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James Bucknall, Third Viscount Grimston

By the Countess of Verulam.

JAMES BUCKNALL GRIMSTON, eldest son of the second Viscount Grimston of Gorhambury, was born in 1747.

His mother, Mary Bucknall, was a Hertfordshire woman, the daughter of William Bucknall of Oxhey Place, near Watford, and it was at her home at Oxhey that James Bucknall was born and spent the first nine years of his life.

On the death of his grandfather, the first Lord Grimston, the boy moved with his parents to Gorhambury, and from there went for his education to Eton, and afterwards to Cambridge. At the age of twenty-one he was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds with his red-haired brother William, known as Lively William, and his sisters Jane (standing) and Mary, in the superb family group now at Gorhambury. (Plate 1.) The picture was painted between the years 1767 and 1769, and Sir Joshua's fee was the modest sum of £205.

In 1771, at the age of twenty-four, he set out to complete the education of a man of culture, according to the opinion of the day, by doing the Grand Tour of Europe. As travelling companion he had Thomas de Grey, his junior by one year, and the only son of the distinguished lawyer, Sir William de Grey, afterwards the First Lord Walsingham.

James Grimston, writing in French to improve his acquaintance with the language, set out his expenses in an account book now at Gorhambury. From it we learn that the route followed was *via* Paris to Italy, where all the principal towns of interest were visited, and back *via* the Tyrol and Switzerland to Germany, across Belgium and into Holland. The tour lasted seventeen months and was undertaken in a carriage brought from England. In Rome, James Grimston was painted by Pompeus Battoni (Plate 2), and made various purchases of books and *objets d'art*.

A letter from him to his brother, William, describes an audience with Pope Ganganeli, known as Clement XIV.

"I have been this morning introduced alla sua santità; he was too gracious to permit us to kiss his Foot and would scarcely permit us to go through the usual ceremonies of kneeling, he talk'd in the most familiar Manner with us for half an Hour and then gave us his Benediction; he told us that he was glad to hear that the Children of his Communion were not persecuted in England and assured us that our Sect should find grace in Italy, in short, his Holiness who I fancy the London mob honor with a Bonfire on the 5 November is one of the most affable of men and by no means such a Bigot in his Religion as to imagine that there is but one Path to Heaven."

At the same time that Mr. Grimston and Mr. de Grey were in Italy, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Walter and their daughter Harriot were also doing the Grand Tour. It is more than probable that in 1771 the two parties met as fellow travellers from England having introductions to residents in Rome. Within three years the daughter Harriot Walter was to become the wife of James Grimston.

She was fifteen years of age when she visited Italy, and an enchantingly lovely child. A pastel at Gorhambury, signed Glain 1769, shows her at the age of thirteen. (Plate 3.) Is it not an attractive little face, suggesting a nature as beautiful as the features? With the hair dressed and powdered in the fashion of the day the face looks strangely mature and it is hard to believe that she was so young. But her marriage settlement gives her age as eighteen at the time of her wedding in 1774.

The Walters were cultivated and attractive people, who, in addition to a large estate, Stalbridge, in Dorset, owned Berry Hill, near Dorking, a smaller house they had recently built. Father, mother and daughter were united by close ties of affection and sympathy. Mr. Walter—a much-loved husband and father—was a great patron of the arts, and had undertaken the Grand Tour with the double purpose of collecting *objets d'art* to beautify his house at Dorking, and of giving his only child, Harriot, an opportunity to see something of the world. I wish I were in a position to show you a portrait of him, but there is none at Gorhambury, nor, so far as I have been

able to discover, elsewhere. It is hard to account for this in view of his keen interest in the arts and the fact that he commissioned Sir Joshua Reynolds to paint his wife, and had pastel portraits done of her and his daughter. Perhaps an unwillingness to sit for his own portrait is the explanation. Plate 4 shows the lovely portrait Sir Joshua made of Mrs. Walter in 1757, and which is now one of the treasures of Gorhambury. It is carried out in a scheme of russet and cool greys. Sir Joshua's fee for painting it was 24 guineas.

Mrs Walter was the daughter of the Fifth Lord Forrester of Corstorphine near Edinburgh.

Fifteen letters which are now at Gorhambury from her to her daughter show how close were the ties which bound them. The letters are written after the daughter's marriage to James Grimston and they reveal the astonishing fact that mother and daughter had never before been separated—a postscript to the first of the mother's letters saying, " This is the first letter I ever wrote you."

Among other things bought by Edward Walter in Italy, and which are now at Gorhambury, are a cinerary urn known as Menelaus' tomb, some fine bronzes, and three ancient Roman Vases, two of them illustrated in Piranesi's works.

Mr. Walter employed an art dealer by name Matthew Nulty to collect for him various antiques by which Gorhambury is now the richer. A bill of Matthew Nulty, dated 10th June, 1771, gives the following items:—

				<i>Livres de Piedmont</i>
The Picture of Venus & Adonis, Paul Veronese	...	...	...	200.00
The Large Salvator Rosa, Theseus and his Mother, exclusive of frame	...		...	100.00
2 Poussin Landskips	...	...	...	100.00
The Cameo Ring 25 Zecheens	...		...	S 1.25
The Small Picture Claude Loronese	...		...	10.25
Total				461.50

The bill is endorsed—"Gave him" (Matthew Nulty) " for his kindnesses to us while at Rome and on our journey to Paris 1771, £180 sterling."

But to return to Rome in 1771. While the Walters were staying there they too had an audience with Pope Ganganelli. He gave Harriot a little oil painting by A. Elsheimer representing Mercury and Bacchus, on the back of (Which the circumstances of the gift are recorded in Italian. At the same time, the Pope gave Mr. Walter a fine marble bust of himself by C. Hewetson. Both the picture and the bust are now at Gorhambury.

In the year following the Grand Tour, James Grimston, aged twenty-six, became the third Viscount Grimston on the death of his father at Gorhambury. He was young for the position of responsibility into which he now stepped, but was undoubtedly helped by a desire to take a prominent part in public affairs and by a natural gift for managing people in a tactful and sympathetic way. He succeeded his father at a time when the government of the country was virtually in the hands of the squires. They filled the majority of the diplomatic posts, shared the positions in the Cabinet with the great nobles, and constituted the bulk of the House of Commons. The younger Pitt had a fixed policy of securing them peerages, and in the reign of George III one hundred and forty-three peers were created, the majority of whom were squires or their sons.

Seven months after succeeding to the title Lord Grimston married Harriot Walter. I imagine that negotiations for the marriage were well in train before Lord Grimston's death, else the intervening time would not have been sufficient for the usual lengthy exchange of opinions between representatives of the contracting parties, and for the winding up of the late Lord Grimston's affairs. By June, 1774, the young couple were definitely betrothed, as is shown by the following letter from Harriot, from which I will quote. You will notice that she is evidently puzzled as to how to address him—whether or not to venture on anything so familiar as a Christian name—and so she goes straight to her text.

Berry Hill, June ye 15th, 1774.

I would have answered your kind letter last Night had I not been upon the Point of setting out

for this Place when I received it, and we did not arrive here till almost eleven o'clocke. I hope I need make no longer apology to you and that you will think I would not have deferred Writing, had I not been unavoidably prevented. . . .

You are in *Disgrace* with my Mother, who bid me abuse you for having forgot to mention *her* in your Letter. My Father is in charity with you and bid me say you was sure of always meeting with a true and sincere Friend in him, and sends you his most affectionate compliments, my Mother also, being of a forgiving Temper, joins in all good wishes with him.

Now I have said so much for them I am a little puzzled to know what to say for myself, imagine, therefore what you please and I will subscribe to it.

The ending is ingenious, is it not?

The marriage took place six weeks later at St. George's, Hanover Square, on July 28th, 1774. It is to be regretted that there are no contemporary letters at Gorhambury describing the ceremony. We can but picture it to the best of our ability, helped by the portraits we possess of the good-looking young couple.

Lord Grimston was at this time a Candidate for Parliament and he was standing as a Tory for one of the two seats of Hertfordshire.. The election came most inopportunately shortly after his marriage. He was in the throes of canvassing immediately before it and after a brief honeymoon he plunged again into work. While he was touring the constituency he had to leave his bride much alone. We read in letters at Gorhambury of his coming home quite exhausted at the end of the day and suffering from fatigue of the eyes. His father-in-law, Edward Walter, who was an old campaigner in the business of standing for Parliament, having represented Milborne Port in Dorset for many years, could not entirely approve of this neglect of his daughter.

Less than a month after the marriage he writes the following letter to her :—

" Stalbridge.

" 24th Aug., 1774.

" My Dearest Child,

" I cannot be at quiet without telling you myself how much my happyness depends upon Yours; & that I am interested in the most minute Things that concern yourself & Lord Grimston is a Consequence that will naturally follow from the love and Tenderness you have so well merited from me, & which my dearest Love, in all Gratitude to Heaven, I own you have repaid me a Thousand fold.

" We begin to think 'tis a long Time since we saw you and want the Day when we hope to give Lord Grimston yourself and the Lively William a welcome here, I think we need not express our wishes that it may be the earlyest Hour that could set you down with us after the Twelfth. I know you will not disappoint our Hopes and we shall expect to see you then. I have been with the Knaves of M (ilborne) P (ort) & held pretty much the Language there that I held at Gorhambury. Was your Lord my Dear as indifferent about a Seat in parliament as I am & he appears to be, perhaps he may and doubtless would treat the County of Herts with more politeness, but with an indifference suitable & agreeing with that of mine at M (ilborne) P (ort). I say not this my Dear Child to divert his Lordship from his present pursuits, nor to put you on perswading him from it, his pursuits would be laudable in better Times, but as Parliament now is, & the next promises to be, I am sure 'twill be more for his Honour & the quiet of his Family to rejoyce in his Gorhambury than mix with the most proffligate, & abandon'd Wretches alive. I cannot will not think it possible that his honest Mind will receive Taint from so pestifferous an Air as that of a House of Commons, but why should he mix with a set of Knaves that in any other place he would be ashamed of and avoid, believe me there is no real honour in a seat there, & why risk a Quiet that one unlucky step at setting out may hazard. I blieve I have said already this is too tender a Subject for you to touch upon to Him, you'll keep it to yourself nor let drop an Intimation of your Disapprobation or my

Thoughts. I shall rest assured he means everything for the best, ' tis your Duty my Dear Child to receive him with Chearfullness, which I am confident he will make up in kindness to you, that it may last to your latest Time is my Dearest Love the constant prayers of Dear Dear Child

" Your Most Affectionate

" Father Friend &

" Sincere Humble Servt.

" Edwd. Walter."

" Make my Compliments of Love & Affecn. to L.G. & best Respects to L.F. (?) the girles & the Family of Oxeby."

and in the same month one to his son-in-law, but in this he gives no hint of his disapproval :—

" Berry Hill,

" 18th Aug. 1774.

I should be truly miserable my Dear Lord to be thought unworthy your esteem & Friendship, & you could not have made me more happy than by your expressions of kindness to me and tenderness to Lady Grimston, it is a happy presage my Dear Lord and I trust in God for its Continuance.

"We shall leave this place to Morrow and I purpose being at Stalbridge Sunday to dinner, we shall there expect Letters from Lady G. as we have none to-day, that we may hear every thing goes on happily at Gorhambury & in the Canvass is very much the wishes of my Dear Lord.

" Your Lordships Very Affectionate,

" Edwd. Walter"

" Short Letters my good Ld. like short answers may and I hope will make long Friends. Compliments."

In the end Lord Grimston did not get into Parliament on this occasion. The successful Candidates were

William Plumer ... Whig ... 2,558 votes.

Thomas Halsey ... Tory ... 1,540 >>

In the same month, that following the Wedding, Mrs. Walter writes nine letters to her daughter. I will quote some extracts from two :—

" My Dearest Love,

" I found some little consolation Yesterday in thinking it was still in my Power to be of some small use to you, & set out after Breakfast to the several Shops to get the things you wanted. I bespoke your Beds at Burnets in the Strand as I could not get them ready made. . . . I have some hopes I shall see your hand writing to Morrow, I have been from you Fifty hours, but I must grow accustomed to living without you. Adieu my Love be good & happy, and satisfy yourself that while I have reason to believe you so, tho' I may be afflicted at your absence I cannot be wretched. Your Father joins with me in kind love to Lord Grimston & all with you and both of us put up our prayers for you. I could say a thousand tender Things but dare not trust myself till my Mind grows stronger to tell you, how Dear how very Dear you are to the Heart of your

" Affectionate Mother,

" H. Walter."

" Berry Hill August ye 12th

" Poor Bessy begs her Duty."

and another :—

" Berry Hill August ye 14th

" My Dearest Love

" I have two letters to thank you for, they are very affectionate and the greatest comfort I can have while at a distance from you. I beg you will mention every trifle relating to yourself or family, remember nothing you are concerned in appears one to me. You seem very anxious to know how I am, I cannot deny there is a strange heaviness about my heart still, but I do everything in my power to shake it off and I flatter myself with the help of a little time I shall be able to do it, especially if I have reason to believe you go on well, and are as happy as I wish you. You are now launch'd into life, much depends on your own prudence, never act without thinking, and I am sure you will never act wrong. Lord G. loves you, make him your study, avoid everything that can give him uneasiness, and try to fix his affec-

tion by an unaffected complasence, you have much of it in your nature, and can never exert it so properly as to him. To the rest of the World be open, frank and civil, but remember to say no in a polite manner is often absolutely necessary for a young Woman, who would not be led into folly and imprudence, in conversation be attentive to others, you will please more by listning to them and following the lead than by taking it, those who do if they acquit themselves well excite envy, if ill laughter, you will now say I have given you a great deal of wholesom advice, it has been the business & the pleasure of my life these eighteen years to make you what you ought to be, heaven prospered my labours by giving me a docile nature to work upon, and my endeavours must not cease now when in the height of youth, happiness, and spirits, you may be in danger of wanting a tender friend to call you to serious reflexion, I believe indeed I have no cause for a fear of this sort, but a mother's tenderness is apt to run before danger, and I know I shall not displease you by sometimes writing in a grave stile. . .

In the following month Mrs. Walter sends her daughter six further letters, full of delightful details of life at Stalbridge, and of advice as to the management of affairs at Gorhambury. Then, alas, the little collection of letters comes to an end, leaving us grateful for the intimate glimpse it has afforded us into the minds of this devoted trio at such an interesting point in their lives.

On October 28th, 1774, three months after the wedding, Mr. Walter evidently sent the first quarter's payment of an allowance of ,£2,000 a year and Lord Grimston acknowledges it in the following delightful way :—

" 28th Oct. 1774. Received of Edward Waltei Esq., the Sum of Five hundred Pounds being One Quarters Payment due to me from him for having made me completely happy

" Grimston

" £500. 0. 0."

Since their marriage Lord and Lady Grimston had given serious consideration to a great problem—what steps should be taken to deal with the unsound structural condition of Gorhambury. The house was that built by Sir Nicholas Bacon in 1568, and two hundred years of use had revealed its weaknesses. The best architects of the day were consulted, and eventually the decision was taken to abandon it and to build the present house of Gorhambury. It was an ambitious proposal, but an eminently wise one for a wealthy young couple whose taste had been formed by seeing fine buildings both abroad and at home. At their disposal was the actual experience of the bride's father in building a modern house (Berry Hill); it is probable that he approved of the scheme as providing a more suitable background for the collection of pictures, bronzes, etc., which he intended should come to his daughter after his death.

The consideration of architect's plans, some of which are still at Gorhambury, must have occupied much of the time of the young couple between their marriage and the year when the building was actually begun in 1777. I do not propose, however, to deal with the details of the building, as they have been admirably set out by Mr. J. C. Rogers in the 1933 *Transactions* of this Society, and I am anxious to confine myself here to such matters as have not yet been published.

The young couple moved to their London house, 42 Grosvenor Square, for the birth of their first child, James Walter Grimston, who, according to an entry in a family Bible "was born at half past four in the morning Sept ye 26th 1775." He was to become a great-hearted, open-handed "magnifico," filling his position as the first Earl of Verulam, and doing an immense amount of work for the County. His correspondence, methodically docketed in his own hand, is at Gorhambury, and contains a store of valuable information on county and public affairs. Six weeks after the birth of the baby, Lord Grimston writes to his wife who is at Berry Hill :—

"My dear Harriot

Gorhambury 3d Nov. 1775.

" A Separation from you teaches me how well I

love you & my Feelings since I left Berry Hill convince me that to be absent from you & to be happy at the same Time is impossible; the Idea I have of the Pleasure I shall receive at our next meeting is my present Consolation, and 'tho' that will not make the Hours that separate us pass away more quickly, yet it assures me that I have the best of Wives, and that fundamentally I am the happiest of men. . . . I am going this Even to our much celebrated St. Albans Ball where I suppose I shall exhibit as Master of Ceremonies, and probably sport a Minuet for the benefit of Mr. Sherman and some Despairing Miss who dies to make a Figure. I really think Husbands might be excused the Formal Part of these Assemblies especially those who would so willingly give up the whole for an Hour of his Wife's Company as I would do. . . . You must present my Love to Mr. and Mrs. Walter, kiss a Blessing into the dear Pledge of our mutual Loves & believe me to be most sincerely and

" Affectionately Yours,

" Grimston."

A second child, Harriot, was born " at three quarters after 5 in the morn Decber ye 14 1776" and thirteen months later another daughter, Charlotte, " at five in the morning Janry ye 16th 1778," according to the entries in the family Bible. These two little girls, born, one might say, with the house, were to be its biographers later, Charlotte, helped by Harriot, carefully recording in a *History of Gorhambury* every fact of interest known to her in the beginning of the following century.

The year 1778, in which the second daughter was born, is a memorable one for a biographer of Lord Grimston. In recording his life up to this point one has had for lack of material to go upon, to be content with glimpses caught at intervals, generally through letters of his wife and her family. One has had to concentrate on a few isolated facts which have emerged from obscurity, and to leave blank the intervening periods. But in this year, Lord Grimston began an admirable system of recording his correspondence. His method was to keep a series of vellum-bound books,

between the pages of which he put the letters he received, and on the pages of which he made a rough draft of the letters he wrote, or, if pressed for time, merely a record of their import. Six such books have survived, and they cover the last thirty years of his life, 1778 to 1808. The collection is a most interesting one. It gives us an intimate knowledge of the affairs of a country gentleman occupying himself in a wide variety of subjects—family business, the management of his estates in seven counties—Herts, Norfolk, Surrey, Essex, Dorset, Somerset and Wilts—parliamentary work, municipal affairs, the magistracy, the work of a Deputy Lieutenant, correspondence relating to the livings in his gift, and to the innumerable requests then made to a prominent man to use his influence to obtain posts for local people. But, further it gives us what is of even more value, the benefit of sharing his first and second thoughts on a subject. Frequently a draft letter is altered to make the tone of it a shade firmer, or more conciliatory, as the case may be. Sometimes a whole letter is written but a note is made later that it was not sent, another letter, also recorded, being sent in its stead. In this way one gains insight to the mind of the man. One learns what he would have liked to say, and what he finally did say, and in so doing one is impressed by the frequency with which the motive for the alteration is respect for the feelings of others, and the rarity of occasions on which selfish considerations are allowed to enter. Such a record is a searching test of a man's character, especially when one realises that these particular letters were evidently kept by Lord Grimston for purposes of his own reference, not for study by future generations. They deal with subjects pleasant and unpleasant, and have not been edited with a view to revealing his personality in the best light. They show him corresponding with all and sundry, those in power from whom he hopes for favours and those entirely dependent on him. In every case we find the same dignity and courtesy, the same wish to be of service to all, and to settle amicably, but with justice, the disagreements which occur from time to time in public and family life. One is struck with the difference between the outlook of the writer and that of the Society of his day, which, accord-

ing to authorities on the subject, was one of general indifference to anything but material ends, and of tolerance of an extremely low standard of morality in public and private affairs.

It would be quite impossible for me to attempt here to give you an idea of the scope or variety of these letters. I will merely say that there are more than four thousand of them and that they are well-worth the attention of this Society. Possibly, by enumerating some of Lord Grimston's activities apart from those already mentioned, I can convey the variety of the subjects dealt with.

He was one of the Representatives of Hertfordshire in Parliament from 1784 until 1790, after which, as Baron Verulam, he had a seat in the House of Lords until his death. During this period of twenty-four years he received and wrote innumerable letters, not only on Parliamentary affairs, but in connection with favours and posts sought through him by local people. In 1783 he represented St. Albans in Parliament and was elected Mayor and High Steward of the Borough in 1807. He was responsible for raising the St. Albans Volunteers for the defence of the realm in 1803 and as Major-Commandant recommended its officers for appointment and corresponded fully with them, with Lord Salisbury, the Lord Lieutenant, and with the Secretary at War. He also took a prominent part in raising subscriptions for the French War. As a Governor of Harrow School from 1796 to 1807, he was in office at a time of stirring events which included the School Rebellion of 1808, after the resignation of Dr. Joseph Drury as Headmaster, and the great Chancery suit of the following year when some of the inhabitants of Harrow applied to the Court of Chancery to remove the Governors. In 1794 he was elected an honorary member of a Board for the internal improvement of the Kingdom.

In all these connections, as well as in many others of smaller importance but of great interest to the student of local history, he wrote and received a large number of letters, all of which have fortunately been carefully preserved and are available for study.

It was not the habit of Lord Grimston to keep in his correspondence books his letters to his wife or hers to him, but three of his letters to her in the year 1778 have fortunately survived. Writing to her at Grosvenor Square on April 5th from Gorhambury, he says :—

" Dear Harriot

⁴⁴ I found everything at Gorhambury in good order ; the Rooms were warm, the House was got up to the point I expected, and the Dairy Maid to save her Credit was legally married. I am told that in her serving Capacity she has long been no better than she should be, so that we easily console ourselves for her Loss, & I fancy shall have but small difficulty in supplying her Place, for 'tho fit and able Men for Church & State may be wanting I hear there is no scarcity of Dairy Maids. . . .

" The Raven croaks upon the same old Tree in the long Walk, & I have retained the Keeper in its Favor; I saunter'd under the Shade this Morning with such a Pleasure that few things cd. have heighten'd, & one of them would have been the having you with me; If I had made this Declaration before Marriage You would have plac'd it under the Article of Galanterie, but now I think near five Years of honest Co-habitation will stand between me & such an Idea, & you may fairly put it down under the Chapter of Truth & Fidelity. I thought of our Children before I wrote the last Sentence, it is but just now to make my best wishes for them. . . . Love to the Bambini

" Most Affectionately Your

" Grimston."

and the other two show the same deep affection. In that of December 6th, writing from Gorhambury, he says he cannot refer to the place as " home," because " I never can call any Place where you are not, my ' Home'."

The education of young James Walter Grimston had now to be considered. Before he was six we have a fleeting glance of him receiving his first lessons from his mother. An entry by her in her pocket notebook for the year 1781 gives the following delightful details: —

- " April ye 22nd.—Walter was very good.
 " „ „ 23rd.—Walter deserves but one Pin
 'tho' he was very good in every
 other Respect but reading.
 " „ „ 24th.—Walter deserves two pins and
 has been very good all Day.
 " „ „ 25th.—very good."

The final choice of preparatory school was Cheam, where for the sum of about £20 a year a Mr. Gilpin, undertook to prepare " our little Boy " for public school, according to Lord Grimston's accounts of the year 1784. It was unfortunate that the date of his first going to school clashed with that of the moving of the family to the new house in October 1784, and probably prevented his being there to enjoy the excitement of the great event.

I imagine that it must have been about this time that Daniel Gardner executed in gouache the pair of oval portraits of Lord and Lady Grimston now at Gorham-bury. (Plates 5 and 6.) At a first glance one is inclined to think that the sitters are considerably older than twenty-eight and thirty-seven respectively, but one must remember how rapidly the late hours and heavy meals of the day tended to age both men and women. Certainly according to these portraits Lord Grimston had acquired a " middle-aged spread," and our lovely Harriot had become matronly in appearance.

The correspondence of the years 1785-6 shows Lord Grimston in the full flood of a busy life, taking a prominent part in county and parliamentary affairs. He had by then been elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and also of the Royal Society. All appeared to be going prosperously, a life of influence and active public service had opened out for him, and his beloved Harriot had created a lovely atmosphere in the home of their designing. His only anxiety was as to her health, which had caused him some distress of late. He had sent her and the children to Eastbourne in the autumn of '85 in the hope that she would benefit by the salt water bathing which had become all the fashion since its virtues had been pointed out in 1750 by a Dr. Richard Russell of Lewes. But the succeeding

winter had lowered her powers of resistance, and just at that unfavourable moment little James Walter became acutely ill. A letter from Harriot to a friend, Miss Spencer, on the 11 th April, 1786, is written just after this period :—

" My dear I.S.

" I have much too good an Apology to make for my long Silence, that of Illness, first in myself, and then in our little Boy, who has been in great Danger from an Inflammation in his Bowles, which he is but recovering the effects of; I hope to be able to give you a better Account of my Family some Time hence, that my Child will be reestablish'd in his Health, & that a Journey we are to take, when the Season permits, will set me up again. It is to Buxton we are to go, I do not like the Thoughts of it, but Health is to be purchas'd at any Rate, & I feel myself bound to take Care of mine for the Sake of my Children—I am sorry my dear I.S. feels any afflictions, but in this World it is the Fate of all to suffer, & those who have not real Miseries, make them—but I will not sermonize, my Friend, nor can I make my Pen speak Mirth—The Days which were deck'd with Flowers that we pass'd in Youth together are gone, the *Allegro* has give place to the *Pensieroso*, they have both their Charms, but the latter are the most solid; my own ill health, and my Child's Illness have thrown a Melancholy over me, not the Tenderness of my Husband and Mother can prevent my feeling though before them I put on a Cheerfulness I do not feel, but which I hope will return—Adieu, my dear I.S. this Detail of myself I thought I owed to our Friendship, believe me with best Compts. to your Family

" Yrs affectionately,

" H. G.—"

The proposed journey to Buxton was undertaken in July, and described by Harriot in a manuscript account at Gorhambury. She and her husband spent four nights *en route*, one of them at Woburn, where she found to her great interest a replica of a portrait at Berry Hill.

There are at Gorhambury a few little pencil sketches of Buxton which were probably done by her at this time.

But the treatment at Buxton was not successful and on their return Lord Grimston, in depression, records in his account book :—

1786 Aug. 26. Journey to Buxton and return to Gorhambury on the 19th inst. having been absent seven weeks; a miserable journey and the consequences more so ,£135."

Perhaps the Buxton doctor had taken a grave view of the case and had conveyed his fears to Lord Grimston. Back at Gorhambury the illness—whatever its form, for we have no information—became more acute; a specialist was summoned from London, but to no purpose. Harriot died on November 7th, two months after the return from Buxton. She was just thirty years of age.

From the fact that no letters relating to the tragedy remain one may gather that Lord Grimston kept them apart from his general correspondence and subsequently destroyed them. Harriot had written instructions for the carrying out of her funeral :—

" Whereas I have a great dislike to all Pomp in a funeral ceremony, I desire mine to be conducted in the following Manner—That my Body should not be embalmed, or opened (unless I should die of some Disorder that may make the opening of it useful to Mankind) that it may be wraped up in a plain woolen Shroud, and if I should die at Gorhambury, that eight of the Labourers, who have the largest Families, & the best characters, should carry me to the Grave, for which Trouble I order to each Man one Guinea, and a good brown Suit of Cloaths, Hat, Stockings Shoes & a Crape Hat Band, and it is my Desire to be followed by only two Maids and two Men Servants. If I die at a Distance from St. Albans, it is my desire my Body may be conveyed thither in a plain Hearse, attended by one mourning Coach, & that the aforesaid Labourers may take my Body from the Carriage into the Church to be deposited in my dear Husband's family Vault in the Church of St. Michael's near the Town of St. Albans, for which I

desire they may have the aforesaid Legacy, & that all superfluous Ornaments of Ciphers, Escutcheons & black Hangings in the Church may be omitted; and I desire that the money which used to be expended in Bread and Beer at Funerals in my dear Husband's Family, may be paid out in Meat the Christmas after my Decease, to be distributed to the Poor in the Neighbourhood of Gorhambury, that they may rejoice at the Season in which our blessed Redeemer came to save the World—

" H. Grimston."

Lord Grimston was but thirty-nine years of age when he was left a widower. Twelve years of perfect married happiness had been given to him, and he had now to face the prospect of life without Harriot in that great house, every detail of which would recall her to him. Another man would have abandoned the place, or married again as soon as decorum permitted. But I am convinced from what I have been able to learn of his character that his sole wish was to do what Harriot would have wished. She had known for some months that she would not recover and it is more than probable that she had discussed the future with him. It would have been in keeping with her considerate nature to do so, thinking of the future of those who would feel her death most—her husband, her three children and her mother, now widowed and more than ever dependent on the love and sympathy of her only child. It was arranged that Mrs. Walter should have the care of the two little girls, and that the boy James should live, with his father—surely a happily conceived plan to give an object for living to two lonely people. The fact that Lord Grimston carried on his public work, with no perceptible break, as is shown by his correspondence, suggests a brave attempt to carry out Harriot's wishes.

He was to live for another twenty-two years and to die in harness at the comparatively early age of sixty-one.

But I do not propose to deal here with these remaining years. It is true that they were important ones—the fullest of his life—but they were years during which he devoted himself almost entirely to public affairs. His

private life was over; after Harriot's death he became the public servant. It has been clear to me from the time that I began to collect material on the subject that it would not be possible to deal in one article with both sides of his life—the private and the public.

I have therefore confined myself to the private side, and have done no more than draw your attention to the existence of his public life. In so deciding I have been influenced by the consideration that whereas others can deal better with his public life I have had unusual opportunity of getting to know its more intimate side. In going through his correspondence, and living, surrounded by evidences of his taste, in the house of his creation, I have come to know James Bucknall Grimston unusually well, and so perhaps am a suitable person to introduce him to my readers.

But, I am sure they will agree that his public life is of too great interest from an antiquarian point of view to remain known only to his descendants, and that the information contained in the records should be carefully gone through and made available to a wider public. In this task I would ask the help of this Society. The scheduling and indexing of the correspondence will be an undertaking of some magnitude. I, unfortunately, have neither the time, nor the ability, to carry it through. But possibly among our members there may be some to whom the work would be a labour of love, and a source of great interest. If so I hope they will volunteer for the task. They will be doing a public service in adding to the available information on St. Albans and the County of Hertford in the late eighteenth century, and they will be rewarded, as I have been, by finding that in making closer acquaintance with James Bucknall Grimston they have made a friend for life.