

## *Elizabeth Claypole*

IN the library of the South Kensington Museum a set of volumes may be consulted which contain photographs of most of the portraits exhibited at the National Portrait Exhibitions of 1866, 1867, and 1868. Any one who turns over these photographs can hardly fail to have his attention attracted by a beautiful face, instinct with life and charm, which comes as a welcome relief amongst many portraits, harsh in themselves or dimly and imperfectly reproduced owing to the age or bad condition of the original pictures. It is that of Elizabeth Claypole, daughter of Oliver Cromwell, a figure standing in a pathetic side-light of history, with the one prominent fact of her death always linked with that of her father. We know less of Mrs. Claypole than we could have wished, but there is enough to be gleaned concerning her to give us a very distinct portrait of a charming and womanly character, nor is the study without interest in estimating the influences at work in the Protector's household and court.

Born at Huntingdon in the summer of 1629, and brought up first at St. Ives, afterwards at Ely, we know nothing of Elizabeth Claypole until her marriage. We can only fill up for ourselves the picture of a childhood during nearly eight years of which she continued the youngest of a family of six; of a girlhood spent at Ely, probably in the old house which may still be seen by the curious, marked chiefly by the death of her eldest brother, Robert, at school, and of the second, Oliver, at Newport Pagnell, in the early days of the Civil War,<sup>1</sup> and otherwise uneventful enough, despite the stirrings in the world outside, to leave her natural light-heartedness and gaiety unimpaired.

She was under seventeen when her marriage to John Claypole took place<sup>2</sup>—the first marriage in the family, though her elder sister Bridget's was soon to follow, and we may suppose—for we are still very much in the dark—that the early years of her married life

<sup>1</sup> He died of small-pox in March 1643-4. *Parliament Scout*, March 15-22, E. 38, 18.

<sup>2</sup> They were married at Holy Trinity Church, Ely, 18 Jan. 1645-6. The entry 'John Claypole, gent., and Elizabeth Cromwell, nupt.' may still be seen in the parish register.

were passed, to some extent at any rate, with her husband's family in the country seclusion of Norborough.

Norborough lies a little to the north of Peterborough, on the borders of Lincolnshire, and some thirty miles or more from Ely. As you enter the village from the west, there are still to be seen, now forming part of a modern house and outbuildings, a few remains of the ancient manorhouse of the Claypoles. Built by Geoffrey de la Mare in 1340, it had passed to the Claypoles two centuries later, and, at the time of Elizabeth's marriage, was the seat of her husband's father, John Claypole the elder, who was there bringing up a numerous family of sons and daughters.<sup>3</sup>

There are indications, however, that even from the first much of Mrs. Claypole's married life was spent with her own family, and a year or two later, when they had approached nearer to 'that fierce light which beats upon a throne,' we can see that she and her husband were constantly members of the Cromwell household.

The two letters, in which Oliver has left on record his anxiety for his daughter's spiritual welfare, have been often quoted, and need only be referred to here. In the first, written to Bridget Ireton a few months after her marriage in the autumn of 1646, he 'trusts in mercy she is exercised with some perplexed thoughts' and 'sees her own vanity and carnal mind.' In the second, written from Edinburgh in April 1651, to his wife at the Cockpit, he bids her 'mind poor Betty of the Lord's great mercy,' and desires her 'to take heed of a departing heart and of being cozened with worldly vanities and worldly company, *which I doubt she is too subject to.*'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> John Claypole was the eldest son. By a deed dated 9 March, 1645-6, his father settled certain of his manors and lands on trusts for Elizabeth's jointure and for the children of the marriage. The parties to this deed other than the father and son and Elizabeth herself were 'Oliver Cromwell of Ely, in the county of Cambridge, Esq., Benjamin Norton of Ely aforesaid, Esq., and Walter Wells of Ely aforesaid, Dr. of phisick.' Cromwell gave his daughter 1,250*l.*

<sup>4</sup> Mention should perhaps be made here of two letters quoted in William Dickinson's *History of Newark* and supposed by him to have been written about this time by Cromwell to Mrs. Claypole from Edinburgh. They relate to some commissions sent by him for friends in Lincolnshire apparently obtained by her influence, and her 'cousin Natt' or 'Nathan' is particularly named. With the letters is printed a commission of lieutenantancy 'in Robert Swallow's troop of horse in the regiment whereof Commissary General John Cleipole is Colonel,' dated 20 July 1651, and addressed to Nathaniel Dickinson, a member of a family of Dickinson settled at Claypole in Lincolnshire, who appears to have married a sister of John Claypole, and one of the daughters of the elder Claypole of Norborough. The letters are not, however, recognised by Carlyle, and from internal evidence are of more than doubtful authenticity. They were reprinted in *Notes and Queries* for 1860, where there is some correspondence about them from which it seems that the originals had disappeared. Members of the Dickinson family long preserved an ancient drinking-cup with a cover supposed to have belonged to Cromwell or his daughter, and 'some specimens of men's apparel in curious needlework said to have been presented by the Lady Cleipole to her sister-in-law as a marriage present for her husband.' As, however, the eldest son of Nathaniel was born five years before Elizabeth's marriage, the history of the latter articles would appear doubtful.

The Cromwells had moved to London probably about a year after Elizabeth's marriage. The year 1650 saw them resident at the Cockpit, while four years later, in the April following Oliver's installation as Lord Protector, they moved to Whitehall.

Of the court of the Protector, as the circle which gathered round Cromwell there during the years of the protectorate may be called, Elizabeth Claypole was without doubt the greatest ornament, and with the beginning of this period our heroine's figure emerges distinctly into view. Barely five-and-twenty, we see in the portrait attributed to Robert Walker, of which mention has already been made, and which was probably painted a few years previously, a charming face in which graceful affability is mingled with high spirit, while the large dark eyes looking out from under delicately arched eyebrows are full of expression and tenderness. The rich elegance of her dress hardly accords with Puritan strictness, while it is interesting to notice that she wears suspended below her lace ruff a small miniature of her father.

It was she who in a great measure did the honours of Whitehall, 'acting the part of a princess very naturally, obliging all persons with her civility, and frequently interceding for the unhappy.'<sup>5</sup> We see her good-humouredly acquiescing in Whitelocke's high opinion of his own importance,<sup>6</sup> procuring for Harrington the restoration of the proof sheets of his 'Oceana,'<sup>7</sup> writing letters to Paris to Sir John Southcote of Mistham, a royalist gentleman of her acquaintance, asking him to buy her two damask beds, one with gold, the other with silver fringes, and also very many yards of the richest gold and silver stuffs for her own wearing, and, later on, going to her father 'in a huf' and obtaining the release of the same Sir John Southcote when he had been apprehended by Cromwell's orders while on his way to visit his lady-love, and had written to his friend, 'Lady Elizabeth Cleopol,' to help him in his dilemma.<sup>8</sup> Wingfield Claypole, her young brother-in-law, relies on her 'powerful intercession' with her brother Henry to excuse a prolonged absence from his duties, while Carrington, allowing for the extravagant eulogies which characterise his history of the Protector, gives us a charming picture of her generosity and kindness.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Toland, *Life of Harrington*.

<sup>6</sup> Whitelocke, p. 551.

<sup>7</sup> See the charming story in Toland's *Life of Harrington*, which has been often quoted.

<sup>8</sup> *Hist. MSS. Commission*. Appendix to 2nd Report, p. 147.

<sup>9</sup> 'A worthy daughter of so famous a father, whom Heaven too soon snatched away both from the virtuous and from the miserable, and whose soul did admirably correspond with her fortune and the majesty of her comportment. How many of the royalist prisoners got she not freed? How many did she not save from death whom the laws had condemned? How many persecuted Christians hath she not snatcht out of the hands of the tormentors, quite contrary unto that Herodias, who could do anything with her father. She employed her prayers even with tears to spare such men whose ill fortune had designed them to suffer; when as this grand hero being trans-

Lord and Lady Claypole, for so they were now styled, had their suite of apartments at Whitehall and also at Hampton Court. At the latter place there were three rooms set apart by Lady Claypole for nurseries, one at the end of the passage leading to the tennis court, another, 'hung round with striped stuff,' formerly part of the armoury, the third, a room which had been occupied by the late archbishop of Canterbury. This last room had among other articles of furniture 'one large looking glass in an ebony frame with a string of silk and gold.' We read also of tapestry hangings 'of Artimesia and Orlando,' Persian and Turkey carpets, couches, elbow chairs, cushions, and stools of 'sky-coloured taffety embroidered with silk and gold after the Indian fashion and cased with blue baize,' others of 'sad-coloured cloth embroidered with silk in beagles and flowers and cased with sad-coloured baize, suitable to the bed that lay in the Cyprus chest in the lower wardrobe.'

They had now three children, two boys, Cromwell and Henry, and a girl apparently named Martha, for whom as the children of his favourite daughter the Protector cherished a special affection. Andrew Marvell in his 'poem on the death of his late Highness' gives us a graceful picture of Oliver, his daughter, and her little ones.

As with riper years her virtue grew,  
And every minute adds a lustre new;  
When with meridian height her beauty shined,  
And thorough that sparkled her fairer mind,  
When she with smiles serene, in words discreet,  
His hidden soule at every turne could meet;  
Then might y' ha' daily his affection spy'd,  
Doubling that knot which destiny had ty'd;  
While they by sense not knowing comprehend  
How on each other both their fates depend.  
With her each day the pleasing houres he shares,  
And at her aspect calms his growing cares,  
Or with a grandsire's joy her children sees  
Hanging about her neck or at his knees.

Suddenly placed in so prominent a position, it was not to be expected that either Lady Claypole or her sisters should escape unfavourable criticism, and the comparative triviality of the allegations and satires directed against them says much for their tact, amiability, and discretion. Butler has a fling at 'her Grace

ported as it were, and even ravished to see his own image so lively described in those lovely and charming features of that winning sex, could refuse her nothing; insomuch that when his clemency and justice did balance the pardon of a poor criminal, this most charming advocate knew so skilfully to disarm him that, his sword falling out of his hand, his arms only served to lift her up from those knees on which she had cast herself, to wipe off her tears and to embrace her.' Carrington, *Hist. of Oliver Lord Protector*, 1659, p. 263.

Maid Marian Claypole,'<sup>10</sup> and Mrs. Hutchinson in the bitterness of her soul classes them together as 'insolent fools.' An allusion to Elizabeth, evidently by a satirical hand, as 'a great lover of plays and piety,' while tending to confirm, as we shall see, the facts recorded of her later life, may serve to indicate that the vanities of which her father had warned her in earlier days, had not lost their sway over her.

We see, too, that she was not without other faults. Perhaps a critic who found in the beautiful face, in spite of 'a great deal of what is lovable . . . withal a certain shallow expression of self-will'<sup>11</sup> was not altogether wrong. The story of the provocation caused by her undisguised contempt for the wives of the major-generals, lends colour to the suggestion.<sup>12</sup>

The position in which they found themselves, and the court which was paid to them, were indeed calculated to impress Cromwell's daughters with a sense of their own importance. 'When my Lord Protector's coach came into the park,' we read in a private newsletter of May 1654, 'with Colonel Ingleby, and my Lord's daughters only (three of them all in green-a), the coaches and horses flocked about them like some miracle. But they galloped (after the mode court pace now, and which they all use wherever they go) round and round the park, and all that great multitude hunted them, and caught them still at the turn like a hare, and then made a lane with all reverent haste for them, and so after them again, that I never saw the like in my life.' There was, we learn from another source, 'a constant expense allowed in tirewomen, perfumers, and the like arts of gallantry, with each their maid and servant to attend them, and by their array and deportment their quality might have been guessed at.'<sup>13</sup> Whitelocke has told us how the Swedish ambassador, Sir Peter Coyet, in the August of 1656, after dining in his company at the country house of Sir George Ayscough, one of the great seamen of the time, 'in his return home . . . went into Hampton Court to take his leave of the Lady Elizabeth Claypole and her sisters, where he was received with much state.'

In the autumn of 1655 Lady Claypole had been dangerously ill. We hear of it first in September,<sup>14</sup> and on 4 Dec. William Malyn, Cromwell's secretary, and Dr. Slane both reported to Henry Cromwell her continued illness.<sup>15</sup> On the 7th we find Mary Cromwell apologising to Henry for her long silence and adding: 'You cannot but hear of my sister's illness, which has indeed been the only cause of it.'<sup>16</sup> On the 10th Dr. Slane writes: 'Dr. Goddard

<sup>10</sup> *A Ballad upon the Parliament which deliberated about making Oliver King.*

<sup>11</sup> *Athenæum*, 18 Aug. 1866.

<sup>12</sup> *Clarendon State Papers*, iii. 327.

<sup>13</sup> *Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth Cromwell.*

<sup>14</sup> 'My Lady Elizabeth very ill,' Dr. Slane to Henry Cromwell, 28 Sept. 1655-*Lansdowne MSS.* Brit. Museum, 828, 226.

<sup>15</sup> *Lansdowne MSS.* 822, 231, and 828, 236.

<sup>16</sup> Thurloe, iv. 298.

and I have sate up again day and night. I never saw two parents so affected (or more) than my Lord Protector and her Highness. Truly my lady hath given a sweet testimony in this sickness. The Lord continue his love further.' <sup>17</sup> Next day Fleetwood, writing from Wallingford House where he and his family were then residing, has a similar report: 'The illness of my sister Claypoole is so very great that both their highnesses are under a great trial. You know the dearness they have unto her, and though we know not how the Lord will deal with her, yet her recovery is much doubted. This afternoon hath given very great cause of fear.' <sup>18</sup>

These days, however, seem to have marked the crisis of her illness. On 28 Dec. Lockyer, one of the chaplains at Whitehall, writes to Henry Cromwell: 'Our family is all well. My Lady Claypool drawing to health, but her child last born is dead.' <sup>19</sup> By 19 Feb. Dr. Slane is able to report that 'my Lady Elizabeth is very well again.' <sup>20</sup>

About this time we find her giving audience to Sir John Reynolds, who had come over from Ireland upon business from the Lord Deputy, Henry Cromwell, to the Protector, and from a letter which he wrote to Henry on 26 Feb. we learn that suffering, as is so often the case, had been the means of leading her into higher regions of thought and desire.

The Lady Elizabeth still complains of your forgetfulness, notwithstanding her late sickness, although I assured her Excellency that publicly and privately your Excellency did cause frequent prayers to be made for her recovery. Indeed, she desires more your Excellency's value than ever, having seen much of God in this late visitation, whereby so much more religion shines with her wonted virtue and nobleness as good men much rejoice, believing his Highness hath comfort in all his children upon the best account. <sup>21</sup>

Elizabeth's youngest child Oliver was born in the end of June 1657. 'Another brave boy,' writes Fleetwood. <sup>22</sup> In the autumn of this year the long engagement of Frances and Mr. Rich was terminated by their marriage at Whitehall on 11 Nov., and on the 19th of the same month Mary Cromwell was married to Lord Fauconberg. In the great festivities which attended these events we do not find mention of Lady Claypole's name except that her wedding gift to Frances consisted of 'two sconces of 100*l.* apiece,' and probably the delicacy of her health prevented her taking the leading part which would otherwise have naturally fallen to her.

That her health was gradually failing, and that each successive illness stole something from the bloom and freshness of her beauty, and left her frame weaker and less capable of resistance, we may gather, I think, from a comparison of her portraits. Samuel Cooper's

<sup>17</sup> *Lansdowne MSS.* 823, 234.

<sup>18</sup> *Ib.* 821, 226.

<sup>19</sup> *Ib.* 822, 198.

<sup>20</sup> *Ib.* 823, 228.

<sup>21</sup> *Ib.* 823, 74.

<sup>22</sup> *Ib.* 821, 821.

miniature, dated as early as 1653, has with its sweet thoughtfulness a matronly air which suggests a more advanced age than the date would give us. The silver medal by Simon, engraved by Vertue, forms a link between this and the Walker portrait, having a look of each, and the face seen in profile is handsome with a mature dignity. The portrait attributed to Sir Peter Lely, if indeed it represents Lady Claypole, shows us an older and plainer face, changed much more than the mere lapse of three or four years would warrant us in expecting.

John Claypole writing to Henry Cromwell at the end of April 1658 says: 'My wife and myself have strong resolutions to wayte upon you and my ladye this summer if their highnesses will give leave.'<sup>23</sup> The projected journey, however, never took place. Perhaps there had been a fond hope that the change might restore her to perfect health. But it soon became evident that the idea must be abandoned. On 2 June Richard Cromwell writes to Henry from Whitehall: 'My sister Elizabeth is yet under heavy afflictions. The Lord sanctifie it to her and us all.'<sup>24</sup> On the 12th she was sufficiently rallied to write to her brother Henry's wife the only letter of hers which has been preserved, in which she excuses herself for not writing more frequently by saying 'in earnest I have bin so extreme sickly of late that it has made mee unfitt for anything.' Slingsby and Hewet's plot had been newly discovered, and the leaders had suffered on Tower Hill four days previously. She speaks with thankfulness of her father's deliverance and dwells on the magnitude of the danger.<sup>25</sup>

Much has been made of her having pleaded ineffectually with her father for Dr. Hewet's life, and of the effect on her health of his refusal. It is natural to suppose that she did plead for a remission of the sentence of death. Dr. Hewet had long been a prominent character in London, where he had been allowed, despite the general prohibition against ministers of the church of England, to preach to large congregations at St. Gregory's church, close to St. Paul's. Noble has it that Lady Claypole herself was privately amongst his hearers, but he seems to derive this from Clarendon, and Clarendon's statement refers to Mary rather than to Elizabeth. If there is any truth in the report that Mary and Frances were privately married by him according to the rites of the church of England, after the official ceremony by Cromwell's chaplains, this would add another reason for the interest felt by them in his fate.

The accounts which go on to depict Elizabeth as reproaching her father bitterly for this and many other of his actions, and alarming him by cries of 'blood' and 'vengeance,' need not detain us long. That some such report obtained currency appears from

<sup>23</sup> Thurloe, vii. 94.

<sup>24</sup> *Lansdowne MSS.* 821, 141.

<sup>25</sup> See the letter in Thurloe, vii. 171.

a private newsletter of the time preserved amongst the Trentham MSS. But if we read Clarendon's version of the story carefully we see on what vague surmises and generalities it rests. In truth Lady Claypole had other sorrows which touched her more nearly than Dr. Hewet's death could be expected to do. On 16 June, little Oliver, her youngest boy, a year old, died, and Fleetwood foresaw too surely the effect of this grief on her weak frame.

Henceforward the record is a sad one of sickness in its varying moods, with occasional gleams of hope recurring only to be quenched again. On the 19th Frances tells her brother Henry they 'hope she is in the mending hand,' and that they are much occupied with her 'going into the country to-moro.'<sup>26</sup> But on the 19th of the following month we hear from a private newsletter that 'my lord watched with her himself all Saturday night, and it is thought she hath bespoken a place in another world.' It was to Hampton Court she had been moved, and there all the hot dry month of July she lay tortured by severe pain. Writers differ as to the exact nature of her malady, but all agree that it was of the most painful internal character. Fleetwood says the physicians ordered her the Tunbridge waters, but it was believed they did not rightly understand how to deal with the case. As the month wore on, the Protector laid aside all public business and gave up his whole time to watching by the bedside of his favourite child. The council of state held its meetings at Hampton Court instead of Whitehall, but even then he had no heart to attend them. On the 30th of the month he felt obliged to receive the Dutch ambassador, who had been waiting some days for an audience, and who had heard from Andrew Marvell, as soon as he arrived in the Thames, how 'the Lord Protector and the whole court was in great sadness for the mortal distemper of the Lady Claypole,' but 'by reason of his highness' indisposition,' the ambassador wisely 'did not think fit to trouble him with a large discourse.'<sup>27</sup> Andrew Marvell's pathetic lines, too long to quote here at length, but which as the record of an eyewitness are as true as they are touching, tell with what tender anguish Cromwell hung over his dying child.

She, lest he grieve, hides what she can her pains,  
And he, to lessen hers, his sorrow feigns;  
Yet both perceiv'd, yet both concealed their skills,  
And so, diminishing, increas'd their ills,  
That whether by each other's griefs they fell,  
Or on their own redoubled, none can tell.

Sympathy with the sufferer was widespread, for Elizabeth had endeared herself to all. General Monk writing from Dalkeith congratulates Thurloe on hearing that she is a little better. Mr.

<sup>26</sup> *Lansdowne MSS.* 823, 124.

<sup>27</sup> Thurloe, vii. 399.



Downing, the English Resident in Holland, writes that he and his wife are 'most exceedingly afflicted' at the sad news. In one of these July days, George Fox, in the quaint words of the historian of the Quakers, 'visited her with' a long and characteristic letter designed to administer comfort to her spirit. We may listen to a few sentences from it even now, in spite of their mysticism.

Friend, be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord God, from whom life comes, whereby thou may'st receive his strength and power to allay all blustering storms and tempests. That is it which works up into patience, into innocency, into soberness, into stillness, into stayedness, into quietness up to God with his power. . . . Therefore, keep in the fear of the Lord God: that is the word of the Lord God unto thee: for all these things happen unto thee for thy good, and for the good of those concerned for thee, to make you know yourselves and your own weakness, and that ye may know the Lord's strength and power, and may trust in him. . . . Therefore, all keep low in his fear, that thereby ye may receive the secrets of God and his wisdom, and may know the shadow of the Almighty and sit under it in all tempests, storms, and heats. . . . Looking down at sin and corruption and distraction, ye are swallowed up in it; but looking at the Light which discovers them, ye will see over them; that will give victory, and ye will find grace and strength.

'This paper being read to the aforesaid lady, it staid her mind somewhat, but she liv'd not long after.'<sup>22</sup> At the end of July she lay very near to death, her physicians having abandoned all hope. Then, after a week of sleepless anxiety, and when her last hour was looked for by all, 'it pleased the Lord beyond all expectation . . . to give hir a composure of spirits by sleepe.' Fleetwood wrote off the glad news to Henry Cromwell with the hope that now the crisis of the disorder was past. But it was only the brief rallying that often comes before the end. She survived a few days longer, and died at three o'clock on the morning of 6 August.

This day [we read in 'Mercurius Politicus'] it pleased God to put a period to the life of the most illustrious lady, the Lady Elizabeth, second daughter of his Highness the Lord Protector, to the great grief of her lord and husband, their Highnesses, the whole court, and of all that have had the honour to be witnesses of her virtue, being a lady of an excellent spirit and judgment, and of a most noble disposition, eminent in all princely qualities; which, being conjoined with the sincere resentments of true religion and piety, had deservedly placed her nigh the heart of her parents, her husband, and other near relations, and procured her an honourable mention in the mouths both of friends and enemies, as was observed in her lifetime, and hath already been abundantly testified since the time of her death.

<sup>22</sup> Sewal, *Hist. of the Quakers* (ed. 1725), p. 175.

She dyed [says Carrington] an Amazonian-like death, despising the pomps of the earth, and without any grief, save to leave an afflicted father perplexed at her so sudden being taken away; she dyed with those good lessons in her mouth which she had practised whilst she lived.<sup>29</sup>

The story of her funeral reads like a page out of an old romance. In the early evening of 10 Aug. the body was borne along the water-gallery of the palace to the landing stage where a barge was prepared to receive it. A flotilla of boats had assembled, 'filled with persons of honor and quality,' for all the guests had been bidden to come by water. Then in silent state the procession passed down the river in the deepening twilight of the August evening. It was eleven o'clock when they reached Westminster stairs. Thence, 'the corps was carried to the Painted Chamber, which was nobly adorned with mourning, and a stately horse prepared there whereon to place it.' Here it rested for an hour. At midnight the last procession was formed and took its way to the abbey, where in Henry VII's chapel the funeral rites were completed. Richard Cromwell, Fleetwood, Fauconberg, and more distant relatives were present, but Elizabeth's mother and sisters were too much overcome with grief and with anxiety at the serious illness of the Protector himself to quit Hampton Court, and her aunt, Mrs. Wilkins, acted as chief mourner.

A special vault had been prepared, and when at the restoration the bodies of those who had been interred in the abbey during the Protectorate were violently torn from their resting-place, Elizabeth Claypole was the only member of the Cromwell family whose remains were left undisturbed. The place of her burial was for a long time lost sight of. No monument marks it, but of late years a brief inscription has been cut on one of the diamond-shaped tiles in the pavement of Henry VII's chapel, close to the sumptuous tomb of that monarch, to indicate the position of the vault.

How the Lord Protector felt his daughter's death all historians tell us. 'It is one thing to have the greatest bough lopt off,' Richard wrote a fortnight later, 'but when the axe is laid to the root then there is no hope remaining; such was our real fear.'<sup>30</sup> It was on 6 Aug. that Lady Claypole breathed her last. On 8 Sept., within a month of that fatal day, Oliver Cromwell lay dead at Whitehall.

Of Elizabeth Claypole's children little is known. From an inscription in Norborough church it would seem that her daughter Martha died young in 1663. Cromwell, her eldest son, lived to manhood, but his memory is only preserved to us by his will, which

<sup>29</sup> We may add Whitelocke's testimony. 'She was a lady of excellent parts, dear to her parents, and civil to all persons, and courteous and friendly to all gentlemen of her acquaintance.'

<sup>30</sup> *Lansdowne MSS.* 821, 151.

is that of a simple country gentleman. Amongst other legacies he bequeaths to his cousin Elizabeth Russell a pearl necklace with miniatures of his mother and grandmother, and he desires to be buried at Norborough near the grave of his grandmother the Lady Protectress, who had found a home in the last years of her life in the old manorhouse of the Claypoles.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Negative evidence as to the early deaths of Elizabeth's children may be gathered from the bill of complaint filed in chancery by John Claypole's second wife Blanch on his death in 1688, and the answers thereto. In these, Bridget, the only surviving child of the second marriage, is described as the 'sole daughter and heire at the comon law of the said John Claypoole.' Cromwell Claypole's will has no mention of brothers or sisters.