MR. LAWRENCE HESKETH PALK'S MAJORITY

Lawrence Hesketh Palk, Esq., eldest son of Sir Lawrence Palk, Bart., M.P., and heir apparent of Haldon-House, attained his majority on Friday last, the 6th of September, and the event has been celebrated on the estate by a week of festivity and rejoicing.

Sir Lawrence Palk, Bart., M.P. for South Devon, father of Mr. Palk whose majority has been the occasion of these festivities, is the 4th baronet. His great grandfather, Sir Robert Palk, Governor of Madras, and 1st baronet in India, was created a baronet on the 19th of June, 1772. From the slight records which remain of the family previous to that date, we find that Sir Lawrence's ancestors resided in Devonshire, and were possessed of Ambrook, in the parish of Ipplepen, Devon, from the 14th century. The baronet is traced from Henry Palk, of Ambrook, who lived in the time of Henry VII. The Rev. Thomas Palk, of Staverton, a celebrated Non-conformist divine, author of several treatises on the religious disputes of the period, died in 1693. From him descended Walter Palk, the seventh descent from the above named Henry Palk, and father of the first baronet. He was member of parliament for Ashburton, and married Miss Abraham. His second son, Walter, was also M.P. for Ashburton. His eldest son, Robert, by his talents and address, attracted the attention and favour of the great Sir Robert Walpole, under whose auspices he went to India, where he amassed a great fortune, and was made the first Governor of Madras. For his services to the East India Company he was made a baronet in 1763. He married Ann, daughter of Arthur Vansittart, Esq., and had one son and three daughters. On his retirement from active service in India he purchased the Haldon Estate near Chudleigh. During his career in India he formed a very close friendship with the famous Major-General Stringer Lawrence, to whose memory he erected, in the year 1788, a fine monument in Fort St. George. His death in 1805 was attended by the loss of his son, Sir Lawrence Palk, named after the gallant Major-General. The second baronet was M.P. for the County of Devon. He married, first, in 1789, Mary, eldest daughter of the third Earl of Harrowby, by her, he had three surviving issue; and secondly, 1792, Dorothy Elizabeth, daughter of Wilmot (Vaughan), first Earl of Lisburne, by whom he had six sons and two daughters. He died June 29th, 1813. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Sir Lawrence Vaughan Palk, who married, in 1818, Anne Eleanora, relict of Edward Hartopp, Esq., eldest daughter of Sir Bourchier Wrey, Bart. He had two sons and three daughters, and died the 16th of May, 1869. His eldest son Sir Lawrence Palk, the present Bart., M.P. for South Devon, was born in 1818. He married, on the 15th of November, 1845, Maria Harriett, only daughter of the late Sir T. H. Hesketh, Bart., of Rufford, Leicestershire. The hon. bart. takes a generous view of his duties as a landlord, and is universally known throughout the county for the facts of charity and the public works which he has promoted and encouraged. He is an active and energetic member of House of Commons, and thinks that a man ought to be done to improve the condition and increase the comforts of the labourers are indicated by the fact that he recently published a letter to the Devon Agricultural Labourers on their charge their property with the cost of improving agricultural dwellings. He also, by a number of much persuasion, succeeded in getting the "Masters" to have very relieved of serious grievances under which they laboured. His eldest son, Lawrence Hesketh Palk, was born on the 6th of September, 1846. He was educated at Eton and at Christ Church, Oxford. Returning about three years ago from a tour in Europe and the East, he was commissioned in the 2nd battalion of the Scots Fusilier Guards, to which he is now attached. Historical and topographical works relating to Devonshire, in the records of the last twenty years, contain numerous references to the Palk family, with particulars of the various purchases by which the magnificent estate of Haldon was gradually formed to the present fair and extensive proportions. The house is a large mansion in the Florentine style. It was built in 1735 by Sir Geoffrey Gilbert, the lady Lucy, daughter of the Duke of Rutland, whose co-heiresses brought it to Sir John Chichester, Bart., in whose family it remained until it passed by the hands of Miss Ann Basset, John Jones, Esq., and William Wickham, Esq., to the possession of Sir Robert Palk, the first baronet, by whom the house and plantations were greatly improved. It contains a fine collection of pictures and an extensive library, in which are some rare and valuable works connected with the history and antiquities of Devonshire. The manor was one of the ancient estates of the Earls of Devon, and was forfeited by the attainder of the Marquis of Exeter, who was executed for his share in the plot for the chased by Sir Lawrence Vaughan Palk, the third baronet. The neighbouring mansion of Ide-Barton, with which most eventful history is connected from the time of the Norman Kings to a comparatively recent date, was purchased from the Earl of Courtenay by Sir Robert Palk, the first baronet. The park at Haldon House is exceedingly extensive and picturesque. On the summit of the hill are many barrows and tumuli which are supposed to be Druidical remains. The ornamental grounds are extensive, and the plantation covers many acres. Some of the finest trees in the country are to be found, and the prospect from the mansion is a succession of hills and vales. The lawns and gardens are very beautiful, commanding the view of a broad area, and varied by pretty places of ornamental water. On Pratt's-tor, about the highest point on the estate, near the Haldon-House Inn, is the Belvedere, a structure of hewn Haldon Palk built in honour of his distinguished friend Major-Gen. Lawrence. It is handsome structure, with four large round battlemented turrets, and from the top there is a broad area, and varied by pretty places of ornamental water. On Pratt's-tor, about the highest point on the estate, near the Haldon-House Inn, is the Belvedere, a structure of hewn Haldon Palk built in honour of his distinguished friend Major-Gen. Lawrence. It is handsome structure, with four large round battlemented turrets, and from the top there is a broad area, in the distance on one side the tors of Dartmoor and on the other side the waters of the English Channel. In parts the prospect may look upon the spires of the towns in the country, and the city of Exeter, which is about seven miles distant, looks like an inconsiderable nest of houses in the distance, lying much below the eye, with the exception of the tower and the horizon. The scene is one of great beauty and interest, and the visitor may spend hours in picking out the details of the wide expanse spread out before the endless variety which it presents. It commands the whole course of the Exe, and the beautiful vale of Exeter and city to the sea, with the hills and woodlands as far as Honiton and the borders of Somerset. The eventful life of the first baronet in India, and the distinguished part in the career of the great man to whose memory this monument was erected, that much interest attaches to the circumstances under which it was built. The monument, which also contains a colossal statue of the Major-General, in classical military dress, and on three separate tables in the panels round the interior runs the following inscription, which Sir Robert Palk caused to be written to the memory of his friend:—

"To the memory of Major-General Stringer Lawrence, who for the space of 30 years commanded the British armies in India, and by his superior genius, consummate skill and invincible courage, reduced the inferior force, extinguished the power of France, restored the glory of the British army and, by rejoicing in the Crown, established the security Ay Cawn Betandu, the distinguished son of Anarcelon, in happier times the ornament and sovereign of the Mahrattas, the friend and ally of Britain in Hindostan. Nor were his talents in war more eminent than his affections. Beloved by his friends, he was honoured and dreaded by his enemies. He was the deliverer of India. At his approach dread fled, and joy poured forth her exhilarating tide. Wherever he appeared with attention on his person, and he second, while blessings in different languages, and from every side, were showered upon him, to have laboured in the cause of his country, and to have secured to the natives of Europe and the inhabitants of Asia.

The Prince of Arcot, in recognition of his superior being, and to the end of his life their testimonials of affection were unceasing. The following inscription, in the Persian language, was placed on a tablet perpetuates the gratitude of the Nabob of Arcot: "To the memory of Major-General Stringer Lawrence; His Highness the Nabob Walajah Amear Al Hind, Prince of Arcot, Prince of the Carnatic, and the ally of His Britannic Majesty has caused this inscription to be placed in gratitude of his Highness and in proof of the great entertains of the important services rendered by the General to himself and to the Nabob Mahomed Ali, the ally of Britain, and the founder of English power in Hindostan." The opinion entertained by the East India Company of his merits is shown by the resolution on the monument which, at the public expense, they caused to be erected to his memory in the Abbey of Westminster, commemorating his discipline established, fortresses protected, settlements extended, French and Indian armies defeated, and peace concluded in the Carnatic."

His excellent son was born at Hereford in the year 1697. His early days were devoted to that service which he adorned, and he was so bright an ornament. He served against the rebels in 1745 as aide-de-camp to the Duke of Cumberland, and by his valour and much loved patron of General Wolfe. At the solicitation of the East India Company he was appointed to the command of the forces in Asia, and after having saved and extended the provinces he closed his active and military glory by the successful defence of Madras the capital of the British possessions, in the year 1758. He died full of years, filled of honours, in 1775, and his remains are deposited within sight of the tower in the Cathedral of Fort St. George. This column was erected in 1788, by Sir Robert Palk, Bart., successor to Governor Lawrence, as a memorial of the triumphs in war and of the virtues in peace of his illustrious friend.

FESTIVITIES AT THE FARM.

It was originally intended that a public dinner should commence on Mr. Palk's birthday by a grand banquet, &c., at Torquay, where great preparations were made by the tenants and tradesmen to celebrate the event. But the gentleman's duties as an officer in the Scots Fusilier Guards prevented his attendance in Devonshire until the Friday evening, and therefore the Torquay programme was postponed until the Saturday. The actual birthday was however celebrated upon the Haldon-House Farm. On the Friday morning, in anticipation of Mr. Palk's arrival, the tenant to Haldon House a handsome, but tastefully chased silver cigar case, on which was the following inscription:—

Presented to
Lawrence Hesketh Palk, Esq.,
On his coming of age,
By the Lady Day Tenantry of Haldon
House
September 6th, 1867.

On Friday morning, at the farm house, presents of meat, beer, tobacco, and tea, were given to forty families, to enable them to celebrate the event in their cottage homes, and a supper was prepared at the farm for about 40 single men, who sat down about 8 o'clock to partake of the supper Sir Lawrence (Lady Palk, with Miss Palk and other younger sons and daughters, and accompanied by Lady Hesketh, proceeded to the farmhouse, being the residence of Sir Lawrence to take the opportunity after the supper to thank the labourers, in the absence of his eldest son, for the handsome present they had made, and for the kind manner in which you have given me welcome to-day. (Much cheering.)

LAWRENCE PALK then addressed the party as follows:—I am very glad to see you all here to day, and to recognize among you a great many old friends, and a great many who have been labourers and servants upon this property since the time when I was a boy. I am very much flattered indeed at the kindness of the labourers on the estate in giving so handsome a present to my son upon the occasion of his 21st birthday. I am very much flattered by it because it shows that the kindness and attention that have been made by Lady Palk and by me to promote the benefit and well being of the labourers upon the estate have been appreciated by them. I hope it will be a lesson to my children that no matter where the British labourer may be, if he is treated with kindness and attention, if his wants are considered and his wishes attended to, he will be found a warm and attached friend to those to whom his services are given, and will endeavour to maintain that state of kindness, if properly continued, to go far and draw nearer and nearer the families of the employer and employed. I hope my children will be taught by Lady Palk who is born to riches to attend sometimes to matters of public business in the country. I do not hesitate to say that it is a duty which I feel it to be a duty of the country gentleman to the requirements of those below him. (Applause.) I am happy to say, my good friends, I can state this much with a good conscience, that I have done my best to be able to restore the neglect of many years on this estate, yet in the numerous parishes and villages in which I have property, there are still many cottages and tenements that have done my best to repair and improve the cottages of the labourers. (Cheers.) I think you on the part of Lady Palk and myself, I have to return you thanks for the thank you for the present you have given to my son, and I hope, I appreciate it more than in a greater degree than even that present the kindness which prompted you to give it to him on this occasion.

Cheers were given for Mr. Palk, for Sir Lawrence and Lady Palk, and for the young ladies. The family then returned to the Hall, when for the first time Mr. Palk saw the handsome present which had been made to him on the occasion of his majority. Prominent among them were the silver cigar-case presented by the labourers, which we have already mentioned, and a very handsome and costly gold silver inkstand given by the servants at the Hall. The latter presented the following inscription:—

This inkstand is presented to Lawrence Hesketh Palk, Esq., on his attaining his majority, by the servants of Sir Lawrence and Lady Palk, on the occasion of his majority.

There were also many handsome presents consisting of a beautiful clock, a watch, articles of jewelry, ornaments, &c., presented by the Misses Palk, Lady Hesketh, Lady Sir Lawrence Palk, by Mr. Palk's sisters and brothers, and other relatives and friends.

FESTIVITIES AT TORQUAY.

Saturday was devoted to the commemoration festivities at Torquay. Sir Lawrence and Lady Palk, Mr. Palk, Lady Hesketh and a party of relatives and visitors staying at Haldon House arrived at Torquay by train at half-past 11 o'clock, and proceeded to the Pavilion, where, at half-past one o'clock the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of a new harbour was performed. The harbour will be formed by the construction of a new pier almost parellel with the one now standing, and the body of water lying between the old pier and the new one will be completely enclosed. It will be finished with every convenience and appliance for the accommodation of shipping. The new pier starts from the foot of Beacon-hill, and will be constructed of the lime the limestone broken from the hill itself. It will be 300 feet in length, and provided with storehouses, and every convenience for carrying on commercial business to an extensive scale. The architect is Mr. Rowell, of Newton Abbotts, and the contract for the construction of the work, which, O. Way, sen., R. Cockren, G. S. Bartlett, H. Elliott, H. Wright, Walter Palk, Rev. J. W. Hayes, E. Seeley, T. Harvey, John Harvey, W. Farrant, J. Marchett, Rev. Thomas Hesketh, Rev. Thomas Hesketh, Bart., Rev. Thomas Hesketh, Bart., M.P., Admiral Hyder, Mr. G. Hesketh, H. C. March Phillips, Esq., Mr. Hesketh Hesketh, Mr. Walter Palk, Rev. R. B. Wolfe, Rev. W. B. Davis, Misses Hartopp, Mr. R. Vivian, Rev. J. R. Hogg, Mr. W. R. Fortescue, Mr. W. H. Hoare, Mr. Hoare, Mr. Hoare, Mr. Hoare, Mr. J. Harvey, Mr. John Harvey, Dr. Nankivell, Messrs. J. R. Toovood, E. Appleton, R. Gee, T. J. Shapley, Carroll, every assistance for carrying on commercial business to an extensive scale. The architect is Mr. Rowell, of Newton Abbotts, and the contract for the construction, of which, O. Way, sen., R. Cockren, G. S. Bartlett, H. Elliott, H. Wright, Walter Palk, Rev. J. W. Hayes, E. Seeley, T. Harvey, John Harvey, W. Farrant, J. Marchett, Rev. Thomas Hesketh, Rev. Thomas Hesketh, Bart., Rev. Thomas Hesketh, Bart., M.P., Admiral Hyder, Mr. G. Hesketh, H. C. March Phillips, Esq., Mr. Hesketh Hesketh, Mr. Walter Palk, Rev. R. B. Wolfe, Rev. W. B. Davis, Misses Hartopp, Mr. R. Vivian, Rev. J. R. Hogg, Mr. W. R. Fortescue, Mr. W. H