

OUR OLD NOBILITY

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Our old nobility by Noblesse Oblige

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NOBLESSE OBLIGE

**OUR OLD
NOBILITY**

OUR OLD NOBILITY.

or
NOBLESSE OBLIGE, &c. &c.

Historical Essay

VI.

SECOND EDITION.

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1879
1880

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PREFACE.

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THIS book is a reprint, with a few corrections and additions, of a series of articles which have appeared in the *Echo*. Should it meet with public approbation I intend in due time to reprint a second series which is now appearing every Saturday in the same journal.

I desire to express my obligations to Mr. Macqueen, Secretary of the Financial Reform Association, for the valuable information which he has compiled from the Landowners Return, and published in the *Financial Reformer* and *Financial Reform Almanack*. I have also to tender my thanks to various correspondents, some of them being members of the families of whom I have written, for information by which I have been enabled to correct and add to the original articles in the *Echo*. It has been my endeavour to state facts as accurately as possible, and scarcely any of the statements I have made have been called in question; in fact the only important correction which I have been compelled to make was in regard to a living duke, who is credited in a County History with having discharged his father's debts. Unpaid

creditors having written to me denying this, I have been obliged to withdraw the statement. If, inadvertently, I have done any person injustice I should be the first to regret it; but on the other hand there are many unfavourable facts of which I am morally certain, but which I have refrained from stating in the absence of proof.

Possibly when my present work is completed I may have something to say upon the Land Question in general. At present I am content to give my readers facts, and leave them to draw their own conclusions.

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OUR OLD NOBILITY.

I.

The Fitzroys.

THE Dukedom of Grafton is a very fair sample of the bastard peerages, of which there are several. The Duke's possessions are very extensive,—13,642 acres in Suffolk, 8,458 in Northamptonshire, 7,316 in Bucks, and 2,784 in Banffshire—32,200 acres in all. He is also hereditary Ranger of Whittlebury and Salcey Forests, an office which gives him the right of cutting underwood and exercising other privileges over some few thousand acres besides. Whittlebury Forest, by the way, has furnished the Fitzroys with the sites of two handsome residences, in which the Duke and his brother reside, and which have attached to them five or six hundred acres of pasture-land. The Duke has also a seat at Euston Hall, in Suffolk, and valuable landed property in London, the locality of which is indicated by the family names of Grafton Street and Fitzroy Square. His Grace receives a pension of £843 per annum as a retired diplomatist; and his brother, Lord Augustus Fitzroy, who is a major-general, has been an equerry to the Queen since 1849, with a salary of £750.

The Fitzroys are certainly descended from one of the vilest of women, Barbara Palmer, wife of Lord Castlemaine, and mistress of Charles II., and they are probably descended from Charles II. also, though, as Barbara was false alike to her husband and her royal lover, it is impossible to speak with certainty. Charles very considerably fathered his bastards on