

## LETTER OF CONGRATULATION,

*Addressed to Sir Thomas Pelham, Bart., on his Marriage with Judith Shirley, 1637.*

(COMMUNICATED BY THE REV. WILLIAM RAYNES, RECTOR OF RIPE  
AND CHALVINGTON.)

READ AT THE QUARTERLY MEETING AT LEWES, OCT. 1848.

WITH NOTES, BY MR. M. A. LOWER.

“ NOBLE SIR,

“ AMONGST those many reall expressions of your friends affections (wherewith I know your owne worth and their deserved loves, will at this time of iust reioycing lode you), bee pleas'd not to disdaine this empty appearance of his full ioy at this your happy day and choyce, whose obligements to you are therefore more then others, because his merits lesse then any's: beleeve it, S<sup>r</sup>, you could not have found out a more effectual meanes to haue gladded this whole contry (and especially your nearest endeared friends) then by marri- jng; nor in marrijng then by soe happy an election of knowne and approved worth and vertue as you have made; of whom, to speake but truth, might easily bee misconstrued flattery: which I soe much detest to doe, that I would not willingly bee thought guilty thereof: it shall suffice mee to fill full my reioycing, that you soe well know her as to bee made happy by her, and in you your friends, among which number (though altogether unworthy of soe hye a title) yet since by you soe highly favoured as to bee made acquainted, and consequently to sympathise with you in your distracted thoughts of your unsetled course, I cannot but claime and expresse my share of ioy in this your soe blessed a way of quieting your minde, and settling your resolutions, which

blessing, as it comes from God alone, soe to him onely I ascribe the glory, resting euer.

Friston, December 18vo.  
1637.

Your haunke doth sometimes  
make a little croeking noise,  
about which I intend to aduise  
with Con Matheman.

I thinke it unseasonable, in this happy time of your truer ioys, to mention unto you your instruments of smaller delight, but when you shall pleas to make use of him, your litle setter is heere fitt for your service.

Your hauke we proceed but slowly withall, because I conceive hee is a hagar, and therefore will require good reclaiming; and since hee hath beene heere he hath wanted noe carring, nor other rites that our skills afford; hee will now iump to the fist.

Your most obliged  
servant to command,  
NICHOLAS GILDREDGE

[Addressed] "To his most honoured friend Sr Thomas Pelham, Baronet, at his house at Halland, these present."

[Endorsed] "My Cosin Gildrige."

NOTES. Nicholas Gildredge, the writer of this letter, was the representative of an ancient family, who derived their surname from an estate called Gildredge, in the parish of Withyham, and were afterwards settled for four descents at East Bourne. Friston, from whence the letter is dated, was the seat of the Selwyns, to whom Mr. Gildredge was related through matches with the Burtons of East Bourne. Mr. Gildredge was the last male of his line. He died in 1668, leaving Elizabeth, his daughter and heiress, who married Nicholas Eversfield, Esq., a direct ancestor of the Eversfields of Denne.

The letter is addressed to Sir Thomas Pelham, the second baronet of the family, and a direct ancestor of the Earl of Chichester. This gentleman had three wives. The first was Mary, daughter of Sir Thomas Wilbraham, who was buried at Laughton March 7, 1634-5. The letter was written on the occasion of Sir Thomas's second marriage with Judith Shirley at the end of the year 1637. The peerages, and other printed genealogies of the Pelham family, do not give either the name or the residence of the lady's father. There is, however, little doubt that she was one of the six daughters of Sir Thomas

Shirley (the younger) of Wiston, by his second wife, Judith, daughter of William Bennet, Esq., and who would probably have been between twenty and thirty years of age at the time of her presumed match with Sir Thomas Pelham.

Of the nature of Sir Thomas Pelham's previous troubles, alluded to by the writer, nothing is known. He was destined, however, to drink still more deeply of the waters of adversity; for, in less than a year after the date of this letter, he had the misfortune to lose this his second wife. She died in 1638, and was buried at Laughton on the 21st of November. He subsequently married Margaret, daughter of Sir Henry Fane, of Kent.

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Mr. Gildredge thinks Sir Thomas's hawk a *hagard*. A *hagard* is a hawk that has preyed for herself before she was taken, and therefore requires much more skill in training than a young bird taken from the nest. *Con Matheman* was probably an Irish hawk-trainer, resident in the vicinity.