

Three Letters of Dr. Richard Traffles

By H. G. RAWLINSON

AMONG the historical papers in the possession of the Rawlinson family are a number of documents belonging to Gabriel Whistler, sheriff of Southampton in the latter part of the 17th century. The most important of them are a bundle of letters from Dr. Richard Traffles, fellow of New College, written between the years 1686 and 1701, from amongst which three have been chosen as worthy of publication.¹ They form an interesting supplement to the narratives of Anthony Wood and others concerning events in the University in that eventful period. The main facts are well known, but a brief account of Gabriel Whistler and his correspondent may be of interest.

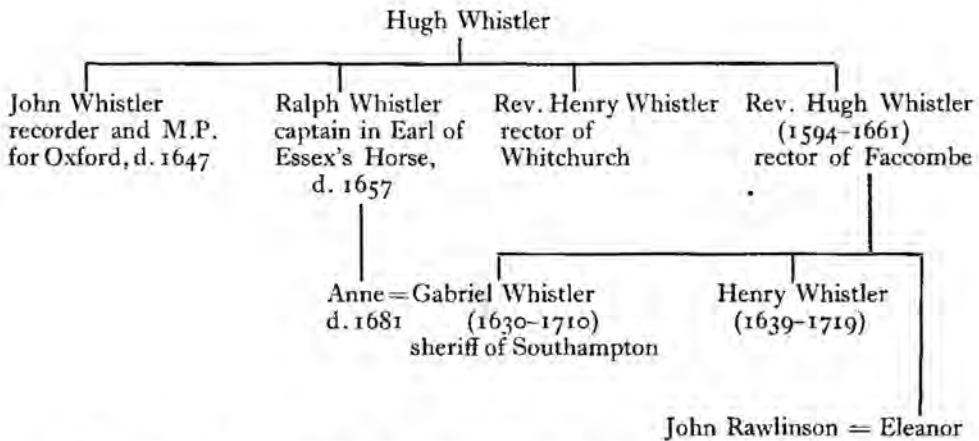
The Whistlers were a well-known Oxfordshire and Berkshire family, and are frequently mentioned by Wood. Most of them were mixed up, on one side or the other, in the Civil War. Humphrey Whistler, alderman and twice mayor of Oxford, died in 1660 (Wood, *Life and Times*, I, 332). Dr. Daniel Whistler was made president of the Royal College of Physicians *vice* Dr. Thomas Cox, 'who was a whig, and would hear treason and not discover it' (*ibid.*, III, 76). He died without issue in 1684. Hugh Whistler had four sons, John, Ralph, Henry and Hugh. John was a member of Gray's Inn and recorder of Oxford, 1628-40, and M.P. for the town. He seems to have been in bad odour with both parties. He was a member of the Long Parliament, and so annoyed the royalists that he was brought in as a prisoner by the King's troopers, and held for a short time in custody by the famous Dr. Fell, dean of Christ Church (*ibid.*, I, 73). He died in 1647. Ralph was a member of Gray's Inn and a captain in the Earl of Essex's Horse, among his fellow-officers being the young Oliver Cromwell. He fought at Edge Hill, received a grant in the Plantation of Ulster and died in 1657, leaving a daughter, Anne. Henry was rector of Whitchurch for 56 years. The youngest, the Rev. Hugh Whistler (1594-1661), was a graduate of Lincoln College, and became rector of Facombe-cum-Combe in Hampshire in 1618,² but being a royalist, was ejected by one John Tabard. He had seven sons, among whom were Henry and Gabriel, and three daughters. One of his daughters, Eleanor, married John Rawlinson, haberdasher of London and deputy sheriff of Southampton. Henry received a commission as captain

¹ For help in editing the letters I am indebted to Mr. Strickland Gibson, Keeper of the University Archives, Mr. E. S. de Beer, of the University of London Institute of Historical Research, and Mr. H. Whistler.

² Foster, *Alumni Oxon.*

H. G. RAWLINSON

in the Regiment of Foot of Colonel Lewis Morris, and this document, signed by Oliver Cromwell, is among the Whistler papers. Little is known of Gabriel's career. He did not go to the University, but he was a member of Barnard's Inn. He married his cousin Anne, and through her he inherited his uncle Ralph's Irish estates. She died in 1681, and is buried in the chancel of Combe church, Hants. Sometime before 1681 Charles II made him sheriff of Southampton, and in 1689 he held a place in the Customs of Whitehaven. In 1691, he leased the manor of Combe (Hants.) from King's College, Cambridge, and the dean and canons of Windsor. He died on 14 August, 1710, at the age of 80, and is buried in Combe churchyard. As a contributor to the expenses of King's College Chapel, Cambridge, his arms are introduced into the carved woodwork of the choir there. He left no heirs, and the property went to his sister Eleanor, who, as has been already mentioned, married his deputy sheriff, John Rawlinson. The following is the genealogy of this branch of the Whistlers :



Dr. Richard Traffles, LL.D., was the son of Edward Traffles of the parish of Saint Thomas, Winchester. He was educated at Winchester and New College, of which he was elected fellow on 13 August, 1667, and warden in 1701. He gave £100 towards the new buildings. Though a member of the Church of England, he was no sympathiser with the extreme protestant party. In one of his letters he says, 'it is against charity and justice to prosecute the ruin of all the Papists, for such a thing in which many of them might not offend.'

There is a King's letter addressed to him (*State Papers, Domestic* 1664/5), commending him 'on account of the loyalty and sufferings of his parents in the late Revolution.' Anthony Wood mentions him among the members of the University who refused to take the oath of allegiance to William of Orange on

THREE LETTERS OF DR. RICHARD TRAFFLES

30 August, 1689 (Wood, *Life and Times*, III, 307). He died on 10 June, 1703, and was buried in the antechapel of New College with a small gravestone inscribed HSE/RI. TRAFFLES/1703. Near by, on the east wall of the south aisle, is a white marble monument bearing the following epitaph and arms :

Cupio abjectus esse in Domo Dei.
Obiit
RICHARDUS TRAFFLES, LL.D^r.
Decimo die Junii
Anno { Domini 1703.
 { Ætatis 55.
Collegii hujus per annos 36 Socius,
Per breve heus biennium Custos.
Quo tamen temporis spatiolo
Ea prudenter destinavit, fortiter aggressus est,
Fæliciter perfecit,
Quæ sæculi opus videbantur.
Electionum castitati prospiciendo, Bibliothecam augendo,
Munifice donando,
Wiccamicorum honori, eruditioni, opibus consuluit.
In exequendo officio
Æquus, constans, prudens.
Religionis et literarum ornamentum et fautor,
Sine fuco pius, sine fastu doctus,
Vita severus, moribus suavis ;
Nec in ipsa morte sibi dispar,
Quam juxta ac vitam pariter orando,
Pariter contemnendo,
Et vivere docuit, et mori.

Arms—Three crosslets formy fitchy between two bendlets engrailed.

LETTER I

This important letter was written when the whole University was deeply stirred by the attempt of James II to romanise the colleges, and very usefully supplements the accounts given by Wood, Luttrell, and Burnet. Anthony Wood, who favoured the old persuasion, is very reticent in his *Diary* about proceedings in the University just at the time when Dr. Traffles wrote his letter, dated 18 December. On 17 December the only entry in Wood's *Diary* is 'fl. sh.'; that is, he wore a flannel shirt on that day. The next entry (19 December) is appropriately enough, 'frost began.'¹ It is strange that Wood makes no reference to the offer of college plate to the Prince of Orange. The incident was, however, known to Bishop Burnet.

¹ Wood, *Life and Times*, III, 291.

H. G. RAWLINSON

Oxford, 18 Decemb^r, 1688.

Honoured Sr

The troubles being now well over, I will make bold to let you know what share of them hath fallen to Vs of this place, & what Difficulties we have been needlessly brought under, but w^{ch} now (I trust in God) will blow off pretty well, or at most end only in the Infamy of twoe or three Designing men.

On Tuesday December 4, One Thorpe an Inkeeper & Papist, was taken up by the maior, for saying, Hee hoped before Christmas to see our Toune in Ashes, & his hands imbrued in E. Abingdon's blood. The Maior unadvisedly (considering the times) Let him goe free, uppon the bayle of two Papists; At this the Rabble were offended, & fell uppon breaking windowes of the few Papists we have with us; w^{ch} riott continued that whole day, The Governo^rs both of the Toune & Vniversity not using their Endeav^{rs} to appease it. That Evening Thorpe rode to Reading to call (as was believed) some of the Kings forces thence, to chastise Vs.

Wednesday 5th Dec. :¹ My Lorde Lovelace came into Towne with a Small number of horse, under 100, & those ill appointed. Declares for the Prince of Orange, & calls himselfe Governor of the Towne. The Mayor meets him with his mace, The Recorder & Towne-clerke & many others attend him in, with their Swords drawne.

On Thursday L^d Lovelace reads the Prince's 3^d Declaration (w^{ch} is now known not to be the Prince's) & because the maior scrupled to read it himselfe, tells him : ' That He had already Don enough to be hangd.'

On Fryday morning about 3 of the clock, An Alarme beats, & the newes was, that a party of Irish were coming to cutt our Throats.² Uppon this the Townsmen arme, and our Vicechancellor delivers our Vniversity Arms to my L^d Lovelace. This Alarm was feigned on purpose, to draw in the University, as it appears since. And 'tis now sayd, That the Vicechancellor was privy to it.

About this time it begins to be whispered, That it would become the University & College to p^rsent the P. Orange with all their plate, & stock of mony; w^{ch} made us cautious, & to putt it aside.

On Munday comes in D. Ormond o^r Chancello^r, uppon whose appearance the whole of the Disigne is brought to Light; w^{ch} was as followeth. Our Vicechancellor, D^r. Jane, D^r. Aldrich, & Warden of All Soules, had about a

¹ The date of Lord Lovelace's triumphal entry is given in *D.N.B.* as December 11th. It was celebrated by a ballad written by John Smith, second master of Magdalen School (Dryden, *Poems on Affairs of State*, II, 268). Luttrell (I, 484), says 300 horse; Wood says, 'about 200 horsemen armed with their naked swords.' (*Life and Times*, III, 286).

² 'This report was not here [London] only, but it went thro' the whole kingdom, to the great consternation of the countries . . . a ridiculous story.' (Luttrell, I, 487).

THREE LETTERS OF DR. RICHARD TRAFFLES

fortnight before resolv'd to ingracciate themselves with the Prince, at our expence ; & had sent the Warden of All-soules into the West, to make offer of our Plate & Stocke, if he would please to come & fetch it, The Value of w^{ch} was estimated to him 30 thousand pound.¹ Uppon w^{ch} the Prince is persuaded to bend his march this way, w^{ch} otherwise (considering our waies here) was very inconvenient.

On Tuesday Last the P. Orange comes to Abingdon ; w^{ch} putt us to a great difficulty what to Doe. Yet at Last most of our Vniversity were resolved not to part with either plate or mony, unlesse taken by fforce ; & That we thought would not bee for his Reputacōn to Doe. That night the newes of the Kings withdrawing came to the Prince w^{ch} occasioned his not coming to Vs ; By this meanes Our Plate is our owne, though without Thanks to those who would have betrayed Vs.

On Wednesday, Our Chancellor produces the Association, & desires our Heads of Houses to signe it, Alleaging the Lords & Gentlemen had don it, & the Prince would take it kindly.²

Our Vicechancellor & ye other Plate-merchants signe, & one or two rich Dignified men, who were willing to keep (or it may bee increase) their share of Church preferments, But some others, (*viz.*) President of Corpus Christi, Rector of Lincoln, & three or four more refused, whose Example will (I think) bee followed by the greatest part of our Clergymen here.

Our Reasons agst it are, 1. That it is tenderd without Lawfull Authority. 2. Is against the Judgm^t of the Vniversity, deliverd twice since the yeare 1640 & peticularly agst the 6th Article of our Decretes made 1683,³ w^{ch} was drawne up by D^r. Jane, the gentleman that now promotes the Contrary.

3. It is against Charity & Justice to prosecute the Ruine & Destruction of all the Papists, for such a thing in w^{ch} many of them might not offend : for if One should murther the P. Orange, the rest might not know of it, nay possibly might abhorr it ; & to Destroy such without y^r fault is Vnjust.

4. In Prosecuting the Adhearents of Papists, The King himselfe is not excepted, w^{ch} is somewhat blunter than was the Solemne League & Covenant.

¹ At Crookhorn, Dr. Finch, son to the Earl of Winchelsea, then made Warden of All Souls College in Oxford, was sent to the prince from some of the heads of colleges ; assuring him, that they would declare for him, and inviting him to come thither, telling him that their plate should be at his service, if he needed it.' (Burnet, *Hist. of his own Times*, 2nd ed., III, 337).

² When the Prince of Orange was at Exeter an Association was signed by his adherents. Burnet says that it ' was signed by almost all the heads, and the chief men of the university.' (*Ibid.*, 337, 350).

³ Judgment and decree of the University of Oxford passed in Convocation against certain pernicious books . . . vi. It is lawful for subjects, without the consent, and against the command of the supreme magistrate, to enter into league, covenant, and associations for defence of themselves and their religion.' (Wilkins, *Concilia*, IV, 610-2).

H. G. RAWLINSON

5. In the very stile of it, it seemes intended only for Souldiers & therefore not so very proper to be taken by Clergymen.

You may believe Sr That in such cases People are apt to talke, some Question how these things consist with our Oathes of Allegiance & Supremacy. Others Tax our greate complyers of Ambition; Nay some pretend to specify the Very Preferments, w^{ch} by these methods are drove at. My observation only is, That It is easier to Gett a greate name, than to keep it.

On Saturday Princesse of Denmark¹ came hither with 1000 northern horse & 180 foot under E. Devonshire. The Bishopp of London rode at the head of a Troop of Gentleman, with his Sword drawne: w^{ch} gives offence to many, even of those who are ingag'd in this businesse.

This Last businesse I doe suppose hath putt off Popery; but 'tis feard that it will prove a blow to Christianity in Generall, some Gospell Duties, which were currant some months since, being now exploded & Laught at, as not being Politicall enough. The middle part of our University doe stick well enough to Old Principles. The Yong & Old men seeme equally forgetfull of their Duties. I pray God to grant us Repentance & forgivenessse.

The Northern Gent. have differd about signing an Association, most of other Counties did it. But Warwickshire Gentlemen refused. Among others y^t Refused were, L^{ds} Chesterfeild, Brook, Lee & Ferrars. All these blame the Exeter Association, as worded too high. Theirs it seemes is accounted more modest & legall.

On Munday the P. & Princesse Denmarke went towards Windsor. Our Towne now begins to be quiett. And I hope our greate men will now consider, how to Justify, or else repent of, what they have Lately Don.

We have been Alarmd hereabouts, y^t Irish were burning & slaying in Alisbury, Thame, &c. But without any maner of reason. The Truth is I have all along observ'd such pretences of Courage, & yet such evident signes of excessive Feare, that I growe perfectly asham'd of Human Nature.

It is believed that the King is very ill, bleeding Inwardly.

I have sent the Association.

LETTER II

This letter records a Visitation of Wadham College by the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Unlike some college Visitations it passed off successfully and quietly, perhaps not without reason. Thomas Dunster, the Warden of Wadham

¹ 'The Princesse of Denmark . . . is now at Oxford . . . with the Bishop of London, who had the command of a troop of gentlemen who were the princesse guards at Nottingham.' (Luttrell, 1, 489).

THREE LETTERS OF DR. RICHARD TRAFFLES

was in Hearne's opinion 'one of the violentest Whigs and most rascally Low Churchmen of the age.' Richard Kidder, the Bishop, was according to Bishop Ken a 'Latitudinarian traditor,' few men being more obnoxious to High Churchmen. He was, however, 'a most industrious and, in many respects, valuable writer.'¹

Oct. 1, 1698.

Honoured Sr,

I am now setting forth towards Hadham. I wish my service to y^e Afflicted Family may answeare y^e Trouble & change w^{ch} This Journey is like to Cost mee. However 'tis Friendshipp & soe much is due, where I have been so much, & so long obliged.

As to y^e Businesse, w^{ch} brought mee from Comb to this place, The state of it is thus :—The Visitation of Wadham Coll: is ended ; & better managed I think than any I ever knew in my Time. The Bishopp tooke no fee of y^e Coll: w^{ch} y^e ffounder allowes for Visitacōn. He dined once with them, to satisfy their Importunity, & was much troubled that their Dinner was too Good. Hee Came hither, & liv'd in towne, uppon his owne Expence ; & Told mee, that His whole designe was to Doe them Good, but no Harme. [Hee professed also that Hee came purely]² All his Conduct in this Businesse seemed to bee in y^e Spirit of Charity & meeknesse ; & accordingly Hee kept all y^r Informations Private to himselfe ; & will doe soe. The most severe thing w^{ch} he did, as Hee himselfe told mee, was Onely the admonishing an Officer of y^e Colledge to keep his Colledge prayers Constantly for y^e future, w^{ch} for some yeares he had scandalously neglected ; so as not to be at Chappell above once in a month.

All Things w^{ch} Hee did, seeme to mee to bee Evidently for the Colledge advantage ; Either in Receiving Deputations, speaking Latin, turning women Bedmakers out of Colledge,³ instructing y^e Youth in Religion, & such like like [*sic*] Acts of Discipline. Or else, in taking care that the publicke Revenue be better managed thereafter than It hath been Don for many yeares ; & without w^{ch} Care, the Coll. in some time must have been vndon.

These things Hee resolves shalbee Exactly observed ; & In order thereunto, Hee hath Left with them a Body of Good Injunctions ; which shew, what He would have Donne ; & How They should manage all these things for their Owne Good. And hereof Hee Expects a Yearly account to be Given him.

This is y^e first time that Ever I knew a Visitor Doe good among Vs ; &

¹ J. Wells, *Wadham College*, pp. 113 ff. ; *D.N.B.*, s.v.

² The words in brackets were inserted in the MS. and afterwards erased by the author of the letter.

³ The Statute against female bedmakers is given in Bloxam, *Magdalen College and James II.*, II, 246.

H. G. RAWLINSON

My Lord hath acted as a Wise as well as Good man, In showing that Visitors may bee a Blessing, if they please.

Thus this matter appears to mee at p^resent & I hope I am not Blinded by any private affection, soe as to be mistaken in this matter. I am sure I can have no Temptation to bee biast towards y^e Bishopp. For y^e Warden & severall of y^e ffellowe are my particular Friends, & more my Acquaintances; than y^e Visitor can bee; Though indeed Hee was extreemly friendly to mee, & ever was soe since first I knew him.

In short, He told mee, that He intended Onely their Good; & I hope God hath directed him to doe every thing sutably to these Good Intentions. If other Visitors will Doe likewise, They must be extreemly welcome to All that Love y^e good of y^e Places they live in.

S^r I am

Yo^r humble Serv^t

Rich: Traffles.

[Addressed :—] For my Kind friend

Gabriell Whistler Esq.

at Combe.

[Endorsed :—] 1 Oct. 98. Dr. Traffles account of Wadham Coll :
Visittacōn.

III

Dr. Richard Traffles is himself the chief character of the third letter. Dr. Henry Beeston, Warden of New College, died on 12 May, 1701. Dr. Traffles was generally approved as his successor, but as his letter shows an attempt was made to put forward Dr. Verney, later 4th Lord Willoughby de Broke, as a rival candidate. A very generous tribute is paid by Dr. Traffles both to Dr. Verney and his supporter, Sir George Beaumont. Dr. Traffles held the Wardenship for two years only, and was succeeded by Dr. Thomas Braithwaite.

New Coll: 30 May 1701.

Honourd S^r

I hope you will pardon mee that I againe trouble yo^u with y^e affaires of this place.

In my Last I spake of Expecting D^r. Verney.¹ Hee came not; but S^r Geo. Beaumont² came in his stead, & went to work with abundance of Industry & Application, to Get off some who had Declared for mee, & to Bring them over

¹ George Verney, D.D., was Canon of Windsor in 1701. In 1711 he became 4th Lord Willoughby de Broke and was Dean of Windsor, 1714-28. (Foster, *Alumni Oxon.*)

² A member of New College. He was M.P. for Leicester in nine Parliaments from 1702. (Foster, *Alumni Oxon.*)

THREE LETTERS OF DR. RICHARD TRAFFLES

to Dr. Verney. But his Application proved unsuccessfull: Not one man vouchsafing to comply with his Desire.

The truth is I was very well pleased ' that y^e D^r. was projectd,' & that Sr Geo. (who is a very popular Gentleman among us) did sollicite his Cause. And my true Reason was Because I hoped thereby to Gett my owne Quietus & to see the Coff: in very good handes. But it seemes I must be contented with thinges, as they are like to Goe: And as 'tis Evidently a Call of Providence, soe It must be y^e Endeav^r of my whole Life, to Act in Obedience to such an unexpected Call. Almost 3 parts of 4, have already declared, & the rest begin to putt on Complaisance.

I find Sr that I shall have No great difficulty to Answere y^e Expectacōn of Mr. Braithwayte's¹ Friendes, for as they Expect no Good from mee, so I must prove very Bad indeed if I don't Doe better than they Expect. But my Friendes (both at home, in y^e University, & abroad) have so unreasonably rayed my Character, beyond what I know is Truth, That this will prove my Greatest Difficulty in my future conduct.—I begg y^e prayers & Advices of my Friends, to Direct mee for ye Best.

Sr Things here by this Late application of Dr. Verney by Sr George, seeme to be so fix'd y^t my Friends make no doubt of y^e Success; w^{ch} I hope will Excuse this freedom, or rather weaknesse, But be pleased to consider, that It is to my Best Friend.

Sr—I just now received yo's concerning Mr. Pyle. I conceived before it, as yo^u are pleased to write; for I know that yo^r Opinion & Mine are y^e same in such cases. If Mr. Pyle's sonn² shall indeed prove uppon Tryall Equall to y^e others who have y^e King's Letter, & withall Equal to Others who have it not, You need not doubt but yo^r mencioning such a matter, shall bee respectfully remembered, as In truth It ought to bee. But as to y^e King's Letters in g^rall, It is the first thing I shall concerne my selfe to putt a stopp to, If it may bee Don: But if That can't de Don, I am resolv'd (by Gods assistance) Not to be fforsworne uppon account of itt. And this I hope to Goe through, & shall be resign'd to y^e Event; Lett it be what it will.

My service to Mrs. West: & Thanks for being still troubled wth Molly, who I heare continues wth yo^u. I thank yo^u for Every thing, & am

Hon'd Sr

Yo^r ever oblig'd Serv^t

Rich: Traffles.

[Addressed:—] To my honoured Friend
Gabiell Whistler Esq.

at Combe

these p^sent.

Leave this wth Mr. Gray in Newbury.

¹ Warden of New College 1703-12. Died 1720.

² Perhaps Richard Pyle who matriculated from New College, 13 June, 1701, aged 18. (Foster).