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978-1-108-07885-6 - The Diary of John Evelyn: With an Introduction and

Notes: Volume 3

Edited by Austin Dobson

Excerpt

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THE
DIARY OF JOHN EVELYN

1676-7: *8th February*. I went to Roehampton, with my lady Duchess of Ormonde. The garden and perspective is pretty, the prospect most agreeable.

15th May. Came the Earl of Peterborough,¹ to desire me to be a trustee for Lord Viscount Mordaunt and the Countess, for the sale of certain lands set out by Act of Parliament, to pay debts.

12th June. I went to London, to give the Lord Ambassador Berkeley (now returned from the treaty at Nimeguen) an account of the great trust reposed in me during his absence, I having received and remitted to him no less than £20,000 to my no small trouble and loss of time, that during his absence, and when the Lord Treasurer was no great friend [of his] I yet procured him great sums, very often soliciting his Majesty in his behalf; looking after the rest of his estates and concerns entirely, without once accepting any kind of acknowledgment, purely upon the request of my dear friend, Mr. Godolphin. I returned with abundance of thanks and professions from my Lord Berkeley and my Lady.

29th. This business being now at an end, and myself delivered from that intolerable servitude

¹ [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 119.]

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and correspondence, I had leisure to be somewhat more at home and to myself.

3rd July. I sealed the deeds of sale of the manor of Bletchingley to Sir Robert Clayton,¹ for payment of Lord Peterborough's debts, according to the trust of the Act of Parliament.

16th. I went to Wotton.—*22nd.* Mr. Evans, curate of Abinger, preached an excellent sermon on Matt. v. 12. In the afternoon, Mr. Higham² at Wotton catechised.

26th. I dined at Mr. Duncomb's, at Sheere,³ whose house stands environed with very sweet and quick streams.

29th. Mr. Bohun, my son's late tutor, preached at Abinger, on Phil. iv. 8, very elegantly and practically.

5th August. I went to visit my Lord Brouncker, now taking the waters at Dulwich.

9th. Dined at the Earl of Peterborough's the day after the marriage of my Lord of Arundel to Lady Mary Mordaunt, daughter to the Earl of Peterborough.⁴

28th. To visit my Lord Chamberlain,⁵ in Suffolk; he sent his coach and six to meet and bring me from St. Edmund's Bury to Euston.⁶

29th. We hunted in the Park and killed a very fat buck.—*31st.* I went a-hawking.

4th September. I went to visit my Lord Crofts,⁷ now dying at St. Edmund's Bury, and took the opportunity to see this ancient town, and the

¹ [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 117. There is a florid monument to Sir Robert Clayton (Dryden's *Ishban*) in Bletchingley Church (St. Mary's). It was erected during his lifetime.]

² [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 68.]

³ [See *post*, under 1st July, 1694.]

⁴ [She was afterwards divorced by her husband, being then Duchess of Norfolk (see *post*, under April, 1700).]

⁵ [Lord Arlington.]

⁶ [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 330.]

⁷ [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 17.]

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remains of that famous monastery and abbey. There is little standing entire, save the gatehouse; it has been a vast and magnificent Gothic structure, and of great extent. The gates are wood, but quite plated over with iron. There are also two stately churches, one especially.

5th September. I went to Thetford, to the borough-town, where stand the ruins of a religious house: there is a round mountain artificially raised, either for some castle, or monument, which makes a pretty landscape. As we went and returned, a tumbler showed his extraordinary address in the Warren. I also saw the Decoy; much pleased with the stratagem.

7th. There dined this day at my Lord's one Sir John Gawdie,¹ a very handsome person, but quite dumb, yet very intelligent by signs, and a very fine painter; he was so civil and well bred, as it was not possible to discern any imperfection by him. His lady and children were also there, and he was at church in the morning with us.

9th. A stranger preached at Euston Church, and fell into a handsome panegyric on my Lord's new building the church, which indeed for its elegance and cheerfulness, is one of the prettiest country churches in England. My Lord told me his heart smote him that, after he had bestowed so much on his magnificent palace there, he should see God's House in the ruin it lay in. He has also re-built the parsonage-house, all of stone, very neat and ample.

10th. To divert me, my Lord would needs carry me to see Ipswich, when we dined with one Mr. Mann by the way, who was Recorder of the town. There were in our company my Lord Huntingtower, son to the Duchess of Lauderdale,

¹ [Sir John Gawdie, 1639-1708. He was a pupil of Lely, and deaf as well as dumb.]

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Sir Edward Bacon, a learned gentleman of the family of the great Chancellor Verulam, and Sir John Felton, with some other Knights and Gentlemen. After dinner, came the Bailiff and Magistrates in their formalities with their maces to compliment my Lord, and invite him to the town-house, where they presented us a collation of dried sweetmeats and wine, the bells ringing, etc. Then, we went to see the town, and first, the Lord Viscount Hereford's house,¹ which stands in a park near the town, like that at Brussels, in Flanders; the house not great, yet pretty, especially the hall. The stews for fish succeed one another, and feed one the other, all paved at bottom. There is a good picture of the Blessed Virgin in one of the parlours, seeming to be of Holbein or some good master. Then we saw the Haven, seven miles from Harwich. The tide runs out every day, but the bedding being soft mud, it is safe for shipping and a station. The trade of Ipswich is for the most part Newcastle coals, with which they supply London; but it was formerly a clothing town. There is not any beggar asks alms in the whole place, a thing very extraordinary, so ordered by the prudence of the Magistrates. It has in it fourteen or fifteen beautiful churches: in a word, it is for building, cleanness, and good order, one of the best towns in England. Cardinal Wolsey was a butcher's son of Ipswich, but there is little of that magnificent Prelate's foundation here, besides a school and I think a library, which I did not see. His intentions were to build some great thing. We returned late to Euston, having travelled about fifty miles this day.

¹ [“There is one pretty good house of y^e Earle of Herrifords that marry'd one of Mr. Norborns Daughters, that was Killed by S^r Tho: Montgomery.” (*Diary of Celia Fiennes* (1689-94), 1888, 117).]

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Since first I was at this place,¹ I found things exceedingly improved. It is seated in a bottom between two graceful swellings, the main building being now in the figure of a Greek Π with four pavilions, two at each corner, and a break in the front, railed and balustered at the top, where I caused huge jars to be placed full of earth to keep them steady upon their pedestals between the statues, which make as good a show as if they were of stone, and, though the building be of brick, and but two stories besides cellars, and garrets covered with blue slate, yet there is room enough for a full court, the offices and outhouses being so ample and well disposed. The King's apartment is painted *afresco* and magnificently furnished. There are many excellent pictures of the great masters. The gallery is a pleasant, noble room: in the break, or middle, is a billiard-table, but the wainscot, being of fir, and painted, does not please me so well as Spanish oak without paint. The chapel is pretty, the porch descending to the gardens. The orange-garden is very fine, and leads into the green-house, at the end of which is a hall to eat in, and the conservatory some hundred feet long, adorned with maps, as the other side is with the heads of the Cæsars, ill cut in alabaster; above, are several apartments for my Lord, Lady, and Duchess,² with kitchens and other offices below, in a lesser form; lodgings for servants, all distinct, for them to retire to when they please, and would be in private, and have no communication with the palace, which he tells me he will wholly resign to his son-in-law and daughter, that charming young creature.

The canal running under my lady's dressing-room chamber window, is full of carps and fowl,

¹ [See *ante*, p. 2.]

² His daughter, the Duchess of Grafton (see *ante*, vol. ii. p. 350).

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which come and are fed there. The cascade at the end of the canal turns a corn-mill, that provides the family, and raises water for the fountains and offices. To pass this canal into the opposite meadows, Sir Samuel Morland¹ has invented a screw-bridge, which, being turned with a key, lands you fifty feet distant at the entrance of an ascending walk of trees, a mile in length, as it is also on the front into the park, of four rows of ash trees, and reaches to the park-pale, which is nine miles in compass, and the best for riding and meeting the game that I ever saw. There were now of red and fallow deer almost a thousand, with good covert, but the soil barren and flying sand, in which nothing will grow kindly. The tufts of fir, and much of the other wood, were planted by my direction, some years before. This seat is admirably placed for field-sports, hawking, hunting or racing. The mutton is small, but sweet. The stables hold thirty horses and four coaches. The out-offices make two large quadrangles, so as servants never lived with more ease and convenience; never master more civil. Strangers are attended and accommodated as at their home, in pretty apartments furnished with all manner of conveniences and privacy.

There is a library full of excellent books; bathing-rooms, laboratory, dispensary, a decoy, and places to keep and fat fowl in. He had now in his new church (near the garden) built a dormitory, or vault, with several repositories, in which to bury his family.

In the expense of this pious structure, the church is most laudable, most of the Houses of God in this country resembling rather stables and thatched cottages than temples in which to serve the Most High. He has built a lodge in the park

¹ [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 276.]

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for the keeper, which is a neat dwelling, and might become any gentleman. The same has he done for the parson, little deserving it for murmuring that my Lord put him some time out of his wretched hovel, whilst it was building. He has also erected a fair inn at some distance from his palace, with a bridge of stone over a river near it, and repaired all the tenants' houses, so as there is nothing but neatness and accommodations about his estate, which I yet think is not above £1500 a year. I believe he had now in his family one hundred domestic servants.

His lady (being one of the Brederode's daughters, grandchild to a natural son of Henry Frederick, Prince of Orange) is a good-natured and obliging woman.¹ They love fine things, and to live easily, pompously, and hospitably; but, with so vast expense, as plunges my Lord into debts exceedingly. My Lord himself is given into no expensive vice but building, and to have all things rich, polite, and princely. He never plays, but reads much, having the Latin, French, and Spanish tongues in perfection. He has travelled much, and is the best-bred and courtly person his Majesty has about him, so as the public Ministers more frequent him than any of the rest of the Nobility. Whilst he was Secretary of State and Prime Minister, he had gotten vastly, but spent it as hastily, even before he had established a fund to maintain his greatness; and now beginning to decline in favour (the Duke being no great friend of his), he knows not how to retrench. He was son of a Doctor of Laws,² whom I have seen, and, being sent from Westminster School to Oxford, with intention to be a divine,

¹ [Isabella von Beverweert. She was a sister of Lady Ossory, and daughter of Henry de Nassau.]

² [Sir John Bennet. Another Sir John Bennet, *d.* 1627, was his grandfather.]

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and parson of Arlington,¹ a village near Brentford, when Master of Arts, the Rebellion falling out, he followed the King's Army, and receiving an *honourable wound in the face*,² grew into favour, and was advanced from a mean fortune, at his Majesty's restoration, to be an Earl and Knight of the Garter, Lord Chamberlain of the Household, and first favourite for a long time, during which the King married his natural son, the Duke of Grafton, to his only daughter and heiress, as before mentioned,³ worthy for her beauty and virtue of the greatest Prince in Christendom. My Lord is, besides this, a prudent and understanding person in business, and speaks well; unfortunate yet in those he has advanced, most of them proving ungrateful. The many obligations and civilities I have received from this noble gentleman, extracts from me this character, and I am sorry he is in no better circumstances.

Having now passed near three weeks at Euston, to my great satisfaction, with much difficulty he suffered me to look homeward, being very earnest with me to stay longer; and, to engage me, would himself have carried me to Lynn Regis, a town of important traffic, about twenty miles beyond, which I had never seen; as also the Travelling Sands, about ten miles wide of Euston, that have so

¹ Harlington. He wished to be called Lord Cheney, and for some days was so called. But a Buckinghamshire gentleman of that name objecting, he took the title of a little farm that had belonged to his father,—“the proper and true name of the place being Harlington, a little village between London and Uxbridge” (*Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon*, 1827, ii. 359).

² A deep cut across his nose. He was obliged always to wear a black lozenge-shaped patch upon it, and so is represented in his portraits [*e.g.* that by Lely, in the possession of the Earl of Tankerville. According to Anthony Hamilton “this remarkable plaister so well suited his mysterious looks, that it seemed an addition to his gravity and self-sufficiency” (*Memoirs of Grammont*, chap. vii.).]

³ [See *ante*, p. 5.]

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damaged the country, rolling from place to place, and, like the Sands in the Deserts of Lybia, quite overwhelmed some gentlemen's whole estates, as the relation extant in print, and brought to our Society, describes at large.

13th September. My Lord's coach conveyed me to Bury, and thence baiting at Newmarket, stepping in at Audley End¹ to see that house again, I slept at Bishop Stortford; and, the next day, home. I was accompanied in my journey by Major Fairfax, of a younger house of the Lord Fairfax,² a soldier, a traveller, an excellent musician, a good-natured, well-bred gentleman.

18th. I preferred Mr. Phillips³ (nephew of Milton) to the service of my Lord Chamberlain, who wanted a scholar to read to and entertain him sometimes.

12th October. With Sir Robert Clayton to Marden, an estate he had bought lately of my kinsman, Sir John Evelyn, of Godstone, in Surrey, which from a despicable farm-house Sir Robert had erected into a seat with extraordinary expense.⁴ It is in such a solitude among hills, as, being not above sixteen miles from London, seems almost incredible, the ways up to it are so winding and intricate. The gardens are large, and well-walled, and the husbandry part made very convenient and perfectly understood. The barns, the stacks of corn, the stalls for cattle, pigeon-house, etc., of most laudable example. Innumerable are the plantations of trees, especially walnuts. The orangery and gardens are very curious. In the house are large and noble rooms. He and his lady

¹ [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 97.]

² [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 90.]

³ [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 206.]

⁴ [Marden Park, Surrey, six miles south of Croydon, now the residence of Walpole Greenwell, Esq. Wilberforce lived here for a time.]

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(who is very curious in distillery) entertained me three or four days very freely. I earnestly suggested to him the repairing of an old desolate dilapidated church, standing on the hill above the house,¹ which I left him in good disposition to do, and endow it better; there not being above four or five houses in the parish, besides that of this prodigious rich scrivener.² This place is exceeding sharp in the winter, by reason of the serpentine of the hills: and it wants running water; but the solitude much pleased me. All the ground is so full of wild thyme, marjoram, and other sweet plants, that it cannot be overstocked with bees; I think he had near forty hives of that industrious insect.

14th October. I went to church at Godstone, and to see old Sir John Evelyn's³ dormitory, joining to the church, paved with marble, where he and his lady lie on a very stately monument at length; he in armour of white marble. The inscription is only an account of his particular branch of the family, on black marble.

15th. Returned to London; in the evening, I saw the Prince of Orange, and supped with Lord Ossory.

23rd. Saw again the Prince of Orange; his

¹ Woldingham. The Church—according to Bray—consisted of one room about thirty feet long and twenty-one wide, without any tower, spire, or bell. It was considered as a Donative, not subject to the Bishop; and service was performed therein once a month. No churchwarden; two farm-houses, four cottages; and by the Population Return, even as late as 1811, the number of inhabitants was only fifty-eight [which in 1904 had increased to two hundred and twenty]. That disposition in Sir Robert Clayton which Evelyn fancied he saw, appears to have subsided, for the church remained for a long time as it was in the Diarist's day. [In 1890 it was restored by the present owner of Marden Park.]

² [See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 117; and *post*, under 18th November, 1679.]

³ [Sir John Evelyn of Leigh Place, *d.* 1643. His "lady" was Thomasine Heynes of Chessington.]