A STUDY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DOROTHY OSBORNE AS FOUND IN HER LETTERS

by

MABEL LAURA MACKENZIE

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The purpose of this thesis has been the re-creation of the social background of Dorothy Osborne, an evaluation of her letters, and an examination of the scholarship done on the letters. The series of letters, which has been called one of the best of the Restoration correspondences, was written by Dorothy Osborne, during the years 1652-1654, to her lover, William Temple.

Three collected editions of the letters were used, by E.A. Parry, Israel Gollancz and G.C. Moore Smith, respectively. Moore Smith compiled his edition using the original spelling and punctuation of the letters, but a detailed examination of the text showed that it was substantially the same as the first edition, which was made by Parry. The Gollancz edition is not as complete as either of the other two. Moore Smith's edition of Lady Giffard's MSS. was used extensively, as this contained much information on both Dorothy Osborne and William Temple. In studying the bibliography of the letters, it was found that there was much careless scholarship, even on the part of Professor Moore Smith. The major error, however, belongs to Edward Gibbon, the historian, who had harsh things to say about Temple's scholarship, and whose criticism was perpetuated in both Parry's and Moore Smith's editions.

With regard to essays and literary criticisms carelessness was still more evident. Both Virginia Woolf and Lord David Cecil were guilty in this respect, the latter having half a dozen grave errors in his latest book on the
subject.

To amplify the background of the social scene several volumes relating to the period were examined, and a collection of Lady Giffard's letters, which included half a dozen letters from Lady Temple to her husband, were carefully considered.

In the evaluation of the letters essayists and editors of the literature of the period were consulted. It was found that not enough importance was attached to Henry Osborne, the strange figure who haunts the letters; therefore this aspect of the letters was examined in detail, probably for the first time.

To sum up: the thesis contains some new material, it clears up several vexed points, and it assembles pertinent material taken from ninety letters in such a way as to give a picture of the life and times of Dorothy Osborne.
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CHAPTER 1

Dorothy Osborne appears to have been a woman who craved anonymity. Time and again she wrote to her lover,

...if I might be allowed to choose my happiness, part of it should consist in concealment, there should not above two persons in the world know that there was such a one in it as your faithful.¹

Every scrap of knowledge which her biographers have been able to discover in the three hundred years since she wrote these words lends weight to the assumption. It is fitting that we do not know where she was born, nor where she spent her childhood. Her father, Sir Peter Osborne of Chicksands Priory, is mentioned briefly in history as the governor of Guernsey who held Castle Cornet for King Charles I, against a siege of nine years. She lived at a time when men had begun to keep diaries, and she appears in the diary of her brother Henry, which, however, is still in manuscript. She is also accorded mention in Lady Giffard's The Life of Sir William Temple, but as little more than the wife of the great man. Swift, her husband's young secretary, approaches his subject timidly when he includes a verse in her praise in his long poem on Sir


(Note: This book will henceforth be referred to as The Letters)
William Temple's illness:

Mild Dorothea, peaceful, wise and great,
Trembling, beheld the doubtful hand of fate
Mild Dorothea, whom we both have long
Not dared to injure with our lowly song,
Sprung from a better world, and chosen then
The best companion for the best of men;
As some fair pile, yet spared by zeal and rage,
Lives pious witness of a better age;
So may men see what once was womankind,
In the fair shrine of Dorothea's mind.

It is strange then, that we know so many intimate details of the life of Dorothy Osborne - indeed it may be claimed that we know her as an individual better than we know any other woman of her century - and it is stranger still that through her "for the first time in English literature we hear men and women talking together over the fire".2 We do not owe our knowledge to any will or kindness of Dorothy's, however. She did not write for the public. Instead she wrote: "I confess I do naturally hate the noise and talk of the world, and should be best pleased never to be known in't upon any occasion whatsoever."3 Not known she would have been but for William Temple, diplomat, statesman, and devoted lover.

J.E. Spingarn tells us that Sir William Temple's fame has waned since the days when his essays were Pope's

3 The Letters, p.110.
favourite prose, but history still presents us with a formidable list of his achievements. Not one of these, however, is of such importance to a twentieth century reader as the simple fact that he preserved the letters of his mistress. He was no Cassandra Austen to burn the precious letters which had enchanted him, and which have pleased an admiring public for a hundred years.

"All letters, methinks, should be free and easy as one's discourse; not studied as an oration, nor made up of hard words like a charm." Dorothy practised her own precepts, and these precepts have given her letters the high place in which they stand in the world of literature. The "ifs" of history tantalise us. If Dorothy Osborne had been born a hundred years later it is probable that she would have written novels. "We may look far to find another such individual mixture of Juliet, Rosalind and Jane Austen." But equally we may conjecture that had she lived a hundred years earlier she would not have written at all. We may be grateful, then, that she was born in 1627, and grew up during the period when "both sexes and all classes enjoyed a pleasant orthographic freedom". This does not mean, however, that women wrote

4 Ibid., p.22.
books. According to Dorothy for a woman to do such a thing was "ridiculous". However, Dorothy's contemporaries wrote poems and plays and lives of their husbands and brothers, and in their day were known as "the matchless Orinda", "Incomparable Astrea", and, less flatteringly, as "mad Madge of Newcastle". Nor must Temple's "sweet sister", Martha Giffard, be forgotten. Dorothy's respect for custom would not permit her to deviate from the prevalent belief that women should not write books. "If I should not sleep this fortnight", she said, "I should not come to that." But it was seemly that she should write letters, and thus, unwittingly and unknowingly, she wrote that book with which "...we can fill in the spaces between the great books with the voices of people talking." In that phrase we have an excellent description of the book we know as The Letters from Dorothy Osborne to Sir William Temple. Dorothy wrote as if she were talking, talking to an audience of one, the most particular and private audience in the world, her lover, Sir William Temple. Her own description of the letters is interesting:

1 The Letters, p.82.
2 For further information on these women see Note 1 in the Appendix.
3 The Letters, p.82.
...there are many pretty things shuffled together which would do better spoken than in a letter, notwithstanding the received opinion that people ought to write as they speak (which in some sense I think is true). ¹

There are eighty of these letters in the collection, the originals of which are in the British Museum. How many there were we do not know. Many, or a few, may have been lost or destroyed, or indeed so strange has been the chance which kept these hidden in an obscure vicarage for nearly two hundred years, it may be that more will yet be found. Like Macaulay

...we find so much in the love letters... that we would gladly purchase equally interesting billets with ten times their weight in state papers taken at random. To us surely it is as useful to know how the young ladies of England employed themselves a hundred and eighty years ago, how far their minds were cultivated, what were their favourite studies, what degree of liberty was allowed to them, what use they made of that liberty, what accomplishments they most valued in men, and what proofs of tenderness delicacy permitted them to give to favoured suitors, as to know all about... the treaty of Niméguen. ²

The spell that Dorothy Osborne casts upon us is such that although she tells us these things and many more, still she does not tell us enough.

The letters do not begin until 1653, and by that time Dorothy Osborne is twenty-six. We know little or

¹ The Letters, p.225.
nothing of her early life. A short history of the Osborne family is given in the preface and appendix of the 1914 edition of *The Letters*, edited by E.A. Parry. The family seat of the Osbornes was Chicksands, in the county of Bedford, and the first Osborne of whom we have knowledge was Dorothy's grandfather. His eldest son, Sir Peter, was Dorothy's father. Sir Peter was an ardent loyalist and succeeded his father in the hereditary office of Treasurer's Remembrancer. However he married Dorothy Danvers, a sister of the Earl of Danby who afterwards took up the cause of Cromwell, an alliance which was later of great service to Sir Peter.

Parry tells us that Dorothy was the youngest of eleven children. Moore Smith states that it is probable that there were nine children. Of her education we know nothing save the results. Since we know something, however, of the education offered to her contemporaries, we may conjecture that hers was on a like scale. Lucy Hutchinson, remembered for her *Life* of her husband, Colonel Hutchinson, writes: "I had at one time eight tutors in several qualities - language, music, dancing, writing and needlework." It had better be

1 *The Letters*, p.314.
stated, however, that if the last mentioned skill was
learned by Dorothy she does not appear to have practised
it. Nowhere in her letters does the womanly art of
sewing appear. The Duchess of Newcastle offers a list
of tutors almost as long as Lucy's.

As for tutors, although we had for all
sorts of vertues, as singing, dancing,
playing on musick, reading, writing,
working and the like, yet we were not
kept strictly thereto, they were rather
for formality than benefit.1

Whether Dorothy was kept strictly to her studies or not,
we do not know. In The Letters we find that she loved
reading: Cowley's poetry, the verses of Lord Broghill,
the Travels of Fernando Mendez Pinto, and long ponderous
French romances, which she read in the original. We also
know that she passed cruel judgment on the efforts of
that "Illustrious princess, Margaret, Duchess of New-
castle".2 It is probable that she read her Bible since
she tells us of the sermons she goes to hear. But there
our knowledge ends. Between Dorothy and her mother there
appears to have existed a pleasant relationship. She
says of her mother that Lady Osborne "was counted as wise
a woman as most in England".3

During Dorothy's childhood her father was resident

1 Margaret Cavendish, The Lives of William Cavendishe,
Duke of Newcastle, and of his wife Margaret, Duchess of
Newcastle. Written by the thrice noble and illustrious
princess, Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, ed. Mark Anthny
2 The Letters, pp.81-82.
3 Ibid., p.216.
in Castle Cornet, as deputy governor of Guernsey, but
the castle does not appear to have been a suitable place
in which to bring up eleven children. Therefore it is
probable that the children lived at Chicksands with their
mother before the Cromwellian party took the house from
them. We first meet Dorothy when she is on a journey
with her brother Robin, who is next to her in age, to
visit their father at St. Malo, the point on the mainland
closest to Castle Cornet. The story is told by Lady
Giffard, Sir William Temple's sister.

At twenty he [Sir William Temple] begun
his travels into France in ye year 48....
He chose to pass by the Isle of Wight,
where his uncle Sr John Dingley...liv'd,
& where His Majesty was then prisoner in
Carisbrooke Castle, and twas there he
first met with Sr Peter Osbornes Daughter
goeing with her Brother to their Father
at Snt Maloes, who was Governour of
Garnesey & held it out for the King; He
made that Journey with them, in wch her
Brother had like to be stop'd by an
accident, that I don't know whether it
will be thought worth relateing. The
spite he had to se the king imprison'd,
and treated by the Governour Coll Hammond
soe unlike what was due to him provoked
him to step back after all His company
were gon before him out of the Inne and
write thesse words with a Diamond in the
window, (And Hamman wa.s hang'd upon the
Gallows he had prepar'd for Mordecai.
Twas easy to imagin what hast he made
after his company when he had done; but
had no sooner overtaken them then he was
seis'd himselfe, & brought back to ye
Governour, & only escaped by his sister
takeing it upon her selfe. In this Journey begun an amour between Sr W T and Mrs Osborne of wch the accidents for seven years might make a History....

Thereafter there is silence for five years. The lovers may have written to each other, but of the letters we have no trace. Nor is Dorothy mentioned in historical records which tell that her father voluntarily resigned his command of Castle Cornet in 1646, and that he spent the next three years at St. Malo, endeavouring to find succour for the garrison he had left behind at the castle. He was not successful, and in 1651 the royalists gave up the castle. But by this time Sir Peter was back home at Chicksands, which had been restored to him through the good offices of his brother-in-law, the Earl of Danby. As we learn from Dorothy's letters, he was worn out and old before his time, and he lived quietly with his wife, his daughter and Henry, one of his three remaining sons. Dorothy's sister Elizabeth, Lady Peyton, had died in 1642 and her name scarcely enters The Letters.

The Letters begin in 1652, and from then until 1654 we have a detailed history of Dorothy's life as she told it to her lover. In 1654 she married Temple, and to quote Parry:

From this time onwards Dorothy Temple's life may be best learned in the record of her husband's career.... It appears that when they removed to Ireland they lived for five years with Temple's father; Lady Giffard, Temple's widowed sister, joining them... In 1665 Temple was sent to Brussels.... In 1668 he was removed from Brussels to the Hague, where the successful negotiations which led to the Triple Alliance took place, and these have given him an honourable place in history. There is a letter of Lady Temple's, written to her husband in 1670, which shows how interested she was in the part he took in political life, and how he must have consulted her in all State matters.¹

In 1679 Sir William retired from public life and went with his wife and sister to live at Sheen, his country place in Surrey. Little is known of their family life at this time. Seven of their nine children died in infancy, and in 1684 their only daughter, a child of fourteen, died of smallpox. A letter from this child to her father has been preserved with the notation in his handwriting "My Di". In 1689 their only son committed suicide. Lady Giffard tells the rest of the sad story:

> With this load of his affliction, & my owne, & all of us with our hearts broken, we return'd at ye end of yt year with him & his desolate Famely to More Parke wch his Daughter in law, her mother, & two young children (both Daughters) then made a part off, & he with soe firme resolutions of passing the rest of his life there, that I beleve such another revolution it selfe could not have alter'd them....²

¹ The Letters, p.275.
² Lady.Giffard, op.cit., p.25.
One would like to leave them there, with perhaps a sigh of pity for two little grand-daughters being brought up by two grandmothers, a managing great-aunt and a mother, but it would not appear that the household continued to consist of this galaxy of women.

... about this time he [Sir William Temple] took into his service as Secretary a distant relative of his wife's, an unknown young student from Ireland, Jonathan Swift.¹

How shocked Lady Giffard would have been had she guessed that now Moor Park was to achieve a far greater degree of fame through having housed the unknown young secretary than it could ever have attained as the home merely of Sir William Temple. But in the lives of Jonathan Swift which have hurried from the pens of his admirers there is only one child to enliven the formal gardens of Moor Park, and that child is neither Dorothy nor Elizabeth Temple, the little granddaughters. The child is Hetty, better known to the world as Stella, daughter of Mrs. Johnston, companion to Lady Giffard. But

Dorothy Temple says nothing of Swift or Stella, or of her granddaughters. Her silence is complete. She died in 1694 and her husband died in 1699.

It is interesting to speculate on what freak of chance, what accident of fate, preserved Dorothy Osborne's letters. It is not strange that they should have been kept during Sir William's lifetime. He knew the exquisite quality of his treasure. It is natural, too, that Martha Giffard should have kept them safe during the twenty three years she lived after Sir William's death. She knew their value. In her Life and Character of Sir William Temple, Bart., written in 1690, she praises the letters highly.

...I have often wish'd the(y) might bee printed, for to say nothing of his writing, wch the world has since bin made judge off, I never saw any thing more extraordinary than hers.¹

This Life and Character was not printed until 1728, six years after the death of Lady Giffard, and then the editor omitted:

...the prefatory paragraph and a crowd of the more personal and intimate touches of Lady Giffard's narrative. Temple's early life at Cambridge, for example, his adventure with the Osbornes in the Isle of Wight, the praise given by Lady Giffard to his early Essays and to Dorothy Osborne's letters....²

¹ Lady Giffard, op.cit., p.6.
The world, then, had no knowledge of the existence of the letters. At the death of Lady Giffard they came into the possession of her two grand-nieces already mentioned, the daughters of Sir William's only son. The history of these two women is interesting in this narrative only in so far as it concerns the custody of the Osborne letters. To unravel the tangle of their history, however, has been a difficult task. E.A. Parry who has been a fairly reliable authority up to now, states in The Letters\(^1\) that Elizabeth, one of the daughters, died without issue in 1772, and that the other, Dorothy, died in 1758, and left among other children, a son, the Rev. Nicholas Bacon, who was vicar of Coddenham. The Rev. Nicholas died and left his vicarage, with the pictures and papers therein, to his wife's brother-in-law, the Rev. John Longe. What Parry does not tell us, though he undoubtedly knew the facts,\(^2\) is that Elizabeth married her cousin, John Temple, son of Sir William's brother, John, who had inherited Moor Park. Elizabeth and John Temple had several children, but they died young and Dorothy's son, Basil, inherited Moor Park. Parry gives the respective dates of the deaths of the sisters as 1758 for Dorothy Bacon and 1772 for Elizabeth Temple, but a descendant of the Longe family, Julia Longe, in

2. See Note 2 in Appendix.
Martha Lady Giffard, her Life and Correspondence, states, probably erroneously, that

...Mrs. Bacon lived many years after, long enough to see her son Basil succeed her sister Betty at Moor Park, and inherit many of the Temple treasures among them the cabinet containing these papers.¹

This son Basil died in 1776 and left his property to his brother John, who died twelve years later and left it to his brother Nicholas, the last surviving member but one of Sir William Temple's family. The one is Nicholas' sister Mary, who died childless, as did Nicholas.

There is proof in Julia Longe's book that Betty Temple was alive and in possession of the letters in 1770, in the form of a letter written by someone described as "a daughter of the first Lord Torrington",² and addressed to her grand-nephew, Sir George Osborne, Bart., of Chicksands. Sir George had asked about the letters of his great-aunt, Dorothy Osborne. The following was part of the reply:

Mrs. Temple did lend me these letters to read with injunction not to shew them. I very much doubt if she would send them to London. You must call on her sometime when you go to Stansted, I don't think they would answer to you, the principle were letters from Chicksands before she married. Her father Sir P.O and his family was against the match, for he was only a

² Ibid., p. 195.
younger Brother and most of those letters were in the tender stile with sensible sentiments, indeed I believe Mrs. Temple burnt them after I had read them, she said she would, as indeed I think she should, such letters can never be exposed to advantage, there were many wrote after her marriage, they soon grew tame and flat to what was before.  

Julia Longe then goes on to say:

It is fortunate for us that Mrs. Temple (Betty) changed her mind, and did not burn the letters. Perhaps she began to do so (for of the "many" written after marriage, only seven survive), and perhaps her heart failed her, or she died before she finished her task; and when, after her death in 1772 at the age of eighty-six, they came into the possession of her sister, Mrs. Bacon, she also refrained from committing to the flames those that remained, but left them to be enjoyed by generations to come.  

The Rev. John Longe came into possession of the "cabinet containing these papers" in 1796,  and he is mentioned as custodian in 1834, when we read that he gave permission to the Right Honourable Thomas Peregrine Courtenay to copy some of Dorothy's letters. Courtenay was an admirer of Sir William Temple and wrote a book on his hero called "Memoirs of the Life, Works and Correspondence of Sir William Temple, Bart. While examining the correspondence of Temple, Courtenay had come upon the Osborne letters, and asked permission to include

2 Ibid., p.194.  
them in a supplement to his work, eventually published in 1836.

Courtenay praised the letters, speaking of "the numerous and pleasing collection of letters written by Lady Temple, before her marriage to her future husband". But he was cautious in his judgment. He did not agree with Lady Giffard that the whole collection was worthy of publication. Instead he gave extracta from forty-two of the letters - not nearly enough for Macaulay, who now entered the lists of Dorothy's admirers.

Macaulay reviewed Courtenay's book in a contribution to the Edinburgh Review in 1838, and he gave high praise to the letters.

Temple appears to have kept up a very active correspondence with his mistress. His letters are lost, but hers have been preserved; and many of them appear in these volumes. Mr. Courtenay expresses some doubt whether his readers will think him justified in inserting so large a number of these epistles. We only wish there were twice as many. Very little of the diplomatic correspondence of that generation is so well worth while reading.

There the matter rested until almost fifty years after

Macaulay's essay was published. One day in 1885, E.A. Parry, a young law student, following his habit of acquiring books discussed by his favourite authors, found in a second hand book store Courtenay's Life of Sir William Temple. Now he could read the love letters so highly praised by Macaulay. In his youthful judgment he found that

...both these eminent writers [Courtenay and Macaulay] entirely underrated the literary and historical value of Dorothy's letters. To me she seemed one of the great English letter writers.¹

Thus was E.A. Parry started on the work which has brought him a measure of fame, and an interest which has lasted for more than forty years. He decided to write an article on Dorothy Osborne.

I remember visiting the British Museum in fear and trembling to find out if anyone had forestalled me....to my great joy, the affair of Dorothy Osborne's Letters seemed certainly to have remained where Courtenay and Macaulay had left it in the 'thirties, so I had no rivals at present to interfere with my plans.²

Parry then tells of the article he wrote and sent to the English Illustrated Magazine, which was edited by Comyns Carr. It appeared in the April number of 1886. Less than a week later he received a letter which surprised and excited him. After a few preliminaries, very few indeed for a Victorian lady, it burst into the topic:

2 Ibid., p.126.
I am the daughter-in-law of Mr. Longe of Coddenham who is now 85. He let me have these precious letters to copy, and I worked, encouraged by what Macaulay said in his essay on Sir William Temple, to publish them, or get someone to do so, but Mr. Longe would not allow me, although his father had allowed Mr. Courtenay to do so, who was a stranger.  

This was a daughter-in-law of spirit, however. She goes on to say:

When I had copied the letters I spared no trouble to learn all I could. There are about 90 letters, which by studying every book of the time I could hear of, I have to a certain degree arranged and dated, and found out who everyone named in the letters was. I have been to the British Museum. All I could find in a hasty visit were the letters of Lady Giffard. The British Museum want the originals, but of course the Longes do not wish to give them up, and at Mr. Longe's death they will go to his eldest son, in the Cabinet in which Sir William always kept them.

That little item "and found out who everyone named in the letters was" must be of great interest to anyone who has read the letters in their collected edition. The labour attached to such a task must have been colossal. Parry said that he replied immediately to the letter and got another in haste from Mrs. Longe, who seems indeed as impetuous as Dorothy herself. She wanted him to publish all the letters.

Cognisant as one must be of all the work Mr. Parry put on the letters, it is impossible at this point to

1 Parry, op. cit., p. 129.
2 Ibid., pp. 129-130.
forbear the comment that it is a very great pity that Mrs. Longe herself was not permitted to finish the ex­
cellent work she had begun on the letters. There appear to be personal animosities in the case. Note the wistful comment in the first letter, "Mr. Longe would not allow me", although Mr. Courtenay had published them, "who was a stranger". The reason for regretting the disappearance of Mrs. Longe's aid in publishing the letters is that in her second letter to Parry she said:

My copies are all spelt exactly like the originals (by the advice of Sir John Taylor Coleridge who thought that was their value) and I will gladly give you up all my notes, etc., etc., and enter into everything - only my name not appearing.¹

But women wrote books in the Victorian age, it was a seemly occupation. Why should her name not have appeared? As for the question of to whom the credit is due for using the original spelling, to Sir John or to Mrs. Longe, this is not important. What is important is that it was a point which Mrs. Longe seemed to find of great interest. Unfortunately Mr. Parry did not agree. He says:

...from the first, I had made up my mind that the book would be of no use to the average reader if the letters were printed in the old spelling, and for my part, although I understand that learned people take an interest in the orthography of a bygone age, I have never been impressed by discovering that a scholar...wrote 'bushoppes' where we write 'bishops'.²

¹ Parry, op. cit., p.130.
² Ibid., p.131.
Mrs. Longe had more instructions as to the publication of the book.

It must be 'by permission of the Rev. Mr. Longe' - then there will be no jealousy as you know this exists in families, especially with daughters-in-law.¹

But even this evidence of respect was not enough for old Mr. Longe. He still proved adamant. He was "not well enough to be troubled with the business"² and left it all in the hands of his son, Mr. Robert Bacon Longe of Spixworth Park. Mr. Robert proved more amenable. If he did not show the enthusiasm of his sister-in-law, at least he stated that he had "no objections" to Mr. Parry's seeing and making use of Mrs. Longe's copies of the letters, but that his father would neither be troubled with visitors at Goddenham, nor would he care to lend the originals.

Mrs. Longe sent her copies to Mr. Parry. Even more, she accepted his decision as to the spelling, and in 1887 the book was finished. Mrs. Longe's part of the work was not yet finished, however. The Letters went the rounds of the publishers, to be sent back promptly, until Mrs. Longe wrote to say that she had found a publisher, Griffith, Farren & Okeden. Mr. Okeden was interested, but not sufficiently so to take all the risks of the publication on his own shoulders. Only enough copies were to be printed to pay the expenses, and if they sold, a commercial

¹ Parry, op. cit., p.130.
² Ibid., p.131.
edition would be brought out later. Then if there were profits Mr. Parry would share in them with the publishers. Moreover, Mr. Okeden specified that seven letters, which he found of no great interest, should be omitted. To this omission there were curious repercussions. In 1891, four years after the publication of this edition of The Letters, the British Museum bought the original letters, but their representative wished to have only the letters published in Parry's book, with the result that the other seven were left in the possession of Mr. Longe. Parry, however, wanted to see all the letters published. He had concurred in the omission, but not agreed as to the wisdom of it. Therefore when he brought out a new edition in 1903, he acquired from Mr. Longe the sole right of publishing the missing letters and printed the full collection. In the meantime, the 1888 edition ran into a second printing, and the publishers, having ignored their agreement with Mr. Parry, brought out what he described as "a cheap and unattractive edition".\(^1\) They also had apparently forgotten their agreement as to sharing the profits. "However, said Parry, "I explained to them their legal position and got some accounts and some share of the profits."\(^2\) It appears that the explanation must have been effective, since some time later the firm handed over the book to

1 Parry, *op. cit.*, p.137.  
Parry, and for the next fourteen or fifteen years he kept making notes for the revised edition which he brought out in 1903, published by Sherratt and Hughes. In that same year Israel Gollancz also brought out an edition of the letters of Dorothy Osborne.

In 1914 J.M.Dent & Sons, Ltd. brought out a cheap copy of the Parry collection in the *Everyman* edition, edited by Ernest Rhys, and for this edition Parry has written an excellent introduction. He speaks of this edition in his autobiography, and immediately after the statement that the book is now published by J.M.Dent & Sons Ltd. (he does not give the date of the publication) he says:

> Quite recently, in 1928 the Oxford University Press, asked me to assist them to produce an edition in the old spelling, which Professor Moore Smith had prepared. I was, of course, ready to comply, and gave them full liberty to use for that purpose any of my copyright material.1

Nowhere does Parry, by now His Honour Sir Edward, mention the 1903 edition of the letters which was brought out under the signature of Israel Gollancz, in London, published by the de la More Press. Nor strangely enough, does the *Dictionary of National Biography* mention this volume among the works of Israel Gollancz. Parry says, however: "On two occasions at least, it [The Letters] has been pirated, once in Toronto and once here...."2 Was the

1 Parry, *op.cit.*, p.139.
2 Ibid., p.139.
Gollancz edition one of those pirated? There appears to be no evidence with which to answer this question. It is obvious that Gollancz had not seen Parry's amended edition, also published in 1903, as he omitted the seven letters inserted in that edition. Parry's failure to mention the Gollancz edition is perhaps understandable when one reads the preface:

The Present Edition. But now that the originals of the letters are readily accessible, it must be confessed, with all reluctance, that the copy placed at Mr. Parry's disposal was far from being an accurate transcript. In the text as printed there are some hundreds of verbal errors, and the omission of whole passages.¹

This is followed by a footnote which says: "Some of the more important errors are noted, but it has not been deemed necessary to record the many minor errors of transcription."² Gollancz then goes on to say:

The present text is an attempt to put forth a true and authentic version. This is its primary claim. At the same time the notes have been worked up independently, and many allusions are now explained or correctly annotated for the first time.³

He also expresses thanks to his good friend Mr. Walter Skeat, M.A., formerly scholar of Christ's College, Cambridge, for much valued help in the preparation of the

¹ Gollancz, op. cit., p.xv.
² Ibid., p.xv.
³ Ibid., p.xv.
book. He states that in the chronological order of the letters he has, in the main, followed the order in the British Museum folio, that is to say, in the order in which Parry placed them.

At this point it might be pertinent to enquire if Parry saw Gollancz's edition of the letters before he published his second edition. If he did not, why did he take the trouble to make up elaborate tables, added as an appendix, headed thus:

Table showing present arrangement of the letters and that adopted in the Edition of 1888

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present number</th>
<th>suggested date</th>
<th>No. and page of letter in Edition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>December 25th, 1652</td>
<td>2. p.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 2nd, 1653</td>
<td>3. p.401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and continuing to the last letter, numbered 77, with the new letters inserted in their appropriate place, and so designated? Gollancz used the old arrangement, has no new letters, and moreover has something to say about one of these new letters, even though he does not know that it belongs to the collection. The statement occurs in his preface:

Strange to say, among Courtenay's extracts from the letters, there is a letter not contained in the collected letters, which from internal evidence would appear to belong to the year 1661.

1 The Letters, p.316-318.
It is significant that no notice has been taken of the fact that here we have another late letter - possibly still at Coddenham.¹ No notice of this valuable piece of autobiography is found in Mr. Parry's volume.¹

Underneath this is the footnote numbered 1, and this gives the letter in question. From Parry, however, we find that Gollancz quotes only a small part of the letter, while Parry gives the whole of it, and numbers it 28. He also has a long note on the letter which shows that Gollancz was not wholly wrong in thinking internal evidence showed it to belong to the year 1661. Parry produces more evidence however, to prove that he is correct in assuming the date to be July, 1653.

Gollancz followed Parry's ideas of spelling, and stated that he tried "accurately to represent the original text in modern orthography."² While he gave to Parry the credit and distinction of having given to the world "the editio princeps of these fascinating letters"³ he did not mention by name anywhere Mr. Longe's wistful daughter-in-law. Instead he reduces her to "another admirer of Dorothy" who made "faithful and loving copies of the originals".

1 Gollancz, op.cit., p.xviii.
2 Ibid., p.xvi.
3 Ibid., p.xiv.
Parry does not mention in his autobiography the book written by Julia G. Longe, daughter of Robert Longe of Spixworth Park, which was published in 1911 with the title *Martha Lady Giffard*, but he wrote a preface for it which is worthy of mention. He states that the book has general interest "altogether outside its illustrations of the later life of Lady Temple", but he finishes his preface with the paragraph:

> It is because I know the enthusiasm that many quiet readers have for Dorothy Osborne's letters that I feel sure there will be an eager desire to read this later correspondence, and to trace her influence in the affairs of her husband and family through the long autumn of Dorothy's life that followed the summer days of the love-letters.

It is probable, however, that many people will agree with "the daughter of the first Lord Torrington" who found that the letters written after Dorothy's marriage "soon grew tame and flat to what was before".

The enterprising daughter-in-law of old Mr. Longe is vindicated, if obliquely, in this preface, by Parry's paragraph concerning her niece's work, which reads:

> Miss Longe has had the courage to do what is undoubtedly the right thing in printing the letters exactly as they were spelled and written, and one can only hope that a course that will make the book more attractive to students and scholars will not be

found to repel the general reader, who will meet with so much entertainment and information in its pages.\footnote{1}

Obviously Mr. Parry is not wholly convinced yet as to the spelling of "bushoppes".

Undoubtedly there is something of interest in the Longe book for those interested in the fortunes of the Temple family. Much of it is gossip, but as Virginia Woolf says, "Gossip which has survived its day is never despicable".\footnote{2} It is unfortunate that the book has many discrepancies in its presentation of "facts". On page 5 Miss Longe tells us that William and Dorothy had seven children in all, and on the same page speaks of five who are already dead and of the birth of the sixth child, the only one who grew to maturity, and who committed suicide twenty-six years later. On page 52 she speaks of the birth of a little girl, the child who lived fourteen years and whose letter Temple kept with the notation "My Di". On page 60 we are told of the birth of another boy, who died immediately after. The number of children who died is perhaps not important, but throughout the book there is continual evidence of faulty proof reading, if not of faulty scholarship. Miss Longe states on page 177 that Swift wrote the verse which begins "Mild Dorothea", and which is quoted on page 2 of this essay, on the occasion

\footnote{1} Julia G. Longe, op.cit., p.vi. 
of the suicide of Jack, the Temple's only son. But the verse is part of a long poem written on the occasion of Sir William Temple's illness, as Swift plainly tells us. Miss Longe makes another statement in connection with the verse, which appears to have little foundation: "Dorothy was never 'mild', as we use the word now - Swift would have said 'gentle' if he could have made his line scan with it - "

In view of all this, the writer has only slight hesitation in suggesting that Miss Longe is wrong in her placing of the letters from Dorothy to her husband, as far as dates are concerned. There appears to be internal evidence, talk of Jane and Mrs. Goldsmith of the Chicksands days, no mention of Martha Giffard etc. which would date some of the letters as having been written during the months Dorothy spent in England immediately after her marriage, and before going to Ireland. However, this is a matter of little importance at this time. Miss Longe's book gives valuable information regarding the ownership of Dorothy's letters up to the time we meet them in Courtenay's book.

There remains but one more edition of the letters to be examined, G.C. Moore Smith's edition, to which Parry refers in his autobiography. An interesting item came

1 Julia G. Longe, _op. cit._, p.178.
to light while research was being done on this volume. Since the book itself was not immediately available, book reviews were resorted to, and the London Times Literary Supplement, 1928, gave an excellent unsigned review, which was found to be a slightly abridged version of Virginia Woolf's essay, Dorothy Osborne's "Letters". The essay, as found in the collection, The Second Common Reader, has a more elaborate beginning than the review but that is the chief difference. In it Virginia Woolf repeats the error of accrediting to Henry Osborne the description of Temple, the "proudest imperious insulting ill-natured man that ever was", though when the Moore Smith volume came to hand, it became perfectly clear that it was one "J.B.", a rejected suitor, who thus gave vent to his dislike of Temple.

For the purposes of this essay, it was unfortunate that Moore Smith's book was not available in time to be used as the primary source book, since then the letters could have been quoted in their original spelling and punctuation.

The first point of interest is the title of this edition. Both Parry and Gollancz give the title "Sir" to William Temple, although when Dorothy wrote the letters he was still merely "William Temple". Moore

Smith corrects this, and calls his edition **The Letters of Dorothy Osborne to William Temple**. On the title page he states "Edited by permission of Sir Edward Parry and of his publishers Messrs Sherratt and Hughes, Ltd., and Messrs J.M.Dent and Sons, Ltd." and in Parry's autobiography **My Own Way** Parry speaks of being asked to assist Professor Moore Smith in the compilation of this edition.

In view of all this it is unfortunate that Moore Smith did not discuss with Parry the seven love letters not sold to the Museum. He states: "For some reason, however, seven of the series of love-letters were not sold, and these, along with some later letters of Dorothy written from Reading after her marriage...passed in 1911 to ...Mr. Francis Bacon Longe." The reason why the letters were not sold is discussed fully on pages 20 and 21 of this essay.

Moore Smith has, however, benefitted by much of the information culled by previous editors. This edition brings us fuller foot-notes, and occasionally a sentence or two of fresh material, but it is interesting to note that as careful a scholar as Moore Smith has not taken the trouble to investigate Gibbon's criticism of Sir William Temple's notes on the famous Almanzor, but has reproduced Parry's note in its entirety. Any Spanish

2 *The Letters*, p.61.
encyclopedia gives the history of Almanzor and completely vindicates Temple, but Gibbon's "smile" at Sir William's simplicity still stands.

But even Moore Smith is not able to clear up entirely the age of Sir William's son, Jack, when he died. However he subscribes to the theory already put forth by this writer (see page 28 of this essay) that the letters supposed by Julia Longe to have been written in 1664 were really written in the years 1655-7 while Dorothy was still in England after her marriage. With reference to the child "Jack" he says: "'Jack' is not the Jack born in 1663-4, but the elder Jack who was born in Dec. 1655 and who died within a few years in Ireland."¹

The volume has copious entries from Henry Osborne's diary, lent by Sir Algernon Osborn, Bt., and still preserved at Chicksands Priory. Henry's diary, however, is not interesting in itself, but only in the additional facts it presents as confirmation in doubtful matters.

The cabinet in which Temple kept Dorothy's letters is mentioned in Parry's book My Own Way, when Mrs. Longe writes to tell him that the letters are still "in the cabinet in which Sir William always kept them".² The cabinet is mentioned again in Julia Longe's book, Martha

¹ G.C. Moore Smith, The Letters of Dorothy Osborne, p.197.
² Parry, My Own Way, p.130.
Lady Giffard, when she speaks of Basil Bacon who inherited "many of the Temple treasures among them the cabinet containing these papers". There is also in this book a photograph of a cabinet with the caption "The Temple cabinet at Spixworth Park". Moore Smith likewise has something to say about the cabinet:

In his lifetime Sir William Temple kept his wife's love-letters in a cabinet. Mrs. Temple writes from Reading, "you would have such letters as I used to write before we were married, there are a great many such in yt cabinet yt I can send you if you please". After his wife's death he probably destroyed his own letters to her, but Dorothy's letters...were preserved and probably passed on his death in 1698 with the cabinet to his granddaughter, Elizabeth Temple....

But no editor so far has commented on the cabinet mentioned in Dorothy's letter, which might well be the same cabinet. She is thanking Temple for his present:

I have the cabinet, and 'tis in earnest a pretty one; though you will not own it for a present. I'll keep it as one, and 'tis like to be yours no more but as 'tis mine.

1 Julia G. Longe, Martha Lady Giffard, p.282.
2 Ibid., p.350.
4 The Letters, p.209.
It would be interesting to know if this is the original cabinet, and if it now stands in its old place at Chick-sands.

Moore Smith has fifty pages of introduction to his volume, as well as almost 150 pages of notes and appendices. There is little that is new in the introduction, and indeed Moore Smith at all times acknowledges his indebtedness to E.A. Parry for much of the material he now uses. There is, however, a new light shed on Sir John Temple. Moore Smith says:

...we may even now learn something from the beautiful family life of the Temples, from Sir John's wise consideration for his son's wishes and William's delicacy about asking help from his father, a delicacy in which for once Dorothy compares with him unfavourably, from the lifelong mutual affection of William and his sister, and from the readiness with which they all received William's unknown bride to their hearts.¹

This is, indeed, a new Sir John Temple. It might be claimed that Moore Smith's interest in Dorothy's letters is secondary to his interest in the Temple family. He has since produced his excellent edition of *The Early Essays and Romances of Sir William Temple, Bt.* with the *Life and Character of Sir William Temple* by his sister Lady Giffard, and there can be no doubt whatsoever that he was a true admirer of the Temple family. Nevertheless

it is difficult to reconcile "Sir John's wise considera-
tion for his son's wishes" with the facts as they appear in The Letters. The first picture we have of Sir John is:
of his ordering his son from St.Malo, being "unsatisfied
at the long stay he made."¹ We remember that the acci-
dents of this amour lasted for seven years, and we have
the letters to tell us why the wooing continued so long.
We have Lady Giffard's statement as to the "dissatisfac-
tion"² of his friends at the courtship, and we have the
many ladies of fine fortunes who are presented to Temple
by his friends and family in the hope of weaning his
affections from Dorothy. Has Moore Smith forgotten Sir
John's complete lack of delicacy - when he praises that
of William and laments Dorothy's want of it - which made
him tell people who knew Dorothy that he had been forced
to send for his son to come to London, and again to send
him to Ireland to prevent his marrying Dorothy?³ As for
"the readiness with which they all received William's
unknown bride" - surely this is an exaggeration. The
letters would lead one to believe William had threatened
suicide and thoroughly frightened his father before the
latter would consent to the marriage. And surely Dorothy
was hardly "unknown". She had sent letters and presents

¹ Lady Giffard, op.cit., p.6.
² Lady Giffard, op.cit., p.7.
³ The Letters, p.267.
to little Martha Giffard, but it will be seen that at an early age Martha displayed those traits of jealousy so unseemly in Dorothy's brother Henry. There is a slightly unpleasant, if amusing, note in the following extract taken from one of Dorothy's letters. Jane, (Dorothy's companion), had sent Temple a present.

What would I give to know that sister of yours that is so good at discovery; sure she is excellent company; she had reason to laugh at you when you would have persuaded her the "moss was sweet". I remember Jane brought some of it to me, to ask if I thought it had no ill smell, and whether she might venture to put it in the box or not. I told her as I thought, she could not put a more innocent thing there, for I did not find that it had any smell at all....My niece and I wandered through some six hundred acres of wood in search of it, to make rocks and strange things that her head is full of, and she admires it more than you did. If she had known I had consented it should have been used to fill up a box, she would have condemned me extremely.²

But Dorothy forgives the sister - after all she is only fifteen - and sends her a new song and two carriage dogs and probably much more that we know nothing of.

There is little more to be said about the Moore Smith edition. It might be of interest to reproduce part of a letter as Dorothy wrote it. For this purpose the letter in which Moore Smith finds the "indelicacy", has been chosen. It will be seen that Dorothy has a fine

¹ The Letters, p.74.
² Ibid., pp.171-172.
is it in Earnest that You say your
being there keeps mee from the Towne?
if soe, tis very unkinde. noe if I had
gon it had bin to have waited on my
Neighbor, whose has now alterd her
resolution and goes not her self, I
have noe buisnesse there, and am soe
little taken with the place that I could
sitt heer seven yeer without soe much as
thinking once of going to it. Tis not
likely as you say that you should much
perswade your father to what you doe not
desyre hee should doe, but it is harde if
all the Testimony's of my kindenesse ar
not enough to sattisfye without my publishing
to the world that I can forgett my friends
and all my interest to ffollow my passion;
though perhaps it will admitt of a good
sense, tis that which nobody but you or I
will give it, and wee that are concerned
int can only say twas an act of great
kindenesse and something Romance, but
must confesse it had nothing of prudence,
discretion, nor sober counsell in't....¹

CHAPTER II

Social Life of the Period as seen in the Letters.

Chicksands Priory still stands in Bedfordshire, forty-two miles from London, and Parry describes it from an etching in Thomas Fisher's Collections of Bedfordshire, dated December 26, 1816. Since it was from this house that Dorothy wrote most of the letters, it might be well to quote the description:

Chixon, Chikesonds, or Chicksands Priory, Bedfordshire, as it now stands...was, in the reign of Edward III., a nunnery, situated then, as now, on a slight eminence, with gently rising hills at a short distance behind, and a brook running to join the river Ivel, thence the German Ocean, along the valley in front of the house.

The Priory is a low-built sacro-secular edifice, well fitted for its former service.... The very exterior of it is Catholic, unpuritanical; no methodism about the square windows, set here and there at undecided intervals wherever they may be wanted. Six attic windows jut out from the low-tiled roof. At the corner of the house is a high pinnaced buttress rising the full height of the wall; five buttresses flank the side wall, built so that they shade the lower windows from the morning sun - in one place reaching to the sill of an upper window. At the further end of the wall are two Gothic windows, claustral remnants, lighting now perhaps the dining-hall where cousin Molle and Dorothy sat in state, or the saloon where the latter received her servants. There are still cloisters attached to the house, at the other side of it maybe.

1 The Letters, pp.16-17.
A bare enough description, but it must suffice, since Dorothy tells us nothing more. Fortunately Sir William Temple resembled all lovers in that no detail connected with his beloved was too small to be unimportant. He asks his mistress how she spends her days, and her reply not only enlightened him, but provides us with a wonderful picture of a day in the life of a gentlewoman of England, in the month of May, 1653.

You ask me how I pass my time here. I can give you a perfect account not only of what I do for the present, but of what I am likely to do this seven years if I stay here so long. I rise in the morning reasonably early, and before I am ready I go round the house till I am weary of that, and then into the garden till it grows too hot for me. About ten o'clock I think of making me ready, and when that's done I go into my father's chamber, from thence to dinner, where my cousin Molle and I sit in great state in a room and at a table that would hold a great many more. After dinner we sit and talk till Mr. B. comes in question, and then I am gone. The heat of the day is spent in reading or working, and about six or seven o'clock I walk out into a common that lies hard by the house, where a great many young wenches keep sheep and cows, and sit in the shade singing of ballads. I go to them and compare their voices and beauties to some ancient shepherdesses that I have read of, and find a vast difference there; But, trust me, I think these are as innocent as those could be. I talk to them, and find that they want nothing to make them the happiest people in the world but the knowledge that they are so. Most commonly, when we are in the midst of our discourse, one looks about her, and spies her cows going into the corn, and then away they all run as if they had wings at their heels. I, that am not so nimble, stay behind; and
when I see them driving home their cattle, I think 'tis time for me to retire too. When I have supped, I go into the garden, and so to the side of a small river that runs by it, where I sit down and wish you with me (you had best say this is not kind neither). In earnest, 'tis a pleasant place, and would be much more so to me if I had your company. I sit there sometimes till I am lost with thinking; and were it not for some cruel thoughts of the crossness of our fortunes that will not let me sleep there, I should forget that there were such a thing to be done as going to bed.¹

A detailed examination of this letter may be profitable in determining something of the social life of the period. "I rise in the morning reasonably early" says Dorothy. But what was reasonably early? H.D.Traill in his Social England tells us that merchants went to work about six or seven in the morning, and mentions, for example, that Pepys was sometimes at his desk by four or five A.M.² Dorothy seems to have been more indolent. She writes: "I am so great a lover of my bed myself that I can easily apprehend the trouble of rising at four o'clock these cold mornings."³ When one thinks of the great, cold, draughty houses of the period her apprehensions are easily understood. However, she is conscious of her duty here, as in everything else, and it is the duty of a woman to rise early. "You are like to have an excellent housewife of me," she says teasingly to her lover,

¹ The Letters, pp.84-85.
³ The Letters, p.42.
"I am abed still and slept so soundly, nothing but your letter could have waked me."¹

Never was a woman who wrote less about domesticity. We know nothing whatsoever about the housewifely duties which took Dorothy "round the house". There must have been vast quantities of baking and brewing and sewing done in a house which sheltered so many people. "I have been called away twenty times", she says in a letter, but alas, we know not what duties called her. We know she is mistress of the house, since her mother died before the letters begin, and in the letters we meet many servants. "I chid my maid for waking me in the morning",... and again "I dare not send my boy to meet you... nor any other of the servants, they are all too talkative."² There is mention of "my brother's groom", and again "my brother's men". In a letter written during a long, wakeful night by the bedside of her sick father, she gives us a pleasant picture of the agreeable situation which appeared to exist between her and her servants.

...here do I sit all night by a poor moped fellow that serves my father...

My fellow watchers have been asleep too, till just now they begin to stretch and yawn; they are going to try if eating and drinking can keep them awake, and I am kindly invited to

1 The Letters, p.270.
2 Ibid., p.124.
3 Ibid., p.213.
be of their company; my father's man has got one of the maids to talk nonsense to tonight, and they have got between them a bottle of ale. I shall lose my share if I do not take them at their first offer. Your patience till I have drunk, and then I am for you again.¹

Throughout the letters we find a great concern for dignity, for convention and form, which makes the foregoing description all the more interesting.

Her relationship with her companion, Jane, is worthy of mention. Jane's position in the house is somewhat curious. Temple calls her his "fellow servant", a form of speech which Dorothy used also, and although a paid companion she appears to have exchanged letters and presents with him.

Jane bids me tell you that, if you liked your marmalade of quince, she could send you more and she thinks better, that has been made since.²

and again:

Jane presents her humble service to you, and has sent you something in a box; 'tis hard to imagine what she can find here to present you withal, and I am much in doubt whether you will not pay too dear for it if you discharge the carriage. 'Tis a pretty freedom she takes, but you may thank yourself; she thinks because you call her fellow-servant, she may use you accordingly. I bred her better, but you have spoiled her.³

¹ The Letters, pp. 80-81.
² Ibid., p. 120.
³ Ibid., p. 144.
Jane is not in continuous residence at Chicksands. At one point she is in London, and meets Temple, to whom doubtless she carries messages. Dorothy writes then:

...If your fellow servant has been with you, she has told you I part with her but for her advantage. That I shall always be willing to do; but whenever she shall think fit to serve again, and is not provided of a better mistress, she knows where to find me.¹

That Jane does not find a better mistress becomes apparent when we meet her again in the letters, always spoken of with affection. But we know no more of Jane's employments than we know of Dorothy's, since Dorothy writes during one of Jane's absences:

...Jane...is not yet come down. On Tuesday I expect her; and if she be not engaged, I shall give her no cause hereafter to believe that she is a burden to me, though I have no employment for her but that of talking to me when I am in the humour of saying nothing.²

Part of Jane's duty was to act as chaperone, or duenna, though sometimes not even Jane was enough, and Dorothy was constrained to ask the vicar's wife to be present. Once a suitor whom she calls "my servant James", and who brought her a present of charcoal, a commodity scarce enough at the time, came to call.

...the other day he made me a visit, and I, to prevent his making discourses to me, made Mrs. Goldsmith and Jane sit by all the while.³

1 The Letters, p.70.
2 Ibid., p.223.
3 Ibid., p.209.
Moore Smith, in his Appendix III, gives his reasons as to why he agrees with Parry that Jane and Mrs. Goldsmith were sisters and ends his note with

I suggest that Mary and Jane Wright were Thomas Wright's daughters taken into the household of Sir Peter and Lady Osborne, and that in Mary the Rev. Daniel Goldsmith, son of the Rector of Campton, found a wife.1

There is little more to be said of the servants at Chicksands. How many cooks, chambermaids, stable boys or gardeners were kept we do not know. The garden was a good one:

I could wish, too, that you would lay your commands on me to forbear fruit; here is enough to kill 1,000 such as I am, and so excellently good...2

and obviously local squires were then as now, keen gardeners. Dorothy's neighbour, Sir Samuel Luke, shows another side of his character than that described by his secretary, Samuel Butler, when the latter satirised his employer as "Hudibras". Dorothy says:

...Sir Sam has grown so kind as to send to me for some things he desired out of his garden, and withal made the offer of what was in his, which I had reason to take for a high favour, for he is a nice florist....3

Dorothy perhaps prides herself on being also "a nice florist". Certainly she loved her garden.

2 The Letters, p. 112.
3 Ibid., p.73.
Last night I was in the garden till 11 o'clock. It was the sweetest night that e'er I saw. The garden looked so well and the jasmine smelt beyond all perfume.¹

But not only in the summer did she spend time in the garden. Even in February she talks of being up early and "...going out to walk in my night-clothes and night gown."² This was obviously the custom, as she states she does not make herself "ready" until ten o'clock. This would appear late, since the social life of the day began early. But perhaps since it was in the country, formal visiting did not begin early. When Dorothy was in town she thought nothing of writing to Temple, saying: "This is to tell you that you will be expected to-morrow morning about nine o'clock."³ To quote Traill again:

> Even the most fashionable and dissipated kept very early hours, and began a 'debauch' at the one o'clock dinner.... guests stayed...till seven or eight o'clock, going to bed at sunset in summer.⁴

She does not go into her father's chamber until she is made "ready*. This is in keeping with the ceremoniousness of the day. Here is no idle running in and out at all hours, to see how he does. Sir Peter is ill, he does not leave his room, and his devoted daughter takes the utmost care of him. She is accustomed to illness. People are always ill - spleen, ague, sore eyes and colds

¹ The Letters, p. 115.
² Ibid., p. 215.
³ Ibid., p. 271.
⁴ Traill, op. cit., pp. 668-669.
are the perpetual companions of the time. Open the diary of the Rev. Ralph Josselin at any page and there will be a notation about his wife's sore eyes, his maid's cold, his child's various distempers, interspersed with thanks to God for their various recoveries from diverse diseases.¹

In The Letters we are early introduced to the state of chronic ill health which is prevalent. In the third letter Dorothy states that she has been away from home drinking medicinal waters in order to be rid of "a scurvey spleen". In the same letter she writes:

...how sorry I am you have got such a cold. I am the more sensible of your trouble by my own, for I have newly got one myself. But I will send you that which used to cure me. 'Tis like the rest of my medicines: if it do no good, 'twill be sure to do no harm, and 'twill be no great trouble to you to eat a little on't now and then; for the taste, as it is not excellent, so 'tis not very ill.²

"The rest of my medicines" writes Dorothy. This is an age wherein gentlewomen knew the uses of herbs to make many homely remedies, and indeed it is a time when women took the place of doctors. Dorothy tells of her friend, Lady Diana Rich, who comes to the country, and "lies at a gentlewoman's hard by me for sore eyes".³ Unfortunately the gentlewoman was not successful in curing the Lady

² The Letters, p. 32.
³ Ibid., p. 35.
Diana's sore eyes, nor were Dorothy's own remedies sufficient to cure her spleen. She writes to her lovers:

I drink your health every morning
in a drench that would poison a horse
I believe, and 'tis the only way I
have to persuade myself to take it.
'Tis the infusion of steel, and makes
me so horribly sick, that every day at
ten o'clock I am making my will and
taking leave of all my friends.¹

A little later she is more specific about the remedy.

...I am partly of your opinion that
'tis an ill kind of physic. Yet I am
confident that I take it the safest
way, for I do not take the powder, as
many do, but only lay a piece of steel
in white wine overnight, and drink the
infusion next morning, which one would
think were nothing, and yet 'tis not
to be imagined how sick it makes me for
an hour or two, and, which is the misery,
all that time one must be using some kind
of exercise. Your fellow servant Jane
has a blessed time on't. I make her play
at shuttlecock with me, and she is the
veriest bungler at it ever you saw. Then
I am ready to beat her with the battledore,
and grow so peevish as I grow sick, that
I'll undertake she wishes there were no
steel in England.²

When she has an ague she is no less eloquent about
the treatment meted out to her. She tells Temple that
she has had two fits with the ague which left her ex-
tremely weak, but she adds:

1 The Letters, p.56.
2 Ibid., p.63.
...it is impossible that I should keep it long, for here is my eldest brother, and my cousin Molle, and two or three more of them that have great understanding in agues, as people that have been long acquainted with them, and they do so tutor and govern me, that I am neither to eat, drink nor sleep without their leave; and, sure, my obedience deserves they should cure me, or else they are great tyrants to very little purpose.¹

Cousin Molle knows all about agues, but Dorothy does not think much of his judgment, and is glad when he leaves and she no longer has to sit at dinner with him "in great state".

...I thank God an imagination took him one morning that he was falling into a dropsy, and make [sic] him in such haste to go back to Cambridge to his doctor, that he never remembered anything he had to ask of me, but the coach to carry him away.²

Cousin Molle had a reason, however, to linger at Chicksands until his dropsy made him leave, and this reason caused Dorothy much unpleasantness. He was "agent"³ for a neighbouring squire who was making suit to Dorothy. This squire was the "Mr. B." who "came in question", at which point Dorothy would leave the room. It was the custom to employ friends or relatives as go-betweens.

...coming to town...I fell in Sir Thomas's way and what humour took him I cannot imagine, but he made very formal addresses to me, and engaged his mother and my brother to appear in't.⁴

¹ The Letters, p.90.
² Ibid., p.105.
³ Ibid., p.105.
⁴ Ibid., p.31.
In the same letter appears another suitor, "...at my coming home I found that a gentleman (who has some estate in this country) had been treating with my brother."\(^1\) Dorothy has no lack of friends to perform this office for her. She suffered from a managing aunt, who would have her married whether she would or no, an older brother who wanted her married with the least possible inconvenience to himself, a brother-in-law who thought she should be married, Cousin Molle and other friends. They all brought offers from eligible young men, and eligible meant only one thing, to be possessed of sufficient fortune. It was a most mercenary age. Dorothy was not over-concerned about money, but certainly she would not marry without it.

Let me assure you...that had you £20,000 a year I could love you no more than I do.... But yet, I would not be thought so inconsiderate a person as not (to) remember that it is expected from all people that have sense that they should act with reason, that to all persons some proportion of fortune is necessary, according to their several qualities....\(^2\)

A mercenary age, and a cynical one!

...I prefer a competency with one I esteem infinitely before a vast estate in other hands. 'Tis much easier, sure, to get a good fortune than a good husband; but whosoever marries without any consideration of fortune shall never be allowed to do it, out of so reasonable an apprehension

1 *The Letters*, p.43.
the whole world (without any reserve) shall pronounce they did it merely to satisfy their giddy humour.¹

There was a certain honesty, however, about the arrangements or marriage settlements. David Cecil, in his Two Quiet Lives says:

Like everyone else in the seventeenth century, Dorothy accepted the view that marriage was a social institution not necessarily entered upon for sentimental reasons. This meant that it had its own problems unconnected with those of the heart.²

She writes very calmly of a suitor, saying:

...I guessed he expected a better fortune than mine. And it proved so. Yet he protested he liked me so well, that he was very angry my father would not be persuaded to give a £1,000 more with me; and I him so ill, that I vowed if I had £1,000 less I should have thought it too much for him.³

There is a modern note in some of Dorothy's observations on marriage:

My brother would persuade me there is no such thing in the world as a constant friendship. People, he says, that marry with great passion for one another, as they think, come afterwards to lose it they know not how, besides the multitude of such as are false and mean it. I cannot be of his opinion, though I confess there are too many examples on't.⁴

David Cecil has an observation to make on this. "In marriages as in every other human institution - so ran

¹ The Letters, pp.218-219.
³ The Letters, p.30.
⁴ Ibid., p.115.
Dorothy's characteristic conclusion - things seemed likely to turn out badly*.

Another bitter little comment by Dorothy is as fit for 1948 as for 1653:

What an age we do live in, where 'tis a miracle if in ten couple that are married, two of them live so as not to publish to the world that they cannot agree.  

In the same letter comes a wise, pathetic observation: "...'tis a sad thing when all one's happiness is only that the world does not know you are miserable." There is nothing modern, however, in the power parents had over their children. It amounted to divine authority. Dorothy refers often to the obligations she has to her father, and comments upon his kindness to her, as though it were not common with parents to be kind.

He [Temple's father, who opposed the match] may be confident I can never think of disposing myself without my father's consent; and although he has left it more in my power than almost anybody leaves a daughter, yet certainly I were the worst natured person in the world if his kindness were not a greater tie upon me than any advantage he could have reserved.

And again in the following sentence where a parent's word seems almost like a divine command: "Sure the whole world could never persuade me (unless a parent commanded it) to marry one that I had no esteem for...." It is comforting to

1 Cecil, _op.cit_. p.24.
2 _The Letters_, p.170.
3 _Ibid._, p.171.
4 _The Letters_, p.67.
5 _Ibid._, p.122.
know, even at this distance, that Dorothy's father laid few commands upon her. Her own religious principles and deep conviction of the value of social laws placed shackles enough upon her.

Returning to the detailed examination of the letter describing a typical day in her life, we find that "The heat of the day is spent in reading or working". What did she read? The answer is simple. She read love stories and presumably her Bible. The first we know, the second we guess from the ease with which she quotes Scripture. Her choice of literature was not strange. Everyone, and everyone meant those people with whom she associated, read the long French romances.

I have read your Reine Marguerite, and will return it when you please ....Have you read Cleopatre? I have six tomea on't here that I can lend you if you have not; there are some stories in't you will like I believe. But what an ass am I to think you can be idle enough at London to read romances!\(^1\)

Dorothy perhaps did her lover too much credit. It is only two short years since he not only read romances, but wrote some himself.\(^2\) We owe to E.A. Parry (how much to Mrs.Longe is an unsolvable question) a long description of these romances, or novels.

1 The Letters, pp.52-53.
2 Sir Wm. Temple, Early Essays and Romances of Sir William Temple Bt. p.xx.
Cleopatre and Le Grand Cyrus appear to have been Dorothy's literary companions at this date. She would read these in the original French; and, as she tells us somewhere, had a scorn of translations....

Le Grand Cyrus, the masterpiece of Mademoiselle Madeleine de Scuderi, is contained in no less than ten volumes, each of which in its turn has many books; it is, in fact, more a collection of romances than a single romance. La Cleopatre, a similar work, was originally published in twenty-three volumes of twelve parts, each part containing three or four books. It is but a collection of short stories. Its author... Gauthier de Costes Chevalier Seigneur de la Calprenede...published Cleopatre in 1642.

Like best sellers of to-day, the books were borrowed and sent around from friend to friend.

You do not tell me whether you received the books I sent you, but I hope you did, because you say nothing to the contrary. They are my dear Lady Diana's, and therefore I am much concerned that they should be safe.

As a young woman of sentiment, Dorothy wept over the fate of her heroes:

...Almanzor is as fresh in my memory as if I had visited his tomb but yesterday.... You will believe I had not been used to great afflictions when I made his story such a one to me, as I cried an hour together for him, and was so angry with Alcidiana that for my life I could never love her after it.

It is a little difficult to reconcile Dorothy's uncritical appraisal of most of the French novels with her unhesitating condemnation of Margaret Cavendish's literary efforts. "You need not send me my Lady New-

1 The Letters, p. 49.
2 Ibid., p. 63.
3 See note 2 in Appendix.
4 The Letters, p. 63.
castle's book at all, for I have seen it, and am satisfied that there are soberer people in Bedlam. It is true that Dorothy never rhapsodises, she is never absurd, and above all she is never vulgar, while the Duchess is guilty of all three faults. Nevertheless the Duchess wrote many pages worth the reading and many paragraphs worthy of Dorothy herself. Dorothy's judgments, however, are forthright.

I have no patience neither for these translators of romances. I met with Polexander and L'illustre Bassa both so disguised that I, who am their old acquaintance, hardly knew them; besides that, they were still so much French in words and phrases that 'twas impossible for one that understood not French to make anything of them. If poor Prassimene be in the same dress, I would not see her for the world....Is it not my good Lord of Monmouth, or some such honourable personage, that presents her to the English ladies? I have heard many people wonder how he spends his estate. I believe he undoes himself with printing his translations. Nobody else will undergo the charge, because they never hope to sell enough of them to pay themselves withal....

My Lord Broghill, sure, will give us something worth the reading. My Lord Saye, I am told, has writ a romance since his retirement in the Isle of Lundy, and Mr. Waller, they say, is making one of our wars, which, if he does not mingle with a great deal of pleasing fiction, cannot be very diverting, sure, the subject is so sad.

Moore Smith has a note concerning Dorothy's knowledge of French, which is of interest here:

1 The Letters, p.100.
2 Ibid., p.158.
She had gained...by the sojourn at St. Malo, that knowledge of French which was to make the long French romances her favourite reading.\footnote{1}

The standards by which she judges romances are sufficiently interesting to be quoted at length. \textit{Parthenissa} is a romance "composed by the Lord Broghill and dedicated to the Lady Northumberland".\footnote{2}

\textit{Parthenissa} is now my company.... 'Tis handsome language; you would know it to be written by a person of good quality though you were not told it; but, in the whole, I am not very much taken with it. All the stories have too near a resemblance with those of other romances, there is nothing of new or surprising in them; the ladies are all so kind they make no sport, and I meet only with one that took me by doing a handsome thing of the kind. She was in a besieged town, and persuaded all those of her sex to go out with her to the enemy...and die by their swords, that the provision of the town might last the longer for such as were able to do service in defending it. But how angry was I to see him spoil this again by bringing out a letter this woman left behind her for the governor of the town, where she discovers a passion for him, and makes that the reason why she did it. I confess I have no patience for our faiseurs de Romance when they make women court. It will never enter into my head that 'tis possible any woman can love where she is not first loved, and much less that if they should do that, they could have the face to own it. Methinks he that writes \textit{L'ilustre Bassa} says well in his epistle that we are not to imagine his hero to be less taking than those of other romances because the ladies do not fall in love with him whether he will or not. 'Twould be an injury to the ladies to suppose they could do so....Another fault I find too,

\footnote{1}{G.C. Moore Smith, \textit{Letters of Dorothy Osborne}, p.xv.}
\footnote{2}{The \textit{Letters}, p.206.}
in the style - 'tis affected. **Ambitioned** is a great word with him, and **ignore**; my **concern**, or of **great concern**, is, it seems, **properer** than **concernment**; and though he makes his people say fine handsome things to one another, yet they are not easy and **naive** like the French, and there is a little harshness in most of the discourses that one would take to be the fault of a translator rather than of an author.¹

That is a most revealing paragraph, and tells much more than Dorothy's ideas of a "good" romance. But enough has been said about her "reading". Her "working" now comes in question.

Virginia Woolf calls her "indolent".² The charge may have been just. It is obvious that much entertaining was done, even in the country, which Dorothy calls "dull". An early letter gives a glimpse of this entertainment. Despite the Puritan influence people still played cards, and to this entertainment Dorothy turned when she is disappointed over the arrival of a letter:

> The loss put me hugely out of order, and you would have both pitied and laughed at me if you could have seen how woodenly I entertained the widow, who came hither the day before, and surprised me very much. Not being able to say anything, I got her to cards, and there with a great deal of patience lost my money to her....³

In the same letter is an interesting note concerning social habits:

¹ The Letters, pp.207-208.
² Virginia Woolf, The Second Common Reader, p.62.
³ The Letters, p.55.
My brother is gone to wait upon the widow homeward.... She has so tired me with being here but two days, that I do not think I shall accept of the offer she made me of living with her in case my father dies before I have disposed of myself.1

Naturally the visits were returned. Dorothy speaks of "having been abroad all this day".2 A delightful vignette is presented when she tells Temple of her meeting with a certain Mr. Luke, bidding him not be alarmed, that her friendship with Luke is very slight.

He lives within four or five miles of me, and one day that I had been to visit a lady that is nearer him than me, as I came back I met a coach with some company in't that I knew, and thought myself obliged to salute. We all lighted and met, and I found more than I looked for by two damsels and their squires. I was afterwards told they were of the Lukes, and possibly this man might be there....3

(It may be remembered that it was Sir Samuel Luke of this family who exchanged cuttings with Dorothy.)

The letters are full of visitors coming and going. "Since I writ this my company is increased by two, my brother Harry and a fair niece."4 This brother figures so prominently in the letters and in Dorothy's life that he requires a section to himself. The "fair niece" drifts into the letters now and again. She is the daughter of Sir Thomas Peyton and Dorothy's older sister Elizabeth, not Anne as mentioned by Parry, and now dead, and is a

1 The Letters, p.57.
2 Ibid., p.67.
3 Ibid., p.73.
4 Ibid., p.85.
kindred spirit of her aunt. To return to the visitors, "I have had ladies with me all this afternoon that are for London to-morrow". Occasionally Dorothy is more explicit, for example:

...I was invited to dine at a rich widow's...We had a huge dinner, though the company was only of her own kindred that are in the house with her and what I brought; but she is broke loose from an old miserable husband that lived so long, she thinks if she does not make haste she shall not have time to spend what he left...We could not eat in quiet for the letters and presents that came in from people that would not have looked upon her when they had met her if she had been left poor.

Another extract, still dealing with visitors, gives an interesting sidelight on Dorothy's views concerning the behaviour of husbands:

I made a visit t'other day to welcome a lady into this country whom her husband has newly brought down, and because I knew him, though not her, and she was a stranger here, 'twas a civility I owed them. But you cannot imagine how I was surprised to see a man that I had known so handsome, so capable of being made a pretty gentleman...transformed into the direct shape of a great boy newly come from school. To see him wholly taken up with running on errands for his wife, and teaching her little dog tricks!

So much for life in the country. When she goes to London life becomes so gay that we wonder if we are really reading about Puritan England in 1653. Her father has died and

1 The Letters, p.101.
2 Ibid., pp.123-124.
3 Ibid., p.130.
she must leave Chicksands. She writes to Temple of her plans.

From hence I must go into Northamptonshire to my Lady Ruthin, and so to London, where I shall find my aunt and my brother Peyton [brother-in-law], betwixt whom I think to divide this summer.¹

When she is at last in London, the city is gay. She writes of her lodging:

'Tis over against Salisbury House where I have the honour of seeing my Lady M. Sandis every day unless some race or other carry her out of town.²

The season is shortly over however, and the fashionable world seeks the country again. It is now July.

...I am in Kent, and in a house so strangely crowded with company that I am weary as a dog already, though I have been here but three or four days....³

There is an amusing note here, when Dorothy complains that her lover is more guilty of writing short letters than she.

I have not seen a letter this month that has been above half a sheet. Never trust me if I write more than you that live in a desolated country where you might finish a romance of ten tomes before anybody interrupted you - I that live in a house the most filled of any since the Ark, and where I can assure (you) one has hardly time for the most necessary occasions.⁴

In this same letter Dorothy speaks of private theatricals in which she takes part. Theatres may not yet be open, echoes of Prynne's Histrio-Mastix, that blast against the stage, although two decades away, still linger in

¹ The Letters, pp.231-2.
² Ibid., p.239.
³ Ibid., p.252.
⁴ Ibid., p.255.
Puritan ears, (Prynne, alas, has none) but the play goes on, and Dorothy says, "They will have me act my part in a play, "The Lost Lady" it is, and I am she."\(^1\) After that the following description of life in a country house cannot be too surprising:

The sun was up an hour before I went to bed to-day, and this is not the first time I have done this since I came hither. 'Twill not be for your advantage that I should stay here long; for, in earnest, I shall be good for nothing if I do. We go abroad all day and play all night, and say our prayers when we have time.\(^2\)

Dorothy never forgets the civilities. At the end of this letter she says she is sending a new song, "not... to you, but to your sister."\(^3\) The new song, what was it? And did little Martha Temple make a new "tune" for it, as Dorothy suggested? Since she was only sixteen at the time this would appear unlikely.

There is further discourse on life in "my brother Peyton's" house. The niece is that "fair niece" already mentioned.

Of all the company this place is stored with, there is but two persons whose conversation is at all easy with me; one is my eldest niece, who, sure, was sent into the world to show 'tis possible for a woman to be silent; the other is a gentleman whose mistress died just when

\(^1\) The Letters, p.255.
\(^2\) Ibid., p.259.
\(^3\) Ibid., p.260.
they should have married....Methinks we three...do become this house the worst that can be....What can you imagine we did this last week, when to our constant company there was added a colonel and his lady, a son of his and two daughters, a maid of honour to the Queen of Bohemia, and another colonel or major, I know not which, besides all the train they brought with them; the men the greatest drinkers that ever I saw....

Further sidelights on the social life are provided in the next extract:

Some company that was here last night kept us up till three a clock [sic], and then we lay three in a bed, which was all one to me as if we had not gone to bed at all. Since dinner they are all gone, and our company with them part of the way....

There are many allusions throughout the letters to travelling by coach, one of the more amusing being that concerning the danger of coaches overturning. Dorothy speaks of her aunt:

...a very good woman, but the most troublesome in a coach that ever was. We dare not let our tongues lie more on one side of our mouths than t'other for fear of overturning it.

The commonest method of travelling was still that of Chaucer's pilgrims. When the company went to wait on the guests "homeward" they rode horseback. Dorothy also used this method of travelling, since she writes regarding

1 The Letters, pp.262-263.
2 Ibid., pp.264-265.
3 Ibid., p.256.
a certain saddler;

...I besoke a saddle of him once, yet I was so often with him about it - having much ado to make him understand how I would have it, it being of a fashion he had never seen, though since it be common....

A detailed examination of one letter has led us to a discussion of a score, and we have not yet come to any of the many little commissions entrusted by Dorothy to Temple. It would appear that there was nothing indecorous in the giving and receiving of presents, and Dorothy makes her requests freely. The first is for seals, which have lately come into fashion. Her dear friend, Lady Diana Rich, daughter of my Lord of Holland, she who went to live with the gentlewoman for the curing of her sore eyes, has brought news of this fashion to the country, and even has some of the seals to show, so that she set Dorothy a-longing for some too. "If such things come your way, pray remember me." He does remember, and sends seals, but not before Dorothy tells him in another letter that she has sent to Italy for some herself. She has heard of a lady who "wears twenty strung upon a ribbon, like the nuts boys play withal". Temple retrieves himself by sending so many that she is able to help her neighbours. Her next request is a fragrant one:

1 The Letters, p.144.
2 Ibid., p.39.
3 Ibid., p.44.
When you go into the Exchange, pray call at the great shop above, "The Flower Pott." I spoke to Heama, the man of the shop, when I was in town, for a quart of orange-flower water....Pray put him in mind of it, and let him show it to you before he sends it me...you see I make no scruple of giving you little idle commissions, 'tis a freedom you allow me, and that I should be glad you would taked.

Her next request is a little more difficult of fulfilling:

When your father goes into Ireland, lay your commands upon some of his servants to get you an Irish greyhound. I have one that was the General's; but 'tis a bitch, and those are always much less than the dogs....Henry Cromwell undertook to write to his brother Fleetwood for another for me; but I have lost my hopes there. Whomsoever it is that you employ, he will need no other instructions but to get the biggest he can meet with; 'tis all the beauty of those dogs, or of any indeed, I think. A masty (mastiff) is handsomer to me than the most exact little dog that ever lady played withal.

She is shocked when she finds that Temple has put the commission in his father's hands:

I give you many thanks for your care of my Irish dog, but I am extremely out of countenance your father should be troubled with it....do me the right as to let him know I am not so possessed with is as to consent he should be employed in such a commission.

She was relieved when she found that she had not entirely "lost" her "hopes" with Henry Cromwell, in that she was

1 The Letters, p. 70.
2 Ibid., p. 88.
3 Ibid., p. 129.
soon able to write:

...I must tell you what a present I had made me to-day. Two of the finest young Irish greyhounds that ere I saw; a gentleman that serves the General sent them me. They are newly come over, and sent for by Henry Cromwell, he tells me, but not how he got them for me. However, I am glad to have them, and much the more because it dispenses with a very unfit employment that your father, out of his kindness to you and his civility to me, was content to take upon him.¹

No lover worthy of the name could let that pass, and soon we have cause to blush for Dorothy's inconstancy:

Your dog is come too, and I have received him with all kindness that is due to anything you send; have defended him from the envy and malice of a troop of greyhounds that used to be in favour with me; and he is so sensible of my care over him, that he is pleased with nobody else, and follows me as if we had been of long acquaintance.²

He must have been a big dog, as she cared for no others. Was he then a house pet? In Van Dyck's portrait of the children of Charles I, the artist shows the children grouped around an enormous mastiff. From what we know of Temple, Dorothy's dog may have resembled that hugh animal. For outdoors there were black and white spotted dogs, ancestors of the breed we still know as carriage dogs, though the carriages have disappeared. Dorothy writes about sending a gift to Martha Temple. "She shall have two "spots" (carriage dogs) if she please (for I had just such another given me after you were gone)."³

1 The Letters, p.159.
2 Ibid., p.223.
3 Ibid., p.268.
"spots" Moore Smith has note on this which says "two spotts. The O.E.D. gives "Spot" as a variety of pigeon".\(^1\) It would appear to the writer, however, that Parry's idea of "spots" being carriage dogs is much more likely to be true.)

Remembering Dorothy's words, "I that am not so nimble", and thinking also of the clothes of the period, it is impossible to connect Dorothy with any sport save that of the battledore she plays with Jane when she is taking infusion of steel for her spleen. We find her, however, remonstrating with Temple for overheating himself at tennis. Investigating this sport further, one finds an interesting note in Strutt's *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*:

> James I, if not himself a tennis player speaks of the pastime with commendation, and recommends it to his son as a species of exercise becoming a prince. Charles II frequently diverted himself with playing at tennis, and had particular kind of dresses made for that purpose.\(^2\)

The aristocratic society which made up Dorothy's world was much concerned with religion, and Dorothy listened to as many sermons as did her friends. She was critical of the preaching she heard, though she does say that she believes it "better to hear an ill sermon than none".\(^3\) The following is an example of her discussion.

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3 *The Letters*, p. 72.
of an "ill sermon".

Would you believe that I had the grace to go to hear a sermon upon a week day? In earnest, 'tis true; and Mr. Marshall was the man that preached....He is so famed that I expected rare things of him...and what do you think he told us? Why, that if there were no kings, no queens, no lords, no ladies, nor gentlemen, nor gentlewomen, in the world,'twould be no loss at all to God Almighty....I cannot believe his sermons will do much towards the bringing anybody to heaven more than by exercising their patience. Yet, I'll say that for him, he stood stoutly for tithes, though, in my opinion, few deserved them less than he; and it may be he would be better without them.

The kindest thing to be said at this point is that Dorothy was a child of her age. Generally the virtues she admires are Puritan virtues. Speaking of Lady Anne Wentworth, daughter of the Earl of Strafford, she says:

In my judgment she is, without dispute, the finest lady I know (one always excepted); not that she is at all handsome, but infinitely virtuous and discreet, of a sober and very different humour from most of the young people of these times, but has as much wit and is as good company as anybody that ever I saw.

It is not possible, however, to forget that Dorothy's father was a Royalist, and that she grew up in that tradition.

'Tis strange to see the folly that possesses the young people of this age, and the liberties they take to themselves. I have the charity to

1 The Letters, p.143.
2 Ibid., p.60.
believe they appear very much worse than they are, and that the want of a Court to govern themselves by is in great part the cause of their ruin; though that was no perfect school of virtue, yet Vice there wore her mask, and appeared so unlike herself that she gave no scandal.\textsuperscript{1}

Among the follies of the age, perhaps of any age, was an interest in astrology, but Dorothy's common sense was proof against this manner of dealing with the stars.

You little think I have been with Lilly; in earnest, I was....not... for any...occasion of my own; but with a cousin of mine that had long designed to make herself sport with him, and did not miss of her aim. I confess I always thought him an imposter, but I could never have imagined him so simple a one as we found him. In my life I never heard so ridiculous a discourse as he made us, and no old woman that passes for a witch could have been more to seek what to say to reasonable people than he was. He asked us more questions than we did him, and caught everything we said without discerning that we abused him and said things purposely to confound him; which we did so perfectly that we made him contradict himself the strangest that ever you heard.\textsuperscript{2}

Only the statement about the old woman who passes for a witch reminds us that Dorothy's letter was not written last week. In the letters we find continual proof that this was an age of transition. As Bush said: "in 1600 the educated Englishman's mind and world were more than half medieval; by 1600 they were more than half modern."\textsuperscript{3}

\begin{enumerate}
\item The Letters, p.207.
\item Ibid., pp.259-260.
\item Douglas Bush, \textit{op.cit.}, p.1.
\end{enumerate}
Throughout the previous pages of this essay the letters have been partially dissected, and many unimportant matters have been uncovered, but no mention has been made of the essential quality of the letters, the very heart of them, as it were. This quality lies in the fact that these were love letters. Apropos of love in the seventeenth century, David Cecil writes:

> It is hardly to be supposed that the Carolines felt the passion of love more intensely than we do; but certainly they thought about it much more. Four-fifths of their poetry is love-poetry; and their prose too is largely devoted to celebrating its glories, analysing its nature and cataloguing its virtues.¹

In the same essay he says: "No one ever wrote better love-letters than stately Dorothy".² The next chapter of this paper will talk of the love-affair which gave rise to such love-letters.

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¹ David Cecil, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
² Ibid., p. 25.
The Romance of the Letters.

"Can there be a more romance story than ours would make if the conclusion should prove happy?" It is surprising that no historical novelist has yet answered Dorothy's question and written the story of that romance. Lord David Cecil, an indefatigable if inexact biographer, has spent a hundred pages in Two Quiet Lives, his latest book, on one episode in the courtship of Dorothy and Temple. But several hundred pages could be written on the subject. All the ingredients for a true romance, in Dorothy's own sense of the word, are contained in her letters. But perhaps more delightfully than for a love story, the letters might be used by a Maxwell Anderson or John Drinkwater to make a magnificent stage play. They abound in dramatic situations, and the list of characters who drift, or storm, through the pages promises drama and pathos enough. Many and varied are the misfortunes suffered by the lovers, "all which an inconsiderate passion has occasioned".

What made it inconsiderate? Only a lack of

1. The Letters, p.196.
sufficient fortune. Neither Dorothy nor Temple had
enough wealth to enable them to marry each other, and
both families were against the wooing. Nevertheless it
continued

...against the consent of most of her
friends & dissatisfaction of some of
his, it haveing occasion'd his refusall
of a very great fortune when his Famely
was most in want of it, as she had done
of many considerable offers of great
Estates & Families.¹

Lack of fortune was not the sole obstacle. There was
the bitter jealousy of Dorothy's strange brother, for
whose actions motives could doubtless be found, which
perhaps not even the brother himself suspected. He
intercepted the letters of the lovers and subjected
Dorothy to a long persecution, believing firmly the
statement made by a rejected suitor - and some
biographers would tell us, with truth, - that Temple
was "the proudest imperious insulting ill-natured man
that ever was".² There was Dorothy's duty - and no one
ever had a stronger sense of duty than Dorothy Osborne -
to her ailing father, which frequently kept the lovers
from meeting. Besides all this, no less a person than
Henry Cromwell, son of the Protector, was a rival for
Dorothy's hand. Through all the vicissitudes she

¹ Lady Giffard, op. cit., p.7.
² The Letters, p.231.
remained a devoted, passionate mistress. We know that her cry rings true when she weeps, "I am the most unfortunate woman breathing, but I never was false".1

It is regrettable that only one letter from Temple to Dorothy has survived. It shows us a vastly different Temple from the man described by Macaulay in his Critical Essays.

...Temple is not a man to our taste. A temper not naturally good, but under strict command; a constant regard to decorum; a rare caution in playing that mixed game of skill and hazard, human life; a disposition to be content with small and certain winnings rather than to go on doubling the stake; these seem to us to be the most remarkable features of his character. This sort of moderation...may be perfectly compatible with laxity of principle, with coldness of heart, and with the most intense selfishness.2

He fares little better at the hands of modern writers. In the review of David Cecil's book, Stauffer says, "He looks to us very much like a prig and a stuffed shirt. But Cecil sees him through Dorothy's eyes".3 Was the clear-sighted, level headed Dorothy deceived? From her replies we can guess at what he said, and in the one letter extant we may read:

This is no artificial humility. I am past all that with you. I know well enough that I am as other people are, but at that rate methinks the world

1 The Letters, p.187.
2 Macaulay, op.cit., p.2.
3 Stauffer, op.cit., p.4.
goes, I can see nothing in it to put a value on besides you....

Nowhere does she reply to a Temple who has caution and decorum, who pleads delays. It is Dorothy who writes:

...I have seriously considered all our misfortunes, and can see no end of them but by submitting to that which we cannot avoid, and by yielding to it break the force of a blow which if resisted brings a certain ruin.  

At the beginning of the courtship the obstacles were raised by Sir John Temple. Lady Giffard, in continuing her account of the affair, states that after their first meeting on the Isle of Wight, where Dorothy proved herself as intelligent as courageous,

His Father, who was unsatisfied at the long stay he made at St. Malo, & more at the account that was sent of the occasion of it, sent him orders to goe immediately to Paris, wch how unwelcome soever, were no sooner received, then obeyed.

It is obvious that the separation did not have the effect desired by Sir John. G.C. Moore Smith tells us that Sir William

...remained in France till the end of 1650....though the times had their lesson for the observant mind of the future statesman, his private anxieties, he tells us, affected him more nearly. His heart was given to Dorothy Osborne - for the 'Madame' to whom the stories are addressed can only be she - and he was

1 The Letters, p.233.
2 Ibid., p.178.
3 Lady Giffard, op.cit., p.6.
fain by all diversions to lessen the occasions of thinking on her in absence. He found relief in reading French stories of unhappy lovers: 'whilst I pitied others I sometimes forgott how I deserved it myself'. From the reading of these love stories came the impulse to tell them over again in a new form and language, and in expressing the passions of the different characters to find a vent for his own. And so we have in Temple's handwriting the group of stories before us - of which the outlines were borrowed from earlier tales, but the passions depicted were drawn solely from Temple's remembrances of the lady of his love.1

The tale is taken up again by Lady Giffard, when she writes:

After two years pass'd in theese countrys he came home, liv'd two or three years about the Towne in the usual entertainment of young & Idle men, but never without passing a great deal of it alone....Hee made many visitts in this time to his friends in the Country, perticularly to Sr Rich Franklyn who lived at More Parke, a place his inclination to the Country had made him very fond off, & more sr Richards haveing married a near Relation of Mrs Osbornes; with them he spent much of his time.2

It was during these two or three years about the town that the letters were written.

They open pleasantly with a letter dated December "ye 24th," to which Parry (or Mrs. Longe) has affixed the additional date 1652. From this letter we learn that if the pair are not formally betrothed, at least they have an understanding between them which amounts

1 Sir William Temple, Early Essays and Romances, p.xvii.
2 Lady Giffard, op.cit., p.6.
to an engagement. There is never the slightest doubt as to Dorothy's modesty and decorum. She could never have written thus freely to any other than her confessed "friend".

To find that you have overcome your long journey, and that you are well and in a place where it is possible for me to see you, is such a satisfaction as I, who have not been used to many, may be allowed to doubt of. Yet I will hope my eyes do not deceive me, and that I have not forgot to read; but if you please to confirm it to me by another, you know how to direct it, for I am where I was, still the same, and always,

Your humble servant,
D. Osborne.

A strange ending for a love letter? Here is David Cecil on the subject:

The love letters of more self-conscious ages make depressing reading. Their shame-faced slangy endearments sound both flat and embarrassing. Passion needs the restraint of a formalised mode of utterance, to give it shape and crystallise its intensity. No one ever wrote better love-letters than stately Dorothy. There are few endearments in them...

The letters begin "Sir:" and end "Adieu, I am, Yours", or "'Tis enough to tell you I am ever Yours." The content of the letters, however, is our concern at the moment.

Mention has already been made of the melancholy of the age.

1 The Letters, p.23.
2 David Cecil, op. cit., p. 25.
It is not unnatural that melancholy has been taken as a conspicuous, even a dominant characteristic of late Elizabethan and Jacobean literature.... causes...range from introspection to indigestion, from Puritanism to the plague.¹

In the first letter Dorothy speaks as if any degree of happiness were not her lot. In the next letter we learn some of her reasons for this gloomy outlook. She speaks first of unimportant matters, including a suitor who had plagued her, and then she says: "...my mother died, and I was left at liberty to mourn her loss awhile."² We know that her father has been in grievous ill-health since he left St. Malo, and that Dorothy has had to comfort him in their common affliction. But we have another clue to the melancholy when, in the same letter, she tells Temple of the spleen "that I had ever been subject to". Fortunately the spleen is a disease which comes and goes, and when Dorothy is well she is, if not merry, at least sprightly. In these early letters she is not always unhappy. Her lover is in England, it is possible to see him sometimes, and though she finds the waiting tedious, and the outcome uncertain, she makes little jokes about their ill luck.

...I do not know that ever I desired anything earnestly in my life, but 'twas denied me, and I am many times

1 Douglas Bush, *op.cit.*, p.3.
afraid to wish a thing merely lest my Fortune should take that occasion to use me ill. She cannot see, and therefore I may venture to write that I intend to be at London if it be possible on Friday or Saturday come sennight. Be sure you do not read it aloud, lest she hear it, and prevent me, or drive you away before I come.1

Her forebodings came to naught, since Parry tells us that in the MS. diary of her brother Henry, there occurs the following entry, under the date February 12, 1653: "My sister came to London with my Lady Diana Rich and lay at my Aunt Gargraves by Charing Cross, and I lay at Robin's.2 Robin was a younger Osborne brother, who died the following year. The next letter tells of Dorothy's return from London and of her weariness at the journey. It is comforting to know that the lovers did at least have these small happinesses in London, since Temple's father is not yet resigned to the marriage. He has another alliance in view, of which Temple has told Dorothy, and she writes: "...I admire your father's patience, that lets you rest with so much indifference when there is such a fortune offered..."3 But gossip of the visits reaches Sir John.

I wonder how your father came to know I was in town....Pray, for my sake, be a very obedient son; all your faults will be laid to my charge else, and alas! I have too many of my own.4

1 The Letters, p.43.
2 Ibid., p.45.
3 Ibid., p.52.
4 Ibid., p.52.
The opposition of Sir John Temple and the jealousy of Henry Osborne now begin to take much of the letters.

Dorothy tells Temple of her brother's admonitions.

You are spoken of with the reverence due to a person that I seem to like, and for as much as they know of you, you do deserve a very good esteem; but your fortune and mine can never agree, and, in plain terms, we forfeit our discretions and run wilfully upon our own ruins if there be such a thought. To all this I make no reply, but that if they will needs have it that I am not without kindness for you, they must conclude withal that 'tis no part of my intention to ruin you, and so the conference breaks up for that time.  

She adds, "All this is (from) my friend that is not yours". She remains steadfast, as is obvious from the next paragraph:

...my own judgment would preserve me from doing any (thing) that might be prejudicial to you or unjustifiable to the world; but if these may be secured, nothing can alter the resolut­ion I have taken of settling my whole stock of happiness upon the affection of a person that is dear to me, whose kindness I shall infinitely prefer before any other consideration whatsoever, and I shall not blush to tell you that you have made the whole world besides so indifferent to me that, if I cannot be yours, they may dispose me how they please.

The next letter is interesting in the delicacy of its turn of phrase.

1 The Letters, p.64.
2 Ibid., pp.64-65.
You have reason to think your father kind, and I have reason to think him very civil; all his scruples are very just ones, but such as times and a little good fortune...might satisfy.1

There is pathos in the next letter. She had waited all day for a letter from her lover, and then went out, as was her habit to meet the carrier. In this case it was her brother's groom. He had a letter, but had not bothered to bring it until he had swept up the stable.

At last I had it, and, in earnest, I know not whether an entire diamond of the bigness on't would have pleased me half so well; if it would, it must be only out of this consideration, that such a jewel would make me rich enough to dispute you with Mrs.Cl., and perhaps make your father like me as well.2

Parry has a note on "Mrs.Cl.".

Temple's father was at this time trying to arrange a match for him with a certain "Mrs.Cl." Courtenay thought the letters were "Ch.," and supposed the lady to be an heiress named Mrs Chambers, who ultimately married John Temple, William's elder brother.3

Gollancz also has a note:

Mrs.Ch(embers); according to Courtenay probably Mistress Chambera, ultimately the wife of Sir William's brother, Henry (not John, as Parry states), who married a daughter of Dr John Hammond.4

Disregarding the identity of Mrs.Cl. what is interesting in the letter is Dorothy's quiet acceptance of Sir

1 The Letters, p.67.
2 Ibid., p.69.
3 Ibid., p.55.
John's having the right to demand a fortune with his son's wife, and the establishing moreover of Dorothy's belief that in relation to their love she and Temple were on equal terms. There was nothing strange, in her mind, in stating that she and Mrs. Cl. were rivals. Modern frankness, in such relationships, lags behind.

The pathos lies in the phrase "and perhaps make your father like me as well". There is nothing cynical in the statement. Dorothy is not humble. She is quite sure she could make Temple happy, and persuaded that she could please his father, only excepting the accident of not having a sufficient fortune. As for that accident, in her next letter she says: "I agree with you, too, that I do not see any great likelihood of the change of our fortunes, and we have much more to wish than to hope for...."1 She ends the letter with,

I was born to be very happy or very miserable, I know not which, but I am certain that as long as I am anything I shall be your most faithful friend and servant.2

It is soon obvious that for a time at least, she is to be very miserable. She cannot get into town to see her lover, and she is convinced that he should not come to see her. But Temple does not accept these restrictions calmly. It may be remembered that Macaulay quarrelled with a "sort

1 The Letters, p.72.
2 Ibid., p.75.
of moderation" which he found in Temple's character, "a constant regard for decorum; a rare caution". It requires but little imagination to conjure up a vastly different sort of person to whom the following letter was written, a letter surely not written to a "cautious" man.

Sir, - 'Tis most true that I could not excuse it to myself if I should not write to you, and that I owe it to my own satisfaction as well as to yours, or rather 'tis a pleasure to me because 'tis acceptable to you. But I cannot think it deserves that you should quit all other entertainment and leave yourself nothing to be happy in but that which is an effect of the absence you complain of, and that which, if we were but a little more happy, we should quickly despise. At the same time that my letters tell you I am well, and still your friend, they tell you too that I am where you cannot see me, and where I vainly wish you....

It appears certain that the greatest obstacle in the way of a marriage is the opposition of Temple's father. True, the Osbornes do not desire the match, but Dorothy's father is a very sick man, too sick to be violent in anything, and obviously devoted to his daughter, who for her part shows him the tenderest care. Had Temple's father been willing it is probable that Dorothy could have brought her father to agree. In the following letter she makes it very plain that she would not permit

1 The Letters, p.96.
the opposition of her brother to affect her course.
She has quarrelled with him, and he has accused her of
being interested only in Temple. This is true, but
convention forbids that she admit this to anyone save
Temple.

'Twas one reason more than I told you
why I resolv'd not to go to Epsom this
summer, because I knew he would imagine
it an agreement between us, and that
something besides my spleen carried me
thither; but whether you see me or not
you may be satisfied I am safe enough,
and you are in no danger to lose your
prisoner, since so great a violence as
this has not broke her chains.1

This does not satisfy Temple. Dorothy may accept the
dictates of their relatives, he is less resigned. She
now replies to him: "Alas! how can you talk of defying
fortune; nobody lives without it, and therefore why
should you imagine you could?"2 Matters do not improve,
but a faint ray of hope appears in a letter written
in August, almost five months after the first mention
of the mysterious Mrs.Cl.

Can your father have so perfectly
forgiven already the injury I did
him (since you will not allow it to
be any to you), in hindering you of
Mrs.Cl., as to remember me with
kindness? 'Tis most certain that I
am obliged to him, and, in earnest,
if I could hope it might ever be in
my power to serve him I would promise
something for myself. 3

1 The Letters, p.103.
2 Ibid., p.111.
3 Ibid., pp.136-137.
It was no more than a ray, however, and it quickly disappeared, to be followed by a period of two or three months when the fortunes of Dorothy and Temple are at their lowest ebb. Dorothy's younger brother, Robin, has died, her father is dying, her companion Jane is sick, and she is in Bedford, kept prisoner by her duty to her father, and goaded all the while by her jealous brother. There is little hope of seeing Temple, and no prospect of their lot being changed. Now it is that Dorothy writes that they might well give up hope and submit quietly to the blows of fortune. Let us be friends only, she begs.

But if, as we have not differed in anything else, we could agree in this too, and resolve upon a friendship that will be much the perfecter for having nothing of passion in it, how happy might we be without so much as a fear of the change that any accident could bring. 1

A week later she is even more despondent over their "inconsiderate passion".

...it has been the ruin of us both...
Can I remember how ignorantly and innocently I suffered it to steal upon me by degrees....Can I discern that it has made the trouble of your life and cast a cloud upon mine, that will help to cover me in my grave.... Ah! if you love yourself or me, you must confess that I have reason to condemn this senseless passion....2

1 The Letters, p.180.
2 Ibid., pp.181-182.
Her despondency is serious. Like many a lover before her, she wishes she could die, "but grief alone will not kill".  

I have no ends nor no designs, nor will my heart ever be capable of any; but like a country wasted by a civil war... 'tis ruined and desolated by the long strife within it to that degree as 'twill be useful to none....

She does not even desire to see her lover.

You would see me, you say? You may do so if you please, though I know not to what end. You deceive yourself if you think it would prevail upon me to alter my intentions....

The long period of dissembling before other people is over. She can pretend no more.

...besides, I can make no contrivances; it must be here, and I must endure the noise it will make, and undergo the censures of a people that choose ever to give the worst interpretation that anything will bear.

Alas, our knowledge of the affair is incomplete. Dorothy now makes a statement which surprises us.

...never spare me; consider yourself only, and not me at all - 'tis no more than I deserve for not accepting what you offered me whilst 'twas in your power to make it good, as you say it then was. You were prepared, it seems, but I was surprised, I confess it.

1 The Letters, p.183.
2 Ibid., p.183.
3 Ibid., p.183.
5 Ibid., p.184.
There is nothing in *The Letters* to give any clue to this statement. Dorothy says no more on the subject, but goes on to tell Temple that if he insists upon seeing her it must be the last of such interviews. "What can excuse me if I should entertain any person that is known to pretend to me, when I can have no hope of ever marrying him?"¹ Here is "that curious blend of naivete and ceremoniousness, which characterised her period".² No one had a nicer sense of her own dignity than Dorothy. Our beliefs are now confirmed that the real obstacle to the marriage is the opposition of Sir John Temple. If Temple marries without his father's permission he must lose any share of his father's fortune, and without fortune Dorothy refuses to marry. This, it must be repeated, is no mercenary trait, but a belief bred in her that she would do ill by Temple should she accede to his desires to try to live without the wealth necessary to their station in life. She tells him once again that the situation is hopeless.

...what hope can I have...when the fortune that can only make it possible to me depends upon...your father's life or his success, his disposal of himself and then of his fortune....³

But Temple pleads, and she replies: "Sir, - I can say little more than I did".⁴ In the short letter she says the bitterest thing she has yet uttered.

¹ *The Letters*, p.184.
...let me tell you, that if I could help it, I would not love you, and that as long as I live I shall strive against it as against that which has been my ruin.  

But she reckoned without the temper of her lover. He continues to write, he pleads, he importunes. If we but knew what he says! Whatever it is, it calls forth a frightened letter from Dorothy, begging him to accede to one last request, "'tis to preserve yourself from the violence of your passion." Has he threatened suicide, this reckless, moody lover? Dorothy begs that he behave in a rational manner, though still she refuses to allow him to hope for a happy conclusion to their love.  

...I would not give you hopes of that I cannot do. If I loved you less I would allow you to be the same person to me, and I would be the same to you as heretofore. But to deal freely with you, that were to betray myself, and I find that my passion would quickly be my master again if I gave it any liberty.  

Alas, poor Dorothy! Passion does not lie speechless yet. She might say with Drayton:  

Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,  
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.  

since she says:  

I am not secure that it would not make me do the most extravagant things in the world, and I shall be forced to keep a  

1 The Letters, p. 186.  
2 Ibid., p. 187.  
3 Ibid., p. 189.  
continual war alive with it as long as there are any remainders of it left; - I think I might as well have said as long as I lived. Why should you give yourself over so unreasonably to it? Good God! no woman breathing can deserve half the trouble you give yourself. If I were yours from this minute I could not recompense what you have suffered from the violence of your passion though I were all that you can imagine me, when, God knows, I am an inconsiderable person....1

But Temple has won. What eloquence must have flowed from his pen to have achieved such a victory? He has convinced her that they must not give each other up. He must have told her that he will never marry any other woman, and she knows that in this, as in all their dealings, he speaks truth, so now she gives up the struggle to put an end to their friendship.

...if I could have persuaded you to have quitted a passion that injures you, I had done an act of real friendship, and you might have lived to thank me for it; but since it cannot be, I will attempt it no more....I never had the least hope of wearing out my passion, nor, to say truth, much desire....Here, then, I declare that you still have the same power in my heart that I gave you at our last parting; that I will never marry any other; and that if our fortunes allow us to marry, you shall dispose me as you please; but this, to deal freely with you, I do not hope for. No; 'tis too great a happiness...2

She writes furthermore:

...I'll never give you any more alarms, by going about to persuade you against that you have for me....the wealth of

1 The Letters, p.189.
2 Ibid., pp.190-191.
the whole world, by the Grace of God, shall not tempt me to break my word with you, nor the importunity of all the friends I have.

There are no more bitterly unhappy letters. There is now an exchange of rings, and Temple sends a lock of his hair which was begged for, and there are sad farewells, somewhat protracted, it is true, when he goes to join his father in Ireland.

Oh, my heart! what a sigh was there! I will not tell you how many this journey causes; nor the fears and apprehensions I have for you.

Apprehensions, yes, but anticipation also.

...I hope this journey will be of advantage to us; when your father pressed your coming over, he told you you needed not doubt either his power or his will. Have I done anything since that deserves he should alter his intentions towards us? Or has any accident lessened his power? If neither, we may hope to be happy, and the sooner for this journey.

Fitting employment is to be secured for Temple when he goes to Ireland, but still the journey is delayed, and there are more letters, but at long last he is gone, and Dorothy writes: "My heart has failed me twenty times since you went, and, had you been within my call, I had brought you back as often..." It is difficult to ensure the safe passage of letters now that he has crossed the sea, but he has bid her write every week, which she does.

1 The Letters, p.192.
2 Ibid., p.205.
3 Ibid., p.213.
4 Ibid., p.223.
Her letters are full of loving-kindness and amusing gossip. She evidently does not think favourably of Ireland:

I shall be sending you all I hear; which, though it cannot be much, living as I do, yet it may be more than ventures into Ireland. I would have you diverted whilst you are there...but not enough to tempt you to stay one minute longer than your father and your business obliges you. Alas! I have already repented all my share in your journey, and begin to find I am not half so valiant as I sometimes take myself to be.¹

Soon she has more need than ever to be valiant. Her kind father has died at last, and with him the only friend able to protect her from scheming aunts, complaisant brother, and the jealous Henry. The first two were no great danger as long as Sir Peter lived, but now that he is gone, and "I am left by his death in the condition...the most insupportable to my nature, to depend upon kindred that are not friends...."²

There is only one more letter written from Chicksands, and then she leaves her old home forever, and goes to stay with relatives until Temple returns from Ireland. The return is long delayed. Although Temple is twenty-six, an age when young men of the time had long since married, and although his father had held out hopes, still Sir John delays giving his consent. The only letter written

¹ The Letters, p.226.
² Ibid., p.227.
by Temple in the collection is that sent at this time from Ireland.

...I must ever be subject to other people's occasions, and so never, I think, master of my own. This is too true, both in respect of this fellow's post that is bawling at me for my letter, and of my father's delays. They kill me; but patience—would anybody but I be here! Yet you may command me over at one minute's warning. Had I not heard from you by this last, in earnest I had resolved to have gone with this, and given my father the slip for all his caution. He tells me still of a little time; but alas! who knows not what mischances and how great changes have often happened in a little time?¹

It goes hard with Sir John to give his consent to this match, in his opinion so ill-advised and foolhardy. But he comes round little by little. We find Dorothy writing from London:

> Whenevery you come you need not doubt your welcome....But I would not have you attempt it till your father is ready for the journey too. No, really he deserves that all your occasions should wait on his....²

There is another delay when Sir John falls ill, but he grows well again, and still Temple does not come. Hope is the only medicine for the miserable, but Dorothy begins to find hope is deferred too long.

> ...there was never any one thing so much desired and apprehended at the same time as your return is by me; it will certainly, I think, conclude me a very happy or a most

¹ *The Letters*, p.235.
unfortunate person. Sometimes, methinks, I would fain know my doom whatever it be....

And so the long summer passes. Temple went to Ireland in March and it is September before Dorothy learns that he is coming back. But he brings with him such good news that the delays are almost forgotten. His father is ready to treat with Dorothy’s relatives on the subject of their marriage, and has made certain proposals. Will Dorothy’s family meet them?

Alas, the difficulties are not yet over. Sir John will not entertain the thought of negotiating with Henry Osborne, the brother who all along has been as opposed to the match as Sir John himself. But Dorothy has too great a sense of her family’s honour to permit this slight to her brother.

If ever this comes to a treaty, I shall declare that in my own choice I prefer you much before any other person in the world, and all that this inclination in me (in the judgments of any persons of honour and discretion) will bear, I shall desire may be laid upon it to the uttermost of what they can allow. And if your father please to make up the rest, I know nothing that is like to hinder me from being yours. But if your father, out of humour, shall refuse to treat with such friends as I have, let them be what they will, it must end there; for though I was content, for your sake, to lose them, and all the respect they had for me, yet, now I have done that, I’ll never let them see that I have so little interest in you and

1 The Letters, p.255.
yours as not to prevail that my brother may be admitted to treat for me. Sure, when a thing of course, and so much reason as that (unless I did declare to all the world he were my enemy), it must be expected whenever I dispose of myself he should be made no stranger to it. When that shall be refused me, I may be justly reproached that I deceived myself when I expected to be at all valued in a family that I am a stranger to, or that I should be considered with any respect because I had a kindness for you, that made me not value my own interests.  

It is impossible to admire the part Sir John Temple played in all this, and doubtless his son is also deserving of censure, but Dorothy has none for him. What could be more disarming than the following:

If your father would but in some measure satisfy my friends that I might but do it in any justifiable manner, you should dispose me as you pleased, carry me whither you would, all places of the world would be alike to me where you were, and I should not despair of carrying myself so towards him as might deserve a better opinion from him.  

But we do not want too much of this. It is time that Dorothy showed more of that spirit we have grown to expect from her. In the next letter it is possible to read that matters have been settled, and it is established that Dorothy has no unseasonable humility.

I do not pretend to any share in your father's kindness, as having nothing in me to merit it; but as much a stranger as I am to him, I should have taken it very ill if I had desired it of him, and he had refused it me. I do not believe my brother has said anything to his prejudice, unless it were in his persuasions.

1 The Letters, pp.265-266.
2 Ibid., pp.266-267.
to me, and there it did not injure him at all. If he takes it ill that my brother appears so very averse to the match, I may do so too, that he was the same; and nothing less than my kindness for you could have made me take so patiently as I did his saying to some that knew me at York that he was forced to bring you thither and afterwards send you over to Ireland lest you should have married me. This was not much to my advantage nor hardly civil, I think, to any woman; yet I never as much as took the least notice on't, nor had not now, but for this occasion; yet, sure, it concerns me to be at least as nice as he in point of honour.1

But that once said, all the loving kindness she has for Temple brims over:

I think 'tis best for me to end here lest my anger should make me lose that respect I would always have for your father, and 'twere not amiss, I think, that I diverted it all towards you for being so idle as to run out of your bed to catch such a cold.2

And now we have one last letter written before Dorothy becomes Mrs. Temple, if we except a few little notes written when the lovers were both in London preparing for their marriage. It is an interesting letter, and gives rise to several conjectures. In it, Dorothy plainly arranging a rendezvous:

After a long debate with myself how to satisfy you and remove that rock (as you call it), which in your apprehensions is of so great danger, I am at last resolved to let you see that I value your affections for me at as high a rate as you yourself can set it, and that you cannot have more of

1 The Letters, pp.267-268.
2 Ibid., p.268.
tenderness for me and my interests than I shall ever have for yours. The particulars how I intend to make this good you shall know when I see you....pray come hither and try whether you shall be welcome or not! In sober earnest now I must speak with you; and to that end if your occasions will give you leave as soon as you have received this come down to Canterbury. Send someone when you are there, and you shall have further directions. You must be contented not to stay here above two or three hours. I shall tell you my reason when you come.........................

I will not hinder your coming away so much as the making this letter a little longer might take away from your time in reading it. 'Tis enough to tell you I am ever Yours. 1

Did Dorothy make good her promise, and did she remove the rock of his apprehensions? It would appear so. But from now on Dorothy has little to say. Martha Giffard gives us some information, and there are entries in Henry Osborne's diary which perhaps have a place in this history.

Lady Giffard first:

But the misfortunes of this amour were not yet ended. The week before they were to be married she fell soe desperately ill there was little hopes of her life & nothing the Doctors said but its prooving the small pox could have sav'd her. He was happy when he saw yt secure his kindness haveing greater tyes then (sic.) that of her beauty, though that Loss was too great to leave him wholly insensible. He saw her constantly while she was ill, & married her soon after.

And now Henry Osborne, according to Parry:

1 The Letters, pp.268-269.
2 Lady Giffard, op.cit. p.7.
November 9th, 1654, "My sister being ill of the small-pox, I removed to her lodging in Queen Street, and then my Lady Peyton and her company removed next day into Kent." 1

What can one think, at this date, of the feelings of the two men? Henry Osborne relinquished his claim upon his sister slowly, and with pain to them both. As shown in the chapter dealing with him there were still more misunderstandings when disputes arose over her marriage portion, but it would appear that at some time they must have been reconciled.

To continue with Lady Giffard's story:

...they made a visit to his Father & Family, yet were then in Ireland...he pass'd five years there with great satisfaction...almost wholly in the conversation of his family & friends; where there was always yet perfect agreement, as well as kindness & Confidence which has been so often taken notice of & that I believe few others have been so happy in. to which there was this addition so unusual in other families, that his lady fell into as naturally, as if she had been born there. 2

And there we should leave her. All else, at this writing, is mere conjecture. Did they, when their passions burned out, or were extinguished, according to Sir William's "owne rules, that no body should make love after forty"? 3 remain the perfect friends Dorothy had hoped they would be? She does not tell us.

1 The Letters, p.274.
2 Lady Giffard, op.cit.p.7.
3 Lady Giffard, op.cit.p.29.
One could take Swift's lines, written during Sir William Temple's illness, at their face value,

You that would grief describe, come here and trace
Its watery footsteps in Dorinda's face;
Grief from Dorinda's face does ne'er depart
Farther than its own palace in her heart:
Ah, since our fears are fled, this insolent expel,
At least confine the tyrant to his cell.
And if so black the cloud that Heaven's bright queen
Shrouds her still beams; how should the stars be seen?
Thus when Dorinda wept, joy every face forsook,
And grief flung sables on each menial look....

and we would know then that she loved her "friend"

still. Let this content us.

1 Swift, The Poems, op.cit.p.32.
chapter IV

an aspect of the letters concerning

henry osborne

in his review of two quiet lives by lord david cecil, donald a. stauffer says:

"in the end her undeviating will conquered an invalid father, an arranging aunt, a brother who could not stand unpleasantness, another brother almost abnormally possessive, as well as all the opposing hosts." 1

there is some lack of perspective in that list, if it is intended to convey that the opposition of, say, the arranging aunt, was on a par with the opposition of the abnormally possessive brother. but the reviewer is not alone in his misapprehension. none of dorothy's biographers to date appear to have realized the magnitude of henry osborne's obsession for his sister. it is true that this obsession was not a bar to the marriage, but only because dorothy would not permit that it should affect her to that extent. as has been shown in chapter iv the real opposition to the marriage came from sir john temple. but this does not minimise the part henry osborne played in the events in his sister's life in 1653 and 1654.

1 donald a. stauffer, "two quiet lives, dorothy osborne, thomas gray", by lord david cecil, a review, new york times, feb. 15, 1948, p. 4.
The story is best told exactly as it appears in the letters. There is little need for amplification or explanation. The first excerpt of importance comes from an early letter, to which Parry gives the date April 10, 1653.

This letter is writ in great haste, as you may see; 'tis my brother's sick day, and I'm not willing to leave him long alone. I forgot to tell you in my last that he was come hither to try if he can lose an ague here that he got in Gloucestershire. He asked me for you very kindly, and if he knew I writ to you I should have something to say from him besides what I should say for myself if I had room.

The foregoing extract is doubly interesting, in that it is the last time Dorothy speaks of her brother and Temple as being on friendly terms. From now on she recognises their complete lack of affinity. How much else she recognises we do not know. But the following letter, written a week later, seems plain enough.

You are altogether in the right that my brother will never be at quiet till he sees me disposed of, but he does not mean to lose me by it; he knows that if I were married at this present, I should not be persuaded to leave my father as long as he lives; and when this house breaks up, he is resolved to follow me if he can, which he thinks he might better do to a house where I had some power than where I am but upon courtesy myself. Besides that, he thinks it would be to my advantage to be well begtowed, and by that he understands richly."

1 The Letters, pp.70-71.
2 Ibid., p.74.
An irrelevant, but interesting, comment on the following excerpt is that at the time it was written Martha Temple was fifteen years old, although Dorothy speaks of her as though she were adult. (Henry Osborne was thirty-four).

He is much of your sister's humour, and many times wishes me a husband that loved me as well as he does (though he seems to doubt the possibility on't), but never desires that I should love that husband with any passion, and plainly tells me so. He says it would not be so well for him, nor perhaps for me, that I should; for he is of opinion that all passions have more of trouble than satisfaction in them, and therefore they are happiest that have least of them. You think him kind from a letter that you met with of his; sure, there was very little of anything in that, or else I should not have employed it to wrap a book up. But, seriously, I many times receive letters from him, that were they seen without any address to me or his name, nobody would believe they were from a brother; and I cannot but tell him sometimes that, sure, he mistakes and sends me letters that were meant to his mistress, till he swears to me that he has none. Next week my persecution begins again; he comes down, and my cousin Molle is already cured of his imaginary dropsy, and means to meet here. I shall be baited most sweetly, but sure they will not easily make me consent to make my life unhappy to satisfy their importunity.¹

It is now May and Dorothy writes of her shepherdesses and the pleasures of country life. Her brother has come from town and is with her.

¹ The Letters, pp.74-75.
My brother says not a word of you, nor your service, nor do I expect he should; if I could forget you he would not help my memory. You would laugh sure, if I could tell you how many servants suitors he has offered me since he came down; but one above all the rest I think he is in love with himself, and may marry him too if he pleases, I shall not hinder him. 'Tis one Talbot, the finest gentleman he has seen this seven year...he swears he begins to think one might bate £500 a year for such a husband. I tell him I am glad to hear it; and if I were as much taken (as he) with Mr. Talbot, I should not be less gallant....

Temple begins to be disturbed by Henry's interference, and Dorothy writes to reassure him:

...I cannot agree with you that my brother's kindness to me has anything of trouble in't; no, sure, I may be just to you and him both, and to be a kind sister will take nothing from my being a perfect friend.  

However not long after Dorothy has changed her mind a little as to the trouble her brother can cause. She writes to Temple telling him that she has discovered that she is "a valiant lady" and had a real argument.

In earnest, we have had such a skirmish, and upon so foolish an occasion, as I cannot tell which is strangest. The Emperor and his proposals began it; I talked merrily on't till I saw my brother put on his sober face, and could hardly then believe he was in earnest. It seems he was, for when I had spoke freely my meaning, it wrought so with him as to fetch up all that lay upon his stomach. All the people that I had

1 The Letters, pp.87-88.
2 Ibid., p.95.
3 See note 4 in appendix.
ever in my life refused were brought again upon the stage...and all the kindness his discoveries could make I had for you was laid to my charge ....I was allowed to have wit and understanding and discretion in other things, that it might appear I had none in this. Well, 'twas a pretty lecture, and I grew warm with it after a while; in short, we came so near an absolute falling out, that 'twas time to give over, and we said so much then that we have hardly spoken a word together since. But 'tis wonderful to see what curtseys and legs pass between us; and as before we were thought the kindest brother and sister, we are certainly now the most complimental couple in England.1

On July 3 however there is another disagreement:

We have had another debate, but much more calmly. 'Twas just upon his going up to town, and perhaps he thought it not fit to part in anger. Not to wrong him, he never said to me (whate'er he thought) a word in prejudice of you in your own person, and I never heard him accuse anything but your fortune and my indiscretion. And whereas I did expect that ...he should have said we had been a couple of fools well met, he says by his troth he does not blame you, but bids me not deceive myself to think you have any great passion for me.2

Now in earnest things grow difficult. Dorothy's brother tries to intercept her letters, and on July 10 (assumed date) she writes to Temple telling how her brother had waylaid the carrier and tried to get from him Temple's letter. "...my brother...in some anger threatened the poor fellow, who would not be frightened out of his letter."3

1 The Letters, p.102.
2 Ibid., p.111.
3 Ibid., p.114.
She tells Temple he must now send his letters to the house of a neighbouring clergyman, the Rev. Gibson, who is her friend. This seems to be fairly satisfactory as on August 7 (assumed date) she writes:

Your last came safe, and I shall follow your direction for the address of this, though, as you say, I cannot imagine what should tempt anybody to so severe a search for them, unless it be that he is not yet fully satisfied to what degree our friendship is grown, and thinks he may best inform himself from them....he has no more the heart to ask me directly what he would so fain know, than a jealous man has to ask (one that might tell him) whether he were a cuckold or not, for fear of being resolved of that which is yet a doubt to him.1

On September 22 (assumed date) she sends Temple some verses written by Lord Broghill, with the following comment:

My brother urged them the verses against me one day in a dispute, where he would needs make me confess that no passion could be long lived, and that such as were most in love forgot that ever they had been so within a twelvemonth after they were married....I was fain to bring out these pitiful verses of my Lord Biron to his wife...and he quickly laughed me out of countenance with saying they were just such as a married man's flame would produce and a wife inspire.2

The date on the next letter which mentions her brother

1 The Letters, p.126.
2 Ibid., p.162.
has been assumed to be November 20.

I am extremely sorry that your letter miscarried, but I am confident my brother has it not. As cunning as he is, he could not hide it so from me, but that I should discover it some way or other. No; he was here, and both his men, when this letter should have come, and not one of them stirred out that day; indeed the next they all went to London.¹

The assumed date of the next letter is January 22, 1654.

'Tis but an hour since you went, and I am writing to you already; is not this kind? How do you after your journey....Well, God forgive me, and you too, you made me tell a great lie. I was fain to say you came only to take your leave before you went abroad; and all this not only to keep quiet, but to keep him from playing the madman; for when he has the least suspicion, he carries it so strangely that all the world takes notice on't, and so often guess at the reason, or else he tells it....a sadness that he discovered at your going away inclined him to believe you were ill satisfied, and made him credit what I said. He is kind now in extremity, and I would be glad to keep him so till a discovery is absolutely necessary.²

The next letter continues the train of thought aroused by the first. The assumed date is January 29, 1654.

You are mistaken if you think I stand in awe of my brother. No, I fear nobody's anger. I am proof against all violence; but when people haunt me with reasonings and entreaties, when they look sadly and pretend kindness, when they beg upon that score, 'tis a strange pain to me to deny.

¹ The Letters, p.181.
² Ibid., p.195.
When he rants and renounces me, I can despise him; but when he asks my pardon, with tears pleads to me the long and constant friendship between us, and calls heaven to witness that nothing upon earth is dear to him in comparison of me, then, I confess, I feel a strange unquietness within me, and I would do anything to avoid his importunity. 1

The assumed date of the next letter is February 19, 1654.

Would you saw what letters my brother writes me; you are not half so kind. Well, he is always in the extremes; since our last quarrel he has courted me more than ever he did in his life, and made me more presents, which, considering his humour, is as great a testimony of his kindness as 'twas of Mr. Smith's to my Lady Sunderland.... He sent me one this week which, in earnest, is as pretty a thing as I have seen, a China trunk, and the finest of the kind that e'er I saw. 2

In the next letter, assumed date March 5, Dorothy speaks of the folly of marrying without a fortune,

All this I can say to you; but when my brother disputes it with me I have other arguments for him, and I drove him up so close t'other night that for want of a better gap to get out at he was fain to say that he feared as much your having a fortune as your having none....I forgot all my disguise, and we talked ourselves weary; he renounced me again, and I defied him, but both in as civil language as it would permit, and parted in great anger with the usual ceremony of a leg and a courtesy, that you would have died with laughing to have seen us.

The next day I, not being at dinner, saw him not till night; then he

1 The Letters, p.199.
2 Ibid., pp.213-214.
came into my chamber, where I supped but he did not. Afterwards Mr. Gibson and he and I talked of indifferent things till all but we two went to bed. Then he sat half-an-hour and said not one word, nor I to him. At last, in a pitiful tone, "Sister", says he, "I have heard you say that when anything troubles you, of all things you apprehend going to bed, because there it increases upon you, and you lie at the mercy of all your sad thoughts....I am at that pass now. I vow to God I would not endure another night like the last to gain a crown." I, who resolved to take no notice what ailed him, said 'twas a knowledge I had raised from my spleen only, and so fell into a discourse of melancholy...and...into religion; and we talked so long of it and so devoutly, that it laid all our anger....He asked my pardon and I his, and he has promised me never to speak of it to me whilst he lives but leave the event to God Almighty; and till he sees it done, he will be always the same to me that he is; then he shall leave me, he says, not out of want of kindness to me, but because he cannot see the ruin of a person that he loves so passionately, and in whose happiness he had laid up all his. These are the terms we are at, and I am confident he will keep his word with me....

But he does not keep his word, and only two weeks later, in the letter dated March 18 when Dorothy writes to tell Temple the sad news of her father's death she begins by saying that "a misfortune never comes single." and then goes on to complain of how badly her brother is behaving. Her eldest brother has not yet arrived to tell her what she must do now that Sir Peter is dead, and Henry is persecuting her strangely:

1 The Letters, pp.219-220.
2 Ibid., p.227.
I take it kindly that you used arts to conceal our story and satisfy my nice apprehensions, but I'll not impose that constraint upon you any longer, for I find my kind brother publishes it with more earnestness than ever I strove to conceal it; and with more disadvantage than anybody else would. Now he has tried all ways to what he desires, and finds it is in vain, he resolves to revenge himself upon me, by representing this action in such colours as will amaze all people that know me, and do not know him enough to discern his malice to me....I am afraid I shall never look upon him as a brother more.

There is nothing more in the letters concerning Henry's unkindness. A few months later when the wedding settlements are being discussed Dorothy asks that he be permitted to "treat" for her. Parry gives a few notes from Henry Osborne's diary.

There was a continued unfortunate misunderstanding between Dorothy and her brother about the marriage portion. On December 22nd 1654 they "utterly fell out about it," and on the 28th we read: "Temple and my sister writ to me to deliver up the writings of her portion." The trouble resulted in a law suit....Dorothy was undoubtedly reconciled to her brother Henry, for under date May, 1656, he writes: "My sister went from Campton for Ireland," which suggests that she was staying with him at the time.

1 The Letters, p.228.
2 Ibid., p.266.
3 Ibid., p.274.
CHAPTER V

Evaluation of the letters

An evaluation of the letters must be undertaken from several points of view. They must be discussed as love letters, as a social document and as literature. Since they were written as love letters it might be expected that they would be worthy of praise in this category. This, however, was not the view of Macaulay, who dismissed this aspect of the letters with a kindly, if patronising, word, "nor are her letters at all the worse for some passages in which raillery and tenderness are mixed with a very engaging namby-pamby."1 Parry comes to the rescue at this point:

...Macaulay hardly appears to be sufficiently aware of the sympathetic womanly nature of Dorothy, and the dignity of her disposition; so that he is persuaded to speak of her too constantly from the position of a man of the world praising with patronising emphasis the pretty qualities of a school-girl.2

He has enthusiasm certainly, but there is more acumen in the opinions expressed by F.L.Lucas.

There are no more delightful letters in English. Love-letters...are a province of literature for which no...

2 The Letters, pp.11-12.
Aristotle has yet laid down the laws. ...The writing of letters is an applied art which turns into a pure one, when they lose their original purpose; the readers for whom they are written come to die, the matter they express grows obsolete and immaterial, and yet by charm of manner alone they may still enthrall an eavesdropping public for which they were never meant.

Sir Walter Raleigh dismissed the letters completely, without even a single comment on their quality as love letters.

We have no one in English to compare with Madame de Sevigne for the combination of wit and tenderness. Dorothy Osborne was an exceedingly amiable and admirable lady, full of sound sense, but if you take away from her letters that flavour of antiquity that gives a heightened interest to all her allusions and to her descriptions of the life of the time, you would have to admit that there are a thousand writers of letters alive today who equal or excel her.

Amiable lady indeed! Full of sound sense! We turn from such judgments to Dorothy's latest biographer, Lord David Cecil, whose much praised and reviewed "Two Quiet Lives" is at last to hand.

Since this is the most recent publication on Dorothy's life, and since, also, it is written by an

author whom the reviewers call "the finest artist among biographers now living," much was expected of it. "This volume is both an education and a delight," insists Stauffer. The truth of the latter assertion makes all the more regrettable the very obvious errors and discrepancies in Cecil's essay. Since Cecil wrote his book in Britain he doubtless had access to the letters, now reposing in the British Museum, in which case there is no excuse for his many grave errors. However, although he is not to be trusted as a biographer, he has exemplary qualities as a critic of the letters as love-letters.

Describing Dorothy, he says:

In Dorothy Osborne, the society, of which she was a child, put forth its last fine flower. To something of her father's gallant nobility of temper, she joined a delicate Herrick-like sensibility....her heart was imaginative; appreciative of every shade of intimacy and affection, and identifying itself so sensitively with other people's feelings that it was almost impossible for her to resist an appeal from anyone she loved. Yet there was nothing extravagant about her. Her taste was chastened by a vigilant sense of the value of dignity and restraint.

All of these qualities Dorothy showed in her letters.

1 Stauffer, op. cit., p.4.
2 Ibid., p.4.
3 See Note 5 in appendix.
4 David Cecil, op. cit., pp.24-25.
Turning again to Cecil's essay, we find he says:

...her own personality is revealed in intimate detail, and during the course of the supreme crisis of her life. So that the correspondence does not give us a feeling of incompleteness. By a freak of fortune this slender chance-kept bundle of letters has composed itself into a brief drama that has the unity and concentration and harmony of a conscious work of art.¹

In that last sentence Cecil has perhaps described the chief reason why the letters have so much charm for us - they compose a brief drama which has unity and harmony. Each letter by itself is not so very remarkable in an age when many women wrote well, and when extravagant and charming expressions of affection were not uncommon.

The following is an example of the beginning of a letter:

I am infinitely overjoyed to heare of your safe Arrivall and now my deare friend I thinke it will not be improper after the promises you maide me at our parting, to put you in minde of seeing me heare, to purchasse which happynesse I would doe anythings in the worlde, so passionately I owne my joy, being a selfe lover.²

Far from being written by a lover to his mistress, it was written by Lady Chesterfield to her dear friend Lady Giffard. Dorothy's letters, however, provide a continuity. They carry us along with them. And, as

Virginia Woolf says:

...our glimpse of the society of
Bedfordshire in the seventeenth
century is the more intriguing for
its intermittency. In they come and
out they go - Sir Justinian and Lady
Diana, Mr Smith and his countess - and
we never know when or whether we shall
hear of them again. 1

We may not hear of the countess, but Dorothy's story
is wonderfully unfolded, all the more wonderfully since
unconsciously, and withal with the harmony of a conscious
work of art.

But a love letter does not purport to be a work
of art. A love letter has only one purpose, and that
is to tell the recipient that he is beloved. This,
then, is what Dorothy's letters do to perfection. She
and Temple were parted for months at a time, but his
passion never flagged - her letters kept it alive and
burning. Yet, as Cecil says:

There are few endearments in them,
and no rhapsodies. But even when
she is telling the news, or asking
Temple to do some commission for her,
the emotion that filled her heart
vibrates through every modulation of
her voice; and now it gleams out in
an enchanting playfulness; and now,
as a wave of passionate longing for
Temple floods over her, it flows forth
in a strain of tenderness, all the more
poignant for the delicate reticence with
which it is expressed.

1 Virginia Woolf, The Second Common Reader, p.62.
2 David Cecil, op. cit., p.62.
But reticence is hardly the word. Dorothy was not reticent with her lover, indeed she scorned to be. There is no reticence in the following:

Deare, shall wee ever bee soe happy, think you? Ah I dare not hope it, yet tis not want of love gives mee these fear's. now, in Earnest, I think, (nay I am sure) I love you more than Ever, and tis that only gives mee these dispaireing thoughts. When I consider how small a proportion of happiness is allowed in this worlde, and how great mine would be in a person for whom I have a passionate Kindnesse and whoe has the same for mee; As it is infinitely above what I can deserve, and more then God Almighty usually allotts to the best People, I can finde nothing in reason but seems to bee against mee, and mee thinks tis as vaine in mee to Expect it as twould bee to hope I might bee a Queen....

Nor in another extract, also taken from Moore Smith's edition in the original spelling and punctuation. Temple has sent the lock of hair which Dorothy requested.

Twill bee pleasinger to you I am sure, to tell you how fond I am of your Lock; well in Earnest now and setting aside all complement, I never saw finer haire nor of a better Couler, but cutt noe more on't, I would not have it spoyled for the world, if you love mee bee carefull on't. I am combing and Curling and kisiaing this Lock all day, and dreaming ont all night.

Surely no lover could ask for more ardour! This may not be literature, but it is indeed a love letter.

2 Ibid., p.146.
To evaluate the letters as a social document, one need only ask what other information comparable do we have of the time? True, the letters do not treat of the matters which have made the Diary of the Rev. Ralph Josselin (1616-1683) important, that is, the price of land, the state of the weather, the wages of servants, the salary of a schoolmaster, the excise duty on hops, the price of cows, pigs, cheese and butter, but they treat of the everyday comings and goings of people in our historical records. They tell of the life of a solitary girl in the depths of the country, who lived at a time when the daily round was conducted with such ceremoniousness that she sat down to dinner each day in as much state as if twenty people were being entertained. They tell of life in other country houses where the men continually drink too much, and where entertaining goes on night and day, and so many visitors arrive that they sleep three in a bed. We hear of the arrival of new books, and find that the broadshot disseminated the news. We find that there is little or no discussion of fashion or food, but that sermons are not only listened to, they are discussed afterwards, by people whose only other topics of conversation are love and gossip. Perhaps indeed it is because the letters tell us these things that Sherburn in A Literary History of England
states that "The letters of Dorothy Osborne to Temple form one of the most famous Restoration correspondences."¹

To evaluate the letters as literature it might be enough to take Cecil's statement that Dorothy's bundle of letters has "the unity and concentration and harmony of a conscious work of art."² But what Virginia Woolf has to say is always worth repeating:

...with all this haphazardry, the Letters, like the letters of all born letter-writers, provide their own continuity. They make us feel that we have our seat in the depths of Dorothy's mind, at the heart of the pageant which unfolds itself page by page as we read. For she possesses indisputably the gift which counts for more in letter-writing than wit or brilliance or traffic with great people. By being herself without effort or emphasis, she envelops all these odds and ends in the flow of her own personality.³

A dozen instances could be cited to prove that Cecil was wrong when he said "Spontaneous though she wanted her letters to appear, in fact Dorothy selected and arranged her matter".⁴ Only one glance at the quick-flowing writing, with no change or erasures, shows us what we already know from their content. Here is no emotion recollected in tranquillity, but emotion at

³ Virginia Woolf, Second Common Reader, p. 62.
⁴ David Cecil, op. cit., p. 61.
first hand, spontaneous and free, and if the result is a work of art, it is because of this spontaneity and not in spite of it.
Note 1

"Matchless Orinda". The following information concerning the "Matchless Orinda" was taken from the Dictionary of National Biography and G.C. Moore Smith's The Early Essays and Romances of Sir William Temple, Bt.

Katherine Philips, 1631-1664, was the daughter of a merchant of London. At the age of eight she was sent to a fashionable boarding school at Hackney. She became a verse writer and a friend of Jeremy Taylor. She married James Philips. Her earliest verses were prefixed to the poems of Henry Vaughan in 1651, and she became known as "Orinda". A letter from Orinda, dated January 22, 1664, addressed to Dorothy Osborne, is published in Julia Longe's Martha Lady Giffard. A collection of her verses appeared about this time, under the title Poems. By the Incomparable Mrs. K.P. and were prefaced by poems by Cowley and H.A. Sir William Temple wrote an elegy on her death entitled A Troop of Mourners in deep Elegie. The Dictionary of National Biography says, "Orinda's fame as a poet, always considerably in excess of her merits, did not long survive her".

"Mad Madge of Newcastle". The following note was taken from the Dictionary of National Biography.

Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, 1624(?)-1674... Mr. C.H. Firth edited a new edition of both lives [The Lives of William Cavendishe, Duke of Newcastle, and of his wife, Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle] in 1886. In these works so much of the literary baggage of the duchess as time will care to burden itself with is preserved.

"Temple's sweet sister". The following information concerning Temple's sister, Lady Giffard, was taken from the Dictionary of National Biography and from G.C. Moore Smith's The Early Essays and Romances of Sir William Temple, Bt. with the Life and Character of Sir William Temple by his sister Lady Giffard.

Martha Giffard was an indefatigable letter writer. She was also her brother's ardent admirer, and wrote, for posterity, his Life and Character, which was not published during her lifetime. Thomas Seccombe in the Dictionary of National Biography refers to her as the "clever and managing sister-in-law, Lady Giffard".

"Incomparable Astrea". The following information concerning Aphra Behn, the first Englishwoman to earn money by her pen, was taken from the Dictionary of National Biography.
Her genius and vivacity were undoubted; her plays are very coarse, but very lively and humourous, while she possessed an indisputable touch of lyric genius. Her prose works are decidedly less meritorious than her dramas and the best of her poems.

Note 2

E.A. Parry brought out the Everyman Edition of *The Letters* in 1914, with a long introduction. But he had in 1911 written a preface for Julia Longe's *Martha Lady Giffard*, therefore it must be assumed that, unless he wrote the preface without having read the book, in 1914 he was cognisant of the biographical facts of the Temple daughters.

Note 3

The names *Almanzor* and *Alcidiana*, not important in themselves, are interesting in the information they uncover. Neither Parry nor Moore Smith investigated quite thoroughly enough the *Almanzor* mentioned by Sir William Temple, but accepted the criticism of Gibbon. It remains now to vindicate Temple's reputation in this small matter.

Parry states:

*Almanzor* and *Alcidiana* are probably characters in some Spanish romance. It is curious that in after years Sir William Temple speaks of *Almanzor* in his essay on "Heroic Virtue" as an illustrious and renowned hero of the Arabian branch of the Saracen Empire, and he devotes the best part of a page to his career. Upon this Mr. Gibbon in his *Miscellaneous Works*, V., 555, says: "I pass over several other mistakes of Sir William Temple's that I may not seem to treat a polite scholar with the critical severity which he justly enough complained of; but I can scarce refrain from smiling at his *Almanzor*, the most accomplished of the western Caliphs who reigned over Arabia, Egypt, Africa, and Spain; but in fact an imaginary hero of an imaginary empire. Sir William Temple was deceived by some Spanish romances which he took for Arabian History." Certainly at this date Dorothy seems
to write of Almanzor as though he were only a romance hero.

Moore Smith's note is as follows:

Temple's knowledge of Almanzor (the hero of Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*) was, as Dr. Thomas[of the British Museum] further suggests, probably derived from Robert Ashley's *Almansor the Learned* (1672), a translation of a Spanish romance by a pretended Arabian author, Ali Abencufian. In his *Essay Of Heroick Virtue*, Sect. v, Temple treats Almanzor as historical: 'The Arabian branch of the Saracen Empire, after a long and mighty growth in Egypt and Arabia, seems to have been at its height under the great Almanzor, who was the illustrious and renowned Heroe of this Race, and must be allowed to have as much excelled, and as eminently, in Learning, Virtue, Piety, and Native Goodness, as in Power, in Valour, and in Empire: Yet this was extended from Arabia through Egypt and all the Northern Tracts of Africa, as far as the Western Ocean, and over all the considerable Provinces of Spain. For it was in his time, and by his Victorious Ensigns, that the Gothick Kingdom in Spain was conquered, and the Race of those famous Princes ended in Rodrigo...I do not remember ever to have read a greater and nobler Character of any Prince than of this great Alamznor, in some Spanish Authors or Translators of his Story out of the Arabian tongue.' Courtenay (ii.264.) quotes Gibbon's comment on this passage from his *Miscellaneous Works*, V.p.554:

Moore Smith then quotes Gibbon's comment, which has been given already here in the Parry quotation.

The famous Spanish encyclopedia, *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada*, however, finds Temple's Almanzor worthy of three long columns, from which the following was taken:

Almanzor...Es el más célebre y popular de los caudillos de la España arabe....Muy joven todavía fué á Córdoba para hacer sus estudios, distinguiéndose especialmente en la poesía. Con

1 *The Letters*, p. 61.
su talento y gentileza se granejo el aprecio de Alhakem III...y de la sultana...que hizo de él su secretario, su mayordomo más tarde, y al morir Alhakem le encargó el gobierno del Estado con el título de primer hagib para que lo ejerciese en nombre de Hescham (Hixem II) quien a la sazón sólo tenía diez años de edad.... Gran guerrero, llevó á cabo en veintiséis años 52 expediciones contra los cristianos; pero antes tuvo que apaciguar algunos disturbios interiores del país, lo cual logró empleando la astucia para atraerse las voluntades de todos, lisonjeando á cada uno según su pasión y necesidad, aliviando de tributos á los bajos, tratando á losgrandes y ricos como iguales, alentando á los estudiosos y premiándoles no pocas veces....Fué este caudillo, según escribe Lefuente, «político profundo, ministro sabio, guerrero insigne, el Alejandro, el Aníbal, el César de los musulmanes españoles»... «...no fué tan sólo... un gran caudillo, sino que añadía á esta cualidad un gusto y una afición decidida por las letras y por aquellos que las cultivaban, y así se le ve rodearse, durante el tiempo que pasaba en Córdoba, de poetas, sabios, y literatos: su palacio era una academia abierta constantemente para los sabios de todos los países; durante su gobierno continuaron en muy floreciente estado, no sólo las letras, sino las ciencias, en especial la medicina y demás ciencias positivas.... llevado de esta afición por los estudios, estableció Almanzor una especie de universidad, en que sólo enseñaban los hombres doctos y reconocidos como sabios, y él en persona visitaba las escuelas... sentándose entre los alumnos, sin permitir que se interrumpiera la lección, y dando premios á maestros y discípulos que los mereciesen».

As far as Dorothy's Almanzor is concerned, Moore Smith has a note which might be of interest:

...Apparently Dorothy's memory was not as good as she thought. I am indebted to Dr. H. Thomas, of the British Museum, for the suggestion that Dorothy was not thinking of Almanzor at all, but of Amaran (in the English translation of A. Munday, 'Amarano'), a character in Palmerin de Oliva (1511)

2 Moore Smith, The Letters of Dorothy Osborne, p. 222.
Since a thorough search of the best known authoritative works on Spanish literature (both in Spanish and in English) in the last four hundred years, has failed to reveal any trace of Almanzor and Alcidiana, perhaps Dr. Thomas's suggestion might be accepted as far as the Almanzor of Dorothy's romances is concerned. But it would appear that Dr. Thomas also was unaware of the information contained in the Spanish Encyclopedia which clears up the matter of Temple's Almanzor.

Note 4

"The Emperor" was Dorothy's nickname for a certain baronet, of whom Parry has the following to say:

The elderly man who proposed to Dorothy was Sir Justinian Isham, Bart., of Lamport, in Northamptonshire. He himself was about forty-two years of age at this time, and had, in 1638, lost his first wife Jane, daughter of Sir John Gerrard, by whom he had one son and four daughters. The Rev. W. Betham, with that optimism which is characteristic of compilers of peerages, thinks "that he was esteemed one of the most accomplished persons of the time, being a gentleman, not only of fine learning, but famed for his piety and exemplary life." Dorothy thinks otherwise, and writes of him as "the vainest, impertinent, self-conceited learned coxcomb that ever yet I saw."

1 The Letters, p. 26
Describing Dorothy's stay in her brother-in-law's house in Kent, Cecil says:

The only people in the house with whom Dorothy felt easy were a lady, grown misanthropic as the result of a quarrel with her husband, and a gentleman whose heart had been broken early in life by the death of his bride to be. These two at least were quiet.¹

However the letter from which he took his information is given both by Parry and Moore Smith as:

Of all the company this place is stored with, there is but two persons whose conversation is at all easy to me; one is my eldest niece, who, sure, was sent into the world to show 'tis possible for a woman to be silent; the other is a gentleman whose mistress died just when they should have married....Methinks we three (that is, my niece, and he and I) do become this house the worst that can be....²

This same niece is mentioned throughout the letters. Always Dorothy gives praise to her silence, but a husband is never mentioned. Instead we read:

...my company is increased by two, my brother Harry and a fair niece....She is so much a woman that I am almost ashamed to say I am her aunt; and so pretty, that, if I had any design to gain a servant, I should not like her company; but I have none, and therefore shall endeavour to keep her here as long as I can persuade her father to spare her, for she will easily consent to it, having so much of my humour (though it be the worst thing in her) as to like a melancholy place and little company.³

Another careless error made by Cecil has perhaps a somewhat humourous aspect in view of Temple's remarks on making love after forty. Cecil quotes a letter written after Dorothy's marriage in which she makes reference to her baby, "indeed my heart 'tis the quietest best little boy

1 David Cecil, op. cit., p. 98.
2 The Letters, p. 262.
3 Ibid., p. 85.
that ever was borne." On the next page Cecil says:

Of the six children Dorothy bore to Temple, only one lived to grow up; and he - the little Jack of whom she speaks so lovingly in her last letters - drowned himself in a fit of madness when he was twenty-one. On the occasion of his death we are permitted, after forty years silence, once more to hear Dorothy's voice. She is answering a letter of condolence from a nephew.\(^1\)

A simple sum in arithmetic shows that since Dorothy was twenty-seven when she married Temple, forty years later she would be sixty-seven, and Temple would be sixty-six. But the son, Jack, says Cecil, was twenty-one. Cecil, then, was wrong on several counts. It has been made clear in this essay that there were two sons called Jack: One, as Cecil correctly states, was born a year or so after the marriage, but he died a few years later in Ireland. The son Jack who committed suicide was born in 1663 or 1664. His age now comes in question. The date on the letter of condolence was 1689, and Lady Giffard states that in the year 1685 "his son [Jack Temple] was married in France & some months after brough(t) his Wife over great with child to Sheen."\(^3\) This would make him seventeen or less when he married, which is erroneous. As for the "six children", Lady Giffard says on two occasions that the Temples had nine children. One quotation will suffice:

\[
\text{He [Sir William Temple] very little encreas'd his estate by his imployments had nine children of wch only two Daughters of his eldest son survived him.} \quad \text{\cite{3}}
\]

The forty years silence is also a careless statement. Julia G. Longe and Moore Smith give half a dozen letters written to Temple in the first fifteen years of Dorothy's married life.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{1} David Cecil, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 101.
  \item \textbf{2} Ibid., pp. 102-103.
  \item \textbf{3} Lady Giffard, \textit{op. cit.} p. 23.
  \item \textbf{4} Ibid., p. xi.
\end{itemize}
EDITIONS OF THE LETTERS


GENERAL WORKS


MAGAZINE ARTICLES


ENCYCLOPEDIAS


