

## LORD CHESTERFIELD AT EYTHROPE

The three letters here printed were recently offered for sale by a bookseller at Leicester; the Editor proposes to deposit the originals after publication in the Society's library. Whilst no importance attaches to them they are lively and amusing in themselves, and throw light upon a minute point in our County's history, the residence of the 5th Lord Chesterfield at Eythrope.

Philip Stanhope was third cousin once removed and godson of the very famous 4th Earl, the writer of *Letters* to his successor,<sup>1</sup> but more celebrated as the writer of *Letters* to his natural son, which have been often re-printed. When he died in 1773 his godson was only 18 years old. He had been educated abroad, but does not appear to have acquired great learning, so that one wonders at the qualifications he possessed for election as F.S.A. in 1776. From his actions in later life, one would suppose that an entire *lack* of reverence for what was venerable was a characteristic. In the following year he was living at Eythrope and could then be described as "a very pretty young man and like to prove an agreeable acquisition to the neighbourhood—much life and spirit without extravagance and folly." Again, he seemed "a most agreeable young man, a great deal of good-humoured drol[1]ery, but quite a rattle sometimes."<sup>2</sup> Mme. D'Arblay remarked:<sup>3</sup> "How would that quintessence of high ton, the late Lord Chesterfield, blush to behold his successor! who with

<sup>1</sup> These were first published in 1890 by Lord Carnarvon. They have just been published, under the editorship of Mr. Dobrée, together with the earlier and more famous *Letters*. The last letter to the godson was written when the latter was only fifteen.

<sup>2</sup> *The Bernards of Abington*, Vol. II., pp. 308-10, in letters from Julia, daughter of Sir Francis Bernard.

<sup>3</sup> *Diary and Letters*, 1854, Vol. V., p. 75.

much share of humour, and of good humour also, has as little good breeding as any man I ever met with."

This was just at the time when he had to go to London to attend the trial of Dr. Dodd, his former tutor, whom he had appointed to the living of Wing, but, as is well known, the reverend gentleman forged his patron's signature to a bond for £4,200, and was duly hanged for it, in spite of Dr. Johnson's activities on his behalf.<sup>4</sup>

Horace Walpole thought that the prosecution "did not discover that tender sensibility so natural to and so becoming in a young mind."<sup>5</sup>

Our first letter is evidence that Lord Chesterfield was at Eythrope in 1778; in 1781-2 he was Lord-Lieutenant of Bucks. In 1786 he was still at Eythrope, as our second letter shows, and later in the same year a letter from him to the Marquess of Buckingham has been preserved;<sup>6</sup> that is as good-humoured as is ours and ends thus: "I can assure your Lordship I am much flattered with what you say respecting the road being open between Stowe and Eythrope, and I hope very sincerely no impediments will ever be in the way of a friendly intercourse between the two houses but those which will arise from the nature of Bucks soil and of Bucks roads."

Our last letter proves his association with Eythrope in 1788. From 1798 to 1804 the Earl was Master of the Horse, and was made K.G. in 1805. Ten years later he died, and was buried at Bretby, Derbyshire, where he had pulled down his old seat and allowed

---

<sup>4</sup> On the N. wall of the N. aisle in Wing Church is scratched the figure of a man swinging from a gibbet, by way of delicate allusion to the late Vicar. It is close to the magnificent tomb of Sir Robert Dormer.

<sup>5</sup> *Journal of the Reign of George III.*, Vol. II., p. 123. The Editor is indebted to the kindness of the late Dr. Paget Toynbee for this reference.

<sup>6</sup> In the Dropmore Papers published by the Historical MSS. Commissioners, Report XIII., Appendix 2, p. 266.

Wyatt ("the Destroyer," as Pugin rightly called him), to build him a new one. His interest evidently lay in the north for he pulled down Eythrope about 1810.<sup>7</sup> In rebuilding Bretby he showed his "normal lack of taste," says the *Diet. Nat. Biog.* The Stanhopes were thorough iconoclasts, for Lord Chesterfield's relative, Sir Wm. Stanhope, had allowed Ascot House, Wing, to decay nearly a century before, and neither of them put anything on the site of the building pulled down.

Our three letters seem to bear out Miss Julia Bernard's character of the Earl. The slang of the day which they contain is certainly far-removed from the stately formality of his godfather. He was an enthusiast for hunting, and had he lived in the present day one feels sure that the weekly illustrated press would have been filled with portraits of him and his first wife, Anne Thistlewayte, whom he married in 1777, the year before our first letter. She died in 1798, and the following year he married Lady Henrietta Thynne, daughter of the Marquess of Bath, who predeceased him by two years.

The addressee of the letters has not been identified. As the second letter twice calls him "Thou Naish," one wonders whether he had not some Quaker associations, though clearly not one himself, since our first letter indicates that he was something of a "beau." The only support for the conjecture lies in the fact that several of the obituary notices of persons named Naish which occur in the *Gentleman's Magazine* between 1780 and 1830 refer to them as members of

<sup>7</sup> Little Kimble Church had a clock from Eythrope (Lipscomb, Vol. II., p. 354, but see Cocks' *Bells of Bucks*, p. 437), and "The White Hart," Aylesbury (destroyed when the Corn Exchange was built), drew much material from Eythrope, if J. K. Fowler can be trusted (*Records of Old Times*, p. 112). Fowler was amusing but a most unscholarly person, thus (in *Echoes of Old County Life*, p. 140), he gives an absurd story of the destruction of Eythrope because of the Earl's disappointment in *not* being made Lord Lieutenant. Apparently he was succeeded in that office by the Marquess of Buckingham in 1782, and he was followed by his son, the Duke of Buckingham, on his death in 1813, after the destruction of Eythrope.

the Society of Friends. This particular Edward has not been noticed in the *London Directories* or in *Boyle's Court Guide* for several years before and after 1800,<sup>8</sup> nor will the dates suit several of the name of whom records exist at the Society of Genealogists.<sup>9</sup>

No. 1.

Eythrope, Sept<sup>r</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> 1778

We feel all too much interested My dear Naish in your obliging promise of coming to Eythrope not to remind you of it, as a further inducement I must inform you that you must wrap up your Heart in a very strong case (?) as you will meet here three Beautifull young Ladies. You are naturally so great a Beau that it is unnecessary to remind you *Ladies like Lobsters are with red cloth caught*, besides, a smart Man is a very great Recommendation. You will also meet here an old Acquaintance Mrs. Grenville, Peggy Banks that was.<sup>10</sup> In short I give you my Word you shall be very jolly.

We shall expect you on Sunday,—if it is a fine day we shall make a party and dine at Hampden;<sup>11</sup> if that is the Case I will send word to the [*words omitted, possibly "coach" or "inn at"*] Great Missenden and you may take a Chaise and come to us there.

All here unite in Compts. to you.

Believe me

Dear Naish

Yours very sincerely

CHESTERFIELD

<sup>8</sup> Mr. Ambrose Heal kindly undertook this search.

<sup>9</sup> The Editor is indebted to Mr. W. Bradbrooke for making the search.

<sup>10</sup> This was Margaret, daughter of Joseph Banks, of Revesby, Lincs., who in 1754 married Henry Grenville, brother of Lord Cobham. She died in 1784. Her daughter married Lord Mahon, the 3rd Lord Stanhope.

<sup>11</sup> The owner of Hampden at this time was the second Earl of Buckinghamshire (1722-1793). He had been Envoy Extraordinary to Russia in 1762, and was Viceroy of Ireland at the date of the letter (1766-1780).

No. 2.

Eythrope near Aylesbury

May ninth 1786

Thou Naish/

My Lady and my present party leave me on Saturday and unless you come down on that day and can stay with me till Wednesday or Thursday I shall sport a solo, as the Rev<sup>d</sup> Alex<sup>r</sup> will not return to me till that Time.

I hope you can make this convenient & that you will meet with no Impediment either from Tax Gatherers or Tipstuffs.

Write me word by Thursday's Post whether you can come or not, and if you come, come by the Buckingham Coach which leaves London very early, and is at Aylesbury by 12 o'clock, from whence a Tight Perch from the White Hart will convey you hither and when we meet I will *reimburse*,—do contrive to come if possible, I shall never believe but you may if you will,

I am, Thou Naish,

Yours

CHESTERFIELD

This letter has the full address endorsed, and has been franked by Lord Chesterfield. It is directed

To

Edward Naish Esq<sup>re</sup>N<sup>o</sup> 33 Great Portland Street

Portland Chapel

London

No. 3.

Eythrope March 19<sup>th</sup> 1788

Dear Naish,

I hope our Lordships and his Maj<sup>ty</sup>'s faithfull Commons will give you some release for the Easter Recess,<sup>12</sup> if they should I hope you will not forget the way to Eythrope, as I do assure you we all think it long since we have had the pleasure of seeing you here. The sooner you can come the better, and the longer you can stay the better still. Mr and Mrs T. and the Divine Jenny will be here on Saturday, I hope you can make it convenient to be with us before that Time to receive them. I shall expect with Impatience a Letter from you

[<sup>13</sup>]

down either that Day or the Day following, and I will send my Chaise to meet you & your Baggage at Aylesbury.

When I say this allow me to add that I shall be much better pleased to see you arrive before any letter.

All my ffamily desire their Compliments to you and your Sisters.

I am sincerely

Dear Naish

Ever yours faithfully

CHESTERFIELD

Betty begs to be remembered to Pamela and promises upon his or her arrival here<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> One might suppose from this that Naish was a clerk in Parliament; unfortunately the records preserved at Westminster do not go back much beyond 1850, probably they were lost in the fire of 1834.

<sup>13</sup> One or two lines have been lost by the bottom of the page having been cut off.