

**CORRESPONDENCE OF THE  
FAMILY OF HATTON, BEING  
CHIEFLY LETTERS ADDRESSED TO  
CHRISTOPHER FIRST VISCOUNT  
HATTON, A.D. 1601-1704, VOL. I**

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**EDWARD MAUNDE THOMPSON**

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OF  
**THE FAMILY OF HATTON**

BEING CHIEFLY LETTERS ADDRESSED TO  
CHRISTOPHER FIRST VISCOUNT HATTON

A.D. 1601—1704.

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EDITED BY  
EDWARD MAUNDE THOMPSON.

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## PREFACE.

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THE letters which are printed in these volumes have been selected from the correspondence of the family of Hatton which forms part of the Hatton-Finch papers preserved in the British Museum. These papers, contained in forty-nine volumes, comprise—as their title indicates—the general correspondence and papers of the connected families of Hatton, Viscounts Hatton, and Finch, Earls of Nottingham and Winchilsea. They extend over the years 1514-1779; but the larger portion concerns the Hattons, and of those which relate to the Finches the greater number are political papers of the second Earl of Nottingham. The collection was purchased by the Trustees of the British Museum in 1874, and now bears the numbers, Additional MSS. 29,548-29,596.

That branch of the family of Hatton with which we have to do was descended from John Hatton, a younger brother of William, the father of Sir Christopher Hatton, Queen Elizabeth's Lord Chancellor. John Hatton had a son of the same name, of Long Stanton, co. Cambridge, who became the father of Sir Christopher Hatton of Kirby, the writer of the first of our letters. Sir Christopher, who was a Knight of the Bath, became heir to the estate of his namesake, the Lord Chancellor, on the death of his cousin, Sir William Newport-Hatton, and, dying in 1619, was succeeded



by his son Christopher. This second Christopher was likewise made a K.B. at the coronation of Charles the First, and was raised to the peerage in 1643, with the title of Baron Hatton of Kirby, co. Northampton. After the restoration he was appointed Governor of the island of Guernsey. He married Elizabeth, daughter and coheir of Sir Charles Montagu of Boughton, by whom he had two sons and three daughters, and died in 1670. He was succeeded in the title and also in the government of Guernsey by his eldest son, a third Christopher, who, in 1682, was further advanced to be Viscount Hatton of Gretton, co. Northampton.

It is to this Viscount Hatton that the bulk of the Hatton papers belonged; and the greater number of the letters here printed were addressed to him.<sup>a</sup> He was born in 1632, and in 1667 married his first wife, Cecilia, daughter of John Tufton, second Earl of Thanet. By her he had three daughters, two of whom died in infancy; the third, Anne, married Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham. Lady Hatton was killed in the explosion of the powder magazine at Cornet Castle, in Guernsey, which was struck by lightning on the night of 29-30 December, 1672. Lord Hatton himself had a remarkable escape, having been blown in his bed on to the battlements without suffering injury. His mother also perished, together with some of the servants; while two of his children who were in the castle were uninjured.<sup>b</sup>

In 1676 Lord Hatton married again. His second wife was Frances, daughter of Sir Henry Yelverton, of Easton Mauduit, co. Northampton, Bart., who bore him several children, all of whom however died in infancy, except one daughter. After the death of

<sup>a</sup> Of the letters here printed, those addressed to Lord Hatton are titled with the names of the writers; those addressed to other persons bear the names of the writers and of the recipients.

<sup>b</sup> See Colonel Chester's *Westminster Abbey Registers*, p. 178.

this wife, in 1684, Lord Hatton remained a widower for little more than a year, and, in August 1685, married his third wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Hazlewood, of Maidwell, co. Northampton. By this lady he also had a large family. He died in 1706.

The letters before us may be taken as a fair sample of the correspondence of a family of the higher classes in the seventeenth century. The selection has been made chiefly with the view of giving such letters as contained matter of historical or social interest. It is true that many of them may be called simply news-letters; but, as such, they are of value as showing the impression that passing events made upon the mind of the writers, as well as the style of news and town gossip that was acceptable to those who were living in the country. Perhaps there is nothing very new of historical matter to be found in these pages, but it is interesting to watch the daily records of events and the way in which the different writers tell their story. Of the two principal news-men, Charles Hatton writes with some humour, and, after William's accession, with a certain Jacobite zest for fault-finding; Lyttelton, in a blunt straightforward way of his own. It should not however be unnoticed that Charles Hatton's connection with Scroggs put it in his power to hand down to us a few facts of political interest. Nor are Nottingham's letters, written at the crisis of the Revolution by one who had so large a share in the settlement, without a special value.

At the risk of here and there printing a dull page, I have not thought it improper to include letters which contained perhaps only a single peculiar phrase or word, or even an ingenious misspelling; for of such small things is the history of social manners made.

Of some writers I could wish that we had more. Scroggs, it is true, writes of nothing but wine, but then he writes so well on that theme that it is a pity his letters are so few. Perhaps Lord Hatton

thought them too wicked to keep. Again, it must be attributed to the low standard of women's education after the Restoration that we cannot give a greater variety of ladies' letters. Nothing can be greater than the difference between their diction and their spelling, and the fearful atrocities committed in the latter respect prove what a painful operation letter-writing must have been to the greater number of women of that time. To quote Lord Macaulay's words: "During the latter part of the seventeenth century, the culture of the female mind seems to have been almost entirely neglected. If a damsel had the least smattering of literature she was regarded as a prodigy. Ladies highly born, highly bred, and naturally quickwitted, were unable to write a line in their mother tongue without solecisms and faults of spelling such as a charity girl would now be ashamed to commit."<sup>a</sup> Excluding the letter of Lady Hatton, printed in vol. i. p. 3,—a letter which one reads with another kind of feeling— as being of an earlier time than that to which these remarks apply, and beginning with the lady who, among other curiosities of spelling, writes: "mythinks the reats are resnabell enufe," we shall find not a single letter of a female writer in which Lord Macaulay's charity-girl might not have corrected some blunder. But there her powers would probably cease; she could not, at least in most instances, have expressed herself so well.

Even Lady Nottingham, whose education appears to have been far above the average, uses phrases which, if not provincialisms, must be attributed to ignorance, and invents a few spellings which are entirely her own. Thus she writes "wait of" for "wait on," and repeatedly spells "queen" and "town" as *queeen* and "twone." Her confusion of the sounds of *b* and *p*, in "blundering" for "plundering" (ii. 115), which is repeated by her half-sister,

<sup>a</sup> *History of England*, chap. iii.