

The School owes its origin to Grace, Lady Manners who by a deed dated 20th May, 1636 stated that she "being moved by with a Godly and charitable zeal towards the inhabitants of Bakewell and Greate Rowsley, is determined to make some provision for the mayntayninge of a school-maister for ever to teach a free schoole within the Townshippe of Bakewell for the better instructinge of the male children of the Inhabitants of Bakewell and Greate Rowsley aforesaid in good learneinge and Christian religion."

LADY GRACE MANNERS

The life of Lady Grace Manners spans a period of dramatic change in England, from the reign of Elizabeth to the Protectorate of Cromwell. While chiefly remembered by history for her foundation of Lady Grace Manners School at Bakewell a study of this seemingly obscure Derbyshire lady reveals her connection to and involvement with the fortunes of some of the greatest figures of her time.

Grace was born in 1573, the daughter of Henry and Frances Pierrepoint. Her birth took place at her father's lesser estate at Mansfield Woodhouse in Nottinghamshire, but she would have spent most of her childhood at the family's principal seat at Holme Pierrepoint Hall. The Pierrepoints claimed Norman descent and since the conquest had played a solid but unspectacular part in national and local affairs as soldiers, justices and members of Parliament. The family had prospered during the earlier Tudor period. Grace's great grandfather, Sir William, had married the daughter of Sir Richard Empson, Henry VII's notorious tax gatherer an alliance which had increased the family's wealth. Sir William's son, Sir George Pierrepoint, took advantage of the dissolution of the monasteries to add to his extensive landholdings in both Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

Sir George Pierrepoint arranged the marriage of his heir Henry to Frances, the eldest daughter of Sir William Cavendish and his wife Bess, the famous Bess of Hardwick. This ambitious and resourceful woman was married four times during her long and eventful life, each marriage increasing her wealth and status. Sir William Cavendish was her second husband and she bore him eight children, six of which survived childhood. The birth of the eldest, Frances, in 1548, was recorded in her father's diary thus:

"Frances my 9 childe, and the first by the said Woman, was borne on Munday, betweene the Howers of 3 and 4 at Afternoon, viz., the 18th of June Anno 2. RE.6"

Sir William was a close friend of Henry Grey, Marquis of Dorset and his wife Frances, daughter of Henry VIII's younger sister Mary and her second husband the Duke of Suffolk. Lady Dorset was god-mother to Frances Cavendish and the child was named after her.

Sir William died in 1557 but Bess of Hardwick maintained a close connection with the Grey family which was to cause her great distress in later years. The plot to replace Queen Mary by Lady Jane Grey decided Queen Elizabeth, on her accession to the throne, to keep a careful eye on Lady Catherine Grey. She was thus made a Lady of the Bedchamber. Bess, now married to her third husband Sir William St. Loe also entered court life and became a Lady of the Bedchamber. Lady Catherine Grey had secretly married Edward Seymour, son of the former Lord Protector, and was expecting a child. The secret could no longer be kept and Lady Catherine dreaded the Queen's reaction. She turned, in her distress, to her mother's fried Bess of Hardwick and confided her secret. When the Queen discovered the situation she suspected a plot. Lady Catherine was sent to the Tower together with her husband and her confidente Bess of Hardwick.

It was during her imprisonment in the Tower that Bess received the following letter from Sir George Pierrepoint.

"Right wurshipfull and my verreye good Ladye: after my heartiest man" I comende me to your good Ladishippe: even so preye you I meye be to good Mr. Sentloe: most herteleye thankinge you booth for your great paynes taken wth me at Holme, acceptinge evrye thinge (though it were nevr so rewdlye handlyde) in suche

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1. See Appendix A.

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2. On the death of Edward VI an attempt was made to put Lady Jane Grey, a Protestant on the throne. She "reigned" for 9 days before her overthrow by the legitimate claimant, Queen Mary. Lady Jane Grey was executed in 1554.

gentille sorte as ye dyde; w^{ch} doeth and will cause me to love you the better whiell I lyve yf I were/to doo you other pleass^r or service: . . . And touchinge suche cominication as was betwene us at Holme, yf your Ladishipe and the gentillwoman your daught^r lyke o^r beye uppon sight as well as I and my wife lyke the yong gentillwoman, I will not shrinke one word from yt I said or promised; by the grace of God who preserve your Ladishippe and my M^r your husbande longe together in wealthe, healthe and prosperytie to his pleasure, and your gentill heart's desyer. From my porer house at Woodhouse the llilth of November 1561: by the rewde lustie hand of your good Ladishipe's assuredlye always to communde.

George Purepounte"

Shortly afterwards the marriage of Frances Cavendish and Henry Pierrepoint took place. But their first child was not born until February 1569. The child was christened Elizabeth. The following year another daughter, Mary, was born. Possibly this child died, for Lady Grace on her husband's monument styles herself as the second daughter of Henry Pierrepoint. Although no trace of her christening has yet been found it must be assumed that Grace was the next child. Of the children of Frances and Henry Pierrepoint five survived childhood: Elizabeth, Grace, Mary³, Robert and Frances.

The eldest child, Elizabeth, was destined to spend her childhood away from her family. This was due to the revival of the fortunes of her grand-mother Bess of Hardwick. In 1564 Bess had found herself once more a widow and a very wealthy woman. Her hand was eagerly sought and in 1565 she consented to marry one of the richest men in Elizabethan England, George Talbot, the 6th earl of Shrewsbury. Within a year of the marriage the Shrewsbury's found themselves the custodians of a very important prisoner—Mary, Queen of Scots. For the next fifteen and a half years this royal prisoner was confined in each of Shrewsbury's seven magnificent houses in the Midlands.

During her captivity Mary Stuart maintained her own household of servants and companions. Elizabeth Pierrepoint was a member of this household and seems to have been quite a favourite with her royal mistress. As was customary at the time the young girl shared the bed of the Scottish queen. Thus the following affectionate letter from Mary to her young companions is addressed "To my well-beloved bed-fellow, Bess Pierpont". It continues:

"Darling, I have received your letter and pretty presents, for which I thank you. I am glad that you are so well; remain with your father and mother freely this season, as they wish to keep you, for the climate and the season are so disagreeable here that I am already very sensible of the change of the air of Worksop, where I had not gone again, but I am not suffered to command my legs. Remember me to your father and mother very kindly, and to your sister, and to all my acquaintances, if there are any there. I shall cause your black dress to be made and sent to you there, as soon as I have the trimming, for which I have written to London. This is all which I can write to you at present except to send you as many blessings as there are days in the year, praying God that His may be extended over you and yours for ever.

In haste, this 13th September, (1583)

Your very affectionate mistress, and best friend,

Marie	R. "
cont'd.	

^{3.} It was not unusual to give children the names of their deceased brothers and sisters.

From this letter it may be assumed that Grace Pierrepoint was at least acquainted with her sister's royal mistress. Perhaps Grace was the "sister" referred to in the letter?

Little is known of Grace's childhood but undoubtedly from an early age she would be taught how to manage a large household. No. aspect of domestic life would be overlooked. She would learn from her mother how to cook, make butter and cheese, brew ale, spin and weave, sew and embroider, cultivate herbs and prepare medicines. This extensive education would prepare her for her future role in life as a wife and mother and the mistress of a gentleman's household.

Grace's marriage took place in 1593. She was twenty years of age. This was rather unusual in a period when the legal age for marriage was twelve years of age and when most girls married in their early teens. Grace's mother had been fourteen when she married and her grandmother, Bess of Hardwick, only twelve.

The Bridegroom, George Manners was four years her senior. The Manners were also an ancient family whose Norman ancestors had come over to England with the Conqueror. Their fortunes rose during the reign of Henry VIII when Thomas Manners, a courtier and friend of the king's obtained huge grants of land at the Dissolution of the monasteries and was created earl of Rutland. On his death in 1543 he was succeeded by his eldest son Henry Henry's second son, John Manners, contracted a very advantageous marriage to Dorothy Vernon co-heiress of Sir George Vernon of Haddon Hall.

There is a very romantic but totally fictitious story attached to this marriage. It is said that Sir George Vernon objected to the proposed match between his daughter and John Manners and forbade the young man to see his daughter again. Undeterred the ardent gentleman disguised himself as a humble forester and lurked in the woods around Haddon Hall hoping for a glimpse at his beloved. The young couple planned to elope together and on her sister's wedding night Forothy stole away from the festivities and was met by her lover who carried her away to be married.

The wedding did in fact take place at Aylestone in Leicestershire. It seems to have been very different from the magnificent wedding feast Sir George gave at Haddon Hall for his other daughter, Margaret. But it is unlikely that a country gentleman, even one as wealthy as Sir George, would for bid his daughter to marry the son of an earl especially as the young man had substantial estates himself.

Dorothy inherited from her father Haddon Hall and his Derbyshire estates. Her four children were brought up at Haddon. The eldest, George, married Grace Pierrepoint. Like other Elizabethan boys of good family George Manners seems to have had a good education which prepared him for the responsibilities he was later to assume when he inherited Haddon. He probably went to university at an early age for in 1586 at the age of seventeen he was residing at the Inner Temple in London under the watchful eye of his uncle Roger Manners. During the sixteenth century the Inns of Court were used as finishing schools by the sone of gentlemen. The legal training offered by them was invaluable for the country's future J.P.'s.

During these years the progress of the young George is recorded in a lively correspondence between John Manners and his brother Roger who lived in London. In June 1586 the young man was showing a reluctance to work hard although "George doth well and behaveth him self lyke an honest man. Yet you may doe well to write to him for to endevor himself to lerne to write better and to ryse erlier in a mornying. For two ours studie in the mornying is better than four in the afternowne." A month later he is described as carrying himself "free from any

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and having two sons who had survived childhood.

James started his long progress to London on hearing of the death of Elizabeth. One of his stopping places was Belvoir Castle the seat of the earl of Rutland. It was here that he knighted George Manners and his father John Manners. James was not as parsimonious with his honours as his predecessor had been, it is said that he knighted more gentlemen before breakfast at Belvoir than Elizabeth had done in the whole of her reign.

Lady Grace's father was also knighted in 1603 at Worksop when James visited the seventh earl of Shrewsbury. Later that year Sir Henry had the honour of entertaining James' wife Anne at Holme Pierrepoint as she travelled south to join her husband. Lady Grace's cousin, Arabella Stuart, soon became a great favourite with the new queen and she used her influence at court to help her family whenever she could.

After the excitement of the investiture at Belvoir Sir George and Lady Grace Manners returned to their home at Aylestone in Leicestershire and it was there in the following year that their son John was born. There had been one son already who had died in infancy. In 1606 a second son, Henry, was born followed three years later by yet another son, Roger. Besides their three sons Sir George and Lady Grace had five daughters, Elizabeth, Eleanor, Frances, Dorothy and Mary.

In 1611 Sir John Manners died after suffering ill-health for several years. Sir George inherited his father's estates and with his wife and family took up residence at Haddon Hall. Perhaps their money problems now ended. It seems likely as Sir George was able to repair the Chapel at Haddon Hall.

During these years Lady Grace must have been kept busy by her large family and the responsibility of a large household to manage. From the Steward's Accounts for Haddon for the year 1617-18 we are given a glimpse at the family life of a seventeenth century gentleman.

"payd for 3 payre of shooes for the children 3s,) for ribbening and pinnes 5d., for worme seed 3d.)		0	3	8
payd for Bells for the 2 tame deere		0	1	0 "
"payd by my Mr. appoyntmt for $2\frac{1}{2}$ doz. of crosbow) arrowes for John Sloe)		0	7	8
payd for 2 hogsheads of clarett wyne bought at Bawtrey 11 ¹¹ 10s., for a rundlet of sheray sack contayning 8 gallons & 3 qters 26d 3s., for the rundet 16d, for the carryage of both home 12s. 10d.)	13	10	5
payd for a smale corde for the little clock with) a chyme)	0	0	4
payd to Raphe Gladwyn for scowreing in the My11) the Carpetts for the Parler))	0	0	10
payd to Richard the fawkener in discharg of) his bill for bells, gests, hood, lure, bagg, etc.))	0	13	9
payd to my lady for my master to pay for a hawke with)	4	0	o "
"payd for a payre of stockings for Mris Dorothye		0	1	4
Given at Haddon for 4 trumpeters wch came from the Court)	0	5	. 0
payd for a horseshooe att the horserace		0	0	-4
Given to the Churchwardens of Bakewell towards the repayre of their Church)	0	13	4 "

The accounts include some very sad entries in 1618 when the family suffered tragedy with the death of Henry aged only 12 years.

"Given to Mr. Shores man for bringing a tame dooe to Haddon w ^{ch} was given to Mr. Henry)	0	1	0
payd for 2 quarts of white wyne for Mr. Henry in his sicknes 16d, for 1 ¹¹ of suger)	0	2	10
payd for such things as the Phisition did minister to Mr. Henry in his sicknes, and for the Phisitions fee and the Apothecaryes, as by a Bill may appeare)	3	7	5
payd the charges att and concerninge the buryall as by a note may appeare)	1	0	4
payd for Richard Derryes charges in goeing to Newarke for the Phisition)	o	1	o "

Five years later Sir George Manners died. He was buried in Bakewell Church where the inscription on his monument may be translated as follows:

"George Manners of Haddon, Knight, here awaits the resurrection of the just in Christ. He married Grace, second daughter of Henry Pierrepoint, Knight, who afterwards hore to him four sons and five daughters and lived with him in holy wedlock 30 years. She caused him to be buried with his forefathers and then placed this monument at her own expense as a perpetual memorial to their conjugal faith, and she joined the figure of his body with hers, having vowed that their ashes and bones should be laid together. He died 23rd day of April 1623, aged 54."

Sir George's heir was his eldest son, John, who had not yet reached his majority, so Lady Grace continued to live at Haddon and to administer the estates until he came of age. John had already studied at Cambridge and the Inner Temple and in 1622 had obtained a license to travel abroad. Lady Grace was very concerned for her son's welfare while abroad as her following letter to her cousin, Sir George Manners, shows.

"I am ashamed to trouble you, but this bearer being instantly to return into France, my suit is that you would be pleased to give me your advice in this business. My son is desirous to see Rome the year of Jubilee, and writes to have my consent, which I am loth to refuse, and yet so fearful that those hot countries should not agree with his body, that I knew not what course I had best take; besides I hear it may prove dangerous, except he have letters to a cardinal for his protection, and that place is excepted in his license."

Her obvious concern for her family was at times useful to Lady Grace in avoiding the costly gifts which were expected at the New Year and on other occasions:

"Grace, Lady Manners to her cousin, Sir George Manners.

July 10 (1624) Haddon - Concerning the gift to Sir Charles Manners,

I trust you will be pleased to hold me excused, considering the
great disbursements I am charged with, of which many are well known
to you, as my debt unto the King, with the yearly rent; the maintenance of my two sons, the one in France, the other at Cambridge; and
two of my daughters marriageable."

At least two of Lady Grace's daughters had been married before the death of their father. The oldest, Elizabeth, had married Robert Sutton in 1616. He was the son of a Nottinghamshire knight and was created Baron Lexinton of Aram in 1645 as a result of his valuable services to King Charles I during the

Civil War. Fis wife Elizabeth died childless and he remarried sometime after 1635.

Bleanor Manners married Sir Lewis Watson of Rockingham Castle in Northamptonshire. He too was rewarded for his services to the king by being created Baron Rockingham in 1645. Eleanor's marriage seems to have been a particularly happy one although the delayed birth of a son must have been a disappointment. Five daughters were born and not until ten years after their marriage did the first son, Edward, appear in 1630. The following year another son, Lewis, was baptised and buried on the same day. One more daughter was born in 1637.

Frances Manners married Nicholas Saunderson of Lincolnshire, who became Viscount Castleton on the death of his father in 1631. A charming letter exists which Sir Nicholas sent to Lady Grace to acquaint her of the news of the birth of his first son:

"I make bold to begin with the great remembrance of a filial dewtie from a great stranger, your Ladyship's grandchild being a chappinge boy lately comed amongst us, and from him I make bold to tender your daughter's and mine own dewtie unto you, as supporters unto the child's meaninge, wee addinge but our humble entreaties unto my parents desire that Fillingham House might have a yet further happiness conjoyned on to it by the fruition of your Ladyship's with my Ladie Watson's presence at the witnessinge of your Ladyship's servant's getting a name."

But the marriage was of short duration for Nicholas Saunderson died in 1640 leaving his widow to care for a young family of at least three boys (their daughters, if any, are unknown). The eldest boy, Nicholas, was 14 at his father's death and died the following year. Peregrine, the second son, never married and died in 1650 aged 22. The title and estate then passed to the youngest son, George, who surprisingly lived to the ripe old age of 82.

Dorothy Manners, Lady Grace's fourth daughter, married Sir Thomas Lake, a Middlesex Knight. Little is known about this family and Lady Lake died in 1643.

Lady Grace's youngest daughter was to cause her mother great concern when she married a wastrel named Sir Sackville Crow. Her mother's anger and anxiety are apparent in the following letter to the Earl of Rutland.

'I received much comfort from your letter "hearing that same night of my daughter's offence to God and disobedience to me, for when I could not persuade her by any fayre menes and promises to come from London with me, shee did sweere with many oaths and teares never to marie without my prevetie and consent, the which shee hath broken, I feare to her own undoinge, for how may I conceave Sir Sackville Crow to be of that estate and fredome he protested to her, by proofe of which he might have had her with the good likeing of all her frends; notwithstanding inticed a pore mayed to marrie him without the consent of her mother or privity of any neare unto her, ether in nature or good wile, but that the cause of his haste was doubting his ingagements would be hard of and looked unto."

Lady Grace's suspicions and doubts were justified. In 1670 Sir Sackville Crow wrote to the Countess of Rutland from the Fleet Prison in London:

Throughout the Tudor and early Stuart period there seems to have been a greater mortality among young boys and men than girls and young women. This is borne out in Lady Grace's own family. Of her four sons only one, John, was to survive into adulthood. His remaining brother, Roger, died in 1627. It was, therefore, essential that John should marry and produce an heir. His marriage took place in 1628 to Frances, the daughter of Edward, Lord Montagu of Boughton. They had eleven children, four of whom were boys, but despite

this only one boy survived childhood to succeed to his father's estates. John Manners sat in the House of Commons as M.P. for Derbyshire in 1626 and 1640. He was High Sheriff for Derbyshire in 1632 and Lord Lieutenant of the County in 1642. With the extinction of the senior branch of the Manners family, John succeeded to the earldom of Rutland in 1641. His estates and income were now vast.

When the Civil War broke out Lady Grace's family was divided. Her son, John, supported Parliament, his father—in—law, Lord Montagu supported King Charles and after being captured by Parliamentary troops died in the Tower. Lady Grace's brother, Robert, now 1st Earl of Kingston, was undecided and tried to avoid taking sides. Eventually, he joined the king and took part in the capture of Gainsborough where he lost his life. Local legend maintains that at the outbreak of hostilities the earl declared that he would rather be split in half than take either side. His wish came true at Gainsborough. He was captured by the Parliamentarians and while they were taking him down the Trent on a raft a cannon ball sank the raft cutting the unfortunate earl in two.

Lady Grace's son-in-law, Sir Lewis Watson was also disinclined to take part in the fighting although he sympathised with the king. When Northamptonshire fell to the Parliamentarians he sent his place and other articles of value to Belvoir Castle. a Parliamentary stronghold, to be guarded by his brother-in-law, the earl of Rutland. Unfortunately, Belvoir fell to the royalists and he lost everything. Meanwhile, his own seat, Rockingham Castle, had been captured by the Parliamentarians. Everything of value was taken by the troops and a considerable amount of damage done.

Sir Lewis had evaded capture but found himself under suspicion by the royalists, because he had made no real attempt to hold Rockingham Castle for the king. He was sent to Oxford, to the Royalists headquarters to answer the charge. Eventually his name was cleared and he was rewarded with a peerage. In 1646 Oxford surrendered to the Parliamentarians. As he had contributed to the maintenance of the Royalist garrison Lord Rockingham was a "delinquent" gentlement of property in the eyes of the victors and was forced to pay £5.000 in fines or leave the country. He paid the fine and returned with his family to Rockingham Castle to start rebuilding the family's fortunes.

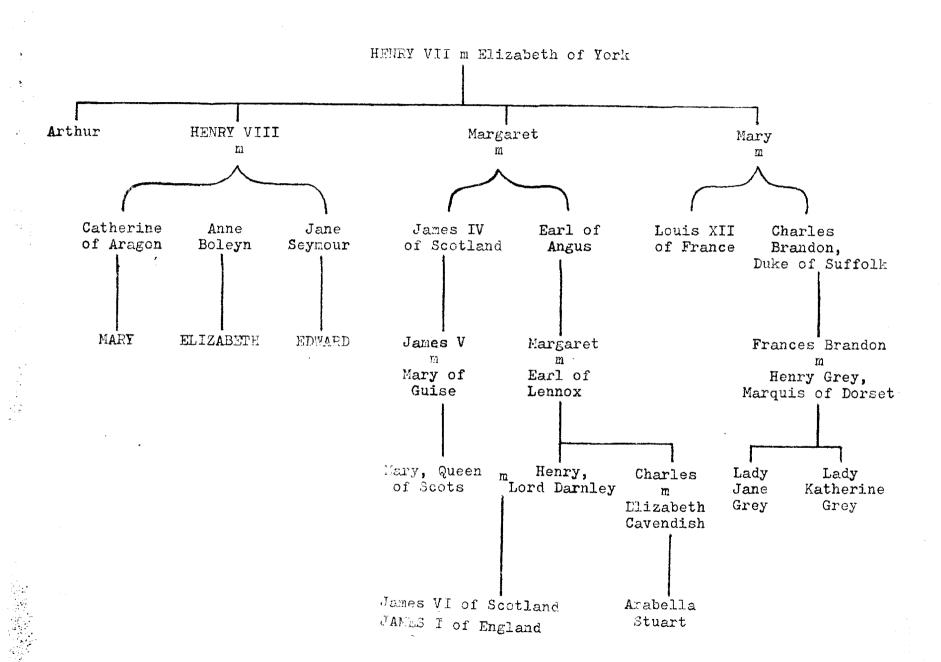
Sir Lewis' fortunes during the Civil War were to have a serious affect upon the last years of Lady Grace's life. In May 1642 Sir Lewis had loaned his mother-in-law £2,000 and had asked her to repay the debt to a Mr. Lambert and others. She duly repaid £1,700 to the appropriate persons. However, by this time Sir Lewis was at Oxford and in 1645 Lady Grace was accused of aiding the Royalists by repaying this money. In reply to these charges Lady Grace stated that she had lived in Parliamentary controlled areas throughout the war, had contributed £890 for public ser ice, her home at Aylestone in Leicestershire was being used as a Parliamentary garrison, she had received no rents from the property since it had been occupied, she had never given any money to the king and finally that she was an old woman of 72 whose only sin was in repaying her debts. Her case dragged on for five years despite the fact that her son was a prominent Parliamentarian. Eventually in October 1650 she was cleared of the charges against her.

But she was not to live much longer. The last years of her life had been troubled by the political divisions within her family and she, like many thousands more had suffered from the upheavals which civil war creates. She died at her home in Leicestershire on 15th March, 1651. An account of her death is contained in the following letter to Lady Rockingham from Lady Grace niece, Katherine Cartwright.

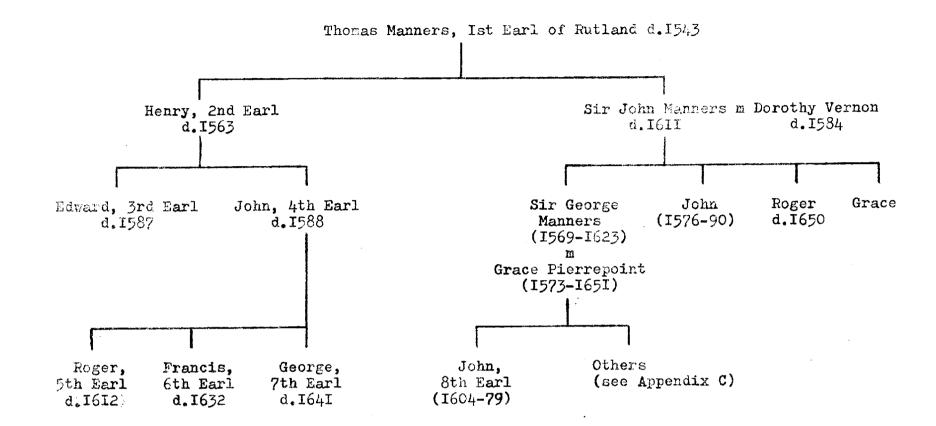
"Upon friday the 14th of March 1651 between ten and leven of the clock at night my Aunt Manners was taken with a Palsey, she lay as if she had been a sleep almost all that night, a bout seven of the clock the next morning she tooke me by the hand and said a great deale to me which I could not understand, I asked her if she would have my Lord of Rutland semt for she said no, my

Lady of Rutland, she said no, my Lady Rockingham, she said no, my Lady Crow, she said no, then I asked her if she would have my Cousen Pierrepont sent for, she said I, I. I sent for him, before he came she said something of a box, Mrs. Ryth fetched the box where her jewels was, she let it stand upon her bed till my Cousen Pierrepont came, as soun as she saw him she looked very cherfully, and said something of an other box, them Mrs. Ryth fetched the box that has her will in it, she tooke it in her hand and gave it to my Cousen Pierrepont, and then made signes to hev the box where her Jewels was opened, when it was she offered to looke in itt, I then opened the papers as the lay lapt up and held them to her, she tooke the pearle cheane, and the two pearle braclets and the three pendant pearls, and put them in one paper and held them towrds my Cousen Pierrepont. Mrs. Ryth asked her if my Lord of Rutland should have them, she said no, if my Lady of Rutland, she said no, my Lord Ross she said no, my Lady Rockingham, she said I."

Having settled her affairs Lady Grace Manners died at the great age of seventy-eight years. She was buried in Bakewell Church next to her husband.



APPENDIX B: THE MANN & FAMILY



APPENDIX C

