



THE PARK, HIGHCLERE.

## A GLIMPSE OF HIGHCLERE CASTLE.

BELONGING TO THE EARL OF CARNARVON.

By ELIZABETH BALCH.

If any spot on earth can boast possession of trees which in virtue of their beauty, and profusion, variegated forms, styles and species, stately grandeur and graceful loveliness, have the right to speak with tongues of eloquence, it is the park at Highclere.

Cedars black with age are more reticent in their speech than the beeches and the limes; perhaps they have learned to look upon life in more sober fashion; while the lordly oaks, perfect specimens as they are, count less in numbers than one would expect. This fact seems to authenticate a reputed remark of the grandfather of the present Lord Carnarvon, to the effect that he would keep the beeches in the park, but would plant no oaks, as he did not propose that any spendthrift descendant should cut them down!

Could it have been the speech of the second Earl of Carnarvon (of the Dormer line) which suggested this remark? he whose portrait when a boy, painted by Vandyck, hangs in Lord Carnarvon's study at Highclere. He was rather a butterfly courtier in the time of Charles II., and he is reported to have said that "trees were an excrescence provided by nature for the payment of debts." If the saying is true, then this noble lord had certainly no ear attuned to the "tongues in trees." All their whisperings and friendly confidences were lost for him, wasted utterly upon an imagination that could rise no higher than the clanking tongues of men.

At all times a genealogical descent is puzzling. Extraneous branches, interlineal



marriages, and outside creations, have reduced the task in respect to the Herbert family to a simple impossibility, the only sense in which the word simple can be applied to the subject. The Herberts have been a clan, rather than a family, and in every age noted for great intellectual capacity. When Henry, third Earl of Carnarvon, whilst still Lord Porchester married Henrietta Howard, daughter of Lord Henry Howard, and niece of the twelfth Duke of Norfolk, the alliance was spoken of as a union of the blood of the Howards with the hereditary genius of the Herberts, who themselves date back to Charlemagne, the great Duke of Brabant, King of France, and Emperor of the Romans. A large stone bust of this imperial and kingly ancestor stands amongst the shrubbery near the garden, with the shadow of the beech trees falling on his stone crown and unseeing stone eyes. But only the younger branch of the Herberts have to do with Highclere; the elder branch, the Earls of Pembroke, have



H. HOWARD MOLYNEUX, 4TH EARL OF CARNARVON. FROM A DRAWING MADE IN 1860 BY GEORGE RICHMOND, R.A.

for their family seat Wilton, near Salisbury. The first mention of Highclere in connection with the Pembroke branch of the family is in 1684, when Thomas, Earl of Pembroke, married Margaret, the only daughter and heiress of Sir Robert Sawyer, of High Cleer in county Southampton. In still earlier days Highclere Castle had been a stronghold of the bishops of Winchester, and its massive walls still attest to its strength as a place of defence. It was only in 1841 that it was restored to its present style of Elizabethan, or, more strictly speaking, Jacobean style of architecture. The house is built of Bath-stone, greyish in colour, with a mellow yellowish tinge running through it, which seems to have been called forth by the floods of sunshine which for so long have poured down upon the place. The building stands well in a broad expanse of green which upon all sides slopes gradually into rising hills and

lovely undulations, with lakes lying calmly here and there, reflecting the summer and autumn foliage as the succeeding seasons pass away. A magnificent view is obtained from a place called Beacon Hill in near neighbourhood to the castle, and distinct remains of an ancient encampment is found at its summit. Six counties can be seen from this spot, and the stretch of richly timbered land, rising and falling in an endless succession of hills and valleys, well repays the somewhat steep climb up the side of Beacon, even if the summer day be warm.

And after the climb the great centre hall at Highclere, built in the eleventh or twelfth century, and originally part of the palace of the bishops of Winchester, is a charming spot in which to rest. One passes from the arched entrance hall, having stone and marble pillars on either side, into a large almost square apartment, the roof of which is Gothic in form, of oak, with ground-glass windows. A wide, hospitable fireplace is on one side; opposite it the oak staircase is visible through a triple arch.

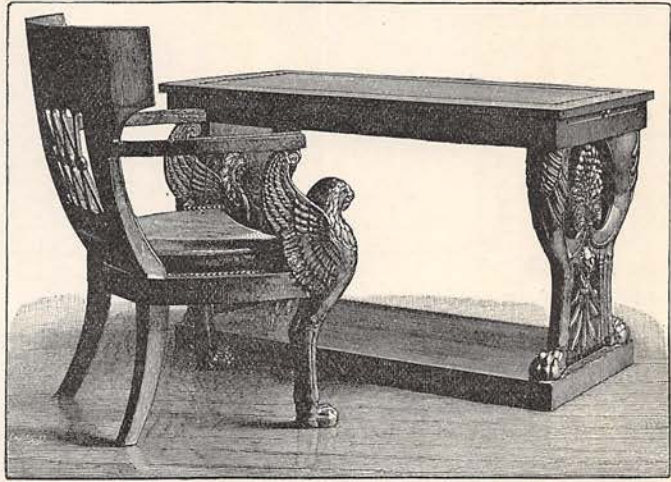


It is on this staircase that the full-length portrait, by Phillips, of the first Earl of Pembroke hangs, one of the greatest statesmen of Henry VIII.'s time. The dog represented in the picture is thought to be the one who followed his master to his grave in St. Paul's Cathedral, where he pined away and died.

The sunshine streaming through the large staircase window gilds the arms of the different families with whom the Herberts have intermarried, these arms, illuminated on shields, forming a border to the stamped leather of quaint design which covers the walls. All the peculiar charm and comfort of an English country-house room is found in this hall, all the delightful arrangement and disposition of furniture so essentially English. In a glass case on one of the tables are several interesting relics, among them two ivory billiard cues with the Herbert arms introduced in the design, which belonged to that gifted Countess of Pembroke who was Sir Philip Sidney's sister.

To tell a ghost story in such a cosy, cheery place, at once reduces a ghost to a very harmless thing indeed. Yet the tale of a ghost claimed by Highclere is often related to credulous guests. He was such a disturbing ghost that a council of clergymen was called to lay his restless spirit. Only eleven divines assembled, an insufficient number for the emergency, therefore the evil spirit speedily returned from the deep well where he had been banished, and became more rampageous than ever. A second

time the clerical council was called together, upon this occasion twelve in number, and all concerned hoped that after they had solemnly laid the ghost to rest within the trunk of an old yew tree near the house that there he would remain for ever. And for a time he was quiet; but one stormy night amid wild thunder and lightning the demon escaped, and became if possible more mischievous than before. Then a more distant spot was chosen whence to banish the unruly spirit—no less a place than the Red Sea; but this latest spell laid upon him could



NAPOLÉON'S CHAIR AND TABLE FROM FONTAINEBLEAU.

continue for only a hundred years, and a most uncomfortable uncertainty exists as to whether or no those hundred years have expired. Therefore at any moment the turbulent ghost may reappear at Highclere, and the only regret of the writer is that he did not elect to do so during her visit at the castle.

Hardly a less restless spirit than the ghost has a memento in the long library leading from the centre hall at Highclere, where an armchair of inlaid mahogany and bronze stands before a writing-table, both being in the best style of the Second Empire. The wooden arms of the chair are deeply marked and cut, and the hand leaving these marks of haughty impatience which could ill brook an instant's opposition was the hand of the great Napoleon. Both chair and table came from the Council Chamber, Fontainebleau, and there is good reason for believing that both were used when the *Code Napoleon* was compiled and written. It was an odd sensation to sit and write where the man of destiny once sat and wrote; and to pause and think, in the dreamy silence of the great room, where the monotonous ticking of the clock, and the humming of summer insects in the June sunshine helped instead of hindered thought, of all that had been since he so wrote. But with Napoleon for a theme where might one not wander? Too far from Highclere, charming as it is, so at once, all reminiscences aroused by the old worn chair and well used table must be peremptorily dismissed. Another plainer table of walnut, which was used by the Emperor Napoleon when at St. Helena, stands in the smaller room at the end of the library. From this room a spiral iron staircase leads to a second library above, where is a curious picture of Allan Ramsay, supposed to have been painted by himself. The rare and valuable books are such as one would expect to



find in the collection of a man inheriting the literary tastes and genius of the Herberts, as the present owner of Highclere does in a marked degree. Out of old Greenwich palace comes the library chimney-piece of carved wood and gilt, and the one portrait in the room hangs over this chimney-piece. It is that of Henry, first Earl of Carnarvon, by Romney. He was the son of Major-General William Herbert, and grandson of Margaret Sawyer, the heiress of Highclere, and of the eighth Earl of Pembroke. In 1780 he was created Baron Porchester of Highclere, and in 1793 Earl of Carnarvon. An account of the times says :—"As Colonel Herbert, and member for Wilton, he was present in the House of Commons during the Gordon Riots, and when Lord George Gordon took his seat with a blue cockade, the House being meanwhile besieged by the mob, Colonel Herbert declared with great spirit that he could not sit and vote



A CORNER OF LIBRARY, SHOWING CHIMNEY-PIECE FROM GREENWICH PALACE.

in that House whilst he saw a noble lord in it with the ensign of riot in his hat, and threatened if he would not take it out he would walk across the House and do so for him. Whereupon Lord George put the cockade in his pocket."

The music-room at Highclere, opening out of the library, is hung with wonderfully beautiful silken tapestry worked upon a gold ground. Amongst some family miniatures on a table in this room lies a small framed sketch of a dog, standing on his hind legs, and holding a cup in his mouth. The sketch is signed *E. Landseer*, and a paper pinned to the picture states that it was drawn by him for Lady Mary Fox.

Some of the best pictures at Highclere are to be found in the drawing-room: the charming "Wood Gatherers," by Gainsborough; the delightful portrait of the first Countess of Carnarvon with her child, by Sir Joshua Reynolds; and that picture, also by Sir Joshua, of Colonel Acland and Lord Sidney shooting deer, the two friends whose friendship was ended before the painting was completed. As neither would have the picture it was bought by the second Lord Carnarvon. In the dining-room are one of Vandyck's celebrated portraits of Charles I. on a white horse; William,



Earl of Pembroke, the friend of Shakespeare ; Margaret Sawyer, the handsome heiress of Highclere ; a group of the Earl of Pembroke and his family ; and many others. Every one who has read the *Antiquary* remembers the incident told by Sir Walter Scott of old Elspeth. A very similar one can be related of the old nurse of the Hon. Captain Charles Herbert, whose portrait hangs on the stone staircase. He was drowned at sea in 1812, and thirty years afterwards Molly Docker his nurse died at Highclere. Her last words were : "The captain's in the drawing-room waiting for you, my lady."

The following account, which explains the memorial tablet to Charles Herbert in Highclere Church, is best given in Lord Carnarvon's own words :—

In the earlier part of the sixteenth century, Charles Herbert, the eldest son of Philip, fourth Earl of Pembroke, after being betrothed to the daughter of the Duke of Buckingham, was sent out to Italy as a youth in order to obtain some of the science and knowledge that was then the



HIGHCLERE CASTLE. SIR CHARLES BARRY, ARCHITECT.

almost exclusive property of that country. He was kindly received at the Papal Court, and subsequently went to a castle in Lunigiana possessed by the Malaspinas. Whilst there he was seized with fever and died ; and, the family holding him in great honour, he was buried in the little chapel in the castle and a tablet put up to his memory. The common legend amongst the peasantry ran that he was buried in a lead coffin and his heart placed in a golden cup. So matters rested till the French Revolution when the country was overrun by French troops. The report reached their ears, and a detachment was sent to ransack the tomb. They found the body in a silver not a lead coffin, and the heart in a bronze and not a gold cup. They melted the metal into bullets, carried away the bronze cup, and scattered about the castle the bones, which were for some time a plaything for the children of the persons who, on the expropriation of the Malaspinas, became the owners of the castle.

In 1883 a friend told me these circumstances, and said that the bones were still preserved by a very old man who had acquired them at or very shortly after the desecration of the tomb. I begged my friend on his return to Italy to spare no trouble or expense in obtaining them ; and after a long negotiation, during which of course the value of these bones rose to an extortionate figure, and after many other curious difficulties and objections, the remains of my unfortunate relative were shipped at night on board a small steamer ; and after being nearly lost in a storm off the west coast of Africa, they arrived by a very circuitous passage at Liverpool. They were brought on thence to Highclere, and buried in one of the family vaults in the presence of a great part of the parish.



Thus, after two centuries and a half, the mortal remains of this young man buried in Italy, torn from their resting place by French revolutionists, preserved by the merest accident by a stranger, after a series of difficulties and adventures which I have not enumerated, were brought to England; and, though not buried in his own home, were interred within thirty miles of it, and amongst the bodies of his own name and race.

Among some old papers discovered at Longleat, the Marquis of Bath's place, is one entitled, "Mister John Kyngesmylle, his account of Ihgecler." We are told that this "is a survey or report of the place evidently sent to be submitted to Protector Somerset for his consideration as to purchase." But the writing and spelling of Mister John leave much to be desired, and it is just as well that other accounts of the beautiful old home in Hampshire can be obtained. For those having a *culte* for trees, they must always come first in any mention of the place, but to lovers of flowers they might perhaps stand second to the wonderful collection of rhododendrons and azaleas which is celebrated throughout England for its extent and beauty. Not only near the house and in the park proper are there groups of scented colour in extraordinary profusion, but all along the drive to Milford Lake and pretty Milford House hundreds of bushes are found glowing with blossoms varying in tints from the palest cream to deepest orange, or from faint lilac to a royal purple. Some of these shrubs are American, and there is quite a large collection at Highclere of American plants and trees. Exclamations fail, and one is reduced to silence when in the midst of the lavish loveliness of the flowers, the varied beauty of the trees and foliage. But after all is not silence the truest form of any deep appreciation?



THOMAS, EARL OF ARUNDEL (THE COLLECTOR OF THE ARUNDELIAN MARBLES). FROM A CONTEMPORARY MINIATURE.