

**THE
CUMBERLAND
MAN
AND
BACLHEN
LETTERS**

Introduction

The following letters and extracts of letters are taken from Clementina Black's book 'The Cumberland Letters'. Additional material not found in the book is given in the Appendix. This is a draft version and is by no means complete. The illustrations have not all been labeled and some dates have been left blank to be filled in later. The initials CB refer to the original editor Clementina Black. At the turn of the last century Clementina Black visited the British Library and was perhaps one of the first to peruse in earnest the sixteen bound volumes of correspondence which George Cumberland collected throughout his life. In 1912 she published a book called 'The Cumberland Letters' which contained some of the more interesting letters among the first volume. Other letters she extracted or summarized. And, she had ambitions to publish more, but this did not happen.

The purpose of these pages is to further extract and distill from Clementina Black's book all instances where the Cumberland brothers refer to members of the Balchen / Man family in the hope of casting more light on the relationship among them. By removing extraneous material, the ties that bound the parties together will be seen more clearly. There are therefore three contributors to the following pages: The brothers Cumberland, whose letters or extracts are presented in *italics*, Clementina Black's contributions which are given between " " and my own which have no distinguishing font or punctuation.

The Cumberland Letters

(1772 - 1784)

Cast of Characters

These following letters revolve mainly around four siblings and their descendants. The siblings are: Mary Man (nee Balchen), Eliza Cumberland (nee Balchen), William Balchen and Ann (Nancy) Balchen. William does not make an appearance but his descendants do. The sons of Eliza (Richard and George Cumberland) are the two main protagonists. Details of the families of Mary, Eliza, and William are as follows:

MAN FAMILY

Mary Man (nee Balchen) (1721 -1790), John Man (1718 - 1783), her husband.
Their children: Henry (Harry) (1746/7 -1799), John (1749 - 1824) and James (1755 - 1823) and Francis (Fanny) (1757 - 1842). Mary Man is sometimes referred to as Aunt Man or Mrs. Mann.

CUMBERLAND FAMILY

Eliza Cumberland (nee Balchen) (1726 - after 1814), mother of Richard (1752 -1825) and George Cumberland (1754 -1848). Their father George Cumberland had died in 177_.

BALCHEN FAMILY

A. William Balchen (1722 - 1765), his children are: Sarah (Sally) (1751 - 1780), Eliza (1752 - 177?), Susannah (1753 - 1778), Mary (1754 - 1786), and John (1761 - 1783).

B. Ann (Nancy) Balchen (1729 - 1780) sister to Mary, Eliza, and William. She features quite prominently among the letters for all the wrong reasons.

C. Henry Balchen (1698 - 1780), uncle of Mary Man, Eliza Cumberland, and William Balchen. His son John (1745 - 1785), first cousin to Mary, Eliza, and William. And, Henry Balchen's wife Mary.

There are times when the brothers refer to a 'Mr. Balchen' or 'Mr. B' and the referent could be either their great uncle Henry Balchen (1698 - 1780) or his son John Balchen (1745 - 1785). There are also references to a 'John Balchen' or 'J.B.' which could be this John or William Balchen's son John (1761 - 1783). But, usually there is no doubt which John is being referred to since the Cumberland brothers neither liked nor trusted the elder John while they were fond of the younger.

Although William Balchen had died before the start of the letters, and so does not make an appearance, his children played a significant role in the lives of their Cumberland / Man relations. However, by the time the letters conclude in 1784 none of their Balchen cousins are living but Mary who dies in 1786.

Sarah Balchen married her cousin Mr. Read and had three children: Sarah (Sally), Hannah (1779 - 1781), and James. There are occasional references in the letters to the Read family.

A fifth Balchen sibling James (1724 - 1748/9) makes an appearance in the form of a letter addressed to his brother-in-law George Cumberland Senior which appears in the appendix.

Thus the Cumberland brothers had two sets of first cousin on their mother's side, the Mans and the Balchens.

OTHER CHARACTERS

Richard Cumberland the dramatist (1732–1811), and third cousin to the Cumberland brothers.

Mr. Ashby, husband of the dramatist's sister Elizabeth Cumberland.

Mr. and Mrs. Tapp (It has been suggested that Mr. Tapp was the brother of William Balchen's wife (see CB p. 18), however William's wife's name was Sarah O' Neal, so he may have been Sarah's uncle).

Mr. Richard Cross (a Member of Parliament and '*distantly related*' to the Balchens).

Mr. (The Rt. Hon. Charles) Long, MP for Rye and who had an illustrious career in government becoming the Paymaster-General for the Army and raised to the peerage as Lord Farnborough. In 1811 George Cumberland published a description of Long's country estate 'Bromley Hill' (see bibliography).



FAMILY BACKGROUND



The Balchen family, to which Mary Man and Eliza Cumberland belonged, was a London family. Another family by the same name (variously spelled Baltchin or Balchin), and somehow connected to the London Balchens, is found quite prolifically in the Guildford / Godalming area of Surrey. Various attempts have been made to unite the two families, in part because the Surrey branch could boast a national hero in the form of Admiral Sir John Balchen. But an explicit documented connection between the Admiral's family and the London Balchens has not been made, although Clementina Black does not hesitate to do so as follows:

"On their mother's side [i.e. Eliza Cumberland] they were of creditable family. The great names among the Balchens were those of Admiral Sir John Balchen and of a certain

Richard Cradoc, described as having been a consul in Persia under Charles II, and as having returned to London in the year of the Great Fire, that is in 1666. A sister or a daughter of this Cradoc appears to have married a Balchen, '*A relative of Sir John Balchen*' ... " (CB p. 15 - 16).

Clementina Black's convoluted argument to connect Admiral Balchen's branch with the London Balchens throws little light on the relations within the London branch. As to these, Ms. Black gives the following somewhat inaccurate account where I have provided additional material or corrections in [].

"We begin with a certain Balchen marrying a Miss Cradoc [no record has yet been found to support this claim] and that two of their sons lived in the Minories, where one William [not William but Richard Balchen (1692- 1738)], was an apothecary and druggist. The other was Henry a '*hozier*' who is said to have made a fortune by trade early in life; he married twice and had one son, John, who left one daughter [Susan] '*with a good fortune*'. William Balchen [in fact Richard] was the father of two sons and four daughters. The elder son, William, was '*an Indian Captain*', and must have been dead by the year 1772 [true, he died in July 1765]. He left a widow (whose maiden name was perhaps Tapp) [no her maiden name was O'Neal]."

"The younger son, James [1724 - 1748/9], died at the age of twenty-four, '*of a decline*'. A curious letter from him to George Cumberland, who became his brother-in-law, occupies the first place in the correspondence." [Ms. Black is referring to George Cumberland senior, the father of Richard Dennison and George. The letter is in fact a copy of a letter James had written to the British Consulate in Bremen, it is not addressed to George directly but was enclosed with one that was. See the appendix for details. James Balchen also wrote a journal soon after his sister Mary married John Man, in which he describes a visit to his sister's new in-laws at Hurst, near Reading. This journal is dated April 18th 1747 and has been transcribed].

"The daughters of the apothecary [Richard Balchen] were Mary, who married John Man (the name appears consistently in this form) and had two sons John and Henry¹, and two daughters, one of whom was named Fanny. A second daughter [of the apothecary's], Susan[na] whose husband was a Mr. Thompson and who had one son; Ann [Nancy] who did not marry; and Elizabeth, who married George Cumberland and was the mother of Richard Dennison and George [...] Their mother, it appears, lived before her marriage, with a Mrs. Boulter, who appears from the pedigree to have been another daughter of Cradoc, the Persian consul, and is described as '*a lady of large fortune, who resided at St. Mary Axe, was a widow and sister of Lady Blount of Stratford, both their husbands had been directors in the South Sea Company, and the chief of their property devolved to Richard Cross Esq., their nearest relation, a man of large fortune who lived in Grovenore St London, and Richmond Hill and always considered my mother a distant relation.*' '*My mother*' is Mrs. Cumberland, born Elizabeth Balchen." (CB pp. 18 -19). Clementina Black gives no indication as to which of the two bothers wrote this and with out more context it provides only clues. We do learn three 'facts', the consul Cradoc had

three daughters one married a Balchen, one a Boulter and the other a Blount. Ms. Black also refers throughout this discussion of the family's history to a pedigree as if it were some document that she was viewing but what this is exactly cannot be determined.

Ms. Black fails to mention, when listing the Man brothers (Henry and John) above, the youngest brother James, who also makes an appearance in the letters. Mr. James Thompson, whom Ms. Black refers to above, was a widower and the father of Eleanor (Nelly) Thompson who married Henry Man. Thus Henry Man's father in law married his (Henry's) first cousin. The son of this Thompson-Balchen marriage was James. At the time of writing Ms. Black would not have been aware of this relationship.

It has been noted above that all the children of William Balchen died young. The reason for this according to Ms. Black is the "family tendency to consumption". As far as we can tell there are no male descendants of the London Balchens (nor are there ant of the Admiral's) and thus the name from this branch does not continue today.



Ms. Black gives the following character sketch of the brothers Cumberland and their mother:

"Richard, calm, sedate, somewhat cold and passive, but quietly tenacious, fond of the country but, fond too of pleasant company, happy in his little farm, and among its domestic animals, a little touchy with superiors and perhaps with equals, but open, generous and considerate to the poor, and beloved by young people; George, impulsive eager, full of artistic appreciations, half-developed talents, and intellectual interests, energetic to excess and subject to fits of melancholy, the warmest of friends and yet a lover of solitary rambles, always busy for others and coveting

leisure for his own pursuits, more keenly happy and more deeply sad than his brother -- the more interesting of the two and the more faulty. In the background stands the figure of their widowed mother, active, thrifty devoted to her sons, but the torment of their daily lives and on no friendly terms with her sister [Mrs. Mary Man] (who to do her justice, appears thoroughly disagreeable). All the elderly ladies on both sides of the family seem to have been tiresome ... All characters [appearing in the letters] were as unreasonable and as prickly as Mrs. Cumberland, under whose rule no servant '*above an Ideot*' would consent to remain ... " (CB pp. 10-11).

THE LETTERS

1771

Between 1771 and 1776 Richard Dennison Cumberland was a student at Cambridge University while his brother George occupied a clerical position at the Royal Exchange Office in London. Thus most of these early letters are written from London to Cambridge

or vice versa.

The first mention of one of the Cumberland's Man / Balchen relatives comes in the first letter that Richard writes from Cambridge where he is a newly arrived undergraduate at Magdalene College.

(Letter 1 CB p. 36) from Richard to George Cumberland dated 29th February 1771.

I will begin with a description of the college which is one of the least, if not the worst, in this university the building consists of two courts, the first almost forms a square The two remaining sides are divided into appartments for the under Graduates one of which is occupied by your Humble servant, Mr. Balchen has you say given you a description of it, therefor have no occaision to repeat it. The second court is behind the hall ...

The Mr. Balchen mentioned in the letter is probably John, the son of the brothers' great uncle Henry. John is also mentioned in the following two letters.

1772

(Letter 2 CB p. 36) From Richard Cumberland (the Dramatist) to his brother-in-law Mr. Ashby dated November 16th 1772.

Queen Anne St.

A Letter has arrived from D. [Richard] Cumberland of Magdalene which has produced a conversation between his Friend Mr. Balchen and me upon the subject of the young mans finances, which seem to stand in need of some little assistance. In what matter to best to apply This assistance on the part of my father [Denison Cumberland, Bishop of Clonfert and Kilmore] is a matter of some debate in my mind: Mr. Tapp a worthy trader here in town, pays His Tutors Bills, and by how much He exceeds His College Exhibitions etc. supplies them from a small fund arising from the Amicable Society of Annuitents; the Bills come quarterly and I am of opinion the best method upon the whole will be to throw the Bishops Blessing into the Hands of Mr. Tapp in aid of the slender fund, by which means I shall see the particulars of His expences and can proportion my aid to the nature of the Demands and the situation of the fund, which if it holds out long enough to land Him in Holy Orders will have done all that we require of it: this being the case provided the youth is not in personal want, I think you need do no more on our behalf than signifie my design to Him; & as His Tutor supplies his pocket & other necessities I should expect there would be no call upon you of that sort - We join in our love & good wishes to Mrs. Ashby [the writer's sister] & you & desire you ever to believe me, Dear Sr.,



Most affec. & truly yours

Richard Cumberland

From this, and other interchanges, we learn that Richard Cumberland, the dramatist, is prepared to do little for the brothers. Richard later comments that they cannot expect to '... get any thing from that quarter...' and George writing in 1777 wonders: 'What if I were to ask Mr. Richard Cumberland for 20 pounds? He would never forgive me as long as I lived. [...] I hope we have none of his blood in our veins.' (CB p. 146)

(Letter 3 CB p.37) Mr. Tapp to Richard Cumberland at Magdalene College, Cambridge November 27th 1772.

Dear Sir

Both your letters came duly to hand and it gives me great pleasure to find my Endeavours have had the wished for effect of contributing to Your Happiness & exteemd myself indebted to You for the Estimation You Rate them at. In consequence of Your last Letter Mr. Balchen waited on Mr. Cumberland [the dramatist, as mentioned in the letter above] & acquainted him fully with your Mothers & Your Situation & left it for him to Judge from thence of what was Proper for him to add to it, what the Bishop determined on, he told Mr. Balchen, he would send to me, as I pay all Mr. Purkis's Bills; but I have not heard from him Yet, I expect to be at the Bear at Cambridge for half an Hour, about 9 o' clock on Monday Morning where shall be glad to take you by the [hand] if Your Studies will permit & remind with all [] kind Love & best Wishes,

*Yrs. Sincerely
W. Tapp.*

1774

The following letter is interesting because it contains four major themes that recur throughout the correspondence between the brothers. First to appear is their mother whose disposition is never truly happy, next their Aunt Man who is considered impossible, third is another aunt, Nancy (Ann Balchen), whose remarkably uncontrolled behavior is a source of great and constant embarrassment, and finally their young Balchen cousins. That the brothers would often despair of their relations is not surprising, as we shall find out.

(Letter 4 CB p. 63) George Cumberland to Richard, July 18th 1774.

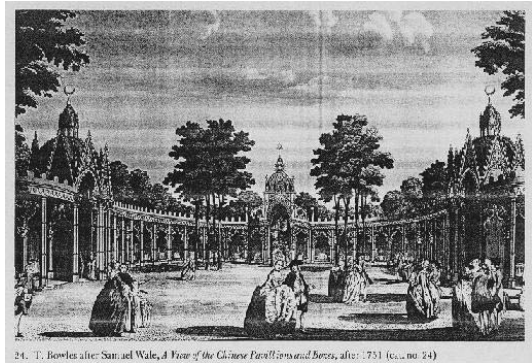
Your mother is better in health than she has been for some time, owing I believe to her having been cupped the other day it has removed that swimming in her head which had troubled her some time with a Numbness which I imagine to be a little Paralitick [...] Our Aunt Man I know nothing of she never calling on us. I am sorry she does not know her friends, there is nothing but what I would do to serve her in my power but her unhappy pride, and tenatiousness will never let her make a friend but perhaps she is prevented by a certain person of whom the only good news I could send you would be that he has ceased to plague Mankind. Nancy (I should have said Miss) has paid Mr. Tapp another visit lately, she asserted so many lies before his customers and vented so much abuse, because he would not pay her beforehand, that he was obliged to turn her

out doors. [...]

There are two possible candidates for who the person might be that George would like to see ceasing to 'plague Mankind' and they are either John Balchen or his father Henry. George is probably punning here since the person being 'plagued' is his Aunt Man. He goes on to say:

Our cousins at Newington are all well and Sally is going to be married ... [to] ... the son of a Mr. Read - a baker in the Borough, he has no fortune but he is going into partnership with his Uncle who is an eminent Attorney, and who 'tis said will leave him the business very soon, having acquired a tolerable fortune ... [Mr. Read is] ... about 19, excessively thin, and pitted with the Small pox, a Man of few words and what is remarkable in a young Attorney or indeed in any profession A Modest Man. [...] I went with them all [his Balchen cousins] the other night to Vauxhall for the first time this Season we staid till Eleven o Clock and the lover [Mr. Read?] proposed a Supper but a Young lady in company an Acquaintance of Cousins insisted on going home; it cost me 3/-.

Clementina Black then adds this comment: "The Newington relatives were the widow of Mrs. Cumberland's brother Captain William Balchen; and an affectionate intimacy existed between the juniors and the Cumberland cousins." However she also adds the following regarding Mr. Read: "So deceptive, however is youthful promise that this modest man lived to send in to the Cumberlands a bill for professional services which George stigmatized as exorbitant." (CB p. 64). This is not the only bill the Cumberlands would complain of. They were not very pleased when their cousin James Man (whom George denigrated in one letter as a 'mere merchant') also came after them for payment (see letter under Man correspondence). (The illustration is of Vauxhall Gardens at the time.



24. T. Bowles after Samuel Wale, *A View of the Chinese Part of Vauxhall Gardens*, after: 1751 (coll. no. 24)

The next reference is to Henry Man, at least this is whom Clementina Black asserts is meant by H.M., in the following brief extract of a letter describing recent election riots that had broken out in London

(Letter 5 CB p. 68) George to Richard 18th October 1774:

Riot disorder and confusion prevailed [... and he had ...] sent two or three Squibbs to the papers [...and that ...] on Friday H.M. and my self where busily employed at the hazard of a broken head, in sticking up Bills which we had printed again's the 'King of the City'.

1775

The next letter from George to Richard is dated June 15th 1775 which Clementina Black paraphrases as follows: "He [G.C.] mentions in the letter that John Man is 'at last' married, and that his '*father has given him half his school,*' a statement that is somewhat confusing, in view of the fact that not many years later George was applying to this same John for a legal declaration that he had not seen or heard from his father for seven years. The explanation probably is that George, like most of his contemporaries, often failed to make any distinction between a relation by blood and a relation by marriage, and that '*father*' here mentioned was the parent of Mrs. John Man." (CB p.83).

As we now know, Ms. Black's supposition that '*his father*' in fact refers to John Man's father-in-law is correct. John Man was indeed given a half share of the Reading school belonging to William Baker on marrying his daughter Sarah on June 5th 1775. William Baker is described as '*... a man of most amiable character and manners, and of great classical and mathematical learning, and more than forty years a master of an academy at Reading Berks*'. Encyclopaedia Londinensis, p. 634.



Clementina Black remarks that the Cumberland brothers had considered marrying one or other of their Balchen cousins (Susan and Mary) which she phrases as follows: "The Misses Balchen being now of age to attract suitors, George's letters frequently report the addresses of some gentleman to one or other of them. Richard had recently enquired whether Mr. Joachim, '*Susan's humble servant,*' was descended from an abbot of the same name who pretended to inspiration ..." (CB p. 92-93)

See the Appendix for notes on who the historical Joachim was. The reference to 'Vender of Nutmegs' further along has something to do with Joachim. All of this is rather obscure to the modern reader. The illustration is a self-portrait by George.

(Letter 6 CB p. 93) George replies to Richard October 14th 1775:

Tis not Susans humble servant (to answer the fag end of an old Letter of the 24 Sept with an affidavit) but Mary's, at that time we suspected otherwise, but it has turned out as I say. I'll tell you more: -- the latter end of September -- She refused Him: -- the beginning of October called Him Friend: Two days after Smiled in His Company : -- the Next day talked of 3 Years: -- 24 Hours after, said, She did not want to be Married, and Yesterday He called on Mr. Tapp : -- did not you expect I should roar out Curse her I hate Her -- Fire! Furies! Death & D_____n! and then whine like a Milksop. -- Nothing like it I assure you -- sound, sound as a Roach, give me your hand my good Friend, and Congratulate me -- there!

Ms. Black then asserts, by means of parentheses immediately after the mention of Mr.



Tapp that he was "her uncle and perhaps her guardian." But as we have noted, if Mr. Tapp were an uncle of Mary's then he would have been a great uncle since her mother's last name was O'Neal.

Ms. Black goes on: "From all which protestations we may surmise that Mary Balchen may have been the '*amiable Female*' with whose affection George would have liked to be '*blessed*.'" Unfortunately Ms. Black fails to provide us with the context in which '*amiable Female*' or a wish to be blessed occurs, all of which leaves the reader somewhat confused at this point.

She goes on to state that "Richard, some days after, did, as requested congratulate him heartily: '...*on having once more regain'd your Liberty which I really thought at one Time in Danger, tho' I cannot give credit to all the unconcern you express upon the Occasion.*'" (CB p. 93).

And she continues: "The vanity of George, if not the heart, must surely, his brother opined, be touched by the rivalry of the '*Vender of Nutmegs*.' Even vanity, however, had no reason long to feel a wound, for neither of the Balchen sisters married Mr. Joachim." (CB p. 93). The picture is of George Cumberland by an unknown artist that hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Ms. Black reports that in the next letter George returns to the possible rivalry of Mr. Joachim, protesting that, as she says, "... he felt no ill-will to him, and proceeded with a statement about Mary that deserves some attention, considering how important a part she played in the lives of the Cumberland brothers, and [...] as an example of the eighteenth century attitude toward marriage." (CB p. 94)

(Letter 7 CB p. 94) George to Richard around the end of October 1775.

Situated disagreeably as I know she is at home, a Man offers himself not disagreeable in his person, approved by her friends, and in a thriving business: she knows her own fortune to be no large one. I am sure she has no vanity and therefore thinks nothing of her personal qualifications; all this considered, I think in prudence she could not refuse; As I am entered into the subject I will tell you (my father Confessor) what my thoughts have been, and how they got their rise - for to no one but yourself, have I ever indulged them, nor do I now ever intend so to do. For the sweetness of her temper, unaffected Humility, and some little strokes of an [invincible?] integrity, joined to my own Observations, I always gave her the preference to one Sister; -- there was a bashfulness, a modesty, which in my Eye, gave her a preference to both [] Age had some share in it; after the death of Eliza (for whom I boast to declare, I would have encountered every difficulty that could have fallen to the lot of Man) my partiality was encreased to esteem from some conversations I had with her on that occasion ; since: I have gradually discovered new beauties in her Mind : and I will frankly confess to you were I in a situation to marry any woman without injuring her, she would be woman of my choice And my only hopes, (if I hoped at all) were that [s.....] she remain single, I might one day have it [in?] my power, honourably, to ask her hand -- but my circumstances must be good before [d.....] because I am fearful of my own extravagance [...]

The opening sentence of this letter referring to Mary's situation at home sounds a familiar refrain that suggest that Mary's domestic situation was made uncomfortable, if not impossible, by her mother.

This letter also resembles one Richard would write some five years later (see letter ____). In fact, Richard proposed to Mary but she declined while George never went quite so far.

1777

Now comes one of the more complex and lengthy incidents, as related by Clementina,



and which I have reconstructed as follows: Richard on leaving Cambridge finally ends up as the vicar of Driffield in Gloucestershire, and in the process is required to expend a fair amount of money on furnishing his new digs. To raise the money, he approaches his mother with the following proposition:

(Letter 8 CB pp. 126 - 127) May 6th 1777 Richard writes from Driffield to his mother in London:

... you are sensible to the necessity of my keeping House, of my furnishing it immediately, this may be done at a small expence with what we have already, but even that is more than I can bear at present without running into Debt, unless you will endeavour to help me out by applying some part of what remains after the account is settled with Mr. Tapp towards defraying your expences in coming down, and purchasing the Things the two beds only I mention'd above, as it is not in my power to remit a single shilling for that purpose, without leaving myself in a situation the most disagreeable, that of having nothing to defray incidental expences, which arise every day or borrowing money in a place where I am scarcely known. If you have so mean an opinion of me as to think I mean to lessen the little you have left by taking anything from you, which I shall not have it in my power to return, I am sorry for it. My intention in bringing you down here, is to enable you to live in a more comfortable quiet manner than you have hitherto done, and therefore I think you are as much interested in our setting out as myself ...

The proposal that Richard makes as to how his mother is to raise the money to defray his expences involves an account in the form of stock that is held under the joint trusteeship of Mr. Tapp and John Man, Mary Man's husband. Unfortunately, John Man had not been

heard of for some time, a common event in the 18th century, and which will be explained later. As a result, the money from the trust that would have been paid out to Eliza Cumberland, was instead being paid out from Mr. Tapp's own funds. Richard was now proposing that his mother should approach Mr. Tapp for a further loan against the trust. Eventually, all loans against the trust would be repaid on selling the stock. However this first required a declaration from Mrs. Mary Man that her husband John was probably no longer alive, the statutory number of years having elapsed since he was last seen. Once this had been accomplished, Mr. Tapp would be the sole executor and could dispense with the money as he saw fit, i.e. he could repay himself from the trust for the loans he had made against it to Eliza Cumberland. But this depended on convincing Mrs. Man to declare her husband dead, which was to prove a difficult task. It must be assumed that George had made several attempts to persuade Mrs. Man to make the declaration. The letter given in the appendix from John Man (Jnr.) to George Cumberland is in response to an inquiry made by George as to when John had last seen his father. George needs to establish when contact had last been made with John Man (Snr.) in order to determine how much pressure he could put on his aunt to make the declaration.

(Letter 9 CB p. 128) To Richard's proposal as to how the money was to be raised, George replied on May 13th 1777 saying that he had:

Been employed in searching for a cheap bed for you but to no purpose, as the upholders will not sell such a thing under 10 or 12 pounds, and at sales they are seldom to be met with without Blankets, etc. You hint in your letter that your expences are at the greatest and your income so small as to reduce you to the necessity of borrowing if you were to pay for the feather Bed etc. and you propose to my Mother to pay for it, and her expences in coming down, out of the stock to be sold, after defraying her debt to Mr. Tapp. I could have wished you had not mentioned the circumstance as it has given her some uneasyness, being unable, as you must be convinced, to pay for it now, and besides the uncertainty of getting it sold at all, there is a probability it may all be wanting to discharge Mr. Tapp's account --- however should this not be the case, you may I think be sure she will not refuse it you for any purpose you may want it for. I am now doing everything in my power to get it done, and cheerfully, I assure you, will I give my release to my future claim [...]

Clementina makes the following comment on the brothers' interchange: "I have not been able to arrive at any definite views as to Mrs. Cumberland's financial position, but I think the case must have been somewhat of this kind: Certain stock had been left to her (I surmise by her mother [Martha Balchen nee Hitchcock], or possibly under her father's will [Richard Balchen (1692 -1738)]), and Mr. Tapp and Mr. Man, her brother-in-law, were her trustees. Mr. Man had disappeared - under what circumstances I have not the smallest idea, but in those days the press gangs, Algerian slavery and very indifferent postal facilities the fact was not necessarily by any means discreditable - and in his absence Mrs. Cumberland had not been able to receive her dividends. Mr. Tapp knowing the money to be safe, had made those advances to her that were absolutely needed for the family's support; and it was now proposed that steps should be taken to enable her to sell her stock and repay him." (CB pp. 128 -129).

Ms. Black's fanciful speculations as to John **Man's** disappearance turn out to be quite wrong and in fact what happened to him can be seen in the appendix. Clementina then comments that: "To George's slightly censorious letter Richard replied by return of post to explain he: ' ... *never thought of taking advantage of my Mother which I did not intend to return and that only to the amount of ten or twelve Pounds at the most [...] neither should I have done this if my mother herself had not told me, she should have about eighty pounds left when the account is settled.*' " (CB p. 129)

On hearing of Mary Man's recalcitrant behavior, Richard Cumberland writes to his mother

(Letter 10 CB p. 130) on May 23rd 1777 expressing his 'astonishment' about:

*... What you tell me of Mrs. **Man's** refusing to serve you in selling out the Stock As it can never be of any use to her Family and must proceed from malice and ill-nature, tho I must doubt the sincerity of your Uncle in endeavouring to persuade her to it. However let it turn out as it will remain full security to Mr. Tapp, and we shall do very well, never fear.*

Who is this 'Uncle' that Richard refers to? Ms. Black speculates that he: " ... was I think John Balchen, possibly the husband of 'Mrs. Balchen of Goodmans Fields' whose death is mentioned (see letter ____). Her other uncle, Henry, and her father, both carried on their occupations in the Minorities -- in their day a thoroughfare very respectfully inhabited. In Goodman's Fields the houses were, like many of those then standing in the Mile End, excellent and substantial residences, with gardens. [It should be noted that Mary **Man's** eldest son Henry (Harry) had been born in 1748 at Prescott Street which bounded Goodmans Fields (a large tree filled square) to the south. Her other two sons, John and James, were born at Mansel Street which formed the west side of Goodman Fields.] The fact of Mrs. **Man's** living in Mile End, where Mrs. Cumberland possessed a house, suggests that their farther, 'the druggist and apothecary' had acquired property in the East End of London. Mrs. **Man** had clearly been asked, either to take action as her husband's death representative, or to make a declaration from which his death might be presumed. True to her invariable character in the correspondence of her nephews, she had behaved ungraciously and refused." (CB p. 130).

Clementina Black's suggestion that this uncle was John Balchen is probably incorrect and that it is in fact Henry Balchen. There was a bother of Henry's called John, but he died in 1742 and there were no other Balchen uncles left alive, except Henry, at the time that these letters were written. The hint of suspicion surrounding their uncle's motivations accompany almost all references to Henry Balchen and so there is little reason to assume that this uncle is any other than Henry. She continues:



"**Harry Man**, whom we have seen assisting George to placard the City with political bills of their own composition, was about to marry a lady whose Christian name was Eleanor and whose

surname does not appear. Richard observed of the match that it was: *'A good one -- because it is as equal as anything of this kind can be, 'tis a toss up which has the best of the Bargain'*. He goes on to beg his mother not to concern herself: *'... on account of my situation as to furniture, very little will serve us at first setting out and things will be better bye and bye.'*" (CB p. 131). Left is St. Mary Aldermary Parish Church, London in which Henry Man married Eleanor on May 17th 1777. She was the daughter of James Thompson who had married Susannah Balchen after her mother Ann Eastham had passed away.

(Letter 11 p. 133) On May 27th 1777 George writes to Richard:

I went this morning to Mile End to persuade Mrs. Man to oblige us by swearing etc. (John Man) having told me, how he had now explained to her all we wanted and that she would comply). I met him just by the house and he went back with me to lend his assistance, but instead of agreeing, she broke out into complaints that I and my Mother had treated her with disrespect, in not calling on her, before letting her Uncle know etc., etc., and in the end bounced out of the Room, and John and I out of the House of course, I am much beholden to John for the pains he takes to serve us in this affair, and sorry it has rendered his time in London so disagreeable.

Clementina then includes an extract of a letter from Richard in reply to the above, where " ... he opines that Mrs. Man's behavior to be: *'... such that I cannot account for it in a more charitable way, than by supposing her a little disorderd in the head.'*" (CB p. 133).

On June 26th 1777 George writes a letter to Richard where he makes the following three short observations: *'[...] Ticonderaga is said to be taken [...] Mrs. Man has sworn. Nancy is going to Prison for four pounds again.'* (CB p. 135)

From this we learn that at long last the Cumberland's Aunt Man had agreed to declare her husband dead, according to 18th Century custom, as a result of his being missing for seven years. However, as will be seen, this 'swearing' was the first in a number of steps that had to be taken before the money from the sale of stock could finally be released to Mr. Tapp.

The reference to Nancy going to prison is one of many where their Aunt Ann Balchen's incorrigible behavior would land her in debtor's prison and, as we shall see, her troubles would only worsen. "In early September George had written a letter to Richard giving an account of an interview with Mr. John Balchen, who had offered to mediate on behalf of the Cumberlands with their aunt, Mrs. Man. To this letter Richard then writes on September 10th 1777 with some mistrust of John Balchen: *'... going so busily between us and Mrs. Man, [...] and am confident he has some bye End to Serve.'* And, as to the proposal of: *'... relieving a certain person I am sorry it was not done before, if there were any Use in it. But they who know her must be sensible it can't be done by paying her Debts unless you have a mind to see her there again the next week.'*" (CB p. 142).

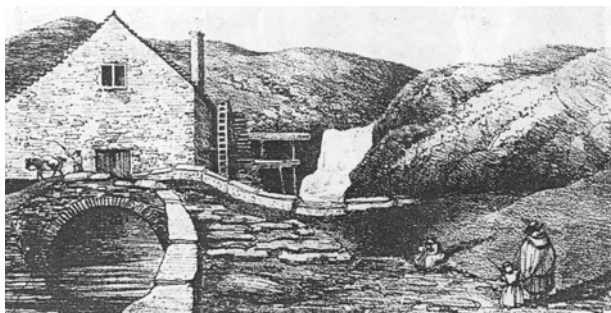
Although Ms. Black offers no explanation as to whom this 'certain person' is, there is little doubt that Richard is referring to Nancy Balchen, whose profligate ways would lead her frequently to the debtors prison at the Marshalsea (the 'there' in last line of the letter). Richard is reiterating the, by now, well known routine of Nancy's borrowing and spending and its inevitable consequence. Nancy had, in 1747, given birth to a son Isaac Balchen and in 1750 twins, John and George. Perhaps Nancy had a sense of humor since these were also the names of her sisters' husbands. All three children were born at the Foundling Hospital for unwed mothers. So her profligate ways were not confined to just money.

The fact that John Balchen is involved in the process of trying to induce Mrs. Man to comply with the brothers' wishes indicates that her cooperation was still needed, although what exactly for is hard to deduce. The reference to John Balchen is also made with the usual note of suspicion.

(Letter 12 CB p.145) Around the middle of September 1777 George writes to Richard the following:

With respect to the Stock affair, we have no remedy with the Company -- I would gladly part with twenty pounds if it was my own to serve you -- I am sure my Mother thinks the same -- but that is not all, it is to serve herself --- for if [-] B. dies, where is the whole? -- one more chance seems now to offer.

If the commons will grant a partial administration, which has been done, Mrs. Mann has offered to accede to it -- if this will come in and do her no injury -- I am to call on Adderly the Proctor to have his answer tomorrow about it -- if this will not do, at all events the Stock must be secured -- I



saw old B. today and he seemed a little apprehensive that I should mention his refusal of [] as a cause of our miscarriage -- he was extremely civil, and pretended to interest himself much in the getting it done. I have lately heard another anecdote of his dissimulation, -- he told Mrs. Mann, to swear Mrs. R [] this was just as we had persuaded her to it -- but I do not give entire credit to it - "The Devil is painted blacker than he is".

It is not easy to determine what is going on here. As we have noted Mrs. Man's swearing alone was not enough for the stocks to be released and the whole matter had now moved on to another legal level involving 'the commons' and a 'Proctor'. The dissembling 'old B' is probably the brothers' great uncle Henry Balchen. The devil being painted 'blacker than he is' probably refers to Mrs. Man exaggerating the dissembling ways of Henry Balchen. Note also Mrs. Man's new found agreeableness. It seems that once she had overcome her (understandable) resistance to having to declare herself a widow, her disposition toward the two brothers became quite amiable. Mrs. R is Mrs. Read (Sally Balchen). The illustration is by George from his book 'Poem on Landscapes' published in

1793.

Just as the brothers are at last about to lay their hands on the stock a further and somewhat obscure obstacle impedes their way, as the next letter indicates.

(Letter 13 CB pp. 147 -149) from George to Richard on September 20th 1777.

Dear Richard,

I wish you could bottle up and send me some of that phylosophy which you say is become so natural to you, say it [is] the result of a constitution early broke, which god forbid; - yet I fear the want of your indifference, will dissolve mine, weaken'd it, it has already. - I know not how it is with you, but my mirth often is turn'd into heaviness - I have got to suspect good fortune, and if I have particular reason to be cheerful, I take it for an omen that something will soon happen to vex me - when it comes, I cry - what next? - however ,



what a difference between this and our schooldays! When our little misfortunes served only to make us sport -- now, everyday brings with it grave Lessons, and serious Concerns, - The World, I am convinced will not let you live in peace unless you can conceal your happyness in some retired corner, or purchase its smiles, with appearance of wealth -- if you have it, you are out of its power -- I know not how far I might run on

with these reflections, if I did not check myself but I will tell you what caused them -- From the remarkable civillity of Mr. Tapp to me lately, and his behaviour to me at his own house, where I have dined and supped since I have been return'd from the country -- I had ventured to think that all our offences where done away and our obligations forgiven; - especially as there seemed to now be opening a way to discharge all demands - for the other day he went with me to Mr. Adderly, and he (Mr. Adderly) gave me hopes that limited administration might be granted - and if not, I had promised (as he desired) that we would spend twenty pounds in chancery sooner than not do it (this seem'd to put all partys in good humour: -- now whether it is Mr. T's natural temper to elate and depress a Dependent , or whether he is worked upon, J.B. or others, I know not - but that night I was sent for and not being at home went this morning - when I was lectured in one of the compleatest stiles imaginable, and in the end (as Shakespear finally has it) shaken up to a warmth that convinced me it would be imprudent to reply -- on this occasion the old fable comes opportunely to my aid, and I consider that to say white to people who are determined it shall be black, is but waste of words -- when I went there this morning -- I was told "I have been sent to last night but was not at home -- that a man has been with Mr. Tapp to demand seven years Interest on the hundred twelve pounds of the Trust and that he had a Letter of Attorney from the Mother, and demanding to know how it was to be paid -- and the end of the story he said that my mother had thought proper to take everything out of his hands -- and therefore she must take the consequences for his part, he should not pay a shilling of it -- this was the burthern of the song -- I slightly hinted that as we were about settling every thing the person might possibly be induced to stay a little; this put him in a fury - "Would I undertake to explain to him how my father had acted with regard to the trust - he thought it would not much rebound to the credit of the

family -- here I had the resolution to defend my father's ashes -- by saying that I thought he left more than enough property behind him to discharge the debts, he gave nobody any room to believe his intentions were dishonourable; -- " It was none of his to leave, he left no property" etc. was reverberated from both quarters, Mrs. T. and Mr. T. -- I maintained my position by an argument that you would readily guess -- that this threw them on another ground, my Mother was a fool and a weak woman etc to give up to me what she might have kept for Life, and been independent of her sons, and had enough money to discharge all these demands, and not strip herself of every thing to [] her sons -- that Mr. Cross and Mr. Long never thought I [] any benefit from these Ground Rents -- but My Mother -- would have given them, Mr. Cross to his servant, Mr. Long to his Clerk -- that Mr. Balchen would have done it for her had already, and would again -- with a vast deal more; and that he - Mr. T. would take the first opportunity when he saw Mr. Cross -- to ask him what he thought of it -- concluding that he had been all along treated very cavallierly by us all, and he did not care a damn whether I was cool or warm; (upon my telling him that I was ready to answer all his arguments, but found myself then to warm to enter into them) to all this harangue I answered shortly, the substance of which was, that I desired him to satisfy himself with respect to Mr. Cross opinion - that I ever did, and ever should look on the money I earned as my own property -- that I believe Mr. C. had a better regard for me than his servant, and Mr. L. than his clerk, that my Mother was so far from being dependent on her Sons, that I was ready and I believed you were too, to allow her any thing that we should risk reasonably putting it out of our own power to retract - and in the end that he would send the person to me, I would take care to discharge the demand - he said I might if I would as he should not, repeating an echo, that he had been treated cavallierly by us all --- To do this I am brought into a situation that I have never before experienced -- I mean to borrow -- and how my first application will succeed I know not -- but I shall ask Mr. E. to lend me twenty pounds for three months, the money is but twenty three pounds and five shillings so that you must remit me the cash I advanced for your Bill as soon as you can, or I go to pot for twenty pounds! Tomorrow I settle with Mr. Long and I have already paid Mr. C. more than I have received -- do not give yourself a moments uneasiness about all this, I write it only because I know you love to be informed -- at present I am doubting whether I shall undertake to defend the family in a Letter, or whether I shall let the "weakest go to the wall" -- the latter is wisest I believe and easiest, but yet not altogether right -- only let it root in you one maxim, never if you can help it borrow of a friend -- My love to my mother -- I dined with Mr. S. and they do not yet fix, but will certainly be down as they intend spending a month -- adieu --

Yrs sincerely

G. Cumberland

Again in this letter George expresses his discomfort with regard to J.B. (John Balchen). The following is an extract of Eliza Cumberland's letter to George ("one of her pathetic scrawls" according to Ms. Black). The shade below is of Eliza Cumberland aged 62 (1814) by George.

(Letter 14 CB p. 150) dated September 26th 1777:

...the News of Nancy Confinement give me great Concern and must beg you will let me have the pleasure of hearing she is Released as I think there will be half a year due upon the House at Michaelmas I should be much obliged to you to now and then write me Long Letter of common Accurrences of our friends and pray let me hear how Dear Little Sally Reed is and very she is likely to have a Brother soon, how you go on with Mrs. Spaweton and whether you find things Agreeable as I must say my Mind is continually anxious about my Children pray my Compliments to all friends shall conclude with prayers for your health and Happyness and am Dear George your Affectionate Mother,



Eliza Cumberland

We learn from this letter that Eliza's sister Nancy is once more in prison. The reference to the half year coming due at Christmas suggests that the family held property in London from which rent could be expected and which could be used to bail Nancy out. The likelihood of Sarah Read producing another child is also raised although as far as we can tell the next time she has a child is 1779 so if she was expecting in 1777 then perhaps this child died in infancy (?)

The following letter shows George's great concern that his whereabouts would be discovered by Nancy Balchen and that she would create such problems for him as might lead him to lose his job. The power that he invests her with and that she seems to hold over him is quite remarkable for a man usually so rational.

(Letter 15 CB pp. 151-153) from George to Richard October 2nd 1777.

I might I think have concluded that his [Mr. Tapp's] rage was sated, and having vented his spleen, he would now let me be quiet, but here I was mistaken, not content with having called me to account for living without his licence, and threatening to attack my bread - by injuring me with my employers he has now thought proper to do the remaining ill natured action he had in his power, and render my office a place of uneasiness -- The matter is this, about an hour ago he sent George, who had been with him to receive Nancy's annuity, to my office to ask charity of me for her, telling him, as he tells me "that he knew none in the family who would grant her any assistance, unless it were George Cumberland who he believed if applied to would help her." I am sorry to say this one action, so malicious, so mean and unworthy of any man, even to a person that had offended him, has in one moment given me the most disadvantageous opinion of a person whom I had before thought incapable of such a thing - he well must remember,

for it was our conversation the last time I was at his house, the uneasyness I expressed at the thought of her discovering me -- and then in a joking manner, said he would send her to me -- he has now seriously as good as fulfilled his promise -- for George in all likelihood will some time or other inform her, or his wife, and in that case, my life will become really unhappy, as I shall go [about?] my business full of apprehension - Is not this a glorious and friendly act? When he first addressed himself to me I denied having any such relation and wanted to persuade him he had mistaken the person -- but he soon convinced me he was not to be put off, by telling me who he came from -- in the greatest confusion imaginable I had nothing to do but to tell him I had not seen the unhappy wretch a great many years, and had determined not to own her, and therefore begged he would not trouble me about her, as I was determined to do nothing -- He entirely agreed that what I said was very reasonable, said that he out of compassion for her distress (of which tis possible he might be a cause), had taken her out of Prison, and given his joint note with hers, to pay her debt at one pound one shilling per Quarter -- for 7 Quarters -- that he had taken her home. Where she lay on his chairs, being so dirty as not to be fit to go into a bed, that instead of thanking him, "she had, according to her wont, been abusive to him and his family," and had kicked up several rows, -- however as he had known something of her he was willing if possible to take care of her provided she has some cloaths to wear. -- I considered some time, and at last came to a resolution to give him one guinea, for the following reasons, tho I could ill spare it at the same time making him promise never to say to anyone that he had got any thing from me, but to lay it out in course cloathing for her use as if of his own accord and by no means to let her know where I was or mention my name. -- I considered that if I sent him away without any thing he might possibly be induced to send her to me, out of revenge for having lost his labour, that if it was properly applied (which he desired me to call and see done) it would be a means of really assisting her, if such a thing can be done -- and if he put the money in his own pocket (which I since hope he will) that will effectually prevent his sending her where she may be informed of the cheat.

But none of these expectations can render me quite easy. It will lay a dead weight on those spirits which lately had been quite lightened, and serve often to depress a person too much "alive to fame" -- If she comes I shall not dare to stay, or fly, if I retreat she will stay and abuse me and family, to people who will perhaps half believe her, or listen for diversion, if I converse with her the evil will be equal - either way. I shall never be able to hold up my head again -- such a crime it is to have an infamous relation -- I cannot bear the thought of it -- I have [] great inclination to write to him, to entreat [] offence [] given to be so persecuted, and wherein he has been [] cavallier [] but as I should chuse to write on my guard, I shall defer it till tomorrow when if I am in the same mind, I think I can make him feel wrong, and satisfy him that, tho I know when to be silent, I am neither a Stock nor a Stone, and can defend my self when ill treated -- I know how cautious I ought to be in the matter, and that I ought to keep a copy -- for it is not unlikely that if I fall any word that could be misconstrued Jno B. may take that opportunity to turn it to my disadvantage wither by telling Mr. C that I have ungratefully offended Mr. Tapp or something of that nature to open a door to injure me -- for I firmly believe J.B. to be at the bottom of it all.

Clementina Black comments that this John Balchen (J.B.) is " ... the son of George's Uncle Henry not the young cousin of the same name belonging to the Newington family." She then goes on to say that it was not John Balchen after all who was responsible for persuading Mr. Tapp to send 'George' to visit George Cumberland, and thus expose him to Nancy, but rather George had " ... learned a few weeks later, on unimpeachable authority, that the author of his discomfort was one James Man, who appears I think on this occasion only in the correspondence". (CB p. 153).

We know now that James Man appears more times (see Appendix ----) in the Cumberland letters than this once. James' relations with his Cumberland cousins appear to have been quite friendly, indeed in his Will he bequeaths ' ... twenty pounds to each of my particular friends the Reverend Richard Dennison Cumberland of Cirencester, George Cumberland of Bristol.' It seems unlikely that James was the inspiration behind Tapp's idea, unless he was acting quite innocently out of concern for Nancy and unaware of George's feelings. We do not know, and Ms. Black does not provide, the source for her claim about James and it is certainly well worth going back into the British Library to try to retrieve.

The next letter Clementina Black provides is from George to Richard in which George is responding to an earlier one from Richard. In that letter he had suggested that George might have been overreacting to the threat that Nancy Balchen posed. Clementina Black calls the previous letter from Richard "a letter of consolation".

(Letter 16 CB p. 154) George to Richard October 10th 1777:



I receive your answer to mine as a kind of endeavour to make a disagreeable circumstance appear trifling - and I myself do not feel it so severely as I did at first, because like other Uneasyness it is not so fresh in my memory. You speak of N.B. [Nancy Balchen] as if you knew nothing of her frenzy, her artifice, her plausability, volubility, and other abilities for which she is famed -- could I bear an office where she came? Or live in a house where she had called on me? In short you talk like a person living in Driffield, and have no apprehension of her taking so long a Journey to annoy you. If you read my letter you will find I do explain why she came to beg of me, she having nothing to clothe her. The money [s]he had of Mr. T., having been expended in taking her out of prison -- the part of a former Letter, was, I thought by her being released -- for my own part I Could not think of acting in the affair, for fear of a discovery, and I knew not who to employ or ask such a favour of if I had it in my power to relieve which it was not, having myself one evening, gone to the Prison, to be informed of her situation, and finding it would require ten pounds.

It appears from this letter as if George's worst nightmare was realized and that Nancy had tracked him down and paid him a visit, although his reaction to the event does not appear to be as great as his anticipation of it. True to his nature he had attempted to help her.

The illustration above is of the Marshalsea (see appendix).

Clementina Black comments "It must be admitted that Miss Balchen was a troublesome relative, either to serve or offend; but it does strike a twentieth century reader that George was more discomposed than most nephews nowadays would have been by her proceedings. It is true that he knew her, and we do not." (CB p. 154)

(Letter 17 CB pp. 155 -156) George to Richard November 5th 1777

What is the reason my dear Mother and brother, that the receipt of your last Letter, affected [me] in the same manner as if you had both rushed in to my room unexpectedly - it is the second time I have been overcome in the same way -- the moment I laid it down I melted into tears --- I will endeavour to account for it myself. My Mothers Letters are the overflowing of a parents love, yours of a fraternal one, expressed without art, and I love you both more than I even suspect -- do not imagine I am low spirited -- I was never livelier in my life, and the tear or two I shed trickled sweetly down my cheek --- I feel no shame in confessing this weakness, if you call it such for I think it more praise worthy than many things we boast of

He then turns to the subject of Nancy Balchen and what an impossible character she was:

Mr. Tapp has ordered her stockings and some money for tea, but she is ever ungovernable, and tells Mr. Smith, she does not understand having cold Mutton and broth, and desires to have Chicken, and Veal, which she has been always used to ... In the Marshalsea, I find she beat all the women that came her way, and accompanied her blows by opprobrious expressions, but sometimes she had the worst of it -- in short if she had not been released I think they would have given her liberty to keep the prison quiet.

This letter conveys an image of a remarkably violent and abusive person who sadly received as much as she gave.

1778

In a letter dated January 1st 1778 George mentions that '*Mrs. Balchen of Goodman's Fields died on Monday*' and that '*The Old Man, is I hear much shocked at it*'. This reference is to the Cumberlands' great uncle Henry Balchen's wife Mary. Records indicate that she died in December 1777. (CB p.164.)

It appears that, at the beginning of 1778, John Balchen, one of the 'Newington cousins', not the son of Henry was considering going to stay with Richard Cumberland at Driffield on account of his health. He, like many of the Balchens, was beginning at that time to show the first symptoms of the consumptive illness that would eventually sweep away all the children of William Balchen.

(Letter 18 CB p. 164) In the letter of January 1st 1778, in which he had mentioned the death of Mrs. Balchen, George writes that Mr. Tapp:

Said to me that he should by no means think of John's being with you without paying in some way for the trouble he gave, I told him you had, I was sure, no such wish, and that you would readily afford him any service in your power, without any interested motive -- but he rejoined that He could not by any means agree to his being with you, unless you would be paid for his board etc. and in that case, nothing he thought would be more likely to restore his health especially as John earnestly desires it.

(Letter 19 CB p. 164) Richard replies to George's letter on January 5th 1778:

What Mr. Tapp mentioned of paying for John's Board rather vexes me, as I look upon it as a Cut of humble Pye, the natural consequence of some late transactions. I shall oppose accepting any thing, as I should be exceedingly glad of his Company as a Visitor but not as Boarder for a few weeks. Mother begs you'll make her Compts to Mr. and Mrs. Tapp and tomorrow being his Birth Day, is determined to drink his health in a glass of his own wine wishing him may happy returns of the Day. This as opportunity serves.

What exactly these 'late transactions' are we are not told but we may hazard that they concern the Cumberland brother's gradual flexing of their financial independence from Mr. Tapp. Clementina Black does not transcribe the contents of a letter that Richard sends to George in the early part of February 1778, instead she summarizes it as follows:

"A gossipy letter from Richard speaks feelingly of the illness of another of the Balchen sisters, '*poor Susan,*' and refers again to the proposed visit of her brother John to Driffield, who could still be accommodated '*without Difficulty if he will take up with a bed in my Room*' -- an arrangement to which, in the case of a consumptive person, medical science had not yet seen reason to object. So far were our ancestors from supposing such patients either dangerous to their neighbours or in need on their own account of fresh air, that the accepted treatment, at this period, was to keep them throughout the winter season in one heated room, to which their kindly friends resorted to as much as possible, in order to keep them amused. In these conditions the disease was apt to carry off member after member of a family -- as was the case with the Balchens. That Richard did not contract it from John during a visit of some duration, in which the lad had slept (doubtless with closed windows) in the same room seems to show that he had not the tendency to it which he seems to have supposed. The passion for both Cumberland brothers to spend long hours out of doors was doubtless of advantage to their health; Richard in particular from being a delicate youth seems to have become a hale man." (CB pp. 177-178)

(Letter 20 CB p. 181) Richard to George March 11th 1778.

John Balchen is arrived. I met him this Morning at Barnsely and put him on the old horse, which conveyed him safe home -- he is very well after his Journey, and already intimate with D. and L., who with my Mother are playing at Whist, while I write so you will not wonder at the stile of this --

A 'p.s.' is added by George at the end of a letter to Richard dated Tuesday March 16th 1778 which merely says '*Susan is rather better, and dined in Town the other day*.'" (CB p. 183). D and L are the initials of two students Richard whom was tutoring.

(Letter 21 CB p.185) About a week after the above from George, Richard comments that:

John is here still, and as stout as ever -- he frequently walks 8 or 10 Miles a Day, and makes a good Playfellow to the others ... he is a very honest good natured fellow and does not want Sense, but there is a certain Cockneyishness about him, something of the Jerry Sneak in his Manner and Expression, that makes him appear to the greatest Disadvantage, and I fear it is too late to remedy it now.

(Letter 22 CB p. 186) A further letter from Richard written at Whitsuntide 1778 states that:

Mother is as well as usual in health, or rather better. In temper much the same, tho now and then a little curbd by the Company of the Boys. Indeed on their Account I find her very useful and only fret she will not endeavour to make herself agreeable.

Clementina Black then goes on to say that: "A day or two later Mrs. Cumberland must have been cheerd, if only temporarily of a present from ...'Coz Mary of a very pretty Dress Cap with a Berkley Ribbon suit'. Ms. Black comments that "Coz Mary was Mary Balchen of Newington, and a 'ribbon suit' was a set of ribbons arranged for the neck, sleeves and sometimes the waist also. The nature of a 'Berkley Ribbon' remains a mystery. The next extract is interesting as to the light it throws on their mother's character:

(Letter 23 CB pp. 186 - 187) George to Richard written on June 29th 1778:

I am sorry the country and the new objects have not given her new ways of thinking, but now I believe it is an evil that will never be mended, however I think the pupils you have must of force do some good -- what a pity it is with such an ability to restrain her temper on some occasions, and with so many good qualities, and so much religion, she does not see the unhappyness it occasions, and be good Natured always.

Clementina Black writes: "A letter of a week later shows that Richard has been in town and visited the Balchen family, who were at Peckham. He had found '*the poor dying Girl [Susan] ... sitting in the little Parlour which was crouded with 6 or 7 People, enough to stifle a Person in health*'. Richard expressed his fears lest John '*should go in the same way*' if he remained in London, and besought George to urge the necessity of his going into the country. As no mention is made of Mary, it is possible that she was not at Peckham, although she was generally to be found wherever there was most need of attendance and sisterly devotion. Richard came away saddened". Two months later on August 30th, 1778 George writes that: '*Susan is dying indeed - but John is better - I fear for Mary.*' (CB p. 202 - 203)

(Letter 24 CB p. 209-210) September 12th 1778 Richard tells George:

I am afraid indeed poor Susan will be cut off by the first Wintry blast - but why are you alarmed for her Sister, I hope there are no symptoms of a Decline, tho no one need be surpriz'd if there was -- Distress of Mind, Confinement, and Fatigue are enough to ruin the best constitution - you say John is better. Should he be too much affected at the Loss of his Sister, and there is a circumstance in her case, that may deeply affect him I intend to give him a hearty and pressing Invitation to join his old companions at Driffield -- You



may remember the Time, when you and I had serious thoughts of connecting ourselves with that Family -- to own the truth they were the last time I thought seriously on the Subject -- some trifling Disgust or rather a new Turn of thinking put an end to them, yet still there remains some Degree of affection and regard, beyond what we feel for [] acquaintance, which without talking of Natural affection, [] suppose to arise from our being acquainted from our Infancy and now we talk of new turn of thinking. I cannot help [] notice of the astonishing alteration that has taken place in you within these 4 to 5 years -- you need not be surprized, if it had not been for the better, I would have mentioned it in softer Terms - but you must allow you are far from being the

same man now in sentiment manner and expression that you were then, and your Genius which is the most extensive I have any where met with, did not discover itself except in the article of Drawing, till very late. This I am convinced was for want of opportunity, and am very sure, had you had the same education that was thrown my way on me, you would much earlier have shewn those abilities which lay so long conceal'd.

This last part is interesting because it shows Richard's recognition of George's talents which were slowly emerging and which would blossom once he had escaped the daily grind of office work. (The portrait is of George by himself.) What the particular circumstances are that would considerably affect John on the loss of one of his sister we do not know.

(Letter 25 CB p. 216 -217) Richard writes to George sometime after October 18th 1778:

In your next be so good as to let us know how the Chancery Suit goes on, and when likely to be finished, and pray send me the Account of what I paid you when last in Town, as the want of it prevents my making up my Books. You say nothing about poor Susan, nor any of our London Friends but considering all think tis very excusable.

Adieu R.D. Cumberland.

*Wedny Night 12 o clock.
Mr. Geo: Cumberland
Exchange Insurance
London*

Clementina Black writes that " on November 16th 1778 a letter with a black seal acknowledges the receipt of one from London, giving the news of Susan Balchen's death". (CB p. 217). The shade on the right is of Susan Balchen. All the shades used here were done by George.

(Letter 26 CB pp. 219 - 220) from George Cumberland to Richard Cumberland December 9th 1778.

I had a most friendly Letter from Mr. Cross today by Mr. Balchen who has been there two or three days -- in which he [] if we are to be very merry at Xmas on the Hill [] take the opportunity of calling on Mr. James who I have not seen since I met him in the street about [] weeks ago.

(Tare of this part or burn the whole.)

I tell it you as a secret - there is still some thing mysterious in the expressions of Mr. and Mrs. Tapp and Mrs. Read, when I am mentioned with my cousin M--

I know not if you have observed it, but I [] other reasons to imagine I have been thought on there, yet I am sure it cannot arise from any behaviour of mine -- it may be conjecture, -- but I can no otherwise account for the [] on her part, -- you may explain it, adieu -- This is your birth night, I'll drink your health in arack punch and tell our Mother I wish I could send her a Glass,



*Yrs. sincerely,
G. Cumberland*

*Revd. Mr. Cumberland
Driffelde near
Cirencester
Gloces.*

1779

(Letter 27 CB pp. 229 - 230) Richard Cumberland to George April 1779:

If Mr. Tapp is about to settle our Account, there will be some money for my Mother, which you will let me know of, and I can regulate my Remittance accordingly. We are at last beginning to repair the Outhouses and I hope this Summer, you will find things in better order within as well as without -- my Garden is kept in better Repair than it used to be, by the Ingenuity of a very valuable Fellow who works for me and can turn his hand to any thing and we are extremely well settled in Maid Servants. Mother enjoys great

Health and is as happy as she is capable of being, but so much taken upon with her little Family cares that it is impossible to persuade [her] to stray out Door or Horseback this fine Weather -- Farming you detest so will say nothing of that -

Clementina Black summarizes a letter that George sent to Richard on June 14th 1779 where he goes to Newington to visit Mary Balchen and where he passes on to her a message from Richard that she should spend a month at Drifffield. (CB p. 237) Further on Ms. Black claims that Eliza Cumberland "... had been educated by a wealthy relative of good social position" although she produces no support for this claim. Who was this relative and would this education have applied to Eliza's siblings? (CB p. 247).

1780

The next letter is to George and is dated January 3rd 1780. Richard had earlier on at a masked ball met a mysterious lady wearing a Greek mask whom he referred to as the 'Grecian lady' and with whom he became quite infatuated. In the letter he asks George if he '... could procure an introduction thro any other family than the Reads', probably because the Reads were 'family'. (CB p. 251)

Clementina writes that: "In this month (January 1780) had occurred the death -- in the workhouse, I think -- of Nancy Balchen, and Richard reported that his mother had been much affected by the sad end of her sister and had wept; although the event must, in one sense, have been felt as a relief by all surviving members of the family." (CB p. 251)

(Letter 28 CB pp. 257- 258) On March 21st 1780 Richard writes to his brother on hearing of the death of Mrs. Sarah Read (nee Balchen) and he supposes that George would attend the funeral:

Be so good as to attend to Cozen Mary's Behaviour on this and any other occasion that falls in your way, as You know I have the highest Opinion of Your Judgement and am interested more nearly than you can conceive in the Family since my last Visit -- Something whispers me she is the good Woman I have been so long in search of -- that without many shining ones she has all the good Qualities necessary to make the Married State comfortable of a serious religious turn without Melancholy -- of a tender disposition and passionately fond of Children -- her Education not amiss and Situation in Life sufficiently humble, by which I mean, such that being taken from an uneasy Dependance on a mean Selfish Woman to be Mistress of My House and Family would be an Elevation rather than the Contrary, which is a Circumstance I lay great Stress on.

'The mean Selfish Woman' is one of a number of references to Mrs. Sarah Balchen, Mary's mother, who appears from the letters to have been a somewhat malevolent character. Although George's enthusiasm for what was now left of the pallid Balchen sister had by now dwindled to a flicker, that of Richard's seems to have be rekindled.

Ms. Black writes: "The visit of Mary Balchen to Drifffield so long desired by her aunt and cousin, took place in July 1780, but the reason for her coming was alarming ..."

(Letter 29 CB p. 265) George to Richard sometime in July 1780:

... that this measure [of going to the country] had not been adopted till her apothecary had pronounced her life in danger without a change of Air. 3 weeks ago she took a sore throat by being out late in an evening, which turned to a Cough and tho not apparently dangerous at present is very alarming to any one who knows her family. This I am sure you will take no notice of, as it should be every ones business to dispel in her the Idea and I think there is great hopes that your air may recover her.

Ms. Black gathers from a letter written by Richard in August 1780 that: '*Driffield vicarage was a gayer place when inhabited by a young lady visitor than when it housed three hobbledyhoys pupils*'. She then goes on to say that the "... next letter exhibits a handwriting that has not previously appeared. Its is very careful, very regular, very long in the loops, and belongs to John Balchen, who writes in the following terms -- no doubt exactly the proper ones for a young man writing to a relative whose hospitality he had recently enjoyed."

1781

(Letter 30 CB pp. 272 - 273) John Balchen to Richard Cumberland January 4th 1781

London

Dear Cousin ,

A Letter, when one has no particular subject to write about, is generally to a Poor Orator a very difficult task, especially when it is divested of all the ceremony and Compliments, which is so much made use of in letters, and which I think between near friends, had better be omitted-I shall therefore without any further apology proceed, with thanking You in my Sisters name for your kind letter-which she received just after she had sent one to my Aunt--she would certainly have acknowledg'd it herself before, (and I dare say will soon, if she dont see you in town, which we all expect will be very soon) but when you hear of her great anxiety and una[] dilligence in the illness of Poor little Hannah and her affliction at her decease - I am sure you will excuse her-upon my word she stood greatly in need of Your usual kind advice to keep her Spirits up-however, she is now much better- but I am running on without mentioning the chief cause of my troubling you with these, and that is to beg your acceptance of a cask of some of the best Jamaica Rum this city can produce, have sent it by the Cirencester Coach to be left for you at the Ramhope it will prove acceptable--All friends here are in good health and desire their best Respects to Aunt and self -- could almost swell a volume about Mrs. R. but think had better do it when we meet - hope My Aunt continues in her usual good health. Pay my best respects to her and am not without hopes o seeing her in the spring here--being in haste must conclude--with wishing you and my Aunt not only a happy new Year but a succession of that felicity which good hearts must always enjoy -- and remain

Dear Cousin,

*Your sincere friend,
J. Balchen*

Perhaps John Balchen obtained the cask of Jamaican rum from his cousin James Man whose business as a commodities importer included Rum from the west Indies. Also, from this letter we learn of the decease of Hannah Read either in later 1780 or the start of 1781. Ms. Black adds that "Although this epistle was addressed cojointly to the '*Revr'd. and Mrs. Cumberlands*' the lady cannot have taken her share of it until later, for she was at the time of its arrival on a visit to Richmond Hill [home of Mr. Richard Cross] where she seemed likely, according to the report of her younger son, to '*continue some time ... for my part I marvel what can make ammend[s] for so much self denial*'. [!]" (CB p. 273)

CB continues: "The visit of his cousin Mary seems to have awakened in Richard to the pleasure of a good and gentle woman's presence in his house, and before she came away he had framed the hope of inducing her to return as his wife. The fact that his mother was fond of her niece, and would probably have liked to have her as a daughter-in-law, may have tended to favour the scheme. While Mary was his guest Richard would have considered it a breach of propriety to make her an offer of marriage, but I imagine that he allowed his wishes to be perceptible to her." (CB p. 278). This change of Richard's heart is in marked contrast to his thoughts expressed in Letter 24 where he writes '*I had serious thoughts of connecting ourselves with that Family ... some trifling Disgust or rather a new Turn of thinking put an end to them ...*'

She continues that: "This winter of 1781 brought fresh unhappiness to the Balchen family. It will be remembered that Mrs. Read, the married sister [Sarah Balchen], had died some time previously; the widower, after quarreling about his late wife's fortune, had married again, not, it would appear, wisely, had become involved in financial difficulties and had now disappeared from London. Mary Balchen at once took charge of her little niece, and probably, since, as we know from Richard's account of her that she was '*passionately fond of children*,' found happiness in doing so. The next misfortune was the return of John's illness; he began to spit blood, and was sent under his sister's [Mary's]care -- the only sister now -- to Clifton, "the hot Wells" of our ancestors. Richard met them and saw them to their lodgings [...] and was constantly running over for a couple of days at a time." (CB pp. 283 - 284).

1782

(Letter 31 CB p. 284) On April 12th 1782 Richard writes to George;

Our Cousins are settled much to their satisfaction, and think both have received benefit from the Air and Waters, but especially John who has had no return of his Complaint and is in much better Spirits, but still languid and incapable of bearing fatigue.

However, Clementina adds that: "The young man himself was not patient enough to stay

long, but went back sooner than was prudent to London and to office work. Before long he was failing again, and Richard's entreaty that he should come to Driffield was successful. John seems to have liked the place and to have been happy with his cousin, whose manners I suspect were calm and soothing; better reports soon began to be sent, and as the weeks went on John became strong enough to share in the cheerful neighbourly gaieties that the young vicar loved." (CB pp. 284 - 285)

"Richard and John (still a guest at Driffield, and reported in every letter as gaining health) made a little tour together in the last days of July, and on August 1st an account of it was despatched to George."

(Letter 32 CB pp. 286) Richard to George August 1st 1781

On Sunday we rode to Cheltenham ... went to the public Breakfast next Morning, met with the Prescots there and above a Hundred People besides, thence through Twokesbury to Worcester, the neatest City I have seen a great while, from thence to Bromsgrove,



where being the second Day of the Races, we dined with the County Members and about 40 more at the Ordinary, went to the Races in the Afternoon, and through a beautiful Country to Birmingham, a Town almost entirely new built and containing near 50000 Inhabitants but in general little better than Spittal Fields, the Houses being run up in a slight irregular Manner, on short Leases, we were extremely entertained with Clay's Manufactory of Japan and Buttons and some others, dined with my old Friend Tames, who accompanied us to the Theatre equal in Elegance to Covent Garden within and far Superior to any other Theatre without, indeed this and the new Church are the only buildings worth attention. Next

Morning we took leave of Birmm and rode to the Leasowes, which is fully equal to the Description given by Dodsley and pleases me more than anything of the kind I ever saw. ..I never wished more for Your Company in my life than during our Walk. An Hour's Ride carried us to Hagley, the Seat of the late Lord Littleton. The Prospects from the Park are beyond Description, and the ground being irregular varys them continually we spent three very agreeable Hours here and then rode to Kidderminster, a fine Country, all the Way and got to Worcester that Night. We found the city crouded with Company, at the Assizes, but got excellent Accommodations after Breakfast rode to Malvern, a public watering place, on the side of a range of the most romantic Hills imaginable, immensely

high and commanding a fine Country-dined at the Ordinary with a very genteel Party of Gentlemen and Ladies, who all live in Houses near Buxton and dine together-Slept [] at Gloster and home next Day, perfectly pleased [] Expedition in every Respect.

However, soon after this jaunt in the country John must have returned to London.

(Letter 33 CB p 297) George to Richard February 6th 1783,

John wrote me word that he is better, but Mr. Balchen told me to day that he does not think he can live. He is going at last to Spain with Harrison -- may it succeed. Mother is as well as usual but seems to Miss the company of Mary, with her cheerful letters, your last made her cry [...] Mary is gone to Pottrills.

Ms. Black comments: "Whether this (*Pottrills*) is a local or personal name I cannot tell at all: in any case Mary had gone to join her brother." She then adds that: "Mrs. Cumberland was at this time established in lodgings near to the Balchens at Newington, and had made and unmade as many arrangement before finally coming thihter [...] so that George has been kept going to and fro with messages to the people of the house." CB then says that; "John Balchen's proposed voyage is explained in a letter from himself."

(Letter 34 CB p. 297) John Balchen to George Cumberland

my Apothecary here advises another Climate; and the peace being at length arrived Mr. Tapp has an intimate Friend Captain of a Ship that is going to Cadiz (the New Betsey; Carbin) and a Mr. Harrison who once lived with Mr. T. and was afterwards his Factor at Cadiz is coming to Ostend to go with Captain Carbin to Spain.

Ms. Black then add that later on "George was writing [below] with great exasperation to give a further account of their young cousin's affairs":

(Letter 35 CB p. 301) At the end of April 1783 George wrote to Richard:

John was going abroad, all settled and the Passage even agreed on when Mr. T came down to demand his final determination, his wavering spirits here failed him and he refused to go. He was taken at his word contrary to Mary's entreaties and no time allowed to recal the resolution. [George meets John and the sister at his mother's lodgings shortly after] John declared with vehemence that it was not his fault he did not go abroad, as he did everything in his power to accomplish it, about that Mr. T had been with the apothecary, who seemed not to approve it, and added that if he lived till the autmn and got better, he would get himself pressed as a common sailor sooner than stay another Year in this country.

Ms. Black then writes that: "George hereupon interviewed Dr. Smith and tried to get Mr. Tapp to meet with him, but the latter came to the appointment too late. Dr. Smith advised the voyage, but when George repeated his opinion. Mr. Tapp: '... remarked that it was a

family disorder, that nothing could save him. And appeared averse to the measure -- adding that most likely Mary would soon go too.' Ms. Black comments: "Whether Mr. Tapp had learned more precisely than George the total hopelessness of John Balchen's case, or whether John was robbed of his last chance by the ill-timed dictation of his uncle [?], no one can now declare." (CB p. 301). Note Ms. Black's belief that Mr. Tapp is an uncle of the Balchens, if so I believe he is a maternal great uncle.

(Letter 36 CB pp. 301 - 302) Less than three weeks later (sometime in May 1783) George wrote to Drifffield, to announce that:

on Saturday last at 6 o' clock poor John died in his Sisters arms - who has been very ill ever since tho prepared for what was to happen . -- I wish you would come to Town on this occasion, as it is a very critical time indeed and you may judge from your own observations -- Mary it is hardly thought will live -- but if she does she is to be taken to Hackney -- for security and preservation. Mr. T said if she left her mother she could not go anywhere but to him with propriety -- this I denied as she was of an age to live anywhere with reputation. It is rather remarkable that I dreamt I saw him dying the evening he died -- and that he recommended Mary and his niece to my protection -- When I told Mr. T. this, he said, they were taken care of that he had been present at making his will when he had left what he possessed between his Mother, Sister and Niece - with legacies to himself Mr. Tapp, Mr. Crowley and his two cousins Richard and George ... But come to Town, if possible, you may be a comfort to Mary, and it will be respectful to John's memory.

Ms. Black says that: "Richard, having not long before offered himself to Mary and been refused, thought that his coming up would be liable to misinterpretation and remained in Gloucestershire ... the letter [from Richard] ends with a very kind message to Mary Balchen: '*That if it will be of use to her little girl [Sally Read] to change the Air this Summer I shall be happy to see her come down with my Mother - she will be no addition to our trouble or expence, but a great one to our Satisfaction'*" (CB pp. 302 - 305).

During this period George was beginning to extricate himself from the Royal Exchange office, but the process was painful and acrimonious and the treatment he was beginning to receive from his superiors angered him greatly. Details as to how George escaped the stifling confines of office work will be provided in later editions. At this point, Ms Black states that: "It transpires that Mary Balchen had apparently heard of her cousin's indignation against the magnates of the Royal Assurance Office, and had written urging upon him a more charitable frame of mind. The draft of his reply shows that she had at this time gone to Margate as it is addressed to her there."

(Letter 37 CB pp. 308 - 309) George Cumberland to Mary Balchen and dated August 1783.

It afforded me the highest satisfaction, my dear Mary, to hear at last of your health improving -- I assure you without flattery I have suffered much anxiety from your silence and the difficulty I found of getting any intelligence about you, however we are now made

amends, etc. ---



Next to your account of your health returning I am delighted with your remarks on my return – You are right, we should overlook little Injuries and great ones, my little Saint. – But how few of us can do as we should? In fact my Injuries have been of long standing but I resolved never to trouble others with them, and as little as possible to suffer them to trouble myself – If you and I should ever be permitted to meet in a certain better Country than this, we will talk about these and many other things, and then they will serve for amusement, but here there are some subjects which are better never entered into, as they only help to disturb the small share of tranquility

which our philosophy procures us, and for my part I have resolved to try to be as happy as I can, if I cannot be so happy as I wish, now this is the Doctrine I would recommend to you as you can neither prevent the Loss of good, or hinder the existence of badness, either by arguments or retrospection, e'en take things as you find them.

All that is in our power almost is to live inoffensively, and while we do so we have a right to make the best of our situation – but I have another Idea which is that to live inoffensively, we must not only shew ourselves content with the good things allotted to us by partaking of them, but we must make use of our understandings to perceive that they are really good, for very few people I believe are sensible to that Existence, accompanied with health and the means of continuing it is a Portion of inestimable value---

Do not therefore again slight this valuable enjoyment, but labour to repair your own of this sort by labouring to recover your health, look around you and you will find there is much good to be enjoyed yet, and if you would be happy look neither before nor behind, but around you and believe me if you do this impartially, you will find no cause to envy the Lot of others, and much to be satisfied with your own.

I don't care who calls this a Sermon it is the language of reflection and Truth and such only will I ever use to you on all occasions – bruised as you have been with afflictions, I hold you sound and would not for my breath utter a Word of unseasonable Levity, or flatter you with false reasoning.

This philosophic letter is contrast to his much ealier letter (13 above) in which he writes: 'The World, I am convinced will not let you live in peace unless you can conceal your happyness in some retired corner, or purchase its smiles, with appearance of wealth -- if you have it, you are out of its power'

1784

(Letter 38 CB p. 318) On January 9th 1784 George Cumberland wrote to his mother at Driffield:

Dear Mother: Be assured I have taken the first opportunity since my Brother came to Town of writing you any news -- and first let me acquaint you that the business of your Stock is at length accomplished, through the perseverance of Richard, and after a great deal of attendance on his part -- he having persuaded your Sister [Mary Man] to at last to administer, and this day she received the Dividends and Transferred the Stock into you name.

This is an interesting letter so more will be added in later editions but there is another mention of [Mary Man] later on, as follows:

*I afterwards saw Mrs. Mann in the street, and she desires her love and thanks for the Guinea which my Brother gave her this morning in your name for transacting the Business, and seems very pleased.
For my own part I am half worn out with fatigue and bad hours, but hope to recruit all ...*

(Letter 39 CB p. 320) Richard to George January 10th 1784:

She [Ms. Townsend] appologised for not calling on Miss Balchen when at Bristol by telling me a dreadful story of fall down a flight of steps which confined her to Bed for six Weeks and had like to be fatal ---

Ms. Townsend was a buxom creature often found galloping around the countryside in a hearty manner, quite the opposite of the pale, sickly, fatigued Balchens. Richard was greatly captivated by her gregarious nature.

(Letter 40 CB p. 324 - 325) from George to Richard dated Wednesday February 25th, 1784

*... I mean to resign as soon as possible, and quit an ungrateful and disgraceful office in that handsome manner which shall most make them feel their own unjust conduct towards me -- As Harry [Henry Man] has answered your Queries I need not enquire at the Stock Exchange, as I see the committee return them thanks in the papers --
I took a coach to Newington to day by way of airing and spent an hour or more with Mary she seems in good health, and spirits as I have seen her for a good while and walked back with me to the Bridge foot -- We had some conversation about her suit and she says she is told she shall gain her cause in case the will is set aside, which seems to be on that account the desire of Mr. Tapp --*

What we have here is yet another legal wrangle. This time it would appear that the will left by Mary's brother John is in dispute, probably by thier mother. Richard makes a flying visit to London during which he visited Mary Balchen and writes the following letter.

(Letter 41 CB pp. 325 - 326) Richard to George February 1784:

I wish to mention one thing that has frequently come into my Mind since I returned -- that you would not suffer any little circumstance to break off your intimacy with Mary B. nor to be too severe in your observations on her Conduct when you meet. When I took leave of her, she seemd I thought a little hurt at your late neglect and as her Health is far from being established, and her Situation sufficiently distressing -- this is no time to look for explanation, but rather for every possible Attention from her Friends, and that her Pride will not permit her to acknowledge it, I believe there is no one she has a higher regard for than Yourself -- therefore let me entreat You to visit her on her own terms, when you conveniently can, and endeavour to promote her present Happiness, rather than refute her Prejudices which you must acknowledge are of the most amiable kind --- Do not mention that I took Notice to You of her Neglect on my second visit there.

(Letter 42 CB p. 329) on May 11th 1784 George to Richard

On Sunday afternoon I called on Mary Balchen and found her very ill indeed with a feverish disorder and putrid Sore Throat and after sitting some time found she grew better, but I persuaded her at last to let Fanny Man [Frances Man] call on Johnsons - she seemed as [s]he has always done of late, uncommunicative, cool and scarcely enquired after any body -- and I suspect from all this that somebody is labouring hard to sever our intimacy - for she is entirely guided I now perceive. They now do not move at all, but why I cannot learn.

(Letter 43 CB p. 337) George to Richard November 10th 1784

PS Mary looks very indifferently - the child improves much, Our Mother so so I dined with her today. Mr. Balchen² -- Mr. Cross writes is dying by inches -- Jefferson with him at Taplow -- Why don't you go to Breedon who wants society as much as you do? Holman is said to be a great actor, I have not seen him Mr. Tapp has left Hackney - Marys cause comes on this week in Chancery and they hope to set aside the Will which she prays in her petition. I have found an Acqua-tinta and Hoffmans Paris mode of Printing -- I sent my mode of Printing to M []s last review and they have copied it into all the papers, but not quite correct.

Mr. Balchen is John Balchen who died January 1785, his father Henry had died in 1780 although there are no references to this event in the letters as selected by Ms. Black. We now know that this M was Maty's Review (see Blake Quarterly). More details of the Cumberland - Man - Balchen relationship will be added to these pages over time.

THE END

THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

This letter is taken out of sequence and given complete as it is of more general interest than familial. It does not involve any of the back and forth among the family and is more a narrative unto itself. Richard Cumberland and John Balchen took an 'expedition' to view the Fleet before its sailing. There are references in the letter as to how to revive people who have drowned. Richard was a member of a society that plucked people from the Thames and that advocated a particular technique for their revival. This will be elaborated on in later editions.

August 29th 1782 Richard wrote to George the following from Portsmouth (CB pp. 289 - 293):

I told you in my last we had thought of an Expedition hither and set out for that purpose last Sunday Evening -- We got to Winchester the next Day thro an exceeding fine Country, visited the French Prison, etc. thence to Dyers at Bishops Stoke who accompanied us to Southampton - after Dinner took a Cutter and Sailed to the Isle of Wt. with a brisk Gale 16 Miles in an Hour and 40 m. Slept at Cowes and viewed the Island as far as our legs would carry us - thence next Morning in the Passage with good Company to this Place across to Gosport and called on Mr. Collins -- only his brother at home. -- Next walked around the Yard -- an astonishing Exhibition ended in the Afternoon took a Wherry and went aboard the royal George at Spithead -- as being one of the finest Ships in the Fleet, we met with the most civil Behavior from the Officers; who shewed us every Part worth seeing, introduced us to each other in their little Births and were very communicative -- we took notice of the number of Women in Board and they assured us there were about two hundred and near double the number of Men.

We were about an Hour seeing everything and then returned to our Boat and thro a rough Sea to the Point - in the Evening we went to the Theatre the worst of Strollers - the Boxes full of naval and military Officers with Ladies of the Ton [Town] and we frequently heard and saw the rough Salutes This Morning we strolled around Works at the Camp of Spithead and whilst talking with an Officer saw two Guns fired from the Men of War, which he observed was previous to their sailing as [] waited to see them under Way we Walked to Southsea Castle and found a number of people on the battery eagerly looking at the Fleet -- They told us a large Ship had just founder'd and shewed us the mizzen and main Masts lying sloping out of the Water and a croud of Boats busy about them with the help of a Glass I distinguished a Blue flag at the Mizzen Mast, yet we flatter'd ourselves it was only a Transport - we retur'd to the Camp with a melancholly News and before we reached Portsmouth was shocked with a confirmation of its being the Royal George admiral Keppenfelt and scarce a Man saved. You can not think how much were affected. It was the identical Ship in which we had begun to take an Interest -- the genteel treatment we had met with on the preceding Evening - the more than possibility of our being delay'd our visit till this Morning or perhaps renewed it and the recollection of every Face we had seen on Board struck us at once -- we walked to the Point and came up just as they brought one of the poor Fellows on shore and were rolling him on a

barrow in his wet cloaths and in the Rain - we thrust ourselves among the Mob and made them carry him to the next tavern assisted in pulling off his Cloaths procured warm Blankets and pursued the methods and recommended by the Society -- but they were applied too layte -- finding him in good Hands and hearing other Bodies were brought ashore, we went out and found a Woman in the same Condition on the Shore and no one attempting to do anything to save her. We ordered them to take her up and follow us into another public House, where we shut out the mob and put the People on the same method of Treatment, before the Fire whilst a warm Bed was got ready -- with great difficulty I made them persevere in the frictions, fumigations etc. and left Balchen to see it continued, a person coming in and saying that a Man was just carried into a House with signs of Life. It was a Distillers I got in with difficulty through the Croud and saw two Bodies a Man and a Woman lying on the Stone Hearth without any Fire. I applied to the Master of the House for a Fire and Blankets and had they been applied in Time think it would have been successful as he was the stoutest made Man I had seen - I next procured proper assistance at another House for the Woman and no means were left untried, but in vain and after the greatest exertion I ever made for tow hours had the Mortification of only leaving the Bodies in a more descent situation than I found them -- after making the People Amends for their trouble I returned to our Inn and found Balchen there as much Fatigued as Myself. The careless Indifference to call it no Worse, of the generality of People here on this truly mournful Occaision has given me a worse opinion of Human Nature than ever. I had before been Witness of such Scene of Debauchery as had not to be paralleld in any part of London. From Seven in the Morning till Night the Street swarm with common women of the most abandoned Cast, Gosport is if anything worse still. In every other respect they are tolerable good Towns and together with the Publick Buildings, Fortifications, Camps, and fleet have a beautiful Appearance from the sea. Being disappointed of a vessel to Southampton, we are going there in the coach to Night -- I just hear -- the Captain and above one hundred Men were saved but the Admiral is lost the Occasion of this Calamity is said to be this. The Cock which communicated with the Pump wanting repair they have hove all her Guns out on the opposite Side to careen -- when a slight squal of Wind taking her, the Sea washed in at her lower Tier and she went down instantly. A Victualling Cutter along side went with her, the master of which saved himself and the captain on a Hencoop and the latter leaping out of the Stern gallery into the Sea. The Tide was strong and most of the Boats to leeward and more might have picked up. I cannot help mentioning a Circumstance that has since made me smile. It was the False Delicacy of the Point Ladies at the publick House we were in - who could not be persuaded to strip and rub the Bodies until a clean Shift had been procured and then their Lamentations over them were curious indeed -- One of the poor creatures left two Children at Gosport, the other lost one from her Arms. Very few of the Women were saved being below Decks -- many of them Sailors Wives who kept a little Market on Board whether considered in a publick or private light, few great calamities have ever happened as an end, where there was so little reason to expect any danger it has made a strong Impression on me that will not wear off for some time. Don't send any extracts of these to the Morning Post as it is wrote in a hurry and I cannot be certain as to the Numbers lost etc. You will have a better account in the Papers.