

RICHARD BAXTER AND THE COUNTESS OF BALCARRES (1621 ?-1706 ?).

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WHEN Baxter came to London from Kidderminster on '13 April, 1660' (R.B., ii. 215) he may well have felt like Abraham that he knew not whither he was going. For he had much to learn about the state of parties, nor did he clearly know his own mind. But, at least, he did not find himself a complete stranger. Friends had 'called him up.' One of the best of them, Mr. Thomas Foley, welcomed him to his home in 'Austin-Fryers' (R.B., i. 106) and others, as occasion arose, were eager to sustain him under the tremendous strain of fluctuating hopes and fears, combined with chronic weakness and pain, which broke down everything for him during the next two years except his own indomitable spirit. His friends indeed were few and his adversaries many: but the friends he had were 'as an hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' Never, perhaps, did he owe more to friendship, or need it more, than at that time. And the friendships that meant most to him were those of two women, Margaret Charlton, who became his wife in September, 1662; and Anne, Countess of Balcarres, who had first heard of him through her cousin, the Earl of Lauderdale, and had not only heard of him but also had read his books, and made a hero of him in her heart, and, when she came to London with the King (May, 1660) rejoiced to find him there instead of at Kidderminster. No doubt, her personal acquaintance with him was made through Lauderdale. She followed it up in the spirit of a devotee. Wherever he preached, in any of the London Churches, she was usually present. He preached oftenest at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, and there, at any rate, she might be found. She defended him against ignorant or spiteful critics. She consulted him in her difficulties; and opened her house to him as an honoured guest.

Here is the summary account of what Baxter calls "her Quality" which he wrote down in 1664 :

'She is Daughter to the late Earl of *Seaforth*¹ in *Scotland* towards the Highlands, and was married to the Earl of *Balcarres*,² a commander but an enemy to *Cromwell's* perfidiousness, and true to the Person and Authority of the King.³ With the Earl of *Glencairne* he kept up the last war for the King against *Cromwell*; and his Lady, through dearness of affection, marched with him, and lay out of doors with him on the Mountains. At last *Cromwell* drove them out of *Scotland*; and they went together beyond Sea to the King, where they long followed the Court, and he was taken for the Head of the Presbyterians,⁴ with the King, and by evil instruments fell out with the Lord Chancellor, who prevailing against him upon some advantage, he was for a time forbidden the Court—the Grief whereof, added to the Distempers he had contracted by his warfare on the

¹ Known as Colin the Red Earl of Seaforth, chief of the Mackenzies. He died in 1633.

² Alexander Lindsay (1618-1659), 2nd Lord and 1st Earl of Balcarres. He and Anne Mackenzie were cousins—her mother (Margaret Seyton) and his (Sophia Seyton or Seaton) being daughters of Alexander, Earl of Dunfermline. Isabel, the Earl of Lauderdale's mother, was another daughter of the same. The two cousins were married in April, 1640, at Leslie, the seat of her uncle Lord Rothes who was against the marriage. Their first child was not born till February, 1651 (Charles Lindsay). A second son (Colin Lindsay) followed and three daughters—Anne, Sophia, and Harriet.

³ He took the 'engagement' in December, 1648, and gave himself to Charles II. after his father's death with passionate devotion. He was one of thirteen Earls and Barons who offered themselves for the King's service in the Highlands (June, 1653). But he had no confidence in Glencairn and promoted a petition to the King (Nov. 1653) for his dismissal. A month later he left the army owing to a false charge against his brother-in-law Sir Robert Moray. When Moray was put under arrest, he went over to France (April, 1654) 'burning with anger.' 'His wife determined to accompany him. In the depth of winter, through 400 miles of country occupied by the enemy she travelled in disguise with her husband, the children having been left behind' (in St. Andrews) and arrived safely in Paris by the end of May.—D.N.B.

⁴ His pertinacious advocacy of the Presbyterian proposals was sedulously counteracted by Clarendon whose absolute exclusion from the King's counsels was, on the other hand, made a *sine quâ non* by Balcarres (July, 1655). The Queen-Mother Henrietta (partly from dislike of Hyde) favoured Balcarres and got Charles to induce his sister (Princess of Orange) to take Lady Balcarres into her household. But Clarendon finally prevailed.

cold and hungry mountains, cast him into a consumption of which he died.¹ He was a Lord of excellent Judgment and Honesty ; none being praised equally with him for Learning and understanding in all *Scotland*.² When the Earl of *Lauderdaile* (his near kinsman and great Friend) was Prisoner in Portsmouth and *Windsor-Castle*, he fell into acquaintance with my Books, and so valued them that he read them all, and took notes of them, and earnestly commended them to the Earl of *Balcarres* (with the King). The Earl of *Balcarres* met, at the first sight, with some Passages where he thought I spake too favourably of the Papists, and differed from many other Protestants, and so cast them by, and sent the reason of his distaste to the Earl of *Lauderdaile* : who prest him but to read one of the Books over, which he did ; and so read them all (as I have seen many of them marked with his hand), and was drawn to over-value them more than the Earl of *Lauderdaile*. Hereupon his Lady reading them also, and being a woman of very strong Love and Friendship, with extraordinary Entireness swallowed up in her Husband's Love, for the Books sake and her Husband's sake, she became a most affectionate Friend to me, before she ever saw me. While she was in *France* being zealous for the King's Restoration (for whose cause her Husband had pawned and ruined his Estate) by the Earl of *Lauderdaile's* direction, she with Sir *Robert Moray*, got divers Letters from the Pastors and others there,³ to bear witness of the King's sincerity in the Protestant Religion (among which there is one to me⁴ from M. Gaches). Her great wisdom, modesty, Piety, and sincerity, made her accounted the Saint at the Court. When she came over with the King, her extraordinary Respects obliged me to be so often with her, as gave me acquaintance with her eminency in all the foresaid Virtues.

¹ At the Hague, 30 August, 1659.

² Of the Countess' personal appearance we read—'She was a woman, if the picture apparently painted in Holland during the Protectorate and preserved in Braham Castle may be trusted, of extreme beauty, the face being full of vivacity, sweetness and intelligence.'—D.N.B.

³ Immediately after her husband's death she went to her children in Scotland but returned as soon as possible to do the work in France which Baxter here mentions—a work in which she and the Pastors (though probably *not* Lauderdale or Moray) became unwilling Sponsors for a hideous pretence.

⁴ Preserved in B. MSS. (Treatises), vol. iii., ff. 118-120, together with other particulars of this affair.

She is of solid understanding in Religion, for her Sex ; and of Prudence much more than ordinary, and of great Integrity and Constancy in her Religion and a great Hater of Hypocrisie, and faithful to Christ in an unfaithful world ; and she is somewhat overmuch affectionate to her Friends, which hath cost her a great deal of Sorrow, in the loss of her Husband and since, of other special Friends, and may cost her more when the rest forsake her, as many in Prosperity use to do those that will not forsake their Fidelity to Christ.

' Her eldest Son, the young Earl of Balcarres, a very hopeful Youth, died of a strange Disease, two Stones being found in his Heart, of which one was very great. Being my constant auditor and over-respectful Friend, I had occasion for the Just Praises and Acknowledgments which I have given her ; which the occasioning of these Books hath caused me to mention ' (R.B., i., 121). The reference in these last words is to two books—published, the one in 1662 and the other in 1663. The title of the former is as follows—' The mischiefs of self-ignorance and the Benefits of self-acquaintance opened in Divers Sermons at *Dunstan's West* ; and Published in answer to these Accusations of some and the Desires of others ' 1662. ' The accusations were from men who have been so long in contention that they dream they are still contending and fancie every word they hear from a so-called Adversary must signify some hostile terrible thing : as the scalded head doth fear cold water.' Baxter rightly judged that the best answer to such cavillers lay in the sermons themselves printed just as they were delivered. But, in publishing, he thought most of those who wished to read at leisure what it had done them good to hear, and especially of the Countess, who had heard them all and urged their publication from a belief that they might be ' as effectual upon common hearts ' as they had been upon her own. He yielded to her judgment ; and took the opportunity of prefixing a Dedicatory epistle of a very remarkable character. It is this ' Epistle ' to which I wish to draw attention. There is not a word of the fulsome compliment which so disgusts the reader in many a similar epistle of that time—nothing stronger than the sentence that he is not alone in considering her the ' honour ' of her ' sex and nation.' But it is an appreciation of the Countess, from the highest standpoint, so unreserved in its praise that one has to choose between regarding her as an almost ideal Christian, or Baxter as a sincere but purblind admirer. For

myself, I choose the former. Baxter was not easily captivated by sentiment. His understanding had first to be convinced ; and in this case it was. Nor is it credible that, in writing on the 'mischiefs of self-ignorance' and giving minute directions to the Countess herself how to enlarge self-knowledge, he should have taken insufficient pains to clear up his own perception of the truth. And this, of course, heightens one's sense of wonder at his portrait.

'I perceive'—he says—'you value the subjects which you have found, in the practice of your soul, to be the most useful. As they that know God would fain have all others know him, so those that know themselves, do love the Glass, and would have others to make use of it. I wonder not if your experience of the benefits of self-acquaintance provoke you to desire to have more partakers in so profitable and so sweet a knowledge. Had you not known yourself you had never known your Saviour, your God, your way and your end, as you have done ; you had never been so well acquainted with the symptoms and cure of the diseases of the Soul, the nature and exercise of grace, the way of mortification, and the comfortable supports, refreshments, and foretastes of heavenly believers ; you had never so clearly seen the vanity of all the pomp and fulness of the world, not so easily and resolutely despised its flatteries and baits, nor so quietly borne variety of afflictions, nor imitated Moses (Heb. xi. 25, 26) nor received the holy character (Psal. 15). . . . O Madam how happy are you (if one on earth may be called happy) that have looked home so often and so seriously, that now you can dwell at home in peace, and need not as the ungodly, be a terror to yourself, nor run away from yourself : when impious vagrants have so abused their consciences that they dare not converse with them, nor meet them alone in the dark ! What a mercy is it that in the great Reconciler you are reconciled to your conscience, and that it doth not find you out as an enemy, but is a messenger of peace and good tidings to you ! That you need not the smiles of great ones to refresh you, nor pompous entertainments, complements, plays or sports to recreate you and drive away your sorrows ; but that you can find more blessed and delectable company and employment at home ; That you can daily retire into your self, and there peruse a richer treasure than bodily eyes on earth can see, and there be taken up with a far more contenting satisfactory employment and a more fruitful and pleasant converse and recreation, than any creature in

Court or Countrey can afford ; that your Joy is laid up where the hand of violence cannot touch it ; and that they that can deprive you of estate and liberty and life, yet cannot take your comforts from you ; that when fleshly unthrifths love not home because all is spent and they can expect no better entertainment there than want, confusion, chiding, and distress, you can withdraw from a confused troublesome world into a well-furnished and adorned soul, replenished with the precious fruits of the Spirit, and beautified with the image of your Lord ! O Madam, what sweet and noble employment have you there, in comparison of that which worldlings are troubled with abroad ! There you may read the sentence of your Justification, as foregoing and foreshewing the publike final sentence of your Judge ; there you can converse with God himself, not in his vindictive Justice but as he is Love : for *love that dwelleth* so plentifully in *you* doth prove that *God dwelleth in you and you in him*, 1 John 4, 7, 18, 16. There you may converse with *Christ your head*, that *dwelleth in you by faith*, Ephes. 3, 17, and with the *Holy Ghost* who *dwelleth in you*, and hath communion with you by the beauty of his illuminating, sanctifying, confirming, and comforting grace. There, as in *his Temple* you are *speaking of his Glory* (1 Cor. 3, 16, 17 and 6, 19, with Psal. 29, 9) and rejoicing in his holy praise, and remembering what he hath done for your soul. There you can peruse the Records of his Mercy, and think, with gratitude and delight, how he did first illuminate you, and draw and engage your heart unto himself, what advantage he got upon you and what iniquity he prevented by the mercies of your education, and how he secretly took acquaintance with you in your youth. How he delivered you from worldly fleshly snares ; how he caused you to savour the things of the Spirit ; how he planted you in a sound well-ordered Church, where he quickened and conducted you by a lively faithful Ministry, and watered his gifts by their constant powerful preaching of his word, where Discipline was for a defence, and where your heart was warmed with the communion of the Saints, and where you learned to worship God in spirit and in truth, and where you were taught so effectually by God to discern between the precious and the vile and to love those that are born of God, whom the world knoweth not, that no subtilties or calumnies of the Serpent can unteach it you or ever be able to separate you from that love. You may read in these Sacred Records of your Heart how the Angel of the Covenant hath

hitherto conducted you through this wilderness towards the land of promise, how he hath been a cloud to you in the day and a pillar of fire by night ; how the Lord did number you with the people that are his flock, his portion, and the lot of his inheritance ; and led you about in a desert land, instructed you, and kept you as the apple of his eye (Deut. 32, 9, 10). His manna hath compassed your tent, his Doctrine hath dropped as the rain, and his words distilled as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass. As his beloved you have dwelt in safety by him ; and the Lord hath covered you all the day long (id. 33, 12) ; when storms have risen he hath been your refuge ; and when dangers compassed you on every side, he hath hid you as in his pavilion, and his Angels have pitcht their tents about you and borne you up ; you have been fortified in troubles, and enabled comfortably to undergoe them, in war and in peace, in your native country and in foreign lands, among your friends and among your enemies ; in Court and Country, in prosperity and adversity you have found that *there is none like the God of Israel, Who rideth upon the heaven in your help, and his excellency on the skie : the Eternal God hath been your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms* (Deut. 34, 26, 27). You may remember the mercies of your younger years, of your married state and of your widowhood, your comforts in your truly Noble lord, though troubled and interrupted by his death yet increased by the consideration of his felicity with Christ ; your comfort in your hopeful issue, though abated by the injury of Romish theft, which stole one of the Roses of your Garden, that they might boast of the sweetness when they called it their own : (I may well say *stole it*, when all the cheat was performed by unknown persons in the dark, and no importunity by you or me could procure me one dispute or conference in her hearing with any of the seducers, before her person was stolen away). Though comforts conveyed by creatures must have their pricks, yet your experience hath partly taught you (and more will do) that by all the mixtures of sour and bitter ingredients your Father doth temper you the most wholesome composition ; he *chasteneth you for your profit that you may be partaker of his holiness* (Heb. 12, 10), and the least degree of *Holiness* cannot be purchased at too dear a rate. His rod and staffe have comforted you ; and, whatever are the beginnings, the *end will be the quiet fruit of Righteousness* when you have been *exercised therein*. And though man be mutable, and

friends, and flesh, and heart have failed you, yet God is still the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever (Psal. 73, 26). O the variety of learning that is contained in the secret writings of a sanctified heart! The variety of subjects for the most fruitful and delightful thoughts, which you may find recorded in the inwards of your soul! How pleasant is it there to find the characters of the special Love of God, the lineaments of his Image, the transcript of his Law, the harmony of his gifts and graces, the witness, the seal and the earnest of his Spirit, and the foretaste and beginnings of Eternal Life! As thankfulness abhors oblivion, and is a Recording grace, and keepeth Histories and Catalogues of Mercies, so is it a Reward unto itself, and by these Records it furnisheth the soul with matter for the sweetest employments and delights. Is it not pleasant to you there to Read, how God hath confuted the objections of distrust? How oft he hath condescended to your weakness, and pardoned you when you could not easily forgive yourself? How oft he hath entertained you in secret with his Love? and visited you with his consolations? How near him sometimes you have got in fervent prayer and serious meditation? And when for a season he hath hid his face, how soon and seasonably he returned? How oft he hath found you weeping, and hath wiped away your tears? and calmed and quieted your troubled soul? How he hath resolved your doubts, and expelled your fears, and heard your prayers? How comfortably he hath called you *His Child*, and given you leave, and commanded you, to call him *Father*, when Christ hath brought you with boldness into his presence? How sweet should it be to your remembrance, to think how the Love of Christ hath sometimes exalted you above these sublunary things! How the Spirit hath taken you up to Heaven, and showed to your faith the Glory of the New Hierusalem, the blessed company of those Holy spirits that attend the Throne of the Majesty of God, and the shining face of your glorified Head! By what seasonable and happy Messengers he hath sent you the Cluster of Grapes as thy first fruits of the land of promise! and commanded you oft to Take and Eate the Bread of Life? How oft he hath reached to your thirsty soul the fruits of the Vine, and turned it sacramentally into his blood, and bid you *drink it in remembrance of him, till he come*, and feast you with his fullest Love, and satisfie you with the pleasure and presence of his Glory.

'But the volumes of mercy written in your heart, are too great to be by me transcribed. I can easily appeal to you that are acquainted with it, whether such Heart-employment be not more pleasant and more profitable than any of the entertainments that fleshy wit, or gaudy gallantry, or merriments, luxurie, or preferments can afford? Is it not better converse with Christ at home than with such as are described, Psal. 12, abroad? To dwell with all that blessed retinue, Gal. 5, 22, 23, than with Pride, Vainglory, Envy, Dissimulation, Hypocrisie, Falsehood, time-wasting, soul destroying pleasures, to say nothing of the filthiness which Christian years¹ (*sic*), abhor the mention of, and which God himself in time will judge (Eph. 5, 3, 5, 6, 7; Heb. 13, 4 and the rest recited, Gal. 5, 19, 20, 21). If *ungodly* persons do find it more *unpleasant* to converse at home, no wonder, when there is nothing but darkness and defilement; and when they have put God from them and entertained Satan so that their hearts are like to haunted houses, where terrible cries and apparitions do make it a place of fear to the inhabitants. But if their souls had had such blessed inhabitants as yours; could they meet there with a reconciled God, a Father, a Saviour and a sanctifier; had they souls which kept a correspondence with Heaven, it would not seem so sad and terrible a life, to dwell at home, and withdraw from that noise of vanity abroad, which are but the drums and trumpets of the devil, to encourage his deluded followers, and drown the cries of miserable souls. Your dearest friends and chiefest treasure are not abroad in Court or Country; but *above* you and *within* you. Where then should your delightful converse be but where your friends and treasure die? (Matth. 6, 21; Phil. 3, 20; Col. 3, 1; 2, 3, 4). When there is almost nothing to be found in the converse of the world but discord and distraction and confusion and clamours and malice and treachery, is it not better to retire into such a heart, where, notwithstanding infirmities and some doubts and fears, there is order and concord and harmony, and such Peace as the world can neither give nor take away? O blessed be the hand of Love that blotted out the *names* of *Honour* and Riches and Pleasures and carnal interest, and inscribed his own in Characters never to be obliterate! That turned out Usurpers and so prepared and furnished your heart as to make and

¹ Ears.

judge it such as no one is worthy of it but himself ! O what a Court have you chosen for your abode ! How high and Glorious ! How pure and holy ! Unchangeable and safe ! How ambitiously do you avoid ambition ! How great are you in the lowliness of your mind ! How high in your Humility ! Will no lower a place than Heaven content you to converse in ? (For Heart-converse and Heaven-converse are as much one, as beholding both the Glass and the Face.) Will no lower correspondents satisfie you than the Host of Heaven ? Cannot the company of imperfect mortals serve your turn ? Nay, can you be satisfied with none below the Lord himself ? Well, *Madam*, if you will needs have it so, it shall be so. What you judge *Best for you* shall be yours ; what you had rather be, you are ; and where you had rather dwell, you shall. And seeing you have understood that *one thing is necessary*, and have *chosen the good part*, it shall not be taken from you, Luke, 10, 41, 42. Having *first sought the Kingdom of God and his righteousness*, you shall have such Additionalls as will do you good, Matt. 6, 33, Rom. 8, 28, Psal. 84, 11. You have learned to know, while God is yours, how little of the Creature you need, and how little addition it maketh to your happiness. You are wise enough, if you live to God ; and honourable enough, if you are a member of Christ ; and rich enough if you are an heir of heaven ; and beautiful enough, if you have the image of God : and yet having made your choice of these, how liberally hath God cast in, as overplus, the inferior kind which you *find* in *losing* them ? . . . As if God would convince even flesh itself that none are like the servants of the Lord ; and when the envious one hath said that *you serve not God for nought*, though he hath been permitted to put forth his hand and touch you in your dearest friends and relations, your peace, your habitation, and estate, yet hath he so restrained him, and supported you as may easily convince you that the *worst of Christ* is better than the *Best of the World*, or *Sin*.'

The remainder of the epistle gives more directions towards full self-knowledge which were intended less for the countess than for her "hopefull sons and daughters." Its final words imply that the countess is already in Scotland :—

'If one kingdom do not hold us and I shall see your face no more on earth, yet till we meet in the glorious everlasting Kingdom we shall have frequent converse by such means as these notwithstanding—

ing our distance ; and, as I am assured of a room in your frequent prayers, so I hope I shall remain, Madam,

‘ Your faithful servant and
‘ Remembrancer at the Throne of Grace
‘ Richard Baxter.’

Between the date of this epistle (25 August, 1661)¹ and the following November, Lady Balcarres underwent some great trouble—which seems to have included,—or perhaps entailed, a serious illness.

Baxter, therefore, added a Postscript (dated 1 November, 1661) ‘to remember you of what you know, that God thus traineth up his children for their Rest. . . . Madam, if nothing in all the world be more certain than that there is a God who is true and just . . . then are our arguments for the comfort of God’s afflicted ones, no fancies, but fetcht as from the highest excellencies, so from the surest realities that ever were presented to the understanding of a man. . . . *Madam*, experience as well as faith assureth me that it is good for us that we are afflicted. And though for the sake of others, I shall earnestly beseech the Lord, that he will not unseasonably remove such as you from this unworthy generation, yet I doubt not but your removal and sufferings in the way, will advantage you for your everlasting Rest. And for myself, I desire that my lot may still fall with those that follow Christ through tribulation, bearing the cross, and crucified to the world, and waiting for his appearance . . . and that I may be fit for the Title of the Beloved Apostle, *Rev.* 1, 9 (though as a servant to you and the Church of God).

‘ *Your Brother and Companion in tribulation*
‘ *And in the Kingdom of Patience of Jesus Christ*
‘ Rich. Baxter.’

Two years later (24 December, 1663) he dedicated a second book to the Countess, and for the same reason as the first—that she had a personal interest in it so far as the sermon went, which Baxter calls ‘the embryo of the Book.’ This was preached on a text (John 16, 32) suggested to him by her Ladyship just when, on the eve of her departure to Scotland she felt ‘deeply sensible of the loss of the company of those friends which she left behind her.’ He preached

¹ Baxter was then in Kidderminster on his last visit.

² May, 1662.

it 'a little before the ending'² of his publick ministry' and meant to comply with her wish to have it published at once, but was hindered. Then he added a sermon which he had 'first preached to 'his' ancient flock' at Kidderminster; and a third which should have been expanded by a fourth, but the Bishop's chaplain cut it out, because in it the world was described as 'a dark, a wicked, a malicious, an implacable, a treacherously deceitful World, etc.' The censor thought it too personal!

The sermon which occasioned the Dedication is part three of the whole and the shortest of the three (80 pages). Its title is:

'The Christian's converse with God or, the Insufficiency and Uncertainty of Humane Friendship and the Improvement of Solitude in converse with God. With some of the Author's breathings after him.'

The Epistle¹ (of 7 pages) is inspired by a deep sympathy with the Countess for the bereavement she had suffered the year before (15 October); and its consolations must have been all the more precious on account of the chastened beauty of the language. If space allowed I would quote the whole. But here are one or two of the opening sentences:—

'Madam,

'In hope of the fuller pardon of my delay, I now present you with two other Treatises besides the Sermon (enlarged) which at your desire I preached at your departure hence. I knew of many and great afflictions which you had undergone in the removal of your dearest friends, which made this subject seem so suitable and seasonable to you at that time; but I knew not that God was about to make an addition to your tryals in the same kind, by taking to himself the principal branch of your Noble Family² (by a rare disease—the embleme³ of the mortal malady now reigning). I hope this loss also shall promote your gain, by keeping you nearer to your Heavenly Lord, who is so jealous of your affections and resolved to have them entirely to himself; and then you will still find that you are *not alone*, nor deprived of

¹ To the Right Honourable and Exemplary Lady Ann, Countess of Balcarres.

² 'Charles, Earl of Balcarres, who dyed of a stone in his heart, of a very strange magnitude.'

³ A stony heart! Such a play on words was rarer with him (happily) than the disease.

your dearest or, most necessary friend while the Father, the Son, the sanctifying and comforting Spirit is with you. And it should not be hard to reconcile us to the disposals of so sure a friend. Nothing but Good can come from God, however the blind may miscall it, who know no Good or Evil, but what is measured by the private standard of their selfish interest, and that as judged of by sense. Eternal Love engaged by Covenant to make us happy, will do nothing but what we shall find at last will terminate in that blessed end. . . . Madam, the greatest service I can do you for all your favours is, to pray that God will more acquaint you with Himself, and lead you by this blessed way to that more blessed end ; that when you shall see all worldly glory in the dust, you may bless him for ever, who taught you to make a wiser choice : which are the prayers of

‘ Madam

‘ Your very much obliged Servant

‘ Richard Baxter.’

‘ 24 December, 1663.’

There is no evidence to show that they ever met after 1662, or that any letters passed between them. For the ‘next few years’ she is said to have spent her time ‘in endeavouring by careful economy, to pay off the debts upon’ the late Earl’s ‘estates.’ Then in 1670 she became the second wife of Archibald, 9th Earl of Argyll, with whom ‘she lived a life of quiet affection until the Catastrophe of 1681.’ This catastrophe was the Earl’s unjust trial for treason, conviction, and sentence to death—a sentence which he escaped by the contrivance of Lady Sophia, the Countess’s second daughter.¹ In May, 1685, the Earl returned from Friesland at the head of an expedition against the Government ; was captured on 18 June, and beheaded at Edinburgh on the 30th.² The Countess survived these sorrows for more than twenty years. The date of her last signature is 1 October, 1706, and she died before the end of that year.

She is said to have been in London at Court for the three months immediately following June 1685 ; and if Baxter had been free he might possibly have met her ; but he was then a prisoner in the Counter. The only later trace of their connection recalls an incident which Baxter describes at some length (R.B. ii. 219-229). It took

¹ Who, later, married Colin her husband’s second son.

² Macaulay’s ‘History of England,’ Vol. II., 534-558. Firth’s Edition.

place before the date of the 'Epistles'—viz., in December and January 1662. Briefly it was this—hearing that the Countess was ill Baxter called upon her and found her 'grievously afflicted for her eldest daughter,' the Lady Ann Lindsey about 16 or 17 years of Age who was suddenly turned Papist by she knew not whom.'

Dr. Gunning² (1614-1684) had talked with her at the Countess's request, but had done more harm than good by first trying to persuade her 'against the Church of Scotland which she had been bred in as no true Church.' So the mother turned to Baxter, who forthwith applied himself to the business with more zeal than discretion. With his strong faith in the force of argument—which experience of this particular case should have done something to weaken—he urged the young lady to bring her unknown perverter and himself together in her presence. But all his proposals to that end failed, and just when he thought the latest of them was about to succeed he found that 'the Lady was gone, being secretly stolen from her mother in a coach.' The day before this happened (1 Dec.) he wrote her a letter which outlines what he may have meant to say in the expected conference; and two months later (29 January) he replied to one which she addressed to her mother from *Calice* (in Paris). He replied, of course at the mother's instance; and, doubtless, because she was too upset to write herself. Apparently, she did not hear from her daughter again. Reviewing the circumstances five years later (1665) Baxter wrote:—

'It was discovered that the Man that seduced her and refused Disputation was . . . Mr. Johnson (or Terret)³ . . . and yet when I asked her whether it were he, she plainly and positively said it was not; and when a Servant went after her Coach, and overtook her in *Lincolns-inn-Fields*, she positively promised to come again, and said, she went but to see a friend. Also she complained to the Queen-mother⁴ of her Mother, as if she used her hardly for Religion, which was false; in a Word, her Mother told me, that before she turned Papist, she scarce ever heard a Lye from her; and since then, She could believe nothing that she said. This was the Darling of that excellent, wise, religious Lady (the widow of an excellent Lord);

¹ Referred to above as 'One of the Roses of his Garden.'

² Afterwards Bishop of Ely.

³ Otherwise well known to Baxter.

⁴ Henrietta Maria.

which made the Affliction great, and taught her to moderate her Affection to all Creatures. This Perversion had been a long time secretly working before she knew of it ; all which time the young Lady would join in Prayer with her Mother, and jeer at Popery till she was detected, and then she said she might join with them no more.’¹

Though this was written in 1665, it did not see the light till 1696—the date of publication of ‘Reliquiæ Baxterianæ.’ So it was after this that a copy of the ‘R.B.’ came into the possession of the aged Countess. This copy was picked up by the father of Dr. John Brown, author of ‘Horæ Subsecivæ,’ in a Glasgow bookshop about the year 1850 ; and ‘on the page where Baxter brings a charge of want of Veracity against’ her daughter (i.e. the page just quoted from) there was found the following note by the Countess written ‘in a hand tremulous with age and feeling’ :—

‘I can say w^t truth I never in all my lyff did hear hir ly, and what she said, if it was not trew, it was by others suggested to hir, as yt,’ e.g.—‘She wold embak² on Wednesday. She believed She wold, but they took her, alles ! from me who never did see her mor. The minister of Cuper, Mr. John Magill, did see her at Paris in the Convent. Said She was a knowing and vertuous person, and had retined the living principels of our relidgion, which made him say it was good to grund young persons weel in ther relidgion, as she was one it apired weel grunded.’³

If we attend here not to the venerable mother’s undying affection and grief, but to the matter of fact, it will be seen that Baxter does not charge the Lady Anne with anything more than her mother allows, viz., that with her new religion she acquired a new indifference to truthfulness. This was a common Protestant charge against Romanism. The one direct correction of Baxter is in the statement ‘I *never* in all my lyff did hear hir ly,’ whereas he wrote ‘She (the Countess) ‘*scarce ever* heard a Lye from her.’ I wonder what other notes—mental, oral, or written—the Countess made. Did she feel that Baxter’s whole way of handling the matter, while logically clear and cogent from the standpoint of his premises, was likely to fail just because it was too severe, too elaborate, too argumentative and too little human ? That, at any rate, is how a modern reader feels.

¹ R.B. ii. 220.

² Come back ?

³ Letter to John Cairns, D.D.