

## CHAPTER I

## COUNTY CAPITAL

THE first known attempt at a picture of the city of Lincoln seems to have been that of the engraver Samuel Buck about 1725, when he was at the beginning of his career; being a Lincolnshire man, he began near home. In 1743, out of a greater experience, he and his brother Nathaniel produced their better known view of Lincoln from the south-west. It shows the Minster and the castle on the hilltop, a cluster of houses about them and on the hillside, a long ribbon of houses punctuated by church towers across the valley, and Brayford pool to the west of it.<sup>1</sup> The hill comes as a surprise to those who think of Lincolnshire as a duckpool, and indeed the explanation of it is not obvious from a glance at a map of England. A long limestone ridge running north and south is interrupted by a gap through which the river Witham, after flowing north along the western side of the ridge, passes on its way south-eastwards to the Wash. The old walled city stood on and below the crest of the hill on the north side of the gap. The hilltop is about 200 feet above the valley, and in its steepest part the hill has a gradient of 1 in 4.

When Horace Walpole approached the city from the south he looked across the valley to the cathedral, noting how high it stood; and he noted also the rich vale, watered as he thought by the branches of the river, and the Swanpool to the west. The limestone ridge, which falls away sharply to the west, he described as a natural and regular terrace commanding for some miles a rich and beautiful view.<sup>2</sup> The view from the west was described by Robert Southey, who had crossed the river Trent by Dunham ferry:

The nearer we approached the more dreary was the country—it was one wide fen—but the more beautiful the city, and the more majestic the

<sup>1</sup> See Plate 1. ‘Nathaniel and Samuel Buck were really meritorious artists; and we must be grateful to them for many memorials of fine buildings that would otherwise have been totally lost. The earlier drawings were rude and wretchedly deficient in accuracy of detail. They began in Lincolnshire, their native county, and so we have the poorest specimens of their works. Their latter works, of 1740 and after that time, were very superior in skill and accuracy to the former ones. I want to pick up a large print of the Bucks, dated, I think, in 1724... It is a coarse engraving...’ (E. J. Willson to John Ross, 21 June 1849. Ross, Corr. 1). There is a copy of the large print in the Usher Art Gallery, Lincoln. Samuel Buck was working in Lincoln with his ‘valuable friend Dr Stukeley’ in July 1725 (Bodl. Gough Maps 16, f.18, ex. inf. Miss Molly Barratt). The views of particular buildings in the county by Samuel were mostly published in 1726. Charles Dibdin said that Buck, ‘a learned antiquarian’, was a native of Lincolnshire (*Observations on a Tour* (1801), I, 378).

<sup>2</sup> *Journals of Visits to Country Seats* (Walpole Society xvi), 71.

cathedral: Never was an edifice more happily placed; it overtops a city built on the acclivity of a steep hill—its houses intermingled with gardens and orchards. To see it in full perfection, it should be in the red sunshine of an autumnal evening, when the red roofs and red brick houses would harmonise with the sky and with the fading foliage.<sup>1</sup>

But Southey was a poet; other witnesses said more of the general air of dilapidation and decay which the city wore.<sup>2</sup> It had been decaying for a very long time, and having changed hands several times during the Civil War, had suffered much damage to houses and churches. Its powers of recovery were small, and it was to be several generations before the damage was made good.

Daniel Defoe, an experienced journalist who seldom fails the local historian of his period, was chiefly interested in social and economic conditions, and he gave a brisk and scathing account of the city: only the cathedral moved him. He thought it a very noble structure, its situation being more to advantage than that of any other cathedral in England. He noticed that the steepest part of the ascent of the hill was the best part of the city for trade and business, although the street between the upper and lower town was so steep and strait that coaches and horses were obliged to fetch a compass another way, as well on one hand as on the other. The only part of Lincoln he thought it tolerable to call a city was the part between the castle and the cathedral; here he found some very good buildings and a great deal of very good company, several families of gentlemen having houses there, besides those of the cathedral clergy.<sup>3</sup>

The importance of the hill in the history of the city can hardly be exaggerated. It is Lincoln's principal physical feature. It had been scaled boldly by the Romans, whose Ermine Street became the north–south axis first of their *colonia* on the crest of the hill, then of a southward Roman extension of the walled area, enclosing the hillside, and later of the suburb of Wigford across the valley; it is known in part as the High Street and in part by the modern names of the Strait, Steep Hill and Bailgate.<sup>4</sup> The hill has generally been regarded as impracticable for wheeled traffic, and after Colonel Sibthorp had driven down it in a four-in-hand for a wager, the

<sup>1</sup> *Letters from England*, ed. J. Simmons (1951), pp. 266–7. His visit was in the period 1803–7.

<sup>2</sup> See Abraham de la Pryme's *Diary* (Surtees Society, 1869), pp. 19, 87; Lord Harley's comments in *H.M.C. Portland*, vi, 86; and for other references, *T. & S.L.* p. 201.

<sup>3</sup> *Tour through England and Wales* (Everyman edn), II, 91–4. See below, p. 138. The *Tour* was first published in 1724–6, but the material for it was no doubt gathered over a lengthy period. Defoe was in Lincoln as a government agent in 1712 (*H.M.C. Portland*, v, 224).

<sup>4</sup> Some of the street names ending in *gate*, in spite of their deceptive air, were invented in the nineteenth century (see *M.L.* p. 33).

city council placed a rail across it to prevent similar pranks in the future. As Defoe noticed, roads slightly less steep made detours to the east and west, both within the walls, of which the western one, the present Michaelgate (also a modern name) and Hungate, was known as the old coach road, because up it were dragged the coaches, with all hands pushing behind. It was difficult to maintain a surface on such a gradient: the middle of the coach road was from time to time worn almost into a ditch by the washing of heavy rains, and the parish had then to fill it with a few loads of stones. They were soon washed away.<sup>1</sup> To the east of the town wall an oblique road—shown by Buck—ran north-eastwards from the lower city and entered one of the gateways of the cathedral close at a sharp angle. The road in parts was so steep that many accidents happened to heavy loads passing along it.<sup>2</sup> The obstacle of the hill meant that visitors from the north put up their horses and carriages in the upper city and those from the south in the lower city, and so there were many inns both above and below the hill.

Defoe had noticed the social distinction; with it the hill also marked an administrative one. At the Norman Conquest the upper Roman enclosure had been annexed to the castle, which stands in its south-west quarter, as an outer bailey: it was and is still called the Bail. With the castle it became parcel of the duchy of Lancaster, whose steward held a great court leet and court baron in the shire hall of the castle, and received castle guard rents from houses in the Bail, and tolls from the fish and vegetable markets on Castle Hill. The castle was the centre of the county administration: the judges held assize and the sheriff his court in the shire hall there, and there also was the county gaol. On the east side of the Bail, and partly carved out of it, is the cathedral close, walled in the fourteenth century, once owned and governed by the dean and chapter. Until 1835 the Bail and Close were part of the county at large and not of the city, and together they formed a petty sessional division of the parts of Lindsey.<sup>3</sup> They were surrounded by lands which were part of the municipal borough, but the phrase ‘abovehill’ was normally used especially to describe these areas which were the headquarters of diocese and county. Here, within mouldering Roman defences and medieval walls and gateways<sup>4</sup> lived a

<sup>1</sup> Willson, v, 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v, 56. In Thomas Sympton’s time (c. 1737) there lay on the brow of the hill several huge pieces of rock and part of the foundations of the Close wall, cemented together as hard and solid as the rock itself, and said to have been thrown down by an earthquake (‘Adversaria’, p. 272). For later improvements to the road, see below, p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> See *M.L.* chapters v and vi.

<sup>4</sup> Much of the Roman wall was standing in the early nineteenth century: Stukeley had shown the northern half of the Bail with wall and ditch, making his plan by pacing as he

tiny society of clergy and gentry of whom much must be said later. As the century went on there grew up a social adjunct to the Close in the parish of St Peter in Eastgate. North of the Bail was the suburb of Newport, a remote and neglected part of the city where there lived labourers in the city fields, and south of it, on the top of Steep Hill, was the poor parish of St Michael. A later writer, having excepted the central part of the upper city, said that the rest consisted of a number of ugly inconvenient narrow streets, or rather lanes, formed by houses mean and disgusting in the extreme, and he added that the abode of poverty and wretchedness in and about Fishmarket Hill (in St Michael's parish) could only be considered as a disgrace to the city, and called loudly for removal.<sup>1</sup> So closely did the gentry and the poorest class jostle each other.

The first moves towards improvement of a worn-out and war-damaged medieval city were taken in the abovehill area as the gentry and clergy slowly recovered from the war. In 1688 an attempt (not, perhaps, successful) was set on foot to build a new shire house in the castle.<sup>2</sup> St Mary Magdalene's church was rebuilt by the parishioners in 1695, and the chancel of St Paul's in 1700. New houses—the red brick and tile that Southey saw—followed. Part of the ruins of the bishop's palace was leased in 1727 with a view to its being made habitable, occupation being reserved to the bishop during visitations.<sup>3</sup> In 1736 John Disney, of a puritan family of gentry, was buying land in Eastgate, just beyond the Close, and clearing part of an old inn, the White Bull.<sup>4</sup> He employed Abraham Hayward, a Lincoln builder, to build him a house there: and Disney Place still stands, its back to the road. Sir Cecil Wray, the eleventh baronet of Glentworth, built Eastgate Court across the Roman foss; it was drawn by Buck in his sketch book.<sup>5</sup> The Archdeaconry house (now become flats) was built by the Reynolds family soon after 1764. Other houses were being repaired and improved, and in 1734 the dean and chapter allowed their tenant at the White Hart to take down part of the Close wall for improvements.<sup>6</sup> It was noted in 1764 that there were many good houses in the modern taste in Lincoln towards the top, though the buildings were generally old.<sup>7</sup>

walked about the city (see Plate 12). The plan is inaccurate in some details, but gives a good general impression. The Close wall was maintained and its gates closed at night until the making of the turnpike road through the Close under an Act of 1756 (see below, p. 123).

<sup>1</sup> *Lincoln and Lincolnshire Cabinet* (1827), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Cal. Treasury Books*, VIII (1685–9), p. 2006.

<sup>3</sup> L.A.O. Bishop's Possns, leases, 55.

<sup>4</sup> L.A.O. Chapter Acts 1731–61, f.29r; *Archivists' Report*, 10, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> In the Bodleian Library: Gough MS Linc. 15. Deeds of part of the site now in L.A.O., Misc. Dep. 110.

<sup>6</sup> Chapter Acts 1731–61, f.21r.

<sup>7</sup> *England Illustrated*, I, 404.

The gentry came and went; they were often in their manor houses, and the richer or more fashionable of them in London for the season; and the cathedral dignitaries resided only by turns, moving on to their other preferments. There were a few doctors and lawyers, and persons of independent means, and one or two private schools. In the periods between the excitements of assizes, quarter sessions, visitations, races, elections and musters, life was slow and dull. Apart from bringing up their families and attending to domestic affairs, the ladies could only look backward to the last ball or rout or forward to the next one, and gossip in their small circle about neighbours or visitors, and about births, marriages and deaths, especially in their financial effects. The fortunate habit of the Banks family at Revesby of keeping their letters has preserved a few glimpses of this society. Mrs Chaplin of Blankney wrote to Mrs Banks that she knew Miss Hales wrote so often that there was no need to tell any Lincoln news, though there was subject enough to employ many pens; and she went on: poor Lady Delorain has suffered much, and daily suffers more. They pull her to peices, and I think have been exceeding rude to her, but I hope she has spirit enough not to regard 'em, and those that marry into the town of Lincoln had need have a large share to be able to stand the shock.

Miss Hales lived up to her reputation. She wrote that she had a thousand things to tell about the Deloraines when they met; and she had some news of an impending marriage which she was only willing to trade in exchange for news about whom Mrs Banks's father was hoping to marry:

Miss Ball had discarded Mr Beck, Miss Molly Cunington has for certain refused my cousin Nevill. I am quite angry at our Ladys over rateing themselves. It spoils the market for the rest.

And again:

Mr Jo. Banks I hear has made his proposeall to Miss Cassia. Lady Wray tells it so, they will be in town in a fortnight. Ten thousand down he desires, and twenty more at his death, which I think will just fetch him. We do nothing but marry and stuf ourselves with the turkey diet.<sup>1</sup>

It is satisfactory to add that Miss Hales at last was married herself, though outside her own social circle: she wed a London grocer, said to have been the natural son of Sir Cecil Wray.

Mrs Massingberd, who wrote a little later, was not such a rattle. She wrote of the kindness of Lady Dunmore, who was described as 'very high and stately in her carriage'. Lord Dunmore had been convicted of high treason in the jacobite rising of 1745, but pardoned and confined to the

<sup>1</sup> 6–7 May 1733, 19 Jan. 1736, *Banks Family Letters*, ed. J. W. F. Hill (L.R.S.), pp. 147, 148, 176.

city for life.<sup>1</sup> He had ensured that his heir was brought up in loyalty to the reigning royal family, and to this end had sent him to the new university in Hanover. Mrs Massingberd said of an impending festivity that the duke of Ancaster for some disgust did not promote it, but

Lady Monson will doubtless shine away and the Familys of Whichcott and Maddison be in high felicity whatever others are, indeed I don't lament being absent, for as I don't partake in any diversions, 'tis duller than other times.<sup>2</sup>

On 13 January 1753 she mentioned that the town had been quite full of gentlemen on account of the drainage from Lincoln to Boston, and the previous week there had been a great cocking between Lord Monson and Lord Vere Bertie. She added an account of the visit of the young Lord Scarbrough and his bride to Lincoln on the way to his house at Glentworth. The wedding party were met near Lincoln by the mayor and aldermen. Scarbrough and his brother-in-law Sir George Savile alighted from the first coach and mounted their horses, which like themselves were adorned with gold and silver. Attended by Mr Chaplin, his friends and the mob, they proceeded slowly through the town, the bride in an open landau, and others in coaches and post chaises. They went without stopping to Glentworth, but later visited the below town assembly, where they were met by the families of Lord Vere Bertie, Lord George Manners, Sir Francis Dashwood and others, including many of the Lincoln ladies that had the convenience of coaches. Thereafter they kept open house at Glentworth in the most magnificent manner. Miss Whichcot described the entertainment there: two courses and dessert at dinner, the raspberries and cream being full of ice—no great rarity in January—with sweetmeats in brandy. They danced until supper, the second course of which was served on gilt plate, a present from the Prince of Wales and bearing his arms.<sup>3</sup> Everything was as elegant as French cooks and confectioners from London could make it, the attendants being numerous and dressed in laced clothes and white silk stockings.<sup>4</sup>

Here was food for gossip for a long time. Mrs Massingberd had commented earlier that the Lincoln races did not answer her expectations. There was not half as much company as she had seen at Nottingham, but she remembered that she was growing older:

<sup>1</sup> He was probably tried at Lincoln; the trials of rebels were held there and at Carlisle and York (*H.M.C. Carlisle*, p. 202).

<sup>2</sup> Mrs Maddison was the mother of the new Lady Monson and the sister of Thomas Whichcot, the member for the county. She lived in Lincoln.

<sup>3</sup> Scarbrough's father, the third earl, who died in 1752, had been treasurer to Frederick, Prince of Wales, 1738–51.

<sup>4</sup> 'Massingberd Family Letters' in *A.A.S.R.* xxiii (1896), 300, 303, 311; L.A.O. Anderson, 5/1/20. During the latter part of her life Mrs Massingberd lived at the Cantilupe Chantry in Minster Yard, where she died in 1762.

I confess I was only indifferent to the entertainments, and went with the crowd to ill-acted plays, a foolish medley and a dusty assembly with great tranquillity of spirit, and passed through the whole round of fatigue with as little delight or disgust as anyone in the company.<sup>1</sup>

It was a small society. The qualification for membership could hardly have been defined, but its members could be listed without much difficulty.<sup>2</sup> Even within this small society there were gradations of rank, and the most select circle was reserved for the nobility and some of the more fashionable families who had a place in London society and who brought London manners back into the country; between them and the rustic gentry who never aspired beyond the high sheriff's ball there was a great gulf fixed. A dean's wife might seek to enter the smaller circle; if she were the daughter of a bishop and the daughter-in-law of a lord chancellor there could be no doubt of her acceptance. Mary Yorke was the only daughter and heir of Dr Isaac Maddox, bishop of Worcester, and brought a great fortune to her husband James Yorke, the youngest son of Lord Hardwicke.<sup>3</sup> They regularly travelled between Lincoln, the dean's living at Reading, and her estate at Forthampton in Gloucestershire; and they had the entry to the highest whig circles. She was a good letter writer, and happily many of her letters have survived. With her knowledge of a wider world she was able to see the abovehill society in Lincoln from the outside as well as from within. She remarked that she was so used to travelling that her clothes and things almost jumped into their proper places; exile she accepted with good humour, but writing from Lincoln she did once confess that she would be glad when her husband's residence was out and she was once again within tolerable reach of her friends.

<sup>1</sup> L.A.O. Massingberd, 13/32.

<sup>2</sup> The list of subscribers to *Poems on Several Occasions* by the Rev. John Langhorne, vicar of Hackthorn (1760), would be a good starting point. The most exclusive circle is given in Mrs Hobart's list of guests at a masquerade at Nocton in 1767 (Sir Charles Anderson, *Lincoln Pocket Guide* (1892 edn), p. 54).

<sup>3</sup> Lord Hardwicke wrote to the duke of Newcastle on 17 June 1762: 'I am going to marry my youngest son, the Dean; and perhaps you may be a little surprized when I tell you to whom. It is to Bishop Maddox's daughter and only child. Her mother is a very worthy lady, and the daughter a very deserving girl; and tho she has no money portion, is a great fortune. She has a real estate of £1500 per annum, £1200 per annum in Gloucestershire, which the Bishop purchased of the Dowdeswell family, and a fee simple house in Arlington Street of £300 per annum. All this is settled to my satisfaction, and I hope in God it will succeed well, and think it may be completed in a very short time' (P. C. Yorke, *Life and Correspondence of Philip Yorke, Earl of Hardwicke* (1913), II, 597). The Rev. William Cole (*Blecheley Diary* (1931), p. 37) described the Yorkes as a family 'remarkable to a proverb for foresight in their matches; all the brothers who are married having taken prudential caution that the ladies they attached themselves to should be able to maintain themselves'.

31 December 1764. Lincoln is *never* remarkable for furnishing anecdotes, and at this season of the year less than in summer, as the distance of the neighbouring families prevent their coming to the Town now the roads are bad and the days short. . . . The weather here has been remarkably mild during this winter till within this fortnight. . . . therefore we must think ourselves particularly fortunate in having taken up our abode here in so good a season. We have spent our Christmas not unpleasantly considering all things. Lord Hardwicke from his kind attention to us has inabled us to bear our part in the hospitality of the season. We have received the two does from Wimpole in consequence of his orders, and desire he would accept of our thanks for them. We were so lucky as to entertain General Parslow upon a haunch of one of them. He was in his way to Mr Secretary Weston's with his daughter. There have been many balls in our neighbourhood, but as my dancing days are over, and my resolution not good to encounter bad roads by night I declined them all. My amusements therefore have been confined to cards and musick within the purlieu of Lincoln. Of this kind is our history. . . . Our house here is large, warm and airy, and therefore we shall be unwilling to part with it till we can find some comfortable abode [in London].

16 October 1766. Mr and Mrs Cox spent ten days with us, and we sent them home again fully convinced that Lincoln is the gayest place in the world, for in the course of that time I carried them to two Assemblys and two or three plays, indeed we were obliged to his Royal Highness the Duke of York for some of the splendour of our entertainments, and he in return seemed perfectly pleased with the reception he met with, but his curiosity not tempting him to see the Minster, the Dean had the good fortune to be excused from all ceremonies on his part.

The duke was fresh from Doncaster races; and the Minster could not compete with a ball in the Assembly Rooms.

She has an interesting comment on the isolation of places at a distance from London, and the little stir that great events there made:

22 April 1769. Perhaps your Ladyship will hardly believe that tho we have been at Lincoln three weeks we have scarcely heard the names of Wilks, Lutterell &c. three times since we came; for my own part I am convinced in general that the spirit is confined within a circle of 50 miles round London; they say a few of the lower people begin to be a little infected with it here, so we had by way of precaution an excellent sermon upon the subject last Sunday. I will not say who preached, for fear I should be suspected of partiality. I called it reading the Riot Act in the church (as it seems they have done in the Assembly Rooms at Bath). I am told the people of this place intend to *call* for it again when wanted, as it did a great deal of good. You see the spirit cannot be very violent that is silenced by a sermon.

May 1769. In this place I never hear a word upon the subject,<sup>1</sup> and indeed to say the truth the people in general of Lincoln have the least curiosity for anything out of their own circle that ever I met with, there ideas in general being chiefly confined to three things, eating, going to Church, and card playing, but there are some exceptions, and some few very agreeable people.

<sup>1</sup> I.e. Wilkes's *North Briton*.



I would not have this account of them transpire for the world, but it puts me in mind that I must immediately relieve your Ladyship from this dull scrawl by getting myself dressed for dinner, as Lady Vere Bertie &c. &c. dine with us to-day; we have I think since we came had above *three score* gentlemen and ladies to eat their mutton with us, as they call it, but our country neighbours are many of them not come down.

*12 June 1769.* I must do the Inhabitants of this place the justice to say, that they are good natured enough to be pleased with our living amongst them, and will I don't doubt regret our departure next week, at least till we are succeeded by another residentiary. Last Wednesday we had a dinner, *pour faire le bon bouche*, for a dozen militia officers, and an assembly at night for all my acquaintance in general, but the most agreeable part of the entertainment was conducted by the Dean without my knowledge, which was a little concert consisting of a French horn and four or five other instruments below stairs for the amusement of the sitters by. Perhaps a *rout* in *June* may sound quite as ridiculous as *hot rolls and butter* in July. I believe it even appeared so to my daughter Peggy, for she collected a vast nosegay together of honey suckle &c. and laid them in the drawing room that morning, for she told me I had invited such a number of people she was afraid the room would be *fusty*. Lincoln ideas however differ in these points, and to them we conform in everything but playing cards ourselves. P.S. The Dean dines out to-day, and this is the only evening I have not been engaged for this last fortnight. We expect the same amusement next week.

*11 April 1770.* Little Polly is very much amused with the circle of ladies that she sees every afternoon placed in the drawing rooms. She will stay there two hours together observing their dress and admiring their fans &c. with the true taste of a London fine lady.

*19 January 1771.* I resigned myself to the common ideas of this place, such as bells ringing, clocks striking, men drinking, women talking, and children dancing eternally. . . . We have had extream sharp weather here for these last ten days, frost and snow a foot deep, but I do not at all regret it, as I believe it is a very happy change for this Town and neighbourhood, which were both becoming unhealthy and liable to putrid disorders for want of frost. . . the Dean escapes cold amazingly considering what whirlwinds and storms he encounters in his way to Church. With Mr Stewards leave I must dignify Lincoln Minster with the Title of the Temple of the Winds, for it really deserves it. I am just come from thence myself and believe I shan't get the use of my fingers again this two hours. It is an observation by the inhabitants of this place that the air upon the top of this hill is much keener than upon the hills in our neighbourhood which are still more northerly. The reasons for it I don't know, except for being a point surrounded on three sides by a deep valley, alias fen, which I suppose collects the wind.

*23 November 1771.* The Dean is seldom without a slight cold in this situation, and I have just got one in my head which makes me very stupid and affects my eyes a little; but we are not at present at leisure to nurse ourselves, being obliged to go out to dinners &c. almost every day. After all it is a sad thing to spend one's time in a manner that one cannot look back upon with the least satisfaction of mind; to sacrifice day after day and nobody be the better for it. In the course of this week we have been asked to four dinners, two assemblies, a play and a

concert, not to mention company we have had at our own house; and we must not refuse these more public diversions of assemblys &c. as they are generally set on foot and countenanced by some particular person whose name they bear. The common subscription ones I never go to, nor do I ever play at cards, or admit them into my drawing room, so that I hope by degrees to secure some hours of an evening to myself and children. This however is a distant prospect, being already engaged for five days in the next week. The moonlight nights favour our present excursions into the country, where our dining visits would be very uncomfortable if it were not for the fine weather and the bright moon to come home by. . . this situation like many others upon the tops of high hills is most remarkably damp; and what is particularly unfortunate at that time, all the houses on the north side the Minster (except our own) smoaked, nay even the Deanery is not allways quite free from this inconvenience, tho thanks to our stoves we are much better off than our neighbours. I wish I could find any method for the Dean's sake of drying the Church as easily as I can our old house; for on a foggy day, and a south west wind, I have seen water stand upon the pavement in the Church just as if it had been mopped.

At the end of 1773 came the prospect of an offer of the bishopric of St Davids, which filled Mary with dismay, for Lincoln deanery had produced nearly £1000 a year, whilst St Davids, which would be more expensive, would bring in only £700 or £800. The dean was however able to ensure that he could continue to hold his deanery with the bishopric.

*12 November 1775.* With respect to ourselves we have hitherto proceeded in our residence with admirable success, made visits, in Town and out, and received near five dozen of our dining Company, which I look upon as having got through a material part of the duty of a residence; so that if the Bishop should be called to London (which some people have imagined might be the case during the present Session of Parliament) we shall not be very much in debt to our neighbours here. The country ones I have seen the most of are Lady Vere Bertie and Mrs Hubbart, the former (poor woman) seems to be going very fast with the dropsy, the latter, whom I spent a day with last week, is all spirits as usual; and preparing a long gallery at Nockton for a play (the *Journey to London*) which is to be acted in the Christmas holidays; the theatre is plain and neat, indeed very little more than benches set across a long galery, and a little stage raised at one end; no change of scenes, but only two neat ones let down at the end. . . Nobody goes but by invitation (about sixty people generally) and no list is published of the Company. The actors are chiefly their own family and Lord George Sutton's. None but people of fashion are admitted to any part of the performance *on or off* the stage; now the thing is, my Bishop says it will not be proper for him to be a spectator. Mrs Hubbart is of a different opinion (and I am of her side). She says she shall be quite disappointed if he does not come. I wanted him to promise if another Bishop (whom she expects) should not disappoint her, whether that would not prevail upon *him*. Pray, dear Madam, determine this point between us; I will promise for him he shall sit quiet, and still, upon a back bench, and never once jump upon the stage whatever blunders may be made. I forgot to mention the farce is the *Guardian*. . . .