

THE GREATEST HOUSE AT CHELSEY

also a very good landlord, and never that I know or heard of did one harsh thing by any of his tenants."

In 1739 the actual business of demolishing the great house was begun, much to Howard's disgust. In vain he tried to save it.

"My master asked me what was best to do with the house," he writes. "I replied, 'Board up the windows, mend the sills to keep out the weather, and prevent it growing worse.' He then consulted one Mr. Sampson, who was Surveyor at the Bank of England, as to the cost of repairs, who said it would cost five hundred pounds; my advice was only to prevent it growing worse that he might wait to see what might offer. . . . Some gentlemen then looked at it with intent to build a large still-house, and the folks who afterwards built Ranelagh viewed it for a place of public resort, but none of those came to anything. Some others made proposals of different kinds, but none took till Mr. Sampson, who knew right well that the receiving of money was to Sir Hans Sloane more pleasing than parting with it, persuaded him to sell the house and all appurtenances as it stood, to be pulled down by the purchaser, and all the materials carried off the spot. This I conceive he did in favour of two of his acquaintances, the one a master bricklayer, the other a master carpenter. . . . he