

THREE HUNDRED YEARS
OF A
FAMILY LIVING,
BEING A HISTORY
OF THE
RILANDS OF SUTTON COLDFIELD.

BY THE
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PREFACE.

“Brief let me be.” It is only the necessity of stating plainly and candidly that the idea of placing family records before the public would never have occurred to the compiler of this book, had not the curiosity evinced by friends and neighbours led him to conclude that a selection from the letters which lay before him might have its use in gratifying the laudable interest now so generally felt in local history and tradition: it is this alone which makes a preface excusable. The greater part of these letters are comprised in the latter half of the last century and the commencement of the present, but the predecessors and the successors of the remarkable family group of the Rilands of Sutton are not unworthy of record for their own sakes, as well as in their relation to the Levitical race, four of whom, from 1688 to 1822, were rectors as well as patrons of the “family living.”

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THE RILANDS OF SUTTON:
OR,
THREE HUNDRED YEARS OF A FAMILY LIVING.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

IT was in 1586 that John Shilton, of Birmingham, mercer, bought from Thomas Gibbons, of New Hall, the advowson of Sutton Coldfield; Gibbons having purchased it in 1559 from the brokers, Glascock and Blunt, who had on the same date acquired it, with other forfeited property put up to sale by the Crown.

From that time to the present, the patronage has been exercised by the descendants of Mr. Shilton, and the object of this little history is to give a few particulars of the rectors who belonged to the family, down to the generation now surviving.

A few words must first be said as to the foundation of the church, and how it came to be in the hands of the Crown at the time of Queen Elizabeth. The builders of the Parish Church of Sutton were the wealthy and powerful Earls of Warwick, who found in the "Cold-field"—the wind-swept, pebbly waste where stood the town next on the south to Lichfield—a suitable place for a hunting seat, and there made provision for the spiritual wants of their retainers and dependents, at some time subsequent to the Norman Conquest, by erecting a church in a place where, as we learn from "Domesday

Book," there was none before. The first recorded name of an incumbent is that of Gregory Harold in 1305; and the next, Robert Hillary, of Sandiacre, Notts, was presented in 1317, by King Edward II., in the minority of the Earl of Warwick. His tenure of the benefice is confirmed by a fine levied between him and William de Grey and Richard de Grey, Parson of Sutton-in-the-Dale, in 1343. The Beauchamps and Nevils, who in succession inherited the Earldom of Warwick, exercised the right of presentation to the Church of Sutton until the attainder of Edward Plantagenet, son of George, Duke of Clarence, by Isabel, one of the co-heirs of the famous king-making earl. He was executed on Tower Hill in 1499, when his possessions, including those at Sutton, were escheated to the Crown, and in the same year Henry VII. exercised his patronage by nominating Mr. Edward Scott to the rectory, which he only held five years, and was succeeded by a man of some celebrity, Dr. John Taylor, the eldest of three sons produced, tradition states, at one birth, by the wife of a poor tailor at Barton-under-Needwood, and educated at the royal cost. He was, at the time of his appointment to Sutton Coldfield, ambassador at the Court of Burgundy, and, in 1509, he became clerk to the Parliament. In 1515 he was advanced to the Archdeaconry of Derby, and was prolocutor of the Lower House of Convocation; and shortly after, having left the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry for the Archdeaconry of Buckingham, he was succeeded at Sutton by Dr. George Heneage* (a prebendary of Lincoln), and died, holding the office of Master of the Rolls, in 1534.

* George Heneage became Archdeacon of Oxford in 1521, and Chaplain to Longland, Bishop of Lincoln. He had a dispensation from the use of "all sumptuous vestment." In 1528 he was Dean of Lincoln, where his forwardness in defacing the shrines of the Cathedral led to popular disturbance, and an insurrection in 1536. In 1542 he became Archdeacon of Lincoln, and died in 1548.

His successors (while the benefice, to judge by the terrier* of 1612, became a very desirable one) for nearly a century were in no conspicuous degree men of mark, but in 1617 Robert Shilton presented to the rectory a Dr. John Burges, whose career, in some respects unique, throws a striking light upon the changes in Church parties in England during the years which intervened between the close of the Reformation and the outbreak of the Civil War. The Shilton family appear to have been keen adherents of the Puritan party, and may, perhaps, have been moved to purchase the advowson of Sutton from a wish to secure for a post, somewhat conspicuous and important, the services of a man who sympathised with them in religious opinion. It has always been, and is even now, a great factor in the

* A trew Terrier or Inventorie of the Glebe Landes and Meadows belonging unto the Personage of Sutton Coldfylde, 1612.

Imprimis.—There is a Personage house, with Barnes, Stables, Oxehouses, and other Buildings, all in good repaire and some newly built.

Itm.—There are two outyards and two gardeins.

Itm.—There are sixe closes appteyning, viz. :—One called the Home Close, another called the Stable Close, the third Heetly or the Blabs Close, the fourth Warningalls or the Calves Close, the fyfte Gilbert's Crofte, the sixth the Mettall.

Itm.—There are two Meadowes, the one a little Meadowe, lyeing between the Calves Close and the Blabs Close, the other lyeing betweene the Mettall and certaine of the towne backsides.

Itm.—There is also one dole of meadowing lyeing in Water Orton Meadowe, betweene Robt. Taverner's dole and the three Swaths of Thos. Pearson's, of Curdworth. All the Lands and Meadows (excepting the dole) doe lye together, sepated only by one lane leading from the Comon belonging to Sutton called the Blabs towards Middleton.

ROGER ELIOT, RECTOR.

ZACH(ARELL?) MASSEY.

WILLIAM GYBONS.

JOHN HETH.

OLD RICHARD  SYMOND,

(his marke).

machinery of the Calvinistic section of the English Church, to secure the right of appointment to populous or well-endowed parishes; an instrument which, in spite of some adverse criticism from the opponents of that school of theology, I cannot but consider a perfectly legitimate one, and often the means of procuring for deserving men the preferment which their merit has entitled them to expect. In the instance before us, Shilton seems to have taken steps to obtain the services of a man of good character, sound scholarship, and popular gifts, who would recommend the views which he entertained in common with his patron, moderately, yet conscientiously. This type of man he found in Dr. John Burges, an elderly minister, who says of himself, in a book written in defence of Dr. Morton, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and published in 1631, with a dedication to King Charles the First:—"Nor knew I my worthy patron, Master Robert Shilton, nor he mee, nor had wee ever seene one another when first hee pleased to bring the offer thereof unto mee at Istleworth, after that Doctor Chetwind now Deane of Bristoll had first refused it." John Burges had been educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he took his bachelor's degree in 1586; and in 1590, at the age of twenty seven, we find him Rector of St. Peter's, Hungate, Norwich, and in that year (according to Blomefield's "Norfolk") he was deprived, as he says himself, for "inconformitie." His refusal to wear the surplice, he continues, was not that he held it unlawful, but that some of his parishioners alleged that "they should never profit by it. Hereupon I resolved not to stumble them, admonished them of their errour, told them they would repent it ere the yeere were about; and indeed so they did with many teares, wishing that I had rather worne ten surplices than to have left them." He afterwards removed into Lincoln diocese, under Bishop Chaderton, where he conformed, and remained beneficed until 1603, when, upon the publication of the Book of Canons, he appears to have been challenged to explain the position he held on the question of

Conformity, which he did in a tract of apology addressed to his diocesan; afterwards answered, at Archbishop Bancroft's desire, by Dr. Covell, who printed it with his reply (as Burges asserts) without his knowledge. It seems, however, that Sir Henry Jermyn, "mine honorable friend," he calls him, presented a copy to the King, which he took ill, "as if I had undutifully imputed to his highness some close innovation which I meant not to doe." Burges's attempts to conciliate King James were especially unfortunate. He was commanded to preach before His Majesty at Greenwich, on June 19th, 1604, when he took for his text Psalm cxxii., verses 8 and 9:—"For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good." But his sermon much offended the King, particularly one passage which he introduced by way of illustration of his desire for tenderness towards the scrupulous objectors to ceremonies and vestments. "I will not direct," so ran the sermon, "but praye leave to tell a story:—It is reported of Augustus, the emperor, that supping with one Pollio, he was informed that a servant of Pollio's had broken a cristall glasse of his master's, a foule fault if he had done it wittingly, if negligently a fault: but for this the poore servant was adjudged to be cut in peeces and cast to the fishes; a marvailous sore sentence for such a fault. The Emperor revoked the sentence, and thought it punishment enough to the servant to have bin in feare of such a punishment, and after breaks all the glasses, that they might not be the occasion of like vigorous sentence afterwards."

Burges himself admits that by "Pollio's glasses I did intend to notifie the ceremonies for which this Church of God hath bin in vexation above fifty yeeres."

So much offence was given by this apologue, that he was not only called before the Bishop of London and rebuked, but also committed to the Fleet Prison, and deprived of his benefice. He was next selected to attend the King at Hinchinbrook, with other

representatives of the Nonconformist party, but was "excepted against," as he says, by Dr. Montague, Dean of the Chapel Royal (Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1608, and of Winchester, 1616), though he asserts that his intention was to have taken independent ground from the rest of the deputation, and to have protested against ceremonies, not as unlawful, but as "inconvenient."

As no prospect of reconciliation with the ruling powers appeared possible, Burges repaired to Holland, and, having studied medicine and taken the doctor's degree at Leyden, returned to England in 1612 or 1613, to establish himself as a physician. He was, however, through the influence of the Court, prohibited from practice in London on account of his being in holy orders, so he settled at Isleworth, where he obtained a considerable success in his profession; "which I affirme upon my conscience," he writes, in 1631, "to have been every yeere as profitable as my benefice is in three yeeres at the least." In 1616 he again conformed by subscribing to the Canons of the Church of England, and was appointed preacher at Bishopsgate; and, although in the next year he accepted the Rectory of Sutton, he went out to the Palatinate as chaplain to Sir Horatio Vere. In 1624 he was made Prebendary of Wellington in Lichfield Cathedral; and, in 1631, Prebendary of Handsacre; and in the latter year he came forward in vindication of his bishop, Dr. Morton, in a work of 654 pages, entitled "An Answer rejoyned to that much applauded Pamphlet of a Namelesse Author, bearing this Title: viz., a reply to Dr. Morton's Generall Defence of three Nocent Ceremonies, &c. The Innocency and Lawfulnesse whereof is againe in this rejoynder vindicated"—"Published by His Majesty's Speciall Command." Bound up with this is another tract of 120 pages, on "The lawfulness of kneeling in the act of receiving the Lord's Supper, wherein (by the way) also, somewhat of the Crosse in Baptisme." These, with the surplice, were the three "nocent" ceremonies before referred to. The subject is treated with much research and candour, in a quaint

style of question and answer, and with many statements in vindication of his personal share in the controversy, from which the main incidents of his life can be elicited.

It only remains to say that he died, and was buried at Sutton in the same grave with his second wife, in 1635; but the monument which was erected to his memory there (according to the "Dictionary of National Biography"), is not in being; nor is it recorded among the inscriptions given in the 1730 edition of "Dugdale's Warwickshire."

He mentions in 1606 that he had then ten children. One of his daughters, Abigail, married a celebrated Puritan, Dr. Cornelius Burgess, in 1618, and died at Sutton, where she was buried in 1626, having given a sacramental cup to the church. William Hill, master of the Sutton School, who afterwards was promoted to a similar post in Dublin, is stated, in the "Dictionary of National Biography," to have married another daughter; but from the statement of A'Wood ("Athenæ Oxonienses"), and the occurrence of the baptism of two daughters of another John Burges, and burial of his wife, in the register of Sutton Church, it is more probable that Mrs. Hill was a grand-daughter of the rector, whose son, like himself, practised medicine and lived at Sutton.

In addition to the controversial works before mentioned, he collected and edited the theological writings of Mr. Thomas Wilcocks, of St. John's College, Oxford, whose daughter, Sara, was his first wife (see A'Wood's "Athenæ Oxonienses" for a list of them); and a polemical tract, entitled "The Pope's deadly wound," by T. C., sometimes attributed to Thomas Cartwright, but written, as Burges himself informs us, by Thomas Clark, of Sutton Coldfield.

In the person of Dr. John Burges we have a specimen of the fluctuations of opinion to which a moderate theologian is always liable; in his successor we shall find one of the rigid school of dogmatic assumption, who measures his principles by an unbending

rule. Anthony Burges, the son of a schoolmaster at Watford, was a Fellow of Emmanuel College, and at the time of his institution to Sutton, about thirty years of age. He is mentioned with much gratitude as a tutor by John Wallis, in the autobiographical notes prefixed to Hearne's edition of "Langtoft's Chronicle." The baptisms of four of his children are recorded in the Sutton register book, between 1636 and 1642; but in the latter year, when Charles I. was assembling his western troops close by: the plantation called King's Standing, on the Coldfield, just outside Sutton Park, still marking the spot where the Shropshire and Welsh levies marched past, Burges, like other men of peace, was forced to vacate so dangerous a neighbourhood, so that he abandoned his residence at Sutton, and took up his abode first at Coventry, and then in London, where in 1645 he is styled in the title page to a sermon preached before the House of Commons, February 25th, 1645, "Anthony Burges, Pastor of Sutton Coldfield, now minister at Lawrence Jewry, London." Several other sermons of his delivered at that time were printed: one in 1643 before the House of Commons, one in 1644 before the Court Martial, and another in the same year at the election of the Lord Mayor (Sir Thomas Atkins), and again before the House of Commons in the same year. In 1645 another sermon of his, preached before the House of Lords, in Westminster Abbey, was published by vote of the House, and during the whole of this time he was an active and estimable member of the Westminster Assembly. It is perhaps only fair to quote his sentiments expressed in a sermon at St. Margaret's, on the 5th of November, the subject being "Rome's cruelty and apostacy":—"I know the question of tolerating men dissenting in religion is a vast ocean, and many learned men have writ of it—both Papists and Protestants, yet I observe those that are sound and judicious, especially when they come to speak of punishments for their errors, to incline *in mitiorem partem*."

In 1642 King Charles I., considering the living of Sutton Coldfield vacant, presented to it Dr. James Fleetwood, a distinguished scholar and preacher, who after the Restoration became Bishop of Worcester; but of whose ministrations Sutton could have had little or no share, as he followed the King to Oxford, and the Parliamentary party speedily regained the ascendancy in the northern part of Warwickshire.*

Anthony Burges was in his rectory again in 1650, and it is to be supposed that during his absence he had maintained a curate to look after his flock. He had one in 1637, when one Mr. Roberts is recorded to have acted in that capacity, and to have been the founder of a library in Birmingham.† Even after Mr. Burges's return to Sutton he was in great request as a preacher. A sermon at St. Paul's, May 11, 1656, before Sir John Dethick, Lord Mayor, entitled "A demonstration of the day of judgement against Atheists and Hereticks," was printed by desire of Court; and a funeral discourse at the burial of Mr. Thomas Blake, at Tamworth, became so celebrated that it was difficult to procure a copy. It was published in 1658, with the title of "Paul's Last Farewell."‡ In

* Fleetwood, indeed, could hardly have expected to be acceptable to a borough whose Corporation had for their High Steward the Earl of Essex, the Commander-in-Chief of the Parliamentary army. Sutton was prosperous in those days. In 1636, when the tax for Ship-money was levied, Birmingham paid £100 and Sutton £80. In 1655, in the collection for the poor Protestants of Piedmont, Sutton Coldfield contributed £14 and Birmingham £15 11s. 2d.

† One Mr. Roberts, curate to a Rev. Mr. Burgis, is described in 1637 as now residing "near Birmingham that is much infested with the sicknesse," and is honourably mentioned "as one upon whose assistance and ingenuity in the drawing of a catalogue Mr. Burgis doth much rely."—Timmins's "Centenary of Birmingham Library," 1879.

‡ Whether it was this discourse, or another which is prefixed to a volume of sermons by Thomas Byrdall, minister of Walsall, who died in April, 1662, I have not discovered; but probably the funeral sermon on Byrdall, by Anthony Burges, was composed for the occasion, as Shaw's "Staffordshire" states that it describes the age of the deceased as 55.

addition to these single sermons, Burges published a number of larger treatises controverting the opinions of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, and of other divines, both Arminian and Antinomian. Their titles will give some idea of his industry as an author:—" *Vindiciæ Legis*, or a vindication of the law and covenants from the errors of Papists, Socinians, and Antinomians: 1647." "A treatise of justification, in two parts: 1648 and 1654." "Spiritual Refining: 1652." "One hundred and forty-five sermons upon the whole 17th chapter of St. John: 1652." "Spiritual Refining, part 2: 1658." "A Treatise of Original Sin: 1659." "An exposition of the 3rd chapter of 1st Corinthians: 1659." "The godly man's choice: 1659."

In 1662, though he had been recommended for the Bishopric of Hereford, and offered a prebend by Bishop Hacket, of Lichfield, he conscientiously resigned his benefice, and retired to Tamworth, where he was buried in 1664. Although his rival in the Rectory, Dr. Fleetwood, was then alive, he had obtained other preferment, and made no claim to the vacant benefice, to which Dr. William Watson was presented and held it for 27 years, when the vacancy created by his death was filled by the Revd. John Riland, who had married his patron's daughter Katherine. The Shilton family became soon after this embarrassed in circumstances, and in 1696 Katherine's portion had not been paid. In 1706 John Shilton mortgaged the advowson; and in 1710 John Riland paid off the mortgage and purchased it. The fall of the Shiltons appears to have been caused in part by the usual land hunger which besets successful Englishmen, leading them into extravagant purchases; and partly from an imprudent marriage of the widow of the last owner but one of the advowson. The original purchaser, the Birmingham mercer, who had married a daughter of Francis Stanley, of West Bromwich, had two sons, the younger of whom, Richard, bought the Manor where his mother's family had resided, was solicitor-general to Charles the

First, and was knighted; dying without issue, his property went to his elder brother Robert's only son, John Shilton, purchaser of the Manor of Wednesbury, one of whose daughters, Katherine, married the son of the Rector of Birmingham, by Cecilia Stanley, whom we may presume to have been a cousin. The widow of John, a daughter of Cornelius Holland, of Windsor, married Dr: Walter Needham, who seems, from a statement made by her younger son, Richard Shilton, to have induced his wife and elder stepson John to beggar themselves on his behalf. Ultimately, about 1710, Wednesbury and West Bromwich were sold, and neither John nor Richard Shilton left any representatives of the family name.

CHAPTER II.

THE RILAND FAMILY.

JOHN RILAND, who thus became Rector of Sutton and Patron of the Advowson, was grandson of a yeoman on the borders of Gloucestershire, where that county interlaces its boundaries with the shires of Warwick, Worcester, and Oxford.

Over, or Upper, Quinton, at which the Riland family dwelt, is only five or six miles from Stratford-on-Avon, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Pebworth, Marston, and Welford, villages handed down to fame by Shakespeare's jingling quatrain. From the same stock as that branch of the family whose fortunes we are following are derived also those of the orthography of Ryland and Rylands, of whom not a few descendants in Warwick, Northampton, Birmingham, and Bristol have been known to fame.* The father of the Rector of Sutton Coldfield, however, spelled his patronymic with an "i," only varying the word Riland by an occasional "e" final. He was born in 1619, and after a pupilage at the Stratford Grammar School, under Dr. Trapp, "in piety and learning second to none," he was, while still in his 14th year, entered at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, then literally

* It is possible that they might all trace their origin to the Rylands of the Ryelands within Westhoughton, Co. Lancaster, of whom an interesting account was printed by Mr. J. Paul Rylands, in the "Genealogist," 1880, but at any rate a relationship between the midland county branches was recognised. (See Appendix.)

under the wing of Magdalen College, to which he eventually attained on being elected upon the foundation in 1641; not long before the "evil days" of civil contention. In spite of his submission to the Parliamentary visitors, he was turned out of his fellowship, and of the small Crown living of Exhall, near Alcester, in 1647, and had a narrow escape of his life from the violence of the soldiery. In addition to this he had to suffer a grievous loss to a scholar, the plunder of his library, which was converted into the stock-in-trade of some of the robbers, who set up as booksellers with the spoil. For several years the hardships he suffered were extreme, his political, rather than his religious opinions, being the cause of his trouble; and at the Restoration he naturally became the recipient of a proportionable degree of favour from the ruling powers. He was, in 1660, presented to the Rectory of Bilton, in Warwickshire (where Addison afterwards dwelt), and in December of the same year was appointed by Bishop Hacket, Archdeacon of Stafford, a preferment, which he held (according to Hardy's *Le Neve*) until 1665, though he was also collated to the Archdeaconry of Coventry in 1661 (December 6th, in *Le Neve's* list), but he is styled Archdeacon of Coventry on the title-page of his sermons preached at the Warwick Assizes on the 19th August, 1661, and at the Mayor's feast in Coventry, on All Saints' Day, November 1st, in the same year.

In the address to the reader, prefixed to these discourses, he describes, with some humour, his aversion to public performances in the pulpit:—"Yet though *one woe is past*, behold *two more are coming*, I mean the Printing and Publishing of those Sermons." He pleads, as his excuse, "I was a man (beyond the common condition of men) born to troubles in this world; which (crowding in upon me through some inevitable misfortunes) for this twenty years have found me somewhat else to do than to meddle much with Books, unlesse they were Debt books, and such like sad old Manuscripts; the Crossing of

which, rather than the marking any other, hath been the greatest part of my employment. For this I blesse the God of Heaven, who by an *invisible hand* hath held me up, and brought me hitherto."

"But besides that, the constant task of Preaching for many years, might well exhaust a greater stock of Reading, than ever I could be guilty of, having had so short a time (I am sure I find it so) to *gather* in the University, and so long a time to *scatter* in the Country. But beyond all this; when a party of souldiers from *Warwick Castle*, coming with swords in one hand, and *Gilbert Millington* in the other, brake in upon me, threw me out of my living (too near the ~~hard~~ walls of that Castle), and there settled a *Fersey-Kember* in my stead, which force remains unremoved to this day. Much about the same time (those times of Dispersion), as my Parsonage house was broken in the Country, my Study (or rather myself) was broken in *Oxford*, where I lost all my books (except two or three of the most inconsiderable), and (that which most undid me) all my Papers, so that thereby I was perfectly reduced to his condition, "*Qui totum perdidit Id Nil.*"

"Comparing which losses (and some other Misfortunes, which afterward befell me) with the abundance of Blessings I had formerly there received, I may say of that *Weeping eye* (whose very Name is precious, and will ever be honourable with me), the same Fountain sent forth the sweetest, and some of the bitterest Waters that ever I tasted of. Not that I think any misusage of mine worthy of the World's notice, so as to sound a Trumpet to my sufferings; but only this I humbly begge, that in those several respects afore-said, I may be borne withall, whatever Defects, Mistakes, or other like Frailties, shall be found upon the ensuing Sermons. Wherein (however some have counted me too sharp, and I wish others do not count me too Dull) God is my Record, my Desire and Meaning in the main, is nothing but (the same, which at this time was sung by a Quire of Angels) '*Glory to God on high, On Earth peace, Good will*

toward Men :' especially Honour and Obedience to his Sacred Majesty, and all in authority under him, that we may lead a *quiet and peaceable life, in all Godliness and Honesty*, for which cause *I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus*, that now at last we may all live as subjects, love as Brethren, that so the God of Love and Peace may be with us. Amen. Decemb. 26, 1661. I. R."

The charitable and pacific expressions in the above extract were the echo of John Riland's real sentiments. In the following year a sermon on Confirmation, preached when that rite was revived at Coventry, June 23rd, 1662, and another Assize sermon, were printed ; and, in 1665, he was appointed to the Rectory of St. Martin's, Birmingham, then held by one Slater, described by Hutton as a broken apothecary, and a man of very inferior calibre in all respects. A letter is extant, addressed by Riland to William Booth, a barrister, and friend of the antiquary, Dugdale, in which he asks Booth's opinion as to the legality of curtailing the service when about to read himself in, fearing lest some disturbance should take place. Ere long he became extremely beloved in the town by all classes, and died there in 1673, aged fifty-three. His monument still exists, with a Latin inscription, in the chancel of St. Martin's. His son wrote for a book, once very popular, "Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy," a character of him worth quoting at length :—"He was very constant in his meditations and devotions, both public and private, which he delivered with such plainness and simplicity of speech and deportment, that there was not the least appearance of any unnatural or forced flights and enthusiastic raptures. There was such a strict and universal holiness in his life and conversation, that he is now called in Birmingham, 'that holy man.' He was so very affable and humble, that he never passed by anyone without some particular regard and friendly salutation. He was such a lover of peace that he laboured much for it, and when he could not persuade those that were at variance to abate anything of the height of their demands,

he many times deposited the money out of his own pocket, that he might make one of two contending parties. He was so charitable, that he carried about a poor box with him, and never reckoned himself poor but when that was empty ; and it was not a single charity he gave them, because he not only fed their bodies but their souls, for when he gave them a dole of bread in the church, he called them together, and then framed a discourse to them, particularly suited to their circumstances. Indeed, his exhortations on these occasions were so excellent and edifying, that several of the chief inhabitants came to hear them, and went away as well satisfied with these as the poor with the bread."

By his wife, Cecilia Stanley, he left (with a daughter, Maria, who predeceased him) an only son, John, who matriculated at Magdalen Hall, in 1673, being of the age of sixteen years ; and, in 1689, was presented by John Shilton, as has been already mentioned, to the Rectory of Sutton Coldfield, vacant by the death of Dr. Watson, having married Katherine, daughter of his patron.

A curious full-length portrait of the second John in boyhood is still in the possession of his family. As a painting it has no merit whatever, but the likeness of the chubby boy may be traced in the lineaments of some of his descendants, and the costume, a wide band and pinafore of linen, a jacket with short slashed sleeves, showing the puffed shirt below, and a hat ornamented with ribbons, is characteristic and becoming. The portrait of his father, the Archdeacon, shows a sallow, meagre face, with short hair, and the skull cap familiar to us on the heads of Baxter, Jeremy Taylor, and Juxon ; a wide band or collar, and black close cassock, or coat. The picture, on canvas, is evidently of the period of the Restoration.

Great changes had taken place in the condition of the parish of Sutton Coldfield during the century which had passed, since the acquisition of the patronage from the Crown. The beneficent



JOHN RILAND IN BOYHOOD.

1665.

schemes of the deposed Bishop of Exeter,* devoting his closing years to the amelioration of the distressful condition of his native place, had, during the 17th century, had time to ripen, and bear fruit to the increase of the prosperity† of the “Royal Town, Manor, and Lordship.” The Corporation had indeed gone far to jeopardise the welfare of the Grammar School he had founded; but the decree of Lord Chancellor Coventry in 1634 had placed education beyond the influence of ignorant and corrupt administrators; and the facilities for the enclosure of lands, the advantages to be derived from the pasture of Sutton Park, and the other encouragements to virtue and industry contained in the provisions of Vesey’s charities, had been the means of settling many incomers of worth and substance at Sutton, who improved the tone of the place both in local government and in the intercourse of daily life, as well as promoted its outward prosperity by building good houses, making pools, and reclaiming from year to year more and more of the waste

* John Veysey, Bishop of Exeter, 1519-54, having been compelled to give up a large proportion of the revenues of his See, obtained in 1528 a charter of Incorporation for his native place by the title of the Royal Town, Manor, and Lordship of Sutton Coldfield, and endowed the Warden and Society with the rights of Lords of the Manor, with the Royal Chase (called Sutton Park), and various lands and houses; the revenues arising from which were to be applied to pious secular uses; the exoneration of poor inhabitants from the subsidies of the Crown, the building of houses within the Lordship, the provision of marriage portions for worthy young women, and the like. He also founded a free school, and endeavoured to introduce woollen manufacture; built bridges, repaired roads, established police, and in other ways laboured for the prosperity of the place; at which, indeed, he resided during prolonged periods of absence from his diocese; and finally died at his residence there, some short time after his second appointment to his Bishopric, which he had resigned in 1551, and had been restored to in 1553.

† Houses in Sutton:—1630, 298; 1698, 310; 1721, 360; of which 244 were freehold tenements.

lands which adjoined the park on the north and west sides of the manor.

South and east of the town of Sutton, where the soil was stronger and more productive, there were several mansion houses occupied by gentlemen of standing. Langley Hall had just passed by inheritance from the old Norman name of Pudsey to the family of Jesson; and the widow of the last Pudsey, who had married William Wilson, the sculptor, from Leicester, knighted by Charles II., resided in the moated house in Sutton High Street, which he had built in the style compounded of Inigo Jones and the Dutch taste of King William's day, which suits so well the red brick material of the Midland Counties. At New Hall (*lucus a non lucendo*), a moated grange, with the date of 1490 on the oriel, and the arms of the Devereux family in the banquetting room window, was living Valens Sacheverell, cousin and friend of Henry Sacheverell, then the good-looking curate of Cannock, but in time to develop into the Saint Henry of the Jacobites, and the best abused man of his day. The Manor House had not long before lost its occupant, Thomas Dawney, of a Yorkshire family, now ennobled by the title of Viscount Downe, who had died in 1671, leaving in his will, with other out of the way provisions about his grave, still to be seen in Sutton Churchyard, that dole of bread for which the attendance of claimants broke down the floor of Vesey's original Moot-hall, and caused the erection of the structure removed in 1854. In 1668 the large pools which lay between the town of Sutton and the hill on which the Manor House stood, were overflowed by a flood, which had broken the banks of pools higher up the water-course in the park. From that time the town pools were drained, and laid into pasture, though the stone dam remained as the highway between Sutton Town and Birmingham, until obliterated by an embankment in 1826. To the north of the town, in addition to Moor Hall, then much as Bishop Vesey had left it, and tenanted by Mr. John Addyes, Henry Lord Ffolliott (third

peer) was building, under Wilson's direction, a mansion, to be known as Four Oaks Hall, on the outskirts of Sutton Park. The Rectory House itself was in the main street of the little town close to the Church, having a good garden towards the east, abutting on pleasant pasture fields. According to a valuation of the parish, in 1671, it was equal to the best of the residences then existing in the place, as out of a total of £1,331 10s. it stands at £120, while Langley Hall is no more, and New Hall £7 less. It did not, however, appear to Mr. Riland to be satisfactory, as in 1701 he contracted with one W. Smith for the building of a parsonage house, 45ft. long in front, and 35ft. deep, and 23ft. high to the top of the wall. This is the present Rectory. The cost was £239 11s. 9d., including a wall round a court or garden in front, which was pulled down in 1823. Mr. Riland found his own timber. The timber which Mr. Riland provided for his house was, of course, oak; and, except that the staircase, in its ascent by easy stages to the garrets, with a handsome balustrade up to the very top, has warped from the perpendicular in the upper flight, it surpasses in beauty and solidity the work of modern builders. One room, the dining parlour, still remains in the same condition as when first built, with renovated oak wainscot, the original cupboards let into the walls, and an exceedingly quaint fireplace, with an elegant cut-glass mirror above the mantel, flanked by brass sconces of the Queen Anne period of art. It must be understood, likewise, that the site, as well as the cost of the house, was provided by the Rector, without any of those modes of distributing the liability over a series of years, which commissioners and church societies have in later years invented. His equivalent he found, it must be supposed, in the sale of the former manse.

The author of a pamphlet, printed in 1762, says:—"There are adjacent brick-kilns that are rather a nuisance to the habitation"; but in 1763, the waste lands at the brick-kilns, near the Rectory,

were ordered to be levelled by Thomas Aulton, Senr., and probably the cottages now standing were built.

The road from Sutton has been several times altered. At one time it ran to the south of the Rectory, then to the north, crossing the avenue, and coming close to the north wall of the house; another zig-zag was then added, which conducted it some sixty yards away, and finally a good road, nearly on the track of an old footpath, places the Rectory within easy distance from the Church.

The house, which is still in the occupation of the incumbent, stands just half a mile east of the Church, and was, probably, to judge by its style, designed by the local architect, Wilson. Here John Riland removed, and in 1708 lost his wife, who had borne him seven children. Seven years later he married Elizabeth Sedgwick, the daughter of a gentleman of some position in the neighbourhood, who outlived him.

There is not much to record during the incumbency of John Riland; the period was, on the whole, a peaceful one. The house of Samuel Stevenson had been licensed in 1672 for Nonconformist worship, and thus had begun a small congregation of Presbyterians,* who gradually resolved themselves into Unitarian doctrines, and about 150 years after ceased to assemble; but the pendulum of popular opinion in Sutton Coldfield had swung round since the Civil Wars to Tory and Jacobite leanings. This was evidenced by the selection, in 1679 of Thomas Thynne, afterwards Viscount Weymouth, as High Steward of the Corporation. He had a residence hard by at Drayton Bassett, and was a decided Tory and courtier. The Rector, in spite of his connection with the Puritan Shiltons, was a High Churchman; though at Oxford he was an opponent of James the Second's

* One of the worshippers here might have been the learned and pious John Ray, F.R.S., who after the death of his patron and scientific friend, Francis Willughby, of Middleton Hall, in 1676, took up his abode at Sutton Coldfield, where he resided for some years. His life and correspondence, edited by Dr. E. Lankester, was published in 1846 by the Ray Society.

creature, Dr. Farmer, who complains of him for taking away his pupils; and he was, in 1687, one of those who brought serious accusations against the same person. The residence of Dr. Sacheverell, at New Hall, where he spent the greater part of the years during which he was suspended from preaching, no doubt had an influence upon the townspeople, which would, probably, be encouraged by the neighbouring county gentlemen, most of whom favoured the Jacobite interest, and met in a club at Coleshill (where Dr. Kettlewell, the Non-juror, had been vicar) to drink to the White Rose. On the Sunday before the coronation of George I., in particular (October 20th, 1714), Sutton Church must have exhibited a singular spectacle, the pulpit being occupied by the renowned doctor, and over two hundred of the Birmingham Jacobites being among his audience. "The consequence of it," says Tindal, the historian, "appeared a day or two after"; namely, a scandalous riot and attack upon Dissenting places of worship in the town of Birmingham. Indeed a book in the rectory library contains some MS. notes of that period, which sufficiently exhibit the bias of the owner, whether John Riland himself, as is probable from the handwriting, or one of his family. The book is "Bishop Prideaux's Compendium of History," printed at Oxford, 1672, and in his chapter upon the Norman kings, the author writes, "Henry the First, surnamed *Beauclark*, for his learning, was wont to say that an *unlearned king* was a *crowned asse*." "If so, what is our K. George?" scribbles the marginal annotator. By-and-by the author gives a list of the succession of the Stuarts:—*James: Charles:* and stops there. In the same hand is added:—"Ye Martyr, Charles ye 2nd, James ye 2nd, Queen Mary (ignoring William), Queen Anne, James ye 3rd, now in Scotland": a somewhat dangerous piece of partisanship, had the book fallen into unfriendly hands. But the High Churchmen did not merely cabal and write treason. It ought to be stated in fairness that Valens

Sacheverell gave rents for bread for the poor ; George Sacheverell founded a dole on St. George's Day ; Thomas Jesson, in 1707, left an estate for apprenticing poor boys, and for a dole ; and John Wilkins, in 1707, left a field, of which the rent was to be applied in purchasing religious and useful books, to be distributed to young persons who had been publicly catechised in the Parish Church. These at any rate are substantial tokens of a creditable zeal in good works.

Of John Riland's seven children, three sons, William, Thomas, and Charles, had died in his lifetime, and so, I think, had a daughter, Elizabeth. The other daughter, Catherine, had married, in 1717, William Sadler, of Castle Bromwich ; she died without issue in 1779. To the younger of his surviving sons, Richard Riland, he bequeathed the advowson of the rectory, with remainder to John, the elder son, if Richard had no male heir. John had been a short time Demy of Magdalen College, but taken no degree. His disinclination to take orders is attributed to his conscientious objection to recognise the ruling sovereign. If he were really a Non-juror, his scruples were either partial, not extending to magisterial oaths, or subsided in course of time, for he took the oath and entered the Corporation in 1726, and became Warden of Sutton, which involved the exercise of magisterial functions, in 1728. He continued to reside at Sutton, a respected and useful member of the community, though a sturdy specimen of a self-willed race, up to his death, in 1765, aged 75. By his wife, Sarah Fisher, who died in 1769, he had a large family, out of whom two sons and four daughters died in infancy. Of four daughters who survived, three were married, but only one left any descendants in the present generation ; the representation of this branch of the Rilands terminating in the family of Trye, of Leckhampton, Gloucestershire. Of his gruff style a note to his nephew will give a good idea :—
 “S^r this is to let y^u know y^t our Daughter Jane is broke out of y^e Measels and has y^m very thick, She is very tedious and

y^e woomens whole business is to wait on her, which will prevent their coming to-morrow. I intend to give y^u y^e meeting as I told y^u at y^e Church if y^u are not afraid of me, he pleas^d to signify this by y^e Bearer. Feby. y^e 10th 1763." Addressed "For y^e Rector, present." Jane Riland married Benjamin Spencer, L.L.D., Vicar of Aston-juxta-Birmingham, and had one son, Charles, who died without issue. The business in the church will appear in the proper place, as it related to the rebuilding, under Richard Bisse Riland's incumbency.

It was just now mentioned that the making of pools was one of the modes in which the neighbourhood of Sutton was improved. In this John Riland bore his share. An agreement is extant between him and John Gibbons on the one part, and William Rawlins of the other, by which the latter agrees to make a good and substantial dam of turf and gravel, for a pool at Longmoor Brook, in Sutton Park, which was to be completed for the sum of seven pounds, Riland and Gibbons finding a trough for releasing the water. The embankment was to be fifty yards long, eleven feet high, ten yards broad at bottom and five at top. The work was estimated by a valuer from the North-Western Railway, in 1864, as worth £130 at present prices; but Rawlins (who signs his name Rolings) received his money by guineas and half-guineas, and completed his bargain. Riland and Gibbons in 1735 received a lease of the pool for twenty years, at a shilling a year, and this lease was renewed in 1754 for a similar term; and again, for forty-three years in 1773; at the expiration of which period the Corporation resumed possession. A corn mill had been erected on the sluice of the pool, by a Mr. Reynolds, which is still in operation, having been repaired in 1822, and subsequently modernised.

Richard Riland, the first rector born at Sutton, succeeded his father in the living in 1720, when he was twenty-five years of age. He had been educated at Oxford, as a Demy at Magdalen College,

1711-1721.* His portrait, taken at this period of his life, represents him of a fresh, chubby, regular countenance, without any very striking characteristic of feature or expression. The placid days in which his lot was cast—days only disturbed by the alarm of the Highland invasion in 1745,† when the rebels had, in popular rumour,

* He took his B.A. degree in 1715, and M.A., February 1st, 1716-17. In “*Pietas Oxoniensis*” are some lines of his on the death of Queen Anne in 1714; and he gave ten guineas to the New Building Fund at Magdalen.

† A portion of the Duke of Cumberland’s army marched across the parish on its way to meet the Pretender. Some of the troops lay the night at Castle Bromwich, the officers occupying the inn now called the “Bradford Arms.” Here they spent the evening with so much revelry, that the officer in command, on moving with his regiment the next morning, was not sufficiently sober to know that he was without his sword. On reaching Basset’s Pole he made the discovery, and was obliged to retrace his steps to recover his weapon. He was, however, so much entertained by the adventure, that on reaching the inn he declared that, as long as he lived, he would give a banquet there on the anniversary of the day on which he marched to fight for his king and country without his sword. This promise he fulfilled; and persons now living have had the circumstance related to them by those who actually assisted at the celebration of an exploit which, at this day, would not be regarded as justifying an annual festivity.

The same officer may have been a principal actor in another adventure of that morning. The advanced guard being ignorant of the road, made inquiries of a man whom they found near Tyburn. The poor fellow had no roof to his mouth, and the soldiers being unable to understand a word he uttered, pronounced him a spy, and took him as such before the commanding officer. He at once ordered him to be shot. The order was instantly executed; and, in further vengeance, his head was struck off, and carried on a halbert as far as New Shipton, and there tossed into a tree, the body having been thrown into a ditch in the Echelhurst, just below Pipe Hays. Singularly enough, to confirm the tradition, the body and head were found within a few weeks of each other, in the year 1827: the one at the draining of the meadows, where the execution had taken place; and the other on the felling of the ruins of one of the finest old oaks in the parish.—B. D. Webster, Esq., in “*The Forest and Chase of Sutton Coldfield*,” 1860.

advanced to Lichfield, and the family plate was submerged in the ornamental canal for fear of plunder—seem reflected in his face ; and, indeed, his thirty-seven years were very uneventful ones. He ought not to be forgotten so long as one of the lime trees, which form so grand an avenue from the Rectory door westwards, in the direction of Sutton town, remains standing ; but his virtues were essentially of a domestic character, and he was deservedly happy in his family relations.

In 1729 he met at Bath a young lady, about eight years his junior, the daughter of Mr. George Bisse, of White Lackington, County of Somerset, to whom, on the 22nd April, 1739, he addressed from Sutton the following letter :—

“ Madam,—I intimated to you in my Last that I had an Offer of some considerable Importance to make, which I once intended to have mention’d sooner. Without any further Introduction, it is that of a Husband ; if you are not better provided, I am at your Service. I do not desire yt any one shd represent my Fortune, as it is usual on such Occasions to do, to better Advantage than it deserves ; I think I may justly say of it myself, yt it is neither small nor indeed very great, yet such, I doubt not, as might be abundantly suffict to support a Family witht ye Addition of a plentiful Fortune with a Wife ; but in Conjunction with yrs (which what it is I am ignort of) there will be enough not only for Convenience or Necessity, but ev’n for Pomp and Luxury, tho’ I think neither of us will be so indiscreet as to Covet much of that. True Happiness does not consist in a Multitude of Riches ; a genteel Sufficiency will entitle ye Possessours of it to all ye Privileges & Advantages yt wise & good men can desire. Nor can I conceive yt if it be our Fortune to meet together in Marriage, any other Ingredient will ever be wanting yt can possibly contribute to ye happiness of life. Tho’ I like very well ye Acct I received of you from Yr Friends, yet what I am most pleased with, & is indeed ye Strongest Inducement to what I now write is one Quality I had daily opportunities of observing myself at Bath ; & is, I think, ye Perfection of All ; witht which all ye other good Qualities in ye world yt any Lady can be possess’d of, as they are not able to make ye least atonement for ye want of That, wou’d never recommend Her to my Esteem.

If this offer be not agreeable, I doubt not I shall soon be told so—if it be, I can see no Reason why That may not be told too with equal Freedom,

& witht Scruple or Reserve ; but whether it be Agreeable or not, I hope no offence is giv'n by making it.

This Matter has been already propos'd to ye Gentleman yr Uncle, with whom you live ; & his consent obtain'd for my Coming to his House on this Business : tho' I do not speak this for yr Information, for I cannot suppose you to be ignorant of it. I intend, therefore, with his and your Leave, to wait on Him & you either ye Week after ye Next, which will be ye 5th Week after Easter, or in Whitsun-Week, but cannot now certainly determine which, & I am, Madam,

Yr most humble Servt

R. RILAND.

To Miss Bisse, at Mr. Bisse's,
in Red Lyon Street, in Holbourn,
London."

The answer to this letter has not been preserved, but its import may be gathered from the fact of a marriage licence for the lady and gentleman having been granted on the 23rd June of the same year, and the following letter from the founder of the Vinerian Scholarship at Oxford, an uncle of the bride:—

" Ffor Mrs. Riland, att Philip Bisse's, Esqe. at Wimbledon, Surry.

Cousin,—Yrs of ye 25th I recd thursday last, but too late to write back by that Post.

I heartily wish you and Mr. Riland (to whom please to give my service) all ye Joy & Happiness a marry'd state is capable of affording ; & doubt not but your Prudence will contribute much towards it. You did well in taking with you the advice of your Mother and Uncle, to whom you lay under so many obligations, & from thence I conceive ye stronger hopes of ye success of my wishes for you. As there is no greater pleasure to me than ye well doing of my friends, so I shall be glad of any opportunity in my Power to promote it, & Mr. Riland or You may at any time freely comand

Your affect. kinsman & Servt.,

C. VINER.

Aldershatt, Augst 1, 1730.

I'me sorry for your Mother's misfortune. Pray give my Love to her, & Service to Mr. Bisse & Lady. My wife desires her Service to all."

Both the families with which the Rilands thus became allied, enjoyed a certain degree of distinction. A Philip Bisse, Fellow of Magdalen, Oxford, in 1572, and Archdeacon of Taunton, 1584, was a large contributor to the library of Wadham College, where his portrait still exists. He died in 1613, and his epitaph (see Fuller) ran :—

“ Bis fuit hic natus, puer et Bis, Bis juvenisque,
Bis vir, Bisque senex, Bis doctor, Bisque sacerdos ”:

a play upon words eminently characteristic of the age. It is still perpetuated in the motto :—“ Sis felix Bis.” In the next century, Dr. Philip Bisse, Bishop first of St. David’s and next of Hereford, was said by the discontented wits of that day to have owed his rise to the distaff, his wife being the Duchess Dowager of Northumberland. Yet as his promotion to the Bench took place in 1710, while the lady was not a widow until 1716, the insinuation is hardly supported by dates. A younger brother, who was Chancellor of Hereford, obtained greater credit by his lectures at the Rolls Chapel in 1716, afterwards published under the title of the “Beauty of Holiness in the Book of Common Prayer.”

The Viners, or Vyners, were related to two Lord Mayors of London, who were both created baronets in the reign of Charles II. It was one of these, Sir Thomas Vyner, who was said to have purchased and erected in Stocks Market, during his mayoralty in 1654, the equestrian statue of John Sobieski, King of Poland, trampling on a Turk, having substituted the head of Oliver Cromwell for that of the Pole, and turned the Turk into a cavalier. At the Restoration he fell into the spirit of the times, and clapped Charles II’s. head upon the shoulders of the rider, while the head of Cromwell was degraded to the neck of the prostrate figure. Charles Viner, the uncle of Mrs. Riland, left £12,000 to the

University of Oxford for a Professorship of Law, first held in 1758 by Justice Blackstone, and other scholarships for the promotion of legal studies. By this lady, whose letters show her to have been a woman of cultivated understanding and noble qualities, Richard Riland had two sons, whom he sent to Oxford, not to Magdalen, but to Queen's College. Both father and mother took the greatest interest in their well-being at the University, and from letters still extant it will be seen how completely in sympathy were the whole family group.

The first is from Mrs. Riland to her son Richard, who had gone up to Oxford in the spring of 1750, being then sixteen, and appears to have been, as we should now say, residing during the long vacation in College.

“Aldershot, August 7, 1750.

Dear Dear Dick,—I got to London very safe and well and staid there Sunday, and went to Church twice, and set out on Sunday night as the clock struck eleven, & the coach brought me here on Monday by eight o'clock, without taking me to Farnham, and I thank God I am very well and met with no evil accident upon the road. I have a very civil reception here by my Unkle and Aunt, and it is an exceeding pretty and neat house, & a charming garden, but no fruit in it this year. Dr. Clifton is expected this week, without the bad weather hinder his coming, but according to that my stay here will be determined, but I hope to see you as I go home. I hope you are well and do well, which I pray for continually. I have wrote to yr pappa, but I have not yet heard from him. I have nothing more to say at present, but my Blessing and kind Love to your Dear self,

From your most affectionate Mother,

M. RILAND.

Here is something you would like, viz., three fine purring rubbing cats, which are great favourites with Unkle and Aunt; here is likewise a very loving dog. I would not have you write to me whilst I am here, because my stay is so uncertain. We have very wet weather here, so that the corn is in danger of being spoiled.”

The Rector next writes to his wife :—

“Sutton, August 20, 1750.

My Dearest,—This Day I have recd yrs from Aldershot, 16th inst., in which you mention yr having mine of ye 11th, but say nothing abt that of 6th which I wrote the first post after my return. I doubt that has met the fate of some of my former—a Miscarriage. I am söröy we cannot all meet at Oxford as we proposed ; notwithstanding which, I will take a ride to see Dick as soon as the whole or greatest part of our harvest is in ; and therefore, I desire you will leave me not only a shirt or two, but likewise one of ye two Perriwigs with Dick. We have now excellent weather and have made good use of it. Jack and I are invited to-morrow to venison at New Hall to meet Sir R. Lawley and Lady, but as our acquaintance with them hath been sometime dropt, I am loth to renew it again, and we being busy abt Harvest, I believe we shall not go. I have to-day a Lr likewise from Uncle Rowe ; he says they have all agreed to stop the law proceedings, and desires our consent ; Mr. Richards having not only given his word and honour, but under his hand too that he will get the thirty and Jackson's mortgage transferr'd, and make a dividend of ye whole by Xmas next. He desires an answer soon, but I shall stay till yr return. Mr. Woodcock has sent them a bill, which is £38, our share of which is £9 10s. I wish you good journey to Birmham, where I will not fail sending on Sunday next. My prest Bedfellow and Valet de Chambre and companion Jack sends his duty to you and sincere love to Dick, in both of which I joyn, and am Dick's and yours

Most affectionately,

R. RILAND.

To Mrs. Riland, at

Mr. Riland's Chamber, in

Queen's College, Oxford.”

However it appears from the next letter, that Richard Riland, and his younger son Jack, met the good wife and mother at Oxford, and from there repaired to Bath, from which place Dick received the following :—

“Bath, September 20th, 1750.

Dear Dick,—On Munday last, abt 5 morng, Jack and I on Horseback, and Mama in Coach left Oxf'd. He and I went the nearest way, and got to Witney half an hour before ye coach ; we din'd at Burford, and lay that night at

Cirencester, and next day came to this place safe and well. Here we found my Fa : Owsley, and Mrs. Chapman, and Georgy, and Betty, and Mrs. Betty Spooner, who are all very well. Here is but little company yet in Comparison of what we have seen at other times ; Ld Digby is here, but goes away on Tuesday next. Jack and I intend to set out for home thro' Gloster and Worster on Wednesday or Thursday in next week, or sooner if Mamma meets with the conveniency of a Coach travelling that way. Ball and Dick are out at grass, and Jack and I have paid a visit to them to see if they are safe and alive ; but one of us is heartily tired, and will pay that compliment to them no more. I hope Saunderson & Quintilian go on, and go down too, as usual. I think you need not to write to us here, for we shall be gone from hence before any Letter can reach us ; so you had better write to us at old Sutton, where we hope to be some time next week. And I cannot but say after all the places we visit in our Travels—

‘ Ille terrarum mihi præter omnes—

Angulus ridet.’

All in general send Love and service to you, and hoping to hear from you the latter end of next week at Sutton, I conclude

Most affectionately yrs,

R. RILAND.

Mr. Riland, at Queen's College,
Oxford.”

A postscript in Mrs. Riland's handwriting is appended :—

“ Pray Dick save your money, for it costs us a good deal in our last journey to see you, and we shall be very short this winter. Grandpappa was here last week & Mist of us, so came again this, and stays till the latter end of the next ; we lodge at Woodward's.”

One more letter from the father will bring this little episode to a conclusion :—

“ Sutton, Oct. 1, 1750.

My dearest Dick,—On Thursday last Jack & I left Bath, and came with ease that eveng to Gloster ; the next day to Worcester, and on Saty, Michaels-Day, we reach'd home with ye least ill accidt, Thank God ; & find all things about ye House well ; but ye Business abt which I chiefly hurried home something sooner

than I should have done, is likely now to come to nothing ; Mr. John Tonkes has now alter'd his mind, & won't sell his Estate, so we must be content without it ; but I still suppose it must be sold a year or two hence, but I shall know more about it soon ; I have not yet seen either him or Mr. Gibbons. Mamma was, by appointment to be at Worcester to-night in a private Chariot which was to fetch Company to Bath from thence ; so Jack has gone thither again to-day, with Richd, to meet her with a Couple of Horses ; & I expect them all at home to-morrow. But poor I am left all alone to-day, only while I am writing I seem to converse with my Dick, whose Letter from Queen's I recd at coming home on Saturday night, which was very agreeable to me, as yrs always are. I am glad you continue in *statu quo* with respect to Health, Sanderson, &c., and I pray God you may so continue, which will be a blessing to us All. I cannot forbear repeating wt I wd not have you forget yr acquaintance with Virgil and Horace, but find a leisure hour sometime for conversing with them, wh will be pleasant and amusing to you, and improving too. It happens well enough for Jack yt Mr. Lowe* is gone abroad to a funeral of Fither's grandfather, & will not return before this day. I send this in a frank, which I have had by me some time, & do not know whether it will be any service to you or not ; mention in yr next whether it comes free. Grandpapa gave Jack a guinea for you at Bath to buy a Book with, and another for himself for ye same purpose ; so you may buy what Book you think proper. Many people enquired of me yesterday about you, & hop'd you were well, & went on well ; and yt you may continue to do & be so, is the hearty & constant wish & prayer of, dear Dick,

Yr ever loving Pap,

R. RILAND."

Letters such as these give a pleasing picture of the family affection subsisting between the various members of the circle. The Rector of Sutton was clearly a scholar and a gentleman, standing on his own dignity, for he did not choose to meet a neighbour who had "dropt" him, with an eye to the improvement of his estate, and a sincere affection for his parish. In a letter a little later, he writes from London :—

"Yr Mother & I have been 2 successive nights at the Playhouse, on Tuesday

* Paul Lowe, Headmaster of the Sutton Grammar School, 1724 to 1764.

night we saw the Harlequin Sorcerer,* which I think superior to every thing I have ever seen at a Playhouse, especially the Ostrich and the Horse, & on Wednesday night we heard the oratorio of Jephtha, perform'd by near 100 hands. Music so full, so grand, so fine I never heard before ; but yr Mother thought there was too much of it."

These visits to London seem to have been connected with the litigation alluded to in the foregoing letters, which often forms the subject of his correspondence with his son. At the end of a letter from Sutton, April 24, 1755, he adds a few items of gossip to the business part :—

"On Tuesday last in the afternoon 2 houses beyond Hill in this parish were burnt down almost to the Ground. Out of the one some Goods were sav'd by proper assistance, out of the other none. The inhabitants of both are by this Accident reduc'd to poverty ; no life was lost, but that of a goose. The same evening 2 children were drown'd in a well at the top of the croft below Butch : While's yard. Mr. Bagnal pull'd one of them out of the water, and has since undergone an Examinaon thereupon before the Coroner upon Oath. By him I send this Epistle to ye Post Office, who is walking with Mrs. Sawyer to Birm: to attend a Concert & Ball that is to be for the benefit of Mr. Eversman. He is in hast to be Gone, which obliges me to be the shorter. On Saturday last a gentn in good circumstances hang'd himself at Aldridge within 3 miles of us, and in the same week a man was killed at Shenston by a tumbrell, who had been some years Coachman to Mr. Addyes at Moor Hall. I wish I cou'd mention some happy circumstances in contrast to these melancholy ones. Miss Jesson is lately gone to Shrewsbury, no more to return to Sutton Miss Jesson. Mr. Holte† went thro' Sutton yesterday to the same place. As you are now with yr Bror. & it is Term-time, I suppose you are now doing what you had never done when you were here last, I mean assisting him in his Preparaon for Disputing in the Hall. I

* "Harlequin Sorcerer" was acted at Covent Garden, January 13th, 1753, to February 20th, and March 6th, 13th, and 20th.

† Charles Holte, 6th and last baronet of Aston, afterwards Member for Warwickshire, m: in 1755 Anne, d. of Pudsey Jesson Esqe., of Langley, in the same county.

omit no opportunity of writing to you after the receipt of your letter in hopes of hearing from one of you the sooner; which I desire to do on Thursday in the next week, in Expectaon of which I conclude,

Yr ever most affectionate

R. R."

By this time the younger son had joined his brother at Queen's, and the father writes to them jointly, thus:—

"Wednesday Afternoon,

(1755) May 14.

Dear Dick & Jack,—For I now write to you both, & hope this will pass for an answer or reply, or wht you will call it to both yr lettrs. Jack's I recd on Thursday last week, & Dick's this afternoon abt half an hour since, inclosed in the White Lackn box which arrived safe. I much approve of Jack's acct which he gives of his improvemt both of his body & mind; tho' I like his going to Lecture in 'Grotius de Veritate,' &c., I cannot say I like it better than ye Greek Testament: for nothing can be better than that. He speaks of having had many Physical Lectures, of late; which I am glad to hear, & want to know from whom, whether from Mr. Foth:* or Dr. Bradley† as his brother had from ye latter. I am glad Jack do's not intend to surprise us with a visit soon; for it wou'd not be worth his time or ours; as not only ye Vacaon betwixt Easter & Act Term is so near, but also ye long Vacaon betwixt Act & Michs Terms draws on apace. I have another reason for Jack's not coming at prest. One or two of this Parish have

* "Mr. Foth:" Thomas Fothergill, Fellow and Tutor of Queen's, Provost, 1767 — "a gaunt solemn figure, who at a regular hour of the day, with a long tasselled cap, a large wig, unusually broad bands, and a particularly broad sash, used to come down the steps of his College gateway to take his accustomed walk, *followed* by his quiet dressed wife. I say emphatically 'followed,' for even at setting out they appeared in that order, the distance rather increasing during their walk: in reference to this they were called by the wits of the day, 'Orpheus and Eurydice.'" —Cox's "Recollections of Oxford," 1868.

† James Bradley, of Balliol, B.A., October 15th, 1714; M.A., June 21st, 1717; Savilian Professor of Astronomy, 1721-1763; Astronomer Royal; First Reader of Experimental Philosophy, 1749-1763; D.D. by Diploma, February 22nd, 1741.

resolved on a visit soon to Coll. Reg., but I cannot now mention the day or week, nor wou'd I if I cou'd. ye precise time is not yet concluded on. Tho' at the time of Jack's letter Dick had not assisted Jack in Disputing, I hope & suppose he has done it since. I am glad he has disputed himself this Term; & assisting his brother will do him almost as much service. I am very pleased with Jack's lectures in Geography. We had before heard of the inglorious success of Parker & Turner in a certain H—e.* We have also had the Widow of the Wood,† which D—k mentions; it was sent to us from New Hall. I have also since you left us, Dick, met with a Declama^{on} of yrs which seems to have been spoken by you before the Fellows of yr College for obtaining yr Bachelor's degree, or for Levee to take yr degree. I like it much, & want to know whether it be yr own genuine composition or borrow'd, I shall be very glad to find it yr own. I hope our guardian Angel has not been provok'd to leave Sutton; but since I wrote last another bad thing has happen'd which do's not immediately respect Sutton in genl, but only Mr. Woodhouse: on Monday last his son Billy with his bror apprentice enlisted themselves for souldiers in Birm: His Father is as you may well imagine very angry & uneasy on the occasion; but determined not to buy him off, if a half penny wd purchase his release. Since reading yr letter this afternoon a thought has enter'd my Pericrane, of which I cannot forbear giving you a hint. You know 29th of May is celebrated for ye recovery of our English Liberties after a long Deprivation of them. Can you not in your Harangue on that day naturally introduce a complaint of the loss of Liberty, especially of Oxfd Liberty, in the late Instance of Elections? I shd say yr County Election. Will not this be Apropos to the Modern state of things? I leave it to yr own Judgt or fancy to interweave something on this hint or to omit it. Mr. Holte & Miss Jesson are to be married on Monday next & to proceed directly after the Performance of the Ceremony to Whitly House inhabited lately by the Widow of the Wood, and an intimate of yours who lately lost a mistress at Coleshill, has since met with another at Birm: & it is likely to be a match soon."

* House of Commons: This refers to the disputed return for Oxfordshire at the general election of 1754, which was determined by a majority of the House on March 23rd, 1755, in favour of Lord Parker and Sir Edward Turner, against Lord Wenman and Sir James Dashwood.—See "Gentleman's Magazine," August, 1755.

† A satirical novel, upon an occurrence in the family of Sir William Wolseley. —See "Gentleman's Magazine," April, 1755.

“Saturday Morn, May 15.

The first news I heard at Coming down stairs this Morning was that our Mare had bro't forth a female foal. Mr. Lowe hath been ill a long time, & continues so, & is more likely to die than to live. Yr Aunt Sadler is expected to come back next week to John Bird's house above Mr. Lowe's. Last Sunday was sev'n night Mr. John Fox sent his servt here with one Testimoniall for himself and another for Jo: Honeyborne, desiring me to sign both; tho' I thought this a little unreasonable, I did it to oblige both; but I am afraid this & their other papers would scarce be thought by the Bishop to come soon enough before Trinity Sunday. J. Fox desires me to let you know that you are a letter in his debt. Mr. Lowe has at last received from old Mr. Fox all the arrears due for his son John's schooling and boarding, which was near 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ l., together with an Apology for trespassing so long on his patience. You know very well how long it is since he left the school. I do not much insist on a Lettr from you next week; but shall be glad of one. Yr Mother is still in bed, therefore adds nothing to this lettr. I am my dear Dick & dear Jack yr very affectte,

R. RILAND.

Mr. Richard Riland,
Queen's College, Oxford.”

Other letters on law business in London also contain references to lighter matters, as on Aug. 13, 1755, Mr. Riland says:—

“We have too much leisure on our hands, which has giv'n us time to go to some places of diversion. We have been one night at Sadler's Wells, in which the performances were very astonishing. The Squire treated us there. On Thursday evening last we were at Cuper's Gardens, at which we were also well entertain'd. Vauxhall we have not yet seen. Yr mother and I are very well, having lost our disorders which each of us bro't hither. On the 20th or 21st inst. there will be a play at Drury Lane. I have lost many a good Anthem, St. Paul's being shut up, & will not be opened till ye 31st. We have dined every day, but one, on Beef, either roasted, or stakes; chiefly the latter. I have had a Lr from Jack; who is well, & all things go on well at home. Our hay is all got in. He has din'd at Moor Hall on Venison, & at several other places in Sutton since our absence, so, as he says, the people have been very good to him. It is said here, particularly among the merchants on 'Change, that there will be no War between England & France. The Dog Act will certainly take effect next session of Parliament, so

that Chlo & Rover must either be annually paid for, or Demolished—*utrum horum?* Yr Mother is this day gone to Chelsea to see Mrs. Mawer & Miss Mander. Write again this week—Yr truly loving, R. R.”

On August 20th Mr. Riland communicates the intelligence of his return by Windsor and Oxford, but as on the 21st Richard the younger writes to announce that he is on a visit at Yattendon, near Newbury, it does not appear whether that part of the programme was carried out. A letter from Sutton in the following year is however worth giving.

“ Sutton, Feb. 19, 1756.

Dear Dick,—I recd yr last Lr of Jan. 20. You say you are *totus* in yr Wall Lectures; I suppose you have read some of them before now to yr proper audience, the Walls. There are other exercises necessary for yr degree wh will require an equal regard. These, particularly yr examinaon, pray do not put off to the last. When I saw you last summer, you talk'd of doing all yr exercise in Michaelmas term; but, I believe, did none; & if you neglect it this term, Easter term is very short, then it will be neglected till Act term, and that will be very inconvient, because yr Degree must be taken in the beginning of that term, on the acct of being made Regent in the latter part of it. Abt a fortnight since yr Mother fell down 4 or 5 steps of the stair to the Parlour Door. It was the wonder of every one that she broke not a leg or an arm; but it pleas'd God she hurt only her shin; but it is so bruised yt she has been somewhat lame ever since, but it now begins to mend, & we hope she will be well in good time, tho' not very soon.

On Thursday night last we had the most furious & tempestuous wind ever known here, there are few persons to whom it has done no damage; some here received £5, some £10, some £20 damage. Tho. Bonell was upon the Coldfield in the most raging time of it, being sent on a very necessary errand to Birm. for a midwife to his Bonella. He bro't with him Mr. Audley, and on Friday she bro't forth a son, to whom I gave the name of Thomas Porter. To wht I before observed concerning the exercises for yr degree, I must add, that from these premises considered the consequence seems to be, that it will be most convenient to perform the greatest part, if not all, those exercises this Lent term, which is a very long one, & will afford time enough for the discharge of all of them. To return to T. Bonell: he will set out for London on Monday next, and will come thro' Oxfd, either going or returning, but is not yet determined what to do.

I suppose Mr. Key, a young gent of your college, has informed you of his calling here on his way out of Cumberland to Oxford; it was on the Tuesday aftr yr Bror. left us; he was sorry he came not sooner when he heard how lately he had been gone. His first question to me on seeing me, was whether you had taken Orders. He breakfasted and dined with us. We importun'd him to stay a night, but we could not prevail. On Tuesday night last was our last assembly; Misses Nuttal, Mason, Sawyer were there from Mr. Sawyer's; the rest of the females were Suttonians. There were about ten couples. T. Bonell was a performer. Mrs. Dunckley's old disorder has returned. She is & has been some time very bad. The Smallpox is at our neighbr. James Horton's, whose daughter has it. I recd. Jack's letter, and am glad he arriv'd so safely, & yt He & you are Both well. My next letter (I believe next week) will be to him, from yr ever loving
R. R."

In 1757 Richard Bisse Riland, who had been admitted to Deacon's orders by the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry (Cornwallis) on the 19th September, 1756, received a letter from his father, addressed to him at Sutton, where he was now acting as Curate during Richard the elder's absence in London, not only on business, but to take medical advice. "I wish," says Mr. Riland, "you may be as copious and fluent in the composition of sermons as in the writing of letters." After some detail of monetary matters, he goes on to say:—

"As to my health; I am not only better than when you went away, but better and better. One morning this week Dr. Heberden said here, I might go into the country ye next day, and Mr. Apothecary this morning pronounc'd me well. So that we have fix'd on Monday seven-night, 25th inst., for leaving this Town, & hope that evening to see yr Bror., as we have already wrote him word. It is business more than health that now confines us in Town so long as that. We recd the Ducks and Turkey, which were all sweet and good. The best of ye three Ducks we gave to Dr. Clifton, the 2nd best we gave to Mrs. Spurrll, and kept the worst ourselves, as we also did the poor Turkey. Mary in her Lettr. to Nanny takes some notice of Chickens and Pigs, but none of Dogs or Cats; so you must take care of them by buying them cows liver or stale sheeps' heads at Sutton. When my Barber perform'd his last shaving on Me, he ask'd for the young gentleman, and being told he was gone, said he had not paid him for the two last times

of shaving; so your Mother promised justice to be done. She has just now whisper'd over my shoulder that somebody shou'd lie in our bed to air it before our return. I think I do not ever remember so large a number of communicants at our Xch. at any one time as you mention on Sunday last. I doubt not you and Mr. Bagnall betwixt you will make the duty of any Sunday a pleasure to you both, and I hope to live to take a share of that pleasure yet. I have not heard a sermon that has rightly pleas'd me since I came to London, tho' I have heard a Whitehall preacher too last Sunday. The Dr., Mrs. Clifton, and yr Mother are as fond of plays as any young people, and go as often together; they have seen several since you saw them. In respect of health; I do not know whether I am not better at present than either yr Mother or her Maid, they having both bad colds. We have not had here all that sunshiny weather you speak of at Sutton. We had 3 or 4 fine warm days last week, but this week none. With our proper compliments to all friends in Sutton,

I am yr ever Loving,

R. RILAND."

In spite of the cheerful anticipations in this letter, which is dated April 14th; and his being able to return to Sutton on the appointed day, the rector became worse. There is a letter of advice from Dr. Heberden, on May 19th, to whom his son had written; and on August 2nd he expired. He had bequeathed the advowson to his elder son, who was inducted to the living on February 4th, 1758, and read himself in on the 12th of the same month, having received priest's orders from Bishop Cornwallis on the 15th January.

CHAPTER III.

THE accession of Richard Bisse Riland to the Rectory of Sutton, which he and his brother held during the full term of the long reign of George III., marks a distinct era in the social condition of Sutton Coldfield, as to which it may be convenient now to say something. The Parish or Manor, consisting of 13,000 acres, lies, as described in a former chapter, on rising ground, with a gentle slope towards south and west. On the west of the town is Sutton Park, which, in the last century, with the pools which encircle it on the boundary, included 2,500 acres of partially wooded land. the timber growing in its copses being the chief source of revenue to the Corporation. North of it stretched a wild, unenclosed district, sometimes called the Coldfield, but more generally styled Four Oaks Common, abutting on the County of Stafford. The house of Lord Ffolliott, which had become the property of Mr. Luttrell, was surrounded by a few enclosures on the northern edge of the park, and some fifty acres of the chase itself had been sold to that gentleman by Act of Parliament in 1757. North of this again, the straggling hamlets of Hill, Little Sutton, and Roughley, stood on the verge of the waste as it swept round to the north-eastward towards Basset's Pole, where the park of the Lord of Drayton marched with the Earl of Warwick's in feudal times ; and

touched Canwell, an extra parochial demesne, which was, according to Speed's map, once a portion of the County of Warwick, and still, though in Staffordshire, regarded itself as a member of Sutton. These unenclosed lands, with High Heath, Langley Heath, and Echelhurst, carried the chain of commons round to the south-east, and were separated by the narrow but fertile valley of the Ebrook, from the extensive waste known as the "Wild" or the "Coldfield," which again adjoined the south-western edge of Sutton Park. These tracts in the aggregate comprised not less than 4,000 acres, so that half the parish at least, including Sutton Park, was uncultivated, except by the system of lot acre, which was administered thus:—A certain quantity of land being selected by the Corporation was distributed by lot among inhabited householders for a term of four years, and while some cultivated the acre they had drawn, others, who were less able to undertake the labour of tillage, either in person or by deputy, or were dissatisfied with their allotment, would let it out to some adjacent lot holder, or perhaps decline it entirely; thus, while some portions of the common land were constantly in cultivation by the temporary owners or their representatives, others had never been broken up at all, and the till or pock-stone (a cold, hard, gravelly stratum at a little distance below the surface), remained unpenetrated until the whole was thrown into farms at the general enclosure. Much of the low-lying open land was extremely marshy, and dangerous both for sheep and cattle. Across the waste ran the two great roads of the district, both of them being about two miles distant from the Town of Sutton at the nearest point; the Coleshill and Lichfield road skirting the parish on the north-east; the road known as the old Chester road, on the south-west; but between these roads and Sutton itself, in fact between Sutton and Birmingham, or Sutton and Lichfield, the roads were crooked, narrow in some places, and mere tracks across moorland in others. Yet when, at the beginning of George III.'s reign, a turnpike road from Birmingham

to Lichfield was proposed, an objection was raised and papers circulated giving "indisputable reasons" against the project.*

* Indisputable Reasons against the proposed scheme for a Turnpike Road, between Sutton and Birmingham.

Turnpike Acts are always undesirable, except where necessity compels their establishment. A large Proportion of the Tolls is ever sunk upon what does not a whit Benefit the Travellers. Gates, Houses, Salaries for Keepers, Clerks, endless Advertisements, and the enormous Exactions attending the procuring of the Act. Besides, an opening is continually afforded for clandestine Jobs, which the Vulgar Phrase of "You scratch me, and I'll scratch you," will in a shorter manner, at least, explain, than the Recital of Particulars.

But peculiar local Objections offer themselves against the Plan now on Foot. The whole Road which can be called foundrous or dangerous is not four miles; and it is believed no Instance can be given where the Legislature hath interfered for so small an Object. These four miles moreover are encompassed with Inclosures whose Value, upon an Average, is encreased from One Pound to Two per Acre, merely upon Account of their vicinity to the Highway in Question, it being an Avenue to the Town of *Birmingham*. That these Landowners then should tacitly enjoy the Affluence which that Vicinage gives them, and yet be permitted to shift off the local Inconvenience of extraordinary road-mending from their own fat Shoulders to the Back of the Farmer, the Scotch or Irish Traveller, whom *Birmingham* never profited a Brass Farthing; is a manœuvre which may be very pleasant in the contrivance, and clever in the Execution, but what no Representatives of the Nation will surely allow.

The insufficient Length and bad Approach to a Bridge near *Birmingham*, was lately thought a Pica for a Turnpike; inasmuch as this Defect upon the Road no Statute Labour could be expected to remedy. Money, however, hath been procured at the County Sessions, and that obstacle will, before *December*, be removed.

There will also remain this singular Injury to the Town and Inhabitants of *Sutton Coldfield*, if this project is brought to bear, viz., that a weighing Engine will undoubtedly be erected at the Toll gate, and whatever general Uses the Prohibition of high Weights may have, here it will be peculiarly injurious, because the Farmers fetch their muck from *Birmingham*, buy it by the Load, and if they are once restrained from large weights there is an end of that Traffick, and an end

Richard Bisse Riland, who had made good use of the advantages of Oxford and London, was hardly likely to sympathise with this sort of argument, and he soon had his hands full with possible, or projected, public improvements. An account of the town and parish of Sutton Coldfield, in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1762, is reputed to have been written by him, and was reprinted in pamphlet form in the same year, with a *quasi*-satirical continuation from the "London Evening Post," and Addenda of a decidedly carping

of all workmanlike cultivation ; for their Land will not do its best without it, and it will never answer to go thither for a small Load. Moreover it is said, that an Act now in Force requires Wheels of a particular Construction to be had for all Waggons that pass a Toll gate, which Act is suspended for a while, until the Owners of Carriages can provide them. If then every poor Farmer of *Sutton*, or its neighbouring Hamlets, must be forced to get these expensive Wheels, or keep from *Birmingham* Market, the alternative is terrible to these poor hardworking wretches, who live but from hand to mouth already ; while their overgrown Neighbours whose Brows don't sweat Half so much, will with their strong backed Teams, and Parliament wheels, engross all the muck and all the market ! Good gentlemen consider—a poor scrattling Rack-Rent Ploughman, should not be cut out of his Bread for the Sake of Whiskies and Phaetons.

Indeed, your Honours ! what is Play to us, is Death to this Sort of Fellows. But one more Reason for being quiet as we are, is yet behind.

Lichfield is the direct Track from *Derbyshire*, *York*, and all the North, to *Birmingham*. That this noted Road (which leads through *Sutton*) might be free, the Commissioners of the *London* Road actually support and repair about four miles, viz., from *Lichfield*, to a place called *Wood End*, gratis ; nor is one Penny paid by any Travelier from that City to *Birmingham*. But these gentlemen, when once they see that in spite of their generosity, their Friends and the Public must pay at last,—they will justly and fairly do as they are done by. They will erect a Gate at *Shenstone*, and then Tax upon Tax will be heaped upon our simple Projectors ; and no one market of all the adjacent Towns will be left open. Right Hand and Left, it must be, Stand and deliver, but yet, the Yeomanry, Gentlemen, have some hopes that you will consider them. They invoke your Justice and Generosity from the Plough Tail, and beg as you are stout, that you will be merciful.

character. It may be gathered from these conflicting sources of information, that at Sutton the spirit of trade had but little existence ; but that the town, from the salubrity of its situation, its educational advantages, and the facilities for sporting, had become the residence of families and individuals in easy, if moderate circumstances, so that society was of a character more select and cultivated than in small towns generally at that period. Mr. Riland, presuming him to be the author of the paper in the "Gentleman's Magazine," congratulates the people of Sutton on the decline of party spirit—his censor, while admitting that the Jacobite party had ceased to be troublesome, in no doubtful strain of inuendo attacks the rector himself, as having been the cause of "private discontents" and "parochial dissensions." A tithe suit with Mr. Luttrell is cited as the foundation for the former charge ; the circumstances being that the last-named gentleman declined to pay tithe upon land which he had taken in under the Act of Parliament obtained in 1756. This was speedily decided in the rector's favour, and, in 1771, he and Lord Irnham (Mr. Luttrell) are in amicable correspondence on the subject. Another charge is, that "the Church having been pull'd down and rebuilt and repair'd by the rector's singular authority, without the consent of the churchwardens or vestry, has give rise to several suits between the rector and Corporation on one side, and the inhabitants on the other." To understand this it is necessary to retrace our steps a little. The Church, as has been said before, was built by an Earl of Warwick in Norman times, and much enlarged by side chapels to its chancel, by Bishop Vesey, in Henry VIII.'s reign. It had become somewhat dilapidated, so that in 1739 the Corporation had voted money for its repair, and again, in 1745, assisted in the repair of the roof, while the monument of the Bishop had, in the same year, been renewed at the expense of one of his descendants, John Wyrley, of Hamstead, Staffordshire. But, in 1758, the Corporation thought it necessary to vote some seven hundred pounds for the "repewing,

seating, and completing the interior," under the direction of the Rector and Churchwardens; and, while this work was in progress, it was reported to them (in May, 1759) that a "breach in the Church" had been occasioned by the carelessness of the men employed by the contractor; but, upon a closer investigation being made, it turned out that the badness of the foundation of the arches and walls in the middle aisle was the cause; and that the whole fabric of the Church, in fact, was entirely unsafe. The Corporation upon this undertook the repair, and directed their chancels to be fitted up with "benches and other conveniences," and to be parted from the Church by boards, as a temporary accommodation for the congregation.

In April, 1760, Mrs. Riland writes to her son:—"The middle ayle of ye Church is Ceiled, and the Chancel is to be ceiled this week; the Plumbers are leading the south side. There is no Cornish nor ornament in the middle Ayle." A London newspaper sums up the result thus:—"The Corporation of Sutton Coldfield in Warwickshire, instead of spending the income of their estate in what is called good living, have nobly expended fifteen hundred pounds in repairing, beautifying, and new pewing the Church. An example worthy of other rich bodies. But though the inhabitants have been at no expense, some of them are very wisely quarrelling about who should sit in the uppermost seats, and the affair has already got into the Spiritual Court at Lichfield, but when it will come out again is no easy matter to determine." In fact, in 1763, the Corporation, in high dudgeon with the attempts made by certain outsiders to override a scheme adopted at a public Vestry, resolved to defend all suits for faculties already commenced, and any that might be commenced in the future; and in 1766 they were successful in obtaining a decree in their favour.

"Whereas several greedy people of low rank, intending to take to themselves some of the best seats in this Parish Church, notwithstanding the whole was erected at the expence of this Corporation, and altho they have seats or

sittings belonging to their respective habitations, And notwithstanding a fair and impartial allotment hath been agreed at a publick vestry to be made of all such seats and sittings as should appear to be gained by the alteration of the new plan from the old one, to and amongst all such persons who before had no seats or sittings, and to and amongst such as were incommoded by such alteration, according to the judgement of eight principal gentlemen of the said Parish, selected for that purpose, have prayed that faculties may be granted to them respectively, out of the ecclesiastical court of the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry for the taking to themselves such seats as they particularly specify ; and accordingly several Citations have been issued out of the said Court, and read in the said Church, requiring all persons who have a reason to show to the contrary, to appear in the said Court at certain days therein set forth, to make their objections, and particularly the Rector and Churchwardens of the said parish.

And whereas such proceedings being thought both very unequitable and unreasonable, It hath been requested by several of the principal freeholders and inhabitants of the said Parish, that the method agreed on at the said publick Vestry, may be pursued and an allotment made in manner prescribed by a certain deed or instrument made and executed at such Vestry, and that all legall methods may be taken for preventing the avaritious and partial ends designed by obtaining such faculties, and that the same may be defended at the expence of the Corporation, as it tends to the manifest subversion of the designs of so good and pious a work ; to which they are consenting. Therefore it is at this Hall, or Meeting. unanimously agreed by the Warden and all the members present (oath being first made of all the members being duly summoned) that Mr. Edward Homer, our Deputy Steward, shall by all lawful ways and means as he shall be advised, defend, carry on, and object against, not only all such faculties as are already prayed or sued for, for the obtaining such new gained seats, but such as shall hereafter be prayed or sued for, by any person or persons whatsoever ; and that, either in the name of the Rector and Churchwardens, or their proxys, or in the name of any freeholders, tenants, and other person or persons whatsoever, within this corporation, as shall be thought most proper. Provided the said Rector, Churchwardens, freeholders, Tenants, or other person, or persons, are consenting that their names shall be made use of for that purpose. And it is ordered & directed that the said Edward Homer shall retain and advise with any Proctor, or Proctors, or other Council as he (with the said Rector and Churchwardens) shall think proper. And it is further agreed upon by all the said members present, that all the fees, reasonable costs, charges and expences, as well of such Proctors or other Council,

as of the said Rector and Churchwardens, and other person and persons, and also of the said Edward Homer, already accrued, or hereafter to happen, in about or in any wise concerning the same, shall be from time to time paid borne and allowed, out of the money stock and revenues, belonging to this Corporation, or by such other ways and means as the majority of the members at any of their publick meetings shall think proper when the same shall be required : but that no money shall be paid or allow'd to the above troublesome people, by way of Compromise or Agreement, or on any other account whatsoever relating to the matters above, except the same shall be decreed by due course of Law."—*Extract from Minutes of Corporation, Decr. 8th, 1763.*

The author of the pamphlet in 1762 was, it is plainly evident, one of the opponents, or at any rate an aggrieved parishioner like the one who wrote the following letter :—

"Reverd Sir,—I have received a complaint from my Daughter that the Churchwardens have taken my Seat in the Church from her. I can't conceive what Pretence they have to a Seat which I have had peaceable Possession of upwards of 15 years ; it is a base, scandalas, and wicked Action to wrong the fatherless Children and Widow of their Right, turning out of their Seat is like turning them out of the Church, and I fear the Consequence ; for, with what Heart can they attend Divine Service when they have lost their own and have no Proper Place to sit in.

Thomas Waldon, with Leave of the Arch Deacon, put the Seat up in a vacant Place in the North Gallery for his Children to sit in the Seat belonging to his House under Ld. Folliot's Gallery (now Mr. Luttrell's) being too little for his Family. After his House was mortgaged, and sold and sold again, neither Mortgage nor Purcher, had any Grant to it, for it never belonged to the House, wherever Walden dwelled he kept it in his own Possession, as long as he lived, and at his Decease left it too his Wife and Children. When the Children were grow up and gone from the Town, the Widow kept Possession and sat in it herself, alone : at that Time I sat in the School Seat, and my Wife with the Rector's Servants, but I wanted a Seat for my Children. At last the poor Woman reduced to extreme Necessity, came and offered me her Seat in the Church, assuring me it was her own, that it was made of some old Wainscot, and everything belonging to it was her own, and in Consideration of one Guinea she would resign her Seat to

me, and put me in Possession. I gave her the Guinea, but did not take Possession without the Consent of the Church Wardens, Mr. Parker, and one of the Church Wardens are my Witnesses, who set their hand to a Note of Memorandum mde on the Occasion. While the Seat remained in its Old State many years, nobody pretended any Claim to it, and when it was taken down to be renewed I committed the Care of it to you, Sir, and you was pleased to promise I should not lose an Inch of my Place: again when the new seating of the Church was finished and the Allotment made of the new Seats the Church Wardens allotted the new Seat to me, as my property, and I took Possession of it without Opposition. The Seat therefore is mine, whatever part of the Nation I sojourn in, I am a Parishioner of Sutton, and ought not to lose my Right, and when I came to Leicester, I left my Family in quiet Possession of it, and I wonder how any body can be so injurious as to give them Disturbance.

But as my Daughter is in no Capacity of Defence against those Audaces Sacrilegi, pray, Sir, take Possession of my Seat yourself, the Church Wardens have no Right to dispose of it, as you may judge by what I have said, and all I desire of you is, that my Children may have leave to sit in it. If you think proper to give yourself any Trouble about this Affair, I shall be very much obliged to you, and my Daughter may send me Word.

I am, Sir (with a grateful Remembrance of your Favours
when I was in Distress),

Your very humble Servant,

WILLIAM DAVENPORT.

Free Grammar School,

Leicester,

Decem. 18th, 1767."

The Corporation, in fact, took a pretty keen interest in Church affairs in those times. In 1774, 1775, 1781, and 1786, sums were voted towards the organist's salary. In 1781 they imposed a rent upon two of their own body who occupied seats in the Corporation Chancel; and, in 1784, a vote of 100 guineas towards a new ring of bells for the Parish Church is recorded. Part of the new scheme for the Church was the reconstruction of a gallery in the

south aisle, for which the Corporation gave some timber. They agreed that Joseph Duncumb and Mary Riland, widow, might take down their old gallery, and build a new; that they might have seats in the new gallery, and that the other seats might be sold. This latter provision, however, was objected to by Mr. Hacket, a member of the Corporation, and finally abandoned, the seats being appropriated by the Faculty of 1766. It was this business upon which John Riland made the appointment with his nephew in the Church as mentioned before, and the specification is preserved. From its provisions we gather that a gallery, fifty-three feet long, and ten wide, could be framed with oak, and completed satisfactorily, for the sum of £118 16s. 8d. If the ends, which in the plan were circular, were made square, £3 5s. 3d. was to be deducted. The agreement was signed by R. B. Riland, John Riland, Abm. Austin; Wm. Andrews for Mr. Hiorn, and Joseph Duncomb for the Corporation. The gallery is still in good repair, speaking well for the workmanship of those days, and is the sole remnant of the restoration of 1760. It may be noted that the Rector contributed £100 towards the general fund, and his brother, who was his Curate (and, in 1762, Warden of the Corporation), gave the organ, to which the eminent musician, Dr. Alcock, was appointed; a post which he held until 1786, when Mr. Clark is stated to be organist, at a salary of £20. Alcock does not appear to have been so well paid, to judge by a letter addressed to the Rector in 1784:—

“Lichfield, 11th October, 1784.

“Reverend Sir,—I should not have troubled you with this, but from several unfavourable circumstances, which has happened to me within these late years. I have great reason to fear, that notwithstanding my constant diligence in business, I shall scarcely receive money enough to procure me, and my Family, even the common necessities of life, tho, with regard to myself, is all that I desire in this world. It has always been the custom of our Cathedral, for every Dean, Canon,

and Prebend, to pay at his installation, 5s. to the Lay Vicar, whose week it is to go to the Litany Desk. when either of them read prayers on the Sunday, and is therefore called the Litany-Money. and is always paid to the Chapter Clerk with the other Fees ; this I find Mr. Fletcher forgot to charge which is the reason for my writing you this Letter ; and at the same time to send you an exact account of the deficiencies in several years of my Subscription during my being Organist at Sutton Coldfield, as Mr. Parker, the clerk can certify you, by his book, since he has always collected my Salary for me. Deficiencies in my Salary at Sutton Coldfield :—

1775	..	£2	6	0
1776	..	1	9	0
1777	..	1	18	0
1778	..	0	6	0
1779	..	4	5	0
1780	..	5	19	6

From Christmas, 1780, to the latter end of May, 1781

five months, which may be reckoned	..	..	..	..	..	9	0	0
<hr/>								
£25 3 6								

N.B.—The Organ was play'd by my eldest son and me, from the 25th of March (when my youngest son went to Newcastle) till the last Sunday in May inclusive : Besides my having a Mare (that cost me 15 Guineas, but about half a year before) killed, by a boy of Mr. Carver's, who took it out of the Stable, whilst his master was asleep, one Sunday afternoon in service time, and galloped it for near an hour (as Mr. Homer, Thomas Bentley, and others that saw him assur'd me) and then rode it to the watering place in Mill Street, and let her drink as much as she would, notwithstanding she was so exceeding hot, and the next Tuesday she died ; and I had not a single halfpenny either for her flesh, skin, or shoes. My son's and my attending the duty at Sutton, cannot be reckoned at less than 4s. each Sunday, for no Person ever charges less than 2s. for a horse for going there, and the other expences must be 2s. more : so that for the year 1780 when I received only £14 and 6d. I had not above 1s. & 6d. each Sunday, clear, for going 9 miles, all but a quarter, to play the Organ, and back again, in all near 18 miles. And for the last five months that I went there for nothing, it was about £9 out of my pocket : which to me, who always pay everybody that I imploy, as soon as they have finish'd their work, it seems really very surprizing, that in so extensive a Parish,

where I have many times seen not less than eight, or ten Postcoaches,* and Postchaises come to the Church, which I imagine are more than go to any other Church, for I might say a hundred miles round. I remember the year after I had received only £14 and 6d. there was a distemper amongst the horses, and my horse was for a long time ill of it, which made him look very thin; some of the parishioners who met me going, or coming from Church said, 'Why Dr., your horse looks very thin!' 'Ah! so she does' answer'd I, 'and I should look as thin too, if I got no more money than I have for playing your Organ.' Suppose, Sir, a Butcher shou'd bring me five shillings worth of meat, and I shou'd give him only sixpence, or nothing for it. Or if a Baker shou'd bring me a Shilling loaf, and I shou'd pay him only a penny, or nothing for it, what wou'd these people think of me? And yet even these are not parallel cases, because many of the Parishioners are Gentlemen of fortune, and I have no more than what I get by my Profession, which at present is very inconsiderable. Mr. Brown, our Organist, has not less than £60 a year (and sometimes more) besides ten or £12 *per annum*, as Master of the Boys; and £5 a year for tuning the organ, tho' he scarcely ever attends the Cathedral but on Sundays, and not always then, notwithstanding he lives so near to it, and therefore I should think (without the imputation of Vanity) I deserved £20 a year (which is but about £10 exclusive of my expences for doing the Duty at a Church that is almost 18 miles going and coming) from the Place where I live:

* "An Account of Carriages which regularly attended Sutton Church in the latter part of the time of the late Revd. R. B. Riland, M.A. (being), Rector, who died in the year 1790:—

Sir Robt. Lawley, Canwell	..	..	Carriages	2
Greasley, Revd., D.D., Four Oaks	..	..	„	2
Spooner, Isaac, Esq., Birches Green	..	..	„	2
Minors, Mrs., Roughley Cottage	..	..	„	1
Duncumb, Joseph, Sutton	..	..	„	1
Hacket, Andrew, Senr., do.	..	..	„	1
Chadwick, Dorothy, New Hall	..	..	„	1
Riland, Richd. Bisse (Rector)	..	..	„	1
				—
Total	..	..		11

N.B.—The above shows how well he was beloved.”

Contemporary MS. preserved at Rectory.

But the misfortune is, ever since I have been in this Country (which is near 35 years) other Masters have always been paid twice or thrice as much for what they do, as I have, and I find much difficulty even in getting that (for there are some Gentlemen who have owed me for teaching ever since last Christmas, and I have never been at their houses since), while Mr. Brown, for his town scholars has a guinea for 8 times, and I have always taught 13 times for that money, and now go to Mrs. Leadham's Boarding school three times a week, for a guinea a quarter, only to two young Ladies. Some years ago I taught a young lady, at Tamworth, and often went from Lichfield on purpose, and had only 7s. each time, and the horse hire was 1s. and 6d. out of it. Afterwards Mr. Clark was engag'd to teach her, and tho he was obliged to go close to her House to Miss Betty Wolferstan at Statfold, yet he had 10s. and 6d. for teaching, and also was paid 7s. and 6d. every time for tuning the Piano Forte, if it was ever so little out of Tune, so he had 18s. each time, and I only 5s. & 6d. clear. I have had three places (besides Sutton) where the salary was by subscription, viz. : Plymouth, Reading, and Tamworth; the two first places were £30 a year, and the last only £20: but yet I always was paid the whole sum without the least deduction, at Plymouth and Reading, by one of the Churchwardens, either quarterly or half-yearly; and at Tamworth, by one of the Gentlemen who are Commissioners for the Organ, and also dine with each of them in turn, every Sunday, if I am well enough to go there.

My expences for going to Sutton :—

Horsehire	..	..	..	2s.	0
Horsekeep & ostler	..	..	..	0	7d.
Dinner and ale	..	..	..	0	8d.
Missing the Cathedral		..	..	0	5d.
Wear and Tare	..	..	..	0	4d.
					<hr/>
					4 0

My son's expences :—

Horsehire	..	..	..	2s.	0
Breakfast	..	..	..	0	6d.
Horsekeep, &c.	..	..	..	0	7d.
Dinner, &c.	..	..	..	0	8d.
Dressing his hair	..	..	..	0	3d.
					<hr/>
					4 0

Sir, my eldest son's officiating for me, part of the last two months, at Sutton, and neglecting his own Church at Walsall, was the first occasion of the parishioners being displeased at him, which is likely to be the loss of that place. I hope you will excuse my sending you this, and heartily wish you, and all your good Family, health and happiness, and am, Sir. your most obedient, and most unfeigned humble servant,

JOHN ALCOCK."

Before entering upon the details of the next great event which disturbed the tranquillity of the Parish in Richard Bisse Riland's days, it will be well to note that the pamphleteer of 1762 complains of the Corporation that "contrary to the express letter of their charter, they venture to choose in foreigners as members of their body Corporate, who might with equal propriety live at Penzance or the Orkneys, as five miles out of the parish;" and that such was the case, the list of members, embracing Sir Charles Holte and Dr. Spencer, of Aston; Mr. Scott and Mr. Hoo, of Barr; Mr. Lawley, of Canwell, &c., &c., bears testimony; while it is equally true that of the local members, not a few were unable to sign their own names to the minutes of meetings.

The great inducement for these neighbouring squires and sportsmen to belong to the Corporation was the sporting over the park, waste, and common land. Over and over again in the old Corporation books the right of hunting in Sutton is the subject of request from influential neighbours, and occasionally the privilege was decided in favour of one or another after close debate and division.* The writer of 1762 says that no less than seven packs of hounds were

* In 1775, the Earl of Donegal and Mr. Clement Kynnersley, having both applied for permission to draw Sutton Park with their foxhounds, after a division, it was decided by the majority to give leave to Mr. Kynnersley. (Nevertheless part of the Park is still called Lord Donegal's Ride); and in 1798 Lord Vernon and Mr. C. B. Adderley "have equal leave to hunt the coverts belonging to the Corporation."

then kept within five miles of Sutton, and those who have read the memoirs of Mrs. Schemmelpennick will recollect her description of Mr. Hoo's harriers hunting the Coldfield in 1785. Complaints are made in the often-quoted pamphlet of a set of professed poachers who were allowed to exercise their nefarious calling, unmolested and undisturbed, and in the remoter parts of the parish there is no doubt but that a lawless spirit existed, of which the travellers over the wastes, as well as the game upon them, had at times pitiful experience. At the Oscott end of the common, the "Beggar's Bush," "Gibbet Hill," and "Jordan's Grave," after a pedlar murdered in 1729; and at the other extremity, "Roughley" and "Muffin's (Ruffian's) Den," the *Spelunca Latronum* of Bishop Vesey's time, marked the dangers of the highway, of which the "Bishop's heap of stones" on the road map of 1765, at the 113th mile from London, on the Coleshill and Lichfield Road, points out the remedy.* It is pretty clear that while

* In a very curious tract, entitled "The Recantation and Conversion of Mr. Stanley, sometime an Inns of Court gentleman, and afterwards, by lewd company, become a highway robber in Queen Elizabeth's reign," the author speaks of a godly and charitable gentleman, "one Mr. Harman, a Warwickshire gentleman dwelling about Sutton Coleill, who seeing his Parish to be pestered extremely with sturdy Beggars & wandering Rogues, did take order that they should be all sent to his house, and presently he set them to work to gather stones forth of his grounds, and gave them some small reliefe in meat and drink and a penny a day, and held them hard to work (having lustie stout servants to see to them), and when he had made an end of gathering his own grounds he set them to work in his neighbours grounds, and paid them their wages, which thing when all the rest of the wand'ring Beggars and Rogues understood, they durst not one of them come a begging in that parish, for feare they should be made to work."

This tract was not printed, says Mr. Ribton Turner, until the year 1646, but from internal evidence was written evidently in the reign of James I., and brought to the notice of that King.

The Sutton tradition is that Bishop Vesey; als: Harman, employed the poor in gathering the large stones which made the highways almost impassable.

one class of minds would see in the reclamation of these waste lands a sound measure of political economy, and a mode of abolishing a dangerous class of the population, others would look with suspicion on any scheme which would diminish the facilities for sport, or abridge rights which all exercised in common. But it was from without, as might be expected, that the impetus towards innovation proceeded. Joseph Scott, of Great Barr, afterwards Sir Joseph,* of whom it was said that he had the art of giving wings to the three fortunes which he successively inherited, was a member of the Corporation of Sutton, a man who derived his ideas rather from men of intellect than from the contracted maxims of parish politics, was sure to have imbibed notions in advance of the sentiments of persons who were in arms against turnpike roads ; and he secured the support

* Letter from Sir Joseph Scott to Mr. Bedford, 1790. “ And so my dear Sir the Winds of Heaven have done what the united force of the Dissenters could not do the other day in the House of Commons—knocked down the poor orthodox chappel at Barr. *Deus afflavit et dissipatur!* ”

I am glad however to find that since its Hour was come, it fell by a visitation of the Lord, and not by the rough disciples of John Calvin.

Mr. Hoo does me and my little property there much more honour than they deserve, in condescending to consult me on the subject. Tho’ my Inclinations are strong, my means are, God knows, but slender. Nevertheless, as a true, though unworthy son of the Church, I will co-operate with him in any plan his matured wisdom and long acquaintance with the hamlet may best conceive for its speedy reconstruction. and, with my respectful Compliments, I beg you will give him this assurance.

A levy I should think the most efficient measure, because. while it obliges the unwilling to contribute, it precludes not the bounty of those whose generosity may carry them beyond the proposed Quotum.

As possessing the first property in the Parish, but particularly as Lord of the Manor, I am glad to see Mr. Hoo take such an active part—for with a Quaker on one side and a Presbyterian on the other, “ *Nisi Dominus ædificat, frustra laboratur Sacellum.* ”

of Mr. Riland for a scheme of inclosure of the commons of Sutton.

An abridgment of this plan, in the rector's handwriting, is still in being, but even in its abridged state it is rather lengthy ; however, it is a document of so much historical importance, that it is worth giving in its entirety.

ABRIDGMENT OF THE INCLOSURE PLAN.

- I. A general Survey to be made.
- II. Five Commissioners to be appointed to execute the Act.
The Rector to nominate one.
- III. First of all—Roads to be set out.
- IV. Publick Stone, Sand, and Gravel Pitts.
- V. One hundred acres of gorse and ling for the Poor.
- VI. Peat sand in the Park : ditto.
- VII. Rowton well &c. Access to.
- VIII. Marlpits to inhabitants.
- IX. Timber to be fallen in the Park to bear the expense of obtaining and executing the Act, to Ring fence (gratis) the Rector's, the Cottagers, and all publick allotments : to build a chapel at Hill, another ditto at Warmley Ash : and Houses for the Curates.
- X. Three acres for each chapel and yard.
- XI. Sufficient allotment to the Corporation (discharged from common) to pay the Fee ffarm Rent, to provide salaries &c. for officers. In the nature of an estate.
- XII. Another allotment to the Corporation for any public exegencies.
- XIII. An allotment of land, in Trustees, to be added to the rent of seats, to pay the Curates at the Chapels, & to pay the organist at the old Church.

- XIV. Curates to assist the Rector, and be nominated by him, but Rector shall not tythe their revenues.
- XV. Rector to give up all Tythes upon all land now common, & for a compensation to have one seventh part of that which hath at any time been drawn for lot acres, and one tenth of all the residue of the employ'd commons, and the Park.
- XVI. Commissioners to ascertain the value of the Tythes of the old Enclosures, and instead thereof an equal value in Land from the fields and Park to be taken from the Freeholders' allottments, and added to his. If any one's allottment is not valuable enough, the Deficiency to be made up in money.
- XVII. Every owner of a house (without ground) to have three acres (more or less as to Quality), the Tythe being first deducted.
- XVIII. Cottages an acre and a half (ring-fenced for them), and to hold of the Corporation for 2 lives or 21 years, along with what intakes they have at present.
- XIX. After the above provisions, the residue to go among the freeholders, in proportion to their value.
- XX. Encroachments above 20 yrs standing to be confirmed.
- XXI. Ditto made by Cottagers to be leasehold to them as above, & at the expiration of the lease to revert to the Corporation.
- XXII. Encroachments under 20 years to be thrown out.
- XXIII. Grants for Pools &c. made by the Corporation to be confirmed, as part of the owner's future allottments; if superior to their share, to pay the Difference towards expences.
- XXIV. Those denominated messuages which have drawn lot acres.

- XXV. Woods in the Park, after all publick purposes are fulfilled, to be allotted to such Proprietors who shall request them, according to their value. That is sold to them standing ; the money to go to pay the Commissioners.
- XXVI. Tenants for life who buy such allottments to be empowered to fall and carry away.
- XXVII. Rector to keep no Bull or Boar, and to have power to lease for 21 years.
- XXVIII. Feoffes of the School and rector to have power to sell or mortgage as much of their allottments as will pay the expence of a subdivision.
- XXIX. Provision to be made for authorising the Corporation to
& take in 12 neighbouring gentlemen, if they reside within
- XXX. 10 miles of the parish.
- XXXI. Always to be 13 of the Corporation residents.
- XXXII. The Description, Number, & salaries of Corporation Offices, & Feasts, to be settled.
- XXXIII. Accounts to be annually audited, and
- XXXIV. That after a fixed sum to be kept in Hand for public exegencies, the usual balance to be immediately distributed for the Marriage of poor Maidens, &c.

On one or two points, the above requires some elucidation. Rowton Well, which has the distinction of coming seventh in the proposals (the actual text being: "That all such pits or springs which may be adjudged to be convenient for waterings or other public Uses, and especially such Springs as are adjudged to be medicinal, shall be reserv'd for the benefit of the publick, with convenient roads for access thereto"), is a spring beneath a little hill in the Park. It was for many years supposed to possess medicinal virtues, and at any rate to be of chalybeate flavour. Some pretty lines sum up the modern estimate of its virtues:—

“ In Nuthurst’s windings would you stray,
 Or o’er wild heath, and length’ning way
 That leads to Rowton Well.
 Pellucid fount ! what annual scores
 Thy stream to cleanliness restores,
 The scribbled post may tell !
 How many Smiths and Joneses came,
 And left to thee their votive name—
 How many more had done the same
 Only they could not spell.”

Less elegant is the addendum of another bard—

“ The Nymph of Rowton Well’s a witch
 Who cures the scurvy and the —— ”

It is also to be noticed the proposal involved a scheme of Church extension of a comprehensive character, by which a demand would have been anticipated which afterwards had to be supplied by private liberality. The defective ingredient in the whole arrangement was the intention to treat the Park as part of the waste, and to obliterate it with the other commons. The loss which the public would have thus sustained would have been so great that we can hardly regret its defeat.

Its authors appear to have been either over-confident or somewhat supine—at least they permitted their opponents to steal a march upon them, and take the initiative in calling upon the freeholders to oppose the plan. A meeting was held at the Town Hall, April 22nd, 1778, when Mr. Finch (Warden), Mr. Lawley, of Canwell Hall ; Mr. Duncumb, Mr. Hoo (of Barr), Messrs. Kendrick, Webster, Wakefield, Dr. Spencer, and others, in number 150, subscribed their names as opponents of the enclosure. The promoters affected to consider this an insignificant list—and issued an address giving the names of the opponents, and some eighty others whom they claimed as supporters. “ If it is to go by a majority of property this list may be

compared with the former, or if (as is highly reasonable) everyone who is likely to be affected has an equal right to speak and be heard on this occasion, we must add to the latter list names of housekeepers of lower degree, until it appears how inferior the subscription to the opposition is in number as well as value."

In this they probably reckoned without their host ; though the Hackets, of Moor Hall and Moxhull ; Jessons, of Langley ; Dr. Gresley (Four Oaks), the Rilands, Webbs, Sir H. Bridgeman, Mr. Sacheverell, Mr. Floyer (New Hall), Rochford, Kempson, Levett, Sadler, &c., make up a goodly array of owners, and as the number of houses in the parish was quite 400, if only 150 opposed the measure, a majority might have been in its favour ; but, as the opponents rejoined with truth, all those who declined an active opposition were not necessarily in favour of the scheme, and in fact additional opposition might be calculated upon. The Corporation at once passed a resolution "That the present design of applying to Parliament for leave to bring in a bill for enclosing the Park, Waste, Common, and Commonable lands within the Parish of Sutton Coldfield, is an unjustifiable attack on the undoubted rights and privileges of the Corporation, seems calculated to wrest from them their property and estate, solemnly granted and confirmed to them by Charter, and will tend eventually to dissolve their existence as a Body Corporate. That this Corporation will oppose such application in Parliament."

Seventeen votes were given for, and three against this resolution. By a similar majority they rejected, at the same meeting, another resolution :—"That, if at any publick hall any member of this Corporation shall offer any plan for improving their constitutional privileges, this assembly will not reject the same unseen, but immediately take it into due consideration." A memorandum is attached :—"N.B. The members who rejected the above, rejected it as being wholly unnecessary, they never having before refused to

see any plan which seemed to them for the benefit of the Corporation." In accordance with this decision, Mr. Homer, the Deputy Steward, issued a manifesto in the name of the Corporation, couched in the same terms as the resolution, and stating that five hundred pounds had been voted towards the expenses of the opposition. The opponents likewise made use of a weapon, which, in all times and in every sort of contest, has been found of much avail in influencing popular opinion. They issued a variety of songs, like those by which Mrs. Jarley, of the waxworks in Dickens' novel, recommended her exhibition, adapted to the tastes and predilections of various sections of society; but all with the same tendency, to represent the promoters of the enclosure in an odious light. One of these (to the tune of "Hearts of Oak") has a curious illustration of prices in those days:—

" Since Stumping and railing went rapidly on,
I ask for the Country what good has been done,
Of the Blessed Effects, this at present is found
The Roast Beef of England brings Fivepence per pound ! "

Another, addressed to sportsmen, is entitled "Oppression Triumphant, or the Downfall of Foxhunting." Tune:—" *Black Slocven*." But the presumed hardship to the poor is, of course, their strong point; and is pitifully urged in a song called "The Cottager's Complaint, addressed to the Lovers of Humanity." But one must be quoted at length, because it is a personal attack on Mr. Riland:—

BISHOP VESEY'S GHOST TO THE RECTOR OF SUTTON.

Tune:—" *Welcome, Welcome, Brother Debtor*."

" Cease, hardhearted, cruel Rector,
Give Inclosing projects o'er,
Hear for once a Midnight Lecture,
Never strive to rob the poor ;

When your flock is made uneasy,
 When your plan the Church degrades ;
 Wonder not that Bishop Vesey
 Thus has ventured from the shades.

Would you shun the bad example,
 And embrace what truth excites,
 Neither wish nor aim to trample
 On the people's Chartered rights !
 Be from hence no more intruding ;
 'Tis the language of each Tongue,
 That the mischief which is brooding
 Would their children's children wrong.

In the cause what can be pleaded,
 To support the Plan in view,
 If you opposition dreaded,
 Why the contest still pursue :
 Since I left this Corporation
 Full two hundred years are fled,
 Be contented in your station,
 Never more insult the dead.

Make your friends with this acquainted ;
 Fly to Moxhull, send to Barr,
 In your hopes tho' disappointed
 Let the tidings spread afar.
 From this sad and solemn greeting,
 Think of *Seventeen* to *Three*,
 And at every future meeting
 Which occurs, remember me !

Moxhull and Barr were the seats of Messrs. Hacket and Scott. The former of these gentlemen, though not a member of the Corporation at the time, was one of the most active instigators of the proposition, and in a broadside emanating from the enclosure party, which is far more scurrilous than those of the opposition, entitled "The S * * * * n Carousal, or the Rabble Triumphant." to

the tune of "*A Cobbler there was and he liv'd in his Stall*," the last stanza twits the people of Sutton with their ingratitude to a good neighbour :—*

"Then a fig for old H—t, whose bountiful door
Incessantly opens, a friend to the poor ;
Our minds will ne'er change, of our good we'll ne'er think.
At least while the Warden supplies us with drink."

It is easier sometimes to arouse a spirit of disturbance than to allay it. That Mr. Scott should soon quit the Corporation, and Mr. Hacket refuse to join it, might be expected, but that in a few years from this time the Corporation should find it difficult to prevail upon parishioners to fill vacancies in their body seems less credible. But it was so, and the reason for this avoidance of office mainly arose from the constant litigation in which the Corporation became at this time involved. As long ago as 1726, a suit in Chancery had been commenced against them by John Bickley; and, in 1762, Thomas Bonell had taken legal proceedings; but during the latter years of Richard Bisse Riland's incumbency, and during nearly the whole of the thirty-two years of his successor, the Corporation were

* Hacket was a lineal descendant of Bishop Hacket, the restorer of Lichfield Cathedral.

John Hacket Bp. Lichfield & Coventry.

Sir Andrew Hacket of Moxhull, d. 1709.

Andrew of Gray's Inn.

Andrew of Moxhull.

Andrew of Moxhull.

John of Moor Hall.
Took name of Addyes, d. 1810.

Andrew of Moxhull,
d. 1815.

Francis Beynon of Moor Hall,
d. 1863.

involved in disputes and litigation, only terminated, after forty years of disquiet, by the adoption in spirit of both the propositions which they rejected in 1778, the enclosure of waste lands, and the framing of a new scheme for the appropriation of their revenue.

So far as the rector was concerned, the differences about these important matters do not appear to have rankled in his breast, or to have impaired his usefulness in the parish or neighbourhood.

In December of this very year, 1778, he had sufficient influence with the Corporation to obtain a grant of thirty pounds to establish a school for poor children. In 1781 he is in correspondence with his old antagonist about the enclosure, Mr. Lawley (now Sir Robert, and Member for Harwich), as to the propriety of Sir Robert coming forward as candidate for the office of Steward of the Corporation, then vacant by the death of Lord Middleton, and acted in concert with him in procuring the election of Viscount Weymouth, of Drayton Manor, Tamworth, who was afterwards created first Marquess of Bath. In 1780 he occupied the chair of the Birmingham General Hospital. He was appointed 1777 chaplain to Dr. Porteous, Bishop of Chester (who was afterwards translated to London), and, in 1784, prebendary of Dornford, in Lichfield Cathedral; and it is needless to say that he was an active and efficient magistrate, acting often, in connection with another clerical justice, Dr. Spencer, of Aston, for the important town of Birmingham. In this capacity he interested himself warmly in all matters relating to the welfare of the rising town. In 1777 he had written to Mr. Lawley, then in London, on the subject of the contested Bill for establishing a theatre in Birmingham, and, as far as can be gathered from Mr. Lawley's reply, with much moderation and candour. Mr. Lawley says, "I thought it right to lay your letter to me before both the members for the County, as well as Sir Wm. Bagot, who has taken the lead in opposing it, and I am very glad I did so, as it enabled them to make use of the argument that the majority of the principal inhabitants were averse to

it, much sooner than any other authentick account they had received. I did not chuse to exert myself as an Individual, either in opposing or promoting the Bill, & I hope you will approve my resolution, when I acquaint you that I was before apprized of the zealous inclination of some of my friends for its success; this, together with your application to me, fix'd the determination of not asking a single Member either way, and I should be sorry if, meaning not to give the least Umbrage, I did so." The Bill was lost. In 1781 Mr. Riland is in correspondence with Bishop Hurd as to some abuses in regard to stage coaches, which he appears to have suggested might be remedied by a Bill then before Parliament. The Bishop explains that it would not be possible to adopt the suggestion, but highly compliments his correspondent. In his letter he mentions his own preferment to the Bishopric of Worcester, and curiously enough the daily newspapers record his having kissed hands on the appointment the very day it was written, May 9th. Another singular reminiscence of the old police arrangements of Birmingham is contained in a letter dated Dec. 7, 1783, from F. Wooldridge, the keeper of the lockup house in that town:—"Hond Sir," he begins, "It is with great grief and shame I inclose this handbill to inform you of my recent misfortune and accident, so soon upon another must, I am convinc'd, give you an ill opinion of me." The accident was the escape of a recently-committed prisoner named Mabberley, who had been left "safe locked up, but he had no irons on; the wife of one Docker, comitted by Esqe Carles, was at that time come to take leave of him," and so while the servant girl went to give them their supper, Mabberley pushed by Docker's wife, and made his excape. Poor Wooldridge was starting to Parkgate, where the fugitive had been traced seeking passage to Dublin. He says, "Should your goodness excuse me on this unfortunate matter my heart will ever flow with gratitude for so bounteous a benefactor," and he excuses himself for not calling upon Mr. Riland, as he is so much ashamed of his conduct, that he dare

not face the magistrate, until every effort has been made to secure the prisoner. Mr. Riland had a reputation for good nature, which his actions deserved. This letter from a plaintiff is too good to lose.

“Dosthill House, 16th Novr., 1785.

Worshipful Sir,—The unprecedented wickedness of young Brewer on Monday last strongly affected me hours afterwards, not only in impiously swearing that I had hired him, but in the detestable Character he gave me. Would you please to enquire it, Sir, of the most respectable people in Birmingham, such as Messrs. Taylor and Lloyd, Goodall and Dickinson, any of the Merchants, as Mr. Glover, Mr. Startin, Mr. Ruffy, Mr. Conquest, Old Mr. Turner, Mr. Thomason, Mr. Dawes, or your own worthy Brother. My building is next to his, by St. Mary's Chappell. I lived there between eight and nine years. Please to ask them if any of my neighbours ever heard of any mean or dishonest action committed by me. No, Sir. I am sure they did not. And as I believe you have a good mind, I shall undoubtedly please you when I declare in the most serious manner that in all my transactions with mankind, and they have been pretty extensive, no person in the world was ever by any subterfuge or evasion injured by me a single penny, while the poor Brewers are the most profligate of mankind. This I could certainly bring people enough to witness, but 'tis a most disagreeable task to any ingenuous mind, nor had I said so much of them had it not been in some degree absolutely necessary in order to defend my own reputation which they have very unjustly attack'd. I beg, Sir, you will please make the necessary enquiry, as it would at all times give me the most sensible pleasure to be thought well of by the Worthy.

I am, with true Respect, Sir, Your Most Obedt. Servt.,

T. PINKS.

P.S.—As I am almost a stranger in this Country, Brewer's vile reports have prejudiced several persons against me.”

In 1767 there is a curious correspondence between him and Lord Catherlough,* who had a place in Warwickshire, called

* “Henrietta St. John, daughter of Henry Viscount St. John, by his second wife (a Frenchwoman), and half-sister of the famous Lord Bolingbroke, was wife of Robert Knight (son of the cashier of the South Sea Company), by whom she had a son who died without issue before his father. and a daughter Henrietta, mentioned

Barrels, and who, in passing through Sutton, had been insulted by "an illiterate silly fellow," John Lunn, who had attempted to strike Lord C., possibly on account of some struggle for the best side of an indifferent road. Mr. Riland pleads for a poor farmer with a family in moving terms, and also hints that, if proceeded against legally, the defendant ought to be brought before the Sutton magistrates "where ye crime was committed, which is a peculiar jurisdiction, within ye liberties of wh ye Justices never interfere." Lord Catherlough turns a deaf ear to this last hint, but consents to mitigate the penalty to the expenses actually incurred in bringing the man to justice, with which the defendant was probably content. Another interesting incident of the road occurs in 1785, when he received the following letter from Miss Winn, daughter of Sir Rowland Winn, of Nostel:—

"Sir,—I had the pleasure of receiving your obliging letter last Saturday, for which I return you my sincere thanks, as it relieved me from an anxiety which no one could be void of on such an occasion, and tho' no person could be blamed, still the very idea of a poor innocent baby suffering by the wheel of the carriage I was in affected me so much that I have waited with the greatest impatience to have a line from you, as you was so good as to say you would indulge me with one; and am very happy to hear she is perfectly recovered and suffered so little, indeed it is very providential she escaped so well, and especially as the wheel went so near her head as to graze the skin on her cheek; the bruise you mention on her body, I suppose, must have been done by the hind wheel, which my servant told me went entirely over her, the great force she run with against the fore wheel before she fell might have loosened the two teeth, for the horses had passed her at the time she ran against the chaise; if the fore wheel had gone over her in all probability she would have been crushed to death, I having a very heavy trunk before the chaise; when I saw her come against the carriage I durst not look out, dreading the consequences; indeed

in these letters. Robert Knight was created Lord Luxborough, and, after his wife's death, Earl of Catherlogh. They had been parted many years."—Note by C. K. Sharpe, in Horace Walpole's copy of "Letters written by the late Right Hon. Lady Luxborough to William Shenstone, Esq. London, 1775."

I am very thankful Providence was so very kind both to her and myself, and if ever I should pass through Sutton again (which, if please God I live, I shall in all likelihood), as all my connections resides in Yorkshire, I will then call and see the poor child, and if your place of abode lays near the road I would stop to return you thanks for all the trouble you have had, and am, with the greatest sense of gratitude,

Sir, your very much obliged Humble Servant,

M. WINN.

Brook St., Feby ye 27th."

Letters of this description are frequent. Foolish apprentices who had "listed," harsh masters who had ill-treated apprentices (about one such case Lord Aylesford writes to him only a short time before his death), and disputes among his own family connections which he could reconcile,—all had a share of his benevolent attention.

That Mr. Riland was a diligent parish priest can be proved by a document in his own handwriting:—"Houses and inhabitants in the Parish of Sutton Coldfield in the Autumn of 1784," showing that he had knowledge of every soul in his cure. The summary is not without interest, as divided by the writer thus:—Houses, 485; widows (*i.e.*, single people), 166; married, 808; children, 1,126; inmates and servants, 387. Number of freehold houses, 53; cottages, 106; total No. of Inhabitants, 2,487. Annual average of burials for several years past is 49, which is annually one Inhabitant out of $50\frac{37}{49}$. No. of houses (as above), 485; but as there are 19 lodgers, or additional separate families, the whole number of separate families is 504. Annual average of births, 88; burials, 49; therefore 39 emigrate annually. Proportion of Inhabitants to a House, $5\frac{1}{8}$."

In his replies to the Bishop's queries in 1772, we have a statement of the provision for the public worship of the population. "Two sermons have been preached every Lord's Day in this Church ever since I have been Incumbent thereof. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administered on the Three great Festivals, and on the 1st Sunday in every month. But the People are very negligent in their

attendance upon it, inasmuch as not more than 120 usually communicate at the Festivals, & at each of ye Monthly Sacraments not more than 70. Prayers are read on all holidays, on each Saturday preceding the Lord's Supper, on every Wednesday & Friday throughout the year, and twice a day during Passion Week. There is no Chapel in this Parish. I catechize in the Church in Lent, and sometimes (tho' but very seldom) at other seasons; the people willingly send their children but not their adult servants. In explaining it I only use an extempore exposition, but sometimes distribute a few of 'Lewis's Catechism' in ye parish. I believe all who frequent the Church have been baptized either by the Dissenters or the Church of England."

Mostly by the latter, for to another query Mr. Riland replies that there are three Roman Catholic families, with no priest or place of worship, no Anabaptists nor Moravians, one family of Quakers, and a meeting house at Wigginshill, so far from the populous places as seldom to be frequented for worship. One meeting house of Independents, "whither they who are called Methodists do also resort, to the amount of 8 or 10 families, and their number is rather increased lately because they have now a regular teacher, Mr. Abraham Austen." As to this latter gentleman he gives some additional particulars. "Mr. Abr. Austen, the teacher at the said meeting house, was licenced the 13th day of December last, under the denomination of a teacher of an Independent congregation. He had made prior application to the Sessions to have his Place of Worship certified under the Toleration Act, which I opposed & prevented the success of, because he was then a minor. The young man was an Apprentice to a Grocer in Birmingham, hath a very good natural understanding, but hath had no education for ye Ministry, nor is he ordain'd or set apart for the Ministry by any of the usual forms among the Dissenters." He is "of irreproachable behaviour in private life, and I have no personal



RICHARD BISSE RILAND.

AGED 25

dissension with him whatever." In 1785 Edward Hands of Hill Hook, cordwainer, a Protestant Dissenter, had his house licensed as a place of worship, but he seems to have left the parish shortly after. In a letter addressed to the Rector by him, he complains of the conduct of "Mr. Hastings, Chief Magistrate," but says "I know by past favours I have reason to return you thanks, for they have been received by me from your hands a many times, which I humbly thank the great God for, and you too."

Mr. Riland's public character may be summed up in the words which a survivor of his parishioners addressed to his grandson in 1847. "Your observations respecting your grandfather, the Rev. R. B. Riland, I well know to be correct, from my own personal knowledge of the man. He was a zealous orthodox minister, a faithful pastor of his flock, and as charitable a kind-hearted, generous creature that ever need to live. As the Rector of a parish, possessing no ostentatious pride, free from asperity, religious without Puritanism, superstition, or enthusiasm, a true defender of the Established Church of these realms and of its discipline, without wavering or turning to the right hand or the left. Now, Revd. Sir, I will give you a brief sketch of his person. In his person he was a fine tall straight handsome man, wore a large full wig, like unto a Bishop's wig, and stood six feet one or two in height; very rarely that we see such another man: he was both an ornament and an honour to the Clerical Profession."

CHAPTER IV.

IN dealing with the private life and domestic relations of Mr. Riland, there is rather a superfluity than a paucity of material. He was a man of considerable mental power, as well as of a very genial disposition; he had a large circle of acquaintance and friends who valued his correspondence, and he kept all his letters. But although many of these, especially from his old friends at Queen's, are interesting from their happy turns of expression and references to current public events, they would swell this necessarily small book to too great a size were they all embodied in its pages. A summary of those on family and local matters must suffice.

Immediately after her husband's death, Mr. Riland's mother was called off to Oxford by the dangerous illness of her younger son John, and she writes to the elder brother from thence to relieve his anxiety. In this letter she mentions that she had begun to build a house for herself at Sutton (an unostentatious brick structure still standing in the High Street of the town, next above the School House). Like a wise mother she probably wished her son to marry, and resolved to interpose no obstacle to his freedom. If this was so, her anticipations proved correct, for on May 29th, 1759, he

espoused Mary Ash,* one of the daughters and heirs of William Ash, of Paston, Northamptonshire, a parish of which the famous Jones, of Nayland, had been vicar. 'This lady's charms were the theme of admiration from many of the last generation. "Without deceit" writes her husband, shortly after the wedding, to her sister, "I am perfectly well satisfied with my wife, and acknowledge myself much indebted to her relations & friends for suffering me to become her husband; if I was not so, now, with the knowledge I have of her, I would come a-courting again, and endeavour by all possible means to obtain her. Perhaps it may be objected that I have not had experience enough yet, but I would fain ask how long a man must be married before he may be allow'd to say He has got a good Wife? I trust in the Providence of the Almighty that we shall never suffer ye fiery trial of adversity, & the common qualities of a good or bad woman may in my opinion be diskivered (*sic*) as well in half-a-dozen months as in half-a-dozen years." In the course of the next autumn, the newly-married pair paid a visit to her relations, and on his return he writes from Coleshill, where he was about to dine at noon on Saturday, before finishing his journey home at leisure.

"Dear Sister,—We came with great success to Northampton, nay indeed with success all the way with respect to any bad accidents, but the roads were so deep, and the weather so wet, that it was very bad entertainment for man and horse. I, in person, delivered the letter to Miss Murray in the Drapery. We lay the 2nd night at the ancient city of Coventry. Polly is very well, and desires that her grandmamma may be in particular acquainted that her head is very well. At the same time give her duty and mine. We went by Daventry, and at Dunchurch

* Some of the old parishioners have told me of hearing from their mothers how the Rector published the banns of marriage between Richard Bisse Riland ("that is I, myself," interpolated he), of this parish, and Mary Ash, of the parish of Paston.

went into ye Churchyard and Church also. Near Coleshill we met 3 mourning coaches and six, and a hearse and six, going to fetch Lady Anson's corpse from London to be buried, a decent number of black attendants were with them. Last Lichfield Races I saw her in a fine new gingerbread coach. Hath all Wellingbro' been in tears since our departure. The Chaise is not merely dirty, but seems to be made of Dirt, and the horse call'd Smiler is well nigh lamed by losing a shoe in the Dirt, and going with a bare foot some miles undiscovered. Human Felicity depends upon the lucky Union of far too many circumstances to be at any time certain, or often compleat. The most likely method of being happy is to learn a complying disposition to bear misfortunes, I think, as no one can point out one circumstance of any importance in Life wherein there is not room to exercise the Virtues of patience and self denial. I do not moralize thus with any intent of applying it to myself, for I am at this hour as happy I think as I wish to be, at least—I am sure—as I deserve to be, and I believe Polly is so too. She is just saying how kind and neighbourly it would have been of us to have called and dined with Mrs. Holte, instead of coming to this same Swan Inn. We might have done so 'tis true, but our reckoning will be cheaper here; I mean that the dearest ordinary one can go to is where one cannot approve of or like the person who gives one the Entertainment.

I again give thanks for our kind treatment at your house, and

I am your Loving Brother and humble Servant,

R. B. R.

Very bad pens; Polly is yawning for her dinner. I have since learnt that the Hearse, &c. were returning to London, having taken Lady Anson down to be buried at Colwich, in Staffordshire.* I would not willingly give false intelligence."

In 1761 the happiness of the new married people was still further increased by the birth of a daughter, to whom her grandmother, on the mother's side, old Mrs. Freeman, stood sponsor. "I think it most propper," she writes, "to take ye oldest

* Elizabeth, daughter of Philip, Lord Hardwicke, married George Anson (the circumnavigator), created Lord Anson 1747. Lady Anson died 1760.

first." In 1763 a son was born to them in January, christened George, who only lived until the April following. A note from his mother says :—

"My dear,—I hope Polly and you will be comforted for the loss of the dear little child, and consider that it is now an angel. To-morrow is rather too soon to bury it, and yet it would be better than keeping it till Monday, because of your coming out on Sunday, so I think it may be buried late in the evening to-morrow. I have had a small matter of my fever last night, but am better.

Yrs affectionately,

M. RILAND."

Mrs. Riland, senior, was now beginning to feel the infirmities of age, and her letters are in a less vigorous hand than formerly.

In the same year, 1763, Mr. Riland preached at the Bishop's visitation at Coleshill. A letter from his connection, Mr. Sadler, received this year, gives a somewhat amusing account of the village of Parkgate, on the north bank of the Dee, which he seems to have thought of as a bathing quarter:—"The accommodation here is tolerable, but the place is very disagreeable. Here is no coffee-house, no newspaper, and almost no company. We are several leagues from the Ocean, and consequently sea water is not to be had here in perfection. There is no bathing but in the springtides, which continue but seven days in a fortnight, and for the last three days the tide does not serve till about noon, which makes it very inconvenient. The inhabitants of this place are an amphibious mongrell breed of animal, half English and half Irish, and as unconvertible as their brother monsters of the deep. They often put me in mind of Lazariilo de Tormes, befished in sea-weeds and salt-water. Two ships have sailed from this place for Dublin since I came here, with a great many passengers, and if it did not interfere too much with my water scheme, I shd like to have taken a trip to Ireland, but such a tour wd require a fortnight, which is more than I can spare at present.

If you should go to the Club, I commission you to purchase for me any of the following books, if they shd be upon sale, or the first vols. fall to my lot, viz., ‘Campbell’s Admirals,’ ‘Sully’s Memoirs,’ ‘Pope Sixtus,’ ‘Fielding’s Works,’ ‘Grey’s Debates,’ ‘Montague’s Letters,’ at half-price, or those marked under at two-thirds.”

One of Mr. Riland’s most intimate friends at this time was a clergyman of independent fortune named Inge, who assisted him as a curate. and was living at Langley Hall; from whom a note, dated 3 Decr., 1763, is worth giving for its good sense and terseness:—

“Dear Sir,—I had a barrel of oysters sent me last night, which I hope will keep good ’till Monday. If Mrs. Riland dares venture out we shall be glad to see you both at Langley in order to partake of them on Monday night, there shall be a Room & Bed well aired for you, and perhaps change of place as well as air may be of service to Mrs. Riland. We must insist however upon one thing, that you dont put yourselves to any extraordinary expence upon the servants upon the account of staying all night. Should you think of that I should be sorry to invite you, and I daresay you will agree with me that it is right to discountenance a custom so destructive of Social intercourse amongst neighbours. We hope to hear that Miss is better of her complaint, & with our compts to Mrs. Riland I am, dear Sir, your most humble Servt,

W. INGE.”

Another trait of the manners of those days occurs in a letter from Mr. Luttrell, who makes an apology for haste as he has just had to despatch his servants in pursuit of two highwaymen at Four Oaks.* Mrs. Luttrell also writes February 2nd, 1765, with reference to a diversion of the road:—

“I am obliged to the Corporation and Inhabitants of Sutton that consents to the altering the Road, & in particular to you who have had so much trouble. When I return into the country shall find it an amusement to be the overseare in

* The author of the “Spiritual Quixote,” 1792, describes a gibbet, with the body of a malefactor hanging from it, on the Common between Lichfield and Sutton.

stakeing out the new desine, & believe it may be done in such a manner that no inconvenience can arrise from the alteration. The two conditions you mention in your letter viz of not shutting up the old Road till the new one is compleated & when compleated to keep it in repair Mr. Luttrell agrees to. I have now only to beg your Interist with Mr. Dolphin, to keep him in the same mind until I come into the country; *at least* I hope he won't retract leting me have enough of his Land to carry the Road strat & behind the Pool.

I shall only intrude on your time to desire you to accept my best thanks, & make my compts to both Mrs. Rilands. I am Sr your most humble servant

MARIA LUTTRELL."

Another brief note from Mr. Luttrell refers to a state of things no longer existing:—

"Mr. Luttrell's compliments to Mr. Riland. If Tuesday morning, about eleven o'clock, will be convenient, shall attend at Church with his Servant, to be christened.

Four Oaks, November ye 24th."

Which is explained by the following entry in the register book of the year 1765:—

"Baptised November 27th, a native of Jamaica, being a person of riper years, now in the service of Simon Luttrell, Esqe., named Phillip, to which was afterwards added the surname of Sutton."

In 1765 a letter about a proposed journey to Ireland exemplifies the change which has come over our locomotion:—"I have taken the very first opportunity," says Mr. Sadler, "of enquiring when the Packet sails from Parkgate to Dublin, and was informed by a person from Chester yt it was very uncertain, & depended on ye freight & wind; yt perhaps we might stay a fortnight or three weeks and not get passage. But he likewise informed me of a much safer way, *i.e.*, from Holy Head, where he says they sail from (Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays) every week; he further acquaints me yt it is not above seven hours' sail from thence to Dublin. Holy-head is near 80 miles

from Chester, but I am inform'd there is a nearer way by Shrewsbury, wh we may travel by ye stage coach. This I think, if you approve of it, will be our best way of conveyance, & ye most expeditious ; but you will let me know your intentions by an immediate answer. You can be informed whether there is a stage from Shrewsbury to Holyhead. I know there is a Turnpike making." Mr. Riland probably did not take this journey till the following year ; in the autumn of this he escorted his mother to the South of England, receiving in London a letter from his wife :—

“August 26th, 1765.

Dear Husband,---As I said I would write to you I do it, but I have nothing perticular to say ; perhaps *you* may say that is luckey, because you may conclude from it that we are all well, which is very true. Lydia is in very good spirits, and is very pretty company. She is just come to me in the study, and sends her duty and her love to Papa.

Mr. Chapman supplied your place at Church yesterday. I ask'd him to dine with us, but he refused.

The post has just made me happy, by bringing me an account of yours and my mother's safe arrival at Salisbury. It was no inconvenience to me to ask Mr. Chapman to dinner yesterday, if he had come, for we had a very good one ; by yr letter you was at Ensham then, I suppose.

The Oats are all in, except just the top, and they have been mowed this three days. The Turnips come up pretty well, a shower would be of great use to them. The Bath is to be begun the middle of the week. Farnell says the bottom of the well is not Rock, but I shall see to that. The Books I will send to the club. Mrs. Neale is at my house ; there's fine doings when you are out, but as I have not hung out the broom, the gentlemen have not been to see me yet. I pray buy me one of the NEW INVENTED Cork Screws. With my kindest love to you,

I am, my Dear, your truly affectionate,

M. RILAND.

P.S.—The weather has been for two or three days very hot, & I dare hardly sit with the window open for fear of the wasps, which come in great abundance. Your Brother came here on Thursday ; he sup'd with me ; he is pretty well. He went to Worcester on Saturday, or to W(est) Bromwich in his way to Worcester, and will be at Sutton for half-a-day the beginning of next week. You have not been wanted for anything particular that I know of, so pray do not hurry yourself.'

Mrs. Riland, senior, after attending the celebration of St. Cecilia, at Salisbury, on the 27th September (there is an affectionate little letter in which she says "Don't let Lydia forget me, talk to her about me"), went on to Bath, where she writes she had "to go up 40 stairs to bed; here is already a great deal of company, and some coming every day. Lady Huntingdon hath built a chappell here for the use of people of her way of thinking; it was opened last Sunday, & Mr. Whitfield preached 3 hours to a crowded audience, who had tickets for their admission, on which was a cross, and the words 'Christ died to save sinners.'"

In the early part of the year 1768 the house at Paston, which had been the home of the Ash family, was consumed by fire. Two letters from the bailiff, a Mr. Strong, give a clear and rather picturesque account of the calamity. The fire, as in many a similar instance, began in a beam which went into a chimney, and by the time that the messenger had reached Peterboro', and the engine with Mr. Strong had arrived at the scene of the fire, they were only able to save the kitchen, brewhouse, and granary, all very much damaged. The tenant, a Mr. Housen, was from home at the time, and on his return in the evening "he found his wife standing in the middle of the yard almost perish'd with cold, with the Household goods all round her, and the house burnt down. It was a most affecting sight to behold, the poor man and his wife hanging upon each other's arms lamenting their unhappy fate. They had the good fortune to save all their furniture, except what was in the best chamber and the room adjoining. (This, however, was an important exception, as "all their clothes, linen, and wearing apparel were burnt, they did not save so much as a cap or a shirt.") It is not known the exact loss that they sustained, but have heard it was £100 and upwards. They are both very industrious, good sort of people, and much respected by all their neighbours. I must say this poor man has been very unfortunate, for the year before last, by a breach which happened in

the North Bank, his whole Fen Farm, which consisted of a great many acres, was entirely under water for many months, his stacks of corn stood a great depth in the water, and all his wheat then growing, which was near 100 acres, was totally damaged, and his loss was then computed at no less than £400; but Mr. Housen is a man of some substance, and of great courage and composure of mind, and bears up very well agst all his misfortunes. The waters are very high with us at this time, and our banks are in some danger, shd they happen to break this poor man wd be drove away agn from his present habitation." Mr. Strong makes some suggestions as to rebuilding the kitchen and offices for a farm house, and, in fact, the mansion itself went to ruin. Some time after Mr. Riland visited the ruins, and found some fine young seedling ash plants in the area. He wrote home to his wife that "the Ashes still flourished at Paston!"

One of Mr. Strong's letters ends with a curious narrative of electioneering:—"The present candidates to represent our City (Peterborough) in the next Parliament are Sir Matthew Lamb,* one of the present Members, and Mr. Wyldbore, in opposition to Mr. Rogers Parker (son to the other present member, Mr. Armstead Parker), who, after canvassing the Town and spending a large sum of money, at last gave up the contest upon Mr. Wyldbore's paying him £1,000 and consenting to lay out £1,000 for the benefit of the town of Peterboro'."

The families with which Mrs. Riland were connected were not much more fortunate in their affairs than were her own immediate relations. Many of the letters preserved refer to the disputes and difficulties of the families of Ashby, Jesson, and Holte, the last-named, the highest in social position, being in the sequel the worst off

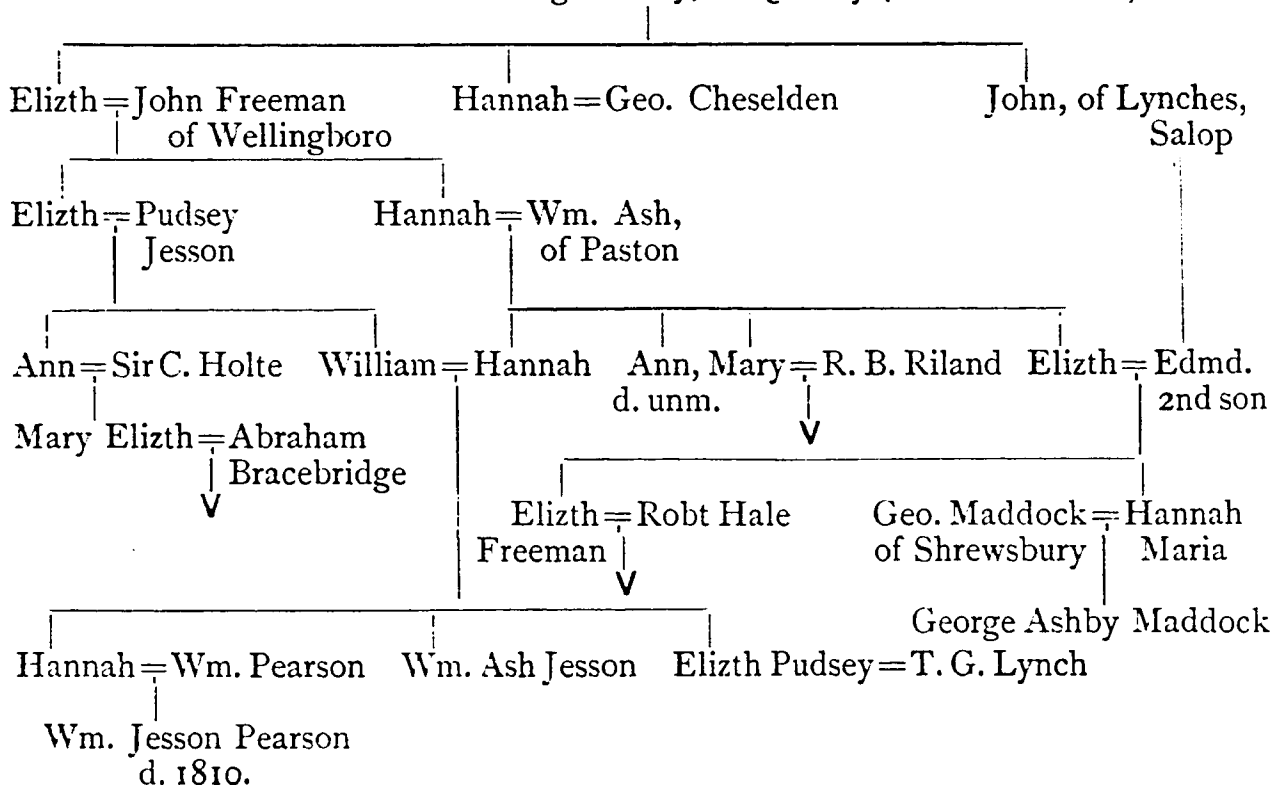
* Of Bocket Hall, Herts; first baronet. A lord of trade and plantations. Father of first Viscount Melbourne.

of the three. The little genealogical tree appended* will give a notion of the relationship of the various members of the kindred whom it will be necessary to mention. A spirited letter from old Mrs. Cheselden does credit to the vigour of seventy-four, and renders the statement that she lived fifteen years longer less astonishing:—

“Leicester, April ye 20, 1766.

Dear Madam,—I recd yr kind & obliging letter by Mr. Richard Ashby, dated Feb ye 2, but did (*not*) com to me till March ye 13. I was glad to hear you was well, and think myself much obliged to my dear cous for askeing after me. I feared you had took somthing ill, not hearing one word from you senes June, '65. I thank you, dear Madam, for yr kind inuitasion, & would be glad to wate on you if my health would give leave. I have not bin oute of town but one day senes I saw you: have had ye Rumatis in my arm & other complants wch atend oeld age yt am onely fit to sit by ye fire & nurs myself. I much wonder yr Gentelmen are not disposed of before this, sure ye Ladys are very cruil in yr part of ye world, they chang hear very fast. Mr. Herrick was married last week, & Mr. Simpson is gon to be married to a great fortain—they talk of no less than ten thousand pound. Miss Vowe was

* George Ashby, of Quenby (with other issue).



married last week to ye Revd att Kiboth,* worth 8 hundred a year, keeps his coach, no fortain, he fel in love with her going home with Miss Smaley yt married there, wch now lies in of two sons. Captain Brown being with you is great news. I am glad to hear yr kind naibors are all well, & beg you will be so good to give my compts to all when you see them. Miss Thorp was feched by her Brother in Lincolnshire, fifty miles from you, wch prevented the pleasur of seing you, as she fully intended, begs her compts to you & Miss Ashby. I see in ye papers Mr. Redal is dead, wch I am sorry for. Mr. Ashby hear & his wife are boath very ill; we have nothing hear worth your notis, ye Town has bin in great disorder ever senes ye Elections; they have turned oute ye Recorder.†

I beg, madam, you will except my sincear love and good wishes for your health & hapines.

I remain, yr affect. aunt & moest obliged humble servt,

NAN CHESELDEN.

In contrast to this, take a letter relating to the division of old Mrs. Freeman's goods, addressed, like the former, to Miss Ann Ash.

“Dear Sister,—I should have answered your kindness to me and mine before know but the weather was so very bad that I could not get home and as I thought it quite needless to trouble you with two letters when one would do, so I stayed till I knew Mrs Holtes mind about the Lots, and I am very much disappointed at her chusing the Lot marked A and sopose you will like the B lot if not I would have that but as you are the eldest you have the preferance and then please to send me the Lot C with the white Damask, and I should take it as a very great favour if the Dresden handkerchief is in the lot marked F which will fall to my sister Jesson will change it for a handkerchief out of mine as it is not named particularly dressding; my Sister will not know but it was in mine, and the Silk Mittings as was of your own produck is not mentioned in the A Lot and if I was you I would take them myself as you have the most right to them, I intended giving them to you if I had been so Luckey as to have had the Muff; I grudge Mrs. Holte that sadley;

* Dr. Shuter, patron and rector of Kibworth, 1741; married in 1766 Lucy Vowe, and died 1769.

† Robert Bakewell, Esq., Recorder of Leicester, removed by a court of aldermen in 1766.

pray change the Snuff Boxes out of that Lott & give her my two if they are not as good for changing is no Roberry and the white Egg is not named in A and therefore desire you would let me have that I hope you will not think I have been either unreasonable or unfair in any of the above mentioned articles, and please to send Mrs Holtes Lot and mine in the same Box and directed to Charles Holte Esqr at Shrewsbury to be left at Mr. William Kempson's near the Chapel yard Birmingham by the Northampton carrier. I imagine my sister Riland has wrote to you to let you know she would have the gray silk and would not have it come from Welling: till she comes to fetch it, and please to send them to Birmingham as soon as is convenient to you; I now begin to give you account of my proseedings from Northampton to Sutton which place I arrived at the Tuesday to dinner and found that family well, and was weather bound till Wednesday in the following week and came to my sister Jesson's almost to breakfast on the Thursday. I return you a great many thanks for all favours to me and mine, and shall with great pleasure return it to you again when ever you please to give me an opportunity. I would have wrote a longer letter to you but the Postman is in the House waiting for this letter, so can add no more then that I found all friends well, and they jine with me in Love and servise to all friends with you—from dear Sister

Yours affectiently

ELIZ ASHBY.

Linches Feb ye 24 1766."

The family disputes and dissensions were not indeed often upon such trifling subjects, and the letters were not always so comical as the one which Miss Ash received from her sister. The Holtes and Jessons were neither of them good managers of their affairs, and their embarrassments often involved Mr. Riland, as one of their trustees, in correspondence with both debtors and creditors of theirs. Almost as curious an epistle as that of Mrs. Ashby was received by him some years later from the well-known Squire Forester, of Willey, who died unmarried in 1811, but it is worth giving in this place as another strange picture of the manners of the age.

"Sir,—I presume to write a second time to you by Mr. Lewis, who would have waited on you before but for a severe & touching Loss, ye Loss of a truly good man, Mr. Congreve. The whole Town of Bridgnorth is contracted in one brow of Woe

on this melancholy occasion, & whilst his Intimates mourn in private--His Familiars grieve for publick Society in general. I should not trouble you nor your Friends more than needful on the business subsisting between us, but, Sr, where infelicity reigns triumphant in a Man's breast, ye quickest, ye most effectual relief is surely his primary object. You have a grievance on your hands, but I have an oppression on my spirits from the same subject, that I must relieve with yr Concurrence & Assistance of a Gentleman of Mr. Riland's tender feelings as well as very quick Penetration. A great deal may be guess'd from what falls from a Man's Pen, & I have seen sufficient of your Productions to warrant my good opinion of your Character in private as well as your abilities in public Life. To explain ye cause of my unhappiness to You perfectly, I must (because I cannot help it) prove so indelicate as to trouble you with a small sketch of ye proceedings of ye first part of my life, & ye Result of those events to ye present Period. I bow, Sr, to you as a Clergyman for permission to write ye few following Lines, & whilst you read them be pleas'd to assume ye Man of ye World, and forget yr professional Doctrine. In ye stormy days of youth, I act'd (as many other thoughtless youths have done before me) precipitately; & led a life, which nothing but great Spirits & an excellent Constitution could then possibly justify. I went with ye stream, no Current e'er opposed me, & at length I form'd Connections in that way as serious, as that Plan would permit. From this rather more recluse State, natural children arose, & ye only atonement I can possibly make for past Follies & imprudence in general is to take all care of these Productions, & to leave them as little Cause to remember me but with Respect as I can possibly contrive within ye pale of Invention. It is from this Motive of Conviction, no Motive of peculiar Interest to myself that I send Mr. Lewis over to you again with an Offer, which I hope you'll think in a great measure unexceptionable. I have experience, how great ye difficulty is for me to settle these affairs; then what must I think should I leave any part of this Money & much more *all*, to these unfortunate young ones; and perhaps no One, at that Hour that may deem them any more worth than as ye Laws of this Country in general notice them. Mr. Riland may be gone, their father may be gone, & should any one of ye parties then be found wicked enough in future to dispute their Claims I know not where their Resources. The Remedy may be worse than ye Disease by endeavouring to obtain their just Rights, and when I reflect upon the whole, I blush not to say it (tho', as poor Othello says, I'm in general unus'd to ye melting mood), I blush not to say I speak it that my eyes drop Tears. I feel as a Christian, I feel as a Father, & from these excruciating thoughts now oppressing me I send this by Mr. Lewis to You, as an Appeal to a Man of Feeling; and as I am willing to do ye best in my power without sinking under ye Weight of my

Apprehensions, I humbly supplicate your kind assistance in ye Completion of this important Business. Was I free and independant of ye World, I should not so deeply express myself; but my Father left me in debt *greatly*, & therefore I can not provide conveniently any other way for these Children; consequently to leave them safe & secure in their little All must be such a satisfaction to Me as a Friend & Father to them, that ye want of such Security will make me for ever unhappy for ye present as well as ye future Part of ye Time I have to exist upon this Earth. Pardon me for this long Epistle, but remember ye subject a tender One, & never can be forgotten till ye end of my Days, when Memory's no more.

I am, with much respect, your oblig'd friend,

G. FORESTER.

Willey, 18th Decr., 1782.

Ann Jesson, who had married Mr. Holte in 1755, was—through her mother—a cousin of Mrs. Riland. Her marriage does not seem to have been a happy one, nor were either her husband or herself persons of a prudent or satisfied turn of mind. They seem to have led rather a wandering life, sometimes residing at Coleshill, or Erdington; sometimes at Shrewsbury. Mr. Holte, upon the death of his brother in 1769, succeeded to the baronetcy and estate of Aston, and in 1774 offered himself as a candidate for Parliament for the county of Warwick, and was returned with Mr. Skipwith after a very severe contest, prolonged, as was permitted in those days, from the 20th to the 31st of October. The defeated candidate was Mr. Mordaunt, eldest son of Sir Charles Mordaunt, and he was, as might be expected, strongly supported in the south of the county, while Holte's strength lay in the north. Thus in the hundred of Hemlingford, comprising the whole north-western part of Warwickshire, Holte had 1,175 votes to Mordaunt's 315, while the latter was in a majority in all the other hundreds. As in those days the poll was taken at Warwick only, Mordaunt had the advantage of being nearer to his reserves, and for three days he steadily increased his majority, the total on the fourth day being 1,495 for Mordaunt, and 1,187 for Holte. During that week the majority was reduced, so that

on the 29th October Holte was 1,818 to Mordaunt's 1,761, and on Monday, 31st, the poll closed, only fifty-three votes more being recorded, of which Holte received twenty-seven. The third candidate, who was virtually unopposed, polled 2,954 votes. Sutton Coldfield was tolerably unanimous in its support of Holte, giving him 107 votes to Skipwith's eighty, and only three for Mordaunt. Sir Charles Holte died in 1782, without male issue, when the title expired, and the estates became subject to a settlement of Sir Lister Holte's (called by Hutton one of the most unaccountable assignments that ever resulted from human weakness), and in 1817, under an Act of Parliament, they were sold and dismembered among the legatees. Sir Charles's only daughter married Mr. Bracebridge, an ancient name in Warwickshire, now extinct. The Sutton property of the Holtes was allotted to Mr. Digby, one of the reversion holders under Sir L. Holte's will, and from him descended to Lord Somerville.

The Jessons of Langley, again, who were doubly connected with Mrs. Riland, William Jesson having married his cousin Hannah Ash, were in continual distresses, and for the most part exiles from their family home. With one son who died early, they had two daughters, the eldest of whom married a Mr. Pearson, and had an only son, who died in the Peninsular War, just after the Battle of Talavera, while the younger (often alluded to in Mr. Riland's letters as Miss Pudsey—from a baptismal ascription of the surname of the old owners of Langley) made a miserable match with a worthless Irish-American, named Lynch, who ill-used her, and by whom she had no children. Thus this family also became extinct.

The Ashbys, of Quenby, in Leicestershire, were the uniting link, through old Mrs. Freeman, of the several families just-mentioned, and also had family reverses, which did not so immediately concern the Rilands. One of their family letters, however, is too good to be omitted, being short, and in subject and style unique:—

“Good Br,—In obedience to yr commands I have sounded Mr S. in relation to his kinswoman. He gives her a Great Charactr commending her for her ffrugality, Chastity, Sobriety, Calmness of Tempr & Piety. She has every thing yt is amiable charming & desirable in a Wife being a Pfect ffund of joys & Cornucopia of Pleasures, in a word yt I may show her, as it was in a Glass, she is exactly qualifd honourably to succeed the Present Mrs of Quenby. Her Education has been Rural having had the best Mastrs the Country affords to instruct her in Dancing Singing Playing upon the Guittr, Writing, Raising of Paste & Cookery yt she might be entirely free from the Vanities & Vices yt now reign in the City. She is an only Daughtr. Her Hair is ffair & Person agreeable. She seems to be abt 20 yrs of age. Her ffathr has lately presented her with a Coach & can make her 1st and last a Ten Thousand Pound ffortune, if she marries with his approbation. He is for a Gentn yt has something of Business as well as Estate. My Ld Keepr Wright is his Neighbr Br Boothby his old acquaintance. Aunt Ashby of Thorp can give you a more particular & satisfactory acct of him. He has improvd his Talt* very much. My Mothr & Wife desire with me yt our Services may be acceptable to you & yrs.

I am Sir

Yr affectionate Br & Humble Servt

EUSBY ASHBY.”

The writer, who was born in 1662, and was a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, 1693, died without children, and left his property to his nephew, Shukburgh Ashby, whose son purchased Quenby from the elder branch of the family. The Lord Keeper Wright, whom he mentions, was Sir Nathan Wright, the husband of his sister Elizabeth, who held that office in 1700. The marriage thus warmly recommended does not seem to have taken place.

In May, 1766, Mrs. Riland writes to her husband from Matlock, whither she had repaired for the benefit of the baths, as to some inquiries she had been making for a curate. Besides these matters and affectionate messages to Lydia “if she should catch the Hooping Cough and be bad, be so good as to let me know that I may come and nurse her. for you know she is *my one*,” she goes on to say

* Talent.

"The Bp. of Raphoe, who is here with His Lady lent me her Single Horse to ride out on, and not only so but went with me himself, and I did not like the going of it, for it would not canter, and he says I shall have another of his lady's horses which is also here but that somebody shall ride it first least it should not go well,—there's for you—I do not know whether you wont be a Dean or some such thing through my acquaintance with the Irish Bishop.* I have rode out twice behind Peter Guarton, who is here for his health. He is something better. Our Company is now upwards of 50, they sometimes make my head ach, we have one baronet." Her next letter begins:—

"Matlock Thursday June ye 9th.

My dear love,—At a house a quarter of a mile, from this place, where I was resting myself after a walk—a man put in his head and said Do you sell drink here; I turn'd and saw John Heatley who said he had a letter for me which I read imediatly and am very glad that you and all things are well at Home. I am very sorry it was not convenient for you to meet me here this week for I am sure it would have done you great service as to your health and been very satisfactory to me, but I am very happy for I thank God I am got very well again and this Bath seems to agree with me very well, so for that reason I shall (as you have given me my choice) stay a day or two longer, and will be at Derby on Wednesday ye 18th in the evening when I hope to meet you in good health, but if anything should happen to hinder *your* coming you will be so kind as to send Jack, and if anything should happen very particular that *He* cannot be spared, I will not be frightened but set out on Tuesday from Derby by my self, therefore pray suit your own convenience.

Matlock is one of the pleasantest places I ever saw—the mad man went from thence yesterday—there is no other company to stay but comers and goers constantly passing. John wants to go so I shall only add my love to you with good wishes for our happy meeting till when

I am

Yr truly affectionate wife

M. RILAND."

* John Oswald, translated from Dromore, Bp. Raphoe, 1763-80.

Another daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Riland on September 8th, 1767, named Phebe, co-heiress with her sister of the Riland property, who afterwards married the Rev. Edmond Williamson, Rector of Campton, Bedfordshire. In 1768 Mr. Riland lost the company of his friend Mr. Inge, who was presented to the living of Brereton, in Cheshire—a pleasant neighbourhood, and with so good a house that he says “our Bedchamber will hold twelve couple to dance in.” One of the many letters from Mr. Inge to his friend deserves a place from its gossiping sketches of the families in the neighbourhood.

To the Revd. R. B. Riland.

“Dear Sir,—I have looked into my Book & find that I received Seven Shillings from the Keeper after I had clos’d the accounts of my Wardenship, so I beg you will return to the Corporation that Sum, & if it be necessary make an Alteration in the Book where my Account stands. If you have received any Money for me at Coleshill you will be so good to keep it till I have the pleasure of seeing you, and if not you will be so kind as to lay down Seven Shillings for me till I have an opportunity to repay you. Pray who is chose into the Book Club in my Room? and on whom have ye conferr’d the Honour of Capital Burgess? Hath Mrs. Duncumb brought her Husband a Son & Heir yet? And when doth Mrs. Hacket * the honourable intend to lie in? I should have asked these impertinent questions sooner, but I waited till I could give you some account of the neighbourhood we are in. The nearest neighbour is Mr. Davenport, of Davenport, Father to Mrs. Bromley, of Bagginton, an elderly man and a widower, very sensible, a companion of David Hume, and is the Gentleman who took in the celebrated Rosseau at his seat at Wootton, in Staffordshire. The next is Mr. Brooke, a polite, well-bred Man, whose Lady is extremely agreeable, they are by much the genteelest people we have seen, and by their manners you would think they were bred in Warwickshire, or had breathed the [refined] air of Sutton Coldfield. There is also Mr. Charles Crewe, Uncle to the present Mr. Crewe, of Crewe, who did us the honour of a Visit with his two Daughters, one of which is lately married to Mr. John Lawton, eldest son of Mr. Lawton of Lawton, who also came with his

* Ann, d. of Lord Leigh, married Andrew Hacket, of Moxhull, and died s.p., 1769.

Lady & Father in Law. You must remember a little mad Girl that Us'd to be with Captain Kent, a Miss Oakes, she is married to a Mainwearing, in this Country, and very kindly brought her husband to see us. I think she is brought down by Matrimony into a good agreeable Woman. Tho' she apes rather too much the most affected woman that you & I know in the world. There are several others of less note to the number of thirteen or fourteen, who have been to see us, some who profess the Law, some Physic, but not one Divine amongst them all; and you may believe me, tho' it sound incredible, that I have not seen the face of one Clergyman since I came into Cheshire, except my relation, Mr. John Gresley, from Biddulph, in Staffordshire. The Churches, it is true, stand thin, and they are chiefly Curates that are around us; and whether they are frightened at me I don't know, but they none of them have been near me, and I believe now they never intend it. So that I must get a Curate whether I like it or not, else in case of illness or unavoidable absence my Church must be unsupplied; for I have no neighbour of whom to ask assistance. If you ask how I like preaching twice a day, I answer very well, and I do it with out any trouble or fatigue, and I think I like the employment better than I ever did in my life, so that if I take a Curate it will be merely upon the Account before mentioned, and that I may not be in an absolute State of Confinement and never be able to visit my own Country and Friends. I am about letting my Tithes, each Man his own, some are to give 6, some 5 shill: P. acre Statute, according to the goodness of their land. Those that don't like the Terms, must pay their Tithe in kind, and that I intend collecting myself, and by this Method I shall advance my Living I expect to £220 P. Ann. Some of them have bid 6 shillings a Statute Acre, for all sorts of Grain, and I believe have agreed, tho' I have not seen Sr * Lister's Steward lately, whom I employ in this affair, & you will observe if it is of any use to you, that the Crops are mostly Oats, and that the Wheat and Barley bear no proportion to the Wheat and Barley grown in Warwickshire. But I will trouble you with my own affairs no longer. I shall now ask after my old acquaintances, and first I hope to hear that yourself, Mrs. Riland, and the little Girls are well, as also Mrs. Riland, of Sutton. Is Mr. Hacket, Senr., got well, he was much amiss when I left you, and is the young gentleman at Moxull recovered, & likely to live. I thought him in a very poor way. How does poor Mrs. Dunkley, whom we left a dying? I hope she is recovered and well. What becomes of Four Oaks? and what neighbours are you likely to have there? Is Langley well fill'd, and is Mr. Sacheverell anything the

* Sir Lister Holte, Bart., of Aston.

better for the death of Sir Andrew Chadwick? Do come & give me an answer to all these questions, & bring Mrs. Riland, the elder, & younger, & Miss with you, I can assure you that no one will be more glad to see you. I hope to be in Warwickshire some time towards the end of Summer, & if so I will certainly wait upon you. Pray give my Service to Mr. Kendrick, & tell him I have great occasion for my Malt-Mill, & if he hath not Sold it I wish he would send it by some Waggon that comes through Brereton from the Green Man or Red Caps. The Woodwork, such as the Hopper, &c., I believe not worth sending, but the other part will be quite useful, as they have no Malt Mills here, & I am charg'd a penny per Strike for the grinding. My Wife is in great distress for an Upper Maid Servant, the Bearer of this, James Farmer, having married Kitty before we left Langley, & he now is come to take her away. Pray pay my Compts to the Corporation when you have an Opportunity, & also to the agreeable Society at Coleshill, whom I leave with particular regret. I desire also to be remember'd to all my old Friends who are kind enough to enquire after me, & with my Wife's Compliments, my own, & my Daughters, to yourself, Mrs. Riland, & Miss, & Mrs. Riland, Senr., I am,

Dear Sir,

Your Very Affectionate Friend,

And most Humble Servant,

W. INGE.

Brereton, July 5th, 1768.

Mr. Inge, too, had a great regard for his former neighbours in Warwickshire, and though he thought it right to resign his membership of the Book Club, indulged a hope that should he be called again into the Deanery of Arden, he might be admitted as a supernumerary member. He mentions having attended the oratorios in Birmingham as the guest of Sir Lister Holte, and in one of his letters, states his entire agreement with Mr. Riland about the agreeable country round Leek:—"People," he says, "who were never in the Moorlands have a strange notion of it; but let them visit Leek—the capital, and then tell me where they have ever seen a more delightful country. For my part I am so fond of it that I shall always prefer that road—though five miles about—to the unpleasant road by Talk and Newcastle. I went into the Churchyard at Leek to view the Cloud, and shall be glad to meet you there

at the summer solstice next ensuing, to see the phenomenon Dr. Plott mentions." *

Another letter from Mr. Inge of this date is occupied with a dissertation upon the verb *ὑπέταξεν*, I. Cor., xv., 27, and other passages bearing upon the subject. Mr. Riland had the reputation of a sound scholar, and several letters among his correspondence are inquiries or suggestions upon critical theology. One of these was Mr. Darwall, Curate of Walsall, who on May-day, 1769, proceeds to say:—"I should be inexpressibly oblig'd to good Mr. Riland if he would please to do me the favour to invite or to speak to any person of his acquaintance in my behalf that he thinks might be instrumental in procuring the living of Walsall for me. I suppose, Sir, you know that the Earl of Mountrath† the patron, who is now resident in Piccadilly, London, whither I sent up a Letter last night, making an apology to his lordship for not applying in person, with an Address from the Mayor and Corporation, and principal inhabitants of the town in my behalf; and I'm extremely oblig'd to my neighbours in general for their good wishes. My good friend, Mr. Sneyd, of Bishton, was so obliging to write a very kind pressing letter to Mr. Kinnersley to urge Sir William Bagot, whose good-natur'd appearance (nay, indeed, particularly kind condescending behaviour to me at Stafford Assize) bespeaks a disposition to do a kind action.

* "A pretty rural observation of late years made by some of the inhabitants of the town of Leek in the Moorelands of the setting of the sun in the summer solstice, near a hill, called the Cloud, about six miles distant, in the confines of Staffordshire and Cheshire, which appearing almost perpendicular on the northern side to such persons as are standing in Leek churchyard, the sun seems so nicely at that time of year to cut the edge of it at setting, that they can plainly perceive by the help of this hill that no two days are equal."—Plott's "Natural History of Staffordshire," 1686.

† Diana, youngest daughter, and eventually co-heiress of Richard Newport, Earl of Bradford, married (1719) Algernon Coote, Earl of Mountrath in Ireland.

But, notwithstanding these prior applications, I shou'd be equally obliged to good Mr. Riland for his, as the greater the interest the greater the prospect of success ; and if the living chance to be promis'd it may still be of service, as his lordship may have other favours to dispose of.*

Another of his clerical correspondents was Mr. Thomas Bagnall, who had been curate to his father, from whom he preserves a letter of critical divinity, dated October 29th, 1770. A Mr. Edwards, of Nuneaton, and Mr. Newling, of Westbury, also write Greek annotations, to which replies were sent in 1781. But his clerical friends often wrote on topics of lesser intellectual value, although flavoured with classical quotations. By way of example, take a letter, in 1779, from Mr. Roberts, lately Mr. Riland's curate, and still a member of the Corporation of Sutton, though apparently now become a schoolmaster at Worcester :—

“Dear Sir,—It was always my intention to write to you from Worcester, & it had been more becoming if I had not been quite so long about it—forgive me this wrong—I can hardly yet call myself settled & what is worse, don't much like my house. In respect to change of situation, as the novelty of things begins to wear away I begin to find myself not a jot happier than I was at Sutton Coldfield : but then I am not disappointed for neither did I expect to be so. I came hither with a fixed resolution to encounter the disagreeable with the pleasant and find it no difficult matter to abide by the determination, nothing near so much so as to combat Phoebus Apollo from the Winter Solstice onward—or to court the Naiads of your cold Bath—

positas cum glaci et nives
Puro numine Jupiter

You see I begin already to quote like a schoolmaster in which capacity there is room for a good deal more employment than I have at present ; insomuch that I dare not yet aspire so high as the elbow chair the plaid gown and the velvet cap but

θαρσύνε χεῖρ, φίλε βάττε, τάχ' αὐριον ἔπετ' ἄμεινον.

* Mr. Darwall obtained the living, and died there, 1789.

Indeed I have reason to expect an addition to the number of my Pupils very shortly. In respect to my clerical capacity, I consider myself as a degraded character ; being as yet unprovided with a Curacy & my business at the Cathedral will not let me call myself more than half a Clergyman ; but it is an easy matter if one be so disposed (& I am sure it is a very prudent one) to derive consolatory thoughts from seeming ill ; if I have no flock to feed, I am at least free from every anxiety on that account & if Clerks will turn their backs upon the Altar of their God, my heart need not unreasonably grieve on their behalf.

This country is most beautiful at this season & the city will in a short time be inferior to none ; they are paving their principal streets on each side with a broad flag pavement and have made a considerable advance in the work. Dr. Alcock, from a preface prefixed to his Church service, which I happened upon 'tother day in the Cathedral, has I find been quarrelling with his brethren of the Quire ever since the year fifty-three. Dallaway declining in health ! ibi omnis effusus labor ! & all I am afraid from his own fault. I wish you happy in your connection with Mr. Blick. If you think proper to write to me sometimes you will use me better than I deserve. I have no room to particularise compliments which if you please I will lodge with you in a Body to be dispensed by you in what manner & measure you shall think proper.

I am Sir yours with sincerity

VIGORNIENSIS."

Mr. Roberts soon obtained the Curacy of Powick, and writes to Mr. Riland describing his advance in prosperity by increase of pupils, and a legacy to his sister, and mentions the performance of the oratorios, but speaks of his being prevented from being present by a sad occurrence. "My blood even now chills at the mention of the following circumstance,—my house has been the scene of suicide. Six weeks ago in the dusk of a very gloomy morning one of my servant maids was found hanging in the kitchen. It was my fate to cut her down, for nobody else would do it. Every means were used for her recovery but without effect. The girl was but lately come into the family ; & during the time of her being with us we could recollect no single circumstance from whence we could trace the least motive to the desperate transaction. We afterwards learned

that she had before given repeated proofs of insanity & had been at Bilstone. 'The jury brought in a verdict of Lunacy.'

Enough, perhaps, of this kind of clerical gossip. Mr. Blick, whose name occurs in one of the preceding letters, became curate to Mr. Riland in 1779, and officiated with him until his death. As will hereafter be seen, he did not continue long with his successor in the Rectory, but kept a school near Tamworth, of which town he was vicar fifty years, and survived until the middle of the nineteenth century. In one of his letters, while residing at Coventry, occurs an allusion to a singular episode in the political history of that not immaculate city. "The principal inhabitants of Coventry, and I with them, are much pleased that an early day is obtained for hearing our petition. In the long debate upon the affair we have, or at least think we have, much the better of the argument. Lord North has more than ever won the hearts of the freemen of Coventry; nor does Lord Beauchamp nor Governor Johnstone go without their share of applause. I obtained a sight of the petition, which fills many leaves, and is in my opinion well drawn up. We have such a reliance on the justness of our cause and on the impartial justice of a committee of the house of Commons, that we think it almost a moral certainty Sir Thomas Halifax and Mr. Rogers will be turned out of that house with as much disgrace as they have now obtained a seat in it."

This was the election in 1780, when the Sheriffs of the city were sent to Newgate for their misconduct. A number of unqualified persons were admitted to the freedom of the city by the Corporation, on condition of voting for the Corporation candidates. At this election also a great riot took place in Cross Cheaping, known as the Bludgeon Fight.

Returning to the simpler records of family events, Mr. Riland, in a letter, of 1772, to his sister-in-law, dated March 9th, complains that the intenseness of the frost destroyed twenty-three brace and a

half of his 'meat-carp' in the pond close to the house, "t'would have been a more desirable exit for them had they been served up brace by brace at your table." Twelve years later he repeats the sad story:—"Another March frost makes sad ravage among the meat-fish; the finest great creatures like sucking pigs frozen, and when the ice broke up found stinking."

Here is a pretty little letter from Lydia, now fifteen years of age:—

"May, 1776.

Dear and Hon'd. Pappa,—We are (I thank God) arrived very safe here, where we are like to stay, for all the chaises and horses in the town are gone to take Voters to Gloucester Election. We came from Ledbury early yesterday morning, and have been waiting ever since in hopes of having a chaise come home. We drank tea with Mr. Cook's sisters yesterday afternoon. They are very agreeable Ladies, and were very obliging to us.

My Grandmama is very well, and as we have taken up our abode at Hereford, we hope, Sir, you will do us the favour to come and see us, and come by way of Malvern, for it is a delightfull pleasant road at this time of the Year, when the apple trees are in full blossom. We are just come from Cathedral Prayers, where we heard some fine singing; we did not stay the Sermon to-day, for was afraid of missing a chaise. When you write to my Mama, please to give my Duty to her and Love to Phebe, and accept the Duty of

Your affectionate Daughter,

LYDIA RILAND.

P.S.—We have been invited to dinner at two places to-day—at Dr. Cambell's and Mrs. Hardwick's, but decline going to either. Miss Cook took us to the fine walk last night by the river side; it is very pleasant, and from one part of it one can see a great way into Wales. A chaise is just come in, but they say the horses are bespoke."

Another of her letters, a few years later, is full of the *naïveté* of a self-reliant young lady, with kindly instincts:—

"Dear Sister,—I received both your letters this morning. The contents of the last gave me much pleasure, tho' I fear my Father has been very poorly indeed. I hope, however, to see him on Friday, as I mean to go in the Coach to Tamworth on

thursday evening, and shall be glad to have the Horses meet me there on Friday, as the Coach will not arrive time enough for me to ride Home that evening. We are going to dine with the Bride to-day, she and her Sister are very fine Women indeed, it is quite a disputed point which is handsomest. I think the unmarried Sister very like Maria Ashby, every body thinks Mr. John Green in high luck. The Bells have been ringing incessantly since their arrival.*

From a letter of Mrs. Dickinson's, I find Miss —— mean to be with us in about three Weeks.

Yours affectionately,
L. RILAND.

Hinkley, April 12th, 84.

Pray give my Duty to my Mother, and tell her if our little pigs are not too large I think one sent by the Coach would be a very acceptable present at this house. If it is not quite convenient to send the Horses on Friday, Saturday will do as well, and I can spend the day with my Aunt. Mr. & Mrs. Iliff desire particular Compts., my best wishes for my Father's perfect recovery."

Travelling indeed was not the perfunctory matter which season tickets and excursions have made it. One of Riland's Weillingborough friends who had called on him at Sutton *en route* puts the case thus :—

"In our journey we met with everything as agreeable as we could wish except the Inconvenience and Exactions of several Inns, which is the fate of most travellers—the Badness of the Weather and Roads &c., sometimes missing our way when we ventured on any excursions. I can hardly forgive the Landlord of the Tunns, who put off to me a light half guinea and furnished us with a Post Chaise driver to take us to Mr. Boltons, who did not know two miles of the road thither."

But the family at Sutton made light of such minor inconveniences, and took long journeys not only to see their friends, but

* Married March 26, 1784.—At Plympton St. Mary, Devonshire, Mr. John Green, of Hinckley, Leicestersh., hosier, to Miss Reep, of Ridgeway.—*Gent's Mag.*

to Bath, Matlock, the Metropolis, and even Scotland, whence Mr. Riland writes in 1783, May 6th.

“Friday, May 6th, 1783.

Dear Mrs. R.,—I am now returned to Edinburgh from Perth & its Neighbourhood, from which Place my last was written, which I hope you have received.

Every safety & Blessing hath attended me, and I hope the same have attended you, because I have just been at the Post Office, where they assure me there is no letter directed for me, so I trust that no Intelligence is good Intelligence, as, if I recollect right, it was if significant Events happened that you was to write to me. Any Letter if needful after the Receipt of this, must be sent to Mr. Murthwaite's, at Russendale, near Kendal, as I hope to be there e'er long, & hope to be at Home about Holy Thursday.

I have a little of a cold for the First Time this Journey, being with two Men in what they call a Fly, they liked to have the windows open, & it blew very searchingly. The Wind also blew very smart at a Ferry which I was crossing between 2 & 3 miles, & I believe I exposed Myself to it by standing at the Head of the boat, for it pitched its beak into the Ocean, & the Waves dashed against it so, that I could not deny Myself the Pleasure of beholding it. I hope when I next write to be quite well again.

This Morn : I have been with the Physicians & Surgeons at the Royal Infirmary, the medical Skill may be very great, but of that I am no judge. Ours at Birm : is cleaner & better conducted. A man was just brought in who had fallen out of a Tree, & having fallen upon His Head was quite senseless ; it was a Birmingham Man, one Hickman. He had been climbing after the Rooks nests. I will endeavour not to run myself into Danger, that I may come Home safe to my dear Wife & Children. A soaking shower now falling sweetens this City a good deal. This morning I saw the Canopy of the great Kirk, prepared for the Earl of Leven next week. They must preach, &c., without me for an Auditor, for as Mr. Murthwaite is a slow mover, peradventure it may take some Time to conduct him to Sutton.

Yours truly, R. B. R.

P.S.—No Home, Place, or Wife hath the same charms for Me that my own Has. I never touched my Watch since I left Home, and it was with Perth Town clock to a moment.

The hand of death had now made a gap in the family circle, Mrs. Richard Riland, senior, died in 1779. Her last scrap of writing is very characteristic.

“I will and desire that at my Death my Goods may be appraised, and that Mrs Riland at ye parsonage may have the first choice of them at the appraised price, and then Mrs Riland at Birm may have her choice upon the same terms, the remainder to be sold, and the money to be equally divided between my two Daughters in law, I have already left my plate and linen to my son John ; my son Richard had his share before.

I desire my wines and spirituous liquors may be equally divided between my two Sons, this is my Will.

MARY RILAND.

P.S.—It is a pity my two best feather Beds should be sold.”

The housewifely instinct was dominant to the last, and it is to be hoped that her injunctions were obeyed, and her wishes respected.

In 1784 another change took place ; Miss Lydia, now three and twenty, married on the 30th September a young Birmingham attorney, about five years her senior, who had lately been engaged in some of the Sutton Corporation affairs, and used to keep a smart coat over at Sutton at a friend's house (as the old man enjoyed telling in after years) “to go courting at the Rectory.” Mr. Bedford's family had lived in respectability at Droitwich for many years, and by marriage with the heiress of a family named Yeend had become possessed of the Abbey estate at Pershore, which, however, descended to Mr. Bedford's younger brother John, the elder, William, preferring to settle in Warwickshire. A letter from one brother to the other on the occasion of the wedding has been preserved.

“Dear Brother,—I have the happiness to inform you that I yesterday entered into the holy state of matrimony with one, whose sweetness of manners and disposition not only ensures me every joy I can wish for, but merits the affection of all who know her. Amidst the various vicissitudes of fortune that has befallen us,

I cannot but with the sincerest gratitude acknowledge the kind dispensations of providence in so amply rewarding us in an instance so peculiarly essential to our happiness and welfare ; when I look round the whole circle of my acquaintance I can find none whose prospects bid fairer than ours. I beg leave to express our united wishes to promote and establish a sincere and affectionate attachment in our families, and I have no doubt but from the goodness of my Sister's disposition which I have experienced in every instance, that tender regard will soon unite them in a sisterly love for each other ; as to ourselves any observation on that point is quite superfluous.

My Wife and Sister unite with me in Love to you and yours.

I remain dr Brother

Very affectionately yrs

WM. BEDFORD.

Birm Oct 1st 1784.

We promise ourselves the pleasure of seeing you at Pershore on Tuesday the 12th Inst, and shd be glad if you and your wife will dine with us at Wor'ster on that day If any thing shd happen to prevent our coming I will inform you."

Three years after this, Mr. Bedford writes to announce the birth of a fine girl, whose vocal powers indicated that "in time she may become a second Billington for ought I know." This lady, Emma Mary, became the wife of Dr. Charles Henry Parry, of Bath,* brother of Sir Edward Parry, R.N., the Arctic explorer, and having had a large family of daughters, who all died before her, expired in London in 1872. Mr. Bedford had two other daughters, of whom Sophia died unmarried, and Maria married Francis Holles Brandram,

* "It is not generally known that S. T. Coleridge's visit to the Hartz Forest (1798-9) took place under rather agreeable circumstances. His companions were three Englishmen, whose acquaintance he had formed at Gottingen, Dr. Parry, of Bath, Dr. Carlyon, of Truro, and Capt. Parry, the navigator."—"Coleridge Abroad," by W. Hazlitt. Dr. Parry was the author of several reviews and pamphlets, and of a more important work, entitled "The Parliaments and Councils of England," published by Murray in 1839.

merchant, of London, by whom she had three surviving daughters ; Frances, widow of the Rev. Aretas Akers, and mother of Aretas Akers Douglas, of Chilston, Kent ; Elonora, widow of Donald McLennan, M.A., barrister-at-law ; and Emilie, wife of the Rev. Alfred Wigan, of Luddesdown, Kent, by whom she has a large family. Mrs. Brandram died in 1874.

Mr. Bedford had also one son, born in 1794, William Riland, who became rector of Sutton Coldfield.

The house in Birmingham, where Mr. Bedford then resided, was at the upper end of New Street, immediately opposite the place where the Society of Arts building now stands, then open country, and with a garden running down to Pinfold Street. He removed from thence to Birches Green, Erdington, and finally to Batheaston, where he died in 1832. The Birmingham property was sold at his death.

In 1786 Mrs. Bedford and her mother were together for some time, while Mr. Riland and his younger daughter—Phœbe—took a tour in the north, described with great animation in the letters to and from home.

“Sheffield, Thursday Eve,

August 3rd.

Dr Mrs. R.,—By the Divine Blessing we are very safe here. The Coach stood at the Ton's door at Sutton, and in getting in we found 3 of Mr. Westley's Preachers (one an Elder of some Authority), and a 4th on the Top, well behaved men, with whom we had no disputings, but a good deal of agreeable conversation. Three of them were going to fix in Scotland, where 2 of them had never been before. We arrived here a little past VII., and, on alighting from the Coach, Mr. Hudson, of Huddersfield, came out to us from the Barr. He is on one of his circuits, & all his family are well, except one daughter, who is going to Scarborough. We dined at Kendall's Inn, and at Chesterfield saw the Street full of Mourning Coaches and Men with Hat bands for the funeral of Mr. Clark, son or brother of Godfrey Bagnall Clark, Esq., late Member for Derbyshire. We heard of Miss Topp, who is very well.

Phœbus does not seem any the worse for her Day's Work, so we have taken places for Leeds Tomorrow Morn at $\frac{1}{2}$ past VII., & are just retiring to sleep. I consulted her whether it was too early to start again, & she had no objection at all. We send our love & Duty. Mr. Hudson would fain have had us gone to Huddesfield, but Carlisle is our object for Sunday, so we declined it. Our Coach only carried 5, which occasioned one to ride at Top. The Elder Minister had been once, he said, with my Brother.

Believe of me as to affection in remembrance of you all you would wish to Believe,

R. B. R.

P. R."

"Leeds, August 4th, 1786.

Dear Mrs. B.,—After fine soft Repose at Sheffield last night, this morning we entered the Diligence at VIII. o'clock, and proceeded through Barnsley and Wakefield to this place in great safety. Two of the Wesleyans went off another Road; the two others proceeded with us, one in the Dilly, another on the Box with the coachman, and now they are gone to somewhere in the neighbourhood of this Town. I know not where, civil and harmless Men, but Phœbus has had no female company yet. We now say to one another—'where and when next.'

I had not alighted here two minutes before one said, there's Mr. Riland. The old Remark of behaving well everywhere is never out of Place.

Crops quite ready for the sickle, but they have been more burnt up & shorter of Hay than we have. We are not at the Inn where Wm. Marigold found the watch, but at another, and are alone very placid, and resting ourselves in the parlour. They have not the best of Inks as you see. Having sat quiet & rested ourselves some hours, we have now taken Places and are going on towards Carlisle; I having promised Phœbus, as I told you, that whenever she tires I stop, and she has promised to tell me when that is.

We said to one another at Noon to-day:—'Now the Gentlemen are dining at Sutton Book Club, and Lydia with you.'

R. B. R.

P. R."

“August 5th, 1786.

Dear Mr. Riland,—According to your request I write to you at Edinburgh and have the happiness of telling you that I am tolerably well, & have my daughter Bedford with me who stays until to-morrow evening, & on Monday I am to go to her. The day you went I was very low, & thought a separation from you so great a distance was rather *too much*, but I hope I have in some measure got over it & shall be good for the future. Sister Ashby came just after I had dined & is returned this morning to Birrmm to meet the coach, they finished the business at last after much talking about it, and my Sister went to Coleshill yesterday where she has taken Lodgings, as she could not get any place agreeable to board at. This afternoon my daughter & self drank tea at Mr. Inge's at Lichfield, where I hear of Miss Riland being gone to Scotland with a man old enough to be her father, I say let her go, & I shall be ready to receive her at her return. Give my very kind love to it. The Chair is to come on Monday, it is very neat indeed but you will wonder at the price, as I did when I heard it to-day, & the Caps of the wheels not those which Phebe & I saw, but like those of our chaise. I was likely to have a great job upon my hands, for the Pantry wall & the brewhouse wall next the garden have given way so much that Farnell has been to prop the former to-day, & he says the other must be taken down very soon & rebuilt, so I had better get a breif for it against your return & put the money into Mr. Cobbs hands. Heep's Wife is rather better. Humphrey Hill's Son came to-night for a Licence; what a pity I could not grant it. I do not know who the Lady is.

Fletchers &c. breakfasted here yesterday & I sat down with 5 others to supper last night, so you see I have company in your absence. We were 14 at tea at Mr. Inge's to-day. W. & C. Inge, Mr. Greseley & Sisters were of the party, all the Falconers, Widow Inge &c. & we were drove home very well by one; very good. Proudman goes to the wake to-morrow to stay 2 nights.

Mr. and Mrs. B. unite in kind love to you both with your affectionate

M. R.

P.S.—I want to know how you both bear travelling. Pray take care to go over the water when the wind is not too high, if you go at all.”

“Sunday Morning.

The post has not yet been so good to bring me any letter from my dear friends in the North yet. I am pretty well this morning. Mrs. Richards of Birrmm is still very dangerously ill. My dear Lyd is very pretty to me.”

“ Carlisle, Monday, Aug. 7th, 1786.

Dear Mrs. R.,—On Friday, after I had put my Letter into the office at Leeds, Phebus and I sett off in the Stage Coach about VII. o'clock in Evening, and arrived at Harrogate (15 miles) about X. But I had better tell you first that all is happy and well with us, and then you may amuse yourself with Particulars with more comfort. We were 6 passengers to Harrogate, where we dropped 2 of them, a Mrs. Purslow and her Daughter, from London, who were going there. And from thence, after a Stay of 10 Minutes, we sett off and went all Night and until $\frac{1}{2}$ past X. the ensuing Night without any Intermission, and then arrived at this City; it did not seem to affect Phebus in the least, nor is she a Bit the worse for it since. We parted with two more passengers at Catterick, and then we proceeded alone. Our Track was Harrogate, Rippon, Catterick, Greta Bridge, Bowes, Brough, Appleby, Penrith, Carlisle, & the many hours taken up in the passage was from no Impediments other than Hill & Dale, and a heavy Coach & Length of Way. At Harrogate, as the Coach pass'd by the Ball Rooms, We saw Them dancing through the windows, which is all we know of the Place, except that it is not full. The darkness was never so much as to be dangerous. At Brough there was very loud thunder, with violent Rain, and it was dark (as you may suppose) before we got near Carlisle. Yesterday we were twice at the Cathedral, & I spoke to a Dr. Hudson whom I had known before, but He did not ask Me to Dinner, being an old Bachelor. I believe He was afraid of my Daughter.

Our travelling Fatigue produced most uninterrupted sleep after it, and at present all our Complaints seem to be gone to Jamaica.

We are now going towards Moffatt (but first to Gretna Green), & I hope some time or another you will hear from us again. In the meantime I am, &c.,

R. B. R.”

“ Dear Mother,—You will be surprised to hear of our travelling all Night, I had not my Clothes off for 36 Hours, but am not the worse for it in the least, really not at all *tired*, only *very* sleepy on Saturday Night; I cannot find my work-Bag, if I have left it at home I shall be at a loss.

I am, your dutiful Daughter,

P. R.

We drank tea at Mr. Wilson's yesterday; very civil people.

Pray order a strike of Barley to Mr. Blick's for His Fowls.”

“Glasgow, Thur., Aug. 10th, 1786.

Dear Mrs. Riland,—It is with some difficulty that I find an Half Hour to write to you, and that you will say is hard. It is not that I think it an irksome Employment, but Phebus & I are engaged from Morning to Night in moving about or sitting still. We are both perfectly well, & our journey agrees with us much, and we have hitherto been surrounded with Blessings on every side, & I trust by the Divine Bounty it will continue so. The last letter from me was put in at Carlisle, from whence we came to Gretna Green, & I introduced Phebus into the Parlour, where a Man in black would soon have attended had he been sent for. We drank the Waters at Moffatt for a Day & a Half, and last night came to this Place.

We arrived here late, for we thought to have slept at Hamilton, eleven miles short of it, but the Duke had made some races there, which filled the only Inn top full & to run over, so we were obliged to grope our way hither in the Dark, but Night or Day is all one to Phebe, who is equal to anything of that sort. Two of the chief Inns refused us last night, but we succeeded at a private house & slept very agreeably. It is Hamilton Races, which have also filled this Town.

This Morn I stepped into a Coffee House & had scarce sat down before a Gent addressed me & told me He lived at Wellingbro, & enquired after Mrs. Ash. He also told me that his Son-in-Law lived in the House where Mrs. Ash did. I need not tell you it was Mr. Corrie, Senr. He introduced us to Dr. Anderson, one of the University Professors, who has just been shewing us all the curiosities of College, & we shall dine with Mr. Corrie and Him.

Our View of some Pictures, Library, Roman Altars, &c., is somewhat made less perfect by an exceeding dark & misty Day, but we do very well, & hope to see soon what we shall like better than all—a letter from you at Edinbro. Had I only seen what Dr. Anderson hath shewed me I should not regret my journey to Scotland, & am doubly happy in seeing it agree so well with Phebus, and truly thank Him who is the same God in all Places for these & all other His great Mercies.

At Moffatt I met with two of the acquaintance I had seen there before—a Doctor Nesbitt and Mr. Gordon. The former was going to Edinbro, & would have much persuaded us to have gone with Him, but our intended Scheme being to go first to Glasgow, we declined it. I suppose my next will be from thence. You would have smiled much to have seen the Ladies talking to Phebe in such broad Scotch.

Friday, August 11th.—We are very well this morning & are going off towards the Scotch Capital, but do not yet know whether we shall not go first to Perth before we go thither, as I promised Phebus before we came from Home that she should see Perth. I quære whether it will not not save Time and Expence to go thither now previous to going to Edinbro. I am considering Roads, &c. for that purpose.

Last Night the said Phebus saw some Reels, &c., & was importuned to dance Herself, but declined it. I there met with a military man of the name of Wright, who said He was Cousin to Mr. Wright, of Curdworth. My Child hath as clean a Bed here as you would wish to set your eyes on, & is waited upon by a bare-legg'd Maid, who moves about like a silent Spright, but when she says anything we want an Interpreter.

We remain much yours in all affection,

R. B. R.

P. R.

P.S.—Pray ask Willm. Marigold whether the Langley Mill wants Water, & tell him He must not let the Bolt be in my absence ; and let Him grease the Wheel of the new Chair often.”

“ August 10th.

My Dear Mr. R.,—Your frequent letters give me the greatest satisfaction to hear of your health & safety, & also of the health and *strength* added to the safety of my dear Phebus. I hope it considers that it has time enough, & that it need not hurry itself so as if it had been in fear of Mother overtaking it before it reached the land of Matrimony. The letter from Carlisle reached Sutton late last night & me this morning by which I perceive there are females to be found at last tho you have met with none the first two days. I am now at Birmm where we are all well & I go out in my *own Chair* with Mrs. B. by my side very often. I like the Chair very well indeed, it is perfectly easy and very neat, I should say *smart*, for the maker of it could not help adding a little finery to the harness which is quite oughy. However it must go as it is I believe, or leave the leather full of holes which would be the case was we to take off certain bits of silver stuck here & there. I only object to the price which is 34 pounds, the lowest that Mrs. Butler & her servant say they can afford it for. I am dowbtfull whether to pay it before your return on that account. I wish I could get a letter from you about it. May be

you will give me a line by return of post from Edinburgh if you are there when this reaches that place, as I said I would pay the money in about a fortnight when I had tried it to see if anything was wanting. This morning we called upon Mrs. Walter but found her gone to Scaigness, so drove on to Perry where we saw three of the very sweetest babes that can be seen, so well behaved & so nice in all respects. I was so delighted with them, & Mrs. G. said she would bring the two eldest to see me at Sutton soon. Yesterday we were calling upon Mrs. Elton who is very poorly indeed, so that had you staid untill the 14th Mr. Elton could not have left her. He is now gone with his Son to school & does not know of her illness which seized her last Saturday, a pain in her side, short breathing, &c., &c. All was well at home yesterday tho' I have not heard to-day tho' I saw Mr. Blick, so I suppose it was. A letter from Si Taylor say they mean to visit us after going from Cheltenham to Bath (fine goings on), so we must be glad to see them. I intend to answer his letter which was to me sent by Mr. Duncumb. Mrs. D. is better. Poor Mr. Dolben of Thingdon is insane (how sad that is). We go to Bordsley to-morrow to visit the Sheriffs Lady. My daughter & Mr. Bedford desire to join me in very kindest love.

I am ever yrs,

M. R."

"My dear Phebus,—I thank you very sincerely for your few lines which afford me great comfort by informing me you bear your journey so very stoutly. I only think you do not stay long enough at any place to see it, for one day only to rest at Carlisle was little after so much fatigue. Pray take care to speak in time *before you are tired* & on yr return take *more* time, if not I shall expect you back in a week more. I do not know anything of the Work bag which if not found must be a sad loss to you. If it is left it is in your room. I have only to hope you got some of the contents at some shop on the road. Sunday evening when Mr. B. sets out for Warwick yr sister and self intend going to Sutton, and Mr. Bedford goes with Mr. Galton to-morrow seven night *you know where* for ten days or a fortnight, so his wife is to be left under my care. The watch says past 11 o'clock so I must to bed, but first I send my very kind love to P. yrs

M. R.

Call at the post office at Newcastle east I through a letter by chance to catch you there. I put this in the post office at 6 on Friday morning after a good night."

“Perth, August 12th, 1786.

Dear Mother,—I have the satisfaction to inform you that we arrived very safe here this Evening, & have met with nothing but Blessings in the course of our Journey, which I hope you have heard by my Father's Letters, & which I am very thankfull for. As to myself I am extremely well both in Health & Spirits; have never been the least sick, or had anything the matter with me since I left Home, and have met with very sufficient Accommodations all the way, I mean as to clean beds and wholesome Food. The Elegancies of Life I did not expect to find in the little Towns in Scotland, but even those we have been provided with in the principal Places, & are now in as handsome a Room as you would wish to sit in, with a good Fire, which is a comfortable thing, as it rains very much, & has done most part of the day. We intend to take up our Abode here untill Monday & then proceed on our Journey, of which you shall hear in future Letters. I have only to hope you have been as well as we since our parting, and that we shall shortly meet again in Health and Comfort is the wish & Prayer of your dutiful & affectionate Daughter,

P. RILAND.

I beg my best love to my Sister and Mr. Bedford; I suppose you see them often? and Compts. to all Friends who are so obliging as to enquire after me. I have found my Work-bag. Our last letter was written from Glasgow.

My Father writes to Mr. Elton by this Post.”

“Perth, Wednesday, August 16th, 1786.

Dear Mrs. R.,—Phebus Letter was from this Place dated Saturday 12th. I hope you have had it. Since that Phebus & I have been at Dunkeld, & have had every Blessing of Health safety &c. as before. I watch the sweet Phebus closely, & believe it is not overdone or hurt at all, but seems uncommonly well, without complaint I can see or hear of, of any kind whatever. The heaviest Burdens seem to be my callings in a Morning, which are sometimes cruel: but I do assure you I watch Her as to Fatigue &c. not to overdo it. I believe it will long remember Scotland with Pleasure. We are now hastening to Edinbro, every step towards which I think very long, because I am so impatient to hear of your welfare at Home, & we have delayed going thither longer than I expected. We conclude a letter from you is now lying at Maxwell & Cheaps. Last Sunday I preached in this City for the Episcopal Minister, & Phebus drank tea with his wife. We expect to arrive at Edinbro to-morrow night. As Phebus was reading a List of Things to be sold at a door in a lousy Village we stopt at, one Article was ‘Ointments for those that claw,’ and it so happened that Phebe was that moment

clawing, for between you and I one night (tho in very clean Beds) we were a little bit by some Buggibus & P. was *clawing* one of those wounds. Those wounds are now all healed except that Phebus hath about one Bite every Night which she guesses is from one who is so kind as to travel about with her as an attendant upon Her Person. I tell her if she takes Buggs Home you will sew her up in a Sack & cast Her into the Pond. As we are just setting out, you will excuse any more at present but our best Love and Duty.

R. B. R.

P. R.

P.S.—Please to direct your next letter to be left at the Post Office Newcastle upon Tyne.”

“Dear Wife,—The moment after we came to Edinbro I flew to Maxwell & Cheapes, where I found yr Affectionate obliging Letter, dated Aug. 5th & 6th. I am thankful that our absence is not *quite* too much for you. Phebus dream’t last night at Kinross that you was quite undone for us, and had sent Lydia who was come to fetch us Home, & it was only calling it up to go in a Stage Coach that broke its dream. My last was from Perth, dated yesterday, & tho’ I wrote but yesterday, the coming here safe, & she receiving your letter, are what I cannot but take Notice of tho’ by writing again so soon. My daughter seems astonished at the Originality of Edinbro. I do assure you I would not go to the Black Bull in the Pleasants, where the Aberdeen Coach in which we came put up, but I have got it *into the New Town*, where it has as clean an Apartment & a Parlour to sit in as you would wish to set your Foot in. It is your Dote, and you would not have it choaked with Dirt, You know we implicitly complied with yr Intimation of not coming over the Water when rough, for I think you might have thrown Dice upon the Surface of it, & both Phebus & I inhaled the old air of old Ocean much to our Satisfaction. It was not so still yesterday, for then she was boating upon Loch Leven, & the Waves were rather rough, so I returned to Shore. It appears that you may trust me, for I remember at the Instant that I was to *take care of Her*. As for Health and Spirits, she seems to have an uninterrupted share of them without being flighty, & has never been Liverpool once though tired sometimes. I hope the Brewhouse wall will stand till I come home to take the Trouble of it off your Hands. A new Building built, “built in my Time.” I beg my dear that if paying for the Chair (I do not grudge it at all), or anything else makes you short of money, that you would go to the Bank, & They will let you have it immediately. Though you have had no letter when you wrote, I fancy you have had some since, or ought to have. I am amazed to hear of Heap’s Wife being better! Phebe is very sorry for Mrs. Ricards, and very glad that Lydia is pretty

to you. I think we have now lost our Companions—the Buggs. To-morrow we shall probably see after the Christies. Whoever I meet with, you may depend upon it, my own Home & Wife are what I shall come to with new Pleasure, and that God will give us the Blessing to do so is the Wish and Prayer of Yrs Truly,

R. B. R.

Edinbro, Thursday, August 17th, 1786.

P. R.

Remember me to Mr. Blick & My Son & Dr.”

“Canwell, August 17th, 1786.

My dear Mr. Riland,—Your very kind letters from Carlisle and Glasgow have given me the highest satisfaction; the former reached Sutton last Friday night, the latter came to me from thence this morn’g. I am very thankfull that it has pleased the Almighty God to protect you & my dear Phebe so far on your journey, and will hope for a continuance of his mercies.

I came here yesterday, and am to stay untill Friday Even’g, then home, & on Saturday am to fetch my daughter B. to Sutton, her husband being to go with Mr. Galton to meet Mr. S. on the sea-coast somewhere, & will be out 10 days or a fortnight, so we mean to spend our time together. We are both pretty well, & I really wonder at Phebus’s Travelling, & should like to see her amongst the Scotch Ladies & hear her converse with them. It was very pretty to meet Mr. Corrie, as by being introduced to Dr. Anderson you saw more of Glasgow & its curiosities. I hope you have seen Dunkeld before this time, & pray do not hurry yourselves for all is well at home, and I remember’d to have the Chair greased, but it has rained so every day this last week that I have only used it three times in all. Miss I. Lawley takes this to Lichfield, so it must be short, but I have time to send my love my kind Love to both, and believe me yrs,

M. R.

P. S.—Sr. Robt. Lawley is gone to town with the high Sheriffe to present an address, we suppose the Esqr. of Bordesley will return Sr. John.*

I am in high favour at West Bromwich, & recv’d an invitation to dine there on Friday next—the Christening, but was engaged to this Place.

The family here desire their best Compts. Mrs. Allcock was taken with a Parylitick stroke on Sunday & lies very much disabled, but is sencible, tho’ I think will scarce recover the use of her side again. Old Mrs. Kempson is deceased, & Hip’s Wife. Bayliss is likely to die, the young man who has been ill so long.

Pray tell P. how dearly I love her.”

* John Taylor, Esqr., High Sheriff of Warwickshire, 1786.

“ Edinbro, Saturday, Aug. 19th, 1786.

Dear Wife,—Yesterday brought us your second kind letter much to our Satisfaction, & we read it with true Delight, as telling us the Doings of Them we love best. I am truly glad the Chair is agreeable to you, and request that you would pay for it if you please immediately, for then it will go easier after it is paid for, & I doubt nothing will be gained by Delay. Whatever inroads this Payment makes upon your poor Purse, you must repair by Application to Taylor & Lloyd, as I mentioned in my last from this Place; and they will keep you from coming to Poverty. But what Oughty Harness! You, who when you was younger, went with plain brass Furniture. But it would be a Pity now to make the leather of the harness full of Holes. If it contributes to your Health or Satisfaction I do not grudge one Farthing of the Money. So pray pay for it & there's an End. I hope it will do some good to the Widow Butler. There is another thing I do not grudge, viz., the Expence of this Journey, for as far as I can discern it hath visibly mended Phebus's Health. She apparently is very strong & quite *even spirited*, & I am sure eats, drinks, and sleeps well, for it was in a profound sleep at $\frac{1}{2}$ past VII. this morn. tho' it went to bed before X. last night. This Morn it hath been out upon the Firth of Forth, & sailed round a 20 Gun Man of War that lies there—a sweet steady Gale, & a little freshish, it said it never saw prettier sailing in its life. I believe it has laid in quite a Stock of Entertainment in the Memory Way: A Place in the Highlands called Ossians Hall it shall never forget while it has Breath! I don't owe Maxwell & Cheape a Shilling. Cheap was very civil & allowed me the Discount, calling it *Prompt* Payment, tho' the Goods were sent in April and the Payment made in August, but He never once asked me to go to His House, or to drink a Glass of Wine. However. My own Wine in my own Cellar is my own, & by paying for it I am sure I am got rid of a Burden, for I had the £60 to carry all thro' the Highlands, & I once was in real Tribulation, for I did think I had dropped & lost it all, & also what other money I had with me, but found it again. I did not tell Phebe of this.

Poor Mr. Elton! * My letter to Him asking Him to meet us in returning will be of no use as he cannot leave his Wife. We must have the Taylors in October. The beginning of September we hope to be at Home. This Place detains us longer than other Places of lesser Note. You cannot think how comfortably we are situated, Phebus's Room within mine up one Pair of Stairs,

* The Rev. Sir Abraham Elton, born 1755; succeeded as second Bart., 1790; died 1842; m. 1776, Elizabeth, d. of Sir John Durbin.

and no Buggs. It hath not walked down ever a one of the *Wynds* yet, and I believe will decline doing so, your admonition of its speaking "*before it was tired,*" became a subject of Merriment (you know it is a saucy Puss), and so it said it was not tired then, and *therefore* must not go to Holyrood House. But you will manage it when it comes home again.

Believe me to be as usual, with Thanks to my Dear Lydia for being good to you,

R. B. R."

"Sutton, Aug. 21st.

My Dear Mr. R.,—Altho' I have wrote one letter to you at Newcastle before, I cannot help sending another to thank you for the many kind letters I have received from you & my dear Phebus; the last came from Edinburgh in four days, I having received it this evening, for having drank tea at Mr. Duncumb's, in returning we followed the post & stopped for letters, & letters of comfort indeed they are to hear of your safety and that of my dear child. I have also the happiness of telling you all continues well at home, & I am made pretty good by hearing so often from you. My daughter B. is at work by me very well, her husband with the Stratfords in Town, in his road to Mr. Scott. No water wanted at the Mill, for alas we have daily rain, tho' no great deal; but it hinders the harvest. We have tythed none yet I believe. Our love to you both concludes me yrs,

M. R.

P.S.—Our Sheriffe is returned Mr. T.

I go with Mrs. B. to Birm. to-morrow for two or three days."

A few more family letters which possess features worthy of notice may now be introduced without further preface.

"To William Bedford, Esqr.

Dear Sir,—What one is particularly desirous not to do, one is sometimes fearful & anxious least one should have done. When my last letter was written & sealed I then feared the Expressions in it might convey some Ideas that I rather wished not to be addressed by you in that mode which Mr. White's affair gave origin to. By yours to Day I apprehend it was so construed. The shortest therefore & most explicit way of removing all Doubts will be to say at once—That I then did and always shall receive with Pleasure & Satisfaction from you

any Information you give me or any wishes you express to me respecting any Gentlemen who are your acquaintance or with whom you have any Connexion. I shall never think they come out of Place or Time, and I will pay to Them every attention you could wish ; and you would wish me to regard Them [I know] just so much and no more as a magistrate [the very Essence of whose proper character is to be an unbiassed righteous judge without one atom of Favour or Affection] ought to regard Them. Pray therefore in future indulge every one who wishes you to apply to me, if by so doing it will oblige Them, and depend upon my always being truly yours sincerely and affectionately,

R. B. RILAND.

March 8th, 1786.

P.S.—I hope to dine with you To-morrow at 11, and shall receive Mr. Stratford with much Pleasure.”

“Green Fields, Aug. 25th, /87.

Dear Sir,—I am to acknowledge the rect. of your very polite and Friendly Letters inclosing a Birmingham Bank bill for £44, the money I paid for the Horses & ten shillings which I paid John for his Expences. The Venerable Oxfeeder returns His Hearty thanks for the Guinea you were so good to present him with, and thinks it was too much ; he arrived at Green Fields on Friday Night abt. twelve o'clock, and very soon awoke most of the Family with his sweet pipe. He told us the next Morning he was not much tired, but if we may judge from his putting his feet down, his was walking on fire. I am very glad to hear Severn and Sprightly are approved off, and hope they will behave in such a Manner as their predecessors did before them, and that they may bring their Master and Mistress to Green Fields. Maria and Myself were glad to hear you had so good a Journey, and that all the Sutton Family are well and that the week's entertainmt. at Birmingham was likely to answer your Expectations. Mrs. Dunston came to us Monday, and is in good Spirits and by no means a restraint on Maria's engagement. You'll please to make our proper respects to the Ladies, and accept the same yourself.

Believe Me to be

Your Most obt. Hble. Servt.,

JOHN MADDOCK.

Mrs. Dunston desires
Compls. Maria will
write soon.”

Wichford, July 20th, 1787.

Dear Mr. R.,—Well knowing how agreeable it is to hear from an absent friend, I cannot help giving you another letter, tho' I have only to say we are all well. Rain has prevented our taking a walk every day since we came, so that we have not been able to go even into the shrubbery, but yesterday the Chaise took us to Weston, where we walk'd in the garden as long as we pleas'd, but sad to see it left by the owner, & overgrown with weeds. The house has been a very comfortable one, & wou'd be so again could the owner return to it. Mrs. & Miss Willes are to drink Tea here to-day, he is not at home. Before you come here, pray ask if Miss Taylor, at Mrs. Webs, has any letter to send by you. Phebe joins me in love, & the family send Compts.

I am yrs,

M. R."

P.S.—I am almost starved, tho' we have fire every evening."

Mrs. Riland was visiting the Rev. James Hastings, curate to the Rev. Charles Willes, at Wichford, near Shipston-on-Stour. Mr. Hastings, who was father of Sir Charles Hastings, and grandfather of Mr. G. W. Hastings, M.P., Chairman of Worcestershire Sessions, was Warden of Sutton Coldfield in 1784, where, in 1782, was born his daughter, Joanna, who died at Malvern three years ago.

Weston House, Shipston-on-Stour, was purchased from the Sheldon family by George Philips, Esq., of Sedgeley, who was afterwards created a baronet.

"From Henry Sacheverell Homer (Rector of Birdingbury, d. 1791)

To Richard Bisse Riland.

Dear Sir,—You'll probably have observ'd in the Coventry or Birmm. Papers an Advertisement of proposals for publishing by Subscription the death of Amnon, a Poem by Elizabeth Hands, of Bourton. She has been known by the Name of Daphne, under wch signature some of her performances were some years ago published in Jopson's Paper, but She had not & perhaps wd. not have obtained any other poetical name if a Son* of mine, who has submitted some of his own

* Philip Bracebridge Homer, one of the Assistant Masters of Rugby School, d. 1838.

poetical performances to the publick, had not been led by curiosity to desire a sight of her poetry, wch He obtained, and being himself much pleased with this particular Poem, wch is her principal performance, shew'd it to Dr. James* & the other Criticks at Rugby, who were unanimously of opinion that its Merit entitled it to be published by Subscription. wch they immediately open'd, and it has had for the time a rapid progress in this Neighbourhood. As the business originated from my Son before alluded to, and whose name is mention'd in the proposals, I wish to give it all the effect I can, and I shall take it as a favour if you'll interest yrself in procuring the names of some of the respectable Inhabitants of Sutton, to whom if you please you may mention it, as a request of mine, to those especially in whose memory I may be suppos'd yet to live. There has been an extract from the poem in the Coventry Paper, and the same has been or will be in the Birmingham, so that you will from thence have one specimen of the style & spirit of it. But I take the liberty of troubling *you* with another & of mentioning to you that She was a Servt for many years in the family of the late Mr. Huddesford & of Miss Huddesford, of Allesly, his Daughter, the latter of whom speaks of her as a Servant in Terms of the highest commendation. Her subject I am afraid will not be a popular one, but the manner in wch She has decorated it will in my opinion get over the prejudices wch it may have to struggle with. I am with respectful Complimts to Mrs. Riland & family, Dear Sir,

Yr. faithful & most Obedt.

humble Servt.,

HENRY HOMER.

4th Novr., 1788.

I enclose 8 Rects of 5s. for large Paper No. 231 to 238)
8 Do. of 3s. for small Paper No. 531 to 538) inclusive."

"Amnon, after having comforted himself with the hope that death would soon put an end to his misery, expresses his fear about the renewal of his strength":—

"Methinks I feel my strength renew'd,—'tis so.
Struggling with life, I sigh for death in vain.
Again my passions rise, again rebel.
I still must live, and live in misery ;

* Thos. James, D.D., Head Master of Rugby School, 1778-1794 ; Prebend of Worcester and Rector of Harvington, d. 1804.

But I've a thought that stings me yet more deep.
 Doubtless some happy rival will be crown'd
 With Tamar's love. O tort'ring thought, must I
 Behold her deck'd in bridal robes to bless
 A rival ; 'tis too much ; the trial is
 Too great to bear. I'll from the Court retire ;
 My gay companions now are irksome grown,
 And all my pleasures are transformed to pains.
 My sister's cheering smiles, that once convey'd
 Soft raptures to my heart, awake such pangs
 As I can scarce endure. Again I feel
 My spirits sink : O welcome fading sickness,
 I'll cherish thee and aid thee with my sighs
 To still this heart that now rebellious beats
 Against my reason's strongest argument.
 Tho' Tamar's beauty prompts my warmest wish,
 Her fairer wishes keep me still in awe,
 Forbidding my aspiring love to soar.
 With sweet simplicity she smiles, secure
 In innocence, commanding my respect ;
 And this command I must, I will obey ;
 But fly her presence, lest some hapless smile
 In flame my soul, and I in passion's phrenzy
 Should act against my final resolution,
 To bear my grief untold and secret pine,
 Till sadd'ning sorrow sinks me to the grave."

The next letter relates to some literary discussion which his friend,
 Mr. Inge, and his sister had started on a visit to Sutton :—

" For thee, James Boswell, may the hand of Fate "
 " Arrest thy goose quill and Confine thy Prate ; "
 " Thy egotisms the world disgusted hears,"
 " Then load with vanities no more our ears,"
 " Like some lone Puppy yelping all night long,"
 " That tires the very echoes with his tongue."

“ Yet should it lie beyond the pow’rs of Fate ”
 “ To stop thy Pen, and Still thy darling Prate,”
 “ Oh ! be in solitude to live thy luck ”
 “ A chattering Magpie on the Isle of Muck.”

“ Revd Sir,—The above is a faithful extract from a Poem written by Peter Pindar, Esqr., and call’d Bozzi & Piozzi, or the British Biographers, a Town Eclogue.

As Witness our hands

W. INGE, Can. Res., Lich.
 N. LISTER.

I, Elizabeth Inge, do extremely rejoice in the above little Victory, as it gives me an opportunity of returning my best thanks to Mr., Mrs., and Miss Riland for their very polite reception of Myself, my Brother, and Friend, on Friday last, and at the same time I confess I am not a little proud of so good an opportunity of telling Mr. Riland that I am his much oblig’d & obedient Servt,

E. INGE.

Close, Lichfield, Febry 5th (1788).

I have just seen Miss Lister, who begs her best Compts & thanks may be added.”

“ Green fields, June 11th (1788).

Dear Uncle,—We received your kind letter, & think ourselves infinitely obliged by your friendly invitation to Sutton. My Cousin desires me to say that if I had not wrote *he* should to have expressed his best thanks for your very friendly wish to see them in Warwickshire, and they desire me to say that if it is *perfectly* convenient to you, they will give themselves the pleasure of passing a couple of nights at Sutton about the 29th or 30th of this month.

You will be very much surprised to hear that the whole body of St. Chad’s Church, with half the Tower, *fell in* yesterday morning at 4 o’clock, immediately on the ceasing of the chimes. One of the bells is broke to pieces, and the rest are covered with ruins. Providentially no lives were lost, and the inhabitants cannot be too thankful that it did not happen during service time, at the late funeral of Captn. Kemble, or when the Judges & the whole country were assembled at Church. The report of it was heard at Alscott, a village on this road of about a mile and a half from hence—none of the family here were awake at the time, but many

heard it on Cotton Hill. From our windows we *now* see *part* of a flat tower, the top & more than half the tower being quite demolished. A number of people were employ'd yesterday in getting all the *lead* they could find & throwing it over the wall, while others were busy in carrying it away. You will likewise be sorry to hear that poor Major Grant, who for some time past has been rather disorder'd in his constitution, threw himself out of a two pairs of stairs window on tuesday morning last, at his own house, into the Gateway, when he broke a leg and an arm, and died yesterday morning. I am extremely concerned for his daughters, who are very amiable young women, the eldest of whom is married to Gen. Cuyler, & is now at home on a visit to her friends previous to going abroad, & a very melancholy one will it be. He had a *few days* before sent up his resignation, intending to immediately quit the Army, but I am grieved to think that as there was not time to have it disposed of, that four thousand two hundred pounds will be lost to the family.

I have hitherto given you but a melancholy history of what is going forward, though am myself perfectly happy in the society of my Dear friends. They made Malvern in their road hither, which detained them till *friday* evening instead of *thursday*, but they arrived in good health and spirits, after a very safe and pleasant Journey. They both desire, with Mrs. Green, & my good man to present their best Respects to yourself and family, to whom you will add the kind wishes of, Dr. Uncle, your affectionate Niece,

MARIA MADDOCK.

P.S.—Should you see my Mother soon you will be so good to tell her I am well & desire my love to her.”

“Dear Sir,—I am much obliged by your kind enquiry after my Niece, and can with pleasure inform you she is much better, tho' the swelling has not entirely left her Leg. I hope your good Lady is recover'd. We have had much disturbance since you left us with our Mad Neighbour. He has purchased a Bear and carried on a roaring trade for a week in baiting of the poor Animal every day. He begins now to subside, & we hope for a little peace and quietness. I wish I cou'd say our Mobility were as free from Oaths, &c., as you found the Wednesbury blacks. My Niece joins Respects to you & yours with

Your sincerely Affec & Obliged servt,

JOHN FOX.

Kinver, 13 Oct., 88.”

In 1782 Mr. Riland had accepted the additional duties of Curate of Water Orton, a small outlying hamlet of the extensive parish of Aston, immediately contiguous to Sutton. In 1784 he resigned the cure. Why he undertook the charge and why resigned it, I have no information, but his Diocesan states that the transaction was "equally creditable to his head and his heart."

In December, 1789, the unmarried sister of Mrs. Riland—Ann Ash—died, aged fifty-eight, and was buried at Sutton, where a marble monument in the chancel perpetuates her memory. She was much attached to the rector and his wife, and was a constant correspondent and frequent visitor of theirs. Her affectionate brother-in-law, who seems to have entertained the most sincere regard for her when living, was not long destined to survive her death. His two last letters to his wife run as follows:—

"Sunday evening, last of January.

Dear Mrs. R.,—I hope you received my note from Mr. Bedford dated Friday. I went immediately to Coleshill upon Sprightly & came home in ye Dark. But Wm. was with me so I did very well.

Did you think I should ever turn spy? A person* who lives to the North-east of me set me to fish out of the company at Coleshill what was done at Meriden, & whether it was the sense of the People in general that he should be at the Meeting, &c. But unluckily Scofield, the Dissenting Teacher (who came to appeal about some Window Tax) sat at my Elbow, so I could not start the subject. However I took Mr. Geast aside, & it is agreed that he goes to the Town but not to the hall. To-day I gave in an account of my embassy.

Little Cope was in your seat alone. Strangers there—Revd. R. Hacket, Mr. Davis, & 2 Miss Windsors.

* The person who lived to the north-east was Sir Robert Lawley, then member for Warwickshire, and the meeting related to the Orders in Council for preventing the exportation and facilitating the importation of certain sorts of corn.—See "Parliamentary Proceedings of 1790" in "Annual Register."

Last night at XII. Pen walked by the end of our Post and chain [Time has been she turned into the house], and this afternoon at V., I Xned Miss Elizabeth Jackson. Pen said the Woman had had a hard time, & advised me to baptize it. The sound is unusual, in that House, of Babes.

I doubt it will be Thursday Morn: before I see you. I have wrote to my Brother that on that day he may expect me. I would come to you on my way to Warwick, but I am told the Road from Birm: to W. is at present very bad, & I really have not spirits at present to encounter it.

I hope I shall have a fat Pig about XII. score ready to kill when you return.

Pray tell Mr. B. that I was looking at the Gander to-day, and observed that his body was as white as Snow, his eyes as black as Ink, & his legs and Beak as red as Coral.

Snap has now 4 or 5 puppies, if Mr. B. chuses any of them. My maid Mary hath attended at Jacksons most part of the day. Nanny Marigold the same. Catherine Bond is as weak as water. I saw to-night James Thompson, the Milleresses son, who is expected to die of an imposthume or some such thing.

I am thankful for all blessings to you. *My Love to every one.*

R. B. R."

This was, unhappily, but the prelude to bad news. He writes on Wednesday following,—the letter is endorsed "My dear Mr. Riland's last letter,"—telling his wife that before his messenger with his former letter had reached Maney, he was taken ill again, and had to call in his friend, Mr. Terry, who had reassured him; and "then began to tell how Ld. Denbigh, Ld. Warwick, & Ld. Aylesford were at ye meeting, and how Sir R(ober) L(awley) was persauded to come into court, & there express his inclination as to ye Repeal or not, and that all was liked that He said or did, and that this matter had fixed his interest in the County quite indisputably;" also, "how Dr. Parr danced about in the streets at Warwick," &c.

The letter is written from bed. "I told Him (Mr. Terry) I was going to write to you, and asked his opinion whether I should desire you to come to me. He said that might be just as I liked. I wanted

nothing that he saw. So Mrs. R., as I tell you the whole truth, you will pursue yr own inclination. I shall love you equally either way. But it will not be prudent for me to come to you to-morrow, therefore, please to apologize for me to another week.—With love, I am, &c., R. B. R.—You had better make Wm. stay to come home with you. ½ past XI., Wednesday.”

Fourteen days after this he expired, and his obituary notice in the “Gentleman’s Magazine” gives us to understand that the grief was deep and general. Mrs. Riland appears to have remained in the Rectory House for six months, and, from a letter addressed to John Riland, on the 21st August, to have had the offer of remaining there still longer, which, with many expressions of regard and gratitude, she declines. She took up her abode in the house which had been built by her husband’s mother at Sutton. In 1793 her younger daughter, Phoebe, married the Revd. Edmond Williamson, of Kempston Manor, Beds, by whom she had a large family; of whom, the eldest, the Rev. Edmond Riland Williamson, was Rector of Campton, Beds, and died, 1864, leaving one daughter. Richard, second son, was Head-master of Westminster School, and Rector of Sutton Coldfield, 1843-1850. Mary, the second daughter, married the Revd. Richard Carter Smith, who was for some years curate to his brother-in-law at Sutton, and died in 1864, leaving two sons and four daughters; three of the latter being alive; Frances Hester, wife of the Revd. Edward Atkinson, D.D., Master of Clare College, Cambridge; Ann Maria and Elizabeth Harriet. The eldest son, Richard Goodhall, M.A., Librarian of the Inner Temple, left one child, Charles Morden, who has taken the name of Trevor, as heir of his relative Miss Trevor, of Tingath, Beds.

Mrs. Riland died in 1809, on March 11th. It is worth notice that in the same year and month, and the same nineteenth year of widowhood, died, in Switzerland, a lady whose parents were near

neighbours and friends of Mrs. Riland and her husband—Anne, Duchess of Cumberland, the second daughter of Simon Luttrell, of Four Oaks, afterwards Lord Irnham, and finally Earl of Carhampton. She had first married Christopher Horton, of Catton; and, as a beautiful widow, in 1771, captivated the weak and dissipated brother of George III., whose disapproval of the match was the cause of the Royal Marriage Act.



JOHN RILAND.

AGED 60.

CHAPTER V.

JOHN RILAND, the little Jack of his father's affectionate letters, was a man who shared much of the amiable character of his brother, but with deeper and more pronounced views on religious subjects, and a disposition for controversy, which amounted almost to pugnacity. In 1759, while yet a junior member of the University, he had rushed into print on the Anti-Calvinistic side, in reply to a sermon, which had been published by the Revd. Richard Elliot, of Benet College, Cambridge, Chaplain of St. George's Hospital. The sermon was preached at Christ Church, Spitalfields, January 21st of that year, and printed under the title of "Encouragement for Sinners, or Righteousness attainable without works." The "Monthly Review," noticing Riland's pamphlet, said:—"The author of this letter seems to have confuted Mr. Elliot; and indeed his doctrine is so extravagant, that it did not require the execution of any uncommon powers to expose the absurdity of it. We may apply to the answerer, who has heaped quotation on quotation in order to disprove a position the falsehood of which is self-evident, those words of Tully, in his treatise 'De Officiis: *Utitur more non dubiâ testibus non necessariis.*' Upon the whole, the letter seems to be as little worth reading as the sermon which it refutes, and from the

style and manner might be guessed to be the work of some pragmatist, self-conceited student of divinity. This must have occurred to every sensible reader, even if the author had not taken care to put it out of all dispute by signing himself, 'Academicus.'"

Severe as this judgment is, there is too much truth in it; John Riland modified his doctrinal views, or rather changed them entirely, but his desire for argument and his mode of expressing his thoughts remained much the same to the close of his life.

He was ordained to the Curacy of Sutton, under his brother, in September, 1759, and from the geniality of his disposition and his sincere goodness of heart must have been a great favourite with all classes. He gave the organ to the newly restored Church, and took a warm interest in public affairs in the town as a member of the Corporation. But all this time, as he himself writes in 1791, he was "a preacher of error and no preacher of truth, taught the law and not the gospel for salvation." But, to quote his printed letter again, from a volume to which reference will be made in its proper place:—"In July, '61, God opened my eyes to behold the wondrous things out of his law, and he then gave me to experience John, vi., 45. On that text, in August, I began to preach the truth I knew then experimentally, preaching which God blessed to the saving of souls, but no preaching before this did he ever bless." Entertaining these views, it is not surprising that he soon contemplated a removal to a curacy where he would have a fuller sympathy with his superior officer, for, although no disagreement between the brothers is any way to be traced from the materials available for enquiry, but everything tells in an opposite sense, it is equally certain that Richard Riland did not sympathise with John's Calvinistic ideas. The latter stayed in Sutton until 1763, for he was chosen Warden in 1762, but he soon after accepted from the eminent Evangelical leader, Henry Venn, an assistant post at Huddersfield, where Mr. Venn was Vicar. Mr. Riland soon gained

a high place in the esteem both of the clergyman whom he assisted and the flock to whom he ministered. Mr. Venn writes in terms of the highest praise of his diligence in parochial visitation and in catechising; while, in the interesting narrative prefixed to Mr. Venn's life of a visit paid in after years by its author to Huddersfield to collect information, there is a quaint yet decided testimony to his worth from one of his old parishioners :—"I knew Mr. Riland well, he was an excellent man; he used to visit much among the poor. He often came to me whilst I was at work, sat down upon a block or anything, and would say, 'Well, George, how are you? Either ask me something, or tell me something. Be quick! for I have much to do and little time.'" The union of sentiment between the Venns and John Riland was much cemented by the marriage of the latter, in 1768, to a young lady named Ann Hudson, whose father and family were among the principal supporters of the Church in Huddersfield, and to whom some of Mr. Venn's most devotional letters are addressed. From the way in which Mrs. Riland speaks of the marriage, in a letter to her son Richard,—“I have wrote to your brother to the same purpose as I did to you, and told him it was to no purpose to stay till I came home, and that he might do what he pleased as to his marriage. He and his wife are to board with Mr. Venn”—it seems as if she hardly looked upon it with favour, but throughout all the letters which are preserved, in which not unfrequent mention is made of Mr. Hudson, it is clear that he was regarded by the Sutton family as not only a creditable, but a pleasant connection; while the mention by the mother of her two daughters-in-law in her last memorandum, on terms of perfect equality, indicates an impartial regard for both. In fact, we find the Sutton Rilands visiting the brother's family, and the Venns and Hudsons partaking of the hospitality of the Sutton Rectory. A daughter, Priscilla, was born in 1770; and another, Maria, in 1772.

In the latter year an Act was passed for building two additional chapels-of-ease in the increasing town of Birmingham, and one of these, known as St. Mary's, had been erected in 1774, at what was then the north-eastern extremity of the town, in St. Martin's parish, upon land given by two ladies, Dorothy and Mary Weaman. The latter contributed largely towards the subscription for defraying the expenses of the erection, and was allowed the right of presentation, which she exercised in favour of Mr. John Riland, who removed thither in the same year.

Here was born his third daughter, Lucy, in December, 1775; and his only son, John, in 1778.

His pen had not been very active during his stay at Huddersfield, where probably his ministerial work left him but little time for authorship. In 1762 he published a sermon on 2nd Cor., ii., 17; in 1763, "Instructions for the Profitable Receiving of the Word of God"; and in 1764, "Ignorance"—the substance of two discourses on Hosea, iv., 6. But from that date he published nothing else until 1775, when he printed two sermons on Ezek., xxxiii., 1-6, entitled, "The Sinful State of the Nation"; followed, in 1777, by a sermon against self-murder, on Exod., xx., 13.

He became at this time involved in controversy with some of his Nonconformist neighbours in Birmingham, and published, about 1781, a letter (without date), addressed as "Considerations for those serious people who seem inclin'd to leave a Gospel ministry by which they have been brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to join themselves to the Anabaptists, by being baptised over again in the mode of immersion." The date of this publication is fixed by that of the rejoinder, which is "a letter to Mr. Ryland, of Birmingham, from the people who have left his ministry to join the Baptists." One of those coincidences which deserve notice, is that at that time was living at Northampton the celebrated but eccentric Baptist preacher, the Revd. John Collett Ryland (whose son, Dr.

Ryland, was afterwards of Bristol, and whose father, Joseph Ryland, of Shipston-on-Stour, was acknowledged by Richard Riland (John's father) as a cousin. (See Appendix.)

The intrinsic excellence of his character and the sincere fervour of his piety raised him above these troubled waters, and gained him the esteem of all who had to do with him. Some verses in the "Gentleman's Magazine," in 1788, are more valuable as a testimony of his worth, than for any poetical merit:—"On hearing the Rev. J. Riland, of Birmingham, catechising the children one Sunday evening"—

"While Hayley greatly strikes the silver lyre,
 And sweetly sings in Howard's worthy praise;
 Forgive the Muse who dares with softer fire
 To chant thy virtue in no venal lays.
 When gloomy grief assails the pensive mind,
 Or burning fevers shoot across the brain,
 Thine is the task, with goodness unconfined,
 To dry the tear and gently soothe the pain;
 Or when Death's arrow wounds this mortal clay,
 And Darkness broods upon the trembling soul,
 The office thine, with Comfort's orient ray,
 To chase the gloom, and show the blissful goal.
 Nor scenes alone like these thy worth display—
 In sweetest union with thy pious life,
 Lo! Youth is taught Religion's narrow way,
 And duteous learns to spurn vain Folly's strife.
 Go, then, and still pursue thy generous plan,
 Lead forth the youths to Virtue's hallowed fane;
 With truth resistless shew them what is man,
 And teach them how to praise their Maker's name.
 To years remote the virtuous youth shall bless
 Thy pious mem'ry, and thy labours praise;
 With love divine Jehovah's works express,
 And high as heaven their grateful thanks shall raise.
 When nature sinks to earth with slow decay,

And life's pale lamp emits a feebler light,
 Thy daring soul shall wing her airy way
 To the ethereal domes of dazzling light ;
 There join with kindred spirits round the throne,
 And carol forth your hymns, in streams of joy,
 To God, who kindly marked thee for his own—
 And joyful sing away eternally.”—W.

During his tenure of St. Mary's he also published, in 1782, a treatise entitled “The Scripture Preservative of Women from Ruin;” and, in 1784 and 1785, selections from Bishop Hall's works.

John Riland was assisted as curate by the Rev. Edward Burn, who afterwards succeeded him in the incumbency of St. Mary's Church. Richard Riland had been requested to give his recommendation to Mr. Burn, and the letter written by him on the occasion bespeaks his charity and candour:—

“To the Revd. R. B. Riland.

Revd. Sir,—I am favoured by this Morning's Post with a Letter from you, together with the Copy of your intended one to the Bishop. This circumstance, Sir, has fully convinced me that the part you have taken in the business has not proceeded from the least desire to injure me, but from the purest principles of Duty to your Diocesan. Your Statement of facts relative to my former conduct is in general fair, and such as I had reason to expect from a Gentleman of your Character, nor am I less sensible of the very handsome testimony which you have thought proper to subjoin to the propriety of my conduct since it hath fallen within your Inspection. There is, however, one or two things on which I would beg leave to submit a remark. You may recollect that in our conversation on the Subject in St. Mary's Vestry, I took the liberty to request that in your Statement to the Bishop a particular attention might be had to the following circumstances, viz., the *time when* I preached in Birmingham previous to my entrance at Oxon, which was fully three years before my becoming a member of St. Edmund's Hall, that I did not officiate at the Anabaptists Meeting as being of that profession, or at the Independants as being a Dissenter upon Principle, but merely because I *at that time* conceived places to be indifferent, provided there was a prospect of Utility to my

Fellow-creatures, and that during that period I was upon conviction and by Communion a Member of the Church of England. Your Statement, Sir, so far as it respects the first of these particulars is perfectly proper, as it represents the transaction alluded to as prior to my Entrance at Edmund's Hall; altho' the exact period be not mentioned. With regard to the Second, I would just beg leave to submit whether the words Anabaptists Meeting might not properly be exchanged for *some of the meeting houses in Birmingham*; as his Lordship may otherwise be led to conclude from the expressions as they now stand, that I was a Member of that Perswasion. Upon the whole, Sir, I must again repeat, what I so solemnly declared to yourself and Mr. Curtis in the Vestry, that I am not conscious of ever having held an opinion contrary to the Doctrines of the Church of England, nor, except in the business in question, done a thing in my life that has been hostile to her discipline. That I am at this Moment, according to my opportunities of Enquiry, as fully convinced of her Apostolicism, as sincerely attached to her interests, and as deeply concerned for her general Prosperity as Yourself.

Waiting to be favoured with the event of yr Letters to his Lordship,

I remain,

Rev. Sir,

Your most Obedt. humb. Servant,

Birmingham,

EDWARD BURN.

March 4, 1786.

N.B.—You are perfectly at liberty to make what use you may think proper of this to his Lordship."

In 1791 Mr. Riland anonymously printed a poem upon the seaside village of Parkgate, of which the introductory lines will be a sufficient specimen :—

" 'Tis mine,
Haply escaped far from the busy town,*
Where clouds of smoke deform the brightest day,
Shedding dim twilight round; where the pure breeze
That morn or evening gives to weary'd man,
Scarce wafted o'er its precincts, feels the taint

" * Birmingham."

Contaminate of poison'd atmosphere ;
 Where ever and anon the hammers clink
 Sounds from the anvil, and the twirl of lathes
 Vibrates upon the ear in tone uncouth,
Sans intermission ; where the noisy din
 Of carriage and of horse, crowding the streets,
 Blends with the hum of men, the shouts of boys,
 The infants' prattle, and the howl of curs,
 Till all confusion is, and wild uproar.
 Haply escaped from hence, 'tis mine. PARKGATE
 To visit. I name it and no more—until
 My tongue in grateful accents has proclaim'd
 The gratitude with which my heart expands
 To Thee, JEHOVAH ! whose paternal arm
 Both me and mine preserv'd, while journeying here,
 From ev'ry evil ; that which walks abroad
 Before the face of day, and that which lurks
 In ambush hid, behind the midnight shade ;
 From open danger, and from secret guile.
 I sing JEHOVAH: O may my life be led,
 In all its ways, for Him who cares for me,
 The good Provider, and Preserver too ;
 By Him 'tis, then, that I can freely breathe
 This air salubrious, free from noxious taints
 Which much pollute that which I've left behind,
 And make unhealthy living in the town."

Upon the death of his brother Richard, John Riland, in accordance with his father's will, became the owner of the advowson of Sutton, but did not immediately cease to officiate at St. Mary's. He was, however, in residence at Sutton in 1791, when Mr. Blick, so long assistant to Richard Riland, whom he had continued as curate, preached a sermon to which the rector took exception, and asked for an explanation of his meaning "both as to *things* and *persons*." Mr. Blick denied any personality, and offered a defence of his doctrine which was not satisfactory to Mr. Riland, so that in

the sequel Mr. Blick found himself under the necessity of resigning his post at Sutton, having printed the controverted sermon with the correspondence. Three hundred subscribers and nearly 1,400 copies subscribed for are pretty good proof of the interest the controversy excited, and from the names in the list a good idea may be gained of the changes which had taken place in the principal residents of Sutton and its neighbourhood at that time. Four Oaks, which thirty years before we found inhabited by Lord Carhampton (Mr. Luttrell), is now in the hands of Hugh Bateman, afterwards created a baronet with remainder to the male issue of either of his two daughters primogenitively; a singular destination of the title, which led to its being inherited by his posthumous grandson, Sir Francis Scott; grandson, too, of the Sir Joseph Scott, of Great Barr (also created a baronet in 1806), to whom reference has been already made. Langley Hall and New Hall were empty; but the Hackets of Moor Hall, Mr. Tennant of Little Aston (where he had succeeded Mr. Minchin, who modernised the grounds, and was the first person in that country to use paillasses under feather beds), and others represented the country gentry. The Birmingham clergy and other respectable inhabitants of the hardware town also came forward to assist Mr. Blick, who had on more occasions than one acted as an examiner at King Edward's School; while the *literati* of Lichfield and the college friends of the author joined with the burgesses of the royal town of Sutton in subscribing for copies. Mr. Blick, indeed, did not totally cease his connection with Sutton, although he removed to Tamworth, where he became vicar in 1795, and established a flourishing school, but held the honorary office of secretary of the Book Club there until his death in 1842.

Mr. Riland naturally sought to supply his curate's place with one of his own theological bias, and in 1795 he found such an assistant in the Rev. Joseph Mendham, M.A., of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, who married, in that year, his second daughter, Maria. Mr.

Mendham was not only a man of eminent personal piety, of pleasing manners, and cultivated taste, but was also possessed of rare attainments in scholarship, especially in the Spanish and Italian languages. He brought these accomplishments to bear upon his principal subject of study, the controversy between the Reformed Church of England and that of Rome. His "Memoirs of the Council of Trent" and his "Literary Policy of the Church of Rome" are among the standard works on their subject, and a list of nine other volumes of which he was the author or editor, as well as many contributions to periodicals, testify to the diligence with which he pursued his studies. He formed a very fine library, mainly of foreign books, which has now found a place at the Law Institution, in reference to which one anecdote is too good to be forgotten. A lady of rank in the neighbourhood, who had come under the influence of Mr. Mendham's religious teaching, possessed a sumptuous copy of Voltaire's works, and began to feel some qualms of conscience as to their being fit denizens of a Christian woman's library. So she determined to offer the dangerous volumes to Mr. Mendham, and confidently reckoned that his pious abhorrence of their sentiments would condemn them to the flames. But her surprise and horror were extreme when, on the occasion of a subsequent visit, he took her to his library and showed her the books in a place of honour, while he showered his thanks upon her for so magnificent a gift. Mr. Mendham resided at the house which had been occupied by Mrs. Richard Riland, and remained curate to his father-in-law's successor for several years, when infirmity of health induced him to retire from active duty, although he lived until 1856. His wife died in 1840; by her he had one son and one daughter. The former, the Rev. Robert Riland Mendham, of Wadham College, died a bachelor within a few months of his father, having left a legacy for the building a spire to Boldmere Church; and the latter died in 1872, also unmarried.

Mr. Riland, almost as a matter of course, was re-elected upon the Corporation on coming into residence, and took part in a resolution to pave the street in 1792; but secular work was not to his taste, and in the same year, having been elected Warden, he declined to serve, and by so doing vacated his seat in the Society. His great diligence in pastoral visitation, which is still remembered at Sutton, was one cause of this determination. Although he does not seem to have availed himself of the machinery which in later days clergymen of his school especially affected (tracts, and cottage lectures or schoolroom services), old people in the present decade have described the "old rector" with his bushy wig, flapped hat, and long cassock-like coat on week days (replaced by a pudding-sleeved gown on Sundays) walking long miles over remote heaths or dirty lanes to the scattered hamlets which formed his charge, his pockets laden with comfits for the children, his mind stored with quaint sayings and simple doctrine for the edification of their elders.

He does not appear to have taken any active part in public affairs, until in 1800 the proposal of enclosure, which had lain dormant since its defeat in 1778, began once more to be canvassed. From a copy of the printed proposals, with marginal notes in John Riland's handwriting, preserved at the Rectory, it is evident that he regarded the idea with extreme disfavour; and when in 1805 the scheme had advanced so far as to require his consent, it was unhesitatingly refused, in a letter which affords another specimen of his shrewd but dogmatic way of treating argument. He takes for granted that the poor must suffer a great and lasting injury, therefore he refuses his consent, and correctly on his own premises.

"To the gentlemen who came as delegates from the two committees to meet and treat with me in the Town Hall, on Nov. 7th, 1805.

Gentlemen,—If you conclude that I have given my consent to the Inclosure, and have reported the same to others, I cannot but take the liberty to let you and them know that it appears to me that you are all under a mistake, and this I can

prove from the true meaning of your own words, as penn'd in the Town Hall the time above mention'd. The words are these, 'That the Rector has no objection to accept of a Corn rent in lieu of Tithes, if that majority of Members of the inhabitants, householders, and other parties interested required by Parliament assent to the inclosure.'

Now I say, what is the fair real meaning of this? If you mean that the whole of this relates to the Freeholders and them *alone*, I must say this is by no means *my* meaning, and never was; respecting the *particular persons* whose consent I judged needful to be given to the inclosure, I meant not them as giving or not giving their consent, but I meant the great body of all the lower classes of the parish, whose consent has not been obtain'd, and, therefore, mine has not been obtain'd. I have uniformly, all along from the beginning of the business to this day, said, and have kept to the saying at all times and in all places, that as the Bulk of the lower classes of the parish were seriously against the Inclosure on account of the great and lasting injury it would be to them, I therefore cou'd not and would not consent to it. I told you in the Town Hall repeatedly if they were satisfied I should be the same, and then I would consent if they did. I go on to observe that these said lower classes of the people are called by you, as well as by me, in your own words as above, *Inhabitants, Householders*, that is Cottagers, Day-labourers, Shopkeepers, and other little Housekeepers, not Freeholders. The Charter means those, so do I, so must you. If not, whom do you mean? And I remark that the concluding words in your paper, 'assent to the Inclosure,' do as much mean, and belong to the *first* class in the description of the persons which must be meant, as well as the *second*. It is evident there is in your own words two classes of persons described and meant; the joining words, 'and *other parties* interested,' prove this. If you deny this, why then are these words in the paper, 'and other.' This last clause in it cannot mean the same as the *first* clause, the word 'and' has no meaning if so, but this word was put in to make the distinction of the persons meant. I ask, then, whom do you mean by 'other parties interested?' Surely *other* persons *afterwards* described cannot signify the *same* persons as *before* described. If you mean, as I conclude you do mean, and trust, namely *Freeholders*, I then say. here are two classes of people described and meant, and both are so spoken of as that the consent of both, as you have worded your sentence, is required by Parliament, and you say the consent of the *majority* of such is required; yes, I say, and more than a *mere* majority, for the Parliament requires, as Mr. Palmer told me, Four *Fifths* of them, which is doubtless a majority, and a very great one indeed. But you have so fabricated the construction of your sentence, that, according to your own meaning, if your words express your

meaning, that the term *Majority* goes as much to the first class described as to the second.

Now, Gentlemen, if you will please to consider all these things coolly and fairly, I cannot but conclude you will plainly see, as I plainly see, that I am in no degree under any obligation to grant that my consent is given to the Inclosure, because of the strange paper you drew up when we conferr'd upon the business in the Town Hall, Novr. 7th. Also that you must believe me when I therefore say, that with no conscience, no peace of mind, no neighbourly regard to my Parishioners, no Pastoral concern for my Flock, can I possibly allow myself to consent to the propos'd Inclosure, and for the great *prevalent* reason given, because I believe what the parish almost throughout believe, that it will prove a *considerable* and *lasting injury* to several hundreds of them. If you are determined to go to Parliament you must go, *observe, without me*. The Petition I cannot and will not sign.

Seeing no necessity of saying more at this time, I conclude by subscribing myself to you and all the Parish, what I wish to be and ever to be, your and their sincere Friend, and faithful Servant and Pastor,

J. RILAND.

P.S.—I have judg'd it right to send you this address before you fram'd your Act of Parliament, to prevent you the trouble of putting me in it, or any particulars respecting the Corn Reni."

Thus, once more, was this great public measure staved off, for the promoters did not venture to attack the rector again. But the mere ventilation of the plan had rendered the maintenance of the old state of things in connection with the Trust impossible. In 1808 proposals were made for a "School of Industry," to which the Corporation revenues should be applied, and during the whole of this time constant and intermittent litigation harassed the Corporation. In 1813, John Riland addressed to the Corporation a letter* which may be considered to have been the first step in the

* "To Henry Grimes, Esqr., Warden, & the Gentlemen of the Corporation. A letter (Aug. 6, 1813) from the Rector, Churchwardens, Overseers, & Committee appointed by the Parish, stating that Mr. Sadler desires to bring the suit to a

settlement which ultimately was made by the scheme of 1825. It was followed up by a proposal made in 1816 for the foundation of schools for elementary public education (national schools as they were then called), and this movement received impetus and direction from an application made by Mr. Barker (B.C.L., Trin. Coll., Oxon), who had succeeded Mr. Webb in 1817 as master of the Grammar School, to divide the English and Latin schools which he found in operation. But the settlement of these matters did not take place until after John Riland's time.

The state of the benefice in his time is on record in—

“A true Note and Terrier of all the Glebe, Lands, Meadows, Gardens, Orchards, Houses, Tenements, Portion of Tithes, and other Rights belonging to the Rectory of Sutton Coldfield, in the county of Warwick, and Diocese of

speedy issue, and their own wish that the Court should be informed that the whole Parish desire it should terminate, and the money be applied to the good of the Parish in general, and the relief of the poor in particular; Signed by J. Riland.

Requests trespass on the waste may be stopped.

Field acres drawn.

Woods thrown open to cattle.

Game preserved.

Rowton Well repaired for the sick.

Mr. Fowler's bill investigated.

Committee :—

John Riland, Rector.

Richard Taylor, Farmer.

James Hughes, Jersey-comber.

Francis Hearnshaw, Millwright.

William Powell, Master of a Forge.

Richard Kesterton, Farmer.

John Reynolds, Londoner (?) (Landowner?)

N.B.—The reason of these persons being members of the Committee, and not persons in higher stations in life, is because all the gentlemen in the Parish are members of the Corporation.”

Lichfield and Coventry, now in the use and Possession of John Riland, Clerk, Rector of the said Church, taken, made, and renewed this 22nd day of August, in the year of our Lord 1801. By the appointment of the Right Reverend Father in God James Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and given in to the Court at Lichfield on the day and year aforesaid.

Imprimis there is one stated Parsonage house, having 4 Rooms on a floor, and four garrets, Pantry, three cellars, two Dairies, Coalhouse, Brewhouse, Laundry, back Kitchen, and Room over it, a Well and Pump, two Gardens, Orchard, Fish-pool, two Pigsties, two Privies, large Tithe Barn with two Threshing floors and two large Doors containing five Bays, another Barn for Hay with two large Doors and Threshing Floor,* a Coach-house with a Dovecot over it, three Stables, Saddlehouse, two Granaries, Cheese Chamber, Wood chamber, Stickhouse, Kidhouse, Rick Yard, Waggon hovel, Cart hovel, Cowhouse, Cow Shed, Two Foldyards, Poultry house, and Chicken Pens.

These are the Glebe Lands :—

Called the Grove, 4A. 1R. 1P. ; The Long Piece, 3A. 3R. 37P. ; The Meadow, 11A. OR. 21P. ; Little Meadow, OA. 3R. 3P. ; The Blabs Close, 6A. 2R. 1P. ; The Gilberts Croft, 4A. OR. 27P. ; Stable Orchard, 1A. OR. 30P. ; Broomy Close, 9A. 1R. 12P. ; Thistly Close, 9A. OR. 25P., with a Barn and Foldyard in it ; The Four Mettalls, 12A. 1R. 26P.

Item, there belong to the said Rectory all the great Tythes of all sorts of Corn and Grain and all other kinds which are due, being Rectorial or Predial tythes according to law, in the tything of Corn every tenth Shuck or Cock is due, but every eleventh usually taken. The Broad Meadow pays tythe of Hay in kind. The Tythe of Flax is paid 5 shillings an acre before it be taken out of the Close by Act of Parliament. The Tythe of Wool and Lambs are due and taken. If there be seven Fleeces one is due, and after that every tenth Fleece ; if under seven a penny is paid for every Sheep, the Lambs the same, but a halfpenny for every Lamb under seven. Geese are Tythed as Lambs are, excepting that there is nothing due for Geese if the Flock be under seven in Number. The Tything of Eggs is in Lent, and is usually begun on the Monday before Mid-Lent Sunday, two Eggs for every Hen, one for every Pullet, Three for every Cock. Two Duck

* Note in John Rilands handwriting :—" This never was a Floor to thresh on, neither of Wood nor of Brick, nor Lime ; never used as such.

Eggs for every Duck, and Three for every Drake. For Turkies a penny each hath been taken, but this seems no fixed modus. When the Rector keeps a Boar he gathers Tythe Pigs after the same manner and degree as Geese and Lambs; according to the custom of the late and present Rector, instead of a Boar being kept, so much is allowed to the Sowkeeper as is supposed to be given to the Boarkeeper. When the Rector keeps a Bull one penny hath been collected for every cow, and one halfpenny for every Calf. A Lot Acre is belonging to the Rector when the Common Fields are set out for Tillage. A Modus of three pounds a year for the small tythes of the Demesne of Newhall, including the farm of New Shipton, now occupied by Mr. William Twamley, is due and paid at Michaelmas. The Herbages are due and paid according as they are Recorded in the usual Tythe Books. Mortuaries are paid according to custom, and the Act of 21 Hen : 8, c. 6. The Freehold of the Churchyard is the Rector's. There is due to the Rector for every Funeral in the Parish sixpence, for everyone out of the Parish 1s. ; for every Banns published 2s. 6d., and when the parties are married, to the Clerk one shilling. For every Licence Wedding five shillings, for every Churching fourpence. At Easter every Housekeeper pays the rector 4d. The seats in the Chancel belong to the Rector, who pays Churchwardens Levy, but Repairs the Chancel. In Testimony of the Truth of the beforementioned Particulars, We, the undersigned, have set our hands the 22nd day of August, in the year of our Lord, 1801.

JOSEPH SHUTT, Warden
of the Corporation.

J. RILAND, Rector.

WM. HOMER,
Deputy Steward.

H. HOLLIS, } Church
THOS. FARMER, } Wardens."

John Riland, thus it will be seen, lived in days when the tithe question was of much importance. Bad seasons, during the height of the French war, combined with the repressive system which closed foreign ports, brought grain up to famine prices; and when peace came again, the agricultural interest had much to endure in the fall from the inflated prosperity they had enjoyed. It is worth giving two of his addresses to his parishioners on this subject *in extenso*, with all their quaint and forcible iteration. The first is dated 1793, the second 1801, and the MS. notes of his own handwriting

seem to have been added in 1810. He also addressed a sermon to farmers, printed in Birmingham in 1805, with a dedication to Thomas York, of Brocton Lodge, Staffordshire.

“ A Computation of the Worth of the Tithe Corn in the Parish of
Sutton Coldfield, 1796.

Addressed to all the Occupiers of Corn Land respecting their several
Enclosures in the Parish.

Friends and Neighbours,—In order to understand this business, to prevent Mistakes and Misunderstandings, and that you may see the Cause and Reasonableness of what I am going to offer, you will please to observe That an Acre of Wheat, if it be a good Crop, will produce 24 Strike, and, if a very good one, or extraordinary Crop, it will near, if not quite, 30. But, I will say it produces 22.

The Tithe of this, being each 11th Part, will be 2 Strike. If this be sold at 8s. per Strike, the Tithe is worth 16s., if it be sold at 10s. it will be worth 20s., and if at 12s. it will be worth 24s. The Straw of the Tithe is worth, at the Rate of 2s. 4d. or 2s. 6d. a Hundred, it may be estimated at 4s. or at 8s. This must be added to the Value of the Grain, which may make the Tithe worth 28s. or more than 30s. If the Straw be the same, as paying for the Gathering and Threshing, the Grain by itself, still remains of the Value as above. This last Winter the Straw sold at the above Rate ; and the Grain at 12s. or 13s., and this Spring at 14s.

Nay, last Summer, Wheat sold for some Time at a Guinea a Strike, and more.

So that had I, at that Season, my 2 Strike off an Acre, I might, if I had sold mine as others sold theirs, have got 2 Guineas, or more, for my Tithe Grain of one Acre and that without the Straw ; whereas I only got 6s.

Respecting Barley.

An Acre of Barley, if it be a good Crop, will produce 40 Strike, and if an extraordinary one, it will produce 50. But I will lower it even to 33. The Tithe Quantity of the Acre will be 3 Strike. If this be sold at 4s. a Strike, the Tithe Grain will be worth 12s., if at 5s. it will be worth 15s., and if at 6s. then it will be worth 18s., allowing only 33 Strike an Acre. But if it should produce 44 Strike (as many Score Acres, we may say, did last year, and more), the Tithe Quantity will be 4 Strike, and will be worth 20s. at 5s. a Strike. The Straw adds to the Value of the Grain, at the Rate of 30s. a Load or more. Observe, the like Computation may be made respecting Oats, &c., in Proportion to their lesser Value.

The last Year I received only 6s. an Acre for the Tithe of Wheat, when the Worth of it was, at a moderate Computation, 20s. or 24s. or 26s., and that without the Straw. For the Tithe of an Acre of Barley, I received only 5s., when the Worth of it was, at a moderate Computation, 15s. or more, without the Straw.

In the Course of the last Year, I paid for Wheat for my Bread at one time 10s. a Strike, at another 12s., at another 13s. and more, to those Sellers who paid me only 6s. an Acre for what was worth, to me, 20s. and 24s. and 26s., and that without the Straw. So that out of my Tithe the Farmers had, in many instances, 15s. or 20s. or more, where I had only 6s. or 5s., and at same Time, they had all the Straw besides, and I had none. From hence it will follow, that between the Pay to me, and the Worth to me and to the Farmer, there is no tolerable Proportion. The Tithe was, by no Means, at all near to an Equivalent, as in all Fairness it ought to be.

These Things being fairly considered as Truths, which all must grant and none can deny, I have to say, and thus I let you know, that I am willing that you should, all of you, respectively, take the Tithe Parts, of your own Crops, this Year, in your inclosures, to your ownelves, upon your engaging to pay me for every Acre of Wheat 10s., for every Acre of Barley 8s., and, for every Acre of Oats, &c., 7s.

(The Tithe of the Common Fields, or Lot Acres, I give you Notice, I mean to take myself in Kind.) This Offer is your Advantage, and it may be your great one. The more it is yours, the less it will be mine.

If you do not choose to take this Offer, I shall gather myself some of the Tithe, and set the rest in different Lots, to those who will be glad to take it, and I shall make it worth their While to take it. I have had sufficient Offers made me, which afford me sufficient Encouragement to Let the Tithes to particular Persons, but I had rather each took his own, than one should take many, as I know it will be more the Advantage and Pleasure for each to do so.

To this Offer, I add the Promise that if it should please God to render this Season so very unfavourable that your Harvest be sadly injured ; or, if the Price of Wheat, from the first Threshing & Selling, to December the 14th, be considerably lower from what it was last Summer, and has been this last Winter, I will, in these Cases, make some Abatement in your Pay : but whether on the Pay Day, or return something another Day, I cannot tell : but what particular Abatement I do not say, and, you must know, I cannot now say. In this you must trust me ; and when you reflect what I have done in Time past, I may say, you have cause to trust me for Time to come.

Should any of you be disposed to ask me for what Reason I make this Rise in the Tithe, I am very willing in Condescension, to answer. It is that I may receive what is the Order of God for me, and his Gift to me ; what the Law of the Land allots me, and secures to me, and what all Equity and Reason claim, in my Station ; by your Means, acting justly for myself and not unjustly to you, and, another Reason is (and which is the most pleasing Part of the Business), that I may, by an Addition to my Income, be better enabled to assist my poor Parishioners next Winter, than I could last ; through the small, very small, Proportion of the Value of the Tithe, the last Harvest ; which I was contented, for your Benefit, to receive from you.

For the Conveniency of the several Occupiers of Corn Land to make an Agreement with me, as above stated by themselves, or by their Agents for them, I will meet the People of the Several Quarters of the Parish at John Collins's, in Hill, on Monday, May 9th.

At Warmly Ash, on Tuesday, 10th ; at Edward Lambley's, in Little Sutton, on Wednesday, 11th.

At the Horse and Jockey in Maney, on Friday, the 20th.

And at the Tons in Sutton, on Saturday, 14th.

At each Place, at 4 O'clock in the Afternoon.

Committing all to God, Praying for his Direction and Blessing,

I remain,

Your sincere Friend and

Servant in the Gospel Ministry,

J. RILAND.

Parsonage,

April, 1796."

"To the Occupiers of Land and Growers of Corn in the Parish of Sutton
Coldfield, Feb., 1801.

(Please to remember the date when this was written, Feb., 1801.)

Friends and Neighbours,—In order to prevent mistakes, and to understand one another's meanings in the business before us, I judge it best to make my application to you for some Advance in my Tithe in the following manner ; and to give you the Reasons for that advance. I wish you therefore to observe and to consider :—

1st. That out of my living, estimated by yourselves at 700*l.* 16*s.* a year, I am compelled to pay upwards of 330*l.* in Taxes, Levies, and other unavoidable outgoings, besides what I allow to my Curate ; so that my living is become, by this means, not a sufficient maintenance to me and my family.

2d. A single Acre of your Wheat, if a tolerable crop, at 22 strike an Acre, will yield me, in Tythe, 2 Strike (and some crops more) these will be worth, as Corn, may sell, 16*s.*, 20*s.*, 24*s.*, 30*s.*, or more ; I receive of you only 8*s.* The Straw may be worth 4*s.* or 8*s.* I have none of this, you have it all ; this adds to your gain, and to my loss. *I now give 3/6 or 4/0 a hund.*

3d. A single Acre of your Barley, at only 33 strike an Acre, will yield me 3 strike, and will be worth, as it may sell, 12*s.*, 16*s.*, 20*s.*, or more ; I receive of you only 6*s.* The Straw may be valued at the rate of 2*l.* a load, I have been forced to give 3*l.* I have none of this straw, you have it all ; this adds to your gain, and to my loss. The case is the same in its proportion, respecting Oats, &c.

4th. For more than a year back I have been forced to give for my Wheat Flour from 14*s.* 8*d.* to a guinea, and more a strike ; for Barley Grain, or Flour, from 6*s.* or 12*s.* to 16*s.* ; for Oats, 7*s.* 6*d.* and more ; for Malt, 9*s.* 6*d.* to 14*s.* 6*d.* ; for Wheat Straw, 3*s.* to 4*s.* a hundred ; for Barley Straw, 2*l.* to 3*l.* a load. Now observe, how very much cheaper this would have been to me, had I received from you. what you have had from me, Grain and Straw in kind. *I now give for (fine) Flour 19/0 a Strike, July, 1810. But what for the grain itself a strike?*

5th. For the first seven years of my residence amongst you here, the Tythe—wheat only, was worth 1600*l.*, out of which you had 1000*l.* and I only 600*l.* You are all welcome to see what some have seen, on paper how I have proved this, and to examine the proof. The case was the same respecting Barley and Oats, but in a lesser degree. Think how much this must add to your gain, and to my loss.

6th. In the year 1793, when there was a long drought, and the crops of Lenten Corn considerably failed, out of every 5*s.* for every Acre, in the common field, I gave you 2*s.*, and out of the same in your inclosures, 1*s.* This cost me a few score pounds.

In the years 1795 and 96, when Wheat sold from 10*s.* to 20*s.* a strike, and sometimes more, I had only 6*s.* an acre, when, had I received my 2 strike in kind, I might have had for them 20*s.*, 30*s.*, or 40*s.*, not one of you gave me more than 6*s.* The case was the same respecting Barley, Oats, &c., but in a lesser degree. Think then how much in that one year you gained and I lost.

If your crops are poor, their produce is of more value—the lesser the quantity the greater the price.

You need not complain of the weight of the Tythes, when they have been so light, and will not be heavy. Besides, your Landlords pay them, not you; for, were your Farms Tythe-free, you would have to pay more Rent for them.

If I see just cause for lowering the Tythe, I can easily do it; but I make no promise.

Now, Sirs, these arguments being well considered, and fairly weighed, judge you, whether in this application to you for an advance in your payments, I am not doing justice to myself, without any injustice to you?

I propose an advance of 2s. for the Wheat, and 1s. for all the Lenten. *From this time to 1809 I have had for Wheat 9/6, Barley 7/-, Oats 6/6, although in 1796 I settled the rise or desired to settle it, at 10s. for wheat & 8s. for Barley.*

Please to give me a positive answer whether you will voluntarily and amicably agree to my proposal, at the Town Hall, on Wednesday, the 4th day of March, at 4 o'clock in the Afternoon, that I may know whether I must have to take any other measures respecting my due.

I remain your faithful Friend and Pastor,

J. RILAND.

Sutton Coldfield,

Feb. 24, 1801."

Mr. Riland's Christian aptitude for giving consolation to friends in affliction comes out with great force in the following letters, now in the possession of Mr. Lomax, of Lichfield :—

[Riland to Dickenson.]

"Dear Sir,—Last night a letter from Mr. Benjamin York brought me the painful Intelligence of the death of your Dear Son Henry. What I felt then, I feel now, and shall to-morrow. 'Tis a heavy stroke, but HE, who strikes, has a Right to do so. May we all yield to Him in full Resignation and submission, and say, 'It is the Lord.' Casualties, sicknesses, and Death come not by Chance and by accident, but by Purpose and Design. They come because sent; may we, for this reason, receive them with a Welcome, and improve them to our Profit. God, the Saviour, now is to be dearer to you than ten Sons: and I trust you will find He makes Himself so; and also makes you, therefore, dearer to Him. He that makes the Burden for the Shoulders, can make the Shoulders for the Burden. If He sees you carry it well, He will lighten it, or continue your Strength. 'As thy Day is, so shall thy Strength be,' was a blessed Promise of old; and is a blessed Promise

now. All God's Promises are made to be verified. May you and I and all now see how the loss of the Creature enhances the Possession of the Creator. Now may we live better than we ever lived, and preach better than we ever preached. Death is near us ; Eternity draws near ; Time hastens on ; Life shortens, and Heaven is opened for us. May we be profitably affected by these Particulars, and make the Days of our Pilgrimage to come, better than the Days that are past.—*Dum vivimus, vivamus.*

I feel, too, for the absence of Mrs. Dickenson, Mr. John and Mr. Samuel. I hope Cheltenham Air and Waters, the Gift of God, will be blessed of God to them, that they may return home better than they went from it. May they, and may we, remember that when after absence from home for Health, we return to it, to live well till we die well, we live to die, and then we die to live. (See Job xix., 25, and Rom. xiv., 7, 8, 9, and John xi., 25, 26.) Now, My Dear Sir, I have a particular Thing to say to you, Come and *see* and *stay* with me here some little time. I am in earnest in saying this, and, observe, so is my Family. We hope you will consider of this and do what we wish. I have been at Blymhill and preached for you : now come and preach for me. I should think you can get your Church supplied for one Sunday, for the whole ; or, if not, for the half the Day, which might suffice. Come any time after next week is over. May our God direct all our Steps, direct us what to do, and what not, and bless his own Direction ! Please to give my love to the York Family, and particularly thank Mr. Benjamin for his pleasing Letter of yesterday.

Farewell in DEO,

I remain, your obliged
and affectionate

Sutton Coldfield,

J. RILAND.

May 25, 1805."

[Dickenson's answer to J. Riland.]

"Dear Sir,—My best thanks are due to you, my good friend, for your very kind & consolatory letter on the heavy affliction it hath pleased my Heavenly Father to lay upon me by the death of a most beloved son. *Premature* I cannot term it, well knowing how fit the dear youth was to be received into the realms of bliss, unfading bliss, permanent happiness. I pray to Heaven to be enabled to view the awful dispensation in the same light in which you consider it : and that my so sensible experience of the fallacy of all human dependance, more brittle than 'the staff of the bruised reed on wh. if a man lean' it breaks and stabs, may powerfully impel me to fly for rest & safety to the arms of an all-sufficient God, 'in whose favour is Life.'

All praise to the 'Father of all mercies & the God of all comfort, I have been *enabled* to sustain the severe trial in a manner surpassing all reasonable expectation. The full assurance of my dear departed son's reception in glory ! What a reflection : if reflection be allowed its perfect scope in such a painful trial ! Having fought the good fight of faith, as an undaunted & triumphant champion, he passed through the dark valley of the shadow of death without dismay. No misgiving or perplexing doubts obscured the brightness of the closing scene. His last words to me, when the lamp of life was nearly extinguished, & articulation difficult, were—'I am going to Heaven.'

In answer to your kind invitation to Sutton.—In the absence of my wife & son Saml. L., I have two households to superintend ; in the direction of wh. prudence will not allow one day's absence : and even were I released from this weighty charge, travelling any distance is become irksome, & a fatigue I am hardly able to endure. My son, J. H., whose company is an unspeakable solace to me, will continue here a few days. His health is much improved ; & his situation at Copeshall the most desirable imaginable. He begs to unite in most kind remembrance to you with, Dear Sir,

Yours sincerely and affectionately,

Blymhill,

S. DICKENSON.*

May 28, 1805."

* "The Rev. Samuel Dickenson, Bachelor of Laws, was presented to the Rectory of Blymhill on January 9th, 1777. He was a great botanist, and contributed to Shaw's County History the list of plants indigenous to Staffordshire, as did his son, John Horatio, the zoological portion. The Rev. Samuel Dickenson married Miss Catherine York, of Sheriff Hales, by whom he had one daughter, Elizabeth Catherine, who died in her infancy, & five sons, namely, Samuel Cyrus ; the Rev. John Horatio (Rector of Blymhill from 1840 to 1853) ; the Rev. Henry ; Samuel Lewis ; and William Henry ; who all died without issue. Mrs. Catherine Dickenson died May 17th, 1812, aged 70, and her husband, the Rev. Samuel Dickenson, on May 15th, 1823, aged 90."—"Bridgeman's History of Blymhill."

The son, upon whose death these letters were written, was the Rev. Henry Dickenson, M.A., curate of Church Eaton, who was born August 3rd, 1778, and buried at Blymhill, May 23rd, 1805.

The initials J. H. in Mr. Dickenson's letter indicate John Horatio mentioned above.

During the year 1815 the duties devolving on Mr. Riland were much increased by the formation on the northern slope of Sutton Coldfield, called Hill Common, of a camp, in which were quartered the Edinburgh and Sussex regiments of Militia, the Seventh Dragoon Guards, and a brigade of Artillery. The register books of the Church at Sutton contain numerous records of baptisms, and occasional burials, from the "camp ground."

He attained a vigorous, hale old age; but in his later days it is evident, from anecdotes still in memory, that traces of exhaustion became perceptible to persons who encountered him on his distant rambles, or heard him in the church on Sunday afternoons; especially that well-remembered one when he pursued the even tenor of his sermon in blissful ignorance that his cauliflower wig had caught fire from the pulpit candles. In 1819 he lost his wife, and in 1822, a fortnight after his 85th birthday, when about to ascend the stairs of his parsonage, he sunk down, and in a few moments had entered into eternal rest. His daughters, Priscilla and Lucy, remained residents in Sutton for many years, exercising a wide Christian influence, not less from their own character than from the esteem in which their father had been held, and were active promoters of many good works. The elder died in 1837, the younger survived until 1869.

An interesting letter, addressed to Miss Lucy Riland by Anne, wife of Sir Edmund Hartopp, first baronet, mentioned in "Hannah More's Memoirs" as one of her friends, illustrates the character of both writer and recipient:—

"To Miss L. Riland, Maney, near Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham.

Clifton, May 25, 1827.

My dear Miss Riland,—I trust the reasons I have given to Mr. Mendham for not answering *his letter* sooner will plead my excuse for delaying so long acknowledging *your kind* & excellent letter, which has afforded me consolation, & I hope your valuable suggestions will not be lost upon me. You have placed my afflictions in a point of view, that more than reconciles me to my heavy loss, if I

cd, without presumption, embrace them. I am persuaded my trials have not been greater than were necessary. Oh may this last and bitterest affliction be sanctified more completely than any I have experienced!! May the furnace, which has been intense, more effectually consume my dross, and may I be purified from all my corruptions, which have required such severe & repeated discipline!

I cannot say my health has not suffered, but not so much as might have been expected, & I am getting better. My loss will never be supplied by any earthly object, & I expect to feel my bereavement more and more as my age & infirmities increase. In this beloved Daughter, I have lost not only a dutiful & affectionate child, but a sincere, faithful, & affectionate friend, whom I loved like my own soul! Perhaps, I loved her too well! May I be enabled henceforth to realize your beautiful suggestion, & surrender my heart more exclusively & devotedly to God! I thank you much for your excellent quotation from 'Ogden's Sermons,' which I shall endeavour to improve by serious reflection.

I sent for the work you mentioned of Mr. Irving's. I sh'd like it better if he were not so dogmatical & confident in stating his opinions; what I have read that has a *practical application* I like, & hope it will not be unprofitable.

I hope Miss Riland's health is improved, & that yours has been good. Sir Edmd unites with me in kind remembrances to you both, & believe me, my dear Miss Riland,

Your sincere & faithful friend,

A. C. HARTOPP."

The Rev. John Riland (Junior), who had taken his degree from St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, did not, according to the settlement of Mr. Richard Riland, succeed his father; but obtained the curacy of Yoxall, in Staffordshire, where he married, in 1820, Maria, daughter of Sir Wm. Wolesley, Bart., by whom he had no children. He inherited many of his father's peculiarities, and carried his views of Church Reform so far that it is difficult to imagine that he could ever have become a beneficed clergyman in the Church of England as at present constituted. Fortunately he settled himself in a post where he was able to be of great service to his fellow creatures without being actually compelled to submit to the formal discipline of an incumbent. This was the chaplaincy of the Magdalen

Asylum, Birmingham, to which institution he not only gave unremitting personal attendance, but also liberal contributions towards the erection and maintenance of its chapel. He had the honour (the first of his family who attained it) of having his portrait engraved by Radclyffe, of Birmingham; and at his death, in 1863, the greatest demonstrations of respect and regret were exhibited by Birmingham Churchmen.

His printed works were :—

Sermon on “Judicial Papal Blindness,” 1825.

“Memoirs of a West India Planter,” 1827.

“Two Letters on the Slave-Cultured Estates of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.” N.D.

“Letter on Slavery in Reference to the Bible and other Religious Societies.” N.D.

“Reflections on Occurrences at Lichfield.” N.D.

“Antichrist: an Estimate of the Religion of the Times,” 1828.*

“Ecclesiæ Decus et Tutamen,” 1830.

“Second Address to Magdalen Chapel Congregation,” 1846.

“Letter to Lord Ashley on the Pastoral Office,” 1851.

“Legacy of an Octogenarian Pastor,” 1857.

* NOTE.—“It is a good remark of Mr. Riland’s in his ‘Estimate of the Religion of the Times’ that men quarrel with the Decalogue rather than with the Creed. But the quarrel that begins with one generally ends with the other.”—Southey’s “Doctor,” chap. 219.

CHAPTER VI.

THE settlement which had been made by Richard Bisse Riland gave the advowson to his daughters equally, but Mr. Bedford, Lydia's husband, had purchased his brother-in-law, Mr. Williamson's, share, so that he had the sole right of presentation, which he exercised in favour of his son, Wm. Riland Bedford, on the death of John Riland. Mr. Bedford, senior, had property of his own in and about Sutton, and knew its capability for improvement. He had also been engaged professionally in the suits against the Corporation, and thoroughly understood their position and the necessity for development of their trust property. A man of sound sense and much tenacity of purpose, he had always been an advocate of the Enclosure Scheme, and with his son in the rectory the success of the measure was ensured. In 1824 the Act for the enclosure of the waste lands and the commutation of the tithes of Sutton Coldfield became law. For the newly enclosed lands an allotment was given to the rector in lieu of tithes, and a corn rent was fixed for the old enclosures.

The Corporation, as Lords of the Manor, became proprietors of the cottages erected on the waste, and received a considerable extent of common land. The Park was not included in the Enclosure Act, but remained as before, a public property, administered by the

Corporation for the benefit of the inhabitants and the recreation of the neighbourhood. Advantage was taken, however, of the facilities afforded by the measure to improve the Park, and the principal alteration which was effected was the formation of a direct access to it from the town of Sutton. Up to this date the only carriage way thither had been by the Driffold (drift—or drive—fold; where the rangers used to assemble the cattle to mark them before they were depastured), down a steep narrow road, which still leads to Windley Pool, a distance of at least three-quarters of a mile from the town. Sir Edmund Hartopp, to whom the estate of Four Oaks had passed by purchase from Mr. Bateman, desired, like his predecessor, Mr. Luttrell, to extend his demesne on the side of the Park; and, on condition of obtaining a small, but very beautiful, wood of about sixty acres, known as Lady Wood, contiguous to his grounds, he purchased and gave up to the Corporation several fields lying between the town and the Park, ninety acres in extent, and in addition procured and laid out a good road direct from the one to the other.

It is a melancholy picture of human nature that, though the terms were so favourable, some miscreant, who felt displeasure at the negotiation, in April, 1826, set fire to the wood, and but for a providential shower of heavy rain, the Park, and probably other property in the neighbourhood, would have been seriously injured, and many lives might have been lost. Although this diabolical outrage, and some other unseemly demonstrations indicated the existence of a dissatisfied minority among the inhabitants, the substantial opposition to the enclosure was very small, and the immediate increase in the prosperity of the parish in building, population, and employment soon gave universal satisfaction, which was heightened by the provision for education and other charities under the scheme of the Court of Chancery for the appropriation of the Corporation revenue in 1825.

The efforts for education which had been commenced by Richard Bisse Riland had, indeed, been continued by his successor ; and, in 1806, a Sunday School for girls, and, in 1811, a Sunday School for boys had been established, to which the principal persons in the place were contributors, upon the lines which were afterwards followed in the foundation of the Corporation schools, viz., admission by selection, remission of school payments, and rewards of clothing for good conduct, and fines for misbehaviour. These schools soon became very flourishing, as is evidenced by the increase in the number of admissions, the balance in favour of the treasurer, and the necessity for establishing a probationary class ; but, on the opening of the National Schools in 1826, they ceased to be of public importance, and only continued to exist as auxiliaries to the other schools.

The scheme of the Court of Chancery, for the days in which it was framed, was remarkable in its foresight and comprehensiveness. The Elementary Education Acts were not yet thought of, except by some visionary lover of education. The weak point of the Sutton system was the want of compulsory powers, with which the plan would, in all probability, have proved a complete success, instead of being, in the opinion of many good judges, a costly failure. The object of the promoters was to make the schools “ foundation ” rather than “ charity ” schools, *i.e.*, that the boys and girls elected to them by the Corporation should be limited in number, and receive a free education, and suits of clothing during four years, while the ordinary or supernumerary scholars should pay for their education, and all should be liable to be fined for non-attendance ; these forfeits being enforced in the case of the foundation scholars by withholding the clothes until they were paid. Children were not to be admitted until they were six years old at least, and able to read monosyllables. The vested interests of Dame schools were thus respected. A school of industry had been part of the proposals, but, so far as the boys

were concerned, was never attempted ; the girls, however, as a large quantity of needlework was involved in the preparation of the clothing for the foundation scholars, may be said to have had a system of more practical education inculcated upon them, with a certain degree of success, as the annals of prizes obtained for needlework in after years from the Coventry Prize Scheme testified. It was probably to meet the objections of old inhabitants, fearful of being swamped by "foreigners" (for the increase of population, which, prior to 1830, had been barely six per cent., during the decade after the enclosure swelled to more than three times that percentage), that one regulation prescribed that the parents of children considered eligible to receive clothes must have resided eight years in the parish. This, and the restriction of clothing to four suits only, helped to prevent children from staying long enough in the schools to receive the full benefit of the education offered ; boys being not uncommonly withdrawn at ten or eleven years of age. Where, however, the scheme failed most lamentably was in the want of provision for higher education, which might have been obtained by a federation of the schools with the Grammar School. Remembering that the latter was part of Vesey's foundation, that the Corporation were the original governors, and only lost their control over it by their own default in 1634 ; that the schoolhouse itself had been erected in 1727 by the then master, on land purchased by the Corporation, and with a sum of £400 allowed by them, on condition whereof the master undertook to pay a rent of £5, and to instruct in writing, arithmetic, and English a class of twelve boys, parishioners, under the age of fourteen ; and, considering also that in 1819 the master had proposed to be relieved of this obligation, and that an exchange of the school premises for other property was contemplated under the Enclosure Act, it would seem almost incredible that the Corporation should have let slip an opportunity of regaining the control of the whole education of the place, and giving to boys of talent and ambition

the opportunity of rising by merit to the level of the cultivated classes. There is no doubt that the hostile influence which stifled such an improvement proceeded from the master of the Grammar School, who was, by unfortunate precedent, a member of the Corporation; and, being a strict public school man of the tradition of the days before Arnold, kept the profane vulgar at arm's length, with all the ability of a determined Orbilius. An attempt was afterwards made to supply this defect by a Middle School for boys; but, after leading a precarious existence from 1836 until 1853, it was abandoned by the Corporation for a subsidy of £40 to the Grammar School, to enable twelve free scholars to be nominated there.

The mass of the inhabitants, too, it must be said, did not look so much at the quality as at the costliness of the education they were to obtain. A remission of ten shillings appeared to paterfamilias a much larger concession than the opportunity of getting accomplishments for his boy, which would ensure a good start in life; while the farmers and their labourers regarded the schools, the one as a *bonus* to keep down wages, the other as an easy way of earning four suits of clothes at the expense of some gibberish which their boy would forget as soon as he had worn out the last pair of inexpressibles. The scheme was quite good enough for popular opinion, and the tendency in administering it was to minimise its best provisions.

The scheme provided that schools should be established in the town of Sutton itself for fifty of each sex, and at Hill for the same number, with supernumeraries at the discretion of the managers. At Walmley twenty boys and twenty girls were to be clothed. The Corporation subsequently, in 1840, erected a boys' school in a more central position for the southern end of the parish; a mixed school in 1845 on the Coldfield (Boldmere parish); and in 1850 a school nearer the Church at Walmley, a provision which up to 1870 sufficed for the elementary education of the place, with the additional assistance of divers infant schools supported by private benefactions. In

1860 there were six hundred children under instruction. The other charities sanctioned by the scheme may be summarised :—

Ten almshouses, with an endowment of 15s. a month for a single inmate, and 25s. for an aged couple. Their number was increased by later benefactions to twenty.

Blankets distributed by the Corporation to poor inhabitants.

A subsidy to a lying-in charity.

Apprentice fees and premiums to children leaving the schools.

Gratuitous medical advice and vaccination to pupils.

Twenty-five pounds each to four “poor maidens, natives or long residents,” on their marriage to suitable persons.

The Lord’s meadow charity, bequeathed by Bishop Vesey, 40s. per annum to each of fifteen poor widows.

William Riland Bedford, born in 1794, was, after a short period of tuition under Mr. Blick at Tamworth, sent to Rugby School in 1804, under Dr. Ingles, who was succeeded in 1807 by Dr. Wool. Nothing in his career there is worthy of mention, save, perhaps, that he gained considerable popularity among his schoolfellows by heading a successful revolt against certain fagging regulations which the juniors considered unjust. He proceeded in 1813 to University College, Oxford, where he was contemporary with Hugo Mavesyn Chadwick, afterwards his neighbour at New Hall, and a traveller of some original enterprise ; Sir Thomas Phillipps, of the famous library, with whom, in later days, he kept up a correspondence ; Herrick (of Beaumanor), Sanders, Wallinger, and other men of more or less literary note, and with the family of one of a higher fame, Percy Bysshe Shelley. Still, his diary gives a low notion of the intellectual life of his college ; and, having a strong turn for versification, Mr. Bedford seems to have employed himself mainly on poetical essays and translations, Latin and English, and, even in his first year,

became a candidate for the Newdigate verse prize, though unsuccessfully, the subject, "The Pantheon," being best treated, in the opinion of the judges, by Francis Hawkins, of St. John's. Mr. Bedford took his B.A. degree in 1816, and M.A. 1820; and, in 1818, he printed in a little volume the rejected exercise, with another longer poem, entitled "Warwick Castle," and some minor pieces, which were favourably noticed in the "Gentleman's Magazine." In the previous year he had been ordained by the Bishop of Worcester, on letters dimissory from the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, to the Curacy of Water Orton; and, in 1819, he was admitted to priest's orders by Bishop Ryder, of Gloucester, as Curate of Broadway and Buckland, where he remained until he came to Sutton Coldfield. He was appointed Domestic Chaplain to the Marquess of Lothian in 1823, which was the only other clerical distinction he obtained, although he received on more than one occasion thanks from his Bishop and Archdeacon for discourses on public occasions; and he printed, in 1828, "Two Sermons on the Scriptural Doctrine of Faith." While he was a sound divine, he was also an energetic magistrate* and country gentleman; the subject of planting and the cultivation of ornamental and timber trees was one of particular interest to him, and he published in 1829 a little volume, "The Midland Forester, by a

* In 1867, in "All the Year Round," one of a series of papers called "Old Stories Retold," contained a statement that the Rev. W. R. Bedford made an injudicious visit to Abraham Thornton, accused of the murder of Mary Ashford, in 1819, in Penns Lane. The present writer appealed to Mr. Charles Dickens to correct a misstatement, which the date of Mr. Bedford's ordination alone was sufficient to invalidate, and on July 6th, 1867, the eminent novelist inserted a most handsome contradiction, which, in a letter to Mr. Walter Thornbury, the author of the article entitled "A Wager by Battle" ("Letters," Vol. III., p. 239), he says, he felt it impossible to refuse, sympathising as he did with a son "reasonably jealous for his father's reputation." It is possible that the statement might be founded on something which passed when Mr. William Bedford, senr., committed

Woodman of Arden," which contains much valuable information as to the principal varieties of trees and their adaptability to different aspects and situations. Judging from the MS. collection on the subject which he left, he seems to have contemplated a larger work. Practically, his love for trees was of the utmost advantage to Sutton Coldfield at the time of the enclosure. He planted extensively on his own account, not merely in situations likely to improve his own allotments, but where woods were of general utility; and he persuaded his neighbours to do the same, so that the newly reclaimed fields soon rivalled the old in beauty and shelter. In 1833 Mr. Bedford, from his own private funds, erected a new wing to the rectory house, and modernised its front by taking down the old

Thornton for trial. As a specimen of the general feeling on the subject of Thornton's acquittal, a letter may be given addressed—

“ The Hon. Justice Bedford, Esqr.

Honoured Sir,—Please not to lay this letter nor the other before my Master, as he mite think I mite have spent my time better. The words which I have expressed will not surprise him, as he has often heard me repeat them to numbers of his Customers, respecting Clark Tandy's conduct, and likewise Miss Mary Jenkins. Mr. Wilson has relations that are very intimate acquaintants with thorntons, and that is Mr. Jenkins at the Bull's head, Coleshill Street, Birmingham. The Miss Jenkins I mention is sister to him at the Bull's head, and is Housekeeper to her uncle at Waterorton. She had an uncle Jenkins died at lapworth at the house called the high Chimneys, and Mr. Burge married the widow, and I am well convinced that Thomas Johns and Isaac Green are well acquainted with Mr. Burge; the was all 3 on the Jury for Abrm Thornton, and what makes me think the were no better than the should be, Miss Mary Jenkins laughed and said to me, she did not pretend to doubt of his guilt, but it would not come to hanging. Indeed, sir, I thought that very plain language. Sir, I am your obedient and Humble servant,

E—— R——

When Miss Jenkins made her speech
was very soon after Thornton was retaken.”

courtyard wall, tithe barn, and filling up the pond where the "meat fish" had been kept in his grandfather's time; he also added at the same time stables and offices. He was also earnest in his exertions for the spiritual good of his parishioners, and took the initiative in the extension of church accommodation, so greatly needed in the wide, and then rapidly increasing, parish of Sutton Coldfield. The first field for these operations was the northern part of the parish, remote from the town, and, until the enclosure, wild and sparsely populated. Mr. Bedford obtained subscriptions to the amount of nearly £1,500, and erected in 1835 a chapel-of-ease, in the meagre Gothic of that period,—on land given by Mr. Hacket, of Moor Hall, with a residence for the incumbent,—bearing the balance of the cost, which amounted to another £1,500 at least, and providing the endowment from his own resources. The church, dedicated to St. James, was consecrated on 14th December, 1835, by the same Bishop Ryder from whom Mr. Bedford had received his priest's orders, who was then Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. In the year following, the Archdeaconry of Coventry, including Sutton Coldfield, was detached from the See of Lichfield, and added to that of Worcester.

The example thus set was not long before it was followed, and now the southern portion of Sutton Coldfield was the scene of the operation. Mr. Bedford had engaged the services of a clergyman, who conducted public worship at two of the schoolrooms, on the south-eastern and south-western sides of the high road towards Birmingham; but it was a church for the first mentioned of these districts which in 1841 was contemplated, the principal mover in the matter being Miss Lucy Riland, daughter of the last rector, who desired, in conjunction with her brother, to endow the church, on condition of receiving the privilege of presenting the first incumbent. Her plan was that the church should be so placed as to accommodate the long outlying hamlet of Wigginshill, running into the parish

of Curdworth, and from an early period independent to some extent of Sutton Coldfield, as it paid tithes to a separate owner until they were purchased by Mr. Richard Riland in the middle of the eighteenth century. This Mr. Bedford thought unwise, believing that the south-western portion (or Coldfield) would increase more rapidly in population, and that a church situated midway would supply the needs of both. While declining to avail himself of the power which he had as rector to veto the project entirely, he tried every legitimate mode of argument and remonstrance to bring Miss Riland's friends to his views, and it is no exaggeration to say that his ill success in these efforts shortened his life. He had in 1842 received a severe shock from the appalling suddenness of the death of his friend Mr. Barker, and his own death was equally sudden. It occurred on the 6th July, 1843, in the street in Birmingham, the cause being apoplexy. He had married, in 1823, Grace Campbell, youngest daughter (and eventually co-heir) of Charles Sharpe, of Hoddon Castle, Dumfriesshire, by whom he had five sons, the eldest of whom at the time of his father's death had not attained his seventeenth year. It was therefore necessary to fill up the vacant rectory with a clergyman who would occupy the post until the heir was of sufficient age to undertake it, and such an incumbent was found in Richard Williamson, cousin, on the mother's side, of the late rector, and then headmaster of Westminster School. This excellent man was probably, on the whole, the most distinguished scholar and best pastor who ever presided at Sutton. He had not been more successful at Westminster, it is true, in arresting the downward tendency which is apt in cycles to make itself felt at schools, than Wordsworth was at Harrow, or Goulburn was to be at Rugby, but it was from no want of zealous conscientious work on his own part. A careful account of the discipline of the school in the "Quarterly Journal of Education" for 1832 shows at once his industry and acumen, while he left one permanent memorial of his administration,

ever grateful to the artistic world, in his reform of the costumes of the annual Latin Play, to explain which he wrote a short excursus to the "Greek Antiquities" of Lambert Bos, which was printed under the title of "Eunuchus Palliatus," in 1839. Small as the numbers of the school were during his mastership, a very large proportion of his pupils were highly distinguished in after life, especially in the ranks of the clergy of the Church of England. He had been himself educated at the school, but not on the foundation, and had been chosen fellow of Trinity, Cambridge, where he took his B.A. degree in 1825, as seventh wrangler, and fourth in the Classical Tripos. He was also junior medallist, and obtained the Members' Prize for Bachelors in 1827. He was created D.D. by Royal Mandate in 1835. For some time he continued, as he was legally entitled to do, to hold Sutton Coldfield Rectory with his headmastership, but his increasing devotion to his parochial charge induced him to resign his school in 1846, and for the next four years to devote himself unremittingly to the duties of a parish priest, in which his scholarship and high personal conscientiousness combined to cause him to excel. The various plans of church extension commenced in his predecessor's time were not allowed to stagnate under his regime. The new church at Walmley was consecrated in 1845, and, a parsonage house having previously been erected, a district was assigned to it; but the remaining portion of the parish towards the south was not forgotten, for the erection of a schoolroom on the "Coldfield" by the Corporation gave the opportunity for establishing regular services on Sundays in that locality; a movement which in a few years' time ripened into a church, vicarage house, and independent parish.

Naturally, however, the value of Dr. Williamson's qualities and experience was chiefly felt in the education of the place, and, among other well-considered schemes for the good of the people, he founded a permanent library, which he intended to develop into something

like the modern institute. In his day, indeed, the intellectual society of Sutton, always of some account, had reached its zenith. The two headmasters, who occupied the school house during his time, were both writers of some reputation ; the first, Mr. Eccleston, B.A., of Dublin, was author of a work of considerable merit on English Antiquities ; the second, Josiah Wright, a high wrangler at Cambridge, produced "David, King of Israel," and other admirable educational volumes. Mr. Eccleston, who was, like his pupil, the well-known Mr. Bellew, somewhat erratic in his life, died on the distant shore of Tasmania, where he had gone to preside over an educational foundation. Mr. Wright remained at Sutton until 1863, when he established himself with private pupils at St. Leonards-on-Sea. At Four Oaks, Sir Edmund Hartopp (second baronet) had constantly the company of his nephew, the late principal of Brasenose, Dr. Cradock. The Mendhams and their frequent visitor, John Riland, were labouring on their anti-Papal treatises ; at the house below theirs, the granddaughter of old Warden Duncumb, Miss Steele Perkins, was writing elegant and polished verses, and over the way the Master of Clare would often be staying with his sisters ; a little further down the street another lady, Miss Bracken, was compiling with studious industry the materials of a history of the Royal Town, while the Messrs. Webster were not only spinning the wire which was soon to bridge the Atlantic, in an electric cable, but entertaining their friends and connections, the Darwins, Merivales, Robert Lowe, and George Dawson. At the Driffold, Dr. Bodington had published his pamphlet on the cure of consumption, which was the commencement of the wiser treatment of that fell disease by bright and bracing air. Hugo Chadwick, if not on his rambles, which extended from Vancouver to Natal, was bringing home strange creatures, and writing five-act tragedies and "other unpublished poems," to say nothing of letters on every conceivable subject,

adorned with every kind of emphasis and illustration;* while close by, the new and flourishing public school, which had replaced the old Catholic seminary of Oscott, full of the flower of the youth of the ancient faith, was presided over by Dr. (soon to be Cardinal) Wiseman. The scholarly and kindly rector made a worthy centre to such a society.

Unfortunately his reign was not of long duration, for early in 1850 he received from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster the offer of the vicarage of Pershore, in Worcestershire, which family reasons inclined him to accept, and he took leave of the parish in the autumn of that year, his successor, William Kirkpatrick Riland Bedford, who had been ordained to the curacy of Southwell, Notts, in the previous year, having been admitted to priest's orders by the Bishop of Worcester, and inducted to the rectory in October, 1850.

* "With regard to your Electioneering information, it is highly probable I may be halfway to New Zealand before anything like county voting may be required. But I will not fail to bear in mind the contents of your note, and though *I myself* may happen to be some thirteen or fourteen thousand miles from Albion's shores at the time, that is no reason why a *Tenant or so* should not cry "*Spooner, or Newdegate for ever,*" and go up "*to the scratch,*" or the Pole, or Poll, or whatever those versed in Elections may call it. For my part "*SCRATCH*" has always seemed to *me* the proper term, because one is *liable to have one's clothes torn off one's back* in getting to the *place of EXECUTION*, the polling booth!

I remember when you were about 7 years' old, getting most woefully SCRATCHED at Coleshill, to say nothing of a *brick end & a decayed egg*, which were hurled at me on my *passage thro' the Gulf of Brummagem*, in consequence of my having "*the impudence*" to sport the Conservative colours. But I have arrived at "*the dreary fuimus,*" and things are different *now* compared with what *they were*

"In my hot youth when George the 3d was King."

Yours very sincerely,

24th Ap., 52."

H. MAVESYN CHADWICK.

Of the thirty-nine years which have elapsed since this change, it is not for the writer to give a history. These memoirs are partly personal, partly historical. Regarding the present occupant of the family living from the first point of view, it is for some other pen to fulfil the task of description, if it is ever worth while to do so; and the history of the parish is too much interwoven with his own to allow him to take quite an unprejudiced survey of the events which would form the staple of the record. The short chronology of the three centuries appended, will suffice to show that the march of improvement has not been stayed:—

- 1559. 30th December, Queen Elizabeth sells advowson of Sutton Coldfield to Glascock and Blunt, who sell it on the same day to John Gibbons, LL.D.
- 1560. 10th January, advowson sold to Thomas Gibbons of New Hall.
- 1586. Thomas Gibbons sells advowson to John Shilton.
- 1617. John Shilton presents John Burges, M.D.
- 1635. Robert Shilton presents Anthony Burges on death of John.
- 1642. James Fleetwood presented by the Crown, Anthony Burges having vacated the rectory.
- 1650. James Fleetwood being unable to obtain possession of the rectory, Burges returns.
- 1662. John Shilton presents William Watson on resignation of Burges.
- 1689. John Shilton presents his son-in-law, John Riland, on death of Watson.
- 1701. John Riland builds rectory house.
- 1706. John Riland pays off mortgage on advowson.
- 1710. Advowson conveyed to John Riland.
- 1720. Richard Riland presents himself on death of John Riland.

- 1758. Richard Bisse Riland presents himself on death of Richard Riland.
- 1758. Corporation give £737 to new pewing the church.
- 1759. Nave of church partially falls down.
- 1761. Church re-opened after being entirely renovated.
- 1763. Brickfields near rectory levelled.
- 1778. Enclosure proposed and rejected.
- 1782. Richard Riland accepts Water Orton, which he holds until 1784.
- 1786. New bells (six) hung in tower of church.
- 1790. John Riland presents himself on death of Richard Bisse Riland.
- 1795. Peal of six bells by Mears, hung in tower.
- 1805. Enclosure proposed and rejected.
- 1806. Girls' (and, 1811, boys') Sunday Schools established.
- 1822. William Bedford presents William Riland Bedford on death of John Riland.
- 1824. Enclosure Act passed.
- 1825. Scheme for Corporation charities issued by Court of Chancery.
- 1834. Rectory house enlarged by William Riland Bedford.
- 1835. District church at Hill consecrated.
- 1843. William Kirkpatrick Riland Bedford presents Richard Williamson on death of William Riland Bedford.
- 1845. Walmley church consecrated, and district parish assigned.
- 1850. William Kirkpatrick Riland Bedford presents himself on Richard Williamson accepting vicarage of Pershore.
- 1855. District assigned to Hill church.
- 1857. Boldmere church consecrated and district assigned.
- 1863. Church repaired and new roof to nave erected.
- 1864. Scheme for Grammar School altered by Charity Commissioners.

- 1874. Church again improved and reseated.
- 1875. Order in Council passed for a future distribution of the tithes to the district parishes.
- 1878. Iron church at Maney opened.
- 1880. Church enlarged by new north aisle.
- 1880. Building at Whitehouse Common opened for service.
- 1882. Scheme for Grammar School came into operation.
- 1885. Peal of eight bells by Taylor, of Leicester, placed in tower of church.
- 1886. Municipal charter granted to Sutton Coldfield, J. B. Stone first mayor.

APPENDIX.

The following letter among Mr. W. R. Bedford's papers gives some interesting details of the family connection of the various branches of the Rylands :—

“Hinton, nr. Brackley, Northamptonshire,
29th March, 1842.

Dear Sir,—On the other side you will find all the information I am myself possessed of with respect to my ancestors and the places of their habitation. As far as I am able to judge, they seem to have been nothing more than respectable and independent yeomen, but if you can prove that they were descended from persons who made a greater figure in the history of the world, I shall, of course, be most happy to hear it. To whatever line the old Mansion at Radbrook belonged, whether to the Rilands or Rylands, I do most sincerely hope that it was not materially injured ; and that, if it had any architecture to boast of, it will be allowed to retain its original appearance untouched by the Vandal fabricators of sash windows, and other tasteless innovations of modern times. With many thanks for the information you have given me,

Believe me to remain,

Yours truly,

W. D. RYLAND.

If you should answer this letter, perhaps you will have the kindness to state in Heraldic terms what the Riland arms are. Those which Mr. Riland has sent me are a chevron gules between three martlets, also gules, upon a field argent, but the field of your arms appears to be sable, though in other respects resembling them.

The arms which I bear, and which my Father and Grandfather bore before me, are those of the Colletts ; my great grandfather, Joseph Riland, having married an heiress of that family, but though she may have been an heiress in the popular sense of the word (though she may have had lands or money), I very much doubt whether she was an heiress in the heraldic sense, as she appears to have had both brothers and sisters, all of whom had children. I have, therefore, very little

confidence in my right to them, and should greatly prefer having the arms, if any, which belong to my own name.

The crest of Mr. Riland's arms are two serpents, but in what position the heralds call it I am sure I cannot tell. It is something like the caduceus of Mercury, but without the staff."

The pedigree attached to this letter is not very comprehensible, but the interesting point in it is that Joseph Ryland (the son of John Ryland, of Hinton-on-the-Green, Gloucestershire), before his death in 1748, was visited by Mr. Riland, of Sutton Coldfield (viz., Richard, father of Richard Bisse and John Riland, rectors of Sutton) at Ditchford, where he then resided, and was acknowledged by him as a cousin. This Joseph, who married Freelove Collet, of Slaughter, and was father of John Collet Ryland, A.M., died 1792.

"But, really," says the writer, "if people will have so many children and call them all after their uncles and aunts for so many generations, I can not undertake to trace their pedigrees."—W. D. R.

Mr. W. D. Ryland concludes thus: "I need not bring this pedigree lower than this John Ryland, A.M., the celebrated but eccentric Baptist Preacher, of Northampton, who was my grandfather. He had three sons, Dr. Ryland, of Bristol; James Ryland, who had an appointment in the Audit Office; and my father, who for very many years was Civil Secretary to the Governor-General of the Canadas, and a member of the Legislative Council. I am his eldest son, and took my A.B. degree at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1825; my only brother, who is married to a niece of the late Admiral Sir John Gore, has still an appointment in Canada."—W. D. R.

FAMILY TREE OF RILANDS OF SUTTON.

TABLE I.

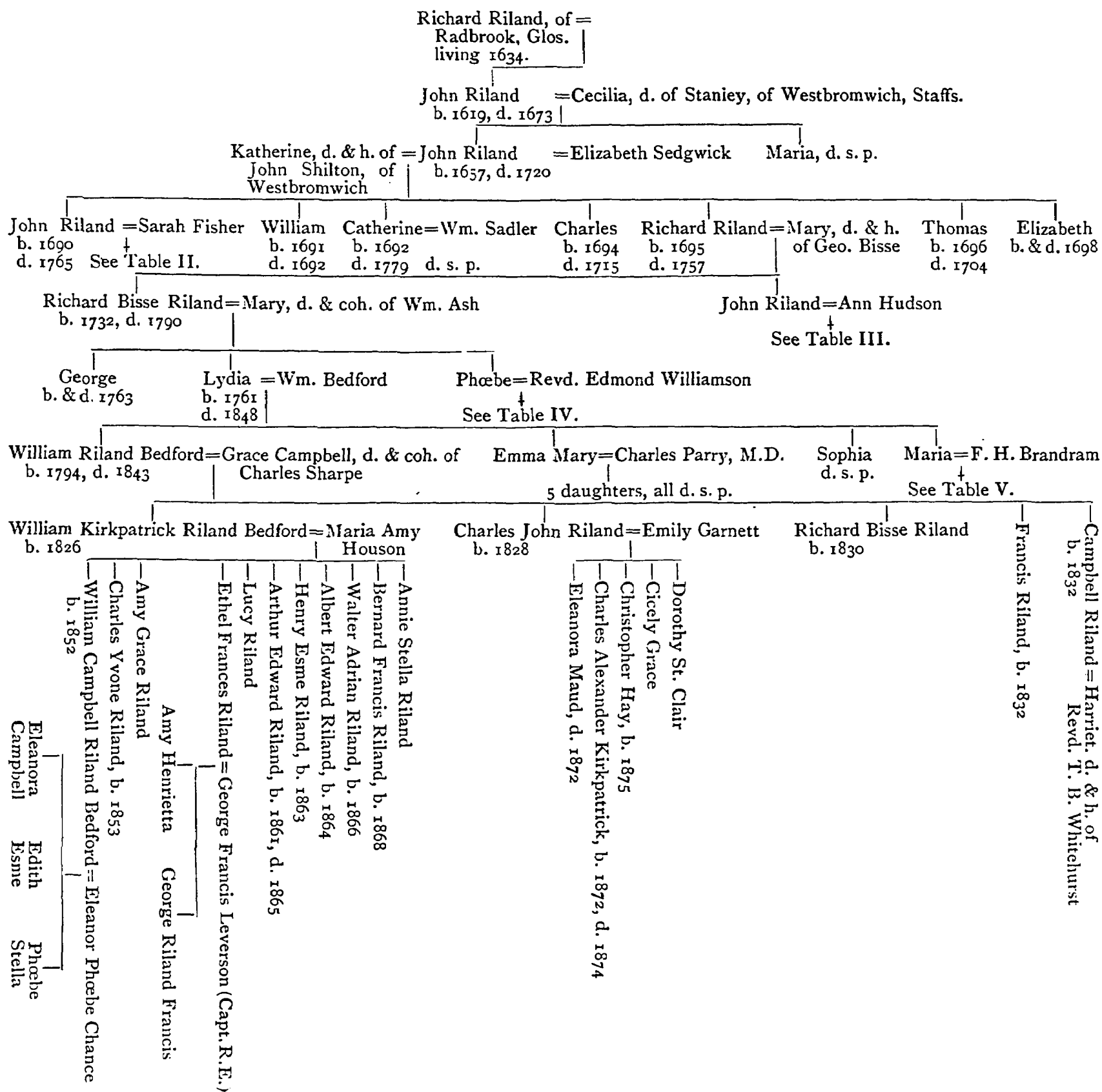


TABLE II.

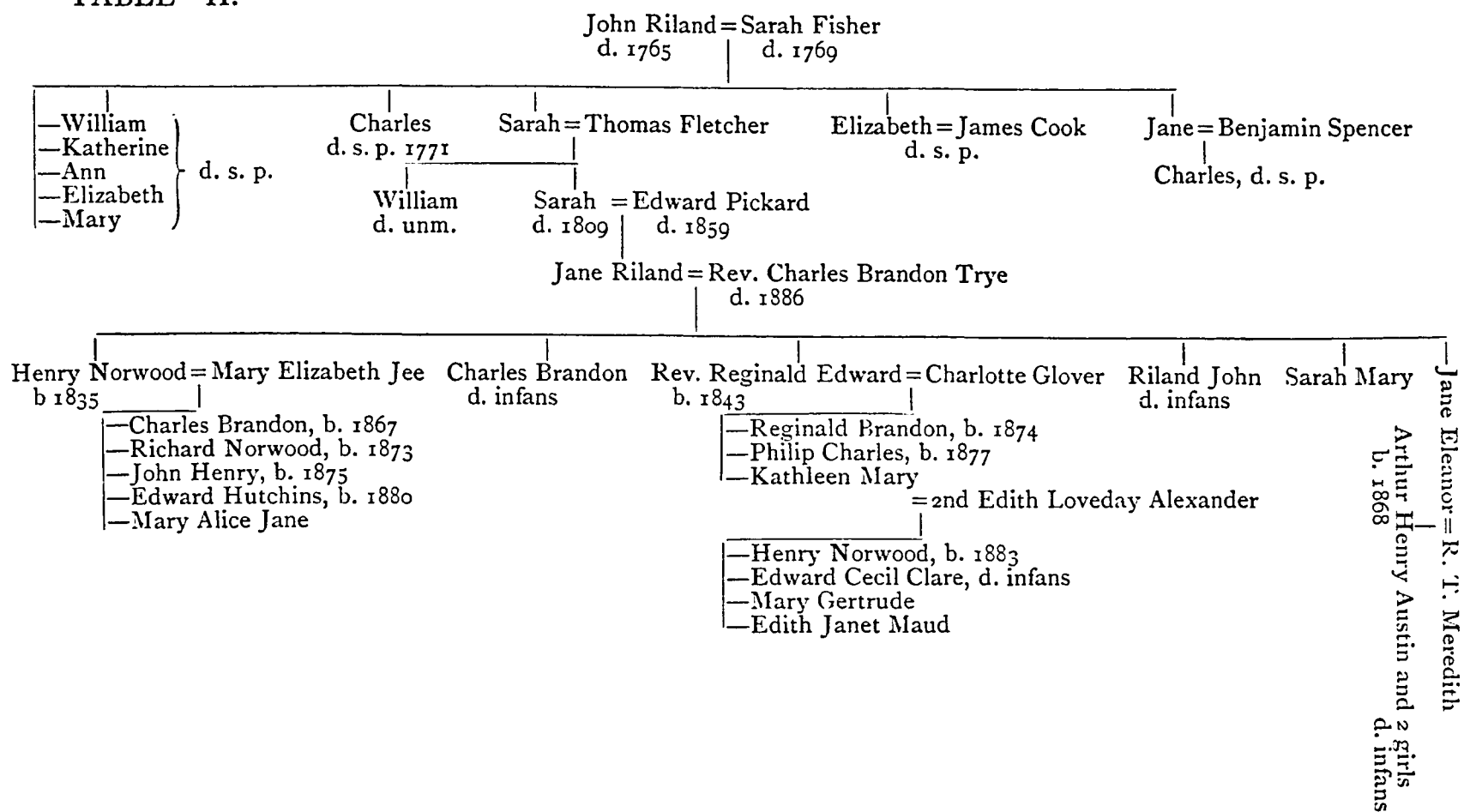


TABLE III.

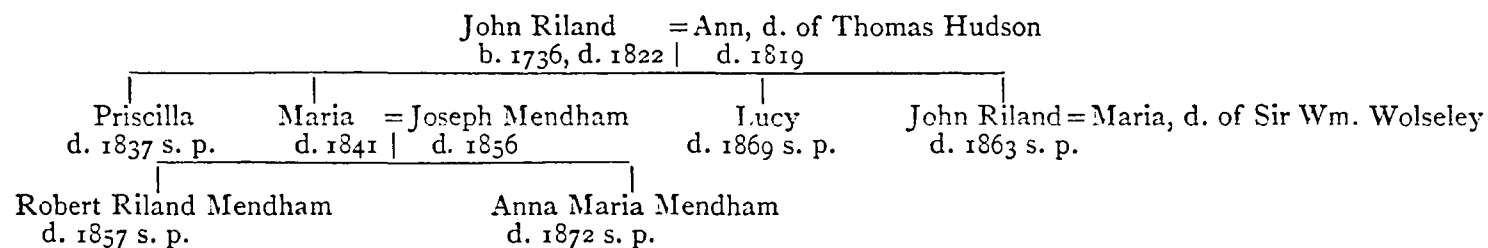


TABLE IV.

Phœbe Riland=Rev. Edmond Williamson d. 1840 | d. 1839			
Edmond Riland Williamson=Charlotte, d. of John Guy d. 1864	Richard Williamson=Anne, d. of Robt. Gray, Bp. of Bristol d. 1865 s. p.	William Williamson=Jane, d. of James Ferguson, M.D. d. 1875 s. p.	
Anne Jane Williamson=Geo. Charles (M.A., Rev.) d. 1879 s. p.		1859 d. { Frances — 1876 s. { Catherine — 1857 s. { Elizabeth — 1888 p. { Anne —	
		Rev. Carter Smith=Mary d. 1864	d. 1875
Richard Goodhall Smith=Amy Sterry d. 1880	Frances Hester=Edwd. Atkinson, D.D. d. 1866	Mary Carter=T. H. Plowman d. 1865	Ann Maria
Charles Morden Smith Trevor=Agnes, d. of Joseph Thomas b. 1866			Elizabeth Harriet
			Edmond Henry Carter d. 1875 s. p.

TABLE V.

Maria Bedford=Francis Holles Brandram d. 1874 | d. 1869			
Sophia d. 1843	Frances Maria=(1) Aretas Akers d. 1856	Emma Eardley d. 1842, æt. 14	Eleonora Ann=J. F. McLennan d. 1881
	Aretas Akers Douglas=Adeline Mary Smith	Eleanor=Edward Norman Mary	Emilie Thal=Rev. Alfred Wigan
	—Aretas —Adeline Frances —George Alexander —Ethel Margaret —Bertha Marion —Evelyn Amy	Isabella Frances	—Francis William —Alfred Lewis, d. 1888 —Amy Elizabeth —Eleanor Jane —Herbert —Emily Gertrude —Alice Mary —Edith Maude —Margaret Blanche —Cuthbert John —William Cecil —Evelyn Harriet
		—Sibella Akers —Richard Akers d. 1883	—Thomas Bedford Brandram d. 1831 s. p., æt. 7
			—William Adams Brandram d. 1840 s. p., æt. 4

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