

OBSERVATIONS ON THE RADCLIFFE PEDIGREE.

RECENT events having attracted much notice to the history of the ill-fated Earl of Derwentwater—a narrative, the interest of which is not likely to die out—there have been engrafted upon the Radcliffe Pedigree some erroneous statements, which ought not to pass without notice, since they are at variance with all that has hitherto been known with regard to the Earl's immediate descendants.

The marriage, in 1712, of James, the 3rd Earl of Derwentwater, to Anne Maria, daughter of Sir John Webb, Bart., by whom he had a son and daughter, the Earl's participation in the rebellion of 1715, and his unfortunate end, are circumstances too well known to need more than recapitulation.

It was always understood that the Earl's son, John Radcliffe—an infant at his father's death—only survived him sixteen years, and died a minor.

After having prevailed uninterruptedly for upwards of a century, and formed the basis of family succession, this belief is now, for the first time, disturbed.

John Radcliffe's decease in 1731 is called in question; his death is pronounced an invention—his obsequies a sham. He is spirited away from Paris to Germany—is provided there with a wife and family; instead of a premature death, abundant length of days is vouchsafed to him, and his life is protracted to the venerable age of eighty-five.

When a fact, which has been unhesitatingly received throughout several generations, and never, until now, critically regarded, comes to be questioned, it is well to inquire upon what grounds contemporaries founded their belief in the fact.

In the obituary of the Gentleman's Magazine for 1731, vol. i. p. 541, the demise was thus announced :

Dec. 31.—The E. of *Derwentwater*, at Sir *John Webb's*, his Father-in-Law (*mistake for grandfather*) in *Great Marlborough Street*, having been lately cut for the Stone. He was the only Son of the late E. of *Derwentwater*, who was beheaded in 1716."

The Historical Register for the same year, with more time to test the accuracy of the news than the magazine might have, records the event thus :

"1731, Dec. 31.—This Day dy'd of an Ulcer in his Kidneys, *James (misprint for John) Earl of Derwentwater*, at Sir *John Webb's*, in *Great Marlborough Street*. He was the only surviving son of the late Earl of *Derwentwater*, who was beheaded in 1716, by *Anne Maria*, Daughter of the said Sir *John Webb*."

The widow of James, Earl of Derwentwater, is understood to have died at Louvain, in 1725, and to have been buried in the Augustine Convent there.

Her son, John Radcliffe, is found to have been interred in the same convent. The establishment was removed, in 1794, to England, and is now settled at Newton Abbot, in Devonshire.

The archives of the convent accompanied the nuns to this country. Amongst their records are the following entries :

"1725.—My Lady Webb sent us 15 guineas on account of the Countess of Derwentwater being buried in our church."

"1732.—Sir John Webb gave us 20 guineas for burying Lord Derwentwater."

The death, in 1725, of the Countess of Derwentwater has not been questioned.

If her son did not, seven years afterwards, follow her to the grave, his maternal grandfather must have been under a strange delusion on the subject.

Not less strange would it have been that John Radcliffe should, a month before the date assigned for his death, have made a will, and that his grandfather should, a few weeks after the supposed death of the testator, have proved the will.

At Doctors' Commons is duly enrolled a will, dated the 18th November, 1731, purporting to be made by John Radcliffe, commonly called Earl of Darwentwater, and signed "John Radcliffe, Darwentwater."

Amongst other bequests, legacies are left to his aunt, Lady Mary Petre, and his grandfather, Sir John Webb, Bart.

On the 28th January, 1732, probate of the will was granted to Sir John Webb and Nathaniel Pigott, the executors.

Five months after the reputed death of John Radcliffe his sister, Ann Radcliffe, was married to Robert James, Lord Petre. In the marriage settlement (which is enrolled on the Close Rolls), dated 29th April,

1732, the intended bride is described as "Ann Radcliffe, commonly called the Lady Ann Radcliffe, *only surviving child* of James, late Earl of Derwentwater, deceased."

By the marriage settlement, in 1712, of her father, power was given to raise a sum of £20,000 for a daughter or daughters *in default of male issue*.

That sum is referred to in the marriage settlement of Lady Ann Radcliffe, as part of her portion, and as "secured upon the estate late of the said James Earl of Derwentwater.

So much for the contemporary evidence of the death, in 1731, of John Radcliffe.

In addition to having been universally accepted, the event was stated to have influenced the family succession.

On the death of John Radcliffe without issue, the heir to the title, had it subsisted, and estates, would have been his uncle, Charles Radcliffe, only brother of the unfortunate Earl.

For the active part he took in the first rebellion, Charles Radcliffe had the singular fate of suffering in the second—at an interval of 30 years.

Whilst in exile, Charles Radcliffe was married at Brussels, in 1724, to Caroline, Countess of Newburgh.

Their first child was born in France—the rest at Rome, where other members of the Radcliffe family had taken refuge.

The eldest son, James, was baptised, in 1725, at Vincennes, as the son of "Messire Charles Radcliffe et de dame Charlotte Levinson néé Countess de Newbrough son epouse."

Their daughter, Barbara Radcliffe, was baptized at S. Lorenzo, in Damaso, Rome, on the 18th March, 1728, as "nat. ex illmo D. Carolo Radcliffe Ex Sexia in Anglia et illma D. Carlotta Comitissa de Newburgh."

The sponsors were "Joes Radcliffe conēg de Darwentwater," represented by Mr. Patrick Darcy; and Lady Barbara Webb, who also appeared by proxy.

On the 13th January, 1730, Ann Thomasin Radcliffe another daughter, was baptised at the same church, as the child of Count Charles Radcliffe and the Countess of Newburgh.

On the 24th July, 1730, Count William Radcliffe, uncle of Earl James and of Charles Radcliffe, made his will, at Rome, and left to his great nephew (*pronipote*) the Earl of Derwentwater a painting by Pietro da Cortona.

He left various legacies to his nephew (*nipote*) Charles Radcliffe, and his wife the Countess of Newburgh.

The christian name of the first legatee is not given, but, as the testator distinguished between his great nephew and his nephew, the former, doubtless, indicated John Radcliffe.

His existence and his *status* were therefore distinctly recognised, both by his uncle, Charles Radcliffe, the heir presumptive to the title, and by his great uncle, William Radcliffe.

So long as John Radcliffe lived his relatives seem to have been careful not to infringe any family right. His death, under age, on the last day of 1731, opened the succession to his uncle.

Not long after the nephew's death the uncle assumed the family title.

On the 6th April, 1732, his daughter, Lady Maria Radcliffe, was baptised at S. Lorenzo in Lucina, Rome, as "*Natam ex Domino Carolo Radclyffe Londinen. mylord Darwentwater et ex Carlotta de Livingstone comitissa Newburgh.*"

On the 22nd July, in the same year, another son, James Clement Radcliffe, was baptised at the same church, as "*Infans ex illmo et exmo D. Carolo Radcliffe milord Darwentwater.*"

Again, in the funeral register, at Rome, in 1734, of his daughter, Ann Thomasin, the father appears as "*Signor milord Carolo Darwentwater Inglese.*"

It is needless, perhaps, to adduce further proof that the public belief, at the time, in the death of John Radcliffe, was shared by his family, and that they acted upon that belief.

The public records, and the legislation of later years with regard to the Radcliffe family and their estates in Northumberland and Cumberland exhibit few distinct references to the death of John Radcliffe, but all assume the fact. A circumstance of such recent occurrence seems to have been taken for granted.

The 28 Geo. III. c. 63, however, (by which the Derwentwater Estates were charged with £2,500 per annum to Anthony James, Earl of Newburgh, Grandson of Charles Radcliffe) alludes thus to the event:—

"And whereas the said John Radcliffe departed this life sometime in or about the year of our Lord 1731, before he had attained his age of 21 years, without issue and unmarried."

Into the genealogical superstructure that has been raised upon the hypothesis of John Radcliffe's having attained old age and left a family it is unnecessary to enter; it being sufficient to shew that the first step rests upon an imaginary foundation.

W. C. M.

5 May, 1869.

T. H. B.