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The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford

In Five Volumes

Walpole, Horace

London, 1798

Peeresses

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P E E R E S S E S .

AS a thick quarto volume has been published within these few years of such illustrious women as have contributed to the republic of letters, I shall be very brief on this head, having little to add to what that author has said.*

MARGARET, COUNTESS of RICHMOND
and DERBY,

THE mother of Henry the seventh, to whom she seems to have willingly ceded her *no* right to the crown, while she employed herself in founding colleges, and in acts of more real devotion and goodness than generally attend so much superstition. While she was yet young and a rich heiress, the great duke of Suffolk, minister to Henry the sixth, or rather to queen Margaret, solicited her in marriage for his son, though the king himself wooed her for his half-brother Edmund. On so nice a point the good young lady advised with an elderly gentlewoman, who thinking it too great a decision to take upon herself, recommended her to saint Nicholas, who, whipping on some episcopal robes, appeared to her and declared in favour of Edmund. The old gentlewoman, I suppose, was dead, and saint Nicholas out of the way; for we hear nothing of the lady Margaret consulting either of them on the choice of two other husbands after the death of earl Edmund, by whom she had king Henry. Sir Henry Stafford, the second, bequeathed to his son-in-law a trapper of four new horse harness of velvet; and his mother the duchess of Buckingham, in consideration of the lady Margaret's great affection for literature, gave her the following legacy by her will: "To my daughter

* Memoirs of several ladies of Great Britain who have been celebrated for their writings, &c." by George Ballard, 1752.

Richmond a book of English, being a legend of saints; a book of French, called *Lucan*; another book of French of the epistles and gospels; and a primer with clasps of silver gilt, covered with purple velvet*.

Her virtues are exceedingly celebrated: "her humility was such that she would often say, on condition that the princes of Christendom would combine themselves and march against their common enemy the Turks, she would most willingly attend them and be their laundress in the camp†." And for her chastity, the reverend Mr. Baker, who re-published bishop Fisher's funeral sermon on her, informs us, "that in her last husband's days she obtained a licence of him to live chaste, whereupon she took upon her the vow of celibacy."—A boon as seldom requested, I believe, of a third husband, as it probably would be easily granted.

This princess published

"The mirroure of golde for the sinfull foule, translated from a French translation of a book called *Speculum aureum peccatorum*. Emprynted at London, in Fleetstreet, at the signe of St. George, by Richard Pynfon." Quarto, with cuts on vellum ‡.

"Translation of the fourth book of doctor J. Gerson's treatise of the imitation and following the blessed life of our most merciful saviour Christ." Printed at the end of doctor William Atkinson's English translation of the three first books, 1504.

"A letter to her son is printed in Howard's collection of letters §."

She also, by her son's command and authority, "made the orders [yet extant] for great estates of ladies and noble women, for their precedence, attires, and wearing of barbes at funerals over the chin and under the same ||." They are extant among the Harleian MSS. ¶

* Dugdale.

† Camden's Remains, p. 271, edit. 1651.

‡ Ballard, p. 16.

§ Page 155.

|| Ballard and Sandford.

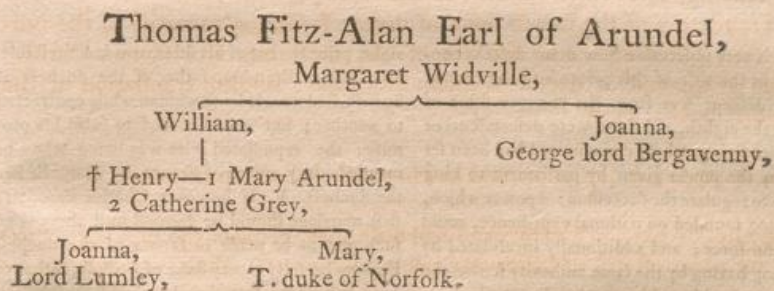
¶ N^o 1107, art. 100.

JOANNA

JOANNA LADY BERGAVENNY.

IN lord Oxford's library was the following book* :

"The monument of matrons, containing seven several lamps of virginity or distinct treatises, compiled by Thomas Bently," black letter, no date. In the beginning was a note written by the reverend Mr. Baker, saying that this book contained several valuable pieces or prayers, by queen Katherine, queen Elizabeth, *the lady Abergavenny and others*. If I guess right, this lady Abergavenny was Joanna, daughter of Thomas Fitz-Alan earl of Arundel, wife of George lord Bergavenny, who died in the twenty-seventh of Henry the eighth, and niece of that bright restorer of literature, Antony earl Rivers. If my conjecture is just, she was probably the foundress of that noble school of female learning, of which [with herself] there were no less than four authoresses in three descents, as will appear by this short table, and by the subsequent account of those illustrious ladies :



* Harl. Catal. vol. i. p. 100.

† This lord had a valuable library, in which were many MSS. saved out of convents at the dissolution, and which descended to his son-in-law

the lord Lumley, after whose death it was purchased by James I. for prince Henry, and is now in the Museum, several of the books having the names of Arundel and Lumley in them.

Vide Birch's Life of Pr. Henry, pp. 161, 163.

LADY

LADY JANE GRAY.

THIS admirable young heroine should perhaps be inserted in the Royal Catalogue, rather than here, as she was no peeress; but having omitted her there, as she is never ranked in the list of kings and queens, it is impossible entirely to leave out the fairest ornament of her sex. It is remarkable that her mother [like the countess of Richmond before mentioned] not only waved her * small pretensions in favour of her daughter, but bore her train when she made her public entry into the Tower †.

Of this lovely scholar's writing we have

“Four Latin epistles,” three to Bullinger, and one to her sister the lady Catherine; printed in a book called “*Epistolæ ab ecclesiæ Helveticæ reformato-ribus, vel ad eos scriptæ, &c.*” Tiguri, 1742, octavo. The fourth was written the night before her death in a Greek testament in which she had been reading, and which she sent to her sister.

* It is very observable how many defects concurred in the title of this princess to the crown. I. Her descent was from the younger sister of Henry the eighth, and there were descendents of the elder living, whose claim indeed had been set aside by the power given by parliament to king Henry to regulate the succession: a power which, not being founded on national expedience, could be of no force; and additionally invalidated by that king having by the same authority settled the crown preferably on his own daughters, who were both living. II. Her mother, from whom alone Jane could derive any right, was alive. III. That mother was young enough to have other children [not being past thirty-one † at the death of king Edward]; and if she had borne a son, his

right, prior to that of his sister, was incontestable. IV. Charles Brandon, father of the duchess of Suffolk, had married one woman while contracted to another; but was divorced to fulfil his promise: the repudiated wife was living when he married Mary queen of France, by whom he had the duchess. V. If however Charles Brandon's first marriage should be deemed null, there is no such plea to be made in favour of the duchess Frances herself; Henry duke of Suffolk, father of Jane, being actually married to the sister of the earl of Arundel, whom he divorced without the least grounds, to make room for his marriage with Frances.

† Strype's Memorials, vol. iii. p. 2.

‡ See Vertue's print of this duchess and her second husband, where her age is said to be thirty-six, in 1559.

“ Her

" Her conference with Feckenham abbot of Westminster, who was sent to convert her to popery *."

" A letter to doctor Harding, her father's chaplain, who had apostatized †."

" A prayer for her own use during her imprisonment ‡."

" Four Latin verses written in prison with a pin §."

" Her speech on the scaffold ||."

Hollinshed and sir Richard Baker say she wrote divers other things, but not where they are to be found. Bale ¶ adds to the above-mentioned

" The complaint of a finner."

" The duty of a christian."

Fox ** mentions

" A letter to her father." I suppose it is the same that is preserved among the Harl. MSS. N^o 2194, art. 13.

There are besides in a manual of prayers, which has been supposed to be the composition of the protector Somerset, two notes written by lady Jane Gray, and another by her husband, which have escaped all the authors that mention her. They are preserved among the Harl. MSS. in the Museum, N^o 2342, art. 35.

* Ballard, p. 195.

|| Ballard, p. 114.

† Printed in the Phoenix, vol. ii. p. 28.

¶ Page 110.

‡ Vide Fox's Acts and Monuments.

** Fox, p. 1420.

§ Ballard, p. 116.

MARY COUNTESS of ARUNDEL,

DAUGHTER of sir John Arundel, married first to Robert Ratcliff earl of Suffex, and afterwards to Henry Fitz-Alan earl of Arundel, as may be seen in the preceding table. She translated from English into Latin

“ Sententias & præclara facta Alexandri Severi imperatoris;” and dedicated it to her father. Extant in manuscript in the king’s library*.

“ De stirpe & familiâ Alexandri Severi, & de signis quæ ei portendebant imperium.”

From Greek into Latin,

“ Selectas sententias septem sapientum Græcorum.”

“ Similitudines ex Platonis, Aristotelis, Senecæ & aliorum philosophorum libris collectas.” Dedicated to her father †.

Learning had now taken a considerable flight since the days of Edward the fourth. sir Thomas More mentions it as very extraordinary that Jane Shore could read and write.

JOANNA LADY LUMLEY,

DAUGHTER-in-law of the lady last mentioned, translated from the original into Latin

“ Isocrates’s oration called Archidamus.” Manuscript in the king’s library.

“ The second and third orations to Nicocles.” Dedicated to her father †.

* Vide Casley’s Catal. p. 169. † Vide Tanner’s Biblioth. Brit. p. 50, and Casley ubi supra. † Ibid.

“ A fourth,

“A fourth, entitled Evagoras.” Dedicated to the same, in the same place.

From Greek into English,

“The Iphigenia of Euripides.” Extant in the same place.

MARY DUCHESS of NORFOLK*,

YOUNGER sister of lady Lumley, and first wife of Thomas duke of Norfolk, who was beheaded on account of the queen of Scots, translated from Greek

“Certain ingenious sentences collected out of various authors.” Dedicated to her father †.

MARY COUNTESS of PEMBROKE,

THE celebrated sister of sir Philip Sidney, wrote

“Poems and translations in verse of several psalms,” said to be preserved in the library at Wilton †. There are a few printed with Francis Davison’s poems §.

“A discourse of life and death, written in French by Philip Mornay, done into English by the countess of Pembroke, dated May 13, 1590, at Wilton.” Printed at London for H. Ponsonby, 1600, 12mo.

* She died in 1557.

† In the king’s library.

‡ Ballard, p. 260.

§ Vide Percy’s Reliques of ancient English poetry, vol. i. p. 293.

"The tragedie of Antonie, done into English by the countess of Pembroke." Lond. 1595, 12mo.

"Three of her letters are printed in sir Toby Matthews's collection."

ELIZABETH, LADY RUSSEL,

OF a family as learned as the Fitz-Alans, was third daughter of sir Anthony Cooke, and sister of the ladies Burleigh and Bacon, whose erudition is sufficiently known. She was married, first to sir Thomas Hobby, ambassador from queen Elizabeth at Paris, where he died 1566; and secondly to John lord Russel, son of Francis, the second earl of Bedford. She survived both her husbands, and wrote Greek, Latin and English epitaphs in verse for them and others of her relations. It is her daughter by her second husband, whose effigy is foolishly shown in Westminster-abbey, as killed by the prick of a needle.

Lady Russel translated out of French into English

"A way of reconciliation of a good and learned man, touching the true nature and substance of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament." Printed 1605; and dedicated to her daughter Anne Russel, wife of lord Henry, Somers^t*, heir of Edward earl of Worcester; with Latin and English verses.

Ballard has printed †

"A letter to lord Burleigh about the extravagance of her youngest son."

* Dugdale, in the pedigree of Russel, calls him Henry Herbert; but there never was a Herbert earl of Worcester. In the pedigree of the Somersets he says rightly, that Henry Somers^t, afterwards marquis of Worcester, married this Anne Russel.

† Ballard, page 195.

ELIZABETH

ELIZABETH COUNTESS of LINCOLN,

DAUGHTER and coheirs of sir Henry Knevet, and wife of Thomas earl of Lincoln, wrote

"The countess of Lincoln's nurserie*." Oxford, 1621, 4°. Addressed to her daughter-in-law Bridget countess of Lincoln. She speaks of it as the first of her printed works, but I can find no account of any other.

ANNE COUNTESS of DORSET and PEMBROKE.

THIS high-born and high-spirited lady was heiress of the Cliffords earls of Cumberland, and was first married to Richard earl of Dorset, whose life and actions she celebrated. Her second match was not so happy, being soon parted from her lord, that memorable simpleton † Philip earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, with whom Butler has so much diverted himself. Anne the countess was remarkably religious, magnificent, and disposed to letters. She erected a pillar in the county of Westmorland on the spot where she took the last leave of her mother, a monument to her tutor Samuel Daniel, the poetic historian, another to Spenser, founded two hospitals, and repaired or built seven churches and six castles ‡. She wrote

* Ballard, p. 267. Wood ascribes this piece to one doctor Lodge, vol. ii. p. 497.

† The first wife of this earl was Susan, daughter of the earl of Oxford. I find a book set forth in her name, called "The countess of Montgomery's Eusebia, expressing briefly the soul's praying robes, by Newton, 1620." *Vide Harl. Catal.* vol. i. p. 100. There is another work with a similar title, called "The countess of Montgomery's Urania, written by the right hon. the lady

Mary Wroath, daughter of the right noble Robert earl of Leicester, and niece to the ever-famous and renowned sir Philip Sidney, knight, and to the most excellent lady Mary countess of Pembroke, lately deceased." It is a tedious rhapsody, concluded by a set of verses, not better poetry for not being better sense.

‡ Vide Ballard, and *Memorials of worthy persons*, p. 92 and 94.

"Memoirs

“Memoirs of her husband Richard earl of Dorset:” never printed.

“Sundry memorials of herself and her progenitors.” Extant in the British Museum.

And the following letter to sir Joseph Williamson secretary of state to Charles the second, who having sent to nominate to her a member for the borough of Appleby, she returned this resolute answer, which though printed in another place *, is most proper to be inserted here:

“I HAVE been bullied by an usurper, I have been neglected by a court, but I will not be dictated to by a subject: your man sha’n’t stand.

ANNE DORSET,
PEMBROKE and MONTGOMERY.”

MARGARET DUCHESS of NEWCASTLE.

HAVING already taken notice of her grace in the course of this work, I shall here only give a list of her works, which fill many folios.

“The world’s olio.”

“Nature’s picture drawn by fancy’s pencil to the life.” “In this volume (says the title) are several feigned stories of natural descriptions, as comical, tragical and tragi-comical, poetical, romantical, philosophical, and historical, &c. &c.” Lond. 1656, folio. One may guess how like this portrait of nature is, by the fantastic bill of the features.

“Orations of divers sorts, accommodated to divers places.” Lond. 1662, fol.

“Plays.” Lond. 1662.

“Philosophical and physical opinions.” Lond. 1663, fol.

* The World, vol. i. N^o XIV.

“Observations upon experimental philosophy. To which is added the description of a new world.” Lond. 1668, folio. One Mr. James Bristow began to translate some part of these philosophic discourses into Latin.

“Philosophical letters.” Lond. 1664, fol.

“Poems and phancies.” Lond. 1664, fol.

“Sociable letters.” Lond. 1664, fol.

“The life of the duke her husband, &c.” Lond. 1667, fol. It was translated into Latin.

“Plays, never before printed.” Lond. 1668, fol.

Her plays alone are nineteen in number, and some of them in two parts. One of them, “The blazing world,” is unfinished, her grace [which seems never else to have happened to her] “finding her genius not tend to the prosecution of it.” To another, called “The presence,” are nine-and-twenty supernumerary scenes. In another, “The unnatural tragedy,” is a whole scene written against Camden’s Britannia: her grace thought, I suppose, that a geographic satire in the middle of a play was mixing the *utile* with the *dulci*. Three volumes more in folio of her poems are preserved in manuscript. Whoever has a mind to know more of this fertile pedant, will find a detail of her works in Ballard’s Memoirs, from whence I have taken this account.

ANNE HYDE, DUCHESS of YORK.

BURNET says *, that she not only wrote well, but actually drew up an account of her husband’s life, of which she showed the bishop one volume finished. As she composed it from the duke’s own journal, perhaps it is the very work which I have mentioned in the article of James II. She also

* Vol. i. page 170.

wrote

wrote the portrait of Mary princess of Orange, mother of king William, while she was her maid of honour, on which occasion Waller addressed a poem to the princess.

MARY COUNTESS of WARWICK,

DAUGHTER of Richard Boyle the great earl of Corke, and wife of Charles Rich earl of Warwick; a lady of great virtues and qualifications, which were described among the lives of sundry eminent persons by Samuel Clark. Her charities were so extensive after she came into possession for her life of her husband's great estate, that it was said, the earl of Warwick had left all his estate to pious uses*. This lady, under the title of the lady Harmonia, wrote an epistle to George earl of Berkeley, affixed to his book; *see above* p. 422: as another copy of it was printed with her funeral sermon in 1678, by doctor A. Walker, who, after a laboured panegyric on her virtues, owns she had two faults, *excess of charity and defect of anger*. She wrote besides,

“Occasional meditations upon several subjects, with pious reflections upon several scriptures.” Lond. 1678. They are much in the style and strain of her brother, the famous Mr. Robert Boyle.

Dr. Walker says that she intended to have written the life of her father, for which she had amassed considerable materials and collections.

ANNE COUNTESS of WINCHELSEA,

AN esteemed poetess, is recorded, with some of her poems, in the General Dictionary. Her

“Poem on the spleen” was printed in Gildon's miscellany, 1701, octavo. Rowe addressed one to her on the sight of it.

* See Collins's Peerage, vol. v. 253, in lord Boyle.

Her

Her poems were printed at London, 1713, octavo; with a tragedy never acted, called "Aristomenes."

A copy of her verses to Mr. Pope are printed before the old edition of his works; and two others of his and hers are in the General Dictionary.

Another little poem in Prior's posthumous works*.

She wrote too †,

"An epilogue to Jane Shore."

"To the countess of Hertford," with her poems.

"The prodigy, a poem." Written at Tunbridge, 1706.

A great number of her poems are said to be extant in manuscript ‡.

SARAH DUCHESS of MARLBOROUGH.

IT is seldom the public receives information on princes and favourites from the fountain-head: flattery or invective is apt to pervert the relations of others. It is from their own pens alone, whenever they are so gracious, like the lady in question, as to have *a passion for fame and approbation* §, that we learn exactly, how trifling and foolish and ridiculous their views and actions were, and how often the mischief they did proceeded from the most inadequate causes. We happen to know indeed, though he was no author, that the duke of Buckingham's repulses in very impertinent amours, involved king

* Vol. i. p. 20.

† Vide Cibber's Lives of the poets, vol. iii. 325.

‡ General Dict. vol. x. Ballard, page 431.

In the miscellany [vol. ii.] called "Buckingham's Works," I find a very silly poem ascribed

to a LADY SANDWICH. This should be the lady lately deceased at Paris, daughter of the celebrated earl of Rochester: but she inherited too much wit to have written so ill.

§ Vide her Apology, p. 5.

James and king Charles in national quarrels with Spain and France. From her grace of Marlborough we may collect, that queen Anne was driven to change her ministry, and in consequence the fate of Europe, because she dared to affect one bed-chamber-woman, as she had done another. The duchess could not comprehend how the cousins * Sarah Jennings and Abigail Hill could ever enter into competition, though the one did but kneel to gather up the clue of favour, which the other had haughtily tossed away; and which she could not recover by putting The whole duty of man into the queen's hands to teach her friendship †.

This favourite duchess, who, like the proud duke of Espernon, lived to brave the successors in a court where she had domineered, wound up her capricious life, where it seems she had begun it, with an apology for her conduct. This piece, though weakened by the prudence of those who were to correct it, though maimed by her grace's own corrections, and though great part of it is rather the annals of a wardrobe than of a reign, yet has still curious anecdotes, and a few of those sallies of wit which fourscore years of arrogance could not fail to produce in so fantastic an understanding. And yet by altering her memoirs as often as her will, she disappointed the public as much as her own family. However, the chief objects remain; and one sees exactly how Europe and the back stairs took their places in her imagination and in her narrative. The revolution left no impression on her mind but of queen Mary turning up bed-clothes; and the protestant hero, but of a selfish glutton, who devoured a dish of peas from his sister-in-law. In fact, events passing through the medium of our passions must strike different beholders in very different lights: had Marlborough himself written his own history from his heart, as the partner of his fortunes did, he would probably have dwelt on the diamond sword which the emperor gave him, and have scrupulously told us how many carats each diamond weighed. I say not this in detraction from his merits and services; it is from our passions and foibles that Providence calls forth its greatest purposes. If the duke could have been content

* In the notes to Dryden's Poems, edit. 1760, vol. ii. p. 44, it is said, that the duchess acted Mercury in the masque of Calisto, at court, 1675.

I should rather think it was her sister, who was

maid of honour, and afterwards duchess of Tirconnel; so much celebrated in Grammont.

† Vide her Apology, p. 268.

with an hundred thousand pounds, he might probably have stopped at the taking of Liege: as he thirsted for a million, he penetrated to Hockstet.

Mrs. Abigail Hill is not the only person transmitted to posterity with marks of the duchess's resentment. Lord Oxford, *honest Jack Hill, the ragged boy, the Quebec general*, and others, make the same figure in her history that they did in her mind.—Sallies of passion not to be wondered at in one who has sacrificed even the private letters of her mistress and benefactress!

We have nothing of her grace's writing but the

“Apology for the conduct of the dowager duchess of Marlborough from her first coming to court to the year 1710, in a letter from herself to my lord ****.” Lond. 1742.

FRANCES DUCHESS of SOMERSET

HAD as much taste for the writings of others, as modesty about her own.