The Revolution of 1688–89 renewed Lady Russell’s social and political position. The flight of King James II, her husband’s archenemy, cleared the way for the ascent of the prince and princess of Orange as king and queen of England and for the restoration, at least for a time, of the Whigs. In these national events Rachel played a discernible, although of course a minor, role. But with the reversal of Lord Russell’s attainder in the spring of 1689 and the elevation in 1694 of his father to a dukedom, largely on the grounds of Lord Russell’s suffering, Rachel assumed an assured and respected place as “Grand Dame” of the Whigs. Until about 1702, when she was sixty-five years old, she exercised personal influence in elections and in political and ecclesiastical appointments. She also maintained her role as head of her family, successfully negotiating favorable marriage settlements for her second daughter and her son, and overseeing their religious and secular education. All these activities she undertook despite failing eyesight.

Lady Russell spent most of the fall of 1688 at Woburn observing, reporting, and soliciting news of public events. Unidentified sources kept her fairly well informed. On a visit to London in early October she found everyone “in amaze, all talking of the same matter”—namely the weather, the wind, and when Prince William of Orange would set sail for England, which she reported could not take place before October 5. She also learned of meetings King James was holding with Anglican bishops a week before an account of the discussions was “leaked” to the press. She lacked confidence in the outcome of a possible invasion by Orange and expressed fear not for herself but for her children.1 Prudently circumspect about committing herself publicly, she refused at the end of October to persuade Bedford to come up to London as his daughter Margaret (now married to Admiral Edward Russell) urged her to do.2 The earl warily decided that if the prince of Orange landed in the north, he would move to Chenies, his estate in Buckinghamshire, and thus minimize the chances of being forced to declare himself.3 Rachel indicated no dissent. A move to Chenies proved unnecessary, for the prince landed
at Torbay on November 5, 1688, and for the next three weeks was encamped in and about Exeter. During these days, Rachel, still cautious in the face of a yet unsettled and dangerous situation, and fearful of bloodshed, confessed to Fitzwilliam that “one is in prudence confined not to speak of matters one is strangely bent to be talking of.”

As the prince of Orange made his way east towards London, Rachel’s confidence in his eventual success grew. She became increasingly impatient for news and for the opportunity to discuss unfolding events with a friend of like mind. On December 8 she could contain herself no longer and wrote several letters designed to find out precisely what was happening and also to affirm her support of the prince. One letter addressed to Dr. Burnet, a member of the prince’s party, she sent by messenger so that she might have a prompt reply. “I would see something of your hand writing upon English ground,” she wrote, “and not read in print only, the labour of your brain.” Praising Providence for the wonderful events that had occurred, Rachel expressed hope that a “happy success” would attend the prince’s affairs. She wrote an even more impatient letter to an anonymous addressee. Complaining of the suspense she was under, she confessed, “I every day hoped that you would have found some way or other to let me hear from the quarters you are in, but I believe, a prudent caution has kept me ignorant.” Affirming her best wishes for the success of the prince’s enterprise, she declared, “If I could see how I could do more than wish or pray for it, I would readily make it appear how faithfully I would serve him and his interests.” Lady Russell sent off still another letter to an anonymous addressee, almost certainly the Reverend Samuel Johnson, expressing unequivocal approval of and commitment to the changes underway. “I have had more mind to scribble a few lines to you than I ever had in my life,” she declared. “My religion and my country are dear to me, and my own hard fate will ever be as a green wound. I need say no more to you. I have been but too impatient to say so much. I have fancied it a sort of guilt not to do it, and want of ingenuity not to find an opportunity; yet I met it not until now.” Observing that some people think that recent events are only a dream, Rachel asserted that the changes were no dream, but rather “so amazing a reality of mercy as ought to melt and ravish our hearts” into thanks to God.

Rachel returned to London with the earl of Bedford perhaps in mid-December, certainly in time for the meetings of the Convention, the body elected to settle the government of the nation. The Convention opened on January 22, and for the next three weeks Tory and Whig members engaged in strenuous debates in and between both Houses. Discussion focused on the state of the nation, the headship of the state, the justification of James II’s removal, the grievances and rights of the
nation, and, once a decision was made to make Prince William and Princess Mary of Orange king and queen of England, the succession to the crown. It must have gratified Rachel that the memory of Lord Russell was evoked in these debates. In fact, she may have known that the way had been prepared for the Convention to cite as a grievance the proceedings in Lord Russell’s trial, for on December 22, 1688, the earl of Devonshire and Henry Booth, baron Delamere, had announced their intention of investigating the trials of former Whig leaders, including Lord Russell’s. A tract from Windsor dated that same day, *A Letter To A Gentleman at Brussels, containing An Account of the Causes of The Peoples Revolt from The Crown*, directed the Parliament to take note of certain juries that deserved censure, among them Lord Russell’s. The memory of Lord Russell’s trial animated the committee of the House of Commons charged with drafting a statement of the grievances and rights of the nation. On that committee were several of William’s former political colleagues, such as Capel, Sacheverell, and John Hampden, and his defense lawyers in 1683, Holt and Pollexfen. It was charged that Russell’s jury had been packed and that men who were not freeholders had served on it. These points appeared in the draft statement of the nation’s grievances and rights that was sent up to the House of Lords, and thus, Bedford, who was present when that statement was debated, knew of them and surely apprised Lady Russell. They were preserved in the final version of the Declaration of Rights as a grievance against King James II (no. 9) and as a right of the nation, article 11 reading: “That jurors ought to be duly impaneled and returned, and jurors which pass upon men in trials for high treason ought to be freeholders.” Lady Russell mentioned none of this in her surviving letters, but one may presume that these initial steps in vindicating her husband pleased her.

The memory of Lord Russell figured in another way in the politics of the Convention. It will be recalled that Sir George Treby, recorder of London in 1683, had pronounced the dreadful sentence for treason against William and had signed the warrant for his execution. Treby’s part in William’s execution still rankled with Bedford and Devonshire, and to avenge Russell’s death they blocked Treby’s appointment as one of the legal counsel to the peers. It took intervention by Pollexfen (Russell’s counsel in 1683)—who explained that Treby was only fulfilling his duties and had not signed the death warrant until reassured by Russell himself—to restore Treby to the good graces of the lords. The episode provided a striking example of the restored political power of former Whigs. There is no evidence that Lady Russell was apprised of this incident.

During these weeks Rachel was among a handful of aristocratic women, both Whig and Tory, who had some influence on the course of
Her most important role during the meetings of the Convention was to help persuade a reluctant Princess Anne, Princess Mary’s younger Protestant sister, to accept a place after Prince William in the succession to the throne. It appears that Sarah Churchill, Princess Anne’s close friend and adviser in 1688–89, sought the advice of “several persons of undisputed wisdom and integrity, and particularly . . . Lady Russell of Southampton House and Dr. Tillotson” as to the course the princess should follow in respect to that issue. Both urged the princess to give way to Prince William. Reluctantly Anne agreed. Her announced decision on February 6 to that effect moved the Convention along to a resolution. That Lady Churchill linked Lady Russell with Tillotson clearly indicates that Rachel was regarded as one of the most respected and influential Whigs in London.

By February 12 a compromise agreement between Tory and Whigs had been reached which elevated Prince William and Princess Mary of Orange to the throne of England, declared the rights of the nation, and settled the succession to the throne to four removes, the whole set out in the Declaration of Rights. In a carefully contrived ceremony held in the Banqueting Hall on Wednesday, February 13, the Declaration was read and the crown of England offered to both William and Mary. Responding for himself and Mary, Prince William accepted the crown and acknowledged the statement of rights. That ceremony, followed by a party that evening at Whitehall, brought the most critical stage of the Revolution to an end.

Whether Lady Russell was among the crowds of people who witnessed the procession to the Banqueting Hall or attended the party that evening is unknown, but her elder daughter, Rachel—married, it should be remembered, to the son of the earl of Devonshire—was present and she left an account of both events. Following in the footsteps of her mother, young Rachel, now seventeen years old, reported in detail the settlement and the ceremony. She was “much pleased,” she wrote, “to see Ormanzor and Phenixana [names she gave to the prince and princess of Orange] proclaimed king and queen of England, in the room of King James, my father’s murderer.” The mob’s wonderful acclamations of joy also delighted and at the same time frightened her. That evening she kissed the hands of the new king and queen, describing him as “homely at first sight” but with “something in his face both wise and good” if one looked closely, and her as “altogether very handsome.” Young Rachel’s presence at these splendid events testified to her father-in-law’s role in the Revolution and to a change in the position of Lady Russell and her family.

Within three weeks of the settlement, on March 7, 1689, a bill to reverse the attainder of Lord Russell was introduced in the House of
Lords by the earl of Bedford and Lady Russell. Rachel played an active role in this effort. As we have seen, an undated draft petition to achieve the reversal survives in her hand. Perhaps as a result of the friendly relationship with the new monarchs that Rachel had been at pains to establish since 1687, someone showed the bill to King William III before it appeared in the House of Lords, and on the eleventh of March the Lords sent the bill reversing Russell’s attainder to the House of Commons. There, it received a warm welcome, provoking a debate full of encomia for Russell, near tears on Sir Robert Howard’s part at the very mention of William’s name, an explanation by Finch respecting his role in Russell’s trial, and an assertion that the issue transcended the personal interests of the earl of Bedford and Lady Russell. “All the nation is concerned in it,” asserted an M.P. A second reading followed immediately, and the bill was sent to a committee that included Russell’s former friends. Five days later, when the Lords sent down the engrossed bill, this committee offered an amendment to destroy all records relating to Russell’s attainder so that “the same may not be visible in after-ages.” In that way they hoped to do “right... to the memory of the deceased Lord Russell.” With this amendment the reversal received the royal assent on March 16.

The reversal of Lord Russell’s attainder was promoted and defended in a quantity of tracts. As early as February 28 there appeared A Defence Of the Late Lord Russel’s Innocency, a pamphlet which must have held special interest for Rachel. The author, Sir Robert Atkyns, described his “Defence” as letters that he had written in 1683 in response to a request for advice from William’s friends and relations. One may recall that despite Rachel’s efforts Atkyns’ advice in 1683 was minimal and that he declined to publish anything then. Another piece on the injustice of Russell’s trial, available before March 11, was written by Lord Delamere, who felt a special sense of obligation to the Russell family. Two more pamphlets were printed by Sir John Hawles, a lawyer. These tracts sought to prove that Russell’s trial was a travesty of justice and, in contrast to those printed in 1683, focused on the absence of freeholders on the jury, the illegality of the king’s guards, the need to have two witnesses to the same act of treason, and the inadmissibility of the testimony of “plea bargainers.” Other printed material was also put into circulation. To reinforce the view that Russell was a victim of Stuart despotism, his Speech was reprinted in a collection of scaffold speeches of eminent Protestants who had suffered under the late-Stuart kings. The preface asserted that the Rye House Plot was a “mere sham-contrivance” concocted by papists “to bring an odium on Protestants.” Printed lists of the jurymen and the judges who were connected with the trials of the Whig martyrs sought further to persuade the
public that William had been unjustly condemned. Finally, to make certain that people “all over the kingdom” should have no doubt about the legitimacy of the reversal of the attainder, an anonymous partisan published a broadside before April 9 justifying it. Only Sir Bartholomew Shower, who had probably written *An Antidote Against Poison* in 1683, undertook a direct response to these defenses of William. Rachel does not mention these tracts, but in view of her lifelong habit of reading polemical literature, she almost certainly was aware of them. And since Bedford purchased the pieces by Atkyns and Hawles, they at least were readily available for her perusal.

No direct comment by Lady Russell on the reversal of her husband’s attainder survives. Gratified she must have been, for the reversal opened the way for achieving a goal towards which she had worked for at least four years, namely the transfer of the Bedford title to her son. Still, a sober, even melancholy letter to Lady Essex written just three days after the reversal received royal assent on March 19 suggests that she felt no great sense of elation. Probably the attention given the trial in Parliament and in the press over so many weeks had revived memories of her husband and his suffering and precipitated a return of active grieving.

During the early years of the new government, Rachel’s position in public affairs underwent a transformation. The change owed much to the honors and high offices the men in her family received. Her father-in-law became a privy councillor and lord lieutenant of the counties of Bedford, Cambridge, and Middlesex, while the earl of Devonshire also became a privy councillor, lord lieutenant of Derbyshire, a knight of the garter, and lord steward of the King’s Household. She must have taken satisfaction also from the fact that at the coronation of the new monarchs on April 11, 1689, Bedford bore the Queen’s Scepter with the Dove and Devonshire acted as lord high steward of England. And even more satisfaction must have been hers in 1694 when both men were elevated to dukedoms, especially because Bedford’s letters patent specifically justified his promotion on grounds that the earl was father to the Lord Russell, “the ornament of his age,” who preferred “love to his country before that of his life.” As a result of Bedford’s promotion, Rachel’s son was given the courtesy title of Lord Tavistock, the first time that a courtesy title was used by a grandson.

Lady Russell’s new position also owed something to the strengths she herself possessed. She was on friendly terms with King William and Queen Mary. She had long since established a reputation for intelligence, courage, good sense, piety, and loyalty. From past experiences and lifelong observation of the political process, Lady Russell was well informed about how to win favor for one’s family and friends in both
church and state. She liked being close to the center of power, as she candidly admitted. Above all, she became a surrogate for her husband, a symbol of the best of the former Whigs. As William became a Whig martyr, Rachel became a Whig saint, mourning her beloved husband. This role decisively strengthened the position given her by wealth and the political power of men in her family.

Concurrently Lady Russell’s self-confidence and command of her grief over her husband’s death grew. Using her influence in the complicated patronage network of late-seventeenth-century England on behalf of her family and friends to advance worthy Whigs contributed to her sense of responsibility, enlarged her social position, and fed her sense of self-importance. Her activities provide a glimpse of the strategies used by a woman to achieve some goal.

In view of her position and the influence she was thought to possess, it is not surprising that both men and women sought Rachel’s favor. For example, on February 19, 1689, Lady Ranelagh implored her to help Lord Rochester escape the vengeance of the House of Commons, which she had heard intended to punish people who had served on James II’s Ecclesiastical Commission. Lady Ranelagh, who had assisted Rachel in 1683, shrewdly remarked that the wheel of fortune had now reversed their roles. Reminding Rachel that she owed a debt to Lord and Lady Rochester for their efforts in 1683 to win a reprieve for William and to Lord Rochester later for supporting petitions respecting her husband’s personal property and the title for her son, she asked Rachel to use her influence and to persuade Bedford to use his “with your friends in the House of Commons in my Lord Rochester’s behalf.” In the event, the House investigated James’s Ecclesiastical Commission and decided to spare Lord Rochester, but no record of Lady Russell’s intervention survives. Lady Sunderland also appealed to Rachel to intercede with the new government on behalf of her husband, who was in disgrace on the Continent. Rachel had earlier resisted overtures of friendship from Lady Sunderland, in part because Sunderland had done nothing to save Lord Russell in 1683 and in part because she simply did not like her. After receiving several importuning letters from her, Lady Russell pointedly declined to help. As it happened, Sunderland was condemned by the House of Commons for his part on the Ecclesiastical Commission, but by April 1690 King William had allowed Sunderland to return to England and thereafter depended upon his advice.

Fitzwilliam, who disavowed the new government and refused to take the oaths imposed on the clergy, also turned to Lady Russell for assistance in securing a pass to go abroad. Temporizing on the pass, Rachel undertook to persuade Fitzwilliam to reconsider his position
respecting the oaths. Her letter has not survived, but judging from Fitzwilliam’s admiring response, it advanced carefully reasoned arguments, based on history, the law of Henry VII, the meaning of the words “abdication and vacancy” (which had been used to justify the removal of James II), and a practical consideration that if Cromwell had become king, as Rachel said her father feared, then he, Fitzwilliam, would have been chaplain in a family that had accepted a de facto monarch. The discussion about oaths continued through the spring, with Rachel hurting his feelings by saying that his boggling at one oath that clashed with another was an “unnecessary scruple.” Rachel tenaciously reopened the question in August. In a vigorous manner, she began, “I am very sorry the case stands with you as it does in reference to the oath; and still wonder (unless I could find kings of divine right) why it does so!” Continuing unsympathetically, she declared, “All this is the acceptance of a word which I never heard two declare the meaning of, but they differed in their sense of it. You say you could have taken it in the sense some worthy men have done. Why will you be more worthy than those men? ’Tis supererogation.” Saying that when her wishes were “earnest” she “spoke without reserve,” Rachel went on to predict, prophetically, that the refusal of able men to serve would weaken the church and the Protestant religion all over the world. She counselled him to admit that passive obedience “went too high” and to accept the new government.

It was to no avail; Fitzwilliam refused to take the oaths. Displaying generosity of spirit and knowledge of church politics, Rachel continued to assist him. In 1691, for example, she discussed the possibility of an appointment for him, forthrightly advising him to be more circumspect, and pointing out that his identification with a high Tory bishop could not help him. “You should be a little more wary,” she wrote. “One should be wise, tho’ harmless as doves.” In 1696 Rachel acknowledged her defeat in the struggle over his conscience, saying that she could not “manage the argument” any longer but then adding, in ways that reveal her personality, that she might yet convince him if she “had the fight [she] once had.” Lady Russell’s lifelong sympathy for Dissent, her rationalism, her pragmatism, and her approval of the Revolution left her incredulous that Fitzwilliam would not conform.

Rachel also used her influence to win the appointment to government posts of family members and friends, but only those, she insisted, who were well qualified. Some positions were of moderate importance. Thus, her first effort, in March 1689, was a petition for the appointment of a cousin by marriage to be clerk of the presentations. Or again, in 1690, Lady Russell sought the assistance of Lady Ranelagh for help in placing one Sir Francis Wingate, a distant relative, in a post at the Prize Office, about to be vacated by the imminent death of the occupant. She
contrived for Lady Ranelagh to see Lord Devonshire and tell him that the request came from Bedford and, as Rachel put it, “on my own account.” Then to reinforce the effort, she wrote Devonshire herself.38

Lady Russell also aimed much higher in influencing appointments. On April 15 she wrote Halifax, lord privy seal in the new government, to ask his help in securing the appointment as king’s counsel of William Cowper, whose father had been closely associated with Shaftesbury. Cowper was a promising young lawyer of twenty-four only recently called to the bar, who had early declared himself for William of Orange. His youth, however, was an obstacle to his appointment. Explaining that Lady Shaftesbury had engaged her to help secure the appointment, Rachel reminded Halifax that in the past he had expressed willingness to oblige Lady Shaftesbury. She also told him that she had spoken to Pollexfen, now the attorney general, who had responded unenthusiastically. Halifax brought Rachel’s request to King William, who granted it as a favor to Lady Russell and Lady Shaftesbury, signifying thereby that the appointment was irregular because of Cowper’s youth. When the appointment was held up in the attorney general’s office, Lady Russell wrote to Halifax again. Assuring him that she and Lady Shaftesbury were ready to accept the appointment as a “concession” from the king, she reported that “several eminent men of the law” whom she had consulted had assured her that many men as young as Cowper had served as king’s counsel. She said flatly that there must be a deeper reason for objecting to the appointment. Rachel also wrote to Pollexfen. She told him frankly that she had William’s promise, that she and Lady Shaftesbury had been too much trouble, and that she did not “love to be baulked.” Peremptorily she asked him to keep her informed and announced that she would bring Cowper’s mother to see him.39 Cowper was appointed.

Halifax’s willingness to assist Lady Russell at a time when many such requests were flowing into his office requires explanation. His cooperativeness was surely accountable not only to his admiration for and familial link with Rachel but also to his own political situation.40 Halifax held high office and the confidence of the new king at this time, but he did not enjoy the favor of either Tories or Whigs. The Tories despised him for abandoning during the Convention debates a Regency proposal which would have preserved James II’s title. They also disliked his championing the interests of the Dissenters. The Whigs hated him for defeating Exclusion. Debates in the House of Commons in March on the Rye House trials and in May and June on an indemnity bill revealed how vulnerable Halifax was.41 His friendly interest in a request that came from two woman who symbolized the former Whig leaders could have helped his position with the vengeful Whigs in the Lower House. In July
1689 he acknowledged Rachel’s favor and “the protection” of her good opinion.42

Reports of Lady Russell’s favor helped to protect Halifax in the fall of 1689, when Lord Russell’s trial again became the subject of investigation. Then the trial was even more deeply enmeshed in the partisan politics of revenge. On November 2 a motion was introduced in the House of Lords to consider “who were the advisers and prosecutors of the murders of Lord Russell, Colonel Sydney, Sir Thomas Armstrong and others.” The underlying purpose of the move, it was widely recognized, was to destroy Halifax.43 A committee of peers, referred to as the Murder Committee, examined the written record and called witnesses, among them Tillotson. Peers questioned him about the part Halifax had played respecting the letter Tillotson had written to Lord Russell in 1683 to urge him to disavow the doctrine of right of resistance. Tillotson was at pains to exonerate Halifax, declaring, in response to a question about the opinion of the Russell family, that Rachel, with whom he had mostly talked, had never said anything against him.44 By the end of November it was doubtful that a case against Halifax could be made.

That fact makes all the more curious a petition to the Lords that Lady Russell submitted on December 6, 1689. She thanked them for the investigation and prayed that the “just inquisition of blood” might be pursued.45 The petition is out of character for Rachel. There is no surviving comment to explain it. Presumably vengeful Whigs persuaded her to present it and regarded it as sanctioning the work they had done. Vengeance found further encouragement in London street theater that featured Lord Russell’s trial. On December 18, the first anniversary of the arrival of the prince of Orange in London, a great bonfire was arranged in Fleet Street at Temple Gate, and the London “mob” came in “three pageants” carrying effigies of the three foremen of the three juries in the cases of Russell, Sidney, and Cornish. The mob held a mock trial of the foremen, found them guilty of high treason, hanged them on the gibbet, then burned them in the bonfire.46 Two days later, on December 20, the Lords Committee presented its report condemning former ministers, including Halifax.

Apparently Rachel knew the contents of the report, for she wrote immediately to her half-sister regretting the steps her brother-in-law Montagu and others had taken against Halifax and expressing renewed grief (as had happened in the spring when Lord Russell’s attainder was reversed) over her husband’s death. Elizabeth impatiently replied that the punishment of men responsible for William’s death should be a comfort to Rachel. In doing so she failed to take into account the friendly relationship between Rachel and Halifax.47 In the event, the report died.

Lady Russell’s influence was also felt in the filling of ecclesiasti-
cal offices. They too varied in importance. For example, in the spring of 1689 she interceded with Bedford for Fitzwilliam, who feared that the earl would appoint clergy sympathetic to Nonconformity. She assured her clerical friend that Bedford would make no changes in the personnel of the Bedfordshire clergy that would disappoint him.48 Also in 1689 she championed the interest of the Reverend Samuel Johnson and secured him not a living, but a grant of money, a life pension for him and his son, and a place for his son.49 In thus identifying herself with the radical cleric she reaffirmed her belief in the right of resistance, the principle Johnson had promoted for so long.

Still further, when the rectory of St. Paul’s Covent Garden became vacant in September 1689, Tillotson wrote to Rachel that the king would not appoint a replacement until Bedford, the patron of the rectory, gave his approval. The dean asked if she and Bedford would favor one Dr. John More. Bedford apparently left the choice to Rachel, and she handled the correspondence. Lady Russell vetoed More for his lack of talent as a preacher. Tillotson invited Rachel’s opinion of other candidates and shared with her his “free thoughts of them.”50 Tillotson’s second choice won the appointment.

Also, in September 1689 Tillotson solicited Rachel’s advice on whether he should accept the post of archbishop of Canterbury. With unusual frankness he expressed his misgivings about his abilities and his fears of jealousies of others. In 1690, with the issue unresolved, Tillotson appealed again to Lady Russell, writing in early October, “Madam, what shall I do? my thoughts were never in such a plunge... I hope that I shall have your prayers, and would be glad of your advice.” In response, Rachel adverted (surely with secret pleasure) to his effort in 1683 to persuade her husband to accept the doctrine of nonresistance, asking him to “put anew in practice that submission you have so powerfully...instructed others to.” She cited his duty to the king, talent for the position, and responsibility to the church as reasons why he should accept the appointment. “I see no way to escape it; you must take up the crosse, and bear it.” Tillotson followed her advice. Thanking Rachel for her help, he expressed his “great regard and deference for [her] judgment and opinion” and also promised to assist her in whatever way she might command.51 Lady Russell’s relationship with the man who occupied the highest position in the Anglican church is a measure of the respect she commanded. Few other people, whether male or female, were on such friendly terms with the archbishop. Few would have had the knowledge, the self-confidence, or the respect to address church leaders as she did.

Tillotson’s dependence on Rachel repays scrutiny. Just as Halifax had political reasons for assisting her, so too did Tillotson. In 1689
Tillotson’s enemies, both Whigs and High Tories, sought to make capital of Tillotson’s letter to Lord Russell urging him to disavow the doctrine of right of resistance. A High Tory partisan of James II printed a tract titled *A Letter formerly sent to Dr. Tillotson, and for want of an Answer made publick and now Reprinted* whose point was that Tillotson should practice in 1689 what he had preached in 1683 and assist others in restoring King James. Whig peers in the fall of 1689 questioned him closely about the letter, as we have just seen. The radical Whig, the Reverend Samuel Johnson, who had been furious with Tillotson over his 1683 letter and had written *Julian the Apostate* in answer to it, continued to upbraid him for his moderate principles. In September 1689, Tillotson told Rachel that Johnson’s sharpness with him was tantamount to “railing.” In 1691 several more libels against Tillotson appeared. Citing damage to Lord Russell’s reputation, Tillotson decided in June 1691 to appeal to Bedford to bring an action against the perpetrators of the tracts. Under the circumstances it was in Tillotson’s interests to have Lady Russell, Lord Russell’s widow, as his ally and confidante, and it is impossible to think that he was not acting in part upon that consideration in turning to her for advice and in representing her interests.

Lady Russell’s favor was also sought by Whigs in parliamentary elections. On October 9, 1691, Lord Devonshire wrote Rachel that interest was brewing in having his son, Cavendish (now returned from his travels), stand for the House of Commons in a by-election for the borough of Westminster. He said that he could not answer the principals without “first begging to know [Rachel’s] opinion,” for he was certain that his son had no hope of success unless Rachel and Bedford approved. With some extravagance Devonshire said that he would always submit his and his son’s concerns to her “direction and advice.” Rachel made herself busy in this matter. She wrote on October 23 to Thomas Owen (c. 1637–1708), a possible candidate for the seat, in terms that show her firm knowledge of the political process and the identity and interests of possible candidates. Without mincing words she asked Owen to withdraw from the race. Candidly she said that the task of contacting him had fallen to her because she knew him better than “any of the Devonshire family.” Presumably Rachel’s contacts with Owen dated back to the reign of Charles II, when Owen, a member of an Independent congregation, had shown sympathy for the Dissenters. Owen felt close enough to Rachel to have asked her earlier to speak to Bedford about supporting him in the election. She had done so and conveyed the earl’s enthusiastic endorsement. But now that Bedford and others had shifted their support to Cavendish, Rachel frankly asked Owen how strong he reckoned his chances were. In her forceful and logical way Lady Russell itemized the strengths of her son-in-law’s candidacy: the cordial endorsement of
Bedford, the withdrawal of some candidates (among them Sir Stephen Fox), the approval of many people of quality and of the king, and the memory of his father’s role in the House when he was Lord Cavendish. Further, as she shrewdly put it, “It will not hurt his interest that he is married to my Lord Russell’s daughter.” Declaring that she “would fain have it come to a fair tryal of skill between the two partys, which it can’t so well do if Lord Cavendish be not singly at the head of one of them, and that I reckon he will be if you desist,” Lady Russell forthrightly asked Owen to “tell [her] ingenuously” his view of the situation and “if you please, [give] your reasons against my Lord’s standing, and for your own.”\textsuperscript{56} Owen decided to remain in the race and was badly defeated in the election on November 9 by Sir Stephen Fox, who had reentered the contest. Although Rachel did not prevail in shaping the election as she wished, the episode shows how close she was to Whig party strategy and planning and how unabashed she was in using her influence in partisan politics.

That Rachel’s public reputation had grown significantly is indicated by an honor she received in 1691. The Dissenting minister Dr. William Bates dedicated \textit{The Last Four Things} to Rachel, prefacing the book with a flattering epistle dedicatory. It was not unusual for a woman to receive such a mark of respect. It was the first time Lady Russell had. The gesture reinforced her identification with Dissent.

Lady Russell also took advantage of the friendship with Queen Mary and King William that she had so carefully nurtured. She turned to the queen in 1691 to help her win the position of auditorship of Wales for Sir Richard Vaughan, a distant relative from her first marriage. Confessing to Tillotson that the award would “please me on several accounts,” she asked him to deliver her petition directly to the queen, but then expressed some misgivings, writing, “I am not versed in the court ways, ’tis so lately since I have loved them. Therefore be free, and do as you think most fit.” Not satisfied with those instructions, Rachel wrote Mary directly that same day. In response, Queen Mary promised to put the matter before the king and assured Rachel that if the place were not already filled, her petition would find favor with the king.\textsuperscript{57}

Lady Russell did not abuse the favor that she enjoyed with the queen. In 1691 one Miss Mortimer, who was connected with one of Lady Russell’s sisters, appealed to her to promote some concern with the queen. Lady Russell demurred. In 1692 she again denied Miss Mortimer’s request for assistance.\textsuperscript{58} By using such discretion, Rachel undoubtedly preserved her credit at court for more important matters.

Interestingly enough, Queen Mary also turned to Rachel for assistance. Mary acted as queen regnant during many months of the early years of the joint monarchy because of King William’s absence
fighting against Louis XIV and James II. Lady Russell’s cousin by marriage Admiral Edward Russell played a prominent role in the naval battles and became a national hero. Like Lord Russell, the admiral was an impetuous and headstrong man whom the queen found difficult. In one trying situation, Mary sought Rachel’s help in persuading him to come to her and in a letter to the king credited her with doing so. She wrote, “To this hour [the Admiral] would not have asked to have spoke with me, had not I told Lady Russell one day I desired it.”

Mary’s death in December 1694 deprived Lady Russell of a warm friend, and although no comment by her has survived, Rachel’s sense of loss was surely acute. She would have taken satisfaction at the public acknowledgment of the friendship between her and the queen by John Howe’s dedicating to her his *A Discourse Relating To the Much-lamented Death and Solemn Funeral, Of Our Incomparable and most Gracious Queen Mary.* This was the second book dedicated to her in four years and is further testimony to the high regard in which she was held.

These instances of Lady Russell’s involvement in partisan politics and in patronage projects testify to the influence in politics that she possessed and illustrate the indirect political power an intelligent, well-placed woman might exercise in a society that denied females legal political rights. Rachel used the access to power that family members and friends gave her, appealing to Devonshire, Godolphin, Halifax, Tillotson, and Lady Derby and Lady Ranelagh. She capitalized also on the friendship she enjoyed with the queen. That her petitions were well received owed much to her wealth, contacts, and role as surrogate for her husband, the Whig martyr.

Lady Russell’s strengthened self-confidence and sense of self also informed her private life. The passage of time, the comforts of religion, the marriage of her elder daughter, the success of the Revolution, her revived political role, business activities, and the responsibilities of her children combined to assuage her grief. It is true that a melancholy strain still appeared in her letters, especially in those to Fitzwilliam or about the death of a family member or friend; moreover, she continued to memorialize the three days of William’s arrest, trial, and execution, and events, as we have seen, still had the power to revive her grief. But her mourning was less intense, and lapses into black despair were less frequent. By 1691 she was keeping “visiting days,” playing cards, and, upon her own admission, losing too much money at it. The change in her attitude found reflection in a letter written to Tillotson on July 14, 1691, a time heretofore marked by intense mourning. Significantly, the purpose of the letter was to seek his help in winning a government post for a friend, but in closing she declared that she had been quite revived recently by the “many public and signal mercies” the nation had
received and that despite the “black and dismal scenes which are constantly before me” she was trying to “raise my spirit all I can.” Moreover, she no longer imposed her grief on others or expected them to grieve also, as she had done as late as 1687. Rather, in the summer of 1693 she expressed relief that July 13 fell on a fast day so she could retire to remember William without exciting comment and declared that she took care not “to affect” in doing so. And that summer she spent a holiday at Bath.

Rachel, moreover, seems to have reconciled herself rationally to the passionate side of her nature and to have become more comfortable with her own interpretation of Christian grief. She ruefully wrote in 1692 that her warm friendships and passionate attachment to her husband were at the root of all her “joys and troubles.” Yet, to live and not love would make life insipid, and moreover, the delight of love in this world prepared one to know the greater bliss of it in the next. She also elaborated the point in a draft paper in which she rejected the thought that a true Christian should “pluck out the eye, and cut off the hand, [and] lay aside every thing that may be an impediment in running our Christian race.” If one loves nothing but God and fears nothing but sin, there will be no sorrow in a person’s life. But in her view “flesh and blood recoil” from such a prospect.

She was confident enough to tell Fitzwilliam candidly that she could not live by his rules and that she felt she might grieve without sinning.

This more secure command over her emotions and confidence in God did not mean that she had lost the capacity to grieve. The deaths in 1690 of her half-sister Elizabeth; of her nephew, the son of her sister Elizabeth; and of her cousin, a son of her uncle de Ruvigny, left her distraught. In commenting on Elizabeth’s death, she observed with a touch of bitterness that on earth whatever is the “object of our love will become the matter of our sorrow.” The idea of her young nephew dying before her she found hard to bear. “It is harder to be borne than a bigger loss, where there has been spun out a longer thread of life. . . . Me thinks ‘tis a violence upon nature.” But she felt a little time would restore her to her “settled state of mourning: for a mourner I must be all my days upon earth.”

Greater confidence in God’s love helped Lady Russell confront the most serious physical affliction of her life—the appearance of cataracts on both eyes. Because she enjoyed reading and above all the physical act of writing, failing eyesight was an especially hard blow. She first alluded to the condition in the summer of 1688, but it was not until 1692, when she was fifty-five years old, that she felt severely impaired. “I can hardly see what I write, and my eyes won’t endure to do it by a candle,” Lady Russell confessed. In August 1692 Katherine wrote in great
anxiety to her sister, Rachel, over the fact that their mother had lost so much sight in the past three or four weeks. Katherine shared Lady Russell’s fears that she would go blind. In September Rachel could read very little, but she persuaded herself that writing did not hurt her eyes, so she continued to do it, but correspondence in her own hand was severely curtailed.

Rachel’s reaction to this impairment illuminated her strong character. “I hope I do not repine,” she wrote Fitzwilliam, “but on the contrary rejoice” that total blindness had not yet overtaken her. Furthermore, she decided to undergo an operation—a decision that took great courage in the late seventeenth century, when procedures and anesthesia were primitive. The operation was not new to late-seventeenth-century England, since the procedure dated back to the twelfth century, but dramatic improvements in it did not come until the middle of the eighteenth century. An operation was performed on Rachel’s right eye in the summer of 1694 and on her left eye the next summer; both operations were successful. No information has survived about her doctor(s), about where the operations were performed and the exact dates, nor about what anesthesia and other procedures were used. It is also unknown whether or not Lady Russell was fitted for glasses. A portrait of her in old age (see the illustrations) does not show her wearing them, but it would seem likely that she did, the more so because Bedford, whose eyes were poor, used spectacles himself. Rachel appears to have made a rapid recovery from each operation. In August 1694 her sister-in-law wrote of her happiness in hearing how much Rachel’s eyes had improved. In August 1695 Lady Russell wrote herself, “I venture to write this much with my first eye. My new one does not alter much though I think I do see better than at first, but there is something still before it.” The next month she was able to write a “letter upon business” without damage to her eyes and follow it with a lengthy letter to her daughter Katherine. After the operations, her handwriting, which had deteriorated in the early 1690s, was restored to its previous legibility and strength, and although she used an amanuensis as necessary, she resumed writing many letters herself. Lady Russell’s eyes were never strong again, but she suffered no further serious problems with them.

During the years when her eyesight was failing, Rachel not only attended to public matters, as we have seen, but also gave devoted attention to the interests of her three children. A woman of fifty-four in 1691 with children ranging in age from eleven to seventeen, Lady Russell was an older parent, certainly older than most aristocratic mothers. That biological fact plus her energy, intelligence, and sense of obligation to her husband’s memory combined to create an overanxious, oversolicitous attitude towards her children, especially her son. As her children
grew into adolescence and beyond, Rachel continued to make herself actively involved in their lives, even to the point of intrusiveness.

Lady Russell was particularly concerned about the religious education of her children, and she took steps, as many contemporary fathers but few mothers did, to set out in writing advice on the subject. She would have known of Carbery’s letters of advice to her first husband, for it is through her that they came into the Bedford family. Possibly they inspired her to the same exercise. In any case, when her children received the sacrament for the first time, Rachel presented to each of them a paper setting out “all the passages” of the child’s life to that point in time, providing a record of his or her strengths and weaknesses. A lengthy letter of general advice on the religious life and a paper of detailed instructions for taking the sacrament followed in 1691; they were probably addressed especially to Wriothesley and Kate. Significantly, Lady Russell did not turn to Fitzwilliam or any of her other clerical friends to perform this service, but undertook to counsel her children herself. The letter and papers reveal a high degree of self-consciousness and self-confidence.

Rachel recommended to her children a rigorous religious regimen based upon her own daily habits. It included morning, afternoon, and evening prayer; reading; and written self-examination on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. She explained how to keep such a record of one’s sins. She chose certain passages in the Bible for her children to memorize and supplied specific pages in devotional material written by Taylor, Patrick, and others for them to consult. She stressed the conscientious confession of their sins and offered her own failings as a model. Declaring that nothing (barring religion) touched her so deeply as their concerns, Rachel exhorted her children, “When I have the least jealousy that any of you have ill inclinations, or not so good as I would, gladly have them, or fear that you tread, tho’ never so little out of the right path, O how it pierces my soul in fear and anguish for yours—if you love or bear any respect for the memory of your father, do not endanger a separation from him and me in the next life.”

Although Rachel wrote didactically, rather like a schoolmistress, and anxiously, much like Carbery, she was also a sympathetic guide. Recognizing that her regimen might seem difficult in the beginning, she reassured her children that practice would make it easier. But easy or hard, for people who mean to be “serious in religion” such a procedure was “huge more satisfying to the mind, than a more careless, loose way of living, and no settled method.” Moreover, in conformity with her lifelong sympathy for Dissent, Lady Russell was at pains to soften the dogmatic strain in her writing. She insisted that her recommendations for religious texts were not intended to restrict her children’s
choice, but rather were “the best” that she could offer as a help at first. No one, she declared, may prescribe for another. Nonetheless, the standards that she set forth in these written materials must have seemed rather rigid and unattainable to an adolescent. Clearly Rachel sought to be a powerful presence for religion and morality in the lives of her children.

A prominent feature of these papers is the repeated evocation of the memory of Lord Russell. Rachel seemed determined that her children should not forget their father. But significantly she made no reference whatsoever to the political principles for which he stood in either these or any other surviving papers. In adulthood, only her elder daughter seems to have shared her interest in public affairs. Her son, who, as second duke of Bedford, might have made a mark in politics, did not develop an interest in public affairs.

Lady Russell took steps to advance the worldly as well as the spiritual interests of each of her children. Young Rachel was now living with her husband (who had returned from his travels and whose interests we have already seen Lady Russell promoting), and through the influence of her father-in-law, Lord Devonshire, she was invited to become one of the queen’s ladies-in-waiting. Lady Russell was fearful that harm might befall her daughter in this role, and accordingly she appealed to Lady Derby, Queen Mary’s mistress of the robes, for help. Remarking that her daughter was inexperienced, having never been parted from “too fond a mother,” Rachel explained that Lord Devonshire had introduced her to court life earlier than she would have wanted. Since the queen desired her presence, Rachel would make no objections, but only seek Lady Derby’s protection. 82 Lady Russell’s love, anxiety, busyness, and connection with court figures are all reflected in this letter. Whether Lady Cavendish knew about it is unknown.

For her second daughter, Katherine, Lady Russell bent her energies in 1692 and 1693 towards achieving a favorable marriage settlement. Rachel did not initiate this project. Rather, John Manners, the ninth earl of Rutland, approached her in early 1692 with a proposal of marriage between Katherine and his son, also John, styled Lord Roos. The two families enjoyed equal social status. The Rutlands had won great wealth, high honors, and much land in the sixteenth century, and although their fortune and lands were less large in 1692, they remained powerful in Midland counties and in Yorkshire. Their principal seat was Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire, and among other estates they held Haddon Hall in Derbyshire. 83 Their politics were compatible with those of Lady Russell too. Although not prominently involved, the earl had been a supporter of the Revolution, joining with Devonshire and others in raising troops for the prince of Orange and giving Princess
Lady Rachel Russell

Anne refuge at Belvoir Castle when she fled London in 1688. Rachel realized that from a social and economic point of view this match was highly desirable, but initially she was unenthusiastic. The reason was that in 1670 the earl, then known as John Lord Roos, had won a divorce in church courts from his first wife on grounds of adultery. An act of Parliament, which became a cause célèbre, disabled the children of this marriage from inheriting his lands and honors and gave him the right to marry again. Rutland had proceeded to do that; his second wife died without issue; his third wife, Catharine, daughter of Baptist Noel, viscount Campden (and thus related by marriage to Rachel’s sister Elizabeth), was the mother of the prospective bridegroom. Rachel finally satisfied herself that the divorce was “just, as agreeing with the word of God” and that her “religious scruples” were “imaginary.” This conclusion persuaded her that the earl’s present marriage was also just and, hence, legal, so that Lord Roos’s inheritance was not threatened. With these religious and economic reservations settled and the young man’s character approved by others, Lady Russell was willing to entertain the idea of the marriage, but only, as she put it confidently, if Rutland agreed to her terms.

Lady Russell handled the negotiations respecting the property settlement herself, as she had done the marriage contract of young Rachel. Although the discussions lasted over a year and involved several meetings of the parties and their lawyers, the bargaining with Rutland was apparently less tough than it had been with Devonshire. Rutland was apparently eager for the match, perhaps in part because in 1692 he had provided his daughter with a £15,000 dowry and hoped to recoup the money by marrying his son. Rachel displayed an intimate knowledge of the value of her properties, a sharper understanding than Rutland of the relative value of London and Hampshire holdings, and skill in presenting her case. Rutland’s position was that he wanted the same contract that she and Devonshire had agreed to. On August 30 Rachel sent him an abstract of that settlement, and they seem to have worked from it. Disagreement between them centered on the size of Katherine’s dowry, the security for it, and the method of payment. Initially Rachel had offered a smaller dowry, “because it was too hard on me to do so much,” but Rutland persuaded her to provide the same dowry of £25,000. Rutland preferred a lump-sum payment, but agreed finally to accept payment in installments. The security for the money was Lady Russell’s ground rents from her London properties, whereas initially Rutland had asked for land in Hampshire. Insisting that she wanted to please Rutland in everything, without “extreme inconvenience” to herself, Lady Russell repeatedly argued that the ground rents were of greater value and better security, for they brought in £6,000 a year and would increase in
value when they expired. When Rutland finally agreed, Rachel persisted in iterating that the arrangements were the best for both of them. Lady Russell liked to win an argument, and her knowledge of her business affairs and her skill in writing enabled her to do so.

Lady Russell did not defer to her daughter’s wishes in the marriage any more than she had done with young Rachel. She declared that she would not unite her child with a person of ill repute, no matter what his wealth, but given the candidate’s moral integrity, his wealth and social position weighed heavily with her. She seems to have quieted her own conscience by insisting that the young couple meet several times at Woburn so that they might, as she put it, “at least guess at each other’s humour before we venture to make them (as I hope they shall be) a happy couple,” but these encounters took place while the property negotiations were in progress.

Whatever Katherine’s view of Lord Roos, Rachel found him to be a “pretty youth,” “virtuously bred,” and with “no disposition in him that is blameable.” She recommended that he should go to university, where in her view, “our nobility should pass some of their time; it has been for many years neglected.” This opinion did not prevail in the case of Lord Roos, but it anticipated Lady Russell’s decision to send her son to university. Lady Russell frankly wrote to Fitzwilliam that although she was “apt” to say that the wedding would not go forward unless the pair were happy in each other, she found a distinction between their “happiness” and God’s approval. Confident of the latter, she concluded that the union was highly desirable. Candidly, she expressed satisfaction in the thought that she had joined her daughters to the “two best fortunes in England.” She was as mercenary in her view as any patriarch of a noble family.

The wedding took place at Woburn on August 17, 1693. No description of the celebration there has survived, but a lengthy account of the reception young Lord and Lady Roos received when they journeyed to Belvoir Castle, contained in a letter to Lady Russell, provides a rare glimpse of country social customs. The high sheriff of Leicestershire and all the country gentlemen greeted the couple when they first entered the county, and the following day “thousands” of people joined the gentlemen to pay their respects. The crowds increased as the party approached Belvoir Castle, with aldermen and corporations in attendance, as well as clergymen who presented congratulatory verses. A twentieth-century visitor to Belvoir Castle may readily visualize the progress of the cavalcade across the flat plain to the castle, which stands on a low hill, and the welcome at the gate by four and twenty fiddlers, trumpeters, and ladies, altogether seventy-two people who ushered in the pair with music. After an “exceeding magnificent supper,” everyone, led by the
bride and bridegroom, went in procession to the great hall, where an enormous cistern provided sack-posset for the drinking of toasts, first in spoons, then in silver cups, and then, with the family on their knees, in brim-full tankards. All this lasted until past midnight. The account must have vivified the scene for Lady Russell, who, because of her poor eyes, was not part of the party. She followed her daughter to Belvoir after two or three weeks and stayed there for about a fortnight.

After the marriage Lady Russell remained a presence in the life of her daughter, writing her regularly, arranging for visits, and sending her advice and admonitions. Lady Russell also advised her daughter on more serious matters. In 1695 something went awry in Kate’s life, and she turned to her mother. In response Rachel, writing in her own hand, urged her to remember her “former promises” to accept God’s providences cheerfully. She reminded her of her duty to her husband and baby and adjured her to “act your part and glory in it.” If she were happy now, she might be less well prepared for eternity. Inevitably Lady Russell adverted to her own years of “bitter grief” and declared that life was a “continual labour checkered with care and pleasure.” The difficulty, she assured Katherine, would pass in time. Presumably the sympathetic, warm, and wise tone of Rachel’s letter comforted Lady Roos, perhaps the more so because of the contrast offered by her sister’s postscript, which read, “I am so out of charity with you that I will not add one word to this, but leave you entirely to my mother’s good council.” The postscript is worth noting, for it indicates what other letters demonstrate—that, in contrast to Lady Russell’s lifelong loving relationship with her own two sisters, young Rachel and Katherine did not get on well.

Lady Russell was also at pains to create a warm relationship with the Rutland family, just as she had done throughout her life with respect to every family to which she was allied. She sent Kate a portrait of her mother and received with pleasure her son-in-law’s portrait. She continued to write to Rutland (rather than to the countess) and, as we shall see, was actively involved in winning a dukedom for him.

Lady Russell gave particular attention to the rearing of her son. She evidently felt a special sense of responsibility for him. Thanks to her energy and skill and the effects of the Glorious Revolution, he was presumptive heir to the Bedford title and fortune. Undoubtedly she saw in Wriothesley a reflection of her beloved husband and the possible fulfillment of the aspirations they had shared. Up to his coming of age in 1701, she carefully supervised all aspects of his moral, social, and intellectual development. After that she continued to advise him. Without her skills and indulgent love, there is no doubt that his prospects would have faltered.

Wriothesley was a coveted match in English society, and as in the
instance of his sisters, Lady Russell received, rather than initiated, proposals of marriage with him. When he was still thirteen years old, in 1693, the Reverend John Howe, the Dissenting clergyman, brought a proposal from Sir Josiah Child, the wealthy merchant and officer of the East India Company, for a union between Wriothesley and Child’s granddaughter, the Lady Henrietta Somerset, the daughter of Charles, marquess of Worcester. The young woman’s fortune was enormous, but for unknown reasons Lady Russell rejected this suit. Indignant at the rebuff, Sir Josiah confided to Howe that he believed that either Lady Russell did not understand the “considerableness” of his proposal or had made other arrangements for her son. The excuse given—namely, that the two young people were still being educated—was no bar to discussing marriage when great fortunes were involved. Recognizing that both parties would inherit large wealth, Sir Josiah declared that he wanted the fortune of his granddaughter to come into the “best and most pious noble family” in the land. Lady Russell reconsidered. Over the past six years she had encumbered her estate and also paid out large sums of money for the dowries of her two daughters. To win for her son a bride of great wealth, even though the family was not landed nobility, would go far towards recouping that money. Whatever the reasons, negotiations were reopened. By the summer of 1694 negotiations leading to the marriage of Wriothesley, now Lord Tavistock, to Elizabeth Howland, another granddaughter of Child, and the only daughter of John Howland and Elizabeth Child Howland of Streatham in Surrey, were far advanced. The prospective bride, aged fourteen, was a fine match from an economic point of view, for she stood to inherit from her grandfather, deceased father, and her mother, and was reputed to be worth upwards of £100,000.

Once again, as in the case of her two daughters, Rachel managed the marriage settlement. No evidence has survived to show that the boy was consulted. As we have seen, Lady Russell placed high priority on the social and economic benefits that accompanied uniting her children with great families. In the case of her son she chose great money over ancient lineage.

Lady Russell and Mrs. Howland were the principals in settling the marriage contract, the negotiations for which took over a year to complete. In August 1694, in one of the first letters that she wrote following her cataract operation, Rachel discussed with Mrs. Howland the matter of some land in Cambridgeshire that would pass to Wriothesley. With customary shrewdness and attention to detail, Rachel sent her steward to ascertain the value of the property and arranged to employ Mrs. Howland’s attorney, who was better known in the area than her own lawyer. A portion of the marriage treaty was ready in November 1694. So
much property was involved that a parliamentary act was required to settle matters, and the Tavistock Estate Act passed on April 22, 1695. That achieved, the parties completed the final document, dated May 20 and 21, 1695. The essential feature was that Mrs. Howland paid Lady Russell the enormous sum of £50,000 as dowry for her daughter. For her part Lady Russell conveyed to trustees properties that would provide the couple an income of £2,500 per year until Bedford’s death. The money was to be paid first at Christmas 1695, with £1,200 going to Elizabeth Howland until the couple cohabited. Then Elizabeth was to have £1,000 a year for her separate use, apparel, ornaments, and wages for two servants. As part of the arrangements at the time of her son’s marriage, Lady Russell mortgaged Southampton House to the earl of Rutland for £10,000 and also put some of her Middlesex property in trust to raise further sums, not to exceed £20,000, as needed.

Negotiating the marriage settlement brought Rachel and Mrs. Howland together and they remained friends thereafter. As she had done with her daughters, Lady Russell made friends with the family with which her son was united. Rachel and Mrs. Howland shared an interest not only in the education of their children and later in their grandchildren but also in religion and in business affairs. A business letter of January 3, 1696, illustrates the easy relationship between them and Rachel’s shrewd business sense. Referring to the payment of rent due her from Mrs. Howland’s father on a London property, Rachel wrote, “I will put him in mind to pay his rent, for I think ’tis good to take men’s money when they have it to give.” One may imagine that Mrs. Howland read this comment, written by an aristocratic lady but reflecting a practical attitude towards money, with some amusement. Continuing the letter about some property in which the two women shared an interest and apparently desired to sell, Rachel declared that she would make no decision on an offer she had received until she heard from her friend. “I do hope you will consider if we are like to do better, and if not, my opinion is to close with him,” she wrote.

The wedding ceremony uniting Elizabeth and Wriothesley was conducted by Bishop Burnet in the chapel at Streatham on May 23, 1695. The event is notable for a charming, perhaps apocryphal, story about the two youngsters, who slipped away from the adult company to play. The consequence of their running and sliding was that Elizabeth ruined her costly gown, which “petrified” both of them. Tavistock reappeared among the adults affecting innocence, while Elizabeth sought haven in the straw in the barn. After the wedding both youngsters returned to their mothers to complete their education. Elizabeth was tutored privately. It was intended that Tavistock, in conformity with the
advice his mother had offered Lord Roos, should enter Cambridge University, where his father had been educated.

But before that happened an opportunity developed for Tavistock to perform a service for the Whig party. On October 3, 1695, Lady Russell received a letter written by Sir James Forbes on behalf of the lord keeper, Sir John Somers, and the duke of Shrewsbury, importuning her to allow her son to stand for knight of the shire for Middlesex in an upcoming general election. These men insisted that Tavistock need not actually serve in the House of Commons, and thus his election would not interfere with his education nor his plans for travel. He would appear but once on the hustings, attended by several hundred gentlemen on horseback and for that day would be known as “Lord Russell,” to evoke memory of his father. His running mate would be Sir John Wolstonholme, a man recommended by Somers, who had connections in Bedfordshire. Their election was regarded as a certainty and the only way to defeat “two notorious Tories.” Even if Tavistock was not present in the House, the Whigs figured that they would have three extra votes, because they would keep out two Tories and bring in at least one Whig, Tavistock’s running mate. Allowing Tavistock to stand for election, Forbes argued, was for the honor of the Bedford family.110

A flurry of letters ensued, aimed at persuading Rachel and Bedford of the wisdom of the proposal. One man asserted that several other underage sons of great men planned to run on the same terms as Wriothesley, and that Tavistock would look less out of place than they because he was taller!111 Plans were laid to canvass the views of voters.112 Suggestions were aired as to how to deal with a man who was much offended that Bedford had withdrawn support from his candidacy, switching it to Tavistock. The solution proposed by Edward Russell, Rachel’s brother-in-law, was for Bedford to excuse himself by shifting the blame to Lady Russell, saying that the importunity of great men prevailed with her.113 The idea seems to have died, perhaps because Rachel persuaded Edward that it insulted her political integrity. Although for a time it looked as if Rachel and Bedford would agree, Lady Russell finally decided not to allow her son to stand. The announced reason was that such an election would interfere with his education and plans for travel. Another reason is suggested in a letter Rachel wrote to Edward. Showing shrewd political sense, she declared, “It is clear to me that my Lord Shrewsbury had no original thought in this business; nor, I verily believe, any further approbation than through compliment to his friends.” Fearing defeat, she asserted that it was “very late for two persons of uncertain interest to set up against two that know theirs, and no doubt have been effectually labouring in it.”114 As it happened, Edward Russell decided to run with Wolstonholme, and both
were elected on November 14, 1695. Some weeks later Lady Russell expressed mild regret that she had not allowed Tavistock to stand. Probably the memory of her husband’s political career in the 1670s and her ongoing interest in public affairs had created ambivalence in her attitude. But when it came to making a choice that might have resulted in embarrassment and surely in some disruption of plans, Lady Russell put the welfare of her son above political considerations.

Rachel had gone forward with plans to take Wriothesley to Cambridge, where she intended to rent a small house until he was settled in. A “snag” occurred when she heard that smallpox had broken out in the town. Admitting to Mrs. Howland her fear that she was being “too fussy,” she decided to cancel the arrangements. She learned that Oxford was free from the disease and, acting upon this assurance, enrolled her son there. Thus it happened that Tavistock attended Oxford University rather than Cambridge.

Lady Russell accompanied Lord Tavistock and his tutor, John Hicks, to Oxford in April 1696 and stayed there for several months. She thoroughly enjoyed herself. Friends and relations came through the town, and she entertained them and was entertained in return. People from the university, such as Dr. John Wallis, a well-known mathematician and writer on philosophical and theological subjects, called. She also saw her son, never failing, at both dinner and supper, and received gratifying reports of the progress he was making in his studies. Moreover, the academic atmosphere reinforced her usual reflective attitude. One letter that she wrote to Thornton is of special interest because in discussing her son’s studies she comes close to suggesting personal ambitions. Rachel declared, “Whatever further progress I make [towards virtue and knowledge] . . . must content my ambition, but on my son’s it does not: I desire he may aspire higher.”

Enthusiastic accounts continued of Tavistock’s attention to work, liking for logic, and independence and excellence of judgment. But Rachel, who knew her son well, was skeptical. She warned Hicks that he might expect from Tavistock “great promises and small performances” followed by “a full blush and some soft words in excuse for non-performance of promise.” She was correct in her judgment. Tavistock was not really inclined towards scholarship. He resisted reading a book more than once, and when Hicks recommended a new and advanced text in logic, Wriothesley said that he had had enough of logic. But he developed a reputation as a gambler, as Hicks reported to Lady Russell. Tavistock wrote in anxiety to his mother that he thought it hard that a “little gaming, such I mean as would not hurt one,” should have harmed his reputation. He begged her not to worry about “my loving play,” and
declared that he was “certain” that he would never be guilty of losing a lot of money.  

When Tavistock had completed a year of study, Rachel sent him abroad to travel. She made arrangements for the trip with great care. In October 1697 Rachel won Bedford’s approval of her choice of Hicks as tutor and traveling companion. The duke wrote that he had admonished Wriothesley to follow Hicks’s advice. He also urged that his grandson not stay abroad long nor visit Italy. Rachel also engaged a Mr. Fazio to be part of the party. She secured letters of introduction from her cousin, Henri de Ruvigny, now earl of Galway. Almost certainly because of her connections at court, arrangements were made for the group to embark with the king’s convoy going to Holland at the end of October 1697. 

Tavistock stayed in Europe for two years, covering much the same ground as his father had done forty years before: the Netherlands, the German courts, France, and, despite his grandfather’s objections, the Italian courts and cities. But there was a difference: whereas William Russell had been a younger son of a family of no great distinction, Wriothesley was the acknowledged heir to a magnificent fortune and to the title of duke. He arrived on the Continent preceded by the reputation of his father; his uncle, Admiral Edward Russell; his cousin, the earl of Galway; and even of his mother, a copy of whose portrait was found in a collection in Italy. Everywhere he stopped he was received with ceremony and welcomed into the highest ranks of society. His mother must have felt special pleasure in knowing that at his first stop, The Hague, he was presented to King William III, who was there on his way back to England, following the signing of the Peace of Ryswick. This and many other marks of favor were a heady experience for a young man, and it is not to be wondered that he took pleasure in describing them. 

The high society that he moved in offered the temptation to gamble, and Tavistock succumbed immediately at The Hague. He was overcome with remorse, especially because Rachel apparently indicated to him that the expense was an inconvenience. He promised not to play anymore—except for the little money he had on him, which he declared was “as good as not playing at all.” Perhaps Lady Russell blamed Fazio for this lapse; perhaps Hicks did too. Rachel dismissed Fazio and appointed in his stead one Mr. Sherard, whose responsibility was to manage finances and accommodations. Fazio retaliated by bringing back poor reports of his former charge. 

The place that Tavistock loved the most and stayed in the longest was Rome. He particularly liked riding about Rome at midnight in an open calash. The routine of his days included listening to music, fencing
(with the best master in Italy), going out to take the air, practicing Italian, and attending social events. He became friends with cardinals, especially Cardinal Ottoboni, the nephew of the preceding pope, Alexander VIII; with a Catholic priest, Father Coemus, who supplied him with further introductions; with the Imperial Ambassador and his wife; and with a host of other high-born Italians. This Roman Catholic community, because of the pope’s dislike of Louis XIV, professed to applaud the Glorious Revolution and to admire the English, especially King William and Admiral Russell. They were pleased to shower Tavistock with attention, inviting him to dinners, lunches, and the opera. News of his reception reached Lady Russell by diverse sources, including a private letter to her goldsmith. She was so proud of comments about what a fine, deserving gentleman Tavistock was that she wrote about his triumphs to Lady Roos.

Tavistock’s letters would have made it abundantly clear to Rachel that her advice set out in 1691 recommending a regimen of thrice-daily prayer, reflection, and reading of religious texts had fallen on deaf ears. Clearly, Wriothesley was exulting in the freedom from the dour atmosphere of Southampton House and his mother’s high moral and religious standards. The trip helped him to find his own tastes and interests: music, opera, art, and collecting rare and beautiful objects. He spent money lavishly. Sherard estimated that Tavistock’s expenses for the year would come to about £3,000 and noted that Wriothesley “did not care being denied anything that he has a fancy to.” Hicks believed that the only way to achieve retrenchment in expenses was for Lady Russell emphatically to command that it be done. “Orders from England are what we want, and nothing will go well without them,” he advised. No such order was given.

Wriothesley’s unrestrained extravagance reveals how indulgent a mother Lady Russell was. Tavistock sought to justify himself on grounds that his expenditures were “absolutely necessary” to maintain his position and that of his family. The money was well spent because his experiences in Rome would “improve” him as nothing else could. He was confident that his mother would not “grudge” the money, but rather pay the bills. She did. Tavistock once took financial matters in his own hands by secretly drawing a bill for £200 on his mother’s account to pay for some presents and other things he “had a great mind to have.” He explained that his brother-in-law, Lord Hartington, owed him £120 and that if Rachel would get that sum from him, she would be out of pocket only £80. But if Hartington would not pay her, Tavistock was sure that under the circumstances his mother would pay the entire bill. He begged her not to tell Sherard or Hicks about the matter. Two months later, perhaps in response to a reproving letter from Rachel, Tavistock
described himself as in such a state of grief over the matter that much more sorrow would hurt him. He declared that if Sherard found out what he had done, he would lie to him, saying that the money was his in England, from the debt owed him by Hartington. He promised on his word and honor that if his mother had to go into debt he would repay her when he returned, even if it meant living in the country for ten years. He wanted to return to England to be a comfort to her and, choosing his words carefully, to “follow in some things . . . the steps of my good father.” He ended this contrite letter by telling her that he had spent £100 on two pairs of fancy embroidered stockings, one for her and one for Lady Tavistock. 137 Rachel paid.

An even more reprehensible weakness in Tavistock was his addiction to gambling. Repeatedly he lost money; repeatedly he wrote his mother contrite letters promising before God not to gamble again. 138 In September 1699 the matter reached a crisis when Rachel wrote him an apparently sharp letter saying that Galway had heard rumors that Tavistock had left Italy without paying Cardinal Bouillon the gambling debts he owed him. 139 In response Wriothesley confessed himself guilty of concealing several “misfortunes,” but he maintained that it was “absolutely false” that he owed Bouillon anything. He closed by saying that his head hurt too much for him to write more. Four days later, having received a letter from Rachel suggesting that perhaps he had been cheated, Tavistock agreed that such was probably the case. He recounted the “facts how it was,” namely that he had been able to pay only half of his gambling debt to Bouillon, and that a “monk” had said he would pay the other half, as he had done at other times, and that he had heard no more of the matter until the rumor surfaced. He recognized that the “monk” was a cunning fellow and the people at Cardinal Bouillon’s “very sharp.” With this realization firmly in mind, he begged his mother that she and Galway agree quickly what should be done. 140

Tavistock’s imminent arrival home was further marred by another rumor. In great agitation, Admiral Edward Russell relayed to Lady Russell on September 19, 1699, gossip that Tavistock had converted to Catholicism. Russell declared that Wriothesley could not live as duke of Bedford and be Catholic. 141 The rumor came as no surprise to Rachel; she had heard it before and been reassured by her son that it was nonsense. 142 In her level-headed and protective way, she apprised Thornton of the situation and advised that everyone remain quiet about it. To avoid speculation about who originated the gossip, she excised names in Tavistock’s letters before showing the letters to anyone else. 143 Hicks confirmed Rachel’s good judgment, describing the charge as a “downright falsehood” that would die of its own accord, which in the event proved correct. 144
Tavistock’s gambling debts, however, were another matter. Upon his arrival in England, it was revealed that he had lost more than £3,000 in Italy. Fortified by Galway’s insistence that gambling was the least serious of sins to which a young man might succumb, Rachel took steps towards arranging for repayment. On Friday, December 22, 1699, Lady Russell wrote Bedford a masterful letter about the situation. She told him how much money was involved, stressed Tavistock’s grief, and stated the problem: how to repay the money secretly so that Wriothesley’s reputation would suffer no further damage. Next, she outlined her proposal in a logical, straightforward manner showing her grasp of financial matters and her intelligence and integrity. She asked that Bedford stand surety for a bond for £3,000 for which she and Tavistock would be the principals. “I will find the money,” she declared. Bedford would run no risk, for the rents of their estates would soon pay it off; if either one died, the result would be the same. The bond “can at no time come to be paid by you,” she assured the duke. Only the family steward need know of the bond, and he need not be apprised of its purpose. Lady Russell declared that she felt obliged to help her son “this one time, and no more.” She also recalled the “debt [his] excellent son” had left her and ended rhetorically, “Who should I apply to besides yourself?” The duke complied, and with Galway orchestrating the project, the money was sent secretly to France. For years thereafter interest on the debt was paid until the principal was repaid at Wriothesley’s death in 1711. Thus Lady Russell rescued her wayward son and preserved his reputation. She was too shrewd not to perceive his weaknesses and too loving a mother not to assist him.

Rachel took other steps to advance Tavistock’s interests. In early 1699 she and Galway discussed making him a naturalized French citizen (her own status, it may be remembered) so that he might inherit property in France from her and Galway. Nothing came of this idea, but it is worth noting, for it shows that long before his death, Galway and Rachel were concerned over how claims on his property, which had been forfeited when he joined the prince of Orange in the Revolution of 1688–89, might be pursued. Later, as we shall see, after Galway’s death in 1720, when she was eighty-three years old, Lady Russell sought to claim her family’s French property. “Some days” after the duke of Bedford died on September 7, 1700, Rachel wrote to King William to announce the duke’s death and to tell him that, as Bedford’s executor, she had his “George” (meaning the insignia of the Order of the Garter) in her hands. Confessing ignorance of the proper procedure in such matters and begging the king to forgive a woman’s troubling him, Rachel respectfully requested that he confer on her son, now the second duke of Bedford, his grandfather’s Garter. “I know,” she wrote, in terms that reflect her cen-
tral position in the Bedford family, “the whole family would always look upon it as a mark of your grace and favor to them and if anything could make them show greater zeal for your service than they do now it would be the honor you bestow on this young man.”¹⁴⁹ On September 23 King William responded in a letter written in his own hand in French. He sent condolences on the death of the duke, assurances of favor to Bedford, and expressions of admiration for her, but he neither awarded nor promised to award the order to Wriothesley.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Rachel’s overture laid the groundwork for the subsequent award of the honor. The next year, when Bedford reached his majority, he won appointment as lord lieutenant of Middlesex and of the counties of Cambridge, Bedford, and Middlesex.¹⁵¹ Young Bedford’s title and honor he owed to his mother.

The fact that Bedford made Rachel executor of his will requires special remark. It testifies to the fond place she held in the duke’s affections and to the respect she enjoyed as a woman who understood business affairs. Even before his death, as he aged, Bedford gradually relinquished to or shared with Rachel the responsibilities associated with being the head of a family. After his death she un­questionably occupied that position. Such a role did not just happen; there were several blood sons and daughters of the duke. That it did develop underscores Rachel’s intelligence and integrity and reveals the love and respect that Bedford bore her.

Although preoccupied with Lord Tavistock’s affairs during these years, Lady Russell continued to take an active part in business and public matters. She took seriously her responsibilities as patron of churches on her Hampshire estate, as a letter to Sir Robert Worsley written perhaps in 1696 demonstrates. Writing in a businesslike manner, she sought his opinion of a candidate, one Mr. Swayne, for the rectory at Kingsworthy and the vicarage at Micheldever. Displaying a sense of confidence and of personal status, she asked Worsley, whom she thought favored the candidate, to respond honestly about his qualifications out of regard to the “weight of the matter and to me who ask it from you.” She set out the terms of the contract: the stipend (which Lord Russell had increased and whose increase she proposed to honor) and also the requirement of a bond to perform the conditions she specified. Without the bond, she explained, she would have no remedy. Lady Russell asked Worsley to “discourse Mr. Swayne” and then have an instrument drawn up “to the purposes I have signified.”¹⁵² At about this time the churchwardens at Micheldever church acknowledged Lady Russell’s interest and her business acumen by placing in her hands the money raised for a bond to help the poor of the parish.¹⁵³ Her devotion to the church at Micheldever found expression in 1703, when she presented it with an
unusually large silver cup, perhaps as a thanks offering that her son and
daughter-in-law had escaped injury in the violent storm that ravaged
England in November 1703.\footnote{154}

Now that the sharpest sting of her grief for her husband had sub­sided, she seemed to enjoy Stratton once more and to take an interest in
her tenants and in the condition of the estate. For example, in 1700 she
asked Bedford to bestow a living on one of her Hampshire tenants. The
man’s family had been tenants of her father, and as she put it, “I would
not deny them to do thus much on their behalf.”\footnote{155} There is no indica­tion that Lady Russell made improvements to Stratton House, but she
did improve the estate by buying two “little” parcels of land in 1698 and
by starting in 1699 on a small scale a herd of fallow deer, which grew in
number and in value to £250 by 1730.\footnote{156} She dealt with the severe
storm of 1703, which had thrown corn and hay up into the treetops and
torn up fir trees by their roots, by immediately dispatching her steward
to assess the damage and take steps towards repair.\footnote{157}

Other business matters show Rachel’s persistent attention to
details. She took steps to protect the value of her London property by
entering a petition on March 20, 1701, to confirm the patent that
Charles II had granted her father to hold markets in Bloomsbury.\footnote{158} She
continued to deal directly with Rutland regarding the business affairs
between them. In 1702 she wrote to apologize for a delay in his receiving
information from her. “The error,” she explained, “lay in speaking
first to a servant, who did not so well remember my settlements as
myself.”\footnote{159} In 1707 she was still handling the correspondence herself,
writing that her steward had not replied to a letter from Rutland’s agent
because she wanted to do it herself.\footnote{160}

Rachel’s interest in political gossip and issues remained strong.
Even before Fitzwilliam’s death in 1669, and especially thereafter, she
poured out news of events in letters to her daughter Katherine and to the
earl of Rutland. For example, in August 1697 she regaled Katherine with
a story of the barbarous eating habits of Czar Peter of Russia, who was
visiting England as part of his famous journey to the west. He “spit of­ten,” Rachel reported; and when he finished his meal, he “whistled” for
an attendant who swept up the room with a broom. Lady Russell also
noted that Peter was an excellent carpenter.\footnote{161} She may also have writ­
ten to her son about the czar, for in December of that year Tavistock,
traveling through Holland, was at pains to tell her that Peter had become
more “sociable” in polite society, while at the same time he was learning
Dutch and working every day with common seamen.\footnote{162} Another exam­
ple of Rachel’s ongoing enthusiastic interest in public affairs may be
found in a letter she wrote to Rutland five years later, in 1702. Lady
Russell was so eager to report the actions of the House of Commons that
she waited until evening for the latest news, and because her eyes would not permit her to finish the letter by candlelight, she had her daughter do it for her.163

Lady Russell was more than a mere observer of public affairs. As she entered the sixth decade of her life, she continued to exercise her influence on appointments at the national level. Although some of the posts in which she was concerned were of little significance, they hold interest because they show that the major contact Rachel used was the duke of Devonshire.164 Devonshire had been named one of the lord justices to whom the government was entrusted after the death of Queen Mary when the king was out of the country and, clearly, was a powerful friend. For his part, Devonshire used Lady Russell’s influence in a case that claimed his interest, that of Donough Maccarty, the fourth earl of Clancarty, Sunderland’s son-in-law. Clancarty, who held huge estates in Ireland, had converted to Catholicism during the reign of James II, fought with him, been captured, and had his estates confiscated. He fled to the Continent. After the Treaty of Ryswick he returned home to be united with his wife and to beg pardon from the king and permission to go into exile with his wife and to be forgiven. But Sunderland and his son, greedy for Clancarty’s lands and despising his past politics, not only refused to champion him but also arranged for his arrest. Probably because of political infighting as much as sympathy for the couple, Devonshire and Bedford took up his cause. Rachel, moved, perhaps, by the romantic story, agreed to help. In January 1698 Lady Russell, accompanied by Lady Clancarty, delivered a petition directly to King William on behalf of the earl of Clancarty. As Macaulay tells the story, William so esteemed Rachel that he pardoned Clancarty and granted him a small pension on condition that he and his wife live in exile.165

In further exercise of her influence, Rachel, always concerned to promote the interests of her family, undertook to win a dukedom for the earl of Rutland. She probably initiated this project in 1701, for a draft letter to the king dated February 1702 thanked him for noticing that she had not yet formally presented her petition and announced that she had put it in the hands of Lady Derby to present to him.166 She followed this with a letter “about the first of March” which was found in the king’s pocket at his death. In it she thanked him for promising to honor Lord Rutland and his family, “in which,” she wrote, “I am so much interested.” The act would lay an obligation on the family, she assured the king. Then, assuming a role as spokesperson for the entire family, a most unusual part for a woman to play, Lady Russell asked to be allowed to “answer for all those I am related to” and pledged them to his service. Further, always eager to put forward her son, Rachel seized the opportunity to remind William of her hope that he would bestow the Order of the
Lady Rachel Russell

Garter on her son. In so doing she reinforced the written record she had earlier created. But William did not live long enough to respond. He died from complications following a hunting accident on March 8, 1702, without awarding Wriothesley the Garter or making Rutland a duke.

For Lady Russell the “prime” of her life in terms of her influence, authority, and achievement came rather late, when she was about fifty to sixty-five years old. During these years she conquered the raging grief over the death of her husband that had nearly incapacitated her and emerged as a public figure, the symbol of her martyred husband. This role, in addition to wealth, the powerful positions of the men of her extended family, and her friendship with the new monarchs, enabled her to exercise influence on public affairs and to participate in the patronage system in state and church. Her requests carried weight partly because those in a position to forward them saw advantage to themselves in doing so. Her activities during these years illustrate in striking fashion the public dimensions of family connections and the part that a woman might play in public affairs.

Lady Russell also assumed the role of matriarch of the Bedford family, taking precedence over her brothers- and sisters-in-law. It was Rachel rather than one of them whom the duke chose as his executor. Thanks to her business skills, she increased the value of her properties and used her holdings to negotiate favorable marriages for her children, linking the girls with landed families of wealth and standing and her son with one of the wealthiest commercial families in the nation. Despite her own romantic view of love and marriage, she arranged these unions with little or no consideration of the personal inclinations of the partners. Thanks also to her understanding of finance, she was able to rescue her son from potential embarrassment. As she entered the seventh decade of her life, Lady Russell could take satisfaction in her personal position and achievements.