

THE TENBURY LETTERS

Selected & Edited by

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&

EDWARD PINE

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INTRODUCTION

THE LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS CHOSEN for reproduction here belong to a collection in the Library of St Michael's College, Tenbury. It is believed that none of these have hitherto been printed.

This collection was made chiefly by Mary Jane Ouseley, a sister of Sir Frederick Ouseley, the Founder of St Michael's College; and it passed into the possession of the College together with the many treasures of Sir Frederick's remarkable Library.

There are in fact two Libraries at the College. The more valuable of the two is the now famous Music Library, collected almost entirely by Sir Frederick. It contains many great rarities, both printed and manuscript, and ranks among the most important music-libraries in Europe.

The other Library was inherited by Sir Frederick from his father, Sir Gore Ouseley. It was formerly at Sir Gore's home, Hall Barn Park, near Beaconsfield, which Sir Frederick sold to enable him to build and endow St Michael's College for the purpose of the study and daily performance of the Services of the Church of England in accordance with the musical traditions of the English Cathedrals. The Library was then moved to the College.

Sir Gore's is an exceptionally good example of an

English country-house Library. It covers a wider field than is commonly found. It includes fine and rare editions of the Classics, of early Theological works, of Travel, of Fiction, of County History, of Art, of Heraldry, and of Persian Literature, as well as some valuable manuscripts.

The interest of the Tenbury Letters largely centres round Sir Gore, who, in the course of a distinguished career as an Oriental scholar and diplomatist, was brought into contact with many prominent personalities and formed a wide circle of friends. He was the second son of Captain Ralph Ouseley and was born in 1770. His elder brother William was, like him, a notable Orientalist.

In 1787 he went to India engaged on commercial pursuits, and there he formed a life-long friendship with the Marquess Wellesley. Shortly after his return to England in 1805 he married Harriot Whitelock, a direct descendant and the last representative of Sir Bulstrode Whitelock, Keeper of the Great Seal under Oliver Cromwell. Matthew Gregory Lewis, author of *The Monk*, and a friend of Scott, Byron, Shelley and Goethe, was her near kinsman. Created a baronet in 1808, Gore Ouseley was appointed Ambassador to the Persian Court on Wellesley's recommendation. In this capacity he negotiated a peace of far-reaching importance, and was

decorated with the Grand Cordons of the Orders of the Sun and Lion of Persia, and of St Alexander Nevski of Russia. He left Persia in 1814 and spent some months in St Petersburg before returning to England in 1815, when he retired to his villa in Hertford.

It was in 1832 that Sir Gore bought Hall Barn Park from Harry Edmund Waller, whose ancestor Edmund Waller, the Poet, died there in 1687. Among his many honours he was made a Privy Councillor, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Guelphs. In co-operation with Sir George Staunton he was a founder of the Royal Asiatic Society. He died in 1844.

A side-light on Sir Gore's friendships is provided by the notable group of personalities who stood as god-parents to his children. Those of Mary Jane, the collector of the autographs, born in 1807, were Matthew Lewis and General and Mrs Whitelock. Eliza Shirreen, born in the Royal Palace at Shiraz in 1811, was sponsored by Mrs Spencer Perceval, wife of the Prime Minister. Wellesley Abbas, born in Persia in 1813, was named after his god-father, the Marquess Wellesley, and the name Abbas was given at the request of the Shah and the Prince Royal of Persia, who as non-Christians, were not eligible as sponsors. Alexandrine Perceval was born in St Petersburg; her god-parents were the Emperor and Empress of Rus-

sia, the Hon. Robert Gordon (Ouseley's secretary, and later a distinguished diplomatist) and Mrs Spencer Perceval. The Empress held the child at the Font. Frederick Arthur Gore, afterwards Sir Frederick, was born in London in 1825. His god-parents were Frederick, Duke of York, the Duke of Wellington and Lady Salisbury.

Among other friends of Sir Gore and Lady Ouseley were William IV and Queen Adelaide, who visited Hall Barn on one occasion to hear the boy Frederick play the piano as a wonderful youthful prodigy. Mendelssohn played the piano with the boy when he was six years old. Sir John Herschel, living at Slough, was a near neighbour and constant visitor. It will be obvious that the opportunities of Miss Mary Jane Ouseley as an autograph collector were altogether exceptional.

The letters have been arranged here in groups under the following classification:

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| 1. Naval | 6. English Royal |
| 2. Military | 7. Foreign Royal |
| 3. Political | 8. French |
| 4. Literary | 9. German |
| 5. Scientific | 10. Italian |
| 11. Miscellaneous | |

The Collection at Tenbury is contained in four

separate albums and consists of about 250 examples, 142 of which have been selected for reproduction here. With a few exceptions these letters are holograph; and it is to be noted that those of Walpole, Chatham, Pitt, Burke, Byron, Mrs Piozzi, like the rest, are printed here for the first time.

It is to be deplored that a number of valuable letters have vanished from the portfolios since Miss Ouseley made her catalogue of them. Among these were holographs of Nelson and George Washington. Washington's letter was sent to Miss Ouseley together with that of Jefferson (which fortunately survives) by Richard Rush (see p. 214). The list of missing letters also includes those of Garrick, Charles and Edmund Kean, the Kembles and Mrs Siddons; Wordsworth, Pope, Johnson and Boswell; Reynolds, Gainsborough and Hogarth. It is strange that practically all of the musical autographs mentioned by Miss Ouseley have disappeared. These included examples of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Cherubini, Rossini and Malibran. It may be that some of these were given away as presents by Sir Frederick.

For many years past these portfolios were kept locked; but the keys have nowhere been found, and it became necessary to cut them open. The removal of the letters must have taken place many years ago.

Miss Ouseley also collected a very large number of

franked envelopes. These survive in the St Michael's Library in another set of portfolios.

The Editors have endeavoured as far as possible to retain the original spelling and punctuation found in the letters; and in this matter the careless observation in the use of accents by some of the French writers may be noticed.

It was the intention of the Editors to reproduce all the abbreviations in superscript wherever they occur in this form. This feature is very characteristic of the period covered by most of these letters, and it has a definite value in relation to the personality of the writers. Moreover, the employment of a 'point', or full stop, as the sole means of denoting an abbreviation, does not in their opinion always indicate with sufficient clarity which of the letters were written in superscript. But on account of the time and work involved in this process and the acute labour shortage at the present time, the publishers, judging that subscribers are more interested in the literary content of the manuscripts than in the calligraphic characteristics of the period, have decided that it is their present duty to indicate the abbreviations solely by the use of the 'point'.

The Editors wish to express their gratitude to Dr Idris Bell, Keeper of the MSS at the British Museum,

and to Mr Owen F. Morshead of the Royal Library, Windsor Castle, for much valuable help and advice; and their special gratitude is due to Miss Mackenzie, Registrar of the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, for her help in the transcription and translation of many of the foreign letters.

EDMUND H. FELLOWES
EDWARD PINE

Johann Franz Encke to J. F. W. (afterwards Sir John) Herschel.

[Post-mark: Berlin 18 Mai 1826]

Je vous prie Monsieur de vouloir bien faire mes remerciemens les plus sincères à la société astronomique, pour le précieux présent du nouvel Tome de ses mémoires, que j'ai parcouru avec le plus grand intérêt.

Je viens d'écrire à Mr. Harding, Mr. Lohrmann et Mr. Hansen (mon successeur au Seeberg) pour leur faire savoir vos demandes en égard de l'atlas céleste, de la carte de la lune, et des détails du baromètre. J'espère que vous aurez les ouvrages au plutôt possible. C'est bien dommage que les droits de douane d'Angleterre excessifs, pour toutes les ouvrages, qui sont comprises sous le nom de planches gravées, ont empêché Mr Harding d'envoyer en Angleterre plusieurs exemplaires de son excellent ouvrage. Je serois bien flatté, Monsieur, si je pourrais contribuer à une communication plus intime de l'Angleterre avec l'Allemagne, et je vous prie de vouloir bien me charger de vos demandes futures, s'il se présenteroit quelque difficulté par un autre chemin. Mon frère C. W. Encke à Hambourg le seul marchand de ce nom dans cette ville, et qui est assez connu pour que sa simple Adresse suffise : se chargera volontiers de vous faire parvenir les livres demandés.

La nouvelle que j'ai lu dans les gazettes, que vous avez donné votre médaille d'or à Mr. Struve, m'a rempli

avec la plus grande joie, et sera pour tous les astronomes un témoignage convainquant de l'équité et l'impartialité suprême du tribunal astronomique de votre société illustre. Si toutes les sociétés suivent ce modèle les sciences seront avancées de la manière la plus sûre et la plus rapide.

Pardonnez, Monsieur, les fautes de grammaire qu'une langue étrangère, et qui ne m'est pas encore assez familière m'a fait commettre et daignez agréer l'assurance de ma plus haute considération

J. F. Encke

Mr J. F. W. Herschel Esq FRS. No. 56 Devonshire Street, Portland Place. London
Acad. d. Wissensch [a] ft.

Johann Friedrich Blumenbach to J. F. W. (afterwards Sir John) Herschel.

Goettingen d. 30ten März [postmark 1825]

Empfangen sie meinen doppelten herzlichsten Dank mein Verehrtester Freund und mehrfacher Societäts-College, erst noch für den gütigen Besuch womit Sie mich am 1sten Oct. erfreut haben, und dann für das mir ausnehmend intrigante Geschenk der beiden trefflichen colorirten portraits des unglücklichen Königlichen Paares von den Sandwich Inseln, womit Sie meine Favoritsammlung, zur Naturgeschichte der National Verschiedenheiten im Menschengeschlechte, so erwünscht erreichen.

Mit der aufrichtigsten Hochachtung und Erkenntlichkeit habe ich die Ehre zu beharren

mein Verehrtester Freund

Ihr ganz gehorsamster Diener

J. Fr. Blumenbach

G. L. Leclere, comte de Buffon, to James, 14th Earl of Morton.

My Lord,

Je ne puis vous exprimer combien j'ai été sensible au malheur qui vous est arivé et combien tous vos amis ont été affligés de la perte que vous avez faite . . . je vous trouve trop bon de m'avoir envoie un aussi beau present; Le microscope m'a été remis par M. Kidby il y a environ huit jours il est travaille avec grand soin et fort ingenieusement arangé, . . . J'ai remis a mr. Walker qui part demain pour Londres un exemplaire relié des trois premiers volumes de notre ouvrage sur l'histoire naturelle que je vous supplie d'agrèer, . . .

Après toutes les graces que vous m'avez faites je ne scai s'il convient de vous en demander encore, je desirerois cependant beaucoup d'avoir des echantillons des mines et mineraux d'Ecosse, j'imagine que vous y avez du cuivre, du plomb du Crystal de roche, du Crystal d'Islande, du charbon de terre, des marbres, des coquilles petrifiées et peutêtre de certaines choses que nous ne connoissons pas;

vous me feriez grand plaisir, Mylord, si vous vouliez en faire remplir une petite boete et me l'adresser, nous avons au Cabinet du roy des Echantillons des mineraux de plusieurs pays mais ceux d'Ecosse nous manquent.

J'ai beaucoup perfectionné le Miroir ardent que vous m'avez vû commencer il y a trois ans, celui dont je me sers actuellement n'a gueres que six pieds en quarré et cependant il brule a deux cent pieds et audela, il a meme une si grande ardeur a dix vingt et trente pieds qu'il fond tous les métaux en n'employant meme que le tiers des glaces dont il est composé; ce miroir agit comme vous le savez, Mylord, par la reflection de la lumière. J'en fais construire un autre par refraction avec lequel j'aurai six fois autant de chaleur qu'il en faut pour fondre le fer. . . .

nous ne sommes pas fort bons amis M. de reaurmur et moy il m'a fait plus d'une querelle depuis votre depart de paris ensorte qu'il y a plus de deux ans que nous ne nous voions pas; je l'ai trouvé dans une maison ou je luy ai dit ce que vous aviez la bonte de me marquer pour luy.

adieu my Lord je vous demande la continuation de l'amitie et des bontes dont vous m'honorez et je puis vous assurer que je vous serai attaché toute ma vie par les Sentimens les plus tendres et les plus respectueuses

Buffon

du Jardin du Roy le 6me. avril 1750