

The Duke of Newcastle and the Election of 1734

(Based on the Newcastle Correspondence in the British Museum)

THE object of this paper is to attempt to throw some further light on the sources of the duke of Newcastle's remarkable prominence in the politics of the first half of last century. Macaulay, in his essay on Walpole's letters to Mann, pointed out the curious discrepancy between the unanimous verdict of his contemporaries as to his incapacity and the inability of any government for nearly fifty years to dispense with his assistance. It is, indeed, difficult to think of a single writer among the numerous memoir- and letter writers of the time who has a good word to say about him. Hervey, though his epigrammatic and vitriolic 'Memoirs' are valuable historically more for their facts and social pictures than for the judgments he passes on his contemporaries, must have had some grounds for the absurd picture which he gives of the duke's folly and pragmatism. Horace Walpole, it is true, had an animus against him, due to the belief that he was a traitor to Sir Robert, and accordingly takes every advantage of occasions which exhibit the duke in a contemptible aspect. But besides these two memoir-writers, whose evidence may, to a certain extent, be discounted, Lord Waldegrave, a shrewd and sensible observer; Bubb Dodington, a sufficient judge of his own interest to be a fairly acute one of the capacities of his contemporaries; Marchmont, a man with a great reputation for political sagacity; and all the letter-writers of the period, such as Chesterfield, Lord Chatham, the Grenvilles, and Walpole again, without a dissentient voice, pour scorn on the ridiculous incapacity and portentous vanity which appeared to them to be his salient characteristics.

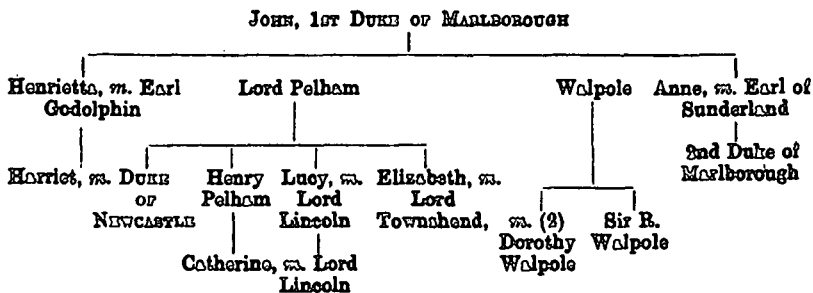
An uncertain friend; a man so profuse in promises, from anxiety to satisfy everybody, that he was habitually unable to please anybody; an insignificant politician; a turbid and incontinent speaker, but an adept at back-handed intrigue; a methodical spendthrift, who wasted time and money with the most exact scrupulosity of system; a vague babler, whose conversation was as profuse as his ignorance and inexactitude were extensive; a politician infirm of purpose

yet tenacious of the utmost panoply of power and influence, drunk with vanity and overweening self-satisfaction, yet ever prone to imagine a slight and to resent a discourtesy : such, in a few words, is the picture which his contemporaries draw of the duke of Newcastle in his public life. Yet this was the politician who almost uninterruptedly from 1717 to 1766 held some of the highest posts in the councils of the nation. During this period he drove out of office, or was largely instrumental in driving out, colleagues of the ability of Townshend, Carteret, and Chesterfield, and others of lesser pretensions, like Bedford and Harrington. George II attempted to get rid of him and his brother, but failed ignominiously. Sunderland, Walpole, Henry Pelham, and even the elder Pitt found themselves unable to carry on the government without him ; and, in fact, for most of the time he held at least the second place in the ministry, while for some years he was prime minister.

In estimating the causes for this long-continued importance of an admittedly second-rate man, the circumstances of eighteenth-century government must not be lost sight of. It is not, indeed, exact to say that the government was entirely carried on by bribery ; there is not the slightest doubt that in all important questions, about which strong popular feeling was aroused, the system of corruption proved utterly worthless, and that the wishes of the country made themselves felt at Westminster as effectively as under the most democratic form of government. The fate of the Excise Bill ; the declaration of war with Spain, in spite of all Walpole's efforts ; and the final triumph of Pitt's policy over the determined opposition of the king and all office-holders, prove this incontestably. The treaty of Paris is an almost solitary instance in the century of an important act of policy carried out against the manifest will of the nation, but that was compassed by almost superhuman efforts of bribery, and immediate retribution fell on most of its authors in their practical banishment from public life. The real effect of corruption in parliament and in the constituencies was to make easy the ordinary routine of government in non-essential questions, and to confirm in office a particular set of men to carry on the administration. Walpole and Pitt would have been in power under any system, since the country approved of the general line of their policy and recognised their pre-eminence ; but the security of their tenure, and the ease with which they carried through the particular measures that they thought necessary, were due to their alliance with the great organisers of ' influence ' or corruption, at the head of whom stood Newcastle.

The duke of Newcastle's opportunities for exercising corruption were certainly unrivalled, and his wide-spread connexions with most of the ruling families of England gave him the required start for the employment of his influence. Born in 1693, he was the son

of the first Baron Pelham, from whom he inherited large estates in Sussex; he succeeded when young to the great property of his uncle by marriage, Holles, duke of Newcastle, and, by his own marriage with the daughter and coheirress of Lord Godolphin, he connected himself with the great clan of the Marlboroughs, and added still further to his acres. The following table will show his various connexions with some of the greatest political families of the eighteenth century:—



It will be seen that he was more or less distantly related to the duke of Marlborough, Lord Godolphin, Lord Sunderland, Lord Townshend, Sir Robert Walpole, and Henry Pelham, all statesmen of considerable importance, and some of supreme importance in the history of the eighteenth century; and further, he was connected, partly through the celebrated Bess of Hardwicke, with the families of the dukes of Devonshire, Portland, and Montagu, and of Harley, earl of Oxford. Thus when he was created duke of Newcastle, in 1715, he at once took his place in the very centre of the aristocratic ring which governed England for the first sixty years of the century. Almost immediately he found himself in a position to grant favours to a politician of the importance of the elder Craggs, who was constrained to beg humbly for one of the duke's seats in parliament;¹ and at the age of twenty-four he was raised to the position of Lord Chamberlain, his first stepping-stone to ostensible power.

But, besides his family connexions, the immense estates which he inherited or acquired by marriage were the securest foundation of his importance. In the first place, their money value was enormous for those days; their gross rental was vaguely estimated at 25,000*l.*, but a study of the accounts preserved in the British Museum² seems to show that the sum was nearer 40,000*l.* than 25,000*l.*, though it is difficult to arrive at an exact estimate of his income for any one year. He had five houses and seats—one in London, one in Surrey, and two in Sussex, besides Nottingham Castle; of all which the furniture alone was reckoned at his death to be worth nearly 10,000*l.*³ But besides their intrinsic worth a further

¹ Add. MSS. 32386, f. 80.

² *Ibid.* 33200, 33166.

³ *Ibid.* 33397, f. 21.

peculiarity about his estates, which enhanced their political value, was the number of counties, amounting to eleven in all, over which they were spread. In Sussex his possessions extended over most of the south-eastern part of the county, between Lewes and Hastings; in Lincolnshire he had estates covering a large part of the county and bringing him in a gross rental of over 7,000*l.*; practically the whole of Nottinghamshire belonged to him; in Yorkshire he had a considerable estate near Ripon, and estates of varying size in Derbyshire, Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, and Suffolk; while, in addition to all these, he was the owner of the Clare Market Estate in London, which brought him in a gross rental of nearly 8,000*l.*

But, great as his wealth was, it was exceeded by the magnificence of his expenditure in liberality, in entertainments, and in bribes; and it is hardly surprising to find that he was in a chronic state of debt. Ambition, it is true, may have primarily dictated some of his profusion, but it became so habitual with him that the object was largely lost sight of, and the credit he gained thereby was in no way diminished in the eyes of the beneficiaries. And there is another aspect of his financial transactions which has not been sufficiently taken into account in estimating the sources of his influence. In a time when personal incorruptibility was probably of less account than at any other time in English history not a whisper was ever heard against the duke's indifference to all monetary considerations: of respect and deference he was insatiable, but by grosser advantages he was never tempted. On one occasion, it will be remembered, Sir Horace Mann assumed that the duke, like many other politicians, could be bribed by a present, and it required all Horace Walpole's tact to persuade him that his idea of conciliating the duke with a coffee-pot was impracticable. For the fact is that, whatever may have been the extravagance of the duke, and however cynical his actions may have been in the corruption of others, he is one of the very few ministers of this first half of the century who made themselves poorer by their years of office. His personal disinterestedness in money matters is vastly to his credit, considering the time at which he lived, and was even carried to lengths which would be remarkable in any age. Early in life he stated in a private letter his objection to making his debts an excuse for accepting money from the public in these words: 'You know very well, my dear Lord, the great backwardness I have always had to ask or secure any sum of money of y^e King, how I detest it in others and consequently how unwilling I shall be to do y^e like myself;' and in 1732, when dismissed from office, although he found that his income had become reduced to 6,000*l.* a year, chiefly owing to his expenditure on what was then

* Add. MSS. 92623, t. 251.

regarded as the public interest, he absolutely refused the pension which was pressed on him by the king. Not only is such disinterestedness creditable to him, but it must have made his presence in the government more agreeable to rivals who were more anxious to win wealth in office than to spend it, and have removed the suspicion of covetousness from his extraordinary tenacity of power.

If a man like this had been content to live quietly and unostentatiously, managing his vast estates, his career would have been a less stupendous failure than it was. For in private relations he had merits which public life gave him no opportunity of developing. He was a devoted husband, and the volumes of correspondence with his wife contain almost the only genuine and unstilted utterances preserved of him; his 'dearest angel,' as he habitually called her, was from first to last constantly present in his thoughts when he was separated from her, and he used to write to her bright and natural little accounts of all the trivialities which occurred to him. To his sister, Lady Lincoln, he was an ever patient friend, and a generous guardian of her son, and to his tribe of uninteresting cousins he behaved with great forbearance and munificence. It would be somewhat pathetic were it not so pitiable to read in his letters the bitter disappointments which this excellent private individual constantly received in his pursuit of public importance. And his disappointments were none the less keen because, in appearance at any rate, he attained the summit of his ambition. In spite of the facts that for many years he ostensibly held the second rank in the ministry, and that he finally became prime minister, the invariable complaint of his lifetime was that his merits were not sufficiently appreciated; that his advice was disregarded by his colleagues and the king; and that his successes failed to receive the recognition they deserved. His life, in appearance triumphant, must in reality have been a continual torment to him from the realisation of his own inadequacy and of his own want of ideas, and from his constant jealousy of all who came near him.

Nevertheless, little as the duke may have tasted the joy of success, and futile as his statesmanship undoubtedly was, it is undeniable that for fifty years he was one of the central figures in English politics. As has been suggested above, the secret of this position may be found in his family connexions, his territorial possessions, and his liberality. In the ordinary play of politics, as retailed by the Walpoles and the Herveys of the time, the effect of these advantages is not immediately obvious. To understand fully the use he made of them it is necessary to consider him in circumstances where he could employ them to the full without fear of

leading to describe the lords appellant who called for a return of the gilds in 1388 as the 'advisers' of Richard II, and the order as 'intended to open a new field for royal extortion' (p. 189). Richard was at that time no free agent. In asserting that Béarn was under the suzerainty of the king of England (p. 9) Mr. Wylie is at issue with M. Longnon.³ Its viscounts had thrown off their allegiance to the duke of Aquitaine in 1324. The Patent Rolls settle the question (p. 115) whether Hadley Castle was granted to Aubrey de Vere in 1378 or 1381 in favour of the former date. 'Llanegwest' (p. 141) should be 'Llanegwestl.'

JAMES TAIT.

Lectures on the Council of Trent delivered at Oxford, 1892-3. By J. A. FROUDE, late Regius Professor of Modern History. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co. 1896.)

It is sometimes difficult to review a posthumous work, observing both proper respect for a great name and regard for historic truth. The greatness of the name and the literary power associated with it may in some cases intensify the danger to the reader and the difficulty to the critic.

A complete and impartial history of the council in English would be welcome, but the lamented death of the writer no doubt restricted the scope of this work to the earlier sittings of the fathers, and the same cause has probably produced some inaccuracies here and there. An adequate history demands a firm and faithful outline of the varying political relations which formed the background of the council and so largely determined the course of the discussions, an impartial view of the ecclesiastical conditions of the time, and along with these two a vivid and accurate sketch of the personalities and actors in the scene.

These lectures partly fail in the first respect, and the actions of Henry VIII form, as it were, a centre of disturbance. The description of the vast conspiracy in England (pp. 120-4), in which Fisher was the most active and dangerous leader ('there is no doubt about this'—'Fisher had, there is no denying it, passionately invited the pope to declare the king deposed. He had implored the emperor to interfere in England by force, to crush the king, to crush the parliament, to stamp out the fast-spreading revolt from popery'), rests on Cromwell's instructions to Casale at Rome, and on inferences from Chapuys's despatches. The former are unsupported in what they say; the evidence of the latter amounts merely to this: that Chapuys, as many ambassadors of the day, encouraged the disaffected (and notably the Pole connexions) and built large hopes on the unpopularity of the divorce: indeed, the treatment of Katharine by Henry would have been a fair cause of war. So much is true, but nothing Chapuys says justifies the charge against Fisher. The same largeness of inference makes the words of Pallavicino (it may not matter very much what he says, but he has a right to be correctly quoted) on Fisher's elevation to the rank of cardinal—*consilium Pontificis fuit . . . carceris iam annui molestiam solari ea novae dignitatis accessione; ac Roffensi, quocumque tandem modo per hoc quamvis mortale praemium, illos annos rependere, quorum*

³ *Revue des Questions Historiques*, xviii. 462.

coming contest. The letters which deal with the subject are contained in two folio volumes,⁵ and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that from the beginning of July 1733 till 10 May 1734, when the poll for Sussex closed, scarcely a day passed in which the duke did not receive a report from at least one of his agents as to the progress made in the canvassing campaign. Naturally, very few of his own letters are preserved in this collection, but frequent allusions of his correspondents point to his practice of answering almost every one of the letters personally, and it is evident that, at least in Sussex, he himself overlooked and gave directions about the minutest details. Frequently his particular orders are invoked about the exact method in which some individual recalcitrant voter should be treated, and nothing which bears on the contest seems to have been regarded as too trivial for his consideration. His position, indeed, very much resembles that of the head of a huge political organisation in modern times, and the comparative restriction of his sphere of influence was more than counterbalanced in his case by the necessity of studying the idiosyncrasies of almost every voter in his constituencies, inasmuch as a system of personal bribery or influence requires more detailed attention than the attempt to persuade masses of voters to adopt a political programme.

The magnitude of his operations may be judged from the fact that these letters indicate that either directly or indirectly, whether by his own agents or by personal pressure, he had something to do with the election of nearly all the twenty members who came from Sussex, of at least eight of the barons of the Cinque Ports, and with the elections for Cheshire and Chester, for Derbyshire and Derby, for Nottinghamshire and its three boroughs, for Yorkshire and at least two boroughs in Yorkshire, for Cambridgeshire and Cambridge University, for Shropshire, Montgomery, Denbigh, and Flintshire, for Somerset, Hampshire, Monmouthshire, and Dorchester. Moreover, though there is no actual indication of the fact in these letters, it is difficult to imagine that he had nothing to do with the return of five government supporters out of eight members for Lincolnshire, where his estates were so large. It is true that in Somerset, for example, his interest was not sufficient to overcome the strong local influence of Pulteney and Sir William Wyndham, and in Yorkshire and in one or two other counties he was not entirely successful, but it would hardly be beside the mark to say that about sixty or seventy members were returned in the interest of the government from places where his influence was either paramount or one of the forces to be reckoned with; and among these members it is worth noticing that he found ample room for relations of his own: thus his brother represented

⁵ Add. MSS. 32688, 32689.

Sussex, two cousins Lewes; one brother-in-law sat for Shoreham, another for Rochester; Pelhams represented Newark-on-Trent and Hastings, and W. Hay, a connexion by marriage, sat for Seaford, while Henry Pelham was elected for Aldborough provisionally, in case he failed in Sussex. In addition to this, although the Scottish representative peers were practically nominated, as Lord Hervey says, by Lord Isla, several of the letters in this collection from Lord Hay, and one from the duke of Athole, seem to imply that the duke of Newcastle also took a considerable part in arranging that the right men should be chosen.

In estimating the duke's power over elections it must be recollected that, quite apart from the special methods of emergency employed before a special election, his extensive property and his long tenure of office gave him the opportunity of establishing permanent agencies of corruption or of influence throughout the country. The bishops and the clergy, for example, as will be evident hereafter from a study of the Sussex election, must have had a very important influence in contested elections; and as at the time of his retirement it was said that there was hardly a bishop on the bench who had not been promoted by him, by this means and by the countless appointments to crown livings at his disposal he must gradually have monopolised almost the entire political interest of the clergy. In the same way his apparent immovability from office and his rapacity for patronage, which was so great that few of his colleagues cared to enter into competition with him for the disposal of places, caused him to be regarded as the chief dispenser of places by the swarm of officials whose numbers alone made them of importance in an election. His official connexion with Cambridge, first as high steward, then as chancellor, his offices of admiral of Sussex and of warden of Sherwood Forest, were all positions which he could utilise in making permanent preparations for elections. Even his lord-lieutenancies of various counties could be turned to electoral profit, as it appears that a means of securing a doubtful voter of much local importance was to have him pricked for high sheriff and then excused from the burden as an especial favour through the duke's intercession with the king.⁶ All these may be regarded as permanent circumstances which gradually made it less necessary for the duke to take such active measures as he found it incumbent on him to take in the election of 1734; but his power was probably in no small measure due to the energy which he showed himself willing to display on crucial occasions like the present.

The greater part of the letters dealing with the 1734 election refer to the contests in Sussex, but there is enough evidence to show how great was his activity in other parts of the country. It

⁶ See the case of H. Montagu, Add. MSS. 32688, ff. 536, 543.

was certainly not for want of forethought that he devoted less attention to his northern interests. In Nottinghamshire there was no difficulty of the slightest importance. His agents for that county were Mr. Bennet, who became member for the county, Mr. Plumptre, elected member for the borough of Nottingham, and Mr. Gregory, who was member for one of the duke's Yorkshire constituencies; but they have not much to tell him. The freeholders of the county were not much troubled by the question of the excise;⁷ and the duke of Kingston at Thoresby, who was the only rival to the duke of Newcastle as an influence in the county, after a little show of difficulty supported his candidates, and would not even accept the offered recompense of a Lordship of the Bedchamber.⁸ In the borough there was, at first, a little hitch about a compromise, by which one Warren should be associated with Plumptre in the representation, but that soon was settled, and the only thing left to be careful about was to keep the agreement secret, 'to prevent ye mutiny of ye generality of y^e Freemen, who are always averse to such peaceable doings.'⁹ For the other northern counties the duke trusted to the reports of Mr. Jessop, who was the agent for his property and member for Aldborough.¹⁰ This singularly illegible writer took a very extended view of his duties, and went on tour through and reported on no less than nine counties—Durham, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Shropshire, Cheshire, Montgomeryshire, Flintshire, Denbighshire, and Nottinghamshire. All these counties, except the first two, were very keenly set against the excise scheme, and so might cause difficulties, but it is evident that the elections chiefly depended in the counties on the influence of great noblemen, and in the cities on manipulation of the electorate. Thus in the boroughs Chester was whig in feeling, but the tory aldermen had appointed tory surveyors, who would procure the election of tory members, unless this could be altered; while Montgomery, which Jessop regards as certainly tory in his first letter, he finds will be whig, because the last resolution of the house of commons had reduced the franchise to freemen only, so that whoever Mr. Herbert (?) pleases will be brought in. Apparently Mr. Herbert did please to bring in supporters of the government. In a later letter Mr. Jessop takes the duke to task for appointing a tory lord chief justice of Chester, which would do much harm in the election; a 'trusty' man should be appointed. On the other hand, in Derbyshire, if the duke of Devonshire would put up his brother, as he was persuaded to do, all would be well.¹¹ In Cheshire Lords Derby and Warrington

⁷ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 30.

⁸ *Ibid.* f. 413.

⁹ *Ibid.* f. 30.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* ff. 187, 332.

¹¹ It is to be noted that even in this case the duke of Newcastle had to pay half the expenses, Lord Chesterfield and Mr. Scroope paying the other half (*ibid.* f. 377).

were the main stays of the government, and in Yorkshire Lord Malton's approval of the duke's plans was regarded as all-important.

It is unnecessary here to dwell on such a common evasion of the Commons' privileges as the participation of peers in elections; it was notorious, in spite of the periodical enactment by the House of Commons of their order 'that for any Peer of this Kingdom, or any Lord Lieutenant of any County to concern themselves in the Elections of Members to serve for the Commons in Parliament, is a high Infringement of the Liberties and Privileges of the Commons of England.' However, it appears that a certain amount of stratagem was still considered advisable in the matter of interference, for after the election for Yorkshire, which had gone against the government, Lords Carlisle, Irwin [Irvine], and Malton write to the duke,¹² asking him to subscribe for a scrutiny on behalf of the ministerial candidate, Sir R. Winn, but they add the prudent reservation that they are themselves subscribing in the names of commoners.¹³ On the whole the duke seems to have had his agents and members well in hand, but occasionally he had to suppress a little burst of independence, as a brisk interchange of letters with Mr. A. Wilkinson, his agent for the Yorkshire estates, shows. On 18 March,¹⁴ about a month before the election, Mr. Wilkinson suddenly displays anxiety to represent Boroughbridge, one of the duke's boroughs, on the obviously inadequate ground that he will be agreeable to the people of the borough. The duke's answer is not given, but apparently he refused, and then Mr. Wilkinson must have become troublesome, for energetic measures had to be taken to keep him quiet. An excited little note of 5 April is preserved¹⁵ of Mr. Delafaye, a clerk in the secretary of state's office, in which he gives urgent orders about a letter of the duke's being despatched by flying packet to 'Boroughbrig' in Yorkshire, and that the answer is to be sent back by the same means. On 7 April Mr. Wilkinson sends the answer in the form of a last despairing grumble,¹⁶ suggesting that even in his grace's own interest he should go on seeking election, as he is a local man: he is quite willing, he says, to resign after the general election, when it would be easier for the duke to slip in the special man he has in his mind. However, the duke was not to be tempted by that kind of inducement, and Brigadier Tyrrel and Mr. Gregory were duly elected, as he wished. It may be added, however, to complete the story of Mr. Wilkinson, that in November he writes¹⁷ to announce the death of Mr

¹² Add. MSS. 32689, f. 268.

¹³ It appears from the duke's Yorkshire accounts for that year that he subscribed 200*l.* to the scrutiny (*ibid.* 33320, f. 191).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 32689, f. 172.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* f. 182.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* f. 184.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* f. 485.

Jessop, the writer of the illegible letters, who had been elected member for the neighbouring borough of Aldborough, and claims fulfilment of the duke's promise to let him succeed to the seat—which he did.

Before passing on to the Sussex elections it will not be amiss to draw attention to evidence given in this correspondence about the duke's influence in other parts of the country, where his interest was not so great; and it may safely be concluded that these instances do not show the full extent of his interference, and that he exercised it in many other cases, not here recorded, on the personal application of patrons and candidates. In Dorchester his influence was fairly immediate, as he had estates in the county, so that it was natural for Sir William Chapple to write¹⁸ and ask for permission to stand again for the borough and beg the duke to urge his steward and tenants to vote for him. But in some other cases he is rather the machine which sets influence at work than the influence himself; thus a letter from the duke of Manchester¹⁹ illustrates the importance of his family connexions, as it contains a request that the duke will urge his sister Lady Lincoln to exert herself for Lord Robert Montagu in his Huntingdonshire election. In Somerset his efforts were confined to writing to Lord Waldegrave at the request²⁰ of the ministerial candidate, Lord Henton [Hinton], to obtain the interest of his agent, Mr. Yorke, against Sir William Wyndham and Mr. Horner. But here there was a difficulty, for Mr. Yorke was also Mr. Pulteney's agent, and, in spite of Lord Waldegrave's letter, Lord Henton²¹ says that Mr. Yorke absolutely refused to act, or to make any 'use of the letter, and had engaged them [the tenants] before for Sir William Wyndham and Mr. Horner;' all Lord Waldegrave could do further was to threaten²² that if Yorke did not support Lord Henton 'he and I must part, whatever the consequence be, with respect to my private affairs.' There the matter ends as far as this correspondence goes, and in the result Lord Henton was not elected, as indeed could hardly be expected in this stronghold of the Tories. A letter from Mr. Bromley,²³ the candidate for Cambridgeshire, suggests a most fruitful method of helping ministerial candidates all over the country. He asks for the living of Bassingbourne, in that county, of which the incumbent is dying, for a Mr. Negus, since that appointment would considerably help his chances of election. The circumstance mentioned in the letter that the living was in the actual gift of the dean and chapter of Westminster only emphasises the comprehensiveness of the duke's influence. It is not recorded whether Mr. Negus got the living, but it is known

¹⁸ Add. MSS. 32689, f. 174.

²⁰ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 82.

²³ *Ibid.* 32689, f. 21.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 32688, f. 117.

²¹ *Ibid.* f. 395.

²² *Ibid.* 32688, f. 466.

at any rate that Mr. Bromley became member for Cambridgeshire. At the university also there are strange doings, unnecessary almost, one would have thought, in view of its notorious loyalty; Lord Malton, known also as a staunch supporter of the duke in Yorkshire, writes,²⁴ apparently in answer to a request that he will use what influence he can, to say that he will do his best for Ned Finch and Townshend at Cambridge, while an interesting side-light is cast on the college system of those days in a letter²⁵ from a Mr. Simpson, of Lincoln's Inn, who says that he will, as the duke asks, vote for the election of one Dale to a fellowship of Trinity Hall, in order to assist the government thereby. In Kent the duke's brother-in-law, D. Polhill, writes²⁶ that he will get in the right kind of mayor for Rochester, and so facilitate his own election; and from Hampshire there are several demands from Lord Harry Powlett and Mr. Chute for aid in their election, which was going so much against them that in the middle of the contest²⁷ they write to say they have adjourned the poll from Winchester to the Isle of Wight.

But it is in Sussex that the interest of this correspondence, and indeed very largely of this election, mainly centres. There were several reasons for this. In the first place Sussex was very important numerically in the members which it returned. It could not, indeed, rival Cornwall, which sent up no less than forty-four representatives to Westminster, but its list of twenty-eight members was exceeded by only two other counties, Wiltshire with thirty-four and Yorkshire with thirty. These twenty-eight were made up of two county representatives, and two each for the boroughs of Arundel, Bramber, Chichester, East Grinstead, Horsham, Lewes, Midhurst, New Shoreham, and Steyning, besides eight of the barons of the Cinque Ports from Hastings, Rye, Seaford, and Winchelsea. In the second place these constituencies were not, like the Cornish boroughs and many others all over the country, mere paper constituencies, representing the views of one or two individual patrons. The franchise in most of these was, for the old unreformed system, on a fairly popular basis.²⁸ The county franchise was, of course, as in all the other counties, extended to 40*s.* freeholders; and, of the boroughs, in Arundel, Lewes, and Steyning all householders paying scot and lot had the vote; in East Grinstead, Horsham, and Midhurst the burgage holders were the voters, and in the other three boroughs, though there was ample room for bribery, the constituency was, in name at least, fairly extended. Of the Cinque Ports Hastings alone retained some freedom of election; the others were already mere Treasury preserves. A further reason which

²⁴ Add. MSS. 32689, f. 52.

²⁵ *Ibid.* f. 63.

²⁶ *Ibid.* f. 122.

²⁷ *Ibid.* f. 235.

²⁸ *Vide* Horsfield's *History of Sussex*, ii. appendix, 23 *seq.*, and Oldfield's *History of Representative Government*.

gives especial interest to this election in connexion with the duke of Newcastle is that, in spite of all his other acquired property, he was essentially a Sussex man. The Pelham stock had been distinguished in the county since the days of the Conquest, and the duke was at home there in the midst of a whole tribe of relations. He had two houses in the county, Bishopstone and Halland; and his own estates extended over the parishes of Seaford, Laughton, East Hoathly, Bishopstone, Ripe, the rape of Hastings, and Lewes²⁹—that is to say, over a large part of the eastern half of the county. Various Pelhams and Mr. Hay, his connexion by marriage, also had possessions in this part, and his brother-in-law Sir John Shelley was established at Arundel. The other great landowners of the county were also to a great extent on his side; thus in the east Lord Ashburnham and Sir William Ashburnham, Sir William Gage, Lord Wilmington, the duke of Dorset, and Lord Abergavenny, and in the west Lords Tankerville and Scarborough and the duke of Richmond were all in his interest. The duke of Norfolk, who had extensive property in Sussex, seemed at first disinclined to interfere, on the ground of his religion, ‘our meddling with elections having been so often objected against us, who are entirely cut of from all employments and publick affairs;’³⁰ and there are several letters from Lady Shelley imploring her brother to obtain the Norfolk interest for Sir John at Arundel. Still he declared his general sympathy with the duke of Newcastle, and seems at any rate not to have acted against him. The ‘proud’ duke of Somerset was also an uncertain influence, and he finally divided his interest between one of the Pelham candidates and one of the opposition. Of the other influential landowners mentioned only the duke of Bedford and Lords Derby and Berkeley in the west, and Sir Thomas Dyke in the east, appear to have distinctly opposed him.

The two elections which were the most hardly contested, and on which the duke’s energies were almost entirely concentrated, were those for the county and for Lewes. For the county his brother Henry Pelham, the future first lord of the Treasury, and Mr. James Butler of Warminghurst were the ministerial candidates, and they were opposed by Mr. John Fuller and Sir Cecil Bishop; while for Lewes Thomas Pelham of Stanmer and Thomas Pelham of Lewes stood against Mr. N. Garland, a dissenter, and Mr. T. Sergison, both Lewes men. The duke’s correspondents on the subject of these elections are drawn from every possible rank of society, and include bishops and clergy, peers, custom-house officials, innkeepers, estate agents, lawyers, tradespeople, and small farmers, and there is even a letter from a smuggler; some can spell and some cannot, some are strictly businesslike, and

²⁹ Add. MSS. 33166, ff. 5-13.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 32688, f. 76.

others ramble over every conceivable topic ; in fact, even if the interest of the election were absent this collection of letters would be exceedingly valuable for the social picture of the time which it affords. There is nowhere any sense of hurry ; every topic is treated in a leisurely manner, as indeed is natural, considering that there was nearly a year to prepare for the elections ; and there was ample room for expansiveness and anecdotage from the various writers, who must have felt keenly the pleasure of almost daily correspondence with a duke. The most prolific writer, and by far the most amusing, is a Mr. R. Burnett, the duke's agent for the county election in the district about Lewes. He was also incomparably the most energetic canvasser in the duke's employment, travelling about the country with untiring diligence, interviewing voters, sending up complete lists of electors and their views, directing subordinates and receiving their reports, gathering the local gossip of the club at 'Hood's Corner,' of which we hear so much, and telling the duke with unflinching tact whom to present with a haunch of venison or whom to appease with more substantial favours. He carried his enthusiasm for the art of canvassing to such an extent that even the colour of the clothes in which he rode about the country became a matter of concern to him. Thus on the death of an old friend, Mr. Trumble, who combined the functions of clerk to the commissioners of the land tax in the Pevensey rape with those of coroner, he writes³¹ to say, 'I have sent to Lewes to bespeake me a sute of gray clothes to Ride about the Country in. Which I hope you will gett my Lord Duke's Leve to wave it one account of Mr. Trumble's death.' His value was evidently appreciated, for when affairs were looking black for the borough election Mr. Hay writes, 'I wish your Grace would order Mr. Burnet to be here till your coming into the Country ; for I fancy he might do more service to you here than anywhere ;'³² and a fortnight later he writes that 'Mr. Burnet is come : he has already done good ; and I daresay will stop any further mischief till your Grace comes into the Country.'³³ Altogether he seems to have been regarded as the obvious person to whom to apply when any odd job had to be performed. He makes a pathetic appeal to the duke to appoint a new coroner for the rape of Hastings, 'for last week here was a man found Ded, and they sent to me nobody being appointed to act.'³⁴

In spite, too, of all his other multifarious duties, Mr. Burnett found time to pay attention to the smallest details affecting his master's personal comforts ; thus, at the end of a letter about election prospects, he writes :—

I have bin finding fault with Mr. Morriss of Lewes for not getting the chimneys built att ye stables att Bishopstone, and in ye Seaford Room,

³¹ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 238. ³² *Ibid.* 32689, f. 7. ³³ *Ibid.* f. 24. ³⁴ *Ibid.* f. 101.

knowing its but a trifle and will be much wanted when your Grace comes Down, for a Servants hall as it wass last year, he says your Grace forbid it till he had sent up a plan and ye expences, but I take that wass ment for the new stables and not for the Little Covenacy mentioned hear.³⁵

Then later comes up the question of my lord's plate:³⁶ will he bring it to Sussex, or will he dine off pewter, or have an entirely new set, which would be very expensive?³⁷ and as to the supply of food,³⁸ 'I shall do ye best I can, fish will depend much one the wether.' It is no wonder that the poor man was worn out with all his exertions. Thus, even as early as August 1793, he says³⁹ that absolutely his only day at home in this 'hurring time' is Sunday, so that he must beg to be 'exskewed' to callers, as 'cautend' by his grace. A month later it is distressing to find⁴⁰ that 'not being very well' he asks to be 'exskews' going to 'hersmuntex,' though, a week later, 'aughter a little recovering,' he is able to resume work. But the recovery was not permanent, for in November he complains⁴¹ that his 'Leggs have sweld pretty much. If they should continew doing so I fear I shall be of but Little service when my Lord Duke comes Down;' but he managed to struggle on till the election was well over, when he declares⁴² that he has 'a scurbitick humour' in his leg, but 'I ashoor your Grace I have Lived very Regular since my Return from Chichester and have strictly followed theire [the doctors'] directions.' But in spite of his indefatigable zeal and usefulness the good Burnett was a very modest man, and he shows almost exaggerated gratitude for the commendations bestowed on him by the duke. Thus, after the contest was over and the victory, so largely due to him, was won, he writes his thanks⁴³ for the duke's 'indulging letter. . . . I am very glad ye parrishes your Grace gave me your pirtickerlor Commands for have answard your Graces expectations and hope when your Grace comes to examine most of ye parrishes in our part of ye country, your Grace will feind I wass not Quite Idle there.' As will be observed from the foregoing extracts orthography was not Mr. Burnett's strong point; but the remarkable thing about his spelling is that he shows an extraordinarily ingenious consistency in his method, and, unlike most people who cannot spell, never varies in his spelling of such words as 'pirtickerlor,' 'exskews,' 'buyas' (bias), and so on.

After Burnett the duke's most constant correspondent is Mr. William Hay, a very different sort of person. He was a gentleman of means, who was connected with the duke by his marriage with Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Pelham of Catsfield. Lower, in his

³⁵ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 381.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 32689, f. 36.

³⁷ It appears from a letter of the duke to his duchess (Add. MSS. 33073, f. 83), written shortly after this, that he decided to send 'for ye French Cook and ye Silver Covers' to Bishopstone.

³⁸ Add. MSS. 32689, f. 40.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 32688, f. 64.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* f. 321.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 32689, f. 36.

⁴² *Ibid.* f. 253.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

'Sussex Worthies,' seems to regard him as perhaps the most distinguished son of Sussex in the literary sphere after Shelley, but this seems more to the discredit of Sussex than to the credit of Mr. Hay. He wrote poems, notes of travel, and moral essays which have not survived, and he was interested in the poor; but his chief claim to distinction seems to have been that he was 'perhaps the first who began to ornament corn fields with walks and plantations.' In person he was unfortunately deformed, and the only ray of humour which is known to have escaped him is that he wrote an essay in praise of deformity. But his generally mean appearance seems to have been keenly felt by Mr. Pelham, who, when writing to his brother about a triumphant entry into Chichester, complains that 'little Hay . . . tho a very good man and of great use here . . . will not contribute much to grace our entry.'⁴⁴ In these letters he appears as an exceedingly industrious and painstaking little man, but portentously dull. He busied himself both with the Lewes and with the county elections, and took an immense amount of trouble in finding out how every individual elector in a place would vote, and in suggesting measures for the conversion of recalcitrants or the confirmation of doubtful adherents. Unlike Burnett, who is always cheerful and confident of ultimate success, he generally takes a somewhat lugubrious view of things, and rarely, if ever, lightens up his letters, as Burnett does, with accounts of free fights and broken crowns, of drunken carouses, or of characteristic conversations with electors. However he was probably a man after the duke's own heart, and found his reward when an unexpected vacancy occurred at Seaford through Sir Philip Yorke's elevation to the lord chief justiceship and a peerage. The whole history of Mr. Hay's election for Seaford is worth setting out here, as it is an effective contrast to the laborious machinations necessary to win the other two elections, and shows the ease with which a Treasury borough could be manipulated. Its docility is illustrated in a letter from Mr. Hurdis, who states⁴⁵ that there was an alarm created of some opponent standing for Seaford, but on inquiry in the town the reply was made that the representatives would be 'who your Grace shall be pleased to recommend.' And so it proved: for the first intimation of a vacancy which occurs in this correspondence is in a draft letter of the duke, which is preserved. It is addressed⁴⁶

To the Baillif, Jurats Freemen and Inhabitants of the Town of Seaford.

Hampton Court: Oct. 1733.

Gentlemen,—His Ma^v having been pleased . . . to appoint Him [Sir P. Yorke] Lord Chief Justice of England and at the same time to create Him a Peer of this Realm; there is a Vacancy at present of a Representative in Parliament for your Town . . . [appreciation of the loss which the town incurs, expressed at length]. . . . As you have already express'd

⁴⁴ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 373.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* f. 354.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* f. 592.

your good Inclinations to my cousin Haye, I shall only take the Liberty to repeat my Recommendation of Him to You, upon this Occasion. He has the good Fortune to be so well known to you all ; that it is unnecessary for me to add anything in His Favour, but my Firm Persuasion, and assurance, that He will upon all Occasions do you the best Service, that lies in His Power, and your Goodness to Him will add to the many obligations already receiv'd by

Gentlemen, Your most obedient & oblig'd humble Servant &c.

P.S. I hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing you in Sussex.

On 27 Oct. Mr. Hay writes an effusive letter of thanks⁴⁷ for this proclamation, in which the simplicity of the proceedings at Seaford is thus charmingly exposed :—

Mr. Palmer thinks on my appearing there as a candidate it will be necessary to do something more than barely to give them your Grace's annual entertainment ; therefore, he thinks it will be proper (as your Grace intimates) to give a dinner to the Gentlemen, a double fee to the Ringers and a double portion of Beer to the Populace. I asked if all the Voters would be invited to dinner, but he says 'tis impossible, for their wives and families and all the Rabble would come with them, which would run the thing to a monstrous expence : but he thinks it very proper to assure the common voters of the half guinea : and indeed, my Lord, I think it will be money well bestowed ; for if they are not very well used now, they may resent it against the General Election.

Again, on 31 Oct., he writes⁴⁸ after the feast to say that everybody was well satisfied, except the rival innkeeper who did not provide the entertainment ; and that he had told the populace ' that your Grace had given me leave to say that since I could not have their Company at dinner, there would be half a guinea for every man to spend when your Grace came to Bishopstone.' One is reminded of the entry in Bubb Dodington's diary at election time—' Spent in the infamous and disagreeable compliance with the low habits of venal wretches.' In the result Mr. Hay was elected without opposition ; the duke paid all expenses, and the new member returned with renewed zeal and dulness to the more important contests.

These two names by no means exhaust the list of the duke's agents in Sussex, but they are the most prominent on this occasion, and may be taken as typical. It is worth noticing that it was not at all unprofitable to be the duke's agent in electoral contests, for, besides the pecuniary remuneration, of which the duke was certainly not niggardly, he sooner or later found seats for the more important among them. Thus the other member for Seaford was Sir William Gage, who acted vigorously as an amateur canvasser for the county election. Mr. Jewkes, who canvassed in the west of Sussex, was given the seat of Aldborough, which had been kept as second string for Henry Pelham, and it will be remembered that his agents

⁴⁷ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 601.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* f. 616.

in the north—Mr. Gregory, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Jessop, and Mr. Wilkinson—were all gratified with seats.

The importance of the Sussex elections as an indication of popular feeling may be gauged by the amount of interest which was excited by the excise question in all the important contests. In the first months of the canvassing there are reports from all parts of the difficulty experienced by the duke's agents in allaying popular suspicions about the scheme, and the importance they attached to laying the question to rest, if the government are to secure the election of their candidates. The most absurdly exaggerated ideas were current about the effects which the bill would have had and of the danger of its reintroduction. Mr. Hay reports⁴⁹ in August that at Lewes the voters were firmly convinced that bread and meat were to be taxed, and, in a list of electors and their views which he gives,⁵⁰ the following curious entries are found :—

Hammond—who did not like that an excise man should take an account of his Pork.

Moon—who had always been for your Grace, but believed he should never be so again because you were for taxing his victuals.

Foord—who said he would kill any excise man that offered to come into his house.

In another conversation which he had at Lewes it appears⁵¹ that Whitfield, a considerable man in the town, acknowledged that the duke had started with good principles, and that the excise scheme outweighed everything else, while Wylbar the grocer is seriously alarmed at the trouble he expected of weighing out tobacco under the scheme. Mr. Burnett, in describing a gathering at the funeral of Mr. Trumble, gives an amusing account of the style of discussion which the subject provoked.⁵²

Mr. Collier [an agent of the duke's] rosted Mr. Hooper pritty much, but in that way that he could not take it one himselfe ; he sayd only in generall that he had had severall of his neighbours and acquaintance with him to aske y^e question whether they was to pay sixpence a stone for pork and beefe. And that he had ashoord them it wass fals and that y^e gentlemen that imposed that on them knew it to be Direct Lies, and an imposition on the Common people.

Lady Shelley complains of the effect of the bill at Arundel, and Mr. Pelham himself acknowledges that it is a cause of great trouble at Robertsbridge. Of course the opposite side made the most of the advantage this gave them. Mr. Fuller's zeal 'made him caress even the meanest of the people, so they could roar out, "No Excise."'⁵³ At Wadhurst the opponents stood at the church door, shouting as the people came out, 'No excise and no dragoons ;' but

⁴⁹ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 98.

⁵² *Ibid.* f. 269

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* f. 121.

⁵³ *Ibid.* f. 177.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* f. 379.

it was at Steyning races, in August, that the excitement on the subject reached its highest. 'Lest the people should forget what they were to cry out against, the faction had taken care to stick up No Excise in great capital letters upon the race post, a very low, mean artifice,' Mr. Hurdis declares; ⁵⁴ and Mr. Butler states ⁵⁵ that on the same occasion an enthusiast went round the town at dead of night with a drum shouting 'No excise,' to the great discomfort of peaceful ministerialists who wished to sleep. These devices were very successful, and the mob not only became most outrageous in their expressions of disapproval of the bill, but hustled the unfortunate vicar of Woodmancote, who was known to approve of it.

On the other hand no pains were lost by the government party in allaying this excitement; the bishop of Chichester throws out the suggestion that a 'simple dialogue' might be written between two farmers which should clear up the subject; various people offer their services as pamphleteers in the matter, and Mr. Pelham is strongly urged to write a public letter declaring that the excise scheme was never to be brought in again. Personal appeals to voters and the composing effect of deep potations were also largely relied on to soothe away difficulties, and a genial illustration of the latter method's efficiency is provided in a letter from Mr. J. Board, ⁵⁶ who relates how twenty-six freeholders of Worth, some accompanied by their wives, came to dinner and punch at Turner's Hill.

By nine in the evening [he proceeds] they were all fully convinc'd y^t y^e clamour of a gen^l Excise was false and scandalous, and were perfectly satisfied of the ability, honour and honesty of their present members, and express'd their indignation and concern y^t any credit had been given to the many misrepresentations y^t had lately been so industriously spread about y^e country.

And so convinced had the party become at a later stage of the punch bowl's circulation that they resolved to proclaim their belief 'in the most Publick manner they then could.' Accordingly, to return to Mr. Board's own words—

We then went all out together to the most Eminent place on the hill, where wth loud huzzas and in full glasses we drank to y^r Grace's and family's health and prosperity, success to Mr. Pelham and Butler, Sir William Gage, the true interest of Old England, the ladies y^{rs} present wth our absent wives, and concluded wth our wishes for a good Parliam^t, prosperity to the County of Sussex, and God bless y^r Grace, its best friend and protector.

The combination of all these methods seems to have attained all that could be desired, for as the contest goes on the agents report that the excitement on the question is considerably cooling down, and towards the end there is hardly any notice at all taken of the subject.

⁵⁴ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 108.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* f. 111.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* f. 232.

In estimating the resources employed by the duke in his campaigns hardly too much weight can be attached to the influence of the clergy. It is not infrequently made a charge in political contests of to-day that the parson and the dissenting minister use their offices as unfair vantage-grounds for persuasion; but even if all that is said in the heat of elections be true, such influence is as nothing compared with what was common in the last century. In the bishop of the diocese, Hare of Chichester, the duke had a firm personal and political friend, and the bishop's power of remonstrance and preferment seems to have been exercised with discretion, it is true, but at least without the slightest scruple. In August he complains,⁵⁷ in answer to a letter from the duke, that there should ever have been any doubt as to which side he would espouse; the opponents do not even expect any help from him.

As to the clergy [he continues] they have their relations, friendships, interests and opinions as others have, and therefore it can't be expected they should act all alike, or as one could wish in affairs of this nature; but if any not content to be of a different side eat a rude, violent, or factious part, as I shall know it, I shall be sure to remember it upon occasion; tho' y^r Grace knows the Bp. of Chichester is but a poor patron especially at present, and therefore can't have great influence. Some few of the clergy, very few, were so silly as to separate from the rest at Lewes and dine at the Star [the opposition inn] but these y^r Grace names were not of the number.

In a letter⁵⁸ of the following day from Dr. Hargraves there are further particulars about the bishop's attitude. He will 'do wt he can if it does not appear to bee by way of jobb;' and he seems to have had no hesitation in proclaiming his views, as he drank the duke of Newcastle's health immediately after the king's at a visitation banquet. Indeed, Major Battine's advice⁵⁹ to the duke that the bishop should be urged to beat up his tenants seems quite unnecessary, for, as the election drew nearer, he wrote⁶⁰ a most bellicose letter offering his house and beds to accommodate voters for Pelham and Butler, and on 6 May Mr. Ball, apparently one of the chapter, writes⁶¹ to say that the duke himself is expected to use the palace as an electioneering centre. The inducements offered are most seductive: the house is well aired, beds are prepared, liquors and all things ready for breakfast; the house would be much more convenient for a levee of his supporters than Lady Torrington's, who would be pacified by having Mr. Pelham as her guest; and, finally, by staying there the duke will 'put it out of Mr. Parke's power [he was a recalcitrant member of the chapter] to persuade the people that his Lordship is indifferent upon this trying occasion.' Another writer labours the point still further.⁶²

⁵⁷ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 135.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* f. 145.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* f. 200.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 32689, f. 220.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* f. 228.

⁶² *Ibid.* f. 230.

My Lord Bishop having sent his chief servants, who came hither last night on purpose to get the rooms ready, beds aired, lain in, etc., in expectation y^r Grace . . . would honour the Palace with your presence—Care being taken to provide all manner of conveniences for your Grace's reception breakfasts, etc. . . . Your Grace may depend on the utmost care being taken to prevent your taking cold.

And he adds that there were eight or nine beds for gentlemen, six for domestics, and stabling for twenty horses; so that on the whole the bishop could hardly be blamed for coldness to the interests of his patron.

Another bishop whose interest in the election is not so obvious was the bishop of Bangor. He, it seems, could influence at least two important votes, for there is a letter to him⁶³ from the duke at Hampton Court, asking for his assistance in the Sussex elections, and especially requesting his admonitions to Mr. Parke, residentiary of Chichester, and Mr. Leland, minister of East Deane. In answer⁶⁴ the bishop encloses letters for these two, especially marked with the Bangor postmark, so as not to arouse suspicion. He has written 'in earnest, tho' tenderly for fear he shou'd start at the apprehension of being influenced.' Again, the bishop of London had been 'so obligeing as to order [Mr. Ball] to apply in his name to a gentleman at Midhurst in favour of Mr. Pelham and Mr. Butler,' and even the archbishop of Canterbury became involved in an obscure electoral intrigue. It was in this wise: an exceedingly active canvasser for the duke during the first three months of the struggle was the Rev. Thomas Hurdis, vicar of Ringmer; he sends reports⁶⁵ to the duke of the state of feeling in all the neighbouring villages, goes to cricket matches to collect local gossip; announces the plans of Mr. Snooke, the rival agent, for corrupting the electorate, and can boast that his own parish is absolutely safe, except for two freeholders, 'brother toades.'⁶⁶ Such a man must have been invaluable, but his career of usefulness was cut short in the early days of October; and, to make matters worse, there seemed some prospect that the living would fall into the hands of a political opponent. The patron of the living, which was worth 140*l.* per annum, was the archbishop, and, almost before the breath had left poor Hurdis's body, there are several letters urging the duke to move the archbishop to give the living to a supporter; while one Lund even asks it for himself. But Snooke was on the spot and in the field first. His energy and rapidity of action were worthy of more success than he obtained. He had his candidate Dixon ready, congratulated him as if he had already obtained the living, and struck amazement and dismay into the opposite camp by immediately posting off to London with Dixon, for a personal interview with the

⁶³ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 257.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* ff. 58, 67, 191.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* f. 297.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* f. 214.

archbishop. The other side could do nothing more at first than chronicle with hardly suppressed envy the stages of this exciting journey; one man has seen them at Godstone on their way back,⁶⁷ but he cannot find out what the upshot of the matter is. However, Mr. Hay a few days later has made the discovery that Snooke's secret reason, which appears an inadequate one for all the labour, is the desire to be made vicar's churchwarden; and that he tempted the archbishop by offering to add 50*l.* a year to the value of the living in his will; an offer not peculiarly seductive, as Mr. Hay sagely remarks,⁶⁸ as it would, in all human probability, only be an addition to the patronage of the present archbishop's successor; 'nor,' he concludes, 'was it very decent to try to bribe an archbishop, and tempt the most reverend Father in God to commit simony.' But unfortunately Snooke's unaided ability could avail nothing against the wide-spread influence of the duke; for, two days after this letter of Mr. Hay's, Dr. Lynch,⁶⁹ who was probably a domestic chaplain or secretary of the archbishop, writes to tell the duke that the man for whom the archbishop intended the living would vote for Pelham and Butler and obey all directions from accredited agents of the duke. He goes on with the following remarks, which incidentally cast an interesting light on what was considered the whole duty of the clergy to their patrons and episcopal superiors:—

y^o are several other Clergymen in Sussex whom my Lord Archbishop at one time or other, has had an opportunity of Preferring, tho' many of y^o I know are Persons whom your Grace or some of your Family Recommended to my Lord, and they I suppose will be gratefull enough to serve the Interest your Grace espouses, yet if y^o be any whom the Archbishop has obliged of w^{ch} your Grace is doubtful, if your Grace be pleased to let me be inform'd of them, I am sure my Lord Archbishap will cause his Secretary to write to them in the most pressing terms to desire y^r vote and Interest for these Gentlemen.

Finally, to complete the story of the Ringmer living, it appears that the new vicar was a schoolmaster at Streatham, called Talbot, who wandered down to Ringmer in the early days of November, knowing absolutely nobody. The clerk took pity on him, and committed the electoral imprudence of directing him to the hospitable home of Snooke, who put him up for the night. But either Snooke magnanimously refused to take advantage of a guest, or Talbot was not to be seduced; for while he evidently had no intention of sacrificing his pedagogic duties to his new cure, he served the purpose for which he had been appointed to the salary by allowing Mr. Hay to nominate the curate who was to do his duty.

It is unnecessary to bring up more than a few instances out of many of the way in which the Sussex clergy took an active and, from our point of view, corrupt interest in the elections. The

⁶⁷ Add. MSS. 32698, f. 493.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* f. 504.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* f. 516.

above-mentioned Dr. Hargraves was a jovial intriguer for his grace; his bribery chiefly consisted in apportioning ducal joints of venison, and he displays a susceptibility to beauty which sometimes leads him to rash conclusions, for on one occasion⁷⁰ he goes to call on Mr. Mills for his vote, and, though unsuccessful in finding him, his servant 'said she was sure her Master was for y^e Duke of Newcastle, and I could not help believing what she said might be true, for she was very handsome and not unlike to be trusted with such a secret.' He also shows a most unclerical joy in a certain Mrs. Brewer's truculent sentiments;⁷¹ she

has a great many tenants in Ticehurst, and has declared if they vote for Mr. Fuller she will burn 'em all out of their Farms, she has no objection to their staying at Home, but if they do go, it shall be at their peril if they don't vote for Mr. Pelham and Mr. Butler . . . write therefore to encourage her in her good dyspositions.

Mr. Barker, a parson at Woodmancote,⁷² who is quite delighted at being told to spend money for the duke, and promises to be as economical as possible, describes with great gusto and many apologies a vulgar brawl in which he took part; a prebendary of Chichester is most energetic; the rector of Edburton recounts his services, and asks for a vacant place in the customs for his nephew; Mr. Turner, to whom the duke had given the living of West Hoathly, is so grateful that he will vote for Pelham and Butler, and thus lose his cure of Lindfield; and even a presbyterian minister solemnly warns his congregation from the pulpit against joining with the Tories.

Of bribery, corruption, and intimidation there is good evidence in these letters. Of all the forms of indirect corruption here exemplified the most remarkable and the most inexcusable is the system of tampering with sentences on prisoners. It must be remembered that Sussex was a county which from its extensive seaboard was admirably adapted to smuggling, and that at that time the revenue laws were of so stringent a character that the breach of them was correspondingly frequent and popular. In the vulgar estimation there was no discredit attached to the smuggler's profession, which, in spite of the army of revenue officers, was extremely lucrative; and the struggle between the officials and the marauders was regarded as far more creditable to the law-breakers than to its upholders. The consequence was that in a county like Sussex intense popular sympathy was aroused for any smuggler who was unlucky enough to be caught in the clutches of the law, and at election times the government candidates found that the punishment of such an offender was a serious obstacle to them in obtaining the suffrages of electors. But with the duke in power there appears to have been no more delay in perverting justice

⁷⁰ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 183.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* f. 145.

⁷² *Ibid.* f. 524.

than was necessary in order to make the favour appear more valuable. Thus as early as August 1738 Collier, the duke's agent in Hastings, writes ⁷³ to Burnett transmitting a petition from sixty freeholders to the duke on behalf of one Black, who was sentenced to some punishment, with the suggestion that the prayer might be granted if all the signatories would sign a paper declaring themselves in the Pelham interest. The upshot of this affair does not actually appear, but there can be little doubt that it was satisfactorily settled, as Collier, who was a frequent correspondent, says nothing more about it.

The case, however, which would seem to have aroused the most excitement is that of a smuggler called Thomas Newman. The first heard of him is in a letter from Major Battine, who appears to have been the chief inspector of police or of custom officials in the county; he states ⁷⁴

that about 40 or 50 Freeholders that live on the sea coast between Chichester and Arundell have sent the Duke of Richmond word that they will vote for your Grace's Brother and Mr. Butler if one Tho^o Newman a notorious smuggler be released out of Horsham Gaol, but if he be not they will vote the other way.

After this there are frequent notices of this person, in whose release the duke of Richmond and Sir John Shelley, the candidate for Arundel, were deeply interested. Mr. Butler himself in one letter ⁷⁵ forwards a petition about releasing some prisoner, in all probability this Newman, and gives advice about the best way of making the most of the concession: he hopes the duke will see to it,

because on y^e success of it depends many double votes: for besides those freeholders who have signed it several of y^m have promised to secure several others: therefore allow me to say if y^e Grace approves of it y^e sooner y^e poor man is released y^e better. . . . P.S. Since I wrote y^e I am told a little notice to me before y^e poor man is released will be of service in procuring more votes than I had before heard of or expected.

And his colleague, Mr. Pelham, urges his brother to get the Treasury pardon before they get to Chichester in their tour of the county. Of course the pardon was obtained, but not in so ungrudging a form as might be expected, for Major Battine in his letter ⁷⁶ to Newman announcing his release states that as a condition he must procure a bond of 500*l.* to surrender if called on, and another of the same amount not to smuggle again, to which Newman very pertinently replies from Horsham gaol that, if he gave the first bond, he would not be properly discharged, and as to the second, though he never intended to smuggle again, he might be falsely

⁷³ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 158.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* f. 212.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* f. 166.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* f. 153.

sworn against, and he demands that his patron, the duke of Richmond, should be informed of the hard conditions of his release.

Closely connected with this form of corruption was the extremely common and cheap bribery which consisted in the bestowal of revenue officers' places. Fifty years later, when these officials were disfranchised, it was stated that 11,500 of them were electors, and though their number was not so great at this time it must already have been considerable. Their power and unpopularity may be inferred from the fact that one of the most decisive arguments brought against the ill-fated excise bill was the fear of the indefinite multiplication of excisemen which it might involve, but however unpopular the office was in the country this did not prevent the applicants for it from being extremely numerous. There are numberless requests to the duke to secure influential voters by obtaining for them or their sons such places as those of tide-waiter, riding officer, or others of the sort. Amongst others there are a couple of curious letters on this subject from the duke of Richmond,⁷⁷ who is generally a breezy writer; he is very anxious to obtain the collectorship and controllership of the customs at Shoreham for two voters, or else he will be quite 'blown up' there; 'speake to Sir Robert nott about my conscience butt about my Borough, where God knows that ugly word Conscience is not known.' He also wishes to perpetrate a job in the way of exorbitant superannuation allowances for a voter who had retired from his revenue duties; and reveals his indifference to bribery by urging Sir William Gage 'to press Haslegrove to be for us, for I am sure Sir W^m can make one vote of him, the other indeed is reasonable that he should keep to sell to the best bidder.' This unblushing recognition of bribery is in this case all the more interesting and illustrative of the almost universal acceptance of the system, since the duke of Richmond was undeniably a man of honour, and, actually, at the beginning of this letter expounds his own conscientious objections to not voting against the pensions bill, as the king and the ministry wished him to do.

The frequency of the demands made to the duke for this sort of equivalent for a vote is certainly one of the most characteristic features of these elections. The people of Shoreham petition the duke to make a Mr. Clarke collector of customs, on the ground that he 'will make an agreeable neighbour.' A young man writes to announce the death of his father, Sir Thomas Wilson, and takes the opportunity to press his claims on the duke for a place. A voter says his son has not done well in the mercery business; will the duke give him something more profitable in the customs? Other voters apply for government contracts as tenders to men-of-war at Portsmouth;

⁷⁷ Add. MSS. 32689, ff. 116, 160.

even places of a 'merchantes steward or a Captaines Clerk' ⁷⁹ seem to be regarded as within the duke's bestowal, in return for which his correspondent declares, 'I will Vote for your Honour if I go five Hundred milles to Oblige your Honour and Bring a Son with me to Vote for your Honour.' A place of mate on a custom-house sloop is asked for another voter, and similar instances might be brought forward to any extent. Requisitions were even made on the fleet, which happened to be stationed off the coast of Sussex, to supply voters for the government. Mr. Masters, probably a custom-house official, writes from Brighton to say he has got some officers and men from a ship stationed there to vote for the government candidate for Shoreham, and, as the time of the election approached, Sir Charles Wager, who was then first lord of the admiralty, writes ⁷⁹ to say that he is sending the 'protections and discharges' asked for, but that they are considerably weakening the fleet and that the officers complain; and he adds that in consequence of this the fleet in the Downs is 2,000 men short of its full complement.

This system of attaching electors to the government by the most substantial bonds of personal interest was due in the first instance to the very great difficulty in securing the Hanoverian succession by any other means. This motive no longer existed, for if there is one thing brought out with any clearness in this correspondence, it is that the Jacobites as a party were altogether out of the reckoning; they have no influence and hardly any existence as a party, and almost the only reference to the Pretender is that neither side has any dealings with him. But when once the system had been started it was naturally difficult to alter it. The government, who had started the practice for a national object, found it easy and profitable to continue it to secure their own personal power, so that it was soon regarded by a minister like the duke of Newcastle, personally the most incorruptible of politicians, as the only method of carrying on the government.

There are, in addition to this quasi-official bribery, various more subtle forms which are more consonant to the forms of bribery known within the memory of man. Thus there is a good deal of trouble about a voter in Cliff called William Smith. He wants to know if the duke or any of his friends will pay off a mortgage of 250*l.* on his mill; as an inducement he states that he is 'very Loath to go from your Grace's intris nor will I not except I am fores to goe from it' by non-payment of this debt; but that, if it is paid, 'i and all my frend and Relation will be for your Grace's intres as far as lyes in our poure.' ⁸⁰ The number of letters preserved on this subject alone proves the amount of trouble which was taken to secure even a single man's vote, and it is easy to

⁷⁹ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 594.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 32688, f. 71, 174.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 32689, f. 22.

understand Dr. Hargrave's complaint in a postscript that 'Smyth of y^e Cliff pesters me sadly about taking of his Mortgage.'

Tradesmen, of course, gain or lose custom according to their votes, and by judicious balancing obtain orders from both sides; a butcher 'will go wrong if not terrified with losing Glynde custom;' ⁶¹ similarly a third of the voters of Rogate will vote as Lord Tankerville directs them, 'to prevent being hindred fetching chalk to mend their Lands with from his Lordship's hill;' ⁶² builders and painters are given employment to keep them in good humour, and the duke is advised to get some liveries made by a certain tailor who might otherwise be led astray by the opposition. But all these cases are more or less in the ordinary way of business; a more unusual instance of bribery is that of the elector who will produce his own and other people's votes if the duke will secure for his son a fellowship at Merton College, Oxford; ⁶³ and this is not a solitary instance of such an application.

Besides direct bribes, the expense in treating alone must have been enormous, and it seems to have fallen almost entirely on the duke. From the very beginning of the contest Burnett and other faithful scribes give almost daily accounts of drunken revels and jovial meetings at various public-houses, which for the time at least assisted in the confirmation of electoral loyalty. One of the first letters, dated 9 July 1733, is from Burnett, ⁶⁴ describing an entertainment of Mr. Fuller's on the Green at Burwash, on which Mr. Burnett spied 'aughter Dinnor;' but 'nothing pirtickerlor' was said, except that Mr. Fuller declared 'he would shake every freeholder by the hand in the County and kiss their wives before Christmas Day.' In opposition to this Burnett gives an entertainment of punch to which he is welcomed by the ringing of church bells. This device of stealing a march on the adversary seems to have been a favourite with all the duke's agents, especially, as might be expected, with the indefatigable Mr. Burnett. Poor Snooke was particularly unfortunate in finding that, when he had announced an entertainment, all his guests had been filched from him by a rival drinking bout given by Mr. Hay or Mr. Burnett, who are always exceedingly contemptuous of Snooke's proceedings. Thus on one occasion Snooke has asked all the freeholders of Ringmer to a treat, but Mr. Hay gives one on the same day. 'I hear,' continues the narrator, ⁶⁵ 'Mr. Snooke designs to treat his neighbours once a month; but I believe if he has any such intention at present he will be soon sick of it.' On another occasion it is related that the opponents had free beer on tap at seven inns in Lewes, but it was all drunk 'by the most despicable creatures that wanted a name.'⁶⁶ Altogether from these accounts the enemy's

⁶¹ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 56.

⁶² *Ibid.* f. 486.

⁶³ *Ibid.* f. 267.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* f. 19.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* f. 191.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* f. 236.

entertainments were very poor affairs, sparsely attended by disreputable non-voters and stingily carried out, while those arranged for the duke were generally as successful as one particularly mentioned of Sir William Gage's, who, becoming alarmed at the enemy's activity in Firlie, 'immediately secured every voter in Firlie within his own walls and talked to them so much last night over a bowl of punch, that I believe 10,000*l.* would not purchase one of them.'⁸⁷ So enthusiastic, indeed, were the duke's supporters in toping that they even 'got drunk . . . at their own cost and Huzza'd Pelham and Butler.'⁸⁸

The only circumstances that occasionally marred the entire success of these Bacchic persuasives was the violence of the adversary. Mr. Fuller himself was forced to own to Burnett that 'all your Grace's friends . . . behaved ourselves with great Desency and Respect to him and y^e other Gentlemen and avoided as much as wass in our power giving offence,'⁸⁹ while his own party disgusted even him by such proceedings as when

the scrub Mobb [of Hailsham] were so rude as to hollow him [an agent of the duke's] both in and out of Town and at night burnt a Wooden Image they got at Sam'l Clark's and dress't it up like a Man bought blue Quality binding to put on him in imitation of a Garter and call'd him Sir R. W.⁹⁰

At Lewes a still more disgraceful scene occurred, which is described both by Mr. Hay and Sir William Gage. The latter's account, being the more picturesque, may be here given. Mr. Mansell, an opponent, who had apparently been drinking freely at the Star, 'came to us after dinner and attacked Mr. Board very roughly, upon wch. Mr. Board gave him some very short answers, wch. Mr. Mansell thought fit to return with a box in y^e Ear upon wch. Mr. Board gave him a damnable Slap in the face and had given him many more had not the company interposed.'⁹¹ About the same time the following notice⁹² was found posted up on the Lewes market house, which shows that the opposition were ashamed of the rumours spread about their methods of electioneering:—

Lewes 17th January 1733.

At the monthly meeting this day of the gentlemen in the interest of Sir Cecil Bishop and Mr. Fuller for the County Mr. Sergison and Mr. Garland for the town of Lewes, notice being taken that a report had been spread that at a meeting at the Starr of the Gentlemen of that Interest a health was proposed to a speedye journey to Hell to Mr. Pelham of Stanmer and that the said health was drank by the said company one Gentleman only excepted, the Gentleman in the first place who is reported to have refused the said Health and afterwards every gentleman present most solemnly declare that no such Health has ever been declared

⁸⁷ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 273.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* f. 222.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* f. 419.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* f. 222.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 32689, f. 148.

⁹² *Ibid.* f. 144.

in their Company that they abhor'd all Healths of that Nature and Tendency and that the said Report is False and Scandalous.

There follow various signatures.

A great occasion and excuse for treating the electors was the 30 Oct. 1733, which was not only the king's birthday but the day on which the prince of Orange was married to the princess royal, Anne. The incidents of this marriage and the ceremonial difficulties which attended it are well known to readers of Hervey's amusing memoirs, but in Sussex of course nothing was heard of all this. By the duke's agents the occasion is treated in a characteristically businesslike manner. The chief thing which they seem to consider is whether their bonfires, or 'boon fires,' as Burnett calls them, are better than those of the other side, and it appears that on the whole they were. The only pessimistic report is from poor Mr. Hay, who admits that at Lewes the adversaries 'exceeded us in shew . . . last night they had a Ball and invited several of the Tradesmen's wives: and afterwards the Ladies dispersed themselves into Lodgings in several Tradesmen's houses where they thought it best to employ their Interest.'⁹³ But at Burwash, Mr. Burnett's own special preserve, the bonfire was a great success, and 'we ventur'd to invite the freeholders' wives and had the satisfaction of seeing near thirty of the Principal Women in this Place (excepting one or two) at an Entertainment of Coffee and Tea with a Glass of Wine to drink the proper Healths upon the Occasion befor we open'd our Entertainment.'⁹⁴ Burnett, who wishes to see it 'done with as much frewgalatry as possible,' is much exercised as to the question of grouping several small villages for one bonfire, for even with all his efforts he finds that each bonfire costs at least twenty guineas; and though Mr. Hay, for example, 'does not think it of service to put Your Grace to the Expence of Orange-coloured favours,' the cost of these treats may be estimated from a little account sent in by Mr. Collier for Hastings. He admits that it seems exorbitant, but he can find nothing to deduct, and so has paid the same.

20th Oct.	£	s.	d.
	36	04	00
30th „ (Including the 20 Guineas usually given the Corporation.)	82	16	09
	£119	00	09

P.S. The 30th of October we had the neighbouring parishes wch increased the Expence.⁹⁵

Probably, in spite of its exorbitance, the duke paid this account in full, for Collier was a necessary man whom it would be dangerous

⁹³ Add. MSS. 22689, f. 7.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 22688, f. 631.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 22689, f. 17.

to alienate, as may be inferred from a letter⁹⁶ of Mr. Pelham's, in which he says :—

As to Collyer you can't do too much, for if I can judge that town [Hastings] absolutely depends upon him and perhaps if he were cool, would leave you. I desire therefore, you will from me tell S^r Robert Walpole, if he has a mind to have two Whigs chosen att Hastings he must provide handsomely for Collyer.

While on the subject of drink bills it is noticeable that considerable correspondence took place, after the elections were over, about a bill for 65*l.* presented for payment by Mr. Pike, an innkeeper of Chichester. There seems to have been considerable doubt whether any orders were ever given to Pike to provide an entertainment ; but in the end he was doubtless satisfied, and the case produced the following testimonial to the duke's generosity in settling such accounts :—

I am grieved [says Mr. Drinkwater, of Chichester] when I think of y^e Unreasonable and Exorbitant bills that have been brought in on acc^t of our General Election, and 'tis the Admiration of all to Observe wth what honour they have been paid, even without reasonable abatements.⁹⁷

It is unfortunate that there does not appear to exist any detailed account of the amount actually expended on this election ; one can only guess at the largeness of the sum by such isolated items as these. There is, however, a record⁹⁸ of the sums paid out to Mr. Burnett between April 1740 and March 1741-2, which were undoubtedly used largely for electioneering purposes for the election of 1741. They amount altogether to the sum of 4,257*l.* 16*s.* 7*d.*, and, as the Sussex elections in that year were not nearly so warmly contested as in 1734, it would probably be well within the mark to estimate the amount entrusted to Mr. Burnett alone in preparing for these elections as 6,000*l.*

But it was not solely to agents even of the excellence of Mr. Burnett that the duke trusted for his success in the Sussex elections. On three occasions at least he personally made a progress down to the county, and aroused his supporters to enthusiasm by the magnificence of his entertainments. It is almost surprising that the duke did not spend more of his time in Sussex, for he seems to have found there flattery sufficient to satisfy even his inordinate craving. One can imagine him driving through the villages in his semi-royal coach with its six horses, in view of all the yokels and gentry standing open-mouthed to see the great man pass, at a time when it was still thought the highest honour to be spoken to by such a mighty lord. There is quite a pathetic little letter in August from Sir Thomas Wilson, of Uckfield, lamenting that he was sitting in his study when his grace rode past, as he would have liked the honour of greeting him ; and on the second occasion when he came

⁹⁶ Add. MSS. 82688, f. 307. ⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 82689, f. 871. ⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 33321, ff. 80, 81.

down in November a chorus of approval rises from all who had the distinction of being entertained at one of his enormous banquets. Finally, as has been seen above, when the voting was actually in progress the duke came down as the guest of the bishop, personally to supervise the proceedings.

But, not content with his own influence, during September he despatched the two county candidates, Mr. Pelham and Mr. Butler, for a grand tour through the county, of which most elaborate reports are sent to him by his brother. Mr. Pelham begins by complaining that the duke expected too much of him.

Was this country as easy to travel in as about Claremont, more might be done, but there is at least two hours in five difference. I fancy you think by your instructions the three Eastern Rapes lie in the compass of ten miles, but I suppose you know they contain some hundreds.⁹⁹

However even so the programme he proposed to himself does not seem to leave much to be desired in the way of actively covering the ground. Thus, writing on Tuesday, 11 Sept., from Ashburnham, his idea is on

Thursday 13th, to entertain the freeholders there.

Friday 14th, go to the Fair.

Saturday 15th, 'great day at Jemmy's' [Pelham of Crowhurst].

Sunday 16th, Dine at Mr. Luxford's with Collins, &c.

Monday 17th, } Entertain Rye and Hastings people at Broomham

Tuesday 18th, } [Sir Wm. Ashburnham's].

Wednesday 19th, Dine at Burwash and go to Wadhurst.

Thursday 20th, Dine early at Rotherfield and thence to Mayfield and Halland.

Friday 21st, Cliff [near Lewes] Fair.

Saturday 22nd, Entertain our neighbours at Halland.

Sunday 23rd, To Goodwood '45 long miles from Halland.'

He appears to have kept very punctually to these dates, for on Tuesday, the 25th, he writes¹⁰⁰ from Goodwood, that on that day he is to entertain the freeholders in and about Chichester in four houses.

Wednesday 26th, To Midhurst and lie at Sir R. Mills'.

Thursday 27th, Dine with Lord Montacute and then to Mr. Butler's at Warminghurst.

Friday 28th, To visit the coast about Tarning [? Tarring].

Saturday 29th, Visit Fittleworth gentlemen.

Monday 1st, Oct. } Petworth.

Tuesday 2nd. }

Wednesday 3rd } Horsham.

Thursday 4th. }

Friday 5th, Home.

As may be gathered from the above itinerary, very little attention seems to have been devoted by the candidates to actual speak-

⁹⁹ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 307.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* f. 389.

ing or exposition of policy; their canvassing would appear to have consisted almost solely in meeting the electors at big dinners and drinking parties.

The tour must, apart from the distances traversed, have been very hard work, at least for Mr. Pelham. He states, for example, of one evening that it was a 'thorough drunken night,' and though it was 'the first of that kind since we began our tour' the constant potations must have been very wearisome. Again, though he expects to win, he does not minimise the difficulties; 'the whole country almost is poison'd, very little regard in the common people for the King or Royal Family, less for the ministry, in short, it is personal interest must carry this election, nothing else will or can.' Consequently it was by the lavish use of this personal influence that this tour was so successful. Though the electors, as has been seen, were not averse to bribery, they also expected to be made much of by the gentry on these occasions; they liked, it was said, to be visited by 'persons of a superior rank and not by your Grace's servants;' and it was added as a reproach to the duke's party that for the other side 'gentlemen of fashion' had everywhere asked for votes long ago. This complaint, a not infrequent one in the correspondence, accounts for the laborious visits paid by the candidates in this tour, and the reports of subordinate agents seem to show that the efforts made were entirely successful. Mr. Pelham was, by all accounts, an ideal 'burgessor,' and, except just in the Rotherfield, Mayfield, and Wadhurst district, triumphed wherever he went by his persuasive talk at convivial meetings and by his affability. And the brunt of the battle fell entirely on him, for his colleague, Mr. Butler, was not seen to so great advantage, being content to hide himself entirely under the shadow of his important friend. Complaints are made of his stinginess among other things; he does not live 'at these publick times in that . . . open and hospitable manner as expected,' says Mr. Hurdis, and Mr. Pelham in one of his letters says, 'I have spared neither breath, cost nor drink, all of which has fallen singly upon me, for my brother Butler, though a good man, is no Burgessor;' and even in the west of the county, where Butler's interest was supposed to be the strongest, Mr. Pelham states that the labour falls on him almost entirely, and Mr. Butler depends on him here, quite as much as on the other side of the county. From little indications too it would appear that besides being stingy he was so cold and reserved as to be almost discourteous; for example, a gentleman of Fittleworth writes to say that he will vote for Mr. Butler, as his grace especially asks it, but 'I think both Mr. Butler and his son have been so very strange that they scarce know me, without it be at their time of neede, which I do not take at all kind.'¹⁰¹ Dr. Ball

¹⁰¹ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 361.

writes to say that unless Mr. Butler will show more energy and spend more money in the west 'his Friends will find it difficult to answer for him even when y^e people are inclinable, every freeholder looking upon himself as a sort of gentleman at this time and a man of very great consequence.'¹⁰² Difficulties were also made by one or two of the noblemen favourable to the duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pelham as to allowing their tenants to vote for Mr. Butler. Lord Berkeley peremptorily refused to have Mr. Butler's circular distributed among his tenants, and the duke of Somerset, after showing considerable arrogance to both sides, decided, when he finally made up his mind in May, to have his votes cast for Mr. Pelham, but not for Mr. Butler.

However, as the time for the election approached the hopes of the duke's party rose, and the result fully justified their confidence. Principals and agents had done everything that man could do, and there is an interesting monument of the accuracy and value of their canvassing in a poll book¹⁰³ which gives the names and expected votes of all the Sussex freeholders. The final figures of this poll book make out the following result :

Pelham, 2,262 ; Butler, 2,046 ; Bishop, 1,698 ; Fuller, 1,570,

while the actual figures were

Pelham, 2,271 ; Butler, 2,058 ; Bishop, 1,704 ; Fuller, 1,581.

Besides the county election there was another which excited almost as much attention, and gave the duke quite as much trouble. At first sight, indeed, it might have been expected that Lewes would be the absolutely impregnable stronghold of the Pelham interest. The duke had property there, and Pelhams not only lived in the town itself, but seemed to hem it in on every side with their estates and houses. Yet, apart from the case of Shoreham, in which there were exceptional circumstances, it was at Lewes that the duke came nearest to being defeated in Sussex ; indeed, only eight votes separated one of his candidates from the leading opponent.

There were several reasons for the closeness of this contest. Among others, the duke was exceedingly unfortunate in his candidates for this borough. They both had the same name—Thomas Pelham—and were distinguished only by their places of abode, Stanmer and Lewes ; and they both appear to have been lazy, incapable ne'er-do-weels, who took no trouble about the election, but expected to be hoisted in on the duke's shoulders. In letters to his wife¹⁰⁴ the duke is obliged to confess that 'there never were two such creatures as our candidates,' and of 'old Tom Pelham' he says that he is 'as unpopular as possible and has personally disobliged the whole Town.' Mr. Hay also is quick to see their faults: constant complaints come from him about their lethargy

¹⁰² *Add. MSS.* 32668, f. 449.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* 33059, B.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 33073, G. 60, 82.

in canvassing the electors : the Lewes Pelham is pig-headed, while his namesake of Stanmer ' never comes to Lewes, but he gets drunk and then talks in so imprudent and extravagant a manner that he makes his friends very uneasy.'¹⁰⁵ Mr. Pelham of Lewes himself writes lachrymose letters to the duke complaining of his own incapacity, and seems to have suffered from the opposite defect to his cousin, as he has been so ill that ' I cannot drink with people, which for ought I know may disoblige some. What I have already done makes me out of order now ; ' ¹⁰⁶ and of him Mr. Hay says :—

I wish Mr. Pelham had lent more to it [the election]; for the ground the Enemy have gained is owing to his Inactivity, which has been much lamented by his Friends and ridiculed by his Ennemies; and many have made it an excuse to vote against him, because he never asked for their votes. This has thrown him into such a depression of spirits, that for a week or ten days last past, he has lain a bed all day, and lost all the time he should have employed in business.¹⁰⁷

Such scandalous inactivity on the part of the candidates did not help to improve the prospects at Lewes, which were already very black. Till the end of the year 1733 there is hardly a letter about Lewes affairs which does not paint the ministerial position in the darkest colours. In Messrs. Garland and Sergison the opposition had secured unusually strong candidates, largely because they represented the dissenting as well as the high tory vote, whereas usually the dissenters went with the government, and it so happened that there was a considerable number of dissenters in Lewes. The opposition candidates were also a great contrast to their opponents by the activity and zeal with which they canvassed and by their ingenuity in flattering the complacency of the electors. Mr. Garland, moreover, who was the dissenter, had gained considerable influence in the town by a reputation for saintliness and upright behaviour, to judge by the exultation displayed by the Pelhams in January at an accusation of bribery which is brought against him. Another circumstance which militated strongly against the duke at first was that Lewes felt very sore on the excise question, for the numerous small tradesmen in the place had become firmly possessed of the idea that the scheme would ruin their trade. However, as has been noticed above, the excitement about the excise had almost entirely cooled down by the time the election approached, and, though it served to frighten the duke, hardly did him much injury at the polls. Here too, in spite of rigid principles, the drinking arrangements made by the opposition were at least as good as the duke's. They had apparently hired the Star and the White Horse, where a drinking club and miscellaneous convivial meetings were held with praiseworthy regularity

¹⁰⁵ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 526.¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* f. 407.¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 32689, f. 24.

and with marked success. These tactics at last woke the Pelhams from their torpor, and they were induced to start a similar club for their side at the White Hart, and to offer it a weekly 'treat.' An attempt was also made to woo the suffrages of Lewes, where the race-meetings were important events, by the blandishments of a jockey. This appears in a letter of Mr. Hay's,¹⁰⁸ who, after the usual complaints of Mr. Pelham's inactivity, adds:—

He had been desired to establish Clubs for the inferior voters at the Black and White Lyons, and to employ Lawrence the jockey as a public Orator there. . . . I spoke to Lawrence the jockey last night and told him as he had better understanding than most people he might do service by entertaining and talking to the inferior sort; he said he would.'

But in spite of such assistance affairs must have looked serious when the duke's relation Henry Shelley could only find consolation in the reflexion that the opposite voters were so fond of wine that one-third of them will have drunk themselves to death before the election, a reflexion which is justified by a statement of Mr. Pelham¹⁰⁹ that 'Mitchelburn [an opponent] who expected to be constable has been drunk this week, some others for three weeks or a month. As to the people here who are drunk and in a ferment—I don't know at all what to do with them.' Nevertheless Shelley's despondency is such that he cannot find language to express to the duke his horror at Messrs. Sergison and Garland's impudence.

I am much concerned [he says] that Innovations upon y^e ancient free choice of Burgesses at Lewes are such that 'tis not to be born. No Borough could in England boast of so honourable and free a choice, but now 'tis destroyed and will I am afraid become like others.

Why, he asks, could not those candidates have gone to some more corrupt borough, instead of to Lewes, which has always been illustrated by the favours of his grace and his ancestors?¹¹⁰

The sentiments in this letter must have been pleasant to hear for the duke, who shortly before had sent round this extraordinarily humble circular to fifteen of his principal supporters in the town:—

Claremont, Oct. 16, 1733.

Sir,—The dependence that I have upon your Friendship encourages me to give you this trouble. You cannot but be sensible with what warmth and diligence the opposition against my two cousin Pelhams is carried on at Lewes, the chief design of which is not only to destroy my Interest at Lewes, but if possible to drive me out of the Country; as I am very positive I have not deserved this usage from the Town of Lewes of all places, I yet hope and believe this attempt will not meet with success, but however if our adversaries are daily at Work, and nothing is done on our Part (as I am afraid has hitherto been too much the Case) to be sure they must gain ground upon us. I therefore expect from your Friendship and goodness for me, that you will not only speak to all your Friends, but

¹⁰⁸ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 584.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* f. 453.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 32689, f. 49.

immediately meet together and consult such measures, as may effectually disappoint our opposers, and Those that you cannot get to promise, I wish you could prevail upon not to engage their Votes, till I come into the country, which will be in three weeks, when I shall make you frequent Visits, and do all in my power to preserve and maintain the Interest which I and my Family have had in your Town for so many years and which I hope the Town will not think it their Interest to destroy.

I am, Sr. Your affectionate Friend and Servant,
HOLLES NEWCASTLE.¹¹¹

As a result of the personal intervention of the duke, of the energetic spirit infused into the contest by Mr. Burnett on his arrival, and of a judicious system of treating and bribing, which seems at Lewes to have been more openly and extensively resorted to on both sides than in the county election, despondency gradually gives way to hope, but to the very last no means could safely be left untried to secure the Pelhams' return. Among the means employed were some rather obscure manœuvres for doctoring the lists of voters, on which a few words of explanation are necessary.

As in so many boroughs, under the old system, there seems to have been considerable doubt and confusion at Lewes as to the franchise. The last resolution of the house of commons on the subject was of 29 March 1627, when it was determined 'that there was no mayor or bailiffs there, but only constables. It was agreed that the election ought to be made by the inhabitants.' If this resolution meant anything it might have been presumed to admit all inhabitants to the franchise, but in practice voting very soon became restricted to the inhabitants whose names appeared in the poor books as paying scot and lot. However, this election was chosen by the opposition as a test how far the exclusion of non-ratepaying inhabitants was valid; twenty-four such votes were tendered for Messrs. Garland and Sergison, but were rejected; and it was finally decided by the house, after considering the petition of the defeated candidates, and after the evidence of a few old inhabitants had been heard on the point, 'that the right of election is in the Inhabitants, being Householders, paying Scot and Lot.'¹¹² But even though this comparatively limited form of franchise was proved by this *ex post facto* decision of the house to be the right form, it nevertheless allowed a very considerable opportunity for the expression of genuine popular feeling; and from the outset of the contest the duke and his agents seem anxious to elude by every possible means such an expression of opinion.

As is evident from the only resolution of the house of commons then applicable to Lewes, the constables were the returning officers for the borough, and by a recognised interpretation of the resolution the voters were all inhabitants paying scot and lot; and it appears

¹¹¹ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 510.

¹¹² *Comm. Journ.* 8 March 1735-6.

that the presence of a householder's name on the poor book of his parish was taken as evidence of his qualification. Thus it was important for the duke, in the first place, to obtain favourable constables, as with them rested the decision as to the validity of a vote in case of dispute ; in the second place, to secure the nominal or real position of householder for all his supporters and deprive his opponents of it as far as he could ; and thirdly, to take care that the poor-book lists should contain as many friends' names and as few enemies' as possible : and these three objects are carefully kept in view. As to the constables, their mode of election was peculiar. There is an indication that their election was originally on a popular basis in the fact that they were still chosen by a jury of a certain number of the inhabitants. But the popular element had really disappeared by this time, as this jury was nominated entirely by a great landowner. Apparently two or more landowners, of whom the duke of Newcastle was probably one, had the nomination of the jury by turns, as Burnett says ¹¹³ that it was 'ye Duke of Norfolk's turn' on this occasion. Now the duke of Norfolk, as a previously quoted letter indicates, was somewhat chary of interfering in local politics, so that the choice was left entirely in the hands of his steward, Mr. Gratwick, of whose disposition there was at first considerable uncertainty, as he appeared willing to take bribes from both sides. Mr. Pelham of Lewes, for example, writes ¹¹⁴ to say that he considers him favourable on the whole, but rarely sober ; however, Mr. Mitchell shall tackle him and if necessary bribe him. Mr. Mitchell accordingly tackled him with a flattering letter from the duke, but found him in want of money, so he again turns him over to Mr. Pelham, who will provide the 'convincing arguments.' ¹¹⁵ And in effect these arguments proved quite unanswerable ; for Mr. Pelham writes ¹¹⁶ to the duke to say that Gratwick had come to dine with him perfectly sober ; and that he was a good man, since, though he had been bribed by the enemy, he had returned them their fifty guineas after he had come to terms with himself. Mr. Gratwick's excellence was further proved by the favourable jury he appointed ; by which means the choice of constables fell on the four nominees of the Pelhams—Mr. Tom Friend, Mr. James Reeve, and Messrs. Willard and Taylor. The first two of these apparently signalised themselves especially by their zeal, to judge from the petition of Messrs. Sergison and Garland to the house of commons of 31 Jan. 1734-5 against the return of the Lewes election, which states that the Pelhams won 'by the Partiality and arbitrary Management of Thomas Friend and James Reeve, who took upon themselves to act as Constables . . . and refused divers good and legal votes' for the petitioners and allowed

¹¹³ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 189.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* f. 409.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* f. 397.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* f. 453.

bad votes for the Pelhams. Evidently, therefore, the duke's first object was successfully attained.

The question of householders was a more difficult matter, as it necessitated separate treatment in each individual case. It appears, for one thing, that the duke's interests had suffered from the fact that, whereas Lewes had been increasing in size lately, the Pelhams had omitted to buy up a sufficient number of the new houses to safeguard their influence.¹¹⁷ But less straightforward methods of securing a majority were resorted to; for wherever it was legally possible the duke, through his agents, had no hesitation in turning out any of his tenants who belonged to the opposite party, and thereby causing them to lose their votes. Such a proceeding was not always possible, from the terms of the lease, and legal questions so often arose that the agents ask for a special legal adviser on the spot, to be always ready to be consulted on such matters. Naturally the other side retaliated with similar proceedings, so that the additional trouble was given of finding houses for ejected supporters who might otherwise lose their votes. Mr. Burnett, as usual, was prepared for all emergencies, and as early as November writes to suggest that as many houses as possible may be hired to accommodate voters who were turned out by the enemy for promising the Pelhams a vote. Mr. Ashby must have been very grateful for this precaution, for he writes¹¹⁸ to Burnett two days before Christmas Day to say that he is about to be turned out of his house by the other side for not voting with them, and begs that the duke may consider his case, 'that I may not Lye in the Street.' However, the duke had the best of this game, for it is calculated that he can turn out eleven or thirteen of their voters, while they can turn out only three of his, besides some widows who are to be turned out 'unless they consent to take men into their houses who may have a vote.'¹¹⁹ In this connexion we may quote an extract from a memorandum of 'things to be thought of' addressed by Mr. Hay to Sir William Gage.¹²⁰

To speak to Wid. Trower and Strickland to keep possession.

To fill the house he hired of Ridge with a good friend.

To hire Parker's house immediately and eject Cooper.

To put Petit into the house he hired of J. Turner, to manage against Dixon and Michelborne.

To try to get one vote at least of . . . [illegible] and Grisbrooke, the Butcher (who begins to be dissatisfied) by doing him favours instead of Smith.

Finally there were the poor books to be thought of; without entry in one of them other qualifications would be of little avail. It appears that these lists were made out for each parish by the overseers and were subscribed on approval by magistrates, and

¹¹⁷ Horsfield, *History, &c., of Sussex*, vol. ii. Appendix.

¹¹⁸ Add. MSS. 32889, f. 96.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* f. 99.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* f. 10.

that in case of doubt an appeal could be made to the magistrates in session. Accordingly it was necessary, as Mr. Hay's memoranda made clear, to see that there were overseers of the right complexion in the first place; secondly, that poor books approved of should be confirmed by signature, whereas those disapproved of should not be signed, for the reason given in the following extract:—

There has been some management of late in making the Poor Books; one for St. Michael's Parish was the other day brought to Mr. Pelham, which I believe he and Mr. Apsley will refuse to sign . . . if they are not signed they are not legal Poor Books and consequently no regard need be had to them, which will give the Constables a greater latitude on the Poll in determining the validity of disputable votes.¹²¹

Parenthetically Mr. Hay suggests that if the overseers help the enemy by adding to the list people not before charged, their side should do the same, and, if necessary, appeal to the sessions, where it is highly important that 'all the justices our friends' should attend. This final resource of packing the magistrates' bench seems to have been all the more necessary that disorderly scenes occurred at the making up of poor books in various parishes; and quite mean and poor people had been successfully put on by the other side.¹²² It may be remarked here that several complaints occur from Burnett and other agents as to the unsatisfactory nature of the commission of the peace in various parts of the county; thus, in relation to a different matter, the licensing of public-houses, which chiefly came before Mr. Fuller, Burnett says, 'I wish there was a proper Gentleman in the Comition that would act; it would give ease to many scrupolos people.'¹²³ However, at Lewes the difficulty was not so much in the political views of the justices as in the clerk, one Puxty, who gave a deal of trouble. He is described¹²⁴ by Mr. Thomas Pelham of Lewes as a shifty fellow, quite likely to take money from both sides. In a long interview with Mr. Pelham, who was himself a justice, he steadily refused to show him the town book, in which presumably the overseers' lists were officially recorded. But in this case, as in so many others, a *grandis et verbosa epistola* was sought for from the duke, and obtained not vainly, for soon afterwards it appears that Puxty had been thoroughly frightened by a letter from his grace, and had become so amenable as to give up the book in dispute. Any further danger of obstruction from Mr. Puxty was finally removed just before the election, when Mr. Thomas Pelham, jun., reports¹²⁵ that he had done something for which he became liable to the commissioners of excise, but hoped to get off on the plea of being in the duke's interest. 'As he is notoriously otherwise,' adds Mr. Pelham, 'I hope care may be taken to prevent his being

¹²¹ Add. MSS. 32688, f. 599.

¹²² *Ibid.* 32689, f. 128.

¹²³ *Ibid.* 32688, f. 105.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* f. 397.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* 32869, f. 194.

excused on such a notion, at least to have the matter suspended till after the election,' so that evidently his teeth were drawn, whichever decision was taken.

The energy and cunning displayed by the duke's agents were in the result crowned with success, though the closeness of the figures showed that the efforts had not been wasted. The voting was:—

Thomas Pelham of Stanmer	84
Thomas Pelham of Lewes	83
N. Garland	75
T. Sergison	70

It is interesting, as in the case of the county election, to see with what an approach to accuracy the result could be calculated beforehand. In the previous November Mr. Hay had reported ¹²⁶ that the voting would result in

Mr. Pelham of Stanmer's getting	87 votes
Mr. Pelham of Lewes	89
Mr. Sergison	84
and Mr. Garland	74

while Mr. Charles Shelley, 'an excellent Burgessor' for the duke, had prophesied ¹²⁷—

Mr. P. of Stanmer	86
Mr. P. of Lewes	82
Mr. S——n	82
Mr. G——d	70

Before concluding this survey of the Sussex election of 1734 a few words must be said about the only place in which the opposition carried both candidates. Shoreham was in rather an exceptional position as compared with the other boroughs. There the voting was done by 'free' electors, as they were called, and in consequence bribery was the sole means of election. The proceedings of the notorious 'Christian Club,' which were revealed in 1771, and resulted in the disfranchisement of the borough, seem not to have been peculiar in the history of the elections here, and the seat was practically at the disposal of the highest bidder. At first there was no opposition to Sir Thomas Prendergast, the duke of Richmond's nominee, and to Mr. Gould, the other ministerial candidate; but the duke of Richmond by his jovial impetuosity had made the mistake of alienating from the first the duke of Newcastle's active interest in the contest, as appears probable from the following letter: ¹²⁸—

All I can say of Shoreham [says his grace of Richmond] is that if it had been a Borough that your Grace had ever had anything to do in heretofore, I should never have had any thoughts of it, butt I look upon it as a new Whore, that is anybody's for their money.

¹²⁶ Add. MSS. 32689, f. 24.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* f. 42.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* 32683, f. 46.

Accordingly, though the duke of Newcastle consented to Sir T. Prendergast's candidature and promised his support, he was not always so ready with corrupt interference as the other duke desired in his frequent and urgent letters on the subject. Moreover the opponents were just the men for the borough. Phillipson was a wealthy London merchant and a South Sea director, who offered to give large shipbuilding orders to the town if he were elected, and was evidently in a position to bribe on a sufficient scale; while Frederick, still more unfortunately for the duke of Richmond, was a friend of Sir Robert Walpole, so that the Pelham interest could hardly go strongly against him. The combination of his opponents' wealth and of the indifference of the duke of Newcastle defeated both the duke of Richmond's candidates; and Phillipson and Frederick were elected.

A general review of the election illustrated in this correspondence gives a not unpleasant picture of the state of feeling in the country at the time. Electors of that day, it is true, rose to a sense of their value at election time, and expected with a touch of arrogance to be wooed with humility by their lords; but this is a characteristic which has not altogether disappeared from their more numerous successors. On the whole this election, which was one of considerable importance, was conducted with extraordinary good temper on both sides, with very little disturbance of ordinary life. There are delightful descriptions, too long to quote, of amiable contests between representatives of opposite sides, who meet as they ride across the Downs on some errand, or in public-houses, or at festive gatherings. Clubs, not always exclusively composed of one party abound; cricket matches and horse races are attended with increased zest when they have the added interest of canvassing; and of course there is a great deal of hard drinking. But of violence and turbulence there is surprisingly little, and what there was did not permanently embitter the good relations of neighbours. Above all else the duke of Newcastle stands prominent. In this aspect of a great landlord and a great patron of parliamentary seats he appears in his most amiable light. His fussiness and care for details find their proper sphere; his vanity and self-assertiveness are no longer his most evident characteristics, as his easy predominance here renders the latter unnecessary and the former tolerable. His good nature and his love of magnificence are well displayed, and his arts of management are put to a test which they adequately satisfy. Above all the story of this election, if it does not excuse, at least accounts for his impregnable position in the ministries of almost half a century, for it proves that although his power in elections may have been partly due to the accident of birth and inheritance, the personal energy and supervision which he contributed alone made possible such unparalleled success.

BASIL WILLIAMS.