

Mr. W. J. Hardy, F.S.A., read a paper, entitled—"Lady Cathcart and her Husbands," giving from documents an interesting and entertaining account of that lady's life and fortunes in connection with Tewin. The Chairman expressed to Mr. Hardy the gratification of the audience, and their thanks for his kind trouble.

Mr. G. N. Marten exhibited a coin (a half groat of Edward IV.) found at Marshall's Wick.

After a cordial vote of thanks accorded to the Chairman, proposed by Mr. Marten, the Meeting became conversational.

A volume of topographical prints, kindly lent by Mr. T. Hunt, and a portfolio of drawings and engravings belonging to the Society were exhibited.

WALTER J. LAWRENCE.

25th February, 1898.

Lady Cathcart and her Husbands.

BY W. J. HARDY, F.S.A.

I do not quite know how to introduce the history of Lady Cathcart to this Society, for it is not archæological, in the ordinary acceptation of the word, since she died but little more than a century ago, and I do not quite see how to make it architectural. Yet I will venture to tell it to you, because there must be a certain amount of human interest in the story of a lady who lived to the eve of 100, who danced when she was 80, who married four times, and who during marriage to her fourth husband inscribed her wedding ring with this emphatic resolution: "If I survive I will have five." Besides these reasons there is this which makes Lady Cathcart's story worthy of attention: It forms the basis of a portion of Miss Edgeworth's powerful sketch of Irish life and manners in the last century—"Castle Rackrent" and those of you who have read it will see that Miss Edgeworth's story is not a great exaggeration.

Then, too, when we find that Lady Cathcart's reasons for her respective marriages were—the first for love, the second for wealth, the third for title, and the fourth because "the Devil owed her a grudge and would punish her for all her sins," then, I say, we really get a little curious, too, about these husbands, and so I have christened this paper "Lady Cathcart and her husbands."

Elizabeth Malyn, who, became Lady Cathcart, was born in 1691, the daughter of Thomas Malyn, a brewer of St. Margaret at Hill, Southwark, who lived at Battersea.

We know nothing of her prior to her first marriage which was to James Fleet, son and heir of Sir John Fleet, a former Lord Mayor of London, and then lord of the manor of Tewin; this was the marriage for love. But James Fleet was also a wealthy man, possessed of a great deal of property in London, and Southwark as well as in Hertfordshire. When they married I do not know. He made his will on the 3rd of May, 1730, and was evidently haunted with the dread of premature burial for he desires that his interment should take place "not less" than eight days after his decease. He wished to be laid to rest under or near the pew in which he usually sat in Tewin Church, and he desired that there should be erected over him "such handsome monument" as should be appointed by his "dear and loving wife." She seems to have considered as sufficient a tablet, which is fixed to the south wall of the Church. This tablet bears the arms of Fleet impaling Malyn, and is inscribed with words testifying that James Fleet was an affectionate husband, that he lived like a good man, and died like a good Christian; the last event taking place on the 29th April, 1733, when he was in his 47th year. He was, therefore, born in 1686, and some five years older than Elizabeth. He left to her for life the capital mansion house called Tewin Water House wherein he then dwelt, and which he had lately repaired and beautified, and he made provision for his children by Elizabeth, should God bless him with any. He was not so blessed. His widow proved the will less than a month after his death and appears to have lived on at Tewin.

At Queenhoo Hall in Tewin parish resided General Joseph Sabine, and of his younger brother William, Elizabeth became the wife—when, I do not know, but before August, 1734, for then William Sabine made his "dear and loving wife" sole executrix of his will and residuary legatee. He died in 1738. This was the marriage for wealth, but I cannot tell what was the wealth that came by it for I have not found the marriage settlement.

A year later, in 1739, Elizabeth, at the age of 48, married Charles, eighth Lord Cathcart, who was born the same year as her first husband. Lord Cathcart was a widower, and his first wife, who had borne him ten children, had died five years before.

He was a distinguished military officer, and had served Queen Anne in Flanders; the triumph of the English troops at Sheriffmuir over the left wing of the Jacobites was largely due to his skill. He was Governor of Londonderry, and in the summer of 1740 was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army sent to attack the Spanish possessions in the West Indies. On his voyage thither he was seized with illness, and dying at sea, was buried on the shore at Dominica on the 20th December, 1741. He had made his will some years prior to the marriage with Elizabeth, and just before starting he had executed a codicil thereto, but that does not mention his second wife. No doubt she benefited by the marriage settlement. At any rate she gained a title.

Lady Cathcart continued for the third time a widow (residing in Lord Cathcart's town-house in Dartmouth Street, Westminster, and surrounded with every comfort that money could provide) till May 18th 1745, when, as she has told us, the Devil prompted her to take to husband Hugh Maguire of Castle Nugent in the Co. Longford, a man of a very different kind to Lord Cathcart. Had he fought at Sheriffmuir it ought not to have been on the side of the House of Hanover, for he belonged to a family of loyal Irish Jacobites, though from the fact I am about to mention, we may presume that he brought himself to take the oath of allegiance to George II. *The Gentleman's Magazine* states that Lady Cathcart bought for Maguire a Lieutenant-Colonel's Commission in the British Service. That she may have done, and if she did, the date of his obtaining the Commission is not without interest; for it was the 15th February 1742 (rather more than three years before his marriage with Elizabeth) that he became lieutenant-colonel of De Grangue's regiment of foot. Before 1750 a new lieutenant-colonel was appointed, and as Maguire's name does not appear on the half-pay ledgers, we may conclude that the horror of holding the Hanoverian King's commission suddenly struck him and that he sold the commission, which had been bought for him, and pocketed the money.

He came of a wild stock. Sir Brian Maguire, who in 1628 Charles 1 had created Baron of Enniskillen in the County Fermanagh, was a chief leader in the

Irish Rebellion of 1641, and he paid for his treason on the gallows at Tyburn three years later. His children and his children's children served abroad, one, always ignoring the act of attainder and styling himself "Lord Enniskillen." Like his ancestor, like scores, nay hundreds, of staunch Irish Roman Catholics, Hugh Maguire was in foreign service. There alone the dauntless courage of the Irish gentry could then display itself; from the English army the religious faith and the political creed of these men excluded them. It was, you may remember, the Irish Brigade in the French army that broke the English ranks at Fontenoy. The Spanish and Austrian Armies, too, were filled with these exiled Irishmen and the Emperor Francis declared that the more of them he got into his service the more certain did he feel of the success of his arms.

Hugh Maguire, in whom we are now interested, had been in the Austrian army, why he quitted it we do not know. His subsequent behaviour certainly suggests that he can have been little endued with the spirit of chivalry of his ancestors, and we can well believe that he did not find it difficult to fight for a Hanovarian King if he thought there was something to be made by it!

Where and when he met the richly dowered widow of three wealthy husbands we do not know; but if it is true that she bought for him his commission in the English Army, their acquaintance must have been of, at least, some years standing when in May, 1745 she (at the age of 54) became for the fourth time, a wife!

Now the story in Castle Rackrent, as many of you no doubt know, narrates how Sir Kit Rackrent brought his wealthy wife, an ill-looking jewess and not very juvenile, to Castle Rackrent, imprisoned her there and made ducks and drakes of her fortune. I have failed to find a portrait of Lady Cathcart, so, of her beauty or otherwise, I cannot speak. But I incline to the belief that a lady (even when rich,) of un-inviting appearance would have found difficulty in securing so many husbands.

Miss Edgworth's story of the imprisonment agrees almost exactly with what the *Gentleman's Magazine* says about it, in the obituary notice of Lady Cathcart: namely, that Maguire kept his wife a close prisoner at

Castle Nugent, and it adds that when she learnt of his intention actually to despoil her of her jewels, she secured, at least some, by carrying them plaited in her hair, and quilted in her petticoat.

But before a sombre assembly like the present we must not deal with fiction—at least, not nominal fiction. Most of what I am going to tell you now, is learnt from particulars in a suit in Chancery brought by Lady Cathcart in 1767. It may be true, or may not, at any rate it is of record.

The day before Lady Cathcart's marriage with Maguire, namely on 17 May, 1745, the marriage settlement was executed. It recited that the lady was then seized for life of property in the City of London, Middlesex and Hertfordshire and was entitled to the sum of £7,500 secured upon a mortgage of some property in Oxfordshire, as well as to £1,046, secured upon a mortgage of the manor of Canons, she was also possessed of jewels, rings and plate of very great value, as well as to a great quantity of household goods and furniture, china, pictures, horses, cattle &c., and to the use, for life, of the town house in Dartmouth Street already mentioned. All these were to remain, notwithstanding the marriage, at the sole and absolute disposal of Lady Cathcart, and by the deed she conveyed them to Dr. Yarborough, clerk, of the parish of Tewin, and a Mr. Thornbury in trust for her to receive the income from the property and to manage and dispose of it entirely as she pleased. The property was to be "in no wise subject to the debts, or be under the power or at the disposal of the said Hugh Maguire."

After the marriage they lived together at Tewin for some months. One morning they started to take a drive in her coach, and thinking that they had gone far enough, and that dinner would be spoilt if they were late, her ladyship begged the Colonel to return. "Make yourself easy, my dear," said he, "we shall not dine at Tewin to-day, for we are on the high road to Chester, and to Chester we will go." Lady Cathcart no doubt then guessed that their ultimate destination was not Chester, but the Emerald Isle which, it is likely, she had expressed her unwillingness to visit!

We may presume that at Tewin Lady Cathcart had

many friends, and with them the non-return of the coach must have caused a good deal of stir, especially when the ultimate destination of the drive was learnt. Quickly the news was carried to her ladyship's kinsmen, and they sent an attorney post haste to Chester, carrying with him writs of *habeas corpus* and *ne exeat regno*. Armed with these the Attorney found the gallant Colonel at an inn in Chester and demanded a sight of the lady. Now in the Colonel's company were often ladies other than Lady Cathcart, and he easily persuaded one of these to impersonate his lawful wife, whom the unfortunate Attorney had never seen and who, for all he knew, might be thirty or sixty. "Are you going to Ireland with Colonel Maguire of your own free will?" pompously enquired the Attorney. "Most certainly," replied the lady dropping a low curtsy, and the discomfited lawyer made as graceful an exit as he could, got back to his inn, and, ere long, was in his coach and on the way to London.

But he still had the writs, and so long as he had them, Maguire did not feel quite safe. Where there's a will there's a way, runs the old saying, and the Colonel's way was this: A man of war himself he naturally cultivated the acquaintance of those who fought at home, as well as of those who fought abroad, of those who cared better for combats in the prize-ring than on the battle-field. Four of these gentlemen were known to him in Chester. These he deemed would be sufficient to tackle the Attorney and his coachman, so he speedily arranged that they should hasten from Chester and meet the returning travellers a few miles on the London Road, the Colonel telling them, of course, that they need not damage the attorney or the coachman more than was actually necessary in order to obtain all the papers the attorney carried!

Faithfully these individuals executed their office, and with the writs in his possession Maguire (carrying with him Lady Cathcart) left for Holyhead and sailed for Ireland. There are various versions of the story of her treatment there, her imprisonment in a portion of the house at Castle Nugent, where she could hear the revelry in which Maguire indulged at her expense, and so forth.

For these stories there was doubtless some foundation in fact, unquestionably she was placed under some kind of restraint from which she would have escaped if she could.

The Chancery suit recites that Maguire carried her over to the north of Ireland where "by threats and other ill-usage" he compelled her to execute the following deed: It is dated on 3 October 1746, rather more than a twelvemonth after the marriage, and is between Lady Cathcart of the first part; John, Lord Ward, Baron of Birmingham, Arthur Stafford, and Theobald Taaffe of the parish of St. George's, Hanover Square, of the second part; and the Hon. Hugh Maguire of the third part, and it witnesses that: "For and in consideration of the tender love and affection which she bore towards her dear and well-beloved husband, the said Hugh Maguire, and as an acknowledgment of that tender and affectionate regard which he has always shown for her," and in order to make an independent provision for him out of her fortune, she, in consideration of 5*s.* paid to her by the parties of the second part, conveyed to them: "All and singular the said lands, tenements and hereditaments, chattels real and personal," of which she was possessed, in trust, to pay an annuity of £52 10*s.* to Mary Horton, spinster, till she attained the age of 21 years, or should be married, and to raise upon the premises the sum of £500 and pay it to the said Mary on her coming of age, and also to pay an annuity of £23 to Henry Sabine of Glenallen, co. Wicklow, and after the death of the said Henry to raise and pay to Elizabeth Nugent, spinster, some sum not exceeding £500 as Lady Cathcart should appoint.

Now all this is rather mysterious! The words "as Lady Cathcart should appoint," were, I suspect, merely put in for the sake of appearance, and Mary Horton and Elizabeth Nugent were ladies whom Lady Cathcart would be exceedingly unlikely to desire to enrich!

The deed then goes on to direct that Lady Cathcart was to receive one half of all rents and revenues arising from the property for her sole and separate use, the other moiety being paid to Maguire.

After the death of either Lady Cathcart or Maguire the Trustees were empowered to raised £12,000 on

the property and to dispose thereof as the *survivor* should think fit. Doubtless Maguire intended to be survivor.

This deed was executed by the parties at Dublin and it is likely that Lady Cathcart's actual incarceration did not begin till afterwards.

So soon as executed, this deed was transmitted to Joseph Hickey of Westminster, Maguire's agent, to be enrolled in Chancery and Hickey was then appointed by Maguire as general agent and receiver of Lady Cathcart's property. By virtue of this appointment he entered upon the receipts of her rents, &c., to the value of over £1800 a year, and leased or otherwise dealt with the property as he thought fit, and continued to do so till June or July 1766 without remitting "one shilling" of money to her ladyship. It was to recover the money received by Hickey that Lady Cathcart brought her suit in Chancery.

Lady Cathcart once safely shut up in Ireland, Joseph Hickey, Maguire's agent, took possession of Tewin Water House and all her other property, including the furniture of the house in Dartmouth Street, and sold the same. Tewinbury House, which, whilst she remained in Ireland remained unlet, the said Hickey took wholly into his own hands, sold the poultry and game, and put his own horses and those of his friends to graze on the lands around.

How rigorous was Lady Cathcart's incarceration in Ireland we shall probably never exactly know. It will perhaps be safest to accept her own description of it in the Chancery suit: that from the time of her going over to Ireland her said late husband kept her, in a manner, confined in her house in the country there, till the time of his death, being almost twenty years together, allowing her only the bare necessaries of life. Upon his death, she came to England.

It is said, and we can well believe it, that Maguire forced Lady Cathcart to make a will in his favour, leaving to him all he had not robbed her of during her life. That will turned out of little use. In the early spring of 1766, Maquire fell sick, and before the end of April he was a dead man. His will is dated on the 20th of March, and was proved in Dublin.

He leaves his landed property in Ireland in trust for

his nephew, legacies to many servants and like his ancestors a Jacobite, at least in name, £100 to the Pretender—"to a certain gentleman in Germany," as he styles him. He makes two mentions of Lady Cathcart. In one he refers to the deed of 1748 between himself and her ladyship and confirms its stipulations, and he leaves his brother's estate at Tempo to trustees, to pay therefrom what is due to Lady Cathcart for "her share," of the money lent upon the mortgage thereof. The other reference is as follows:—"I leave to Lady Cathcart all jewels and plate of which she was possessed at the time of her marriage." There is much dry humour displayed in this bequest inasmuch as of the majority of these possessions he had already disposed.

There is no necessity for us to stop to consider the feelings with which Lady Cathcart must have learned of Maguire's death. She hastened to England. With wondrous rapidity recovered from her ill-usage, and fought (with the spirit of her less exalted namesake who still hovers about the law courts) a number of legal battles to recover such of her property as she could.

The tenant of Tewin Water House, a Mr. Joseph Steele, she ejected after an action at the Herts Assizes, and she took up her residence in her former home, entertaining and being entertained. But she did not carry out her resolve to have a fifth husband—perhaps she could not get one, perhaps the fourth proved enough for her. When eighty she danced, it is said, with the spirit of a young woman.

On the 3rd of March, 1780, Lady Cathcart, at the age of 89, made her will. She desired to be buried by daylight "as privately as may be," and without pall-bearers, in the vault where her first husband's body had been laid nearly 50 years before. She left a few legacies to the poor people in the parish, £200 to Francis, Lord Napier, Lord Cathcart's grandson, and several sums of money to relations and others. The largest legacy being to Marjorie Reynolds, who received £1,000 and the furniture of Lady Cathcart's bed-chamber at Tewin, the bow window room and the tapestry room. But the feature of her will is the bestowal of the bulk of her possessions on those in her employment:—To her housekeeper all her wearing apparel, and the furniture

of the room where she slept, and in the dressing-room and dancing room, besides one half of all household linen. To her "cook-maid" she left the contents of the kitchens and scullery. To her housemaid the contents of the "common parlour." To her dairymaid all cattle and poultry and the contents of the dairy. To the gardener the stock of her garden and garden tools. To the gardener and footman jointly all ale and beer in the cellar. To her coachman her post-chaise and harness, and stable furniture and a pair of post-chaise horses to be chosen by himself. Her sheep and pigs, she left equally between the labourers on her estate. Her steward, Philip Cosgrave, she made sole executor and residuary legatee. All these legacies were in addition to monetary gifts. Some four years later she made a codicil by which she gave money and plate to her kinsman, Mr. John Loveday, and her watch and some jewellery to his eldest daughter.

She had, in 1783, given the sum of £5 a year towards the schooling of poor children in the parish of Tewin.

Five years after making this codicil, namely on the 3rd of August 1787, Lady Cathcart died at Tewin. Before interment her body was dressed in linen and laid in a leaden coffin, and this again was placed in one covered with velvet and trimmed with gold on which was a gold plate recording the names of her husbands, her age, etc. From a desire to honour her memory, and from the natural interest which the circumstances of her life had awakened, her funeral was not so simple or so quiet as she desired. A hearse drawn by six horses bore her body to the Church, and this was followed, as *The Gentleman's Magazine* tells us, by two coaches and six, and "a prodigious concourse of people." Hatbands and gloves were given in general to all who chose to attend, and "a sumptuous entertainment" was provided for all. Cussans describes the only monument to her memory which is a large oval tablet on the south pier of the chancel arch. The inscription on this records that she was "sometime the wife of James Fleet, esq., of Tewin Water, but afterwards the widow of the Right Hon. Lord Cathcart."

The memory of her second and fourth husbands is not perpetuated.