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## LADY CATHERINE O'BRIEN.

LADY CATHERINE\* O'BRIEN (née Stuart) of Cobham Hall, fourth cousin of King Charles II, was the eldest and only surviving daughter of George Stuart, Lord D'Aubigny, by his wife Lady Catherine Howard, daughter of Theophilus Earl of She was baptized at St. Martin's-in-the-fields, Suffolk. Middlesex, on the 5th of December, 1640. She and her mother's daughter by a second marriage, Lady Elizabeth Livingstone (wife first of Mr Robert Delaval and then of Mr Henry Hatcher) were bred up together, and seem to have been warmly attached to each other throughout their lives. Her only brother, Charles, was created Earl of Lichfield in 1645, and, after the Restoration, the rank and precedence of an Earl's daughter was granted to her, on the 24th of September 1660. Just twenty days before that grant of precedence, there had been buried at Westminster the remains of her young cousin Esmé, Duke of Richmond and Lenox, to whose estates, first her brother Charles, and then she herself, became the heir. At the age of twenty, she was married to Henry O'Brien, Lord Ibrackan, commonly called Lord O'Brien, the seventh Earl of Thomond's son and heir. For the subsequent forty-one years of her life her usual appellation was "Lady Catherine O'Brien."

Of her early life very little is known. Her eldest daughter Mary O'Brien was born in London on the 7th of May 1662. Her eldest son, Donatus, born in September 1663, was christened at Great Billing, on the 16th of that month. Her husband's grandfather Barnabas sixth Earl of Thomond, had been created Marquess of Billing in 1645, by privy seal, but as the great seal was not then in the king's power the patent never passed. From the baptism of her son at Great Billing, we may presume that Lady Catherine was, at all events for a

<sup>\*</sup> As Lady Catherine O'Brien wrote her Christian name with a "C" we adopt that spelling in her memoir, but, in her brother's will, her name is written Katherine, and for many years after the Restoration it was usual to spell that name with a "K." The "K" still survives in the pet name Kate.

time, residing on the O'Brien's estate there. We do not know when her second daughter Catherine was born, but the birth of her second son, George, occurred in London on the 10th of October 1670. As her daughter Catherine was not of age in 1690, and yet was married in 1688, it is probable that she was born in 1671.

When Charles, Duke of Richmond and Lenox, died in 1672, his sister Lady Catherine O'Brien was heiress to his estates, and to such of his honours as could devolve upon a female. She at once claimed the Barony of Clifton, and her claim was allowed by the House of Lords. Her husband Lord O'Brien, writing on the 10th of February 1673-4, to Sir Joseph Williamson at Cologne, says "this day judgment on her behalf" has been delivered, respecting the Clifton peerage.\* months previously, Lord O'Brien in writing to Sir Joseph Williamson had alluded to her as unwell. Williamson was then acting as an English Plenipotentiary for Peace, so Lord O'Brien addresses him as "My Lord"; and says, "I thank God our family is in pretty good health: my wife is drinking North Hall waters, which Dr Willis hopes will cure the distemper of her heade; wee all are (with true respect) your humble servaunts."+ Lady Catherine kept up a constant correspondence with Sir Joseph Williamson during his absence in 1673 and 1674, but none of her letters survive.

In 1676-7 Lord O'Brien, and Lady Catherine, united in a mortgage, for raising £4000 or £5000, wherewith to buy out the interest, in Cobham Hall and estate, of Frances Teresa widow of Charles Duke of Richmond; and they obtained an Act of Parliament ratifying this arrangement, for the benefit of Donatus O'Brien their eldest son. The sumactually paid to the Duchess Frances Teresa seems to have been £3800. About the same time it would appear that the young Donatus, although but fourteen years old, was married to Lady Sophia Osborne daughter of the Earl of Danby (afterwards Duke of Leeds). The marriage is mentioned in a "List of Court Members of the Long Parliament of Charles II," which is ascribed to Andrew Marvell, and was printed in 1677.

<sup>\*</sup> Letters to Sir Joseph Williamson, edited by W. D. Christie, C.B., for the Camden Society, vol. ii., p. 146. † Ibidem, i. 35.

In 1678 Lord O'Brien died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey on the 9th of September. He had made his will six years previously, on the 6th of April 1672. He therein enjoined his son to be true to Protestantism and the English, and to drive out the Irish from his estates as much as possible. Sir Joseph Williamson's will speaks of the ample provision which was made for Lady Catherine, by Lord O'Brien or his father, out of the Thomond estates. Yet Lady Catherine may have had immediate need of a large sum of money, for in October 1678, she assigned the feu duties of Islay to Sir Joseph Williamson, probably as security for some loan. In the following December she married Sir Joseph.

Within six months she lost her son George, a boy of eight years, who was buried on the 8th of May 1679, in Westminster Abbey. No doubt this was a period of severe trial to her, as her new husband had been driven to resign his office (Secretary of State) in the preceding February, and many ascribed that to Lord Danby's chagrin at her marriage. In April 1681, when Lady Catherine was in Dublin, something in the nature of a robbery seems to have occurred at Cobham Hall. Her daughter Mary went down to Cobham, and in company with the late Duke of Richmond's executor Sir Charles Bickerstaff, and others, examined all the rooms in the house. They found nothing missing save two "rich beds," and some small things. The incident is related to Lady Catherine, by John Paige, in a letter dated 23d April, 1681.\*

London 23 Aprill 1681.

Madam

The 16th of this month I gave Sr Joseph Williamson a large account of Mr Christopher Musgrave's journey and mine to Cobham where, by apointment wee mett your daughter Madam O'brien Sr Charles Bickerstaffe and Mrs Horneby when wee survayed most of all the romes in the house especially those wch had goods in them and to our great Admiration wee found much more then wee expected consideringe the great Treasure of rich goods that was in the house, wee found none of your cabinetts broaken open all your Tapistrey your severall trunkes Linen packt as you left them and what most feared your picktures in the Gallary &c wch if had bine

<sup>\*</sup> Additional MS. in Brit. Museum, 5488, folio (pencil) 177.

taken out of the frames one trunke full might have caried £500 valew, what wee found wantinge was your to rich beds with some other small thinges of little valew, Madam O'brien who best knew ye house ffurniture, concludes there nothinge elce wantinge of moment, soe yt of a bad buisnesse I am hearty glad itts noe worse wee did preuaile with Mrs Horneby to remaine att Cobham for 14 daies till we heard from you, for to say the truth ye house considringe the great valew of ye goods, ought to have a man and a woman of great entegrity to bee there, least a second disaster should prove worse than the first wen I pray your Ladyship to well consider of in time soe as you doe not retorne speedily from Ireland I have convayed yr I adyshipps leve to Mrs Horneby at Cobham with mine and my wifes humble seruice I am

Madam your most faithful servant

JOHN PAIGE\*

(Endorsed)

For my Lady Catherine O'Brien these present For Dublin

In 1682, Donatus, who by his father's death in 1678 had become Lord O'Brien, embarked in the frigate Gloucester at Margate, to accompany the Duke of York to Edinburgh. He never reached his destination, but was drowned with many others, when the Gloucester was wrecked, off Yarmouth, on the 5th of May. Thus, Lady Catherine lost her eldest and only surviving son, when he was not quite nineteen years of age. About the same period, probably, her eldest daughter Mary was married to the eighteenth Earl of Kildare. Lady Kildare had a son born in July 1683, but she died in the following November, when in her twenty-second year. Her infant (Henry, Lord Offaly) lived not quite seven months after his birth.

Lady Catherine was thus bereft of all her children save the daughter who was named after herself. Nor did that young lady long afford much comfort to her mother. When she was about seventeen years old, she made a runaway match with Viscount Cornbury. His father, Henry, second Earl of Cla-

<sup>\* 15</sup>th July 1681, he writes saying Lady Catherine is in St. James's Square lately come from Cobham. Her son, Donatus Lord O'Brien, met her there, and took account of most material goods. She had made a proposition to him, for her life interest in Cobham. As yet the Duke of Buckingham hath not sealed the Deeds, though they give hope he will do it.

rendon, narrates the escapade in his Diary. They were married at Totteridge in Hertfordshire, on the 10th of July 1688. Viscount Cornbury seems to have been a spendthrift scape-Being Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Dragoons, he, in November 1688, induced it and other regiments to side with William III. He afterwards became Master of the Horse to Prince George of Denmark; and was Governor of New York from 1702 to 1708. While there he held a levée on the Queen's birthday, and himself appeared dressed in female attire, similar to that of Queen Anne, his first cousin, whom he much resem-He caused a portrait of himself in this attire to be painted, and it still exists. His wife survived her marriage eighteen years, but died in 1706, before her husband became Earl of Clarendon. Lady Catherine O'Brien's troubles were materially increased by Lord Cornbury's conduct; and her family estates were burdened with his debts, by mortgage in 1693, and in various ways until 1719, when the Lincolnshire property, Sutton Marsh, was sold for £31,800 to defray them. The debts of her brother Charles (the last Duke of Richmond and Lenox) were likewise sources of concern to her, during the remainder of her life.

In 1689, Lady Catherine O'Brien's husband, Sir Joseph Williamson, made himself responsible to Duke Charles's creditors for the Duke's debts, and was permitted to take possession of the Duke's estates. It was in pursuance of this arrangement that Sir Joseph, in 1696, agreed to pay £45,000, for Cobham and the Kentish lands. The whole of the transactions were not completed before his death, so that on the 23rd of June, 1702, the Court of Chancery issued a decree directing their completion.

Lady Catherine died in November, 1702, and was buried in Westminster Abbey on the 11th of that month. She was succeeded, in the Barony of Clifton, by her daughter Catherine, Lady Cornbury, who survived her only four years. Lady Catherine O'Brien's ultimate heir was her grand-daughter, Lady Theodosia Hyde, who succeeded her young brother Edward, in the Barony of Clifton, in 1713, and whose husband John Bligh, Esq., M.P. for Athboy, was created Earl of Darnley in 1725.

## WILL OF LADY CATHERINE O'BRIEN.

(Transcribed from a copy preserved at Cobham Hall).

In the Name of God Amen. I the Right Honble the LADY CATHERINE O'BRIEN Widdow, being of sound mind and memory and in Reasonable Health for which I bless God, do make this my last Will and Testament, this thirteenth day of October in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and two, in manner and forme following, vizt Imprimis I Resign my Soul into the hands of our Blessed Saviour in hopes of a Joyfull Resurection through his merrits, And my Body I desire may be privately buried in the Vault of my Ancestors, In King Henry the Sevenths Chapell, near the bodys of Lord Henry O'Brien & Sr Jos Williamson my first, and Second Husbands, without laying in state, and being privately carryed thither without any Pomp or State, but with all the Ceremonies of the Church, Item. I give to the Lady Elizth Hatcher\* one An'uity or Yearly Sum of Fifty Pounds during her Life, to be paid by two half yearly payments without any deduction for Taxes or for any other thing Whatsoever, out of the Yearly Rents Proffit or produce of the Two third Parts of the overplus of the Real and Personal Estate of my late Husband Sr Joseph Williamson, after his debts and Legaacies paid, given to me by his Last Will & Testament; And I give to the said Lady Elizth Hatcher Fifty Pounds for Mourning, and my Lockett sett with Diamonds wth my Brother the Duke of Richmond's hair and Enameled on the back side C R L. Item I give to my Grandchild Mrs Catherine Hyde my Pearl Necklace and my diamond Watch with the Chain and hook to it, and I desire that the same Necklace Watch Chain & hook be delivered to the Rt Honble Charles now Earle of Carlislet or in case of his death or Refusall to the Rt Honble Henry Lord Walden! Eldest Son to Henry Earle of Suffolk to be kept for the benifit of my said Grand Child; and I will that the Receipt of the said Earle of Carlisle or Henry Lord Walden for the same shall be a discharge to my Executors, And I will that the same be delivered by the said Earle of

† Charles Howard, Earl of Carlisle, was a distant cousin of Lady Catherine O'Brien.

<sup>\*</sup> Lady Elizabeth Hatcher was uterine sister of Lady Catherine O'Brien, Lady Elizabeth's father, James Livingstone, 1st Earl of Newburgh, was the second husband of Catherine, widow of Lord D'Aubigny. Mr. Henry Hatcher was Lady Elizabeth's second husband.

<sup>†</sup> Henry Howard, Lord Walden, was a first cousin of Lady Catherine O'Brien. He married her sister-in-law, Lady Penelope O'Brien, daughter of Henry Earl of Thomond. He was created Earl of Bindon in 1706, and succeeded his father as Table of Carlotte and his father as Earl of Suffolk in 1709.

Carlisle or Henry Lord Walden to my said Grand Child when She shall attain the Age of sixteen Years, and if She dyes before that Age then I give the same to my Grand Child Mrs — Hyde next Sister to the said Catherine Hyde. Item I give to the Right Honble the Dowager Lady Joan Howard\* of Escrigg, my Picture set with diamonds round it, and to the Lady Russell Wife to S' W' Russell + late of Langhorn in the County of Carmarthen Barrt, my Emerald Ring, and to Mrs Boyce Wife of Capth Boyce my Gold Watch with the Shagrine case & with the Gold Chain and Garnet Heart set round with diamonds. Item. I give to my Cozen Elizth Viscountess Poorcourt; of Ireland my Ruby Ring. Item. I give to Mrs Addison my Gold Balsome Box with the Green stone lid to it set with Diamonds & to Mrs Catherine Hornsby Three hundred Pounds to be paid at her Age of one & twenty years or day of Marriage which shall first happen, if the said Marriage be with the Consent of my Executors or the Survivor of them, and all such furniture of the Chamber where she lyes and of the Closet to it as shall be therein at the time of my decease. Item to Mr Joseph Hornsby Senr Fifty Pounds. Item, I give to Mr Thomas Hornsby the Son one Annuity or Yearly Sum of Twenty Pounds until he has possession of the Cumberland Estate given to him by Sr Jos. Williamsons Will in Remainder; and to Mr George Hornsby who was my Page one Annuity or Yearly Sum of Five Pounds during his Life; the same two Annuitys to be paid by two Equall Payments half Yearly, without any deduction for Taxes or any other thing Whatsoever out of the Yearly Rents Income Proffit & Produce of the before mentioned Two third parts of the over plus of the Real and Personal Estate of the said Sr Joseph Williamson, after his debts & Legacies paid, And I will that all the Annuities given by this my Will shall be paid out of the same two third parts of the over plus of the Real & Personall Estate of the said Sr Joseph Williamson and no other wise; Item I give to Mrs Ann Hornsby the Mother Twenty Pounds and my Lockett or Heart set with Diamonds with Sr Joseph Williamson's Hair. Item I give to my Servant Hester Watson Thirty Pounds, And I give the Sum of One Hundred

<sup>\*</sup> Dowager Lady Joan Howard of Escrigg (née Drake) was the widow of the second Lord Howard of Escrigg, who was a first cousin of Lady Catherine's mother.

<sup>†</sup> Sir William Russell, of Langhorn, was an uncle of Sarah Countess of Thomond, the step-mother of Lord O'Brien, who married Lady Catherine. The father of the Countess was Sir Francis Russell of Chippenham, the elder brother of Sir William Russell of Langhorn.

<sup>†</sup> Elizabeth, Viscountess Powerscourt, was a daughter of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, by Margaret (daughter of Theophilus Earl of Suffolk), a younger sister of Lady D'Aubigny, who was Lady Catherine O'Brien's mother.

Pounds to be paid to the Minister and Church Wardens for the time being for the Education of the poor Girles of the Parish of St James's within the Liberty of the City of Westminster; Item I give to all my Servants that shall be in my service at the time of my decease one Years Wages over and above what shall be then due to them, And I give to all my servants Mourning at the Discretion of my Executrs Item I give to my page Richd Tabor Thirty Pounds; Item I will that if my Personal Estate other then the said two third parts of the Over plus of the Real and Personall Estate of Sr Jos. Williamson and other then such part of my Personal Estate which I have given as Specified Legacies, be not sufficient to satisfie my Money Legacies, that then such deficiency be made good out of the said two third parts of the Real & Personal Estate of the said Sr Jos. Williamson; Item I give & Devise unto my Executors herein after named and their heirs Executrs & Administrators All my said two third parts of the overplus of the Real and Personall Estate of my late Husband Sr Jos. Williamson after his debts & legacies paid, Given unto me by his Will upon trust that they shall with the Consent and approbation of the said Earle of Carlisle or the Rt Honble Henry Earle of Clarendon,\* or the Rt Honble Laurance Earle of Rochester,\* lay out the same on some Purchase or Purchases of some Mannor, Messuages, Lands, Tenements or Heriditariments, if the same shall be turned into money, and settle such Purchase, or Purchases, or the Mannors, Messuages, Lands, Tenements or Heriditariments, which shall be allowed for or in such part of such two third parts to the Uses following;

Vizt In the first Place for securing the Annuities herein given and Bequeathed by me and subject there unto to the Use of my Executes herein after named, and their Heirs during the Life of my daughter Catherine Lady Cornbury in trust to preserve the Contingent Remainders herein after Limited, and in trust during my said Daughter's Life to dispose of the Rents, Issues and proffits, to such persons and to and for such uses intents and Purposes, as she shall by any writeing under her hand Notwithstanding her coverture direct or appoint for her Personal Use and Benefit, so as the same may not be subject to her Husbands Controul Forfeiture, Incumbrance or disposeall, and so as her own Receipt in Writing, shall be a Sufficient discharge to the Tenants Trustees or others for so much money, Rents, or Profits as She shall Receive with Her own hands, and from and after Her Decease to the use of

<sup>\*</sup> Henry, Barl of Clarendon, and Laurence, Earl of Rochester, were brothers. Lord Cornbury, who had married Lady Catherine's daughter, was the eldest son of this Lord Clarendon, and the nephew of Lord Rochester.

my Grand Son Edward Hyde, and the Heirs Male of his body, and for Default of such Issue to the use of all & every other the Son or Sons of my said daughter Lawfully beggotten Successively and in Remainder one after another as they shall be in Seniority of age or Priority of Birth and of the Heirs Male of their Severall & Respective Body's Issuing the Elder of such Sons and the Heirs Males of his Body Issuing being always to be preferred before the younger of such Sons and the Heirs Males of his or their Body's, Issuing, and for default of such Issue to the Use of all and every the Daughter and daughters of my said Daughter begotten or to be begotten as Tenants in common, and not as Joint Tenants, and of the Heirs of their severall and Respective Body's Issuing, and if any such Daughter or Daughters Shall dye without Issue, then to the Use of the others or other of them And the Heirs of her or their Respective Body's or Body Issuing, And if all such Daughters but one should dye without Issue, then to the Use of such Only Daughter and Heirs of Her Body, and in Default of such Issue to the Use of the said Henry Lord Walden Eldest Son of Henry Earle of Suffolk his Heirs & Assignes for ever. Provided Always and my Will is that my said Daughter and Her Husband Lord Cornbury or the Survyvor of them, shall and do within the Space of one year next after my Decease, seal and execute in such manner as Councill learned in the Law shall Reasonably advise, unto the Executrs of Sr Joseph Williamson & also unto my Executrs a good and sufficient Release and discharge, by deed in Writing Attested by three or more Credible Witnesses, of all and all manners of Actions, or Causes of Actions, suits and demands, held against the Respective Execut<sup>rs</sup> or Administrators of Sr Joseph Williamson or myself, they the said Edward Lord Cornbury and Catherine Lady Cornbury, or either of them, or either of their Heirs, Executrs or Administrators, have or hath, or can or may or ought to have in Law or equity for touching or Concerning the Actings Managements Receipts or Intermedling of the Agent or Agents Servant or Servants of us the said Sr Jos. Wm Son and my Self or either of us in with or out of the Mannors, Lands, Tenements, Heriditariments, or Estate, whatsoever heretofore or of, or belonging to the Most Noble Charles late Duke of Richmond and Lenox my Deceased Brother, or any part or parts of the same or for or by Reason of any suposed mismanagement, wast or other thing or things by him the said Sr Jos. Williamson my late Husband or by me or by our or either of our Agents or Servants, done committed or Suffered relating thereto, or for or by Reason of any Accounts Whatsoever of the Rents proffits and

Issues thereof by him the said Sr Jos. Williamson & my self or either of us or our or either of our Agents or Servants, had or Received, or for or by Reason of any other matter or thing or matters or things whatsoever Relating to the Estate of the said Duke from the beginning of the World to ye Day of my death, But if the said Edward Lord Cornbury and Catherine Lady Cornbury his wife, or the Survivor of them, in case they or either of them shall so long live, shall not within the Space of one year next Immediately after my Decease, seal and execute such a Release and discharge as afore said, then I will that the said two third parts of the overplus of the Real and Personall Estate of the said Sr Joseph Williamson be setled Subject to the Annuities herein before given to the Use of the said Henry Lord Walden Eldest Son of the Rt Honble Henry Earle of Suffolk. And of the Heirs Males of his Body, and for default of such Issue to the Use of the said Charles now Earle of Carlisle and his Heirs, Item, I constitute and appoint John Boys of the City of Westminster Esqr, & Richard Webb of the Inner Temple Esqr. Executors of this my last Will and Testament, and give unto them Two Hundred Pounds apeice for their Trouble & Pains, they will be at in executing this my Will, and I also give unto them Fifty Pounds apeice to buy each of them a Ring to wear in memory of me, and I will that they shall be allowed out of my Estate all their Charges and expences that they shall be put unto, in or about the Execution of this my Will or in any Wise relating there unto, And as to all the Rest and Residue of my Estate not herein before disposed of, after the Debts that I have contracted since the death of my late Husband Sr Joseph Williamson are Satisfied, and all my Lagacies are paid, I give and bequeath the same to my Grand Children, that shall be born at the time of my Decease Equally Divided Amongst them share and share like, Provided that if I shall enter into any Covenant or Obligation to pay my Grand Child Catherine Hyde, any Sum of Money and She shall Receive the same, then I will that she shall have no share of the said Estate Undisposed of, but it shall be Equally divided amongst the Rest of my Grand Children that shall be born at my Decease, share and share like, And I will that the said Residue of my Estate undisposed of, be turned into money by my Executrs and Afterwards paid by them to the said Earle of Carlisle, and in case of his Death or Refuseall into the hands of the said Henry Lord Walden, to be placed out at Interest for the Benifitt of my said Grand Children, untell their Respective Ages of one & Twenty Years or dayes of Marriage, And ye Interest to be paid for and

towards their maintanance share and share like untell their Respective parts of the Principall shall become payable; And I will that the said Earle of Carlisle and Henry Lord Walden shall be allowed their Costs and Charges occasioned by the Performance of their Trust, And they shall not be Answerable for the loss of any moneys that shall happen wthout their Willfull neglect or default, And I will that my Execurs shall account with the Earle of Carlisle and in case of his death or Refuseall with the said Henry Lord Walden, And I will that the Account of my Executrs touching the Residue of my Estate undisposed of being allowed of by the said Earle of Carlisle, or in case of his death or Refusall by the said Henry Lord Walden shall be conclusive and binding to my Grand Children; Item I will that when the two third parts of the overplus of the Real and Personal Estate of Sr Joseph Williamson or any part of the same being Reduced into money my Executrs or the Survivor of them, or the Survivor or ye Executrs or Administrators of such Survivor shall and may untill a Convenient purchase can be found place out the same money or any Part or Parts of thereof, upon some security or Securities at Interest, wth such consent where with the Purchase is to be made, and pay the Interest in the same manner as the Rents and Proffitts of the Purchase are to go, And I will that my Executrs shall not be answerable the one for the other, or for the Acts Receipts or Defaults of the other, Nor for any more moneys then they shall Actually Receive, Nor for the loss of any money that shall happen without their Willfull neglect or default, in placeing out to Interest in depositing for safe Custody, or by Servants, or Agents, that shall be employed by them, and their Joyning with one another in Receipts and discharges, shall be only a charge on such of them as Realy received the moneys therein Mentioned so as if it be exprest which of them Recd the same, Item. I hereby Revoke all former Wills by me made and Published And In Witness that this is my last Will and Testament I have hereunto set my hand & Seal the day and year first above written.

CA: O'BRIEN.

Signed Sealed Published and declared by the Lady Catherine O'Brien to be Her last Will and Testament after the Interlineation of the Words (In case they or either of them so long live) And the Words (or by Servants or Agents that shall be Imployed by them) In the presence of us who have here unto set our hands in her Presence,

James Mathews, Jonathan Lowndes. Isaac Garnier, Robt. Southam.