

## XI.—THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY, THIRD EARL GREY, AND WILLIAM WOODMAN

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The family papers of the Earls Grey, now deposited at the Prior's Kitchen, Durham,<sup>1</sup> include 109 letters to the third Earl Grey from his solicitor, William Woodman. Henry, third Earl Grey (1802-1894), was the son of the Reform Bill Premier, and was known as Viscount Howick until his father's death in 1845. After serving as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies from 1846 to 1852, he never again held government office, but he continued to play a prominent part in public affairs from time to time during the next forty years. His greatest interest, however, was his estate at Howick in Northumberland, where he spent as much time as possible, especially in his latter years. William Woodman, who was born in 1806, was a member of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne from 1848 until his death in 1895. His books and manuscripts, presented to the Society by his daughter in 1896, form one of the most important collections in the library at the Black Gate.<sup>2</sup> Among these papers are two volumes of "Letters of Earl Grey, etc."<sup>3</sup> so that both sides of the correspondence are available from these complementary sources.

Unfortunately, neither side is complete. The series of Woodman's letters preserved by Grey is clearly not the whole that he received, while a note by Woodman at the beginning

<sup>1</sup> A brief description of this important collection is given in a pamphlet by the present writer, *Earl Grey's Papers: An Introductory Survey*, published by the Private Libraries Association, North Harrow, 1961.

<sup>2</sup> An account of Woodman is given in the Society's centenary volume, *AA*, 3rd series, Vol. X, pp. 225-7.

<sup>3</sup> Press-mark M16 B37-38. I am grateful to the Hon. Librarian, Mr. H. A. Taylor, for making these available to me.

of the first volume of Grey's letters states: "The following are a few letters selected from a very long correspondence with Earl Grey." These volumes contain 253 original letters from Grey, of which three or four written in December 1859 and January 1860 are addressed to Woodman's son Benjamin<sup>4</sup> who was a partner in his practice, but from whom he apparently became estranged in 1871,<sup>5</sup> and two<sup>6</sup> were written to George Annett Grey of Milfield, Lord Grey's estate agent, who passed them on to Woodman. Woodman also preserved a few letters from other members and connections of the Grey family, and kept them along with the third Earl's letters; so that the first volume begins with two (one inserted loose) from Charles, second Earl Grey, and there are also letters from the third Earl's brothers Francis Richard Grey, Rector of Morpeth, and John Grey, Rector of Houghton-le-Spring; his sisters-in-law, Barbarina, Lady Grey, wife of Admiral Sir Frederick William Grey, and Lady Elizabeth Dorothy Grey, wife of the Rev. F. R. Grey; his nephew Albert, afterwards fourth Earl Grey; and others. One or two press cuttings are also included, and the second volume is appropriately completed with obituary notices of the third Earl, and a copy of the funeral sermon preached by the Rev. William Champion Streatfeild.<sup>7</sup> Documents in these volumes other than letters from the third Earl Grey amount only to some two dozen items in all, however.

Despite the incompleteness of the correspondence as we have it, there are ample materials to illustrate the long connection between the two men which, although primarily a business association between lawyer and client, was on the

<sup>4</sup> Letters of 17th and 23rd December 1859 and 27th January 1860 are definitely to Benjamin Woodman, and that of 6th January 1860 is probably also to him, but could be to William Woodman.

<sup>5</sup> This is alluded to in letter Grey to William Woodman 28th November 1871. There are 18 letters from Benjamin Woodman in Earl Grey's Papers in the Prior's Kitchen.

<sup>6</sup> 23rd January 1858 and 11th December 1883. There is also a copy in Lord Grey's hand of a letter from him to H. Andrews, 29th November 1873.

<sup>7</sup> *A Sermon preached in Howick Church, October 14th., 1894, on the occasion of the death of Earl Grey, K.G., Alnwick, [1894].*

basis of a personal friendship in which Woodman's advice and help were freely sought and given in matters far outside the province of his professional duty. These letters afford us a glimpse into the dealings of the prominent Morpeth solicitor with the head of one of the most distinguished of the Whig families among whom his practice chiefly lay.<sup>8</sup>

Grey first met Woodman in 1826. Lord Howick, as he then was, stood for Parliament for Northumberland in that year,<sup>9</sup> and was assisted in his campaign by Woodman. In old age, Grey frequently recalled this early stage in their careers. Writing on 28th December 1878, for instance, in reply to a birthday greeting from Woodman,<sup>10</sup> he said:

I am exceedingly obliged to you for your very kind letter which I have received this morning, it gratifies me very much as coming from one from whom I have received so much kindness, & to whom I have been so frequently indebted for very useful assistance in the long period which has passed by since I became acquainted with you for the first time on coming into public life in 1826.<sup>11</sup>

Woodman was Grey's solicitor from about 1852<sup>12</sup> until his retirement in 1887. He gradually curtailed his practice for some years prior to giving it up completely, but Grey was very unwilling to lose his services entirely, and insisted

<sup>8</sup> See the article on Woodman in *AA*, *op. cit.* in note 2.

<sup>9</sup> He was defeated, but was provided with a seat for the "rotten borough" of Winchelsea. See G. M. Trevelyan, *Lord Grey of the Reform Bill*, London, 1929, p. 200.

<sup>10</sup> In letter Woodman to Grey 27th December 1878. Letters from Woodman to Grey and all other correspondence referred to in this article, except for the two volumes in the Black Gate Library, *op. cit.* in note 3, are in Earl Grey's Papers at the Prior's Kitchen, Durham.

<sup>11</sup> There are similar passages in letters Grey to Woodman 29th January 1882, 29th December 1882, and 1st January 1893 (the last quoted at the end of this article).

<sup>12</sup> When Lord Grey was in the cabinet, his brother Sir Frederick William Grey (1805-1878) looked after the estate at Howick. There is therefore little correspondence on estate and legal matters in the third Earl's papers until after his release from office in February 1852. There are only two letters from Woodman prior to that of 27th December 1852, while the earliest letter from Grey kept by Woodman is that of 3rd May 1856.

that, even if the assistance of a younger man were called in, Woodman should remain in charge of his affairs.<sup>13</sup> When at length Woodman felt obliged to make his withdrawal from professional life complete, both the third Earl and his nephew Albert (afterwards fourth Earl) Grey wrote him very appreciative letters, which Woodman proudly showed to his London agent, E. H. Flux.<sup>14</sup>

Grey paid a tribute to Woodman on an important public occasion. When inaugurating a memorial to the seventh Earl of Carlisle at Morpeth on 2nd October 1871, he said :

I am happy to see sitting near me one of those who most assisted me so long ago as in the year 1826—to whom I have since, both in public and in private, been most deeply indebted, and who has, I believe, taken the most active part in inducing the Barony of Morpeth to pay this tribute . . . to the memory of Lord Carlisle. Mr Woodman had before great claims on the town of Morpeth for services he has rendered to you, and I am sure, in the manner in which he has performed his duty on this occasion, you will all recognise a new one.<sup>15</sup>

There is on record only one occasion on which relations between Grey and Woodman were clouded by a misunderstanding. In August 1867 Lord Grey had hastily expressed in writing to George Annett Grey his feelings of irritation and impatience with Woodman's delay in completing a certain transaction. The latter was informed of this by G. A. Grey and was much hurt by the charge. He wrote on 20th August a long letter<sup>16</sup> explaining the reasons for the delay, and Grey at once admitted that he had been wrong,<sup>17</sup> adding :

<sup>13</sup> Letters Grey to Woodman 5th July 1884 (misplaced between those of 29th December 1882 and 23rd February 1883) and Woodman to Grey 8th July 1884.

<sup>14</sup> Letters Albert Grey to Woodman 7th March 1887; third Earl Grey to Woodman 10th March 1887; and Flux to Woodman 4th April 1887 (in second volume of Grey-Woodman letters).

<sup>15</sup> Reported in a press-cutting preserved by Woodman between Grey's letters of 18th August and 3rd October 1871.

<sup>16</sup> Misdated 30th August 1867.

<sup>17</sup> Letter of 21st August 1867.

I hope this letter may be sufficient to remove completely from your mind the painful impression produced by what I had written to Mr. Grey under a mistaken view of the subject, I sh[oul]d be very sorry indeed if it did not do so, as I can assure you I am very sensible of my great obligat[i]ons to you for the constant kindness & the very useful assistance I have received from you during a long course of years.

Perhaps remembering his over-hasty judgement on the former occasion, Grey made a point of congratulating Woodman on the completion of a particularly intricate piece of business at the end of 1870:

I cannot receive these last papers connected with the recent arrangements without again expressing my sense of my deep obligations to you for having managed all these complicated transactions with so much skill & success.<sup>18</sup>

In May 1875 the Clerkship of the Peace for Northumberland fell vacant by the death of William Dickson, and the appointment was at Grey's disposal as Lord Lieutenant of the county. He at once offered it to Woodman, adding, however:

But it seems to me probable that you may feel that like myself you have reached a time of life at which it is not very desirable to enter for the first time upon an employment of considerable importance & labour & that you may therefore prefer retaining your present office to changing it for another. In this case I shall be exceedingly obliged to you if you will be good enough to favour me with your opinion as to who would be the fittest person to be appointed.<sup>19</sup>

Woodman's reply<sup>20</sup> was as Grey had anticipated:

Although it would have afforded me no ordinary gratification to have accepted the appointment your Lordship has offered to me in such flattering terms, & the emoluments are not a matter of indifference to me, feeling that I could not fill the office to my

<sup>18</sup> Letter of 31st December 1870.

<sup>19</sup> Letter of 17th May 1875.

<sup>20</sup> Letter of 18th May 1875.

own satisfaction I cannot hope to do so with the approval of others, and must therefore decline it.

In this, and in a subsequent exchange of letters,<sup>21</sup> the candidates recommended by Woodman are discussed. He suggested three; Robert Dees of Newcastle, Stephen Sanderson of Berwick, and Edward Leadbitter of Newcastle. Grey eventually decided to offer the post to Sanderson, having been at first inclined to give Dees the first refusal. The course of his thought in the matter may be illustrated by quotations from two of his letters to Woodman. On 21st May 1875 he wrote:

From your account of the different gentlemen who might be eligible for the office I should be inclined to give the preference to Mr Dees & then to Mr Sanderson, but it might be as well before coming to a decision to enquire as you propose about Mr Leadbitter. I infer from what you say that Mr Dees is an old man,<sup>22</sup> but if he is still equal to the office it might not be without advantage to offer it to him in the first instance in consequence of his having been a liberal, the party with which I was formerly connected might by such a previous offer be somewhat reconciled to the appointment's being conferred on Mr Sanderson. Though I do not wish to be at all guided by party considerat[i]ons, & though I consider it a great recommendat[i]on of Mr Dees & of Mr Sanderson that they have both as you say ceased to take any active share in politics, yet from old recollections & sympathies, I sh[oul]d prefer making the first offer to a gentleman who was a liberal.

Grey's letter of 25th May indicates his change of mind:

I have on the whole thought it best to select Mr Sanderson of Berwick for the vacant appointment. Besides your

<sup>21</sup> Grey to Woodman 21st and 25th May 1875; Woodman to Grey 21st and 26th May 1875.

<sup>22</sup> "I would place Mr Dees of Newcastle first, but then his age and large practice may lead him to decline it" (Woodman to Grey 18th May 1875). "Mr Dees is a few years younger than I am" (Woodman to Grey 21st May 1875). Robert Richardson Dees was in fact eight years younger than Woodman; he was born in 1814 and died in 1908. He became a member of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1839. See *AA*, 3rd series, Vol. X, pp. 195-6.

recommenda[ti]o[n] of him I have one in the highest terms from Mr Grey of Milfield, & from what you say of his age I think it is advisable to appoint a younger man than Mr Dees as he has no special claim.

Sanderson had written to Grey on 22nd May asking to be considered a candidate, but making it clear that this was subject to Woodman's not being one:

I wish to say that if my friend Mr Woodman is a candidate, it is far from my wish to be deemed a competitor with him. It is only because I fancy he may not care to urge his claims, that I allow my ambition to attain so honorable an office to find expression.

The favourable impression made by this letter may have influenced Grey in deciding to offer the post to Sanderson rather than Dees after all.

This was not the first time that Grey had consulted Woodman about an appointment he had to make. He regularly sought his advice concerning suitable people to serve on the bench, and if Woodman could not give an opinion from personal acquaintance about men who had been recommended to Grey, he took pains to find out about them from reliable sources.<sup>23</sup>

Woodman's legal knowledge was frequently of service to Grey in political matters. Their correspondence in the first three months of 1859 was largely concerned with the municipal franchise, Grey being convinced of "the injurious effect of the encrease of the lower class of voters"<sup>24</sup> brought about by the Small Tenements Act.<sup>25</sup> He successfully moved for a committee of the House of Lords to look into the matter, his chief purpose being to point out "the necessity of caution in making far more important changes in the Parll[iamen]tal[r]y franchise".<sup>26</sup> Woodman provided him with written evidence

<sup>23</sup> Letters Grey to Woodman 25th November 1871, 15th and 24th October 1872, 20th February 1875, 23rd February 1875 (misdated 1874), 26th February 1875; Woodman to Grey 29th September 1859, 27th January 1876.

<sup>24</sup> Letter to Woodman 26th February 1859.

<sup>25</sup> 13 & 14 Victoria Cap. 99.

<sup>26</sup> Letter to Woodman 31st January 1859.

and obtained witnesses, being himself prevented by his health from appearing as a witness before the committee.<sup>27</sup> In the second edition of his *Parliamentary Government*,<sup>28</sup> Grey made use of information supplied by Woodman.<sup>29</sup> Grey consulted Woodman about a point of detail which struck him when this work was at proof stage.<sup>30</sup>

Grey's confidence in Woodman's judgement in political matters is illustrated by the fact that he left to the latter's discretion whether or not a long letter he had written to Thomas Burt, M.P. for Morpeth, on the Northumberland miners' strike of 1877-8, should be forwarded. Grey wrote this letter on 17th and 18th January 1878 as an attempt at conciliation, because he was greatly concerned at the suffering caused to the men and their families, and the losses sustained by the owners, as a result of the protracted dispute. He sent the letter first to Woodman, asking him to forward it to Burt if he approved of it, and if not to return it. Woodman, who had kept Grey informed of the progress of the strike, stressing both the exemplary conduct of the men in that no violence occurred or was threatened despite their sufferings, and, on the other hand, the danger of permanent loss of coal trade from the Tyne if they continued to hold out, had no hesitation in sending it on.<sup>31</sup>

It appeared to me [he wrote on 19th January] to be exactly what was wanted, & likely to be productive of great good, as taking a wide & enlarged view of the question, and lifting it out of the narrow, and daily narrowing, rut into which it had drifted.

The letter was afterwards published in the *Daily*

<sup>27</sup> Letters Grey to Woodman 2nd, 4th, 8th, 11th, 15th, and 30th March 1859.

<sup>28</sup> *Parliamentary Government considered with reference to Reform. By Earl Grey. A New Edition, containing suggestions for the improvement of our representative system, and an examination of the Reform Bills of 1859 and 1861*, London, 1864. The first edition is cited below in note 44.

<sup>29</sup> See especially pp. 144-5. In his letter to Grey of 26th April 1860, Woodman enclosed a table showing the effects of various acts upon the parliamentary borough franchise.

<sup>30</sup> Letter Grey to Woodman 14th September 1864.

<sup>31</sup> Letters Grey to Woodman 7th, 14th, 18th, 22nd, 28th, and 31st January, 1878; and Woodman to Grey 1st, 12th, and 19th January 1878.



*Chronicle* with a covering letter from Grey to the editor dated 31st January 1878. Burt had declined to publish it himself, but had not objected to Grey's doing so.<sup>32</sup> Woodman preserved the cutting from the *Chronicle* with Grey's letters.<sup>33</sup>

Grey valued Woodman's advice and assistance just as much in a concern of great personal importance to himself; the career of his nephew and heir Albert, afterwards fourth Earl Grey. Albert Grey left Cambridge in 1873 after a distinguished career there, taking first place in law and history. Lord Grey was anxious to get him into parliament as soon as possible,<sup>34</sup> and considered that he might have a chance of being elected for Morpeth. With that in view, he introduced him to Woodman in January 1874,<sup>35</sup> and thereafter there is frank discussion in their correspondence of his prospects and the tactics to be adopted. On 24th January 1874, for instance, just after the sudden dissolution of Parliament had been announced, Grey wrote:

Supposing he is to stand I sh[oul]d like much to know your opin[i]o[n] as to the best mode of proceeding. Should he issue an address at once? or sh[oul]d an invitatio[n] to him to stand be got up? My own opin[i]o[n] is much in favour of the last course. I think at his age it w[oul]d appear somewhat presumptuous in him to volunteer coming forward, whereas if an invitatio[n] to him even though not very numerously signed if it had some good names attached to it, would afford him good grounds for standing [sic]. The question also arises what public grounds sh[oul]d be put forward either for an invitatio[n] to him, or for his own standing? What occurs to me as the right line to be taken would

<sup>32</sup> Letter Burt to Grey 30th January 1878.

<sup>33</sup> Misplaced between letters of 23rd August 1876 and 6th January 1877.

<sup>34</sup> This is clearly true of the third Earl's attitude in 1874, being borne out by the correspondence referred to here. In *Albert Fourth Earl Grey: A Last Word*, London, 1918, p. 40, Harold Begbie wrote that the third Earl "did not . . . show much sympathy with Albert Grey's desire for an immediate political career, feeling that his nephew would soon succeed him in the House of Lords". This refers to four years later, but does not seem to be entirely supported by Lord Grey's letters to Woodman at that time (cited below, notes 37 and 38). It is undoubtedly correct, as suggested by Begbie, that it was in accordance with his uncle's wishes that Albert Grey did not stand again after his defeat in 1886.

<sup>35</sup> Letter Grey to Woodman 15th January 1874.

be to say that many of those who have always been attached to liberal principles & still adhere to them are not prepared to adopt the extreme views put forward by Mr Burt in his recent speech, & that without having any object[i]o[n] to him personally they cannot be satisfied with having the borough represented by a gentleman professing these opin[i]o[ns]; that believing from what they have heard of him that Mr A. Grey holds the constitutional & liberal principles which have so long been those of his family, while at the same time he is not identified with any political party they were willing to support him if he will consent to come forward as a candidate for the borough.

Woodman advised against his standing, and Lord Grey acknowledged in a letter of 8th February that he had been right:

The result of the Morpeth elect[i]o[n] does most conclusively prove the correctness of your judgment as to the absolute hopelessness of my nephew's success if he had stood. Indeed the facts you stated when I took him to Morpeth completely satisfied me on this point, & I am very glad that I did not cause him to stand.

Albert Grey finally secured a seat in Parliament in 1880, and represented the Tyneside division for six years. Two years previously he had contested a bye-election in South Northumberland with a very curious result; both candidates were found to have received 2,912 votes and it was declared a tie. Grey and his opponent, Ridley, both took seats in the House of Commons, until Ridley was declared elected by two votes, because on a scrutiny two of Grey's supporters were found to have written his name on their ballot papers instead of a cross.<sup>36</sup> Lord Grey's feelings on the occasion of this contest are fully stated in his letters to Woodman—gratification at praise of his nephew's performance from one whose judgement in such matters he knew to be sound; a feeling of being somewhat out of sympathy with the seemingly advanced liberal views of his nephew, accompanied by

<sup>36</sup> See *Annual Register for 1878*, p. 50, and Begbie, *op. cit.* in note 34, p. 40 footnote.

a wise realisation that this was an example of the usual difference between generations; and great annoyance at his nephew's loss of the seat, attributed to the negligence or worse of some of the polling officers. These points may be illustrated by two quotations:

What you say of my nephew is highly gratifying to me. I think from what I have read of his speeches he does show great ability & readiness considering his age & want of experience. I must confess there is a much more radical tinge in his speeches than I like, but my opin[io]ns I know are old fashioned & not in accordance with those of the present generat[io]n, such as they are I have held them too long to change them now, & must not find fault with my nephew for going beyond them. I remember that fifty years ago my father did not approve of some of my opin[io]ns & especially of my opposit[io]n to the policy of protect[io]n, but he never sought to prevent my acting on my own views, & in this I must follow his example.<sup>37</sup>

It is most vexatious that my nephew should have lost the seat for South North[umberlan]d through the fault of the persons appointed to take the votes at some of the polling districts, & their conduct deserves even more severe condemnat[io]n than it has met with from his Committee. I sh[oul]d like to know your opin[io]n as to whether the neglect to stamp some of the voting papers arose from mere stupidity & negligence on the part of the persons employed, or whether it was wilful for the purpose of diminishing the number of votes for my nephew?<sup>38</sup>

Grey was aware of Woodman's antiquarian interests, and was able to draw upon his knowledge in order to answer questions about the arms of the Grey family. On 9th April 1863 he wrote:

My brother William<sup>39</sup> has sent me the enclosed letter & impress[io]n of an old seal which has been found in the neighbourhood of Calais. The person who writes the letter is the

<sup>37</sup> Letter of 2nd April 1878. There is a similar passage in Grey's letter of 23rd March.

<sup>38</sup> Letter of 14th June 1878. Grey returns to this topic in his letter of 19th June.

<sup>39</sup> William George Grey (1819-1865), Secretary of the British legation at Paris.

Vice Consul for Holland at Dunkirk & possesses as you will perceive a small property near Calais where the seal he describes has been found. My brother sent him two impressions of seals with our present arms but was quite unable to give him any further informat[i]o[n]. It has occurred to me that from the antiquarian knowledge you possess you might be able to answer M. Cousin's quest[i]o[ns]. If you can you w[oul]d oblige me much by doing so but pray do not take the trouble of seeking for the informat[i]o[n] unless it is easily accessible, as this w[oul]d not be at all worth while.

Unfortunately the enclosure referred to does not seem to have survived. In his letter of 1st May 1863 Grey acknowledged "the full & very curious informat[i]o[n] you have sent to me respecting the seal".

On 22nd November 1892 Woodman sent Grey a draft of the pedigree of the Grey family "prepared for the continuation of Hodgson's *Northumberland*"<sup>40</sup> and stated that he was sure that any suggestions Grey might make would be attended to.

You will see [he went on] the pedigree is curtailed from that of Raine,<sup>41</sup> & confined to the Howick branch.

I think the act of parliament dividing the estates between the families of Chillingham & Howick should be noted. Also after your name the publication of "The correspondence of William

<sup>40</sup> i.e. *A History of Northumberland issued under the direction of the Northumberland County History Committee*, 15 vols., Newcastle upon Tyne, 1893-1940. The pedigree and biographies of the Grey family are given on pp. 351-9 of Vol. II, published in 1895. The following acknowledgement of Woodman's help is printed in the Preface to that volume: "It is also with peculiar pleasure that the committee take this opportunity of thanking Mr William Woodman, of Morpeth, for the help he has given. The Rev. John Hodgson in the preface to one of his volumes, written more than sixty years ago, mentioned Mr Woodman's name with gratitude, and it is a pleasing reflection that one who assisted Mr Hodgson has been able to render not less valuable help to a work which is intended to complete and supplement the labours of the great historian of Northumberland." Hodgson's reference to Woodman is in the Preface to Part II Vol. II of his *History of Northumberland* (Newcastle, 1832): "The active mind and ready pen of Mr Wm. Woodman, solicitor, in Morpeth, left me comparatively little to do in searching for materials for my account of the corporation of that town."

<sup>41</sup> James Raine, *The History and Antiquities of North Durham*, London, 1852. The pedigree of the Grey family is inserted between pp. 326 and 327.

the 4th & the late Earl Grey<sup>42</sup> "The Colonial policy of Lord J. Russell"<sup>43</sup> & "Reform"<sup>44</sup>.

In his reply of 25th November, Grey wrote that he had no remarks to make—"I am so little used to considering subjects of this kind that I feel very incompetent to offer an opin[i]on upon them." He proceeded to give some details of his parliamentary career and publications, prefacing them with a curious correction: "I need only observe that with regard to myself my name is not Henry *George* but only Henry." The current and recent editions of Burke's *Peerage* give his Christian names as Henry George, but as the 1832 edition of that work<sup>45</sup> gives only Henry, it may be that this is an error which crept in from Raine.<sup>46</sup> Oddly enough, there is also some confusion about the Christian name of the third Earl's second youngest brother, who was apparently christened Henry Cavendish,<sup>47</sup> but was always known in the family as Harry, obviously to distinguish him from the third Earl. The latter had the projected inscription on his brother's memorial stone altered from "Henry" to "Harry Cavendish Grey",<sup>48</sup> which seems to imply that he took "Harry" to be the correct Christian name.

In a very different field from that of antiquarian lore Woodman was able to give Grey the benefit of his expertise, or rather in this case that of his employee. Grey for long lamented the inability of his men to produce a good crop of

<sup>42</sup> *The Reform Act, 1832. The Correspondence of the late Earl Grey with His Majesty King William IV and with Sir Herbert Taylor from Nov. 1830 to June 1832. Edited by Henry Earl Grey, 2 vols., London, 1867.*

<sup>43</sup> Henry, Earl Grey, *The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration*, 2 vols., London, 1853. There were two editions of this work in the same year; see J. M. Ward, "The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration", *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand*, 1960, pp. 244-262.

<sup>44</sup> *Parliamentary Government, considered with reference to a Reform of Parliament. An Essay by Earl Grey*, London, 1858. The second edition of this work is cited above in note 28.

<sup>45</sup> Vol. I, p. 547.

<sup>46</sup> *Op. cit.* in note 41.

<sup>47</sup> (1814-1880).

<sup>48</sup> Letters Alex. Macdonald, Field & Co. to third Earl Grey 20th and 25th November 1880.

mangold wurzel at Howick, while Woodman was particularly successful with that root on similar soil at Morpeth. Eventually, Woodman sent his steward to Howick to supervise the planting, and the results were successful.<sup>49</sup>

Grey's regard for Woodman is manifested in frequent enquiries about his health. In his younger days, Woodman was troubled by attacks of "congestion in the head" for which the usual remedy was "a severe blister"; these afflictions became less frequent as he grew older.<sup>50</sup> It is sadly ironical that Woodman, who had played a large part in bringing the main railway line to Morpeth,<sup>51</sup> was himself unable to travel by train in his later years, because it brought on fainting fits.<sup>52</sup>

On the death of Grey's wife in 1879, Woodman wrote one of the most moving letters of condolence, perfect in its simplicity and sincerity:

Allow me to express my sincere sympathy in your great sorrow; which I can well do, as from sad experience, I know after such a loss, life can never again be what it was before.<sup>53</sup>

There are few *bons mots* in these letters, since the talents of neither man lay in that direction, but Woodman's description of experts is possibly worth quoting: "They are generally those who form their conclusions first & seek for their premisses afterwards."<sup>54</sup> This may be matched by a comment of Grey's on Disraeli, which, if not so pithy, is at least as trenchant:

I am surprised that L[or]d Beaconsfield's speech . . . has not called forth stronger expressions of disapproval than it has in the country—for my own part I read it with feelings of disgust & of shame for the nation which is content to be governed by

<sup>49</sup> Letters Grey to Woodman 19th November 1870, 11th and 18th August 1871, 31st January 1872, 25th April 1873, and 9th November 1873.

<sup>50</sup> Letter Woodman to Grey 12th January 1878.

<sup>51</sup> See the article on Woodman in *AA*, *op. cit.* in note 2.

<sup>52</sup> Letter Woodman to Grey 8th July 1884.

<sup>53</sup> Letter Woodman to Grey 19th September 1879.

<sup>54</sup> Letter Woodman to Grey 6th April 1875.

a man who is habitually guilty of such monstrous misrepresentat[io]ns that they might fitly be described by a shorter & stronger word.<sup>55</sup>

As this correspondence continues through the eighteen-eighties and into the early nineties, it has rather an old-fashioned air, both men writing with a formality that was being relaxed by their juniors. To the end, each retained one strikingly archaic graphic device, Woodman the legal “ff” for “F”, and Grey the old long “s”, writing “ss” as “ſs”. Grey’s last letter, written on 1st January 1893, is a fitting conclusion to these records of a lifelong association:

Dear Mr. Woodman,

I have to thank you for your letter & good wishes.

I am sorry to hear you are feeling some of the infirmities of age but though you are somewhat younger than I am you have also arrived at an age when we must expect them. I now feel them very much & I have to trust chiefly to a wheel chair to get from one room to another & cannot attempt to get out except in a carriage & it is a matter of some difficulty getting into it with much help. Since it is now not very far from 70 years since I entered upon the elect[io]n contest in which I had your able help I have reason to be grateful for what powers of body & mind I still retain much reduced as they are.

With my best wishes for your health & comfort believe me  
Y[ou]rs very sincerely

Grey.

<sup>55</sup> Letter Grey to Woodman 15th November 1878.

