



The Thomas Thynne Memorial Stone in Westminster Abbey

## *THOMAS THYNNE*

Against the back of the choir, in the south side of Westminster Abbey, is an altar-monument, on which appears a statue, in a recumbent posture, of Thomas Thynne, Esq., of Longleat, in Wiltshire, and underneath a representation in relievo of the circumstances under which he was shot by hired assassins in Pall Mall, on the evening of Sunday, Feb. 12, 1682. A long Latin inscription was prepared for this monument, but forbidden to be put up from party or political motives, according to some authorities, but rather, as we suppose, because it positively ascribed the murder to Count Koningsmark, who had been tried for, and acquitted of that crime.

The circumstances of the case, which in more respects than one was extraordinary, appear to be these:-

Mr. Thynne was a gentleman of large landed property in Wiltshire, where his rental is said to have amounted to 10,000/ a-year. He had for many years been a member of the House of Commons, and distinguished himself for bold and active conduct, and opinions by no means favourable to the court. Elizabeth, sole heiress of the noble house of Percy, was left an orphan when a child, and immediately became an object of solicitous attention to many persons on account of her large fortune. While still of tender years she was betrothed to the Earl of Ogle, eldest son of Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, but was left a widow before the marriage had been consummated. She was next wedded to Mr. Thynne, but being still extremely young, her mother prevailed upon her husband to allow her to go abroad and travel for a time before she lived with him. This being agreed to, the lady took up her residence at Hanover, where she met and inspired Count Koningsmark with a violent passion. The count, as the story goes, assumed, that if the husband was dead, the widow would bestow her hand and fortune upon him. With this impression upon his mind he came over to England, and sent Mr. Thynne two challenges to single combat. Of these missives no notice was taken.

Koningsmark then hired three foreign ruffians, Fratz, a German, Stern, a Swede, and Boroskia, a Pole. These men watched Mr. Thynne, and as he was driving from the Countess of Northumberland's down Pall Mall, rode up to his carriage and discharged into it a musketoon, which killed him. Koningsmark fled

as soon as the murder was effected, but a reward of 200*l.* being offered for his apprehension, he was seized at Gravesend, and being brought before the King in Council, was committed to Newgate, and in due course put upon his trial at the Old Bailey sessions as an accessory to the murder. Koningsmark was acquitted – it is said by a packed jury, but the other three were found guilty, and executed. Public opinion, however, implicated the Count so decidedly in this daring outrage, that William, Marquis, and afterwards Duke of Newcastle, and intimate friend and near connexion of Mr. Thynne, resolved to seek the only revenge in his power, and fight the great criminal. But the latter fled as soon as he was discharged from prison, and no further steps were taken to punish him.

*(Remainder of article has not been transcribed as it does not relate to Mr. Thynne, or his murder.)*

**The Worthies of England, By George Lewis Smyth, 1850.**