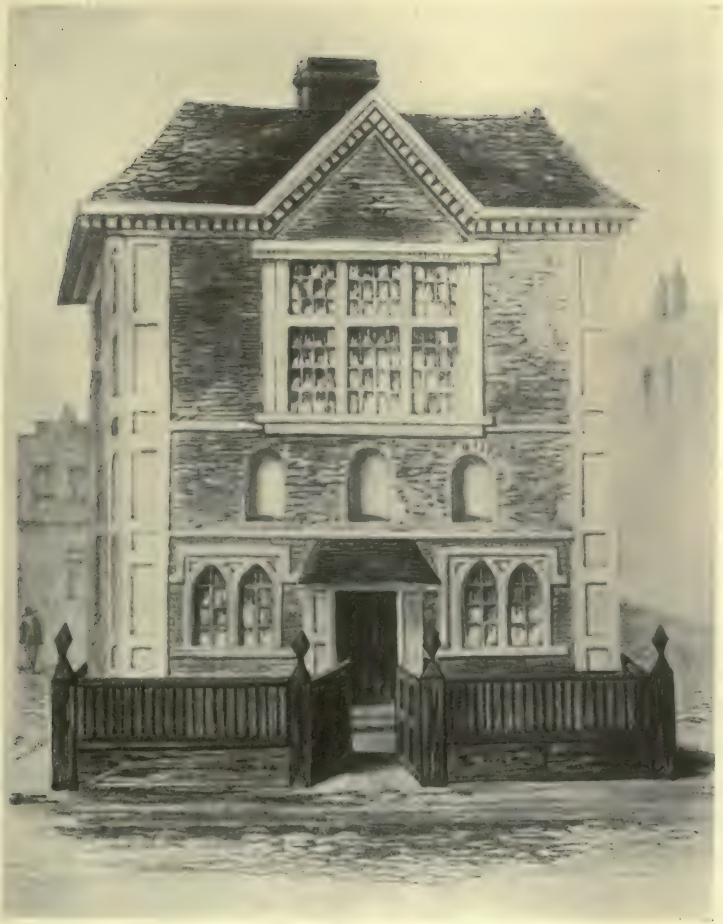
In 1600 (and long before that, probably) Lady Hicks was making known her wish for a house in the country. At the end of a letter (February 28th) to Michael, which is all about a debt due from one John Littleton, Baptist says, "I pray you comend me hartely to my sister, and I wishe that my wife were as well placed in the country as she is, but it avayles not to wishe it." In 1610 he was evidently not feeling the pinch of poverty so severely. In the county of his yeomen ancestors he bought the manors of "Campden, Chipping Campden, Broade Campden and Berington," from Sir William Bond, Sir William Withens and others, as the deed (dated March 14th, 1610) sets forth; and he began to build in Campden, to the south of the church, the house over whose remains all Cotswold literature of to-day grows eloquent. Eight acres the buildings covered, and about £100,000 in the money of to-day the frontage of the house alone is reported to have cost. In 1613 he bought the living of Campden, and year by year, as the Close Rolls show, he added, field by field, to the size of his property.

In 1612 he won at cards from Sir Walter Cope (so the story has survived, and no deed of purchase is in the Close Rolls) a few acres of land in rural Kensington, on the hill behind the parish church. Here he built another house for himself, which was in the country and yet not so far from the City as the top of the Cotswolds. This mansion he called Campden House, and it has given the name to the hill itself, and to all the region that lies behind St. Mary Abbotts, Kensington. He added to the property in 1616 by considerable purchases, from one Robert Horseman, of the Manor House, Kensington, and divers closes. A description of Campden House is in Faulkner's "Kensington." It remained in the Noel family until 1720. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was a famous ladies' school. Then a Mr. Wolley bought it to hold a collection of Renaissance furniture. It was burnt out in 1862, and a long litigation took place with Insurance Offices. It was to a certain extent restored, and, although shorn of all its country-house adjuncts and divided into two houses, one called Little Campden House, and the other Lancaster Lodge, it still retains a seventeenth-century dignity behind its garden wall in the midst of a wilderness of red-brick flats and houses on the top of the hill.

3. In Stow's "Survey of London" (edition 1633) is "A brief Remembrance of such noble and charitable deeds as have been done by the Right Honourable Baptist, Lord Hicks, Viscount Campden, as well in his life as at his death; Recorded to the Glory of God, his owne honour and good example of others."

Here is a still briefer summary of the benefactions:—

To the Mercers' Company, besides other large gifts, he gave half the great tithes of the parish of Woodhouse in Northumberland for founding scholarships from St. Paul's School at Trinity College, Cambridge. (It seems probable that he had been educated at the school).



HICKS HALL.

The original Clerkenwell Sessions House.

(*From a water-colour drawing.*)

To the County of Middlesex, in 1612, he gave a Sessions House. Up to that time the Middlesex justices held their Sessions at the Castle (or Windmill) Tavern, just outside Smithfield Bars in St. John's Street, Clerkenwell. Hicks Hall, as it was called, was built in the middle of St. John's Street (which is very wide), and just at the point where St. John's Lane runs into it. The Hall remained in use until 1782, when the present Sessions House on Clerkenwell Green* was opened, and the old one was pulled down. The fine dining-room chimney-piece, with its centre inscription, was preserved, and is now in the magistrates' room in the new building. In the same room is hanging a water-colour sketch of the old hall; but the portrait of Sir Baptist by Paul Van Somer is now in the Sessions House at Westminster. There is a plan of Hicks Hall in the Guildhall library, which shows that it had an oval central hall, and underneath this hall must have been the oval room, depicted in the last plate of Hogarth's "Progress of Cruelty," where the bodies of criminals were publicly dissected. In Vols. II. and IV. of the "Middlesex County Records," edited by Mr. J. C. Jeaffreson, a detailed account of the history of the hall will be found. Clerkenwell has immortalised its benefactor in its own way. In the narrow slum called St. John's Lane, which leads from the site of Hicks Hall to the old gateway of the priory of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, is a gin palace called the *Baptist's Head.* It was once the house of Sir Thomas Forster who died in 1612. It has been a public-house, with its present name, ever since.

To the town of Campden Sir Baptist gave a market house. He also built and endowed twelve almshouses. "For pure craftsmanship in stone masonry it would be hard to find anything finer than these noble almshouses," says one of the many modern Cotswold books. For

* Soon to be abandoned also.

Campden Church he did much. He roofed the chancel, built a gallery, made a window, walled the churchyard, and gave a pulpit cloth and cushion, a 'brass faulcon,' two communion cups, and a bell which is now No. 5 in the peal and has the inscription: "Ex dono dignissimi Baptiste Hicks Militis 1618." He left a sum of money to the poor of Campden by will, and bought the impropriation of Winfrith in Dorsetshire to add to the value of the living.

To the Parish of Kensington Lord Campden gave a sum of money which, with money willed by his widow, now forms the 'Campden Charities,' and brings in an income of about £3,000 a year. He also put a window into the chancel of the church.

To the Church of St. Laurence, Jewry, he gave, with other benefactions, a stained-glass window, which was destroyed in the Great Fire, and, in fact, to all churches of any parishes where he had property (and they were many) he gave generously.

Baptist Hicks was buried in Campden Church, and his monument is there. It bears this inscription:—

> To the Memorie of her deare and deceased husband Baptist Lord Hicks, Viscount Campden, borne of a worthy family in the citie of London; who by the blessing of God on his ingenious endeavours, arose to an ample estate, and to the foresaid degrees of honour: and out of those blessings disposed to Charitale uses, in his lifetime, a large portion to the value of 10,000£.* Who lived religiously, vertuously and generously, to the age of 78 years: and died octo: 18: 1627.

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* The "Episcopal Report" of the Gloucester Diocese in 1750 says that Sir Baptist Hickes was a Turkish merchant, and he vowed, when taken by the Moors, to lay out £500 in charity if he ever returned to England. In a few hours afterwards he was retaken and he laid out in charity over £10,000. If this is true (but it was written 150 years afterwards) it is but a proof of what an incomplete history of Sir Baptist's activities this chapter is.

ELIZABETH VISCOUNTESSE CAMPDEN,
his deare consort, borne of the family of the Mays, lived his life in all peace and contentment, the space of 45 years, leaving issue by her said lord and husband two daughters Juliana married to Edward Lord Noel now Viscount Campden, and Mary maried to sir Charles Morison knt and Baronett, hath piously and carefully caused this monument to be erected as a testimonie of their mutuall love, where both their bodies may rest together in expectation of a joyfull resurrection.

The inscriptions say much, and say it soberly, but the two effigies beneath the overwhelming marble canopy upheld by twelve marble pillars say vastly more. Here are the figures of two idealists—they are both that: their sculptured hands betray it no less than their faces, and they have the aspect of divine survival. Serenely they lie, with regal bearing: they are the fulfilment of their world. No other force than theirs has dared to dominate this grey hill town: their influence still sways it, for such lives are an inheritance, are permanent. There is stuff in the legend of these two, and over the locked iron gates of the chapel, beneath the glowing colours of their 'arms,' *Nondum Metam* in large lettering meets the eye of those who pass by that way.

Outside the church, all along the south side of the churchyard, is a high grey wall, and in the midst of it, just opposite the chancel porch, is a built-up doorway. From the one to the other a pathway once stretched, and through the postern, from their palace on the other side of it, my lord and my lady used to come to worship. On the other side of the doorway to-day is the glimpse, in an enchanted hour, of the barrier which ends all experience, of the starting point of a greater adventure —all that—but there is no actual palace any longer. The tiny fragment that remains of the great façade stands on the edge of the wide terrace, sentinel over glory departed—glory of which the details of its stonework

and the generous dimensions of the grass terrace speak graphically; and even were the fragment perished, those more considerable remnants, the summer-houses which flank the terrace, would be sufficiently eloquent of all that once was; it needs but to consider their many chambers, their carved pillars and friezes, and then to remember what a mere adjunct a summer-house is. Below the great terrace, to right and left, are two more terraces, and a fourth encloses, on the further side, a sunken level, now an orchard, but once part of the garden, "without which," as Francis Bacon said, "buildings and palaces are but gross handiworks." This garden must have been as princely as any Bacon could have desired. Terrace below terrace there is; then comes a brook which, doubtless, had its part in the scheme. Beyond the brook the ground rises again and the horizon is a narrow one. On the other side of the house, next the church, is a space which legend calls the Italian Garden, and the remains of a courtyard, with arched gateway and lodges. This gateway overtops the main street of Campden which goes downhill from it. On the right are Baptist's almshouses; on the left is an inhabited house of considerable dimensions, once part of Baptist's stables; and so the street goes on into the heart of the town, where it gets wider, and there, in the middle of it — a drowsy, empty street to-day—is the market house which Baptist built.

"A Defiance to Death being the Funebrious Commemoration of the Right Honourable Baptist Lord Hickes, Viscount Campden late deceased"—that is the title of a book which Mr. John Gaule, rector of Campden, published after his patron's death. At the sign of the *Blacke Beare* in St. Paul's Churchyard it was to be bought, the title-page says, and the contents consist of the funeral sermon Mr. Gaule preached in Campden Church on November 8th, 1629, and a number of elegies in verse, one of them being in the form of an

ONE OF THE SUMMER HOUSES THAT FLANK THE TERRACE

THE MARKET HOUSE OF CAMPDEN.

acrostic. They all belong to a taste which has had its day: as a survival of that they are of interest. The Dedication of the book is to "the truly honourable and religious Ladies, Julian Viscountess Camden, and Mary Lady Cooper." For Baptist was survived by no son: he founded no family. These two women were all that were left of five children who are entered in the St. Mary Magdalene register of christenings.

1586 Julian Hicke was baptised, Julii tricesimo primo.
1587 Marie Hicke was baptized, Februarii undecimo.
1590 Arthur Hicke was baptized, Octobris quarto.
1592 Elizabeth Hicke was baptized Septembris vicesimo quarto.
1594 Baptist Hicke was baptized, Februarii nono.

It was in accordance with all the rules of infant mortality of the day that the burial register should subsequently account for the majority of these offspring.

1596 Arthur Hicks was buried, Augusti vicesimo octavo.
1599 Elizabeth Hicks was buried, Septembris septimo.
Baptist Hicks was buried Octobris ondecimo.

CHAPTER VIII.

MICHAEL HICKS, SECRETARY TO WILLIAM CECIL, LORD BURGHLEY.

In 1828, after years of laborious plodding through thousands of documents, Dr. Nares, Regius Professor of History at Oxford, produced a ponderous "Life of Lord Burghley," which Macaulay (if that need condemn it) pronounced to be unreadable. But the truth is, of course, that, except to the student, the details of the long life of a statesman pure and simple cannot be anything but wearisome—dust and ashes in the telling is the tale of the weaving of the million strands of the web of power. The earliest life of Burghley is an anonymous one, and is printed in the "Desiderata Curiosa." At the end of the article on him in the "Dictionary of National Biography" is the remark that "a really satisfactory biography is still a desideratum," and this perhaps is what lately inspired Major Martin Hume to wrestle again with the stupendous subject. In his "Life of the Great Lord Burghley" he tries within the limit of five hundred pages to extricate the man from the policy, then to weld them together again and to make a summary. A review of the book which appeared in the *Standard* newspaper puts William Cecil into more concrete form still:—

> "It would not perhaps be quite true to say that nothing is remembered by the public of to-day about the greatest statesman of Elizabethan times but his nod; but it is certainly the fact that of all the crowd of sailors, soldiers, adventurers, courtiers, poets and thinkers who thronged the court of the Virgin Queen,

his figure is the most shadowy. According as the policy of Elizabeth is regarded as mean, vacillating, and heartless, only saved from shameful failure by the prowess of Hawkins and Drake, or as a very miracle of prudent statesmanship, so is the character of William Cecil defamed or extolled; but it is always the policy, not the man, which is blamed or praised.

"The almost universal neglect of his memory is, indeed, the best proof of his success in the course which he set himself throughout life. Cecil was a devotee of the *via media;* he had an unerring instinct for the line of least resistance; he was a past master of intellectual *jiu-jitsu.* Only on rare occasions did he set himself in direct opposition to the plans of the sovereign, or of the adviser for the moment in power. He would bend; but he would neither break nor be broken, and, like a steel spring of the finest temper, the further he was bent, the greater his resistance. He moves among the ruffling Court, a sober figure in a fur-trimmed gown, aping none of the extravagances of fashion, though consumed with the desire to be a great nobleman; turning none of the deft compliments which the age of euphemism—amid all its greatness—kept as part of its stock-in-trade; yet always and everywhere his hand can be traced, baffling the poor old Bishop of Aquila, Philip's Ambassador, and the more dangerous Guzman, hoodwinking de Foix, humouring, while he thwarted, the vanities and amativeness of the Queen and Leicester. With an adroitness too profound to be easily recognised, he held apart Philip and the Guise faction in France, and he brought about the Protestant League of Europe. He laid the train effectually fired by the heroes of the Armada struggle."

This is the master to whom Michael Hicks was servant, and who—pile word on word vainly—still

eludes the imagination. He himself explains himself to his son, and yet somehow the final word is not there. The Queen, on an occasion, had called him a "froward old fool," because unable to prevail with her at the moment he had said he would "for ten days go take physic"! He writes:—

> "My loving son Sir Robert Cecil Knt, I do hold and will always, this course in such matters as I differ in opinion from her Majesty. As long as I may be allowed to give advice I will not change my opinion by affirming the contrary, for that were to offend God, to Whom I am sworn first, but as a servant I will obey her Majesty's Command, and no wise contrary the same; presuming that she being God's chief minister here, it shall be God's will to have her commandments obeyed—after that I have performed my duty as a Councillor, and shall in my heart wish her commandments to have such good success as she intendeth. You see I am a mixture of divinity and policy; preferring in policy her Majesty before all others on earth, and in divinity the King of Heaven above all."

This is his *Apologia pro vita sua*, but it gives no clear-cut edges to the great shade behind the Throne—in whose shadow lived Michael Hicks, himself only to be guessed at in the midst of a wilderness of ink and paper. Surmises, misgivings, half-intuitions, all the dim instincts of a moral borderland, wake to an ephemeral life in front of the portraits of the Lord Treasurer and his secretary. A remembrance of the portraits of Burghley makes the half-smile with which Michael Hicks, from his wall at Witcombe, listens to Gloucestershire twentieth-century conversation quite translatable; and, transversely, there is no more curious comment on William Cecil extant, than this face in its frame against its red background. It is the face of one who has listened to little purpose at doors all his life, "peeping now and then at the presence

LORD BURGHLEY.

(From a picture by Mark Gerard in possession of the Hon. Mrs. Trollope.)

door, but never presuming to peer into the privy chamber," as he says in a letter to his friend, Mr. Manners, excusing himself that he has no matters of great novelty to communicate.

The first fourteen or fifteen years of Michael's life were spent in Cheapside, in the frame house at the street corner. It is possible that he went to St. Paul's School close by, but the register of scholars is incomplete before 1748. His father died when he was fourteen, and, immediately, was the accession of Elizabeth, and the enthusiastic beginning of a new era for the nation. Michael would have been in the Cheapside crowd which acclaimed the woman of twenty-five, with her long face, her intelligent eyes, and her red-gold hair. The coronation and its attendant ceremonies meant much business for the City mercers, and the widow Juliana was not one who would let opportunities slide. It was in the *White Bear*, over the sale of silks to the court gentlemen, that those acquaintances were made which were useful, when it came in later years, to the matter of starting her eldest son in life. Next, there was Juliana's move from the rooms over the shop to the house on St. Peter's Hill and its greater luxuries, a life in which there was more diversity and more colour, and presently a second marriage.

Anthony Penn was too colourless in character to have failed to be anything but a perfectly amiable stepfather to the three boys. There is one letter from him to Michael, dated March, 1561, and endorsed "Too Mychael Hicke wth Mr. Blyth in Trini Colledg in Cambridg," which is of quite exemplary vapidity :—

> "Michael. I am glad to hear that both you apply your learning and profit very well therein. The book you wrote and sent to Mr. Osborn is very well liked and much commended of him and all others that have seen the same; the print whereof will be yours, and the continuance of your diligence must needs be to

your advancement; and your tutor Mr. Blith hath deserved by your forwardness great praise and commendation—to whom I and your friends are much bound for his care of you and the pains he hath taken in your bringing up. And thus with my thanks for your verses you sent me I wish you much increase of virtue and learning from London the first of March 1561 your loving Father Ant Penn."

The endorsement of this letter is a proof that Michael was at Trinity, as all the published accounts of him state, but the general admission register of the college does not go back beyond 1635, and it looks as if he did not take a degree, as his name does not appear on the registers of the university. His tutor, Mr. Blithe, was Fellow and Junior Dean in 1560.

After leaving college Michael was entered as a student at Lincoln's Inn. This was probably done (as was usual at the time) to give him a standing in London. In the books of the Inn his name occurs three times:—

Admission Register, Vol. I., p. 73.

1564-5 *March* 20 *Michael Hickes of London.*

Black Books, Vol. I., p. 361
(under Pensioners' Accounts).

1567-8 *Payments . . . £4 6s. 8d. to Mr. Hickes for victuals for many gentlemen of the Middle Temple who came here to dance the Port Revels with the gentlemen of this Inn (at the Pasification last before the Honourable Earl of Rutland).*

Black Books, Vol. I., p. 402.

1577 *February* 11 *Called to the Bar . . . Hickes . . .*

There is no evidence that Michael ever practised as a lawyer, but he began at once (under his mother's guidance at first we may be sure) that judicious system of investment of money, which, although it never made him the very rich man that his brother Baptist became, yet enabled him, before he died, to add a Norman castle to the lands his father had left him in Gloucestershire.

As early as 1565 there is an indenture in the Close Rolls by which Nicholas Beaumont of Coleoverton, co. Leicester esquire, mortgages to Mighell Hickes of Davies Inne in Holborn co. Middx. gent., an annuity of £40 going out of the manor of Coleoverton. There is no evidence that the capital for this investment was raised (as often, and quite openly in later years) from any suitor to my lord, for it is quite uncertain when it was that Michael was attached to Burghley's household—at first, for seven years, in a vague and insignificant capacity, and then as one of the two secretaries of the minister. Among the MSS. are the drafts of two letters to Burghley in Michael's handwriting, but, as drafts, they are undated. They are endorsed "lres to ye l. Trer by myself." They are immensely long, and Cecil must have been immensely bored with them, but they are an ingenuous revelation, and the first is given in its entirety:—

"May it please your good Lordship. I have now been attendant upon your lordship for the space of 8 years and upwards, of the which I have spent a twelvemonth and somewhat more in the place of one of your lp secretaries: during which latter time, your lp having often occasion to use me in services incident to the place, I observed sometimes, but of late especially, that your lp had a hard conceit of me, as of one that neither conceiveth with that dexterity, nor yet dispatcheth with that celerity as is required in the execution of that service. For the which cause, though not forbidden by your lp, yet have I forborne, to my great grief, to enter into your lp chamber, or to offer or to intermeddle in suits according to my accustomed manner. The alteration of which your lp good opinion once conceived of me (?) because I am afraid it may draw with it also some declination of your lp honourable favour to my irrecoverable discredit (which I trust I neither have or ever will deserve) I have

presumed under your lp favourable correction to offer unto your lp herein a plain and true declaration of the state of my case, committing both myself and it to your lp grave and gracious consideration.

"First, my very good L., I protest it was neither any benefit, or preferment which I might receive thereby, that moved me to desire to serve your lp, but only an ardent and zealous affection I had to be near about your lp; by the opportunity whereof I might increase my small knowledge and better my slender judgment.

"Secondly, albeit I desired to be in your lp presence by the occasion of my service, yet I never made suit for the place; albeit I do not but think, and also acknowledge it with my most dutiful thanks, that the good report given by some of me to your lp, did the rather move your lp, both to conceive the better of me, and to do me so special a favour.

"Thirdly, touching the errors and oversights committed by me, and noted at sundry times by your lp, (of the which I could call to my remembrance either all or the most part) I could, with your lp honourable favour and patience, though not altogether excuse them, yet in some sort qualify the imputations laid upon them.

"And, my very good l., in my good opinion, I think it a hard matter for a man of good pregnancy, and otherwise well qualified in such a multitude and multiplicity of causes, to keep stroke with the sharpness of your lp conceit—or with his pen that hath served so many years as your lp Secretary—except it please your lp to vouchsafe to allow unto him some reasonable time to acquaint himself with the course and sundry natures of your lp affairs.

"But, lastly and specially, my hope is wherein also consists my chiefest comfort, that, neither your lp hath noted, neither yet that it hath been informed to your lp, that I have behaved myself undutifully

towards your lp, or insolently towards suitors, either by careless neglecting, or a needless protracting or by any unjust and unhonest exacting for their dispatch; whereby I might give offence to them, bring slander to the place, or dishonour your lp.

"The consideration whereof, together with this, that my enabling to the place proceeded from your lp good opinion, and my calling to the same from your honourable favour (whereof I make mention, as well to acknowledge the deeper and straighter bond of my thankfulness towards your lp, as also, in some good 'congruency' as I think, to excuse or cover at the best my insufficiency) may give occasion to your lp to consider, that your lp hath rather been deceived in me than by me; and therefore, howsoever your lp good opinion touching ability shall cease and determine, yet I have not deserved to be deprived of the sweet comfort of your honourable favour.

"And therefore, I do in most humble and earnest manner, beseech your good lp to take my poor credit into your favourable protection; if not in regard to myself, yet in respect of my poor old mother, who, in her natural love and care, foretasting, and, peradventure, accounting of the profit and preferment that might befall me, by the example of others that have gone before me—when she shall find her expectation frustrate in both, it cannot but make a very deep impression of grief in her heart, and, with all hazard, the impairing of her love and withdrawing her good meaning from me; for that she will never be brought to think that this could ever have happened without some notable evil desert on my part towards your lp. The which to shun and avoid, if it shall please your lp of your honourable favour to make trial of me for some further time, employing me only in services of less difficulty and weight, and which may abide more leisurable dispatch, I hope I shall make myself fitter for your lp greater causes,

and therein acknowledge myself extraordinarily bound to your lp.

"But, if so be that your lp have conceived such a firm and settled opinion of my insufficiency, as that your lp thinks that I neither am, nor can be, made fit to discharge this service to your lp good liking and 'contention;' and that your lp have intention to make choice of another; yet, then at the least I humbly beseech your lp (which I trust your lp will not deny unto me) that I may continue and have access to your lp as heretofore I have had, as ordinary occasions shall offer; and that it will please your lp to use me sometimes in employment agreeable with that capacity and discretion which your lordship conceives to be in me; until I may apprehend some good occasion or honest colour (excuse?) to retire myself like a hurt deer out of the herd, and betake myself to some private life in the country, more answerable, I confess, with my unstirring disposition, than either the Court or public causes.

"But howsoever it shall please your lp to dispose of me, such is, and always hath been the reverent and zealous affection which I have borne to your lp, as I will continue a most faithful honest and dutiful servant towards your lp during your life.

"And so, praying to Almighty God to protect your lp with His mighty power and to direct your lp with His Holy Spirit, and to give you many happy and healthful years, to the good and comfort of her Majesty, and the good government of the commonwealth, I most humbly take my leave."

This servility is really rather attractive! Between his old mother's determined ambition for him, and Cecil's impatience with his obvious incompetence, poor Michael was indeed between the devil and the deep sea! Perhaps he was not quite so incompetent as it was Burghley's policy to let him believe—or, it is much

more likely that Burghley was far too pre-occupied to have any policy concerning him at all, and did not, as a matter of fact, find him of much duller edge than any other of his tools. At all events, for the time, it was all a black tragedy for Michael. My lord was evidently quite unmoved by the pathos of the lengthly appeal, and another had to be drawn up:—

"May it please your good L. having presumed to trouble your lp so lately with so long a letter, I will now only be bold to remember and renew to your lp my former request. For since it seems your lp is settled in opinion touching my inability for the discharge of this service, howsoever I may otherwise seem fit in my own fancy, or be 'enabled' in the judgment of any other; yet I wholly submit myself herein to your lp grave censure without any further allegation or argument.

"*Ingenium vultu stat que credit que tuo.* And albeit, haply (happely) I might, by means and meditation, through the facility of your lp honourable and inclinable nature, win from yr lp this undeserved favour; yet, in this prejudice of your lp conceit, whereby every day shall bring with it new occasions of dislike, as it were a mere folly in me to desire it. So, for my private respect or particular favour, to require a place of such publick service as this is, wherin want of knowledge, conceit, and quickness in him that is to execute it, may be prejudicial and hurtful to such a number and of all sorts of persons—to be served by a man of slow dispatch and of slender understanding, were a matter in my opinion both against reason and conscience. And therefore, myself being discovered in your lp wisdom to be such a one, I may not think myself hardly dealt withal by your lp to be put from it; albeit I cannot but think my fortune to be very hard that I ever entered into it. For, the case standing with me as it doth, except your lp shall have an

honourable regard to me, it cannot be avoided but that I shall grow into great contempt with men of my own coat, into obloquy and discredit with the world, and into a secret suspicion of some bad desert amongst my acquaintance and best friends. Whereupon must likewise needs ensue to myself these two grevious and bitter effects—*SHAME* and *SORROW*. In which extremity and perplexity, if I have recourse to myself only, I cannot find or bethink me of any other remedy, than of *SILENCE* to cover the one as I can, and of *PATIENCE* to digest the other as I may. So again, when I cast mine eye upon your lp honourable disposition" (and so on) . . . "And therefore my very honourable good Lrd I do once again most humbly and earnestly beseech your lp, not only to continue me in the number of those upon whom yr lp vouchsafeth your honourable favour, but also to continue me in some such service about your lp in ordinary suits, as I may have access to your lp in fit times and upon meet occasions: whereby the world may see that I am not altogether discarded, and, my fall being by degrees, and not all at once, may redound to my less discredit and disgrace. And this do I require, and with the greater confidence hope to obtain at your lp hands, for that I may boldly say (because I say it truly) that, how far short soever I come touching my sufficiency, of those that have served your lp in this place before, yet neither they, nor any that shall come after me, ever had, or shall have, truer heart and affection towards your lp, or a greater desire, or more earnest and careful endeavour to please your lp, than I had, or hope to hold during my life. And so, referring my case to your lp honourable consideration" . . . etc., etc.

The presumption is that the sole answer to this rigmarole of a profoundly anxious soul was a contemptuous form of the historical nod. At least no

other answer exists, nor does there exist any sort or kind of letter from Burghley to his secretary, and the fleeting glimpses we get of Michael in the Cecil papers are rare—amazingly rare when the mountainous mass of manuscript is considered; for in half the "affairs" (there were two secretaries), at least, Michael must have played his underling's part. In the Historical MSS. Commission Calendar of the Cecil papers the following are examples of entries where he is mentioned:—

1593. Sept. 10. M. Brandaye to Mr. Hicks one of the Secretaries of the Lord Treasurer, re warrant for conveyance of munition to Brittany.

1595. March 28. Earl of Oxford to Mr. Hicks re the custom of tin.

1597. Nov. 10. Hicks on the Committee touching monopolies.

1597. Nov. 15. Hicks on the Committee touching the subsidy.

After all it is of trivial bricks like these that the house of history is reared—it is no use being impatient with them. Michael's whole life, metaphorically, was that of the bricklayer's "labourer" handing the bricks to the master-hand which laid them. Yet the position must have had its more poignant moments too—there was intercourse sometimes to be had with agreeable rogues.

Among the domestic State papers is a series of twenty-one documents relating to one Denis O'Rowghane, an ex-priest, whom Sir John Perrot, when Lord Deputy of Ireland, had employed as a spy. O'Rowghane used to extort money from Papists by warrants on which he had forged Sir John Perrot's name. For this he was imprisoned by Sir John in Dublin Castle. When Sir William Fitzwylliams succeeded Perrot as Lord Deputy, O'Rowghane produced a letter purporting to be from Perrot to Philip of Spain, and offered to prove that he had been the bearer of it. The letter promised that Philip should be made master of England and Ireland if Perrot were allowed to keep Wales for himself! Fitzwylliams

sent the letter to Burghley in 1590. It was manifestly a forgery, and it was said that Fitzwylliams, had he wished, could have proved it to be so. A letter of commission was sent from the Privy Council to the Bishop of Meath and others directing them to take into their custody the body of Sir Denis Rowghane, priest, to examine him relative to his accusations against Sir John Perrot, and to transmit the result of their examinations and Rowghane himself over to England for further proceedings. One chamber of the double Gate-house of Westminster was used as the Bishop of London's prison for "clerks convict." Here the priest was locked up, and here, on a summer day, came Michael stepping importantly, a list of "Interrogatories" in his hand. Of the futility of the interview he writes thus to his master in a letter dated June 11th, 1690:—

> "He (O'Rowghane) is nothing abashed or dismayed with anything objected therein against him, but laughing oftentimes (as it were heartily) seems to have in derision the matter brought against him as vain and false, and relies much upon the incompetence both of the Commissioners and some of the deponents."

He relied also, it would seem, a good deal on his own epistolary eloquence. Two letters of his to Burghley are endorsed in the Treasurer's handwriting "a very vayn lre" and "a fryvoloss lre." There are other letters also, in which he says that he is most desirous to see the Queen herself personally, that he may confess all his wicked pretences against her. Of the end of the matter (as regards O'Rowghane himself) there is no record. Only the impression is left that in morals he was no worse than his betters, and that his Irish gaiety was rather attractive.

Mr. Francis Donce, keeper of the manuscripts in the British Museum, who catalogued the Lansdowne

papers in 1819, adds to one of them (dated 1609, eleven years after Burghley's death) a note to the effect that there is much to justify suspicions that neither Michael nor his two masters were altogether innocent on the score of corruption. The accusation is at once elusive and too arbitrary, because, while it is pretty plain that both Robert Cecil and Michael Hicks took bribes, there is no evidence in the Lansdowne letters that Burghley ever did. That he was silently cognisant of the fact that others could be bought, and were bought, is another matter. When Dean Nowell of St. Paul's wrote to ask good Mr. Hicks to do him a very small favour with my lord, my lord may never have known that a small token accompanied the request in the shape of an image of Edward VI. ("the Josias of Englande"); but that he was as blind as his son and his secretary hoped he was when a certain Dr. Tobie Mathew was translated from the deanery to the bishopric of Durham is not likely—it is very unlikely. Tobias Mathew, who was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, was the son of a John Mathew of Bristol (of Welsh lineage), who, perhaps, like many others, had only conformed to the new religion under pressure of the penal laws. Strype (in his "Annals") makes this inference because, after Tobias took orders in the Anglican Church, his relation, Archdeacon Calfhill of Colchester, wrote to Sir William Cecil that he was bound by all honest means to prefer his cousin Tobie as well in respect of his abilities as that he had followed his advice in entering "into the ministry" against the goodwill of his father and mother and other his able friends. Abilities which led him from preferment to preferment Mathew undoubtedly possessed. He was in turn Archdeacon of Wells, President of St. John's College Oxford, and Canon and then Dean of Christ Church; when he married a lady who was the daughter of William Barlow, Bishop of Chichester, and who was also the widow of Archbishop Parker's son. Mistress

Frances Mathew's lengthy epitaph in York Minster records that "A Bishop was her Father, An Archbishop her Father-in-law; She had four Bishops her Brethren;* And an Archbishop her husband"—for Archbishop of York is what Tobie Mathew became, notwithstanding that the Queen, never reconciled to clerical marriages, "stuck for a great while," says Strype, at the aspirant's wife and at his youth, before she would give him the deanery of Durham, which proved to be the first step towards it. Under the wing of the Earl of Leicester Mathew hung about the Court for some considerable time before the matter of the deanery was settled in his favour, and Strype declares that before he left, Burghley, "according to his grave and godly way, gave him much good counsel, for his sure and good behaviour of himself and discharging of his duty in that place." If the Lord Treasurer ever did have a garrulous lapse of this sort, he atoned for it when the bishopric of Durham became vacant some years later. That hour found Tobie Mathew at Court once more, and making use this time of Burghley's secretary for the furtherance of his wishes; and it is not far-fetched to wonder if a common Bristol ancestry was the means of bringing the two together. Three letters are extant, and the first of them, from Michael to the dean, is an answer to a letter accompanying one for Burghley, and which the Lord Treasurer seems to have perused with perfect stolidity and to have handed back to his secretary without a word:—

"Sir. Upon the receipt of your letter yesterday unto me with another directed to my Lord, because I knew I was to come to London I required your man to come to me for an answer sometime in the afternoon; which I do not understand that he did. But, because it were both an ungentle and an unjust part to receive a remembrance from you and not to

* Brothers-in-law.

remember you, I have sent my man herewith to let you understand that yesterday, in the forenoon, I delivered your letter to my Lord at a fit and convenient time. After the deliberate reading whereof his lp gave it to me again into mine own hand, whereby it is, and shall be, kept from the view of any common eye, or any eye besides. I doubt not but my L. doth well apprehend the matter therein contained, and doth so well conceive of the writer as there will not want his good furtherance as he hath already his good word. For myself, I am but as one that giveth aim, and can but wish well and hope well where preferment is so well deserved. I will not say better than some that I seek it not *Quia bonum opus, sed quia magnus bonos*, because comparisons are odious. Sir, I know you have a very honourable friend though not mentioned, yet I think meant in your letter; and of me you shall have a poor friend, ready to hold the candle to give light to the game whilst others play it. From my lodging in the Strand the first of Sept. 1594."

The dean replied to these somewhat groundless assurances with urgency; and the direct appeal to Burghley having failed, he responds cautiously to Michael's hint about an "honourable friend," but would rather confer with Michael in person than commit himself on paper. Michael, he remarks, shall have no cause to repent his part in the matter.

"Sir. You have by your letter satisfied me greatly every way, not only by signifying the delivery of mine so conveniently to his Lordship, and by promising to suppress the same from the sight of others, but by putting me in good hope withal that I need not despair of some effect. Howbeit, but that causes of this quality be not commonly accelerated over fast, I should be very sorry of your so speedy departure from the Court and so slow return: for that by the one I

cannot well speak with you myself, and by the other I shall happly, or rather unhappily, be disappointed of my most desire: because I think it is expected that I should not here or hereabout make so long abode as to be here at your coming back. Which to me is so much grief the more for, that when I am once gone homeward, I shall be far off to remember others of myself, and to be certified how things in time are like to work. Indeed, I know I have been, and am, exceedingly beholden and bounden to that honourable Councillor whom both you and I do mean; but I would not doubt to increase his favour and furtherance by your own good and friendly solicitation in case (*i.e.*, if only) I could confer with you before your journey or mine. To which purpose I would willingly resort to your Lodging were you not upon your way, as it were, already. Play how they will, I pray you look on at my request; shoot as they can, let me desire you to give aim. It may be, by our sight or their oversight, somewhat may be effected to serve the turn. But, *sine sic sine secus*, I am very glad to have taken this occasion to enter acquaintance with you; whereof I hope you shall have no cause to repent you. And I heartily request you that it may continue and increase on your part, as on mine I will by all means show myself desirous and ambitious to nourish it by all the good offices or pleasures I can do you. So if it be not my good hap any more to see you now, Sir I take a long leave of you, with a thousand thanks and commendations. Your ass. Lo. friend Tobie Matthew.* At the Court 1 Sept. 1594."

The sequel, a letter from Robert Cecil to Michael, shows that the "honourable Councillor" was Robert Cecil himself. He had been made a member of the Privy

* Like all other names of the period a letter more or less was immaterial.

Council in 1591, and at this time (1594) was doing the work of the Secretary of State, although the office itself was vacant because Essex, the favourite of the moment, wished it for his *protégé* Davison. Like most of Robert Cecil's hastily - expressed, hastily - written and often illegible letters, it does not entirely explain itself, and part of the letter has been deliberately mutilated. It is impossible not to make inferences when Robert is filled with so much anxiety that his particular interest in the affair shall be concealed from the Queen and others, and when he is obviously annoyed that it has come to his father's ears. It was a curious part that Michael had to play too—he was in the service of the father and in the confidence of the son. This was a small enough affair, of course, but it is symbolical of the whole political atmosphere.

> "Mr. Hycks, Things past are known unto you, and the . . . difficulties were; the more contentment now to r(emember) them being overcome. That which is to come I pray you take care of, which is especially that I may not be known to have any particular dealing in the matter, more than out of the conceit I had that his words justly entitled him to this Fortune. For it will disable me to do him or others pleasure hereafter if my access to her Majesty's ear, which now I so used as her Majesty cannot suspect that I looked to anything but her service—which as I profess and protest I did, and do most of anything in all my recommendations, so do I not deny to myself the liberty that when other things concur my friends are not nearest to me in my wishes and honest endeavours. The Party named . . . is surely a worthy man, and one of whom I ever will be loathe to be misjudged; and therefore do only take care of this, that with silence he be content to enjoy my true friendship, which will be most honourable for him and most agreeable to my humour. I hear that

divers about my L. do tell him of my furtherance in it. You can guess how it comes but by overhearing me at one time when I was most in danger, for otherwise more than that I cannot avoid their speeches to me. I have not discovered any particular divided affection, more than that I knew not where of such a pair any one might be elected and no choice to be discommended. I refer all other things to yourself, and if your discretion fail me I shall alter my faith, and so scribbling hastily I will send it you unread over, because I know it shall be buried. The eyes of men will now be more vigilant and their tongues more frequent in the exercise of discourse of his proceedings in the cradle of this fortune than it will ever be in any time after when he hath passed over three or four months discharging the place. Your friend

"Ro. Cecyll.

"If there be any secret cause to be dealt between us only I will have you used, but for common courtesies and ordinary occasions let him not make me a stranger for he is honest and of good nature, yet in all things I would make some difference."

There is no further reference to the matter in the Lansdowne MSS., but among the Cecil papers is a letter to Burghley from the firmly-seated Bishop of Durham. It is dated May 3rd, 1596. On the 14th of the preceding month, owing to Elizabeth's vacillations, Calais had fallen into the hands of the Spaniards, and her policy had received a severe blow. The bishop writes to the Lord Treasurer to say that the death of the late Lord Lieutenant of Durham and the loss of Calais "marvellously embolden the hearts of the bad effected."

"Might I entreat you for a warrant dormant for such impost as you usually allowed my predecessors, and myself last year? I should the seldomer trouble

you, and be the more beholden; not meaning thereby in anywise to lessen any officer's yearly fees accustomed. Wherein if I might obtain your favour, I would appoint one to attend to know your pleasure. At Mr. Maynard's hands or Mr. Hick's sometime this term or next."

A complete biography of the prelate cannot be given here, nor must anything be said about his still more vivacious and versatile son (of the same name) who was the "Alter Ego" of Francis Bacon, and who died a Jesuit. The Bishop's portrait hangs in the dining-room at Bishopsthorpe to-day, and he left a characteristic diary behind him, which has been edited by a Mr. Thomas Wilson. Accounts of him appear in various Yorkshire Histories, and a certain view of him is presented in the interesting "Life of Sir Tobie Matthew," his son, recently put together by Mr. Arnold Harris Matthew. He became Archbishop of York in 1606, and his "cheerful sharpness in discourse" is said to be attested by the story of his declaration that he exchanged his post for want of grace. He died in 1628, and is buried in the Lady Chapel of the Minster under a black and white marble monument.

He thus survived by many years William and Robert Cecil and Michael Hicks. Lord Burghley died in 1598. He had had bad health nearly all his life, and was a martyr to gout, for which defiant malady his friends were ever suggesting remedies. A stewed sow nine days old, and a hedgehog stewed in rosewater are among some recommendations of Lord Audley in 1553. Twenty years later Lord Shrewsbury confidently praises "oyle of staggs blood," a German doctor prescribes medicated slippers; and very many other nostrums are to be found in the Cecil and Lansdowne manuscripts. Allusions to Burghley's health are wedged into many a State document, and into the letters which his secretary received and wrote. "I dread in my soul it will overthrow him

in health," says his son to Michael, writing in his urgent, scrappy way about some bad news that had to be communicated in 1592. "Freshly pinned with the gout and unable to write," says Michael to Robert in 1596, after the news had come of the fall of Calais. A year later Michael was at his house of Ruckholt in Essex, and had a letter from one John Norton at Court.

> "My Lord is still lame of the gout and keepeth his chamber, but now are good hope of amendment if please God to send fair weather: whereof I wish you part for the better finishing of your bowling alley and your walks, I have sent you herewith the pattern you desire."

This letter is dated August 2nd, and a year and a day later, the Lord Treasurer, lying in his bed at Cecil House in the Strand, took leave of his children, prayed for the Queen, handed his will to his steward, turned his face to the wall, and died as he had lived, silent, self-controlled, dignified to the last.

CHAPTER IX.

MICHAEL HICKS AND ROBERT CECIL.

THE evidences of Robert Cecil's venality do not condemn him. Why should they? The traffic in offices was covertly recognised. "If Portington think to get it without cost he is I find deceived," said Robert to Michael in a letter of 1589 respecting an applicant for a small post. And in 1609, when Robert, Earl of Salisbury was Lord Treasurer, if he himself (and that is not certain) was beyond the need of adding to his income in such trivial ways, his secretary Michael was not; and Michael's family, it is evident, knew them as a perfectly justifiable source of revenue.

Sir Charles Moryson of Caishobery,* Hertfordshire, the writer of the two letters given here, was the first husband of Michael's niece, Mary, the second surviving daughter of his brother Baptist. The nephew-in-law writes thus:—

> "Worthy Uncle. If my leisure would let me, I acknowledge it would become me to begin with excuses before I make requests: for now you never receive my letters but upon occasion: you may think I would not write at all but for necessity: but such is my extreme haste as that I have no more time than in brief to acquaint you how there came one to me at my last being in London who desired to buy a place of you in the 'Lycens of Alienation Offices.' His payment will be good, and he will give as much as another if you have not promised it already. I

* Cassiobury.

desire to hear from you because I may put the suitor out of pain. Thus, remembering my service to my aunt, I rest yours in any service to Command

"C. MORYSON.

"I have been much laboured to move you in a great suit, but you shall not know it till I meet you. A thousand pounds he offers, I know you may easily do it."

Another letter quickly followed :—

"Good uncle. Fearing least my coming to London may be uncertain, and when I do come my stay not long, and the while I am there uncertain to find you; I have resolved out of all these doubts to send you these; whereby you may be both acquainted, as also a little digest the business before I meet you. Shortly these :—Meeting this summer with Mr. Doctor Wyatt one of the King's Chaplains, he began to ask me (being in familiar talk) how I thought he might get the Deanery of Salisbury; that being the place which of all the gifts in England he desired. To which I answered that although he had named many great friends, yet, *Sacra pecunia cuncta*, and he was as well to pay as to pray. Whereupon the consultation grew to this, that he indeed did desire, having placed himself in the country, to use some friend which might effect the premises; he not to be troubled. Then did I tell him how I thought I might persuade you to deal for him, but I did think it would be a suit of great trouble, as, by so much, the more charge. To which he replied, I will give him a thousand pounds for his pains so I may have it. Now if you can do it I will bring him to you sometime at London, when you may speak of more particulars. Thus, wishing all happiness to your motion, which I think you may bring to pass, I rest,

with remembrance of all respects to my worthy aunt, your very loving nephew to be commanded

"C. MORRISON.

"Mr. Doctor Gurdon is now possessed of the place, but is not likely to continue by reason of his years."

These letters are both dated October, 1609, and there is virtuous satisfaction in recording that Dean Gurdon lived for ten years after Sir Charles so confidently disposed of him, and that when the place had to be filled up it was given to John Williams, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln and Archbishop of York.

These evidences of barter of places (and there are others just as positive) make one inclined to suspect motives behind the simplest actions, but after all there are numbers of letters which seem to say that Michael was often content to be a kind intermediary without thought of advantage. He was asked to intermeddle in very varied matters.

Doctor John Bull* pray shim to use his influence to change his name "in favour" of his child; unaware that it would become famous!

Mr. Vincent Skynner writes urgently to Michael about a Doctor Bright who has invented the art of shorthand and who desires some "effectual fruit of his labour," and thinks there should be no difficulty in obtaining it considering how some other States encourage their own people and reward inventors. Mr. Skynner himself thinks it a great matter to put so much into so small a compass and to be able to take a speech from any man's mouth as he delivers it; he encloses the *Epistle to Titus* in shorthand as an example, and it certainly looks, to the uninitiated, precisely like the shorthand of to-day. Yet it is likely enough that Dr. Bright went to his grave unrewarded.

The Cecil household made use of Michael too. He intercedes, with many excruciating puns, on behalf of a

* See Dictionary of National Biography.

musician named Oxford who had had the temerity to marry without leave, and when Lord Salisbury was at last made Lord Treasurer, he became ambassador in many causes!

"Mr. Gerrard thinks your Lordship will now have a gentleman of your horse. If your Lordship shall think him meet for the place, he will accept it with his most humble thanks, and seek no further, and serve your Lordship with all duty, diligence, and trustiness.

"White, your lordship's cook, humbly prays your lordship to bestow on him the place of the cook for the Star Chamber, which belongs to your lordship to give. He will acknowledge it as an honourable favour, and hopes to discharge it very sufficiently without any hindrance to your lordship's service otherwise.

"The late Lord Treasurer bestowed on his steward the writing and keeping of the book of Imposts of wines. If it please your Lordship to bestow the place on your lordship's steward now, he shall be much bound to you for your favour in it, and I think can very sufficiently discharge it.

"Mathew Davies (sometimes my man for XII. years whilst I served my Lord your Lordship's father, and for these 3 or 4 years a Messenger of the Chamber) very earnestly besought me (which I have very unwillingly yielded unto) to move your Lordship, that whereas your lordship is to appoint one to be your messenger, that it would please your lordship to grant it to him. If your lordship shall think him worthy, or if it please your lordship to bestow it upon any of your own servants (that shall not execute it) he will give him good contentation for it.

"This is written but to give your lordship overture of their desires, which in modesty they are backward to do for themselves."

"By whose benefit I am here," writes a certain William Beecher, in 1606, from Paris to Michael; and discharges his debt of gratitude by a long letter of gossip about the Court of Henry IV. with apologies that he has not news to send of a more important kind to one "who has been so long trained in the forge of our English affairs."

"But immediately after my coming happened that short broil of Sedan, since the composing whereof, the king (though he were never thought greatly disposed to enter into new troubles) hath been observed to be more averse than before from those actions which might engage him in foreign hostility; as having retired his own pieces and thereby secured his quiet at home. This hath made him fall back into his pleasures and delights more resolutely, though with a more uncertain and disdainful appetite as made weak by years. So as the news of this Court are the King's Loves and change of Mistresses, which some compare with the practice of Lewis the XI., who, growing old, because he would maintain himself in talk and reputation, did nought but change his officers and many times cut off their heads; which the King doth more plausibly by changing his mistresses. Among the rest, after many treaties, they say he is fallen in agreement with the gentlewoman that was in England with Madame de Beaumont, whom some call Mademoiselle de L'Ambassade, and that he is to give her 30,000 crowns and a pension of 4000$^{\overline{00}}$ a year. And that which more confirms the matter is that immediately Monsieur de Beaumont is nominated Ambassador to Rome, though the other's time comes not yet out this twelvemonth. . . . Here was lately, upon very slight occasion, a great quarrel between the Prince of Condé and the D. of Nevers; the prince coming to knock at the Queen's cabinet, where the Duke was before,

was jested at by the Duke, who protesteth that he knew him not. The other next day challenged him the field but they were both taken in the field by the King's order, who made them immediately friends. They say he told the Prince that he must not be so light in his actions, though this in him were pardonable, as proceeding from courage, and that he had rather see him dead than to hear that he were one that would endure injuries: though afterwards he made a jest and scoff of their quarrel somewhat to their discontent. And indeed they who do otherwise admire him for his wisdom do tax him for a little incontinency of his tongue."

Middle-class British William Beecher proses thus about the old age of Henry de Navarre. Michael Hicks can hardly have needed the letter of the good William to inform him at this time of day that Henry was amorous and free of tongue! For in 1606 the day was over, or far spent, for all the chief actors of the European drama of the sixteenth century. Elizabeth was dead, Philip II. was dead, the House of Valois was extinct, Navarre was near his death too. On all their fevered ambitions, policies and deeds Time's cooling hand was already laid. Burghley, of course, was dead, and Robert Cecil also was soon to lay down the reins from his weary hands.

Robert Cecil's overmastering weariness at the end of life marks the whole difference in temperament between father and son. The house of Cecil had for ambition the building up of itself on firm foundations—that passion swayed Robert as strongly as it had ruled Burghley himself, and with it he had inherited the desire for clean hands withal. "'Tis a great task to prove one's honesty and yet not mar one's fortune. . . . I am pushed from the shore of comfort," says Robert in a letter to Sir James Harrington, which is quoted in Burke's "Peerage." "My life full of cares and

SIR ROBERT CECIL.

(From a picture at Hatfield House.)

miseries desireth to be dissolved," was his tale on his death-bed. Perpetual consciousness of the 'means' stole from him all pleasure in the 'end.' Yet he would forego neither the one nor the other. His father, without losing sight of either, had the sublime talent of the deaf ear when they clashed too thunderously. Robert's self-consciousness meant a life of perpetual tension for him, and it had its physical cause. He had a slight curvature of the spine and was under middle height, and he was intensely sensitive about the deformity. In a scurrilous lampoon of the day his "wry neck, crooked back, and splay foot" are, of course, exaggerated; but his cousin Francis Bacon wrote a cruel essay which gives a certain view of him perfectly. "Deformed persons are commonly even with nature, for, as nature hath done ill by them, so do they by nature, being, for the most part (as the Scripture saith) void of natural affection, and so they have their revenge on nature. Certainly there is a consent between the body and the mind, and where nature erreth in the one she ventureth in the other—*Ubi peccat in uno, periclitatur in altero.* . . . Who never hath anything fixed in his person that doth induce contempt, hath also a perpetual spur in himself to rescue and deliver himself from scorn; therefore all deformed persons are extreme bold. First, as in their own defence, as being exposed to scorn . . . they will, if they be of spirit, seek to free themselves from scorn, which must be either by virtue or malice; therefore, let it not be marvelled if sometime they prove excellent persons. . . ."

Thus did Francis Bacon seek to get his knife into his inscrutable cousin. No living soul ever knew if he succeeded. The legend is that Robert Cecil never had a friend—"*particeps curarum*," a partner in care. In any case the office was not filled by Michael Hicks. Where intercourse was close and frequent, if not daily, letters are not of the first value; but these that exist show that the often jocular intercourse of youth stiffened

into a strange formality, and not into friendship with its magnanimity and equality. The failure was not necessarily Michael's. If Robert Cecil found himself baulked by compliance, by what Emerson calls "a mush of concession," when he looked for furtherance or at least resistance, it is also true that the only way to have a friend is to be one. The friendship about which essays are written and poems are made was not between these two. Yet, at first sight, all the appearances of it are there. There is, for instance, a letter of thanks for some books Robert had asked to have sent him in 1589. It was the year of the murder of Henry III. of France. Henry had betrayed Catholicism in the previous year by the murder of the Guises, Duke and Cardinal. Catholic France had burst into insurrection, Henry was obliged to take refuge in the camp of the Protestant King of Navarre; the two kings had marched on Paris, and, while lying beneath its walls, Henry, the last of the Valois, was murdered by a monk named Jacques Clement. Navarre at once assumed the title of Henry IV., and similarity of policy made it necessary for Elizabeth to help him in his ambiguous position. Of all this Robert gossips for gossip's sake to a familiar soul:—

> "Our news is here from France good, for Mylls hath been with Gourden that is governor of Calais; who wept most bitterly for the death of his king (but) standeth now firm to this successor; and where the Queen offered to recommend him to the King of Navarre's favour, he answered bravely that he would require no foreign recommendation, but would, as he had deserved regard of the late King dead, so recover this Prince's favour by his own merit; promising ever firmly to hold this town at his Majesty's denotion. The camp lieth still afore Paris, and acknowledgeth this king for their sovereign, being the bravest company of soldiers together that ever France had;

only wanting pay; which the queen will, or might, help them with.

"The King of Navarre hath under his hand and seal, vowed no way to change any religion; only reserving to him and his, as before, free profession.

"This Mylls you know was towards Randall (?) He brings word that of 6 orders of Friars 5 (or 8 ?) in every house had vowed by Sacrament to do this villany. In Paris they make bonfires for the act; but it cannot long hold out."

There is vitality in this unnecessary outpouring of news to an unimportant person, but Michael laboured too much to return answers to Sir Robert's letters which should pleasure Sir Robert. Cecil is not to be blamed if, as life went on, he got tired of a triteness that was not always even sincere. In the matter, for instance, of the Secretaryship of State which he ardently desired, he found his father's amanuensis too anxious to assure him that all would be as he wished, and he sends answer:—

"I thank you for your letter but I hardly can imagine the fortune so good, because my Lord writ to me yesternight, which to-day I received by Charl (?) that he heard no more of my matter yet."

Michael was evidently not in my lord's confidence, and had been drawing on his kindly imagination, for this letter is dated March 10th, 1590, and it was not until five years later that Cecil got the office. Two other letters on the matter survive of the many Michael must have had.

"If you can conjecture by Mr. Lake's being with my Lord, or my Lord's speech to him, whether my Lord had been thinking of Secretaries or no, or speaking with the Queen, seeing I hear nothing, I pray you answer my desire to write to me."

Another letter is in a different key:—

"Immediately your bowling games be ended send me word pray you of the Election, Creation, suspension or confusion (of) her Majesty's principal Secretary. Deliver my Lord this letter soon when he comes from the Queen for it requires no haste."

This last, which is undated, is signed not only by "Ro: Cecyll," but by "Ely: Cecill," too; so it cannot have been written after 1591, for Robert's wife, Elizabeth, the daughter of Lord Cobham, died in that year after giving birth to a son. In a message of "love and service" to Lord Cobham, sent through Michael in the previous year, Robert says, "I hope to be the cause that his daughter shall make my lady a grandmother." And that Michael was the customary channel for these domestic confidences is quite clear. There was nothing about the Cecil family, its quarrels and its money matters, that he did not know. When Burghley died, the question of the wardship of his three granddaughters, the daughters of Lord Oxford, who had deserted their mother and now had married again, became a burning question. Their grandfather had made provision for them, but Thomas Cecil, who had been left no jewels, was in a mood to make difficulties, and then there seem to have been all the hackneyed disputes about personal possessions. Robert is weary of it all, he says, and only anxious that his nieces be not kidnapped.

"I thank you for your letter and for your care. As for my Lord of Oxford's claim, if Mr. Bellot do not turn him to us we shall do well enough; and above all things we desire that he do say, though not swear, that such charge was given him by 'Parroll;' which Mr. Maynard shall witness.

"In the doctor's cavil to defeat them of their portion, God knoweth I never intend it, but be you sure my brother thinks so hardly to have none of the Jewels, as I fear me he will stand now upon all

advantages. But I will never consent in such a kind to break my father's testament.

"For my private things at Theobald's, good Mr. Hycks end them, for I am weary of the noise of such beggarly things as they are and will be when they are best (I commit all to you).

"Tell Mr. Bellot if the Earl of Oxford desire the custody he cannot have them of anybody. For if he look upon the deeds whereby my Lord hath conveyed them their lands, he shall find that, for default of issue, their land comes to the Heirs of his body. Now whether he that never gave them grant (and) hath a second wife and another child be a fit guardian, consider you. If once my Lady Redford were come to town he would quickly conclude. I wish Mr. Bellot to have a good care they be not stolen away by his means: I would they had some honest man there while Mr. Bellot's eye is absent from them. When you are there I pray you take order with my wardroper that any stuff they want, or anything else, may be given them.

"On Monday night I shall be at London, but I pray you do not come from Theobald's without some end. I have written out my eyes to-day and therefore farewell. Your loving friend

"Ro: Cecyll."

Theobald's, in Hertfordshire, had been settled on Robert Cecil, while to the elder brother, Thomas (made Earl of Burghley by the Queen on the occasion of his father's funeral), went the magnificent Burghley House by Stamford town, Wimbledon House, and Cecil House in the Strand. Robert found Theobald's too large for his means, and he entered into negotiations for a house at Harrow.

"I have nothing to say to Theobalds but that I wish it less. The 'Garner' would be sold; speak to

Mr. Amuas and tell him I would fain know the certainty of the lease about Harrow Hill."

But Theobald's remained in Robert's possession until 1607, when James I. took a fancy to it and offered him Hatfield in exchange. Lord Salisbury was not able to refuse, and he at once set to work and, with the architect, Robert Limminge, began to plan and construct Hatfield House as it stands to-day. He had not the passion for a garden that swayed his father, who both at Burghley and Theobald's had made gardens glorious; but the garden at Hatfield, as part of the whole, would not be out of his thoughts, and the vines for which Michael took thought in 1609 may be at Hatfield still.

"Having been lately at Sir Edward Sulyard's, and finding that his grapes being ripe (especially the white) were in my opinion as good as ever I tasted of for the relish and sweetness, I prayed him to send some to your Lordship to taste of, to the end that if you liked of them you might have some grafts of the same vine. But he told me that if your Lordship do like of them, he will give you half a dozen roots to set, which he saith are far better to take, and will bear in 2 years where the other will not bear in 3 or 4. Besides, he will give your Lordship two Nectarin plum trees of several kinds when the time of the year is to plant; and anything else he hath in his garden or orchard."

Michael was rather officious with his presents, and it is plain that more than once he had been severely snubbed. Yet as late as 1608 he is not discouraged.

"May it please your Lordship, I have forborne for some years past to present your Lordship (amongst others who make acknowledgment how much they are bound to your Lordship) with any Token, according to the use of this time. It pleased you to say that it was needless betwixt your Lordship and me,

as a matter that did make a greater diminution of my state than an addition to yours. Nevertheless, lighting by chance, and at so fit a time as this is, upon this poor piece of plate, which I found to serve for 3 uses more than it makes show for, I did presume your Lordship would be pleased to accept of it; and although you should never have need to use it, yet that you would esteem it for the uses sake than of a thing of greater value. It comes accompanied with the heartiest wishes both of health and happiness to your Lordship this year and many, from him, who in affection is faithfully devoted, and in duty and service (with the meanest of your servants) always most willing and ready."

Apricots from his house at Ruckholt Michael was evidently always allowed to send. There are several allusions to them, and in July, 1603, he reports that they "begin somewhat to draw to ripening colour." In August of the same year he says:—

"Because it pleased you to thank me for the apricots I sent you, which were the first, now I send you the last, and but a few, having lost many of my small number with pecking of birds and earwigs. I have a heart to send you things of value, but you have often said it is not the measure of your honourable favour towards me, nor of my love and affection towards you."

Judging by results, the measure of Cecil's honourable favour towards Michael was not very tremendous. He was not advanced to any office. He remained secretary always. This may, of course, have been because he had become far too useful to be spared, and besides, he never seems to have asked for anything of an ambitious nature, or for anything that could not be held together with the secretaryship. It is not quite clear what a "wardship" was, but Cecil refused him that several times. In 1603 he also refused him his "stewardship,"

although it is plain that Michael had been acting as agent and steward; and apparently he was to continue to do the work while my Lord of Devonshire was to hold the office.

> "For your money, this note will fetch it. For your Deputation, I will sign it when it is brought. But for my Stewardship I have given it to my Lord of Devonshire, and with condition not to put out you. Believe it you are under one who I know loves me and mine; in which I will never be short of him, though he be taller than I am."

In the same year (1603), however, Michael was made Receiver-General of the counties of Middlesex, Hertford, Essex and the city of London. There is no mention of it in the letters, but the warrant is among the State papers, and in June of the following year there is the grant of the same to John Davy "on surrender of Michael Hicks." Possibly Michael hoped to get something better, and forgot that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"; a letter of Cecil's dated 1604 tells him that the importunities of others are so great that he cannot "this time" fulfil his request.

Great prizes for Michael Hicks there were not, but amenities by the way there were plenty; the letters are strewn with mention of them. A scrivener writes, at Cecil's command, he says, about a little house at Joy Bridge in the Strand which Michael is to have either for his own use or for disposal; Lord Cobham, Robert Cecil's father-in-law, promised to give Michael his coach, and Michael writes to remind his lordship's steward about it; Cecil sends a hawk and promises some doe venison (buck venison, he says plainly, he wants for others). But what Michael, as the result of his connection with the Cecils, father and son, must have valued most was the fact that it landed him at once in the inner circle of the Court. Courts have their intangible magnetism which philosophy derides in vain;

and Elizabeth's Court, above any, in English history at all events, must have been a place where life really vibrated, and where it was extraordinarily interesting. There never had been and there never will be another Elizabeth Tudor. Greater than any of her great ministers, harsh in voice, impetuous in will, furious in anger, sensuous, splendid, without self-restraint, trivial, wilful—yet of a temper purely intellectual, frugal and hardworking, of a real simplicity of feeling. And, as example of violent contrasts in her character, there is no need to go further than the facts that she listened with delight to the "Faery Queen," and yet, because of some verses Michael Hicks wrote for her eye, did not banish him at once to Hades. In the twentieth century it is impossible to quote the verses, but in the sixteenth century they were quite a fit subject for queenly "chaff"; and there can be no doubt that the following letter must have uplifted Michael (who had obviously offended in some trivial way) very much indeed:—

> "Michael. I ly not to you. The Queen is now very pleasant and excuseth you as much as any. I told her y^{t} I cold not tell what you sayd, but I saw what you writt, wch in my fancy was as prety and Pythy as ever I saw. I marry sayth she but he writt them not him self. I sware before God I knew you dyd,/well sayth she when I see him next we shall have good sport./ This is the treuth and ye whole treuth, I assure you faithfully.
>
> "Yor ass: frend Ro: CECYLL."

It was an age of violent contrasts. The Queen was, after all, only typical of it, and Michael, to whom obscenity was native, was also very glib with religious sentiments. Towards what was the end of life for both of them, he writes to the Earl of Salisbury:—

> "I beseech God increase confirm and strengthen you in the knowledge of his truth. Inspire you

with all Godly wisdom and Counsel. Arm you with true fortitude and Christian patience. Protect you against all the wicked plots and practices of God's enemies and yours for His cause. And preserve you this year and many to the advancement of God's Glory and the public weal of this state and Kingdom; whereof many thousands of the subjects of the best sort who know you not but by their ear only, and do never expect any benefit from you, yet do both praise God, and pray to God heartily and daily for you: in the which calendar I have enrolled myself with them as a poor bedeman, and by myself by my particular obligation as a poor friend ready always to do you service."

No doubt these, and similar words, were all perfectly sincere, and how fitting it would be if this imperfect account of the long fellowship of these two could be left just there: but it is almost tragic that it cannot, and that the last vision to be had of Robert Cecil is of one stricken, prostrate, and with what bear a rather strong family resemblance to birds of prey gathering around him.

Lord Salisbury's health had been very bad for a year or two before his death. Like his father before him he suffered terribly from gout, and there were other complications. In the spring of 1611 he was said to be dying, but he continued to transact business all through the next winter. On April 11th, 1612, Lady Shrewsbury (wife of the seventh earl and daughter of "Bess of Hardwick," his stepmother) wrote from the Tower to Michael about some remedies for his children's "infermetes," and added as a postscript: "I hard from my lo: to-day that my lo: Treasurer mendes excedengly well God be thanked for it." Towards the end of the same month Lord Salisbury set out for Bath to see what the waters there would do for him. Michael Hicks and Sir Walter Cope were in his train,

and from Ditton Park near Windsor, then occupied by Lord Chandos.* Michael wrote on April 29th, "to my very Lovinge frende Sir Hugh Beeston knight at Beeston Castle or thereabouts."

"Sir Hugh Beeston, I commend me unto you: but wherein I should commend you to any man else I know not. And though I know no cause, yet as your countryman was wont to say, Beeston I love thee; so I say I know no cause except it be for old acquaintance. You went away out of town and never bid me farewell, and to fare the better by you I never could yet in 40 years, nor never shall though we should live 40 years more together. And yet you see my kind and generous nature in participating with you in your griefs, in rejoicing with you in your benefits, yea, and in soliciting your business for your profit. And that you may see that I continue my care to think upon you when there is any likelihood to do you good, I do at this time take this pain to write unto you to give you knowledge that albeit it hath been bruited in such remote countries as yours is† that my Lord was dead, yet, thanks be to God, his Lordship at the writing hereof was (is) at Ditton Park on his journey towards the Bath; and in reasonable good state of body, only his legs a little swollen (as they were wont to be) which we hope will also abate before we come to Bath; he eats well, and is as merry as a man may be in his case. And because I think he would be the merrier (if he had such a merry man as your worship is in his company) I have thought good to advise you setting all your affairs for the county and his Majesty's service apart, to make your present repair to the Bath without any delay. In this advice of mine Sir Walter Cope doth join with me.

* It was Crown property.
† Presumably Norfolk.

"Now to persuade you. Besides your love and duty to my Lord, the best argument I can use to you is *ab utili.* For assume yourself, if my Lord be in any case fit to play at tables, we shall be sure to get 4 or 5£ apiece from him and Sir W. Cope. For you know (God wot) they cannot play anything well; and you can without cause chafe, swear, and 'brable,' and for a need, enter and bear a man falsely, and therefore we have good advantage of them. But if this should fail, yet it is hard luck if you wring not one 'pidling' suit or other from him; or at the least some velvet cloak or saddle not much the worse for the wearing; for Sergeant Goddnis hath gotten a velvet pair of breeches already.

"My Lord is ready to take his coach for this day's journey, which is to 'Cawsam' to my Lord Knowles,* and I am ready for my breakfast, and, as you know if you understand Latin, *Venter non habet aures.* And therefore I will end with my paper, and commendations to my Lady Beeston, who I make no doubt will give you leave for your absence upon this cause who have taken leave so long and so often to be from her upon so small cause. Your old acquaintance and good friend for small desert MICH: HICKES.

"Sir W. Cope and I moved Mr. Chaunceler (?) to write unto you to require you to meet my Lord at Bath: which I make no doubt he hath done. And as a Councillor (he) may command you, and I know you will do much for him as long as your suit

* Corsham, near Bath, was pronounced without the 'h' until a few years ago. Some grass fields there, in the possession of Mr. Fuller of Neston Park, are still called 'Knowles' Lands.' Close by was once an old manor house which Leland says was "in Dowage to the Quenes of England," and was partially pulled down in "Quene Anne's" days. This refers to Anne Boleyn, whose nephew, Sir Wm. Knollys was Treasurer to the Royal Household and was created Baron Knollys (Knollis or Knolles) in 1603. He may either have been granted the lands and remnant of house or have been there in 1612 looking after what was Crown property.

is depending for the recusants. But that one Recusant should pray upon another it is strange; but that *bonus odor lucri ex re qualibet.*"

Bonus odor lucri, alas! "There shall the vultures be gathered together"—and they must gather quickly now. The Bath waters were of no avail, and Lady Shrewsbury, always ready with her nostrums, writes to Michael at Bath that she understands the spleen to be the cause of Lord Salisbury's uncomfortable fits. She recommends him to try quintessence of honey which she says is good for the spleen and lungs and against all obstructions. A grain of musk must be taken with it, she says, and will much comfort the heart and spirits, and a spoonful is the most that must be taken at one time. The prescription, an infallible one no doubt, came too late. Robert, Earl of Salisbury, knew himself to be dying, and was resolved to die at home; and on May 24th, attended by his "Court," he set forth, and got as far as Marlborough where his strength failed. He died at the vicarage house there on May 24th, 1612.

All that he confided to Sir Walter Cope in his dying hours, and the manner of his death itself, was summarised by Francis Bacon: "Men in great place are thrice servants: servants of the Sovereign or State: servants of fame: and servants of business. So as they have no freedom, neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times. It is a strange desire, to seek power and to lose liberty, or to seek power over others and to lose power over a man's self. The rising into place is laborious; and by pains men come to greater pains, and it is sometimes base; and by indignities men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall or at least an eclipse, which is a melancholy thing: *Cum non sis qui fueris, non esse cur velis vivere.* Nay, retire men cannot when they would, neither will they when it

were reason; but are impatient of privateness, even in age and sickness which require the shadow; like old townsmen, that will still be sitting at their street door, though thereby they offer age to scorn. Certainly, great persons had need to borrow other men's opinions to think themselves happy; for if they judge by their own feeling they cannot find it; but if they think with themselves what other men think of them, and that other men would fain be as they are, then they are happy, as it were by report; when, perhaps, they find the contrary within. Certainly men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves, and while they are in the puzzle of business they have no time to tend their health, either of body or mind: *Illi mors gravis incubat, qui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi.*"

CHAPTER X.

MICHAEL HICKS AND HIS FRIENDS.

In St. Mary's Church at Warwick is a tomb with this inscription :—

Fulke Greville, Servant to Queen Elizabeth, Councillor to King James, and Friend to Sir Philip Sidney.

Trophœum Peccati.

How much it would have added to the fragrance of Michael Hicks' memory if there had been written over him, "Friend to Fulke Greville and to Francis Bacon." It would have been quite true, although it is also true that "friendship has its degrees and diverse uses," and it is not always the greater spirits who need a friend who shall play Jonathan to their David. Francis Bacon discourses of friendship that "maketh indeed a fair day in the affections from storm and tempests; and maketh daylight in the understanding out of darkness and confusion of thought"; but he goes on to say that "this second point of friendship, in opening the understanding (is not) restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel (they indeed are best); but even without that a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits as against a stone, which itself cuts not."

That Michael Hicks' friendship was a "fair day from storm and tempests" for Fulke Greville, or "daylight in the understanding" for Francis Bacon, cannot be supposed, but both the great gentleman and the great genius had the friendliest feeling for one who helped them without criticism.

The name of Fulke Greville stands—and yet it is impossible to say how or why—for all that is sweet and fine in English character. Nothing that he did remains in the memory, but what he was—that has survived with a persistence that seems immortal. He was the largest landowner in Warwickshire, and was directly descended from William Greville of Campden in Gloucestershire, a rich wool merchant of the reign of Richard II., whose tomb is in Campden Church. William Greville bought the manor of Milcote in Warwickshire, and the family settled there and increased their stability by marrying heiress after heiress, until the culmination came with Fulke's grandfather, who took to wife Elizabeth Willoughby, the greatest heiress then in England. Beauchamp's Court became the family seat, the already large property was augmented by purchase, and to all this Fulke, in due time, succeeded.

He was entered at Shrewsbury School on the same day as Philip Sidney, and their long friendship then began; but, when Sidney subsequently went to Oxford, Greville was sent to Jesus College, Cambridge. They left college in the same year, and in 1597 they went to Court together. There Greville at once attracted the Queen's notice and had "the longest lease and the smoothest time without rub of any of her favourites." Of the sweetness of his temper and the grace of his hospitalities his contemporaries talk, and Bacon himself said, that "he used his influence with the Queen honourably, and did many men good." He evaded marriage and its possible discrepancies, and it would have saved him from many futilities if he had evaded a good deal besides. As a man of action, a man of affairs and a man of letters, his fate was to be mediocre. From wanderings and wars afield the Queen herself did her best to restrain him, and when he went abroad with Sidney, and served for a short time with Navarre in Normandy, he did so surreptitiously, and brought

displeasure on his head. Robert Cecil's envious hostility to him kept him successfully from high employment, but he filled various small civil posts as "Treasurer" of this and that, and after Cecil's death, James, who had previously made him K.C.B., made him Chancellor of the Exchequer and then "Baron Brooks," and bestowed the ruined castle of Warwick upon him. But it was as a man of letters, perhaps, that he really wished to excel and to be remembered, and it is in his writings that he failed most piteously. He wrote elegies, tragedies, poems, and tracts in verse, and, in 1652, published the discursive "Life of the Renowned Philip Sidney." In all his writing he was only a harsh echo of his friend—his style was sententious and his imagination non-existent.

But all that had nothing to do with himself as he was. The fact is, that he had the mysterious gift of *charm.* That mystery which, Mr. Frederick Greenwood has said, may be described as the effluence of the spirit of candour—the candour of generous and gentle minds. "Mind there must be, where there is charm; but among its many tokens of a divine origin must be counted the fact that brilliancy of intellect is rarely its companion. The light that naturally belongs to it is a steady, sweet, and cheerful wisdom which helps it to the last."

So to Fulke Greville belongs that rarest of all forms of immortality which has nothing to do with the immortality of achievement, and it is only because of this, that his six existing letters to Michael Hicks have their interest.

The first letter is one of mere friendliness, and is endorsed "Jan. 18. 1600":—

> "Sir. Coming home yesterday from Chatham, where I have been this two days about the Queen's business, I found Doctor James was dead. Whereupon, bethinking with myself his place for the

Keeping of Records in the Tower might he fit for myself, I presently sent to seek you here; and finding you not, I send this bearer purposely to advertise you of the same. Wherein, if you mean to engage your friends, I will be very ready to join with them to the uttermost of my power to do you good. Therefore, I pray if you take liking to it, come presently hither, that you and I may confer together of some courses which must necessarily be followed in the pursuit of this matter."

The next two letters are both written in July, 1603, and it was Michael this time who was to do service, though not, it would seem, without remuneration:—

"Sir. The heavy burthen that is fallen upon me for the securing of my whole estate, makes me to intreat your favour in this matter. I am to pay to Sir David Fowles £500 at a very short day, and have no other means to raise so great a sum, but by laying all my plate to gage. I do therefore very heartily pray you to be a means to procure me such a sum, upon a sufficient pawn, of some good friend, whereby I may escape the rumour of the world, and leave my plate safe; either for three months or half a year. I will willingly give the usual consideration, and take it as a very kind favour at your hands."

"Sir. I thank you very heartily for the pains you have taken about this money: wherein I was more willing to trouble you, because I am very loth to have my name in question amongst them that practice in this kind upon the Exchange. And, if there be no remedy, but that we must use their help, let me I pray you be thus much more beholden unto you and your brother. Allow that my plate may remain in your hands and custody, and that, betwixt you, the lenders may have such security as may

content them, without notice of me, or passage of my plate through unknown hands in this infectious time."

There follow letters written in 1605 and 1606, after the Queen's death, at the beginning of the new reign, when the scramble for places was at its height. The first is from Wedgnock Park, a Warwickshire estate which had been Elizabeth's gift to him. He had induced Cecil, whom he would propitiate, to visit him there, but is philosophical as to the result:—

"Sir Michael Hixe not to you, but to the better part of yourself I adventure to send this buck; if he come not sweet and worthy of her I am sorry, and the carrier is only to blame, whose diligence may easily do it, and he is hired and instructed of purpose. The noble Earl of Salisbury hath taken a long journey out of his way to visit me and my poor Cottage. The honour he did me in it is more than I can deserve, but when he shall please to command my service, he and the world shall see that I am a more natural subject to love than power. Good Sir Michael commend me to yourself and the good woman, and let us some time this winter have your companys for I unfeignedly love you both."

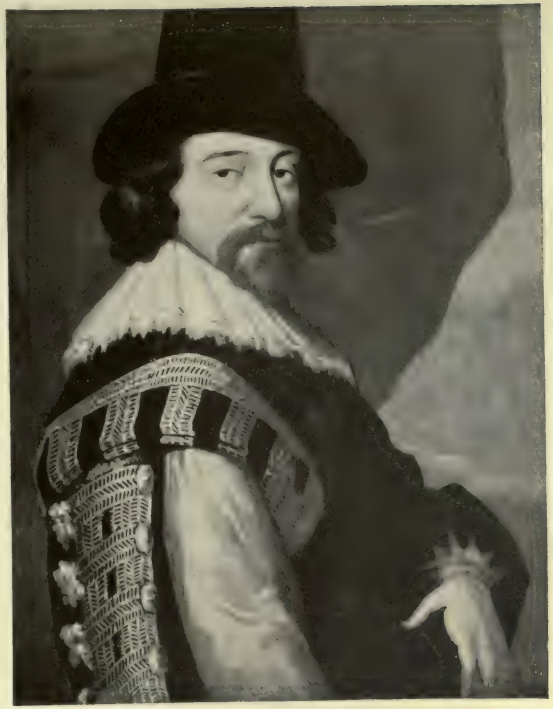
The other letter of 1606 shows that Greville is hoping still that his services may be commanded. Indeed, his words almost foreshadow a day when Cecil's star shall have set:—

"If your leisure serve, a word how the neither house (?) and the Judges agree about this Naturalisation by law, would be welcome. And you shall command more of me whensoever I live in the light and you in darkness."

The last of the letters is pure compliment, and is dated December 29th, 1610:—

"Sir Michael Hicks. Commend me kindly to yourself and your good lady, and take this poor token in good part, only to bear witness that I am not willing to forget or be forgotten by such hearty friends and neighbours. One hears that my Lord Treasurer should be a little touched with a cold at Cherme (?) in his gums. Good Sir, write a word how he doth, by whom all we do much the better. If it please you to ask after my health, in few words I assure you my hearing is worse for my coming into the country, but my disposition of body showing something better."

"Sylla chose the name of Felix and not of Magnus," says Francis Bacon in his essay on *Fortune.* It is not certain that Fulke Greville would have made the same choice, and yet to him is, indubitably *happy* fame; while, to Bacon himself, fame came in any guise but that. Dean Church says of him: "The life of Francis Bacon is one which it is a pain to write or to read. It is the life of a man endowed with as rare a combination of noble gifts as ever was bestowed on a human intellect; the life of one with whom the whole purpose of living and of every day's work was to do great things to enlighten and elevate his race, to enrich it with new powers, to lay up in store for all ages to come a source of blessings which should never fail to dry up; it was the life of a man who had high thoughts of the ends and methods of law and government, and with whom the general good was regarded as the standard by which the use of public power was to be measured; the life of a man who had struggled hard and successfully for the material prosperity and opulence which makes work easy and gives a man room and force for carrying out his purposes. All his life long his first and never-sleeping passion was the romantic and splendid ambition after knowledge, for the conquest of nature and for the service of man; gathering up in himself the spirit and



SIR FRANCIS BACON.

(From the picture by P. Van Somer.)

SIR FULKE GREVILLE.

(From the picture in the Guildhall Library.)

longings and efforts of all discoverers and inventors of the arts, as they are symbolised in the mythical Prometheus. He rose to the highest place and honour; and yet that place and honour were but the fringe and adornment of all that made him great. It is difficult to imagine a grander and more magnificent career; and his name ranks among the few chosen examples of human achievement. And yet it was not only an unhappy life; it was a poor life. We expect that such an overwhelming weight of glory should be borne up by a character corresponding to it in strength and nobleness. But that is not what we find. No one ever had a greater idea of what he was made for, or was fired with a greater desire to devote himself to it. He was all this. And yet, being all this, seeing deep into man's worth, his capacities, his greatness, his weakness, his sins, he was not true to what he knew. He cringed to such a man as Buckingham. He sold himself to the corrupt and ignominious Government of James I. He was willing to be employed to hunt to death a friend like Essex, guilty, deeply guilty to the State, but to Bacon the most loving and generous of benefactors. With his eyes open he gave himself up without resistance to a system unworthy of him; he would not see what was evil in it, and chose to call its evil good; and he was its first and most signal victim."

Francis Bacon and Robert Cecil were first cousins. Their mothers were sisters, and had both been second wives — the one of Burghley, the other, Anne, of Nicholas Bacon, who became Lord Keeper. As the younger son of a second marriage, it behoved Francis, at eighteen, when his father died, to make his own way in life, and to that end nature had given him genius, magnificent ideas, enthusiasm for truth, a passion for benefiting mankind, charm of manner, unremitting patience. "Men," quotes Dean Church, "are made up of professions, gifts and talents; and also of *themselves*." In Bacon's 'self' was that subtle flaw noted and named

by Aristotle and St. Paul, and which can only be rendered in English by saying that he was a pleaser of men. There were, however, two whom a lifetime of 'pleasing' left cold, and on whom untiring importunity had no effect; these were the two Cecils, his uncle and cousin, and their steadfast undervaluation of him has never been explained. His ability was recognised and undoubted, and Burghley was not the man to neglect a useful instrument who betrayed such good will to serve him—yet, to the last, Burghley (and his son after him) abstained from advancing Francis Bacon's fortunes. There was one man, however, who seemed to have the ability, and who certainly had the wish to serve him, and this was the Earl of Essex, the most brilliant of all Elizabeth's favourites. The friendship of these two was of the closest kind, and was of genuine affection, and Essex, who had great gifts, who began life with noble ideals, who had imagination and love of enterprise, was, of all Bacon's contemporaries, best fitted to sympathise with his ideas and aims. Obliged to earn his living, Francis took up his abode at Gray's Inn in 1579, and followed all the usual steps of his profession. In 1584 he entered Parliament. Clogged with debt, his life was a pertinacious seeking after Government employment which should put money in his pocket, and, in 1593, when the Attorney-General's place became vacant, Essex, who in that year became a Privy Councillor, determined that he should have it. To Robert Cecil, who hinted that the Queen would not easily digest the demand, he replied, "Digest me no digesting; for the Attorneyship is that I must have for Francis Bacon." Yet Bacon found that Essex, who could do most things, could not do this: his life-long enemy, Coke, got the post, and Essex vainly pressed that the Solicitorship, which was also vacant, should be given to Bacon instead. In the same year, 1593, Bacon was arrested for debt at the instance—so he always suspected and declared—of Coke himself.

It was at this juncture in his life that the first existing letter to Michael Hicks was written. Michael, as usual, was to play the part of mediator, and the postcript makes it clear that he was also one of Bacon's many creditors. This letter was written by Bacon from Gorhambury (which his mother had for her life), on September 28th, 1593:—

> "Mr. Hicks. Still I hold opinion that a good Solicitor is as good as a good Councillor. I pray, as you have begun so continue to put Sir Robert Cecil in mind. I write now because I understand, by occasion of Mr. Solicitor's being at the Court, things are like to be deliberated if not resolved. I pray learn what you can, both by your nearness to my Lord and by speech with Sir Robert; and write what you find. Thus in haste I wish you right well. Your friend assured FR. BACON.
>
> "I pray send me word what is your day of payment, and whether you can be content to renew, because my brother's land is not yet sold."

To Fulke Greville, Bacon unburdened himself at this crisis in a long letter, in which he said he was "like a child following a bird, which, when he is nearest, away and lighteth a little before, and then the child after it again, and so *in infinitum.*" But from his monetary troubles at Court, Essex was able for the time to extricate him; he gave him £1,800, and Bacon thanked him with the words: "I esteem it like the pulling out of an aching tooth, which, I remember, when I was a child and had little philosophy, I was glad of when it was done." And then, before the second letter to Michael Hicks was written, came the cataclysm of this friendship with his greatness and its generosities. Bacon, the lawyer, was called on to take a leading part in the prosecution which ended for Essex in ruin and in death; he obeyed the call apparently without difficulty

or surprise; he played his part with infinite ability. Nor was his part at an end when the grave had closed over his benefactor. The death of Essex was a tremendous shock to the popularity of Elizabeth. An elaborate justification of the whole affair was felt to be necessary, and Francis Bacon, already of world-wide literary fame, was fixed on as the man to do it.

It is all an impenetrable tragedy of the soul. And it was such a futile tragedy too. The *Declaration of the Treason of the Earl of Essex* seemed to justify the Government, but the odium of it clung to Bacon all his life, and the immediate reward was trivial. Of the fines and forfeitures which followed an affair of this kind he had his share, and he hoped to pay some of his creditors, among whom Michael Hicks still retained a place.

> "Sir. The Queen hath done somewhat for me, though not in the proportion I hoped. But the order is given; only the monies will not in any part come to my hand this fortnight. The later by reason of Mr. A. H. absence,—busied to entreat the Queen. And I am loath to borrow the meanwhile. Thus, hoping to take hold of your invitation some day this vacation, I rest your assured friend FR. BACON."

"Not in the proportion I hoped:"—indeed he had sold his honour for a veritable mess of pottage; for a mere dole, small, and contemptuously flung. All that he had bartered could not, while the Queen lived, bring him what he craved, and that was official place—a platform where, supposed necessities provided for, he could live, unfettered, that other strange life of visions which was as truly his life as the distressful one of self-seeking and disappointment. It is the appreciation of that "other" unbroken life of dreams, noble, original, and irresistible, which gives his anxious letters about preferment, and about his everlasting debts their only interest. In 1600 he was still piling loan upon loan.

"Mr. Hickes. Your remain shall be with you this term. But I have now a furder request which if you perform I shall think you are of the best friends I have, and yet the matter is not much to you. But the timing of it is much to me. For I am now about this term to free myself from all debts which are only ways in suit or urged, following a faster pace to free my credit than my means can follow to free my state, which yet cannot stay long after. I having resolved to spare no means I have in hand (taking other possibilities for advantage) to clear myself from the discontent speech or charger of others. And some of my debts of most clamour and importunity I have this term, and some few days before ordered and in part paid. I pray you to your former favours which I do still remember and may hereafter requite, help me out with £200 more for six months. I will put you in good sureties, and you shall do me a great deal of honesty and reputation. I have writ to you the very truth and secret of my course, which to few others I would have done, thinking it may move you. And so with my loving commendation I rest, your assured loving friend

"Jan. 25, 1600." "Fr. Bacon.

Michael seems to have returned an answer, to which the next letter is an answer again:—

"Mr. Hicks. I thank you for your letter testifying your kind care of my fortune, which, when it mendeth, your thanks will likewise amend. In particular you write you would be in Town as on Monday which is past: and that you would make proof of Mr. Billett or some other friend for my supply, whereof I see you are the more sensible because you concur in approving my purpose and resolution in first freeing my credit from suits and speech, and so my estate by degrees. Which in very truth was the cause which made me sub impudens (somewhat impudent?) in

moving you for new help when I should have helped you with your former monies.

"I am desirous to know what success you have had since your coming to Town in your kind care. I have thought of two sureties for one hundred pounds apiece. The one Mr. Fra. Anger, of Gray's Inn, he that was the old Count of Lincoln's executor, a man very honest and very able with whom I have spoken and he hath promised. The other Sir Tho. Hobby, whom I have not spoken with, but do presume of, although I never used him in that kind. So, leaving it to your good will I rest, your assured loving friend

"FR. BACON."

Two years later there is a letter which bears out what Dean Church says about his attitude to Robert Cecil. "To the last there was one thing that Bacon would not appear to believe—he did not choose to believe that it was Cecil who kept him back from employment and honour. To the last he persisted in assuming that Cecil was the person who would help, if he could, a kinsman devoted to his interests and profoundly conscious of his worth. To the last he commended his cause to Cecil in terms of unstinted affection and confiding hope."

"Mr. Hicks. The apprehension of this threatened judgment of God* *percutiam pastorem, et dispergentur oves gregis,*† if it work in other as it worketh in me, knitteth every man's heart unto his true and approved friend. Which is the cause why I now write to you signifying that I would be glad of the comfort of your society and familiar conference as occasion serveth. And, withall, though we cardholders have nothing to do but to keep close our cards and to do as we are bidden, yet I ever used your mean to cherish the truth of my inclination towards

* The approaching death of the Queen.

† "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

Mr. Secretary, so now again I pray, as you find time, let him know that he is the personage in this State which I love most: which containeth all that I can do, and expresseth all which I will say at this time. And this, as you may easily judge, proceedeth not out of any straits of my occasions, as might be thought in times past, but merely out of the largeness and fullness of my affections. And so for this time, I commend me to you from my chamber at Gray's Inn, this 19th of March 1602 Your assured friend

"FR. BACON."

Bacon was among the three hundred gentlemen knighted at Whitehall before the coronation of James, but, although he obtained a private interview with the King, for the first year of the reign he was unnoticed. In 1604 James' first Parliament met, and with it Bacon returned to public life, and in the House of Commons came at once to the front. He took a leading part in the contest about privileges, and was the spokesman of the House in the various conferences, and, although he never wavered in allegiance to the House, he contrived to soothe the susceptibilities of the King. His attitude was rewarded by a small salary, and he was made secretary of the Commission for the Union of the Two Kingdoms—work which occupied him from December, 1604, to November, 1605. His next letter to Michael Hicks is dated January 17th, 1605:—

"Sir, for your travail with all disadvantages, I will put it upon my account to travel twice so far upon any occasion of yours. But your wits seem not travailed; (or travelled?) but fresh by your letter, which is to me an infallible argument of heartesease, which doeth so well with you as I must entreat you to help me to some of the same. And therefore I will adjoin our conference to your return to the Strand on Monday, where I will find you if it chance right. And this day would I have come to your

Friars,* but that I am commanded to attend the Enditements at Westminster. And so, glad to perceive your good disposition, I remain your assured

"FR. BACON"

Parliament met again in November, 1606, which is the date of the following note :—

"Sir I pray you try the conclusion I spoke to you of out hand. For it is a mind I shall not continue in if it pass this very tide. So I rest yours FR. BACON."

In Parliament all the involved questions arising out of the Union were keenly debated and with much jealous feeling. Bacon was the willing servant of the House, and it came to pass that, without comment, on June 25, 1607, he was appointed Solicitor-General. At the age of forty-seven he had thus won the first step to success in life and could enjoy at last the immense convenience of being rich and powerful, and all the supposed necessities of the Thinker and the Prophet. And it is simply part of the incongruity of the whole of his life that he, who had betrayed Essex with facility, did not cast aside the acquaintance of Michael Hicks when there was nothing more to be had from him. The last letters are of the purest friendship.

"Sir. There is a Commission touching the King's service to be executed at your house on Tuesday next. The Commissioners are Mr. Recorder of London, Sir John Bennett, Sir Thomas Bodley and myself. I hear there are blanks left for other names such as you in your wisdom shall think fit to fill. Mr. Hendon is wished, for the better countenance of the service, and Sir Thomas Lowe is spoken of; but these and others are wholly left unto you.

"It will take up a whole afternoon, and therefore no remedy but that we must dine with you. But for that, you are not so little in grace with

* Austin Friars, where Michael Hicks had a house.

Mr. Chancellor but you may have an allowance; the Exchequer being first full. Hearof I thought most necessary to give you notice. So I remain your assured guest and friend FR. BACON.

"This Sunday at afternoon Aug. 6. 1609."

There had been a day, not long ago, when to have provided a dinner suddenly for so large a company, would have been to Francis himself an immense embarrassment; and, from the little there is to be gleaned about his unsuccessful marriage, it is possible that Lady Bacon would not have risen so triumphantly to the occasion as, we may feel certain, Lady Hicks did. Bacon married, in 1606, not the widowed Lady Hatton whom Essex had tried to win for him and who became the wife of his rival, Coke, but Alice Barnham, an alderman's daughter and step-daughter to Sir John Packington who was the original of Sir Roger de Coverley. "I have found out an alderman's daughter, an handsome maiden to my liking," wrote Francis to his cousin Robert Cecil. There was not as much money as Bacon had believed when he entered into the affair, but the wedding was celebrated with a good deal of curious pomp in the month of May, and Dudeley Carleton wrote to John Chamberlain on the 11th:—

"Sir Francis Bacon was married yesterday to his young wench at Maribone Chapel. He was clad from top to toe in purple, and hath made himself and his wife such stores of fine raiments of cloth of silver and gold that it draws deep into her portion. The dinner was kept at the lodging of his father-in-law, Sir John Packington, over against the Savoy, where his chief guests were the three knights, Cope, Hicks and Beeston; and upon this conceit, as he said himself, that since he could not have my Lord Salisbury in person, which he wished, he would have him at heart in his representative body."

The marriage was an unhappy one, and twenty years afterwards, in his will, Bacon showed his dissatisfaction with his wife; while his essay *Of Marriage and Single Life* proclaims emphatically for the blessedness of the latter state. "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune, for they are empediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief."

If there ever was a woman's influence in Bacon's life (and that is doubtful) it was his mother's. Anne Bacon, the daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, Prince Edward's governor, and sister to Lady Burghley, was a woman of great intellect and imperious will. She loved her elder son Anthony the more passionately of the two, but for both sons' advancement she laboured incessantly, and she ministered to their necessities by denying herself firing and sufficient food. Her self-sacrifices were endless, and she thought that they gave her a claim to proffer advice that was endless too. There was nothing in her sons' lives about which she did not freely express her opinion, and she was an intolerant Calvinist and would have her sons, too, acknowledge the Puritan infallibility. It was the last tyranny to which Francis, with his appreciation of facts and his balance of mind, was likely to bow, and, as the years went on, Anne Bacon's ungovernable temper led to many a furious passage of arms. Her mind lost its balance completely towards the end of her life, and in 1600 she died.

> "Sir Michael Hicks. It is but a wish, and not anyways to desire it to your trouble, but I heartily wish I had your company here at my Mother's Funeral, which I purpose on Thursday next in the forenoon. I dare promise you a good sermon, to be made by Mr. Fenton the preacher of Gray's Inn; for he never maketh other. Feast, I make none. But if I might have your company for two or three days at my house I should pass over this mournful

occasion with more comfort. If your son had continued at St. Julian's (?) it would have been an Adamant (magnet?) to have drawn you. But now if you come I must say it is only for my sake. I commend myself to my Lady and commend my wife to you both, and rest yours ever assured

"FR. BACON."

The last of the letters, written in 1611, the last year of Michael's life, discovers Francis in debt once more, but this time in humorous wise. There had evidently been a loan to him of a pair of stockings :—

"Sir Michael. I do use, as you know, to pay my debts with time. But indeed if you will have a good and perfect colour in a carnation stockings it must be long in the dying. I have some scruple of conscience whether it was my Lady's stockings or her daughters', and I would have the restitution to be to the right person else I shall not have absolution. Therefore I have sent to them both, desiring them to wear them for my sake as I did wear their's for mine own sake. So wishing you all a good new year, I rest Yours assured FS. BACON."

Legend has it that Sir Walter Raleigh was a third famous friend of Michael's, and Mr. Strype in his "Historical Account" quotes a letter written by Sir Walter. The letter is one of those no longer in existence; it concerns a certain Captain Spring and £300 owed to that gentleman, and begs that Michael will "further" him with the Lord Treasurer. It is by no means the "familiar" epistle which Strype labels it, and Michael was evidently to Raleigh nothing but a mere acquaintance. Among the Talbot papers is an immensely long letter from Michael to the Earl of Shrewsbury, which contains a vivid and detailed account of Raleigh's trial. It has been printed in Vol. III. of Lodge's "Illustrations of British History," and is a

valuable historical document, but nothing in the tone of it shows that Michael is writing of one for whom he had a personal feeling. Raleigh was not one of his friends.

To his friends 'indeed,' Michael wrote voluminously, and he could be exceedingly candid. To a lady, apparently the wife of a clergyman, whose name is almost obliterated in the manuscript, but which may be possibly "Howard," he offers unexceptional advice regarding reconciliation with her spouse:—

"Friend. I am very glad to hear of the forwardness of the reconciliation betwixt you and Mr. Ho. . . ., although I hear withal it be offered on his part with some hard and froward conditions. But when I consider that an unjust peace is better than a just war, and that Commonwealth to be in better case which hath a Tyrant than that which hath no king, I cannot but advise you to accept of any course which they that deal in the cause betwixt you will advise you unto. Considering they are both wise and love you well, and especially the one of them by his long experience in the World and knowledge in the Word of God, is able to give you very sound counsel. And there is in that house, and hath been many a year, the very pattern of womanhood and wifely obedience that I do know in England; by whose example, you might observe and learn many good things to imitate, if you should remain there any time; which I hope you shall not by the blessed help of your peacemakers. And though I be none of them, yet I wish it with them of all my heart, and that it may be sound without dissimulation, and firm without interruption; the which, in my poor opinion, shall be the better effected if there be but bearance and forbearance betwixt you. That is, to speak plainly, if you can bridle your nature to

forbear him in his fury, and he temper his fury to bear with your folly. Friend, I do advise you to yield him love and subjection, for you owe it to him; and I wish him to yield you love and benevolence for it is due unto you; that ye may both walk together in knowledge, giving no offence to God, as becometh couples of your profession. I would have been glad to see you, and the rather to see him, but I am returning to the Court."

To Lady Willoughby, in her matrimonial troubles, Michael writes in a strain precisely similar, but in a tone slightly differentiated. Lady Willoughby, who had been Lady Mary Vere, was one of the two daughters of Lord Oxford, and therefore, of course, was a granddaughter of Burghley's. She was one of those sisters over whose custody, as was shown in the last chapter, such war was waged on Burghley's death, and whose persons Robert Cecil feared would be kidnapped. Lady Mary married the twelfth Lord Willoughby de Eresby, to whom the ancient barony had descended through his mother the Duchess of Suffolk. In expeditions by sea and by land he played a gallant part; and if the marriage was not a halcyon one, perhaps the faults were not all on one side. Michael's fatherly tone is natural, for he had known her ladyship from childhood.

"Madame,

"If I, that have been so oftentimes partaker of your joys, should in these your troubles take no part of your griefs, truly I might justly be accounted both a forgetful friend and an unthankful person. For the which cause, since the occasion gives me not hope to see you (as I would) I thought it good to send to you (as I might) these few lines, as records for me that, if I had but half so much power to redress your mishaps as I have to lament them, your

Ladyship should not continue many hours discontented. But since my small ability . . . (torn off) no further but to wish you well and to give you that friendly advice that I can (which would require more words that I can well now commit to writing) I will only for the present say thus much:—

"Good Madame, commit your unhappy case to God by your prayer, and commend your honest cause to the world by your patience. And I would to God it had been my hap to have been with you when these broils were a-brewing, and I doubt not (for the honest opinion that I trust your Ladyship hath of me) I could have persuaded with you in such sort as they should never have burst forth to such extremities. Nevertheless my trust is that it will please God to rid you shortly out of them all which He hath laid upon you—no doubt for the best. Until which time, if your Ladyship shall cast your whole care and confidence upon Him, and exercise yourself in the reading of His Holy Word, and the meditation of His great mercies, as surely you shall both provide well for the health of your body and find a sweet comfort for the sorrows of your mind.

"Only this, withal, that, according to the ordinance of God, and the covenant of your marriage, you endeavour to subdue and submit your will to the pleasure of your Head in all honest and lawful things, seeking rather to win his goodwill with covering his faults and bearing with his infirmities, than to convert him to your own by revealing his shame and resisting his commandments.

"And this is that, that I thought good to write; which I protest unto your Ladyship I have done in the soundest wit that I have and with the heartiest goodwill that I can; the which although it may seem hard to flesh and blood, yet is it fully warranted by the Word of God, which binds all women of whatever birth and calling soever they be, to yield

due benevolence and obedience to their husbands. The which, if your Ladyship shall do (as I doubt not but you will) besides that you shall bridle the ill tongues of your ill-willers and give the world cause to witness on your side, you shall have the testimony of a good conscience at home, than the which there is not in this life, either a stronger bulwark against temptations or a sweeter comfort in all our troubles.

"And thus beseeching Almighty God to bless you with His Spirit of meekness and patience, I beseech Him withal ever speedily (if it be His Will) to mollify the heart of . . . (erased) towards you and to overthrow the malice and devices of all your enemies. And so I humbly take my leave.

"Your Ladyship's true and hearty poor friend,

"MICHAEL HICKES."

With a lady called Mistress Bowland, Michael had a serious misunderstanding, and he delivers himself in this wise:—

"To mistake a word may be want of wit in a woman, and to misconstrue a man's doing the property of your sex; but to misreport of a man's good meaning, what can it be but sound and sheer malice.

"To charge you with the second first, were not to blame you but nature; and to bear with you in the last passeth the patience of a melancholy man. And yet when I consider what a folly it were to be at war with a woman (whose manner is to break a man's head without a playster) I am content to carry it with quietness, least, in seeking to revenge the old I be recompensed with a new.

"Only this is my poor comfort; that, albeit women are commonly soon angry, and upon slight occasions, yet, having once conceived a displeasure against one, it is long time ere they forgive it, and

they will never forget it. Therefore very aptly it is said that their wrath in weight is lead and in continuance marble. Which is as much to say as they bear mortal hatred immortally."

Michael yielded a facile pen, and in admonishing his creditors, he is much more diffuse than his mother; and, if not quite so drastic, yet sufficiently plain spoken. There is a letter dated 1581, addressed to his cousin John Sprynt, who turns up several times in the family correspondence and always in a financial plight. The letter is of great length and is perhaps an answer to one still longer :—

"Cousin,

"I have received a long and large letter from you, wherein are some words that I cannot read, and some that I do not understand and cannot answer at all. . . . You think you are sharply reproved when you are but highly admonished, and cannot abide to be touched where the sore is. . . . If I said that you break your promise often I said truly. . . . If I wished you not to depend in your own payments upon other men's promises or bonds, I gave you sound and necessary counsel. . . . Now if you excuse it to say other men break with you, then I reply and say, what's that to me? You have rather to complain of their ill dealing towards you, than, by their example to deal so with others. . . . But whereas you seem to insinuate that covetousness is the cause that spurs me on thus eagerly to call for it, and, as it were shamefully to crave it, especially in a matter of so small value—now truly, cousin, I cannot choose but smile to see how you are deceived. For (God wot) if this seed had taken any root, or but little hold in me, my state would be much better than it is, and I have less cause to be so earnest with you as you take me to be. . . . Touching the half dozen of cheeses, which you write that you have

wished here with my mother half a score of times—I can tell you if you send them not before they come with wishing, they will be mouldy before they be eaten. But if indeed they be not worth the cost of the carriage, you were better not to send them at all than have them wished with you again. Tokens are very good and necessary remembrances betwixt friends that are far asunder, but a token that in his kind is not according (if the sender do know of it) doth rather declare the little account he makes of his friends than expresseth his goodwill towards him. . . . For the pasty of red deer which you wish to me, I do wish you thanks again, and would have given you thanks if you had sent it. But this, and that which you promised to Mr. Branthwait, Mr. Spencer and me in Lent was two years, will be deferred so long as I am afraid it will grow to a horseload at the last."

Mr. Robert Southwell, Mr. Manners and Mr. Thomas Beaumont were friends with whom Michael corresponded at leisurely length, and it is amazing how little information he managed to convey at the expense of so much ink and paper. One of his letters to Mr. Beaumont, however, contains reflections on a London life that are not without modern interest:—

"London is the only place of England to winter in, whereof many wise men might be put for examples. If the air of the streets be fulsome, the fields be at hand. If you be weary of the City, you may go to the Court. If you surfeit of the Court you may ride into the country; and so shoot as it were at rounds with a roving arrow.

"You can wish for no kind of meat but here is a market, for no kind of pastime, but here is a companion. Here is some of all sorts, either to comfort a weak stomach or provoke an ill one. If

you be solitary, here be friends to sit with you. If you be sick, if one doctor will not serve your turn, you may have twain. When you are weary of your lodging you may walk into (St.) Paul's, where you shall assure to fill your eyes with gallant suits, and fill your ears with foreign intelligence. In the middle aisle you may hear what the Protestants say, and in the others what the Papists whisper; and when you have heard both, believe but one, for but one of Both says true you may be assured. To be short, you can want nothing here if you want not money."

At the end of his life, Michael wrote to his friend Sir Hugh Beeston, who had been his companion on so many jovial occasions, a letter of condolence on the death of Sir Hugh's only son. The platitudes are not more futile than such platitudes have been in all ages in the face of irreparable loss, and whether they served as a plaster to Sir Hugh's perplexed mind such as Sir Michael hoped seems unlikely enough. But at the end of the tremendous piece of composition were words that seem to ring truly enough:—

"And now Sir Hugh Beeston to join in counsel myself with you. For as much as the glass of our life is almost run out and the light of our candle burnt to the socket, let us with David learn to number our days and to apply our hearts to wisdom. Let us redeem the time past with an earnest apprehension and meditation of our approaching end *Et ideo serio quia sero.* To which end let us cast off all worldly cogitations and cares, which are but grigs in our heads and thorns in our hearts, and being balanced and valued, are nothing else but trash and transitory."

MICHAEL HICKS.

From a picture at Witcombe Park.)

CHAPTER XI.

THE MARRIED LIFE OF MICHAEL HICKS.

It is certain that the question of a prudent marriage for her eldest son would have been a preoccupation of Juliana Hicks from the day Michael left college. She died in 1592, and a letter of Robert Cecil's of 1595 proves that Michael was then a married man. The marriage probably took place after his old mother's death. Mr. John Strype gives an account of her impatience, and says that she sent Sir Robert Cecil a suit of hangings, with a message that she had kept them thirty-two years expecting Michael's marriage, and that unless he would make haste and marry she promised Sir Robert to give him also her house and all the stuff belonging to it.

That Michael had been preoccupied with the matter also, if only unsuccessfully, is, however, quite certain, for two carefully composed proposals of marriage of his survive, and it looks as if they had done service more than once, because another name has been written over the Mistress Loftus of the one letter, and the name of Mistress Woodcocke has been erased in the other. Both ladies were widows, and Mistress Woodcocke was so for the second time. The letters themselves, perhaps, explain why Michael, at fifty years old was still a bachelor. They repeat each other in tone, and sometimes in actual words, so that it is not necessary to quote them both. That to Mistress Woodcocke is the more emphatic of the two:—

"Good Mistress Woodcocke. Albeit in the time of your first widowhood you were a woman unknown

to me but by sight only, yet such was the good report as was generally given of you, that I was not only moved to love and desire you, but was minded also to have been a suitor to you. But my wavering hope being thwarted and overthrown with the view and weight of my own unworthiness, I gave over my determination in seeking you for a wife, though I could not leave (off) to love you as such a woman doth deserve.

"And now also, albeit the like occasion is offered me by the death of your second husband yet (I assure you) if I were as well able to master the affections of my mind as I have power to govern the actions of my body, I would rather with grief smother my thoughts in their cradle, than betray my folly in shooting at a mark so far beyond both my reach and reason.

"For when I look into my own manifold wants and imperfections, and consider withal what a number of good parts and virtues there be in you, I see plainly the more cause I have to love you, the less hope I have to enjoy you.

"Besides this, when I hear it commonly reported how many, both of good ability and credit, have already, and are like daily, to resort unto you in this behalf, I may be thought either very simple or very arrogant in hoping to find favour where my betters are put back.

"But to deal plainly with you, truly Mistress Woodcocke, the reasons that moved me to put it on proof were these.

"First, I considered that it is only God that beares the stroke in all our detirminations, counsel, and proceedings, ordering and disposing them as seems best to Him, and is best for us.

"Secondly, mine own conscience doth witness with me that the foundation of my affection is grounded upon the fear of God, and an assured

opinion of your virtue, and that I seek you for yourself and not for that which you have.

"The last, and not the least reason is, that I have certainly heard and do verily believe that you are a woman of that wisdom and understanding that you will marry a man and not money, that you will make your choice by your ear and not by your eye, that you prefer a peaceable quiet and contented life before either worldly wealth or all the glorious titles of the world.

"To these may be added as a poor help of my doubtful hope, that many times it is better to be happy than wise, and that women sometime, even of the wiser sort, do in nothing sooner overshoot themselves than in their marriage.

"These were the causes that have encouraged me, being but a mean shooter, to adventure to cast my shaft in the company of so many good archers.

"Of myself I will forbear to say anything, though peradventure I could say somewhat. They are not always the deepest waters that make the greatest noise, nor yet the best fruit that bear the fairest blossom.

"Only this I protest and promise for myself, as in a thing best known to myself, that if you had ten thousand suitors, there is none can either love you more or will use you better; that desires you for better respects or to a better end.

"And therefore (good widow) if I may be bold to use so familiar a term upon so small acquaintance, weigh well the effect of my words, and make not light of his love whose love is not light towards you. Think my bark that bears a low sail above board may carry a heavy burden under the hatches. And though I myself wear not a coat of scarlet, yet I shall be able, and will maintain my wife in a gown of silk. Measure not a man's mind by his looks. They be not always of a froward condition that be of a choleric

complexion; and although a wise woman will seldom desire to have her own will, yet a wise man will never deny it to a loving wife.

"And so I take my leave of you, till it shall please you to give me leave to see you, who have been bold as you see without your leave to send to you. In the mean (time) I pray God to direct you with His Holy Spirit, and to give to us both the accomplishment of our heart's desire so far forth as they stand with his glory and our good.

"Yours without change and without end

"MIHCLE HICKES.

"To Mistress Woodcock in Aldermanbury."

The wise woman seldom desiring her own will was far to seek, and all the evidence seems to say that Michael never found her. It was probably in 1594 or 1595 that he married the widowed Mistress Elizabeth Parvis or Parvish, a lady somewhat richer in ancestry, but of wholesome provincial blood like himself. She was one of the four daughters of Gabriel Colston of the Grocers' Company, and of his wife Alice, daughter of Michael Foxe of the same Company. On both her father's and her mother's side she owned a considerable "pedigree."

The Colstons are a Lincolnshire family of Norman lineage, descended from Robert de Colston of Colston Hall. From them comes the famous Colston family of Bristol; and from a sister of Edward Colston, the philanthropist, who married Sir William Hayman, and whose descendants afterwards assumed the name of Colston, comes the present-day family of the Colstons of Roundway Park, Wiltshire. These bear on their arms the "two dolphins counter haurient respecting each other," which were likewise the arms of Elizabeth's father, Gabriel Colston the grocer. In the pedigree at the Heralds' College, Gabriel's father is given as Robert Colston of Corby, in the county of Lincoln; and his

mother as Katherine, daughter and co-heiress of John Malory of Walton, in Leicestershire. Gabriel's wife, Alice Foxe, has a reference attached to her which takes us to a pedigree of the Foxes of Northamptonshire, and on which both she and her father are to be found.

Elizabeth's childhood was most likely spent in the City, but her father was prosperous, and he bought a country house on the edge of Waltham Forest; "Forest House" it was called, and it was still existing in 1777, for it is on a map of that date. Walthamstow adjoins Leyton, and the third entry in the Leyton marriage register is this:—

Novembris 1578. The xviith day were married Henry Parvish and Elizabeth Colston.

Morant's "History of Essex" says that Henry Parvish was "a merchant who traded to Italy." He traded successfully, for in 1592, the year before his death, he bought from William, Lord Compton, the manor of Ruckholt, close to his wife's old home. He seems to have left the property to his wife for life, and then to his eldest son Gabriel Parvish (who must have been about fifteen at the time of his father's death).

Ruckholt manor house, which became Michael's home, and where his descendants lived until 1720, is now submerged beneath the sea of yellow brick buildings which covers that part of Essex, and which is known as 'London over the Border.' So complete and so appalling in monotonous dreariness, is the metamorphosis of this once country village, so bewildering is the maze of drab streets all exactly alike that it is not possible for the most conscientious searcher to be certain of the exact site of the manor house. Mr. Kennedy, in his "History of Leyton," says that a farmhouse called Tyler's was afterwards built on the site and stood "at the end of the road on the left hand side of the present Town Hall." A map of the manor,

made by one Thomas Archer, surveyor, in 1721, shows that the entrance gates were on the high road leading from Leyton to Stratford—to-day a broad thoroughfare lined with dwellings, mainly mean, and along which trams travel continuously. The map seems to say that a double avenue led from the high road through a "warren" to gates again, that these gave on to an outer yard, and that then there was an inner yard and the house itself, which appears to have had outstanding wings. Behind the house was a garden with a pond at the bottom of it, and beyond was the twelve acres of rook-infested grove which gave the house its name. Beyond the grove again, meadows went down to the River Lea and a mill and to Leyton Marsh. To the right of the house more meadows stretched away to a lane which was the boundary on that side, and on the left, in the direction of Leyton Church, was a considerable demesne intersected by a brook which ran into the Lea. On the other side of the high road in front of the house, the property stretched away to Leytonstone and the borders of Waltham Forest—about five hundred acres there may have been in all, and they had changed hands pretty often. Mr. Kennedy says:—

The Manor of Ruckholt which took its name from the Saxon words 'hroc holt'—Rook Wood—was, about 1284, the property of William, son of Robert de Bumpsted Steple, who then recognised a deed by which he had conveyed this manor to Sir Richard de la Vache. In the year 1360, Philip de Bumpsted, son and heir of Robert de Bumpsted of Stoke, released to Adam Francis, citizen of London, all his right and interest in this Manor. It is probable that Francis had purchased it of the heirs of Sir Richard de la Vache. Sir Adam Francis, who died seised of this manor in 1417, left two daughters, co-heiresses, Agnes, wife of Sir William Ponter, who died without issue in 1461, and Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Charlton, whose son, Sir Thomas, died seised of this manor in 1465. His son, Sir Richard, inherited it; he, like many another Englishman before and since, interested himself in the affairs of his country and thereby came to trouble; for in consequence of his attachment to Richard III., he was attainted of high treason, and the Manor fell into the hands of the Crown. In 1487 Henry VII. granted it to Sir John Rysley, on

whose death it escheated to the Crown, and was granted in 1513 by Henry VIII. to William Compton, ancestor of the Earls of Northampton. William Lord Compton, sold it in 1592 to Henry Parvish whose widow married Sir Michael Hickes.

This account makes it probable that the manor house itself may have been several centuries old, but there is evidence that the garden, or part of it at least, was laid out in the latest mode. There is a portrait at Witcombe of one of Sir Michael's grandsons, and he is standing on the terrace at Ruckholt and holds a bunch of grapes in his hand. The terrace is flagged in black and white, and from the opening in the balustrade a path goes to white wooden gates between red brick pillars. On either side the pillars are tall clipped hedges; over them looms a grove of trees. In the midst of the path near the terrace is a fountain in two tiers, and a stone Cupid with a bow stands on the topmost basin. Around the fountain and down the path as far as the gates are grouped square beds with box edges and small clipped trees, about two feet high, at each corner. It is all as 'Elizabethan' as can be.

But Michael did not live, immediately after his marriage, on the little Essex estate in the midst of his wife's large family of growing-up children. He prepared his house on St. Peter's Hill for his bride. "Wherein," says Baptist to him in a letter, "I hear you take much pains to make it neat and fine against my sister's coming." Here, in January, 1596, their eldest son William was born. The date is certain because, in a precisely worded and dated letter, Dr. William Mount, master of the Savoy, congratulates Mr. Hicks on the birth of his son, and sends Mrs. Hicks some cordials. While Robert Cecil says, "Good Mich: I and Bess do send to you to know how your wife and your Jewell do."

Burghley, of course, was to be godfather, and *William* was to be the child's name. Robert Cecil wrote to Michael at length about the christening, but a great deal of the letter is obliterated. He says he will find

out from my lord what day will suit him, and whether in the church or not. He himself thinks it will be best in the church with a short sermon, and Mr. Wolston to do it. The body of the letter is occupied by a rigmarole about a "Lady R." whom Cecil thinks will look for it to be bidden to be godmother, and of whom he apparently disapproves; but the subsequent censorship does not help to make his reasons clear. Mr. Strype relates a story of the christening, which, he says, he had heard from the hero of the occasion (afterwards Sir William Hicks) himself. It is trivial enough, but it illuminates Burghley in a genial moment. "The old Lord pulling out his Purse to take out some gold to give to the servants, one or two pieces dropt down and fell somewhere under the Bed: which he would not suffer anyone to take up again, saying Let the sweepers have it."

Michael soon found the house on St. Peter's Hill too small for the hospitalities he exercised. The following letter is from his fellow-secretary, Henry Maynard, of Easton Lodge:—

> "This morning I was with my Lord Chamberlain. . . . Some speech he had with me touching your house, saying that he understood that it was scant of lodgings and offices. Whereupon I took occasion to tell his Lordship that it was true, and that I conceived it did trouble you that you had no convenient place to entertain some of her Majesty's necessary servants. His answer was that you were unwise to bear any such charge but only to leave the house to the Queen; and wished that there might be presented to her Majesty from your wife, some fine waistcoat, or fine ruff, or like thing, which, he said, would be as acceptable taken as if it were of great price. He said two days since, upon speech of your house and of your marriage, the Queen fell into an exceeding commendation of Mr. Parvis, as that she never had such a

merchant in her kingdom; whereupon his Lordship saith that himself and others standing by, gave the like commendation to her of your wife."

Neither the waistcoat nor ruffle brought to Michael a town house large enough to hold the family of stepsons and stepdaughters, and it is evident that after this first year Ruckholt became his headquarters. And to Ruckholt presently came the Queen, to judge for herself of the perfections of Mistress Hicks.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that those perfections did not include great personal beauty. There is a sentence in one of Robert Cecil's letters which tells, although in balder language, that Mistress Elizabeth was exceeding stout; and a letter from Michael to Sir John Stanhope seems to say that she found favour in the royal eyes, not always inclined to regard female comeliness with complacency! The said letter is all that exists to betray that the royal Elizabeth found in Elizabeth Hicks a composed, capable hostess set in the midst of a house and demesne in perfect order, and that had it not been for the far too anxious host, the visit might have been regarded as an entirely successful one.

"I assure you I was very much troubled before her Majesty's coming to my house out of the care and desire I had she might find all things there to her good liking and contentment. But since, I have been much more troubled and perplexed, having heard by some (who overheard it) that her Majesty took some conceit and note towards myself for my silence, although (in her princely favour) it pleased her to like of my house, with the mistress of the house, and all things besides. Truly Sir, I am very sorry it hath so fallen out, and, though I shall like the better of my house and my wife (because it pleased her Majesty to like of them) yet I know I shall like the worse of myself as long as I live. And I will the less believe Cato

(though he were a wise man) who taught me when I was a boy, *Non ulli tacuisse nocet.*

"But to confess to you truly, I was purposed, in as few words as I could, to have expressed the great joy and comfort I took to see her Majesty at my poor house, my most humble thankfulness to her Majesty that it pleased her Majesty to vouchsafe to honour my house with her princely presence, and my like humble request that it would please her to pardon and cover all the faults and defects she should find there with the veil of her gracious and favourable acceptation. But the admirable majesty and resplendance of her Majesty's royal presence and princely aspect did on a sudden so daunt all my senses and dazzle mine eyes, as for the time I had use neither of speech nor memory. For the which, though I be very sorry that it so fell out, yet am I not much ashamed, remembering, as I think both her Majesty and you can remember, that men of great spirit and very good speech have become speechless in the like case, as men astonished and amazed at the majesty of her presence.

"Sir, you have known me long, and, if I be not deceived, have loved me also, though without my desert. I beseech you for that your long acquaintance and your love, help to restore me to her Majesty's good opinion and conceit, and to repair my credit with some public testimony to the world from her Majesty of her Majesty's princely grace and favour. I hope it shall be no hard thing for you to obtain, my fault being an oversight not an action, an error of omission not an offence of commission. . . ."

This is by no means the end of a not altogether guileless letter, which proceeds, at some length, to quote Ovid on the topic of the clemency of princes; and it seems pretty certain that Michael had hoped

that the Queen would have made her visit the occasion for the bestowal of knighthood; it was a natural hope enough, for lesser men than himself had successfully cherished it under similar circumstances. Who knows but that Elizabeth had entered the Ruckholt avenue from the high road with every gracious intention, but had been moved to impish passivity in the matter by a knee and a back too redundantly bent? Later on, when the Queen was at Theobalds, it appears as if Cecil had used some urgency in the matter, as if Michael had then shown a crookedness of mood and temper to match that of Royalty itself, and as if he had formed an obstinate determination to be knighted on his own hearthstone or not at all. Cecil willed that he, as well as his brother Baptist, should be made a knight at James' coronation, and told him so in the postscript of a letter of 1603, which is all about the unintelligible conspiracy known as the 'Main' or 'Rye' conspiracy. Michael replied to the letter at great length, and discoursed piously on the foulness and fearfulness of the plot, adding:—

> "I humble thank you for the postscript of your letter, and so much the more moving out of your own honourable favour. But since I refused it at Theobalds, when it had come with the greatest grace and credit to me, as a mark of your honourable favour, I can be content to stay at this time. And if it shall happen (as it is likely) that the King do come to the Forest where I dwell, to hunt, and to come to my house (as it is not unlikely that he will) then if it shall please him, by your honourable intervention, to think me worthy, it may be I will accept of it for my wife's sake, whom I think worthy to be a lady, though not myself fit to be a knight, but by way of comparison with a great number that have been, or may be, made."

"Good Mr. Hicks that would not be Sir Michael,"

jeers Cecil in September of the same year. But from 1604 onwards the letters from himself and others are addressed to 'Sir Michael,' so the honour was obviously conferred somehow and somewhere, and, although no authority can be found for his statement, John Nichol, in his "Progresses of James I.," states that "Sir Michael Hicks was visited by the King at Ruckholt on June 16th, 1604, and was knighted at Theobalds in the following August." If that be true, this second royal visit for which Michael had schemed brought again its mortification.

The life that Michael led after his marriage was, evidently, a very comfortable one. Mistress Hicks was of undoubted repute as a housewife and a hostess; the house must have been spacious and comfortable, and not only were Michael's friends glad to visit him, but there is an instance of a father whopays to Ruckholt the compliment of regarding it as the most fitting temporary asylum for his widowed daughter. A letter from Sir Nathaniel Bacon about his daughter Anne Townshend plunges us momentarily into the history of a family of antiquity and great services, and calls up besides the vision of all that remains to-day of the magnificent house which Nathaniel's half-brother, Francis, used as a model when he wrote his famous essay on *Building*. Sir Nathaniel Bacon (knighted also in 1604) was the second son of the Lord Keeper by his first wife. His father had left to Nathaniel all the lands in Norfolk belonging to the monastery of Thetford, which had been given to him by Henry VIII. at its dissolution. These lands included the manor of Stiffkey, and it is from 'Stifkey' he writes to Michael Hicks in August, 1605. He had no son, and his eldest daughter and heiress, Anne, married Sir John Townshend of Raynham, of an ancient Norfolk family. Sir John was M.P. for Norfolk, and sat in the first Parliament of King James; but in 1602 he was killed in a duel with Sir Matthew Browne, leaving his widow with

two sons and a daughter. Stiffkey still belongs to the Townshend family, and enough remains of the house to show how splendid it once was—'a princely palace,' indeed. It is built of Norfolk flints and cornered with stone, and nearly all that Francis Bacon described can be traced out. It lies down an incline from the high road, by a bridge that goes over a trout stream; and the marshes with their wild-fowl and the sea that divides from the Pole are not far away. The entrance arch is bricked up: only a portion of the banqueting hall remains and only a few of the staircase towers: a late Georgian doorway is the way to the few rooms that are still habitable: through a gap is seen the tangle of the old garden with its ruined turf and the high terrace above the bowling alley under the wall. Close by is the church, where the bones of Sir Nathaniel lie, and where is the monument he erected to his two wives. It was in 1605 that he took up his pen in his closet at Stiffkey to write to Sir Michael Hicks, who was evidently his creditor as well as his friend:—

"Sir, I would be glad to hear that my brother Sir Francis Bacon were not towards marriage, but bestowed in marriage, for then, I know, his debt and mine to you would come to be discharged. I have such a report made unto me as if he had some ways attempted marriage, but cannot yet hear of any going forward thereof. I wish that God would raise him up such friends, as, if Mr. Attorney be called to be Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, that he might succeed him. I do fear that he will find many oppositions, and too many for him, to prevail in the obtaining of that place.

"When you and I spoke last together, there passed speech between us about my daughter Townshend's sojourning at your brother's house. And I rather wished it at your house. If my daughter might

herein prevail, either with you, or with your brother by your means, she and I will acknowledge ourselves beholden to you for it. Her Company is herself and her daughter, being a child of 9 or 10 years, her two maids and two men. And she will be content to give for their board that which shall be to your liking; and this to be for a year or half a year. I hope that her company will be to the liking both of you and your wife. If this my suit with you may be obtained, I then intreat you that you will be content to signify so much unto me by your letter. I guess by the late adjournment of the Parliament that the same will hold now at Hallas (?) at which time it is like that we shall meet, and then commune further of my brother Francis' business. Thus I heartily commend you to the grace and favour of Almighty God. From Stiffkey this (blank) of Aug. 1605 Your very assured friend NA: BACON."

If Lady Townshend came to lodge at Ruckholt, she would have been there later in the year, when, for some reason or another, Juliana Hicks' marriage to Sir Edward Noel took place from her uncle's house. The wedding was in Low Leyton Church, and the entry is in the register there :—

December 1605. Edward Noell Knight and Julian Hickes were married the XXth. December 1605.

A note in the margin, by a much later hand, remarks that she was "daughter of Sir Baptist Hicks." She was Sir Baptist's eldest daughter and heiress, and her *dot* was sadly needed to replenish the Noel coffers. Of lineage that traced back to the reign of Henry I., the family had become wealthy at the dissolution of the monasteries; but Sir Edward's father, Sir Andrew, was a lover of magnificence, and upon him Queen Elizabeth is said to have made a distich :—

The word of denial and letter of fifty,
Is that gentleman's name who will never be thrifty.

He had a considerable family, and Sir Edward, knight-banneret, was the eldest. Sir Edward was made a baronet in 1611 and a baron in 1616, and when Sir Baptist himself was elevated to the peerage as Viscount Campden, in 1628, it was with remainder to his son-in-law, Lord Noel. Both titles are now submerged in that of Gainsborough. Sir Baptist had no country house in 1605, and it is more than likely that Juliana did not want to be married from Milk Street, and 'Aunt Elizabeth' could be depended upon to arrange everything with distinction.

> "I pray you heartily at your next coming to London let me understand the charge of my daughter's dinner, for I shall not be quiet in mind to have it unsatisfied; although I know out of your love you could afford me a greater matter, yet, in such a kind as this, I may not accept it. I thank my sister and you for our good entertainment; everything was so well that it pleased much the company."

So wrote Baptist to Michael when it was all over, and "so well" did it all go off that Baptist's other daughter elected to be married at Ruckholt too, and the very next entry in the register is :—

> 1606 Sir Charles Morrison Knight and Mary Hickes were married the iiiith of December 1606.

Sir Charles Morrison lived in Hertfordshire, at Cassiobury, which the seventh Earl of Essex now owns the first Earl of Essex being the son of Elizabeth Morrison, Sir Charles' only child.

Of going and coming at Ruckholt there seems, to have been no end. Among the visitors were Lord and Lady Shrewsbury, and both of them were letter-writers. Gilbert, seventh Earl of Shrewsbury, was the eldest son of George, the sixth Earl, who had had the custody of Mary Queen of Scots, and who had married secondly, and as

her fourth husband, Elizabeth Hardwick of Hardwick, known to fame as 'Bess of Hardwick.' Gilbert married his stepmother's daughter, Mary Cavendish. She has been met with in a previous chapter recommending nostrums for all sorts of ailments: it is a way in which certain female vitality expends itself. The Shrewsburys owned the manor of Sheffield (which descended through their third daughter Alathea to the Duke of Norfolk). They write from Sheffield in September, 1603, to thank both Mr. and Mrs. Hicks for their many kindnesses, and especially for the hearty welcome and kind entertainment given them at Ruckholt. They are settled in their country life at Sheffield as if they had never been absent, and as the autumn is an apt time for physic they have Doctor Barron of Cambridge with them to cure Lord Shrewsbury of his infirmity. The latter has found a little nag by chance which Lady Shrewsbury will needs send to Mr. Hicks' son, and the bearer of the letter is paid for the horse's food by the way, and is charged to take nothing at the delivery of him but a cup of beer. That cup of beer was never quaffed, for Lady Shrewsbury writes a month later from Worksop (another manor which the Duke of Norfolk now possesses) to say that the man who was bringing the horse is dead of the plague, and the horse is lost. She is most anxious to know how they all are at Ruckholt, and begs them not to stay in a house "so shrewdly besieged with the infection round about." She sends two pies—perhaps to compensate for the loss of the horse!—and says she is sure they are reasonable good if the cook has not been too much intoxicate with the news of the death of his friends of the plague.

There is another letter of Lord Shrewsbury's to Michael, written from Greenwich in 1611, all about a "strykynge clock made lyke a watch to stand uppon a cubbart" which he is sending for Lord Salisbury's acceptance. He complains of the fatigue common to

courtiers. "I am weary with waytynge on ye Queene overstandynge myself and therefore I will hast to bedd."

Essex, in 1600, was a sociable county. Sir Robert Wroth of Loughton Hall* was High Sheriff in 1587, and he had also considerable property in Middlesex, for which county he was member of Parliament. He acquired Loughton through his wife, Susan Stonard, and lived there a good deal, and here is an invitation to 'dine and sleep' at Loughton:—

"My good friend Saint Michael. I have expected, and have been in good hope, that we should have met sometime this summer and to have been merry together. The time draweth very near out for sport in hunting, if therefore I might intreat you and your wife, with Mr. Alderman Lowe and his wife,† your brother Colston and his wife, and any other good company, whomsoever you will bring or appoint, I shall be most glad thereof, and you shall be as welcome as to your own house with all the rest. And in any *wise you must determine to lodge with me one night at the least.* And the time of your coming I desire it may be upon Thursday morning next, and to meet about Fairmead, where I will appoint to hunt and to make the gentlewomen some sport with Mr. Ralph Colston's hounds and mine. And so, earnestly desiring you not to fail herein, and to send me word of your determination, and to be very earnest with Mr. Alderman Lowe to have his company and his wife's, I will bid you farewell. Loughton this 9 September, 1600. Your assured Friend

"ROBERT WROTHE.

"If the gentlewomen cannot be stirring so soon, appoint to come to dinner upon Thursday, and in the

* Now the property of the Rev. John Whitaker Maitland.

† She was the sister of Elizabeth Hicks.

afternoon we will find some sport at bowls or otherwise. And therefore bring your bowls with you for yourself and your other company, among whom I pray forget not to bring with you your brother Baptist."

In August, 1611, is another letter inviting the same company to stay at Loughton for three or four days, and a letter from Henry Maynard of Easton Lodge, Dunmow (now the property, by inheritance from him, of the Countess of Warwick), makes it evident that these house parties of county neighbours were a popular form of entertainment. Maynard was co-secretary with Michael, and he puts Michael and Lady Hicks in mind of promises to come and stay at Easton, says there is no time like the present, and that if they will come at once they will meet another Essex neighbour, Lord Petre* of Thorndon Hall (still the property of the Petre family), together with his two sons, Sir William and Mr. John Petre, and Sir William's wife, Lady Catherine (a daughter of the Earl of Worcester). Another neighbour, Sir Edward Suliard of Flemings,† was to be there too, and he was not behind others in hospitality. In 1603 he invites Mr. and Mistress Hicks to spend Christmas with them and bargains that William Hicks (six years old) and Mr. Parvis shall not be left behind. Gentlewomen, he says, will sometimes send a trunk or two before them, and his cart will "fitly" be in Stratford. Indeed there is nothing in all this to divide 1600 from 1900 except the curious fact that this social correspondence, which is nowadays entirely in the hands of the women of a family, was then almost exclusively carried on by the men.

There is no evidence that Mistress Hicks ever accompanied her husband to Court. Michael himself had, occasionally at least, to follow the Court about

* First Baron Petre, M.P. for Essex.

† Both name and house have disappeared from Essex.

and was probably as uncomfortably lodged as minor officials have been in all centuries. His brother-in-law, Alderman Lowe, came to his succour on an occasion when the Queen was to stay for two days with the Bishop of London. Thomas Lowe says that he knows Fulham Palace is not large enough to receive all the Queen's honourable followers, whereof he observes Mr. Secretary to be one of the chief and principal, and therefore he thinks it his duty, without presumption, to offer his poor house at Putney to him. Thomas wished to be something of a wag.

If Elizabeth Hicks did not go to Court she was a welcome guest elsewhere. She stayed more than once at Theobalds, and Cecil's carriage was at her disposal too.

> "Roger let Mr. Hicks have my horses and my bigger coach to bring his wife from her house to London, let mine own coachman go with it, and let her use it as she pleaseth.
>
> "Your master R. CECYLL."

In London itself the pair were not without invitations.

> "Sir. This night, of four of the clock, my Lord Cranborne and my Lady, Sir Walter Cope and his Lady and some others, will be at Westminster. They have a play before supper and another after, if you will be pleased, and my lady, to bear them company I shall be much bound to you, and so rest your loving friend and servant.
>
> "GEORGE MONTAIGNE."

This letter is dated from 'Sir Walter Cope's House,' January, 1611. Its writer was Dean of Westminster, and it was to the deanery that Sir Michael and Dame Elizabeth were bidden. Sir Walter Cope himself was

Master of the Court of Wards and one of the Chamberlains of the Exchequer. He built Holland House at Kensington, and it descended to the Earls of Holland through his only daughter. Lord Cranborne was Robert Cecil's son, and was just twenty years old. He had been married for three years to Lady Catharine Howard, daughter of the Earl of Suffolk.

At this gay party at the deanery, in the year before his death, it would be well to leave Michael—leave him there in the good company he loved.

For the gathering up of the threads of what is left to be told of his industrious, merry and (in every mundane sense) successful life, is in the nature of an anticlimax. The remaining details cannot make the shadowy portrait a more definite one. Like his first master, Burghley, Michael Hicks eludes the definitions of posterity, and is for his own descendants only a 'picture on the wall.'

That he suffered from deafness, for instance, must have mattered a good deal to him; but for a later age is only interesting because of a letter from Sir John Evelyn of Godstone, uncle of the more famous John Evelyn of Sayes Court and of the Diary. The letter describes Sir John's own deafness at some length, commiserates Michael on his, and tells of a marvellous cure of oil dropped into the ears and hot loaves clapped on the top. At the end of the letter Evelyn observes, incidentally, of course, that he has written to 'my lord' touching his old friend, Mr. Sprentall and one Fabyan. He asks for Michael's help in furtherance of their suit, and assures him "in both their names, there shall be that thankful remembrance had of your pains and travail that you shall think it very well bestowed."

It was an accumulation of "thankful remembrances" which enabled Michael, as is recorded on his tomb, to die a rich man. The wealth so acquired was invested, as the Close Rolls and Patent Roll Calendars show, in the two ways usual; either in loans to the impecunious, or

in mortgages on, or purchases of land. Several manors passed through his hands, and, because of this, it is not possible to assert that either imagination, or that passion for 'founding a family' which was particularly strong in Elizabethan days, had anything to do with the acquirement of the Norman Castle of Beverstone on land adjoining that which his father, Robert, had entailed on him at Tetbury in Gloucestershire. The castle and its surroundings had once been part of the great Berkeley estates, but in 1610 it belonged to one Henry Fleetwood. There are two deeds in the Patent Roll Calendars for 1610. In the first, dated 'Easter,' the final agreement with Fleetwood for purchase is made; and in the second, dated 'Trinity,' Maurice Berkeley, for the sum of £200, renounces all manorial rights. The property is described as "the Castle and Manor of Beverstone, 30 messuages, 10 tofts, 2 mills, 2 dovecotes, 30 gardens, 20 orchards, 1,000 acres of land, 200 acres of meadow, 500 acres of pasture, 200 acres of wood, 500 acres of heath and furze, and £8 rent in Beverstone and Kingscott."

It is not at all likely that Michael, at sixty-seven years of age, had any thought of leaving the pleasant Essex neighbourhood and settling far away in Gloucestershire. But Ruckholt, of course, was his wife's property, not his own, and Beverstone may have been bought for his son William. He went there to see it once, at least, for a letter of a Gloucestershire worthy, Sir William Cooke, exists, in which he promises to be a kind friend and neighbour to Sir Michael Hicks now he has come into Gloucestershire, and says that he has already dispatched his keeper with his hounds to kill him a buck.

Michael died at Ruckholt two years later than this, on August 15th, 1612. His will was made with obvious haste on the day before he died. His wife, his brother Baptist, and his brother-in-law, Thomas Lowe, were made executors, with injunction to use their

discretion as to the bestowal of property among wife and children:—

"In which disposition I entreate the said Sir Baptist Hickes and Sir Thomas Lowe to have a Care of my sayd wife, whose love, care, and tender affection towards me I have great cause to respect. And withall I entreate my saied executors to remember Clement Hickes my brother, and my daughter in Law Mary Purvys, as alles such servants as I nowe have."

Next day, on the day of death itself, a memorandum was added in which his son William was added to the executors, his daughter Elizabeth's portion was directed to be £2,000, and £200 was to be given to Mary Purvis.

The 'Inquisition' of his property taken at the Guildhall on October 7th following shows that he possessed a house in Austin Friars, as well as that on St. Peter's Hill and his property in the parish of St. Catharine Colman. He possessed also, at the time of his death, as well as the estate of Beverstone, considerable lands in Nottinghamshire, formerly parcel of the possessions of the dissolved priory of Lenton. The jurors said they were ignorant of whom the said lands were 'held' and there is no trace of their acquisition in the Close Rolls.

Michael Hicks was buried in the chancel of Leyton Church, and a monument of beautifully designed and coloured marble was placed there by his widow. On it, he is represented lying with his head on his mailed hand, in the armour he never donned, and with a close beard in the fashion of the day, which he is certainly without in his portrait at Witcombe. In the arched recess behind him is the Latin inscription:—

In obitum Clariss, Viri D. Michaelis Hickes
Equitis aurati, etc.
Quae volui in Vita Vidi dulcissima nuper Piqnora,
Consortem charam, Sortenq; beatæ Prolis, erant
Nati Gemini, Nata una Parenti-Optabam Christum:
Hinc Morti succumbo, lubensq; Consortem, Sortem,
Natos, Natamq; relinquo.

To be translated thus :—

> On the death of the most illustrious gentleman
> SIR MICHAEL HICKES, KNT, ETC.
> Those things I desired in life I attained, pledges lately deemed the sweetest, a dear wife and a fortune. I was happy in my family; two sons and a daughter called me father. I began to long for Christ, therefore I willingly yield to death; willingly I leave wife, fortune, sons and daughter.

CHAPTER XII.

ELIZABETH HICKS.

WITH head on hand, and feet towards, and almost touching, those of her second husband, lies Elizabeth Hicks' effigy in the church at Low Leyton. Her dress, her widow's coif, her shoes, are black. The colour of the book in her hand is red, and her lips are very red too. Under her generously arched brows the widely set eyes are open, and the aquiline nose comes down towards a squarely-modelled chin. The effigy gives the effect of simplicity of mind and dignity of nature. Beneath the marble arch behind her is this inscription :—

> Me tua Mors Viduam fecit : tu jam Viduatus
> Connibium Christi, nonviduandus, habes
> At junctum hoc Tumulo me Sponsam rursus habebis,
> Sic tua semper ero, quæ tua nuper eram.
>
> (Thy death hath widowed me ; thou, snatched from me, hast wedded Christ, from whom thou shalt never be parted ; but united to thee once more in this tomb thou shalt again possess me a bride—thus I, who was lately thine, shall ever be thine.)

Right away, on the other side of the church on the south wall, is a plain stone :—

> HENRY PARVISH 4 of August 1593. He was an eminent merchant of London. Owner of the Manor of Ruckholts in this Parish : His widow matched to MICHAEL HICKES Esq : afterwards Kt. and of her son GABRIEL PARVISH was the Manor of Ruckholts purchased by her son SIR WILLIAM HICKES.

MONUMENTS TO MICHAEL AND ELIZABETH HICKS IN LOW LEYTON CHURCH, ESSEX.

In the Visitation of Essex, 1634, the Parvish pedigree begins with Henry himself, and says that he and Elizabeth had five children, Gabriel, Elizabeth, Anne, Ellen (Helena) and Mary. But they must have had at least seven, for there is a letter to Elizabeth from a son, Henry, and reference in another letter to a son, Thomas.

That Elizabeth ruled not only them, but her second family also, with affection, firmness and foresight—if without imagination—the few letters give evidence.

1. *Gabriel Parvish* must have been about fifteen when his father died, and about seventeen when his mother married again. As Ruckholt is not mentioned in Elizabeth's will she must have had only a life interest in it. Gabriel not only sold that to his step-brother, Sir William Hicks, but also disposed of a property in Shalford, co. Surrey, which seems to have been in the Parvish family for three generations.

2. *Thomas Parvish* was apparently not of gigantic stature. One of Elizabeth's sisters had married a citizen named Benet. The eldest son was Sir John Benet, and the younger brother carried on the family business, evidently that of a haberdasher. When it came to the matter of putting her son Thomas out in the world Elizabeth cast an eye in the direction of the Benet shop. But it was not to be; Thomas was not tall enough. Her nephew, Sir John, writes to her from Putney, 1604:—

> "My very good aunt. I would have been right glad to have satisfied your desire for placing your son Thomas with my brother Benet. But the truth is, after my brother was intreated at many hands (as you have understood) and found himself very willing to yield to our requests, he took a view of him, and perceived that, by reason of his small stature, he was not able to do him such service as his trade requireth, in bearing, pitching, and removing of broad cloths.

This answer he gave me finally upon Wednesday last (after sundry earnest solicitations) in the presence of my father (in-law) Lowe, and enforced the matter so fully, as neither he nor I could tell how to make reply."

Thomas' career does not seem to have been entirely blighted. He is referred to in later life in a letter from his brother Henry. (A Harleian pedigree says that he had four sons.)

3. *Henry Parvish* evidently carried on his father's business of "trading to Italy," and was established in Venice.

"VENICE, *the* 21 *July* 1613.

"Dear Mother. With all humility ever performed, and your kind letter of the 10th past acknowledged, craving pardon for my former ignorance; which being blotted out of your remembrance, and your blessing so freely bestowed upon me, I will hope hereafter better to pleasure your favour; desiring only that once in a year I may receive your blessing, I praying daily for the same.

"And, for my late father-in-law, (step-father) assure yourself I did know him kind and honest towards you and yours, and no doubt he hath received the fruit of an honest man.

"For my Father's estate if I was ignorant, let my travels excuse me. . . ."

Hereupon follows an explanation of his own financial position, which finishes with the assertion that he is in good credit and out of debt.

"I shall be glad to understand the estate of my sisters—as well those married as to marry. For however I live, or wheresoever I leave my bones, I hope to have something in advance; and having no children (as yet I have none) amongst my blood must be divided the fruit of my labours. For which I

desire the rather to hear how they are married and increase with children. Because I protest unto you what per (with) my youthful marriage (and) little content, and troubles in this world, I esteem myself not long lived; which, now I have obtained your favour, I esteem less than you can imagine. . . ."

He goes on to say that he has sent his sister Mary a pair of earrings and his brother Gabriel a waistcoat; he commends his mother to heaven, and himself to all the other members of the family, and says that his wife, Cecilia, wishes to remember "her duty to you and yours." If the Harleian edition of the Visitation of London, 1568, is correct, he had subsequently three sons, and his kind testamentary dispositions towards his sisters came to naught. And if Elizabeth ever sat down, pen in hand, to give him a really candid account of the married lives of her daughters, it is a million pities that the document has not survived. Some of his sisters, it is evident, would have been only too grateful for a little pecuniary help.

4. *Elizabeth Parvish*, the eldest daughter, married a neighbour, Charles Pratt of Homechurch.

5. *Anne Parvish* married, first of all, Timothy Whittingham of Holmside, Yorkshire. There is a letter all about her written to her mother, from a relation of her husband's who signs himself 'Jarrard Birkhead,' and who writes from York. It would seem as if Anne's husband were lately dead. Part of the letter has been deliberately destroyed—the writer praying this may be the fate of the whole epistle. The remainder gives a sufficient picture of discomfort under the roof of a mother-in-law, but Anne was probably something of a hussy, with a train of admirers, of which Mr. Jarrard Birkhead was evidently not the least. At all events, deliverance from an impossible domestic situation came. Anne married again, and her second husband was Henry Luter of London, merchant. She was destined,

too, to have a third husband, and by her last marriage with Sir John Dryden, Bart., became the aunt of the poet.

6. *Ellen, or Helena Parvish,* Elizabeth's third daughter, married one John Delahay, and the Parvish pedigree says, elaborately, that he was of Halternes, or Altyrings, between three and four miles west of Dore and Ewias Harold, co. Hereford.

7. *Mary Parvish* at the time of her step-father's death in 1612 had not finished her education. Her marriage is the only one of the sisters' which is in the Leyton register :—

1617 Sir Robert Charles Knight was married to Mrs. Mary Parvis daughter to the Lady Hickes 6th May 1617.

Sir Robert lived at Romford and so was a neighbour.

It was to this large family, with its multifarious interests and temperaments and tempers, that Mrs. Parvish heroically added a second husband, two more sons, and a fifth daughter!

No letters of Michael's to her exist, and there is only one of hers to him, and the beginning of that is torn off. (It is given in the original spelling and punctuation.)

". . . I wret to you though . . . and cheses which you sent . . . you sente it for it was very good and it was well eaten we dranke to you and wisht you here to eate of it, but I cannot have it with wishing if I coulde you shoulde not be from hence so much as you ar, but if I had all that I wolde I thinke I shoulde be unwilling to leave the worlde therefore I thinke it tis well as it is. I pray God bles you and giue you helth for I protest to you it tis the chefest thing I desier in this worlde. I had sent your men for you though you hat not scute for them. I was at my Brother Colstones and came home a porpose to write to you he toulde me that he wolde goe to London in the morning and come home a fote with you at night

for this wether it tis better to goe then to ride or to come in your coche, it freses so harde that my encke will cease fale (scarce fall) out of my pene nor my fingers houlde my pene, but that I write to you I shoulde cease (scarce) write in your countinghouse without a fier, but I will nowe bed you Godnight and sende you good reste and bles us with his grace.

"Your boy and gerl is well I thanke God

"Your euer louing wife

"ELIZABETH HICKES."

Except for its extreme tranquility of tone this is not very illuminating.

Michael and Elizabeth Hicks had three children: William, Michael and Elizabeth. The two boys were sent to school at Moreton, not far from Chelmsford and, indeed, very near home. The school was kept by a Mr. Goodwin, and was near Easton. It was on Henry Maynard's recommendation that William, first of all, was sent there in 1608, and in 1611 both the boys were at Moreton, for Lady Maynard, writing in July, says that she went there "yesterday and thanks be to God both the young gentlemen, Mr. Will and Mr. Michael Hickes all very well."

In 1613 William had left Mr. Goodwin, but Michael was still with him and in need of a new jerkin. The following letter is in beautiful writing on pencilled lines:—

"Most lovinge Mother. I have allwaies found your loving and mindfull toward me. Wherefore I knowe it to be my dutie to wright very often unto you, because I consider that nothinge can fall out more acceptable unto you then to heare of me, and of my good proceedings in learninge. Therefore I will alwaies have a redie mind unto my studies, that I may requite (though it be the lest part) of your benefites. So remembringe my most humble dutie

unto you, and intreating you to send me a jerkin, I take my leave and committ you to God

"Your most obedient sonne

"MICHAEL HICKES."

In 1613 William was at Trinity College, Cambridge, under the care of a Mr. Francis Nethersoll, two of whose letters to Lady Hicks exist, but concern his own movements only. The 'Family Tree' records that Michael also went to Trinity College, and that he died there. Possibly he did; there is no further mention of him at all.

As for Elizabeth, her education, too, was a certain preoccupation. She and her half-sister Mary had Masters for all the accomplishments, and one of them who signs himself 'P. Erondelle' had the temerity to send a French teacher down to Ruckholt.

> "To the end that the gentlewomen do not over much neglect their French, I have thought it good to recommend this bearer unto your Ladyship, for whose honest behaviour and diligence in teaching I will be answerable; which I would not do unless I had certain knowledge of his sound religion and conscience. . . . He intendeth to tarry with you some fortnight, upon trial of your liking."

In 1619, Lady Hicks' last remaining daughter was married to Sir William Armine, or Ermine, of Osgodby in Lincolnshire, the representative of an old Lincoln family. The baronetcy was dated November 28th and the wedding was on December 14th (so the pedigree says). Elizabeth had a son who married Anne Crane of Chilton, but they had daughters only, and the baronetcy became extinct in 1688.

Besides her children, her household, her friends and, we may be sure, her charities, Lady Hicks had the occupation of looking after her own money matters.

Her name appears several times in the Close Rolls and Patent Roll Calendars, and in the Close Rolls of 1612 is an indenture made to her by John Chamberleyn. This was a mortgage purchased by her on the manor of Widcombe Magna in Gloucestershire, and is the beginning of a long story.

The manor of Widcombe is not mentioned in Domesday Book, and is first heard of in 1275 when Edmond, Earl of Cornwall, was seised of it. Later on it was certainly part of the lands belonging to the priory of St. Oswald in Gloucester and, on the dissolution of the monasteries, it, together with an immense amount of land in the same neighbourhood and county, became the property of Sir Thomas Chamberlayne, ambassador in that, and in the three subsequent reigns, to the Courts of Hungary, Sweden, Portugal and Spain. Sir Thomas, who was descended from the Tankervilles, High Chamberlains of Normandy, had three wives* and a considerable family, and to the eldest son, John, went the wide Gloucestershire acres, soon to know a rapidly diminishing process.

From the Witcombe title-deeds the following tale has been culled :—

Sir John Chamberlayne was in debt to Sir Thomas Thynne of Longleat to the amount of £1,300 and he wanted Sir Thomas to become surety for £600 more. To this end he gave him a deed of conveyance on the manors of Prestbury, Churchdown, Hucclecote and Widcombe, and on land in Badgeworth and Upton St. Leonards. The conveyance was not to come into force until Sir John's death: then land was to be sold sufficient to repay Sir Thomas, and the residue was to revert to Sir John's widow and heirs.

This deed was dated May 26th, 1612, and on December 21st in the same year Sir John gave a mortgage

* From Sir Thomas and his second wife, Elizabeth Luddington, are descended the family of the Chamberlaynes of Maugersbury, Gloucestershire.

for £2,000 for two years to Lady Elizabeth Hicks on the manor of Widcombe. At the end of the two years, Sir John was not able to repay the £2,000 he had borrowed, so Lady Hicks descended, in the person of her agent, on the manor, for the purpose of receiving its rents. She found, however, that Sir John had issued a notice to the tenants not to pay her, and that Sir Thomas Thynne declared that he had a prior claim.

The matter was brought before the court of Chancery, March 5th, 1615, when Sir John Chamberlayne's defence was that, his debt to Thynne being only £2,000, he was of opinion that the land conveyed to Thynne over and above the manor of Widcombe was sufficient to pay all the engagements.

The court, however, "conceived a great suspicion of fraud," and ordered a subpœna to be issued on Chamberlayne to show cause why Lady Hicks should not enter into possession of the said manor or else have her money. The defendant not being able to show reason for this, an injunction was issued on June 12th, granting Elizabeth peaceable possession of the manor free of all incumbrances. On June 1st, 1616, a deed was signed confirming to her the lordship and possession of the manor, and on June 10th another deed, by which Sir John Chamberlayne, for himself and his heirs, quitted claim for ever.

It is not in the least probable that it ever occurred to Elizabeth that she should go and live on her new estate so far away in a Cotswold valley. It had been a mere investment, and had happened to turn out a very profitable one—and there, for her, the matter ended. Yet, if she never saw the Wide Combe, with the Roman road dropping down through it from the high plateau to the Severn side, she missed a vivid sensation. Modern means of travelling the roads swiftly have made the sensation a recurrent one to-day. If the whole journey from London is not often made by road, as it had to be made then, yet it is a pleasant thing to

leave the train at Oxford and to come straight across the tops of the Cotswolds, through the whole of the characteristic Cotswold country and those two entirely Cotswold towns, Burford and Cirencester. From Cirencester the Roman Ermine Street stretches for ten miles before the eyes, in an unbroken straight line to the edge of the Cotswold plateau, and on each side of it lies the wind-swept, undulating land with its spectre trees and isolated barns. The road dips, rises, sweeps through a village of low stone houses with stone roofs, and with the last of them the edge of the hills is suddenly gained. It is like an abrupt arrival on the brink of cliffs that overhang a seashore, for, like a sea, and wide as the sea, the whole plain of the Severn valley—a different country, with a different climate and a different people—lies before the eyes. And connecting the two lands, and curving slightly inwards in a horse-shoe formation where Ermine Street reaches the vale, are the beech-crowned slopes of the Wid(e)combe of yesterday, and the Witcombe of to-day, with their gabled farmhouses and their pastures and orchards; and Ermine Street leaves them behind it, and goes straight as an arrow once more across the plain to where the cathedral of Gloucester stands high above the haze of the river-side.

It is possible that Elizabeth may have gone into Gloucestershire to visit Sir Baptist and his lady in their great house at Campden, and may, from there, have journeyed across devious hill-roads from a northerly direction, and so have come at last to the edge of the plateau and of her Witcombe woods. There is no vestige of proof that she ever did so—but she kept the estate, and if she had ever seen it she must infallibly have done that.

After her husband's death Elizabeth seems to have lived a great deal at the house in Austin Friars which Michael's executors had made over to her. All that neighbourhood was a mass of dwellings and gardens;

many of the houses had been part of the friars' stables and offices, and in their midst rose the gilded vanes of the great house which Thomas Cromwell had built on the site of the monastery itself. It was a semi-rural settlement, with quick-set hedges and muddy lanes, all within the boundaries of the old monastery, and within a few paces of the exchange and the heart of the City. Elizabeth would be there in near touch with relations on both sides of the family, close to Sir Baptist and his wife in Milk Street, and close to her married sisters' town houses too. But she outlived Sir Baptist, for she did not die until 1634, in the summer of which year, while she was at Ruckholt, she made her will. Its provisions are more definite than those of the death-bed testament of Michael, her husband :—

Anno Domini 1634 the 14th July—In the name of God Amen. I, Dame Elizabeth Hicks, late wife to Sir Michael Hicks Knight deceased, do, the day and year above written, make this my last will and testament, being infirm of body but (thanks be to God) in perfect sense and memory, for which His Name be praised. First I yield up my soul into the hands of Almighty God who created it, and in His infinite mercy, through the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, redeemed it; with hope and confidence that, in the accomplishment of all His mercies extended unto me in His good time, He will grant me a part of the Resurrection of the Just; that in that Great Day I may with comfort behold His glorious Countenance.

My body I will to be buried in the Church of Leyton parish in a convenient place, with ceremonies according to the Church of England. And for my funerals, I leave them to be performed at the discretion of my Executors and Overseers of this my last will and testament.

I will that all such debts as shall be found owing by me at the time of my death be duly paid out of my estate.

To the poor of Leyton parish I leave it to my Executor to give and supply their necessities as he shall find fitting. To George Tillery, Joyce my maidservant, George Gardiner and Edward the Warrener, my ancient servants, I refer to my Executor to give them what he shall please to bestowe of them.

I give and bequeath unto John Delahay, my grandchild, the sum of five hundred pounds, out of which is to be paid such a sum as shall be given for his preferment in service to a Master, either Merchant or other Trader as his friends shall find fitting for his training up. And what the residue of the said five hundred pounds may amount unto, I will that it be let out at interest for the use of

the said John Delahay for the increasing of this my said legacy. And that the said legacy, with the full interest, be paid unto the said John Delahay or his Assigns when he shall arrive unto the full term of one and twenty years.

I give and bequeath unto my son Sir William Hicks Knight, Baronet, the manor of Widcombe in Gloucestershire, and all my personal estate. That is to say all sum or sums of money due unto me by bonds, mortgages, bills or debts, or any other specialities or contracts whatsoever.

Likewise I give and bequeath unto my said son Sir William Hicks, all manner of household stuff, plate, jewels, rings or pearls that I shall die possessed withal, either in my now dwelling house at Ruckholts in Essex, or in my house in St. Austin Friars in London ; except only such household stuff and plate as is or shall be found in both or either of my said houses of Ruckholt or Austin Friars at my decease, belonging or appertaining unto the estate of my first husband Henry Parvish deceased. All which said household stuff and plate I give and bequeath unto my son Gabriel Parvish.

And I ordain and make hereby my said son Sir William Hicks my sole and full executor of this my last will and testament. And likewise make Sir Robert Quarles Knight and my son Gabriel Parvish my Overseers. And I give to each of them for a legacy ten pounds apiece. And so I leave my blessing with them. And I pray God continue his peace amongst them. Eli : Hickes Sealed and subscribed and delivered as her deed in the presence of us Eliza : Pratt Richard Alline.

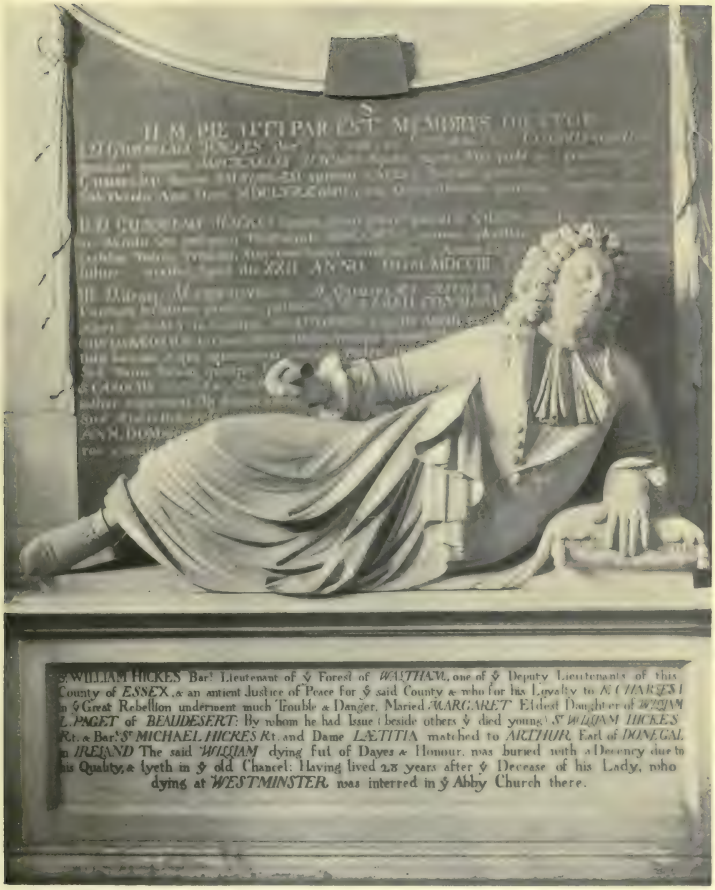
CHAPTER XIII.

SIR WILLIAM HICKS, BART., I. AND II. 1612 TO 1680 AND 1680 TO 1703.

On his father's death in 1612 William Hicks became possessed of the castle and lands of Beverstone in Gloucestershire; on his mother's death in 1634 he became owner of the manor of Witcombe in the same county, and, when his mother's life interest in it ceased, he bought Ruckholt, in Essex, from his step-brother Gabriel Parvish; so the Parvish monument in Leyton Church says.

He was born in 1596, in the reign of the last of the Tudors, and he did not die until 1680. His lifetime covers a period when the history of many families flames suddenly with passion, and despair, and burns down into the steady glow of Fortitude—into necessary endurance of the 'thing desired.'

Sir William and passionate incident were not linked successfully together, and Fortitude—as Botticelli conceived of her at all events—was certainly never the goddess of his hearth. In the two counties in which he was a landowner, the Royalist and the Puritan levies marched and counter-marched, and we can believe, as Sir William's monument records, that he "Underwent great Trouble and Danger." But the trouble had been all over for twenty years when that was written over him, and it would have proved a robuster mood if it had been forgotten. It seems to betray a nature of low vitality, and famous contemporary diaries verify the impression. Other households had been wrecked disastrously on the rocks of the Commonwealth, and had patched their shattered hulks together



MONUMENT TO SIR WILLIAM HICKS, FIRST BARONET, IN LOW LEYTON CHURCH, ESSEX.

and raised sail merrily once more when Royalist breezes began to blow; but Sir William, in his gloomy old house in the Essex marshes, had that curious form of vanity which shows itself in being unnecessarily wretched. A door swinging latchless; torn arras dangling in the draught; meals shockingly served to the music of rooks cawing ceaselessly in the swaying trees close to the windows—that is the picture we get of his latter days; and his sculptured, loosely-knit figure, lying on the monument, seems to say pathetically that he could not help the deliberate pose!

It was on the Essex stage that his life was lived out. Then, as now, the county held within its boundaries very divers elements. It had, in the first place, its purely country districts, where a church and a village were the nucleus of an estate; where the squire and the parson reigned supreme, and where the old faith and the old manorial customs died a lingering death. Secondly, there was the large district, which was then, as truly as it is now, 'London over the Border.' Here, from early Plantagenet days onwards, city merchants had rooted themselves in the soil as landed proprietors, and had built houses on the rising ground backed by the great Essex Forest and fronting the reaches of the Thames and distant views of its wooded Kentish banks. Ruckholt was in this neighbourhood, which had been dominated from mediæval times by the culture and the wealth of City princes, and which was, on a large scale, simply a suburb of London itself. Lastly, there were the small Essex towns. Chelmsford, the county town, practically owned by the Mildmay family, was unimportant and not even incorporated: then there were Maldon, Saffron Walden, Thaxted and others, with Colchester in the north of the county.

Colchester had had a continuous history from the days of its Roman greatness onwards, and in the seventeenth century it was a centre for the weaving of 'bays and says,' and had a population of over 8,000, an

immense number of whom were of Dutch or Flemish extraction—the children of refugees from the Low Countries. Harwich, close by, was the great port of Northern Europe, and in constant intercourse with the Continent. It is not too much to say that Harwich and Colchester were the channel through which the liberal opinions of the reformed faith percolated into England.

The defeat of the Armada brought about a revulsion against the Puritan spirit all over the country, and in Essex itself are many recorded instances of incumbents presented to the bishop by their churchwardens for infractions of the Book of Common Prayer and neglect of its rubrics. On the whole, however, the beginning of the historic struggle found Essex strongly Puritan and Colchester itself a hotbed of disaffection, and one reason for this state of affairs may have been that many of the old Essex families had disappeared. The De Veres, who had been the first family in the county for six centuries, had become impoverished, and the nineteenth earl had married a Dutch woman and lived in Holland. The Fitzwalters, who were in Essex for four centuries, had been succeeded by the Radcliffes, to whom Henry VIII. gave the earldom of Sussex, which died out with the sixth earl in 1641, and the two Radcliffe heiresses married Sir Thomas Cheke and Sir Henry Mildmay, who were both Parliamentarians; while another Essex house, the Darcys of Chiche, found themselves, at the beginning of the war, without a male representative—Earl Rivers, head of the family, having died in 1639.

Essex was, in short, the last county in England in which a man who was a pronounced Royalist would willingly have found himself in the years of tumult which began with the dismissal of the Parliament of 1628. But the truth is that, until the day when he did turn with a certain decision from an abhorrent extreme, Sir William Hicks, floating with the tide, did not discover his environment to be uncomfortable.

It is quite likely that if he left Cambridge with any opinions at all, those opinions were Liberal, for that was the prevailing spirit of the university, although Trinity College itself was not specially Puritan in tone. In the years after leaving college, however, it is certain that the Puritan ideal did not harass him particularly. His uncle, Sir Baptist, was a powerful member of the Court party, and he himself was rich in a Court that always needed money. In the year 1619, at the age of twenty-three, he was made a baronet by James I. The grant was made out at Theobalds on July 18th in wordy Latin, and on July 21st another lengthy document was signed, the purport of which was that William Hicks was to be acquitted of the sum of £1,095, usually paid in respect of the dignity of a baronet, because he did voluntarily offer aid for the maintenance of thirty footmen in the army in Ireland for three whole years. In a gossipping letter dated August 23rd in the same year, Sir John Chamberlain, writing to Sir Dudley Carleton from London, tells him of three or four knights made into baronets :—

> "The first was Sir Villiers, eldest brother to the L. of Buckingham. . . . Another was Sir James Lee, Attorney of the Court of Wards : besides Sir William Harny that married the old Countess of Southampton, and younge Hickes sonne to Sir Michael Hicks that comes to it I know not by what title."

"By what title" Sir William Armine got his baronetcy in November of the same year is likewise a mystery. He married William's only sister, Elizabeth, in Low Leyton Church in December, and proved to be, in the time to come, an active Parliamentarian. Marriages complicated life tremendously, and Sir William Hicks' own marriage in 1625, to a daughter of Lord Paget, plunged him into a family that was decidedly Puritan. The Pagets seem to have had their origin in

the little town of Uxbridge, and, in 1547, Henry VIII. gave the manor of West Drayton, close by, to Sir William Paget, afterwards Lord Paget of Beaudesert. He was succeeded by his two sons, Henry, who died in 1568, and Thomas, third Lord Paget, who was a Roman Catholic. Thomas, Lord Paget, was attainted of treason in 1587 and his estates, including West Drayton, were forfeited; but after his death Elizabeth granted the reversion of the manor of West Drayton to his son William, who afterwards recovered, by Act of Parliament, the remainder of his father's estates and the title. He was the fourth Lord Paget, and it was his youngest daughter, Margaret, whom Sir William married.

Margaret Paget had had a strict Protestant unbringing, for her mother was Lettice Knollys, grand-daughter of Sir Francis Knollys, one of the well-known Protestants added to the Great Council of Elizabeth,* while her mother was the daughter of Sir Ambrose Cave, another of the seven. One of Margaret's elder sisters married Sir William Waller, who was, later, one of Cromwell's most famous generals; and her eldest brother, the fifth Lord Paget, married Lady Frances Rich, daughter of Lord Holland, a leading Parliamentarian. All this would necessarily be an influence in Sir William Hicks' early married life. The wedding took place in West Drayton Church.

1625 September 8. William Hickes Knight and Baronet and Margaret Paget oldest daughter of the Lord Paget by Licence.

is the entry in the register. Lord Paget's house was built in what was once the churchyard, and is now the churchyard again. A rectangular gatehouse is all that remains to-day of a very considerable mansion and outbuildings.

Lord Paget was Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, where Great Marlow had just been created a

* His mother-in-law was Mary Boleyn, sister to Anne Boleyn.

borough with two members, and in 1626, he put his son-in-law in as one of them ; and thus was Sir William pitchforked into the hurly-burly of the Parliamentary struggle.

Parliament had met at Oxford in 1625, in a stern temper, for Charles I. had defied it. He defied it again, for its determination to consider public grievances was checkmated by dissolution, and Buckingham, resolved to lure the mind of the country from the constitutional struggle by the triumphs of war, got together a great fleet which was sent to the coast of Spain. The expedition was an idle one and the enormous debt incurred made a new summons of the two Houses imperative, and it was this Parliament of 1626 to which Sir William was elected for the first time.

The Parliamentary leader of these earlier stages of the struggle was Sir John Eliot. He called for an enquiry into the failure before Cadiz ; Charles answered with threats, but Buckingham's impeachment was voted and carried to the Lords and pressed home by the invective of Eliot. Charles' reply was fierce and sudden, and Eliot and Digges were committed to the Tower. Till their members were restored, the Commons refused to proceed with public business, and the King had to yield ; but Eliot's release was instantly followed by another dissolution and by an appeal to the nation to pay as a gift the subsidies which Parliament had refused.

But the tide of popular resistance—apart as yet from the resistance of Parliament—was gradually rising, and refusals to give anything came from county after county. Charles met the failure by defiance of the law and the levy of a forced loan. "Every means of persuasion as of force was resorted to," says J. R. Green. "The pulpits of the Laudian clergy resounded with the cry of 'passive obedience.' . . . Poor men who refused to lend were pressed into the army or navy. . . . Eight peers, with Lord Essex and Lord Warwick

at their head, declined to comply with the exaction as illegal. Two hundred county gentlemen whose obstinacy had not been subdued by their transfer from prison to prison were summoned before the Council." John Hampden, who was one of them, declared that he must refuse to lend for fear of drawing down on himself the curse in Magna Charta.

That fear did not haunt Sir William Hicks. Essex was one of the counties which resisted most strenuously. Lord Warwick was Joint Lord Lieutenant of the county with Lord Sussex, and behind him were most of those prominent in Essex life. But Sir William's name does not appear in any list of delinquents—he gave no trouble—he paid what was demanded. Yet his acquiescence does not seem to have involved him with his neighbours, for when, in the following year, Lord Warwick "bought out" Lord Sussex and became sole Lord Lieutenant of the county, he made Sir William a Deputy Lieutenant—an honour then rarely bestowed.

It was Buckingham's folly—the abortive expedition to Rochelle—which forced on Charles, again overwhelmed with debt, the summoning of yet another Parliament in 1627. Sir William did not stand for Great Marlow this time, and that is a sure indication of his indecisive mood—a mood that must have been universal enough. It looks, too, as if the predominating influence was for the moment not his Paget father-in-law, but his uncle, the Royalist Sir Baptist; for when Sir Baptist, who was sitting as member for Tewkesbury in this new Parliament, was suddenly made a peer in 1628, he put his nephew in as member for Tewkesbury in his place. So it came about, after all, that Sir William was behind the locked doors of the House of Commons during that strange scene when the Speaker, in tears, was held down in his chair; when the Usher of the House of Lords, with the order for adjournment, knocked vainly, while Denzil Holles read the famous protest, and Eliot uttered the prophecy, "None have

gone about to break Parliaments but in the end Parliaments have broken them."

Sir William was not the only person in that fevered atmosphere with a fundamental distaste for revolution. The tide of passion had risen so high that it would seem as if a climax must have been reached there and then. But when the guards came to force the doors they found an empty chamber; and so was inaugurated the eleven years of King Charles' personal rule.

There was no dubiety about the effect of those eleven years on Sir William.

In 1640 Scotland was in arms. "The discovery of a correspondence between the Scotch leaders and the French Court raised hopes in the King that an appeal to the country for aid against Scotch treason would still find an answer in English loyalty." Relying on a burst of popular indignation, he thought it a propitious moment in which to summon a Parliament once more and ask for a heavy subsidy. But "every member of the Commons knew that Scotland was fighting the battle of English liberty"; they set aside the intercepted letters and declared, as of old, that redress of grievances must precede the grant of supplies.

Three weeks was the measure of Charles' patience with them; the old weapon of dissolution fell again, and with strange infatuation all the old measures of exaction were continued with renewed energy.

In this Parliament, known to history as the Short Parliament, Sir William Hicks sat for Great Marlow once more, as the nominee of the Puritan Pagets, and, for the next three years, at least, the line he took was definitely Parliamentarian, although he evaded re-election to the Long Parliament.

It was the occupation of Newcastle by the Scotch army and their threatened march on York which obliged Charles, with wrath and shame, to summon the Houses again to Westminster; and there stepped to the front at once John Pym, the first definite leader of

the House of Commons. Pym was a political genius, and he foresaw clearly from the first the issue that must now, at last, be forced—the doctrine that, as an element of constitutional life, Parliament was of higher value than the Crown.

Two years later England was plunged in a civil war. Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Cambridge, Huntingdon and Lincoln formed themselves into an 'Eastern Counties' Association' in aid of the Parliamentary cause, and Sir William Hicks was on the committee for Essex. In 1642 he was nominated one of the committee for carrying out the 'Scandalous Ministers' Acts'; in 1643 he was one of the Essex committee of assessment and was on the Essex sequestration committee; and in June of the same year, as the borough MSS. at Colchester show, he and others became surety for the payment of £2,000 raised for the pay of the Essex forces. But recruiting was becoming more difficult; the first ardour of the county for the Parliamentary cause was cooling. Complaint was made of the poor attendance of the county gentry at a meeting at Chelmsford, and Sir William's own excuse * was that he desired to attend Mr. Waller's trial† next day; and in October he and some of his influential neighbours made a formal protest against a new levy of men from their district, which, they say, had already sent more than its full share of soldiers.

All classes were beginning to feel the strain of these heavy exactions, and in December Sir William showed his first sign of revolt and definitely refused to pay an assessment of £800 made upon him. Parliament had but one answer for that sort of behaviour, and

* In a letter to Sir Thomas Barrington, June 29th, 1643.

† Edmund Waller, the poet, who was connected with the Pagets by marriage, had been engaged in negociations with King Charles. Two of his associates were hanged, but he escaped with a fine of £10,000.

a warrant, dated January 16th, 1644, was made out for his "safe custody." The order for his discharge is dated a week later, and he is directed to pay the £800, the collector's salary and charges, and to contribute £120 7*s.* 4*d.* in plate because that part of his estate in the county of Gloucester is under the power of the King's forces.

In 1644 Sir William's Gloucestershire property, Beverstone Castle, was in the hands of Royalist troops under Colonel Oglethorpe. It is extraordinary that, during the two and a half centuries they possessed it, the Norman stronghold never had any appeal for the Hicks' imagination. To-day the shadow of its great keep lies across the rectory croquet hoops, and jackdaws caw undisturbed in the trees that lean towards it; but the "Bureston" of Domesday Book* stood out nakedly on the Cotswold hillside, 600 feet above the Severn river, and overlooked the plateau from Kingscote to Cirencester, the whole length of the vale of White Horse and the downs round Marlborough and Calne. The accepted theory seems to be that some Norman named Bure, or Bever, in the train of the Norman Queen Emma, obtained a grant of land from Canute, and on it built his castle after the manner of his own country. Such as he made it, did it remain until it was granted by Henry II.. as part and parcel of the great manor, since known as the manor of Berkeley, to Robert Fitzharding, whose eldest son, Maurice, married the daughter of Roger de Berkele. Maurice Fitzharding's third son, Robert, took the name of De Weare, and Beverstone became his portion. His son, Maurice de Weare, rebuilt the castle, about 1225, and left it to his sister's son, Robert de Gournay. Anslem de Gournay was the next owner; then John de

* "Beverstone: Its Church and Its Castle." By J. Nowell Bromehead, Rector of the Parish.

Gournay, and then a granddaughter who married Lord Ap Adam. The only son of this marriage, Thomas Ap Adam, sold back the castle, in 1331, to the Berkeley family—to Thomas, commonly called the Great Lord Berkeley. He reconstructed the whole place out of ransom money obtained for prisoners in the battle of Poitiers.

Lord Berkeley made the castle a place of great strength and adorned it with stone carving. It was a quadrangular pile, with a tower at each angle, and the south-west tower was probably reared on the foundations of the original building and more or less represents it. Between each tower was a curtain-wall, with galleries and chambers behind it. Beyond the portcullis were the flanking walls of a barbican; then came a deep moat which encircled the whole castle and was crossed by a drawbridge, while a second moat lay at a distance of 80 or 90 yards beyond the south face. It was, in fact, a magnificent—a 'baronial'—place; and what a chapter for this book the story of its siege might have made, had its owner but been a person in whom the dramatic sense was at all developed!

Once before in its history Beverstone had been occupied by troops who desired to overawe the city of Gloucester. In 1051 an army was gathered to force King Edward the Confessor, who lay at his residence at Gloucester, to dismiss his Norman favourites. Uley Bury and Beverstone were occupied for the purpose, and Earl Godwin, with his sons, the Earl of Gloucester and the Earl of East Anglia, were at Beverstone. In 1643 it was the People's Army which was in possession of Gloucester, and the King's men who had seized Beverstone; which commanded all the disaffected cloth-weaving valleys between it and the city. Its seizure by the Royalists was easy enough, for it was quite unfortified. Sir William's tenant there was a yeoman named John Shipway, who occupied a very small part of the great pile. It is likely enough that Shipway

BEVERSTONE CASTLE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

(*From a print at Witcombe Park.*)

was himself a Royalist—in any case, resistance on his part would have been useless.

The castle is said to have withstood more than one assault from Gloucester, and, early in 1644, Colonel Massie, who commanded the Parliamentary troops there, made a determined attempt to take it with 300 foot soldiers and 80 horsemen. Guns were placed close to the entrance, and there was an effort to blow up the gate, but the attacking force was driven back by hand grenades and stones, and after twelve hours' hard fighting retired to Wotton-under-Edge. In May of the same year, however, the castle came into the hands of the enemy. It is not a particularly inspiring story. Colonel Oglethorpe, its commander, was seized by Massie in the house of a young woman in the neighbourhood of whom he had become enamoured, and Massie wrote to the lieutenant, who was second in command, offering him and the garrison "faire quarter and true performance" if they would surrender. Perhaps the position had really become untenable. At all events, the officer struck some sort of a bargain, and he and his men made their way to Malmesbury. Colonel Massie put a Parliamentarian garrison at once into the evacuated castle and Sir William Hicks was called on for its support. He appealed against the demand to the Committee of Both Kingdoms, and an order, dated August 26th, 1645,* was sent to the committee at Gloucester:—

"We are informed by Sir Wm. Hicks that you require him to maintain the garrison of Beverstone Castle, of which he is the Proprietor, or else that it must be slighted. Having suffered much in his estate for his good affection to the Parliament, he assures us that he is not of ability to do that, besides the place being small, it may be kept by a garrison of only 40 musketeers, the which we conceive

* State papers.

probable, for that, Sir Thomas Fairfax being so near at Bristol, it cannot be in any great danger. You are therefore to afford it such a small garrison that the Castle may not suffer more than it has already done, but be still preserved for him."

From this concession it is clear that Sir William's half-hearted pecuniary revolt at the beginning of 1644 had been forgiven. Indeed, in May of that same year, he was made one of the Committee for the General Assessment of the East and West, and in 1645 he was both on the Committee for Raising and Maintaining the New Model, and on that for Raising the Scots Assessment. It was that curious social and religious medley, the army of the New Model, with which King Charles found himself confronted at Naseby. With Naseby the issue of the Civil War was decided once for all, and, with the complete downfall of the Royal cause, it was but human that the natural loyalty of the average Englishman to the Crown should reassert itself. Sir William was an average Englishman, with average caste instincts, and, after Naseby, it is quite clear that he belonged to that party which thought that things had gone far enough, but did not realise that they had gone too far for accommodation, and not far enough for a genuine popular reaction.

In Essex the reaction, which culminated in the siege of Colchester, was peculiarly disastrous. On May 4th, 1648, 2,000 men of Essex, claiming to represent 30,000 more, marched to Westminster with a petition praying for an agreement with the King and the disbandment of the army. In June Sir William Hicks and most of the country gentlemen were assembled in Chelmsford, and Lord Norwich, who had already raised Royalist levies in Kent, was negociating with them.

The Duke of Beaufort has in his possession a manuscript narrative of the siege of Colchester, by an eye-witness. It relates that the Houses at Westminster

were alarmed at the threatened union of the two counties:—

"They humbled themselves to theire old arts and offer'd us an Act of Indempnitie, upon condition that we would render to them the gentlemen of Kent as a well pleasing sacrifice . . . we were too well acquainted with theire thirst of blood to thinke this offering could appease; . . . all the advantage we could have expected from theire Act of Indempnitie, was no more than Polyphemus promised Ulisses, to be the last devoured, yet this deceipt so wrought upon the feares of some of our meane spirited counterymen, as Sir William Hicks and others—who march'd in the first ranks of our petitioners—that they were frighten'd into an infamous apostacie to their loyalties and honours, and to a breach of theire faithe, which they had forengaged to the gentlemen of Kent: whom by the bonds of justice, honour and interest, we were obliged to assist.

"This meene example of the gentlemen shaked, and had almost dissolv'd the assembly of our counterymen, had not the honourable Sir Charles Lucas—like a worthy patriot—stept in, to the rescue of his countery, and reason'd those that remained into a resolution of adhering to their first engagement."

Another account in the Civil War pamphlets says:—

"The Commons from Parliament were here, and published the indempnity to the inhabitants, and Sir Wm. Hicks and divers others of the gentlemen submitted. But Sir Ch. Lucas that eminent Cavalier came into them, and by his insinuations hath prevailed with the Cavalier party and the soldiers. And they seized on Sir Wm. Hicks and several

other gentlemen of the county and plundered some, which hath much discontented the inhabitants."

It is not possible to unravel the threads of all that really took place in those heated Chelmsford councils. But, although it is true that it was Sir Charles Lucas who was henceforth leader of that more ardent section of the county gentlemen who felt they had gone too far to retreat, it is not fair to say that Sir William was an infamous apostate. "Some thought it best to depart privately from the town, lest an unexpected inconveniency should arise and occasion their persons to be seized," says Matthew Carter, who left a long account of the whole matter. Lord Warwick's steward, Arthur Wilson, is another who wrote down what happened, and his story is that, when Sir Charles Lucas and his followers seized the Parliamentarians of Chelmsford, he was sent down by his master to secure his house at Leez. On his road from London he met, returning thither, the three commissioners who had gone to Chelmsford to offer the terms of indemnity. To them he told the news, just received, that General Fairfax had routed the Kentish Royalists at Maidstone, and, says Wilson, "They desired me to inform Sir William Hixe of it and others of the leaders at Chelmsford, which I did. But it took no impression in their belief." Wilson goes on to relate how the Essex Royalists at once took the field, and that the soldiers elected Sir Charles Lucas to be their general, "one who had been a great commander for the King." It has to be remembered that Sir William at this time was fifty years old, and that he had had no practice in warfare at all, and had no taste for it; but, if he went not forth to battle, he did at least stick to his newly-adopted intentions.

General Fairfax, flushed with his Kentish victories, crossed the river into Essex and drove the Royalist forces north to Colchester. That town, after a faint

show of resistance, opened its gates to them; then the gates were shut; the Royalists faced about; Fairfax was under the walls, and the famous siege began. It lasted ten weeks before the garrison was finally starved out, and, years afterwards,* when kings had come again to their own, one John Heyes of Woodford based an appeal about some small matter of land, on the fact that he and his servant were in arms at Chelmsford "when Sir William Hicks and the rest of the gentry of the country were there to receive commands from Colchester."

Lord Capell, who had married the only child of Sir William's cousin, Lady Moryson of Cassiobury, was one of those condemned to death after the surrender. Mr. John Strype's story is that Sir William himself as "privy to, and concerned in that business was kept in prison about six weeks," but no warrant for the imprisonment is in the State papers. What is more positive is that his estates were confiscated and the rents stayed in the tenants' hands; but, on June 27th, 1649, five months after the King's execution, he compounded for his delinquency by payment of £1,000,† and was discharged by the Essex commissioners. In April, 1650, the sequestration of Beverstone was removed as well.

The story of Sir William Hicks resolves itself inevitably into a catalogue, and, at this point in his fortunes, that can be realised in full force, because, in November, 1649, he, with his eldest son, William, his nephew, Michael Armyne, and a servant, went "beyond seas"; ‡ and the fact has just to be stated and then left as a bald statement—as another item in the catalogue. And what else but a further item is the information that he had eleven children, of whom, in this year of 1649, six survived? The fact does not in the least call

* State papers, 1670.
† State papers.
‡ Passport in State papers.

into being daily existence at Ruckholt during thirty-eight years of married life. It is as if between ourselves and the real drama hangs a curtain, which leaves but a narrow space between itself and the footlights; and Sir William seems to step across the strip of boards but occasionally in order to give us the bare heads of all that is going on behind. It is clear that when Sir William decided "over seas" to be the happiest place for such as he, Ruckholt was shut up, and Lady Margaret his wife, and her five younger children went to live in the London house on St. Peter's Hill. There, in 1652, she died, and she was buried in Westminster Abbey—on the north of King Henry VII.'s monument, the Abbey register says.

Who can tell what her death meant to Sir William? The power to portray what it did really mean would alone suffice to make their history of immortal interest. Which of them was it, in their long relationship, who gave gold for the other's silver? Which was the happier, the giver of gold? Not Sir William, perhaps, for the melancholy which he assiduously courted had, maybe, for its mainspring causes not purely political.

Politics, however, continued to be for him melancholy enough. He had evidently come back from abroad with his Royalist tendencies intensified—was, at all events, strongly suspected of the powers that were—and in 1655, as a sequel to a semi-successful Royalist rising in Wiltshire, he, with eighteen other Essex gentlemen, was arrested as a mere precaution, and sent prisoners to Yarmouth. In October, however, he signed a bond for £1,500, binding himself not to plot nor conspire, and to reveal any plot that came to his knowledge; so his release was ordered—"Major Hezekiah Haynes to see it done," says the warrant.* In 1658 Oliver Cromwell died, and a Cheshire gentleman, Sir George Booth,† once a Puritan too, put himself prematurely

* State papers.

† Created Lord Delamere at the Restoration.

SIR WILLIAM HICKS, SECOND BARONET.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS, KNIGHT.

(Sons of Sir William Hicks, first Baronet. From pictures at Witcombe Park.

at the head of the movement for the restoration of monarchy. The reaction of feeling was, however, not yet universal enough, and, well planned as the rising was, it failed, and Ruckholt was one of the Royalist houses searched for arms in the hour of retribution. Sir William was "barbarously treated" by John Topham, the commander of the troop of horse who carried out the search—so said one Gerard Foukes, four years later, when he wanted Topham's place of Sergeant-at-Arms.*

"It is my own fault that I did not come back sooner; for I find nobody who does not tell me he has always longed for my return," said Charles II. ironically, when he landed in Dover the next year. It had been supposed that the landing would be at Harwich, and Sir William was, no doubt, among the troop of Essex gentlemen, with Lord Maynard at their head, who assembled there to do the King honour. And *The Loyal Address of the Gentlemen of Gloucestershire*, presented by Lord Herbert on June 19th, contained Sir William's name as a Gloucestershire landowner. "Always true to the Royal Cause, and to the Church of England," says the vicar of Low Leyton of him—prefacing that by the more cautious statement that he lived in "difficult times."

In the year of the Restoration Sir William was sixty-four years of age, and he lived for twenty years longer in the manor house of Ruckholt, which got shabbier and shabbier as time went on. Mr. Strype says that he had faced it with brick, "much improving and beautifying it"; but Mr. John Evelyn, that typical country gentleman of the day, was not at all impressed with it:—

> "I went to Rookwood and dined with Sir William Hickes where there was a great feast and much company. It is a melancholy old house environed with trees and rooks——"

* Petition in State papers, 1663.

Thus wrote Evelyn in his famous *Diary*, on May 28th, 1659; and the date is interesting because it was in the spring of the year after the death of the Protector, and it was just before the abortive Booth affair—it was in fact, a moment when Royalist hopes were running very high. But the realisation of those hopes was not made the occasion for setting Ruckholt in order. Another more garrulous diarist, Samuel Pepys, went there six years later and painted a picture of extreme desolation:—

> "1665—Sept. 13th. My Lord Brouncker, Sir J. Minnes, and I took boat, and in my Lord's Coach to Sir W. Hickes's whither by and by my Lady Batten and Sir William comes. It is a good seat, with a fair grove of trees by it, and the remains of a good garden; but so let to run to ruine, both house and everything in and about it, so ill furnished and miserably looked after, I never did see in all my life. Not so much as a latch to his dining-room door; which saved him nothing, for the wind blowing into the room for want thereof, flung down a great bow pott, that stood upon the side table, and that fell upon some Venice glasses, and did him a crown's worth of hurt. He did give us the meanest dinner (of beef, shoulder and umbles of venison which he takes away from the Keeper of the Forest,* and a few pigeons, and all in the meanest manner;) that ever I did see to the basest degree. I was only pleased at a very fine picture of the Queene Mother when she was young by Vandike; a very good picture and a lovely face."

It is very possible that, in his old age, Sir William really had persuaded himself that he was a ruined martyr in the Royal cause. It may have been an

* Sir William was Ranger or Lieutenant of Waltham Forest. The date of the appointment is uncertain.

SIR WILLIAM HICKS, FIRST BARONET.

(*From a drawing in the possession of Viscount St. Aldwyn.*)

honest conception, evolved out of the curious morbidities of the human mind, or it may have been a deliberate attitude maintained for a purpose. Little came of it, however. The King, Charles II., was entertained at the Ranger's house one day when he was hunting in the forest,* and the apparent poverty he beheld there did make him aware of expectations with which he was familiar enough; so he knighted the old baronet's two sons, William and Michael, there and then, and discharged what debt there was in that way.

William Hicks was sixteen years older than his brother Michael, who was at this time a boy of eighteen or nineteen, and they and a younger sister, Elizabeth, were all that were left of the once large family, for Letitia, the only other surviving daughter, had been married to Lord Donegall for some years. William married in 1665, Michael in 1674, and Elizabeth died in 1776 at the age of twenty-seven, so that the last few years of old Sir William's life were solitary ones. As a magistrate and as Lieutenant of the forest he took part in county affairs up to the end,† and then, at eighty-four years of age, he died, and his son William reigned at Ruckholt in his stead.

Of Sir William Hicks, second baronet, nothing is known beyond what his rector has recorded of him:—

> "Sir William Hicks Kt. and Baronet, son and heir of Sr William (receiving University Learning also at Trinity College) came to ye Honour and Estate in October Anno 1680, and lived many years in Honor and Reputation at his antient seat of Ruckholts, was High Sheriff of ye county of Essex Ann 16. . . . and served that Office at his own Expence, with much credit and splendour, ye L. Chief Justice Vaughan

* Narrative of John Strype.

† Various unimportant references in State papers.

and Sir Tob. Charleton then Judges of ye Assize at Chelmesford."

Sir William II. married, in 1665, Marthagnes, daughter of Sir Harry Coningsby of North Ryms Park, Hertfordshire.* They had thirteen children, and the the eldest, Harry, became the third baronet. Both Sir Harry's surviving sons died childless, and the title passed to the son of his brother Charles, who was childless also. Thus it came about that the baronetcy went eventually to the grandson of Michael—Sir Michael—who was the youngest son of Sir William I. and the brother of Sir William II. It is with this Sir Michael Hicks, Knight, that the story has to be continued.

NOTE.—The monument to Sir Michael Hicks and Elizabeth his wife was originally erected along the east wall of the chancel in Leyton Church. In 1698 a new chancel was built, the monument was replaced, and opposite to it, along the west wall, Sir William Hicks II. put a monument to his father, who is represented lying down with his elbow on a cushion, and the staff of the Lieutenant of the forest in his other hand. The standing figures of Sir William II. himself and his wife, Marthagnes, were added in due course, one on either side. They are a striking example of the degenerate taste of the day. In 1822 the church was enlarged and altered, and the Hicks monuments were taken out of the chancel. A small chapel or vestry was built for them at the bottom of the north aisle, and there they face each other to-day, while, in the space between them, stands a table from which the 'Hicks' Charity' is still distributed in the form of loaves of bread.

In 1704 Sir Michael Hicks gave a piece of land called Smallgains to provide bread for the poor of the parish. Sir William Hicks II. left a legacy of £50 to the parish, and his widow decided that it should be invested in more land and go to the bread charity. The whole of the land was subsequently enfranchised by Sir Harry Hicks, the lord of the manor. In 1732 it was all let at a rent of £3 15*s.* per annum; in 1854 it was bringing in £72 10*s.*, and it must, of course, be worth a good deal more than that to-day.

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* Sir Humphrey Coningsby, founder of the family, was a judge of the King's Bench, 1509.

CHAPTER XIV.

Sir Michael Hicks, Knight, II.
1645 to 1710.

No ghost walks Witcombe to-day with quite the same gay air of proprietorship as that of the second Sir Michael Hicks. A man may live in this world for sixty-five years a life completely uneventful (as we count events) and not altogether praiseworthy (as we apportion praise), and yet may leave behind an impression of himself far more vital than that of a man who has 'achieved.' And apart from the actual perpetuation of personality (which is a subject curious enough), it is also a fact that Sir Michael was so completely a man of his day and hour—and the hour that of the Restoration—that his memory is almost a theatrical one.

He was born in January, 1645, in the year of the Self-Denying Ordinance and of the battle of Naseby, when, with the triumph of the newly-modelled Puritan army, the Civil War was ended at a blow, and a dim beginning was made of the England in which we live. The atmosphere of his early childhood was that of the tedious struggles which, after Naseby, went on in Essex, as in nearly every county, and there would be his father's mysterious absences and the domestic economies which followed the fines. When he was six years old his sister Letitia married the Earl of Donegall,* and it is certain that the wedding of the handsome worldly girl took place with all the circumstance of which the impoverished household was capable; and then in the following year his mother died.

* She was his third wife.

Michael was probably sent to some Essex school, and from that went to Pembroke College, Oxford—to the Royalist university, and not to Cambridge like his elder brother. The family Bible at Witcombe was given him when he left Pembroke, and inside the cover is written, "*This Sacred Volume was given me by the Right Reverend Father in God John Hall Lord Bishop of Bristol and Master of Pembroke College, Oxford.*" At Witcombe too is another gift of about the same date, and that is the miniature of Charles II. given Michael on the occasion of his knighthood. He was not quite twenty then, and was Sir Michael from thenceforward. The miniature has a beautifully enamelled back, but the diamonds have all been removed from the framework.

Of the decade between Sir Michael's college days and his marriage there is no record whatever, but details are very unnecessary because he was in the hey-day of cheerful youth in an age that was sober neither in manners, speech, nor dress, that exceeded the bounds of decency in all three, and looked on such excess as the hall-mark of fashion. "Whatsoever" Sir Michael's hand found to do (such as it was) he generally did with all his might, and there is no reason to suppose that he sowed his wild oats with anything but supreme zest. And then, with all the good will in the world, he came to be thirty years old, and he took to wife a plump, dark-eyed, foolish woman, the daughter of a City alderman (and sometime sheriff) and the widow of a barrister.

Mrs. Susannah Everard, the widow of Mr. Samuel Beaumont Everard of the Middle Temple, was the second daughter of Sir Richard Howe, a City knight. She was one of three children only, and her dower was the third portion of that part of a manor in Surrey which belonged to her father, and which was known by the name of Old Paris Garden. The manor is long submerged in the slums of Southwark, but its

DAME SUSANNAH HICKS.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS, KNIGHT.

(From pictures at Witcombe Park.)

records still exist. The marriage evidently pleased Michael's father, Sir William, for he settled considerable property on his son. The deed is dated June, 1674, and states that in consideration of five shillings of lawful money of England duly paid, and the receipt thereof hereby acknowledged, Sir William sells to Sir Michael the house in Augustine Friars, two houses on St. Peter's Hill, the manor of Witcombe, and certain lands at Chigwell in Essex.

All Sir Michael's ten children (and there were others who did not survive birth) were baptised in the church of St. Peter's, Paul's Wharf, and for the first fifteen years of his married life he must have lived continuously in one of his houses on St. Peter's Hill. The deed of conveyance states that the 'great tenement' in possession of Julian Hicks, Sir William's grandmother, had been burned down in "the late dreadfull fire" (1666), and that Sir William had erected two tenements in its place; and gardens, yards, ways, lights, easements, waters, watercourses, commodities and appurtenances are spoken of as being attached to them. It sounds in fact an airy and healthy dwelling place, and it stood high above the river down to which the hill sloped sharply. Yet the mortality among Michael's children as revealed on the fly-leaves of his Bible was a thing truly fearsome, and Sarah, his eldest daughter, died at thirty, while his one surviving son, Howe, lived to be only thirty-eight. The following list was not at all an unusual family record in those good old days:—

Sarah,	baptised	20 May, 1680,	died	18 Feb.,	1710.
Letitia,	,,	7 Oct., 1681,	,,	2 Aug.,	1682.
Letitia,	,,	24 Jan., 1682,	,,	28 June,	1685.
William,	,,	10 Sept., 1684,	,,	10 July,	1685.
Michael,	,,	3 Sept., 1685,	,,	7 Nov.,	1686.
Michael,	,,	17 Oct., 1687,	,,	3 July,	1689.
Howe,	,,	2 Sept., 1689,	,,	12 Feb.,	1727.
Elizabeth,	,,	5 Dec., 1690,	,,	19 May,	1691.
William,	,,	5 Feb. 1691,	,,	20 March,	1694.
Alice,	,,	15 Sept., 1693.			

The babies were all buried at Low Leyton, with the exception of one buried at Witcombe, and attendance at their funerals must have been quite an occupation for Sir Michael; and otherwise there are very few indications of how his London existence was passed. It is only clear that he evaded parochial duties. Two papers there are which show that he would be neither churchwarden of his parish of St. Peter's, nor constable and questman of his ward of Castle Baynard. He was elected churchwarden in 1697 and got out of that by offering £5 for the use of the poor, and he was quit of the other obligation in 1699 by the expenditure of £10.* In the parish affairs of his old home, however, he continued to take keen interest, and the only letter from him which exists is an excited one to his brother about Low Leyton matters. The vestry minutes there do not reveal what the 'Difference' mentioned was:—

"For Sir William Hickes at his house at Ruckholts in Essex.

"St. Peter's Hill, *this* 26 *Apr.* 1694.

"Sir,

"Being taking a bottle with Mr. John Hill the last night, I was telling him of the Difference you have about Low Leyton Church and this Day Mr. Hill came to me and assured me that Harvey and the rest of that gang were this morning at the (Doctor's) Commons, and will be too hard for you if you do not take speedy care; for they are cunningly undermining you. You would do well to come or to send Mr. Thomas to Mr. Hill, for he says he may at present serve you. I thought good to acquaint you with this that you may not be surprised.

"With my kind love to your sister and yourself

* The title deed calls him 'His Worship,' so it is probable that he was a justice of the peace.

and my Respects to my cousins being all at this time,

"from your affectionate Brother
"MICHAEL HICKES."

Michael was evidently on good terms with all his relations, and the Bible records that they stood as sponsors to his children, and some of them over and over again as the children died off. Sir William and Lady Hicks, Sir Richard and Lady Howe, the Countess of Donegall, her daughter the Countess of Longford, Lady Ingram, Lady Barnham, Sir William Franklyn, Mrs. Lowfield (*née* Elizabeth Howe), Mr. Thomas Joanes, Mr. William Weston, are all names that appear; and Sir William Franklyn, who was 'of Maverne,' Bedfordshire, was Lady Donegall's second husband. Lady Donegall died in 1691, and, like her mother before her, was buried in Westminster Abbey, where she had been christened. The register of burials in the Abbey has the entry:—

1691 May 15 Letitia Countess of Donegall in Oliver's Vault.

The explanation of what seems a strange choice of tombs is in the unofficial register. It says that the vault had been used for the interment of Cromwell's family; after their remains had been ejected it passed to the Duke of Ormond, and has been known as the Ormond vault ever since. Now, James, Marquess of Ormond (created 1642) was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at the beginning of the Civil War, and after the Restoration he was made an English duke for his loyal services. Lord Donegall, who had been Colonel Chichester, M.P. for county Antrim, had been raised to the peerage on Ormond's solicitation in 1647, in consideration of his services against the rebels; and he was one of the four hostages sent by the marquess that same year to the English Parliament as surety

for the delivery of Dublin and other garrisons to their Commissioners. There was evidently friendship between the two families, but that hardly explains why the widow of one friend should have been buried in the family vault of the other. But there she is—and her name is one of those in the list on the two slabs in the floor over the vault to-day.

Letitia Donegall left £100 to her brother William to buy a ring, and to his wife twelve silver plates, a pair of silver candlesticks, a silver cup and cover, and a silver 'cullender':—

> I give to my dear brother Sir Michael Hicks all my estate and interest of and in two tenements in Belfast in the Kingdom of Ireland with the appurtenances, one late in the tenure or occupation of John Chekhr (?) the younger aforesaid Victualler; the other now, or late, in the tenure or occupation of Alice Meeke alias Beche of Belfast aforesaid widow or her assigns. Also I give to my said dear brother Sir Michael Hickes my Camlett Bed lined with yellow satin and all the furniture belonging to it, and my gilt cup and salver all which are now in his custody; together also with all other goods chatels and furniture which he hath of mine in his custody. To my sister, the Lady Hicks his wife I give a dozen of my silver plates which I bought during my widowhood and are engraven with my arms in a lozenge, and a pair of my silver candlesticks engraven with the arms of my late dear Lord the Earl of Donegall and my own arms; all which plate is now in the custody of the said Sir William Franklyn.

Witcombe of to-day would think a great deal of the Camlett bed lined with yellow, and would treasure the Jacobean cup and salver and the silver plates with the Donegall arms. They have disappeared. The Belfast property has disappeared, too, but a reason for that is easily found. Although no deeds exist, there can be little doubt that Sir Michael sold it in order to add to his Witcombe property. For, if Sir Michael had a passion—if there was for him "a world within the world"—it was his manor of Witcombe in the county of Gloucester.

All the tumult of the Civil War had passed Witcombe by—passed it by nearly, close overhead.

THE COUNTESS OF DONEGALL.

By Sir Peter Lely.

(From a picture at Witcombe Park.)

At Painswick, the Cotswold town on the hills, six miles to the south-west, Sir Ralph Dutton, lord of the manor there, raised a regiment of 800 pikemen, and he joined the King's standard at Nottingham on August 23rd, 1642. In February, 1643, Cirencester in the hills, eleven miles off, was taken by the Royalists. In July of the same year, Bristol, in the south of Gloucestershire, capitulated to Prince Rupert, with whom was Colonel Dutton, and the map shows how necessary it was to take Gloucester also, in order to open up communications between the Royalist forces at Bristol and those in the north.

On August 7th, King Charles stayed at Berkeley Castle, dined at Tetbury next day, and slept that night at Cirencester with the Chester Master family. He set out from Cirencester for Painswick on August 9th. It is very unlikely that those who guided him took him along the field paths between the two places; if there were baggage it would have been too difficult a journey. He must have come along Ermine Street, straight to the sharp ridge of the Cotswolds where Witcombe Wood dips downwards. There, 900 feet above the level of the Severn river in the vale beneath, he would halt to look down on the town to be besieged—standing far off by the river with the immensity of level valley again beyond it and the dim hills in the horizon. All along the road at the top of Witcombe Wood he would ride after this, leaving the crest of Witcombe Valley at last where he entered Cranham Wood, and so on through that into the open once more, and across the bare Wold to the north of Painswick.

Neither he nor Prince Rupert stayed in the high pitched camp on Painswick Common. The Prince had his quarters at Princenage (Prinknash), halfway down the hillside, where he was the guest of Mr. George Bridgman, a Deputy Lieutenant of the county. The King was lodged right in the vale itself, with the Selwyns at Matson House, at the hill-foot, five miles

from Gloucester. In September, when the siege was raised, it was from Matson that he set out, up the hill to Painswick once more; from there, in the wind and the rain,* across the downs to the beech woods, along the edge of Witcombe Valley again, and then, from Birdlip to Cobberley, Andoversford, Charlton Abbots, up hill and down dale, to the castle at Sudeley.

And that was all Witcombe knew of the Revolution. It heard, as it can hear to-day, horsemen and waggons clattering along the hidden road which crowns its wooded sides. Perhaps it paused in its day's work to listen and to wonder—but that is by no means certain.

Witcombe's immunity from the turmoil was of course mainly owing to geographical reasons, but it was also owing to the fact that there was no squire to raise a levy from the stone-roofed farms and cottages and to ride at its head out into the fray in the vale. The lord of the manor, Sir William Hicks, was far away in Essex, and indeed there was no house in the valley which would have been a fitting residence for him, with the exception of a stone-gabled farmhouse which had always been known as Witcombe Farm, and which was securely held on a lease of lives at that time by the ancient family of Hellow. That was a house substantial, roomy, and of a certain dignity. Very little spending would have been required to turn it into the conventional manor house of the day with all the conventional appurtenances. It was not available, however, and it was probably chance happening, the accident of the lease of another farm falling in, that determined the present site of Witcombe Park.

Sir Michael of Restoration days, whose life was

* "When we drew off (from Gloucester) it proved to be most miserable tempestuous rainy weather." From a "Military Order" now in possession of Mr. W. H. Herbert of Paradise House, Painswick, and quoted by Mr. St. Clair Baddeley in his book "A Cotteswold Manor."

otherwise objectless, had the object of becoming a country gentleman. Witcombe, with its hilltop boundaries, was a kingdom, carved out, definite, which must have appealed to the most primitive imagination. Indeed, it was of course the primitive element in him that took fire—the Saxon lust for the proprietorship of land, and of land hedged in, where he might lead the life of freedom jealously guarded.

It is doubtful if his vision was shared at all by his wife, the alderman's daughter. For her were the cares of an enormous family, and the trivial sociabilities of life as she knew it. Gloucestershire was an unknown desert, very far off. It was not a "basket" into which she would place lustily all her 'eggs.' Sir Michael had to be content to do what he could, not what he would. Backwards and forwards along Ermine Street he travelled during those first twenty years of marriage. The inns all along the London Road knew him well, and as his Witcombe plans took shape and coherence it is certain that his importance and his geniality increased, and the clatter of his arrivals and departures in the inn yards became louder.

Among pastures and orchards in the innermost curve of Witcombe Valley, under a bank rising sharply to the woods was a stone farmhouse with a stone roof which directly faced the western spur of the valley and the sunsets. Over the mantelpiece in the farmhouse parlour 1607 was carved, so that it was, in part at least, a comparatively new house. Sir Michael saw no financial prospect of being able to build in the valley the palace of his dreams. The lease of the farm fell in, and he proceeded to raise, at right angles to the existing building, a frontage with parlours, bedrooms, and, above, attics with dormer windows in the deep pitched stone roof. Of timber from his woods he built the framework of this wing, it was completed with laths and plaster, and it, and the older portion as well, were covered with a coat of rough stucco. The new parlours and the new

entrance door looked directly south and faced the bank and the woods. On the level piece of ground between house and bank a garden was walled in, a gazebo or garden house was built, while a road from the front door was driven right through the garden, out of great gates erected at the end of it, and up the hillside through the park to another set of gates at the top of that. For a park Sir Michael would have. He turned into pasture a piece of fallow land on the lower bank, and he partially cleared a piece of the wood above, and round about he set a stone wall and established within it a herd of deer. The print of Witcombe Park in Sir Robert Atkyn's "History of Gloucestershire" is a spirited attempt to represent Sir Michael's achievement; and, as Sir Michael planned it, so did house and demesne remain for two hundred years. Granary and great barn, cider-mill house and all the outhouses, he probably found in existence as they exist to-day, but stables he had to build. The old farmhouse made capital servants' quarters. The farmhouse parlour became a servants' hall, and beyond the kitchen was the bakehouse, the brewhouse, the laundry, and the slaughter-house. It was all finished at last. The gazebo carries the date 1697 on the spiral which bears its weathercock, and it was about then, and in the reign of William and Mary, that Sir Michael insisted on the practical evacuation of the tenement on St. Peter's Hill.

The road through his park curved away towards Cranham on the right as you looked uphill, but, besides that, he had made, for the private use of his own coach and his own baggage waggons, a road which followed the line of an age-long track through the beechwoods, and which travelled away to the left and emerged at Birdlip. So it was down this road that there came rumbling presently all the household goods. Persian and Turkey carpets certainly there were, and feather beds, and voluminous bed-hangings; and there was a great deal

WITCOMBE PARK, THE SEAT OF SR MICHAELL HICKES.

(*From Atkyn's History of Gloucestershire.*)

more which Witcombe of to-day despiseth not. Some Jacobean oak furniture for the servants' rooms; walnut cabinets and stools in the latest mode for the parlours. For the guest chamber upstairs great-grandmother Juliana's verdure tapestry, and a yellow Japanese cabinet with a silvered Florentine stand and pedament which must have been inherited from grandmother Elizabeth, and have been a trophy of Parvish trading. Then there were Oriental bowls and jars, and blue Oriental dinner services and tea services, with a pewter service all emblazoned for everyday use; and silver plate too, candlesticks, flagons, salt-cellars and sugar castors. There were books also—calf-bound tomes in Latin, a collection of Restoration plays, and smaller books in parchment covers of Elizabethan date and mostly of a religious character. Lastly there were family portraits: Sir Ellis, the hero of Crécy, in Cromwellian armour; the excellent portrait of Sir Michael the Secretary, in ruff and skull-cap; two full length portraits of the brothers William and Michael as boys, in long skirts, and holding immense brimmed hats in their hands; a present-day portrait of Sir Michael himself, in his cumbersome wig, and another of Dame Susanna, whose costume a later and censorious generation has thought fit to modify; a portrait of Sarah, the eldest daughter, just grown up; and lastly, the pictures of Lady Donegall by Sir Peter Lely and of Sir Michael's niece, Lady Longford, by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

There is another picture at Witcombe which is also of Sir Michael's day, but it was painted on the spot; and, apart from its real beauty, it is of immense interest, because, together with his portrait, it is a complete betrayal of Sir Michael's zest for his new *rôle*. It is a picture of the vale of the Severn seen from the hill side from a gap in the wood, with the house and the garden in the middle distance. It is, in fact, the same view as that of Atkyn's print, with the miracle of atmosphere added to it, and the laborious details left out. Behind

Cooper's Hill, the spur of the valley to the left, is the after-glow of the sunset. Out in the vale to the right stands the isolated Chosen Hill, with the bold outline of the Malvern range beyond it and the Welsh mountains blue in the far distance. Between Cooper's Hill and Chosen Hill, across the flat pastures, straight as a dart goes Ermine Street, to where there is a gleam of the river with the great tower and the spires of Gloucester. At the foot of Cooper's Hill, but out of the shadow which it casts across the pastures in the sunset hour, stands Witcombe Park House, its front and great gates gleaming white. "Yea, I have a goodly heritage," might fitly have been inscribed upon the silvered frame, for that quite positively was Sir Michael's mood, emphatically insisted on by the humorous groups in the foreground. At the summit of a mound topped with trees on the right of the picture sits the artist busily at work. On the ground beside him sprawls Sir Michael, with a hand impatiently reached out towards the goblet which the butler is filling to the brim. Near by sits the boy Howe, the heir to the valley kingdom, playing with a spaniel. At a short distance behind a groom holds three horses. Lower down the slope stand the parson and the doctor, satellites; they are talking together with immense animation. In the centre of the foreground, down near the frame, is a flock of sheep, and among them are some cows of the old Gloucestershire breed, with the white stripe all along the back. Beyond these to the left is a surveying party, who have instruments for levelling; and then in the corner we come to the gamekeeper and the bailiff. The painter of the picture was the well-known Adrian Van Diest, who was born at the Hague in 1655, and lived most of his working life in this country, dying in 1703. Numbers of his landscapes exist in country houses in the west of England, where he stayed to paint the local scenery on commission. The Witcombe picture is eight feet wide. It hung for two hundred years over the

fireplace in the dining parlour on the left of the entrance, illuminating rather vividly the Book of Ecclesiastes.

"*One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.*

"*The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done.*

"*I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards.*

"*And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.*

"*Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do.*"

There is a tradition about a curious brown stain in the middle of the great picture. If Sir Michael, very fashionably drunk, ever did take aim at it with a glass full of wine, there may have lain beneath the action a subconsciousness of the old refrain that echoes down the centuries:—

"*Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*

"*What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?*"

From the tribulations that dog the path of the owner of land Sir Michael was not exempt, and he was particularly harassed by a lawsuit with his rector.

Mr. John Abbott, A.M., was rector of Witcombe Magna from 1681 to 1733, and in 1694 he sued Sir Michael for "tythe" which he declared was due to him on the timber cut in Witcombe Wood. Sir Michael, he said, had begun in 1682, and had continued yearly ever since, to cut down great quantities of the wood, some of which he had converted into charcoal,* and the rest he had sold for fuel and firing. The tenth of the wood

* There are old charcoal pits in Witcombe Wood.

—so the rector maintained—was yearly worth £100, and ought to have been paid to him for several years past, because the wood was under twenty years' growth, and was all beech, hazel, ash and sally, which was never esteemed or counted timber in the parish of Witcombe or the county of Gloucester.

Sir Michael's reply to all this was that the wood cut was of the age of two hundred years and upwards; that Witcombe Wood was described as a timber wood in the deed of conveyance of the estate to his grandmother, Dame Elizabeth Hicks; that the "most ancient" in Witcombe, who had known it for sixty years, always remembered it as a great wood of timber of very great age and growth; that the wood, when sold, was not contracted for by the cord, as copse or underwood, but by the number of trees, marked out in the woods by the buyer; that most of it had been converted into boards, joists and rafters, to be used in building; that he knew of at least forty houses within five miles of Witcombe which had been built and repaired with his beech timber; and that some of it was of so large a growth that it had been bought by millers and clothiers and used for making mill shanks, mill crooks, and shrouds for mills.

The case was directed to be tried at Gloucester Assizes. There the petition was dismissed as regarded the beech wood; but as regards the other woods a small commission of magistrates was appointed, with Sir Francis Winnington of Willersley as chairman, to visit Witcombe Wood and make a report. The report upheld Sir Michael's contention, and the matter was given in his favour, but without costs.

The relations between the rectory and the park were perhaps somewhat strained after this little adventure at law. But although Witcombe was a *cul-de-sac* it was not entirely without other neighbours given a desire to be neighbourly and a gregarious disposition. The roads were dreadful and the coach of the day

was amazingly cumbersome, but time was no object, and visits were paid, and neighbouring ladies sat with Lady Hicks in her garden house and sipped syllabub in long-stemmed glasses, while the children played battledore and shuttlecock on the lawn. It was all very gay and leisurely, and with some of the neighbours real friendships were made. Mr. John Bridgman of Prinknash, the beautiful old monastic house on the further side of Cooper's Hill, and Mr. Jonathan Castleman, who lived in a house close to the church at Cobberley up on the ridge beyond Birdlip, were made executors of Michael's will, so there must have been intimacy there; the Hyetts of Hunt Court were friends also, and other neighbours were the Snells of Witley Court, the Singletons of Parton Manor, the Lawrences of the Greenway, the Selwyns of Matson House, the Sandys of Miserden Park, the Rogers of Dowdeswell Court, and Mrs. Tracy of Sandiwell Park.

A natural sequence would have been that Sarah should have married one of these country squires, but she never married at all. Her portrait in its oval frame gives an impression of ill-health, and when she was thirty years old she died in London in February, 1710. Very likely the family migrated each winter back to the home on St. Peter's Hill. The Witcombe Bible has the entry:—

On Sunday Feb. 18, 1710, my Daughter Sarah Hickes dyed at my house on St. Peter's hill, London, and was buried on Friday the 24th of the same month under my pew at St. Bennet's Church, London.

And in the following May Sir Michael died too, in an inn on the London Road between Abingdon and Faringdon—a road along which he had travelled very often, and an inn at which he was beyond doubt very well known:—

May 4, 1710, being Thursday, Sir Michael Hickes departed this Life about five in the afternoon on the Road at Kingston's Inne, and was buried in ye Chancel of ye Parish Church of great Widcomb (his seat) in the County of Gloucester.

Born into a Puritan England, Sir Michael, in his sixty-five years of life, had lived to see the inglorious Restoration of one Stuart King and the ignominious flight of another; had survived the interlude of the Dutch William, and did not die until the reign of Queen Anne was almost over. He had been born in the lifetime of John Milton, had lived in the atmosphere of the Restoration dramatists, and died one year before the first number of the *Spectator* was published.

In the Norman chancel of Witcombe Church is an oak altar, black with age, on which is carved, "The gift of Charles Hellow, 1688." On the wall to the left of this hangs the marble monument of Sir Michael. At the top of the monument is a scutcheon with two coats, viz., *Hicks impaling Howe.* The red and the gold and the black have been renovated within the last decade, and the painted shield, perched above the wordy legend within its frame of carven marble, has an air of inimitable gaiety.

WITCOMBE OLD CHURCH.

CHAPTER XV.

HOWE HICKS, 1710 TO 1727.

SIR MICHAEL left his widow the house on St. Peter's Hill for her life, and certain Witcombe rents. Howe, who was nineteen years old when his father died, was to have the Witcombe estate, and deeds prove that Sir Michael had added to it considerably in his lifetime, not only by buying up small freeholds within the parish, but also by purchases in the adjoining parishes of Badgeworth and Shurdington. Alice's portion was to be £2,500. This was augmented by half of the similar portion which would have been Sarah's, and owing to the latter's death she got eventually both her mother's pearl necklace and "great diamond." There is a miniature of her at Witcombe with brown hair piled high above a girlish face. She married in her nineteenth year, just nine months after her father's death.

In the Vicar-General's office, Lambeth,—

22nd Feby 1711–12 appeared William White of Little Somerford Wilts Esq ætat 23 Bachelor and alleged that he intended to marry Miss Alice Hicks of St. Peter's Paul's Wharf London, aged 18, spinster, with consent of her mother Dame Sus^ah Hicks of the same, widow, and prayed for license to marry in the Parish Church of St. Bennett's Paul's Wharf, London.

The intended marriage duly took place, and in the register of Little Somerford is a memorandum :—

Susannah * the daughter of William and Alice White was born August 6th and baptized August the 23rd 1713 at Widcombe Gloucestershire.

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* She married Mr. William Earle of Eastcourt, Wilts, and had a great deal to do with the Witcombe of the next generation.

Alice had very probably come to Witcombe to be present at her mother's marriage, for it was in that year of 1713 that Susannah Hicks married, as her third husband, Jonathan Castleman, a Witcombe neighbour and one of the executors of Sir Michael's will. The wedding took place in Witcombe Church. The old Witcombe register was kept in the house of the clerk and was mysteriously burnt, and the present one does not begin till 1749; but there are a number of transcripts in the diocesan register at Gloucester, and among them is :—

Jonathan Castleman married Susan Lady Hicks 1713.

The Castleman family had bought the manor of Cobberley from Lord Downe about 1650, and the ancient Court house, with its oriel windows, was near the church. From the evidence of letters which will be quoted, it would seem that Jonathan Castleman was a widower with grown-up children, and that Howe, whose mother and sister had both deserted him, joined the family party at Cobberley for a time. In 1720, however, Jonathan sold Cobberley for £40,000 to Mr. John How, the father of the first Lord Chedworth, and he and Susannah then migrated to the little town of Painswick.

In the year 1717 Howe Hicks himself married a lady named Mary Watts. Her father's name was Jeffry and her mother's Fortune, and they lived at Leigh Magna in Essex and were people of some substance; and Fortune's picture is at Witcombe and portrays a fair, clearly-cut face which looks down from its frame out of a white hood with an air of immense reticence; and there is another very decorative picture of a fair-haired boy holding a bow and arrow, who, legend says, was Mary Watts' first husband, Benjamin Eames—so she must have been a widow when Howe married her. The marriage settlement has disappeared, but is referred to in a list of deeds, and she is there named as

MARY HICKS.

HOWE HICKS.

(From pictures at Witcombe Park.)

Mary Watts. It doesn't matter much—she would not matter at all, except that she is so absolutely Georgian in appearance that she might have come directly from corrupt little Herrenhausen itself, in the wake of the first George, with whose reign her married life at Witcombe was almost contemporaneous, for both ended together in 1727. King George I. was uneducated and had neither wit nor taste, and even provincial manners became infected by the depravity of the Court; and Mary's portrait is a most curious commentary on that fact. If it had been painted a century later she would, no doubt, have had the air of a stout, plain, yet eminently virtuous British matron; but the Georgian artist has made her stolid and reminiscent of mean asperities, and yet, somehow, not virtuous at all—not positively so at any rate.

Life in the narrow manor house facing the woods did, perhaps, deteriorate in those few years; did, perhaps, lose its hold on realities and tend to become a survival only. It is this want of apparent continuity in things which is the desolation of the egotist. For Sir Michael had been the rapture of creation—quite beyond any expression of his, no doubt, but there all the same—and within the framework he had achieved, life should have grown towards a completeness not of pleasure, of course, but of actual experience, with insight into all the present moment holds. The father had made ready for the arrival of to-morrow, but the son was not the one appointed to gather that which lay on the horizon—for him was no tide calling in the night. People's accounts are always a complete betrayal of their lives, and Howe's accounts are startling enough because of the limitations of the spending. Here is a page selected for its greater interest:—

	£	s.	d.
pd for a Peck of Turnips	0	0	3
pd for Grinding Benjamin's sisors . . .	0	0	2
pd for Shrimps	0	0	6
The horse myself and Pike	0	0	6

	£	s.	d.
pd for a Leg of Veal	0	4	0
pd for three Cupple for Chirkins	0	2	6
pd for one Cubbard hinge	0	0	2
pd for a neck of Mutton	0	1	2
Give a poor man	0	0	1
pd for spinning the Mop Yarn	0	1	6
pd for two Quartes of Sack and bottles	0	5	3
Spent	0	1	0
pd for a Necke of Mutton	0	1	2
Paid for Trype	0	1	0
The horse myself and Pike	0	0	7
Give a poor man	0	0	2
pd for a Goose	0	2	0
pd for shooing the horse	0	0	6
pd for a pair of Storkins for Mrs. Hickes	0	2	0
pd for a Crabb	0	1	0
For 4 yards and half of Fryse	0	19	6
pd for a Jews harp	0	0	1½
pd for a horning Book	0	0	2
pd for Quilting two Petty Coats	0	6	6
pd for two pairs of Gloves	0	1	6
pd for two Gallons of Brandy	0	6	0
pd for two pair of Cotten Sleeves	0	3	0
My own expenses	0	2	0
pd for rosting pig	0	2	0
Give John Birk's man a Quart of Ale	0	0	3
pd for sossages	0	0	7
for Oysters	0	1	2

The Jew's harp and the horning book are the only direct evidences here of the presence of children at Witcombe. Howe had a Bible of his own, and wrote on the fly-leaf:—

> My Eldest Daughter Susannah was Born the 19th of June 1718.
> My Second Daughter Mary was Born the 20th of Nov^{br} 1719.
> My son Michael was born the 5th of Jan 1721
> And dyed the 6th of March 1721.
> My Second Son How was born August 8th 1722.

In the attics in the steep dormer roof the children lived their rigorous Georgian lives, and in the closet built out of the dining-room their father sat at his inlaid walnut bureau and added up figures with the aid of tails of dots (there are sheets of paper covered with these dots), and paid his outdoor servants from

the closet window, and penned, at his leisure, letters to his step-father, and made leisurely copies of the same for the joyous edification of his posterity.

In February, 1718, Susannah Castleman, who still called herself Lady Hickes, made up her mind that she was dying, and from her bed at Cobberley she scribbled incoherently to her son :—

"Dear How. If I should die suddenly before I see you, pray pay my debts, and don't think it hard. For the three years and half I was a widow I never received a hundred a year, and since I married not full three hundred rent charged (?) For the twenty pounds I receive in Gloucestershire do not pay the taxes and charges of that at London. For you know that I have but 4 score and ten pounds, and that twenty pounds will not make that up one hundred a year. So if you reckon hundred and fifty pound a year to make them rent charge, it is but four hundred and fifty pounds a year, and I have no monies to make good six hundred pounds a year per annum, so that considering this it is not so hard.

"I desire you to carry me privately to Widcome, and lay me by your father as privately as you can, and hope you will mourn for me, though I leave you no mourning, and hope your sister will do so too. This is the earnest desire of your dying mother

"S. Hickes."

Susannah did not die for nearly six years after this, and two years later Cobberley manor was sold and the Castlemans migrated along the hilltop to Painswick town. From here Jonathan Castleman presently sent to his step-son by hand the following epistle :—

"Painswick, *Friday* 19 *July* 1723

"Sir

"Being in great Distress, even in such distress that I was forced lately to borrow Thirty Guineas, and

having perused our Account (Errors excepted) I find you are in arrear last Midsummer 208 - 5 - 8, the 2 Bills you paid my son Lowfield included.

"I desire you seriously to consider that your estate is certain, Terra Firma; mine Floating and precarious, which gives me many a melancholy thought, and obliges me to make the most of what I have, and to lay up what I can for my poor younger children. I am grown old, and my time may be but short: Ten pounds per annum is too much for me to lose, and you may remember you have more than once voluntarily promised to make me satisfaction for the time you, your servant and horses were at Coberly.

"Therefore, that you may not give me the uneasiness of writing, nor yourself the uneasiness of receiving, such letters as this, for the future I desire you to pay me this money as soon as you can, and you'll oblige

"Your humble Servt

"J. CASTELMAN."

Howe kept a copy of his answer, and it is dated August 3rd, 1723:—

"Sir.

"I had answered yours by your Servant, but that I thought it required some consideration; accordingly I have taken your advice and done it seriously, and cant say, that, Considering the Difficulty of raising Money, and the daily unavoidable expenses of a family but that I am glad to find the Arrears Rise no higher against me. I need not tell you that it is impossible to convert the Profit of Land into Money fast enough to answer so near a Demand; and I hope you would not desire me to run into debt to answer the Present Deficiency of my Estate which in time will be able to make good your whole

Demand without any assistance. I purpose to help you to what money I can speedingly, and endeavour at Michaelmas or quickly after to even with you to Lady Day, when I hope you wont insist upon the loss of ten pounds per annum: for were the Estate grown, you must have better luck with it than ever I have had, to be paid so well. I can truly say I have one tenant that has not even'd with me to last Lady Day twelvemonth, or I would not have given you cause to have sent to me now. I dont pretend to deny what I promised at Coberley, but flattered myself to think you would have been so kind as to have Esteem two hundred per annum a sufficient demand upon a little estate at present, and have waited for the promise of the performance till my annuity might cease when either I (or They that Survive me) may be better able to answer your charge. Especially since I believe you may remember you have said you would never put me to straights, which a Compliance with your present Demand must certainly bring upon Sir, Your humble Servant

"H. H."

Susannah Castleman died at Painswick in November, 1724, and, in accordance with her wish of six years earlier, she was brought to Witcombe and buried beside her second husband in the chancel of the church there; and the inscription on the monument makes no mention either of Mr. Everard or Mr. Castleman. Fifteen months later the latter again took up his pen:—

"Dr Sir

"The tender regard I bear to the memory of your late deceased mother and my wife, makes me sollicitous about the payment of her Debts, fearing least any scandalous Reflections should be thrown upon

the Ashes of so dear a Friend; and I doubt not but the memory of so Indulgent a Parent, as I know she has been in a more particular manner to you, will have the same effect upon you.

"She has now been dead more than a year, it is therefore high time that All her Debts were paid; I need not I hope remind you that Nature as well as Duty requires this Last kind Office at your Hands, which you know she so earnestly desired, both by Letter, and a Message sent to you by your Sister White, which could not be about her Bond debts, and therefore must be her Debts in General, Which you Yourself so often and so solemnly promised Her upon Her Dying-Bed before so many Witnesses of the Best People this Town affords; and such a Promise to anyone at such a Juncture ought to be looked upon as Sacred and Invoilable, but more especially to a Tender Dying mother, who depending entirely upon the Performance of that Promise, went out of the World without Doubt, with the more Complacency and Satisfaction.

"The payment of these Debts is what the World expects from one of us, though we are neither of us obliged thereto by Law, nor I by promise, though you are, and therefore by Conscience.

"She never expected nor desired me to pay them, and you may remember that you not only assured me that you would pay them, but gave me your Hand upon it.

"Neither can your promise be fulfilled by paying only the Debts you were bound for, because you were Obliged to that before: besides your promise being General, without any Exception, must necessarily extend to all her debts; and I think the Uneasiness which happened betwixt your mother Mrs. Hickes and yourself so near her Death (which I daresay you have been sorry for since) should be a particular Reason for the fulfilling a Promise to

her, the Performance of which (if she could know it) would even Now be pleasing to Her.

"You know I was at a considerable Charge for the Funeral, and I assure you I lent Her a great deal of Money, so I hope you'll not expect that I should do any more, nor take this letter by the wrong Handle, as if I intended a breach of Friendship, for I desire to Live and Die in Love and Charity with all the World, and more particularly with You, from the Relation there is between us. All my family joins with me in humble service to yourself and Mrs. Hickes and your little ones. I am S^r your humble Servant

"J. CASTELMAN.

"PAINSWICK, *Fri* 2 *Feb* 1725-6."

To this immortal composition Howe returned a spirited answer:—

"Sir. The Close of your late Letter discovers an earnest inclination for our Living in a Friendly becoming Manner, which is sincerely my Desire, for I bear not only a regard for you but for every individual Branch of your Family: what at present remains for me to do is to acquit myself of a Seeming Casuistical Charge. In order to do which be pleased to remember that some years ago at Coberley you told me my mother wanted to borrow a hundred pounds of you, and offered me as a Security; one would think my answer Then was Sufficient to Discover the intentions of my mind; for I told you I was too deeply Engaged before, and would be concerned no farther. Again, upon a later application of my mother to me for money, I sent her for answer (a copy of which I have by me, and read once to you) that nothing had ever bred so much uneasiness between my wife and me; inasmuch that I had Soberly Promised Her never to be further Engaged, nor suffer my money to be drawn out of my Pocket. These Declarations seem to need

no Explanation; Mrs. Lawrence and Mrs. Clement can testify I often pressed her to Dun for her Debt, for as she might think it hard to lose it, I should think it as much so to pay it; neither would I pay Her or anyone else more than I was engaged for. But to coroborate these assertions I seem to have your Concurrent Testimony; for I cant imagine, had you deemed me my mother's paymaster, you would have suffered anyone to Ransack her Boxes and Trunks, but have left them for my Examination.

"The Creditors themselves plainly discover where they expect their payment, for, excepting Lander (who told me he was sent by you) not one has Pretended to make a Demand upon me; and I think you might as well have sent Holder the Butcher with his Bill because my mother ordered the meat. You seem to lay great stress upon the contents of a letter writ seven or eight years ago wherein my mother desires me, in case she should Dye Suddenly and before she should see me again—I would bury her by my Father. (Had she then dyed) The many Hundreds I have paid you Since would have enabled me to do it and have left Plenty in my Pockets besides, but the number of times we have met since have made that letter of no Significance. And as for the message sent by my Sister White—I dont remember there was one word about the debts; but in case there was, I dont think anyone desiring me to pay Their Debts is a Sufficient Reason to Engage me to it.

"You farther think I can be discharged from my Promise by paying only the Debts I am Engaged for; but I can assure you had my mother kept her promise, I had had no Reason to pay either Principle or Interest (which she often assured me I never should). But when I came and found her in a Dying Condition, and unable to perform her Promise, I thought it my Duty to do what lay in my Power

to make her last moments easy by acquitting Her of it.

"But for you to suppose me to engage for Debts that I know nothing of, you could Judge me to be no better than a Mad-man or a Fool: and that she could not mistake my meaning must appear from the contents of the letter sent her as above, which if you had bin pleased to communicate to the Parties (who were then Present in the Room) it would necessarily have set their opinions right; whereas, hearing but part of what had passed betwixt us, no wonder if they ran into wrong Judgment.

"You suppose the Debts will be expected of one of us, but that neither of us are obliged to pay 'em. That's a Question I wont take upon me to Determine, tho' I think myself very safe, and am apt to believe, should my wife run in Debt, I should scarcely find a Conscientious person that would pay the money for me.

"The Dispute you mention, that happened between my Mother, Wife and Self sometime before her Death, occasions no uneasiness to either of us, for as we said Nothing but the Truth, I see no reason to be concerned.

"I am Sensible no man can be on Evidence in his own Cause, but believe anyone may be admitted to explain his own meaning, which I think I have done sufficiently. You go on to explain you have lent my Mother a great deal of Money: So have I my wife, which you would think very unreasonable to pay. Had my Mother died a Widow, and without Effects, I would have taken care to provide a decent Interment for Her: but I know not what I have more to do to Bury your wife, than you mine, and I am apt to believe had Mrs. Horde* died first, you would have thought it His business and not yours to have Reposited her Remains.

* Must have been a Castleman relation.

"There ought to be more, and much better linen than what I have yet received, which my Mother must either have left in Trouble (like other things) or, by a too rough usage, have converted into floor cloth before the time.

"As to what things properly Appertain to my Mother, every individual one ought to be sold (be it never so small a value) before anyone should be Questioned for her Debts; but as I dont design to trouble myself about 'em, I need not be under any concern more than for my Own, an Inventory of Which, if my mother had given me, as she ought, there had been no Room (through Mistakes) for any injury to be done to Either of us. What I have to add is that the whole world must allow I can best tell whether I speak Truth or not; I shall therefore esteem myself a properer Judge of my own Conscience that Anyone Else: I cant do better than give the same advice you do, which is that you would not take this Letter by the wrong Handle, since the Intent of it is only to set Truth in a clear Light, which yours to me made necessary to be done.

"You had not stayed so long for an answer, but that I have bin almost continually out of order, and at best but an indifferent Proficient at the Pen especially upon such unwelcome occasions.

"Our Respects wait on you and all the good Family, and I desire to continue S^r^ your humble Servant as long as I remain

"How Hickes.

"I find a few Books belonging to you, therefore I send them by the Bearer, being unwilling to Detain another's Right."

To Jonathan, however, was the triumph of the last word.

"S^r^. Meum and Tuum is said to separate Best

Friends, and that I might do nothing unbecoming a Gentleman or a Xtian, you have staid so long for an Answer, that, in a cool and sedate temper, I might write nothing unfit for me to send or you to receive.

"In this Casuistical charge (as you are pleased to call it) if you have satisfied yourself, you have satisfied me; very likely I have seen your letter to my wife, but have since forgot it; and since you are resolved not to pay these Debts, I am resolved I will, though not from any the least sense of Danger, having the Opinion of the Learned in the Law that I am not liable but from the Honour and Love I bear to her Memory, verily believing that had she outlived me, she would have paid my debts if I had left any.

"If the Occasion of my last letter was unwelcome to you, I Desire this may not be so, and I wish you had Expressed your Resentments in Milder Terms.

"As for the Ransacking her Boxes and Trunks, it was not done Privately, Mr. Abbot* being present, and I dare Affirm that you are now no greater a loser than if you had been by, for you know she could leave nothing of value behind her, one half Guinea, one shilling, and a few halfpence being all that was found: this I shall say to Nobody but her own Son; and I flatter myself you have still a better Opinion of my honesty than to think I would conceal anything. Any Writings or Papers of Concern or whatever Else of Right belonging to you would have been kept for you.

"The Creditors you may be assured would never come to you because of your declaring your Resolutions to pay none of them, and, in my Judgment your Opinion is very ill-grounded that I might as well have sent Holder with his bill as Lander, because his bill was for Sugars Syrrops and other things for the use of her Physik Closet; neither had I sent him had you not promised to pay her Debts; and I

* Rector of Witcombe Magna, 1681 to 1733.

cannot think you really believe I would have Ordered him to bring you a Bill for Sugars or anything else I had used in my House. I will Judge more charitably of you than you seem at Present to Judge of me, and think that if my Wife had lived till this time or longer you would not have unwillingly paid her Rent Charge, considering she Quitted so good a Jointure in your Favour.

"You will allow there must be some difference between the desire of a Mother to her Son to pay her debts, and such a desire from one Acquaintance to Another.

"My wife's promise to you that you should pay neither principal nor interest cannot say I ever heard of before, but you must needs know her poor Circumstances too well to believe she could perform it—These debts I suppose will not reach an hundred pounds, and No Body could have judged you either a Madman or a Fool for generously paying Such a sum for Such a Mother—This your letter to my Wife I have not seen since I came hither, neither do I know where it is (probably it is lost or burnt) so that I could not have communicated it, and if I could, I should not, because I thought then you would pay these debts.

"I shall say no more of the Dispute between your mother and you, only that Truth, such Truth, ought not to be spoke at all Times nor to all Persons, especially to a mother in such a Condition. If you had, in your Promise to your mother on her Death-bed excepted all the Debts but those you were bound for, your words would have needed no Explanation.

"As to the Linnen, I know not, neither do my Daughters, of one the least piece belonging to you in this House, and as a Proof that I sent you all, you may remember I sent you a parcel of Towells with no mark because they were pinned up with one marked with H. and I believe my wife would not

have converted any Linnen into Florcloth that had been fit for any other use.

"What things properly appertained to your mother, I think properly appertain to me, for you have a just claim to nothing but what was your Father's, as I hear you have fairly acknowledged; and since I have just paid some, and will pay the rest of her Debts, There will be no Occasion to sell anythings that appertained to her, for I will keep y^{m} (as of little value as they are) yet very valuable to me) for her sake; and if you please to look over our Marriage Agreement, you will find, where she orders her goods to be sold to pay her debts, she excepts her wearing Apparel. I suppose if you had asked for an Inventory your mother would have given you one. A clear Conscience is a blessed Comfort. I am sorry you have been out of order, and this I hope will find you better. I have received the Books, and question not if you find more I shall have them; neither would I Conceal or Detain your Right. You know of the clock in the Hall which a workman has valued at 5 or 6£, a Jack which I will send you by Holder, a Cane Chair, the outside of the Bed my wife dyed in, in which I desire to dye also, and a quilt. Therefore what you think it worth, if you please, I will pay you for them. Here are some little pictures, and small silver Trifles, wch when you see (and Judging them your Father's demand them) I will deliver to you.

"I desire to have no Answer to this letter, only the return of a visit which you have long Owed me, that the Friendly usual Correspondence may be Continued between you and

"S^{r}

"Your humble servant

"J. CASTELMAN."

"PAINSWICK, *Sat* 30 *April* 1726.

"I send you three books. I am not sure, but

I think Sir P. Herbert's Memoirs is yours and the ArchBp of York's Sermons, and if I find more you shall have them. I remember Mr. Brown said you knew of ten Pounds due to my wife, and there were ten pounds left in Mr. Feary's hands, I think, which my son Lowfield left her for mourning. And if you know of any Arrears of Rent due to her, the Michaelmas before she dyed I shall be obliged to you to Inform me.

"My Brother John's and my Daughter's and my humble Services to yourself, My Daughter, and my Blessing to your little ones."

Howe had no intention of ending the matter in the friendly manner suggested by his step-father: for horse and man it was but six miles across country to Painswick, but there is no evidence that the suggested visit was ever paid, and since he was debarred from writing again to Jonathan, it was to Miss Castleman that a final letter was directed. It is not conciliatory, and betrays intense pettiness. :—

"Charles informs me Mr. Castelman would willingly keep the chairs in the Little Parlour, the Clock and the two Peer Glasses: as for the Chairs already sent, they are so much the worse for wearing that they are worth next to nothing, therefore I shall expect the others, and for the Glasses I shall likewise have occasion for them. As for the Clock—if Mr. Castelman pleases he shall have it at what any understanding workman shall value it at."

Jonathan lived for twelve years after all this fuss, and there is a monument to him in the chancel of Painswick Church surmounted by his arms, *Azure on a mount in base proper, a castle triple towered Or* :—

In Memory of Jonathan Castleman Esqr, who was a Person of strict Probity, extensive Charity, primitive Piety. He died Anno Ætatis 77 Dom 1738.

His name also appears twice in the lists on the painted boards hung in the north aisle; he was one of the eleven trustees of the Painswick Charity School, and was also a donor of £10 to the said school. He evidently took his part in the small affairs of the hill town, although he left no permanent mark on its history, and it has not even been possible to discover where he lived. Laughable as he is, he emerges insensibly from the correspondence with an air of placid, if meretricious, triumph; and he achieved that which is a solid triumph in any quarrel—he out-lived his step-son.

Howe probably had bad health; he complains of being "out of order," and he died in 1727 at the age of thirty-eight. He left Witcombe to his wife for her life, and she was to have the right of entry to the wood, and as much firewood and timber for repairs as she wanted. She did not survive to enjoy these privileges, for she died in the following year, and drew up a will of her own of which she made Charles Hyett of the city of Gloucester and the Rev. John Browne of Salperton Park and rector of Coberley executors. She left money and jewels to her daughters, but the bulk of her estate to her son Howe, and to him also "my largest gold watch with the picture of our Blessed Saviour and his mother sett in gold on silver and usually hung thereto."

CHAPTER XVI.

SIR HARRY, SIR ROBERT, AND SIR JOHN BAPTIST HICKS. 1703 TO 1791.

HOWE I. died, and Howe II. reigned in his stead, and was five years old at the time of his father's death; and he lived to the age of seventy-eight and succeeded to the family baronetcy in 1792. His life covers practically the whole of the eighteenth century, and behind it are the vague shadows of his cousins, Sir Harry, Sir Robert, and Sir John Baptist.

Sir William Hicks, second baronet,* of Ruckholt and Beverstone, who had married Marthagnes Coningsby of North Mims, was the father of Sir Harry, and the grandfather of Sir Robert and Sir John Baptist, who were first cousins, John Baptist being son of Sir William's youngest son, Charles Hicks.

Sir Harry Hicks, third baronet, was forty-seven years old in 1703, when he succeeded his father, Sir William, and inherited the Beverstone property in Gloucestershire, together with Ruckholt and the other Essex estate of Chigwell Hall which his father had bought in 1667. He married, first, Elizabeth, daughter of Admiral Sir John Holmes, and had three children who all died in childhood. Elizabeth herself died in 1705, and Sir Harry then married Barbara Johnson, the daughter of a Walthamstow neighbour, and by her had ten children, four of whom, Robert, Michael, Martha, and Anne, lived to maturity.

Sir Harry was evidently in constant need of money,

* Elder brother of Sir Michael Hicks, Kt., of Witcombe.

and there is no need to suppose that his eldest son's debts were his sole embarrassment. It is laid to his charge that he cut down the great grove at Ruckholt; but, after all, trees do not live for ever, and the right moment to fell them may have arrived.* In 1720 he sold Ruckholt itself to Benjamin Collier, and its subsequent vicissitudes are related by Mr. Kennedy in his "History of Leyton." From Collier it was bought by the Earl of Tylney for his eldest son, Lord Castlemain, who did not live there after he succeeded to the title, but let it to one William Barton, who made it into a public Breakfasting House, and it was advertised by Barton in the years 1742 to 1744 in the *Daily Advertiser* as one of Queen Elizabeth's palaces. There is another account of Ruckholt in the *Gentleman's Magazine for* 1814, in No. VII. of a series of articles *Of the London Theatres:* "Ruckholt-house is said to have been the mansion of Queen Elizabeth; it is now mentioned as forming for a short period an auxiliary place of amusement for the summer to the established theatres, and situate within the environs of London. It was opened about the year 1742 by the proprietor Wm. Barton with public breakfasts, weekly concerts, and occasional orations. The place is described in a ballad addressed *To Delia* :—

Delia in whose form we trace,
All that can a virgin grace,
Hark where pleasure blith as May,
Bids us to Ruckolt (haste) away.
Verdant vertos, melting sounds,
Magic echoes, fairy rounds,
Beauties ev'rywhere surprize,
Sure that spot dropt from the skies.
Delia in, etc.

The "sweet singers of Ruckholt" are immortalised by Shenstone; and the place appears to have been the drive of fashion for about three seasons. In "Music in

* Mr. Strype says that it had.

good Time: a new ballad 1745," it is enumerated with other places in the following stanza:—

> That *Vauxhall* and *Ruckholt* and *Ranelagh* too,
> And *Hoxton* and *Sadler's*, both old and new,
> My *Lord Cobham's* head, and the *Dulwich* Green-man
> They make as much pastime as ever they can.
> Derry down, etc.

Public amusements did not continue there after the summer of 1756. The house was pulled down in 1757. Towards the end of the eighteenth century a small, square farmhouse was built on the site of what had been Ruckholt Manor House, and a Mr. Samuel Turner lived there and farmed the land until 1804, when he was followed by his son William, whose only daughter married John Tyler. The Tylers succeeded to the farm, which was known by their name for forty-nine years. In 1880 the house was engulphed in the rapidly advancing tide of yellow brick of the modern Leyton, and it is impossible to-day to be sure of its exact site, but it is somewhere in the neighbourhood of, and to the south of, the town-hall.

The dilapidation of the Ruckholt house was, perhaps, a valid reason for its evacuation by Sir Harry, but he sold a great part of the Chigwell estate too, although he kept the manorial rights, and, as a schedule of 1800 shows, enough property to bring in a rental of about £1,000 a year. He lived in Chigwell itself, in a house which he built and which has been pulled down within the last twenty years. Chigwell is a village on the borders of Epping Forest, and has kept its country character. "The greatest place in the world," Charles Dickens called it in 1841, when he invited his friend John Forster to go with him there. "Name your day for going, such a delicious old inn facing the Church, such a lovely ride, such forest scenery, such an out-of-the-way rural place." The delicious old inn, the *King's Head*, is the *Maypole Inn* in "Barnaby Rudge." Sir Harry's brick house was in a road called Chigwell Row,

and was divided from it by a hedge and a screen of trees. The house, which he called the Bowling Green, was long known as Bowls.

Sir Harry Hicks died in 1755 and was buried, at his desire, in the churchyard of Low Leyton, and in the same grave as his first wife, Elizabeth; a plain altar tombstone on the west side of the church bears both their names, and a Latin eulogy on Elizabeth says that she was, with much else, "courtly and modest, virtuous and affectionate."

Two wills of Sir Harry's are in existence. In the first, dated 1749, he directs that property at Minety in Gloucestershire is to be sold to the extent of £1,000, and that with it an attempt is to be made to compound with his son Robert's creditors. Annuities of £200 a year are left to each of his four children. In the case of Robert this was to be paid quarterly and into his own hands: "My Intent being that it shall not be in the power of my said son Robert Hickes to alien or Dispose of the said Annuity or any part thereof before the same shall be actually received, the same being intended by me for a Personal provision and Maintenance for my said son Robert Hickes only during his natural life." He goes on to say that his further will and mind is that if Mary Greydon, *alias* Hickes, shall survive Robert Hickes she is to have £50 per annum for life in quarterly payments. The will of 1749 then provides that all profits of the estates, shall be divided between the brothers Robert and Michael yearly as the trustees in their discretion shall appoint, and a strict entail is made. But in the final will of 1743 Robert is cut out altogether; everything is left (after the debts and annuities are paid) to Michael and his heirs, and the estates are then entailed on John Baptist, the son of Sir Harry's brother Charles.

Sir Robert Hicks, fourth baronet, is, somehow, less of a shadow than his father, perhaps because his disreputable life was a perfectly definite thing. He

had apparently no resentment against the brother who had supplanted him, for three months after their father's death he writes a friendly letter "to be left at the Coffee House in the Grove" at Bath:—

"Dear Sir. As you desire the copy of the Will in my Hands by return of the Post (I) send it you torn as it is, not being willing to make you wait the transcribing. I was in hopes to have heard the Waters proved salutary and the Companys agreable but find business at present takes place both of Health and pleasure. However shall interrupt you so far to let you know an affair affirmed to be just discovered and not known but to a Few. Vid^z^. We are to be invaded in 3 places nearly at the same time: one is in Scotland by Twenty Thousand Swedes as Auxiliarys to France, one in the South of England by the French, and the other by D^o^ in the West. However whether this prove true or no, Transports are certainly sailed for the Hessians and Dutch. I believe something Extraordinary must be near at hand for the Ministry press their friends hard to fill this Subscription which is now at a Discount. In your next, if your Business is with the Lady's, I hope to hear they are like to prove as kind as fair. I am Sir your most affec^te^ Brother

"R. HICKES.

"*Thursday Feb.* 5: 1756.

"My Dame desires to be kindly remembered to you.

"I believe you have Noblemen and Members of Parliament with you."

The year 1756 saw the beginning of that general European war known to history as the Seven Years' War, and the baronet's letter to his brother is a direct illustration of the assertion of Bright, the historian: "Meanwhile the courage of the nation had sunk very

low. There was a dread of an immediate French invasion ; and the Government so thoroughly lost heart as to request the King to garrison England with Hanoverian troops. This dread was kept alive by a simulated collection of French troops in the North."

Only one more letter of Sir Robert's is in existence ; it is dated 1757, and is signed "with great affection your loving brother." It is evidently one of a series, not only from himself, but from Mary Greydon too, and it shows that Michael was making him an allowance of three guineas a week paid weekly, and that Robert considered it might just as well be five guineas. In the following year Michael himself wrote a letter which he meant to be final, and of which he kept a copy. The opening sentences allude to the fact that Sir Robert had gone blind :—

"*May y^e* 23^d 1758

"Dear Sir. Your letter of the above date is this moment come to my hand. I answer it with trouble in my own mind, not seeing it wrote by your own hand. But Acts of Providence we must all willingly resign to.

"My accounts I regularly keep, and have kept, and will stand the test, both in my Father's and my own time since. The money you have had, and I paid, I will swear to. Any acts you have done are your own preservative more than mine, and I can faithfully declare both before God and man, I never asked you to do any act or deed upon my own account in my life or ever will.

"Necessitys of humane life are well and easily supplied with prudence and Æconomy, which in my last letter I hinted to you.

"Brotherly affection and tenderness to each other are just and laudable, and every man is my brother who uses me well.

"I did never neglect my duty to you, but I will not beggar and draw myself into the same calamities

with you, for then I can neither serve you, nor take care of the little estates that yet remain, nor follow the instructions of a dying parent.

"Voluntary necessities are not the Acts of Providence but our own seeking, and I verily believe the greatest part of every man's misfortunes are generally owing to their own misconduct. Pardon this digression. I am always ready to draw a veil over all disagreeable actions and topicks, and no cure can ever be administered by relation of past facts; nor do I trouble myself about them.

"I shall conclude this answer to yours with a text out of Scripture: 'He is wise, who is wise to Salvation.'"

The problem of the ne'er-do-weel is a recurrent one in nearly every family, and is as baffling as the rarer occurrence of genius itself. Both the ne'er-do-weel and the genius, in their different ways, diverge at a tangent from the main current of the family history, and the family regards the one divergence as a tragedy and looks on the other with elation. As a rule it is sufficient merely to be sorry about the one and glad of the other—and let it rest at that: for the divergence in both cases ends, it can be generally observed, in a *cul-de-sac.*

Robert died in 1768 and was buried in the churchyard of Hemel Hempstead, in a grave which cannot now be identified. His burial certificate is very curious:—

"April ye 6th 1758 Sir Robert Hicks Baronet aged about 55 years. He departed this life March 31st preceding. N.B. This gentleman was the eldest son of the late Sir Harry Hickes Bart of Chigwell in Essex. He married Mary the only daughter of Admiral Greydon late of Fordwick in Kent, grand Daughter of the learned and celebrated Sir Edwd Gregory, his present disconsolate Dame—a

lady endued with every accomplishment which can add ornament and honor to her sex."

This is the only marriage certificate of Mary Greydon's in existence. She outlived Sir Robert fifteen years, and was buried at Hemel Hempstead, too, on June 3rd, 1783, under the name of Mary Hicks.

Sir John Baptist Hicks, fifth baronet, is for posterity simply a name on the pedigree and a monument in a church.

Charles Hicks, his father, younger and only surviving brother of Sir Harry, had married a Coningsby (evidently one of their mother's relations, and probably a cousin); John Baptist was their only son, and there were two daughters, Juliana and Geneviéve, or, as it is sometimes spelt, Jenaviva.

Charles Hicks died in 1760, so when his nephew, Sir Robert, died in 1768, it was John Baptist who succeeded to the title. He married, May 2nd, 1771, at St. Andrew's, Holborn, Farrington Bristow, of a Nottinghamshire family. Thoroton's "History of Nottinghamshire" says that John Bristowe was Cup-bearer to Henry IV., that in 35 Hen. VIII. John Bristowe possessed the manor of Beesthorpe, and that William Bristowe of Beesthorpe, a justice of the peace for the county, had by his wife, one of the daughters and co-heirs of John Bookey of Woodford, Essex, two sons and two daughters. Farrington, who married Sir John Baptist Hicks, was the youngest daughter, and she inherited a moiety of the manor of Winchburn. The names of these places and people cannot be galvanised into life. John Baptist lived in Hertfordshire, where he had been brought up. He had a house in the little country town of Hoddesdon, and was buried in the church of the next parish of Broxbourne, where an unpretentious marble tablet says that he died on November 23rd, 1791, aged seventy, and that Lady Farrington Hicks lived till 1813, when she was aged

eighty-eight. The Chigwell and Beverstone property had been entailed by Sir Harry on his nephew, but John Baptist had no children, and his cousin Michael was nearly his own age; they came to an agreement, and by a deed dated November 27th, 1755, the entail was barred and Michael acquired the fee simple.

CHAPTER XVII.

SIR HOWE HICKS. 1727 TO 1801.

No letters or documents of any sort exist to show what became of the three Hicks children at Witcombe after their parents' death in consecutive years. When their mother died in 1728, Susannah was ten, Mary was nine, and Howe was six years old. The only thing that can be stated certainly is that the house and gardens at Witcombe were let, partially furnished only, to a Mrs. Chapman, at a rent of £60 a year; so it is evident that the children were taken away and placed under someone's care.

A torn schedule exists of the "*Household stuff remaining in the Mansion House demised unto Mad^m^ Chapman.*" The establishment was evidently not without maps. One hung in the "white parlour," one on the "stayer," and in the summer house were "one ovel table, a duz of Chayers, one little fframe of Martyrs over the door, eight mapps with a lock and key to the door." It is curious to find left in "my Lady's Chamber" "two little brushes, one powder box, one pach box"; and the "moehire curtaines and valians lined with white sarsnett" of the bed can be noted with the emotion which one has for a returning fashion.

The only possible inference is, that the Witcombe children were taken into the household of the Rev. John Browne of Salperton Park, one of the executors of their mother's will; and this inference for the reason that there is no trace of their being under the influence of anyone else, and the Browne domination of Witcombe lasted for the rest of the century.

When he was seventeen years old, Howe Hicks was married to Dr. Browne's daughter Martha, aged twenty-four. July 28th, 1739, is the date.

The children's natural guardian was their cousin Sir Harry. There is a letter from him written on the eve of Howe's coming of age, which shows that he was concerned in the management of the Witcombe estate, but was otherwise a stranger. Dr. Browne's co-executor was Mr. Charles Hyett, of Hunt Court, a near Witcombe neighbour; but Mr. Hyett was the occupied M.P. for Gloucester, and was moreover, at this time, busy building the fine house at Painswick where the family still live. His portrait hangs in the dining-room there, but unfortunately no Hyett letters of that date are in existence.

The Brownes were a respectable Gloucestershire family and owned Norton Court in the neighbourhood of Gloucester. There is a monument to Richard Browne, who died 1636, in Norton Church. His eldest son (also Richard) went to America where he made money and became possessed of a property in Richmond which he named *Brownville*. He died unmarried, and Norton went to his next brother, John.

John Browne had two sons, George Montagu Browne and the Rev. John Browne of Salperton Park.

George Montagu inherited Brownville in Richmond from his uncle, and sold Norton and settled in America.

The other brother, the Rev. John Browne, who was born in 1668, married a fortune in the person of Miss Elizabeth Bourne of Windlebury in Oxfordshire; being presented to the living of Cobberley on the top of the Cotswolds, he bought the property of Salperton in its immediate neighbourhood.

Dr. and Mrs. Browne's portraits hang side by side at Witcombe. He fills his frame squarely, in gown and bands and voluminous wig. He is truculent and red of face, with all the impossible truculence and the

SIR HOWE HICKS, SIXTH BARONET.

DAME MARTHA HICKS.

(*At the time of their marriage. From pictures at Witcombe Park.*)

impossible redness of the eighteenth century, and the humour that is undoubtedly there too, gleams coarsely in the midst of it all. That one would rather not have been Mrs. Browne is an inevitable reflection, and yet it is doubtful if that lady did not hold her own. In her tightly laced blue gown she is extravagantly meagre, and it may have been the heroic bracing together of the waist which contracted the mouth and gave the nose its pinched look. The two pictures are so vivid that they make the circumstances of the boyish marriage imaginably preposterous, until we travel to the portraits of Howe and Martha themselves. Then it is seen that the slim boy—eminently a gentleman in his blue velvet coat and white satin waistcoat and brown peruke—is, before all other things, a self-willed boy, with an under-lip as obstinately set as that of his clerical father-in-law: and he is, moreover, not unaware of his own importance in his narrow provincial world. Plump Martha Browne by his side was seven years older than he, but she was a little thing, with red lips and rounded shoulders and a trim waist, and her grand-daughter, Mrs. St. John, has left it on record that she had a beautiful complexion and lovely hands "pink inside like satin." If there was a boyish infatuation it is by no means beyond comprehension. She was a self-possessed little lady in a white satin frock trimmed with blue, and with brown curls behind her ears.

Howe and Martha, there upon the wall, lived out the long eighteenth century in close bodily companionship in the two parlours facing Witcombe Wood; and their history for us is that they were young, and that then, without seeming interval, they were old, and were the pastel portraits of themselves, as old people which are in the Manor house at Coln St. Aldwyn.

The eighteenth century preoccupied itself with the 'manner' in which life should be conducted, and its acute thoughts on life are crystallised in the yellowed pages of the calf-bound *Spectator* and *Tatler* and

Rambler in rows on Witcombe shelves. With the wonderful novels of their century Howe and Martha provided themselves as well—if the books that they bought are a testimony, they did what in them lay to bring urbanity to the Gloucestershire wilderness. But that very urbanity was in essence itself a crass thing.

Crassness was not invented in the eighteenth century, and did not evaporate with it; but if we are to have definitions at all 'tis best to define in one word. *Crassness* triumphant, and more than that, invincible, is the word around which to build all there is to be said about Howe and Martha.

The eighteenth century brought to perfection the cult of the single eye, of the personal point of view, of the science of crowing on one's own dunghill. Witcombe was metaphorically that dunghill — the culmination of the efforts of social man directed with strenuous simplicity towards the stability of all things that personally concerned him or his. It was a fortress against which irony could obtain only an empty victory. Assail the crassness of the time with what irony you will, and Martha Hicks, with her fallen day about her, and with her powdered hair piled high, still remains an inscrutable vampire, a veritable eighteenth-century *Mona Lisa*, a presence expressive of all that in the ways of immemorial centuries had come to be invulnerable. Not quite so expressive of that is Sir Howe in old age, because his face betrays the coarsened temper which was to be his undoing at the last, and because he has retained a definite air of good breeding. He lends himself, on account of these obvious qualities, more easily to analysis; and although it is certain that he would have maintained the sacred immunity of his own dunghill in the face of heaven and hell, yet it is possible that he may have had a faint sensitiveness to the sting of life, and this makes him—what Martha is unbelievably—a possible forerunner of the nineteenth century into which he lived.

SIR HOWE AND LADY HICKS IN OLD AGE.

(From pastel paintings in the possession of Viscount St. Aldwyn.)

The men and women of the nineteenth century, with their nervous sensibility to its miracles, were, directly, the ancestors of the men and women of the twentieth century, whose wills are set on the mastery of life; and they are all, far less obviously, the descendants of the eighteenth century, with its unconquerable atrophies, its obliterations, and its molluscry. The twentieth century is taught to cast its stones at the mollusc; but the absence of the crusading instinct in ancestors is by no means to be despised. The mollusc does not sow the wind, and leaves no whirlwind to be reaped. As ancestors, as channels through which stiffening qualities were passed by time into the family fibre, Howe and Martha were incomparable.

Incomparable, but sufficiently disagreeable in daily life, it may be suspected, because all great-grandparents of the grandparents of to-day were! Now that the practice of the positive deification of age, of position and of rank, has become one of the lost arts, a wondrous mellowing of family and social life has taken place; but with it another strenuous talent has gone too, and that may be called the art of family behaviour. Stout Lady Hicks, very like a pouter pigeon, and lean Sir Howe, with his obstinate jaw, beat their children and said unthinkable eighteenth-century things to their servants, and were full of what the literature of the day calls 'distempers'; but they had, at the same time, miraculous powers of endurance where the said servants and children and where relations were concerned. Servants were abused, but there was no thought of dismissing them, even for such peccadilloes as thirty-six hours' hard drinking or for immorality; and relations might pay visits of many months' duration quite as a matter of course. It made life a wonderfully stable thing, and it was all firmly welded together by regular habits of over-eating, by a tremendous amount of courteous letter-writing, and, let it not be forgotten, by an unbending sense of duty.

Howe and Martha's portraits in youth, and then in age, are in themselves a complete translation of their sixty-two years of married life, and are far more illuminating than the little that there is to be said about those years.

Mr. and Mrs. Howe Hicks settled at Witcombe after their marriage, for a letter to Howe from his cousin Sir Harry, dated 1742, is directed to be left "att the Post House on Burlipp Hill," at the top of the hill above Witcombe Wood. The letter reveals, incidentally, that one of the two houses on St. Peter's Hill, which had been settled on Howe's grandfather, Sir Richard, had returned to the possession of the elder branch, for Sir Harry was living there:—

"PETERS HILL, *March* 5, 1742.

"Cousin Hickes. I think itt Incumbent upon you now to come upp, my House shall be att your service for you and your wife, etc. Your House * now Emptye. Their is a large account for Chancery to bee made upp, to which I don't think itt proper for you to discharge untill well adjusted, and to which you must bee of Age first, which now is near. I have no Ends in this butt assisting you with my best Advice, you being so nearly related to mee. Some Answer, if you receive this, will oblige mee who am yours to Command HARRY HICKES."

The "account in Chancery" was the result of a lawsuit over a technical point. Howe I. had left his daughters, Susannah and Mary, legacies of £3,500 and £3,000 respectively, but he had not made them a charge on the Witcombe estate; and the marriage settlement of Mary Watts deprived him of the power to charge any of the property in London, Essex or Surrey, save some copyhold houses "of inheritance" in Surrey, of the yearly rental of £33. The Master of the Rolls decided, in 1733, that, as the legacies could not be

* Next door.

paid in one way, they must be paid in another, and that Witcombe must be charged with them. If Sir Harry advised the young Howe to appeal against this decision, it did not turn out to be good advice, for in 1747 Lord Hardwicke confirmed the previous judgment, and thus the Chancery account was augmented to no purpose. Masses of papers concerning the suit have been kept, and also some letters to and from Mr. Hutton Perkins of Lincoln's Inn, who was Howe's counsel in the case; they contain nothing of immortal interest, although the prelude to them does, for it tells posterity that Howe had been made a magistrate, and gives him a character for sobriety.

The letter of introduction to Mr. Perkins is written by Howe's first cousin, Mrs. Susannah Earle of Eastcourt in Wiltshire. She was the daughter of Mrs. Alice White, Howe's aunt, and had been born at Witcombe. She tells the baronet that Howe is "the person my Lord Chancellor put into the Commission of the Peace at the request of Mr. Earle" and that he is "a very honest sober young man." Mrs. Earle was evidently a good deal at Witcombe from her childhood onwards, and her portrait is there and shows her to have been black-haired, black-eyed, very merry and well dressed, and a complete departure from the Hicks type as it had come to be. She had twinkling pearl earrings and fashionable lace, and constantly reminded Witcombe, we may be sure, that Gloucestershire was not the universe. When she came on a visit she would be lodged in the best chamber, where was the tapestry and the yellow Japanese cabinet; but where was everyone else bestowed as years went on? Howe's eldest sister, Susannah, had married before he did, and her husband, the Rev. Thomas Wells, was rector of Cowley, close to Cobberley and to Salperton; but Mary remained unmarried until after Howe's sixth child was born, and she lived with her brother and sister-in-law. She was a slim, handsome young woman, very like her grandmother, her father,

and her brother Howe; and it is pleasant to think of her enjoying her youth in the sunny, walled garden set in the circle of hills—pleasanter to think of her there in the open air, and of the children tumbling about in the open air too, than to realise the household in the winter days and calculate the number of the souls cooped into the narrow house. Howe and Martha had a son born to them in 1740, but he died four years later. The succeeding years brought them daughters: Martha, 1742; Mary, 1743; a child who died at birth, 1745; Susannah Elizabeth, 1746; Alice, 1747; Anne, 1749; and Henrietta Howe, 1752. At length, in 1754, a much-desired son appeared and was christened William, and six years later the family was brought to a triumphant conclusion with another son, who, at the desire of Michael Hicks of Beverstone, was named Michael after him.

Sir Harry Hicks, who died in 1755, had, as will be remembered, disinherited his disreputable heir, Sir Robert, and had left Beverstone, Chigwell and Norfolk property to his second son, Michael. It is evident that the birth of William in the following year was looked on as an important family event, and Michael wrote to Witcombe in 1759:—

> "I hope the Hares thrive, and Will is able to mount his Pony with a little help and ride after them; though I hope at the same time he will not take after my side of the Family, and think of and love only shooting, hunting, and a long etc. of that sort; but while he is young let us train him in the Way he should go, and make him a useful member of Society, and bring Him up in a proper sphere of life; and then a good Estate will be an Honour to Him and He an Honour to a good Estate, and he may be a means (nay the only means that I see) of raising again and perpetuating the Family to the longest era of time (which Almighty God grant)."

SUMMER HOUSE, WITCOMBE PARK.

It was, as events have turned, not William, but his younger brother, who was the means of "perpetuating the family."

Michael, at Chigwell, writing "very late at night," says :—

> "I rejoice to hear of the safe Delivery of Mrs. Hicks and likewise of the additional son to your Family, and suppose he is made a Christian by this time, if not, if agreeable to yours and Mrs. Hicks Inclinations, Name Him Michael, and let somebody stand Sponsor for me."

There is a miniature of godfather Michael at Witcombe, with powdered wig, and the scarlet coat which the *Tatler* complains the country gentlemen of the day particularly affected and flaunted in London. He had the long narrow head and chin and the arched brows of the idealist; was of the type which, without the driving force of an actual ideal, swells the ranks of the restless. He was unmarried, and his life had no pivot. He writes, in 1759, saying he has been at Brighelmstone (Brighton), and is just going to Newport, in the Isle of Wight, to stay with relations of his father's first wife, who are "willing to amuse an idle bachelor."

> "I more and more hate Essex, and think I shall sell my dwelling House, Offices, and Gardens, but no land of consequence not exceeding five Acres. I can make a Great Advantage in the sale and wish it gone, for none of our Family Elder Branch, or younger, ever got anything by London Affairs (I mean within the last Century)."

In 1760 he has been to Norfolk, to visit his property of Ellingham, and gives a long account of the sport he has had. The next letter relates that he has been ten hours three days together with the rest of the fashionable world in the House of Lords listening to the trial of Earl Ferrers for the murder of his land-steward,

Johnson.* Then he has been at Harrogate for his gout, of which he often complains.

> "I am now returned Home from drinking the Harrogate waters in Yorkshire, and have great reason, amongst manifold others, to bless my Creator for bringing out of the Veins and Caverns of the Earth, such a pure inestimable medicine, far exceeding all Chemistry and the Vain Researches of Man. In truth I am much better than when I last parted from you . . . and am in hopes I am cleansed in some shape, or at least for some time, by this Pool of Bethesda."

This was in July, 1762, and in December of the same year he was at Bath.

> "I find it impossible to keep either Servants or Horses at Bath, My Coachman comes home every evening drunk, and makes such a noise in the House, He will let us have neither Rest a-bed nor up till twelve-o-clock. For when a-Bed he hollows and makes as much Noise as when in the Day-time."

In May, 1763, Michael went to Lisbon, and left behind with his banker a MS. book, with an account of his estates, his tenants' names and rents, list of annuitants of the estates and the form of receipts the latter were to give. It is all very clearly put and fully annotated, and in a note at the end he states that Sir Harry Franklin, the consul at Lisbon, is related to him. He was back in England in the autumn, for in October he wrote from Bath again, from "Morgan's Coffee House," to say that he does not mean to be in Gloucestershire again that year. This letter and, indeed, the body of all his letters to Howe, are about Beverstone matters, and it is evident that Howe acted

* Laurence, fourth Earl Ferrers, was hanged at Tyburn for this murder, May 5th, 1760.

as agent for him at Beverstone; and when he died, in the following year, Howe was summoned to London by the lawyer and Lord Boston* to learn that Beverstone, the manors of Chigwell and Westhatch and the manor of Ellingham Nevels had been left to the godson and namesake, the little Michael of Witcombe, aged four. The letter came across the Cotswolds by express messenger, travelling all through the March night, and reached Cirencester at a quarter past four in the morning. The postmaster there enclosed it in a note saying that the charge is paid so far, and his further demand is "three shillings for the horse, the boy what you please."

Michael Hicks was buried in the churchyard of Islington parish church.† In accordance with a provision of his will, a sale of the contents of the Chigwell house immediately took place, and a catalogue of the household goods exists with the prices obtained against each item. The whole amount was £623 8*s.* 8*d.* There is no mention of the picture by Vandyke which had hung in the dining-room at Ruckholt, nor were there any other pictures of value.

The list of wearing apparel contains the scarlet 'roccolo,' and, besides, a suit of black cloth, a suit of garnet-cut velvet, a suit of crimson velvet, a crimson cloth coat with gold lace, a light silver lace coat. Then there was a brocade waistcoat, a black bugle waistcoat, and waistcoats of yellow sattin, of crimson sattin embroidered with silver, of white sattin with rich gold lace. Breeches were of blue velvet and black velvet; there were many pairs of white stockings, both silk and cotton, shoes, neck-cloths, and lace ruffles. It must have added to the gaiety of the London Road when Michael drove along it from Chigwell in his 'crane neck post chariot on steel springs,' or in his

* Lord Boston was distantly related to the Hicks through the Pagets. His wife was a Miss Selwyn of Matson House, four miles from Witcombe.

† Why there, it is impossible to guess.

'Italian two-wheel chaise,' and there were, of course, all the added details of things that did not go into the sale—the diamond rings devised in the will, the enormous gold repeater now at Witcombe (with its bill of £66), shoe-buckles, enamelled snuff-box. The Chigwell plate all came to Witcombe in its great mahogany chest clamped with brass, which is one of the treasures of the house to-day. There is a list of the silver that was in it, and that the godson Michael took away when he married—happily the chest was too cumbersome to remove.

In 1764, the year of Michael's death, the Witcombe household was a much diminished one. Howe's sister Mary had married a soldier named Williams and she had died at Witcombe in 1755. Of Howe's daughters, Mary, Susanna and Henrietta were also dead, and Martha, Alice and Ann were married. Mary died when she was fifteen, and was buried in the church of Witcombe beneath a characteristic poem of the day:—

> Though few her years she not untimely died,
> Who richly was with heavenly gifts supplied,
> Thus God decrees—When ripe for heav'n the soul
> Quits her terrestrial home without controul
> Of youth, physician's care or parent's love
> T' enjoy the blest abode prepar'd above.

Susanna was buried at Cobberley.* She must have died when on a visit to the Brownes; but how dull it is not to be able to revive all the detail of these daughters' lives! All that can be done is to remember that Miss Edgeworth was born in 1757, and Miss Austen in 1775. Martha, it is pretty certain, was a person in whom Miss Austen would have delighted, and she married a neighbouring clergyman of the name of Pettat, which is just—name and all—what Miss Austen would have arranged. The Rev. John Pettat

* Bigland, in his "History of Gloucestershire," says there was a monument to her, but it and eighteen others have disappeared.

was rector of Stonehouse in the vale, not eleven miles from Witcombe. He and Martha had two surviving children: Thomas, who took orders and succeeded his father as vicar of Stonehouse; and Martha Susanna, who married her cousin, John Browne of Salperton Park. Martha Pettat's tombstone is in Stonehouse churchyard, and bears the legend that "She closed a well-spent life on the 26th day of September 1826 in the 84th year of her age."

The Witcombe register—not worse kept than others of that date—is silent about all the Park weddings. Alice and Ann did marry—the one a Mr. Lowfield of Bath, the other a Mr. James King of Stanton in Herefordshire—but their father did not think the facts worth recording, and entered their deaths in the family Bible, in 1769 and 1774, without mentioning their surnames. Alice Lowfield died at Witcombe, for her name is entered in the burial register.

Thus it came about that, in 1764, when Cousin Michael died, William, aged ten, and Michael, aged four, were the only children left at Witcombe. Michael was a sturdy, healthy child, but William all his life—and it was a long life—suffered from a want of vitality; he was undersized, he stuttered terribly and made faces when talking. A legend has survived that at the age of six he had a bad illness and was supposed to be dead, but his mother's maid, Mrs. Betty Brown, found that he was living by holding a feather to his nose; drastic means were employed to revive him and he stammered ever after.

Howe Hicks had been made a magistrate when he came of age. His commission as a deputy lieutenant is dated 1763, but he successfully evaded being made High Sheriff in the same year. His cousin Michael wrote to him from Chigwell:—

"I saw your name in the list of Sheriffs for Gloucestershire, as you have acquainted me by

letter, and I immediately upon Receival of yours this day wrote to my old Friend the Bishop of Winchester, and inclosed your letter to him. The Answer, as soon as I hear the Result from the Bishop, I shall immediately send to you which I flatter myself will be to your Satisfaction as the Bishop was Preceptor to the present King, and is still often with Him."

A month later he says:—

"I am glad you are made easy by Mr. Earle and Mr. Tracy as to the Sheriffdom."

This is all 'small beer' enough, but Howe's life was not an epic one. His first care was his property, which he gradually added to and improved, and then there were local affairs;* and Howe seems to have been a particularly skilful auditor of parish accounts, as the following balance sheet for the parish of Badgeworth shows. It was presented by John Andrews, a curate of the parish:—

	£	s.	d.
Received of 3 Overseers in money .	32	13	9½
Received of Thomas Bullock in money in part of Thomas Dowdwell's goods .	2	18	11
Received of Wm. Hooke the Ballance of Churchwardens' Accounts . .	0	1	1½
Received	35	13	10
Disburst more . . .	12	6	4
Easter Monday Disburst in all .	48	0	2
Before Easter in Purce . . .	41	12	5
	6	7	9
Received 3 Rates 1*s.* 4*d.* in the Pound.	183	16	4
Own Ballance . . .	196	4	1

* He repaired Witcombe Church and rebuilt the tower and built a porch in 1754.

	£	s.	d.
Disburst by John Andrews from Aprill ye 20th, 1770, to May ye 23rd, 1770, which was left in my hands	5	16	0
and disburst after out of money received for a Bastard by me . .	1	3	6
and to 3 Overseers of the Poor . .	6	6	0
and after to them	4	10	0
and to Badgeworth Ballance . .	4	1	0
	16	0	6
all Ballanced in Disbursements .	21	16	6
but forgot to Ballance . . .	212	0	7
and Received of Benjn. Hodges overseer which is in his hands . .	3	12	0

16th April 1771 Allowed by us NICHS. HYETT
HOWE HICKS

Nicholas Hyett, Howe's partner in this staggering auditorship, was constable of Gloucester Castle, like his brother before him, and both were sons of the Mr. Hyett who had been co-executor with Dr. Browne.

Howe and Martha played their parts stoutly in the midst of their acres, but it is by no means to be supposed that they lived on them from one year's end to another. There are all sorts of stray references, in letters, to journeys hither and thither, and it seems positive that at one time the Witcombe family made a regular practice of spending the season in Bath—Howe's gout, and the train of unmarried daughters supplied two good reasons for that. "I hope we shall soon all meet well in health at Bath," wrote cousin Michael of Chigwell in 1762, and the next year he offers Howe the use of his house in Chappel Row there.

The surviving daughters were married at last, and it was round the careers—and that simply meant the marriages—of their two sons that Howe and Martha's interests centred in later life. Both boys were sent to Oxford. William went to Pembroke College, where he matriculated in 1771 and took his M.A. degree in

1775. Michael matriculated at Magdalen in 1778, but Foster's *Alumni Oxonienses* has no further record of him, and that, of course, for the reason that in the following year, at the age of nineteen, he married.

Susannah Earle had married her only son, Giles, in 1761, to a Yorkshire heiress, Miss Margaret Bouchier of Benningbrough Hall in the North Riding. When the time came to find a suitable wife for her cousin William Hicks, she was therefore able to devote her energies to the matter with a disengaged mind. Eastcourt House, where the Earles lived, was about five miles from Malmesbury in Wiltshire, just over the Gloucestershire border. It was built between 1648 and 1660 by Giles Earle, a Bristol shipowner.* William Earle, Susannah's husband, was for many years M.P. for Cricklade, and evidently had some small post in the Government.

Susannah was one of those people within whose radius things have a way of happening. She put her husband into Parliament and kept him there, and it is evident that she made herself felt in Wiltshire; but she was, perhaps, too merry and too non-provincial to be well-beloved of the county ladies. For self-sufficient cousin Martha she had always just a little the tongue in the cheek, and she wrote an *Epitaph* for her, which we can be sure Martha (for it was written prematurely) thought was a very just tribute :—

EPITAPH ON LADY HICKS.

The Dame whose tomb thy observation draws,
Past through each stage of life with vast applause.
For her, the Poor, the Neighbour, and the Friend,
Their tears unite, their pious sorrow blend.
Her Husband most, who to her mem'ry just,
To future times distinguishes her Dust.
For want of utterance his Heart must break,
When stones must tell, what sorrow cannot speak.

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* There is a panel picture of him in one of the bedrooms, with his house, his large family, his coat of arms and a ship, all on the panel too.

Susannah was evidently an inveterate rhymster, and an invitation to the Witcombe family to come to Eastcourt in 1777 is all in verse. It begins with a reference to Howe's gout :—

> I was sorry to hear that my dear Cousin Hicks
> Was still limping about and supported by sticks.
>
> * * * * *
>
> If their sister gets better, the Sharps all intend
> To come here this autumn and visit their Friend.
> A Bed for yourself, Mrs. Hicks, I'll provide,
> And a small one for Betsy* to lay by your side.
> Mr. William and Michael did consent and agree
> That for Three or Four nights they would sleep on settee.
> Therefore hope you will come and this summons attend
> And believe Susan Earle your affectionate Friend.

But the unknown Sharps were not vital to the schemes of Susannah Earle. To the north of Eastcourt was Witcombe with its two eligible sons ; to the south was Keevil, one of the homes of the Wiltshire heiress, Miss Henrietta Maria Beach. It was high time that William found a wife, and was he not undisputed heir to a baronetcy as well as to a very fair estate ? The Keevil chariot at the Eastcourt door, Mrs. Hicks and Mrs. Beach rustling their brocades in the parlour, with Susannah as a clever third—and then, somehow, there was a day in the following year when William found himself driving over the Wiltshire downs, with his young brother beside him and his fellow behind him, on his way to visit the Beachs at Netheravon House, for the coursing in that neighbourhood. Netheravon, on the further side of Salisbury Plain, to Keevil, had been bought recently by Mr. Beach. A red-brick, barrack-like house it was, and you dropped down on it from the downs, and found that below it were the water meadows, and the Avon, and the church. A wooden painted portico was in front of the door, and over it was the window of the great staircase, which was as unlike the Witcombe

* The maid.

'stayer' as anything could be. Here it would be possible for the only daughter of the house to stand and watch the arrival of guests about whom she might have a curiosity. Michael, we may be sure enough, was out of the chaise first—a well-grown, round-headed boy of eighteen, with the vigour of health and with an air of being pleased with the world as he found it. William, with his lower vitality, never had that air; he was a small, anxious man—all his life long a little anxious, and very stutteringly, of his own dignity. Perhaps it was all settled in that moment of arrival that Henrietta should never gratify an eighteenth-century parental ambition and be 'my lady.'

The Beachs were—for that epoch, at least—really rich people, and the two young men found themselves in a household carried on with a good deal more state than was possible at Witcombe. We must think of the Netheravon party that evening as of some picture by Zoffany—the candles lighted in the chandeliers hanging from the high ceilings, the card tables set out, and the ladies in their looped-up silks sitting about on the stiff chairs with ruffles falling from their elbows. Netheravon demanded of its visitors the difficult talent of crossing empty spaces of floor without self-consciousness, and perhaps William was glad when the evening was at an end. And legend will have it that, when the next day came, the unabashed boy Michael discovered a misliking for the sport of coursing, and let his brother and his host and others of the party ride away over the downs without him. No doubt Madam Beach did not mind the turn affairs had taken, for Michael was actually the better endowed of the two brothers. There is a yew plantation at Netheravon which stretches inside the boundary fence, along the high road from one entrance gate to another, and the path through it is shaded from sun, from wind, and from observation too. Along this the Michael of the pastel portrait which is now in the possession of Sir Wyndham Portal, and the Henrietta

Maria of the picture which is at Coln St. Aldwyn,* must be imagined walking together. And in the following year, when they were both nineteen, they were married to one another in the church at the bottom of the Netheravon garden; and that is how it happened that Michael did not stay long enough at Oxford to take his degree.

There are in existence three or four letters which Michael wrote to Henrietta Maria while they were engaged. They begin with "My dear Madam," in the fashion of the day, but end more warmly with "Ever your Constant, Sincere and Affectionate Lover." "It would be impossible for me to think any place agreeable when you are absent as a smile from you is the greatest pleasure I can experience," is the would-be impassioned text of the earlier letters; but in August, 1779, when the wedding was near, he talks of more practical matters, and says that he cannot hear of either a housekeeper or a butler that will answer. The letter concludes with the relation of a scandal about his mother's maid Betsy, who has been alluded to before. "I foreseen the event and told you that she would soon be rid of her dropsy," he crows, and is blatant of the eighteenth century: a young man of the twentieth century might write that, but never to the girl of nineteen he was just about to marry.

But the taste of the eighteenth century was often laudable. Weddings were not occasions for ostentation, and the Netheravon wedding was so small and quiet that not even the bridegroom's parents thought it necessary to be present. It took place on October 7th, 1779, and Mrs. Beach wrote to Mrs. Hicks when it was over and received a reply from Martha. "We are very happy in the agreeable connection of our ffamilys and have the highest opinion of the merits of my daughter Hicks," she says in prelude to a laboured exposition of the virtues of her son Michael.

* Painted by — Beach, a pupil of Gainsborough.

Henrietta Maria was a 'great fortune,' and the marriage must have given satisfaction to Howe and Martha; and yet the satisfaction could not have been undiluted. Michael was all very well, but he was amply provided for by his cousin's legacy, and Witcombe, at the door, could have absorbed a fortune happily. We can be sure that Howe was ready to suggest to his heir a thousand plans for improving the property, for enlarging its borders, for building on to the house. It was really rather provoking! And when William did marry, six years later, it was not a matter for very loud congratulation. His wife was a Miss Judith Whitcomb, of a family that must have owned the little living of Orleton in Herefordshire, for three incumbents of that name were instituted there in 1740, 1758 and 1776. Her father was not one of them—was not in Orders—but he is called 'of' Orleton, although there does not seem to have been any property—nothing of any size or importance, at all events. A small miniature shows Judith with black curls all round her head and falling on her shoulders. The wedding took place in Redmarley Church, near Orleton, on May 12th, 1785. "I think she is a very tender person," says Martha, of Judith, writing to her other daughter-in-law in August.

The William Hicks took a house at Withington on the top of the Cotswolds, about ten miles from Witcombe. Here, in June, 1786, a little son was born and was christened Howe. Martha wrote to Henrietta Maria, on July 5th:—

> "I went to Withington yesterday to see my daughter, she is better, but I think very indifferent still, she have a bad cough and a little fever."

Three weeks later there is a worse account. Martha relates that she has been summoned to Withington to breakfast. The doctor has ordered change of air for Judith, so she has brought her back to Witcombe.

Judith is to go later to Redmarley, and the Hot Wells at Bristol are recommended. "My poor daughter is very indifferent, her complaints I think very alarming," says Martha. In August she reports that Judith is better for being at Witcombe, but in October writes to Michael:—

> "Your poor sister W is got, with much difficulty, being 3 days going, to Ridmarley, she is given over by all, Doc^rs and Friends, it is now a gallopping consumption, nothing of Breeding has been the Case, that have never been the least suspected, we went to see them at Redmarley on wednesday, found a House of sorrow, they think this decline has been coming on for some years. My daughter Pettat went to Ridmarley with them, as your brother had not spirits to see her friends without a friend of his own to help to support him, as his affliction is great indeed. Your sister left him on Thursday in a most melancholy situation, he intends to come either here or to Stonehouse as soon as the event happens. I wou'd wish you to enquire what will be the proper mourning for your brother, whether dark grey or Black, and also what will be the most proper for me Bombasin or Black Silk trim'd with crape."

This was rather premature, for a week later Judith was a little better:—

> "They have been trying a new experiment which they hoped might be of some service, a pan of tar standing on a table before her, which is stirred with a hot poker several times a day."

At the end of November the poor woman was still alive "expecting each day may be her last," but it was actually March, 1787, before the end came, and, mercifully enough, her hapless child, born an idiot, died too,

at Witcombe, in the following June, on its first birthday. Its grandmother wrote on June 8th :—

> "I am sorry to tell you that his (William's) poor little boy have not been so well this fortnight, but I found him much worse when I returned from Eastcourt, and, turn'd his Nurse away the next morning, who I have great cause to think have been the occasion of great part of his weakness."

William's first matrimonial adventure had ended sadly enough, and it was six years before he was married again, on October 7th, 1793, in Sherborne Church, Hants, to Miss Ann Rachel Chute, a cousin by marriage of his sister-in-law, Mrs. Michael.

Mrs. Michael Hicks' mother, Mrs. Beach, was one of the two surviving daughters of Mr. Charles Wither of Hall Place,* Hants. The other daughter married, as her second husband, Mr. Edmund Bramston, of Boreham, Essex, and their only son, Wither Bramston, inherited Hall Place from his grandfather. He was Henrietta Maria Hicks' first cousin, and he had been married to Miss Mary Chute of the Vyne, the historical neighbouring property, for ten years, when William Hicks took to wife her younger sister, Ann Rachel.

Henrietta Maria's daughter, Mrs. St. John, has left a 'note' to the effect that Ann Rachel was "not pretty," but that her sister, Mrs. Bramston, was "very charming." The following description of the wedding is from Mrs. Bramston's pen :—

> "The Bride was array'd in a Clear Book Muslin jacket and coat with white satten ribband which look'd very Handsome over a white silk petticoat, a white satten bonnet with a band of gouffred (goffered ?) white feathers, and one (long ?) white feather, a lawn

* Now Oakley Hall.

cloak trimm'd with Valencienne Lace, and I assure you she look'd very elegantly dressd.

"Mrs. Bramston * in a mulin (?) petticoat with a quilling at bottom a clear work'd muslin robe, Pink satten hat with a bouffant round the crown and white feather, pink sash and shoes very smart and look'd like a Paisanne on the stage.

"Mrs. Brocus (of Beaurepaire) in a beautiful clear muslin worked in small sprigs of Lilac and Green.

"Miss Chute in a white persian robe, Green cloud muslin petticoat Yellow hat lilac ribbands.

"Mrs. A. B. (Augusta Bramston) new muslin gown lilac ribbands her hair powdered and black satin shoes.

"All the gentlemen in new habiliments.

"We had 3 cariages to Church where we all behaved very well returnd to partake of 3 large Bridecakes 2 made at home and 1 from London. At dinner we partook of a very fine Haunch sent us by a Friend, Turtle from London 2 courses, Pine Apples from Mrs. Brocus. We spent the day very pleasantly as it went off much better than those days generally do. . . . My brother and sister set off for Weymouth Thursday."

The William Hicks seem to have lived at Bath immediately after their marriage, for their only child, Ann Rachel, was born there in 1794. After that they lived in Cheltenham within a drive of Witcombe. "My son and daughter Hicks came and dined with us yesterday return'd in the evening," said Lady Hicks, writing in 1795. Michael and his wife were not far away either. They had left Shaw Hill House, near Melksham in Wiltshire, where they lived when they first married, and were settled at Williamstrip Park, eight miles on the other side of Cirencester, and but eighteen miles from Witcombe. They were rich people, they lived in some state, and the greater prosperity of the younger

* Herself?

brother did perhaps make his near neighbourhood rather aggravating to the elder brother and the elder brother's wife! Their mother writes:—

> "I have often heard him (William) say there is great weight in money, and his fate is to possess less of that than any other part of the family, though sufficient to content him, but cant bear to be trode upon. I have not seen my daughter Hicks since she was so warm, as I wrote you word. I hope when I see her next she will be more composed or otherwise those that are to live with her are much to be pitied."

In 1791 Sir John Baptist Hicks died at his house at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire, and his second cousin Howe Hicks of Witcombe then became the sixth baronet.

Martha was thus at last in possession of what she quite deliciously calls "an old family title," and although age and infirmities were beginning to overtake Sir Howe and herself, no Lady Hicks had ever yet existed so consciously capable of upholding her new dignity. Perhaps her nearer neighbours found her at first rather insufferable. She wrote to Henrietta Maria:—

> "There was two dozen of flax left at Mr. Hicks for you, which I had brought here, and sent it, to Williamstrip yesterday, and I hear there is a large box of spun thread left at our Blacksmith's,* but as I don't know what it is intended for, I must leave it till I hear from you, we have neither of us been well for some time, Sir Howes is his old complaint in his Stomach, we have sent for Mr. Hinde and he has order'd an emetick, to be taken this evening, I hope it will be of service, he talks much of going to Bath,

* The Witcombe Forge at Horseferry Bridge was a famous one on the high road from South Wales to London, and Welsh drovers had their cattle shod there in great numbers.

which I suppose we shall if we don't get better soon, mine has been a bowel complaint and pain and giddiness in my Head, but I am much better, this Country at this time of year is rather dull, most of the neighbours being gone, and those few that are left have never call'd or taken any notice of us since we have had the misfortune to have an old family Title descend to us, however that is not the case of our more distant friends, for I think poor Lady Oxford* and the Harley family are if possible more civil than ever, we had thought if pretty well of going to Stonehouse next week, but from a letter I received from my daughter Pettat yesterday, I understand they are now, and will be for a fortnight to come, she says engaged in some very troublesome alterations, which will render it very inconvenient to them to see their ffriends, and tomorrow three weeks they propose going to Netheravon, so that it is very uncertain when we may see them, I have been in the Chaise but once since I came from Williamstrip and Eastcourt."

From Martha's letters—and many are in existence—it is clear that, during her reign, Witcombe became the social centre of the neighbourhood and that the coming and going of relations and friends was incessant:—

"Your brother (William) and sister (Mrs. Pettat) and Susan (Pettat) and ye two Brownes came here between 5 and 6 this morning from the ball at

* The old de Vere creation died out in 1702, and the title had been revived in 1711 in Robert Harley. The Lord Oxford of 1792 was the fifth earl of the new creation, and it is his mother, Susannah, who had been a Miss Archer of Berkshire, whom Martha alludes to. Lord Oxford did not marry till two years later, and his wife, a clergyman's daughter, was a celebrated lady in the fashionable world. "Quite a settled thing between Lady Oxford and Lord Byron," said Lord Dudley, writing to his friend 'Ivy,' in 1813; and again, a month later, "Lady O. sets off next month for Palermo and Childe Harold is to accompany or follow her."

Cheltenham and are now but just up. We expect Lady Oxford and Miss Harley on Wednesday next to spend some days with us."

"Have been a good deal hurried with company almost every day since we came home, and indeed have now Mr. and Miss Bunn* they have been with us this ten days. . . . Mr. Rogers was so kind as to make us a visit. . . . We have also had Mr. Sampson and his daughter to spend some days with us last week. Cheltenham is very full we have been to one breakfast there."

"We had all our neighbours round us to take part of the Haunch of Venison on Friday. Mr. and Mrs. Howell, the three Sheppards, Mr. Webb and Mr. Lawrence and your brother, and yesterday morning we went to Gloucester market and took your brother with us."

"Lord Oxford came here on Sunday and left us just before your servant came. He went yesterday to visit the King and Queen at Cheltenham and return'd to us to dinner. The King etc behaviour pleases every one at Cheltenham, they are perfectly free and easy."

Sir Howe and Lady Hicks dined out incessantly too, and sometimes at impossible distances—with the Nibletts at Haresfield,† at Withington, at Salperton, at Prinknash and at other places which meant climbing hills along roads that were very bad. Even to reach Cheltenham a mountain had first to be surmounted, for the vale road was not in existence until half a century later.

"We are going this evening to Cheltenham to

* Chigwell friends.

† It would seem as if it were at this halfway house that acquaintance was first made with the Whitcombs of Red Marley.

attend my Son and Daughter to the Play for the benefit of the Royal Cheltenham Corps of Infantry,* the Play is the Wheel of Fortune with a great variety of entertainments of songs etc and some of the best performers to conclude with Rule Britannia."

They went further afield as well—to stay at Cirencester and Eastcourt, at Netheravon for Christmas, and with Lord and Lady Oxford at Egwood. They were to make the Bishop of Gloucester and Mrs. Bendon a visit; and then there is a letter written from Pyle in Glamorganshire, where they are with the Talbots, and Martha says that they are on their way to Newton, and if they don't like that they shall go to Swansea. The old lady of eighty sets it all out precisely in her beautiful clear writing and with no hint of lassitude. Her interest in domestic affairs was unflagging too. She discourses with spirit, and often, to her Williamstrip daughter-in-law, who was undoubtedly a kindred spirit, of servants' peccadilloes—"Sure never was Servants at such a hight as they are now"—and there was a constant traffic between Witcombe and Williamstrip in chickens, flax, venison, young turkeys, and plush for the men's breeches† which Henrietta Maria was to procure. With her own relations, the Brownes at Salperton, Martha was not on invariable good terms. "My brother wrote to me as if nothing had happened between us," she says, announcing her sister-in-law's death to Michael. But her unmarried sister, Martha Browne, lived at Witcombe in "a little dwelling," and died there in 1786.

It was a tragedy of the old people's last days that the house in which they entertained so royally seemed as if it must tumble about their ears. It will be remembered that Sir Michael Hicks, in 1689, had built on to

* William Hicks commanded it.

† The indoors livery was crimson plush breeches and pale blue coats.

the original stone premises in timber and laths and plaster only, and it was this timbered structure which was in such sad disrepair. Martha gives a detailed account of the matter in a long letter of June, 1797, saying that it was her son Michael who discovered how unsafe it all was, and that when they uncovered a great portion they found it much worse than they hoped, for the foundations had slipped; they were preparing timber and stone and props for the house, and the wainscoting in both parlours would have to come down :—

> "In looking back in a Book I have found it was 44 years, since the Building was entirely uncover'd and then only new Laths and Plaster, the Timber then being perfectly sound, as indeed it is now everywhere but at bottom."

Grandchildren, of course, stayed at Witcombe, and their bodily ailments and moral perfections were an incessant theme. Susan Pettat was constantly with grandmother, but she was a grown-up woman when Michael's and William's children were yet babies. Ann, William Hicks' only daughter, was seven when her grandfather, Sir Howe, died in 1801. He was seventy-nine years old, and his temper had not mellowed with old age. The spring rains had burst a culvert under the road near the buildings of the Upper farm behind the church, and he rode out in the afternoon to see about it. The way the men were repairing it did not please him, and while he was saying so in forcible language, apoplexy intervened; he fell from his horse and was carried to the house across the orchards on a hurdle.

In her thin, high voice, his granddaughter, in extreme old age, told her heir, the present owner of Witcombe, "I never had such a shock: I went into the dining-room and there was poor grandpapa on the table." That makes it extraordinarily vivid. Ann was an ugly

little child in a tight, narrow little frock;* her chin would just come to the edge of the table when she wandered into the room in the midst of the first general confusion. "Poor grandpapa," there he lay, and the great picture of Van Deist's, with its everlasting hills and floating clouds, looked down upon him.

Martha was seven years older than her husband, and she survived him but a short time, and her last letter tells that, at eighty-five, her enormous courage for life had perhaps failed her a little for the first time.

> "On Monday morning Mrs. Lawrence† sent to enquire after me, and to say if I had no company, she wou'd come and dine with me on Tuesday, or any other day that I wou'd fix, so she came in a very friendly way yesterday, and desired I would return her visit in the same way, and very kindly wish'd that we might see each other often which was more than I expected as I think myself old and out of date."

* Pencil picture at Witcombe.
† Of the Greenways, Shurdington.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MICHAEL HICKS BEACH.

BECAUSE she endowed the Hicks family not only with her fortune, but with her name, Henrietta Maria Beach seems to have a particular importance. And, indeed, the fortune has this importance for to-day—that it has given to Henrietta Maria's great-grandson (with other qualities perhaps) the leisure necessary to become a Cabinet Minister. Some members of his family regret that when he was made a peer he did not feel himself justified in reviving the title of de la Beche.

In the church of Aldworth, in the deanery of Newbury in Berkshire, under arches against the north and south walls, are a remarkable series of eight altar tombs with effigies, mostly of men in armour and crusaders. They are all supposed to represent members of the de la Beche family, and to have been placed there in memory of his ancestors by Nicholas, Lord de la Beche, who built the church in the reign of Edward III. The de la Beches had a castle at Aldworth, and the said Nicholas was constable of the Tower of London.

"Dugdale's Baronage," and other similar books, say that this Norman de la Beche family were the ancestors of the Beachs of Wiltshire, who were first heard of in the town of Warminster about 1500; but although the Patent Roll Calendars from 1229 to 1469 have many allusions to the offices held by de la Beches and to the crimes committed by them, it has not been possible to link them securely to Robert Beche of Warminster whose will was proved in 1519. Yet he very likely was

a de la Beche all the same, for they had owned land in Wiltshire two hundred years before this. An inquisition of February 26th, 22 Edward I., says that Thomas de la Beche held lands in Wiltshire of his brother Roger. In 1324 Philip de la Beche owned the manor of Hacleston,* and early in the reign of Edward III. the charge of the county of Wiltshire and of the royal castle of Old Sarum was committed to him. In 1345 there was an inquisition of one Nicholas de la Beche showing he had lands in Cheprigge, Farlegh and Dydenham, co. Wilts.

Between this Nicholas, and another Nicholas Beche of Warminster, is the gap of a century. In an undated bundle of Chancery proceedings from 1493 to 1500 is a suit relating to a cottage in Warminster by "ROBERT BECHE son and heir of Johane wife of Nicholas Beche." The sequence is, of course, of names only, but this Robert was probably he whose will was proved in 1519. The said will describes him as a mercer, but it is likely that he was a vendor of broadcloths and not of silks, for there would not be much trade doing in silks in the market town on the edge of Salisbury Plain, and there had been a prosperous manufacture of broadcloths there for a long time. Robert desires to be buried in the chapel of the Blessed Mary in the church of St. Dionysius of Warmynster, gives £20 to his sons Christopher and Thomas and to his daughter Margery, and leaves the residue of his property to his son John.

The daughter mentioned in the will left a will also, which was proved August 22nd, 1552. It says that she was one of the religious sisters of the monastery of Amresbury, and she bequeaths a piece of gold to her brother Christopher Beche of Warminster, to Jone his wife and to each of his five children.

The inquisition *post mortem* of "CHRISTOPHER BECHE of Warminster gentleman" says that he died June 10th,

* Curiously enough William Beach bought it in 1678, together with Fittleton.

1556, and that John Beach aged thirty-six, was his eldest son.

The Warminster register says that JOHN BEACH married a widow, Julian Stanlock, 1559. His will was proved in 1573, and he only mentions his Stanlock step-children, although his wife's will shows that he had a daughter. He makes his brother Thomas his executor.

THOMAS BEACH married Agnes Stanlock in 1563 (Julian and Agnes were perhaps sisters-in-law). Administration of his property was granted to his widow, Agnes Beche, in 1576.

WILLIAM BEACH, son of Thomas, married Joan Adlam, of a family who had property in the parish of Brixton Deverill, near Warminster. He was buried at Brixton Deverill in 1646.

His eldest son, WILLIAM BEACH, married Mary Gifford of Alhampton, Somerset. In 1678, he bought of his Adlam relations the manors of Fittleton and Hacleston, with the mansion house of Fittleton, in the valley of the Avon. He bought, also of William Adlam, the mansion house of Keevil Manor in the north of the county. He was buried at Fittleton, 1686.

His eldest son, WILLIAM BEACH, married Anne, a daughter of the Rev. Gilbert Wither of Hall Place, Hampshire. He purchased the estate of Keevil of T. Lambert in 1680, and was buried at Keevil in 1741.

His son THOMAS BEACH made a particularly fortunate marriage. In 1718 he married Miss Jane Harding, the only sister of a bachelor East Indian merchant, James Harding. His beautifully-kept account books are in the possession of Viscount St. Aldwyn, and show his mercantile transactions in detail. He died a very rich man, and left his whole fortune to his sister, Jane Beach.

The eldest son of Jane and Thomas was yet another WILLIAM BEACH, and he married his second cousin, Miss Anne Wither, one of the two heiress daughters of

Charles Wither of Hall Place, Hants. Their only surviving child, Henrietta Maria, married Michael Hicks.

All this detail demonstrates that Michael had married into a family with whom the accumulation of fortunes and properties had become a fixed habit.

The portrait of William Beach at Coln St. Aldwyn shows him as a mild-natured man, with an anxious eye, which may be accounted for by the portrait of the lady who hangs by his side. But that is very likely a libellous statement, for the only evidence that he was hen-pecked is contained in an extraordinary *Narrative* written by the curate of Keevil who succeeded in marrying Mr. and Mrs. Beach's eldest daughter, and who was, by his own showing at least, a most ingenuous scoundrel. He could hardly be relied upon for an unbiassed opinion of his mother-in-law. Whatever her temper and disposition, she was the daughter of an interesting father.

The *Saturday Review* of February 1st, 1908, contained an article called "An Eighteenth Century Gentleman, and gives an account of Mr. Charles Wither, Commissioner of Woods and Forests, who was Mrs. Beach's father. The Wither family had its origin in Lancashire in the time of Henry I., but in the fifteenth century Thomas Wither killed Sir Robert Worceley and fled the county with his two brothers, and the youngest, Robert, settled at Manydown in Hampshire. His descendants married judiciously, and, in the seventeenth century, became possessed of Hall Place near Manydown, and of considerable property in Oakley, Sherborne and Deane. Charles Wither sat as M.P. for Christchurch from 1727 to his death. "Quis ullum inveniet parem?" wrote the clergyman at Deane when recording his burial in the register. He had a considerable family, but was survived by two daughters only. The younger, Anne, married William Beach of Keevil and Fittleton in 1779. The elder, Henrietta Maria, to whom the Hall Place property had

been left, married, as her second husband, Mr. Edmund Bramston of Boreham, Essex. They had an only son, Wither Bramston, who married Miss Mary Chute of the Vyne.* The Wither Bramstons had no children, and William Hicks Beach, the second son of Michael Hicks and Henrietta Maria Beach, eventually got Hall Place, or Oakley Hall as it began to be called about 1800.

"An obscure unnoticed state of Affluence," is Mr. Wainhouse, the Keevil curate's, account of the worldly position of the William Beachs, so that it must have been their riches only which drew down on them the thunder of the gods. The stories of their son and eldest daughter are really tragic. William Wither Beach, their only son, went to New College where he had some reputation as a poet. A poem of his called *Abradates and Panthea: A Tale Extracted from Xenophon*, was published privately with all the panoply of good print and wide margins, but the rest of his life —and he lived to be eighty-two—is a dreadful silence, for he went out of his mind. Mr. Wainhouse's story is that it was his mother's fault, because she crossed him in a youthful love affair: "The Disappointment threw the Son into a low, odd and unsociable Way, in which he has continued ever since," says the narrator of *A Tale of domestic and uncommon Parental Barbarity.*

Anne Beach cannot have been in full possession of her senses either, if she fell in love, in the way he would have the world believe, with the Keevil curate. Mr. Wainhouse says of his *Narrative* that it was prepared for the Press, but was withheld from publication because the tale was too horrid for the general ear. "Wherefore the Delinquents are left to Heaven and their own Consciences." He starts by describing in some detail his failure to secure the hand of another young lady of good prospects, but, things having been brought to a crisis unfavourable to his wishes, he turned his thoughts to Miss Anne Beach. Mrs. Beach

* Her younger sister, Rachel Ann, was William Hicks' second wife.

KEEVIL MANOR HOUSE.

Showing the room over the porch where Ann Beech was locked up.

suspected his design, and he made her a promise that he would never make any private attempt on Miss Anne's affections. He confesses with shame and sorrow that he broke his word. He broke it, indeed, with great elaboration, and he gives all the particulars of his surreptitious addresses—the notes, the secret avowals, Anne's consent to a matrimonial excursion to Scotland, the little sister's awakening at the wrong moment, the post-chaise and four that had to drive away, the discovery of the plot, the anger of the parents. Then there was a second attempt and a nam'd and fix'd retreat at the midnight hour in the shrubbery at Keevil, with the hasty descent of Mrs. Beach on the curate's lodgings directly she missed her daughter. The main part of the narrative, however, is not so much occupied with a relation of facts, as with the forcible setting forth of the hardness of heart of Mrs. Beach, and her supposed motives; together with the demonstration that the Rev. William Wainhouse himself had no motive at all but that of esteem and pity for the young lady. Exaggerated as the whole story is, it is likely enough that Anne's parents were not very wise in their anger,* and the end of the matter was that Anne came of age, and—so, at least, he repeats with gallantry after her death—practically forced Mr. Wainhouse to marry her by flying to him for protection. Poor foolish Anne had caught a very bad cold that night she hid in the shrubbery, and it sowed the seeds of consumption. She survived the marriage but three months, and her husband went to lengthy pains to lay her death at her mother's door.

Henrietta Maria was only ten years old at the time this second tragedy was being played out, but Mr. Wainhouse does not let her escape the lash of his censure. "The Mother, as it appears, cross'd two, out of three, of her children in their matrimonial Desires,

* They are said to have locked her up in the room over the porch at Keevil.

and free Choice in Love. It is a very probable conjecture, that it is the Aim of the mother to center the Riches of the Family in the youngest Daughter the Object of her Idolatry. This she has effected by the Death of her eldest Daughter. But if enriching one Child by the Plunder and Destruction of another, can be Matter of Rejoicing to Parents, who envies such a Triumph?" The child, Henrietta Maria, herself, he is "credibly inform'd," had been heard to say that if her sister went counter to her parents' wishes, "this wou'd be a fine Thing for herself, as she shou'd be a great Fortune out of it."

The picture of Henrietta Maria at Coln St. Aldwyn was painted when she was fifteen, and shows her as a rosy, fair-complexioned, buxom girl, with an underlying glint of pathos, called into being perhaps by the weight of her piled-up head-dress. Her marriage to Michael Hicks in 1777 probably pleased her parents well enough; the boy and girl were in love with each other and Michael had birth and a fair fortune. William Beach had bought the house and lands at Netheravon in 1760, with the Harding money, from the Duke of Beaufort. Netheravon and Fittleton villages join each other, and Netheravon House and Fittleton Manor are but a mile apart. The young couple, however, did not settle at Fittleton—wisely, it might perhaps be thought. They took on a lease, Shaw Hill House, near Melksham, on the other side of Salisbury Plain and about thirty-five miles by road from Witcombe. Here most of their nine children were born during the next years, and Michael had as much coursing and shooting and fishing as he could desire.

But the eighteenth century was drawing to its end; the restless nineteenth century was in the throes of its birth—it was all in the air that the borders of life should be enlarged. Mr. and Mrs. Beach had ambitions for their daughter and son-in-law, and there are

WILLIAMSTRIP PARK.

evidences that Michael was tired of an aimless life of sport. It was decided, as a preliminary, to invest the rest of the Harding fortune in landed property, and William Beach set on foot negociations to buy Williamstrip Park, a Gloucestershire estate with a deer-park and a big house, on the Cotswolds near Fairford. The estate comprised the manor of Williamstrip, the parish of Coln St. Aldwyn and half of the parish of Quenington. It had no particular history and had changed hands pretty often.* That business genius, James Harding, would have shuddered in his grave could he have known what a bad investment Cotswold land was going to be a hundred years later. At the time, however, the purchase gave unalloyed satisfaction to everyone. The final conveyance was not signed until 1790, but the Michael Hicks were installed there as early as 1788, and Lord Oxford, who stayed with them, was evidently doing the expected thing when he wrote, "Give me leave to assure you Williamstrip without compliment is a most fine place, the inward real satisfaction I felt at seeing you in possession of it is not easily to be describe."

Mrs. Beach died in 1788 and her husband died in 1790, when the responsibilities of the Netheravon, the Fittleton and the Keevil property were added to those Michael Hicks already had; and, by a codicil to his will, his father-in-law desired that he should take the name of Beach.

It is a matter of history that Sydney Smith was curate of Netheravon. The tale of how the new squire and his wife, with the curate as an able third, began, as new brooms will, to sweep very diligently there, has been set forth exhaustively by Mr. Stuart Reid and by Mr. George W. E. Russell in their *Lives* of Sydney

* One of its owners was Henry Powle, Speaker of the House of Commons and Master of the Rolls, who was buried in Quenington Church, 1692.

Smith. Mr. Reid gives in full all the discriminating comments which the curate, at Mrs. Beach's request, made on a list of the Netheravon poor which the steward had compiled; and he quotes, in full, all the existing letters, but three, which Sydney Smith wrote to Williamstrip during this period. The village "an oasis in the midst of Salisbury Plain" (as Mr. Russell, full of pity for the curate's isolation, calls it) was probably not worse, as regards its vice and its poverty, than the average remote village of the day. Nor is it necessary to place the Hicks Beach educational efforts on a pedestal. Mr. Russell says patronisingly that the Beachs "seem to have been thoroughly high-principled and intelligent people." So they were; but they were not on that account constellations set apart. It was the era of the awakening conscience—of Robert Raikes and of Hannah More; and the Bishop of Salisbury had but recently urged the diocese to adopt their ideas. The Sunday school and the industrial schools of Netheravon had their counterparts on other estates.

The correspondence over these Netheravon matters was carried on principally between the curate and Mrs. Hicks Beach, and that was a custom which extended to subsequent years—the lady's greater leisure being given as the reason.

Michael himself was busy enough, for in 1794 he was returned as one of the two Members of Parliament for Cirencester, and he represented the borough until 1818. It belonged to a Mr. Joseph Pitt,* and no doubt a heavy price was paid for it; yet the method was a direct one, and, perhaps, in the long run, not more

* In his "Remeniscences of the Oxford Circuit," Lord Campbell says that J. Pitt had been a boy who used to hold horses for a penny, that an attorney had taken a fancy to him, that he had scraped together money, and had become a brewer, a banker, a farmer and a land jobber; was worth (1812) £20,000 a year and returned four Members to Parliament. Pitt subsequently ruined himself, and partly through laying out an estate, now a part of the town of Cheltenham, and called 'Pittville.'

expensive than the methods of to-day. In 1807, after the fall of Grenville's Ministry, Michael was anxious that his eldest son should enter Parliament as well as himself. The Duke of Beaufort was asked to approach Lord Mount Edgcumbe about a seat in Cornwall, and he wrote: "As I really think there is some chance of L^d. M. being likely to seat your son, would it not be better for you to write to some Man of business in London, stating what terms you will give, and empowering him to make an Agreement with L^d. Mount Edgecomb's Man of business." Young Beach never sat in Parliament, but his father was re-elected for Cirencester in 1787.

'Going into Parliament' was a new departure for a member of either the Hicks or the Beach families in these later generations, and it can be well believed that the matter was well discussed, and that the parents at Witcombe would have their opinion to give. The Earles were consulted as well, and William Earle, Susannah's eldest grandson, the heir to Benborough Hall, who was in the 50th Regiment, wrote at some length:—

> "My opinion is this and I will tell you in few words. If you are by any means ambitious of getting into Parliament, you make an experiment at a very reasonable rate; Should you find upon trial that you have health and Spirits, inclination, and time, to continue in that line, which is an honourable one, you may fulfill your engagements in the other Quarter nearest your own residence, should you find that it will not suit you, or agree with Mrs. H. B., you will have made your experiment, and the dissolution of parliament will give you a very good opportunity of quitting, when the existence of parliament is no longer. As to what you are to do, I leave that to your own final determination. You have been mentioned to the Ministry, and the way is paved for you, or any one presented by Mr. L. to succeed him.

"Could you prevail upon Mrs. B. to mix more with her own sex and not merely with her and your female relations, she would extend her acquaintance, encrease her knowledge of the World, and gradually diminish that diffidence she has of her abilities, and accomplishments, she will not allow she has.

"The property you have makes you one of the properest persons to be in parliament, provided you come in at the fair market price and by agreement, but if you are to put yourself forward to make yourself known as a public Character, and Mrs. B. will not cooperate by coming forward to be acquainted with the Wives of those with whom you are connected by party politics, she will find your avocations in the house will employ your time and from her dislike to London, she would be forced to pass many weeks alone without your society, which she has never been without, from the day of your marriage. Should you get into parliament you will (have) different society and different connexions, Your party dinners and the conversation annexed to it, will be a scene of a different kind from any you have ever as yet experienced. Whatever you do, as you and Mrs. B. have a mutual regard for each other, make her your friend, and do nothing without her knowledge or assent. She brought you to a fortune, and has some title to be consulted. I wish to see you known, and popular, in your own county, and in Wiltshire, visiting, and visited by the people of rank, Character and fortune, in those two counties. Your own expences would be lessened, and the credit and satisfaction of having good company is among the first comforts in life. You intimated when in Wiltshire you intended to come forward and take a different line in life, I was very sincerely happy to hear it. Leave off gradually a certain . . . whose behaviour and conversation can adorn no society, and who are only happy and at their ease, when in the society of such

MICHAEL HICKS.

HENRIETTA MARIA BEACH.

(From pastel pictures by L. Vaslet in the possession of Sir William Portal, Bart.)

men as Toys or . . . The friendship you express for me induces me to give my opinion thus freely, if I have taken too great a liberty forgive it, I mean neither to be troublesome or officious. It is a real regard for you and Mrs. B. that has made me give the rein to my ideas."

This throws a strong side-light on Mrs. Hicks Beach, and some of the candidly expressed opinions of Sydney Smith and her own letters to her husband make the picture of her rather a complete one. It is perfectly clear that nothing would ever have made her into a woman of fashion, but that, in keeping herself aloof from that side of life, she yet managed, when occasion required, to hold her own with great spirit. She was very deliberate, very conservative, very far-seeing, and had an immense care for detail which has been transmitted to some of her descendants.

"Remember me very kindly to Mrs. Beach of whom I never think without recollecting and admiring her great good sense and many amiable qualities," said Sidney Smith, writing to the husband in 1794. In 1799 the friendship had ripened and he felt able to poke a little fun at the lady:—

"You are now seriously immersed in all these weighty operations which fill up the sum of country life. You are flinging barley out to the pigeons. You are hearing the hideous death of peafowls that have been eat by foxes. You have drawn half a carnation, you have observed several times that the grass is green and the may sweet. You have gap'd several times and pull'd Cæsar by the ears—and heard above eight and thirty stories which Anne and Henrietta have to tell you about Grandpapa and Grandmamma."

Halcyon as this life was it was not without its tragedies.

"I sympathise with you upon the loss of poor Bloxam,* and the circumstances of his death render it the more distressing,—his loss is great I admit, but you will think it irreparable—no new thing ever compensates you for the loss of an old one—a new hat or bonnet which gives pleasure to other Ladies is to you a source of sincere mortification. The preceding one becomes dear to you as it becomes shapeless, and when it is on the eve of dissolution, you quit it with a pang."

"I cannot take leave of you in silence without thanking you individually for the distinguishing kindness you have ever shown me," wrote Sydney Smith to Henrietta Maria in 1803, when he was about to sever his connection with the Beachs; and many years before, during a holiday in Bath, when he was commissioned to interview a governess for the Beach girls, he had said:—

"Upon the fair share of respect and attention with which a person who has still all the feelings, and once had the situation, of a woman of independent fortune, will expect to be treated, I shall say nothing. For I never saw a family in which they were more delicately attended to than in yours."

That was all very well for phrases, but in the course of his career as tutor to the Beach sons he and Mrs. Beach had a very considerable difference of opinion as to a want of deference which the angry husband considered had been shown to Mrs. Smith. "So Sidney Smith has laughed himself into the good graces of Miss Pybus," wrote William Earle in 1800. The marriage took place in July, and later in the summer the Smiths seem to have accompanied the Beachs on one of those leisurely tours in their own coach which

* The family doctor.

were one of the pleasures of the day. They went northwards to Matlock, and when the Smiths proceeded to Edinburgh, the Beachs turned and came home. The letter here quoted was evidently not the first of the series:—

"My dear Madam,

"When people of good breeding, and education travel together, they share equally the pleasures and inconveniences of the journey.

"Amongst the rest in the article of sleeping rooms —every lady takes her Share of good, and bad, and sometimes she is accomodated well, and at others she yields to her fellow travellers the best that the Inn affords. Nobody knows the rules of politeness better than you, and if Mrs. Loveden, or Mrs. Barker or any other of your respectable neighbors had been of your party—you would I think have strictly complied with them. You uniformly thro' the whole of our tour put Mrs. Smith in the worst room, and took the best for yourself—without the smallest apology—or any one softening expression whatsoever.

"Is this not to say in language *too plain to be mistaken*—I do not think this woman worthy of being treated with the common forms of politeness?—If there *is* any other interpretation to be put upon this, it has escaped my attentive consideration. My wife is of a disposition that she would not complain if she were to be placed in a dungeon—but am I to feel for her less because her disposition is amiable? I should be unworthy your notice—if I thought for a moment whether my bed were good or bad—or if the bad accomodation to which every person is exposed in travelling could for a moment ruffle my temper—but I want the consideration, and the politeness—not the accomodation. I want not the thing itself but the offer, and I want these much more for

my wife than myself. I would have slept in mud and water before I would in any one instance have suffered Mr. Beach and yourself to take the worse accomodation, but would it have cost you much to have shewn Mrs. Smith by *only once* giving her an opportunity of dealing a choice of a bed—that you thought her not an unworthy object of that good breeding, which Ladies in general exercise towards one another ?—

"While many are starving in this world, my dear Madam, and many are toiling, God has given you various good things, and you are blessed with unbounded affluence, and with unruffled ease—you are too valuable and too amiable a woman to be rendered proud by your opulence, but let me ask you, are you never rendered negligent of the feelings of others by it ?—are you never careless of giving pain,—because you are exempted from any interested motives to consult the opinions of others. On the contrary it is ever the study of a truly Christian Spirit to soften by gentle behavior the hard distinction of human lots, and to efface that jealousy of contemptuous treatment, which the little have so much to fear from the great.

"Everybody will love you my dear Madam if you treat them with consideration, and respect, without this—you will meet with a number of base people who will hang upon you for their food and their drink, but no honorable spirited man or woman *will* or *can* be your friend. I want *nothing* from Mr. Beach or you—but that for which I toil—but I have a very great affection, and respect for you both, and I wish with all my heart, and Soul to preserve them. I know how easily people like Mrs. Smith and myself are apt to be disregarded —unprotected as we are by the Splendor of birth and fortune—and you and your husband would feel it, if you could change situation. I am not the

man to barter the respect due to me and due to my wife for any earthly consideration—she is the best of women, she has given up affluence for me, and may God Almighty curse me—if ever I cease to feel for her more, and to love her better than myself. All this seems much to write about a bed, but negligence and contempt may be shewn in a thousand different ways. None but a fool can quarrel with the vehicle, it is the thing conveyed which is hateful. You will call me selfish for clouding the good humour of a party, and not sacrificing my resentment to their entertainment, but my dear Madam there is a much more general, and a much better rule, than that which this imputation includes, and that is 'not to act so as to give rational cause of dissatisfaction to those with whom you travel' for it is much easier to consult the feelings of others than to stifle our own. I cannot for a moment suppose that any difference was made in this case by Mr. Beach defraying the expence of the journey, because had I been the Pay Master I should have thought it the most cogent reason *possible* for treating my companion in a different manner. Nor was I a mere idle traveller at his expence—myself and wife had an object in the journey. If after all you really think I cared for accomodations, *considered by themselves*, ask your Son's Servant, If in our journies, the most impartial justice was not preserved between me and your Son. I make you no apology for my resentment, because I think it wise, and just, —but I do apologise to you *most sincerely*,—If I have expressed that resentment now or *at any time* indecently. Farewell my dear Madam, you are little accustomed to such plain truth as this Letter contains, and yet I do not think you will hate me for telling them to you whether you do or not—my opinion of you founded upon an acquaintance of 6 or 7 years, will remain invariably the same, and

when I think or speak of Good women you will be one of the first on my Lips and in my memory,

"Farewell—

"Your obedient humble servant,

"SIDNEY SMITH.

"I think it may be as well to drop the subject entirely my great object in writing this Letter was to explain to you the cause of my dissatisfaction on our journey."

But Mrs. Hicks Beach was not at all inclined to let the matter drop. It is rather natural that, whether she were guilty, or whether she were not, she would equally have been angry. But it is probable that, being what she was, she expressed her anger temperately. Unfortunately she kept no copy of her letter, and we can only judge of its tenour by the answer to it :—

"*Tuesday, October 2nd*, 1800.

"My dear Madam, I lay down this simple principle that under all the circumstances of our journey, and from every principle of good breeding with which I am acquainted, a fair share of the accomodations experienced on the road ought to have been *offered* to Mrs. Smith. If such as you say was the fact—or *nearly* the fact—my conduct has been quite unpardonable, by myself and by you. If the *very reverse* was the fact, as appeared to me at the time and afterwards upon reflection, then I have had fair right to complain. What the facts were we cannot agree.

"I never accused you my dear Madam of *intentional* disrespect or neglect to me or any body—I am sure you are *quite* incapable of it—but I said to you, in the spirit of that respect I truly feel for you 'ask yourself if you never give pain—by not *attending* to the feelings of people in a different situation of life from your own.'

"You have involved Mrs. Smith in our difference, who never complained directly or indirectly to you, and answered only such questions as I put to her. I have spoke my mind very freely to you in my last letter, tho' I hope neither rudely nor disrespectfully —as long as you and I continue to have any acquaintance together—I will always do so—unless you prefer that I should address myself to Mr. Beach, but my idea on this Subject is that man and woman go thro' the quarrels indispensable to human life more pleasantly and good naturedly, than Man and Man or Woman and Woman. I have perfectly forgot the whole business days ago. If you and Mr. Beach mean to continue as angry with me as I can easily see you are by your last Letters—I can only say I am extremely sorry for it—and will beg you hereafter when you meet with a poor and proud man to remember *this* in justification of his faults—*that the same pride which renders him perhaps litigiously jealous of his Superiors in condition guards him from mean and dishonourable conduct in difficult Situations.* . . .

"Your obedient humble servant,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Mrs. Hicks Beach's reply to this is in existence:—

"WILLIAMSTRIP PARK, *October* 18*th*, 1800.

"My dear Sir,

"A few more words on the disagreeable subject of our last letters, and I hope to have done with it entirely. You tell me *if* I have stated the fact, or nearly the fact in my former letter your conduct has been quite unpardonable, now the account I gave you, appears to me, as far as I am capable of judging, to be perfectly correct, and I am fully persuaded that any unprejudiced person who was to see the rooms, would be of my opinion. When Mr. Hicks Beach and myself were at Matlock

some years ago, we certainly chose the room you had this autumn, because we thought it the best.

"I do not suppose you always looked at the different rooms yourself, if you had, perhaps you might have agreed with me, if you did not, as you know I generally did, why should you disbelieve me —it is not pleasant to be suspected of telling an untruth, the fault itself I abhor and hope I shall always endeavour to avoid it according to your own way of thinking my good Sir I have some reason to be angry, altho' I am not at all inclin'd to consider your conduct as *unpardonable.* Those lines in your letter mark'd with strictures I really do not comprehend.

"Your letter has not offended me, on the contrary I think you have done well in accounting for your very extraordinary behaviour at Bank House. But you must excuse me for contradicting your assertion, for indeed you are much mistaken in supposing that Mrs. Smith had always the worst bed-room during our journey, I do assure you her room was sometimes equal to mine and sometimes better. On the subject of travelling we certainly do not think exactly alike, but I forbear giving you my sentiments at large, because I am confident as your letter has not made a convert of me, mine never would convince you. I must do myself the justice to say good Sir, that after a strict review of my late behaviour from the commencement of our acquaintance, I can fairly acquit myself of having at any time treated you or Mrs. Smith with negligence or disrespect, I have uniformly endeavour'd to pay you both every proper attention and can only add, I am sorry to find I have not succeeded better in her opinion and in yours. . . . Mr. Hicks Beach unites with me in compliments to Mrs. Smith and love to William.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

"H. M. Hicks Beach."

Unconvincing this was, as Henrietta Maria had prophesied!

"79 Queen Street, *October* 1800. Friday Night.

"My dear Madam,

"You have surely put a hard construction upon my last letter when you say "that I suspect you of telling an untruth." You have said that it was your *intention* to give Mrs. Smith as good accomodation as yourself, and that in the selection of rooms you had this object in view. I am therefore bound to believe your *intention* to have been irreproachable. I do and did believe them to be so, directly as you explained them. It is a justice I owe to every person of character in common with yourself, but I am at full liberty to say that I do not think you were very successful in *evincing* the obliging consideration you *felt*, and that the best tempered man living might from the same evidence have been betrayed into the same jealousy which I felt, and confessed. I saw the rooms much more frequently than you imagine Mrs. Smith *always*, except the first night. You say our rooms were better occasionally, doubtless you thought them so, or you would not say it, I am only sorry that some very definite mode of judging of these things should so completely have blinded me to your civil and friendly conduct. It is some little pity that Mrs. Smith in conformity with established usages was never *once offered* to choose her own accomodations first, and that you never in any instance appealed to her *own* ideas of best and worst, this would have settled and sweetened everything in a moment, would have convinced *you* of the disposition of the woman you had to deal with and would have prevented me from mis-conceiving the conduct of my old and respected friends and benefactors. The sentence you allude to in my last letter contains a very trite and true opinion in morals, and has literally no

sort of meaning but what the words obviously convey.

"You say 'according to my own way of thinking, You have reason to be angry with me.' I have only to say in reply that you will find me a most willing martyr to your rules, whenever you chuse to make me so, and that I rather court such martyrdom than avoid it. State to me any incongruity between my practice and principles, and I will make every effort of candor to own myself wrong. . . .

"Your obedient humble servant,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

It is impossible to believe that Henrietta Maria did not contrive to have the last word, but it is not in existence. She had a facility in letter-writing, and her husband preserved a great number of the letters she sent him during the first years he was in Parliament, when he used to lodge at Reddish's Hotel in St. James' Street.* The first of those kept is a perfect example of the rest. It is from Netheravon, where the Beachs seem to have lived for three months every year.

"My dear Mr. Hicks Beach 1796.

"Your kind letter which I rec'd yesterday, was a cordial to my spirits, and fill'd my eyes with pleasure, Be assur'd since you wish to hear often you shall not be disappointed, altho' you must not expect very entertaining Epistles, for you know these Downs do not abound with variety, however I trust I may have it in my power to send you good accounts of our healths, and the uniformity of those reports will not I am sure be unpleasing to you and sometimes perhaps for a remarkable piece of intelligence you may hear of a certain married lady not a hundred miles from Salisbury plain, corresponding with a Gentleman who is unknown to her Husband, during his absence in

* In later years the Beachs had a house in Harley Street.

the duties of his Senatorial office. But to have done with this nonsense, if it has not already convinc'd you I am well enough to be saucy, I will now assure you in earnest, that I am God be prais'd, so much better that Bloxham has order'd me to take Bark Draughts which you may perhaps recollect he recommended after the sore throat I had when we went to Mr. Smiths at Stokepark, and which could not be given during the time it lasted. I mention this in hopes of removing any uneasiness you may feel on my account; the little Girls and William also are quite well, some of the servants have had the same complaint, and Salter has it now therefore I hope most sincerely that Mr. Pitt will delay the call of the House &c. a little longer, or if not I hope you will not come, till it is quite over, for I should feel uncomfortable with the idea of your taking it now, and I trust this frosty weather will as Bloxham supposes purify the air and carry off these complaints.

"You could not possibly hunt if you were here for the ground is cover'd almost with ice, and it is hardly safe to ride even on the road, tho' the Horses shoes are turn'd up. Susan and James were ask'd the second time yesterday, so suppose they will soon become Man and Wife.

"We have been feasting on the bounty of our neighbours, Mr. Fowle very obligingly sent us a fine brace of Partridges a few days since, which I enjoy'd much and yesterday Mr. G. Moore presented me with two couple of Snipes. I had a long letter from Mr. Talbot* yesterday which I send you, let me have it again when you write, and I must beg you will let me know whether you think 5 Guineas will be too much to give the attendants, and if not whether I should send a country bill of a £5. (note) or if I should desire Mr. T. to pay it for me. I send you a letter

* Jane Beach, sister of William Beach of Netheravon, and Mrs. Hicks Beach's aunt, had married a Talbot of Margan, Glamorganshire

I have written to Mr. Andrews who applied for Beaumonts character. I mention your name, not mine as he does the same by Sir Edmund & Lady Hartopp for whom he is enquiring after a Housekeeper if you approve my letter be so good as to convey it according to the direction, I shall be happy to hear from you when convenient but pray do not hurry yourself to write, God bless you my dear Mr. Hicks, we unite as usual,

"Believe to be

"Your obt. & affectionate wife

"H. M. Hicks Beach.

"Mr. Bramston says I ought only to mention Beaumonts not suiting us in general terms if you think pray let me know & I will write another letter.

"Love to Michael."

The letters are naturally full of details about the children—"dear Jane is better than could be expected, she has eaten bread pudding for Dinner and Tapioca with two Buns for her Supper," and "Ann has recover'd her complexion again, and has an amazing appetite." Ann, who seems to have been always delicate, died when she was only seventeen years old and while she was on a visit to her aunt and uncle at Witcombe. A brass plate on the floor of Witcombe Church commemorates her. Jane lived to be an old woman, and when she was forty-seven she married a Mr. Edward St. John of a Hampshire family, and reigned as Aunt Jane St. John well into modern days. Henrietta Maria, who was evidently Sydney Smith's favourite among the daughters (for he mentions her constantly in his letters) died when she was twenty-four. The other children who survived infancy were the two sons, Michael the heir, and his younger brother, William.

In one of Sydney Smith's letters to Henrietta Maria from Netheravon he had said, "Nothing can equal the

profound the immeasurable, the awful dulness of this place, in the which I lie, dead and buried, in hopes of a joyful resurrection in the year 1796." Two years later the resurrection came. Young Michael Hicks Beach had left Eton, and his parents decided that, before going to an English university, he should go to a German one, and that the Netheravon curate should be put in charge of him. Tutor and pupil were to have set out for Weimar in the summer of 1797, but war had broken out in Germany, and it was finally decided that they should go to Edinburgh instead. They arrived there in June, 1798, and it was Sydney Smith's home until August, 1803, during which time he had under his care consecutively Michael and William Hicks Beach.

As this is not the story of Sydney Smith's life, it is impossible to quote at any length from the very large number of letters which are in the possession of Viscount St. Aldwyn and of Major Beach of Oakley Hall. It was the tutor's practice to try to write to the parents every fortnight about his charges, so that the letters in existence can be but few in proportion to those actually sent. A famous modern headmaster has recently said that the parents of this generation have become too fussy about the upbringing of their children, but the whole of the Edinburgh and Williamstrip correspondence demonstrates that 1800 was not a whit behind 1900 in this respect. Michael and Henrietta Maria were minutely anxious that their sons should be worthy of the fortune which was to be theirs, and Sydney Smith, who laughed at most things, never laughed at this anxiety. It would seem from the letters that William, the younger brother, was, of the two, his favourite. At all events, there is no doubt that he found him easier to manage than Michael, but when William came to him he was no longer a novice in the art of bear-leading; he had been chastened by marriage, and had learned too, perhaps, not to sharpen his wit too pitilessly on youthful foibles. At a later date some of his difficulties with

Michael might never have occurred. Nearly fifty of Michael's letters to his parents have been preserved, and they begin with childish letters written under supervision from a preparatory school. When he went to Eton supervision ceased, the letters became lively and candid, and they are in a hand which is large, and free-flowing and legible; they are full of character and humour, and are as different as can be from the letters written from Edinburgh. The handwriting of these is detestable; it is exceedingly small and fine with enormous 'tails,' and is so redolent of the then fashion in such things as to be almost illegible. The manner and phrasing of the letters is as tiresome; the sentences are stilted, and an air of dull oppression pervades all. Says poor Michael, however, after three months' striving, "I have the vanity to flatter myself that with Mr. Sidney Smith's assistance I have improved my style of writing as well as my hand." It is evident that between his parents' epistolary exhortations on the one hand, and his tutor's witty diatribes on the other, the unhappy young man had 'self-improvement' on his nerves. Sydney Smith made him feel he was a fool, and that result never yet served an educational purpose. He writes about some invitation:—

> "I did not accept her invitation because I thought Mr. Smith would not like it, but I find he has no objection to be left alone—and indeed I do not see why Mr. Smith should have any objection for he might as well be alone as in such company as mine."

An evening to himself, free from the company of the boy so much his intellectual inferior, must indeed have been a heaven-sent boon to the tutor, but it does not need saying that the ideal tutor would not have let the pupil be alive to the fact. The ideal tutor, for this particular pupil at all events, Sydney Smith never was,

and one incident alone proves it. There is an introductory letter :—

"Anxious as you and Mrs. Beach are for the welfare and improvement of your son. . . . I can always promise you one thing in my correspondence, I will always tell you the truth in everything that concerns your son, whether that truth be likely to give you pleasure or pain. Our beginning has been very auspicious ; as far as we have hitherto gone I am extremely pleased and satisfied with Michael. My first serious conversation with him was upon the subject of his toilette, and the very great portion of time he daily consumed in adorning himself. This Michael took in high anger, and was extremely sulky. And upon my renewing the conversation some time after, he was still more so. Without the smallest appearance of anger or vexation on my part, I turned his sulkiness into ridicule, and completely laughed him into good humour. He acknowledged it was very foolish and unmanly to be sulky about anything, promised that he would hear any future remarks of mine about his conduct with cheerfulness and that he would endeavour to dress himself as quickly as he could. Mithoffer* was extremely fond of standing at his elbow while he was dressing and reaching him everything he wanted ; this I have put a stop to. Habits of indolence are soon learnt, Michael is a very apt Scholar in these particulars."

The tutor's triumph was premature. A year later the battle had to be fought again, and this time Sydney Smith was not able to say he had shown no vexation.

"I am sure that you will do me the justice to say that it has not been my habit to harass you with trivial complaints of your son's conduct, and Indeed as I never troubled you before upon the subject, you

* Michael's valet.

may believe that I should not *now* do it, unless the occasion appear'd to me to be such, as fully called for your interference. Is it not my duty to correct the foibles and mistakes of your son? Is it not his duty to hear what I say to him, if not with respect and attention, at least without insolence, contempt, and defiance? You have no conception of his frivolous minuteness and particularity in every thing which concerns his dress and person—it is more than feminine. And upon venturing the other morning to make some observation about the inutility of his troubles with his own boot-jack, his behaviour was so extremely improper and disrespectful, that I did not open my lips to him for two days—in all this time no sort of apology. This morning I had a very long and serious conversation with him on the subject, and tho' he knew I intended to write to you not a syllable of apology. Perhaps my dear Sir a few observations from you on that politeness and respect which he owes to those to whom you delegate your authority would do him more good than I am sorry to say any advice of mine can do. You expect, and have an undoubted right to expect, from me, the strictest attention to every thing which goes to make up the character of your son as a man and a gentleman, and I am sure you will use your influence and authority to protect me from insult and injury. One single word of apology on the part of your son would have prevented you from ever hearing what passed between us. I was the more hurt on this occasion as Mithoffer was present during the whole of his improper behaviour.

"I have read over this letter to your son, but he heard without the least notice and without a single word."

This letter could have but one result, whatever opinion the father may have had of the tutor's tact.

"I was too well convinced of the proper sentiments in which you have educated your children to doubt for a moment of the manner in which you would express yourself to Michael upon that conduct of which I complained. Your letter produced every effect you could have wished from it. He not only apologised to me in the most ample manner, but (which convinced me he really thought himself wrong) brought in Mithoffer before whom the affront was given to witness the apology. Of course I said everything handsome to him on the subject, and I daresay we shall only be better friends for what has passed. I am very sorry my dear Sir to have troubled the tranquility of yourself and Mrs. Beach, but it would have been a most injurious and mistaken complaisance to have sacrificed the real good of your son to the present feelings of his parents."

Michael's own letter to his father does him entire credit:—

"I am extremely sorry for having behaved in such an ungrateful manner to Mr. Smith, whom I hope for the future I shall respect as much as I ought; but I am still more so for having vex'd and offended my Mother and yourself so much as I fear I must have done; yet I am perfectly assured that if my future conduct is such as to deserve forgiveness, you will forgive me as well as my Mother; therefore I shall endeavour to conduct myself properly particularly towards Mr. Smith until I see you again, and then I shall hope to regain your approbation.

"You little think how much I am obliged to you for your letter, so justly severe (tho' I hope I may never deserve such another) for as I foolishly thought I was forgiven, I am affraid that without so positive a command from you, I should not, even by this time have apologised for being so impertinent to one whom at least I ought to have esteem'd too much

to have offended in that manner. I have at last attempted to make a proper apology: but Mr. Smith was so good he would not suffer me: he said 'my dear friend one word by way of apology is enough.' I can never forget those words, and only hope that I may prove what he then called me.

"Tho' I cannot deny that I wish'd very much to stay at Penrice to see Lady Mary * present the colours; yet I can assure you that my quitting Penrice was not the cause of my misbehaviour, but Mithoffer, for I lost all command over myself when questioned and reprimanded before him——"

The incident may have been a lesson in the art of behaviour to Sydney Smith as well as to Michael Hicks Beach, and no repetition of it ever took place; partly perhaps because, after a time, tutor and pupil shook down into different social niches in the Edinburgh world, saw less of each other, and rubbed against each other less. Sydney Smith had his place in University and legal circles, and drew some of the keenest minds in the city to listen to his sermons at Charlotte Chapel in Rose Street; while Michael was made a welcome guest in fashionable and more frivolous society, and had various love affairs which the tutor conscientiously made himself aware of, and faithfully reported to the mother in far-away Gloucestershire. To Gloucestershire from time to time went summaries of Michael's character.

"The great apprehension I entertained of Michael was that he would hear everything I said to him with a kind of torpid silence, and that I should never be able to learn whether he acquiesced voluntarily or from compulsion in my proposals, or get him to state candidly his objections, and prefer openly and ingenuously his observations. From an entire ignorance

* Lady Mary Talbot.

of his opinions and disposition, I should then have always been working in the dark. This difficulty, however, upon better acquaintance with him, has vanished, he talks over a subject boldly with me, and makes his objections like a man."

"I can safely say he has no vice about him. His temper is good, a little inclined to sulkiness perhaps, but these fits are neither long nor frequent. He has no great literary ardour upon him. His amusements will be the common pleasures of the country. You will always find him a good son, a very respectable country gentleman and a good man."

"I am now decidedly convinced that whatever share of knowledge Michael may gain by reading with me, it is quite out of my power to give him a taste for books in that degree which I think useful and ornamental in his situation in life. Do not be disheartened by this opinion, Michael will, as I have often told you, be a very worthy, prudent man, with a sufficient share of sound understanding leading to conduct: an excellent heart, and manners by time and his father's assistance soft and gentlemanlike, and though literature is an excellent addition to all these, it is hardly worth the least of them."

"He is in the essential points of character an extremely good young man, honest, honourable, and friendly without the smallest tendency to any one vice whatsoever. In little points of disposition he never affronts, but he has not that desire to oblige and to please which is so conspicuous in his brother."

But from Michael's disposition, his manner of spending money, the details of his studies, his dancing lessons, and his amusements, Sydney Smith occasionally turns with an air of relief. He had explained to Mrs. Beach in a former letter that, thanks to the clergy, the practice

of religion was now entirely confined to females of the middle class. To her protest he replies:—

"You may depend upon it my dear Madam that my observations upon the clergy are just. Religion (I am sorry to say) is much like Heraldry—an antiquated concern. A few people attend to the one and the other, but the world laughs at them for engaging in such superannuated pursuits. In fifty years more, the whole Art of going to Church—how the Squire's lady put on her best hat and cloak, and how the Squire bowed to the parson after Church, and how the parson din'd with the Squire, and all these ceremonies of worship—will be in the hands of the antiquarian, will be elucidated by laborious investigation, and explained by appropriate drawings."

On the weather of Scotland he had his observations to make:—

"We are just going to Church. The wind is outrageous—to the infinite joy of those Ladies who can boast of good ankles, who will not fail this day to be punctually attentive to the public duties of religion—while those of more clumsy fabric will no doubt discover that prayers read at home are quite as efficacious."

"We have had tremendous weather here. The country is in a most dreadful state from the thaw which has now taken place. Except the morning after the Flood was over, I should doubt if it had ever been dirtier. On that day Mrs. Noah's white flounce petticoat which was made by an antedeluvian Milliner in the Land of Edom, was dirtied from top to bottom, but as she had carried two of every kind into the Ark this was no great evil. She changed her clothes, and, after a little muttering and swearing, took a dram of brandy which Noah had had by him for 520 years—and all was well."

Towards the end of 1799, Michael Hicks Beach went to Christ Church, and in June, 1800, William joined Sydney Smith at 46, George Street, Edinburgh, to which house, later in the year, came the newly-married Mrs. Smith. Subsequently there were two other pupils—Mr. Powlett, a son of Lord Bolton, and a son of Mr. Gordon of Ellon.

All Sydney Smith's biographers, beginning with his daughter, Lady Holland, have dilated on the Beach generosity towards him, and the gratuities with which they gratefully endowed him over and above the fixed payments. But the truth seems to be that, although they were perfectly easy about money matters, Mr. and Mrs. Hicks Beach did not think it needful to pay more than was necessary, and that the hot-headed and sensitive tutor would not allow any discussion as to what the value of his time actually was—he wished to be explicit himself, but did not ask for a similar lucidity on the part of his employers.

"79 Queen Street. 1800. *Sunday, 9th November.*

"My dear Madam,

"As I consider Mr. Beach as not very fond of writing—and yourself as his deputed Secretary—I presume it to be a matter of indifference whether I address myself to one or the other. I am rather inclin'd upon a consideration of times and circumstances to postpone my attempt of preaching in London for two or three Years. Beginning then at the period when I finish'd with Michael and was ready to receive William last June—take either 2 or 3 Years. If I dedicate my time at this place to William for either one of these two periods as you may please, have I any further remuneration of any kind to expect from Mr. Beach than the £200 per Annum I now receive? We seem my dear Madam to be all so much agreed that this kind of explicit conduct is so much the most agreeable for all parties

—that I should owe you rather an apology for not pursuing, than pursuing it. . . . .

"The only circumstance that gives me pain in putting this question to you—is the panegyric upon William and the pleasing account of our progress I have given you from time to time, but be assured, that you could hardly find any man as the guardian of your Son's education and morals who would not be as much delighted as I have been—by his good sense and his strong desire to give pleasure and to do his duty."

"79 Queen Street. 1800. *3rd December.*

"My dear Madam,

"I believe 200 per Annum will in addition to my own fortune nearly defray expences in this place,—and therefore if the whole question was, what William cost me by his residence in my house, there could be nothing farther to arrange. You ask me to state what I conceive to be the value of my time. This is to me so new a question, and so delicate a one, that I am rather embarrassed in answering it. The remuneration which the Clergy receive who may be engag'd in the task of education, differs with a prodigious variety of circumstances. I will however select one criterion. Mr. Beach's former estimation of my Services—for two years study with Michael—I received from him £730.—and all my expences were paid—and this at a time when money was of more value, and an unsettl'd life a less evil than it is now. To this criterion however the natural liberality of Mr. Beach's temper is an objection which I will remove. If Mr. Beach will continue my allowance of £200 per Annum and give me his note of hand for £300 June 1802 if I remain so long with his Son—or for £600 June 1803 if I remain so long, I shall be well content. In the case of staying the longer of these periods, I shall have given up five of

the best years of my life to the education of your children, and shall be a richer man by about £1330. This Sum sunk in an income at 9 per Cent. would bring me in an income of £121—per Annum, which in recollecting the various instances of emolument derived either from money or preferment by gentlemen of my profession does not appear to me exorbitant—but with which I shall be perfectly satisfied—and deem all obligation dissolved between us, except that which I shall always owe to you and Mr. Beach—for the compassion, and protection I experienced at your hands in my unhappy solitude at Netheravon.

"If Mr. Beach shall differ in opinion with me on this offer, and should rather prefer placing William with Mr. Stewart, my reluctance in parting with so truly amiable a young man will be in some degree mitigated by the pleasure I shall have in forwarding by my mediation any wish Mr. Beach and you may entertain for the welfare of your Son. . . .

"In Edinburgh we are all storm—in England a storm is like a mild man in a passion, Every body stares, and asks why."

And the Beachs, although the man was not "mild," must have stared and asked why, too, when they got the third letter :—

"28*th December*. 1800. 79 Queen Street.

"My dear Madam,

"The contents of your Letter did not require that deliberation which you were so kind as to allow me to give them. I confess I had great objections to propose terms myself because I thought it unprecedented and incorrect, but having so done in compliance with your desire, I cannot allow myself even to think of accepting any others, or to consider the question of interest when the question of decency and propriety (which should always be prior in

the order of reflections) is so very plain and obvious. I shall therefore in the Spring, resign my charge into your hands, with that reluctance for his loss, which his charming understanding and admirable disposition, will most unfeignedly inspire.

"I am surprised the quoted passage in my last Letter should be considered by you as in any degree ambiguous. I am making a calculation, and stating on one side the Services render'd and on the other the advantages receiv'd. The first I specify to be 5 of the best years of my life given up to the education of your children. You ask me if it was not a matter of choice—to be sure my dear Madam it was a matter of choice on both sides—you were as free to abandon me as I was to abandon you—any body is free to leave any lucrative situation, but as long as they do not exercise that freedom they remain entitled to remuneration. You have always said with the most humane and generous attention to my welfare—do not let your engagement with us be any obstacle to your views in life, and I could prove to you plainly enough if it were worth while how completely you abolished the possibility of using such a permission by giving it in so friendly a manner.

"Why should you suppose me desirous of fixing the charge of obligation upon Mr. Beach and you—when I have said *repeatedly*, 'my lobor bestow'd and my Salary receiv'd, there is an end of all obligation between us upon this point.'

"Immediately upon the receipt of your Letter I waited upon Mr. Stewart, and am sorry to inform you that he is completely full, for a year or two, and that it is wholly out of his power to receive William. I subjoin his address, if you think you can add to my sollicitations or to the very high character I gave William. Dugald Stewart, Esq: Lothian House, Cannongate, Edinburgh.

"Mr. Stewart, and myself are both considering

what other eligible Situations this place affords—one very superior man we mean to try—but with little hope of succeeding. I shall send you in a day or two the exact result of our deliberations—and will give you a description of Mr. Sandfords, that you may see if you approve of his establishment. You may depend upon it no exertion of mine shall be wanting to effect your object. In the mean time, as the knowledge I can have of the character of people here must necessarily be limited. It would be better perhaps to get what information you can from Baron Norton, or any other friend you may have in this place.

"You shall hear from me in a day or two. I have sent notice of giving up my house, and taken the usual steps preparatory to bidding adieu to this country in the Spring—and it is my intention to try my fortunes in London, and can only make you this offer, which I do with the greatest sincerity in the world and with the most friendly disposition towards my old benefactors. If contrary to all probability you should not meet with an eligible situation for William by the time I am settl'd in London, my services to superintend his education till you can succeed in placing him elsewhere are most entirely at your disposal and I shall conceive myself amply rewarded by the pleasure of improving so good a young man.

"Yours my dear Madam, with great respect,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

This seemed final, and it is to be wondered if Sydney Smith ever was aware of the reason it did not actually become so, and of his old father's intervention.

"*February 7th*, 1801. No. 25 CIRCUS. BATH.

"My dear Madam,

"I am sure you will have the goodness to allow my freedom on a subject so very near my heart, I

will yet flatter myself not quite indifferent to you—the happiness and honor of my *misguided* Boy.

"I have been favored with a very kind answer from Mr. Beach for a letter I wrote him—in the hasty reply to which on my return from Beauchamp I find it was sent to Reddishs Hotel St. James Street—when he directs to be written to Williamstrip Park.

"To prevent accident I make free to trouble you Madam with the explanation to Mr. Beach should he not have receiv'd my letter, will have the goodness to write for it, you doing this it is impossible for me not to avail myself of the opportunity of begging your intercession with Mr. Beach offended as he has the justest reason to be with Sydney's conduct for my opinion of which allow me Madam to refer you to the letter now in London.

"I had not the most distant information of the business from Sydney till last week; he too well knew my sentiments of your past goodness and the eternal gratitude it so truly merited—and it is with grief I confess I feel myself very much hurt from this pointed neglect so recent after his marriage at which and all its arrangements I was equally an utter stranger.

"Yet I am convinced he is a good Man holding you and Mr. Beach in the highest esteem and attached to your Son William warmly—nor do I believe there exists another who would more honorably devote his time and faculties and the trust you have repos'd in him.

"He has mistaken the point of honor of which he thinks improperly—and fearful of sinking in your opinion—had not courage to recede from a point to which he never should have committed himself. Mr. Beach's offer was of a piece with his former friendship and ought not to be increas'd, but Madam it will be shewing such superiority over this false parade of

Sydney's to indulge me in the proposal I have taken the liberty of making to him as must have most beneficial effect in future—added to which that I am convinc'd his coming either to London or Bath will be followed with the consequence I dread of all others.

"You will thus save the young Man you have hitherto not found insensible of your kindness, you will secure a sincere sensible affectionate tutor to your dear Boy who I believe is not discontented with his situation.

"You will releave me Madam too from a weight of shame I never expected to have met you with and I will yet hope for a favorable turn at the earnest intercession of

"Dear Madam

"Your ever Faithful and obliged humble Servt.

"ROBERT SMITH.

"It quite escap'd me to thank Mr. Beach for Mr. Messater having given business last Sept: over to my Son Robert whose character expands every day and business increases.

"Any opportunity Mr. Beach may have of mentioning him to his stewards will be doing me great kindness. The leading passion and object of my life having been to establish my Boys, whose exertions and conduct have hitherto justified my most sanguine hopes."

The sequel to this was that Mr. Beach made an arrangement by which Sydney Smith was empowered to draw on him for whatever he thought fair;* over and above his expenses—and thus everyone's dignity was saved.

* "*Dec. 23rd*, 1801. Will you have the goodness to inform Mr. Beach that I drew on him yesterday for £100. It is my intention to draw on Mr. Beach for £400 in the whole between June last and June to come if that arrangement is agreeable to him."

"79 Queen Street, *February* 24, 1801.

"My dear Madam,

"I do not like to do that which will afterwards make me uneasy and unhappy,—as I should have been, if William had been left here in a situation with which yourself and Mr. Beach were not entirely satisfied, however this is all over. I shall take a house here—till the Spring of 1803,—and I am flatter'd with the confidence in me which Mr. Beach and you both express, and which I hope you will not find misplac'd. Will you allow me to recommend to you the works of Burns in four volumes, including his life, and a valuable account of the Scotch peasantry which I think if you still continue to collect books you will find worth attention. Farewell my dear Madam, my best regards to Mr. Beach. I hope now when we meet we shall be as good friends as we used to be.

"I remain with great regard and respect

"Your obedient humble Servant,

"Sydney Smith."

The letters of 1801, 1802, 1803, are a little monotonous in their reiteration of William's perfections:—

"He continues to give me that perfect satisfaction which his conduct has done since the first day of his acquaintance."

"He is fatter, handsomer, and stouter than he was. . . . Nothing can exceed the propriety, politeness and good humor of his general behaviour to everybody in this house."

"He is *without exception* the very best and most gentlemanly young Man I ever saw, and will be an ornament and a comfort to his family."

"That he will be a very accomplished gentleman —and a very sensible tho' neither a very profound

or a very learned man—is what I have repeatedly told you before."

Criticism came from the father and was answered :—

"You hinted to me that his disposition was more reserv'd than you wish'd—the remark is certainly just—but the habit of mind is I am afraid too strong for correction—he will probably remain a cautious, deliberate man as long as he lives—a character not certainly the very model we should select—but which contains many advantages if it have some unpleasant traits, but on the whole my dear Sir you must allow me to say you have not only no cause to complain, but much to be proud of."

From the eternal subject of William, as from the eternal subject of Michael, the scribe sometimes turns with hearty enjoyment :—

"We have been unpleasantly engaged for these two or three days past in bidding adieu to some very pleasant families who are quitting this place,—all adieus are melancholy, and principally I believe because they put us in mind of the last of all adieus, when the Apothecary, and the heir apparent, and the nurse who weeps for pay surround the bed,—when the Curate engaged to dine three miles off mumbles hasty prayers—when the Dim Eye closes for ever in the midst of Empty pill boxes—Gallipots—phials—and Jugs of barley water—at that time—a very distant one I hope my dear Madam, may the memory of good deeds support you."

William Hicks Beach went to Oxford in 1822, and there were a good many letters of consultation about that, and then from the little house, 8, Doughty Street, Brunswick Square, Sydney Smith, with his face turned eagerly towards his new London life, wrote what was,

for many years, his last letter to Henrietta Maria Hicks Beach :—

"Adieu Dear Madam, everything good attend you. I often think with great kindness of my friends at Netheravon—and of their antient kindness to me in the days of my misery.

"Adieu—

"SYDNEY SMITH."

Twenty years later, Mrs. Beach, hearing that Sydney Smith's son was at Oxford,* wrote to him at his Yorkshire rectory, and got an answer as characteristic as ever:—

"FOSTON YORK. *January* 4 1824.

"My dear Madam,

"My son is not yet gone to Oxford and will not go there till the Month of May nor have I been at Oxford for these ten years :—but it has been some fat man who has taken my name. I am however much oblig'd to him for the Imposture, as it has given me this proof on the part of Mr. Beach and yourself of kind recollection, and continued good Will. I shall have very sincere pleasure in seeing you all again and if I possibly *can* pay you a Visit, I will.

"Allow me to give you a short history of my family and myself. My eldest daughter is a sensible amiable Girl not bad looking of 22 years of age—my eldest Son is Captain of Westminster a very sensible judicious young man a quality this last which you will easily believe he does not derive from me—then comes Emily a remarkably clever Girl of 16—and then Wyndham, a lively Boy of 10 fond of Mud and Noise. Mrs. Sydney keeps her health—so do I—I have one moderate Living and another good one to hold for nine years. My Parsonage is extremely comfortable and I am full of Spirits and talk, in short

* Oxford is twenty miles from Williamstrip.

happy enough. You us'd to make Tours. I wish you would come, you and Mr. Beach and all of you—and make us a Visit. There is much worth seeing in Yorkshire. I think of you both with real regard—and do not believe I should forget my early friends even if I was a Bishop—and yet Bishops commonly do. . . .

"God bless you my dear Madam—health, happiness and many years to you and yours,

"SYDNEY SMITH."

To William, the well-beloved old pupil, several invitations were issued to bring his horses and hunt from Foston. "Corn is very cheap—therefore poultry is very plentiful, therefore foxes are very strong, and therefore Sport is very good." William Hicks Beach's grandfather, William Beach had left him the Keevil property, and he sat as M.P. for Malmesbury* from 1812 to 1818, and it is evident that he conscientiously went through all the round of county duties, including the duty of being in the North Gloucestershire Militia, of which he eventually became colonel. In 1826 he married, but he did not go further afield for his wife than Salperton Park. For the third time, there was a Browne marriage in the family, and Jane Henrietta Browne was his third cousin. His grandfather, in leaving him Keevil, had made a condition that he should drop the name of Hicks altogether and be Beach only. He discarded Hicks accordingly by Royal Warrant in 1839, and by that time his second cousin, Wither Bramston, had died† and had left him the Hall Place (Oakley Hall) property. The present owner of Witcombe remembers that, as a small boy, he had an *exeat* from his preparatory school at Dummer and went to Oakley, where he was taken into the study to see great-uncle Beach. He

* It was, like Cirencester, one of the four boroughs which belonged to J. Pitt.

† He died 1830.

found a very old gentleman, with a charm of manner which made the half-sovereign which changed hands an ineradicable memory. 'Beloved by all' is the memory he has left behind him. *Burke* tells the story of his three children :—

(1) William Wither Bramston (Right Hon.), P.C., of Oakley Hall, Hants, and Keevil House, Wilts, J.P., and D.L. for Hants, formerly major Hants yeomanry cavalry, M.P. for North Hants 1857-85, and for W. Hants 1885-1901, and at the time of his death Father of the House of Commons, M.A. Oxon, b. 25th Dec., 1826; m. 8th Oct., 1857, Caroline Chichester, youngest daughter of Colonel Cleveland, of Tapeley Park, Devon, and d. 3rd Aug., 1901, leaving issue.

(2) Mary Jane, m. 19th April, 1849, Sir Wyndham Spencer Portal, first baronet. She died 4th Nov., 1903, leaving issue. He died 14th Sept., 1905.

(3) Henrietta Maria, m. 22nd June, 1852, Colonel Sir John Williams Wallington, K.C.B., Keevil Manor, Wilts, and died 26th Oct., 1905, leaving issue (*see* "Landed Gentry.").

The further history of the elder brother Michael is not a long one. He came of age in 1801, and his mother then penned him a letter of many pages in which she told him that no pains or expense had been spared in his education, that no one had had greater advantages, and that it was highly proper he should turn his thoughts to the consideration of what was most likely to make him esteemed and respected by the best part of mankind.

"Be civil and obliging in your behaviour to all but make very few friendships, and let these be form'd with the greatest circumspection or you will frequently lay yourself open to imposition and may be wretchedly deceiv'd in your progress through life.

"Cultivate the acquaintance of men of sense and Literature, their society will improve and delight you, besides giving you a degree of consequence in the opinion of the world."

That these, and all her other counsels, were of a half-way-house perfection, Henrietta Maria probably had little suspicion; and, after all, the pre-occupation of 1801 with externals was with the externals of great things. The admonitions, "Avoid trifling and insignificant pursuits—Be Constant in your Daily Prayers to God—Always Attend public worship," were the husks of verities, and the very length of the letter shows that, as the mother wrote on and on, she was perhaps half conscious that the pith of it all had somehow eluded her.

And it is certain that counsels of perfection would have been hurled at Michael in vain, for, notwithstanding parental ambitions, the heir to Williamstrip and Netheravon never was more than a young man of amiable but average energies. From Christ Church he wrote to his sister Henrietta letters as lively as those of pre-Edinburgh days, and in the large, plain handwriting to which he had immediately reverted. But he did not cast off his old tutor's acquaintanceship as well as his teaching; by the time Michael left Oxford Sydney Smith was settled in London, and he tells his sister of visits exchanged between them, and that he is to be allowed to take little Saba Smith driving in the country. He betrays his desire to escape from London life and his liking for children in the same sentence. In the next year, 1804, a letter of William Earle's to his father shows him introduced to Royalty.

> "I have to thank you for returning me so speedy an answer as you did from Weymouth. I am very happy to find that you are so well received and entertained on the water as well as on Land by the Royal family.* I wish Mrs. Beach's health had permitted her to have obeyed the Queen's commands, as from the Royal family considering themselves when absent from London more free from restraint a very

* George III. and Queen Charlotte.

considerable portion of Court etiquette is laid aside, and she would have seen them in a Character more nearly allied to private life than they would or could with propriety display at a public Drawing room. I am sure my old friend Michael will feel himself quite at home at Weymouth. As for William I guess he is following his pursuits at Oxford. . . . Should the King's levees continue to be open as usual, you ought, after your Audiences and Personal invitations at Weymouth to attend a Levee and Drawing room attended by Michael, as a mark of respect for the Civilities the King and Queen intended to shew you and your family."

There is no evidence that young Michael took any active part in public affairs except that, like his uncle William Hicks at Witcombe, he threw himself into the Volunteer movement and raised a body of one hundred and twenty men from the parishes of Coln St. Aldwyn, Quenington, Hatherop and Aldsworth. In his duties as Captain of this troop, in sport, and in country house visiting, the years slipped away until he was twenty-nine years old, when he married, on January 26th, 1809, Miss Caroline Jane Mount, of Wasing Place, Berkshire. Her family was of the precise social standing of his own, and had had much the same sort of origin. No match could have been devised for him less likely to introduce alien elements into the race! The engagement was the occasion for one of Henrietta Maria's marked characteristics.

"My dear Mr. Hicks Beach,

"The little conversation we have had respecting Michael's settlement after his marriage has given me serious uneasiness, because I am apprehensive from your not *mentioning* any plan for a habitation he may call his own, that it is either very uncertain or distant, and this leads me to communicate my sentiments to

you now that you may have time to consider them attentively; and I also wish not to wait till I have seen the Lady, least I should feel myself biass'd by partiality.

"I like Williamstrip very much and should be sorry were we to share it as a residence with any family whatever, but circumstanced as Michael is respecting his future prospects in life, I should think his Family the most improper of any—whilst he remain'd single it was always my wish that he should look upon our house as his home—as a married man it is totally different, and might involve us in very great and unnecessary trouble and inconvenience, which it is much easier I think to prevent than to remedy.

"As it is settled for Michael to go to Williamstrip on his marriage there is nothing to be said about that, and whilst the eddy of Spirits usual on such events exists, it is not so likely to do any harm, but if he is accustom'd to be there in our absence, and to enjoy all the conveniences and comforts of the place and neighbourhood, quite unrestrain'd and in his own way, it is too probable that he may feel some reluctance to resign it for any other situation; he will insensibly begin to wish himself permanently fix'd there, and perhaps he will almost unconsciously encourage a hope that you would give him an opportunity of enjoying it in the prime of his life by resigning it to him, and when once an idea of that kind is form'd in the mind, it extends itself farther, till by degree he may persuade himself that he has a right to expect such an indulgence from you, and this opinion may be strengthen'd by unguarded speeches, made to him by inconsiderate people,—or if you guard against this evil by never suffering him to be there but with us, he will in time fancy that he has a sort of joint partnership in the house, and look upon it rather as a right than an indulgence,

and if he does not feel himself too much restricted by our presence, will dislike to remove to any other place, when perhaps you yourself may be desirous he should. Besides nothing is more likely to occasion, or has been more productive of family discord & Variance than two familys living under the same roof. You will recollect when you read this that I have a high opinion of Michael's principles and goodness of heart, and have always sided with him, but we know from our own experience that human nature is weak and erring, and that it is much easier to receive bad impressions than to eradicate them. I am thoroughly persuaded Michael has not at present a thought or wish about your giving up Williamstrip, and I hope he never will, so I cannot on any account approve of Yr. giving it up, but it appears to me of great consequence that every thing should be carefully avoided that may tend in the slightest degree either at present or at a later period to give him or any other person in or out of the family, the shadow of an idea that you ever intend doing such a thing. God bless you my Dear Mr. Hicks Beach.

"Believe me your truly affectionate & obedient wife.

"H. M. Hicks Beach."

There is a happy honeymoon letter written by Michael to his father from Williamstrip—evidently in the eddy of spirits which his cautious mother had foreseen. But her caution bore fruit, for the young couple took a house called Banks Fee, nearly twenty miles from Williamstrip and near Moreton-in-the-Marsh. Here they lived out the six short years of their married life. Michael died at West Cowes, October 5th, 1815, from the result of a sunstroke while swimming in the sea. He and his wife had gone to the Isle of Wight for sea air for the three children—another Michael, another William, and a little girl who afterwards died in early childhood.

HENRIETTA MARIA HICKS BEACH.

Died 1837

(From a miniature in possession of Sir William Portal.)

After her husband's death Caroline Jane Hicks Beach, the widow, lived at 7, Portman Square. She was the grandmother of the living generation who are now themselves grandparents, but their youthful recollections of her are overshadowed by the more pungent memories of the dentist with whom Portman Square visits were invariably connected. Her eldest granddaughter says "she was very upright and spick and span and particular. She wore a brown 'front' with curls on each side, a lace cap tied under the chin, a folded fichu and substantial silk or satin skirts." She is revealed, to some extent in her few existing letters, written in a flowing 'Italian' hand; and, between the lines of those, two facts emerge: the first, that she found her well-dowered widowhood very bearable; the second, that her mother-in-law, the redoubtable Henrietta Maria, had no particular liking for her. Many of the letters are dated from country houses. "I have such a lot of visits to get through this autumn that I scarcely know how to arrange them," she says, for the joy of humorous descendants, who reflect that her type has not yet ceased to inherit the earth. In another letter she supplies a piece of Victorian history, and gives a description of visits to Gunter's and Bridgeman's to see the Queen's wedding cakes. "The former has the most elegant display. 15 cakes made by him are for each of the Ministers, and the large cake something like a fort . . . is beautiful indeed and is to be placed before the Duchess of Kent at the Banquet given at St James on the day of the wedding." Indeed, the letters in their well-bred spuriousness are as unlike anything that Henrietta Maria would have written as well can be. When her father-in-law died, in 1830, Caroline would have hastened from Portman Square to Williamstrip, for it was certainly the 'proper thing' to do. Jane, the only surviving daughter there, had to convey, as politely as could be, the decided opinion that she was the last person wanted.

Williamstrip and Witcombe were in fact for Caroline only two among the country houses she stayed at in her autumn tours; but she took care that her son Michael, who was heir to Williamstrip, and her son William, who was heir to Witcombe, should be more constant and intimate visitors; and when Michael, who had just left Christ Church, fell in love with a handsome Miss Stratton at a county ball, it was she who pointed out to him the propriety of consulting the grandmother whose approval would mean so much. Henrietta Maria was at Weymouth when the letter reached her:—

"WILLIAMSTRIP PARK,
"*March* 10*th*, 1832.

"My dear Grandmother,

"In a letter I wrote to my Mother the other day, I mentioned a certain subject which I wish no longer to conceal from you, as I know that you are very anxious about my happiness. At the last Stow Ball I met a Miss Stratton with whom I candidly confess I was very much taken. This being the case I should never forgive myself were I to embark any farther in so serious an affair without first asking your consent. I have managed through a friend to obtain some information with regard to the family—from whom I learnt that the Joddrils, the *Cheshire* Leighs, and the Lights of Somersetshire are their immediate relations, with these I feel assured you will raise no objection. I cannot refrain from adding this much from my own observation—she appeared to me to be as sensible, ladylike and (I must say) as handsome a girl, as I have ever seen. It only remains for me, before I proceed any further, anxiously to await your answer, which I very much hope, and have no doubt, will perfectly coincide with mine and my Mother's sentiments on the subject. Perhaps I ought to have communicated with you in person, rather than by letter, but I thought considering all

things that a letter would be to you the less troublesome of the two. I must now conclude, with best love to my Aunt

"I remain dear Grandmother

"Your ever affec^te grandson

"M. H. Hicks Beach."

The marriage took place the same year, Michael being twenty-three years old; and in 1834, when his great-uncle Sir William Hicks of Witcombe died, he, the third Michael Hicks Beach, succeeded to the family baronetcy. Four years later, on the death of his grandmother Henrietta Maria at the age of eighty, he became the owner of Williamstrip Park and Beverstone Castle in Gloucestershire, and of Netheravon House and Fittleton Manor in Wiltshire. He sold the castle and land at Beverstone in 1842 to Mr. Holford of Westonbirt, whose property it adjoined. His son tried, but unsuccessfully, to re-purchase it when he was raised to the peerage in 1906—it was the obvious title.

Sir Michael Hicks Beach, eighth baronet, contested the division of East Gloucestershire in 1854, and, after a struggle, still remembered locally, wrested the seat from his popular opponent, Mr. Edward Holland of Dumbleton Hall.

When Radicals declare Beech roots run underground,
They're wrong in their orthography, and the metaphor's unsound.
By this time they know better. Both time and spelling teach
How thy wild waves, Democracy! beat vainly on our Beach.

So wrote Mr. Hyett of Painswick from Rome to the *Gloucester Chronicle*; but Michael was the Conservative "Beach" for a very short time. He died of typhoid fever the next year, leaving his wife, the handsome girl of the Stow ball, with an eldest son of seventeen, a younger son of thirteen, and six daughters.

Harriet Vittoria, Lady Hicks Beach, died in 1900,

and is survived by seven of her eight children—Viscount St. Aldwyn (created 1906) * ; William Frederick Hicks Beach of Witcombe Park; Lady Dillwyn Llewelyn; Mrs. Fuller of Neston Park, Wiltshire; Mrs. Barneby of Longworth, Herefordshire; Mrs. Lowbridge Baker of Ramsden House, Oxfordshire; and Lady Crawshaw.

"She was a daughter of the handsome, upstanding Strattons," said a local paper in its account of Lady Hicks Beach's funeral. She was more than that—but this is not the place to estimate what her children have inherited from her of intellect and character, and what they owe to her definite 'upbringing.'

* Entered Parliament as member for East Gloucestershire 1864. Has been Parliamentary Secretary to the Poor Law Board, Under Secretary for the Home Department, twice Chief Secretary for Ireland, Secretary of State for the Colonies, President of the Board of Trade, twice Chancellor of the Exchequer.

LADY HICKS BEACH, WIFE OF EIGHTH BARONET.

(From a picture at Williamstrip Park.)

CHAPTER XIX.

SIR WILLIAM HICKS III. 1801 TO 1834.

When old Sir Howe Hicks died so suddenly in 1801, his eldest son, William, was already forty-seven years old, and he was living on the outskirts of the little market town of Cheltenham, in a house called *Belle Vue*, on the London Road, where the coaches passed by. The house had a considerable garden, and the ground in front of it went down to the willow-fringed stream, the Chelt, and then rose gradually towards Leckhampton Hill, an outstanding angle of the Cotswolds, over which ran the road to Witcombe.* The house is now known as the *Bell Vue Hotel*, and the district has completely lost its rural character, although there are still some remains of the garden.

At the end of the eighteenth century Cheltenham was a place of about two thousand inhabitants, had a small brewing trade, and was a considerable coaching centre —as many as thirty or forty coaches passed down the High Street every day. The paved High Street, with its inns and its motley collection of houses and small shops, was barred at either end by a turn-pike gate, and close to the gate on the Tewkesbury Road was the market-place, and beyond that the Grammar School and the beautiful old church on opposite sides of the way. At the further end of the High Street was the '*Plough*,' the principal inn, with its low entrance leading into its large yard; and then there were more houses and the London Road pike, and the open

* The vale road through Shurdington to Painswick was not made until 1841.

country, with its scattered houses, and *Belle Vue* on the left as you travelled London-wards. The discovery of the mineral waters in the middle of the eighteenth century had not affected the size of the place at all. When George III. was advised by his doctors to drink them, and came to Cheltenham in 1788 with Queen Charlotte and the Princesses, Cheltenham was, in the language of the *Morning Post*, "a summer village." But the Royal visit made the village fashionable, and in 1801, the year of Sir Howe's death, the speculative builder had already begun his dire operations.

Sir William kept on the *Belle Vue* house when he inherited Witcombe, and came there every year for a period, and he played a considerable part in the affairs of the growing town. He sat on the Cheltenham Bench,* and in the old numbers of the *Cheltenham Chronicle* his name constantly appears as being present at public meetings. To his relations he was a little, frail man, with a puckered brow and a stuttering tongue, who was not expected to be too much in the foreground; but, after the death of his indomitable parents, he developed an unexpected virility, and an unexpected temper, too; for "milk and mildness," as was observed of Mrs. Tulliver, "are not the best things for keeping." Gloucestershire raised a tremendous regiment of mounted volunteers during the Napoleonic scare, and Sir William was captain of the Cheltenham troop, and was peppery enough to keep them all in very good order. But it is doubtful if, from first to last, he would not have been happier without the Cheltenham connection—it brought him disaster later, and, somehow, he does not seem to fit comfortably into the meretricious life of the Georgian spa. The *Times* of September 4th, 1807, records that Sir William and Lady Hicks were among the company present at the Cheltenham Theatre when His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales commanded *The Rivals*,

* He was Chairman.

SIR WILLIAM HICKS, SEVENTH BARONET.

(*From a pastel picture at Coln St. Aldwyn.*)

which was performed to a very crowded house. The Duke of Beaufort, the Earl of Leicester, Lord and Lady Carberry, Lord and Lady Glerawley, Sir C. R. Boughton, Ladies Barrington and Myers, Sir John and Lady Callender and Dr. Jenner are all mentioned as being there too, and the plumes in Lady Hicks' turban would no doubt quiver contentedly in such good company; but Sir William has to be pictured as a meagre figure in the shade of the corner of his box, perfectly conscious of himself as a local magnate and the possessor of what his mother had called "an old family title," but somewhat lacking in the talent of making Royalty aware of his importance. Yet he was a better man than the poor Royal George on the other side of the theatre —"nothing but a coat and a wig and a mask smiling below it," says that severe censor of Georgian Royalty, Thackeray. "I look through all his life and recognise but a bow and a grin. I try to take him to pieces, and find silk stockings, padding, stays, a coat with frogs and a fur collar, a star and blue ribbon, a pocket handkerchief prodigiously scented, one of Truefitt's best nutty brown wigs reeking with oil, a set of teeth and a huge black stock, underwaistcoats, more underwaistcoats, and then nothing." The Prince—"Prince Florizel," Thackeray calls him—gave a great ball in Cheltenham, to which all the *élite* were invited, and, as George IV., he paid the town a brief visit many years later, in 1821; but after 1807 his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, came every year for twenty-nine years, and Witcombe Valley became accustomed to the passage through it of Royalty and fashion. The Bath Road from Cheltenham climbed the Cotswolds for six miles to Birdlip, and its famous '*Black Horse*' inn, with the thatched tea-house overlooking the vale, which Richard Dancer had lately erected. Fashionable Cheltenham patronised the inn prodigiously, but, unless acquainted with Sir William, had to turn and go back the same way they had come, while Sir William's own

friends might drive through Sir William's beech woods down to Sir William's house nine hundred feet below. The entrance to the road down the wood, which Sir Michael had made a century before, was just beyond the '*Black Horse.*' No house in Gloucestershire, as Sir William knew well, had a road to its door equal in beauty and interest to his Witcombe drive of over a mile long. The view of the vale from between the beech stems was pronounced later by Charles Darwin—if he were an authority on views—to be the most wonderful in the world. The manor house, with its walled garden, was not a very imposing goal after the glories of the hillside; but if the cookery books with Sir William Hicks' book-plate in them are to be believed, there was, at all events, nothing Liliputian about the dinner which awaited the arriving guests.

But, after all, little Sir William's country seat was not his greatest social asset, for he had an only daughter. It was a day when the cult of the heiress was at its height, and Ann Hicks was not only the heiress of Witcombe, but, as was well known, was to inherit her uncle Thomas Chute's property of the Vyne in Hampshire as well.

"A History of the Vyne," by Chaloner W. Chute, was published in 1888, and it says that the house was originally a Roman posting station, Vindomis, (*vini domus*, 'the house of wine'), on the military road between Winchester and Reading. But so different were the 'lie' of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century high-ways that there came to be a saying, "The Vyne is the end of the world and Beaurepaire is beyond it."

At the Conquest, the manor of Sherborne, in which the Vyne is situated, was granted to Hugh de Port* with fifty-five other lordships in Hampshire. His grandson John, in conjunction with the feudal tenant,

* He is the reputed ancestor of the Marquis of Winchester.

William Fitzadam, built and endowed a chantry chapel at the Vyne in the twelfth century. John de Port's son married an heiress of the St. John's, and their son William took the name of St. John. The St. Johns used the Vyne as a hunting resort.

In the fourteenth century the manor belonged to the family of Cowdray, and Sir Thomas de Cowdray re-endowed the chantry chapel. In 1386 it passed to the Sandys family by marriage, and remained in their possession until the Commonwealth.

The first Lord Sandys was Lord Chamberlain to King Henry VII., and, having married an heiress, he pulled down the old buildings and erected the present house and chapel. In 1535 the King and Queen Anne Boleyn were entertained by him, and in 1569 Queen Elizabeth stayed at the Vyne with his grandson William, the third baron. In 1643, during the siege of Basing, the Parliamentary troops under Sir William Waller* were quartered at the Vyne, and tradition has it that the painted glass of the chapel windows escaped destruction at Puritan hands by the simple device of taking it down and burying it under the adjacent stream. About 1650 William Sandys, the then owner, was obliged by poverty to part with the estate which was already heavily mortgaged, and he sold it to Chaloner Chute, a famous lawyer, who was made Speaker of the House of Commons in 1659.† His portrait by Vandyke hangs at the Vyne and there is a recumbent monument of him in a 'Tomb Chamber' built out of the chapel.

Succeeding Chutes went into Parliament, kept racehorses and played their part stoutly in Hampshire life. The Speaker's great-grandson John Chute, who succeeded his brother in 1754, was the survivor of a family of ten children, and he had spent most of his life

* Brother-in-law of Sir William Hicks.

† The Chutes can trace a male descent from Alexander Chute of Taunton who died in 1268.

travelling on the Continent. In Florence he had made friends with Horace Walpole and with the poet Gray, and letters from both of them are preserved at the Vyne. Walpole became a frequent visitor there, and suggested numerous alterations, such as the addition of two towers, a Roman theatre with an obelisk, and the complete metamorphosis of the garden. John Chute, however, had his own ideas, and the alteration he finally made was the construction of the present staircase. He died unmarried in 1776, and with him the male line of the Chutes came to an end. His only relation was his cousin, Elizabeth Chute, who had married Thomas Lobb of Pickenham Hall, Norfolk. To their son Thomas, John Chute left the Vyne, with the proviso that he would take the name of Chute.

Thomas Lobb Chute, the fortunate inheritor of the Vyne, married Ann Rachel, only daughter of William Wiggett, mayor of Norwich, and he was the father of Lady Hicks, Sir William's wife, and also, it will be remembered, of Mrs. Wither Bramston of Oakley Hall. He had a third daughter who died unmarried, and none of his three sons—two of whom succeeded to the Vyne—had children. The Wither Bramstons were childless also, and thus it came about that Ann Rachel Hicks was the Chute heiress.

There is in life the frequent tragedy of character ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity. The other tragedy, of opportunity ill-matched with inadequacy of character, is less frequent, and somehow not so tragic, because opportunity is not lost, but slips into more competent hands. Poor little Ann Hicks was physically and mentally quite inadequate to her background.

"Little Ann has recovered from the small pox and looks very sprightly and clear from any humour," wrote her mother to Williamstrip; and a few months later (1795) her grandmother pronounced her "as good a child as can be, but have not cut a tooth yet." Later

THE VYNE, HAMPSHIRE.

on Ann's cousin Michael alludes to her several times in letters to his sister Henrietta, and he makes it evident that her health was a family topic. He had been at Witcombe with his brother William in order to go to balls and plays at Cheltenham, and gives it as his opinion that Ann would be very well if her mother would not force her to drink asses' milk; but he says a year later that her growth is so gradual that it is imperceptible. She grew up to be not quite five feet high, and, from first to last, from childhood onwards, she was ugly—that is harshly definite, but she was in fact a feminine replica of her father, if without the stutter. And her 'Prospects'—her background—dwarfed her hopelessly. "Whatever should I have done with that immense house, my dear!" she said in old age, in her high, cracked voice, to Mrs. Beach of Oakley, who drove her over to the Vyne to see her lost inheritance. What indeed!

But the story of the forfeiture of the Vyne has yet to be told.

Ann grew to womanhood, and, with a complaisance that seems criminal, her parents launched her into the strange whirlpool of Georgian fashion which Cheltenham had come to be. To carry on the metaphor—she was pushed into it, all sails set, and without an ounce of ballast. The only wonder is that the shipwreck did not come sooner.

Three of her ball dresses have been preserved. Two are gauze over-dresses, white and deep yellow, with satin hems, and bands of coloured flowers embroidered in floss silk on the gauze. The line of the waist is just under the armhole, and the transparent sleeves reach to the waist. The third dress must have been copied exactly from a description of London fashions in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 1816. "Frock of white crape over white satin with crape *bouillione*, intercepted with bunches of riband and finished by an elegant festooned wreath of roses; short sleeves of crape, not very full, trimmed with blond, and surmounted with imperial

wings elevated. The hair," the account goes on to say, "arranged in bands, with very few curls, and short at the ears; a bandeau of pearls surmounted by a bunch of full-blown roses." The only pictures of Ann which exist are in childhood and old age, so that she has to be imagined with her dwarf stature, and with her thin, sloping shoulders and long neck rising out of the glories of the crape *bouillione*, and with the pearls and the roses on her poor head. Beauty, or even ordinary good looks, would have been such a safeguard in the extravagantly foolish world of fashion in miniature. "Beauty is usually proud, because of a conviction of its own worth: while a want of beauty often breeds vanity, which is the desire of rousing that conviction in others so that one may come to it at last secretly oneself." Ann was not the first plain heiress who was inordinately vain. But she was in her twenty-second year, had danced at many a Cheltenham ball before the catastrophe came. It was foreshadowed by a paragraph in the Cheltenham paper dated Thursday, February 22nd, 1816:—

> "It is rumoured in the Fashionable circles that the only daughter of a worthy Baronet in this neighbourhood is about to receive the flowery wreath of Hymen from the hand of a late wily visitor of good family connections."

The adventurer in question was an Irishman named William Lambart Cromie. It is true that he was the only son of a baronet, but that did not commend him to Ann's parents. William Playfair, in his "Baronetage of Ireland," proses about the Cromie family:—

> "It is the lot of some families to derive their splendour from ancient ancestry, and a long series of distinguished actions: but, undoubtedly, however enviable or desirable these circumstances may be,

yet, perhaps, in the eye of reason, the family that owes its rise to individuals, who have benefited their country by mercantile exertions, is equal, at least, if not in many instances superior, to the proudest, when those families can boast of nothing else but a highly-traced lineage."

Which is the preamble to the statement that a certain Michael Cromie, the son and grandson of Dublin merchants was M.P. for Ballyshannon, was made a baronet in 1776, and married the only daughter of the Earl of Cavan. In the year 1816, the said Sir Michael had been leading a wandering life abroad for many years; his only daughter had married a Mr. West in 1801, and his only son, William Lambart, was seeking his fortune at the English Spas.

Miss Hicks was too valuable a prize to be let slip by Mr. Cromie because of a little provincial parental opposition, and the very next number of the *Cheltenham Chronicle*, February 29th, 1816, had the following startling piece of news:—

"A great sensation was excited in this town, last week, by the sudden disappearance of Miss H. daughter of Sir W. H. and sole presumptive heiress to more than one large fortune. The young lady took the road to Scotland, by a circuitous route, accompanied by Mr. Cromy, to whom, according to a letter received from her, dated Carlisle, she has been united by the Gretna Parson. The previous proceedings and arrangements were, it seems, artfully concealed under love demonstrations directed towards another lady. A pursuit was ineffectually instituted for the purpose of bringing back the fair fugitive. We fervently hope that, as the first impulses of surprise and irritation have subsided, the return of natural fondness will produce the usual results of

forgiveness and reconciliation; particularly as there is not any circumstance of disparagement connected with the young lady's choice."

The editor's pious aspiration was not destined to be fulfilled, for Ann Cromie was never forgiven—the sequel proved to be too humiliating.

Nearly a hundred years have passed away, and the story of her elopement is now a cherished legend of which every scarce detail is valued, but at the time—oh dear, at the time!—how Sir William must have stuttered, how fast pens must have scratched over paper in those respectable strongholds, Williamstrip, Oakley Hall and the Vyne! Alas, that it should all have been regarded so tragically! for the result is that every single letter that was written about it at the time has been carefully destroyed.

The "ineffectual pursuit" was undertaken by Ann's cousin, William Beach of Oakley, who must have been in Cheltenham at the time, and report has it that Sir William gave him a table for his pains—a comic enough descent into the matter-of-fact out of the heroic ragings of the moment! There was a descent into the matter-of-fact for foolish Ann too, for, three weeks later, she was remarried in Marylebone Church; tied securely with all the formalities of the Establishment to the husband who was already certain that domestic life, as interpreted by Ann, did not suit him at all. The date of this ceremony was March 16th; it was performed by Luke Heslop, D.D., and the witnesses who signed the register were Mary Arundell, John A. Giffard and J. W. Fermot. The register states, "these parties having been heretofore married to each other in Scotland."

A honeymoon on the Continent, and a long honeymoon too, was an obvious sequel to the scandal, and all that poor Lady Hicks could do was to see to it that her daughter took a really competent maid with her. That

accomplished, Sir William and she set out in their coach for Witcombe, and perhaps before they got to the end of the tedious journey they had resolved that they must make the best of the matter, and be as philosophical over it as they knew how.

But Ann's first letter from Paris was a sufficiently rude shock to any philosophy, for it appeared that she was alone in her hotel and Lambart Cromie and the competent maid had disappeared in each other's company.

Think of Sir William, as he crossed the Channel for the only time in his life, and of the hateful journey home again, for himself and Ann, to the valley, to the narrow house, to the familiar things and faces which were not to be evaded. Think of what the passing days meant to Ann after this. For it was Ann who was most to be pitied. She had to sit, on every day in every week in every year as it went by, at table with parents whose mood remained an unmodified one, and whom she herself had deprived of healthier distractions; for the Cheltenham house was given up after that fatal year of her marriage, and life was confined mainly to Witcombe interests and to the society of relations. Cheltenham card-parties, if they had served no other purpose, would at least have been useful as a counter-irritation!

The derelict Ann was clearly no fitting mistress for the Vyne. Her uncle, William Chute, was M.P. for Hampshire, and he kept at his own expense a pack of foxhounds which were the origin of the Vyne pack of to-day. He is to be met with in all sporting annals, and he seems to have been a real character —a lovable man with a thousand small peculiarities. But he was not peculiar enough to look charitably on his niece's escapade. His immediate heir was his clergyman brother, Thomas Vere Chute, who was unmarried, and the two brothers were unanimous as to what was to be done. William had a godson and

namesake, the second son of a Wiggett cousin.* On the condition that he should take the name of Chute, William Lyde Wiggett, then a boy at Winchester, was solemnly decided on as heir to the Vyne in the place of Ann Cromie. For Ann herself, this decision, which seemed so momentous to her Chute uncles, which must have been the keenest mortification to her mother, had probably little or no importance; for it needed an educated imagination to deplore a forfeited sovereignty of the red-brick Tudor pile, with its panelling, its tapestries, its statuary, its cabinets, and its other countless treasures.

It is impossible to speak with any certainty about Ann's later relations with her husband. He eventually died in a madhouse, and it is a fact that for some years she visited him there annually. But it would seem that about the year 1827 he reappeared in Cheltenham, and that Ann, then over thirty years of age, was disposed to extend forgiveness to him. Mrs. William Beach of Oakley Hall, writing to Williamstrip, says, "I was much surprised and vexed to hear of Lady Cromie's conduct; surely she has caused already her too indulgent parents sufficient trouble without continuing to torment them, at least Sir William; for it seems Lady Hicks' feelings are quite subdued; still I think Ann is very much to be pitied, more especially as she has the misery of reflecting (did she reflect at all) that she has been the principal cause of their sufferings." In a letter of July, 1830, to her cousin Jane at Williamstrip Ann herself gives what seems, without any context, a startling piece of news. "I am going to Cheltenham to-morrow where Lambert will arrive to-day and look out for a house for us in the meantime, to save the trouble of going to an hotel first and then moving. I have not the least idea how long we shall stay there."

* This cousin, their mother's nephew, James Wiggett, was rector of Crudwell in Wiltshire, where was Eastcourt, the home of the Earles.

Whether this project was carried out or not, it is impossible to say, but the fact that Sir William put into concrete form at this date his determination to disinherit his daughter if she ever lived with her husband again, makes it seem as if the flitting from Witcombe was either prevented or was of very short duration. Sir William's Will was pretty drastic. It provided that if his daughter ever lived with her husband again, she was to have an income of anything between one shilling a week and one pound a day, as the trustees in their discretion should appoint. The same provision was to hold good if her husband died and she ever married another Irishman. Otherwise she might marry again with the written consent of the trustees and might inherit the Witcombe estate after the death of her mother.

The discovery of a Roman villa at Witcombe in 1818, two years after the Cromie catastrophe seems to posterity to have been discovery at an ironical moment. Fortune had turned her back on the owner of the wide, green combe; his dwelling-house was again beginning to show signs of decay, and he himself was daily deteriorating in temper because of his powerlessness to command the future, to impel in the coming centuries the continuance of his direct descendants on the property which, to him, was the world: and then the goddess Chance, who takes so many strange forms, took the form of a labourer's spade, and, with all her accustomed sarcasm, quietly brought to light on the hillside the site of the dwelling-place of him who had been the landowner of the valley sixteen centuries before. Opportunity was thus given to testy little Sir William to reflect that, sixteen centuries hence, the family of Hicks would be certainly unknown, and that the grass would be growing over the foundations of the house in which they had fretted out their lives; but that, nevertheless, the young moon would still rise

over the crest of the woods in her silver irony—that the world would in fact, still go round.

Under the supervision of a famous local antiquarian, Mr. Samuel Lysons, Sir William proceeded with the excavation of the villa, and parts of it were protected with stone huts with thatched roofs. Mr. Lysons read a paper on the villa before the Society of Antiquarians in 1818 and 1819, and in February, 1908, Mr. St. Clair Baddeley read a paper on the same subject in the Guildhall, Gloucester, to the Gloucestershire Archæological Society. The antiquarian conclusion seems to be that the Witcombe Villa, lying between the two important towns of Corinium (Cirencester) and Glevum (Gloucester), was the abode of a magistrate and senator who owned all the land in the valley lying on either side of Ermine Street, and that it had been built early in the third century, after the grant of the Roman franchise to all free inhabitants of the Empire, when a great push was given to the building of country houses.

For the Roman landowner, as well as for Sir Michael Hicks of the seventeenth century, had been surely the rapture of creation; and the Roman set his house and demesne between a foreground and a background of everlasting beauty. In the foreground beyond sloping meadows was that view of the vale which Van Deist painted for Sir Michael 1500 years later, with Ermine Street running across it like a spear to Glevum, and with all the recurring atmospheric glories and the eternal hills beyond. The colonnaded court and gardens of the villa looked towards this view, and the house was a much more considerable one than any the valley has known since. It was built of brick, of stone and of marble, and on either side of the court were groups of buildings—the service rooms on one side, and the baths on the other. It faced the morning sun in glistening dignity, and was outlined in such an hour with unearthly brilliancy against the purple and black of the beech stems, which

towered on the hillside above it, with the belt of their foliage melting away into the mysteries of the sky. The house sheltered a whole population. There was the family priest, the steward, the secretary, the amanuensis, the janitor, the hairdresser, the bathing man, gardeners, woodmen, cooks, smiths, keepers of the stock, the keeper of the dogs, the chauffeurs for the furnaces, the textores or weavers of household linen, the delicatæ or housemaids. The house was a centre of organised industrial life, and the position of its owner as a municipal magistrate and senator of Glevum made it a centre of Civil Justice as well; of its luxury and beauty, the pottery, the silver plate and the toilet accessories that have been excavated tell their own tale.

Yet, if to Oblivion so complete, to Silence so impenetrable, it is the lot of every generation to make its ultimate submission, why trouble to repeat, and repeat again and over again, in one small valley of the whirling earth, this country house life, that needs so much strenuous thought and care if, in its peaceable security, free from the struggle of creeds and tariffs, it is to be kept from gross materialism? Would it not be wiser to withdraw, if opportunity should offer a dignified retreat, from a battle with untraceable Destiny, in which the things of inheritance, of creation, and of desire, must infallibly be obliterated?

To Sir William Hicks, to whom grandchildren had been denied, an opportunity for this wisdom was offered, and he differed no whit from his Roman predecessor in that he rejected it passionately. In the year before his death, his daughter Ann was thirty-nine years old, and her husband (Sir Lambart by that time) was still alive. It was necessary to provide for the ultimate future of Witcombe, and, as his younger nephew at Williamstrip was already provided with the properties of Oakley Hall and Keevil Manor, Sir William directed that

Witcombe should go to his grand-nephew William, the second son of his elder nephew Michael. A condition was attached to the legacy—William Hicks Beach was to become William Hicks.*

* This provision was for himself only and not for his heirs.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAST HICKS OF WITCOMBE. 1839 TO 1885.

THERE is a saying of Lafcadio Hearne's that everyone meets the Sphinx in life, but that sometimes she doesn't kill people; she only bites and scratches them. The Sphinx scratched the pigmy heiress of Georgian Cheltenham pretty severely, but it is an enormous tribute to her inherited invulnerability that in later life only one person ever knew how much the scratches smarted, and that, for the world around her, they were completely hidden behind the disguising pomp of a spreading crinoline and the prestige of consistently living beyond her income. For, to the imagination of the twentieth century, Dame Ann Cromie steps at once from the Gretna Green episode into a grim old age as the lady of the manor of Witcombe, who was an old lady so long that her age became mythical. The interval between the two stages never seems to count at all, and yet there was a period of eighteen years, during which she sat at her father's table in an atmosphere of perpetual disapproval, and became first thirty, and then forty years of age. Endless years they must have seemed—and dreadful years from every point of view one would suppose. That they affected her nerves there are curious scraps of evidence to prove. "Lady Cromie's tongue goes as fast as if worked by *steam*," wrote Caroline Hicks Beach after she had been staying at Witcombe; and young William, her son, who was to be heir to the property, said, "Lady Cromie hasn't much the matter with her except a stiff knee which the doctors tell her requires rest—the only thing she seems

determined it should not have as she is fidgetting up and down stairs and round and round the room perpetually." Poor restless Ann! She had a sort of outlet in religious emotion, but perhaps that only made her the more tiresome! When her uncle Michael died at Williamstrip in 1830, she wrote to her cousin Jane there saying that she had a bilious attack, and recommending a book called "Cecil's Visit to the House of Mourning"! "I am well aware my dear Jane (having been taught by painful *experience*) that *Religion* is the only consolation in *affliction*, and then when the mind *can* be brought to dwell on the subject there is a *comfort* in reading books of this sort which nothing else in this world can give."

Sir William died in 1834 when Ann was forty years old, but Lady Hicks* lived five years longer. She had been an invalid with gout for a long time, and many of her letters are dictated and are in Lady Cromie's handwriting. For weeks and months at a time she was shut up in her bedroom looking on to the garden and the rather sprightly letters are about nothings. She tells her sister-in-law that she has collected in her room all the best china in the house, and all the things she brought from the Vyne, and that she keeps there two Chinese mice in a gilded cage tied up with pink ribbons and hung round with little bags of scented flowers and herbs! She was of easier temperament than Sir William, was good natured, trivial and foolish, and was not able to keep up a life-long anger with her daughter. There was affection between them, and we can believe that Ann was lonely enough when her mother died. But it was the beginning of a healthier life for her. She was now mistress of the Witcombe estate, was of 'consequence,' and had independence and responsibility. Life was only half over and its profoundest emotion was still unfledged.

Of that emotion—her friendship for Francis Close,

* *Née* Chute.

Rector of Cheltenham—it is impossible to speak without a little gentle laughter.

When Francis Close came to Cheltenham in 1824, it was as curate to the lately-built church of Holy Trinity. He married in the following year, and in 1826 he was made rector of Cheltenham. 'King in Jeshuran,' it is said he shortly became, and it is a fact that, during the thirty and odd years of his reign, he raised money for the building of eight churches, a hospital and a training college for elementary teachers, and was instrumental in founding the boys' college of to-day as well. In fact, he made the Cheltenham of to-day. He found it an overgrown country village with a stream of noisy fashion flowing through it, and he left it in his sixtieth year, for the Deanery of Carlisle, a town of ordered streets of peculiarly hard pavements, and with an established population. He left it, moreover, a stronghold of Evangelicism. Gone for ever were the hey-ho tables and the pea-and-thimble tables which used to make the High Street such a diverting place at the times of the races! "We went to the Old Church which was crowded to hear the Rev. Mr. Close preach against horse racing and the playhouses," says *Dolly Dubbins* in her Diary of the thirties.

> "You must not to the races go,
> At least your pastor tells you so,
> Whose fraught with proper notions;
> And if you to the Playhouse get,
> Old Nick will know it, for he'll set
> One CLOSE to watch your motions."

Each generation has its popular preachers, and the undying secret of their power is, in the vernacular of to-day, the possession of a magnetic personality. It was towards the man, Francis Close himself, that the shrunken soul of Ann Cromie went forth, and so there came to her in the desert of middle age, the gift of a new initiative. All the circumstances combined to make it a comfortable friendship for them both.

Many volumes of "Close's Miscellaneous Sermons" stand on Witcombe shelves; they are much marked in pencil, and the tenour of the scored paragraphs is the same:—

> Those whom God loves, and whom He is training for eternity are chastened and afflicted most severely. The dearest objects of their affection are torn from them, their earthly prospect is clouded and darkened, one source of temporal enjoyment after another is taken away, and sometimes the servant of God seems left alone in the world, bereft of all that delighted his eyes and cheered his heart; like the solitary blasted oak of the wilderness, spoiled of its leaves, with its branches torn off by the tempest.

The underlining of the last sentence is a whole revelation—the revelation of a pose. With Ann's purely personal views of all things human, it is impossible that any blow of Fate could have obtained a permanent importance, but the suggestion from the pulpit that the blasted oak was for the preacher a more interesting object than the healthy growing tree, was an insidious temptation. The facts of her tragic story were undeniable, and they made perfectly legitimate a demand on the sympathy of the busy divine.

He gave that sympathy freely. Witcombe became eloquent of the fact that he was freely repaid—it is impossible to keep a little sarcasm out of the laughter. He came out to Witcombe not infrequently, and not infrequently he drove away again along the lanes with a cheque which brought some one of his many plans for the welfare of Cheltenham nearer to its accomplishment. He was a good man, and he prayed with the lady of the manor in the panelled parlour at Witcombe in all singleness of soul—but the single eye enabled him to see Cheltenham only: it never occurred to him that the panelling of the parlour was rotten, nor that the timbers which upheld the roof above his head would, with little provocation, fall on it; it never occurred to him to have any practical surmises about the cottages and farms he passed on his road.

DAME ANN CROMIE.

(*From a photograph.*)

SIR LAMBART CROMIE, SECOND BARONET.

(*From a miniature.*)

And who can blame him if he supposed Lady Cromie to be a richer woman than she was? Part of her appeal for him was, without doubt, her social position. She belonged by birth to a class with whom—at the beginning of his ministry, at all events, and because he girded at its amusements—he was very unpopular. To be a friend of her ladyship's was an asset for him, and perhaps her ladyship was not unaware of it.

Yet the part of *grande dame* was, very likely, not assumed consciously at all—it may have been simply the outcome of strict adherence to the eighteenth-century tradition. The twenty servants, the pale-blue liveries, the over-abundance of food and drink, the continuous giving out at the back door—it was all part of a system which was rigidly adhered to decades after other country houses had modified or revolutionised it—it was adhered to long after conditions made it an economic impossibility.

When Ann Cromie first came into her kingdom there is witness that she had the usual emotions of the new broom. There was a row of stone cottages close to the church which were in very bad repair, and she pulled them down and built for Witcombe a school and a schoolhouse; and then, as there was stone left, she built, at the suggestion of her lawyer, a lodge at the portal of the wood, at the Birdlip boundary of her property. This was in 1845, and in that year her heir, her younger cousin at Williamstrip, William Hicks Beach, died unmarried. He had the power of appointing a successor to his Witcombe prospects, and had left directions that they were to devolve on his younger nephew, his brother Sir Michael's second son, who was another William Hicks Beach, and, at this time, a child of three years of age.

This change of heirs, in which she had had no choice, made the future of Witcombe somewhat of an abstraction to its female tenant for life; and it is perhaps hardly a matter for declamation that, from this time onwards,

she allowed her interest in the development of religious Cheltenham and the claims of an adopted family to outweigh her practical responsibilities towards the land from which she drew her income. Her sentimental responsibilities were never neglected—up to the last she was wheeled in her chair into the low-raftered kitchen to superintend the gifts of beef to the cottage tenants at Christmas time, and all the year round an ever-flowing stream of milk puddings and soup linked the big house to the village. But as the nineteenth century went on, and, together with Ann Cromie's own life, drew towards its close, the battle with deterioration, which has to go on persistently if deterioration is not to gain foothold, was given up altogether.

In her ninetieth year Lady Cromie was awaked one day from the doze of old age by the entrance of her heir into the panelled parlour, and she startled him with a decisive utterance: "William, you must see that the road is in good order, for Sir Michael will want to bring his coach down it next week to Quarter Sessions." This is proof that the dozing dreams of his many-times descended granddaughter were not haunted by the angry ghost of Sir Michael of 1700, who had made the wood road, and who might have had his spookish denuniciations for the person who had allowed the main artery of the property to become a mere timber track. Yet she had no feminine horror of mortgages.

An adopted family has been alluded to only, and it is not possible to tell the story with detail to make it interesting, because of those still living whom it affects nearly. Ann burdened the little estate with extraneous lives, but it was a reparation—and the only possible reparation—she could make for her own disastrous obstinacy and ill-judgment.

Ann's elopement, it will be remembered, did not take place until she was twenty-two years old, and she must have reigned as an heiress of the Cheltenham

season for several years before that, and Mr. Cromie was, of course, not the only aspirant to her hand and fortune. There had been a Colonel Donovan, a Welshman, who had served in the Peninsula, and who was afterwards at Waterloo—he eventually married a Miss Treherne, of a Glamorganshire family, and his wife died and left him with a young daughter, for whom Lady Cromie seems to have had a real affection, and the girl stayed at Witcombe for long periods. She grew up quickly, as girls will, and then there appeared the inevitable lover. The father disapproved of him entirely, and with all the good reasons in the world, beyond that he was, by birth, a gentleman; but Ann Cromie, with her strong streak of inherited self-will, and her innate lack of worldly knowledge, saw fit to foster the affair, and the part she played put an end once for all to the half-romantic friendship between herself and Colonel Donovan. The marriage took place, Colonel Donovan was entirely justified in all his objections, and, in 1852, the poor wife, with two fair-haired little daughters, came back to Witcombe and lived there until she died.

As life went on this heroism of Ann's became—as all acts of the will do become—its own justification. The girls grew to tall and slender womanhood in the house in the valley, and a perennial interest in their good looks, their ball dresses, and eventually, of course, their lovers, helped to keep for Ann a living heart behind the mask of a formality which grew to be impenetrable, and, because of that, to be awe-inspiring. Her grimness became a legend—was an *aura*, which had its radius far beyond the circle of her beechwoods. Witcombe women, themselves now in old age, still recall with bated breath the ordeal of Christmas morning, when, ranged before her ladyship in the servants' hall, all the village boys and girls had to produce for her criticism the stockings they had knitted. The ceremony was very likely two centuries old. The wool came from

Witcombe sheep, was spun by the very old women who were pensioners, and was then given out to the youngsters who had to render their account. Holland enough for a smock was each boy's reward, and the girls got a straw bonnet with a plain riband ; and Ann's redoubtable grandmother, Martha Hicks herself, could could not have exacted profounder obeisances.

The placing of persons in their proper places and the keeping of them there, which came to be, perhaps, the most conspicuous talent of Ann's middle age, tended at last, as talents will, to petrify, and the petrifaction had sometimes its grotesque features. A guest of the occasion has a recollection of a dinner at Witcombe when her ladyship missed a dish of stewed kidneys she had ordered, and which the cook, it would seem, had thought superfluous. "Tell the cook I mean to have the kidneys, and we will wait till they come," was her order to the butler. And wait the company did, and a very long time too! A later episode was related by herself to her heir. Dean Close of Carlisle was dead, but a clergyman, who had been his curate when he was in Cheltenham, had come there in charge of one of the new churches. This gentleman remembered the friendship, profitable and pleasant to both, which had existed between his old rector and the lady of Witcombe, and in a hired Cheltenham cab he set forth on his adventure. It was afternoon, and Ann was established on the sofa by the round table in the panelled parlour. "And before I could make out who he was or where he came from, he knelt down by the table and began to say a prayer," she related in high indignation. "I never before suffered such impertinence. I rang the bell at once and said, 'Kindly shew this gentleman out.'"

That panelled parlour, with the battered family portraits crowded together on its pink painted walls, with the afternoon sun pouring in through the drawn white blinds, with the shining round table and its circle

of books and the tight posy in the centre—that was the prison-house where, for the last twenty years of life, Ann Cromie made her soul: for the last ten years she never left it except to be carried to her bedroom.

"I am sure I don't know what all this coming and going means," the high, fatigued voice behind the mask used to say; and coldly and shrilly, in response to patient explanation, "No; I don't understand it at all." Behind the mask the mind was still alive, able to realise the existence of new and compelling conditions: and the will was still alive too, prompt to reject them if possible. "It was always so in my poor grandfather's time," was the steadfast answer to any revolutionary proposition—and how far that took all things back, for Sir Howe had probably said the same! It is quite likely that Witcombe was the very last house in England where a pewter service was used in the servants' hall, and where the servants had beer for breakfast. And it is almost impossible to realise that, as late as 1885, there was an audit dinner-party which differed in no particular from a dinner-party of Georgian days, with a whole salmon in its dish on the table, with a joint and boiled chickens to follow at either end, and six side dishes beneath their silver covers. The rector,* the family lawyer, the doctor and, in the last years, the heir were the invariable guests at this biennial festivity, and all that made it seem an anachronism was their accumulating consciousness that it was so. Every year the fat coachman, who came in to help when there was a party, grew stouter; every year the buttons in a row down his livery seemed larger; every time the running rattle with which they twanked against the edge of the door when he inserted himself into the room, seemed louder. And then the twanking rattle played its part as a nineteenth-century joke for the last time, for Ann Cromie lay dying at last.

* Ann's cousin, Charles Pettat, was rector of Witcombe from 1839 to 1845. He married his cousin, Caroline Browne of Salperton.

In the small bedroom over the servants' hall, in the narrow tent bed which she had used since childhood, she lay. From out her furrowed face her ninety years looked forth, with all their still-born passions, with their thin pleasures, with their patience of unfulfilment.

"The Kingdom and the Power and the Glory——" She heard the words, for she stirred faintly; but those watching knew that she had heard them only as a trumpet blast upon another shore.

CHAPTER XXI.

WITCOMBE TO-DAY.

Of the Witcombe of to-day all that can be said must be said tentatively—said with a hesitation none the less profound because of spiritual certainties.

In the year 1855 the city of Gloucester, six miles off, needed a reservoir, and an Act of Parliament was passed compelling Lady Cromie to sell land for the purpose. Her trustees used the money to add to the property, and bought Cranham Wood, while William Hicks Beach's trustees bought land too; so, when he inherited the Witcombe estate at last, it was considerably larger than it had been in Sir William Hicks' lifetime. But the house itself was no longer habitable. After Lady Cromie's death an architect was called in and his advice, if drastic, was inevitable. The whole of the timber and plaster frontage was pulled down and the older, stone servants' quarters were left standing and were let as a farmhouse.

In the year 1891 it became a matter of immediate expediency to provide a house for the estate and, because of so much that was ready to hand, because of stables, greenhouses, garden walls, the old garden house and the servants' quarters of 1600 still intact, the owner of Witcombe raised, on the site of the old frontage, four walls and a roof to close them in. Between the walls, beneath the red roof, are partitioned spaces wider and loftier than the parlours of the old house, and at the back of the rooms which face the sunny garden and the towering woods, runs a long hall, where,

between Juliana Hicks' tapestry from St. Peter's Hill, the grandchildren of the twentieth century — those keepers of unknown redemptions—may play battledore and shuttlecock. Into this hall is the entrance to the provisional house—and the adjective is used defiantly; with the consciousness that the expediency, the comfort, the decency of to-day, will be the least important things of to-morrow.

O ghosts of the Valley Manor, have done with your hampering task! You filled the hold of the Ship of Destiny with ballast, and that was well for its day and in its hour, but "the fear that the Ship may pitch or roll on leaving the roadstead is no reason for increasing the weight of the ballast by stowing the fair white sails in the depths of the hold. They are not woven to moulder side by side with cobble stones in the dark. Ballast exists everywhere: the pebbles of the harbour and the sand on the shore will serve for it. But sails are rare and precious things: their place is not in the murk of the well, but amid the light of the tall masts, where they will collect the winds of space."

INDEX

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