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978-1-108-07736-1 - Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century:  
Consisting of Authentic Memoirs and Original Letters of Eminent Persons, and Intended  
as a Sequel to the 'Literary Anecdotes': Volume 3

John Nichols

Excerpt

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( 1 )

ILLUSTRATIONS  
OF THE  
LITERATURE  
OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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GEORGE HARDINGE, Esq.

I feel a melancholy satisfaction in opening a new Volume, with an ardent wish to preserve a brief but faithful memorial of the social virtues, the talents, and the unbounded benevolence, of a justly valued Friend, and excellent Literary Coadjutor, George Hardinge, esq. the descendant of an antient Family, long seated at King's Newton\*, in the parish of Melbourne†, in the county of Derby.

Henry Hardinge, of Newton, gent. died in December 1612, s. p. ; and was succeeded by his brother ; whose son Robert Hardinge‡ was a Chief Justice in Eyre, and Recorder of Newark. He was of great use to King Charles I. in his conflict with the Rebels ; and for his Loyalty was knighted by

\* Their antient and noble mansion in this hamlet is now the property of Lord Viscount Melbourne.

† Where several monumental memorials of the Hardinges still remain in a separate chancel or chapel of the church, called "The Hardinge chancel." See Appendix, No. I.

‡ The following Letter will illustrate the family history :

"This, for the worthily much honoured his good Freind William Dugdale, esq. Norroy King of Armes, att his Chamber in the Heralds Office, neare Doctors Comons, in London—respectively presented.

"WORTHY SIR, *King's Newton, 25<sup>o</sup> Januarii, 1663.*

"About a week since, your Letter, directed to Mr. Nicholas Hardinge, att King's Newton, com. Derby, comeing to my hands, supposing you hereby meant myselfe but mistooke my name, and knowing your hand-writinge, I opened it. And  
VOL. III. B hereby

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[More information](#)

## 2 ILLUSTRATIONS OF LITERATURE.

King Charles II. at Melburne in 1674. He married Anne, the daughter, and eventually the heiress, of Sir Richard Sprignell, of Highgate, Baronet.

Of her Brother, who died in his youth, Sir Peter Lely has painted a Portrait, which is now in Sir Richard Hardinge's collection, and is a *chef d'œuvre* of that exquisite Artist.

hereby you say that I failed to wait on you to prove my armes ; and this week accyidentally meeting your servant, Mr. Hall of Nottingham, inquiring the reason, hee told mee you was to perfect your Book of Visitac'on, and deliver it upp speedily. I have therefore, to prevent mistakes, sent this to assure you that had I not, ever since Trinity Terme last, when I mett you in the Tally-office at Westminster, bin dangerously sick of the scurvy and black jaundice, and an hydropicall humour, so that I was forced to neglect the two last Termes and my business at Leicester as Recorder, and Justice in Eyre's seat, also as the King's Attorney, till this last weeke, when, my Lord Newcastle sending for mee, I adventured to Welbeck, and by a new cold am somewhat relapsed ; I had sooner (and should have this Terme) waited on you : but now I shall not bee able to travell ; so that I have desired my brother, this bearer, to attend you ; but my deeds are here in the country, so that I cannot send them with safety to London. But, Sir, you may please to remember, to prove my Pedigree, I shewed you, att your chamber in the Heralds'-office, two old deeds, sealed with white wax, to which Robert the sonne of Nicholas and Nicholas the sonne of Robert of Melburne were partyes, to each whereof five or six others of Melburne and de Newton were witnesses, who had no surnames in the deeds ; and the lands I now have. To which you have objected, that these were all named Melburnes ; to which I answered, there could not be probably five or six Melburnes and Newtons att one tyme. And I then shewed you another deed, 7<sup>o</sup> Henry VIIIth, whereby my *tres-ayell* Nicholas Harding de Melborne, gent. then so writtén, sonne of Robert de Melburne, setts out a joynture to Agnes de Newton, and seales it with a cheveron in green wax. I then shewed you an old bond from Astell to my grandfather Nicholas Hardinge de Melburne, gent. conditioned for the performance of covenants on a purchase made by my great-grandfather. And then my great-grandfather Nicholas Hardinge de Melburne, gent. his will, under seale, dated 25<sup>o</sup> Maij, 1582, whereby the Pedigree is apparent, and legacies given for repair of Swarston Bridge, whereof Sir Rauph Zacheverell and William Benbrigg, esq. were overseers. And I also shewed the joynture made by my uncle Henry Hardinge, gent. to his wife, 20th February, 7<sup>o</sup> Jacob. under his hand, and seale of a cheveron ; but then you objected that this was the Lord Berkeley's

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[More information](#)

## THE HARDINGE FAMILY.

3

Sir Robert Hardinge had, amongst other children, whose issue are extinct, two sons—Robert, who succeeded him at King's Newton, and Gideon.

Robert married Anne, daughter and coheir of William Buxton, of Youlgreave, esq. by whom he

Berkeley's coate: but to that I told you, hee had the crosses patées added to his; and to mine aunciently were added the three escallop-shells, as old Bryan Dawson, of Newton, the Herral-painter, sometymes called the wandring Jew, who was near a hundred yeares, had declared. To which you lastly replied, that this was the Melburnes coat of arms. To which then I could give no answer, that family being quite extinct. But, they lying interred in Melburnes church, I have since seen their coate, which is visible, which was a fess betwixt 3 garbes, or sheaves. And now, Sir, my ancestors lye interred in a chappell in Melburne church, which chappell is myne by prescription, and never any in memory but they were there interred; and there are two monuments of them. Sir, they have bin written "Gentlemen" tyme out of minde, and have used the coate I now give, as appears by the deeds, &c.; wherewith you seemed satisfied, only told mee they were omitted in the two last Visitac'ons. Now, Sir, for that it happened my uncle Henry was in ward to Sir Francis Needham, an infant, in the first; and myselfe an infant, and att schoole in Leicestershire, in the last. And really, Sir, what further evydence can be given I know not. But sure I am you have past a great many in this County, and many in Nottinghamshire, and some of my own tribe of the Lawe, who are Gents. and Esqrs. of the first head, and no such strict prooffe hathe bin required. And why myselfe, who have bin sequestered, and so great a sufferer for the King, and who have bin in the warrs, and yett am in command as Captaine, and by several capacities in your own Law am an Esquire, should have so strict a scrutiny, I know not. Sir, I have long known you to bee a person of much worth and civility, and therefore shall not differ with you, not doubting your civilityes; but well know I have no reason, neither shall I accept a new grant of other or my owne arms att this day. But I desire you to enter my Pedigree and Arms, which I clayme by prescription, in your Book of Visitac'on; and to send mee downe the Pedigree and Coate under your hand in short; and please to lett my brother know your demands, and I will speedily send you the money by the next carryer, or hee will gratify your respects. Thus, Sir, with my best love, and very hearty respects to yourselfe and ail yours, wishing in health to see you att King's Newton, I remaine, Sir, your respective neighbour, and affectionate freind to serve you, ROBT. HARDINGE.

"Sir, being not well to wryte myselfe, my man hath bin too tedious, wherein I pray excuse mee."

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[More information](#)

## 4 ILLUSTRATIONS OF LITERATURE.

had one son, John; and three daughters; Anne, who died Dec. 7, 1721, unmarried; Isabella, who married the Rev. John Bayley, of Chaddesdon, but had no issue; and Mary (the last of that branch of the Family), who died unmarried in 1767\*.

Nicholas Hardinge, esq. younger brother to Sir Robert, purchased, in 1671, the manor of Canbury, including part of the town of Kingston-upon-Thames, with the impropriation of Kingston church. He presented his nephew Gideon to that vicarage in 1692; and died in March 1709, leaving one son Nicholas, who died Feb. 24, 1736-7; and was succeeded at Canbury by his cousin and heir-at-law Nicholas, of whom hereafter.

Gideon Hardinge was more than twenty years Vicar of Kingston, and died Jan. 28, 1712-13†.

By Mary his wife he had issue two daughters, Sarah and Mary; and two sons, Nicholas and Caleb‡, who both attained considerable eminence in their several professions.

Mary, the youngest daughter, was married to Sir John Stracey, Knt. Recorder of the City of London 1746—1749; by whom he had five children; Har-

\* See the Epitaphs in Appendix, No. I.

† See Mr. Nicholas Hardinge's Epitaph on his Father, and his Lines on the Death of his eldest Son, in Appendix, No. II.

‡ Of Jesus College, Cambridge; B. A. 1720; M. A. 1724; M. D. (Regiis Comitibus) 1728; F. R. S. 1743; and many years Physician Extraordinary to King George II. and Physician to the Tower. He died at Mansfield in January 1776. He was a man of singular habits and whims, but of infinite humour and wit. He was, like his brother, a most admirable scholar; and, if he had been uniformly attentive to the duties of his profession, would have acquired the first ranks in it. In medical sagacity and learning he had few if any superiors. His conversation was coveted by the most accomplished wits and scholars of his age. He was a man of perfect honour, and a more benevolent one never breathed. His passion for coursing was one of his most prominent characteristics; but, like all the rest, he made it the source of infinite amusement for his friends. Some pleasing traits of him, by his brother, the late worthy Judge, are given in the "Literary Anecdotes," vol. VIII. pp. 523, 524, 530.—The Doctor's Widow, a lady of considerable talents, died in 1779.

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Excerpt

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NICHOLAS HARDINGE, ESQ. M.A. FELLOW OF KING'S COLL. CAMBRIDGE.

*Clerk of the House of Commons*  *Joint Secretary of the Treasury &c.**Born in 1700; Died April 9<sup>th</sup> 1758.**Published by Nichols. & C<sup>o</sup> March 16. 1818.*

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

## NICHOLAS HARDINGE, ESQ.

5

dinge, John, Edward, Mary, and Anne. Hardinge, the eldest, was several years Clerk of the Committee of Privileges and Elections in the House of Commons.

Nicholas Hardinge, esq. the youngest son of Gideon, was born in 1700, and educated at Eton; whence in 1718-19 he removed to King's College, Cambridge. Both at Eton and Cambridge\*, he had the fame of the most eminent scholar of his time. His Latin Poems in every measure and style are much admired. He was thought equal, if not superior, in that line, to the celebrated Dr. George, Provost of King's.

In 1726 Mr. Hardinge took the degree of M. A.; and in the same year, having been previously called to the Bar at the Middle Temple, he was chosen Recorder of Kingston. He had also the honour of being appointed Law Reader and Attorney General to William Duke of Cumberland; Auditor to Princess Amelia; Principal Clerk of the House of Commons from 1731 to 1747-8; Joint Secretary to the Treasury, with James West, esq. in 1752; and a Representative in Parliament for Eye in Suffolk in 1752 and 1754.

Mr. Hardinge was as much distinguished by his virtues and literary attainments, as by the ability and integrity with which he discharged the im-

\* While he was at Cambridge, Party was at the highest in his own College, and he was at the head of the Whigs. Doctor Snape was then Provost. A violent contest arose upon the subject of a Mr. Bushe, who having, in one of the College exercises, given offence by some political reflections injurious to the Tory cause, was expelled; and, upon appeal to the Bishop of Lincoln, was reinstated. The sentence of the Bishop was litigated; but, in the end, the Whigs prevailed, and gave a turn to the political sentiments of the whole University. In every part of this contest Mr. Hardinge's judgment, knowledge of the Law, address, and spirit, were of infinite service to the party, and to his own character. His attention to the points of that controversy led him insensibly to a perfect knowledge of the general subject of Visitorial power, which he discussed in a very masterly Essay, never published, though he intended it for publication

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

## 6 ILLUSTRATIONS OF LITERATURE.

portant duties of his various public employments. He was a rigidly honest, useful, and able servant of the Revenue in the office of Secretary of the Treasury. He was in politicks a determined and zealous Whig. He had a severe countenance; but the most playful manner with his most intimate friends, and was full of Socratic humour. He was a deep and judicious Antiquary, particularly in what concerned English Law and History\*. At the request of William Duke of Cumberland, he wrote a very learned Memorial upon the Regency, when the subject arose in the last reign, of which Lord Hardwicke spoke in very high terms, calling it, in a Letter which he wrote to him on that subject, "an invaluable work." It was by Mr. Hardinge's advice and encouragement that Mr. Stuart, the celebrated Traveller, undertook his journey to Athens, with a view of illustrating the History of that City.

His diligence, accuracy, knowledge, and skill, in the office of Clerk in the House to the House of Commons were never exceeded. He put the Journals into their present form; and drew up a very able Report of the condition in which he found them, making part of that work. In his office of Secretary, he was laborious, able, zealous, and so honest that he had many enemies †.

\* In the British Museum is the following "Account of the Recovery of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton's Papers, by Nicolas Hardinge, Esq." (Birch MSS. 4106.3.) — "Mr. Mansfield, formerly a grocer at Windsor, was executor of Mr. John Hales, Fellow of Eton College. Mr. Mansfield died at his house at Eton. His effects being sold after his death, several books and MSS. which appeared to have belonged to Mr. Hales, were purchased by the learned persons of Eton College, and particularly by Dr. Evans, Fellow of it. Throckmorton's Letters were part of the MSS. so purchased. Mr. Hardinge, who had seen the Letters in Dr. Evans's custody, obtained them of his executors, with a design to preserve them in the Paper Office, in compliance with Sir Henry Wotton's will, who left all Sir Nicholas Throckmorton's Papers to King Charles I."

† These are the words of his Son, the late worthy Judge; who adds, "My Father was allowed on all hands to be one of the



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[More information](#)

NICHOLAS HARDINGE, ESQ.

7

It ought to be recorded as a proof of the taste of Mr. Hardinge, that he was a great admirer of Milton. When the fame of that celebrated man was basely attacked, in consequence of the forgeries of Lauder, Mr. Hall, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, addressed a Sonnet \* to him, commencing with the following lines :

“ Hardinge! firm advocate of Milton's fame!  
Avenge the honour of his injur'd Muse:  
The bold Salmasius dar'd not to accuse,  
And brand him living with a felon's name!”

the best Latin Poets in his day, and perhaps ever since the Augustan age. I have kept and printed many of his Latin verses in honour to his memory.” Of these Mr. Hardinge printed a few copies, as presents to his friends; and, after a consideration of more than 30 years, had prepared a new Edition, which he determined to re-print; a determination originating in an account which I had given of Mr. Nicholas Hardinge, with a specimen of his Writings, in 1782, in “A Select Collection of Miscellany Poems;” and again in the First Edition of the “Literary Anecdotes.”—Some Letters of his on this subject are printed in the Eighth Volume of that Work, pp. 113, 542; to which I now add a few extracts from Letters written at various periods, and with very long intervals.

“SIR, Temple, Dec. 13, 1782.

“I send my Clerk to you, for a little explanation on the subject of my Father's Verses.—The English are too numerous to be inserted with propriety in your ‘Select Collection.’—What I wish, therefore, is, that you would publish them in a separate Book, either with or without the Latin; which are also at your service, as well as a very curious ‘Dissertation upon the Regency,’ never published, and written by my Father for the Duke of Cumberland and Lord Hardwicke.—I am perfectly sure that the English and Latin would indemnify me, which is all that I desire, if I sold on my own account; but I do not like that method. And my reason for offering them to you was, that I thought they would be of service to you; as well as that your knowledge of my Father's character would induce you to accept his Works, and print them with confidence upon your own account.—Believe me, Sir, Your well-wisher and friend, G. HARDINGE.”

“SIR, Temple, Dec. 27, 1782.

“I have considered of my plan, to let you have my Father's Verses, and print them at your own cost: and I will send you some of them to begin with. G. HARDINGE.”

This correspondence was not resumed till 1813; when it was again most zealously taken up. See p. 32.

\* See it in the “Literary Anecdotes,” vol. VIII. p. 520.

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He married Jane, fifth daughter of Sir John Pratt, of Wilderness in Kent, Chief Justice of the King's Bench from 1718 to 1724 (the second daughter by a second marriage), and sister to Charles Pratt, esq. Chief Justice of the Common Pleas from 1762 to 1766, afterwards Lord High Chancellor, and Earl Camden. By this lady Mr. Hardinge had nine sons and three daughters.

He died April 9, 1758; and was buried in the family vault at Kingston\*. His Widow, who survived nearly half a century, died May 17, 1807†.

This lady, together with two of her daughters, had retired to the county of Kent; and she closed her days at Grove Hill, a pretty little seat in the vicinity of the residence of her Nephew, the present Marquis Camden. This place she continued to embellish and adorn, so as to render it a very agreeable, and indeed, a very romantic residence ‡.

\* See Mr. George Hardinge's verses on his Father's death in Appendix, No. III; where may also be seen an Epitaph intended to be placed in Kingston church to the memory of Mr. Nicholas Hardinge, of his Relict, and their Son George.

† Mr. Hardinge's excellent and affectionate character of this truly venerable Matron is given in the Appendix, No. III.

The communication was inclosed in the following billet:

"DEAR SIR, *The Grove, Sevenoaks, Kent, May 21, 1807.*

"I have always admired your *Obituaries*; and I hope you will honour me, by accepting at my hands the Portrait of as extraordinary a person as in the circle of domestic wisdom and virtue ever appeared in the world—Mrs. Hardinge, my Parent, who in her 89th year was claimed by Heaven a few days ago.—I am drawing this Portrait with all the fidelity of a religious and impartial Historian for your next Magazine.—Pray tell me if you can reserve a page for it; and honour me with two or three lines. I am, dear Sir, your most grateful servant, G. HARDINGE."

In the same year Mr. Hardinge printed the elegant poetical "Ffilial Tribute" noticed in p. 23.

‡ It is not a little remarkable, that she was greatly addicted to Romances and Novels. In this passion she participated with her illustrious Brother; a fact often asserted, but never entirely credited, in respect to this legal luminary, until fully confirmed by the pen of his Nephew.

Mr.