Swallowfield and its Owners.

By Lady Russell.

(Continued from page 185, Vol. II.)

1691. The bearers of the treasonable letters were apprehended soon after starting and committed to the Tower, on January 2nd, 1691. Queen Mary then issued a proclamation for discovering the other conspirators. The Bishop of Ely, Grahame and Penn absconded. The latter only escaped owing to the fact that he was attending the funeral of George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, when the warrant was issued. Mr. Elliott was released, Lord Preston and Ashton condemned to death, but Lord Preston was spared to give evidence and his revelations implicated Lord Clarendon who was sent to the Tower and kept there for upwards of 6 months. Evelyn writes that he went to see Lord Clarendon the next day, and he also mentions dining twice with him in the Tower. The Queen was earnestly solicited on behalf of her uncle by his brother, Lord Rochester and by his great friend and relation, Lady Ranelagh,* for some relaxation in the severity of his treatment in the Tower, his health suffering much under the depression of solitary confinement. Lord Rochester also pleaded for Burnet's influence against the attainder of his brother. When Lord Clarendon was liberated he was still a prisoner within the limits of his country house. Evelyn writes on the 11th July: "I went to visit Lord Clarendon in the Tower but he was gone into the country for air by the Queen's permission, under the care of his warder," but before long the warder was removed and Lord Clarendon was informed that while he led a quiet rural life he should not be molested.

1692. In March, 1692, Lord Clarendon brought an action for libel against Mr. Anthony à Wood, the author, the libel being the statement that Lord Clarendon had "altered and caused to be altered in Athennæ Oxonienses many lines, sentences and words relating to the character of Edward late Earl of Clarendon without

* Katharine, Dowager Lady Ranelagh, daughter of Richard, 1st Earl of Cork.

the knowledge or consent of Mr. Wood." The passages which Lord Clarendon was alleged to have altered imputed corruption to his father. The University pronounced the following sentence against Wood, "that he should be banished and deprived of all privileges belonging to a member of the University until he should make a proper recantation, that the book should be burnt; and that he should pay the costs of the suit which amounted to £34. Wood himself mentions in his memoirs, "On Monday, 31st July, about ten of the clock in the morning, Skinner, the apparitor, made a fire of two faggots in the Theatre Yard, and burnt the 2nd volume of Athen. Oxon." Some months later Wood writes "Thomas Wood says the Earl of Clarendon and his party will turn my Lord's fees into a medal, in token of the victory, to be put into the Museum," but in reality we find that Lord Clarendon laid out the money of the fine upon the two statues of King Charles I. and Charles II. "standing in the niches on each side of the rustic-work gate leading into the University Physick Garden."†

1694. On May 22nd, 1694, Pepys writes to Evelyn "My Lord Clarendon asked me the other day with great respect after you, and your work upon ye Medailles, intimating (methought) his having something therein to pleasure you with. If you have any errand to be delivered to him, on that or any other subject, pray let me be your messenger."

Lord Clarendon who was always a most extravagant man, was now in great pecuniary difficulties, and we hear of executions at Cornbury, and sales of pictures and books taking place this summer. It was probably about this time that he sold Cornbury to his brother Lord Rochester. The purchase, however, remained a secret till Lord Clarendon's death. In his Will, Lord Rochester speaks of the purchase he had lately made from his "dear brother the Earl of Clarendon, of the Manor of Witney, as likewise of the house and park of Cornbury, &c., which," he adds "his circumstances indispensably obliged him to part with."

1695. In 1695, Sir William Trumbull, of Easthampstead, consulted Lord Clarendon as to the advisability of his standing for the representation of Reading or the County. The following is Lord Clarendon's answer :—

† The Botanic, or Physic Garden was originally the Cemetery of the Jews, who were once very numerous in Oxford. In 1622 the lease of it was purchased by Henry Danvers, Earl of Danby. The Gateway was designed by Imigo Jones and executed by Nicholas Stone.

Cornbury, 7ber 18th, 1695.

Sr. My neighbours of Reading, I mean the Major and his Brethern are soe very sensible of their obligations to you, in the great favour you show'd them in their business this summer at the Councell board; yt to expresse their gratitude, they will be ready to use their utmost interest for choosing you one of their Burgessess, if there should be a new Parliament, wch is soe generally talked of in the Countreys, that many People doe believe it will be soe; and I thought it fitt to give you this notice (if you please to accept of it) yt (that) I believe you may be chosen for that Towne, without much difficulty, especially if Mr. John Blagrave will be for you, wch I doubte not he will bé, and if I know your mind, I will engage him:—I doubte not you may be chosen in many places, but perhaps you had rather be in your own Countrey; and if you please, I have some reason to believe, that you may be chosen one of the Knts of the Shire for Berks; if you will joyne with Sr. Humphrey Forster, you will have all the Church Interest for you, wch I take to be the best, and I am sure you would not divide them: I would not write soe confidently, but yt (that) I have lately had a very good opportunity of knowing the minds of some of the most considerable men, who have the best interest in Berks: I know, Sr., it is not for me to be inquisitive whether there will be a new Parlnt or not, and lesse fitt for one in my circumstances, to concerne himselfe in Elections, nor shall I for any in England, but when I have soe fair an opportunity of shewing a respect to you, wch I will always endeavour, I thought it became me to offer you my service; you may comand me what you please herein,—either for the County of Berks, or Town of Reading. I am with great esteeme, Sr.,

Your most affectionate and most humble Servant,

CLARENDON.

A Lrè (letter) directed to me to be left at the Posthouse at Woodstock will come safe to me.

1695. In October, 1695, Anthony Wood writes "I was with the Earl of Clarendon at Dr. Turner's lodgings, and there I began to rip up all the matter, how unworthily he had dealt with me against all law . . . I told him he had gotten from me more money than I should get again in five or six years, for I earned but 2d. per diem. I told him I am restored from my banishment by virtue of the late Act of Parliament, he said not, but I was excepted. I told him all matter of libels was excepted. He said not, but talked after a rambling way."

1699. On Dec. 7th, 1699, Pepys writes from London to his nephew Jackson as follows, "This comes directed to Rome as the certain place that some time it will find you at . . . There is a little matter mightily desired by Lord Clarendon, who is you know, a great saladist: it is (to use his own phrase) that you would dust your letters to me with Roman Lettice-seed, it being what Mr. Locke used to do for him."

1700. On July 1st, 1700, Lord Clarendon writes to Mr. Pepys as follows: "Sir, yours of the 24th past was doubly welcome, in

bringing me the good news of the improvements of your health, which I am as much concerned in, and wish as well to, as any friend you have. You had not been thus long without my letters, but I thought they might be troublesome, not being able to fill them with anything diverting. Now my law affairs are a little over for the present, I intend very speedily to make you a visit. I am extremely obliged to your nephew for remembering so small an affair as the lettice seeds, of which my wife is very proud. As to your enquiry concerning the second sight, and of what happened to me in reference to my first wife upon that occasion, I will tell the story to yourself when I see you, and in the meantime to Dr. Smith,‡ and if either of you think it worth notice, I will put it into writing as exactly as I can."

Pepys evidently did think the story of second sight worth notice, as we find Lord Clarendon writing the following to him in May, 1701 : "Sir, I cannot give you a greater instance of my willingness to gratify your curiosity in anything within my knowledge, than the sending you this foolish letter. The story I told you the other day relating to what they call in Scotland the second sight, is of soe old a date, and soe many of the circumstances out of my memory, that I must begin as old women doe their tales to children, 'Once upon a time.' The matter was thus :—One day, I know by some remarkable circumstances it was towards the middle of February, 1661-2, the old Earl of Newborough came to dine with my father at Worcester House, and another Scotch gentleman with him, whose name I cannot call to mind. After dinner, as we were standing and talking together in the room, says my Lord Newborough to the other Scotch gentleman (who was looking very stedfastly upon my wife), 'What is the matter, that thou hast had thine eyes fixed upon my Lady Cornbury ever since she came into the room? Is she not a fine woman? Why dost thou not speak?' 'She 's a handsome lady, indeed,' said the gentleman, 'but I see her in blood.' Whereupon my Lord Newborough laughed at him; and all the company going out of the room, we parted: and I believe none of us thought more of the matter; I am sure I did not. My wife was at that time perfectly well in health, and looked as well as ever she did in her life. In the beginning of the next month she fell ill of the small pox: she was always very apprehensive of that disease, and used to say, if she ever had it she should dye of it.

‡ Dr. Thomas Smith, a learned writer and divine, died 1710.

Upon the ninth day after the small pox appeared, in the morning she bled at the nose, which quickly stop't; but in the afternoon the blood burst out again with great violence at her nose and mouth, and about eleven of the clock that night she dyed, almost weltering in her blood. This is the best account I can now give of this matter, which, tho' I regarded not at the time the words were spoken, yet upon reflection afterwards, I could not but think it odd, if not wonderful, that a man only looking upon a woman, whom he had never seen before, should give such a prognostick. The great grief I was then in, and going quickly after out of towne, prevented my being so inquisitive as I should have been after the person of this Scotch gentleman, and into other things . . . . . Sir your most affectionate and humble Servant, CLARENDON."

Ten months before Lord Clarendon wrote this letter, he lost his second wife. Flower, Lady Clarendon died on the 17th July, 1700, aged 59. She was buried in the crypt under the Russell transept in Swallowfield Church, on July 22nd, as we find in the Register where there is also an entry showing that the fine had to be paid as the penalty for not having buried her in woollen.*

There is no monument to Lady Clarendon's memory visible in the Church, but the following inscription is over her remains in the vault: "Depositum Prænobilis Dominæ Floræ Comitissæ de Clarendon uxoris Henrici Comitis de Clarendon Filii natu maximi Edwardi Comitis Clarendonii non ite pridem summi angliæ Cancellarii quæ obiit 17 die Julii an. dom. 1700 œtatis 59."

With Lady Clarendon's death terminated the line of the Back-houses, owners of Swallowfield, who had possessed it for 118 years.

1701. In December, 1701, we find Lord Clarendon living in Jermyn Street, and Evelyn writing from Dover Street to Pepys says "I have hardly seen any of our neighbours here save C. Hatton, Lord Clarendon and Sir R. Dutton."

1702. In August, 1702, Pepys writes from Clapham to Lord Clarendon the following letter:

"My Noble Lord,—I am still forced, much against my will, to make use of my man's legs on all errands, and particularly on this to your Lordship, to know where you are this uneasy season, and inquire after your health. My Lord, I am

* An Act was passed in the reign of Charles I. that no one under a penalty of £5 should be buried in any shift, shirt or shroud made of flax, hemp, silk or any other material but sheep's wool, and the Keeper of the Parish Register had to record the affidavit of a kinsman of the dead that the body was buried in a woollen fabric or the fine had to be paid.

but this morning come from the third reading of your noble Father, my Lord Chancellor Clarendon's History, with the same appetite, I assure you, to a fourth, that ever I had to the first; it being most plain that that great story neither had, nor could ever have been told as it ought to be, but by the hand and spirit that has now done it, or I hope soon will; and that your Lordship, and my honoured Lord your brother, will not suffer the press to slacken in the dispatch of the remainder and therewith in the eternizing the honour of your name and family, the delivering your country from the otherwise endless consequences of that its depraved loyalty, which nothing but this can cure; and your putting together such a lecture of government for an English Prince, as you may yet live to be thanked, and to thank God, for.

Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

S. P."

On the accession of Queen Anne on March 8th, 1702, Lord Clarendon was one of the crowd of friends or relations that attended at St. James's Palace that same Sunday morning. He asked the Lord-in-Waiting for "Admittance to his neice." The Queen sent him word that "if he would go and qualify himself to enter her presence she would be very glad to see him," meaning that if he chose to take the oath of allegiance to her as his legitimate sovereign, she was willing to admit him. "No," he replied, "I come to talk to my neice, I shall take no other oath than I have taken already." The Queen refused to see him unless he took the oath, and observes Roger Coke, "that wretched man remained non-juror to the day of his death."

1703. This year Lord Clarendon was one of the supporters at the funeral of Samuel Pepys which took place at Crutched Friars Church. He received one of the mourning rings given on this occasion. We find they were supplied by Sir R. Hoare, the goldsmith, and were respectively of the value of 20s., 15s., 10s.

1704. In December, 1704, Lord Clarendon presented Evelyn with the three volumes of his father's History of the Rebellion.

1706. In February, 1706, he lost this old and valued friend, for Evelyn died on the 9th of the month in his 86th year, and in August of the same year Lord Clarendon's daughter-in-law Katherine, Lady Cornbury, died at New York.

1707. In 1707, Governor Pitt, who, a few years later, became the owner of Swallowfield, commissioned his son, Robert, to buy him estates in several counties and the latter recommended Clarendon Park and the Manor of Christchurch as "the most desirable property now for sale," and writes to his father who was still in India as follows: "The income from both is about £1,750, and they may be purchased for £34,000. The property is mortgaged

to the estimated value for 3 years to Lady Bathurst, and will be sold unless redeemed by Lord Clarendon, and whoever gives him £1,000 more may have it. The proprietor controls the elections for the borough of Christchurch." Thomas Pitt did not however buy Clarendon and Peter Bathurst, brother of the first Earl Bathurst became its possessor. It belongs now to his descendant Sir Frederick Harvey Bathurst, Bart.

(To be continued.)