



Swallowfield and its Owners.

By Lady Russell.

(Continued from page 95, Vol. III.)

1726. The last letter we have of Governor Pitt's was written from Swallowfield on April 10th, 1726. It is addressed to his son Robert, and says, "I desire you to send the Duke of Buckingham's works, edited by Pope, to this place," and goes on, "In your next send the price of all sorts of graine." Eighteen days later Governor Pitt was dead. He died at Swallowfield April 28th, 1726, aged 73. Robert Pitt thus announced the event to his son Thomas who was at Utrecht: "I am under the dissatisfaction of being obliged to advise you of the death of my father Thursday last at Swallowfield, after two days' illness. His distemper was a mixture of appoplexy and palsie." Governor Pitt was buried at Blandford St. Mary on the 17th May, in a vault under the chapel which he had added to the church. At his funeral, the Rev. Richard Eyre, Canon of Sarum, preached a sermon in which he alluded to the false accusations that had been propagated against the late Governor respecting the diamond—accusations which he attributed to the envy caused by his extraordinary prosperity. The Canon goes on to say that the abuse he met with probably occasioned his taking more particular value of a short admonition which (with others he had collected for his use) was found in his own hand with the paper concerning the diamond transaction. The admonitions found in his handwriting were "Learn to suffer," "Trust in God," "Pray to him often," (and accordingly he was known to retire very constantly for that purpose), "Oppress not the poor," and the last was "Remember to die." Col. Yule, in epitomising the character of Governor Pitt, says, "Taking him throughout his active life, he is hardly, as painted by himself, an attractive character, though a most forcible one. Bold, decided, and shrewd himself, he held in utter contempt those who failed in such qualities, and in the frank unrestrained expression of his sentiments, whether in seriousness or in merciless and rasping

chaff, he must often have given offence to friend as well as foe. Foes he must have had in plenty, being such as he was, and among other things so eminently that character which Samuel Johnson said he loved—a good hater. Of his character as a servant of the Company I have before spoken, and I have already indicated that he was by no means delicately scrupulous. Nevertheless he had a standard of duty and honour, if not a high one, and I believe he kept to it.”

There are portraits of Governor Pitt by Kneller at Chevening and at Boconnoc, and there is one belonging to Mr. Best at Red Rice, near Andover. Governor Pitt's will fills more than twenty large folio pages, it is dated 18th July, 1721; his trustees and executors being the Earl of Pembroke, George Pitt of Strathfieldsaye, Charles Cholmondeley of Vale Royal, and Mr. Chapple* of the Middle Temple. He left all his “Manors at Blandford St. Mary and Kainston, or elsewhere in Co. Dorset, Abbots Aunt in Co. Southampton, Stratford in Co. Wilts, and other lands in counties of Devon and Cornwall lately bought or to be bought from Lady Mohun (Boconnoc†), also Manor of Swallowfield, to my eldest son Robert Pitt for life.” In a codicil, dated 1723, he alludes to “having sustained very great losses by the late South Sea Scheme and otherwise.”

Governor Pitt's wife, who survived him only nine months, was Jane Innes, daughter of James Innes, and granddaughter of Adam Innes, of Reidhall, Moray, who was son of John Innes, of Blackhills, and great grandson of Sir Robert Innes, of Cromy.‡ We do not know the exact date of her marriage, but it was probably in 1673. Governor Pitt had issue by her four sons and two daughters: (1) Robert, who succeeded him, of whom more hereafter. (2) Thomas, born 1688, who married Lady Frances Ridgeway, daughter and co-heir of Robert, Earl of Londonderry, and was created Earl of Londonderry in 1726. He was M.P. for Wilton, Captain General and Commander-in-Chief of the Leeward Islands, and died at St. Christophers in 1729, aged 41. He had two sons and one daughter, Thomas and Ridgeway, successively Earls of Londonderry, who both died unmarried, whereby that title became extinct, and Lady Lucy, who married Pierce Meyrick, of Bodorgan, Anglesea, and

* Pitt calls him “Cousin Chapple.”

† Boconnoc was bought by Pitt in 1717 for £54,000, from the widow of Lord Mohun, who was killed in a duel with the Duke of Hamilton.

‡ Sir Robert Innes was son of James Innes, sixteenth of that ilk, by Lady Janet Gordon, daughter of Alexander, Earl of Huntley.

lived till 1802. (3) John Pitt, A.D.C. to the King, Colonel of the First Regiment of Foot Guards, and Lieut.-Governor of Bermuda, married Mary Belasyse, daughter of Thomas, Viscount Fauconberg ; he died in 1744 without issue. He sat in Parliament for St. Ives, Hindon, Old Sarum and Camelford. (4) William, died of smallpox. (5) Essex Pitt, married in 1714 to Charles Cholmondeley, of Vale Royal, Cheshire, and had issue Thomas Cholmondeley, father of the first Lord Delamere, and great-grandfather of the present Hugh, Lord Delamere ; Jane Cholmondeley, married to Richard Meyrick, of Bodorgan, and Mary Cholmondeley, married to the Rev. William Wannup, of Walden. (6) Lucy Pitt, who married in 1712 General James Stanhope, son of the Hon. Alexander Stanhope, and grandson of the first Earl of Chesterfield. He had been Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Spain in 1708-10, where he greatly distinguished himself, and after serving as First Commissioner of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was in 1718 created Earl Stanhope. He died very suddenly in 1720-1, leaving issue Philip, second Earl Stanhope, great-great-grandfather of the present Earl, and Lucy, twins, born 1718 ; George, born 1747, died unmarried, 1754 ; Gertrude, born 1718, died young ; Jane, born 1719 ; James and Catherine, posthumous twins. Lady Stanhope died in 1723, when Governor Pitt looked after his orphan grandchildren. He writes in 1723 to his son Robert : "I decline very much, and am doing all the good I can whilst living. And in order thereto, I hope all my daughter Stanhope's children are at my house at Swallowfield this evening except Lady Lucy, who is with Lady Fane ; and my Lord Stanhope we intend to put to Eaton after Whitsuntide, so that there is four children and their servants there, which I intend shall remain till they are fitting to go out to boarding schools."

In relation to the marriage of Governor Pitt's daughters, Robert Raworth wrote to him in 1707 as follows :—"You would do well to think of marrying your eldest daughter for being fitt for it, the sooner the better ; and if you assign her fortune something may be done, and she be well placed. I find that if daughters are not disposed of while their parents live, they are liable to many misfortunes afterwards. Men of estates are scarce, and women plenty, so that they do not easily go off without a great deal of money, though they be never so virtuous and pretty." It was perhaps in consequence of this advice that we find Governor Pitt writing a few months later to Sir Stephen Evance as follows : "I wrote last year to my cousin

George Pitt and brother-in-law Curgenven* to dispose of my daughters in marriage if suitable matches presented, and desired you to pay their fortunes of £6,000 each, with incidental expenses; and if my daughters and those that marry them deserve it, I shall be ready to make what addition to their fortunes my estate will permit." Miss Essex Pitt herself seems to have been practical enough, for she writes to her sister-in-law, in 1712: "We go to Mr. Bartman semmer very ofone, and are very much in his favour. I was in hopes of gitting of him at one time, but, the other day, I was strock dead all at once, for, he told me he never desired to marry."

At the death of Governor Pitt in 1726, Robert Pitt, his eldest son, entered into possession of Swallowfield. He had been sent at an early age to Rotterdam for his education, and in 1697-8 accompanied his father to Madras and received permission to reside at Fort St. George as a free merchant. In 1699, and again in 1701 he was in China on trading expeditions, and in 1702 he returned to England, carrying with him the great diamond. His father then writes to him as follows:—"I strictly injoyn you to be dutyfull to your mother and loving to your brothers and sisters, and follow the good advices I have always given you since your years will admit of it, to enter yourselfe in the Inns of Court, and goe to Oxford for three or four years, and stick close to your studies, which, I would chiefly have to be Civil Law, and if possible make yourselfe master of fortyfication and gunnery, and I hope the little experience you have allready had in the world will not only render these accomplishments necessary, but desirable by you. Let me also desire you to take great care of what company you keep, and let it ever be a rule never to lend any money but where you have unquestionable security, for, generally, by asking for it, you lose your friend and that too." Robert Pitt did not, however, abandon himself to study on his return to England, for very soon after, in 1703, he married Harriet Villiers, sister of John Villiers, Earl of Grandison,¹ a proceeding which seems to have incensed his father exceedingly, notwithstanding the flattering accounts of her, which were sent to him. Robert Pitt himself announces the fact to his father in December of same year. He says, "you always advised me against a disreputable marriage, which I have avoided by marrying a lady of family and character, with the approval of my mother and of Uncle Curgenven."

* The Rev. — Curgenven, of Folke, Sherbourne.

¹ Her father was the Honourable Edward Villiers, son of Geo. 4th Viscount Grandison, and her mother was Catherine, daughter and heir to John FitzGerald of Dromna.

Her fortune is but 2,000*l*, and 1,000*l* more after the death of her father-in-law, Lieut.-Gen. Stewart. I hope I shall not be abandoned by you at a time when I have no other support but yourself, since my alliance with the greatest families in England is as much to your credit, as my wife will be a comfort to you when you know her. My present happiness is altogether due to you, as it was the universal report of your good and generous character that induced Lady Grandison to give me her daughter. Her age is 21, her portrait and letter, herewith, speak for themselves; and I hope to obtain some genteel employment by the intercession of her relatives." The first letter of Governor Pitt respecting his son's marriage is written in 1704, and says: "In your letter of the 27th of May, you say there is a match on foot between you and *the* lady mentioned. I believe you play the same game with me as with your mother, who writes me you were married before she saw your wife, and I believe you were so before you wrote to me, for several correspondents tell me that was the first thing you did, which has justly brought you under the character of a giddy inconsiderate young fellow. As to your marriage, what I chiefly dislike is its suddenness, and much wonder you desire a present enlargement of your fortune, which, with your wife's, cannot be much less than 10,000*l*, a very good fortune for a young man qualified for business." Robert Pitt settled in Golden Square. John Wyndham writes in Jan., 1705, to the Governor, "Your son, my opposite neighbour in Golden Square, lives very handsomely and in esteem with all good men, and also very happily with a good lady." In 1706-7 Robert Pitt writes to his father that he had left town, and, for the benefit of his family, taken a house and gardens with 50 acres of land about it, for 60*l* a year, near Enfield, at a place called Forty Hill, twelve miles from London. Robert Pitt sat in seven Parliaments continuously from 1705 till 1727, viz., four times for Old Sarum, once for Salisbury, and twice for Oakhampton. In 1707 his father wrote to him as follows: "I have been often thinking what box you have got into in the House of Commons. I am afraid you are one of those children that are awakened with the rattle that is commonly naming the Church of England, for which noe man have a greater veneration than myselfe; but I know it is often named within those walls to bring over a party, the consequences of which has been generally dangerous to the State. And it is the custom of old stagers to make use of such forward fellows as yourselfe (as the fox did the cat's foot) to trye the temper of the House. It is my advice

that you speake seldome, and then to the purpose ; and make it your busyness to be well versed in the orders of the House ; and doe nothing that is dishonourable on any account. I cannot imagine what has made you an anti-courtier, when wee are sure wee have a Queen that is in no other interest than that of England. I conclude this with recommending to your perusall a book entitled ‘Miscellanies,’ by the late Lord Marquis of Halifax.”

(To be continued.)

The Antiquities of Wallingford.

By John Edward Field, M.A., Vicar of Benson.

(Continued from page 99.)

IV.—ANCIENT HOUSES, Etc.

Buildings which present an appearance of antiquity are less conspicuous in Wallingford than in many towns of the same character. A cellar, probably of the early part of the 16th century, under an old house with projecting upper-storey, in the High Street, has already been noticed ; as also has Stone Hall, with its Tudor front but slightly altered, adjoining the site of the Priory of the Holy Trinity. The “White Hart” in St. Mary’s Street has an ancient carved doorway and original gables, with good ornamental pendants ; and the west side of “The Lamb,” in Castle Street, is of similar character ; both being apparently of the earlier Tudor period. The buildings of “The George,” in High Street, also show work of the same antiquity, and a large Tudor fire-place has lately been discovered there.

But more remarkable than any of these is the excellent specimen of a house of the time of Henry VIII.,* now called St. Lucian’s, outside the mill-brook at the Lower Wharf. Each front is surmounted by three gables, and has two bay windows of two stories, battlemented ; though one of these windows, on the east, has been modernised. The west front has, apparently, its original coating of stucco, ornamented with hearts and other devices ; and the interior

* Parker, Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of Berkshire, 189.