

MAJOR SOWLE.

IN the year 1740, the town of Newcastle suffered most severely from the outrages of a mob. Riots on account, as was pretended, of the scarcity of corn, broke out on June 9. A number of merchants' apprentices, and gentlemen, chiefly young ones, became a volunteer militia on the occasion, and, from their wearing white stockings, received the name of the White Stocking Regiment. The mob were pacified by the announcement that the cornfactors had set a certain fixed price on their grain; but on the 21st some granaries were plundered, in consequence of the factors shutting their shops, and absconding. On the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th, nothing happened, except the discovery of an exportation of rye, which was stopped, and sold at the stipulated prices. On the 25th, the militia very imprudently were disbanded, and on the 26th, the riots became of a most destructive description. One of the rioters being killed by a shot from the Guildhall, the rabble broke in, maltreated the gentlemen there, destroyed the glass and pictures, plundered the town's hutch of nearly £1,200, and would probably have set fire to the town, according to their threats, had not three companies of Howard's Regiment, under the command of Captain Sowle, arrived in the evening by a forced march from the North. They soon dispersed the rioters, forty of whom were committed to prison, and seven transported for seven years at the next assizes. The affair is said to have cost the Newcastle Corporation upwards of 4,000*l*. A few weeks afterwards, they voted that the freedom of the town should be presented to Captain Sowle in a gold box, value fifty guineas, a plate, value forty guineas, to Captain Fielding, one of thirty guineas to Ensign Hewitt, and ten guineas to each of the three companies.

The following letter, alluding to Captain Sowle's services, has been communicated to the Society by Sir Walter Calverley Trevelyan. He states that it is in "a collection of autographs, in four volumes, left to the Museum by Sir — Musgrave. In every case the *signature* has been cut off from the document or letter, and pasted into a *separate*

volume, which accounts for the blank at the commencement of this letter, the signature and conclusion having been at the back of the first sheet."

SIR WALTER BLACKETT TO LORD BUTE.—(*Additional MSS. British Museum, No. 5726, C. f. 40.*)

Half Moon Street,
31 May, 1762.

MY LORD,

..... Lordship, and the same pr.... which actuated me to make application to the Duke of Newcastle a year or two ago obliges me now to repeat it to you.

Major Marmaduke Sowle, by his extraordinary personal behaviour, in the year 1740, preserved the town of Newcastle most probably from being plundered by rioters; through infirmities, he was obliged some time since to quit the army, which somewhat streightened him in his circumstances. The Duke of Newcastle was so obliging as to promise me that he should have (as now) the first Commission in the Appeale or the Alienation Office that should become vacant; and if your Lordship will please to renew that engagement you will confer a particular obligation upon your Lordship's most obed^t Serv^t,

WR. BLACKETT.

I shall take the earliest opportunity of waiting upon your Lordship to know your pleasure.