

**PROCEEDINGS**  
OF THE  
**CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN**  
**SOCIETY**

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



**VOLUME LXIX**

1979

**IMRAY LAURIE NORIE AND WILSON**

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## DR. BALAM'S COMMONPLACE BOOKS

Mabel H. Potter

In June 1914 two manuscript collections of the works of John Donne, seventeenth-century poet and preacher, were discovered in England. One of them (Plates 1 and 2) appeared at G. David's bookstore in the Market Place, Cambridge, where it was purchased by Sir Geoffrey Keynes, and subsequently (1916) presented to the Cambridge University Library and catalogued *Add. MS. 5778 (C57)*; the other was discovered at Sotheby's in London, where it was purchased by Percy Dobell, antiquarian of Tunbridge Wells, and later (1932) given by an anonymous donor to the Harvard College Library and named the Dobell Manuscript (*Dob*). Both manuscripts are handsomely bound in old morocco decorated with gold tooling, and probably were made in the early seventeenth century.

In *C57* and *Dob* Donne's poems are inscribed in a clear, graceful hand, and spaced evenly in the centre of the page. In startling contrast to this neat chirography is a quantity of miscellaneous material written in the blank pages and margins in a large, sprawling, and sometimes illegible hand. This writer disregarded punctuation, left sentences incomplete, and often neglected to disclose the source of his quotations. He came into possession of the manuscripts in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and used them as commonplace books. But the marginalia in *C57* and *Dob* vary widely from those of the usual commonplace book, in that they represent the work of a single author rather than an assortment of items from various sources. This writer has filled the pages with a commentary which reveals an extraordinary interest in poets, politicians, and prelates, and also adds to our knowledge of the Isle of Ely during this significant period of English history. Some of his writing is trivial and incoherent, couched in the vocabulary of the tavern. But even these fragmentary records from the pen of a contemporary observer bear valuable testimony to the literary and political trends of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The author of the marginalia has been identified as William Balam of Ely, in Cambridgeshire.<sup>1</sup>

*William Balam of Ely*  
1651-1726

The little city of Ely has changed in many respects during the past three hundred years, but it still retains an aura of antiquity. Situated on a rise a few miles north of Cambridge it is the focal point of that portion of East Anglia known as the Isle of Ely. At the top of the incline stands the massive Ely Cathedral which dominates the town

and surrounding countryside for miles around. This magnificent example of Norman architecture has endured the ravages of decay and vandalism through many centuries and today is one of the glories of Britain. To the south of the Cathedral is the Bishop's House and the Deanery, protected by the ancient wall, with its famous "Porta", through which one gains access to the cathedral park and monastery, the latter founded in 970 by the Benedictine monks, and in more recent years used as a boys' school. The original Bishop's Palace (now a school for physically handicapped children) stands to the west of the Cathedral, and across the green St. Mary's Church and Vicarage. North, east, and south of the Cathedral lies the close, where in the seventeenth century many of the leading families in Ely lived. Most of the houses in the close are medieval buildings of the monastery which were converted into residences at the Reformation in the sixteenth century (Pl.3. a). North of the cathedral close, across the High Street (originally Stepil Row), stands the Lamb Hotel, in 1584 "The House of the Holy Lamb". The inn signboard still carries a painting of the Agnus Dei - the Lamb of God. Further down the High Street is the old marketplace, square and paved, which comes to life on Thursdays when tradesmen from all over the adjacent counties bring their wares and arrange them under bright-coloured awnings. One can buy everything from fish to fertilizer, and the market swarms with local townspeople and visitors from neighbouring villages. At the foot of the street is the River Ouse with its quayside and little boats painted blue, red, and yellow. This is the site of one of the ancient landings, when almost the only method of transportation was by water. Since the middle of the nineteenth century progress has been assumed by the railway, and a continual procession of small trains with shrill whistles bustle in and out of the railroad station nearby. But three hundred years ago Ely was surrounded by water for the greater part of the year and became virtually a wasteland, except for the fenmen who waded through the flooded areas in high boots or on stilts and did a flourishing business in fishing and wild duck shooting.

Much has been written about the lowlands of this region known as the Fens. During the years before the draining of the fens was achieved, the inhabitants of the Isle of Ely suffered severe hardships from the flooding of miles of flat country between Cambridge and Len-Regis (King's Lynn). Even though they built their villages on high ground, wherever it could be found, and took care to be protected by dikes, the coastal storms and swollen rivers brought destruction each year and often rendered the inhabitants homeless. Sometimes a village was completely isolated, as in the case of Whittlesey, where the farmers for a great part of the year "lived upon bread and water, and went all day into the Fens to get reeds, wood and hassocks by which they got their living".<sup>2</sup> Insanitary conditions prevailed. A visitor to Ely in the seventeenth century describes the town as "a perfect Quagmire" which "breeds vermin", and "tho my chamber was near 20 steps up I had frogs and slow worms and snails in my Room".<sup>3</sup> Today there is little trace of this early menace except an occasional muddy road. One who travels in East Anglia looks out upon a landscape of orderly design, set in a pattern of dark furrowed fields alternating with those of yellow-brown and bright green, with only a windmill or a clump of trees to disturb its symmetry.

The city of Ely was significant in the Civil War. During his army career Oliver Cromwell made Ely his headquarters, and used the Vicarage of St. Mary's as a garrison for his troops. He held the position of farmer of the tithes of the two parish churches, Holy Trinity and St. Mary's (1636-1649), and in 1643 became Governor of the Isle of Ely. Cromwell's association with Ely began at an early age, for his mother, Elizabeth Steward before she married Robert Cromwell, grew up in Stuntney Manor, one mile to the east (Pl.3.b.). Cromwell succeeded to his uncle's estate in 1636. This fine old manor house stood, although precariously, on the hillside until recently, but has now succumbed to destruction like many other landmarks.

Ely was an important stronghold of the Anglican Church in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The Diocese of Ely was extensive and covered portions of several counties. The bishop was Lord of the Isle and held almost unlimited administrative and judicial powers. In the middle of the seventeenth century the bishop of the See was Matthew Wren, whose term of office (1638-1667) was interrupted by a sojourn of eighteen years in the Tower of London. During his early reign as bishop he was overzealous in his efforts to stamp out Puritanism in East Anglia, and his high-handed methods of dealing with the clergy led to his removal in 1642. He was reinstated in 1660.

In this setting William Balam was born 11 July, 1651, to William and Katherine Balam. He was of gentry stock and boasted a genealogy that can be traced back to the eleventh century, complete with coat-of-arms.<sup>4</sup> Members of this family were great landowners, and tenants of the bishop's manors as well as lessees of messuages held by the Crown. The name of Balam (spelled ten different ways) appears often in the early Court Rolls, and for many centuries the Balam family controlled property in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. They were respected members of the community and held important positions.<sup>5</sup>

William's grandfather was Robert Balam of Elm (1580-1640), son of Charles Balam, Lord of Isleham, and Mary Peyton Balam (who later married Sir Richard Cox, son of Richard Cox, Bishop of Ely). Robert inherited his father's fortune in 1592 and came into possession of extensive property. One of these holdings was Beaufort Hall, a manor of 776 acres in the village of Friday Bridge near Elm (held by the Balam family until 1699). Another one was a messuage at Stathe Dyche, including St. Roche's Chapel, which housed the Guild of the Holy Trinity for many years. Robert attended St. John's College, Cambridge, and in 1603 married Alice Irby, daughter of Sir Anthony Irby of Whaplode, Lincolnshire.<sup>6</sup> Eight of their many children lived to the age of maturity.<sup>7</sup>

The fifth son of Robert Balam was William (1620-1684), father of William Balam who is the subject of this chronicle. He attended Clare College, Cambridge (1637), was admitted to Lincoln's Inn (1639), and married Katherine Goodricke (1622-1678), member of a prominent Ely family who claimed relationship to Thomas Goodricke, Bishop of Ely (1534-1554) and Lord High Chancellor of England. The Goodrickes were wealthy landowners, and their name appears on many property deeds in the Isle of Ely. In the annals of the Goodricke family, Katherine is said to have married "Capt.

Wm. Balam",<sup>8</sup> but no record of his commission has been discovered. It is probable that he served in the Parliamentary forces like his newly acquired Goodricke relatives. At least three of their children, besides young William, survived infancy: John, who died before he reached his majority; Anne, who married James Verdon, Rector of East Dereham (d. 1741), and Mary, who married Henry Towers of Gaywood (d. 1710).

This branch of the Balam family was "one of the principal families of Ely",<sup>9</sup> and William Balam the elder was a leader in the community. He was a member of Holy Trinity parish and served as one of its prestigious church wardens. In 1660 he was appointed one of the Governors of Parson's Charity Committee (founded by Thomas Parsons in the fifteenth century), an important organization which administered the "Lands and Possessions of the Poor of Ely", and for nearly ten years he signed its accounts.<sup>10</sup> William Balam senior also made a last stand against the draining of the Fens. There was bitter opposition to this gigantic undertaking, chiefly on account of the loss of fish and fowl and reeds for thatching, on which the poor depended for a livelihood. When the draining of the Bedford Level was considered, and received the sanction of Bishop Wren, who gave 961 acres of the "comons and wastes" to the improvement, it was opposed by a group of inhabitants led by William Balam and four other influential citizens of Ely. They lost their case, and the Act was passed in 1664. The elder Balam and Bishop Wren appear to have been at odds for many years. In a letter written after his father's death, the younger William refers to "those hardships my father suffered under Bishop Wren", and there is evidence that the elder Balam openly resisted the bishop's attempt to raise his rent:

1661. 29 July. The Petition of *Wm. Balaam and Tho. Culpeper, Esqrs.* was this Day read.

*Ordered that it be recommended to the Lord Bishop of Ely to renew the Petitioners Lease upon reasonable Terms and Mr. Speaker is desired to move his Lordship effectually from this House.*<sup>11</sup>

During their lifetime, the Balam family owned a good deal of property in Ely, including a public-house in St. Mary's Street (King's Arms) adjacent to the inn, a tenement in Broad Lane, and a part interest in the manor and grange of Newbarns.<sup>12</sup> Even as late as 1949 there was a large tract of land south of Ely known as "Balam's Pieces".<sup>13</sup> In 1667 William and Katherine Balam left Ely for Wendling, Norfolk, where they resided for several years. On their return in 1678 they became lessees of the bishop's demesnes in Downham (near Ely), and lived in Downham Manor, where Katherine died in 1678, and William in 1684.

Young William Balam grew up in Ely. The Balam family occupied lodgings in the cathedral close which they leased from the bishop. On one side they looked out on the burial-ground in the shadow of the great cathedral. On the other side they surveyed Stepil Row, with its inn and pub, where villagers gathered to sample the ale and discuss the most popular topics of the day: politics, religion, and weather. One can imagine young William, as a child, listening to the cathedral bells chime the quarter-hours; watching the priests in their colourful regalia proceed to evensong; playing hide-and-

seek among the tombstones; and skipping down through the meadow to the bottom of the street to see the ferryboats come and go at the landing. It was from this same landing that William Balam may have journeyed to school in Cambridge (the road from Ely to Cambridge was not begun until one hundred years later).

William Balam's education followed established gentry tradition. From the meagre records available we learn that he received his elementary schooling in Cambridge and was admitted to St. John's College there at the age of fourteen. His status was that of a "gentleman-pensioner", which included special privileges and distinctive dress, in contrast to the "sizar" who performed various tasks in return for his education. Every undergraduate was required to have a tutor<sup>14</sup> who was responsible for his charge's moral behaviour as well as his intellectual development. But no one could exercise control over the minds of these budding scholars. They were exposed to some of the most liberal thinkers of the age, and much time was spent in the extra-curricular pastime of inflammatory discussion. The curriculum was based on conservative lines and conducted in the traditional method of lecture and debate: Greek and Latin language and literature, philosophy (broadly interpreted to include ethics, logic, metaphysics, and rhetoric), mathematics, and science. Theology was offered to those who were preparing to take orders; but the opportunities to study medicine were meagre, and students of physic often finished their training elsewhere. Prospective lawyers went to the Inns of Court.

William Balam received his B.A. from Cambridge University in 1671 and was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1672. In choosing a legal career, Balam had shown wisdom. There was plenty of business for an attorney in the Isle of Ely. In addition to the usual legal cases (debts, divorces, patents, wills, etc.) there was much litigation concerned with flood control. County records contain many petitions by the inhabitants of Ely, all the way from demanding that planks be laid "to prevent man and horse from sinking in the mud", to dismissing the ferryman for his bad behaviour. One interesting document (1676), which suggests an analogy to modern transportation problems, is a petition, with seventy-two names appended, that "the back water be stopt up soe that boats may not pass that way but be constrained to come through the town".<sup>15</sup> Also, there was a great deal of business having to do with mortgages and transfers of property in the Fens, where land could be cheaply bought.<sup>16</sup>

In 1674, William Balam became secretary to Peter Gunning, Bishop of Ely, and assumed the legal duties pertaining to this office, a major part of which had to do with diocesan rents. His careful records are neatly inscribed in his notebook.<sup>17</sup> This book was also used to list his personal expenses as secretary to the bishop. Balam's position necessitated frequent travel to the bishop's headquarters in London (a fifteen-hour journey), which provided him with an opportunity to see his friends and enjoy the advantages of the city.

In 1681 Balam was appointed Registrar of the Diocese of Ely *pro termino vitae naturalis*, a post that he held for forty-five years, during which he served under six bishops. This was an honourable position and a lucrative job despite Balam's opinion

to the contrary ("Wee registers are but Church mice, very poor, everyone knows"). In 1682 he received an LL.D. (*com. reg.*)<sup>18</sup> from Cambridge University. But with the death of Bishop Gunning two years later, Balam's future appeared to be less assured. Francis Turner, who succeeded Gunning as Bishop of Ely, did not share his predecessor's enthusiasm for the incumbent secretary. Even before he took office the new bishop showed his antipathy by refusing to renew a lease of property in Downham that had been held by Balam's father, to which the younger Balam felt entitled.<sup>19</sup> In that same year he refused Balam's petition for the post of "Steward of the Bishop's Courts" relinquished by Sir Robert Wright. This antagonism may have dated back to the years when Balam and Turner were students at St. John's College (1666) and Turner succeeded Gunning as Master of St. John's (1670). But it is more likely that it stemmed from their political differences. Bishop Turner was firmly committed to the royal succession; Balam was an advocate of popular rights. During the years when Britain was suffering the growing pains of a two-party system, tension was high in the town of Ely, as elsewhere, and plots and rumours flourished. It was in this period that Balam appears to have suffered depression and disillusionment that amounted almost to a persecution phobia. In a letter to Bishop Turner<sup>20</sup> he bemoans the departure of a "Friend" (Gunning?), deplores the Bishop's lack of confidence in him, and denounces the machinations of his enemies who have misrepresented and maligned him. (One of these "unscrupulous men" appears to have been the Reverend Mr Bincks.)

Subsequently, Bishop Turner appointed Balam his secretary, and the rift in their relations appeared to be temporarily mended. For several years thereafter Balam was an important member of the bishop's entourage. He looked after Bishop Turner's correspondence and served as a channel of communication between the bishop and his petitioners. Apparently Balam had great sympathy for the poor, and often contributed to their needs. In a letter to the Inspector of the Registry, he defends his practice of overlooking taxes in the case of an extraordinarily poor client, and in another letter he asks the Chancellor of Ely for his support in a charity case. His notebook contains several entries of small personal gifts ("To a poor man at Hadnam ... 10 sh., To a poor woman ... .05", etc.).

In 1686 Bishop Turner nominated Balam Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely.<sup>21</sup> It probably was about this time that Balam's aspirations for a political career began to develop. In addition to his keen interest in public affairs, he possessed an intense pride in the achievements of his ancestors and was ambitious to carry on the family tradition. Family prestige was important during the latter half of the seventeenth century, and political power was shared among county families who assumed the duties of parliamentary representation. Encouraged by the bishop's apparent friendliness, Balam proceeded to make long-range plans for a career which included a distinguished County post, an ancestral estate, and a brilliant marriage. He cultivated the acquaintance of influential citizens, and became a protégé of Sir William Wren (d. 1689);<sup>22</sup> and he made sure of adequate means to promote this scheme. Only one hurdle remained, and that was the sanction of the bishop.

In 1690 Francis Turner was deprived of the bishopric for refusing to take the Oath of

Allegiance to William and Mary. But before his departure, he succeeded in ruining Balam's most cherished hopes. The details are revealed many years later in a letter that Balam wrote to a creditor.<sup>23</sup> According to this account, the bishop told his secretary that "hee should be very glad if I could shape any way to Him by which Hee could serve mee". Balam continues:

I let Him know that I was contractive with Sir William Wren for the Bailiwick of the Isle – a very Honorable place and worth 200 lb. per Annum – that I had a Couz: German and Turky merchant in the City<sup>24</sup> that would lay down whatever Sum was necessary for it – and upon obtaining this place would be attended with the match of an Heiress of my own family – and that I should be restored to the ancient seat of it at Elm<sup>25</sup> near Wisbech.

Finding the bishop "extremely pleased with all this", Balam went to close the business with Sir William and

found him dead in his Lodgings that very day but half an hour before my coming to him ... I applyed immediately to his Ldp who pitying the misfortune of the deceased told [me] ... Hee woud give it [the post] to Mr Edwards of Wisbech<sup>26</sup> ... accordingly sent for Him up to London ...

This Sr was a stab to all my futurity of Life.

The last sentence is an eloquent understatement. Ambition and pride had suffered a shattering blow. His well-laid plans had miscarried; he was shocked and enraged by the bishop's perfidy; and he was humiliated before family, friends, and associates.

The reason for Bishop Turner's refusal to give Balam this coveted position is not clear. Even more puzzling is his appointment of Dr Balam to several County offices that same year, one of which was the Bailiwick of the County of Cambridge except for the Isle of Ely. These offices are recorded in the Cathedral Library:<sup>27</sup>

1. Seneschallus de Wisbech [Steward of the Bishop's Manor of Wisbech Barton where he would preside at the Manorial Courts].
2. Bailiff of the Liberties in the County of Cambridge (excluding the Isle of Ely) and also in Middlesex and the City of London [including the Bishop's Palace and estate in Holborn].
3. Master of the Game of Deers, Conies, Hares, Pheasants, Partridges, Swans, Cranes, Wildgeese, Duck, Mallard and Herons and of all Beasts and fowles of Warren in and throughout the said Isle of Ely.
4. Bailiff of Fairs and Markets.

All of these posts were for the term of his natural life.

In 1691 Simon Patrick was elevated to the bishopric of Ely and brought with him John Wilson as his secretary. During the following years Balam was a prominent lawyer and consultant on ecclesiastical matters. Also, he was active in promoting various enterprises: a movement to reduce taxes, increase salaries for the clergy, and unite the offices of Registrarship of Archdeaconry and Bishop's Consistory in one

person, which he believed to be advantageous to the Court (and incidentally to himself). In spite of his recent disappointment, Balam still aspired to a political career. In 1695 he again became Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely.<sup>28</sup> He also ran unsuccessfully for Member of Parliament for Cambridge.<sup>29</sup>

In 1698 the office of Head Bailiff of the Isle of Ely, held by Thomas Edwards of Wisbech, again became vacant, and Balam's hopes rose once more. He forthwith applied for the post, but to his dismay Bishop Patrick refused to appoint him. Instead, he named the incumbent's son, Thomas Edwards, to succeed his father.

Bishop Patrick died in 1707 and was succeeded by John Moore (1707-1714), who was renowned as a friend of scholars. His successor, William Fleetwood (1714-1723) was a distinguished preacher and antiquary. Apparently, Bishop Fleetwood had a high regard for Balam, for in 1714 he nominated him for Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely, among other dignitaries.<sup>30</sup> There is no record of Balam's association with Thomas Green, Bishop of Ely (1723-1738), under whom he served less than three years.

Some years earlier, Balam had taken lodgings in Cambridge. The only other member of his household appears to have been his maid, Elizabeth Stagg, who is mentioned in his will. Balam always manifested an active interest in St. John's College, and he was a member of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, known as the "Round Church", with which the college was affiliated. He died in Cambridge and was buried there 28 January, 1726. The major portion of his estate passed to his nephew, William Towers, Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, and (later) Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University.<sup>31</sup>

#### *Commonplace Books*

There is no evidence to determine how or when *C57* and *Dob* came into the possession of Dr William Balam. He may have acquired them through inheritance, gift, or book sale. Neither one of the manuscripts reveals a date of acquisition, but a few dated letters and references suggest that many of the marginalia were written just before or soon after the turn of the century.

The contents of the commonplace books stem from a variety of sources: personal comments and emotional outbursts; transcripts of letters and legal records; verses; quotations from many authors; and finally, a conglomeration of disconnected ideas, hurriedly jotted down, which probably originated in the London coffee houses that Balam frequented.

Like many commonplace books, *C57* and *Dob* abound in aphorisms. Hundreds of these "petty gospels" fill the blank pages, sometimes placed in categories. For example, one page is whimsically devoted to "women" and "hens". Often proper names are appended:

My Lord (Bishop Patrick) – a Hypocrite has his Prayer-book in his hand, God in his mouth, and the Devil in his heart.

Balam issues a few hints on gardening, expresses his interest in natural science, and

subscribes to the astrological pronouncements in Partridge's *Almanack*. Discouraging on music, he recommends "the Airs composed by Lully ..." and waxes eloquent over "the great Italian music of Scarlatti, Corelli, and Bassani". His comments on opera are less enthusiastic:

Mistress Albiniera in damd many languishing scenes and insipid airs ... poor and tiresome ... they swell their throats just like a nightingale ...

Many of Balam's entries deal with business concerns and legal matters (summaries of cases, a treatise defining property lines under the Bishop's Franchise, and two long dissertations on the Divine Right of Kings). A few letters are addressed to friends and relatives. One of these was written to young Tom Steward, Balam's ward, away at school, urging him to study more diligently:

If you think of your great family consider as well how great a merit is necessary to sett you on a Levell with it.

In contrast to this noble sentiment is a communication addressed to Balam's brother-in-law, the Reverend James Verdon, regarding a property title. His reply to the clergyman's claim is filled with ugly threats and invidious charges. A final taunt reads:

You know you carried away part of the house from Wendling to repair the louzy Vicarage ... I found it dismantled both of stable Dayry and Brewhouse.

But there is no trace of rancour in the letter Balam wrote to Sir Christopher Hatton, requesting a recommendation on behalf of a prospective tenant of Stuntney Manor:

Sir your goodness and Candor invites every mans relyance upon you ... if Sir Christopher Hatton is pleased to say that Holmes is a responsible tenant I will admitt Him mine tomorrow.

Another letter offers gratuitous advice to "My Nephew at Inns of Court":

... not Taverns and Plays but Arts and Arms should employ your youth and lay the foundation of an Honorable usefull Life ... a mans mind is certainly what Hee impresses on it - now who would have an ugly daubing instead of a fine beautiful picture ... pleasures want that true inward delight and are nothing but reall deformities to our more serious reflexions ...

And there is a memorandum of an unsatisfactory family gathering "upon a Goose at my Brother Towers his house in Norfolk on St. Luke's Day, 1708", which included Balam's sister (Mary Towers), his nephew (William Towers), and his cousin Jane. Apparently, Balam took this opportunity to be obnoxious in his choice of language ("words of noe ... prophane intention") and was sternly rebuked by his nephew, who was outraged to the point of telling his uncle to "goe to your Companions that are fitt for such discourses as this".

Dr William Balam had an absorbing interest in literature. The abundance of literary quotations and references which he scribbled in his commonplace books manifests a remarkable knowledge of poets and scholars, as well as an astonishing choice of occasion for their expression. The poetry of Milton is "graceful though difficult", while that of Benlowes is characterized as "Bombast"; a line from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* ("Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety") is included in a passionate declaration to a lady love; a business letter to Bishop Turner,<sup>32</sup> bemoaning Balam's misfortunes, contains nine lines from Spenser's *Faerie Queene*; a humorous letter to a relative refers to Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*. Balam greatly admired Dryden, and may have known him personally ("my friend Dryden"). Obviously, he had less regard for Tom Brown, notorious writer of epigrams.<sup>33</sup> Quotations from many other sources include Bacon, Butler, Cowley, D'Avenant, Oldham, Otway, Prior, and Waller. Balam also uses Biblical and early church history references, as well as quotations from classical authors, Homer, Ovid, Virgil, and particularly Lucretius, a portion of whose *De Rerum Natura* he singled out for extensive critical commentary. His interest in modernization of the classics inspired him to copy more than one hundred lines of satirical verse currently published by Sir Richard Blackmore and Dr Samuel Garth. Often he would change a word or phrase, rearrange a line, or add a comment.

Balam's taste for satire and his zeal for textual improvement are revealed in his treatment of many of the literary quotations. Apparently, he did not aspire to creative writing,<sup>34</sup> but preferred to use his talents in the field of critical analysis.

Dr Balam's literary interest was centred in John Donne. He carefully studied the poems in *C57* and *Dob*, and also in two printed editions of Donne's poetry which he owned, and evidently considered himself qualified to assume the role of literary critic. He compared texts, changed words, corrected and supplied titles, amended the pagination, underscored lines and added his own interpretation. He also wrote a prose paraphrase of a portion of Donne's *Satire IV* and another satire attributed to Donne (*Satyre VII*), now thought to be spurious.

Balam's preoccupation with John Donne is perplexing, in view of Donne's declining popularity at the end of the seventeenth century and the development of a literary taste that was counter to Donne's style. But Dr Balam's marginal comment (*C57*):

Hee never Leaves a Subject without leaving men Satisfied with what Hee has said upon it

is indicative of his keen enjoyment of Donne's poems, and his comments show no sign of decreasing interest. No other reader of that period analyzed Donne's poetry with such painstaking care, or left a critique of so great a dimension.

\*\*\*\*\*

The marginalia in *Dob*, and Dr Balam's predilection for John Donne, have been discussed in more detail elsewhere.<sup>35</sup> There are fewer pages in *C57*, but the entries

follow the general pattern of *Dob* and contain discourses on clergy, courts, and love. There is a marked absence of correspondence. On the front cover, in barely distinguishable letters, is written:

thes for [?] Coote att his loginge  
in bow street next the bull Covent Garden.<sup>36</sup>

At the beginning of the book, in the middle of the page, Balam wrote what might almost be regarded as a dedicatory title page, if adjacent comments on the composition of salt, the danger of eating sweets, and the function of the salivary glands did not somewhat diminish its effectiveness:

Discountenance the profligate in Life and opinion  
Exclude them from all marks of your royall favour  
Nature exerted in its utmost force  
Strengthen the ordinary Jurisdiction of Ecclesiasticall  
Courts now too much restrained and infeeble.

This portion of the manuscript contains Balam's sole poetic effort in *C57*. It appears to be a parody on the metaphorical extravagances then in vogue, particularly in regard to a lady's charms, and is reminiscent of Donne's elegy, *Loves Progress*,<sup>37</sup> which satirizes the Petrarchan lover. Balam's textual improvements are in evidence. Entitled *My last nights Dream on my M<sup>rs</sup>*, it begins:

Last night I saw in instant Dream  
The brightest beauty ere was seen  
Clad in a veil of azure sky  
Whilst hearts hir trophies round hir lye.

The poem continues on a superlative note, praising the lady's hair which resembles "threads of burnished gold", forehead "smooth as marble polish" (Donne: "smooth and plaine"), sparkling eyes brighter than "Orient Gemms or morning starr", "a comely nose of midget size", "Lipps soft and full" (Donne: "swelling lips").

Hir teeth sett even in a row  
And full as white as driven snow [Donne: "chosen pearls"]  
Hir breath as sweet as any Cows  
That only on the rosebud brows[e]  
Hir Voice as sweet as Violin  
As if Apollo toucht the String [Donne: "Delphique Oracles"]

.....

But mortall man now comes thy woe  
If from above such graces flow  
Oh what oh what must be below?

The poem ends appropriately with a reference to Donne's *Extasie*:

Tis only known in extasy  
When ravisht souls from bodies fly.

Directly following the collection of Donne's poetry that (with Balam's commentary) occupies the middle section of *C57*, there are nine poems written in a different hand:

Francis Bacon: "The World's a bubble" (no title in *C57*).

Thomas Carew (?): *Lippes and Eyes*.

John Donne: *Docter Dunn's Going into Bohemia Himne to Christ*.

Anon.: *Of Friendship* ("Friendship on earth wee may as easily find").<sup>38</sup>

Francis Beaumont: *An Elegy on ... the Countess of Rutland*,  
*An Elegy on the Lady Markham*.

Sir Henry Wotton: *On his Love's Inconstancy*.

John Donne: *The Broaken Heart*.

Anon.: *Verses on the Excellency of his M<sup>s</sup>*. ("Excellent Mistris, brighter then the Moone").

The last poem in the book is written in Balam's hand: *The Hystory and fall of the Conformity Bill being an excellent ballad to the Tune of the Ladyes fall or Chevy Chase*. This is a political poem of thirty-six stanzas, and was popular during the reign of Queen Anne. The name "Robert Wisdome" is appended to the ballad, but it has also been attributed to Arthur Maynwaring and Lieutenant-General Mordaunt.

The last pages of *C57* for the most part reflect "coffee house chatt" like Balam's other commonplace books. Scraps of poetry include lines from William D'Avenant's *Upon the Fables of Aesop Paraphras'd in Verse*, with Balam's emendations, and eight lines of a poem beginning "Rogues are for whores and honest men for wedding". Some space is allotted to "The Case of James and Rebecca Pitts ... one Dr Balam having been appointed ... to enlist union and accord between them". This entry is important in supplying the only date in *C57*, "this last fifteenth of January, 1703". Another page containing Balam's expense account in "The Case of Mr Pitts *versus* Barnes" reveals a varied assortment of places chosen for consultation:

Shepherds Walk

The lake where wee did meet by the Fleet Prison

Fishmongers Hall

The Globe by Moregate.

An epicurean note reads: "A Flip at the Tippet".

There are more entries of a strictly personal nature in *C57* than in *Dob*. These range from laundry lists to medicinal cures. One notation reads, "Quare my Lord Bacon's Naturall History his cola plasm for the Gout".<sup>39</sup> "Dr Baynard" is frequently mentioned as a dispenser of remedies for ailments both physical and mental:

Palsy is cured by mustard seed and Horseradish ...

Joy dilates the senses - keeps the mind bright ...

Walnuts fortify the brain and augment the Animall Spirits ...

Eggs make the hair of head and beard black ...

No doubt it was this peripatetic medicine man who advocated the therapy:

Walk with your bare feet upon Daysies and you cure the Gout.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dr Balam did not confine his literary efforts to *C57* and *Dob*. At least two other manuscripts contain his writing, both of which are owned by the Cambridge University Library. One of these, *C.C. 95,577*, is a small notebook used for legal records. It contains valuable letters and documents and apparently was compiled over a period of many years. Included in its pages is a copy of a letter from Bishop Cox to Queen Elizabeth, dated 1577 (p. 123); a list of diocesan rents beginning in 1601; the text of the opposition to the draining of the Bedford Level, 1664; a copy of the will of Alice Balam, 1692 (p. 131); a portion of the Hatton correspondence (to 1694);<sup>40</sup> notations of deeds and patents and lawsuits relating to the bishops of Ely; and many other records. These are written in several different hands.

One unusual entry is a record of the sale of a portion of Bishop Gunning's goods after his decease:

Dr. Balam's Chamber	{	A Bedsted matt and Cord Cantoon Curteins Tester and Head Cloth 1 Featherbed and Bolster 1 Flock Bolster one pillow One Coverlet 2 Blankets 5 Chairs 2 Spanish Tables one grate with Brasses and all ye hangings about ye room	} 2-00-00
		<i>In the Kitching</i>	
		5 Spitts 4 Warming pans 6 pair of Andirons Brasses 4 pair of Doggs and Brasses 1 pair of Iron doggs 1 pair of Fireshovells 1 plate frame 1 frying pan 2 dripping pans 3 Gridirons 1 Fishkettle 1 Brass pot 2 Skillets 1 Iron mortar 2 tinn pastry pans 1 Tinn dripping-pan 1 Tinn roaster 2 Peates 1 poudring Tubb 2 Tables one Beam and Scales - 84 lb. of Leaden Weight 335 lb. of Pewter - 143 of Brass at 8d. per pound	} 10-00-00

Another item (p. 8), "Bishop Wren's Directions for keeping the Assizes", is primarily concerned with privileged guests and protocol. The last part of it reads:

provide horses with good old Hay

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for wine you shall do well to have 100 bottles from Linn 65 claret 35 Sack ...  
they must be well stopt tyed down and seald and must have good Corkes.

\*\*\*

no Tobacco to be had in public room.

\*\*\*

Let the Porter be prudent and Stout and admit no man else but according to appointment ... the Judge to be lodgd at the Deanery and there to have 2 beds if need be for his attendants.

The other manuscript, *Add. MS. 5779 (C5779)*, is an alphabetical index to Latin terms, compiled by Robert Stonehouse, and dated 10 March, 1681/2. A distinguishing feature is the bookplate which states that the volume was "sold by Charles Rawson, Stationer at the Golden Ball in St. Paules' Chaine nere Docters Commons London". This announcement is flanked by drawings of three heralds. The book contains 282 folios, most of which were left blank except for the Latin headings, and, since paper was at a premium, they were happily appropriated by Dr Balam for his efforts at self-expression. Like *C57* and *Dob*, much of the writing in *C5779* lacks logical sequence or chronological order. For example, there are quotations ranging from Pliny to Gower on a single page, in which Balam also disposes of Vanity, Chastity, Creditors, Judges, Atheists, Rogues, and Statesmen. Another page presents a golden opportunity for his talents under the Latin headings: *Anabaptismus*, *Anarchia*, *Anatomia*, *Animus*, *Antipathia*, *Antiquitas*, all of which he disregards in favour of an eloquent discourse on the wickedness of kings, the folly of eating salad dressing, and the dangers of philosophy. But many of the entries are of value in supplying the more personal aspects of Balam's life as well as his sentimental musings.

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Dr Balam's commonplace books were among his most prized possessions. Whether he was at home, at work, or making the rounds of the coffee houses, one of these books was his constant companion, and his pen was never idle. Even at court he scribbled:

The Room is full as a Jayl and divided into Severall Wards like the Bedds of a Hospitall.

He copied arresting phrases:

A snuff box as long as the face of an old Andiron

\*\*\*

Always waspish and dirty like an Actress at a morning rehearsal,

or yielded to an angry outburst:

I will not execute any Commission that has Captain Thomson's Name on it  
I tell you plainly for I dare not of all men living venture his Yorkshire  
Conscience with soe many prejudices as hang on it at present.

To many of his unidentified quotations he has appended exclamations: "There is a Rogue!" or "Oh mischievous Malignity of Soul!"

This tendency to what may euphemistically be called "roughness" manifests itself in much of Balam's writing, and sometimes deteriorates into violence and abuse. He is particularly allergic to Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, and Tories:

Presbyters ... Confound their babell of religion ... those vile malefactors  
against the peace of Church and State

\*\*\*

The Pope takes not God as Hee is but makes him new to his own ends and  
shapes and forms him as his superstition pleases

\*\*\*

The Jacobites always claim kindred with the Papists ... sure wee ought to  
be exempt from the superintending of such Rogues as have noe protection  
from the Laws of our country

\*\*\*

The dismal wide mouth of a Tory rabble.

Balam was aware of this inclination to harshness. He writes: "Oh this unhappy tongue  
of mine ... Lawless – Voluble – Destroying ..." But Dr Balam could also express  
himself earnestly and gracefully when he hoped to win popular favour:

I always delighted to exercise myself in the open Campaign of the publiq good –  
not in the inclosures of my particular ends and respects.

This compelling urgency for self-expression in Dr Balam's commonplace books has  
resulted in a collection of memoranda which clearly reveal an active mind and varied  
interests. Whatever the subject, he is well-informed and his capacity for  
argumentation is boundless.

### *Political Comments*

A large number of the notes in Dr Balam's commonplace books relate to politics  
and religion. Toward the end of the seventeenth century political speeches and tracts  
were increasingly available in print, and in 1702 the first English newspaper was  
published in London. Balam was well-read and articulate. His commonplace books  
contain many of his own reactions to the opinions of current writers, and some of his  
quotations stem from earlier sources.

The early eighteenth century was a time of critical importance for Britain. No one  
was under public scrutiny more than the reigning monarch of England. Extracts from  
royal speeches dating back to the time of King Charles I are scattered through Balam's  
manuscripts. He quotes with some disaffection a passage from the first speech of  
Charles II to his House of Commons:

...the national Harmony is always the sweetest when the Prince and the People  
tune well together ... Look not upon this as a threat for I scorn to threaten any  
but my equals.

He quotes from a speech of King William III regarding the public debt:

The English (says King William) ought to keep sound this Maxim that they shall  
never be losers who trust to a Parliamentary Security,<sup>41</sup>

which elicits from Balam the protest:

An extorted revenue disables us by Legale and Voluntary supplies to express our affection to his Majesty and to cherish his to us.

He quotes Queen Anne as saying, petulantly:

I will have noe Godolphin-men ... noe Marlboro men ... noe squadron men. ... I care not what they are soe they are none of these ...

and recites a riddle in vogue:

Here is a health to the Queen and the Lord Keeper right – let her have many summers [Sir John Somers] to ripen her judgment – and never let her Summer set [Duke of Somerset] let noe ominous Birds build in hir palace – noe Rookeries [Sir George Rook] disturb Hir rest nor Finches [Sir Daniel Finch] pinch the buds of the best flowers in hir Garden. let noe Enemies lurk in Hedges [Sir Charles Hedges] ...

Statesmen share the spotlight with royalty and receive their share of criticism. Balam brands as “a piece of studied banter” the sentiment that “all places both in Church and State are filled with the wisest men and most steadfast ministry that ages have seen or known among us”. He quotes several passages from the speeches of John Pym (1584-1643), Parliamentary leader and powerful speaker, famous for having contrived the impeachment of Lord Strafford and other celebrated statesmen. One of them draws from Balam the comment, “Pym in a large studied Oration ... full of hyperbolicall figures and insulting Eloquence”.

The most vehement protagonist in the struggle against the *status quo* was Henry Sacheverell (1674-1724), ecclesiastic and politician, whose inflammatory sermons rocked Britain in the early eighteenth century. In one chronicle alone he is called “trifling incendiary”, “whiffling incendiary”, “impudent incendiary”, and “dangerous incendiary”.<sup>42</sup> Balam writes, “If moderation be a Vice I will doe the Dr the Justice to acquit him from the least tincture of it”. The most violent diatribes of this Tory fanatic were directed against the heads of state. Maintaining that the Church was in danger due to the negligence of the Whig ministers, he fanned the flames of revolution. His trial in 1710 only increased the agitation, and his impeachment was the immediate cause of the downfall of the administration. Balam writes:

Such seditious flames never broke out from the pulpit upon any well establish Government before ... this Sacheverell is the very Oliver Cromwell of the church as Oliver Cromwell may be said to be the Sacheverell of the House of Commons.

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Sacheverell is to be tried by Numbers and not Leviticus – Law and Righteousness may flourish where there is poverty but only Corruption where there is power and wealth.

Under the heading, "Sacheverell's Sermon", Balam writes:

His wondrous Vanity has hammered upon his brains soe long that it has beat them as thin as Leaf Gold ... you may blow away the sense of them like a Cobweb ... all their Glories Sullied and betrayed by a malicious and disingenuous Misrepresentation.

Probably no event of the early eighteenth century stirred the pride and imagination of the British people more than their military triumphs over the French, under the leadership of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722). The wars had been bloody and costly, and it was primarily due to this military wizard that the enemy was vanquished. There was universal rejoicing after the Battle of Ramillies (1706), temporarily transcending party lines, and elevating Marlborough to the status of hero to both Tory and Whig. Balam writes, "Marlboro the only man that has awak't remembrance of those Valiant deeds done so long ago in France". With patriotic fervour he quotes lines from Matthew Prior's famous poem celebrating this victory:

The Foe with lessen'd Rage disputes the Field  
And Blenheim's Fame again is in Ramillia known.<sup>43</sup>

Another comment shows the prestige that Marlborough commanded, "Marlboro made mee great in hope Hee himself should Govern England and mee".

On the other hand, John Cutts (1661-1707), Member of Parliament for Cambridgeshire, did not inspire Balam with enthusiasm. Although Cutts was a popular hero, and fought beside Marlborough in the Battle of Blenheim, his military career appears to have resolved itself into constant attendance on the King, and the writing of mediocre poetry:

My Lord Cutts – tis great pittty that any man should be more a favorite and less a Soldier then Himself ...

Balam also expresses disappointment in "Argile", who presumably was Archibald Campbell, first Duke of Argyll:

A young nobleman of great hopes ... had Hee inherited the principles of his family Hee must have been the Head of the very party Hee acted against ... but with his morals abandoned ... Hee flew in the face of his grandfather's injured grace ... Joynd with his murderers ... the betrayers of their Country and placed himself at the head of that very party who had trampled on the blood of his family.

No one receives more praise from Balam than John Tillotson (1630-1694), Archbishop of Canterbury, eminent preacher and creator of a unique literary style. Bishop Tillotson adhered to a rationalistic philosophy, and was a leader of the group of liberals called Latitudinarians:

Of Dr Tillotson – tis true that never any man knew how to use his reason better

or make it more prevalent by those naturall but strong and pressing Turns that Hee gave it – Hee says nothing but what gives weight force and dignity to his discourse.

Balam was interested in philosophy. He refers to Aristotle, Plato, Pythagoras, and he had digested the theories of Bacon and Descartes. He had been exposed to the Cambridge Platonists, who laid the foundation for the liberalism of the eighteenth century. The doctrines of John Locke and their political implications were being widely discussed. Balam quotes Locke (“the Originall of all Ideas are Sensation and Reflexion”),<sup>44</sup> and brands as “noble nonsense” the contrary view held by some Cambridge Platonists that “there is a natural union between the will of man and the representation of Ideas which Gods immensity conteins”.

A little earlier Thomas Hobbes was making himself heard on politics and religion. Balam characterizes him as:

Old Hobbs – that new evangelist that makes the Joys of Heaven more indifferent and the pains of Hell less formidable than anyone before him has done.

Hobbes’ doctrines as outlined in his *Leviathan* (1651) were sufficiently revolutionary to arouse Edward Hyde, first Earl of Clarendon (1609-1674), historian and statesman, who vigorously refuted them (1670). Apparently Balam carefully followed this debate, for he copies quotations from Clarendon’s critical work,<sup>45</sup> complete with page numbers:

My Lord Clarendon is of the opinion that Thucidides<sup>46</sup> teaches the Art of Mutiny and sedition – answer to Hobbs, p. 85.

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says my Lord Clarendon, with the Schoolmen I am not very much in Love ... do wish that very many of them had been bred artificers and Handicraft Men in which they woud have done this world much more good and Learning much less hurt – agt. Hobbs, p. 302.

Balam could never resist an amusing aside:

My Lord Clarendon observed that the half-hearted and half-witted people made much the major part of both Houses.

Balam comments on George Berkeley’s *Discourse of Passive Obedience* (1712):

All our Lives and fortunes are subject to the Laws and not to the Queens Will – but this Irish Priest tells us all our Lives are given by a Divine Commission into hir power,

and adds, with prophetic vision, “Hee hopes to swallow down a good Bishoprick for this”.<sup>47</sup>

One of the most colourful personalities in the early eighteenth century was Richard Bentley (1662-1742), Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. This brilliant classical

scholar and divine was at variance with his Fellows for many years, and he is almost as famous for the succession of arrests, petitions, suits, and trials that plagued his career as for his scholastic achievements. It is not clear to what extent Balam was involved in the interminable quarrels between Bentley and his colleagues, but as Registrar of the Diocese he undoubtedly knew him and followed his case carefully. Bishop Moore was legal "Visitor" of Trinity College, and presided at Bentley's first trial in 1714, but did not live to pass the final judgment that would deprive Bentley of his degrees. Moore's successor, Bishop Fleetwood, declined to act, and the next trial took place in 1718, in the Court of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Thomas Gooch, who presided as Judge. Balam's name appears only once in the legal records, at the end of a detailed account of this famous case, and adds drama to the already supercharged proceedings.

*The Grace had not passed above Half an Hour, before Dr Balam came to Town, who was sent for on Purpose to exclude Dr Otway, and to give a 2<sup>d</sup> Stop to the Business. This is said to be a Mistake.*<sup>48</sup>

The last sentence is ambiguous. The "Mistake" could refer to an error in the record, signifying mistaken identity, or to an individual opinion deploring Balam's presence. But Balam clearly made the mistake of arriving too late to block proceedings against Bentley. The reference to Dr Otway is significant. He was a member of the Caput,<sup>49</sup> and hostile to Bentley. But Dr Otway was also a non-juror, and, had the oath been administered to him before a vote was demanded for Bentley's censure, he could have been removed, and his place filled by a supporter of Bentley. Dr Gooch was well aware that this would alter the outcome of the trial and, since he opposed Bentley, refused to administer the oath. Apparently it was then that Bentley's friends made a last-minute effort in his behalf, and sent for Dr Balam to force the Vice-Chancellor's hand.<sup>50</sup>

Balam offers several comments on Richard Bentley. One of these is a harsh indictment:

Dr Bentley seems to have noe regard to either Vertue or learning otherwise as they may be coincident with his Vanity or interest.

Another comment reads:

Bentley tells you it were noe difficulty if the publiq had a regard to it to make the English Tongue inimitable.

Another refers to Bentley's personal extravagances and expensive improvements to his lodge:

A commutation for the Master's perquisites of bread beer fuel Coach and Garden allowances woud have been agreed in one Day had this incendiary meteor been out of the Way.

Still another comment contains an amusing personal reference:

Dr Bentley said of the Queens bounty of 100 lbs. that it was not above 3 farthings a man – nobody can deny that Hee has laid the Varnish on thick – tis pity soe

many fine words and sentences so well put together and soe artfully turnd shoud have neither truth nor sense it them ... when at prayers by his careless behaviour Hee plainly discovers that Hee thinks Himself above that business and is continually giving Himself airs with his Snuff-Box ... when at St. Mary's Hee continually sleeps in despite of his snuff-box.

Balam concludes:

I doe affirm that tis now in the power of the Vice Master and Seniors to shutt up his Lodge and expell him the College for what Hee has done.

Balam also mentions, with some irritation, four associates and adversaries of Bentley: Edward Miller, Fellow of Trinity College, who led the initial opposition against Bentley ("You shoud have been quite sure Mr Miller before you dared to say it was a falsity"); Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester and Jacobite fanatic ("soe spruce and dapper in his stile"); Joshua Barnes, historian and orator and an unsuccessful rival translator of the classics ("all your fatt is quickly in the fire, Mr Barnes"); and William Sherlock (1641-1707), English divine and Dean of St. Paul's, who was the inspiration for a large number of satirical poems, one of which was copied by Balam:

*An Epitaph on the Late Dr Sherlock*

Here lyes within this Holy place  
the Lord have mercy on Him  
A Wesill in a wooden Case  
Exempt from Human plagues unless  
You lay his wife<sup>51</sup> upon Him

Some people think if that were done  
The Dead He woud be ready  
To rise before his time and runn  
The Lord knows where in Hopes to Shunn  
That Termagant his Lady

Since Hee is gone tis hard that shee  
Soe long shoud be deserted  
Why Death coudst thou soe cruell be?  
Since all good people doe agree  
Tis pity they were Parted

But when She comes bid her not prate  
but cease hir teasing Nonsense,  
For if the Weasell smell a Ratt  
Heel shun his wife Ile tell you that  
As once Hee did his Conscience.<sup>52</sup>

Bishops have often been the target for satire. One poem which Balam quoted refers to William Laud (1573-1645), Archbishop of Canterbury, who was charged with introducing popish opinions into his High Church doctrine:

Our Canterbury great Cathedral Bell  
 Seldom rings out but makes a fatall Knell  
 Hir loud unpleasant roaring Jarring sound  
 the noise of all our sweet tun'd Bells doth drown'd  
 Shee sung soe loud of late I am in doubt  
 Shee struck good Tom of Lincolns Clapper<sup>53</sup> out  
 It is imported by the men of Kent  
 She sounds such discord Shee gives no content  
 Though she is ponderous and so great the people  
 Woud gladly have hir quite out of the Steeple  
 She makes as hideous noise with hir Bome Bome  
 As did the roaring Bull that came from Rome  
 But seeing that Shee's made of Romish Dress  
 Sheel serve the Catholicks to ring to mass.

Another widely circulated poem may refer to Bishop Bancroft (1544-1610), Archbishop of Canterbury:

A Learned Prelate of the Land  
 Thinking to make Religion stand  
 At equal poise on either side  
 A mixture of them Choose Hee cryed  
 An ounce of Protestant Hee singled  
 And with a Drachm of Papist mingled  
 One scruple of a Puritan  
 All these Hee put into his Brainpan  
 And when Hee thought they woud digest  
 The Scruple troubled all the rest.<sup>54</sup>

Dr Balam was a staunch supporter of the Church of England, although like every Low Churchman he deplored its Romish tendencies:

Why should the fundamentall points of religion which command general Love to God and man be neglected for particular differences on an Enterprise of bringing the whole world into one Regularity and Uniformity?

And he clearly states (*Dob*):

The world supports itself by three things – law, religion and good works.

Three other prose writers come under Balam's scrutiny. One of these is Charles D'Avenant (1656-1714), political economist, whom Balam criticizes for straddling the political fence:

Dr Davenant ... writing for a bribe against his conviction ... not one proposition or principle laid down but a thin harangue of perhaps or peradventure ... He has dully acted that Character (of Tony Doubts) ... He that woud say something but knows not what it must be.

Sir Roger L'Estrange (1616-1704), journalist, "the great oracular Sir Roger", provokes several comments from Balam:

Le Strange who thought himself as great with a goose Quill in his hand as King Charles was with his Scepter ...

\*\*\*

In 1681 Le Strange writ an apology for the Protestants with fair and practicall proposalls for a reunion to the Catholick church ... a medling ambitious Turbulent mixture ... a political sort of Imperious Zealot for the reconciliation of the two churches ... which when united together woud grow into a much stronger Tyranny then it had been.

Balam adds the current squib:

Le Strange his Character of Himself – thou standst condemned by nature to be soe arrant a dredge to an Inke-Pott that thou canst as well forbear Writing as Breathing.

Dr Balam's association with James Drake (1667-1707), Tory pamphleteer and erstwhile physician, originated through their mutual friend Tom Brown the satirist, and the three of them often met with their cronies at Castle Tavern in Fleet Street. This is clarified in a humorous letter that Balam wrote to his cousin Tom Steward in London (1695), which concludes:

...my service to Dr Drake and all other friends in Town that are so kind to remember me in that glorious Claret that I thirst for here amidst a wicked conversation ... when the Spirits of each good Lyer might possibly refine if you woud think fitt to send a pint of it to

W.B.

Although Balam had no high opinion of Drake's literary output ("Hee is noe good writer"), and sometimes made fun at his expense ("Drake shruggs Himself as if Hee was always in an itch of thought and his own witt tickled Him"), nevertheless he was willing to imbibe with him, and evidently found him intellectually stimulating. Balam includes a humorous verse featuring Drake and two notorious quacks, Thomas Saffold (d. 1691) and John Case (fl. 1680-1700):

Tom Saffold expiring that Sovereign Quack  
Bequeathed his possessions to Case and to Drake  
To share them betwixt them the Dr thought fitt  
Soe Case had his Practice and Drake had his Witt  
On each side of Pauls each sett up his Throne

Dispensing their Guifts as their Fathers had done  
 The one made the Philtres the other the Bills  
 The younger made Verses the elder made Pills  
 Till envy and Avarice tempted poor Drake  
 To encroach on his Brother and pose for a Quack  
 But Case who to loose his profession was loath  
 Grew mighty in Witt and excelled Him in both  
 Soe Drake mett the fate which Pretenders deserve  
 To be damd as a Witt as a Dr to starve.

Many other names appear in Dr Balam's commonplace books: there are excerpts from the State Letters of Lord Arlington (1618-1685) regarding revenues from the Sale of Dunkirk; several pages copied from the Marquis of Huntley's speech at the time of his imprisonment in 1640; a long Latin passage eulogizing the Earl of Shaftsbury; a quotation from Bishop Stillingfleet; a reference to Bishop Gunning, "youth's great patron", and Dr Henry Hammond, "a great divine and casuist", and so on. Sometimes his subject cannot be identified, as for example, "Dr Wright - the poor man keeps such a fiddling about a Text which he calls preaching".

Local politics play a large part in Balam's commentary. The reader is projected back three hundred years into the pulsating life of the Ely community, with its petty jealousies and rivalries. Balam introduces several of his associates: Sir Roger Jennings, respected judge and a leader in the community, who lived in an elegant mansion on College Green; his brother, John Jennings, lawyer and High Churchman, and bitter rival of Balam; Samuel Gatward, lawyer and (later) Recorder of Cambridge, rich enough to lend Balam money but too shrewd to continue the loan; Granado Piggott, politician with Jacobite leanings, Member of Parliament in 1702 (unseated in 1705); Judge (Jack) Walsham, "that Chief Bastion of iniquity"; John Wilson, secretary to Bishop Patrick, whom Balam secretly envied.

There is evidence that Balam received encouragement to publish some of his critical comments. One entry reads:

Look you Jerry,<sup>55</sup> you know what the press is ... I can't go to the charges of a Coppy ... such an edition of myself woud undo me - i.e. to marry.

Added to this is an interesting comment of plagiarism:

Another tacks a few things to it and gives it a new dress so the first Author is undone and the Publisher undone ... like a Pompous Frontispiece to a lousy building.

Another passage is enlightening:

I think these extraordinary men that write, but I think Him a much greater man that can write and will not ... everything is difficult because I dare not do it.

Again, in an outburst directed against a current pamphleteer:

I wish he had my Laziness – These bread-getting Calumniators that turn their pens into flails and Lay about them like the Iron Man in Spenser.

The reason for Balam's hesitation is obscure. He was not likely to have been affected with modesty or restraint; he moved in a circle of hack writers where keen competition was to be expected; and if he feared that his image would be impaired, in his various County offices, he had only to look around him and count the multitude of political writers who wore the traditional habit of legal pomp and ceremony. It is true that lawyers were the target for a good deal of ridicule. The irrepressible Tom Brown characterized a lawyer as needing "nothing but a strong pair of Bellows, call'd Lungs, and a Forehead of the Corinthian Order". Another satirist who discountenanced lawyers was the poet John Oldham who wrote in his *Satyr in Imitation of the Third of Juvenal*:

Flippant of Talk, and voluble of Tongue  
With words at will, no Lawyer better hung.

This could have been an apt description of Balam. It is a coincidence that Dryden, in his poem *Absalom and Achitophel*, refers to "the well-hung Balaam". But Balam may not have feared ridicule as much as the danger of exposing himself in print to his political enemies. Another explanation can be found in the veiled reference to his prospective marriage, which presupposes some reserve toward his literary aspirations on the part of his betrothed and her family.

On the other hand, we cannot rule out the possibility that Balam may have published something of his own. There is a vast quantity of anonymous and pseudonymous writing in printed editions, miscellanies and pamphlets that have never been identified; and some of Balam's perpetrations may be concealed in one of these media, or lost in the literary debris of the early eighteenth century.

#### *Personal Relationships*

There is no doubt of Dr William Balam's disaffection for Simon Patrick, Bishop of Ely. The reader of *Dob* can scarcely credit the abundance and vehemence of the diatribes in its pages, castigating this distinguished prelate and culminating in the thrust, "I hate hell the Bishop and his wife Ile swear". Although these vituperations are usually addressed to a nameless "My Lord" or "Bishop", there can be no doubt of their objective, for Balam himself supplies the information:

He has lived thoro a Prebend a Dean and a Lord Bishop – and yet the Sonn of a Hatter is but the Sonn of a Hatter still.

Simon Patrick was Prebend of Westminster, Dean of Peterborough, Bishop of Ely, and the son of a mercer. No other bishop of that period falls into the first three categories except Francis Turner, who was the son of Thomas Turner, Dean of Canterbury.

Bishop Patrick is a celebrated figure in ecclesiastical history. He was an eminent preacher, although not to be compared with Donne and Tillotson, and a prolific writer. More than fifty of his sermons and discourses were published, one of them running into sixteen editions. His interest in philanthropy is well known. One of his famous schemes was to divert the revenues from a stockyard in Wisbech<sup>56</sup> into a fund to provide clothing for the poor. He was dedicated to the charity-school movement initiated by Archbishop Tillotson. Patrick had a keen interest in foreign missions and was a founder of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. His concern for his clergy manifested itself in repeated attempts to provide them with better housing and revenues.

Bishop Patrick was a Latitudinarian and adhered to the doctrine of non-resistance. His acceptance of the Glorious Revolution (1688), and his ready allegiance to William and Mary on their accession to the throne, appeared to be inconsistent with this philosophy, and he was censured, particularly by the Jacobites, who accused him of being an opportunist. Patrick, however, stoutly maintained that tolerance was necessary if the Church was to survive, and he is considered to be one of the chief instruments for revitalizing the Anglican Church in the late seventeenth century.

It is not difficult to imagine a situation in which a bishop and the registrar of his diocese might disagree, and the powerful Bishop of Ely would have been a formidable adversary in any confrontation. However, the early relationship between Balam and Bishop Patrick appears to have been amicable, when Balam was trying to curry favour. His letters contain passages which are respectful and even obsequious: "Your Lordship's great wisdom", and "Whole colonies my Lord are evidence of your Care for the Distressed". He writes of sending "two Potts of Sweet meats" ("marmalet") to Mrs Patrick, and requests permission for "Master Patrick"<sup>57</sup> to accompany him to the Assizes. Politically, Balam was in agreement with the bishop, and it is clear that he voted for Patrick's candidate in the Parliamentary elections, for Balam warns him of "a certain party" who is working against him, and criticizes John Wilson, Patrick's secretary, for "soliciting Votes for Piggott and Jennings" against his own Lordship's interest.

But Balam's letters applying for the office of Head Bailiff of the Isle show a marked difference in tone from his earlier communications, and reveal disappointment and injured pride: "I am sure I have lived soe as nothing can be said ill of mee with truth ..."

I think it noe ambition to aspire to what my family<sup>58</sup> has borne but believe it a great deal of injury to be degraded from it.

Inevitably there is a political implication:

Your using mee thus will extremely gratify the Jacobites ... there is nothing soe terrible to their apprehensions as that I should come into your favor.

No one could accuse Balam of lack of persistence. He pleaded his cause with increasing intensity and mounting displeasure, which eventually resulted in mutual hostility:

["Bishop" in margin] I hate any man that shall make stones of my stories and translate my contrary meanings into his own wretched applications.

But the main reason for Balam's hatred of Bishop Patrick had little to do with administrative office or politics. Balam was in love with Mrs Patrick's niece, and the bishop and his wife would not sanction their marriage.

The bishop's wife, Mrs Simon Patrick, née Penelope Jephson (1646-1725), belonged to the distinguished Jephson family of Ireland.<sup>59</sup> She was the great-granddaughter of Sir Thomas Norreys, Lord President of Munster, and Bridget, daughter of Sir William Kingsmill, and she claimed kinship with several illustrious families of Britain.<sup>60</sup> Apparently, Mrs Patrick was "a Lady of great Piety and Charity"<sup>61</sup> and aided her husband in his philanthropic endeavours. Simon Patrick's devotion to his wife, twelve years his junior, is revealed in his *Autobiography*,<sup>62</sup> which contains many affectionate references to his family, and a highly entertaining account of his courtship of ten years' duration, in which Penelope bravely allowed him to address her as "sister". After eight years of brotherly affection, he was emboldened to present her with a little book he had written for her, entitled *Advice to a Friend*. Two years later they were married.

There is a suggestion throughout Bishop Patrick's *Autobiography* that Mrs Patrick was the dominant personality in the Patrick household. One reason for this may have been the bishop's awareness of the importance of his wife's family: "she was much above me"; "I had not an estate to maintain her suitable to her fortune and breeding"; "my wife's brother, Secretary to the Treasury";<sup>63</sup> and so on. This sentiment is expressed more forcefully by Balam:

Patrick was always bigotted to his wife – very uxorious and submissive to all shee dictated – for shee never askt but commanded everything.

The details of the romance between Balam and Mrs Patrick's niece are meagre, but it is possible to piece together the fabric of a love story from scraps of comments and letters in the manuscripts. Apparently, Balam met this young girl (whose name is not divulged) at the bishop's house. It was love at first sight:

I was not there two days but I could have staid two years for the delight I had in the Conversation.

At first, Balam seemed to be acceptable to the bishop and Mrs Patrick, but later they turned against him and he was summarily dismissed. The reason for this change of heart is not revealed, although one suspects that Balam may have been too precipitate in his advances. A letter, presumably written by Bishop Patrick, asserts that "she loved at first but your very manner of Courtship has taught hir to scorn and deny you".

Balam's reaction to his repudiation by the Patrick family is a masterpiece of angry expostulation:

I used your niece with all possible Honor and respect – and you mee with all possible obloquy scandall and contempt that an enraged malice could heap upon a man – with the most ungentleman unChristian Unbishopleike usage in the

world ... I beseech your Lady to take it into her most Xtian mind to consider whether perverting the Love of one of the most beautiful Creatures in the world and to whom my heart is soe inseparately tyed and that by your first permission, and encouragement, be not the most wicked thing in the world ...

But his pleading and ranting were in vain. The years that followed did nothing to heal the breach, and the relations between Balam and the Patrick family continued to be strained.

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The story of Dr William Balam would not be complete without a brief consideration of the object of his affections, whom he calls "Jephsinda". From the multitude of references to this superlative creature, it is clear that she was constantly in his mind, and his rapturous declarations are those of a man deeply in love. In a lighter moment he is carolling gaily:

From the east to the western Inda  
There's nothing like to my Jephsinda ...

or chanting foolishly:

No witt nor power nor Fame to mee are charms  
I scorn all wreaths but my Jephsinda's arms.

In a more serious mood he writes, "I only love the world for her being in it", or ecstatically cries, "Oh my dear Unison to every heartstring of mee". A few pages are completely filled with paeans of love and devotion.

We are told that Jephsinda is "a sprightly girl about 18 with a breath Violet sweet and wholesome as dying leaves of strawberries, cheeks mingled with such a redd as the blushing morn never wore", that "an Eternity of Joy dances in those Lipps and Eyes", and that "each Shake of her Voice strikes my very Soul with Rapture". But this description, often repeated with variations, is almost all we know about the young woman.

These expressions of ecstasy are all too soon replaced by lamentations:

I am weary to death of what this world calls Life ... in some lonely desert  
unfrequented Joyless place let mee endeavor to forget myself and Hir ...

On the theme "Say, is not absence Death to those who love?" Balam penned these mournful verses:

Jephsinda's dead and Love is now noe more ...  
See where on earth the flowery glories lye  
With her they flourisht and with hir they dye  
All which avail the Beauties nature wore  
Jephsinda's dead and beauty is no more.

the silver Swans hir hapless fate bemoan  
in sadder notes then when they sing their own ...

One might assume that this was the end of the love affair. But Balam did not give up hope. There are several letters addressed directly to Jephson which demonstrate his tenacity. One concerns a malicious rumour, linking his name with hers, which Balam repudiates forcefully, castigating the scandalmonger, and reiterating his abiding love and constancy. Addressing her as "My dearest Couz", he asserts with surprising candour, "I writ to my Couz: Arthur to renew his suit when I found my own lost", adding with wry humour, "It was the Charity of Dives when Himself was damd to save his kindred". There is an expostulation, obviously in response to criticism, "Drink has been often the Cure of my grief and disappointment but never the master of my reason". And there are many extravagant declarations, as for example, "I have never enjoyed one minutes conversation with any one of your sex since I saw you".

Another letter is a clumsy attempt at reconciliation. After pointing out the opportunities he has sacrificed for her sake, and the disappointments she has suffered on his account, Balam suggests that they begin a new life together. Apparently, the response was unsatisfactory, for Balam's last communication to his Jephson is a stiff letter to "one who has used mee soe extremely ill". Yet this unhappy ending could not dim the radiant memory of their romance, and Balam remained faithful to his passionate assertion, "I woud rather choose to dye yours then change my Life to any other hopes".

The identity of Jephson is not definitely established. Nowhere in these pages is her Christian name revealed, but since she was Mrs Patrick's niece, and is addressed as "Mistress Jephson", the search has been considerably narrowed. In the genealogy of the Jephson family,<sup>64</sup> Mrs Patrick appears to have had four brothers, two of whom died without issue, a third had one son only, and the fourth (Anthony Jephson) had two sons, William and Anthony, and three daughters, Frances, Mary, and Catherine. Since Jephson, on Balam's authority, had two brothers, William and Anthony, and several sisters, she can probably be identified as either Frances, Mary, or Catherine Jephson. Of the three, Mary is the most likely, as the genealogy has no record of her marriage,<sup>65</sup> while Frances married once and Catherine twice. This conclusion cannot be considered positive proof, however, and Jephson must remain a nameless image of youth and beauty.

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The history of the Steward Case reads like a modern thriller. From scattered notes and letters in Dr William Balam's manuscripts, it is possible to re-weave a tale that combines fraud, intrigue, and seduction. In 1642 Thomas Steward, of Stuntney, married Mary Balam, William Balam's aunt, of Elm, thereby uniting two prominent families in the Isle of Ely. Thomas Steward traced his lineage to an ancient family of Scotland, whose descendants were wealthy landowners and held positions of

importance in the community. In the seventeenth century they were lessees of the tithes of Holy Trinity and St. Mary's parishes in Ely. Apparently, Thomas Steward was a captain in the Parliamentary Army under his cousin Oliver Cromwell. In 1660 he was appointed Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely and held this post for several years.

Captain Steward and his wife lived at Stuntney Manor. Several of their many children died in infancy, but in 1665 at least three sons and one daughter were living. It was in that year that misfortune overtook the Steward family.

On 10 April a new dairy maid arrived at the manor. Her name was Elizabeth Smith, and her wages were two pounds five shillings per annum. Without delay the ambitious dairy maid set out to exercise her charms on her employer. Balam writes darkly:

that Day dated the ruine of His family for Shee made no scruple to serve Him in all hir bodily Capacities the first Minute Shee came to Him.

She extracted large sums of money from the amorous master of Stuntney, and carried out with dispatch her well-laid plans to be rid of his wife and sons. In 1666 the Captain disowned his eldest son; in 1668, his wife, Mary, died "under the sorrowful impressions of hir husband's ill conduct with hir maid"; in 1669 a second son (Thomas) was rejected; and in 1670 a third son (Charles) died from "ill usage and grief".

In 1675 Elizabeth Smith "pretended an intermarriage" with Captain Steward, and in the next year gave birth to a son, Charles. Meanwhile, the new mistress of Stuntney had astutely destroyed the Captain's will. Little mention is made of Thomas Steward during the ensuing years. Whether he became disillusioned with his amour and suffered remorse is not recorded. A portion of a letter criticizing Captain Steward for "being absent from the Session in favour of Mrs Smeggergills who now keeps the Dolphin Inn" [Ely Market Place]<sup>66</sup> suggests that he may have drowned his sorrows in drink. Certainly matters were not going well for the captain, for in 1692 he was arrested and imprisoned due to a "Fob-action" by his second wife and her friends, who subsequently extorted from him a Deed of Settlement. According to the records, Captain Steward (d. 1696) rewrote his will<sup>67</sup> in favour of Elizabeth and her son Charles, but he shrewdly included a proviso leaving the property to his son Thomas (by his first marriage) in the event of Charles's death without male issue. In 1701 Charles Steward died without male heirs, and his property passed to his half-brother Thomas Steward, then living in London.

William Balam was fond of his cousin Tom. The two boys had played together as children and attended St. John's College at about the same time.<sup>68</sup> After Tom's "merciless ill-usage" and repudiation by his father, he and William met frequently in London. No doubt there was mutual rejoicing at Tom's good fortune in retrieving the ancestral homestead. But the celebration was short-lived. Four years later Tom Steward was dead.<sup>69</sup> In his will he had named William Balam executor and legal guardian of his two children.

Balam viewed this responsibility with mixed feelings. He would need courage to undertake the commission, for the Steward property was heavily mortgaged, and ready money must be found to save it from creditors. On the other hand, family pride

was strong. He hated to see this "elder branch of the family ... cut off from the vital sap of the estates that should nourish it", and he felt compassion for the two orphans committed to his care. Although not obligated "to sacrifice a penny of myne to second Cousins when I have nephews of my own", Balam decided to assume this financial burden.

His first responsibility was to care for the children. The boy, Tom, was apprenticed for his education, near Ely, and the girl was sent to a distant relative, "Madam Stewart", in Lynn. The relationship between Balam and the Stewart children provides one of the few light touches in an otherwise sombre story. Balam's attitude toward them is one of parental pride and affection. He writes, "The Boy is my Charge now and never to be neglected"; and in a letter to "My Dear Child" (the little girl), he exhorts her to "study to please the good Lady you are with ... and make yourself one of the best Women in the world".

Balam's next move was to appeal to the children's relatives for financial assistance. In a letter to Sir Nicholas Stuart, advising him of their predicament, he writes:

Not one farthing is left for his [Tom's] only son of great hopes Courage and Ingenuity of Spirit ... this soe hopefull a branch of your Hon<sup>ble</sup> family must wither without your Cultivating help.

But there was little response to Balam's pleas, and he was left to face an almost hopeless situation. Through months of litigation he fought against creditors, family opposition, and machinations of unscrupulous lawyers until he was on the verge of bankruptcy. To add to his troubles, Madame Stewart was demanding more subsidy for her youthful charge in Lynn and, even more disturbing, young Tom was growing restive and threatened to leave school.

Finally, in desperation, Balam confronted Elizabeth Stewart. The widow of old Captain Stewart, his erstwhile dairy maid, had been of no help during the months of Balam's monetary torments. Indeed, she had taken every opportunity to thwart and debase him ("this woman is Cunning as the Devil"). Balam stated his case succinctly: he had paid her promptly, under the terms of the will; he was not responsible for unpaid interest on the estate dating back to 1697; already three writs of ejection had been served by Sir Roger Jennings; the orphans were penniless and their predicament was scandalous. Balam may have added a veiled threat to expose her shortcomings to the clergy, toward whom she had some apprehension. His eloquence prevailed, and Elizabeth Stewart promised to pay the delinquent interest.

This brief respite encouraged Balam to carry out a cherished plan to send young Tom to sea in the service of the Crown. Under the auspices of Edward Russell, Earl of Orford,<sup>70</sup> he was able to secure an Order from the Queen, permitting Tom to volunteer for service on the *H.M.S. Salisbury Prize* (July 1, 1708). Realizing the importance of the occasion, Balam made elaborate plans to equip his cousin ("I will doe my utmost to sett him out genteely") and deliver him punctually to the ship ("I myself will take Coach with Him to Portsmouth"). Hasty preparations were made for Tom's departure. Letters were dispatched in all directions: to Mr Holmes (a tenant) asking

for the rent (20 pounds) to buy "cloaths and necessaries"; to Samuel Newby (Balam's clerk) telling him to collect the money from Mr Holmes in person and take no chances; to Mr Bentham, Tom's Master,<sup>71</sup> asking him to send Tom home with all haste; to Captain Harland, requesting notification of the hour of embarkation, in which Balam took the opportunity to add a glowing recommendation of his young cousin, including a reference to his ancestry: "The gentleman is well born being of Collaterall Line to hir now Majesty".<sup>72</sup> Balam's efforts were successful and he had the satisfaction of seeing Tom Steward a full-fledged seaman.<sup>73</sup>

But Balam's troubles were not over. It had cost him 60 pounds to send young Tom to sea, and his funds were running low again. During the following months Balam lived dangerously. His commonplace books contain copies of frantic letters to creditors, lawyers, and tax collectors. Some of these are belligerent, some obsequious, and almost all repeat the same refrain (with variations), "poor supportless Orphans". Very soon, Balam had used up his credit with Ely associates, and his enemies took advantage of the situation to plot his ruin. The blow fell in December 1710 when Dr William Balam was arrested for default.

Inevitably, the process of law was tied in with political rivalry and intrigue. This is clearly indicated in Balam's correspondence with John Jennings, Ely lawyer. The original mortgager, Sir Roger Jennings, had assigned the legal business to his brother John, assuring Balam that the latter would be a "mild, gentle Creditor". But John Jennings was an ardent Tory, and took no pains to disguise his antagonism to Balam. Moreover, John Jennings was running for Parliament, and may have suspected that Balam was plotting against him. At the first opportunity he sued Balam for 60 pounds and, without the courtesy of a letter, sent the bailiff to make his demands.

The effect on Balam was profound. This peppery lawyer was enraged at having received no warning, and humiliated at having been duped. It was "a meer trick", and "scandalously barbarous"; "all the world cries shame on you".

Balam did not go to jail. It was "either Jayl or Security for the Debt", and apparently Balam's friends rallied to his aid. In 1711 he was again writing to creditors. One of these letters is of special interest in that it contains a personal tribute to Dr Humphrey Gower (1638-1711), Master of St John's College, Cambridge. The correspondence is between Balam, who had borrowed money from Dr Gower, and Stanley West, Dr Gower's nephew, who is trying to extract from Balam the interest left unpaid before his uncle's death. Mr West intimates that his uncle had been impatient also; Balam counters that he was "Dr Gower's Friend":

Dr Gower was a man soe irreversibly constant in his Friendships that I never knew him to alter the first choice Hee had made ... I dined with your uncle but the year before Hee dyed at Thriploe and never found myself more welcome. I begunn that fatal year with Him upon New Years Day at St. Johns where I told Him that Mr Jennins our new Mobb-Representative had perfidiously arrested mee which disabled mee from the return of his money to Him. Dr says Hee, one of the faulcon Clubb as you are, can't expect less from them ... keep out of their

reach. You shall always find mee as I have been ... your true friend.

Both Balam and West were members of the politically motivated Falcon Club,<sup>74</sup> but they disagreed on religion. Stanley West was "one of those Presbyterians", and Balam rudely refers to his "Presbyterian Covetousness". This relates to an incident at Dr Gower's funeral, when Balam, who had arrived "to pay my last Duty to those Solemnities" (and, incidentally, to pay his debt to Stanley West), was told that he would not be welcome, since the congregation was limited to Presbyterians. In high dudgeon, Balam returned to Ely ("I carried myself and my money in a great warmth of resentment back again"). Perhaps Mr West might have relented had he known that Balam carried in his pocket 10 pounds earmarked for overdue interest.

Inevitably a question arises concerning Balam's integrity in his business dealings. He appears to have been a sharp businessman, in spite of being outwitted by John Jennings. In his manoeuvres with loans and interest, and his dealings with courts, creditors, lawyers, and tenants during those frustrating years, it might have been a temptation to stretch a point of ethics. But the manuscripts give no proof of underhanded dealings. A significant piece of evidence in his favour comes from Bishop Fleetwood, who nominated Balam for Justice of the Peace for the Isle of Ely. Bishop Fleetwood maintained that he would never appoint a man of whose character he disapproved.<sup>75</sup>

Less can be said for John Jennings. A personal item in a manuscript of William Cole, noted Cambridge antiquary, reads:

Mr Jennyns who wronged my father of 600 pounds finally went bankrupt and lives on 300 pounds allowed him by his creditors.<sup>76</sup>

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It would be futile to attempt a full characterization of this Ely lawyer of three hundred years ago on the basis of his scribblings in a few commonplace books. Yet there are some distinguishing qualities that recur frequently in his writing and help provide a partial analysis of his personality. He appears to have been opinionated, often intolerant, and sometimes abusive; self-righteous and inclined to moralize; proud and ambitious; intelligent and knowledgeable; kind and conscientious. Much of his writing is in a humorous vein and shows a keen imagination. He possessed the indispensable quality of being able to laugh at himself, and sometimes wrote in the third person ("Dr Balam always sparkles ... in his wit"). One of these amusing passages, apparently written toward the end of his life, contains the only direct reference to his person, when he admits "a wadling heavy gate like a toad", and, borrowing a phrase from Shakespeare, characterizes himself as "Old Dr Balam - time-honord Register - all tempestuous in his rage - Deaf as the Sea and hasty as fire itself".<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps Dr Balam's general philosophy can best be summed up in his own words, evidently addressed with some emotion to a client at the conclusion of an unsuccessful

lawsuit. In a margin of *Dob* he wrote, "If I have not done what I woud, I have fairly wisht to do what I ought". We may assume that this was William Balam's credo.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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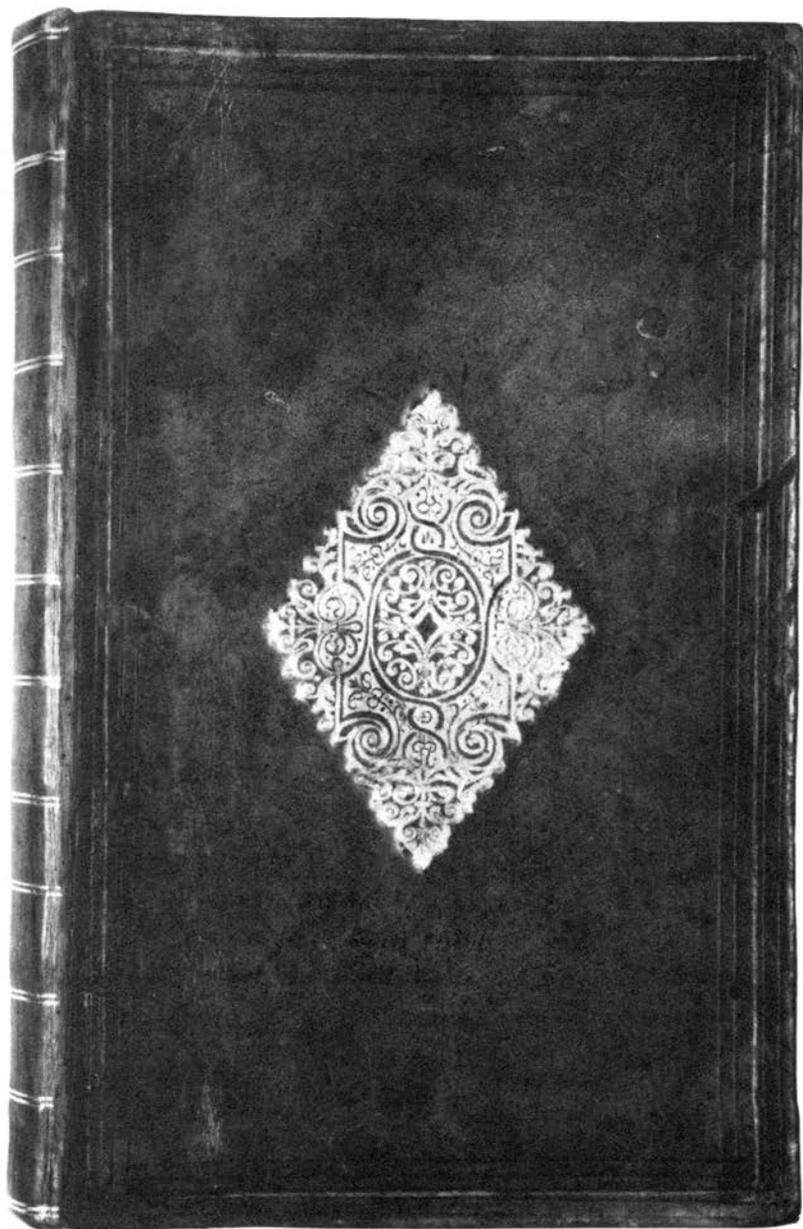
I am deeply indebted to the Librarians and Staff of the Harvard College Library; to the Radcliffe Institute, under whose auspices this project was developed; to the American Philosophical Society, whose support of a grant enabled me to continue my research in England; and to the late Evelyn Simpson of Oxford for her interest and encouragement. My greatest debt is to my husband, George R. Potter, whose discovery of this material provided the incentive for more extensive research.

### NOTES

1. Identification was made by Professor George R. Potter, University of California, Berkeley.
2. *C.C. 95,577* (Cambridge University Library), p. 179.
3. *Diary of Celia Fiennes* (1888), p. 128.
4. Francis Blomefield, *History of Norfolk* (Lynn, 1739-1775), "Balam bore sable, on a fess, between three stars, argent, as many pellets".
5. It is significant that in a map of Marshland drawn by Sir William Dugdale in the seventeenth century, two of the five houses depicted in a welter of bridges, churches, dikes and windmills have the appellation, "Mr Balam's". (Wisbech Museum.)
6. Claude and Lois Scanlon and Sydney Warner, *The King's England: Lincolnshire*, p. 415. "The fine old church at Whaplode contains the splendid canopied monument of Sir Anthony Irby, shown in armour and baggy breeches with his wife by his side in long flowing gown; by the tomb kneel three boys and two girls in rich lace collars".
7. Charles, Robert, John, Alexander, William, Anthony, Anne, Mary. See *Harl. MS. 6830*, fol. 51 (British Library). Six sons received a good education, married well, and became leaders in civic and ecclesiastical affairs: alderman, bailiff, clerk, justice of the peace, proctor, royal commissioner, sheriff. A more detailed genealogy of this branch of the Balam family has been placed on file at the Headquarters of the Society of Genealogists, Harrington Gardens, London.
8. *History of the Goodricke Family*, ed. Charles Alfred Goodricke (privately printed by Hazel Watson and Viney Ltd., London, 1885).
9. Richard Blome, *Britannia* (London, 1673).
10. An interesting description of the activities of this organization is given by Mr R. Holmes of Ely in *Fenland Bulletin*, no. 1 (1967), pp. 11-14, under the title "A 17th Century Health Service".
11. *Journals of the House of Commons*, Vol. 8, p. 315.
12. See Harold Archer, "Ancient Ely Byeways", *Cambridgeshire Times*, March 17, 1922, for an amusing tale of Newbarns Drove way, over which there arose a controversy regarding the trespassing of cattle.

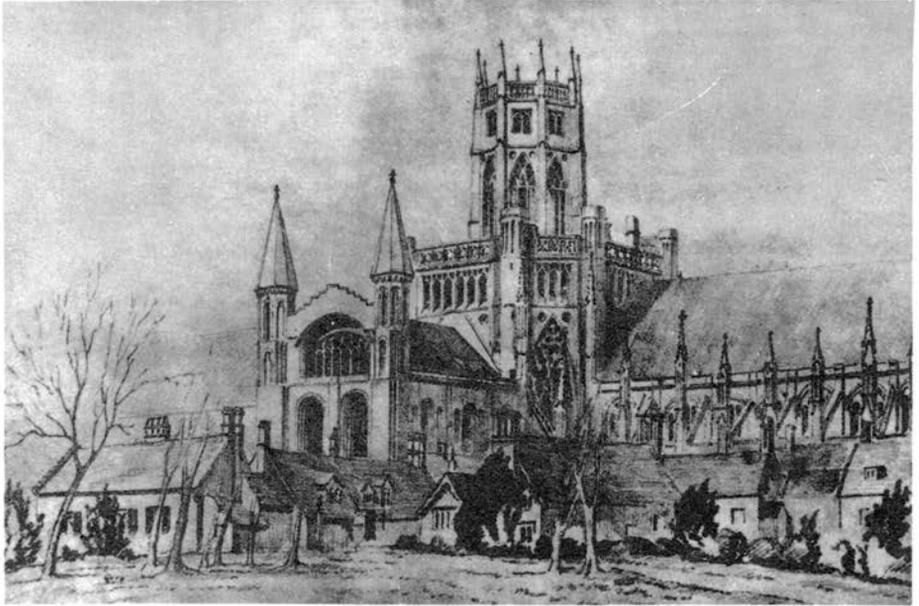
13. This information was supplied by the late Colonel Goodwin Archer of Ely. Evidence for the location of this property was discovered by Mr R. Holmes in a map of West Fenland (1857), which depicts a road "from Cuckold's Haven to Balam's Pieces".
14. William Balam's tutor ("Mr Saywell") was probably William Saywell, Fellow of St. John's College (1666-), author of "The Reformation of the Church of England Justified" (Cambridge, 1688) and other controversial tracts.
15. These documents are preserved in the County Record Office, Shire Hall, Cambridge.
16. Many of these transactions under such suggestive titles as Grunty Fenn, Broken Helmet, Eau Brink, and Swine Coate Dole, are recorded in the Woodgate Papers (Wisbech Museum).
17. *C. C. 95,577*.
18. *Comitia regia*: certain gatherings of the Senate of the University at which royal personages were present and degrees were specially conferred. *N. E. D.*
19. *Rawl. Letters 93*, fol. 278 (Bodleian Library). In this letter Balam manifests family pride, embarrassment at being "a rejected tenant" of Downham Manor, and dismay at the "prophanation of the chapel" ("milk-bowls where the altar stood").
20. *MSS. Rawl Letters 93*, fol. 311 (Bodleian Library).
21. *Chancery Records*, 193/12/5.
22. Son of Bishop Wren; Member of Parliament for Cambridge, 1685-1687; Head Bailiff for the Isle of Ely, 1661-1689.
23. *Add. MS. 5779*, fols. 279v-280 (William Balam to Stanley West, 1711).
24. Anthony Balam, his cousin.
25. Beaufort Hall.
26. Thomas Edwards of Wisbech, Head Bailiff, 1689-1698.
27. *Dean and Chapter Records*, 2/6/3. The appointments probably were sinecures and entailed little more than the drawing of salaries attached to them.
28. *Crown Office Warrants*, Index 4215.
29. Balam's "Circulatory Letter for a Parliament Man" follows the usual pattern. See *Add. MS. 5779*, fol. 183.
30. *Bishop Fleetwood's Diary*, January 7, 1714 (Cambridge University Library).
31. Cambridge University Archives, V.C. Court Wills IV. f. 599.
32. *MSS. Rawl. Letters 93*, fol. 311.
33. An exchange of letters between William Balam and Tom Brown occurs on pages 530 of *Dob*. See author's note in *Notes and Queries*, October 1973, p. 593.
34. One exception is a parody of 50 lines, apparently a refutation of atheism, which begins: "What is Religion a thing known or not/Fathered by whom and how was it begott?"
35. Mabel Potter, "A Seventeenth-Century Literary Critic of John Donne: The Dobell Manuscript Re-examined", *Harvard Library Bulletin*, January 1975, pp. 63-89.
36. This may have been the Bull and Mouth Inn, St. Martin's le-Grand, "established as an Inn (1630) in premises erected ... on the site of Northumberland House" (Bryant Lillywhite).
37. This poem (*Elegie 13* in *C57*), censored for many years, was not included in a printed collection of Donne's poetry until 1669.
38. Printed in *Poems written by William, Earl of Pembroke* (London, 1660).
39. Sir Francis Bacon, *A Naturall History* (London, 1658), "His Ld<sup>ps</sup>. Usual Receipt for the Gout".
40. These letters deal with the lawsuit involving the Hatton family's hold on Ely House, London.
41. Speech delivered to both Houses of Parliament, December 31, 1701.
42. *Life and Works of Arthur Maynwaring*, ed. J. Oldmixon (London, 1715).
43. *Ode to the Queen* (London, 1706), p. 9.
44. *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (London, 1690).
45. *A Brief View of Mr Hobbes's Book ... Leviathan* (Oxford, 1676).
46. A reference to Hobbes' translation of Thucydides.
47. Dr Berkeley became Bishop of Cloyne in 1734.
48. *Sloane Add. MS. 5852* (British Library), pp. 56-57.
49. The ruling body of Cambridge University.
50. Dr Gooch was challenged by Balam's nephew, William Towers, Fellow of Christ's College, who in an address to the Senate publicly criticized the Heads for this degradation. See William Cole, *Add. MS. 5821* (British Library).

51. Dr Sherlock's wife is believed to have persuaded him to take the Oath of Allegiance to William and Mary.
52. Thomas Brown, *Works*, IV, 346.
53. Thomas Winniffe (1576-1654), Bishop of Lincoln, who had Puritan leanings.
54. This poem is found in several Bodleian Library and British Library manuscripts (in *Harl. MS. 4955* the caption is "Dr Andrews"). See *First Line Index of English Poetry 1500-1800 in Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library*, ed. Margaret Crum (Oxford, 1969).
55. Probably Jeremy Collier (1650-1726), political pamphleteer, who specialized in attacking contemporary writers.
56. Butchers Shambles in the Market. A document reappraising this stockyard "at the yearly rend of 6<sup>d</sup> and a quarter of a pound of pepper which ... is worth 13.13.4" and signed by William Balam, Notary Public, occurs in *C.C. 95,577*.
57. Symon Patrick (b. 1680), eldest son of Bishop Patrick.
58. Alexander Balam held this office in the sixteenth century.
59. Mallow Castle, County Cork has been the seat of this family for more than 350 years.
60. Mrs Patrick was connected with the Derby, de Vere, Russell, and Sackville families.
61. *The Political State*, LVI, 91. Mrs Patrick's "frequent and liberall benefactions" are cited in the inscription on her tomb in Ely Cathedral.
62. *The Autobiography of Simon Patrick, Bishop of Ely*, ed. J. H. Parker (Oxford, 1839), pp. 70-79.
63. John Jephson, secretary to William III.
64. M. D. Jephson, *An Anglo-Irish Miscellany* (Dublin, 1964), p. 72.
65. A note in *Fenland Notes and Queries*, II, 43, "Arthur Stewart who married Mary Jephson" appears to contradict this.
66. *Rawl. MSS. Letters 94* (Letter to William Balam from Robert Mingay, 1686).
67. Ely Consistory Wills (C 35:79).
68. Thomas Steward was admitted to St. John's College in 1668, aged seventeen.
69. June 14, 1705.
70. First Lord of the Admiralty.
71. The Reverend Samuel Bentham, Vicar of Witchford.
72. See *Genealogist*, New Series (1885), II, 34-42, "The Steward Genealogy and Cromwell's Royal Descent" for discussion of the relationship of the Steward family to the Royal House of Stuart.
73. In the Pay-books of the *H.M.S. Salisbury Prize* (1710-1714) occurs the item: "Wages owed Thos. Stewart Jan. 30, 1710 - £18.1<sup>s</sup>.9<sup>d</sup>". Later Tom Stewart returned to civilian life. He died in 1744, and was buried in Ely Cathedral near his father and grandfather.
74. This group of political activists may have held their meetings at the Falcon Inn in Cambridge. See Charles G. Harper, *The Cambridge, Ely, and King's Lynn Road* (London, 1902), p. 168: "...the remains of the galleried, tumble-down Falcon stand in a court off Petty Cury - the inn in whose yard Cambridge students entertained Queen Elizabeth with a blasphemous stage travesty of the Mass".
75. *Bishop Fleetwood's Diary*.
76. *Add. MS. 5809*, p. 97 (British Library).
77. *King Richard II*, Act I, Scene 1, line 19: "In rage deaf as the Sea, hasty as fire".



Pl. 1. Manuscript collection of the works of John Donne  
(C.U.L. Add. MS. 5778 (C57))  
The seventeenth-century binding  
*Reproduced with the permission of the Syndics of the  
Cambridge University Library.*





Pl. 3. *a.* Ely cathedral and Close.  
Pencil sketch by Henry Baines, 1847.



*b.* Stuntney Hall.  
Pen and ink drawing by unknown artist, early 19th. century.

*Both drawings reproduced by permission of  
Miss H. M. Thompson, of Ely.*

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

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