



Notable Collections

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NOTES ON THE PICTURES AT BELVOIR CASTLE BY LADY VICTORIA MANNERS PART III

PORTRAITS by Hogarth are rarely to be found, we believe, in private houses; the two charming examples in the Belvoir collection of the Duchess of Somerset and her daughter are therefore worthy of especial notice. The Duchess, who was Lady Charlotte Finch, the second wife of the sixth Duke, looks an ideally beautiful *grand dame* in her picturesque gown of grey satin and lace, while Lady Granby (wife of the famous Marquis) is a coquettish figure with a dainty cap perched on the back of her head. An amusing story is told of the Duchess. In an impulsive moment she ventured to tap her husband familiarly on the shoulder, whereupon he drew himself up and remarked: "Madam! my first wife was a Percy, and yet *she* never ventured to take such a liberty with me!" No wonder he is known to pos-

terity as "the proud Duke of Somerset," and that Macaulay says of him that he was "a man in whom the pride of birth and rank amounted almost to a disease." The greater number of the family portraits are, however, by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Hoppner. A magnificent full-length of Lord Granby, by Reynolds, hangs in the large dining-room; the famous Marquis is in the uniform of "The Blues," with a cuirass over the waistcoat, and is leaning his left hand on a mortar; an engagement is going on in the background. Lord Granby, contrary to the

custom of his time, wore no wig, although quite bald at the age of twenty-four; in this picture he is represented bare-headed, perhaps in allusion to the episode at the battle of Warburg, where he lost his hat, but charged on regardless of the fact that his baldness made him a most conspicuous figure. "It was in this attack that Lord Granby, at the head of the Blues, had his hat blown off, a big bald circle in his head rendering the loss more conspicuous. But he never minded; stormed still on, bare bald head



CHARLES, FOURTH DUKE OF RUTLAND, IN A FANCY DRESS
 BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH, R.A.



CHARLOTTE, DUCHESS OF SOMERSET, SECOND WIFE OF CHARLES,
SIXTH DUKE OF SOMERSET BY W. HOGARTH



MARY ISABELLA, DUCHESS OF RUTLAND, WIFE OF THE
FOURTH DUKE . FULL-LENGTH, LIFE-SIZE

(From the original by Sir Joshua Reynolds, burnt at the fire)

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among the helmets and sabres; and made it very evident that had he instead of Sackville led at Minden there had been a different story to tell. The English by their valour, and he, greatly distinguished themselves."—De Mauvillon (translated by Carlyle), *History of Frederick II. of Prussia*. Hanging in the same room is a portrait, also by Reynolds, of the Marquis's son Charles, fourth Duke of Rutland, in his robes, and holding in his hand the wand of office. The following extract relating to this picture is taken from Messrs. Graves and Cronin's *History of the Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.* "The Prince Regent having a fine whole-length picture of the late Duke

of Rutland in his possession, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which he valued highly, no sooner heard of the loss of another picture of his Grace, by the same artist, in the calamitous fire at Belvoir Castle, than he ordered his picture to be immediately sent down with a letter requesting that he might have the gratification of thus restoring that family loss."—*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1816, page 554.

This picture was probably painted for George Prince of Wales after the death of the Duke in 1787, and was presented by him to the fifth Duke of Rutland in 1816. Sir Walter Armstrong, however, gives the date of the picture as having been painted in 1782.



THE MARQUIS OF GRANBY AND LADY E. NORMAN WHEN CHILDREN
BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS



CHARLES, FOURTH DUKE OF RUTLAND
FULL-LENGTH, LIFE-SIZE
BY SIR J. REYNOLDS



LORD ROBERT MANNERS, CAPTAIN OF H.M.S.
"RESOLUTION," 1782 BY SIR J. REYNOLDS
FULL-LENGTH

An admirable head of the Duke by the same great master hangs in the library; the expression of the handsome face is full of spirit and energy. It is melancholy to remember that a career so full of promise was cut short at the early age of thirty-four. It is difficult for we weak moderns to realise the Irish customs of those days, but from contemporary memoirs it is easy to see that the Duke's life must have been

shortened, not only by his arduous duties as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, but by the incessant conviviality in which he was obliged to participate. The Duke and his wife, Mary Isabella (daughter of Charles Noel Somerset, fourth Duke of Beaufort), were accounted the handsomest couple of their day; by a stroke of dire ill-luck all the Belvoir portraits of the Duchess were burnt in the fire of 1816. There is, however, an excellent copy of the famous full-length, which Messrs. Graves and

Cronin think is a replica of Smirke's copy of the original, painted in 1799 for the Duchess's parents, and which now hangs at Badminton. "Permission was given by the seventh Duke of Beaufort before 1853 to the fifth Duke of Rutland for a copy to be made of Smirke's copy at Badminton. The late Duchess Dowager of Rutland told Sir F. Grant, R.A., that Sir Joshua made her try on eleven different dresses before he painted her 'in that bedgown.' No doubt the bedgown was the dress with the least marked character

about it."—*Tom Taylor*, vol. i., page 248 (Graves & Cronin). A mezzotint by Valentine Green of this picture was sold in March, 1901, for the record price of 1,000 guineas! In the Elizabeth salon are charming miniatures of the Duchess by Andrew Plimer, Cosway and Nixon, which luckily escaped the fire of 1816.

Hanging in the ball-room near the Duchess's portrait is an extremely fine full length by Reynolds of Lord Robert Manners, the only brother of the fourth Duke of Rutland and second son of John, Marquis of Granby. A most gallant sailor and of great personal beauty, he was killed at the early age of twenty-four, from wounds received in action when in command of the *Resolution* under Admiral Rodney in 1782. His letter (1782) from his ship—"I am as well as a man can be with one leg off, one wounded, and right arm broke.



CHARLES, FOURTH DUKE OF RUTLAND, LIFE-SIZE (TO KNEES)
BY THE REV. M. W. PETERS, A.R.A.

The doctor who is sitting by me at present says there are every hopes of recovery"—reveals his indomitable spirit.

A monument by Nollekens in Westminster Abbey was erected at the national expense to Lord Robert, Captain Blair, and Captain Bayne.

The following letter referring to this portrait has lately been discovered by Lord Roos in an old folded up newspaper at Belvoir. Unfortunately the name of the person to whom it is addressed is missing,



ELIZABETH, DUCHESS OF RUTLAND, WIFE OF
THE FIFTH DUKE FULL-LENGTH, LIFE-SIZE
BY JOHN HOPPNER, R.A.



JOHN HENRY, FIFTH DUKE OF RUTLAND
FULL-LENGTH, LIFE-SIZE
BY JOHN HOPPNER, R.A.

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but it was probably intended for the Duke's secretary or chaplain :—

J. Reynolds to

1782, June 6.

I shall certainly execute the commission which his Grace has ordered with the greatest care possible as soon as ever I receive the picture, and hope it will be such a picture as will give an opportunity of doing something that shall correspond to his Grace's idea.

The Death of Lord Robert Manners, by T. Stothard, R.H., is a fine picture, and hangs in the new library. A beautiful half-length portrait by Reynolds of Lady Tyrconnel (Lord Robert's only sister) is in the Regent's gallery; this lady was divorced in 1777, and afterwards married the Honourable Philip Leslie, son of Lord Newark. She is here depicted seated, dressed in a rich white satin dress trimmed with gold, and in her hair are white



THE DEATH OF THE STAG BY ANGELICA KAUFFMAN (26 x 36)

I knew very little of Lord Robert but was very well acquainted with his Grace's great affection to him, I therefore felt and sympathized with him. I really think in losing him we have paid the full value of what we have got. It is the general opinion that we have lost the most promising youth in the whole navy, and I am sure from what I saw of him and the letters I have seen from him I am most perfectly inclined to confirm their opinion.

I beg my most respectful compliments to their Graces and am
Dear Sir,

Your most humble and obedient servant,
J. REYNOLDS.

feathers. Messrs. Graves & Cronin publish the following extract from Sir Joshua's note book in reference to this picture :—"Paid for, September, 1776, Lady Tyrconnel, £73 10s. Memo., 1775, Lady Tyrconnel, first, olio e poi colori con cera senza olio."

But perhaps the most fascinating of the series of portraits by Reynolds is the delightful group hanging in the centre of the picture gallery, of the children of the fourth Duke of Rutland, the young Marquis of



Notes on the Pictures at Belvoir Castle

Granby, afterwards John Henry, fifth Duke, and his sister, Lady Elizabeth Manners, afterwards Lady E. Norman, with their favourite dogs "Turk" and "Crab." Sir Walter Armstrong gives the date of this picture as having been painted in 1780. As Lady Elizabeth was born in 1776, she would be about four or five years old, and the boy (born 1778) about two or three years of age. "Sat in 1780 as Lord Granby and Lady Elizabeth Manners, children of the Duke of Rutland, paid for 1781, Duke of Rutland, £200. Exhibited at Royal Academy in 1781, No. 140" (Graves & Cronin). The picture is extraordinarily brilliant in colour—the landscape behind the figures, with its wind-blown trees and stormy sky is most characteristic of Reynolds at his best. The dogs are especially good, "Turk" being almost as fine as in the picture of him by the famous G. Stubbs (No. 70, New Library).

Of Reynolds' great rival, Gainsborough, the collection possesses four pictures. Hanging opposite the children are two magnificent landscapes by that master—(41) *Late Sunset with horses at a Pond* and (72) *The Woodcutter's Home*, both purchased by the fourth Duke for the modest sum of £160; a third landscape is almost as fine; while the portrait of Charles, fourth Duke, in a Van Dyck dress, is beautiful in its strength of colour and refinement of expression. Mrs. Bell, in her book, *Thomas Gainsborough*, states that this picture was painted between 1774 and 1788.

It is curious to note that the collection does not contain one picture by Romney or Lawrence; there are, however, several fine Hoppners and some interesting portraits by the Rev. M. W. Peters, A.R.A. This artist was the rector of Knipton, a village near Belvoir; after the death of the fourth Duke he acted as curator of the pictures at the Castle. His portrait of Mary Isabella and her husband hang in the new library, and a charming *Girl with Jay in a Cage* show how fine a colourist he was, and make us regret that he was unable to devote his life entirely to art. He enjoys the distinction of being the only clergyman who ever became a full academician.

Hoppner's portraits of John, fifth Duke, are very fine, both in execution and colour; that in the Regent's gallery, in the uniform of the Leicester Yeomanry, holding his busby, is perhaps the better. Hanging as a pendant to this is an admirable portrait, also by Hoppner, of the Duke's wife, Lady Elizabeth Howard, fifth daughter of Frederick, fifth Earl of Carlisle. The Duchess is depicted standing in the beautiful garden which she laid out at Belvoir; she is leaning against a pedestal and is holding a straw hat with feathers.

In the small drawing-rooms are some excellent pictures by Angelica Kauffman, *The Death of the Stag* is the largest and most important, the two small pictures *Eloisa* and *Deserted Maria* (from Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*) are most charming. The unhappy Eloisa is represented dressed in her nun's white habit, gazing sadly upon Abelard's ring upon her finger, beside her lies a letter from the faithless lover.

"Soon as thy letters trembling I unclose,
That well-known name awakens all my woes.

Another picture by Angelica of a lady seated in a garden is supposed to be a likeness of herself; it is a delightful portrait, and full of that grace and refinement for which the artist is celebrated.

In a small dining-room are several excellent sporting pictures by G. Stubbs, R.A., a *Landscape with Dogs, Turk and Crab, Lion devouring a Stag*.

The collection contains but few modern pictures; an early water-colour by Turner of the Castle, *The Melton Breakfast* and the *Belvoir Pack* (the latter an admirable example of animal portraiture), and a portrait of the sixth Duke, by Sir Francis Grant, are among some of the most important.

The above brief and cursory notes do not attempt to give an exhaustive account of the pictures; to do so would far surpass the limits of this article. The writer has endeavoured merely to give a brief description of some of the more important examples of each school represented in the collection.

