

INTRODUCTION

Among the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century manuscripts of Elizabeth Freke in the British Library are two commonplace books. The larger of them, a white vellum-bound volume of 245 folios (BL, Add. MS. 45718), contains among a number of miscellaneous pieces hundreds of preventatives and cures gathered from relatives and acquaintances as well as from contemporary medical authorities. Besides these 'Receipts for my owne use', the manuscript preserves an extensive compendium of remedies abstracted from John Gerard's herbal and long lists of natural medicinal properties derived from the writing of her kinsman Nicholas Culpeper. The other commonplace book of fifty-three folios wrapped in brown wallpaper (BL, Add. MS. 45719) also contains detailed lists, but their enumeration of rents, deeds, and financial transactions emphasizes material rather than medical well-being. Both concerns, however, are bound inextricably together in two of the entries common to both manuscripts: an account of the expenses incurred in the futile attempt to relieve her husband's fatal illness and 'Some few remembrances of my misfortuns [that] have attended me in my unhappy life since I were marryed'. Medicine, money, and misery are inseparably woven into the life Elizabeth Freke constructs and reconstructs in the telling and retelling that characterize her remembrances. Together, the two manuscript versions reveal a sense of self unique among early modern women's autobiographies.

Where previous seventeenth-century women writers of diaries and memoirs saw purpose and meaning in social status, family accomplishments, and religious faith, this Norfolk gentry woman forthrightly emphasizes years of personal struggle and resistance. Her secular and materialistic individualism strikingly redefines the relationships among self, family, and patriarchy characteristic of early women's autobiography. None of her diary-like remembrances ever purports to leave to posterity a record of the family; in fact the only acknowledgment of this conventional desire occurs as she concludes the second version of the expenses related to her husband's sickness, death, and burial: 'This is the usage I have had in Norfolk; therefore, son, take heed and beware of my fate' (B, below, p. 303). Nor is hers the cultural ideal of maternal strength evoked by the duchess of Newcastle or the traditional role of the supporting, loving wife portrayed by Lady Ann Fanshawe and Lucy Hutchinson. She expresses none of the traditional piety that consoles Alice Thornton, the Yorkshire woman she most closely resembles. In the difficult search for kindness and security from her

husband, son, and male cousin, the patience and fortitude conventionally affirmed in other contemporary memoirs are conspicuously absent; suffering and sacrifice dominate an extensive ledger of disappointment and bitterness that reveals over time the complex emotions of a woman seeking both solace and reaffirmation.

Unfortunately Freke's attempts to re-create meaning in her troubled life are lost in the only published edition of her writing, Mary Carbery's early twentieth-century publication *Mrs. Elizabeth Freke Her Diary, 1671 to 1714*¹. Guided apparently by Victorian principles of editing and intent upon ordering events chronologically, Carbery cut, conflated, and rearranged the two versions of the life Freke presents in the commonplace books. Though the composition of neither remembrance can be dated precisely, Carbery assumes that the vellum-bound text (hereafter W) was 'evidently copied with additions from the "Brown Book"'² (hereafter B). The B text of the memoirs does indeed omit many of the letters, all of the poetic 'emblems for my own reading', a narrative of events related primarily to the first years of William III's reign, and an extensive survey of the West Bilney house found in the W text; internal evidence suggests, nonetheless, that Freke began the shorter version some ten years later. Quite explicitly the opening page of the B text recalls her dreary marriage day 'full forty years past, being now 1712'. A 1676 entry in W, on the other hand, stresses that her infant son, crippled soon after birth, now 'goes straight and well, . . . the father of two lovely boys in Ireland, November 14, 1702' (W, below, p. 42). Other references similarly dated increase the probability that in 1702, at the age of sixty, Elizabeth Freke began writing her remembrances, perhaps relying upon earlier notes for the specific details of her first thirty years of marriage.³ Differences in the handwriting further suggest that the increasingly substantial entries in the vellum-bound folio were written fairly soon after the entry dates. Freke rewrote this account of her life when at the age of seventy she began the remembrances again in the brown wallpaper manuscript. Towards the end, parts of both versions would have been written at about the same time, though the W text continues the life until 15 February 1714, some ten months beyond the final entry in the other remembrance of 5 May 1713.

This new edition of both remembrances together with the ledger of her husband's fatal illness from the wallpaper-bound manuscript and several miscellaneous pieces from the two commonplace books recovers

¹ Published by Guy and Co. Ltd in Cork, 1913; also in *CHAS*, 2nd ser., 16–19 (1910–13).

² Carbery, 'Introduction', 12.

³ The day of the week usually matches the date, indicating she relied on an earlier form of diary notations. Among the miscellaneous sections in the two manuscripts are several versions or drafts of material that appears in the remembrances.

an unusually detailed account of a gentry woman's late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century domestic world. Freke's preoccupation with the sickness, pain, and loss that increase as she ages conveys with unsentimental immediacy the personal and practical realities of healing and death. Her own ambivalent attitudes toward the physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries she both scorned and sought provide a rare view of the patient's plight in a changing yet limited medical marketplace.⁴ Her protracted struggle with the bishop of Norwich over the right to control the parish church and her suits with tenants in the hundred court, quarter sessions, and assizes show an awareness of property rights seldom found in earlier women's diaries and memoirs. Unusual too is the attention to holdings in East India stock and the Bank of England, mortgages disputed in chancery hearings, and conflicts about power of attorney. Besides the painstakingly precise inventory she compiles of all her household possessions or the careful tallies of expenditures, her penchant for gathering and compiling leads her to glean from contemporary histories, gazettes, and gossip newsworthy national and international affairs that reveal how attuned she was to the world beyond Norfolk. Together, Elizabeth Freke's manuscripts are unique in their sense of the medical, economic, and political realities that shaped her daily life.

The edition also recovers a voice new to early autobiography, an often modern sensibility whose long-suffering but defiant nature challenges the assumption that domestic memoirs of this period are limited to *res gestae* narrative and religious meditation. Like Margery Kempe, the much earlier and more famous spiritual autobiographer from the nearby town of King's Lynn, Elizabeth Freke depicts her struggles to overcome domestic constraint. In writing and then rewriting versions of three decades of marriage and ensuing years of widowhood, Freke challenges cultural boundaries as she searches for significance and even vindication in her hardships, frustrations, and disappointments. Complex feelings of neglect and vulnerability central to her self-perception suggest an embittered woman, but they are not limited to disappointment and misery. The infirm woman who eventually found herself utterly alone remained to the end a contentious, melodramatic, yet formidable figure – a strong-willed, even sympathetic person intent upon asserting herself against what she perceived as familial neglect and legal abuse. By making available both versions of the remembrances in their entirety, this new, multiple-text edition clarifies the refashioning inherent in each stage of writing and rewriting. It assumes that in the case of Elizabeth Freke revisions embody more fully the disposition

⁴ Raymond A. Anselment, "“The Want of health”: An Early Eighteenth-Century Self-Portrait of Sickness', *Literature and Medicine*, 15 (1996), 225–43.

and circumstances that help determine autobiographical meaning. Her distinctive re-creation becomes apparent when seen in relation to what is known biographically about her life.

I

According to an early eighteenth-century genealogy of the Freke family begun by her father, Elizabeth Freke was ‘born at Westminster, Jan. 1, 1641’;⁵ neither the baptismal register nor her burial monument confirms, however, that year of birth. An entry in the register of St Margaret’s Church Westminster records, ‘January 3, 1641/2 Elizabeth ffreake d: to Ralph by Dorothy his wife’;⁶ her Westminster Abbey memorial states, ‘She died April 7th 1714, Aged 69 years’. Although Elizabeth’s mother was Cicely, not Dorothy, there is little probability of another Freke family; the date, moreover, is correct if the genealogy follows the old style dating, which begins the new year on 25 March. The burial in Hollingbourne of ‘A Chrisome of Ralph Freke Esqr and Cicily his wife’ on 14 October 1640 further precludes the possibility that the parents could have had another child so shortly after the death of an infant or chrisom no more than a month old. While the remembrances at times imply different years of birth, the explicit statement at the outset of 1714, ‘New Years Day and my unhappy birth day thatt I entred my seventy third yeare’ (W, below, p. 208), supports the conclusion that she was born in 1642, a date that in this context is not at odds with the Westminster Funeral Book.⁷

Elizabeth was the eldest of the surviving children born to Ralph Freke and Cicely Culpeper, who were married on 18 August 1636 at All Saints Church in the Kent village of Hollingbourne four miles east

⁵ The Bodleian Library possesses A Pedigree or Genealogy of ye Family of the Frekes, which is ‘augmented’ by John Freke and ‘reduced to this forme by William Freke ... July ye 14th 1706’ (MS. Eng. misc. c. 203). The pedigree was also published in 1825 by Middle Hill Press; a condensed version appears in ‘The Freke Pedigree’, ed. H. B., *The Ancestor*, 10 (July 1904), 179–211; 11 (October 1904), 36–53. Carbery’s copy of the 1825 publication (BL, Add. MS. 45721 B) contains corrections by an unidentified author that are incorporated in the published version, which also has a somewhat different title page. In addition to her annotations, Carbery interleaves at the beginning her handwritten copy of ‘The Author’s Generall Censure’ found in the manuscript of the genealogy now at the Bodleian.

⁶ The microfilm of the register in the Westminster City Archives; also Arthur Meredyth Burke, ed., *Memorials of St. Margaret’s Church Westminster Comprising the Parish Registers, 1539–1660, and the Churchwarden’s Accounts, 1460–1603* (London, 1914), 175.

⁷ The Funeral Book states she died at the age of seventy-three (*The Marriage, Baptismal, and Burial Registers of the Collegiate Church or Abbey of St. Peter, Westminster*, ed. Joseph Lemuel Chester, *Harleian Society*, 10 [1875], 279 n. 7).

of Maidstone. Before Cicely Freke died 'on the 6 Jan. 1650, of her age the 41st.', a memorial on the north side of the chapel door records, 'She bear her husband, who most derlie loved her, 2 Sonnes & 8 daughters of which 5 only survived her, Eli, Cice, Fran, Judeth and Phi'.⁸ The parish register notes only the burial of the Frekes' first child, Thomas, a newborn interred on 25 June 1637, and the burials of two unnamed chrisoms, one on 25 August 1639 and the other on 14 October 1640. Elizabeth Freke never mentions her youngest sister Philippa, nor does this sibling appear in the Freke genealogy among the list of other sisters: Cicely, who was born in London in February 1642/3; Frances born in Oxford on 22 May 1644; and Judith, at Sarum in February 1646/7. The genealogy does spell out in considerable breadth the paternal ancestry of the Frekes.

Ralph or Raufe Freke was born the sixth of Thomas and Elizabeth Freke's ten children in the Dorset village of Iwerne Courtney, also known as Shroton, on 23 July 1596.⁹ His paternal grandfather, Robert, had left an estate valued in the genealogy at one hundred thousand pounds; the father, eulogized on his Shroton church monument as 'magnificently bountiful, providently frugal',¹⁰ ensured the family's substantial presence among the Dorset gentry. Ralph followed his older brothers John and Robert to Oxford, where he matriculated at Hart Hall in 1612, receiving a BA in 1615 and an MA in 1619. A year later he entered the Middle Temple, was called to the bar on 27 June 1628, and maintained his association with this inn of court. When the Brick Court chambers of Ralph Freke and William Nevile became a court of requests office in 1635, students at the Middle Temple continued to be bound over to him.¹¹ The births of children, first at Hollingbourne, then in London, Oxford, and Salisbury, suggest Freke did not reside solely in London, though his residence and life after his marriage are not clear. Presumably his wife and growing family lived much of the time near Hollingbourne at the Aldington West Court estate he had purchased from the heirs of Richard Smyth and held until his wife's

⁸ Church Notes in Kent, BL, Add. MS. 11259, fol. 8v, attributed to Edward Hasted; Cave-Browne, 23–4. The burial date is old style or 1651, when she would have been in her forty-first year, having been baptized on 10 October 1610. The family name is spelled both Culpeper and Colepeper in the Hollingbourne parish register and on the church monuments. Culpeper, the name preferred in the Freke genealogy begun by Freke's father, will be used throughout this edition.

⁹ SG, DO/R51, transcribed by P. J. Rives Harding.

¹⁰ Erected in memory of their parents in 1654 by Ralph and William Freke as transcribed in John Hutchins, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset*, 3rd edn., rev. William Shipp and James Whitworth Hodson, 4 vols. (Westminster, 1861–70), iv. 99.

¹¹ *Alumni Oxonienses, ... 1500–1714*, ed. Joseph Foster, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1891–2), ii. 534; *Middle Temple Register*, i. 111; *Middle Temple Records*, ii. 654, 733, 835; iii. 1,079.

death.¹² Another estate in north Wiltshire he and his younger brother William had inherited from their father, Thomas Freke, then became his principal residence. Completed in 1654, the manor of Hannington Hall appears to have embodied the Latin line from Psalm 133 etched on the house, ‘Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren, to dwell together in unity’:¹³ the two brothers and William’s wife, Frances, the sister of Ralph’s deceased spouse, Cicely, lived together at Hannington, where Frances continued to stay after her husband died on 18 September 1657.

Though Elizabeth Freke would fondly remember the aunt as a surrogate mother, other Culpepers were a significant force both in her life and in the nation. Cicely Culpeper was baptized in the Hollingbourne church on 10 October 1610, the sixth of eleven children born to Sir Thomas Culpeper (1575–1662) and his wife Elizabeth (1582–1638), the heir of John Cheney. Cicely’s father, who inherited Greenway Court in Hollingbourne from his father, Francis Culpeper (1538–1591), had matriculated at Hart Hall in 1591 and three years later entered the Middle Temple. Knighted in 1619, Thomas Culpeper published *A Tract against Usurie* (1621) and served as a member of parliament; he also appears to have taken a limited role in the civil conflict of the 1640s, ultimately supporting the monarch.¹⁴ His nephew and son-in-law Sir John Culpeper (1600–1660), the husband of Cicely Freke’s older sister Judith, was more deeply committed to the royalist cause. Elected one of the Kent representatives in the Long Parliament, he later served as chancellor of the exchequer and master of the rolls, attaining the title of Baron Culpeper of Thoresway before seeking exile with Prince Charles in the civil war.¹⁵ Among the Culpeper estates sequestered or confiscated in the conflict, the castle of Leeds purchased by Thomas Culpeper and given to his son Cheney concerned Elizabeth Freke, for the disputed mortgage on the estate would involve both her father, Ralph Freke, and her husband, Percy Freke, in a bitter legal dispute with the heirs of Thomas and John Culpeper.

¹² Hasted, v. 526–7; a memorial in the Hollingbourne church also notes Cicely’s marriage to ‘Radulpho Freke de Allington in Thornham Ar.’ (BL, Add. MS. 11259, fol. 8r).

¹³ Claude B. Fry, *Hannington. The Records of a Wiltshire Parish* (Gloucester, 1935), 35.

¹⁴ Hasted, v. 466–7; Cave-Browne, 14–16; Fairfax Harrison, *The Proprietors of the Northern Neck: Chapters of Culpeper Genealogy* (Richmond, Va., 1926), 55–7; M. F. Lloyd Prichard, ‘The Significant Background of the Stuart Culpepers’, *Notes and Queries*, n.s., 7 (1960), 411. A 30 April 1646 entry in the *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding, &c., 1643–1660*, ed. M. A. E. Green, 5 vols. (London, 1889–92) notes that he ‘Never took up arms’; the fine of £1,318 was subsequently reduced to £844 (ii. 1,235).

¹⁵ *CP*, iii. 363–4; Cave-Browne, 25–8; Harrison, *Proprietors of the Northern Neck*, 62–8; F. W. T. Atree and J. H. L. Booker, ‘The Sussex Colepepers’, *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 47 (1904), 67–9.

Percy Freke was the grandson of William Freke, the brother of Elizabeth's grandfather Thomas Freke and her father's uncle. Arthur Freke, the heir of William and the father of Percy Freke, was born on 13 August 1604 in Sareen or Sarsen, Hampshire, matriculated at Wadham College, Oxford in 1623, and was admitted the next year to the Middle Temple.¹⁶ Both registers indicate his father resided at the time near Shroton in Cerne Abbas; Richard Boyle, earl of Cork, would, however, eventually persuade his friend William Freke to join him in Ireland. There three of his children, Arthur, John, and Ann, would settle permanently. Through marriage to Dorothy Smith of Youghal, the daughter of Mary Boyle and niece of the earl of Cork, Arthur Freke strengthened the family relationship with the powerful Boyles.¹⁷ From the earl's son-in-law David Fitzdavid, first earl of Barrymore, he rented the fortress of Rathbarry built in the fifteenth century on the coast of Cork, south of Clonakilty, by the Barrys, whose family possession was reconfirmed in the early seventeenth century.¹⁸ Arthur Freke calls himself the 'owner of ye castle' in his manuscript account of the long siege of Rathbarry that one hundred people endured in 1642, but the civil war and the defeat of Charles I complicated his claims to any property.¹⁹ Among the so-called Forty-nine Officers who served the king in Ireland before 1649, Arthur Freke sought through his relative the earl of Orrery one of the letters patent pardoning him under the declaration of 1660 that granted the restoration of the lands on the terms of possession held in October 1641.²⁰ A year later Orrery forwarded to Edward Hyde, first earl of Clarendon, a letter 'from a poor gentleman Ar. Freak' asking for 'the first vacant company or lieutenancy of horse'.²¹ The characterization of Freke's financial straits may have been a rhetorical ploy, for 'Arthurus Freake Armiger' was at least in a position to represent Clonakilty in the Irish parliament that

¹⁶ The Freke genealogy documents the birth; the Amport area registers for this period no longer exist. *The Registers of Wadham College, Oxford*, ed. Robert Barlow Gardiner, 2 vols. (London, 1889–1905), i. 67; *Middle Temple Register*, i. 115.

¹⁷ Dorothea Townshend, 'Freke Pedigree', *CHAS*, 2nd ser., 11 (1905), 99, and *The Life and Letters of the Great Earl of Cork* (New York, 1904), 69, 298; *Burke's Irish Family Records*, 5th edn. (London, 1976), 1,039.

¹⁸ On 22 October 1618 James I directed the lord deputy and chancellor 'to regrant to the Lord Barry, Lord Viscount Buttevant, all his estates', including Rathbarry (*CSPI*, 1615–25, 216).

¹⁹ BL, Sloane 1008 describes the hardships those within the castle suffered from 12 January to 18 October, when they were relieved by Charles Vavasour and William Jephson and removed to Bandon. The castle was then set afire to thwart the Irish rebels (Herbert Webb Gillman, ed., 'Siege of Rathbarry Castle, 1642', *CHAS*, 2nd ser., 1 [1895], 1–20).

²⁰ *Fifteenth Annual Report*, iii. 623; *CSPI*, 1660–2, 316, 317, 319.

²¹ Edward Hyde, first earl of Clarendon, *Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers Preserved in the Bodleian Library*, ed. F. J. Routledge et al., 5 vols. (Oxford, 1869–1970), v. 280.

began on 8 May 1661. Two years later he was listed as ‘Arthur F., of Mogely, County Cork, Ireland, esq’ in the entry recording his son Percy’s admission to the Middle Temple.²² The son ensured the Frekes’ possession of Rathbarry and considerable further holdings in County Cork in large part through marriage to Elizabeth Freke.

The courtship of Elizabeth and Percy Freke is obscured by the lack of information about their early lives. The second of Arthur and Dorothy Freke’s three children, Percy Freke was probably born in 1643 either in the nearby area of Bandon, where the commander of the besieged Rathbarry and his sick wife ‘being wth child’ found safety late the year before, or near her parents in Youghal, where a year later Arthur Freke was made a freeman.²³ Their son registered at the Middle Temple on 4 July 1663 without matriculating at a university. Despite a lengthy association with the London inn of court, he seems also to have left without being called to the bar. ‘Peirce Freake’ appears only in January 1670/1 minutes as one of several people threatened with expulsion if fines of twenty pounds were not paid ‘for breaking open the doors of the Hall, Parliament Chamber, and kitchen at Christmas, and setting up a gaming Christmas, persisting after Mr. Treasurer’s admonition, and continuing the disorders until a week after Twelfth day’.²⁴ By then he had already applied for the 23 June 1669 London marriage licence to ‘Mrs Elizabeth Freke, of St Martin’s in the Fields’.²⁵ Later, in her recollection of the wedding, which according to the registers of St Paul’s Church Covent Garden took place on 14 November 1672, Freke recalls that she had been engaged for six or seven years; she also laments elsewhere the loss of the letters they wrote to each other over a period of seven years before they were married. Presumably the two met in London, though also possibly on a visit to Hannington, soon after Percy Freke entered Middle Temple. The registration of another marriage between them on 26 June 1673 at St Margaret’s Church Westminster lends credence to her admission that the first marriage occurred privately without her father’s knowledge or approval, prompting him to give his daughter away in a second, more suitable, ceremony. His new son-in-law, in any case, had considerably less prospect of providing for his daughter’s material well-being than

²² *CJI*, i. 589; 6 July 1663, *Middle Temple Register*, i. 168.

²³ ‘Siege of Rathbarry Castle’, 19; at his death in 1706, according to the remembrances, he was ‘in the sixty third yeare of his age’ (below, p. 253). Arthur Freke was among those who took the freemen’s oath on 20 September 1644; he also became, according to C. M. Tenison, a lieutenant in the parliamentary army (*The Council Book of the Corporation of Youghal, from 1610 to 1659, from 1666 to 1687, and from 1690 to 1800*, ed. Richard Caulfield [Guildford, Surrey, 1878], 249; ‘Cork M.P.’s, 1559–1800’, *CHAS*, 2nd ser., 1 [1895], 378).

²⁴ *Middle Temple Records*, iii. 1,253.

²⁵ *Allegations for Marriage Licences Issued by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, 1558 to 1699*, ed. Joseph Lemuel Chester and George J. Armytage, *Harleian Society*, 23 (1886), 165.

someone in Ralph Freke's position might have expected for each of his children.

Compared to her already-married sisters, Elizabeth Freke had, indeed, less assurance of economic prosperity. Ten years earlier, on 2 May 1661 at the Hannington church of St John the Baptist, her sister Cicely had married Sir George Choute or Chute, 'knight of Hinxhill in the County of Kent' and the heir to the Bethersden estate of Surrenden 'very much enhaunsed' by his ancestors, who 'improved the Beauty of the Ancient Structure, by additional Buildings'.²⁶ Though the marriage ended prematurely with the death of her husband in 1664, their son, Sir George Choute, succeeded his father, becoming a knight, a baronet, and a member of parliament. The next older sister, Frances, had also married a man who would receive a knighthood, George Norton of Abbots Leigh. The Norton family and their Somerset manor had gained some prominence in royalist history for the refuge provided for the disguised prince of Wales as he fled from England in 1651 after the battle of Worcester.²⁷ The manor house of Abbots Leigh, which was razed in the early nineteenth century, was 'a very large building situated on the brow of the hill northward' with commanding views of the Bristol Channel, the Welsh mountains, and the adjacent shires.²⁸ On the other side of England, an estate near the Kent village of Tenterden became the Heronden residence of the youngest sister, Judith, who on 14 October 1669 had married in Hannington Robert Austen, the second son of the baronet Sir Robert Austen. Her husband inherited their estate from his uncle John Austen. In his own right Robert Austen gained stature as a leader in the Kent militia, an administrator in local government, and a representative to parliament; the last five years of his life he was also a lord of the admiralty.²⁹ Neither Judith and Robert Austen nor the Nortons and Choutes had great wealth, yet the estates at Abbots Leigh and Tenterden in particular provided Elizabeth Freke throughout her life with a sense of place she struggled to find in her own marriage.

The brief entries recalling the Frekes' first married years in London underscore an insecurity measured in lost sums of money. The same year of their second wedding Percy Freke sold a mortgage in Epping

²⁶ John Philipot, *Villare Cantianum; Or, Kent Surveyed and Illustrated* (London, 1659), 72; Hasted, vii. 562, 488–9.

²⁷ Frances' father-in-law, George Norton, was knighted on 13 May 1660 'for his service in entertaining King Charles at his house & helping to convey him to Trent'; her husband was knighted on 14 December 1671 (*Le Neve's Pedigrees of the Knights*, ed. George W. Marshall, *Harleian Society*, 8 [1873], 58, 57).

²⁸ John Collinson, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset*, 3 vols. (Bath, 1791), iii. 154.

²⁹ Hasted, vii. 206–7, ii. 174–5; *HC*, i. 573–4.

Forest valued at more than £5,000 that his wife had received from her father. Several months later her husband appears, at least in her accounting, to have unwisely invested money from her marriage portion in Hampshire real estate. Their fortunes turned out no better when three years later Percy Freke purchased from his father-in-law the right to a mortgage held on Leeds Castle. When Thomas, second Lord Culpeper, bought the castle from the estate of Cheney Culpeper, it was encumbered by a mortgage in Ralph Freke's name that Lord Culpeper failed to settle. The suit in chancery to recover the property moved towards the Frekes' advantage: a 29 November 1676 decree granted the plaintiff possession of the disputed property, and on 14 December the court ordered that 'a writt of Assistanse should be Awarded to the sherriffe of Kent to put the plt into the poss[essi]on of the lands'. Five days later, however, the court reversed itself, citing unspecified 'app[ar]ent irregularitys' and concluding 'that the sd Ld Culpeper & his Lady are not to be disturbed in or turned out of poss[essio]n of the Manision house of Leed & Castle' and that Ralph Freke should file an answer by the beginning of the next term.³⁰ A year later Percy Freke sold his right to the Culpepers, his wife claims without her knowledge.

The one financial transaction from the first years of marriage that would ultimately provide at least limited security was the purchase of the Norfolk manor of West Bilney in 1676. Located along the River Nar about seven miles south of King's Lynn, the West Bilney property had been mortgaged to Ralph Freke by Thomas Richardson, Baron Cramond. A chancery suit confirmed the Freke title to the manor, which Ralph Freke had given to Robert Austen as part of a marriage settlement. Austen sold the estate he considered too far from his Kent holdings to Percy Freke, who bestowed it in trust to his wife. At the time the manor of West Bilney had almost 2,700 acres, including common and warren, and a yearly rent of £413; the Frekes, however, did not have the immediate right to all the rent and holdings. Ralph Freke had confirmed in an indenture to Lord Richardson's widow a dower claim to the estate with a 'yearly value of one hundred thirty three pounds and five shillings being the third part of the said Mannor of Bilney'.³¹ Until Lady Ann Richardson's death in 1698 the agreement prevented Elizabeth Freke from occupying the manor hall; for much of this time she would dwell in either Ireland, London, or Hannington.

The memoirs describe at some length only the last of the five times she lived in Ireland. The hope of recouping her diminishing fortune, she writes, prompted her to leave her newborn son at Hannington and

³⁰ PRO, C 33/247, fol. 140r; see also fols. 34r-v, 73r, and 202r.

³¹ NRO, 19375 103X2. On the outside of the document, apparently in Freke's hand, is the notation, 'Deede of Dowre to the Lady Ann Richerson wch she Injoyed 27 Years'.

accompany her husband for an eight-month stay with her mother-in-law in Youghal and at Rostellan. When the Frekes returned a year later, in September 1677, she says nothing about where they lived during this period of seven months. Subsequent journeys back to Ireland, the first for almost two years and the second for a year, were spent at Rathbarry, which Percy Freke had purchased from the second earl of Barrymore. Neither memoir acknowledges the hospitality extended at Rostellan by the family of Lord Inchiquin or the welcome and support from other English settlers. Outside of the dangers encountered in sea voyages wracked by storms and plagued by pirates, Elizabeth Freke remembers most vividly the unkindness: the unspecified cruelty of her husband's mother, the grasping behaviour of his sister Mary Bernard, and the unjust demands of the Rathbarry tenant John Hull.

The death of her father on 24 April 1684 began a new stage of difficulties at West Bilney. News of Ralph Freke's imminent death prompted Percy Freke to lease Rathbarry to John Hull and return to Hannington, perhaps out of a desire to please his grieving wife and possibly in anticipation of her father's legacy. But the Hannington estate would go to none of the surviving daughters. Ralph and William Freke had promised their dying father 'that if they had no heirs male, they should let Hannington Estate come to their brother Thomas and his heirs', an agreement that the Freke genealogy states 'The 2 brothers, Rafe and William, made a settlement strait on'. The settlement was honoured, and their great-nephew Thomas Freke came into the property that might otherwise have descended to Ralph Freke's surviving children. Elizabeth Freke's only reaction to his death and the lost inheritance is the rueful comment that she was left 'his unhappy child, ever to lamentt him'. She was also left without the prospect of living at either Rathbarry or Hannington. While her husband went back to Ireland, leaving in all probability partly because of the discord acknowledged in the first manuscript, his wife stayed with her sister Frances Norton in London and her sister Judith Austen in Tenterden. By the end of 1685 and a year of dependence upon others, she left for King's Lynn resolved, as she notes, to find her fortunes anew at West Bilney and to resist her husband's efforts to make her sell the Norfolk estate and return to Ireland.

Until the conflicts that would lead to war in Ireland intensified, the Frekes remained separated for sixteen months and then again for seven months. The events in this period of the remembrances deal primarily with Elizabeth Freke's efforts to settle into the thatched house known as the Wassell Farm and to impose her will upon resentful tenants. Aside from mentioning the visit during which her husband took some of her money to buy a nearby property, the manuscripts ignore him

and emphasize her own hardship and degradation. What little is known of Percy Freke during this period would suggest that he was serious and responsible in his commitment to Ireland. A letter from the earl of Longford to the duke of Ormonde in December 1685 recommends him as trustworthy and knowledgeable, ‘a very honest gentleman of a good estate in the county of Cork’.³² When his name appears on a list of Protestant families forced to flee the Catholic supporters of James II, the yearly value of £520 placed on his estate is considerably above the average.³³ He also was apparently actively involved in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of military affairs valued by the earl of Longford and the officer’s rank Elizabeth Freke says was later taken from him by the Jacobites.

The tensions that led in 1689 to the armed conflict in Ireland between the forces of James II and William III brought the Frekes together for a considerable time in Bilney and, ironically, also determined Elizabeth Freke’s return to Ireland for her last and longest stay. Having fled Ireland along with many other Protestants in 1688, Percy Freke was included the next year in an act of attainder against those who would lose their property and be considered traitors if they did not appear in court to answer charges of disloyalty and submit to James’ authority. In his absence the Rathbarr estate was confiscated and given to the Catholic Jacobite Owen MacCarty. Several months before the July 1690 battle of the Boyne, while William III was gathering forces for the campaign he himself would lead, Freke returned to Ireland. He may himself have assumed an active leadership in the Cork military resistance to the Irish Jacobites, thereby justifying the title of colonel by which he was later known.³⁴ The defeat of James II and his supporters, in any case, led to the series of forfeitures that restored properties seized by the Jacobites. When two years later Percy Freke came back to Bilney, his repossession of the Rathbarr estate unencumbered by the former lease to Hull made it difficult for his wife to ignore his insistence that she return with him to Ireland. Together they lived from 1692 to 1696 in the place she had not seen for eight years and would never see again.

Despite her characterization of the four and a half years as a ‘miserable life, and most of my time ther sick’, the Frekes had a rather prominent position among their Cork neighbours. Percy Freke represented Clonakilty in the session of Irish parliament that began on 5 October 1692; and although he never assumes a significant role in

³² *Historical Manuscripts Commission. Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Ormonde, K. P.*, ed. F. Elrington Ball, n.s., 7 (London, 1912), 397.

³³ *Cork Remembrancer*, 330; transcribed from a Trinity College, Dublin manuscript.

³⁴ The parliamentary journals, for example, refer to him variously as Colonel and Mr Freake.

the journals of the House of Commons, he remained a member of parliament until his death. In 1693 he petitioned Whitehall 'to be tenant of wharfage, carriage and keyage' in Ireland as compensation for his 'great expense in the redemption of that kingdom'.³⁵ A year later he was high sheriff of County Cork, attending the assizes with a retinue his wife describes as 'two and twenty handsome proper men all in new liveries'.³⁶ Their twenty-year-old son, Ralph, and his father further received considerable attention from Lord Drogheda, who saw the younger Freke as a suitable husband for his daughter. Other Cork families appear to have welcomed them into their homes. Percy Freke and his son rested on the way from Dublin at the Waterpark estate of Richard Pyne; Castle Mahon, the residence of the Bernards, afforded Elizabeth Freke a respite on another journey. Like the Powerscourts, who promoted the marriage suit on behalf of Earl and Lady Drogheda, the Pynes and Bernards were related in various degrees to the Frekes by marriage and birth, but the kinship shared among families bound together by their English heritage was not strong enough to overcome the isolation Elizabeth Freke felt.

She left her husband and son to reestablish her own life. Until Percy Freke came back to Bilney in late 1703, she was reunited with him in England only twice. Both times her husband left again, her memoirs stress, once he had obtained from her large sums of money. The remembrances do not describe, however, the extent to which Percy Freke used her resources to become a significant landholder in County Cork. The estate of Justin MacCarthy forfeited after the Irish war and granted to Henry Sidney became Percy Freke's in a 1698 transaction involving £1,031. When large quantities of forfeited land were sold in the government sales of 1702 and 1703, Freke was in a position to buy for £2,409 the forfeited Galway estates, including the town of Baltimore and lands of Bally Island; for another £700 he also purchased in 1703 the towns and lands lost by the attainted John Barry.³⁷ In all, these and a smaller acquisition for £98 in the barony of Ibane and Barryroe added more than 2,800 acres to holdings that included the Rathbarry estate, the unspecified amounts of land near Bantry and southwest of both Dunmanway and Skibbereen noted by Bishop Dive Downes in his 1700 visitation, and a £2,000 mortgage on Limerick property.³⁸

In the meantime Elizabeth Freke re-established her former life in Bilney on a more modest scale. For two years she lived in the thatched

³⁵ Referred to the treasury on 4 June 1693 (*CSPD*, 1693, 169–70).

³⁶ *Cork Remembrancer*, 317.

³⁷ *Fifteenth Annual Report*, iii. 392, 393.

³⁸ 'Bishop Dive Downes' Visitation of his Diocese, 1699–1702', ed. T. A. Lunham, *CHAS*, 2nd ser., 15 (1909), 84, 86, 131; *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, 1712–1714*, ed. Maurice F. Bond, n.s., 10 (London, 1953), 273–4.

house struggling to undo the alleged mismanagement of her property during four absent years, escaping the inhospitable Norfolk world only for long visits in London with her sister Judith Austen. When all the holdings of Bilney came into her possession on the death in 1698 of Lady Richardson, the ‘empty’ manor house and its ‘bare walls’ occupied her time. Entries in the memoirs describe the furnishings given to her by her sisters and purchased with her ‘own mony’. They further emphasize the renovations she undertook on the neglected church. The management of the estate itself also now became her responsibility as she faced alone the domestic realities of arresting tenants and evicting families for unpaid rents. Adding to the burdens was the infirmity that increasingly preoccupies the pages of the memoirs.

Her physical and emotional well-being are not always easily distinguishable. The four and a half years she had spent in Ireland were, she insists, miserable years of unrelieved colic and vapours that kept her in her room virtually an invalid. Vapours were in the seventeenth century considered the ‘most frequent of all Chronical Diseases’; their resemblance to ‘almost all the Diseases poor Mortals are subject’ also suggests that the illness has no apparent physical basis.³⁹ The phthisic or asthma that occurred in December 1700 following the visit of her husband and once again confined her as an invalid further strengthens the suspicion of hypochondria. A similar attack occurred following her husband’s second visit in 1702: after he again took her money for his own property-buying ventures, she became unable to move across her chamber without assistance. An earlier description of a ‘malignant fever’ that affected her left side and turned her foot ‘black as a cole’ lends substance, however, to the gravity of another illness she claims left her bedridden and on the brink of death for five months. Like the graphic reconstruction of a fall in 1704 down a long flight of stairs into a stone wall, which left her ‘almost dead’, the account of her affliction may exaggerate its seriousness, but the suffering had an undeniable physical basis.

Among the misfortunes and pain that marked the next years, the deaths of her grandson and husband affected her most deeply. In 1699 her son had married Elizabeth Meade, the daughter of a prominent lawyer and future baronet in Ireland, without the consent and probably the knowledge of his mother. Elizabeth Freke would not in fact meet her daughter-in-law until the autumn of 1704 when her son, his wife, and two of their three children came to Bilney. John, the three-year-old grandson she grew attached to during the visit, was accidentally shot in London with a pistol a servant had carelessly left loaded; three

³⁹ John Pechey, *A Plain and Short Treatise* (London, 1698), 10; *International Dictionary of Medicine and Biology*, ed. Sidney I. Landau, 3 vols. (New York, 1986), iii. 3,096, ii. 1,378.

days later, 13 June 1705, the little boy died. He was interred at West Bilney, the parish register notes, on 18 June after a large public funeral described in the remembrances. The unusual extent to which Elizabeth Freke commemorated the young boy reflects a sense of loss that later changes, it will become apparent, as she privately recounts the grandson's death in the two versions of her autobiography. In a different way the sickness and death of her husband also assumed, in time, a new meaning.

Shortly after Percy Freke had returned to Bilney in 1704 he survived a five-month bout of fever and gout that brought him, in his wife's view, beyond the care of physicians; in December of the next year the first symptoms of his fatal illness appeared. Five doctors, two surgeons, and three apothecaries tended with limited success to the asthma and dropsy that wracked and swelled his increasingly frail body. Throughout the ordeal that ended when he died on 2 June 1706, Elizabeth Freke appears in her narratives as the unstinting nurse who tended her husband through long days and nights at her own considerable emotional and physical expense. However self-serving this image may be, she undeniably spared little expense on medical care for her husband. Separate accounts compiled in 1709 and 1712 document with slight variations the daily sums of money expended over the fatal months. Hundreds of pounds were spent on the professional medical help Freke never trusted yet sought throughout her life; additional amounts detail the cost of the mourning rings, gloves, and hatbands; the wines, cakes, and ale; and the vault, leaded coffin, and pall befitting a 'gentlemans buriall'. While the versions of her husband's fatal illness, it will also be apparent, do not vary as strikingly as do those of her grandson's death, the loss significantly influenced the way in which Freke would later reinterpret the past.

Percy Freke's death left his widow once again alone and burdened with the responsibilities of her estate. Unlike the period in her life during which she struggled without him at Bilney, the years of widowhood intensified financial concerns paradoxically brought about by her prospect of greater wealth. In addition to those from the properties in West Bilney and Pentney, her husband's will bequeathed to his wife 'all the Rents and profitts arising out of all and every my Lands Tenements and hereditaments whatsoever in the Kingdome of Ireland not before settled upon my Sonn Ralph ffreke and his heires dureing the Terme of her naturall life'.⁴⁰ Elizabeth Freke values the Irish estate bequeathed to her at £850 a year not counting a further £1,200 in arrears; she stresses the difficulty, however, in realizing anything near this amount. Her cousin John Freke, the memoirs assert, had abused his power of

⁴⁰ PRO, PROB 11/489/145.

attorney by lowering the rents of the Irish properties and forgoing the arrears; her son, to his discredit, also failed to honour the rents he owed his mother. Besides the perceived mismanagement of the holdings in Ireland, the first years of widowhood were preoccupied with Norfolk tenants who took advantage of her failure to renegotiate the leases, cut trees from the properties for their own use, and ran away without paying rents long due. Charges and countercharges in the hundred court and assizes led to many small but expensive disputes.

Ill health exacerbated her difficulties. In the spring of 1707 the phthisic that had earlier incapacitated Freke prevented her from going to Ireland and asserting the legal rights of her husband's will; instead, she returned to Bilney, letting her cousin John Freke make the journey in her place and settle her affairs. Later that year, she contends, the cousin's handling of the business and her son's indifference to his mother aggravated the effects of an earlier fall and confined her once again to a chair for more than three months 'with such a violent ticcike and shorttness of breath' that others 'thought itt imposyble for me to survive'. Freke attributes her failure to renew the leases following her husband's death to her invalid confinement; the trial in Norwich over the disputed trees left her, she writes, with a weariness and pain that defied conventional medical treatment. When she then consulted a well-known physician, the diagnosis was not encouraging: 'he told me twas too late: grife had brought me into the condition I were in; and thatt I were wasted all in my inward parts, both my kidnys and my back ulcerated with some fall I had lately had' (W, below, p. 98). His emphasis on both the physical as well as the emotional causes of her illness recognizes that the infirmity could not be attributed solely to hypochondria. The beleaguered widow, now in her sixties, suffered the accidents and chronic maladies of age tormented not only by 'rogues of all kinds' but by 'the wantt of health to supportt besids, and noe comfort from any frind'.

The theft of her horse the next year added to the legal problems that unsettled the last years of her life; still more consuming was the protracted dispute with the Norwich ecclesiastical officials. At issue was Elizabeth Freke's fundamental effort to assert control over her Norfolk world. After her husband's death she sought to replace the minister who had served the parish for thirty-five years without seeking the bishop's licensing of her new choice. The long series of letters that ensued between her and the bishop and his chancellor raises a number of fine distinctions about governance that turn ultimately upon the bishop's insistence that 'you are both obliged to provide a curatte and allsoe to provide such a one as I shall approve' (W, below, p. 113). In response she pressed forcefully her conviction that her Bilney parish was not subject to the bishop's authority. Summoned to Norwich at

the early stages of the dispute, she stressed the infirm condition that prevented her from appearing at the ecclesiastical court. The letters that remain her means of defence end in late 1710 on a grudging note of accommodation: she will accept a licensed minister 'dureing my pleasure'. But the basic conflict remained unresolved. Two other letters written three years later in response to the chancellor's warning of excommunication threaten in the end to tear down the church rather than acknowledge the Norwich authority. The sentence of excommunication issued by Thomas Tanner, chancellor of Norwich, on 18 November 1713 cites the refusal of Elizabeth Freke to appear when summoned three times to answer the matter pending before the court concerning the appointment of a suitable cleric.⁴¹

The intemperate tone of her last letters is perhaps more than the expression of a wilful woman intent upon protecting her threatened rights; the letters may well reflect in their irascibility and tenacity Freke's growing awareness that she is now a 'diseased criple' imprisoned in her confinement and 'used by every body'. Her fears that her tenants are scheming to cheat her and that her servants are plotting to murder her are not simply the paranoia of increasing age. Rheumatism, pleurisy, and colic compounded her phthisic and accentuated the loneliness, vulnerability, and virtual helplessness of the final years. At the age of sixty-eight her eyes also began to fail her; three years later she would tersely write, 'I am allmost tottally deprived of my eye sightt, an insuportable grieft to me' (B, below, p. 280). Her sister Frances Norton offered some support in London, and her other sister's daughter provided companionship in Bilney; the arrival of Ralph Freke and his family at the end of 1712 proved less comforting. During the four-month stay, her grandson's smallpox endangered her servants, and relations with her son and daughter-in-law were cold and occasionally hostile. Elizabeth Freke nevertheless purchased a baronetcy for her son before he returned to Ireland; she also appears to have derived some solace from contemplating the legacies waiting for each grandson. Like the series of extensive inventories undertaken the year before in the wallpaper-bound manuscript or the room-by-room list of her possessions included in the vellum-covered text, measuring or accounting may have provided both diversion and reassurance amidst the tedium and fear of pain and age. Near the end of her life the news items increasingly incorporated in her remembrances may have been a further attempt to break the confines of a Norfolk world of troublesome domestic concerns and the threats of the sheriff's bailiffs.

Two months after the last entry in her memoirs Elizabeth Freke died. The only evidence of the date is the inscription on the Westminster

⁴¹ NRO, DN/CON/57.

Abbey monument: ‘She dyed Aprill 7th 1714’. While her remembrances emphasize a desire to be buried with her husband in the West Bilney church of St Cecilia, her will states only that she be ‘decently Interred in Westminster Abbey, If I shall happen to dye in or about London’.⁴² Perhaps her sister Frances Norton arranged the Abbey burial; she was responsible, in any case, for the monument erected in 1718 to the memory of her sisters Elizabeth Freke and Judith Austen, who was interred on 24 May 1716. The marble monument in the south choir aisle not far from the Poets’ Corner remains on the wall next to the elaborate one commemorating Lady Norton’s daughter Grace Gethin, whose death in 1697 Elizabeth Freke mourns in her writing. An unmarked grave in the nave of Westminster Abbey contains the remains of all three sisters.⁴³

At her death the rights to the Irish estates bequeathed in her husband’s will went to her son and his heirs. When Ralph Freke died in 1717, his eldest son, Percy, succeeded to the baronetcy and the majority of the land in Ireland. Percy Freke never married; and at his death on 10 April 1728 his title and estate went to his youngest brother, John Redmond Freke, their brother Ralph having died unmarried the year before. The last of Elizabeth Freke’s grandsons married Mary Brodrick, who died three years before her husband’s death on 13 April 1764. Since they had no children, the baronetcy became extinct, and his sister, Grace, remained the chief beneficiary of his will.⁴⁴ She had married John Evans of Bulgaden Hall, the fourth and youngest son of George Evans, the first Baron Carbery. The second of their five sons, John, fulfilled his uncle John Redmond Freke’s will by assuming the name and the arms of Freke; he was created a baronet in 1768. John Evans Freke, the first son of his marriage to Elizabeth Gore, succeeded his cousin on 4 March 1807 as the sixth Lord Carbery.⁴⁵ Algernon William George Evans-Freke, the ninth Lord Carbery, was the first husband of the woman who initially edited the remembrances, Lady Mary Carbery, the second daughter of Henry Joseph Toulmin. Their grandson, Peter Ralfe Harrington Evans-Freke, is the eleventh Lord Carbery.

The estates that Ralph and Elizabeth Freke had struggled to establish no longer remain in their descendants’ possession. Their grandson John Redmond Freke sold the Norfolk property to Francis Dalton in 1750.⁴⁶ By the end of the next century the thatched house had been divided into three houses and the Hall bore little resemblance to the former

⁴² PRO, PROB 11/539/67.

⁴³ Christine Reynolds, Assistant Keeper of the Muniments.

⁴⁴ *CB*, v. 15–16.

⁴⁵ *CB*, v. 378; *CP*, iii. 9–12.

⁴⁶ Blomefield, viii. 354.

residence. The church that Elizabeth Freke fought to control is now leased to the Norfolk Churches Trust, which offers services there only three times a year.⁴⁷ For two centuries the fate of Rathbarry Castle and its surrounding lands was quite different. A 1787 survey of the 15,276 acres in County Cork owned by Sir John Freke contains a detailed depiction of the 325-acre Castle Freke Domain, locating among the orchard, pastures, and deer park the castle overlooking the twenty-three acre lake, Lough Rahavarrig.⁴⁸ John Evans Freke, the sixth Lord Carbery, abandoned the old castle and commissioned Richard Morrison to build a castle in gothic style on another portion of the surrounding thousand acres. The new residence occupied a hill facing the south with views of the sea and coast. To the east were extensive plantations. 'When the view of the place first opens on the traveller', an 1820 description of Castle Freke observes, 'the whole has a grand and imposing appearance, presenting an extensive range of woodlands and undulating ground, with the fine turreted structure rising above it'.⁴⁹ The crenellated mansion remained in the nineteenth century the principal residence in County Cork of the Carbery-Freke family, major landholders of over 19,000 acres in Ireland valued in 1883 at £10,515 a year.⁵⁰ When fire destroyed much of the castle in 1910, insurance helped defray the expense of its rebuilding; the family fortune, however, was no longer what it had been. In 1919 the castle was sold to a consortium. The particulars of the sale listed in the illustrated catalogue describe the numerous rooms, the stables, cottages, and gardens on an estate 'extending to about 1,100 acres'.⁵¹ For several decades Castle Freke was occupied; then in the 1950s it was stripped of everything that could be auctioned. Recently the son of Lord Peter Carbery bought Castle Freke, though there are no plans for extensive renovation. The many acres of the Carberys' Irish holdings now gone and the lake

⁴⁷ Mary Carbery noted some of the apparent changes during a visit in the first years of the twentieth century. Nicolaas Velzeboer, whose family owned the immediate property until he sold the uninhabited house 'in approximately 1985', has indicated in correspondence that the dwelling long known as the Manor House, and currently part of the Manor Farm owned by Stephen Fry, had been faced in yellow brick 'at some stage ... as the home of a wealthy person'. Reverend Stuart Robert Nairn, The Rectory, Narborough, has also kindly provided the further information about the church.

⁴⁸ A Survey of the Estate of Sir John Freke Bart. in the County of Cork by Thomas Sherrard, 1787. Reverend C. L. Peters generously made available the survey, which is in his safekeeping at The Deanery, Rosscarbery.

⁴⁹ J. P. Neale, *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen, in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland*, 6 vols. (London, 1818–23), iii. n.p. See also, for example, Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, 2 vols. (1837; reprinted Baltimore, 1984), ii. 488–9.

⁵⁰ *CP*, iii. 12.

⁵¹ Peter Somerville-Large, *The Coast of West Cork* (London, 1974), 24–6; *Mary Carbery's West Cork Journal, 1898–1901*, ed. Jeremy Sandford (Dublin, 1998), 137–8, 153. Sandford reproduces the sale catalogue in an appendix to his edition, 155–8.

now a marsh, the ruins stand with their commanding views, a vestige of the past.

II

Part of that past is re-created in Elizabeth Freke's two distinct accounts of her misfortune. Though both begin with the same date and end within a year of each other, their differences are usually apparent despite the considerable duplication. The second remembrance begun in 1712 both retells and revises the earlier version, adding and deleting material to gain a tighter chronological continuity. Factual discrepancies that emerge in the later narrative, though they may raise questions of accuracy, do not compromise social and economic insights. Mundane details such as the cost of thatching a house, the furniture in various rooms, or the construction of a burial vault reinforce with unusual detail a rare picture of domestic life at this time. The value also lies in the implications of Elizabeth Freke's distinctly different representations of herself as a wife, mother, and widow.

The revision of the first entry reveals changes fundamental to a new self-portrait. Besides eliminating some of its awkward syntax, Freke expands the original version of the November wedding day twofold by adding information about immediate family members. The knowledge that her mother's death 'left me, the eldest of five daughters, aboutt six or seven years of age' and the description of the men her sisters had married may have been included simply to fill out the family background. Two shorter additions, however, suggest a further intention. The man she married is now described as 'my deer cosin Mr Percy Frek', not simply 'Mr Percy Freke'; the 'most grievous rainy, wett day' on which they were wed without her father's permission is remembered as 'a most dreadfull raynie day (a presager of all my sorrows and misfortunes to mee)'. The parenthetical emphasis underscores the event's ominousness, enhancing a melodrama intended to emphasize the disappointments of the ten years since the original entry. Over time Freke also comes to use the new endearment for her husband. In the context of her mother's death and sisters' marriages, her own wedding without the consent of the widowed father who had raised her may seem all the more defiantly unconventional because she now understands more fully the complexity and strength of the bonds of love and loyalty to both her father and husband.

Neither memoir ever explains why she married without her father's knowledge or consent, nor does either overtly admit guilt or regret for this parental disobedience; both manuscripts do convey the misery that stems in part from Freke's inability to end her dependency upon her

father and commit herself completely to her husband. This failure to break the paternal bond may reflect the 'general genius of this family' recognized in the genealogy begun by her father. The headnote to the pages charting the Freke lineage from its sixteenth-century progenitor attributes the considerable prosperity and self-sufficiency to a 'frugall and judicious' nature. The monument in the Hannington church erected in memory of Ralph Freke similarly commemorates him as 'a wonderfull Example of Frugality & Liberality'.⁵² Much the same phrase appears on the Westminster Abbey tribute to Elizabeth Freke: 'frugal to be Munificent'. The tacit link between father and daughter puts her preoccupation with money in a favourable perspective; its reminder of the Freke heritage might also account for some of her unhappiness. By nature frugal and strong willed, she married another strong-willed Freke who may have been frugal but not as liberal as her munificent father. Throughout her marriage and widowhood the struggle to achieve the self-sufficiency, if not the wealth, of her heritage compounded her misery.

An overprotective father may have ill-prepared Elizabeth Freke to endure adversity patiently. The man who cared for his young daughters after their mother died did so, both memoirs stress, with such kindness and indulgence that she 'was nott mised by us'. Until he died at the age of eighty-seven, almost thirteen years after his daughter's fateful marriage, the father's generous and loving nature did not lessen. He provided the newly married couple with a substantial estate, took them to his Hannington home for the birth of their son, and cared for the grandchild when the parents left for Ireland. Sensing his daughter's melancholy on a later occasion, he returned with bags containing £200 to be kept secret from her husband and to be used for 'pin money'. On the same visit he got her to promise that she would not leave him again while he lived in exchange for his promise that she would 'wantt for nothing his life'. She immediately wrote to her husband about the £200, 'hopeing', she says in the second manuscript, that 'itt might be a meanes for my continuance with him'. When 'with grief of hart' she left her father for the last time, his parting blessings cancelled a bond of £1,000. This and other sums of money that measure his continued care are tallied in the miscellaneous lists of both commonplace books. Throughout the narratives of the married years in which Elizabeth Freke moved by her reckoning seven times to empty houses and bare walls, the refrain 'nott a place to putt my unfortunatte head' underscores the deeply felt loss of the security and place provided by her nurturing father.

The failure of her husband to provide for her as her father had done

⁵² Fry's transcription, *Hannington*, 74.

colours Freke's portrait of a troubled marriage. Both versions insist that at least initially theirs was a marriage of love. Each entry describing the first two years of married life attributes her unhappiness to the absence of the husband she loved and not merely to the loss of much that she associated with her father: 'And I never had of itt, to my remembrance, five pound of itt and very little of my husbands company, which was no small griefto mee, I being governed in this my marriag wholly by my affecttions' (B, below, p. 213). During the years Elizabeth Freke and her husband lived sometimes together but often apart, as Percy Freke continued to use her financial resources for his own ventures, bitterness gradually displaced love. Neither account minimizes the grief of a marriage that forced her 'to seek my fortune by shifting for my selfe'. The image of the husband, however, alters quite significantly when the same years are recalled in the revision. His death in the intervening decade seems to have contributed to the noticeable change.

The two accounts of his death reflect different emphases. Though both describe the futile medical efforts to save his life, the second version gives greater prominence to Elizabeth Freke's emotional reaction. Doctors and surgeons who earlier are said only to have ignored her wishes now appear in their 'barbarity' to have 'murdered my deer husband'. Before, others were rude to her; now, they are cruel. Her leg that breaks into ulcers under the strain of continuous care becomes in the retelling 'an additional misery to whatt I dayly laboured under I dayly reckned would kill mee'. Entries found nowhere in the older manuscript disclose that nights spent tending a husband wracked by asthma and bloated with dropsy caused her to become, in the words of others, a crazy woman, a characterization she admits was 'too true, for my grife had made me very little better then crassed with seeing him lye fowre monthes in thatt misery and my own legg broke in two holes full of pains' (B, below, p. 250). The later passages also reveal that the bedridden husband challenged his wife's detractors to a duel at sunrise, 'Soe tender was my deer husband of my honour'. His death in her arms befits the new portrayal. The trauma of the moment, which in the first text frightened her so much that she was 'nott able to hold him', vividly reappears in the later narrative: 'noe mortall was with him butt my wretched selfe; [dying] in my armes, which quite distracted me, [he] bid me nott stirr from him. But my amased condition was such as my crying outt soon fill'd the house outt of the church to be a wittness of my unhappy and deplorable fatte' (B, below, p. 251). The cry seems one of grief as well as terror. The man willing to challenge those who called her crazed became through their shared suffering more nearly the husband she had married. In death he becomes the 'deer husband' of the second manuscript.

The reconstructed remembrances often effect this transformation simply by omitting statements and actions that reflect a strained relationship. Most striking are two passages crossed out in the W text and absent from the B text. The first reveals the conflict caused by Elizabeth Freke's divided loyalties. Reluctant to leave Hannington and her father, Freke at first refused to go back to Ireland in 1683 with the husband she had left with considerable discord ten months earlier at Kinsale. 'His last parting wish' was, the deleted passage recalls, 'thatt he might never se my face more' (W, below, p. 49). The later version is more ambiguous: 'his parting with me last att Kingsaile stuck deep in my stomock' (B, below, p. 220). A year later another separation from her husband reveals the depth of her unhappiness during this troubled period. Percy Freke, who had reconciled with his wife and returned with her to England at the news of his father-in-law's imminent death, left once again for his Irish estates. While they were in England, he often was absent from his wife, 'which I cannott forgett', she confides only in the original narrative, 'itt was soe griveous to me' (W, below, p. 52). After his departure she does not restrain, in this version, her resentment at having been 'thrown off by my unkind husban; [who] never in his life took any care for me or whatt I did' (W, below, p. 53). Later Elizabeth Freke crossed out both passages from the vellum-bound account, perhaps because she recognized even as she entered them that they were emotional outbursts rather than considered reflection. They may also have appeared much too damaging for someone who insists in both narratives that she never revealed to others any differences she had with her husband.

Additional omissions made some years later in the rewriting further soften the conflict in the marriage. Thus two quite distinct versions describe the husband who returned the year after he had 'thrown off' his wife, hoping to convince her to sell the Bilney estate she held in trust for herself and her son. Originally Elizabeth Freke portrayed with less than fondness an ill-tempered, grasping husband bent upon having his will: 'he was very angry with me for being on this sid of the country, tho in all his tims of his being from me he never took care for a peny for my subsistance or his sons. For which God forgive him' (W, below, p. 55). The same entry rewritten after his death simply relates that he came from Dublin by post and 'was dayly importuneing of mee to sell my Billney to Sir Standish Harts Tongue for the like in Ireland; but my God gave me the resolution and courage to keep whatt I had rather then by parting with itt be keptt by my frinds' (B, below, p. 225). The statement, taken from the original, omits the final words in the W text, 'or trust to his or any ones kindness'. Also omitted is the reaction of her husband, who 'in a greatt anger' left his wife 'alone againe' and did not return from Ireland for almost two years. Other deletions

diminish Elizabeth Freke's pique at her husband's neglect and irresponsibility. Missing in the new entry about the £1,000 he had shifted in 1702 to Ireland is the information 'given me by my deer father', about which she wrote, 'This I thought very hard usage, butt tis true' (W, below, p. 71). The later remembrance also overlooks her earlier complaint that she had been 'cruly disgarded' by her husband and left to the care of her sister, 'itt being more then Mr Frek has afforded me this 17 yeare' (W, below, p. 72). Another entry for a period more than a year later excises from the text a similar example of his selfishness: 'Mr Frek thus <deleted: barbarously> leaving of me to my shiffts withoutt any pittty or comiseration two yeares' (W, below, p. 73). Her complaint in a passage two years later about a lack of letters from Ireland, 'which has much aded to my greatt misery and sickness' (W, below, p. 76), becomes 'in all which time I never heard' (B, below, p. 241). She is not as willing to forget her dismay and humiliation at a later date when she waited fruitlessly for her husband to arrive at Bath only to discover he had removed in her absence 'all I had'; she does not, however, re-enter her comment, 'This is true. Which with many more such triks I beg God to forgive him' (W, below, p. 78).

At the same time that she describes her husband less bitterly, years of growing disillusionment seem to have strengthened her unwillingness to sentimentalize the realities of a marriage whose unhappiness she refuses to mitigate. While she omits her negative memory of her first stay in Ireland – where she miscarried, 'my husbands mother being very unkind to mee' (W, below, p. 42) – and says only in the second narrative that the eight-year period at West Bilney was the most quiet and comfortable of her life, she also accentuates her difficult fate. The words 'miserable' and 'wretched' in the revision underscore her vivid sense of the suffering she endured on their Irish estate, 'almost frightened outt of my witts', and emphasize the stress she felt without her husband in England. Unappreciated is the extensive support she received from her sisters, an omission all the more glaring in the self-characterization added to the statement about her visit to Judith Austen preserved from the initial text: 'And being very poore, I presented her in London with six sillver plates cost me thirty six poundes' (B, below, p. 224). Though able even then to afford a considerable gift of silver, Freke seems compelled to exaggerate her misery in the revisions for reasons further related to her plight after her husband died. The years of widowhood that reshaped the memories of an unhappy marriage never altered, however, her contention that his death was 'the dismall and fattasst day of my life' (B, below, p. 289).

Without her husband, the misfortunes of motherhood increasingly assumed significance. Her son Ralph, born with such danger to his mother, shared his father's interest in Ireland and settled there into a

distant, somewhat strained relationship with his mother. The death of the beloved grandchild and the fatal illness of her husband added considerable tension to her relationship with her son. Compounding the difficulties was the son's obligation in his father's will to settle with his mother the arrears on the family's Irish estates, an obligation that a December 1706 letter to her son included in the first remembrance admonished him to meet. Her son, she later notes in the second manuscript, 'had only as usuall a rude answer' (B, below, p. 254). His failure to pay the rents due to his mother each year increased her sense of his ingratitude. Another letter written four years later threatening legal action complains bitterly about the 'many slights and disrespectts' that have 'broke my hartt and brought mee to the condition I am in' (W, below, p. 132). By the time the son ended three years of silence with a letter and then returned to England in late 1712 to see his mother, her feelings of affliction and abandonment had deepened. The dismay and hurt she expresses in the original memoir are intensified in the revisions begun near of the end of her son's long absence.

Her reactions to Ralph Freke's marriage reflect the change. Both remembrances give less attention to the marriage than to her son's earlier effort to obtain the hand of Lord Drogheda's fifteen-year-old daughter Alice. While the accounts of this failure are substantially similar in detail, the second voices a hardened attitude. Where she first saw in the prospective bride 'nothing to be objected butt her quality, which I thought too much for a gentleman' (W, below, p. 62), Freke later comments, 'Butt I could nott think her <deleted: quality> proper for my son, clog'd with seven or 8 brothers and sisters'. She adds wryly, 'A fine lady she was, but I cared nott to be a servantt to any one in my old age' (B, below, p. 230). Whatever else she might have felt is lost in the rest of the sentence scratched out in the manuscript. A similar concern, however, is apparent in the further remark, 'I cared nott to bee frightened out of my mony nor my son too <deleted: several words>' (B, below, p. 231). Her complaint in the revised version that Lord and Lady Drogheda could have spared one of their many children to live near her conveys both affection and selfishness. She resists both the attempt of the prospective bride's parents 'to bring me to any tearms' as well as her husband Percy Freke's offer of better financial terms, thereby increasing the bitter anger of the son. Elizabeth Freke becomes spiteful when she recalls the son's later marriage without her consent to John Meade's daughter Elizabeth. Both versions ruefully wish him the good fortune she herself never had. In the second she records a cryptic, baleful thought: 'perhaps I mightt have opposed this match, I heering my son wish (to cross mee) thatt he mightt never prosper iff hee married there to thatt lady fifteen years of age. God forgive him' (B, below, p. 237).

Her complaints run through the rewriting of the memoirs. The birth of the first grandchild, for example, reminds Elizabeth Freke of her own motherhood, and she hopes ‘thatt he may be a greater comfortt to his parents then my son Frek has bin to mee, his mother’ (B, below, p. 238). Long-suffering and self-sacrifice are an integral theme of another addition recalling the loan she secured two years later on her son’s behalf. To the original complaint about his ingratitude she bitterly adds, ‘This tis to have butt one child, and him none of the best to me neither. Butt God forgive him and give patience to me, his unhappy mother, Eliz Frek’ (B, below, p. 242). Characteristic discontent reshapes her entry of 27 March 1704 on Ralph Freke’s ill health. For almost a year, the mother originally wrote, she had received no news from her son; and her response at the receipt of a letter from his wife in March 1704 is to implore divine help ‘to restore him to me and his children’ (W, below, p. 78). Later she could write that he did recover from his illness, but by then the much longer anxious periods without news led her to decry the ‘hard and uncomfortable fate of Eliza Freke’ and to note that he had regained his health ‘I hope to be a comfortt to mee, his unhappy mother’ (B, below, p. 244). A year later the death of her grandchild occasioned much greater pain.

The original account of the three-year-old Jack Freke’s tragic death is one of devastating loss. Elizabeth Freke loved him, she initially notes, with all her soul because he was an image of her own son; and she had begged her daughter-in-law to let him remain at West Bilney while the parents stayed at the Norfolk Street lodging, where the little boy was fatally shot. The grief-stricken grandmother is convinced that the child would be alive if the ‘cruell’ mother had left him in his grandmother’s care; she is also certain ‘I lost my child to show their undutifullness and cruellty to me, which God forgive’ (W, below, p. 82). Originally Freke had wished divine forgiveness of ‘her’; she changed the pronoun to ‘them’ as well as deleted two other references to her daughter as ‘cruell’. Her need to grieve, however, is greater than her desire to blame. The grandmother writes that she ‘shall ever lament’ the child whose death broke her heart and took away ‘any comfortt in this life’. Though she finds some solace in the large funeral she arranged, her sorrow remains unabated: ‘Oh, my harde fatte; I am ruined and undone for my child, and I doubt shall never enjoy my self againe’ (W, below, p. 82). When the daughter-in-law then refused to let her other child visit his sick grandfather while in London, Elizabeth Freke vowed never to see her again. Alone at West Bilney, she waited until her husband returned weakened by gout and consumed by ‘extream malloncally for the fattall loss of this our deer babe, which he had too much as well as I sett his whole hart on’ (W, below, p. 83).

Seven years later her husband’s sorrow and not her own is central

to her reconstruction of the tragedy. Time had lessened the pain that seemed so unbearable, and the troubled family relationship together with the death of her husband increased the need to reapportion responsibility. Once again Elizabeth Freke believes the grandchild 'must pay for all their undutifullness and cruellty to me' (B, below, p. 247), but now she heightens the magnitude of her son and daughter-in-law's guilt. The revision emphasizes her warning against staying at the fatal Norfolk Street lodgings and her fears that the servant, who, she now stresses, had on an earlier occasion mishandled the pistols, would again be dangerously careless. Their dismissal of her wishes leads to the tragic consequences perceived as a direct and deliberate wrong to Elizabeth and her husband: 'About 5 a clock in the morning he gave up his soule to God for there undutifullness to mee, for elce my God would nott have taken from me roott and branch as hee did butt to show his judgments to them. Butt God forgive them both their barbarity to the best of fathers and the indullgents of mothers' (B, below, p. 247). She considers this cruelty 'the most fattall'st thing that ever hapned to me' not because she had lost the lovely boy but because 'this same shott kild my deer husband' (B, below, p. 247). Her undutiful son, in effect, appears guilty of parricide, for Percy Freke's illness is now more emphatically a consequence of the shooting, a sickness aggravated by the daughter-in-law's refusal to let her older boy visit his namesake. 'Griefe for my child and his childrens cruell usage to him' now appear the cause of the 'extream mallonally' he suffered throughout the last months of his life. His death, Elizabeth Freke concludes, was 'to compleatt all my miseryes together' (B, below, p. 248).

The ungrateful behaviour of her son after the double tragedy exacerbates her misery. When she complains about his lack of correspondence in the months following the little boy's death, Elizabeth Freke omits in the revised account a probable cause of the silence – 'because I wrott him word of some mistakes he had committed' (W, below, p. 84) – and adds in the text the hope that God will forgive the son's 'crueltyes and undutiffullness' to her just as 'I, Elizabeth Frek, his unhappy mother, doe' (B, below, p. 248). Her contention that the year following her husband's death was as dreadful as any mortal had suffered now also ambiguously associates her son's behaviour with the loss of her husband: 'and those frinds I most trusted most deceived me, besids my own sons undutifullness to me, which after the loss of Mr Frek was enough to have brok the hart of any mortall butt my wretched self' (B, below, p. 255). Whether she did in fact intend to suggest that the son's neglect of his mother was second in sorrow only to her husband's death, his growing silence continues to appear grievous from the perspective of later years. Ralph Freke's return to West Bilney after his long absence only confirms the tension. One of the last entries in

the second manuscript records her attendance at a Sunday service where she had not been with him for seven years: 'My greatt and good God forgive him this and all his other mistaks to Elizabeth Freke' (B, below, p. 288). The narrative of her final months continued in the vellum-bound volume adds that her son frowned all the while they were in church 'for I know nott whatt (except itt were his feare of my coming alive home againe)' (W, below, pp. 197–8). Disagreements with her daughter-in-law and disappointment with their refusal to let her care for her grandchild prompted the familiar plea for divine forgiveness by 'unhappy mee, his wretched mother'. Yet Elizabeth Freke also writes in one of her last passages that for months after her son and family left she never went to bed dry-eyed: worried about reports of his death, 'I have paid those tears due to his death in his liffe to him' (W, below, p. 208).

Elizabeth Freke's troubled relationship with her son recalls her ambivalent feelings about her husband. The love she never expresses openly seems implicit in the reluctance to lose her only child in marriage and the desire to keep one of the grandchildren in his absence. Her close bond with young Jack Freke, the image of her son, suggests especially a maternal love, however much it is displaced; and her willingness later to hold her son responsible for the death of the boy implies a deep-seated feeling of betrayal. Like the decades of marriage, the years of troubled motherhood blurred love and blame.

Closely associated with her son's ingratitude during the years of widowhood is the irresponsibility of the other male figure who failed her, her cousin and attorney John Freke. Both narratives rue her decision to give him legal power, the later one adding bitterly, 'Lett me be a warning to trust friends with letters of aturny' (B, below, p. 256). Recalling in 1712 the cousin's willingness to renegotiate her son's lease, revised entries for 1707 complain that he 'ruined me'. Her cousin, she asserts in retrospect, took advantage of her ill health and pressed her to sign the agreement; in his callous dealings he left her little recourse other than the prayer, 'From such friends and friendship, good Lord, deliver mee and forgive my son his undutifullness to mee, his poor unhappy mother, and grant his children may nott pay my debtt by their undutifullness to him' (B, below, p. 257). Over the years legal problems with local rents and debts increased her sense of grievance, exacerbating feelings of harassment as well as strengthening her resistance; and in the rewriting she expresses her growing belief that she cannot trust her attorney or any of her friends. By the end of 1711 both accounts of this period reflect Elizabeth Freke's conviction that she is being used by everyone. Weakened by attacks of asthma, plagued by diminishing eyesight, and confined largely to a chair, she found it easy to blame her cousin John Freke.

Accounts of earlier troubles reflect, paradoxically, in the rewriting feelings of vulnerability and tenacity. Returning to England in 1684 with her young son, Freke now appears especially isolated, having 'nott a place now to putt my unhappy head in either in England or Ireland' (B, below, p. 223). Alone in the sparsely furnished thatched house, she was forced 'to seek my fortune amongst a pack of brute beast who endeavored my rhuien as by their threats to me dayly, and my deer father dead, Mr Frek gone to sea, and my self quitt a stranger in this country. Leftt with nither mony or bed or the least of goods or credid' (B, below, p. 225). The new description of the final journey from Ireland in 1696 no longer blames her maid Margaret for the loss of her clothes: 'a roghy watterman stole every ragg of my clothes'. Freke was later denied her rightful place in the manor house, she now insists, because the death of Lady Richardson was 'concealed' from her; those who sought her ruin then subjected her to the 'shame' and further injustice of the courts. Yet the woman who was not above portraying herself as a weak and helpless widow in her protracted disagreement with the bishop of Norwich and in her refusal to appear before a drainage commission also appears assertive. She becomes the mother who now claims greater credit for the recovery of her crippled infant son and the wife who manages through her own 'care and skill' to relieve the suffering of her husband's life-threatening gout. With an independence missing from the earlier memoir, she refuses to accept at Bilney her sister Judith Austen's financial help: 'I thank God I had learned the way of shifting better then borrowing and ever esteemed itt more honorable to unhappy me' (B, below, p. 226). When her narrative later records that God had spared her to face the miseries and vexations of a return to Ireland, she projects courageous resolve, though she cannot resist further complaint about the four-and-a-half miserable years. 'I have undergone more then mortoll tongue can speak' is a claim that epitomizes her characteristic pattern of self-vindication. 'And the seventeen year pastt', she continues, 'I have seen the fall of most of my enimise and am able to subsistt withoutt the help of my friends' (B, below, p. 229).

While Elizabeth Freke finds special pleasure in the misfortunes of specific enemies, dwelling in each manuscript on the just suffering of her antagonists, she obviously wants the support from others she claims not to need. Near the end of her life the troubled relationship with her sister Judith Austen described in the revised narrative especially reveals her ambivalence. An entry for 11 September 1710 recording the departure of her sister from West Bilney notes only the payment of £20 for the coach that 'I mightt receive noe further pittty or obligation on thatt accountt' (B, below, p. 266). Her resentment when she learns her sister left her not to return home but to visit others leads to the ironic remark,

'My God forgive her and raise her and hers upp better friends then I have bin to her and them' (B, below, p. 268). A lengthy itemized list of the money and gifts she had given her sister and niece adds bite to the prayer. The implicit rebuke was occasioned at least in part by a related disagreement a year later when her niece Betty Austen ended a three-month visit at West Bilney after her mother had written three letters requesting the daughter's return. Elizabeth Freke apparently did not want to lose the valued companionship, and she later notes in the revised manuscript that she gave her niece £50 for plate and £5 for expenses, but not before she complains about her sister's selfishness: 'affter my kind giveing her above fifteem hundred pound, she might have spared this awhile to me, Eliz Frek; for I had deserved itt and more of her thatt have bin to her like a mother from her childhood. Butt my God forgive her and be my supportt' (B, below, p. 278). The falling out reflects a fear of being forsaken that prompts, almost reflexively, her defensive independence, and the dismay perhaps explains the deletion in the second memoir of a passage describing the kindness of her sister after the death of Percy Freke. Typical of the revision and her later years in general is the need to measure relationships in monetary terms.

From the earliest time in her marriage, money had been both a source of conflict and security, a preoccupation that increased with the years of widowhood. The value Elizabeth Freke places on wealth is clear at the beginning of the revision when she characterizes her first unhappy years in London 'wher I twice misscarryed, [and] where I lost two thousand five hundred pounds outt of my six thousand seven hundred sixty fowre pounds' (B, below, p. 213). The new collocation of miscarriages and money quantifies in remarkable terms what loss had come to mean near the end of her life. Money had become for her, quite simply, a measure of self-definition amidst isolation, sickness, and insecurity. Her awareness of the liberating power of money is even more noticeable in the relationship with her son. When her revised entry on the birth of his first child expresses the hope that the grandchild will be a better comfort to his mother than her son had been, she cannot resist adding that he 'was borne butt to two hundred pound a yeare and by Gods blesing on my industry has affter my death above two thousand pound a yeare. And I have provided for his two eldest sons' (B, below, p. 238). The desire and the failure to buy love appear again in her reaction to the naming of the grandson born after the accidental death of young Jack Freke. His parents gave their new infant the name of the dead son, resisting Percy Freke's desire to have the grandchild named in memory of his own father. 'Butt itt was denyed him', the second manuscript observes with no apparent concession to the parents' feelings, 'and nott to bee purchased by me, his unhappy

mother' (B, below, p. 250). Elizabeth Freke was able to acquire, however, the baronetcy for her son; and though the last visit ended with disagreements about unpaid debts and charges of ingratitude, she found some comfort in reviewing all the material wealth earned through her own efforts and to be left to her descendants. The list of expenditures dated 14 September 1712 and included in the second manuscript ends a detailed account of outlays for her husband's fatal illness and sums lost to unscrupulous tenants with the additional defiant note: 'Thus have I lived neer seven years in my widowhood in a continuall trouble and to see the fall of most of my enimies without the assistance, help, or comfortt of one friend' (B, below, p. 304).

Other lists compiled in 1712 complement the revision. Updated accounts of the West Bilney leases, the wealth she had brought her husband, and her own personal estate, along with records of the donative living and inventories of documents, are all part of a self-image reaffirmed in the expectation of death. From the need to count the bottles of wine in a closet to the detailing of every household furnishing, listing becomes a form of definition as well as a justification that reflects a fundamental desire to find order, control, and worth. Perhaps appropriately the last entry is a list of what she had given the West Bilney church but had taken away when she was excommunicated. This final act of repossession fittingly culminates Elizabeth Freke's desire to repossess the decades of her life. Together her manuscript narratives form a distinct and valuable attempt to refashion and perhaps reclaim the past. At times painfully defiant and obviously self-serving, their representation and re-creation nevertheless shape a self-portrayal of vivid individuality unusual among earlier domestic memoirs. Hers is a sensibility whose immediate counterpart may well be found in the fictional narratives shaped by the novels that later explore the central concerns of money, marriage, and family.

PROVENANCE The British Library has no account of the manuscript acquisitions other than the fact that they were 'Presented by Mary, Lady Carbery', in 1941, two years after her death. The bequest also included a geographical survey of the British Isles and a list of dukes, marquesses, and earls Elizabeth Freke gathered in 1669 from William Camden's *Britannia* and Ralph Brooke's *A Catalogue and Succession . . . of this Realme* (BL, Add. MS. 45720); miscellaneous Freke papers and Carbery correspondence (BL, Add. MS. 45721 A); and an annotated copy of the family genealogy begun by Ralph Freke and printed in 1825 (BL, Add. MS. 45721 B). The five volumes appear to be all the materials in Carbery's possession directly related to her edition. She provides no information about the provenance of the two immediately relevant manuscripts, mentioning in the edition only that Freke's 1669

geographical and historical compilation was at Castle Freke and that a manuscript by Grace Freke ‘copied from a Diary of her Grandmother’s’ was at Hannington. The present resident of Hannington Hall, Mrs Mary Hussey-Freke, has no knowledge of Grace Freke’s manuscript copy or its whereabouts. Like the Castle Freke manuscript, which has the bookplate of Elizabeth Freke’s son Ralph, presumably many of her papers remained for generations in the Freke family. A major exception appears to be the vellum-bound manuscript. While Lady Mary Carbery may have come into possession of the later version of the autobiography through marriage, she bought the commonplace book containing the other account from a Norfolk resident.

An undated notation on a small piece of blue paper attached to its blank second folio identifies the previous owner: ‘Diary (“White Vellum Book of Remembrances”) of Mrs. Eliz. Freke bought by me, Mary Carbery, from Mr. Edmund Kent for £10’. A summary of the manuscript’s contents written by G. G. Coulton and later interleaved establishes an approximate date of purchase and the identity of the owner. During one of his visits to the Coulton family house at Pentney, before he had begun to establish his reputation as a medieval scholar, Coulton was lent the manuscript by Edmund Kent, whom he acknowledges as the owner at the end of the summary written ‘in this month of August 1890’.⁵³ A faded signature cut from the vellum cover and pasted to the back of the new cover when the British Library rebound the manuscript notes in an early hand ‘Ed[]d Kent East Winch-Hall Lynn’. The identity of the signatory, whether Edward or Edmund, remains uncertain; no ambiguity exists, however, about the new owner, a retired gentleman farmer who was lord of the manors of East Winch and Carrow. Edmund Kent, his wife Anne, and their daughter Muriel are listed in the 1881 Census Index as the residents of East Winch Hall;⁵⁴ the East Winch parish register records his burial at All Saints on 24 March 1900. Lady Carbery would have purchased the manuscript from him, then, sometime during the 1890s, after she had married the ninth Lord Carbery.

How Edmund Kent came to possess the vellum-bound manuscript is unclear. East Winch Hall seems to provide the link with Elizabeth Freke and the means of possession; the provenance, unfortunately, cannot be traced through her association with the residents of the manor. The nearby neighbours mentioned quite often in her last years, the Edgeworths and Langleys, were not in the end especially intimate

⁵³ Coulton mentions none of the Kent family in his autobiographical account of his early life in King’s Lynn, where he was born, and at the Pentney house his father later purchased (*Fourscore Years: An Autobiography* [Cambridge, 1943]).

⁵⁴ 1881 Census Index, PRO, RG 11/1995.

acquaintances; in any case, soon after her death the estate was lost to a London attorney who held a mortgage on the property. Only considerably later did the Kent family occupy East Winch Hall. Edmund Kent appears as a gentleman and freeholder of East Winch in the poll for knights of the shire in 1802; no Kent precedes him in the 1768 poll.⁵⁵ Originally a grocer and draper from Wereham, Edmund Kent married Charlotte Shene, the heir of Thomas Shene of Little Dunham; their son Edmund Kent (1800–1876) of Baron's Hall, Fakenham, a well-known solicitor who by 1864 had become lord of the manors of East Winch and Carrow, was the father of the Edmund Kent who sold the Freke manuscript to Lady Carbery.⁵⁶ His predecessor, George Edward Kent, had been vicar of East Winch from 1820 to 1842.⁵⁷ The Kents were therefore in a position to gain the manuscript, conceivably along with the other possessions of East Winch Hall or more probably in their roles as landholder or lawyer.

MANUSCRIPTS The folios of the vellum-bound commonplace book (BL, Add. MS. 45718), which measure eight inches wide and eleven and eight-tenths inches high, have more than one numbering. The verso of the initial folio's blank first side, numbered in ink ii, identifies the owner: 'Elizabeth Frek her book Given mee by my Cosen Sep. 1684'. Interleaved and numbered iii–v in pencil are the Carbery and Coulton additions. The commonplace book itself contains 245 folios numbered in pencil 1–245 on the recto sides. The first parts follow sequentially until the end of folio 103; subsequent entries begin with the last folio, continuing backward from folio 245v to folio 104r. The first several of

⁵⁵ *The Poll for Knights of the Shire for the County of Norfolk, ... July 20, 1802* (Norwich, 1802), 66. Edmund Kent, listed in the 1806 poll, appears as a freeholder in the 1817 *Norfolk Poll and Proceedings Relative to the Election* (Norwich, 1817), 91. 'Edmund Kent, sen., Esq.' is lord of the manor in William White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Norfolk* (Sheffield, 1836), 461.

⁵⁶ Rye, ii. 1,073; Carthew, iii. 95. Edmund Kent was buried in East Winch on 30 June 1839 at the age of eighty-three. The 1864 edition of White's Norfolk directory lists his son as lord of the manors of East Winch and Carrow. *The Poll for the Election of Two Knights of the Shire ... Taken July 22nd, 1865* (East Dereham, 1865), 139, also associates Edmund Kent of Fakenham with East Winch; the 1835, 1837, and 1852 polls note that Edmund and George Kent are eligible to vote from East Winch. Edmund Kent was buried in East Winch on 25 August 1876, three years before his wife Elizabeth, who was interred on 17 November 1879. The 1885–6 *Register of Persons Entitled to Vote* (Wisbech, n.d.) notes that Edmund, their son, has a 'Share of freehold house and land' (fol. N7); he is identified in White's 1883 Norfolk directory as lord of the manors of East Winch and Carrow.

⁵⁷ Reverend George Edward Kent is lord of the manor in the 1845 and 1854 editions of White's Norfolk directory. Educated at Corpus Christi and ordained in 1820, George Kent would become affiliated in 1848 with All Saints, St John's Wood, London (J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses. Part II: From 1752 to 1900*, 6 vols. [Cambridge, 1940–54], iv. 25).

these sections are paginated on each side in ink. The ink numbering is original to the manuscript; the pencil numbering is that of the British Library. Another pagination, however, also exists in red ink. With Edmund Kent's permission, G. G. Coulton renumbered both sides of the folios, completing the original ink pagination by numbering folios 35r to 103r (pages 63–200) and continuing from folios 244r–103v (pages 201–482). Thus the remembrances, which comprise the last of the sections starting from the manuscript's opening folios, begin on folio 46v or page 86 and end on folio 103v or page 200. The pencilled foliation rather than Coulton's pagination will be cited in the text.

The pagination of the other commonplace book is more straightforward. The manuscript bound in the original brown wallpaper, patterned with a bird and a house with a clock at the top of its cupola, contains fifty-three folios numbered once again in pencil and measuring eight inches wide and twelve and eight-tenth inches high. The first two folios are blank except for the words 'A Letter' at the top of folio 1v; the remembrances begin on folio 3v, following another blank side. Freke paginated these memoirs 1–46 (folios 3v–26r). After two blank and unnumbered sides she then paginated a series of miscellaneous entries 2–31 (folios 27v–42r), the first of which is the ledger of expenses related to her husband's illness and death included in this edition. The remaining folios contain a number of blank sides interspersed among unpaginated entries. Once again the pencilled foliation done by the British Library will be cited in the text. The miscellaneous material taken from either this or the vellum-bound manuscript will be identified by folio numbers designated B or W.

The miscellaneous documents included in this edition complement the two versions of the remembrances. Like the ledger from B of the expenses incurred during Percy Freke's fatal illness, many of them are also accounts or assessments. Selections from the lists summarizing 'how West Billney stands' over the years have been limited to the time after Elizabeth Freke gained possession, excluding also the lengthy chancery decrees and legal agreements affecting the earlier estate but including one of her histories of the property. Audits and inventories chosen often from quite similar versions in both manuscripts recount funds given to her husband, received from her father, or acquired by herself and list documents, cordial waters, and household goods in her possession. The limited length of this edition prevents the inclusion of the Pentney land taxes, the fragment of her will, and the summaries of her protracted religious and legal disputes. Omitted too are the numerous recipes and the redactions of Gerard's and Culpeper's works, which are such a large part of the vellum manuscript, as well as from this manuscript a political song allegedly composed by her father-in-law Arthur Freke and the three anonymous poems, 'The Downfall of

Charing Cross by the Long Parliamt' (1648), 'The British Ambassadors Speech to the French Kinge' (1713), and an epitaph on William III.

EDITORIAL METHOD The edited transcriptions of the manuscripts conform to the recommendations of the Camden Society and the principles established in R. F. Hunnisett, *Editing Records for Publication* (British Records Association, 1977). Capitalization has been modernized, and abbreviations other than those of signatures have been silently expanded; the ampersand has been replaced with the conjunction. Elided words have been separated and broken words have been joined according to the contemporary usage when Freke's intention is not clearly established among the textual variations. The original spelling has been retained; however, i and j, u and v have been modernized and to/too/two, of/off, and on/one silently emended. The punctuation has been modernized for greater clarity, though here too a sense of the original has been approximated. Possessives have not been changed, nor have numbers been hyphenated; apostrophes are original to the manuscript, and variants in the punctuation of Freke's abbreviated first name have been retained. The semicolon has at times been used for clarity when a comma might ordinarily be more appropriate.

The edited text of the remembrances reflects their chronological structure. Dates that Elizabeth Freke added in the margins to underscore her recollections have been printed where appropriate in bold type within the body of the text. The entries themselves, which often occur originally in longer passages or blocks of material, have been indented to reflect chronology. Occasionally Freke repeats with slight variations the end of the previous line when she begins a new folio side; these are retained and the preceding versions silently omitted. Editorial clarifications are included in square brackets, as are lacunae. The round brackets are original to the text; angle brackets indicate additions and deletions. Entries obviously out of place in the manuscripts have been moved only when noted; only the most obvious slips, such as the repetition of a word and transpositions, have been silently corrected. Unless designated as new style (ns) the dates reflect the English practice in force until 1752; those between 1 January and 24 March will be cited with both years, separated by a stroke (e.g., 1641/2).

DOCUMENTATION *The Dictionary of National Biography*, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, and *Alumni Oxonienses* are cited in the notes only when they provide the sole clarification or have not been superceded. Transcriptions of parish registers – usually held by the Society of Genealogists, London – are acknowledged; otherwise the specific local records and register bills of baptisms, marriages, and deaths are not noted. All unattributed definitions are based on the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Variations in the spelling of proper nouns have been eliminated whenever possible in the notes to reflect those in works such as *Gazetteer of the British Isles* and *Cambridge Biographical Encyclopedia*; clarifications of titles as well as, in some instances, spellings are based whenever possible on the 106th edition of *Burke's Peerage & Baronetage* and the revised edition of *The Complete Peerage*. Gazettes are cited by the number of the issue rather than the date; along with clarification, they indicate implicitly possible sources of Freke's interests and information.