'A Memory of Honour'

A Study of the House of Cobham of Kent in the Reign of Elizabeth I

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Birmingham.

July, 1964 David Bruce McKeen, B.A., M.A.

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SYNOPSIS

William Brooke and, after him, Henry his son held the Barony of Cobham of Kent, the Lord Wardenship of the Cinque Ports and the Lord Lieutenancy of Kent from 1558 to 1603. The elder lord was also a Privy Councillor and, in 1596-1597, Lord Chamberlain. Because of the importance of the offices which the Lords Cobham held, and because other of the Brookes were prominent in courtly and diplomatic circles, historians have recently begun to recognize that their part in Elizabethan history is greater than that which Froude and his predecessors had allowed them. To treat of such figures before conducting original and intensive researches into the contemporary books and documents which concern them is, however, never very wise and sometimes even worse than leaving them in the obscurity which they have occupied for centuries. Critics of Shakespeare and historians of the stage, although long interested in the connection between Falstaff, Sir John Oldcastle and the Lords Cobham, are hardly more scholarly than the political historians upon whom they rely for their factual information in considering the family.

"A Memory of Honour" is an attempt, first to point out misconceptions about the Brookes, and then to present in biographical form what can be discovered about them. It traces briefly the relationship of the sixteenth-century Lords Cobham to Oldcastle, discusses the political and social significance which the Brookes had attained by the time of the accession of Elizabeth, and sets forth in detail the careers of William and Henry Lords Cobham as courtiers, ministers, politicians, literary patrons and private men during the forty-five years of the queen's reign. The Falstaff-Oldcastle-Cobham question is considered in the light of what has been learned about the Brookes and the stage.

July 1964

David Bruce McKeen

PREFACE

There is no discrete collection of manuscripts which one might call the Cobham Papers. A student of the Brooke family is therefore forced to seek his information in many places and from many printed and written sources.

I began by quarrying the Cecil Papers, preserved at Hatfield House, for it was in that collection that the private documents of the Brookes were incorporated by the first Earl of Salisbury after the attainder and imprisonment of his brother-in-law, Henry Lord Cobham, in 1603. Next I turned to the public records of England and to the private repositories of documents bequeathed by the Brookes' contemporaries to their heirs. In my search among these various collections I was guided by the calendars published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission and by similar indices, but references to men who have been so neglected by historiographers as the Brookes have been are but haphazardly noted. I soon realized that one cannot depend upon printed calendars to list material relevant to the study of such a family. When I consulted works of history and editions of sixteenth-century memoirs, journals and correspondence, I learned that only by the closest reading could I hope to find where the Brookes stood in the social and political circles of their time. There are no short cuts to the discovery of information about them, for even the editors of the indispensable volumes of the Camden, the Harleian, the Surtees and similar societies, tend to overlook references to a family of whose size and significance historians have never had a very clear impression. In this century, the current 'taste for Tudors' notwithstanding, students of the sixteenth century are even less aware than were the Victorians of the importance of the Brookes to the Cecils, the Dudleys, the Devereuxes and the Sidneys whose lives have been so assiduously documented. A hundred years ago historians had at least their interest in genealogy and their much consulted handbooks, the genealogical and heraldic periodicals, to remind them that the Brookes had once existed.

Because the printed material cited in this dissertation has had to be assembled from sources both numerous and diverse, and because the dissertation is very long, I have tried to ease the burden placed on the reader's memory by

aking the first reference to an authority bibliographically complete in each of the six books into which the work is divided. Thereafter I have used short-titles rather than 'ibid.' and similar forms. In transcribing titles of and passages from books published before the time when spelling, punctuation and initial capitalization were made standard in print, I have retained all the peculiarities of the originals except long esses and exotic types. Italic I have rendered by underlined Roman. Where modern editions rather than original copies or microfilms of old books have been consulted, the editor's version has been retained.

In citing periodicals I have used only those abbreviations recognized in the revised edition of the MLA Style Sheet (1951), my authority for the form which citations should take.

Manuscripts have been peculiarly important sources of information, and I have taken every care to transcribe quotations from them with the same accuracy as that which I have used in quoting from printed books. Citations of manuscripts take the following forms. Where I have quoted from an original document in the Public Record Office I have prefixed 'P.R.O.' to the code number employed at the Office for that particular manuscript: P.R.O., S.P.12/6/5, for instance, means that the quotation has been taken from item 6 of Volume V of the Domestic State Papers of the reign of Elizabeth. The prefix distinguishes the reference from any which I have made to the printed Calendars of State Papers, Domestic; the latter would be expressed, in this instance, S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 135. Where I have quoted from an original paper in one of the collections calendared by the Historical Manuscripts Commission I have used the code name employed by the archivist at the repository in which the paper is to be found: Cecil Paper 3/69 thus means that the quotation made has been taken from item 69 of Volume III of the Cecil Papers at Hatfield. Had I quoted only from the abstract of the paper printed in the Commission's calendar, I should have cited H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 336. References to manuscripts deposited in the principal libraries and museums of Great Britain and America are self-explanatory: MS. Harl. 1810, f. 3, for instance, is a reference to folio 3 of manuscript 1810

of the Harleian collection housed in the British Museum; while MS. Folger L.b. 452 signifies manuscript b.452 of the Loseley collection now in The Folger Shakespeare Library, and MS. Coll. of Arms I.9, f. 161b, is to be understood as folio 161, verso, of manuscript 9 in the collection of documents relating to interments preserved in the College of Arms. Wills and letters of administration of which copies are filed at Somerset House are indicated by the prefix 'P.C.C.' (Probate Court of Canterbury), followed, in the case of wills, by the name of the volume in which the copy is bound and the number of the section in which it is included (for instance, Bakon 45). Letters of administration are distinguished by the abbreviated description, 'Admon. Act Bk', followed by the folio reference.

I have been so much helped by librarians, archivists, custodians of parish records and other people engaged in preserving books and manuscripts and in making them accessible to students, that I should like to express my gratitude to each of them individually. Unfortunately it would take up too much space to do so here. I can only single out for especial mention Mrs. Allardyce Nicoll, formerly Librarian of The Shakespeare Institute; Miss Clare Talbot, Librarian and Archivist to the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury at Hatfield House; Miss Dorothy Coates, formerly Librarian and Archivist to the Most Honourable the Marquess of Bath at Longleat; Dr. G.E. Dawson, Curator of Books and Manuscripts at The Folger Shakespeare Library; Miss G.M.A. Beck of the Guildford Museum and Muniment Room; Mr. E.E.W. Bin, Librarian of the Lambeth Palace Library; and Mr. Neil Ker, Librarian of Magdalen College, Oxford. The files of the History of Parliament Trust were opened to me by the exceptional kindness of Mr. E.L.C. Mullins, Secretary to the Editorial Board. In the last century an attempt was made to collect materials toward a history of the Brooke family by Francis Capper Brooke, Esq., of Ufford Place, Suffolk, male representative of the house of Cobham; these materials, which I have called the Ufford Manuscripts, I was able to consult through the courtesy, first, of Bernard Quaritch's of London, and then through that of Captain T.E. Blois-Brooke and Mrs. Blois-Brooke, Cresborough, Rhos, Haverfordwest. For other personal courtesies I am obliged to

the Most Honourable the Marquess of Hertford, and to Colonel Sir T.P. Butler, Bt., Resident Governor and Major of the Tower of London. To A.C. Cole, Esq., Portcullis Pursuivant, I am indebted for permission to consult the records of the College of Arms and to transcribe certain passages from them. Dr. M.S. Moore, Church Warden of St. Mary Magdalen's, Cobham, Kent, assisted me in visiting and in photographing the Brooke tomb and the College of Cobham; his help, as well as the hospitality extended by him and Mrs. Moore, I gratefully acknowledge.

I illustrate this dissertation with photographic reproductions of paintings of members of the Brooke family by gracious permission of Her Majesty The Queen and by permission of the Most Honourable the Marquesses of Bath and Salisbury.

I have been given help and encouragement in the writing of this dissertation by several men. Professor Joel Hurstfield's knowledge of the age of Elizabeth and the kindness with which he employed it in considering my problems must first be acknowledged. I am grateful also for the interest which Dr. E.W. Pendry and Mr. Philip Styles have taken in the work and for their helpful suggestions. The Right Reverend R. William Stannard, Dean of Rochester; Mr. P.H. Blake, Director of Research of the Society of Genealogists; Mr. David Piper, Assistant Keeper of the National Portrait Gallery; and Dr. Leslie Hotson have been most patient and instructive correspondents. Finally there remains to be mentioned Dr. S.W. Wells, Senior Fellow of The Shakespeare Institute, whose contribution to my work has been as remarkably diverse as are his interests and erudition.

David B. McKeen

Oromocto, New Brunswick,
July 1964.

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INTRODUCTION

"The accident of evidence," writes Sir John Neale as a student of the age of Elizabeth, "has centred our attention on the Cecils."[1] His acknowledgement of the importance of chance to the study of history is worth noting. If when one conjures up an eclectic picture of the Elizabethan Court one peoples it with Burghley and Parker, Leicester and Walsingham, with Throckmorton, Sidney and Hatton, with Essex and Ralegh, Bacon and Cecil the younger, one does so not only because these were great and famous men. The memorials which, in the forms of letters and books and political documents, they left to posterity have kept them so constantly before the eyes of historians that at no time in the last three and a half centuries has it been possible to forget them. The survival of these writings by them and about them has contributed at least as much as have their characters to their posthumous fame.

It is partly because of the destruction of many of their muniments and other private papers, and of the dispersal throughout Great Britain of the rest of them, that the Brookes of Kent have been so generally forgotten. Apart from the modest attempts at a family history made by Hamilton Rogers and John Green Waller in the last century, the Brookes have not inspired a chronicler to write of them since the sixteenth century, and historians tend to ignore the members of a family which, no matter how great it was in its own time, has not had its story incorporated into at least one handy, standard authority. So have they ignored the Brookes.

It is only in the works of those scholars who have made use of the manuscript of the Marquess of Salisbury at Hatfield that one finds modern accounts of the family which contain more than antiquated, inaccurate remarks on its members. Sir Robert Cecil, the first Earl of Salisbury, married one of the daughters of William Brooke, Lord Cobham; in 1603, when both of his brothers-in-law were attainted for high treason, Cecil took upon himself the management of the Brooke family affairs and, as minister of the Crown as well as father of one of the heirs, arranged the settlement of the confiscated Cobham estates. It was

[1] Essays in Elizabethan History (1958), p. 65.

undoubtedly while doing so that Cecil acquired most of the Cobham papers which survive, so that Hatfield became the repository of those as well as of archives more properly belonging there. Private letters and household accounts of Cobham Hall and the Brooke residences in the Blackfriars and at Canterbury, material dealing with the long tenure by two Lords Cobham of the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports, and documents concerning William Lord Cobham's position as Privy Councillor, are thus found mingled with the similar, but necessarily much more historically significant memoranda of the careers of Burghley and Salisbury. Algernon Cecil and Miss Handover, in their works on Sir Robert Cecil, and Edwards, Stebbing and Strathmann, in their studies of his associate, Ralegh, have all been confronted with these persistent reminders of the Brookes in investigating at Hatfield the lives of their own subjects. Indeed a student of the last years of Elizabeth must come to the conclusion, reached by the Earl of Essex three and a half centuries ago, that the careers of Cecil, Ralegh and the younger Lord Cobham were inextricably linked. He must, for that matter, conclude that the elder Cobham and Cecil's father, the much studied Burghley, were almost as closely associated for some forty years as were their sons during a briefer but more intense period.

To go from Hatfield to the repositories of other public records in England is to confirm these impressions. One may find much about the political and social significance of the Brookes in the printed Calendars of State Papers and Patent Rolls, in the Acts of the Privy Council, in the volumes published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the records of Parliament, the publications of historical societies and of county antiquaries, and even in old works like Holinshed's Chronicles. Much more can be discovered among the Additional manuscripts and in the Harleian, Cotton, Egerton, Lansdowne and King's collections in the British Museum, in the files of the College of Arms, among the wills at Somerset House and the records of court proceedings and inquisitions in the Public Record Office.

Yet, despite this plethora of material, none of the interpreters of the lives of the more famous Elizabethans has studied the Brookes. A nobleman "whose consequence was derived entirely from his birth and great Fortune"

s how Edmund Lodge described William Lord Cobham, "a man of most weak understanding" Henry his ill-fated son.[2] So, substantially, have succeeding historians been content to leave them, as shadows who slip palely in and out of the lives of their colourful acquaintances during the forty-five years in which Queen Elizabeth reigned and they held the barony of Cobham. The great favourite of the queen, Elizabeth Brooke, the notorious pirate, Thomas Brooke, the senior diplomatist, Sir Henry Cobham, are all but entirely forgotten. Even Esmé Wingfield-Stratford, whose Lords of Cobham Hall (1959) one might expect to pay the Brookes the compliment of first-hand study, dwells upon the glories of the mediaeval de Cobhams, whose heirs the Brookes were, and delights in the story of the Earls of Darnley, who succeeded the Stuarts of Lennox in the possession of Cobham Hall, but dismisses the Elizabethan Brookes in twenty, derivative pages.

It is due to two accidents that this dissertation, in which the family is studied to any appreciable degree of thoroughness for the first time, came to be written. The first was that it was a student not of English history but of English literature who became interested in the Brookes. The published histories and historical biographies which mention them are manifestly unlikely to stimulate a student's curiosity. Dramatic and literary critics, however, frustrated in their attempts to find in historians any coherent information about the Elizabethan Lords Cobham, have been hard put to it to explain how one or both of these lords prevailed upon Shakespeare to change the name of his greatest comic character from 'Sir John Oldcastle' to Sir John Falstaff. Their expositions of the Oldcastle-Falstaff problem are so muddled, and the composite Lord Censorious whom they have created in their pursuit of the Cobhams so ludicrous, that their efforts finally intrigued someone enough to make him want to study the problem for himself. It is out of a Master's thesis written on this Shakepearian problem at the University of New Brunswick in 1959-60 that the present dissertation has grown.

The second accident is that already suggested by Neale. Having decided to

[2] Illustrations of British History ... (rev. ed., 1838), II, 506 n.; III, 72 n.

study the Brookes of Cobham, one was fortunate to find that it is in the most extensive and best preserved of the collections of private family documents in England that what remains of the Brooke archives has been incorporated.

The material contained in the succeeding pages ought to convince a reader that the Brookes have not deserved the obscurity in which they have so long been kept. None of them was great, but many of them were extremely important in the government and society of the sixteenth century. Their intimates included most of the men and women who have made the age of Elizabeth famous. To consider those brilliant courtiers without considering William Lord Cobham and Henry his son and heir, their wives, their brothers and sisters, would not have occurred to Holinshed or Camden, and ought not to seem possible to an historian today.

PREFATORY NOTE

On the Surnames Used by the Brookes

The following work ought not to be considered until a preliminary word has been said on a practice apparently peculiar to the Brookes of Cobham. That is the frequent use of the title borne by the head of the family as the surname of the various junior members of it. Compilers of indices find this a particularly vexing point; one sees the Brookes listed haphazardly under both name and title, and often even the same person listed in two different places. It can be said that all the members of the family with one exception ought to be entered in indices and similar lists as 'Brooke, alias Cobham'. (This form has been accepted by the compilers of the forthcoming biographical study of Members of Parliament which is to be published by the History of Parliament Trust.)

The one exception to the recommended rule should be Sir Henry Cobham, whose use of the title as his name seems to have been almost officially recognized in his own lifetime. For, while his brothers and sisters appear as 'Cobham' in documents that range from the private one of their mother's last testament (not, apparently, a proved will), to the public one proclaiming Thomas's piracy, to the even more formal ones showing the return of William, George and John to Parliament, the rest of Sir Henry's family seems always to have reverted to its proper surname in official documents bearing legal weight. Their father's will, for instance, unlike their mother's, calls them all 'Brooke'; Elizabeth's marriage with the Marquess of Northampton was confirmed by an Act of Parliament which described her as "Elizabeth, Daughter to Sir George Brooke"; John made his will as "John Brooke als Cobham". Such instances may be multiplied without ever revealing a case which infringes this rule: in familiar intercourse, and for purposes of general identification, the Brookes were Cobhams, while in law they were Brookes. Sir Henry, however, was somehow different. Where the formula 'Brooke alias Cobham' is often used for the others, he is, as in The Return of Members of Parliament (Part I, 1878), p. 418, "Cobhame alias Brooke". As ambassador to France he was officially described as "Henricus Cobham Eques Auratus". The portrait done of him in 1582, judging by Thane's engraved copy of it, was inscribed "S^{r} Henrie Brooke Cobham". While his inquisition post mortem describes him, as one would expect from the form used for his brothers, "henricus Brooke als Cobham", the equally official letters of administration have "Sir Henry Brooke Cobham". When George Brooke of Aspall had the family pedigree drawn up in 1592, he described all of the members except one of the main line simply as Brookes; his cousin Henry he described as "S^{r} Henry Brooke, called Cobham" (MS. Harl. 2134, f. 129b). Brooke of Aspall would have known that all of his Kentish cousins were known colloquially as 'Cobham'; by "called" he must have meant something more official. It appears, in fact, that Sir Henry's was a special case, that his use of the title amounted almost to a change of name, and that he should generally be given the surname which he used throughout his life, becoming, where more exact description is required, 'Cobham, alias Brooke'.

While the younger sons of George Lord Cobham were styled 'Cobham', their children do not seem to have used anything but their proper surname after some time in the 1580s. Even the children of the eldest son, William Lord Cobham, do not seem to have followed the example of the previous generation. While William's eldest son, Maximilian, when writing in French, signed himself "de Cobham" (cf. The Register of the University of Oxford, Volume II (1571-1622), ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1887), I, 378), and while, even when he signed himself 'Brooke' in his letters home from France, his father's clerk endorsed them "M^{r} Maximilian Cobham to his Father" (MS. Lansdowne 36, f. 193b), the practice of using the title instead of the surname was falling into disuse even during his lifetime. Maximilian died in 1583; in 1584 his younger brother William was

ɔcted to Parliament as "Broke, alias Cobham" (Return of Members, p.414), and, ɔy 1586, when he was elected to sit a second time, he was described simply as William Brooke. Henry Lord Cobham and his youngest brother, George, were always known, even in their youth, as Brookes, and their sisters were never, as their aunts had been, the Mistresses Cobham. For William Lord Cobham's nephews, the children of the younger Cobham brothers of the early Elizabethan period, the same is true as for their noble cousins. George Brooke the elder's eldest son was called "Duke Cobham" in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Household in 1582 (P.R.O., E351/542, f. 34b), but, by the time of his dispute with Gregory Sprinte in 1586, he was "Duke Brooke". Duke's brother Peter, if he was the student who attended Oxford in 1582, was known at that time as "Peter Cobham", but the youngest brother, Charles, is always referred to simply as a Brooke. One might expect the name of Sir Henry Cobham's children to differ from that of their cousins, but, by the time the knight's inquisition post mortem was taken in 1593, it was apparently too late for them to be known as 'Cobhams', even though they are described in the document as "Brooke als Cobham". John Brooke, later Lord Cobham, was never called 'John Cobham', nor is one ever required to pronounce the unwieldy name 'Calisthenes Cobham' as that of his elder brother.

One may thus conclude that, by 1585, perhaps because of some decision taken by the head of the house to have the use of the name regulated, the family, apart from William Lord Cobham's middle-aged brothers, was known familiarly as well as officially as the Brookes.

BOOK ONE

(1527 - 1558)

A Brooke, not an Oldcastle.

Chapter I

The eldest of the ten sons of Sir George Brooke was born on Friday, 1 November 1527, three months short of the midway point in the long reign of King Henry VIII.[1] The child was christened William and within two years became immediate heir to the barony of Cobham of Kent.

The heritage of William Brooke was a proud one, old, rich and honourable. Its foundations were laid as early as the twelfth century by men of the family of de Cobham, Kentish knights whose descendants, by the time of Edward III, bore no fewer than four different baronial titles all based upon their common surname.[2] Of these noble families that of the Lords Cobham of Kent, the senior line, was the most important and the most enduring, maintaining its position until the seventeenth century. It outlasted the mediaeval world from which it sprang, however, only by passing successfully through vicissitudes even greater than those which overwhelmed the titles and estates of its collaterals.

The troubles which for so long plagued the house of the Lords Cobham of Kent began in the reign of Richard II; they were part of a national upheaval and so are recounted in the general histories of England. John de Cobham, the baron who headed the family in the latter half of the fourteenth century, was a more significant figure in state affairs than any of his predecessors had been. Connected through his wife with the chief men of the kingdom, he was associated in the government for twenty years by the influence of the king's mother and uncle, Gloucester. The power which Cobham wielded as Gloucester's man, however, marked him as an enemy of the royal authority, and when Richard suddenly moved against his uncle in 1397 the baron was among the first of the magnates to suffer. He escaped death, unlike Gloucester and another of his colleagues, but was banished for life to Jersey.[3] There, late in 1397, John Lord Cobham found himself with poor prospects of ever regaining his former position. He was an old man, who had been of marriageable age sixty-four years before;[4] he had no sons,

his heir being the child Joan de la Pole, daughter of his only daughter; the powerful allies who had once been his were either dead or reduced to impotency by the rule of an absolute king who was as inimical to them as he was to Cobham himself. Yet Cobham had been living with his despair for only a year when there was set in motion a succession of dynastic occurrences which were to change his situation completely. These happenings are famous: Bolingbroke's banishment, Gaunt's death and the king's seizure of Bolingbroke's inheritance, Richard's ill-timed departure for the Irish wars, Bolingbroke's invasion and subjugation of England in his royal cousin's absence. John Lord Cobham was recalled from Jersey immediately the kingdom fell, and when, in the autumn of 1399, Richard II abdicated and Bolingbroke became King Henry IV, it was Cobham who had the satisfaction of moving the arrest of those of the deposed king's advisers who had helped to bring about his own ruin two years before.[5] It was the last public activity in which the old baron seems to have engaged, although his name appears in several documents of the first years of the Lancastrian regime. He died on 10 January 1407/8, "vir grandaevus, simplex et rectus",[6] leaving his great estate and his reputation as a pillar of the new dynasty to his only descendant, his granddaughter, Joan de la Pole.[7]

The young woman to whom passed in 1408 the representation of the line of the Lords Cobham of Kent was already three times a widow and the mother of an only child, Joan, the daughter of her second husband, Sir Reynold Braybrooke.[8] The immediate concern of the new Lady Cobham, entrusted with so valuable an inheritance in an age of war, was to find husbands for herself and her daughter. Within two years of her grandfather's death she had found both of them, men who were to be of the greatest significance to the history of her family. One was also to find an important place in English dramatic literature, for Lady Cobham accepted for herself the suit of Sir John Oldcastle who, after leading the barony of Cobham through a phase of its existence more ignoble than any other which it was ever to know, made its name famous as that of the prototype of Falstaff. Thomas Brooke, the young husband from Somerset whom Lady Cobham chose for her daughter, was never himself to be so celebrated as Oldcastle, yet it was he who provided the old male line of the family with its true heirs. For, even as

Oldcastle plunged the barony into ignominy, Thomas Brooke fathered the line which was eventually to restore the Cobham title to its former greatness.

The varying outcomes of the marriages made by the two women of the family could not have been foreseen when in 1410 Thomas Brooke came into Kent to wed Joan Braybrooke. Oldcastle, the bride's step-father, was then at the height of his power: the friend of the Prince of Wales and a distinguished soldier of the Crown, he had just taken his seat in Parliament as Lord Cobham in right of his wife.[9] The formation in 1409 of a new government, subservient to Prince Henry, had no doubt also increased Oldcastle's influence.[10] Brooke, the young bridegroom, had himself powerful connections, for he was the son and heir of the West Country magnate Sir Thomas Brooke, "of Le Brook, in Ilchester, Somerset, Olditch, in Thorncombe, and Weycroft, in Axminster, Devon", sometime Sheriff of Somerset and Devon and Knight of the Shire for Somerset.[11] The anticipated marriage was thus a fine one, contracted between two great houses in widely separated parts of the kingdom. Lady Cobham no doubt saw it as a suitable provision for the only surviving child of her previous marriages; once it was made she was herself left free, while still in her thirties, to found a new line of Lords Cobham which would bear the surname of Oldcastle. The Brookes probably regarded the match from a different point of view. They had secured for their son a girl who was already an heiress and who, if her mother's expected sons by Oldcastle died as young as had those whom she had borne to her other husbands, might one day find herself the only heir to the Cobham estates.

As soon as Thomas Brooke arrived in Kent, however, all thoughts of the future were dispelled by a sudden threat to the immediate security of the family into which he was about to marry. For, five days before the Brooke-Braybrooke wedding was to take place, Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury, placed under interdict all the churches in which Oldcastle's chaplain had been preaching, Cooling (where the marriage was to be solemnized) as well as the rest.[12] The reasons for the archiepiscopal move were plain. Oldcastle had long been suspected of fostering the Lollard heresy, but, as a simple Herefordshire knight occupied with military duties on the Welsh marches, he had not posed a real threat to the Church. His assumption of the title and powers of one of the most signifi-

cant baronies in England, together with his friendship with Arundel's political opponent, the prince, changed all this. By 1410 Oldcastle had become dangerous; therefore Arundel attacked, not at first the baron himself, but his more vulnerable chaplain, the orthodoxy of whose preaching was doubted. The archbishop's move was probably only a threat, for when it was seen that the ban would prevent the proposed wedding from being performed the Church obligingly lifted it for a period of three days, and then allowed it to lapse altogether.[13] So long, in fact, as Prince Henry showed public favour to Oldcastle, the archbishop had to forbear from taking positive action, so that it was not until Arundel was restored to temporal as well as ecclesiastical power in 1412 that the drive against heresy began in earnest. First Oldcastle's chaplain was examined, then the baron himself was summoned to explain his beliefs. Before he had to appear before the theological court at St. Paul's, Henry IV died and the Prince of Wales succeeded him as Henry V. All of the new king's efforts, however, could dissuade neither the archbishop from carrying out his intention to confront Oldcastle with his heresy, nor the Lollard leader from maintaining his subversive stand. The court met, and on 25 September 1413, after reiterating his disbelief in transubstantiation, the necessity of confession, the power of the Keys and the need "to worschype holy relyques", Oldcastle was excommunicated and condemned to die as a Wycliffite heretic under the statute De Haeretico Comburendo of 1401.[14]

The sentence of death imposed upon him should have been the end of Oldcastle's career. For his heretical outspokenness and activities neither he nor his family had suffered other than mental pain up to this time; had the execution been carried out an once, his brief rule over the Cobham patrimony would have done it no great harm. But the king, in the desperate hope that the condemned man might reconsider his position and save himself from the stake through recantation, ordered a reprieve of forty days, and it was during this time, so charitably but so impoliticly granted, that Oldcastle's career became catastrophic both for himself and for the barony of Cobham. The Lollards, stunned by the fall of one of their leaders, were encouraged by the reprieve to plan his release; there were soon rumours in London and Kent that a popular uprising would free him. The government imprisoned his wife and put his

estates in the keeping of officers of the Crown.[15] Suspect preachers were taken into custody throughout the kingdom. An abjuration of Wycliffism, purporting to be Oldcastle's and designed to convince the malcontents that their chief had recanted and deserted them, was issued.[16] Then, in the midst of all this uncertainty, Oldcastle escaped from his prison in the Tower and for the space of five years vanished from official sight. He was declared an outlaw and his estates were confiscated by the Crown, but his supporters refused to reveal his whereabouts, even after the severe reprisals which followed the abortive insurrection which was raised in his name in 1414. The king, who could ill spare the time required to suppress domestic rebellion, had the most intensive search made for the fugitive, but at last had to give it over and turn to his real purpose, the conquest of France. Thus, while Henry V fought at Harfleur and Agincourt, the valiant Lancastrian commander Oldcastle skulked in the hills of the West Midlands, near his old home in Herefordshire.[17] Occasionally he made raids upon border lords like Beauchamp de Bergavenny at Hanley Castle, or conducted propaganda campaigns in which his followers distributed Wycliffite literature in the market towns of the area. In 1416, when Henry came home to spend Christmas at Kenilworth, one of Oldcastle's squires tried to assassinate the king.[18]

Then, in 1417, Oldcastle was captured near Welshpool by the men of a tenant of Lord Cherleton of Powys,[19] He was brought up to London, where Parliament was in session, and arraigned before his former peers. The Commons petitioned that he be executed and, a fortnight before Christmas, he was hanged in chains and burnt at St. Giles's Fields. Some of his old followers, convinced that they were beholding a martyrdom and incited by the dying man's prophecy that he would be resurrected within three days, fell into hysteria and blinded themselves by rubbing his ashes into their eyes.[20] Most of the spectators, however, headed by the Regent Bedford, if they inclined at all to the opinion that Oldcastle and the other Lollards were martyrs, would have agreed with Dean Hook's perceptive description of them as "political martyrs rather than religious".[21]

There is a curious statement in one of the early London chronicles that Oldcastle died "with an yren cheyne aboute his nekke by cause that he was

a lorde off name".[22] Since his proscription he had, of course, no longer a title, but no doubt he was conversationally still known as the Lord Cobham. The notoriety of his later career ensured that, for a generation after him, the peerage rights of the head of the family of Cobham would be no more formally recognized, so that Sir Thomas Brooke, while calling himself "lord of Cobham", was never allowed to take his seat in the Lords.

Brooke, whom Oldcastle's death left at last in sole command of the fortunes of the barony, had been imprisoned at the time of the rebellion which broke out early in 1414, soon after Oldcastle's escape from the Tower. He must, however, have been a discreet young man, careful to establish so far as he could his independence of his father-in-law, for he did not long remain in confinement, and when Oldcastle was outlawed in June or July of that year Brooke was granted the custody of the Cobham estates.[23] In 1417, when the successful campaign to apprehend the rebel was launched, the authorities took Lady Oldcastle into preventive custody so that she should not try to assist her husband; they did not molest Brooke, and he was sitting in the Parliament before which Oldcastle was finally arraigned.[24] With him gone, Brooke settled down to a career not unlike that which might have been his had he not made the potentially brilliant match of ten years before. A month after Oldcastle's death, Sir Thomas Brooke the elder died, leaving to his son his West Country estates at about the same time as the young man was knighted.[25] Brooke sat in the first Parliaments of Henry VI, and in 1434 Lady Brooke succeeded to her mother's possessions when Lady Oldcastle died, having had no children who survived her either by Oldcastle or by Sir John Harpeden, her fifth and last husband.[26] Five years later, on 12 February 1438/9, Sir Thomas made a will in which he described himself as "Thomas Brook', knygte & lord of Cobham", and died soon afterward at the age of forty-seven. He left as his executor his wife and, "yf she will, Edward my sonne", whose immediate charges were to see his father buried in Devon and his many young brothers and sisters (Sir Thomas and Lady Joan had had fourteen children) suitably married.[27] These duties fulfilled, Edward Brooke was left in possession of vast estates in Kent and the West, and in the expectation of receiving the benefit of his mother's baronial rights. He had not long to

wait, for on 12 January 1444/5 the government of Henry VI issued a summons calling Edward to take his place in Parliament as the first Lord Cobham of the house of Brooke.[28]

It is not necessary to do more than sketch the careers of Edward Lord Cobham and his successors until almost a century after their recognition as peers of England. Edward committed himself to the cause of York when the Wars of the Roses broke out, and, dying on 6 June 1464, left his son John to succeed him in the service of Edward IV.[29] John Lord Cobham supported the Yorkist kings, but passed without difficulty into the confidence of Henry VII. He had seen his family through the last perils of the civil wars when he died in 1512, leaving it established securely under his son Thomas as a part of Tudor England.[30] Thomas Lord Cobham, although less distinguished both in peace and in war than either his immediate predecessors or successors, took part in much of the pageantry of the early part of the reign of Henry VIII, and managed to place his children well in the courtly world of the period. One of his younger sons, Thomas, for instance, married Thomas Cranmer's niece, while one of the baron's daughters, Elizabeth, became the wife of the poet, Sir Thomas Wyatt.[31] On 19 July 1529 Thomas Lord Cobham died and was succeeded by his eldest surviving son, George. Sir George Brooke, the father of William, was the Lord Cobham with whom the greatness of the Elizabethan house of Brooke may be seen to begin.

* * *

Chapter II

George Brooke, ninth Lord Cobham, was born in 1497, the second son of Thomas Brooke, later Lord Cobham, and Dorothy Heydon.[1] He was present with his father at the magnificent wedding of Mary Tudor with Louis XII of France late in 1514,[2] and may have been "Le filz de monsr Cobham" who was one of the English "enffans donneur" who remained in France with Mary during her brief stay there as queen and queen dowager, from November 1514 till April 1515.[3] After serving under the Duke of Norfolk in Ireland, where he "did valiantlie behaue him selfe",[4] George won his spurs in the Breton campaigns of the early 1520s and was knighted in the field, probably in July 1522.[5] Soon afterward he married Anne, eldest of the six daughters of Edmund Lord Braye, of Eaton Braye in Bedfordshire, and in

1525 or 1526 their first child, Elizabeth, was born.[6] On 1 November 1527 occurred the birth of their son, William, and two years after that, his elder brother having died earlier, George succeeded to the title of Lord Cobham of Kent upon the death of his father. On 3 November 1529 he took his seat in Parliament.[7]

Little is known about George Lord Cobham during the first few years of his life as a peer. Acquainting himself with the management of his estates must have taken up a good deal of his time, and he probably moved about between the Brooke town house in the Blackfriars and the two principal family seats in Kent. These were the new manor at Cobham, twenty-seven miles from the capital, on Watling Street and Rochester Way, and the castle at Cooling, a fourteenth-century fortress seven miles east-north-east of Gravesend.[8]

The family of Lord and Lady Cobham began to increase rapidly in the late 1520s and early 1530s, and, although their fourteenth and last child was not born until long after the baron had reached a position of importance in public life, it is perhaps most convenient to mention their children now, before going on to trace Cobham's career. Following the births of Elizabeth and William came, in 1529, that of Henry, born at Cooling Castle, and, in 1531 or 1532, that of Anne, children who probably died quite young. Early in 1533 George, the second son to reach maturity, was born, and at the end of the same year the first of two sons named Thomas, after their paternal grandfather. Then, in 1535, John was born, and after him, in 1536, an Edward, who must have died young. In 1537 came Henry, later celebrated as the diplomat Sir Henry Cobham, and in 1539 another Thomas. The next year Edmund was born and named after his mother's father; he was followed in 1542 by a third daughter, Mary. A second Edward, the tenth and youngest son, was most probably born in the 1540s, either just before or not long after the birth of Catherine in 1544. Edward may not, however, have come along until almost 1550.[9]

By the middle of the sixteenth century, when he was the father of fourteen children and a man of fifty or so, George Lord Cobham had been long out of provincial obscurity, so that his younger sons and daughters were born to persons of real prominence in the kingdom.

It is probable that the Brooke connections with the family of Boleyn

gave the young baron his start upon a career at Court. By 1528 Henry VIII was keeping Anne Boleyn openly beside him at Greenwich and elsewhere; by the end of January 1533 he had married her; and, on Whitsunday 1533, he had her crowned queen in Westminster Hall. During the long years of his infatuation with Anne, the king bestowed great honours upon her family. Her father was especially favoured, rising within a decade from the status of a knight with noble blood but no recognized title to the lofty position of Treasurer of the Household, Knight of the Garter, Viscount Rochford, Earl of Wiltshire and Ormonde and Lord Privy Seal. Although no one else acquired quite so much new dignity as the king's father-in-law, inclusion anywhere among the Boleyn kindred was a decided advantage at Court. Lord Cobham, Anne's second cousin, found it so, and his heirs, as subjects of Anne's daughter seventy years later, were still proud to be counted among the queen's connections.[10] When, late in 1532, just before their secret marriage and months before the royal divorce, the king and his prospective wife made their flagrantly unconventional visit to France, Cobham was among Henry's noble companions.[11] Of the official notices which were sent out in the autumn of the next year to announce the birth of the Princess Elizabeth, it is that to Cobham which survives:

> By the Quene.
> Right trustie and welbiloved, we grete you well. And where as it hath pleased the goodnes of Almightie God, of his infynite marcie and grace, to sende unto us, at this tyme, good spede, in the delyveraunce and bringing furthe of a Princes [the 's' added], to the great joye, rejoyce, and inward comforte of my Lorde, us, and all his good and loving subjectes of this his realme; for the whiche his inestymable benevolence, so shewed unto us, we have noo litle cause to give high thankes, laude, and praising unto oure said Maker, like as we doo mooste lowly, humbly, and with all the inwarde desire of our harte. And inasmuche as we undoubtidly truste, that this oure good spede is to your great pleasure, comforte, and consolation, We, therefore, by thies our letters, advertise you thereof, desiring and hartely praying you to give, with us, unto Almightie God, high thankes, glorie, laude, and praising; and to praye for the good helth, prosperitie, and contynuall preservation of the said Princes accordingly.
> Yeven under our signet, at my Lordis Manour of Grenewiche, the 7 day of September, in the 25th yere of my said Lordis reigne.[12]

There is disappointment implicit in the alterations to the word 'Prince' in this prepared announcement of the royal birth. Yet it was not felt too keenly in the first year of Anne Boleyn's marriage, when she was still expected to have other children, sons as well as daughters, and the queen's party rejoiced

when the infant proved strong and survived the period when all but one of Queen Catherine's children had died. But the hoped-for heir of the next year was a miscarriage, and that of the next still-born, and on May Day 1536 the king, by publicly displaying his dissatisfaction with his wife, announced the end of the rule of the Boleyn faction. Three weeks later Anne was dead.[13]

The Brookes were in no way connected with the Seymours, the queen's party which succeeded the Boleyns in favour, but, unlike so many of those who had been prominent in the royal circle in the time of Henry's second marriage, Lord Cobham did not fall with the advent of Queen Jane. His brother's kinship with Archbishop Cranmer perhaps stood him in good stead,[14] and his own reputation for bravery, won in the years when he was only a second son, had no doubt been remembered by the king when Cobham made his first appearance at Court as a peer of the realm. Once brought again to Henry's attention, the young baron's acquiescence in the royal will secured his future. He sat among the lords who tried Queen Anne, and, when Henry's male heir was at last born late in the following year, was given a part in the gorgeous ceremonial which attended the baptism of the infant prince: he was appointed "to serue the Ladye marye and the Ladye elzabethe w^{t} ... waffers ...".[15] Less than a month later Cobham and his wife took part in a more melancholy service when they walked in the funeral procession of Queen Jane at Windsor.[16] The baron (who had perhaps been educated at Gray's Inn),[17] also was concerned with Henry's fourth queen, Anne of Cleves, to the extent of advising upon the legality of the king's divorce from her in 1540.[18] With the next queen, Catherine Howard, Cobham was probably associated in 1541 in saving the life of his brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Wyatt. A supporter of Cromwell, Wyatt was recalled from his embassy to the emperor and sent to the Tower in the general purge which followed Cromwell's execution; he would have been killed had not powerful intercession for his life been made to the king. A letter from the imperial ambassador to Charles V, written on 27 March, relates how Henry, to please Queen Catherine on the day of her triumphal procession through London, pardoned Wyatt

> on rather hard conditions, the first of them being that the said Whyat should confess the guilt for which he had been arrested; and, secondly, that he was to resume conjugal relations with his wife, from whom he had been separated for upwards of fifteen years. Whyat had cast her away on account of adultery, and had not seen her for many years; he will now be obliged to receive her, and should he n

> do so, and not lead a conjugal life with her, or should he be found to keep up criminal relations with one or two other ladies that he has since loved, he is to suffer pain of death and confiscation of property.[19]

This emphasis on Wyatt's reconciliation with Cobham's sister suggests that the baron's care for his family honour weighed with the king when Henry made his decision to spare Wyatt.

A year after the Brookes were involved in the matter of Wyatt's pardon, the family of George Lord Cobham seems to have reached an apogée in its importance at the Henrican Court. On 29 January 1541/2 the imperial ambassador reported to Charles V that Parliament had condemned Queen Catherine Howard; on 9 February, four days after the queen was executed, he wrote again, telling the emperor of the splendid supper which Henry VIII had given on the night after the condemnation. Of all the ladies present at this macabre celebration of the king's approaching freedom from his fifth marriage, "celle a qui pour l'heure yl [the king] monstra plus de faveur et affection fust la seur de Mons^{r}. Coban et de la femme que M^{e}. huyet a pieça repudiée pour adultere. Ellest belle, jeusne fille," comments the ambassador, "et a assez exprit pour si elle l'entrepregnoit, fere aussy mal que les autres."[20] No daughter of the Brookes, however, was destined to become queen; Henry's favour was mercurial, and when it settled for the last time it lit upon the matron Catherine Parr, not upon a "belle jeusne fille" whose Christian name has not survived. Yet even so ephemeral a thing as the king's attentions to his sister served to make George Lord Cobham more prominent, and it is from about the time of Catherine Howard's death that foreign ambassadors in England make frequent mention of him in their reports.

In religious matters Cobham was forward in advocating Henry's suppression of the monasteries. In a letter to Wyatt, written on 7 October 1538 from the house which he rented in the Blackfriars, the baron observed, "No news, but I trust there shall not be a friar left in England before you return."[21] Sir Edmund Chambers, commenting that "it is to be feared that some of these tenants [of monastically-owned properties] cast a covetous eye upon the fee-simple of their dwellings," quotes this remark, and bases upon it his doubts that it was "all zeal for church reform" which led Cobham to make it.[22] The inscription on Cobham's tomb does not, of course, admit of any questioning of the

morality of the baron's courses under Henry VIII or later: "professionem evangelii susceperat et defensionem ac eandem ad extremũ usq' spiritum conservavit," it runs: "he took upon himself the profession and the defence of the gospel, and maintained the same till his dying day." Nor does there seem to be any reason to doubt the sincerity of the dedication to him in 1542 of Dauids harpe ful of moost delectable armony, newely strynged and set in tune by Theodore Basille [i.e., Thomas Becon], in the course of which the Calvinist doctor said: "I am not only credibly ẽformed of other, but also perfectly perswaded that your ryght honorable Lordeshyp delyghteth in nothynge so greatly as in ye holy scripture." Becon, whose vicarship of Brenzett, near Romney in Kent, no doubt gave him some personal knowledge of Cobham, concluded the dedication with words which also testify to the baron's good reputation in the matter of religion: Becon prayed that "God, whose holy worde you most feruentely loue, and mooste earnestly practyse in your dayely conuersacion, moughte vouchesaufe to preserue your righte honorable Lordshyp & that vertuous Lady your wyfe, wyth all your moste swete children and family in perpetuall helth and prosperous felicite." Yet, much as one might wish to prefer these tributes to his integrity to Chambers's insinuations about it, one must admit that profit more often than piety marked Cobham's endorsement of the king's ecclesiastical policy. A month after the letter to Wyatt was written, the Blackfriars, those valuable premises by the river once owned by the Dominican fathers, was handed over to the Crown and Cobham got his house, at nine years' purchase. It was to prove a worthwhile investment, its value increasing over the years until, when it passed out of the family in 1603, it was one of the finest of the town residences of Elizabeth's peers, and had the distinction of having contained the first private theatre in England, Richard Farrant's 'private house in the Blackfriars'.[23] Nor was it the only, or even the most appreciable property which fell to Cobham. He received various manors, including that of Chattingdon in Kent, as well as the old college of Cobham, founded by the last of the old male line of the Lords Cobham of Kent in the reign of Edward III. When, in lieu of jointure, George Lord Cobham's wife was assured of certain lands "to be enjoyed during her life from the death" of her husband by the Parliament of 1543, the lands assigned to her included

several of these recent gifts: apart from the castle and manor of Cooling, there were the manors of "Bekeley, Strode Temple, and Chatyngdon, and other lands in Collyng, Bekeley, Strode Temple and Frynesbury, Kent, the site &c. of the late dissolved college of Cobham, and the hundred of Shamell, Kent".[24] (By 1558, when Lady Cobham received this dower, it was worth yearly "ij hundreth lxxix$^{li.}$ xij$^{s.}$ vij$^{d.}$ aboue all yerely charges and reprises".)[25] The ruined Cobham College, situated directly behind the parish church at Cobham and once joined to it, was re-endowed as a hospital for the poor by the last will of William Lord Cobham, and is still operating today as a block of alms-houses.

Henry VIII's appreciation of the services of George Lord Cobham took many forms. In 1542, when he was threatened with prosecution for the debts left him by his father, Cobham was assured by Lord Russell that the king had not forgotten his promise and had ordered a stay of process against him. Cobham was told to be confident that Henry "likes his proceedings well".[26] On another occasion, on 20 April 1543, he and Lord Clinton were called before the Council and "examined off eating off flesshe and keping an open borde there off during the Lent", but were let off "wyth a good leasson" only by pleading the king's special licence.[27] It is interesting to find Cobham, who educated his sons along sound Protestant lines, taking advantage of an indulgence derived from Roman Catholic practice.

It was, however, as a soldier and not as a courtier that Cobham was given the chief evidence of Henry's confidence in him. Early in 1544 he acted as marshal of the army which suppressed the Scottish rebellion and burned Edinburgh,[28] and, on 14 June of the same year, the king acknowledged his services by entrusting him with the keeping of Calais.

Few offices can have been more important than that which Cobham received in 1544. The Venetian ambassador, writing of Calais to his government in 1557, described the town as

> the key and principal entrance to their dominions, without which the English would have no outlet from their own, nor access to other countries, at least none so easy, so short, and so secure; so much so, that if they were deprived of it, they would not only be shut out from the continent, but also from the commerce and intercourse of the world. They would consequently lose what is essentially necessary for the existence of a country, and become dependent upon the will and pleasure of other sovereigns, in availing themselves of their ports, besides having to encounter a more distant, more hazardous, and more expensive passage;

> whereas, by way of Calais, which is directly opposite to the harbour of Dover, distant only about thirty miles, they can, at any time, without hindrance, even in spite of contrary winds, at their pleasure, enter or leave the harbour (such is the experience and boldness of their sailors), and carry over either troops or anything else for warfare, offensive and defensive, without giving rise to jealousy and suspicion; and thus they are enabled, as Calais is not more than ten miles from Ardres, the frontier of the French, nor further from Gravelines, the frontier of the Imperialists, to join either the one or the other, as they please, and to add their strength to him with whom they are at amity, in prejudice of an enemy. For these reasons, therefore, it is not to be wondered at, that, besides the inhabitants of the place, who are esteemed men of most unshaken fidelity, being the descendants of an English colony settled there shortly after the first conquest, it should also be guarded by one of the most trusty barons which the king has, bearing the title of deputy, with a force of five hundred of the best soldiers, besides a troop of fifty horsemen.[29]

The circumstantial account in Holinshed of what happened at Calais on the day that the new Lord Deputy took over suggests why Henry VIII felt that Cobham was qualified for so responsible a charge. It is an anecdote worth quoting, for what it tells both of the baron and of his royal master. "In the morning of the same fourteenth day of June," reads the chronicle,

> before the king passed from Douer to Calis, was Henrie Fitzallen earle of Arundell deputie of Calis, but he then surrendering his office, and the lord Cobham that daie sworne, the king tooke land at Calis, after that the watch was set, & that the watch bell had ceased ringing; after the ceasing whereof, it was not lawfull to open the gates to receiue anie into the towne. The news of the kings landing being knowen, the erle of Arundell and the new deputie come with the porter, hauing the keies to open the gate, and to receiue the king into the towne, at what time the earle of Arundell in hast commanded the porter to open the gates, the lord Cobham then saieng nothing, but the porter refused the dooing therof at his word, alledging, that this same morning in truth he was their gouernor, & then it was his dutie to obeie him. But now (saith he) you are no more in that office, wherfore I will not doo it vntill the lord Cobham our deputie doo appoint vs, at whose speech it shall be doone, and not before.
>
> Wherevpon the lord Cobham noting the wise demeanour of the porter that warrantlesse would not breake the orders of the towne, for the present time said nothing, but still expecting the kings neerer approch to the towne, he at length goeth himselfe to the gate, when the king knocked, tooke the keie from the porter, did open onelie the little wicket, receiued the king onelie therethrough, with three or foure more into the towne, and excluded all the rest of the traine, of what estate soeuer: which the king greatlie commended, hauing before vnderstood by the speech of the lord Cobham, that they might not without breach of the orders of the towne, admit such companie amongst them, after the houre appointed; and therefore besought the king that it would please him that onelie some three or foure, which his majestie would appoint, might onelie come within the wals of the towne; wherevnto the king granted, and standing himselfe at the wicket, would not permit anie to enter, but such as he by speciall name called vnto him; wherevpon three or foure being now come in at the gate, the king did shut the wicket with his owne hands.[30]

After so noteworthy a beginning, George Lord Cobham held the post of Lord Deputy of Calais for six years.[31]

* * *

Chapter III

Henry VIII died on 28 January 1546/7. When Parliament met late in that year the government called Cobham home, but, despite the Spanish opinion of a year before that he was a member of a group which would be of some importance when the king died,[1] he found that he had no great part to play under the protectorship of Somerset and soon returned to his charge of Calais.[2]

By now George Lord Cobham was fifty years old, a big, rugged man who was almost bald, to judge by Holbein's drawing of him executed a few years before.[3] Although the father of children still in their infancy, he had as well several grown sons and daughters, whose education he was occupied in directing and whose futures he was planning with great care and foresight. In his efforts for his children he was helped by his wife, with whom he apparently lived for thirty years in singular harmony. Their life in Calais was by no means easy.[4] Lady Cobham found herself dependent upon weather conditions over the Channel for the supply of many necessities for her growing family, and often for news of those whom she had left in Kent; for the baron, struggling to manage his many estates by means of letters to his bailiffs, his being kept away from home for long periods of time was a real cause for concern. With Stephen Vaughan, the diplomat who was another Englishman abroad at this time, managing the king's financial affairs at Antwerp, Lord Cobham kept up an intimate correspondence about all these personal preoccupations. On 26 February 1545/6, for example, Vaughan writes that he has sent "a little clout with needles for Cobham's daughter, whom he has heard wish 'she might somewhere find good needles'".[5] Three days before he had written directly to Lady Cobham, "I have received your letter and, by my Lady Bruges, this bearer, I send you 6 lb. of synamon. It is very good and cost 29s. 5d. Fl., which is 4s. 10d. the pound and 5d. for the box. I will send your caffa, but you write not how much I shall send."[6] The n- month, having received more explicit instructions, the helpful Vaughan had Lady Cobham's silks brought to Calais in the train of the Bishop of



Sir George Brooke, Lord Cobham, K.G.

(By gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen)

Winchester: "I send you 9 yds of black caffa," he writes in a covering letter to her husband. "No better can be got for the price."[7] In June he had a more seriou matter to communicate. "As I have talkd wth John Cavolo," he reports, "he told me that one of yo^{r} sonnes was very sick and in thandes of the phisicions to be curyd of a great heate in his lyver ... so daung'rous that the phisicions feard ...." The illness was imputed to the boy's eating mustard when he was younger. Which of Cobham's sons is meant it is impossible to say; perhaps it was one of those who did not live to grow up, and who may even have died at this time.[8]

At about this time, the Cobhams showed their appreciation of Vaughan's interest in their welfare by helping him to solve a long-standing problem. A widower with many children, Vaughan had been finding it impossible to attend properly to the king's business in Antwerp while raising a family as well. So he wrote urgent letters home to his friends in the government asking them to find him a second wife. "'England is full of widows and the King's Majesty is my gracious good lord. How can I lack a good wife having the help of my Lord Chancellor and you?'" he hinted broadly to Lord Paget on 22 January 1545/6.[9] Paget and Wriothesley were co-operative, and when the Bishop of Winchester arrived in Calais with Lady Cobham's silks in March, he brought also Vaughan's request to Cobham to assist him in expediting his marriage. Speaking of wives rather as of any other commodity mentioned in their correspondence, he tells the Lord Deputy: "'I have one, and one hath me,'" and, since he cannot get to England before All Saints' Day, he intends to have his betrothed come to Calais and many her there. The ceremony he means to have performed simply; if Cobham will allow them the use of his chapel, they will be wed "'without any foolish wondering'", and return to Antwerp immediately afterward.[10] Apparently Lord and Lady Cobham did as they were asked to do; certainly their friendship with Vaughan continued, and the letters which they exchanged survive to give a homely picture of life in the English community on the western coast of Europe in the mid-sixteenth century.

One of the most pressing concerns of both Cobham and Vaughan was the education of their children. In a curious letter from Antwerp of 22 Augus

1546, written after he had made his business-like marriage and just before he returned to England to take up his duties as Under-Treasurer of the Mint, Vaughan tells the baron:

> My schoolmaster in London, Mr. Cob, goes from me. I dare no longer keep him. I signify this to you 'because of your son, that after my schoolmaster were gone he should not be provided where it should please [sic: displease] your Lordship.' Men suspect me for keeping him, but I think there is no honester man and I leave his opinions to others. 'It is a great displeasure to me to lack so sad a man as he is in my house to teach my children, specially seeing I am driven so often from home.'[11]

Vaughan's reasons for dismissing the tutor were cogent enough: Cob was a non-conformist by Henrican standards and had got into trouble with the authorities in 1543 by making a "translation off a certeyne Postilla upon the Gospelles, wherein were founde sondry seditious ande erroneows opinions". He had been imprisoned and examined by a panel of Doctors of Divinity, while his protector, a mercer, had been had up before the Council for harbouring one who was religiously suspect.[12] Vaughan no doubt feared similar trouble, and dissociated himself from Cob before it arose. In doing so, he apparently lost not only his own children's tutor, but inconvenienced one of the young Brookes as well, who, having been receiving his early education in London with the Vaughans, had now to be placed under a different master. That would seem to be the explanation of Vaughan's writing to Cobham about the affair, and of the cryptic phrase concerning the baron's son's not being "provided where it should displease your lordship". It is apparent that arranging suitable education for their children was a problem which prominent Englishmen in the mid-sixteenth century found difficulty in solving.

It was of greater consequence to Lord Cobham to arrive at a satisfactory solution of this problem than it was to many of his contemporaries. He had acquired a great deal of wealth, influence and prestige in times of turbulence; a failure to equip his heirs with the means of maintaining these advantages after his death might well have meant the loss of all that he had gained. The question was not merely one of giving his sons a practical education. It was a comparatively simple matter to predict what they would become, and to prepare them for their careers: they would be courtiers, diplomats and soldiers, and would therefore need a knowledge of the culture, customs, geography and

languages of the states of Europe. This Cobham could and did give them, sending them early to Germany, France and Italy and maintaining them there for a few years of their youth. The real difficulty for the baron lay in the necessity of predicting what would be the guiding spirit of the England in which his sons would live as adults. In his own lifetime he had seen, and was still seeing, such striking changes in religion that only by becoming a master of opportunism had he been able to survive. Under Henry VIII he had been a Roman Catholic, an English Catholic, and an upholder of the Royal Supremacy and of the need to suppress the monasteries; under Edward VI he would join with the Protestant leaders in advancing the cause of the Reformation; under Mary he was to revert to his original position and accept a Roman Catholic commission to investigate the reforming heresy. Cobham no doubt felt himself justified in thus accommodating his public profession of belief to the exigencies of the time, but he must have known, in the last years of Henry VIII, that so variable an age could not last indefinitely. He did not survive it (although he may have thought that he would), but it was reasonable for him to expect that his children would do so. Therefore he had to commit his sons to the faith in which they were most likely to live. With foresight born either of great sagacity, of intuition, or, simply, of the optimistic opinion that Prince Edward's reign would establish the Reformed Church in England for all time, Cobham committed his heirs to Protestantism.

The education of none of the Brookes of whom anything is known was neglected; here something may be said of the training given to the younger of them, while an account of the early life of William, the eldest son, is postponed to a more convenient place. George, the third son but the second who is known to have survived childhood, was in Venice by the time he was thirteen, being left behind there when his elder brother, William, went back to Calais at the end of 1545. On 10 January 1545/6 the English ambassador in Venice, Edmund Harvell, wrote to the baron that George "'is with a man of singular honesty and learning, who takes care that he profits in Latin, Greek and Italian and also in civil and virtuous customs.'"[13] At the time of this letter no system of sending the boy money had been evolved, so that Harvell had had to lay out forty

crowns for him, "'he being left here without money, raiment, books or anything besides'". Later his father sent George an allowance of £ 20 a year, by an arrangement of which Cobham had informed Harvell in a letter written before Harvell's but which had perhaps not been received in Venice when the ambassador wrote his account of George's plight.[14] George stayed in Italy for almost two years, watched over by Harvell, who wrote to Lord Cobham in August 1547 that the boy was planning to return home with his tutor, an Italian named Silvester whom Harvell recommended for his scholarly virtues and for his religious principles: Silvester was apparently a Protestant, for he was seeking refuge in England from the persecutions of the Italian Church.[15] Back in England, George probably went up to Cambridge like his brothers, although there is no record of his stay there. He then entered the service of John Cheke, King Edward's tutor, soon to be knighted and to become Secretary of State, and in Cheke's train found favour with the king.[16]

Thomas, the fourth son, was more difficult to educate. The first notice of him is found in a letter from John Wilkins, his father's steward, written late in 1545. From Cobham Hall, Wilkins reports to Calais on Thomas's health (he has just recovered from a cold) and notes how fast the boy is growing: he has had to be bought "a Coatte cappe slopes hausse and shooys".[17] At Michaelmas 1547 Thomas matriculated pensioner from the newly founded Trinity College, Cambridge,[18] and then was sent to Orleans with his tutor, Nicholas Alen.[19] Just after Thomas's sixteenth birthday, on 6 February 1549/50, Alen was forced to write to Lord Cobham about the youth's habits. The letter is in drastically abbreviated Latin; it dwells on the intractability of "Thomae clarissimi atq' nobilissimi filii", "cuius cũ uiuendi licẽtiã dissolutũq' ociũ [otium] perspexissem, e quẽ admodũ optimi et liberalissimi patris pecuniã dissiparet, & suae aetatis pulcherrimũ florẽ perderet ...."[20] Thomas's idleness, the licentiousness and dissoluteness which Alen observed in his way of life, his prodigality with the money given him by his generous father, his destruction of 'the finest flower of his youth', were all part of a most unscholarly existence; as Waller paraphrases what follows, "he spends whole days drinking in taverns, and the time he should g' to his studies he passes away at tennis, or wanders through the streets,

even by night, in the company of 'lost men', now from this and now from that craving money; nor would he go to public lectures ...." It was a bad report, undoubtedly troubling to the "amãtissimus pater" to whom it was sent, and presaging the long period of trouble which Thomas was to give his family.

John Brooke was a very different type, and in his education prominent men were interested. His tutor was a Doctor Bruno, whom the English government regarded highly, taking his advice on the appointment of bishops and awarding him hundreds of pounds in the name of Edward VI.[21] From Strasbourg on 5 September 1547, when John was twelve, Bruno wrote to Cobham that his son was already making moderate progress and that he hoped soon to see the baron fully satisfied with him.[22] In the spring of the next year Bruno sent another report, this time a verbal one by the bearer of his brief letter.[23] Two months later no less a person than Martin Bucer noticed the young man. On 6 May 1548 Bucer, whose acquaintance with Cobham probably arose from the reformer's correspondence with the English government about the first divorce of Henry VIII, and in particular from that which he maintained with Cranmer, sent confirmation of Bruno's reports: "Et certe," he wrote, "filius non male interim in literis proferit, habet enim ingenium.... Familia mea praefert ei quoq' commodum testimoniu' de progressu in bonis moribus ...."[24] Bucer was to go the next year to England where, as Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, he no doubt again met Cobham's son. For John, although still in Strasbourg when Sir Thomas Hoby left the city in July 1548,[25] returned home soon afterward, and at Michaelmas matriculated pensioner from Trinity College.[26] In 1550 he was granted a stipend out of the revenues of Lincoln Cathedral, being installed prebendary of Clifton on 14 June.[27] Later he went on to study law in the Inner Temple.[28]

Of the academic education of the elusive second, sixth and ninth sons of George Lord Cobham, the elder Henry, the elder Edward and Edmund, nothing is known. Nor can one say much of the schooling of the seventh, the younger Henry, except that he seems to have matriculated pensioner from Trinity College with his elder brother, Thomas, at the age of ten, at Michaelmas 1547.[29] Considering the diplomatic responsibilities later entrusted to Sir Henry, it is curious that there is no record of his having been trained in the law. Perhaps,

however, his education was of a more feudal kind, dependent upon what he could learn from associating in his youth with people of experience in state affairs. When, as a man approaching his fifties, he wrote to Secretary Wilson to plead his case for a pension in reward of his "Travailes, and Yeares spent in her Majesties Service", he recalled how, "Fyrste, In my tendrest Age it pleased God that my Father did dedicate me to her Highnes, and because (during Queene Marye Reigne [which began when Henry was fifteen years old]) he durste not prefere me into her Highnes Housholde Service; my carefull Father sent me to the Earle of Devonshire, wherby I might be in place to her lykinge ...."[30]

Probably the experience which Henry Brooke gained in the company of his father's friend,[31] Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire, a figure of great importance to national affairs, was in no way inferior to that which his brothe received in more formal fashion. He may even have toured the Continent with the earl, who died at Padua on 18 September 1556.[32] Yet Henry was alone in being so treated. The second Thomas and Edward, the tenth son, went to Cambridge, Thomas matriculating from Gonville Hall at Easter 1549, at the time of his tenth birthday, and Edward from Trinity at Easter 1563.[33] John Brooke resigned his prebend of Clifton at about the period of his youngest brother's matriculation, and soon afterward the stipend was granted to Edward, who received it between 1566 or 1567 and 1570.[34]

Little need be said of the education of the two daughters of Lord Cobham who survived childhood; apparently the baron's insistence that his sons be well schooled did not extend to his daughters' training, so that, unlike many of their contemporaries, they never invaded the male world of classical learning. One letter only survives to describe Elizabeth and Catherine Brooke at the time when their brothers were being prepared for adulthood, and the glimpses are significant which it gives into the lives of the sisters. They were the eldest and, probably, the youngest of their parents' children, separated from each othe by eighteen years. On 30 November 1545 John Wilkins, Cobham's steward, wrote in his inimitable way to his master:

> I was w^{t} mystres elesebeth at the Courte one thursdaye laste. I talked w^{t} er but a welle for She w^{t} hother of the quenes mades wayted a pon my ladye marye to my ladye of suffockes housse to the cressenyng of my lord hamberall [John Dudley, Viscount Lisle,

> Lord Admiral, later Duke of Northumberland] Childe and the emperalle ymebassytor was a nother and my ladye of suffocke the thurde as I hard say. I talked w^{t} mystres Stoner the mother of the mades and she tould me ther was nothyng in mystreys elesebythe doynges that was to be mysseleked. m^{r} thomas hathe byne seke of a nague but he ys well a gayne nowe thankes be to god. he lacketh a Coatte cappe slopes hausse and shooys he hade such greate ned ther of that I haue bowght thyme. The Charge ther of was under xx^{s} trustyng your lordshyp ys well be [sic] contented therew^{t}. mystryss Caterane ys merye and in elthe at ansells thanks be to god.[35]

Throughout their lives the daughters of George Lord Cobham were to continue the separate and very different existences suggested by Wilkins's report of them; Elizabeth, at nineteen a young lady winning favour in the virtuous household of Catherine Parr, was always to be a courtier and a favourite of royalty; Catherine, an infant put out to nurse with the Hansell family at Ospringe, was to marry in the provinces and to live and die there as a county lady.

* * *

Chapter IV

While his other children were still spread out over England and the Continent Cobham's eldest son was a young man already well advanced on his career. William was a pensioner at Queen's College, Cambridge, as early as 1544, having gone there as a scholar from the King's School at Canterbury.[1] He was by then a much-travelled youth of seventeen. On 17 February 1539/40 Thomas Warley reported to Lord Lisle, later Earl of Warwick and Duke of Northumberland, that Cobham had been wanting to send his sons abroad into Germany, but that Cromwell had prevented it. He "would have sent two of his sons thither with the duke of Cleves's Chancellor, but my Lord Privy Seal would not let them leave England," as Warley put it.[2] Two months later Cromwell was dead, and early the next summer a safe conduct was issued under the king's signet from "o^{r} palace of Westm' the fourth day of June":

> And wheras oure trustie and welbeloved William Broke, the eldest sonne of oure right trustie and wellbeloved the Lord of Cobham, is desirous and mynded to passe into the p'tes of beyond the sea there to contynue for his further encrease of vertue and lerning. We have you wit that we have licenced and by these pat's do licence him to passe unto the said p'tes of beyond the sea wth his tuo servants, three horses, twentie pounds in money, bagges, and baggage, at his libertie.[3]

The boy was twelve years old when he set out for the Continent, and his father had drawn up for him as a guide a little vade-mecum. It is headed

"Remembraunces for M^r Willm" and could only have been written in the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII. Instructions redolent of Roman Catholic piety are set down side by side with stern Calvinistic precepts that presage the Puritanism of years to come. The nine points by which William was to conduct himself abroad reflect the diverse forms of Protestantism which he, as a minister under Elizabeth, was later to help to reconcile in the established Anglican Church. The list reads:

1. ffirst in the mornyng remembre to serue god, thankyng hym for his benefittes and humblie desiryng his grace to ayde and assiste you.
2. It^m to heare Masse deuoutlie upon yo^r knees and praye feruentlie at that tyme (all other fantasyes and worldlie pleasures cleane sett apart) that your mynde and bodie may that tyme oonely be giuen to call upon almyghtie god.
3. It^m to applie yo^r lernyng diligentlie (and that of yo^r own mynde without any compulsion) Yo^r lernyng shal be Ciuil Lawe, Rethoricke and Greke.
4. It^m to be obedient in all pointes to yo^r Tutor and to doo nothyng without his advise and counsell.
5. It^m to kepe yo^r selfe chast and to take grete hede that ye sett no mynde or pleas^r upon the abhominable sin of lechery euer hauyng in yo^r remembraunce the bounde of yo^r promesse of mariage [to Dorothy Neville] and kepe yo^r vessell cleane according to the comandement of god.
6. It^m to send lettres ouer to my Lorde into Englande so often as the comoditie of cariage shall serue you.
7. It^m at vacant tymes to playe upon the lute or other instrumentes.
8. It^m to marke well the best formes and maneres in the countrie and those to put in use and accustome yourselfe to the best.
9. It^m to take hede that ye doo not speke to thicke.[4]

It was an exacting programme, but the young traveller felt that he could uphold its requirements. Accordingly, there is an endorsement at the bottom of the list as it survives among the Harleian manuscripts: "I wyl performe aull thes thyngs bi the grace of god, by me your sonne Wylliam broke."[5]

Where William went first on the Continent cannot be discovered, but by the autumn of 1543 he was in Venice and Padua, in company with Master John Schiere, who was perhaps his tutor.[6] The only records of this visit to Italy are found in the Venetian State Papers, where it is noted that the youth, his companion and their two or three servants were granted special licences to carry weapons in the street. The privilege must have been an exceptional one, for at first the Venetian Council withheld it; they gave in only after the authorities in Padua, prevailed upon by Harvell, the English ambassador, had done so first. William's reason for being in Padua, as it appears from the official note

in the records of the Council, was to study.[7] It was by no means unusual that he went to Italy for his education. Six years after Brooke's stay there, William Thomas published a book about his own experiences among "the Italian nacion, whiche semeth to flourisshe in ciuilitee moste of all other at this daie".[8] In this work, Thomas makes several observations which not only explain why Cobham sent his sons to Italy, but also give one an idea of the number of young men like them who spent some time there, and of the sort of student life which they led. "And I thinke verilie," says Thomas,

> that in one region of all the worlde againe, are not halfe so many straungers as in Italie: specially of gentilmen, whose resorte thither is principallie vnder pretence of studie. For there are diuerse famouse citees, that be priuileged with great libertees for all scholars that come: as Padoa, Bononia, Pauia, Ferrara, Pisa, and others: in euery one of the whiche, are excellente learned men, waged for the readyng of philosophie, of the ciuile lawes, and of all the liberal sciences. Besid' excellent maisters of musicke to syng and plaie on all maner of instrumentes, and the best maisters of fence at all weapons that can be founde.
>
> So that all kyndes of vertue maie there be learned: and therfore are those places accordyngly furnisshed: not of suche studentes alone, as moste commonly are brought vp in our vniuersitees (meane mens children set to schole in hope to liue vpon hyred learnyng) but for the more parte of noble mens sonnes, and of the best gentilmen: that studie more for knowlage and pleasure, than for curiositee or luker. For lightly there passeth no shroftide without rennyng at the tilte, tourneiyng, fighting at the barriers, and other like feates of armes, handled and furnisshed after the best sorte: the greatest doers wherof are scholers.
>
> This last winter liyng in Padoa, with diligent serche I learned, that the noumbre of scholers there was little lesse than fiftene hundreth: wherof I dare saie, a thousande at the lest were gentilmen.[9]

Whether William now returned to England for a time and went to Cambridge, or whether he was there slightly later than is thought, he was certainly again in Venice in June 1545, when it was resolved "by the Council of Ten to show the armoury of the Council and the jewels of the Sanctuary to the son of Lord Cobham, governor of Calais, and fifteen English gentlemen his companions, and the Spanish Doctor of Laws who is here on his way to the Council of Trent".[10] William Thomas, who was also privileged to view the Venetian treasure, describes what William must have seen:

> the principall thing wherof is a table on the high aulter, plated ouer with siluer, grauen and enameled, and set full of preciouse stones of all sortes. And than in a little stronge corner on the southsyde of the churche [St. Mark's] are certeine plates of golde muche lyke womens partelettes set full of riche stones, a goodly imperiall crowne for theyr Duke, two fayre vnicornes hornes, and diuers other thynges, the value wherof consisteth onely in the preciouse stones: For the golde that is about theim is but small

in quantitee, but the stones are many in numbre, excellent great and fayre, and almost inestimable of price.[11]

By 1545 William Brooke was a grown man, and on 3 October, a few weeks before his eighteenth birthday, Edmund Baker wrote a letter to Lord Cobham about the changes which would soon be taking place in his son's way of life. It is unfortunate that so little is known of this Baker, who was probably resigning at this time as William's tutor, for his letter suggests that he was a man who knew his charge well, and who felt that he might take justifiable pride in the boy's progress. "Knowing the inclination of Master William to be now rather to wars than to letters," Baker tells Lord Cobham how, on the way back from Italy, William and he had met the king's officers mustering their men at Aix-la-Chapelle.[12] This was the period when the storms were gathering which culminated in the Schmalkaldic War of 1546 and the Protestant disaster at Mühlberg. The forces of the league against Charles V were in a good position in the months just before the war broke out, but among them and the German mercenaries who made up much of their strength firm control and leadership were lacking.[13] Late in October, Sir Ralph Fane and Thomas Chamberlain, governor of the English merchants at Antwerp, reported to the Privy Council the misconduct of Frederic van Reiffenberg, a Hessian soldier whom Henry VIII had taken into his service and entrusted with an important command. Reiffenberg had promised to march against the imperial forces "wythin 3 dayes after the musters" of his mercenary followers, but had made "of 3 dayes 2 hole monthes". John Dymock and Thomas Avery were sent to him to demand action, and Reiffenberg, "having now none excuse left to protract any lenger tyme ... [fell] to an open mutynerye, upon the unreasonable clayme of one moneth for the horssemen over and above His Majestyes bargayne wyth them." He kept the Englishmen in his camp, refusing to allow them to return and report on his behaviour. Fane and Chamberlain's letter to the Council explained the situation and on 6 November elicited a command from the government that the ambassadors whom Henry had sent to the German princes should return immediately. As for Reiffenberg and his men, whose shocking defection Henry suspected Philip of Hesse of arranging in order to embarrass him, the letter indignantly stated that "to thinke that by theyre mutynerye and emprisoning of His Majesties Commissaries they shall dryve Him, after so muche lewde service, to entretayne them

one hole month for no purpose, more than He hath appoynted or convenaunted wyth them, they ar assuredly in a wrong belefe; for His Majeste woll never do itt."[14]

It was in this confused arena of sixteenth-century religious and political conflict that William Brooke received his earliest training in war. He was easily persuaded to enter it; what is known of the upbringing given him by his father, and his very presence in the troubled Germany of this time, suggest that he would not have hesitated to take up the English fight against the Roman Catholic emperor and his secret allies. The English army was ready to march when William and Baker arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle, and when the muster-masters "offered Master William all pleasures," as Baker tells Cobham, "after debating with Mr. Halle, who thought the journey would be profitable to Master William and the opportunity not likely to be found again, Master William, being wholly bent thereto, concluded to tarry and take his part." Proudly the tutor concludes that "doubtless the journey will be to Cobham's honour, the young gentleman's experience and the writer's contentation." So, with Baker employed as clerk to the overseer of the ordnance,[15] William entered the king's forces. His first tour of duty was brief but dangerous, for he went directly to the camp of the recalcitrant mercenaries near Brussels, where the English commissioners were being held. A letter written from Louvain soon after this exploit suggests that William's purpose in visiting the camp was reconnaissance. It is from Francis Halle, the controller of Calais, whom the young man had found at Aix-la-Chapelle in charge of the musters, and addressed to Lord Cobham, and runs: "'Jarmyn can tell you how I sent my servant with him to the camp, and yet Master Cobham came to me hither, unbeware both to them and me, ere they returned again; and because the said Master Cobham, this bearer, and the said Jarmyn can tell you all the evil favoured news of and from the camp, I refer them to their report.'"[16] Jermyn was Cobham's servant, whom the baron seems to have sent in search of his son when he realized how risky was the youth's adventure. William apparently managed without his father's assistance, but it was probably with difficulty, for another letter concerning his foray into danger reveals a circumstance which Halle's bland account omits. From Bruges on 11 November Thomas Thirlby (the only

man ever to occupy the ephemeral Anglican see of Westminster) wrote home to Paget about the progress of Reiffenberg's muting. "The Emperor," he says, "has no answer from Mons. du Lyre concerning the treaty with the Almains for delivery of the Commissaries. Some say that they are marching homeward and lead the Commissaries with them, including now Mr. Avery and Mr. Dymocke. My lord Cobham's son escaped from them and is gone to Calles. 'I would be loth (I may tell you) to make so narrow an escape.'"[17]

William Brooke passed his eighteenth birthday while in Reiffenberg's camp, reached Calais in the second week of November, and soon afterward further established his newly proved manhood by marrying. Before he was seven years old he had been affianced to Dorothy Neville, the daughter of George Lord Abergavenny by a daughter of the executed Duke of Buckingham; in the will which he had drawn up on 4 June 1535 Abergavenny had directed his executors to extract from the profits of his estates "sixe hundred markes sterling [£ 400] therwt to satisfye content and pay vnto ... George Broke lorde Cobham so to discharge all and singuler bondes and writinges obligatorye made by me the foresaide George Nevill and the foresaide George Broke for the sure payment and paymentes of the foresaide vjC mkes sterling in and for consideracion of mariage had and solemnized betwene ... Dorathie Nevill and ... William Broke".[18] Apparently the wedding was now celebrated and the union consummated immediately, for Edmund Harvell wrote to Lord Cobham on 10 January 1545/6 that he supposed that William "is now enjoying his bedfellow amorously. God send both joy infinite!"[19]

Harvell's friendly hopes for the happiness of the young couple were not realized. The bride, who was probably about the same age as her husband, soon came into conflict with Lady Cobham and it was not long before it became obvious that she could not live in her mother-in-law's house.[20] Sir William Paget, who was Cobham's friend and a man who protested that he would do for the young bridegroom "as I woollde myn own soonne",[21] stepped into the unpleasant situation and offered to take Dorothy into his household in London for a time. Bemusedly the baron accepted the suggestion, as one learns from a letter written when Paget's determination to visit his Staffordshire estates late in 1546 made necessary some

new arrangement. In October the Secretary had sent his clerk, Nicasius Yetsweirt (later French Secretary to Queen Elizabeth), to Calais to inform Cobham that Dorothy could no longer remain with him, and on the twentieth Yetsweirt reported:

> I declared to my Lord Deputy that now upon removing your household into Staffordshire, you 'took thought how to do with his daughter;' and I tried to persuade his Lordship to place her with some friend in Kent near London, that her husband and she might interview each other the oftener, whereby the good conformity which they showed might augment or at least not 'empaire'. But all the answer he made was to say merrily that he would not meddle, for you would needs have her, and at your request he granted his son and her 100 mks. [£ 66.13.4] yearly; howbeit he would write to his son to take such order with her as he thought best. And here he blamed much her evil behaviour towards my lady his wife, which, as learnt here, I will declare at my coming. Doubtless his Lordship now writes to you of the matter. 'My Lady is the fearfullest woman alive that Mrs. Cobham should come to her again, and would fear it a great deal more if she knew of this; wherefore it were best, in mine opinion, she were bestowed either with my Lady Dacres, her sister, or some other of her friends. Thus, Sir, your wisdom doth perceive what is like to follow of this matter, whose <u>novissima</u> (I fear me) will be <u>pejora prioribus</u>.'"[22]

The young bridegroom cannot have had much time with his wife before she had to be removed to England. On 11 February, two or three months after the wedding, Dorothy was probably already in Paget's care, for the Secretary wrote to Cobham on that day that "William Cobham was here of late, but, because he was come without your knowledge, I made him a little sour countenance and he came not again. 'He said he would into Kent, wherefore I think he be returned to Bullen.'"[23] It is hard, however, to see the William Brooke who made his furtive visit as a lovesick boy, smarting at being deprived of his bride and romantically flouting his parents' wishes in his desire to see her. His marriage with Dorothy Neville was an arranged one, which apparently never grew into a relationship satisfying to either of them. In the letters and papers which otherwise tell so much about the Brookes there is only one explicit mention of the young wife between late 1546 and the time of her death in 1559: in an official document of 1554 she is said to have interceded for her husband with Queen Mary, in a way which shows that William was then so estranged from her that the queen herself had to order his father to reconcile them.[24] Besides this, all that is known is that they must have come together at some time in the autumn of 1548, for on 31 July 1549 Dorothy gave birth to a daughter, Frances.[25] The baby was born in the house of a

Kentish gentleman who appears to have had no connection with the Brookes; she never seems to have been properly a part of her father's family at all, and when she lost her mother at the age of ten she was turned over to the care of the Nevilles. Except for bearing him this apparently unwanted child, and causing him the extreme annoyance which led him to break with her before 1554, Dorothy, after the first few months of her marriage, must have played a most unimportant part in the life of William Brooke.

By the time that his first child was born, William had already done much to advance his career. On his nineteenth birthday he joined his father's garrison as a spearman, the Privy Council on 1 November 1546 sending "to my Lord Deputy of Caleys that the Kinges Majestes pleasor was he should admit his Lordship's sonne, William Cobham, to the rome of a spere there, which Mr. Tate decessed lately enjoyed, as amplie as he held yt, with the wages, &c., therunto apperteyneng".[26] Early the next year, following the king's death, the uncertainty of the international situation prompted Dr. Nicholas Wotton to write a letter to Lord Cobham which reveals that at least two of the young Brookes were then in Paris. One of them may have been William. Wotton, expecting momentarily to be recalled from his embassy in France, wrote on 26 February 1546/7: "Lyke as I see yet no greate lykelyhode of enye breache with theese menne: so wolde I wisshe that yo^{r} sonnes and other that ar heere war at home (to be owte of al doubte) for a whyle till it maye evydentlye appeare which waye the wynde wille blowe. Neverthelesse yf I p'ceyve anye suche lykelyhode at my dep^{t}ture home, I wille take your sonnes with me yf I maye be sufferd so to doo."[27] The breach with France which Wotton feared, however, did not materialize; he stayed on in Paris, and in March the government there was able to accord to Somerset's ratified Protectorship of England its full recognition.[28] The death on 31 March of Henry VIII's old rival, King Francis, and the accession of Henry II, did not at once disturb the amity between the two states, and on 18 April Cobham wrote to Secretary Paget of his plans for his heir. He tells Paget that he has informed the Protector that he intends to send William to France for a year, to serve the new king there, and that he has requested a letter of introduction for the young man from Somerset to the French Council.

Cobham assures Paget that William will not go without Paget's consent, because he is his servant; if, however, both Somerset and the Secretary approve the plan, and will send letters to Wotton signifying their wish that the ambassador receive William and "somewhat set him forth," Cobham will send his son to Paris immediately.[29]

If William went to the French Court at all, he did not stay a whole year there, for when Parliament met on 4 November 1547 the twenty-year-old Brooke was a member for Hythe. He was not a nominee of Sir Thomas Cheney, the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, but probably owed his election to his father's influence in the Ports area and to the favour of Paget and even of the Protector himself. He was by no means alone in getting to Westminster by such means; it has been shown that, in the first Parliament of Edward VI, "of the one hundred and eighty nine members, ... whose names occur in the returns, at least a third either held some office about the court, or were closely related to ministers for the time being."[30] What part William Brooke took in the seven-weeks session of 1547 is not known; there is no mention of him in the meagre records of the time. Yet, whether he participated actively or not, it was a Parliament in which he must have learned much that would be of use to him in the following half-century during which he sat as commoner and peer. Effectively ending the orthodoxy of the Henrican régime by throwing open the doors to the rampant Protestantism of the reign of Edward VI, the legislators of 1547 repealed the statutes against heresy (under the provisions of which Oldcastle and the other Lollards had been executed) and the Act of Six Articles (which, since 1539, had enforced confession and clerical celibacy, authorized private masses, and required acknowledgement of transubstantiation). Brooke, when the session ended on Christmas Eve, could feel that he had witnessed a marked advance in the course of the Reformation to which his father's training had committed him.[31]

Early the next year the Brookes became closely connected with the Marquess of Northampton, one of the foremost men of the new government, but the alliance caused an estrangement between the marquess and the Protector which invalidated for some time any usefulness which it might have had for the family. The impor-

ence of Northampton's career to the Brooke family requires that the circumstances by which he became associated with them be given in some detail. Lord Cobham's eldest daughter, Elizabeth, had her twenty-first birthday in June 1547, at a time when she was attracting the attentions of the brother of her mistress, the Queen Dowager. William Parr was not a clever man, but his marriage with the heiress of the royally descended Earls of Essex and his sister's position as queen had made him an important one; Henry VIII bestowed upon him a barony, revived his wife's family's earldom (with its ancient rights of precedence) in his favour, admitted him to the Order of the Garter, and gave him a seat on the Privy Council; and when the king died Parr's support of the Earl of Hertford assured Parr of further advancement. In February 1546/7, on the day before Hertford became Duke of Somerset, Parr was made Marquess of Northampton, and, a few weeks later, was confirmed in his seat on the new Council. In 1543 he had been given a divorce from his wife on the grounds of her adultery, and thus found himself in the first year of Edward VI a man only thirty-five years old, unmarried, with a new career before him as a promoter of the Reformation and with, apparently, nothing left over from his old life as the king's brother-in-law but the advantages of titles, wealth and valuable connections. Within a year of Henry's death, however, the marquess discovered that he had brought forward impediments with him from his past. On 14 or 15 January 1547/8, with the approval of Queen Catherine, he married Elizabeth Brooke, and a week later was summoned before the Privy Council:

> Uppon sundry informacions brought to the Lord Protector's Grace and Counsaile that the Lord Marques of Northampton, his first wif living, had maried one named Mistres Elsabeth Cobham, which informacions were so set forth and aggreved, as being the thing straunge normelle and against the lawe, wherof being suffred tescape inreformed, namely in a persone of siche representacion, might ensewe many and great inconveniences to the wholl realme; the same Marques was commanded this daye to present himself before their Grace and Lordships, being assembled in councile at Somerset Place besides the Straunde, and after the thing by them objected to him, and by him confessed to be doone accordingly, excusing nevertheles the fact, for that as he said the same stoode with the word of God, his first wife being proved an adoulteresse; when many wordes and argumentes had bene controverted on the behalfes of their Grace and Lordships and of the same Marques, they commanded him to retyre himself apart (as he dyd), and then weyeng emong themselves thimportance of the cas to be siche as being either permitted or winked at might brede manifold disordres and inconveniences within the realme; it was by

> them ordred and accorded that the said Marquis and Mistres Elsabeth shuld from thens forth be sequestred and dwell apart in sort as thone shuld not resort to thother, she to remane and sejourn with the Quenes Grace untyll the cas shuld be at full herd and tried, whether the same were consonant with the word of God or no; wherupon siche furder order shuld then be taken as shuld be convenient.[32]

Northampton had not married rashly. In April 1547 he had requested that a commission of doctors sit to decide "whether during the life of Anne Bourchier he might lawfully marry another woman", and only when he saw that the canonists were going to sanction his right to make a new marriage did he go ahead.[33] He must therefore have been surprised at Somerset's refusal to acknowledge Elizabeth as his wife, and chagrined when the separation which was required by the Council proved to be a long one. In April, three months after Northampton's humiliating appearance at Somerset House, Cranmer's divines finally published their decision that "'the band of wedlock being broken by the mere act of infidelity (of the first wife) the second marriage was lawful.'"[34] But Northampton had not waited, as he should have done, for their official approval, and as a result it was not until 9 March 1551/2 that the bill "for the Disannulling of the Marriage between the Lord Marquis of Northampton and Lady Anne Bourchier, one of the Daughters of Henry late Earl of Essex; and for the Confirming of the Marriage between him and Lady Elizabeth, Daughter to Sir George Broke, Lord Cobham, and for the Legitimation of the Children that shall be had between them," was read in the Lords for the third time and concluded (the Bishops of Carlisle and Norwich, the Earl of Derby and Lord Stourton dissenting).[35] Meanwhile Northampton had no doubt been living with Elizabeth Brooke again; she was known as his wife and shared his titles, and on 25 October 1551, for instance, the Privy Council issued "Lettres to dyvers noblemen and ladies to attend upon the Lord Marques of Northampton and the Lady Marques, his wyef, for the receyving of the Quene Dovagier of Scotland at Hampton Court".[36] Yet Somerset's failure to smooth away quickly the difficulties in the way of the second marriage no doubt alienated Northampton from the Protector's party. Whatever the Protector's reasons for being difficult, Northampton henceforth bore him an implacable grudge, and when Somerset was deposed it was with the Parrs' concurrence. The marquess refused to help when Somerset had a chance to rise again, and allowed his name to be used when

Northumberland effected Somerset's final ruin by charging the former Protector with a plot to assassinate him, Northampton and the Earl of Pembroke.[37] The bill of 1552 which settled the marriage question was passed by the Parliament called by Northumberland to meet the day after Somerset's execution.

There is no mention of William Brooke during the year of his sister's controversial match with Northampton; he is not heard of again until the time of his re-entry into military affairs on the Continent. By the early summer of 1549 the rumours of French designs upon Boulogne, which England held under the governorship of Lord Clinton, became insistent. The young French king had determined from the beginning of his reign to take back the fortress, which Henry VIII had seized from his father in 1544, and from late in 1547 had been directing raids into the territory about Boulogne. Somerset, anxious for peace, had refused to retaliate, but his "complacence merely postponed the issue."[38] By June 1549 Lord Cobham, quizzing everyone who came into Calais about the movements of the French, was "reporting that certain Albanoies just arrived had seen a great company of lance-knights, well armed and weaponed, marching towards Lyons, where the French king's Ambassador was lying to receive as many as should come, hoping to raise the number of 25,000 men, to await there his master's orders".[39] At last, on 8 August, France was ready, and sent a declaration of war to the English Council. At once Ambleteuse was taken; it was only seven miles from Boulogne, on the coast between the besieged fortress and Calais, and its capture alarmed the English. Alarm grew when the French moved into the defences of Boulogne itself.

Into this desperate situation marched William Brooke, at the head of 100 of his father's best men from the Calais garrison, with Captain Smith and another hundred from Guisnes. Lord Clinton, whom the government at home had not instructed soon enough to prepare fortifications for withstanding the French, was hurriedly improving his defence when Brooke and Smith arrived at Boulogne. He immediately gave the young man a force of 300 foot-soldiers and twenty-five horse and sent him out into the forests two miles from the town "to fetch timber from thence for the mounting of the great artillerie and other necessarie uses". The expedition had no sooner got to the woods than Clinton's scouts came up and warned Brooke of

a large body of French troops waiting in ambush in the shelter of the trees. Encumbered with the heavy wagons which he had brought to transport the timber back to Boulogne, the young commander turned round and retreated,

> wherevpon ... the French horssemen brake out of the wood beforesaid, & following the English fell in skirmish with them. But the Englishmen, casting themselues in a ring, kept out the enimie with their pikes, wherewith they had impaled themselues; who hauing that their small number lined with shot, did continuallie gall the Frenchmen as they approched. All which notwithstanding, those horssemen gaue three onsets vpon the English, with the number of fiue hundred horsse; the rest of their companie remaining still in troope. But such was the valiant prowesse of the English (incouraged by the comfortable speeches and valiant actiuitie of sir William Brooke, with the diligence of the other capteins, which not onelie conducted and placed them in such order as stood most for their safetie, but also vsed such comfortable speeches to them as the necessitie of the time required and would permit) that in the end the enimie was manfully repelled, and diuerse of them with their horsses slaine; ... whereby this sir William Brooke and the Englishmen did safelie retire and returne home.[40]

It will be noted that Holinshed calls William Brooke 'sir', although it is unlikely that the young man had been knighted by the time of the events which the chronicle recounts. The accolade, however, was bestowed upon him not long afterward. On 3 October 1549 Sir William Paget informed Lord Cobham that "Master Brooke" had been sworn "esquyer for the body" to the king;[41] less than two months later, according to an entry in a list of knights made in the reign of Edward VI, "att Westm' the first day of December", the young man became "S^{r} Willm̃ Cobham".[42]

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Chapter V

William Brooke's knighthood must have seemed to him to be one of the few positive results of the defence of Boulogne, for his contribution to Lord Clinton's protracted endeavour to keep the fortress from falling to the French army was expended in a lost cause. In March 1550 Boulogne was handed over by treaty. Henry VIII, when he took the town in 1544, had agreed with Francis I that the French could reclaim it only after ten years, and even then by paying a huge ransom; the English Council which governed in the name of Edward VI gave it to Henry II after six years, for no more than 400,000 crowns.[1]

The capitulation of England to the demands of France over Boulogne reflected

the weakness to which internal dissension had reduced the kingdom by 1550. On 5 October 1549 Somerset had suddenly become alarmed about the intentions of the party opposed to him on the Council, a powerful group which included the Earls of Warwick, Arundel and Southampton, the recently returned ambassador, Nicholas Wotton, and the Marquess of Northampton. Somerset was slow to take these men as seriously as they deserved to be taken, but, once alerted, he panicked, first calling upon the people to rally to his support, and then hurriedly withdrawing with the young king to Windsor. In London his opponents seized control; on 14 October he was brought back and taken to the Tower; and on 16 October Sir William Petre was able to write to Lord Cobham that the crisis was over and the reformed Council in power.[2] The coup had been effected with surprising ease, and early in the new year the results of it began to look favourable for the Lord Deputy of Calais and his family. Somerset was formally deprived of the Protectorship (being otherwise let off lightly and even allowed, eventually, to return to the Council), and Warwick, with whom Cobham had always had friendly dealings, was made head of the government as Lord Great Master (later Lord President of the Council). Wotton became Principal Secretary, sharing the office with Petre. Paget, who had remained loyal to Somerset so long as he dared, was welcomed into Warwick's party, created Lord Paget of Beaudesert, and sent off to France on the important mission of treating about Boulogne. Northampton became Great Chamberlain. With congenial colleagues in office, Lord Cobham came home in the spring to enter the governmental circles which had been closed to him under Somerset.

Exactly when Cobham left Calais for good it is difficult to say. On 13 December 1549, a fortnight after his eldest son was knighted, he had been installed Knight of the Garter at Windsor, apparently paying a special visit to England for that purpose, since he was still on the Continent early in April 1550.[3] The letters of the Council do not mention his successor in the Lord Deputyship until September 1550.[4] Yet by 13 April at least Cobham was back in England, awaiting summons to Parliament, for on that day the Council sent "six severall letters to therle of Shrewisbury, therle of Derby, the Viscount Hereford, the Lord [De] Laware, the Lord Cobham and Sir John Wallop that they may aswell differ their cummyng up to

the Parlyament at this presente, for that it is proroged to the xth of October next, as also to be absent from the feast of Seint George".[5] Cobham's dispensation from joining his fellow Knights at what should have been his first Garter feast was clearly granted to enable him to accompany Paget, Petre and the French Secretary, Mason, when they sailed from Dover on 23 April for France, there to arrange with the French the surrender of Boulogne under the terms of the treaty made in March.[6] Home again within three weeks, Cobham returned to Court and on 23 May "the Counsaill had accesse unto the Kinges Majestie for divers sutes, and upon their retourne from his Highnes the Lord Cobham was sworne of the Privie Counsaill."[7]

Henceforth Cobham's career under Edward VI was that of a junior Tudor minister. He attended regularly at the Council board, signing every kind of administrative letter and decree. He assisted Warwick in keeping down the sort of dissident element which the earl had himself used to depose Somerset, and, when the repressed malcontents complained, helped the Lord President to intimidate them still further.[8] The boy king himself approved Cobham's behaviour and when it was learned, early in 1551 that the French had designs upon Ireland, Edward personally committed to him the repulsion of the expected invasion.[9] It was probably because he expected to be away from England again for some time, perhaps engaging in actual fighting, that Cobham, on 31 March of that year, drew up a will.[10] Ireland, however, was not as seriously threatened as it was at first thought to be, and Cobham did not have an opportunity to prove the wisdom of the king's choice of him to defend it. A strengthening of the Lord Deputy's forces, and the replacement of the Lord Deputy himself with a more alert soldier, served to dissuade the French from their purpose. If Cobham went to Ireland at all, there is no record of his visit; he may have gone over in August, when it was again expected that the French would make an attempt upon the kingdom, but he was certainly back in London in the autumn, working for Warwick in the final extirpation of Somerset and his group.[11] In October Warwick became Duke of Northumberland, a few days before it was published that the former Protector was seeking to murder the principal men of the government which had succeeded his.[12] On 16 October Somerset was arrested and sent to the Tower; within a few weeks Paget, as his accomplice, was

also committed to prison. Cobham had cut his ties with Paget by this time, and on 25 October was appointed to head a commission which examined Somerset's brother-in-law and three of his other supporters.[13] When Somerset was tried on 1 December, Cobham was one of the lords whose verdict of guilty doomed him to die, but the baron was not called upon to help to decide Paget's fate: the former Secretary, asked only to answer to a charge of peculation, freely confessed his guilt and thus saved his life. Under Mary, Paget was once again to rise to power.

Cobham emerged from the last contest between Somerset and Northumberland stronger than ever. He had done a workmanlike job in assisting the Lord President, and had also continued to do the routine work of a Privy Councillor throughout the holocaust. On 16 May 1552 he took part in the great muster reviewed by the king in his park at Greenwich: a spectator noted that the thirteenth of the lords to pass in procession before Edward was "the lord Cobham with ys men of armes, and ye standard whyt and blake, and a Sarsunshed in [it;] ys cotes blake gardyd with whytt".[14] Not long afterward Cobham was taken ill, so ill that the Earl of Northumberland wrote to Sir William Cecil on 31 May that "Lord Cobham is in danger of his life,"[15] and for a time retired into Kent. Before the end of the summer he had recovered, joining the king in his summer progress, and by September he was again administratively active, being appointed to take part in a visitation of Eton occasioned by differences between the master and fellows, and by the need to remove from the college statutes certain relics of 'superstition' still remaining on them.[16]

So Cobham's life as one of the men who ruled Protestant England went on. His position as Northumberland's trusted colleague and as Northampton's father-in-law gave him an importance which he had not before enjoyed, and when he took time off to visit his Kentish fastness of Cooling Castle or the manor at Cobham he was often accompanied by courtiers of the first rank. Sir Thomas Hoby's autobiography provides a glimpse of such a country gathering in 1551 when "upon Newyere's Daye my Lord Marquiss of Northampton, Lord William Aparr, receaved me into his service and upon Tweluf Yeven had me with him to my Lord Cobham's house of Cowling Castle, where he dissported himself a while with my Lord of Ruttland, my Lord Braye, Mr. Nicholas Throgmorton, and dyverse others."[17] No doubt the advantages of moving in

such circles were appreciated by the sons of the family. William had returned to Calais after the first few months of his father's re-establishment in England,[18] but soon came back to take up his duties at Court. In April 1551 Henry II of France was elected to the Order of the Garter, and the next month a splendid embassy was dispatched to convey the honour to Paris. Again Sir Thomas Hoby gives an account in which the Brookes and their kin figure prominently: Northampton was chosen to head the mission, and with him went Sir William Brooke and Thomas Brooke, their uncle Braye, and Sir William's brother-in-law, Abergavenny.[19] The embassy was successful (virtually concluding the French match for Edward VI which it was designed to promote), and in July the French king reciprocated by having Edward invested with the Order of St. Michael. (On his way to London with the insignia of the order, the French ambassador who brought it was entertained at Cobham Hall.)[20] William Brooke was entrusted with the dispatches between Northampton and the Council; on 2 July, when he left Greenwich with the government's latest directive, it was noted that he was "now well rested", which suggests that there may have been some concern for his health in running these cross-Channel errands.[21] His part in the embassy was much more important than his brother Thomas's, who, according to Hoby, went along in a private capacity as one of "my Lord Marquess' owne companie ... to waite upon him". Yet his being chosen to make the trip at all marks the progress of Thomas's career at Court, where, on 13 January 1550/1, he had already received a grant of lands "late of two chantries ... in Bangor cathedral and Clynnock Vaur".[22] Soon after returning with Northampton, Thomas was probably sent back to France, for when Lord Clinton was appointed on 7 October 1551 to represent the king at the christening of the future Henry III he chose as one of his party a "Mr. Brook" who it seems most likely was Thomas.[23] Clinton and his train returned to England in December, bringing with them the ratification of the marriage between Edward and the Princess Elizabeth of France;[24] they arrived just in time to join in the Christmas festivities at Court, and on Twelfth Night Thomas and Sir William appeared before the newly affianced boy king. As Edward himself reports the entertainment:

> The same night was first a play; after a talk betwen one that was called Riches, and th'other Youth, wither of them was bettir. After

some prety reasoning ther came in six champions of either side.
On Youth's side came --

My lord Fitzwater.	Sir Wiliam Cobham.
My lord Ambros [Dudley].	Mr. [Henry] Carie.
Sir Antony Brown.	Warcop.

On Riches' side.

Milord Fitzwarren.	Digbi.
Sir Robert Stafford.	Hopton.
Mr. Courtney.	Hungerforth.

Al thes fought tow to tow at barrieres, in the hall. Then cam in tow apparelled like Almaines, th'erle of Ormond and Jaques Granado; and tow cam in like friers; but the Almaines wold not suffer them to pase til they had fought. The friers were mr. Drury and Thomas Cobham. After this folowed tow maskes, on(e) of men, another of women. Then a banket of 120 dishes. This was th'end of Christmas.[25]

To Sir Thomas Chaloner, a poet and diplomat who later showed himself friendly to Sir Henry Cobham and the Marchioness of Northampton, had been committed the staging of the evening's performances, and it is probable that he wrote the dialogue which pleased the young king.[26] If it was he who chose them, Chaloner could hardly have picked more promising young men to be the champions of Youth: besides Sir William Brooke, there were on that side the future Earl of Sussex, Leicester's only open opponent at the Court of Elizabeth; the Earl of Warwick, Northumberland's eldest son and Leicester's brother; the great Roman Catholic peer of Mary's reign, Viscount Montague, one of the few of his faith who retained their eminence under that queen's sister; and Anne Boleyn's nephew, the bluff Lord Hunsdon, whom his cousin Elizabeth favoured and valued highly throughout his long life. Only Warcop is not easily identified.[27] Brooke's inclusion among such company may well reflect how high his father stood in the Edwardian world in the days of Northumberland's power.

Even at the time of the Twelfth Night festivities of 1552, however, the halcyon days of Brooke prosperity were running out, numbered by the inexorable advance of consumption in the young king. Edward VI, never strong, was seriously ill early in the new year, and, although apparently well again that summer, never regained even the fragile stamina which had seen him through his first fourteen years. "He began to fail again in the autumn. Maybe one sign of his debility was that he discontinued keeping his Journal in November 1552. Even so, those around him did not really begin to envisage his early demise until the following spring."[28] The signs of imminent death in the king were watched most anxiously by the men whose very existence depended upon their power to keep the Crown subservient to them.

Edward had been easily ruled; Mary, his half-sister and his undoubted heir under the will of their father, an embittered spinster of thirty-seven, an inflexible Roman Catholic and the first cousin of the emperor, could not be expected even to recognize their right to advise her. An alternative to Mary had to be sought, and Northumberland found her in the person of the Lady Jane Grey, eldest of the daughters of the Duke of Suffolk by the Lady Frances Brandon, niece of Henry VIII.[29] On 21 May 1553 Northumberland married the girl to his only bachelor son;[30] on 28 May the king's doctors confirmed the belief that the boy's condition was deteriorating rapidly;[31] on 12 June Edward, spurred on by Northumberland and by his own zeal to perpetuate Protestant rule in England, presented to the Council and the judiciary a draft instrument setting aside his father's will in so far as it affected the succession; and on 21 June there passed the Great Seal letters patent by which the Crown was bequeathed to "'the L' Jane and her heires masles'".[32]

On 28 April, immediately after the betrothal of the Lady Jane with Lord Guildford Dudley was announced, but before the foreign observers in London became aware of its implications, the imperial agent Jehan Scheyfve wrote to Spain, "It is believed that my Lord Cobham's son and several other gentlemen will shortly cross the sea to place themselves in the Emperor's service."[33] It was not long, however, before the error in this assumption that Cobham would place his heir at the disposal of the Princess Mary's kinsman became apparent, for the Brookes were soon seen to be deeply implicated in the chicanery by which Northumberland hoped to keep Mary from the Throne. Elizabeth Brooke had been instrumental in arranging Jane's marriage: Fuller perpetuates a story which attributes to Sir William Cecil the statement that "the match had been largely the work of the Marchioness of Northampton."[34] During that time when she was so politically active, the marchioness's brothers were constantly in her company, receiving gifts of money from her husband; the position of Sir William Brooke and Thomas must thus have been clear when, upon Edward's death, their sister became the first lady in England after the Duchesses of Suffolk and Northumberland to pay homage to the new queen.[35] Their father, with the rest of the Council, signed the letters patent bestowing upon Northumberland's daughter-in-law the succession, and there is no

suggestion that he was one of those ministers who did so only under the Lord President's coercion and who immediately afterward set themselves up in protest against him. The family thus seemed to be totally committed to Northumberland's party when, on 6 July, the king died. At once the machine designed to thwart the expected opposition of the Princess Mary was set in motion: the Council met in secret, even Petre, Cecil and Cheke, the associated Principal Secretaries, being excluded from its deliberations, and issued commands to the officials of the home counties to suppress any Roman Catholic demonstrations. Cobham signed these edicts,[36] took the oath of allegiance to Jane when, unwillingly, she came to receive the news of her accession from the Council at Syon House on 9 July, and was present when she was publicly proclaimed to the London crowds on the tenth. At least one of his sons was sworn to her service.[37] Then Cobham shifted position abruptly and just in time. On 12 July Northumberland chose him and Sir John Mason to go to the Spanish embassy to persuade the representatives of Charles V that there was no use his sending assistance to Mary, since the Protestant succession had been secured, and to inform them that the Council would not tolerate any communication between Mary and her imperial cousin. The ambassadors, however, refused to recognize the irrevocability of Northumberland's moves, and Cobham and Mason left their presence knowing that their side was by no means in uncontested possession of England. Deciding quickly, the Councillors went, not back to Northumberland, but to Barnard's Castle, where the noblemen who were holding out for Mary were ensconced.[38] This equivocal behaviour jarred Northumberland at the same time as he received news of the uprisings in Norfolk and elsewhere in Mary's behalf. Torn between the fear of betrayal among his colleagues in London, and the need of marching to meet the Catholic opposition in the country, Northumberland on 14 July left the capital at the head of an army. With him went all of his sons except the Lord Guildford Dudley, the queen's husband, and the Marquess of Northampton, who might have led the government forces himself had he not four years before proved his incapacity to command by letting himself be beaten "by a mob of Norfolk peasants".[39] Even before their leader left, the Earls of Bedford, Arundel, Shrewsbury and Pembroke, with Cobham, Mason, Petre and perhaps Cecil,

had proved correct his fears of treachery by conferring again with the imperial envoys, stressing their desire for a continuance of the Spanish alliance against the pro-French policy of the Lord President, and asking the ambassadors (whose diplomatic visas had expired with Edward VI) to defer their leaving England until matters were more settled.[40] Two days later Cobham and Mason went to the Spaniards yet again and this time, obviously determined not to commit themselves until they knew where they stood, "said not a word ... about the new Queen or the Lady Mary".[41] The Duke of Suffolk, Northumberland's lieutenant and the queen's father, did what he could to keep the Council united until a victory by the government forces over Mary's troops should allow the duke to return to London; it was no doubt because Suffolk held the Tower and spoke for Jane, the legal authority, that the Council was signing letters exhorting the Lords Lieutenant to remain loyal as late as the morning of 19 July.[42] But it was a hollow show of fidelity to a lost cause. Later on the nineteenth the Council declared for Mary. Northumberland was arrested in Cambridge, and Suffolk, tremulously alone, announced to his daughter the end of her reign before hastening off to head the Councillors in their proclamation of the new queen. As a citizen of London reports the frenzied culmination of that momentous day:

> The xix day of July was qwene Mare proclamyd qwene of England, France, and Yrland, and alle domy(ni)ons, as the syster of the late kyng Edward the vj. and doythur unto the nobull kyng Henry the viij. be-twyn v and vj of the cloke at nyght, and ther wher at proclamasyon iiij trumpeters and ij harold(s) of armes, and the erle of Arundell, the erle of Shrossbery, th'erle of Penbroke, my lord Tressorer, my lord of Preveselle, my lord Cobham, my lord Warden, master Masun, and my Lord Mare, and dyvers odur nobull men; and thys was done at the crosse in Chepe, and from that plasse thay whent unto Powlls and ther was Te Deum Laudamus, with song, and the organes playhyng, and all the belles ryngyng thrugh London, and bone-fyres, and tabuls in evere strett, and wyne and bere and alle, and evere strett full of bon-fyres, and ther was money cast a-way.[43]

On 3 August Mary Tudor entered London and the five years of her Roman Catholic rule began.

One of the first to be arrested upon the proclamation of Mary was the Marquess of Northampton, who, unlike his father-in-law, had remained loyal to Jane. He was committed to the Tower on 26 July, three days after Northumberland's transference there from the place of his apprehension in Cambridge. Sir Thomas Wyatt, Cobham's

ephew, who had been an officer in Northumberland's army, was also imprisoned, while Jane herself was put under restraint in the house of one of Lady Cobham's rigidly Catholic affinity, Sir John Brydges, her sister Dorothy's father-in-law. Cobham himself, with his family involved on both sides, got off scot free, except for losing his seat on the Council, and, while his former associates awaited their fate in the Tower, was given the honour of serving as one of the principal mourners at the funeral which the queen arranged for the late king her brother on 8 August.[44] Froude accounts Cobham one of the lords regarded by Mary as those whom, "too powerful to affront, too uncertain to be trusted as subjects, she could only attach to herself, by maintaining them in their offices and emoluments".[45] He was probably instrumental in gaining a reprieve for his son-in-law; Northampton, although condemned on 18 August to die with Northumberland, did not accompany the great conspirator to the block on the twenty-second.[46] In fact, of all Northumberland's colleagues, only two knights were executed with him; then the new government settled down to the less capital business of eradicating from the Church, the judiciary and the executive those intolerable elements which the Edwardian blend of Protestant innovation and opportunistic corruption had introduced. Cobham and his family resumed the life interrupted by their ride on Northumberland's band wagon. In November the eldest son, Sir William, was included among those who were given the general pardons customarily granted at the beginning of a reign;[47] on the last day of the calendar year Northampton was released from prison, and on 13 January 1553/4 was freely pardoned. (Elizabeth Brooke's marriage had been declared invalid by act of Parliament, so that, until the accession of Elizabeth, five years later, she had no position at Court.[48] The annulment had been anticipated from the first days of Mary's reign; on 27 August 1553, after Northampton's reprieve had been granted, the Spanish ambassador wrote to Charles V that it "is believed that the Marquis ... may receive his pardon on condition that he shall take back his first wife and put away the daughter of Lord Cobham."[49] Northampton does not seem to have fulfilled the first of these requirements, and Anne Bourchier, who survived him and died in 1571, never again had a reputable place in Tudor society.) Sir Thomas Wyatt and his step-father, Sir Edward Warner (whom Cobham's sister had married after the poet's death), men

who had supported Northumberland to the last, also went unmolested. The day before the declaration of the amnesty which included Sir William Brooke, on 13 November, the Lady Jane, her husband and two of her brothers-in-law were sentenced to die, but the condemnation was probably regarded among those intimate with the government's policy as a public measure upon which the queen did not intend to act. Only Archbishop Cranmer, condemned at the same time, was to suffer.[50] For a period which was to leave an indelible impression upon English minds as a time of blood, the reign of Mary Tudor thus began with remarkable moderation. Had the conspirators of the last days of Edward VI accepted the failure of their plot, there might never have been need for the queen's forbearance to alter. It was not in the nature of the Brookes and their allies, however, once they had been at the centre of affairs, to rest content in the backwaters of public life. Early in the new year, provoked by Mary's determination to marry Philip of Spain, they reunited their forces in a mad attempt to unseat the Catholic monarchy.

* * *

Chapter VI

Lord Cobham's power was such that when, on 14 August 1553, writs of summons were issued to the first Marian Parliament, the government had, however reluctantly, to include him among the peers whose presence was required at Westminster on 5 October.[1] When Parliament met it was immediately apparent that its chief business would be the marriage of the queen. It had been clear from the moment when the spinster of thirty-seven ascended the Throne that the succession could be assured and the turbulent kingdom reduced again to order only if the queen were at once matched with a suitable consort. As early as September the emperor had offered his son and heir as a husband for his cousin; almost at once, however, Mary's Council had proposed another cousin for her consideration, this one an Englishman, Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire. The queen herself was fascinated by all which she had heard of Philip of Spain, and her desire for him was assiduously whetted by Simon Renard, the imperial ambassador, who was her only confidant. No one else in England shared her infatuation; the only encouragement which she received from her ministers came from the reascendant Lord Paget, who perceived

the value of contriving an Anglo-Spanish alliance against France and who was willing to consider the match with the prince if sureties of English independence could be arranged. Paget's conditional acquiescence in the queen's wishes was regarded as contemptible time-serving by his colleagues; they wanted none of Philip, seeing in him only the embodiment of a foreign and papal threat, and some of them threatened to leave the royal service if Mary brought him into England. Even Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester and Mary's Lord Chancellor, a minister intent on reversing the work of the Reformation and therefore one who might have been expected to support the cause of the future Most Catholic King, was swayed by personal affection to endorse the candidacy of Courtenay. Everyone in the government, then, viewed with consternation the scene in Parliament on 10 November when Mary, having heard the Speaker read the Commons' petition that she choose a husband from among her own subjects, suddenly rose and furiously reprimanded the unfortunate mouth-piece of her people for presuming to advise her upon so personal a matter. Her public rejection of even so tactfully expressed a suggestion that she marry Courtenay was tantamount to announcing that, despite her government, despite the desperate threats of the French to declare war if she allied England with their enemy, despite the will of the English nation itself, she would have her prince.

Cobham's position throughout the autumn of 1553 is not known. One can, however, assume that he was with the majority in preferring Courtenay to the Spaniard; the need for radical realignment within the Council and the Lords did not become apparent until the new year, so that the baron must not yet have linked his fortunes with those of the ostracized Paget, with whom, despite their ostensible differences in religion, he was later to be associated. Cobham's hopes must therefore have been dashed by Mary's hysterical outburst in November; if he did not at once determine upon some course of opposition to the queen's marriage with a prince from whom, as a prominent Northumbrian, he could have expected little favour, he must soon have seen that some action was required. For on 6 December the sullen Parliament was dissolved; early in January an unwelcome embassy from the emperor arrived at Westminster; and, with a haste dictated by the queen's desire to marry

before Lent, the treaty uniting her with Philip was concluded.[2] The final blow to Protestant hopes fell on 15 January when the Lord Chancellor, summoning to him the Lord Mayor and aldermen of London, told them officially that the queen had decided to marry Prince Philip of Spain.[3]

Reaction to the news was immediate. On the night of the Chancellor's announcement, the French ambassador, Noailles, wrote to his master that England was ready to rise in rebellion. Noailles had himself met with the conspirators who were to lead the insurrection, and in his letter he named them. Cobham he did not mention, but prominent in the list of names were, besides the Earl of Devonshire and the Duke of Suffolk and his brothers the Greys, those of the baron's three most influential relatives. These were his son-in-law, Northampton, his brother-in-law, Sir Edward Warner, and his nephew, Sir Thomas Wyatt.[4] With his nephew, although Noailles apparently did not know it, Cobham had either already made or was about to make a secret agreement.

The ambassador saw no reason why the rebels should fail: with French assistance, they could take the West Country, Wales and Kent; the midland counties would fall to the Greys; and London, where anti-Spanish demonstrations had already taken place, would capitulate when converged upon from all sides. The unhappy Privy Council was too far divided by the past careers of its members to be reconciled even by its common disinclination to serve a foreign king. The French view of the situation was, however, unsound. It neglected the important fact that the plot was largely the work of the discredited followers of the Duke of Northumberland, men who reminded the people only of the days when England was ruled by corrupt adventurers. The inability of the rebel leaders in the West to raise support for their cause was demonstrated even before Noailles's optimistic letter can have reached Paris, for Sir Peter Carew and his brother, when they rose prematurely in Devon, found themselves so utterly alone that they had to flee for their lives to France.[5]

The early dispersion of the rebellion in the West was not, however, so vital a blow to the conspirators' hopes as might at first have been thought. For, just as it pointed out to the French king the weaknesses in his ambassador's report, it

served as a useful purge of some of the more unacceptable elements in the plot. Immediately the Carews' flight proclaimed their guilt, the other prominent colleagues of Northumberland were put under close surveillance: Northampton and Warner were confined to their houses, officers stood by to arrest the Duke of Suffolk and his brothers upon the slightest provocation, and Courtenay, protected from the consequences of his indiscretion by Gardiner's affection for him, was got out of the way by the government's preparing him for an embassy to Brussels. Against Sir Thomas Wyatt, however, no action could be taken, for positive proof of his complicity in the affair was lacking, and none of the Kentish officials could be relied upon to bring him up to Court on mere suspicion. Thus only the Kentish leader, Cobham's sister's son, was left completely free to act, and became, by the elimination of his more prominent fellows, the acknowledged spokesman of the nation's dissatisfaction with the queen's plans.

Wyatt was, although only about thirty-five years old,[6] already well known both as the son of a famous father and as the companion of the poet Earl of Surrey; he was, moreover, despite his support of Northumberland, a popular figure, whose patriotism never seems to have been doubted.[7] Although the curtailment of the liberty of his step-father and the marquess in mid-January doubtless altered his plans, Wyatt saw that his own stand as an impartial defender of English independence was enhanced by the public knowledge that they had been removed from his counsels. He had hoped to postpone the putting of his popularity to the test until Philip and his detested Spaniards should actually have arrived in England, so that the people's expected surge of resentment against the foreigner might then coincide with his presentation of himself as their spokesman. The apprehension of his colleagues forced him into premature action, yet he did not panic.[8] Rather, he set about convincing the Kentish gentry of the justice of his cause in as calm a manner as possible. One of these country gentlemen, Anthony Norton, later recounted how his support had been enlisted.[8a] On Monday, 22 January, while the government in London was going ahead with its drive against the remnants of Northumberland's party by arraigning the duke's son, the future Earl of Leicester,[9] Wyatt sent word to Norton that he would like to see him next day at Allington Castle,

Wyatt's seat on the Medway near Maidstone. Accordingly, Norton went "yn y^{e} mornynge to Alyngtō castell wher he foūde m^{r} wyat yn hys parlo^{r} syttynge by y^{e} fyre". Wyatt received him graciously, proposed to him that he join a party which would preserve the commonwealth from foreign rule, and, when Norton protested that he himself could do little because of Lord Abergavenny's control of the area in which he lived, assured him that almost all Kent was rising and that Abergavenny could hardly hope to hold out against such a movement. Besides, Abergavenny might not even attempt to resist the popular tide. Three other gentlemen came into the room at this point, momentarily interrupting the knight's persuasive conversation with Norton, and then, addressing all four of his visitors, Wyatt went on to summarize the situation. Kent was his primary objective; once possessed of it, he would march on London and, while the government's attention was turned upon him, the Suffolk faction would be enabled to rouse the Midlands, Sir James Croft take Wales, and the whole country fall into insurrection. Therefore, Wyatt's visitors were told, it was essential that they concentrate on their own county, the securing of which was fundamental to the success of the whole undertaking. Of the Kentish magnates only Sir Thomas Cheney, the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, was known to be unshakable in his loyalty to Mary. Cheney's inevitable opposition would, however, be unimportant if Sir Robert Southwell could be brought round to their side, for Southwell was an extremely influential figure in the county and was that year sheriff; he would, moreover, be seconded in all he did by his wife's first cousin, Lord Abergavenny.[10] Southwell had been vociferous in his Parliamentary opposition to the marriage, and many expected that, thwarted at Westminster, he might oppose Philip by less constitutional means. Norton stated later that Wyatt, who was not on good terms personally with the sheriff, asked each of his guests in turn "how thynke yow by m^{r} southwell;" their replies he did not record, but apparently they encouraged the rebel leader to hope, for the next day he wrote a letter in which he told Southwell that, "whatsoever private quarrel you have to me, I doubt not but your wisdom is too much, seeing so many perils at hand to us both (this pretensed Marriage ... taking effect), to dissent from us in so necessary a purpose as wherein we now determine to enter for the common wealth of the

whole realm." The letter concluded with the simple assertion of what was common knowledge: "We forbear to write to the Lord Abergavenny; for what you may do with him, if you list, we know."[11]

It was in discussing the probable allegiance of another Kentishman that Wyatt and his guests at Allington on 23 January most clearly revealed how powerful was the support which they expected to receive, and how closely connected was their cause with that of the late Northumberland. "M^{r} Wyat sayde unto them," Norton declared, curiously dissociating himself from the treasonable conversation, "y^{t} my lorde Cobame had sent hym [Wyatt] worde y^{t} his iij sones shoulde go w^{t} him & shoulde haue his ayde. Answer wasse made," apparently by the three unnamed gentlemen, "Y^{t} suche sendynge wasse y^{e} castynge a way of y^{e} duke [Northumberland] & sayde y^{t} ther lyueys ware as deer unto them as my lords wasse to hym. Wher for sayde they let hym go hym selfe & set hys fotte by them as well." Wyatt had kept his uncle's good wishes secret until this time; it was not until a week later that it was rumoured openly at Court that Cobham might be disloyal, by which time the insurrection was well under way. Even then no one was sure where Cobham stood; the experienced Marquess of Winchester, writing to Sir William Petre on 31 January, summed up the general uncertainty concerning the baron by saying, "I am sory of the newes spoken of my lord cobhm̃ but I trust they be not trew ffor if they be then was it done with his consent as I thinke."[12] In other words, Cobham either was the unfortunate uncle and father of rebels, valiantly maintaining his own loyalty to the queen despite his natural inclination to help them, or the secret instigator of treason among men less experienced and less responsible than himself. On 23 January, when all was still peaceful in Kent, Anthony Norton must have gone home at the end of his interview with Wyatt convinced that Cobham was behind their cause; within a few days he had reason to suspect that both he and Wyatt had been misled.

Following the meeting at Allington, Wyatt kept his intentions hidden from the public for only a day. During that day he wrote his letter to Southwell and received a disdainful verbal answer, communicated to him by the bearer of his letter. The sheriff notified him that, "to press his Sovereign, in any suit or

upon any occasion, with weapon and armour, by stirring her subjects to rebellion; that is, and always hath been, accounted the part of the most arrogant and presumptuous traitors." Southwell left no doubt that he would have nothing to do with the rebels, and promised that he would, "God willing, provide for them accordingly."[13] Certain now that Southwell and Abergavenny, as well as the Lord Warden, were to be his local opponents, Wyatt at last declared himself, publishing at Maidstone "in the market time" on Thursday, 25 January, an earnest manifesto. The proclamation, ostensibly the production of himself and two other knights, Sir George Harper and Sir Henry Isley, from whom, with "divers of the best of the Shire", it was addressed "unto the commons of the same", had a certain rough eloquence:

> Forasmuche as it is now spred abrode, & certainly pronounced by the lorde Chauncelour and other of the counsell, of the Quenes determinate pleasure to marry w^t a straũger: &ce. we therfore write vnto you, because you bee oure neighbours, because you be our frendes, and because you be Englishemen, that you wyll ioyne with vs, as we wil with you vnto death in this behalfe, protestyng vnto you before God, that no other yearthly cause could moue vs vnto this enterprise, but this alone, wherein we seke no harme to the quene, but better counsel & coũselours, which also we would haue forborne in all other thinges saue onely in this. For herein lieth the helth & welth of vs al. For trial herof & manyfest profe of this intended purpose: Lo now euen at hand, Spaniardes be nowe already ariued at Douer, at one passage to the nombre of an hundreth passing vpwarde to London, in companie of ten, foure and vi. with harnes, harquebusses and morrians [helmets] with match light[ed], the formest company wherof be already at Rochester. We shall require you therfore to repaire to such places as the bearers hereof shal pronoũce vnto you, there to assemble & determine what may be best for y^e aduauncement of libertie and commen wealth in this behalfe, & to bryng with you suche ayde as you may.[14]

The effect of the proclamation was immediate. Wyatt took horse for Rochester, where he established himself to wait for his supporters. Fantastic reports reached London: in the Tower, a prisoner who was keeping a journal of the troubled first years of Queen Mary wrote

> that the xxv^th of January the counsell was certyfyed that ther was uppe in Kent sir Thomas Wyat, mr. Cullpepper, the lorde Cobham, who had taken his castell of Coulyng, and the lord warden, who had taken the castell of Dover, and sir Henry Isely in Meddeston, sir James Croftes, mr. Harper, mr. Newton [sic: Norton], mr. Knevet, for the said quarrell, in resysting the said king [sic] of Spayne, as they said, ther pretence was this only and non other, and partely for moving certayn counsellours from about the quene.[15]

The Council knew that no such widespread defection from the queen had yet taken

place. That the faithful Lord Warden, Cheney, should have been reported a rebel; that Sir James Croft, who had fled upon the discovery of the Carews' plot into Wales, should have been listed among the men rising in Kent; and that the insurgent Thomas Brooke should have been confused with his father, indicate just how wide of the mark the diarist's information was. Yet the government was seriously disturbed, and a messenger was sent to Suffolk's house to demand the duke's instant appearance at Court. Suffolk, forewarned by Wyatt of his determination to rise that day, was already dressed to go out when the messenger arrived; assuring the man that he was on his way to the queen, the duke sent him on ahead, dispatched a servant to alert the Lords John and Thomas Grey, his brothers, and then rode off for his life toward Leicestershire.[16] The Council, taught a lesson by Suffolk's escape, immediately ordered the closer confinement of the other Northumbrians who had been under house arrest, so that the next morning "ther was [brought] into the Tower as prysoners the lord marquess and sir Edwarde Warner knight."[17]

On Friday, 26 January, when Northampton and Warner entered the Tower (of which Warner had himself been Lieutenant from October 1552 until 28 July 1553),[18] Londoners received more positive news of what was happening a few miles to the east than that which had reached them the day before. The merchant tailor, Henry Machyn, records that,

> the xxvj day of January began wachyng at evere gatt in arness, for tydyngs cam the sam tym to the quen and her consell that ser Thomas Wyatt, ser George Harper, ser Hare Ysseley, master Cobam, and master Rudston, and master Knevetts, and dyvers odur gentyllmen and commons, wher up, and tha say because the prynche of Spayne commyng in to have owre quen, for they kepe Rochaster castell and the bryge and odur plases.[19]

Neither in Machyn's diary nor in that of the observer in the Tower is the Brooke who was known to be among the first to rebel identified as Thomas; subsequent events, however, indicate that Thomas was more deeply involved in the rising than were his brothers, and Machyn's placing his name after, not among, those of the knights who rose indicates that it was he and not Cobham's eldest son, Sir William, whose treason both diarists meant to record.

As reports continued to pour in on Friday, and as the Council dithered inde-

cisively, the queen applied to the corporation of London for forces to defend both her and the city itself, and on Saturday, 27 January, she was given 600 men, nicknamed 'white coats', whom she put under command of the old Duke of Norfolk.[20] Before she could dispatch them into Kent, Mary, whom the Council had kept as ignorant as possible of exactly what was happening, was certified of the seriousness of the situation by the treatment which her herald received at Rochester. Wyatt met the messenger whom the queen had sent at a point outside the town, and, with scant courtesy, heard him offer "promise of pardon to as many as would retire to their houses within four and twenty hours after the Proclamation, and become good subjects. But Wyat would not suffer his soldiers in anywise to hear it, nor any other Proclamation coming from the Queen," and, dismissing the man, announced his refusal to settle the rebels' quarrel with the Crown by anything but a trial of arms.[21] When, therefore, Mary sent Norfolk off on Saturday night, she did so knowing that upon him and her few Kentish supporters rested almost all of her hopes of keeping her Throne.

Norfolk went straight to Gravesend, from which he wrote to the Council late on Sunday night.[22] By then there had been other important occurrences. Late the previous day Sir Henry Isley and the Knevets, having stormed Penshurst and rifled the loyal Sir Henry Sidney's armoury, had issued a proclamation at Tonbridge declaring Abergavenny and Southwell "to be traitors to God, the Crown, and the common wealth";[23] at the same time, in West Malling, these 'traitors' had published an appeal to the people to resist the rebels, with such persuasiveness that the sheriff's hearers "with one voice defied Wyat and his complices as arrant traitors".[24] In the enthusiasm generated by the popular response to their addresses, the loyal troops led by Southwell and Abergavenny had set upon Isley's men on Wrotham Hill and so routed them that, when one of the Knevets raced to Wyatt with the alarming news, one of the chief rebels had left his leader's side.[25] Thus Norfolk was able to write to the Council that, "where as George harp did sende before to m^{r} vicechamberlaine to haue his pdon as I dowte wol ye knowe by the p^{r}porte of the said m^{r} vicechamberlaines lre, This night at v of the clock, the said S^{r} George harp arryued here, and is stollen frome the rebells." Harper's advice was that the duke advance at once upon Wyatt, who was shaken by Isley's

unexpected defeat, but Norfolk was not yet sure how far he could trust the turncoat.

The news of Harper's defection was the only encouragement which the queen received from Gravesend that Sunday. Norfolk had found little support waiting for him when he arrived there late in the afternoon, only Lord Cobham, Sir Henry Jerningham (the Vice-Chamberlain) and Sir John Fogge, "w^{t}out any cũpany, savynge suche, as the same vicechamberlaine & ffogge brought w^{t} them, not passinge CCC". Moreover, confirmation of the suspicion that Wyatt's purpose was more devious than it appeared had been received in London while the duke was still marching toward Gravesend. This was an incriminating packet from the French ambassador, Noailles, intended for Henry II, which was intercepted and found to contain a copy of a letter which the Princess Elizabeth had sent on 26 January to the queen, excusing herself from coming to Court because of illness. The letter had saved Elizabeth from instant arrest; the discovery of its duplicate in Noailles's bag could be interpreted as proof of her treasonable complicity with Wyatt and be used to destroy her. Gardiner, in whose opinion the Protestant princess was a constant threat to his religion and to his mistress's Crown, determined to make all that he could of it. Only the difficulty of the cipher in which Noailles's covering letter was written prevented the chancellor from at once learning that Wyatt and the French were in league to place Elizabeth on the Throne. Even without such proof, however, Gardiner was able to write meaningfully to Sir William Petre, within minutes of receiving the packet on Saturday night, that the princess's letter of excuse to her sister "is taken a matter worthy to be sent into France".[26]

Lord Cobham was in part responsible for the interception of the French correspondence, as he revealed in a letter which he and Jerningham sent to the Council on Sunday afternoon. It was dated at Gravesend, where the men were awaiting Norfolk's arrival, and recounted how "a frenche post that is calid nicolaus lepetit w^{ch} tooke his post horse at grenewiche and cam not the Rode wey to Rochest^{r} but went about ... was taken by o^{r} skowltes w^{thin} a myle & half of Rochest^{r} who had abowt him dyu^{r}s lettres w^{ch} we have sent to yo^{r} Lordshipps."[27] Indeed, from this time onward, Cobham exerted himself greatly in the queen's

cause, apparently turning his back upon Wyatt, his sons and the other rebels. His behaviour, once the rebellion had broken out, was so impeccable that it is impossible to know whether his loyalty was real or feigned. It is not unlikely that the unexpected swiftness with which his nephew declared himself caught Cobham unawares, that he had been trying to decide whether or not he should commit himself to so desperate an undertaking and had not been given time to reach a rational decision when circumstances decided for him. A letter which he received from Wyatt on Sunday night, after he had met Norfolk at Gravesend, suggests that the rebels then still expected his support. Wyatt must have written it before the news of Isley's defeat reached Rochester, for his tone is arrogant and assured:

> My Lorde you vnderstande in what state we now are thankes be geuen to god. I am right sorye that you are so far behinde hande, yet I will not forsake you in this ioy but wolde wishe you to be ptenar of the same. I pray you be her to morowe for we will march then to london....
>
> Your frend and cosyn
> THOMAS WIAT.
>
> I pray you take some order for the taking of the Duke, wherso that he be betwen this and london, wherin you shall gratifye the state of the realme.[28]

If, however, the letter suggests a previous understanding between the two men, which Wyatt still hoped that Cobham would honour, Cobham's reaction to it indicates that he had at last made up his mind not to do so. For when, after conferring with Norfolk early next morning, he returned to Cooling Castle to find that a spy from Wyatt had been there in his absence, Cobham immediately sent reports of the new development to both Norfolk and the queen herself. Enclosed in the account which Mary received was Wyatt's letter of the night before.

To suggest, as has been done here, that Cobham was honestly perplexed about what to do in the two weeks before Norfolk's arrival at Gravesend is a legitimate interpretation of the known facts. Yet one can also view the baron's course as one of clever duplicity, As a veteran of the Northumbrian school of politics, Cobham would have been quite capable of encouraging his nephew to revolt, and of seeing that his sons were made sufficient partakers in their cousin's endeavour that the Brookes would profit from the rebellion should it succeed, while himself playing safe by remaining in the queen's service. The possibility of such deviousness cannot be discounted, even if it cannot be proved.

Once he determined to put the treasonable communication from Wyatt of 28 January into the queen's hands, to do with it as she would or could, Cobham seems to have used all of his skill and experience in Mary's behalf. His letter to Norfolk, which begins with an indication of the method used by the rebels to stir up the people under the very noses of their betters, is full of good advice for dealing with the immediate situation. "Pleasith yt youre grace to be adu'tysyd," the baron began,

> Wiat, pceyuyng of my depture sente an espiall vnto my house. When he kam ther, my Stewarde[29] pceyuing that he talkyd and whisperyd emongste my Tenauntes, toke hym apte into his chamber and ther examynyd hym and serched hym & founde a letter vpon hym, wherin is declaryd that bothe pentioners [the Gentlemen Pensioners, the sovereign's personal guard] garde and Londoners wolde tak suche pte as he dyd, and also trusting that his cosyns [the Brookes][30] wolde not se his bolde [undertaking] perishe. It may please yo^{r} grace, if he be not goone this mornyng he intendith to fight yt out, for he makethe rekonyng of the said pẽtioners, Garde & londoners w^{t} diu^{r}se other of yo^{r} company. Therfor my opynion is, that youre grace be not to fowarde vnto such tyme yo^{r} company come together, and that [Sir George] harpar do not practise to moche with some other, beseching youre grace to sende me worde ye will remove this day or not, & whether ye will I bring my men vnto yo^{r} grace to gravisend for I haue no weapons for them, but a fewe blackbilles.[31]

The letter, with its oblique but unmistakable reference to Wyatt's confidence that his cousins -- the writer's own sons -- would not fail him, its insinuations about the loyalty of the 'white coats', its suggestion that it might have been a mistake to pardon and to go on to trust Harper, its insistence that Cobham be told of any intended moves, undoubtedly perplexed Norfolk. He would have been very gullible indeed if he had not doubted Cobham's sincerity, yet he could not afford entirely to disregard his advice, since the baron was his only powerful colleague within immediate reach. The position was difficult for a man of eighty, who was, in the opinion of his contemporary, John Proctor, although "an ancient and worthy Captain ... yet, by long imprisonment, ... diswonted from the knowlege of our malicious World and the iniquity of our Time".[32] Feeling himself forced to decide quickly, Norfolk made the wrong choice; after writing to the Council to inform them that he was setting out to storm Rochester (although "I thinke it wilbe harde ..., howe be it we shall do the best we can"),[33] he left Gravesend within an hour of receiving Cobham's letter, without sending word to Cooling and without testing the fidelity either of Harper or of his men. The result of his error of

judgement was soon known, for later on the same day, when Cobham wrote to the queen to tell her of what he had before informed the duke, he also had news of a defeat to impart. Recounting his instructions to Norfolk to let him know when he intended to move out of Gravesend, Cobham related how,

> restyng vppon his ferther adu'tysem^{t} therin he [the duke] contrary to his former determynacõn w^{t} me, m^{r}ched w^{t} his small power towardes Rochester immedyatly after my depture from hym, not sendyng me eny knowledge therof vntill he was almost at Rochester And I beyng then in a redynes when the messynger came I forthw^{t} w^{t} all sped made to hym but before I was half wey I was adu'tysed that his men had forsaken hym & were fledde to the rebelles so that his power beyng gon he was compelled to retyre & I heryng therof retyred also to my castell agen.[34]

Harper had, in fact, betrayed Norfolk, and had seduced Alexander Brett, the chief captain of the 'white coats'; the old duke had marched a force to Rochester which put itself under Wyatt's orders as soon as they reached the town.[35]

Cobham concluded his letter with an asseveration to do Mary's pleasure "accordyng to my allegeaunce w^{ch} I shall contynually beare vnto yo^{r} highnes" and with a prayer "to god for the p's'uacõn of yo^{r} ma^{tie} w^{t} the vyctory ou^{r} yo^{r} enemyes". That same night of 29 January the Spanish ambassadors, who apparently learned at once of everything which occurred, wrote to the emperor to tell him how Cobham, "who was suspected for having fortified a house of his and because he was connected with Wyatt," had given satisfactory assurance to the queen "that what he has done is all in her favour".[36] The news from Kent left her no choice but to accept any offer of help: that same letter of Cobham's caused her to summon Simon Renard to her side, to inform him of Wyatt's plan to march on London. "She was quite bewildered, she said, especially as she had no men-at-arms about her, nor anyone whom she could trust. Worst of all, shecould not bring her Council to the point of providing a guard for her person." Her only hope lay in the emperor's immediate dispatch of Spanish troops to protect her.[37] Mary was not exaggerating her predicament. Her ministers, who had at first regarded Wyatt as an energetic spokesman of the same feelings which they had themselves expressed in their verbal remonstrances with the queen, had kept her powerless to silence him until he had made his point. As the rebellion gathered momentum, however, and especially as word reached them of the defection from Norfolk of the mercenary London bands, the Council realized that they had miscalculated, and that the move-

ment which they had encouraged by their inactivity was threatening to overwhelm them. Paget, who had once cautiously backed the queen in the hope of gaining her confidence, but whose support had become superfluous when she determined to go ahead on her own, could hope for little from restored Northumbrian rule. Gardiner, aware that a victory for Wyatt might well mean the substitution of Elizabeth for Mary on the Throne, could hope for even less. They shifted, therefore, when the news of the collapse of Norfolk's power reached them, from a policy of wait and see (or, rather, of wait and let the queen see), to one almost of every man for himself. Neither attitude of her ministers took into account Mary's personal defence.

The Council's belated recognition of the seriousness of their situation coincided with Wyatt's decision to move immediately upon London. Despite his declared intention in his letter to Lord Cobham, the rebel leader had not meant to set out for the capital on 29 January; he and his lieutenants had decided that they should first protect themselves from attack in the rear by rounding up Southwell and Abergavenny. The desertion of Norfolk's men, however, had proved to be a precedent: support for the sheriff and the baronat once dwindled to such an extent that Sir Thomas Cheney was soon writing from the Dover area that he was the only loyal leader still in the field.[38] It had begun to seem that it would be a waste of time to pursue already beaten opponents, and, besides, the cupidity of Wyatt's new allies the 'white coats' would not tolerate delay. "Having the spoil of London in their eyes," the mercenaries advised an immediate march on the city, "'For London,' said they, 'longed sore ... for their coming; which they could by no means protract without breeding great peril and weakness to themselves.' ... Wyat, savouring full well their disposition, and understanding their meaning by their arguments, and knowing also that without his assenting thereto he could not long have their company, yielded to their counsel."[39] On Tuesday, 30 January, the rebels moved out of Rochester.

There was, however, one piece of unfinished business from which not even the importunity of the 'white coats' could distract Wyatt. All three of his Brooke cousins were now with him, Thomas apparently having been joined late the previous

day by Sir William and George, the sons who Cobham had told the queen were with him at Gravesend when Wyatt's spy had come to Cooling in search of them. Their father, following Norfolk's sorry retreat, was holed up in his castle. Wyatt, in his "hault corage and pryde", was determined to encounter his uncle once more, face to face. So, on Tuesday morning, the rebel leader marched

> in great pomp and glory, carrying with him six pieces of ordnance which they had gotten of the Queen's, besides their own, to Cowling Castle, a hold of the Lord Cobham's four miles distant from Rochester; and not much out of their way towards London: where the Lord Cobham was.
> Wyat at his coming to Cowling Castle, bent his ordnance against the gate; and with great and sundry shots and fire brake and burned up a way through the gate. The Lord Cobham defended his Castle as stoutly as any man might do, having so few against so great a number; and so little munition; ... himself discharging his gun at such as approached the gate right hardily. And in that assault two of his own men were slain.
> After this assault, and talk with the Lord Cobham, Wyat marched to Gravesend; where he reposed that night.[40]

The scene within the castle is vividly recreated in a letter which Cobham wrote later in the day to the queen, a letter so redolent of his desperate need to assure Mary of his fidelity to her despite the disloyalty of his nephew and his sons that it must be quoted in full.

> It may please yo^{r} most excellent ma^{tie} to be aduertysed that this day at xj of the clok Wyat w^{t} his hole force of ij m^{l} men & aboue removed from Rochester & approched to my castell assaltyng the same in most forcyble manner they could but I declaryng my true subiection towards yo^{r} highnes & callyng theym traytours made to theym defyaunce resystyng their force & defendyng my castell w^{t} suche power as I had vntill v of the clok at after none havyng no other munycõns or wepons but iiij or v handgones iiij pykes and the rest blakbylls the fault wherof I may well ascrybe vnto yo^{r} graces offycers of the bulwerks & shyps makyng ernest request as well to my lord of Norffolk as to theym for the same howbeit I could neu^{r} get none. The rebells pceyvyng that I was bent to resyst theym havyng ij grat peces of ordynance that the Duke of Norffolk left emong theym at his retyre layd batery to the gate of the castell & also did fyre the same & layd foure other peces to another syde of the castell w^{ch} did so sore batre the castell & the gates that w^{t}out that they could neuer haue prevayled at w^{ch} assault iiij or v of my men were slayne & dyuers hurt w^{ch} did so discorage the comons that I had theryn assembled for the seruyce of yo^{r} highnes that they begonne to mutney & whisper one to another. And I their standyng in defence at the gates w^{t} my sonnes ageynst them in a doubtfull assalt vntill my gates w^{t} the drawebryges were so batred and fyred down that they were redy to invade me I pceyvyng behynde me both my men to shrynk from & my shote to be wasted was then compelled to yeld where if power had seruyd to my true hart & seruyce towards yo^{r} highnes I wold haue dyed in yo^{r} graceis quarell. If yo^{r} grace theirfore will assemble suche force in convenyent tyme as were able to encounter w^{t} so fewe in nomber beyng not aboue ij m^{l} & yet not v^{c} of theym able & good armed men but rascalls & rakehells as lyve be spoyle I doubt not but yo^{r} grace shall haue the vyctory of

theym so that they be guyded & man handled by suche an approued Captayne as can discretely lede theym. They inforced me to promyse theym uppon myne hono^{r} to be w^{t} theym tomorowe at Grauesend yet not w^{t}standyng I will remayne faythfull in hart towards yo^{r} highnes aduertysyng yo^{r} grace fro tyme to tyme of their procedyngs. And for better tryall of my good seruyce towards yo^{r} highnes to be don unfaynedly yea and more effectually then I haue wryten it may please yo^{r} grace to send some one whom yo^{r} grace shall appoynt to viewe my house whereby yo^{r} grace shall vnderstand that I haue as well in this as in all other yo^{r} graces former comaundments shewed my self as true & redy seruyteur towards yo^{r} highnes. Although I vnderstand I haue byn otherwise reported to yo^{r} highnes wherin my doyngs & the contrey shall vtter & witenes the truth as my conscyence hath inwardly ment good fayth towards yo^{r} grace w^{ch} I shall so contynually beare whiles lyfe doth last. Thus makyng my contynuall prayer for the preseruacõn of yo^{r} highnes w^{t} strenght & fortune to subdue yo^{r} enemyes I most humbly take my leaue of yo^{r} grace ffrom Cowlyng Castell in hast the xxxth of January 1553[/4].

Yo^{r} graces most humble & true subiect & seruant to thend
G. COBHAM.[41]

The letter is addressed "To the Quenes most excellent maiestie hast hast post hast with all dyligence possible for the lyfe for the lyfe".

How convinced the queen was by this almost pathetic account of Cobham's loyalty it is impossble to say. The day after his castle fell the baron must have gone as he had promised to Gravesend, and marched with Wyatt to Dartford; on that day it was openly said at Court that he had joined the rebels.[42] Thursday was a day of great activity: Wyatt was, rather belatedly, "proclamyd traytur and rebellyous, and all ys fellowes, agaynst the Quen('s) mageste and her consell", and Mary herself went in state to the Guildhall, where she so swayed the city fathers with her appeal to them to defend her and themselves against the onslaught of 'ruffians' that within a day she had 25,000 men at her disposal. The rebels thus reached Greenwich to find that the popular tide was suddenly turning against them.[43] It was while Wyatt delayed at Greenwich, considering what his chances were of taking the capital, that Lord Cobham finally managed to leave the rebels. On 3 February a lawyer wrote to a friend in the country that, as the rebels were determining to enter Southwark, "the Lord Cobham did come on message from them or Wyat on Candlemas day in the morning, and that he is now committed to the Tower of London for his labour."[44] This account is probably correct; perhaps Wyatt thought that his uncle might be able to persuade the Council that resistance to him was useless, and so allowed him to leave the rebel camp. For whatever reason, Cobham certainly reached London at midnight on Thursday, and was let across the bridge in the first

minutes of 2 February. In the morning he was brought before the queen's ministers, many of whom were his former colleagues. At first the Council was unsure of what to do with him; its uncertainty is demonstrated by his provisional commitment to the Earl of Pembroke's house, for Pembroke, although the queen had just appointed him Captain General of the city forces, was also the imprisoned Northampton's brother-in-law and a man who did not definitely decide for Mary until five days later.[45] By Friday afternoon, however, the government had determined not to let the baron out of its sight again, and he was taken to the Tower "as an abettor of treason".[46]

For Cobham himself the rebellion was thus over on 2 February. His sons, however, were still with Wyatt. From the official action afterward taken against Sir William, George and Thomas, there is no doubt that all three of them followed their cousin to the end, although Thomas's part in the undertaking was infinitely more notorious than that of either of his brothers, and George's so unimportant that it was often forgotten even at the time. Thus the observer in the Tower, whose account of Cobham's movements between the time he left the rebels and that when he was imprisoned has been used here, says that the baron left "his ij sones with Mr. Wyat", and later, when the rebellion had been crushed, the Spanish ambassador informed the emperor that Cobham's "two sons were taken prisoners."[47] However, all three Brookes had been promised to Wyatt when he named his supporters to Anthony Norton on 23 January, and all three were prepared for arraignment when the trials of the traitors were held in February. One may be sure that Thomas Brooke had both of his older brothers with him when he marched with their cousin from Greenwich to Southwark on Saturday, 3 February, received with him there the news of the defeat of the Duke of Suffolk in the Midlands and along the Severn border, and paused once more to consider whether their now unsupported rebellion could succeed.[48] While Wyatt still hesitated, on 4 February, "Old Cobham came to the Queen ... to beg her pardon because some of his sons were with the rebels. He departed promising faithfully to serve her."[49] It was a time when Mary needed all the service offered her, although she could not accept that of a suspected traitor in the Tower, for the next day the rebels moved to Kingston and

that night, "without either resistance or peril, marched over the bridge towards London".[50] A few hours later, in the early morning of Ash Wednesday, the queen was awakened at Whitehall to find that the pre-Lenten period during which she might have been married to Philip was over, and that the men who had prevented her from having her will were pouring into her capital. She sent for Renard, who must have been almost the only prominent Spaniard left in London of all the ambassadors who had been there a week before,[51] and asked him whether she should stay to face the rebels, or flee. Renard counselled her to remain, and the last-minute decision of Pembroke, with that of his colleague Lord Clinton, to support her, convinced the queen of the justness of her friend's advice. Mary ensconced herself in "the Gallery by the Gatehouse" of her palace;[52] Pembroke, Clinton, Lord Admiral Howard, Sir Maurice Berkeley, Sir John Gage and Sir Thomas Cornwallis, with the ineffectual Courtenay of Devonshire tagging reluctantly behind, went out to fight her battle; and Wyatt's rebellion reached its pathetic climax.[53]

Much has been written about the straggling, shifting encounter which took place in the streets between Hyde Park Corner, Charing Cross and Whitehall on 7 February 1553/4; all of it shows only how ill matched were Wyatt's bedraggled followers and Pembroke's mounted troops, how incapable were the rebels of seizing even those opportunities which came their way.[54] Wyatt's own obstinacy in refusing to move to his appointed position at the city gate without his unmanageable artillery gave Sir George Harper time once again to turn his coat, this time in earnest. Lack of purpose caused the rebels to split up, some following Wyatt, others William Knevet. Knevet and Thomas Brooke one came within range of capturing the queen herself; Edward Underhill, one of the Gentlemen Pensioners, who was attempting to guard her despite his own 'Hot Gospeller' principles, afterward related how the two men came, "with a company of the rebels with them, through the Gatehouse from Westminster", passing near the queen's station; "wherewith Sir John Gage and three of the Judges ... that were meanly armed in old brigantines ... were so frighted, that they fled in at the gates in such haste, that old Gage fell down in the dirt and was foul arrayed; and so shut the gates ...." Yet neither Knevet nor Brooke made any attempt to pursue the ineffectual protec-

doors of the royal person, choosing rather to shoot a few arrows at the gate and then to pass on to Charing Cross.[55] Meanwhile the loyal commanders were everywhere cutting down the insurgents, until finally Wyatt, Knevet, Thomas Brooke and the traitorous 'white coat' captain, Brett, found themselves with only a score of men at Temple Bar. The accounts of two chroniclers, more economical than the others who record the events of that momentous day and of the dismal two which followed, may be relied upon to conclude the story.

> Wyat hereat somewhat astonied, seeing now his whole designes defeated (though his few Souldiers were bent still to fight) answered the Herauld [who had been sent to demand his surrender], Well then, If I must needs yeeld, I will yeeld to a Gentleman: to whom Sir Maurice Barkley came presently, and bade him mount his Horse behind, in like manner another tooke up Sir [sic] Thomas Cobham, and the third Thomas [sic] Knevet, and so carried them unto the Court, whence in the afternoone, they with the two Mantels and Alexander Bret, were committed to the Tower ....[56]

At the Tower bulwarks the prisoners were received by Sir Philip Denny, who admitted several of them.

> Then came Thomas Cobham, whome sir Thomas [sic: Nicholas] Poines tooke in, and said, Alas maister Cobham, what wind headed you to worke such treason? And he answered, Oh sir I was seduced....
> Thomas Wiat had on a shirt of maile, with sleeues verie faire, theron a veluet cassocke, and a yellow lace, with the windlace of his dag hanging thereon, and a pair of boots on his legs, and on his head a faire hat of veluet, with a broad boneworke lace about it. William Kneuet, Thomas Cobham, and Bret, were the like apparelled.
> On the morrow and the next daie following were brought into the tower prisoners George Cobham, sir William Cobham, Anthonie Kneuet, Hugh Booth, Thomas Vane, Robert Rudstone, sir George Harper, Edward Wiat, Edward Fog, George Moore, and Cutbert Vaughan ....[57]

The rebels' defeat had cost them much, the queen's victory had cost her little, "a loss of only two men and three wounded", which the Spanish ambassador, to whose advice Mary's triumph was largely due, esteemed "an evident miracle".[58] The penalty which England paid was far greater. With her faith in her cause justified, Mary turned her back forever upon the Protestants, and, "longing to show her gratitude to Providence by restoring the authority of the Pope",[59] gave Gardiner her consent to go ahead with his crusade against apostasy. Resigned, like the rest of the Council, to the Spanish match as to a virtually accomplished fact, the Chancellor accepted the challenge. Prisoners of state, rebels and heretics soon began to suffer for their opposition to the Catholic Throne. The Lady Jane and her husband,

innocent victims of Suffolk's ambition, were the first to go. Their execution on 12 February was followed by the decipherment of the intercepted letters of the French ambassador, by which Elizabeth, Courtenay, "the Duke of Suffolk and his two brothers, Cobham and his three sons, Pelham, Pickering, Carew and many more" were found to be implicated in a plot "to throw the Queen of England into the Tower and put her to death".[60] On 13 February, at nineteen different places in London, traitors were drawn and quartered, on the seventeenth Suffolk was sentenced to death, and on the eighteenth Brett and some of Wyatt's other followers were sent into Kent to be executed.[61] Then Lord Thomas Grey and Sir James Croft were apprehended and brought to the Tower. Courtenay, who had disillusioned even Gardiner by his shameful failure to support Pembroke on the day of Wyatt's invasion of London, had already been imprisoned when, on 22 February, the Princess Elizabeth was brought to Whitehall and confined there. The next day Suffolk died, and, soon after, his brother was condemned to follow him. Already several simple country people had been sentenced to die as heretics, and the first of the Marian martyrs had been made.[62] One way or another, as old followers of Northumberland, as more recent followers of Wyatt, or as Edwardian Protestants, it seemed certain that the Brookes of Cobham would be caught up in the apparently inexorable drive to exterminate the enemies of the queen and her Church. Yet when, on "Mondaye the xixth daie of Februarie ther went out to be arrayned at Westminster sir William Cobham, master George Cobham, Thomas Cobham, all being the lorde Cobhams sonnes," among others, "ther cam home uncondemned sir William Cobham and George Cobham, som say as reprie[ve]d; the rest being condempned to dye."[63] That is, according to the observer to whom the Tower was 'home', Thomas alone was sentenced. Probably the other two brothers were not even tried, despite this first-hand account. On the day when they should have been arraigned, the Council issued a letter to the Lieutenant of the Tower "signifieng the Quenes Hieghnes' pleasure for the staye of bringing fourthe to triall William Cobham and George Cobham, the Lordes (sic) Cobham's sonnes, and to deteyn him (sic) still as he dothe till he shall here further of hir Graces pleasure in that bihalf".[64] Five days later, in a list which he sent to the emperor of the principal men who had been involved in the rebellion,

Simon Renard made a note beside the name of each of those who had been tried, indicating his fate. Beside the names of Sir William and George Brooke, as well as those of the Marquess of Northampton and Lord Cobham himself, there are no comments, while beside Thomas's is the one word, "Sentenced", sentenced, that is, to death.[65] The Council's letter and Renard's list thus suggest that only one of the Brookes was brought to trial, and permit one to accept Holinshed's statement that "the lord Cobhams three sonnes, and foure other men were brought to Westminster, the yoongest of the Cobhams, to wit maister Thomas Cobham was condemned with the other foure men, but the other two Cobhams came not to the barre."[66] The baron's heir and his second son were thus allowed to wait throughout the last weeks of the old year as their former confederates went from the courts to the seemingly inevitable gallows. On 15 March Wyatt himself was sentenced, although in his case execution was deferred because the Council, and Gardiner in particular, hoped that in his final confessions he might incriminate the Princess Elizabeth. Then, on Good Friday, 23 March 1553/4, Mary decided to exercise the sovereign prerogative of mercy. As her friend Simon Renard recounted three days later in a letter to his master,

> The Queen of England sent for me last Saturday, and told me that the Controller [Sir Robert Rochester], [Sir Robert] Southwell, Petre and the men who had examined the prisoners had persuaded her to discharge eight accused, against whom there was nothing in the way of treason or revolt. Among them was the Marquis of Northampton, whom they asserted to be returning to the old religion, Cobham and his eldest son Daniel [sic], and four others whose names she could not remember. There was an immemorial custom that the Kings of England should pardon a few prisoners on Good Friday. I remarked that as she had been pleased to show mercy, there was nothing left for me but to approve; but she might have waited until it came out in the trials whether these men had been of the plot or no; for if they had been, she was only adding to her own enemies and to the Lady Elizabeth's partisans by sparing their lives.
> The Queen made answer that the Chancellor had taken surety from them; and as for the Marquis, he owned nothing more than what he wore on his back, as all his property had been confiscated; and she felt sure he would be loyal to his Highness [Philip] and to herself.[67]

Among the names which the queen, in her abashed confession of weakness to the stern Spaniard, was unable to remember was that of George Brooke, whose part in the rebellion was so inconspicuous as to be frequently forgotten; according to the entry which Machyn made in his diary for that day, there "was delevered owt

of the Towre and had the quen('s) pardon the lord marquess of Northamtun, my lord Cobham, and ij of ys sunes, and dyvers odur mo."[68] Of the Brookes only the twenty-year-old Thomas was exempted from the amnesty, and he, considering his brazen progress through London on the first day of Lent, may well have thought himself fortunate merely to be alive on the last, since Brett and Knevet had already been executed. Nor did Thomas have to wait long to be informed that his reprieve was more than temporary: in May official pardons were granted to the three sons of Lord Cobham, and his, dated 3 May, was the first to be issued. His brothers' followed two days later.[69]

Confronted with the fact that the queen extended her clemency to a family so obviously inimical to her interests as the Brookes, one must try to find some more satisfactory explanation for her gesture than the reason of state which she herself gave to the emperor's representative. The tone of Renard's letter shows that, for once, it was not he who had advised her; his desire to see "the trials and executions of criminals, especially Courtenay and the Lady Elizabeth", concluded before Philip arrived in England was at odds with such humane counsel.[70] The mention in the ambassador's letter of Lord Paget's close associate, Petre, however, suggests a more likely advocate of the Brookes' cause. Despite the parting of their ways under Northumberland, it must not be forgotten that Cobham and the former Secretary had for years been good friends, and it should be observed that they were to become even more intimate later in Mary's reign. Paget had also, at the time of the young man's marriage, shown an affectionate interest in William Brooke's happiness. It is easily conceivable that, seeing death threaten the father and oldest sons of a family to which he had long been attached, Paget used the undoubted power which he wielded in the reformed Council of March 1554 to save them.[71] It can only have been the influence of a very powerful minister which kept the Brookes' names out of the list of rebels which was made public in A Breuiat Cronicle, published by John Mychell after 25 February and before 25 March.[72]

Other assistance for the Brookes perhaps came from their affiliation with Lord Abergavenny, whose active support of the Crown in the early days of the rebellion when he, Southwell and Cheney fought practically alone against its enemies had

certainly ingratiated him with Mary. The queen's gratitude for his service probably explains why his sister, Lady Brooke, was able to plead successfully for her husband's release, as it is obvious that she did from the Council letter of 24 March announcing to Cobham his freedom from prison. The letter is worth quoting in full, for it is an unusually warm and informative one, quite unlike most of the impersonal directives issued by the ministers of the Tudor Crown. The Councillors, after addressing themselves formulistically to "our very good lorde the Lorde Cobham" and sending him their "hertiest comendacõns", went on to say:

> We must to our gladnes and your comforte aduertise you that the Queenes highnes is at this present so mitche your good and gracious Lady That the same is pleased to discharge you of further enduraunce in her Tower and to graunte you libertie Assuring you the Instaunce and intercession of Monnss^{r} degmont to her highnes hathe not failed you in this parte, whiche we have thought good to signiiie vnto you to this entent that albeit we alwaies have good hope that your cause in thend shall so fall owte that your Loyaultie shall may [sic] deliver you from Daunger, yet your good cheare bestowed vpon that noble Man and his Companions hathe bene so frindly remembred, that her Ma^{tie} hathe moche rather and soner accomplyshed your owne desire and the desire of suche as be your frindes in this poincte of your libertie And therfore it shalbe well that you recognise the same vnto the saide Monnss^{r} Degmonnd. And furthermore the Importunitie and assiduouse labour made to her saide highnes for yo^{r} eldest Sonne by yo^{r} doughter in law his wife, hathe also recovered the Quenes clemency vnto hym, whiche of congruence wolde be considerid And yo^{r} good L shall do like your selfe bothe honorably and cheritably yf you give hym to know the same And also worke what you can so to mollefie hym if you finde an hard hert That a godly reconciliacõn may ensue betwixt them, w^{ch} as it shall please god, So will the Quenes highnes take the same in suche good ꝑte as we doubt not the fruicte therof shall redounde to yo^{r} owne good contentment and greate consolacõn. And thus beseching yo^{w} to furder it according[ly] we cõmitte yo^{r} Lordship to goddes tuicõn ffrom the Courte this Easter even.[73]

Despite the emphasis placed on Cobham's debt to the Count of Egmont, the charming ambassador who had been sent to complete the arrangements for the marriage of Mary with Philip, one should not regard his intercession as very significant. The count and his Flemings had no doubt been well entertained by Cobham when they first came to London in January, just before the troubles began; no doubt, too, Egmont was grateful for the baron's hospitality and distressed to find his host in such altered circumstances when he returned to England in the spring. He was, by all accounts, a noble man. Yet he was also an instrument of the Spanish Crown, and would not have been allowed to let his personal feelings interfere with

his duty. Since it was part of his job to make England safe for the prince by winning over to Spain the wavering elements at Court, it is even possible to interpret the announcement that Egmont had recommended mercy for miscreants as a propagandistic attempt to convince the English of the magnanimity of their future king. One notes that Mary, even in defending her act of mercy before Renard, did not refer to his colleague's supposed appeal to her. Even if one accepts the story that Egmont pleaded for Cobham's life, one ought not to think that his gesture would have been acted upon had the English government not had other, more compelling reasons for pardoning the baron. The expression of the queen's personal desire to see the Brookes' marriage saved, however, is less open to cynical interpretation than is Egmont's part in procuring Cobham's release. Miss Prescott's observation that Mary, "generally out of her depth in business of state, liked to use her power in personal affairs which she could understand", as applied to Sir William and Lady Brooke's case, seems sound.[74] Since no more is heard of Dorothy Brooke until she died, less than a year after the death of the queen herself, it is impossible to say what effect Mary's compassionate interest had upon the marriage; certainly it did not lead to the birth of a son to the young couple, that fruit which was to redound to Cobham's 'good contentment and great consolation'. Yet, if it did not help the baron to a grandson, it apparently helped at least to preserve the life of his son.

It would seem, then, that the queen was moved to spare the Brooke family by the persuasive combination of Paget and Abergavenny, and, perhaps, by the equally persuasive voice of her own private charity. The amnesty granted to Cobham and his sons and son-in-law was an exceptional one, a conciliatory move in an almost unbroken series of savage acts of retribution. Executions continued to deplete the ranks of the Edwardians. One of Suffolk's brothers died, and a former Clerk of the Council, that same William Thomas who had written so enthusiastically of the Italian world which the young Brookes knew.[75] On 11 April Wyatt himself was beheaded on Tower Hill, his body quartered, his bowels and genitals burned. The next day the quarters were set up at four different places in the London area, and the head, later to be stolen (to the great indignation of Simon Renard), stuck

up on a gibbet at Hyde Park Corner.[76] Soon after Wyatt's execution, however, the Council realized that it would have to call a halt to its punishment of the rebels. Despite the queen's fury, the Londoners who tried Sir Nicholas Throckmorton on 17 April acquitted him of treason: he had not actually borne arms, and, although he had taken part in the deliberations of Wyatt and Sir Peter Carew in the days before the rebellion broke out, his judges gave him the benefit of the doubt and refused to bring in the verdict demanded by the Crown.[77] Although, to Renard, Throckmorton was proved innocent "by a packed jury of twelve, heretics to a man, notwithstanding the fact that he ought to have been condemned,"[78] the acquittal was popular among the people. Sir James Croft, less fortunate than Throckmorton, was condemned to death on 29 April. Yet the government did not dare to execute even him, although he had rebelled openly in Wales and was one of the servants of the Princess Elizabeth whom Wyatt, in his last confessions, had implicated deeply.[79] The release from the Tower soon afterward of the princess indicated Mary's recognition of her own inability to prolong further the purge of her enemies, and the nation settled down with its queen in comparative tranquillity to await the arrival of the royal bridegroom. Mary could obviously no longer hope to win popular approval for a marriage over which so much blood had already been shed; she now had to content herself with the passive, if sullen acceptance of its inevitability among her people, who were informed by proclamation that henceforth "no man shuld not talke of no thynges of the qwen."[80]

Thus passed the great crisis of 1554. It was fortunate for the Brookes, who could hardly have been more seriously concerned in it, that the rebellion assumed such proportions, that within the Council itself there was sympathy for its cause, if not its conduct. Treason rooted only in the dissatisfaction of a few Edwardians in London and Kent would almost certainly have been ruthlessly extirpated; when, however, its ramifications spread so far that only a wholesale purge of peers and officers of state, councillors and provincial officials could have killed it, it had to be treated less radically. For Cobham, who had served the Crown well in the past and who had, ostensibly at least, attempted to serve it even during the uprising itself, excuses could be found once it was decided that he was one of

those who would be spared. When, therefore, John Proctor wrote the government's account of the rebellion for publication in December 1554, he, like the author of A Breuiat Cronicle, gave no hint of the disloyalty of the Brookes, not even of that of Thomas, nor did he note what everyone knew, that Wyatt was Cobham's nephew. Only as the stout defender of his castle against the queen's enemies is Cobham noticed. Proctor's version of what happened in Kent (or, perhaps, one should say the anonymous chronicler's version) was adopted by all later Tudor historians; Francis Thynne, for instance, who needed little encouragement to praise the Brookes, wrote in Holinshed thirty years later that George Lord Cobham was always true to Mary,

> But as nothing is so well doone or meant, but that the same maie be impeched by the malice of the aduersarie, sith there is none that resteth free from enuie: so this lord growing in some suspicion about Wiats rebelling, by the euill persuasions of his enimies, sith this lord had vsed some conference with Wiat; he was in the end apprehended and committed to the Tower with certeine of his sonnes; who there sufficientlie prooving his innocencie, was after about the foure and twentith of March, discharged of his imprisonment and sent to his house in Kent.[81]

Yet a scapegoat had to be found for the sins of the Brookes, and Thomas was, not unnaturally, elected. Although pardoned, he remained in prison for months, apparently not being released even when a letter was written to the Lieutenant of the Tower on Christmas Eve 1554 "to set at libertie Thomas Cobham",[82] for he carved his name and the date on a wall in the Beauchamp Tower in 1555.[83] This graffito suggests that, unless he was released at Christmas 1554 and shortly thereafter re-committed to prison for an unknown offence, he was kept prisoner longer than any of the other rebels: he would not have carved the date 1555 at least until the beginning of the Julian year, 25 March 1555, while the last of his fellow prisoners, including his uncle Warner, the Dudley brothers, Sir James Croft, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton and even the double-crossing Harper, were released on 18 January 1554/5.[84]

How long Thomas remained in the Tower one cannot say, but at some time during his stay there, either at this period or later, in 1571, he may have put to use, in reading Italian romances, a little of the education which his father had once tried to give him. The copies of Ariosto's Cassaria (1525) and Girolamo Benivieni's Amore (1526) which are bound together in a volume in the library of

Magdalen College, Oxford, apparently belonged to him, judging from the inscriptions in them, inscriptions which also suggest that he had the books with him while confined somewhere. On various fly-leaves at the beginning of the Cassaria are the name 'Cobham', the initials 'TC' arranged as a monogram, the words "Thomas Cobhm̃/ I hope the hapye daye," and some verses in French and English. The French is a neat combination in conventional, sixteenth-century Gallic form of several old, misogamistic proverbs which, originating in the Bible, appear several times in Chaucer and elsewhere. The words, almost certainly written by a Frenchman, who has not been identified, were apparently copied by Thomas Brooke into his book. They are:

> Qui veult perdr' tout son seruice
> Serue ung vieil, enfant, femme nice,
> Le vieil se meurt, lenfant soblye,
> Et la femme tousiours varie.
>
> La femme qui parle latin,
> Enfant qui est nourry de vin,
> Soleil qui luysarne au matin,
> Ne viennent poynt a bonne fin.
>
> ffumee, pluye, et femme sans raison,
> Chassent souuent lhomme de sa maison.

One is reminded of Hotspur's censure of Glendower: "O, he is as tedious/ As a tired horse, a railing wife,/ Worse than a smoky house" (1 Henry IV III.i.159-61).

The English poem is a philosophic expression of another kind; it is so roughly written that one may doubt whether it is meant to be poetry at all:

> Brother when you behoulde thys
> thynke on fortũe y^{t} changes ofte
> and rembar well y^{t} godis ponnismẽtys
> to all thos y^{t} His Mercy for get yt alowste.

One of the fly-leaves at the end of the Amore bears a sort of poetic 'Ex libris' label, which suggests that it was written by a prisoner who often found time lie heavy on his hands:

> I swar by hym y^{t} made Adam
> I am the boke of Tho. Cobhm̃
> W^{ch} is so merye and pleasant
> Grete losse it wear y^{t} he shuld want
> ffor he dothe make me oft merye
> whoo ells full oft wolde be sorye.[85]

Brooke was certainly out of the Tower by April 1557, when he abused his liberty by engaging once more in violence, this time of a private kind.[86] He was by then

already established in the official character of the criminal among his father's sons. One is not surprised to find that, when Sir Edward Warner's pardon was granted on 2 July 1555 and the names of the traitors who had taken part in Wyatt's uprising were rehearsed, the only Brooke to appear among them was Thomas.[87] He was henceforth to bear the brunt of his family's association with Wyatt, and ultimately to be stigmatized in Holinshed as one of the six principal perpetrators of the Kentishmen's treason.[88] In a curious way, by his very recalcitrance, Thomas was thus made to benefit his family, for his father and brothers, more discreet than he, within a year of their escape from death were steadily rising once more in the circles of Court and Parliament even as he became the outcast.

* * *

Chapter VII

On 20 July 1554 Philip of Spain landed at Southampton and on 25 July, by his marriage to the queen in Winchester Cathedral, became King of England. Francis Thynne, writing in Holinshed more than thirty years later, is the only authority for the statement that George Lord Cobham was in the great concourse of peers and gentlemen which went down to the coast to meet the sovereign whose coming had been so fiercely opposed.[1] "After which," says Thynne, Cobham "liued some fiue or six yeares in honorable peace and quiet, beloued of his countrie, and honored of the nobilitie, and then gaue place to nature." Thynne's words mislead if they give a picture of Cobham living and dying as some sort of elder statesman, retired since his near escape from destruction in the aftermath of Wyatt's rebellion and his final, politic gesture of going in person to greet his new king. A similar warning must be made against Thynne's assertion that "William Brooke liued in quiet all the time of queene Marie, as far as I can yet learne." Although they never took so patently disloyal a stand in national affairs that they endangered their lives, Cobham and his sons played too prominent a part in the reign of Philip and Mary to be considered to have lived in 'peace and quiet'. The baron, in fact, in the months just before the king arrived in England, threw himself into the rivalry of the Court with an apparent lack of prudence which is striking in a man who had so recently faced death. His commitment to Lord Paget's interests in

the spring and early summer of 1554 was more open than it was ever again to be, and points to a feeling in him of deep obligation to the powerful Councillor who had probably contrived his release from the Tower.

Cobham was not summoned to the second Marian Parliament, which met on 2 April 1554.[2] It was a session which was intimidated from the outset by the spectacle of the executions which went on even as it assembled, and Gardiner, the Lord Chancellor, was confident that it could be used to forward his two greatest ambitions, both of them essential to the re-establishment of Catholicism in England. They were the exclusion of the Princess Elizabeth from the succession and the restoration of the authority of the bishops. When, however, Gardiner introduced the Succession Bill, he found that the opposition to the programme was inflexible; surprisingly led by Lord Paget, the peers would not consider authorizing any device by which Mary, if she found that she had kept from marriage too long now to have children, might prevent her half-sister from following her on the Throne, and, despite Gardiner's desperate attempt to prove that Philip himself had Plantagenet blood as a descendant of John of Gaunt, they would not even pass a bill to make offences against their future king high treason. The same recalcitrance met the several measures which were designed to restore episcopal jurisdiction and the statutes against heresy; again it was Paget who frustrated the Chancellor's desires and whose eloquence persuaded the House of Lords to throw out bills which the more tractable Commons had passed. On 5 May the Parliament from which Gardiner had hoped for so much and which had conceded him so little was dissolved.[3] It is not until after the dissolution that Cobham is seen to have had a vicarious voice in the deliberations of his peers. On 6 May Simon Renard, whose fear of a new insurrection had induced the queen to dismiss the legislature before Gardiner antagonized her leading subjects any further, wrote to the emperor that Paget had managed to have the Bishops' Bill thrown out by persuading the Lords that "it was being introduced in order to deprive them of the Church property now in their hands."[4] Renard was bitterly disappointed by Paget's public opposition to the Lord Chancellor. Paget was the one English minister whose ability as a politician the Spaniard respected and whom he recommended to Philip as an 'homme d'esprit', on

whose common sense the prince could rely when he found himself involved in the intrigues of his wife's Court.[5] Renard had therefore not expected Paget to reveal the shameful lack of unity in the Council in so open a manner. When Paget did so, the Spaniard concluded that he was "not likely to have shown his hand so far without having formed some seditious plan, and as he acts by the advice of Cobham and [Sir Philip] Hoby, heretics both and one of them, Cobham, of French leanings, I am afraid that more intrigues may follow".[6] It is not known what made Renard suspect Cobham of being more pro-French than any other of those Edwardians who had worked to ally France with England by the marriage of the boy king with a French princess. The only suggestion independent of the Spaniard's that the baron maintained his connection with Paris after the death of Edward VI is one from which little more can be deduced than that the French government showed a remarkable interest in him at the time of the Wyatt rebellion. On 22 February the English ambassador in France had an audience of Henry II, and told the king of the failure of the insurrection; of the men concerned in it, the only ones about whom the French wanted information were Suffolk and Devonshire and, more surprisingly, Cobham: the ambassador was asked particularly whether he "had been of the plot".[7] Such interest in the baron can only be construed as proof that the French still regarded him as someone of importance; it cannot be taken to mean that Cobham had given them cause to be so concerned about his affairs. Indeed, on the face of it, the French query suggests that Cobham and Henry II were quite out of touch with each other by 1554.

No matter how ill-founded were Renard's opinions about what was going on among the Councillors and their allies, however, the Spanish ambassador was justified in suspecting that a dangerous situation was building. Paget was a consummate politician. Like quicksilver he slid from position to position, never sticking to one when another, more advantageous one presented itself. How far he sought England's welfare in his mercurial course, how far his own, it will require a study of his policy such as has not yet been published to reveal. Such a study would also tell one much more about George Lord Cobham than can now be known, for it is fairly certain that, whether he influenced Paget (as Renard assumed),

or whether (as seems more likely) it was he who adopted Paget's fluctuating stand, the interests of the two lords were inextricably combined in the reign of Mary.

When Paget later explained to the emperor that he had been forced to deal with Gardiner as he did, he said that it was because of Gardiner's refusal to accept, in the privacy of the Council chamber, the advice of his colleagues "not to try to pass any religious measure that might make trouble".[8] A gesture which he made a week after Renard wrote his report on the proceedings in Parliament, however, makes one doubt whether Paget's frustration of the Chancellor's policy was quite so well-meant as the emperor was later asked to believe. His motives were certainly regarded as suspicious by Spain. On the night of Whit Sunday the ambassador told how, that morning,

> Paget, moved by a bad conscience, presented himself before the Queen on the way from mass, and begged her pardon for his efforts during the last session to prevent the passage of the bill providing for the punishment of heretics, and the proposal to make it a treasonable offence to take up arms against his Highness. As for the first point, Lord Rich had persuaded him that what was aimed at was the expropriation of those who held Church property. In the second matter, he had acted out of ignorance and inadvertency; but in future he meant to serve her truly and loyally. The Queen, after remonstrating with him on his conduct, pardoned him, admonishing him to do better hereafter.
>
> Now, when the Chancellor and his followers heard this, they conceived a suspicion that Paget, Arundel, Pembroke, Cobham and other heretic peers were weaving a plot against the Queen, and that Paget's behaviour was a blind. This was discovered by a gentleman, a friend of the Chancellor, whom Paget forcibly detained for two days in his house, cross-questioning him as if he had been the Chancellor's spy in order to discover whether the Chancellor intended to injure him.[9]

Gardiner was badly frightened. The unexpected rebuff which he had received in Parliament, combined with Paget's inexplicable behaviour, convinced him that he was about to be thrown into the Tower by the Councillors who followed Paget, that the queen would then be ruled by them, and that a new Edwardian era would be established (that there would be a repetition of what "was done in England in the reign of King Edward"). Yet there was almost nothing which the Lord Chancellor could do to protect himself. He had only the queen behind him, while Paget and his colleagues were considered to have the people; a coup by Gardiner would precipitate another rebellion, while a coup by Paget would distress only Mary. Although it was decided, as Renard informed the emperor at the end of his long

letter, to send the Princess Elizabeth to Pontefract Castle and to keep a close watch over her advocates in the Council, it soon proved impossible to impose even so slight a check upon Gardiner's enemies. Admiral Lord Howard of Effingham, a loyal Catholic whose service to her in the late rebellion Mary had rewarded with a peerage, would have rebelled had Elizabeth, his grand-niece, been sent to the ominous Northern stronghold where Richard II died, so the princess went no farther from London than Woodstock. No effective surveillance could be kept on so powerful a group as Paget, Cobham and the two earls. All that could be done was to ensure Gardiner against unauthorized imprisonment; this Mary did by sending to the Lieutenant of the Tower a command forbidding him to accept the Chancellor as a prisoner except by express command of the queen.[10] A month after the Whitsun crisis Renard was faced with the impossibility ever of reconciling Gardiner and Paget. On 20 June he wrote to the emperor that Sir Philip Hoby had approached Courtenay of Devonshire, offering him the support of a group of dissidents in the Council if the earl would again consider marrying Elizabeth. Courtenay informed Gardiner of the offer, but there was nothing which Gardiner could do to punish Hoby. Impotently, Renard summarized the situation:

> It is certain that Hoby has done all the harm that it was possible for him to do, and that he has an understanding with Paget, Cobham and others to do as much harm as they can to the Queen's affairs. I am greatly displeased to see Paget following this course through his inconstancy, matters now being in such shape, that the Queen would stand in no danger whatever were it not for the plots and intrigues whereby he has drawn over to his side several heretics. Were it not that the Queen is afraid to cause a commotion in the kingdom when his Highness is just about to arrive, he would already be in the Tower.[11]

The reiterated proof of Cobham's collusion with the enemies of Gardiner and therefore of the tranquillity which Mary so much desired leaves no doubt that he was defying the queen at every turn, right up to the time of her marriage.[12] Soon after Philip's arrival, however, Cobham's name ceases to appear in Simon Renard's letters. This is the more odd because of the openness with which he associated himself with Paget's group in the first week of August when, after joining the other noblemen in receiving the king at Southampton, he accompanied the courtly party to Windsor for the royal honeymoon. At that time, the emperor was informed of the progress of Paget's suspected conspiracy in the following terms:

> The disorder among the Councillors has reached such a point that some of them follow the Chancellor and the rest the Earl of Arundel, who has gone off with Pembroke, Darcy, Cobham and several others to Paget's house four or five miles hence; behaviour which is not to be interpreted otherwise than as a sign of evil intentions, for when Englishmen have a conspiracy on foot these meetings always take place. Paget is taken to be the author and abettor of all evil plans, and he has been the more ready to plot since he has seen that the Queen is indignant with him, that he no longer counts and, whilst he despairs of ever receiving his expected reward for all the trouble he took to bring about the marriage, others who did not work nearly as hard as he are reaping where he sowed.[13]

The imperial agents who sent this report to their master on 8 August were probably right in assuming that Paget, who had once stood alone in advocating the Spanish match, deeply resented the favour which was being shown to Gardiner, an old opponent of the marriage, when Philip first came to Court. They were also right in saying that Mary was annoyed with Paget, who was now regarded as "an acknowledged anti-Catholic", that is, as an opponent of the programme for reversing the English Reformation.[14] The Spaniards were, however, wrong in thinking that Paget no longer counted; he continued to be indispensable to the management of conciliar affairs and as an assurance to the nation that Mary's ministers were not all fanatically devoted to Rome. It is just as important to know what Paget was doing and feeling at this time as it was before, for his position was almost certainly that which Cobham continued to share. Curiously enough, there may even be in their association the answer to why Cobham so markedly withdrew from the clique opposed to the Lord Chancellor. The Spanish letter of 8 August is the last in which Cobham is mentioned as a conspirator, and not long after it was written the baron began to rise in favour at Court. It is known that the new king, finding Renard's advice justified, preferred Paget to the rest of his wife's ministers, and it is also known that he was well enough acquainted with Paget's friend for William Lord Cobham, several years later, to be identified for Philip's benefit simply as "the son of the Lord Cobham whom you knew".[15] Unfortunately no evidence of direct contact between Philip and George Lord Cobham survives, but it seems probable that the baron was introduced to the king by Paget and that, soon afterward, he decided that his own interests would be better served by forwarding Philip's quiet but determined opposition to Gardiner's fanaticism, than by vexing the Chancellor through participation in conciliar faction. Cobham's retirement

from the discreditable combine against Gardiner coincided with Paget's own retreat, so that, by September, it was the contentious Earl of Arundel alone whom Renard reported to be still refusing to give even an outward show of co-operation with the Chancellor.[16]

In the autumn of 1554 feuding at Court was obscured momentarily by the great events which completed England's return to the Mother Church. Cobham, although not summoned to the Parliament which met on 12 November and before which Reginald Cardinal Pole, the papal legate, was ceremoniously to absolve the kingdom of its sins of heresy,[17] was given his first significant duty of the new reign by being appointed to receive the cardinal in Kent on his way to London. Paget, chosen no doubt by Philip, was sent in November to the Netherlands to prepare Pole for what he might expect when he came on his apostolic mission to a people who had "never been known to be so licentious in word and deed", to an ill-ruled commonwealth so rife with religious agitation that "each man speaks his mind unashamed."[18] At Brussels Paget, having brought to the emperor a letter of introduction from the king, found that he had shown "signs of being so well-disposed as to merit confidence", and was honoured with a long and private interview with Charles V. During the course of it, Paget presented his case against Gardiner and won at once, with surprisingly little reservation, the sagacious emperor's sympathy and respect;[19] when he returned, therefore, on 20 November, with the cardinal in his care, he was more secure from Gardiner's jealous machinations than he had ever been during the first year of Mary's reign. Paget at once took Pole to Rochester. There, in pursuance of a Council order, they were met by Lord Cobham and his brother-in-law, Sir Percival Hart, with Sir Henry Sidney and other prominent Kentishmen.[20] In triumph Cobham escorted his guests to Cooling; the castle which, a few months before, had been battered by its lord's own Protestant sons and their fellow rebels, now served for two nights as the residence of the princely Pole, the son of the last Plantagenet and the man who was to welcome England back into the Roman communion.[21] It was to Cooling that word was sent from the queen that Pole should now openly proclaim himself as legate and come to her and her husband at Whitehall. Accordingly, on 24 November,

> cardinal Pole came from Gravesend by water, with the earl of Shrewsbury, the lord Montagu, the bishops of Durham and Ely, the lord Paget, sir Edward Hastings, the lord Cobham, and diverse ... knyghts and gentyllmen, in barges, and thay all [did shoot the] bryge be-twyn xij and on of the cloke, and a-g[ainst] the steleard [steel-yard] of Temes my lord chanseler mett [them in his] barge, and my lord of Shrousbury [had his] barge with the [talbot, all] ys men in bluw cotes, red-hosse, skarlett capes, [and white] fethers; and so to the cort gatt, and ther the Kyng('s) grace [met him] and imbrasyd hym, and so lad ym thrughe the kyng('s) hall; ... and he had borne a-for hym a sylver crosse, and [he was arrayed in] a skarlet gowne and a sqware skarlett cape; and my lord [North] bare the swarde a-for the Kyng; and so they whent up unto the Quens chambur, and ther her grace salutyd hym; and after he toke ys leyffe, and toke ys barge to ys plase at Lambeth, that was the bysshope of Cantorberys, Crenmer, and so to dener.[22]

The London diarist who wrote the account of Pole's reception at Court was premature in describing the archiepiscopal residence as his, but he was also well informed. On 30 November the kingdom, in the persons of the assembled Lords and Commons, was absolved of heresy and schism and restored into the unity of the Church.[23] It took more than a year for Cranmer to be got out of the way, and it was not until 22 March 1555/6 that Pole became Archbishop of Canterbury, but the cardinal had power over the affairs of the nation which did not derive from his primacy and which he did not wait so long to use. During the four years of violent and bloody reaction which followed his return to England, Pole and Mary ruled England. The conflict between Gardiner and Paget, which had always tended to render ineffectual the influences of both men, was resumed, and eventually succeeded in paralyzing the Council. By February 1554/5 Simon Renard was writing that "the two factions no longer consult together; some councillors transact no business; Paget, seeing that he is out of favour with the Queen and most of the Council, is often in the King's apartments."[24] A month later, when the country was alive with rumours of a new plot against the queen, Renard reported that the government was doing nothing to keep the situation in control, neither Arundel nor Paget attending the Council meetings "because of their enmity for the Chancellor and other Councillors. When the Chancellor reaches a decision, the others immediately endeavour to defeat it. Unless steps are taken to remedy this state of affairs," said Renard in mounting alarm, "it is impossible that trouble will not ensue."[25] Mary, sorrowing in her barrenness, saw all hope of a child taken from

her by her husband's desertion in July 1555. Left alone, she turned for support to the cardinal, and for satisfaction to the results of his mission; Pole, convinced that his work was divinely directed, needed the queen's authority alone to prosecute it. The tragic story of their combined attempt to eradicate the Protestant heresy from England is too well known to require repetition. The Council, instead of providing a politic counterbalance to the bloody measures taken by the ecclesiastical arm of the government, gradually quarrelled itself out of existence, so that Gardiner, before he died on 13 November 1555, sacrificed nothing by reconciling himself with Paget.[26] Paget, meanwhile, had become so much Philip's man that no one else in England, not even the queen herself, was trusted as he was with the secrets of the absent king's dearest ambitions.[27] Philip's influence even got for him, from the reluctant Mary, his first official position in the government: on 31 December following Gardiner's death he became Lord Privy Seal.[28]

There are few mentions of Lord Cobham during the first year and a half of the newly Romanized England. He perhaps restricted himself to administrative and local affairs: on 6 May 1555 he was directed to set a miscreant "on the Pyllorie at sum tyme and place as his Lordship shall thinke mete, without nayling his eares";[29] on 19 May he was advised by the Council to refrain from interfering in the musters in Kent until it was decided whether he or Lord Abergavenny had the right to direct them;[30] on 24 June he was at Court, but called himself "a stranger" there.[31] Then, when he was probably nearing his sixtieth year, Cobham suddenly emerged again from provincial life and was appointed, on 26 April 1556, to the first of the important commissions established by the Crown to assist the Church in the "diligent search and discovery of heretics".[32] Associated with him were several of the loyal veterans of the Wyatt rebellion: Lord Abergavenny, Sir Thomas Cheney, Sir John Baker and seventeen other men, among them a William Oxenden who was perhaps Cobham's brother-in-law.[33] Among the commissioners' duties were the investigation of all persons in the diocese of Canterbury suspected of heresy or of spreading rumours against the Crown; the searching out of all heretical writings and publications; and the commitment to the ecclesiastical authorities of all

those who refused to hear Mass and to take the sacraments, to attend church regularly, or to take part in the ostentatious services prescribed by the archbishop for the nation of neophytes. The actual trial, judgement and determination of heresy was carefully restricted to the bishops' courts, but the wording of the commission, although it explicitly denied that the laymen to whom it was directed were meant in any way to infringe upon the jurisdiction of the Church, made it clear that anyone denounced by Cobham and his colleagues would stand little chance of acquittal before his spiritual superiors. Only Cobham's association with Paget, and Paget's favour with the Most Catholic King (Philip had just ascended the Spanish Throne and returned to England after a prolonged absence) can have got him such real and sweeping powers; that, and the death in the previous autumn of Gardiner, who would certainly never have permitted one of the men who, only five years before, had convicted him of heresy against Protestantism to sit in judgement on a Catholic England.[34] Thus, no doubt with feelings as mixed as those which one experiences today in imagining the scene, the representatives of the laity of the diocese of Rochester trooped into the city to defend their orthodoxy before a panel headed by the Edwardian Lord Cobham and the Marian Bishop Griffith. Nor do these hearings seem to have been conducted in a superficial way: the laity was thoroughly examined. For instance, in the year beginning on All Saints Day 1556, the wardens of the church at Allhallows underwent five 'vycytations', the first of which, at least, was specifically described as the appearance in Rochester of the churchwardens "at the syttyng before the byshop and my lord cobh[illegible]".[35]

If Cobham had, by 1556, so far practised his old dexterity in the matter of public profession of religion that he was considered worthy to execute a Marian commission, his kinsmen were less tractable. Once again, through sincere disagreement perhaps, but more probably through policy, as at the time of Wyatt's rebellion, the head of the house of Cobham stood on one side of the field of politico-religious battle while his heir, the future leader of his family's fortunes, stood on the other. Cobham had himself been summoned to the Parliament which met on 21 October 1555, less than a month before the death of the Lord Chancellor, which the queen wished to see restore to the papacy the old subsidy of the first fruits

and tenths of all ecclesiastical benefices.[36] Mary had herself informed the Council earlier in the year that she was surrendering to Pole, as legate, every one of the Crown lands which her father and brother had appropriated from the Church; she did so, she said, to relieve her own conscience, and in the hope that those of her subjects who had profited from the dissolution of the monasteries would follow suit.[37] It was before Parliament that she now had the satisfaction of giving up so much of her patrimony, and the bitter disappointment of seeing her nobles, who had just heard read to them the pope's confirmation of their undisputed titles to the former Church properties, refuse to surrender any of theirs. The perverseness of Cobham and his peers, however, was merely a fault of omission; more positive defiance of the queen's wishes came from the Commons, who debated long before allowing her to give up her rights to the tenths, as she wanted to do in order that they might be paid by her conscientious subjects to the pope, and finally passed the bill by the narrow margin of 193 to 126. From a contemporary list of opponents to the queen's policy, it seems likely that, among the representatives who thus tried to cross Mary in her determination to derogate from her own dignity, were Sir William and George Brooke.[38] Since Gardiner's last public act in behalf of the Catholic monarchy had been to choose the members of the Lower House with care, it appears that the Brookes sat in 1555 because they had so far shown themselves good subjects that their candidacy was approved by the government. George had accordingly been returned as the member for the borough of Hedon, in Holderness, Yorkshire, on 23 September, and Sir William for Rochester on 15 October.[39] It is not known how far the brothers went in objecting to the legislation proposed by the Crown, nor whether they were among the young Parliamentarians who, one crucial day, locked themselves in the chamber of the House of Commons in order to reject undisturbed one particularly unpopular measure, the confiscation of the property of refugees overseas.[40] When their brother-in-law Northampton's former servant, John Daniell, later gave the Council the names of some of the impetuous saboteurs of this bill, he said that there were among them "such other young bloods whose names I cannot well express";[41] it seems not improbable that the Brookes were in this latter category. Yet, if they did no more than vote in the normal way,

Sir William and his brother cannot have participated in the uproarious session of 1555 without incurring some danger. Many of the refractory members, despite their privileges, were imprisoned,[42] and even Sir William Cecil, former Secretary and respected courtier as he was, although his conduct apparently never went beyond what was constitutionally permissible, was closely examined by the Council after the unruly members were dismissed on 9 December. For the only Marian Parliament in which the Brookes sat was, in the words of Conyers Read, "the most tumultuous assembly of Mary's reign and among the most tumultuous of the whole century",[43] and the steps which the government took to try to discipline it were correspondingly exceptional.

The leader of the opposition in the autumn of 1555 was a magnate from the Severn country called Sir Anthony Kingston. Kingston, soon after the legislature was dissolved, combined with one of the late Duke of Northumberland's kinsmen, Sir Henry Dudley, to follow Wyatt's example and express their dissatisfaction with the government by swords, not words. Throughout the first months of 1556 they plotted, drawing more and more of the nobility and gentry into their conspiracy to rob the Exchequer, kill the king and queen, expel the Spaniards, establish Elizabeth on the Throne and bring back Courtenay of Devonshire from Italy to marry her. They were to be aided by France. Details of the plot are copious yet curiously indefinite; it is not known, for instance, when the first overt move was to be made. At any rate, early in March the first suspicion of their intention reached the Council, and thereafter for three months men were taken in, examined, others were implicated, executions took place, and still more suspects were apprehended.[44] Prominent among these conspirators were enough of Lord Cobham's kindred and acquaintances to make one wonder how he himself and his sons escaped complicity. As early as 18 March Henry Peckham, whose brother Sir Robert was a Privy Councillor and the brother-in-law of Lady Cobham,[45] was taken to the Tower, along with John Daniell, formerly one of the Marquess of Northampton's men, and more than twelve others.[46] From this first batch of prisoners the Council obtained information which led to the examination of one of themselves, Sir Robert Peckham, who revealed that he knew more than a minister of the Crown

should have known, but against whom no action was taken.[47] Late in April two of the conspirators, having told all they knew, were executed, and the day after their deaths a new lot was imprisoned, including five Parliamentary knights. More executions followed, and on 15 June Cobham's other prominent brother-in-law, John Lord Braye, who had already been arrested and confined to the Fleet, was removed to the Tower.[48] Three days later one of Cobham's wife's nephews, Francis Verney, was tried and condemned to death.[49] John Daniell had denied any knowledge of either Braye's or Francis Verney's complicity,[50] but another conspirator, Sir John St. Loe, had branded Braye and Verney's brother, Edmund, as parties to the plot.[51] Braye, however, escaped the fate of his fellows; on 22 June Robert Swift wrote to the baron's father-in-law, his master the Earl of Shrewsbury, telling how

> my Lord Bray hath been very stout in his truth, with much desire that his accusers might be brought before his face; so that of [sic] Saturday last, as I heard, his accusers and he were face to face before certain of the Commissioners; and, as I hear, both Francis Verney and Edmund Verney have touched very sore; and, as one told me in Westminster this day, that he should be indicted this present day, and shortly after arraigned, and if it be not for your Lordship's suit, and that of his wife, most like to suffer; and what he shall do God knows, but my Lady doth handle herself in her suits, as well to men as to women, as she is both more commended and lamented than all other suitors are; yea, insomuch that the Queen, upon the report which she had heard of her Ladyship within this two days, gave her great praise, and earnestly said that God sent oft times to good women evil husbands.[52]

Eventually Mary's admiration for Lady Braye's loyalty to her husband resulted in a pardon for the young baron, who, released from the Tower in April 1557, henceforth served the queen well and finally died of wounds received in her wars.[53] The Verneys also escaped death, despite Francis's condemnation, although Edmund remained in prison for some time, being still there when his uncle Braye was released. Henry Peckham, however, was less fortunate: on 7 July both he and Daniell wer "hangyd on the galaus on Towre-hylle ... and after cutt downe and heded, and ther hedes cared unto Londune bryge and ther sett up".[54] The grisly spectacle presented by the city in the spring of 1554 was thus seen again two years later. Yet somehow, although their cousins and collaterals were deeply implicated in the Kingston-Dudley plot, the Brookes seem not to have been so much as mentioned in connection with it. The long lists in the Public Record Office of the names of those "vehemẽtly suspect" and those who were never actually proceeded against,

contain no references to them.[55] It was, in fact, at the most intense point in the investigation that Lord Cobham was appointed to the ecclesiastical commission of April 1556. The family must have cut its ties completely with the insurgent element in Marian society before this last serious conspiracy was contrived.

During the two and a half years left to the queen after the events of early 1556 there are no really significant records of the Brooke family. Cobham was again prominent at Court: during Philip's last, brief visit to England, in 1557,

> the xxj day of Marche the Kyng and the Quen [went] thrugh the galere unto ther closett, and ther thay [heard mass]; and ther was ij swordes borne a-for them, on by lord Cobham, and thodur (by) my lord admerall; [and from] ther closett bake to dener, boyth the Kyng and the Quen together, and ther my lord chanseler was ther and dyvers [other lords.][56]

A month after this courtly observance of Sunday, on Saint George's Day, Cobham was again conspicuous in the king's procession through Whitehall.[57] After Philip's departure from England in July, Cobham seems to have retired again to the country, but from there he kept up his social ties with the Court. Late in the summer, for instance, he probably entertained Sir William Cecil and his sister at Cobham Hall. Before leaving London on 28 August, the baron apparently tried to see the Princess Elizabeth, who had been present at the festivities which preceded the king's departure and who had not yet returned to her residence at Hatfield. "I thought to have tarried in London till Monday, intending then to have seen my lady's grace," he told Cecil on the twenty-seventh, but "I understand since from thence that her grace is in such wise diseased that she keepeth her chamber. I have therefore deferred my going thither."[58] Cobham told his friend that, if Cecil would send word what time he and his sister would be coming into Kent, he would give order that his barge should pick them up in London and that Lady Cobham's litter should wait for them at Gravesend.[59] Cobham probably returned to London in the autumn, for, although none of them is named, he was most likely one of the "nobull men morners in blake" who followed his brother-in-law Braye's funeral procession to Chelsea on 23 November.[60] Back in Kent for Christmas, he wrote again to Cecil on 26 December, saying that "I thought to make you mindful of your promise to see me this Christmas if my house might entertain so desired a guest."[61] Conyers Read, in his great study of Cecil, says that Cecil refused several invitations from

friends in the last year of Mary's reign, especially from that same Sir Philip Hoby who had once been such a torment to the queen's peace of mind.[62] He was, says Read, "somewhat reluctant to assemble with his old friends", people who were capable of involving him in counsels inimical to the Crown. "Cecil was consistently loyal to the legitimate Tudor sovereign. He had taken that attitude at considerable personal risk in the crisis following Edward's death. He would have no truck with rebellion against the Lord's anointed."[63] Read makes no mention of Cobham's letter. If, as its confident tone implies he would, Cecil accepted the baron's invitation, one may suggest that Cecil did not feel that he compromised himself by associating with the Brookes.

At the time of Christmas 1557 neither George Lord Cobham nor Queen Mary had as much as another year to live, but the time remaining, on the whole an uneventful period for the baron, embraced one occurrence which must have disturbed both of them. On 1 January 1557/8 letters were issued to Cobham and his fellow peers

> that every of them do furthewith levye of their servauntes, tenantes and others under their rules and offyces orelles where, by vertue of thies lettres, the nomber of oone hundreth footemen hable, and to furnyshe as many of theym as may be with armour and weapons and to sende the rest as they can gett them, so as the whole nomber be at Dovour by Fryday nexte at the furthest.[64]

The soldiers so assembled were destined for France, against which Spain and therefore England were at war, and especially for Calais, which was under siege. There was a slight delay in the musters, however; in Cobham's case his eldest son, who had been appointed by the Council letter to conduct the hundred men to Dover, was too ill to take command, and on 2 January the baron was instructed to send the contingent "foorth with all spede, so as they be at Dovour on Fryday nexte at the furdest, under the conducte of summe other of his sonnes whom he thinketh mete to take that charge, so as it be not Thomas Cobham, whome he is wylled to spare at home for this tyme".[65] But, by Friday, 7 January, when one of the younger Brookes arrived at Dover, his men were already without purpose, for late the previous day Calais had fallen forever to the French. Mary is said to have died with the name of that proud old fortress written on her heart; nothing so melodramatic is recorded of Lord Cobham's painful awareness of its loss. Yet, as

one of its most conscientious governors and as one who appreciated its importance to the security and commerce of England, he must have regretted its passing into enemy hands in the course of a Franco-Spanish quarrel at least as sentimentally, as well as far more objectively, than the foolish, husband-harassed queen. It would be interesting to know what Cobham had to say in the lugubrious Parliament which met on 20 January, two weeks after England lost the last bit of her French empire; there is, however, not even proof that the baron took his seat in that last legislature to which he was summoned.[66] His drawing up of his will at London on 13 January is, in fact, the final action which he is known to have performed.[67]

Before going on to treat of George Lord Cobham's death and burial, one should record the little that is known of the activities of his sons in the last years of Mary's reign. None of them was returned to the Parliament of January 1558, perhaps because the opposition shown by the two oldest brothers in the session of 1555 proved them not to be the kind of men, "given to good order, Catholic, and discreet", whom the queen wanted to represent her subjects.[68] Concerning Sir William at this time there is nothing but the statement of his poor health in the Council letter of 2 January 1557/8, and the evidence, derived from a law suit which went on between 1579 and 1587, that he was in debt in 1556 and borrowed from a Thomas Colte of Waltham Holy Cross, Essex.[69] It is obvious that what is known of his life under Mary is not enough to give one any idea of what had put him into debt. Of his brothers George is mentioned once, and that in connection with Thomas; the last half of Mary's reign must, in fact, from the point of view of the Brooke family, have seemed the time when the scapegrace Thomas proved his incorrigibility. On 16 April 1557 a courtier wrote of several happenings involving Cobham's family:

> At Mr. Solicitor's house this morning I met Lord Braye, who has been out of the Tower these eight or ten days, and all the rest save Edmund Verney. He sent his commendations to you and to my lady, and he shewed me a letter from his brother-in-law, Sir Edward [sic: Edmund] Brydges, who declared that his father, Lord Chandos, was dead. 'His syne under nethe was "Yower loveyng brother Edmonde Shandos."['] An hour before your letter came [on 14 April], young lusty Smythe, whose mother was sister to the Duke of Somerset, met Thomas Cobham and George, and upon an old quarrel George and he fought. As I heard, George hurt him in the arm, and they were put asunder. 'By and by upon moltyplyng of wordes, Thomas Cobham and Smythe went to yt agayne, and, as I harde, Smythe made Cobham gyve growende, and in the end Thomas Cobham haste a pryke at hem and hyte hym in the flanke in the nether ende of the bely, soo that no man can tell whether he wyll lyve or dy. And [the]

other Cobham is flede to sentuery (sanctuary) or else he is gone.'[70] Whether the Brookes killed their man is not known, although at some time in that week an unknown man whose death Henry Machyn considered important enough to record in his diary "was slayn in Flestrete".[71] Nor is it known what their quarrel was with him; considering the bad blood that apparently had once existed between Cobham and the Protector Somerset, and the fact that George Brooke had been in Sir John Cheke's Protestant household while Smith was the son of a papist, it need not have been a very personal one. At any rate, while George fled to sanctuary and disappeared from recorded history during the remainder of Mary's reign, Thomas went on to another exploit, this time a particularly distressing one for his family. Two months after taking part in the brawl, on 11 June 1557, he and several accomplices

> at 11 o'clock in the night burglariously broke and entered the mansion house of Edward Warner, knight, in the parish of St. Mary Magdalene in Castle Baynerd ward, London, put Edward Foster then in the house in great peril of his life and carried off 200 marks in coined money of the moneys of Warner.[72]

Brooke was at this time in the service of the Earl of Pembroke, the Marquess of Northampton's brother-in-law and thus a family connection; his fellow burglars were also men familiar to Cobham and his allies, for one was another of Pembroke's servants and two were "in the Lord Chandos' bande", as is learned from the warrant issued by the Council for their arrest on 22 July.[73] It was perhaps Warner's reluctance to charge his wife's nephew which caused the government to wait almost six weeks before taking steps to apprehend the thieves; perhaps the police were actually unable to make out who had committed the robbery until Edward Vaughan, himself one of Brooke's accomplices, turned informer, as the warrant shows him to have done. Whatever the cause of the delay, Brooke and the others made for the Continent in the meantime and apparently reached Calais, which, as a boy, Thomas must have known well. They got no farther, for on 28 July the Council wrote to the authorities there to send the miscreants back

> in the next vessell, the master whereof they knowe to be trustie, with sum suche trustie servantes as they shal thinke mete, alonge the seas to the Tower of London, where order is given to the Constable for thiere receiving and keping accordingly, willing them to gyve charge to thier servantes to have diligent eye and regarde to the salfe keping of them so as non of them escape.[74]

Sometime early in August, then, Thomas Brooke saw once more the inside of the Tower. When, if ever, he was tried one cannot say; he was out of prison and at home in disgrace by 2 January 1557/8, when the Council instructed Lord Cobham not to commit to him the band of reinforcements which the baron was sending to Calais.[75]

* * *

Chapter VIII

George Lord Cobham died between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning on 29 September 1558, "at his Mannor of Cobham hall in the Countie of Kent on Thursday being Michaelmas day".[1] He had, according to the inscription which his son placed on his tomb, reached the ripe age of sixty-one years when he was carried off by a raging fever. It is impossible to ascertain how long he lay unburied, for the herald who conducted the funerals neglected to enter an account of them in the registers of the College of Arms, while that which survives in the Bodleian Library says only that he was buried on a Sunday in October. Since his wife, when she died soon afterward, was allowed to lie in state for twenty-five days, a procedure which is nowhere noted as being unusual, it might seem likely that Lord Cobham's interment took place on Sunday, 23 October. Since, however, an entry in Machyn's diary for which one cannot establish an exact date appears to refer to the rites at Cobham, and since it occurs in the list of funerals between one on 12 October and another on 18 October, one probably ought to consider the ceremony to have been conducted on Sunday, 16 October.[2] According to his own wish, he was "buried in Cobham Churche in the Countie of Kente after the laudable and honorable order of the Gartere withoute vaine pompe or pride".[3] The account of the ceremonial which is preserved in the Bodleian was probably written by Sir Gilbert Dethick who, as Garter King of Arms, was present at the services and would therefore have been responsible for recording the event. His statement gives some notion of the splendour of a prolonged rite for which the blazoners' bill alone was £ 142.[4]

> Item After that hee was dead & colde, hee was openned, cered and Coffened very safe & sure and after that hee was sett in his Chappell couered with a pall of black veluett with Scochions of his Armes set ouer the same some in palls of his and his wifes and some within the Garter and the Chappell wherein the said body stood was hanged with

black Cloth and garnished with Scochions of both ther Armes and there was sett ouer the said Course all his hachementes & a Crosse and there was light burning both day & night, and also there was said Masse and dyrges every day with watch every Night & thus continued till the day of the buryall that all things were in a readynes for the said buryall.

The Order of the furnishing of the howse

Item the Hall was hanged wth black Cloth and garnished with Schochions of both the Armes aforesaid in the which hall there was every day great faire kept for all Commers also the entry comeing from Rechen Dressen [probably Rochester] to the Hall was hanged ouer both sides in like manner. Also from the foote of the Stayres up to the Gallery to the head of the same with the Entrey betweene the said Staire and the Galery was hanged on both sides with black Cotton and garnished with Scochions & the said Gallery was hanged with brode Cloth and on the same there was tached scochions of Bokeram in metall and the said Galery was trymmed in the best manner for that the morners sopped & dyned in the same.

The Ordre of the Churche.

Item the said Church from the West dore up to the Rode lofte was hanged on both sides with black Cloth, the rode lofte also & garnished with scochions of Armes & Quere was hanged round about wth blacke Cloth & garnished with scochions in manner. Also the high Aulter was hanged & garnished in like manner. And in the myddel of the said Quire the [sic: there] was maid a very faire herse iiij^{or} square of v principalls which did conteyne in lyght to the number of iij and more well garnished with Scochions and penseles with a Ma^{tie} of Sarsenet with over it Iob & the iiij^{or} Evangelistes in the same wrought with fine golde and a valence which went round about the said hersse of Sarcenett wth a ffringe of arvell written with Letters of Golde and the postes with the inner and outter rayles were hanged double with black Cloth & garnished wth Scochions & betweene the said rayles strawed with russhes and there sett vij Stooles wth Cushions covered wth black Cloth at the which the morners kneeled the chief morner at the head who had a Cushion of black veluet and ouer eich side iij of the other morners. Thus the hersse wth Church and house in this manner aforesaid furnished the day was appointed for the carryeing of the said Course to the Church which was Sonday the -- day of October on the w^{ch} hee was couered [corrected in the margin to 'carryed'] to Church in forme followinge.

The Order of y^{e} goeing to Church wth y^{e} said Hersse

First the porter with a black staffe in his hand in a black Cote to leade the way.

Then the Crosse and eich side of the same a faire white branche garnished with Scochions wthin the Garter borne by ij Clerkes in Surpleses.

Then the Children of Rochester ij and ij & after them all the Clerkes ij and ij.

Then the priestes ij and ij.

Then the Deane of Rochester which did execute as at the comminge forth of the Herse out of the Hall dore where hee senced & hallowed the same and after tooke his place.

Then the Standard borne by M^{r} Louelace in his Gowne and his hood on his head.

Then all Gentillmen in longe Gownes their hoodes on their Shoulders and after them Squiers in like manner ij and ij.

Then the Executors in longe Gownes their hoodes on their Shoulders.

Then the Banner of Armes borne by M^{r} Poole in his Gowne his hood on his head.

Then the Helme and Crest borne by portcullies pursuivant at Armes, his gowne and his hood on his head and over his Gowne his Cote of Armes.

Then the Target borne by Chester Herald in like mann^{r} in his Coate of Armes.

Then the Cote of Armes borne by Garter principall King of Armes in the

Queenes Cote of Armes.

Then came the corpse, covered "with a pall of blacke veluet wth a Crosse of white satten, borne by his Sons brethern & Kinsfolke in longe gownes ... their hoodes on their heades". The names of the pallbearers, "with also the names of the Assistants", are given as "M^{r} Thomas Cobham the elder", "M^{r} Thomas Cobham the yonger", "M^{r} John Cobham", "M^{r} ffogg", "M^{r} William Okenton", Cobham's brother-in-law, "M^{r} John Wilkins" the steward, "M^{r} Richard Broke",[5] "M^{r} Hugh Darrell", "M^{r} William Boyes", "M^{r} William Normanton", "M^{r} Chpofer Gayer" and "M^{r} John Webb". On either side of the coffin walked twenty yeomen in black, bearing torches, and before and after them came men carrying bannerols: "The Banner of S^{t} Thomas borne by M^{r} Thomas Broke", the dead man's nephew; "The Banner of S^{t} George borne by M^{r} John Orwell"; "The Banner Roll of Cobham & Westm̃land borne by Tho: Page"; "The Banner role of Cobham & Wrotesley [Wriothesley?] borne by Thom: Tottisherst", one of the witnesses to Cobham's will of 1551; "The Banner role of Cobham & Haydon borne by M^{r} Martin"; "The Banner role of Cobham & Bray borne by John Alleyn"; "The Banner of our Lady borne by M^{r} Henry Byer", one of the witnesses to Cobham's last will; and "The Banner of the Trinity borne by M^{r} Henry Hart", Lady Cobham's nephew.

> Then the chiefe morner William now Lord Cobham.
> Then the Lord of Burgaveny. S^{r} Percyvall Hart.
> S^{r} Christopher Alleyn. M^{r} [later Sir Thomas?] Walsingham.
> M^{r} Henage. M^{r} Byer.
> Then after them all yeomen in blacke Cotes which were many in number and so proved [sic: proced'] to the Church where at the Church dore the said Deane senced & hallowed the said Course.

Once the service began inside the church one's interest in the account of it lapses Cobham was laid out in state and, the next day, beginning "In the Morning about vij of the Clock ... the Chief Morner for that tyme [being] M^{r} Thomas Cobham thelder", masses were sung in orthodox Catholic fashion. There was then a sermon "made by the Deane of Rochester whose Anthem [antetheme] was Beati qui in Domino moriantur", then the solemn interment of the body in a sunken vault, and after "All theis Ceremonyes done the deane w^{t} the rest of the Quire departed to the place to dynner where they had a great dynner:" what Machyn succinctly described as "a sermon, and grett chere".[6] The Roman aspect of the rites cannot have been what the late lord would have preferred, but, despite what now seems its heavy magnificence, one need not assume that the temporal side of the ceremony would have struck him as being

contrary to his expressed last wish. As the solemn procession moved out of the gates of Cobham Hall and down the country lane to the lovely little chantry in the village that was the parish church of St. Mary Magdalen, its show was no more than that prescribed by statute for a deceased Knight of the Garter; it demonstrated in the words of Sir Thomas Browne, that "man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave."[7]

There is no reference to the presence at his funerals of the dead man's widow; the dowager Lady Cobham was probably too weak to take part in them, for she was dying as they went forward. Almost nothing is known of Anne's life after her return to England with her husband in 1550; one mention only is made of her, and that is in a Council letter issued on 6 March 1553/4, during the aftermath of the Wyatt rebellion, by which Sir John Bourne and Sir Richard Southwell were directed "to give order to the Lieutenant of the Tower that he permitt and suffer the Lorde Cobham to have the libertie of the gardein, and his wief to comme unto hym".[8] On 7 October 1558, eight days after Cobham's death, she made her will:[9] perhaps, as Thynne affirms, she had resolved to die, "refusing anie longer to liue after the deth of hir honorable and louing husband".[10] After directing that her body be buried simply in the church at Cobham, she bequeathed sums of money to her children (all of whom she surnamed Cobham, except William), and to her dependents, and disposed of her personal effects with painstaking thoroughness. Catherine, the youngest daughter, and Henry, the fifth of her surviving sons, each got £ 60; George got fifty, and John, the younger Thomas, Edmund and Edward, the youngest son, forty each. George's wife Christina got "iiij^{li} in money to pay for the nursyng of her chyld"; Faith and William Okendon, the testatrix's sister-in-law and her husband, got £ 6.13.4. Friends, servants and charities were given money and practical gifts. "To the iiij almes children whome I fynd" Lady Cobham left "to each of theym XL^{s} and ij kene [kine] apece." Her two personal attendants were left money and several articles of clothing, which it had been part of their duties to care for: "to Alice Hamcok my servant my gowne of black cloth and the best peticote of cloth she will chose, my varthyngale & half my lynnen that is in her keeping, iiij marks in money [£ 2.13.4] & a ryng other & besydes for wages", and

"to Anne Barley my servant the residue of my lynnen in the keeping of my said Servant Alice ... my night gowne of sakcloth, a peticote of sylke saye and xxvj^{s} viij^{d} besydes her wages". To other servants, fourteen of whom, at Cobham and Cooling, are mentioned by name, their mistress gave, besides sums of money ranging from £ 2 to 5s., small but useful gifts. One woman got "as muche fyne serge as will make her a payer of shetes"; to others went "one quarter of wheate & a noteher [another] of malt", "my gowne of taffeta, myne old kyrtell of velvett a peticote of cloth, ij smokks ij parteletts & ij payer of ruffs ... & my half vartingale", "a kerchief & a veyle out of my owen Cofer". "All my yerne & hempe," stipulated Lady Cobham, "I give and bequeath among my laundry servants and all the wool that I refinned for myself to be lykewise devyded among them to make them frokks." Some got only their wages and small gifts of money; among these beneficiaries were a "Mother Marshall", "the nurse at Colyng" and "the Frenchewoman". "To Henry Byer for his paynes making this will" went £ 2. It may appear from these bequests, recorded here principally because of the hints they give of the scope of the establishment ruled by a great lady in the mid-sixteenth century, that Lady Cobham was a hard-working, severely dressed countrywoman who wore sackcloth to bed and who spent much of her time in the simple woollen-mill at Cobham Hall. A note of the items which she bequeathed to her children and relatives, however, will balance this impression. George's wife was left "a gowne of wrought velvet furred with jennetts [genet]" and "a kyrtell of purple velvett". Catherine was to have her mother's "gown of furred velvet lyndd with Sarcett [sic], a gown of furred velvet blak and a gowne of blak satten with a french kyrtell with sleeves of wrought velvet a round kyrtell with sleves to it of black velvet with lace about it & another kyrtell of black velvet with a cutt of the same, a cloke with perlle belong [sic] to it, viij fyne smokks, ij Cambryk vayles, ij Cambryk kerchefs, ij corse veyles, ij corse kerchefs out of myne owen Cofer ... & ij petticotes one of velvet & one taffeta". "Mistriss Fayth Okenton" was bequeathed a far more elegant night-gown than was Anne Barley: it was "of chekker velvet furred with Martens with a fore part of a kyrtell of blak velvet". William Okendon got "a gowne of weought velvet furred with Coney". From her chest of jewels and other valuables, including monies minted in various parts of Europe, the old lady drew some fas-

cinating articles. Her son Henry was left "the hart of stone garnyshed with gold with a pearle appendant to it", and "my cup of silver with a brake upon the cover", the latter probably an heirloom in the Braye family, since the brake or curb used on a horse's nose in training him is termed in heraldry a braye, or barnacle. Elizabeth, "my daughter the Lady Marques", got "a jewell sett with dyamonts with a great pearle thereto appendant, iij boxes of sylver, a taglet of gold for a lace to a krytell, ij of my best wrought handkerchiefs, a pece of gold called a sovereryn and the best ryng I have". The marchioness's younger sister, Catherine, was given "a pece of gold called a double duckett & ij of my ryngs"; a cousin from Suffolk, Richard Brooke, also got a double ducat. Lady Cobham's three-month-old grand-daughter, George's daughter Elizabeth, the child to pay for whose nursing Christina Brooke was left £ 4, received "a pommander enclosed with gold & a little mawndolen [maudlin] cup of sylver gilt". "My gilt spone" was given to Faith Okendon, and with it "ij forkks": forks were to be rare in England for yet another fifty years when Lady Cobham passed hers on to her sister-in-law, and it is not unlikely that the baroness had been brought them as gifts from Italy when her sons had returned from their student days at Venice in the late 1540s.[11] All that was left of her personal estate after the legacies were made and "my funeralls fynyshed" went to the testatrix's son, "William Brook Knight Lord Cobham whome I make & ordeyne of this my testament & last will my sole executor & Sir Percyvall Hart Knight my overseer". It was a rich woman who made this will: bequests in current English coin alone amounted to £ 367.11.8: but Anne as a widow had a yearly income of £ 279.12.7, and she knew that her estate could well afford the legacies which she made. Her mother's death on 24 October, by which she became co-heiress of Lady Braye's extensive property, left her even better off. It was also a capable woman who made it: less than a month before she died, and probably only a week after sustaining the blow of her husband's death, Anne set herself the tedious task of surveying her domestic world and remembering the many people in it with appropriate tokens of her regard for them and for their varied needs. Finally, it was a disappointed woman who looked over her progeny for the last time: her third son, the prodigal Thomas, she had apparently decided at last to

disown, for neither he nor his family is given anything in her will, nor is there mention in it either of her eldest grandchild, Frances, the girl who at the time of Lady Cobham's death looked as though she might remain the only child of the new lord, or of Frances's mother, Anne's hateful daughter-in-law.

Anne Braye did not long have to endure the experience of seeing Dorothy Neville châtelaine of Cobham Hall: the dowager died "on allhallowendaye the fyrste of nouembre 1558 beinge tuesday About a xj of the clocke in the Aftre none".[12] The provision for the payment of the cost of her funerals which she had made in her will was, in the event, proved unnecessary; the whole service cost only £ 8.18.0, for when she was buried on 26 November

> Therse w^{t} all the furnyture therof s^{r}uyd hoolye for that hit stoode styll there readye whole eu' syns the buryall of the lord cobhm̃ her husband a lytle before And so stode styll tyll Aftre Chrystemas whollye vppe & then taken downe to my lordes owne vse for that m^{r} Garter & Chestre were Agreyd contented and pleased for all thinges wth readye money presentlye payd them.[13]

It is unfortunate that the ceremonial of her funeral was not preserved, for Lady Cobham, unlike her husband, was interred in the first days of the reign of Elizabeth, when, should her executor have strongly desired to bury her according to a Protestant rite, he might have attempted to do so without great fear of official reprisal. All that one knows of the funeral service is what survives in a fragment of Machyn's diary, where it is recorded, in extraordinarily bewildering terms, that "the xxvj day of november was bered in ... my lord cobbam here husband w^{t} iij haroldes ... w^{t} a gret baner of armes & iiij baners of ... & a iiij dosen of armes - my lade Cobbam."[14]

William Lord Cobham was preoccupied with helping to establish Queen Elizabeth upon her Throne when his mother was buried; he may not even have been able to attend her funeral, since he had already been constituted the queen's ambassador extraordinary to the King of Spain by the time that the ceremony took place, and was concerned with making his way as quickly as possible to Brussels. Upon his return his father's inquisition post mortem was taken at the Guildhall on 20 January 1558/9.[15] The commissioners found that the estate which George Lord Cobham had left to his eldest son[16] was almost exactly that described in the baron's will, the value at which he was assessed amounting only to £ 5.13.3 $\frac{3}{4}$. more than that

which he had estimated his property to be worth. Because of this virtual tallying of the inquisition post mortem with the will, the latter may conveniently be discussed here, although it was not proved until 6 December 1560.[17]

The will which George Lord Cobham made on 13 January 1557/8 is a long and carefully worded testament. He began it by reciting fourteen of the innumerable titles of which the king and queen, as sovereigns of and princes in most of Catholic Christendom, were possessed, and by making a statement of his faith which, considering the time at which he made it, was unusually simple:

> ffirst and principallie I commite my sowle vnto almighty God my maker and redemer, and sauior in whome I truste and beleue by his death passion and Resurrecc̃on to haue free remission and forgiuenes of all my offences and Synnes.

From this formulistic beginning the testator proceeded to direct the burial of his body at Cobham, and to ensure his staff against dismissal by his heir for at least six months after his death, by prescribing that "euerie of my howseholde serũntes haue one halfe yeres wages and one half yeres boorde next and ymmediatlie after my deceace." The next Lord Cobham was then provided with the means of maintaining his personal estate:

> I giue to s^{r} Willm̃ Broke knight my sonne and heire apparante the lease and interest whiche I haue of the late bisshopp of Rochester of the manno^{r} of Cobhamburie. And also I giue to the saide S^{r} Willm̃ Broke my Coller of the Order of golde with the George of diamontes therto belonginge, and all other my smale Chaines of golde with the George of golde to them appertaininge, and all my garters of golde of thorder and all other myne apparell and robes belonginge to the order of sainte George, And all my parlemente Robes, And all other myne apparrell. Also all my horses and Jennettes steele saddles harnesses with all others to them belonginge: Also all myne Armorie withall and singuler the app'tenũces. And as concerninge all my plate Shepe and bullockes I will the same to be equallie devided into ij. equall partes. And I will that the Ladie Anne nowe my Wief shall have the one half therof. And that the saide S^{r} Willm̃ Broke knighte my sonne and heire apparante shall haue the other half therof; And all other my householde stuff at Cowlinge Castell I giue & bequeth the same to the saide Ladie Anne my Wief. And all my other householde stuff at Cobham I give and bequeathe the same to the saide S^{r} Willm̃ Broke knighte.

Cobham did not appoint his son an executor of his will:

> of this my present Testamente and laste will I doe make ordaine and constitute Thomas Wotton Esquire Benedick Spynnala m^{r}chant and Edward Osborne m^{r}chaũte myne executors. And S^{r} persiuall harte knighte and S^{r} Martin Bowes knighte my ou'seers of the same.

Almost forty years later, when William Lord Cobham was drawing up his own will,

he commended his father's practice, telling William Lambarde that "I Like well to followe the example of my father hearin, whoe (notwthstanding that I and other of my Brethren weare then of mans estate) ordeyned Benedict Spinola and m^{r} Osborn, to be his executors."[18]

All of these stipulations and legacies, however, were merely a preamble to what Cobham had really to say; as if impatient to get on with it, he said:

> And nowe beinge desierus to declare and set forthe in order howe all soche Castelles mannors Landes tenementes and hereditamentes as god hath lente me in this vale of myserie, sholde be vsed and bestowed when I am gon aswell for the advauncemente of my Wief Children and seruũtes, as also that my moste dred souereigne Lorde and Ladie the Kinge and Quenes highnes sholde fullie haue all that parte and porcõn which to them of right appertaineth after my deathe by theire highnes Lawes and statutes I doe make and ordaine this my laste Will concerninge the disposicõn of all and singuler my saide Castelles mannors Landes teñtes rentes reuercõns seruices possessions and hereditamentes whatsoeu' they be wherof at the tyme of the makinge of this my laste will I am seased of in fe symple or other state of enheritaunce within the Realme of Englonde or elce where within the Kinge and Quenes maiesties Dominions and Signoris or any parcell therof in manner and forme followinge.

There followed a list of more than fifty lordships and manors in Dorset, Somerset, Devon, Bedfordshire, Wiltshire, Essex, London and Kent, besides many unnamed and only generally specified properties, which composed "an estate of enheritaũce of and in" which Cobham said he stood and was "sole seased".

> Which Castelles Lordeshipps mannors Landes Tenementes hereditamentes and possessions with thapp^{r}tenũces Equally rated, doe extende and amounte in the hole to the clere yerelie value of one thousande threescore eightene poundes vj^{s}. ij^{d}. ob. [halfpenny] q^{a} [farthing] in possession ouer and aboue all yerely charges and repryses.

The commissioners who took Cobham's inquisition post mortem found the same property to be worth yearly £ 1084.1.6½. Cobham's interest in his wife's inheritance was also suggested in the will, where he noted that he possessed

> the revercõn of the Scyte of the late monasterie of Newinham in the Countie of bedd, And of other Landes tenementes and hereditamentes in the saide Countie parcell of the possessions of the late monasterie expectante vppon the deathes of master Bruorton[19] and of Dame Jane late Ladie braye now his Wief.

Having enumerated the components of his vast estate, Cobham next divided it roughly into three parts. The first "full third parte", the revenues of which amounted yearly to £ 362.13.4, was set aside

> for the Kinge, and Quenes maiesties duties to be taken of ... by reason of wardeshipp releef primer season lyverie or otherwise

> according to theire highnes lawes and Statutes in suche case ordained and prouided.

The contingency for which Cobham thus provided did not occur; his heir being of age when he died, the inquisition directed that this third part set aside in case of wardship should descend without interference by the Crown to William Lord Cobham. (The fees paid by Cobham's heir in suing livery would, however, have been drawn from this third part.)[20] The second part was to be the widowed Lady Cobham's portion:

> And further I will and devise my Lordeshippes and mannors of Cooling Beckley Strowde Temple, the hundred of Shamble, and the ferme of Chattington with theire app^{r}tenũces in the saide Countie of Kent and the late Colledge of Cobham with the Lordeshipps mannors Landes and Tenementes at the dissolucõn therof to the same belonginge or in any manner of Wyese appertaininge amountinge to the clere yerelie value of ij hundreth lxxix^{li}. xij^{s}. vij^{d}. aboue all yerely charges and reprises to the Ladie Anne my Wief for and duringe the terme of her naturall Lyef accordinge as they and euerie of them haue byn hertofo^{r} alreddie to her appointed and assured by one Acte of Parliamente therefore made in the xxxiiijth yere of the Raigne of the Late Kinge Henry the eighte as by the same Acte amongest other thinges therin contained more at large doth and maye appeare.

Finally there was marked out an estate which was bringing in yearly £ 435.14.3½; this, with the reversion of Lady Cobham's jointure and that of Lady Braye's Newnham estate, was to pass to "S^{r} Willm̃ broke my sonne and heire apparante".

It was only after setting out the three divisions of his estate that Cobham departed from ordinary practice and set out an entail so precisely expressed that no loop-hole could ever be discovered in it, even in the years when the Crown of James I did its best to break it. Covering more than five of the great pages of the probate register at Somerset House, the wording of the entail moves inexorably with never an ampersand, through each of Cobham's eight sons in order and through each of their male descendants, up to the heirs male in perpetuity of the eighth son to be born to the child Edward Brooke the younger. Even there it does not stop: the heir male of Elizabeth Marchioness of Northampton's eighth son is cited; then the comparable descendant of Catherine Brooke; then the heirs male of Cobham's brother, Thomas; then back to the heirs general of each of the daughters to be born to Cobham's sons. For sheer determination to foresee every eventuality, George Lord Cobham can hardly be equalled. One smiles when one reads his confident request

> that yf there arise any ambiguitie or doubte in any worde or sentence in this my laste will and testamente, that then the same ambiguitie or doughte shall from tyme to tyme be declared and appointed by the Kinge or Quenes Justices of the cõmon pleese at Westm' or by the more parte of them for the tyme beinge, and that suche exposicion or declaracõn by them or the moste ꝑte of them to be made shalbe demed and taken to the true intente, and meaninge of my wyll.

No such elucidation by the judiciary seems ever to have been required.

Apart from reciting the sanction of disinheritance to which any of his descendants should be liable who attempted to contravene the entail, there is little more to the remainder of the will than an exhortation to the executors to perform their duties honourably, "as they will answer fo^{r} hit before god". Once they have acquitted themselves of his trust, Wotton, Spinola and Osborne

> shall not further intermeddle with the proffittes of the same mannors Landes, tenementes or premisses but the same to remaine to my sonne S^{r} Willm̃ broke in forme afore mencõned.

To so careful, so determined, above all so successful a man William Brooke was heir, and on 5 May 1561, six months after the will was proved, he was granted licence out of the Court of Wards and Liveries to enter upon his lands.[21] By the time that he was put in possession of his inheritance William Lord Cobham had already decided how he would honour, materially at least, his father's memory. He had commissioned a table monument of marble to be set up in the church at Cobham, upon which would lie in effigy his parents, and along the Ionic-pillared sides of which he and his thirteen brothers and sisters would kneel, each in a separate sculpted niche. This tomb was set up in 1561. Francis Thynne called it "a rich, statelie, and curious monument of rare workmanship in stone", "a gorgeous" thing,[22] and so it still is today, following the repairs done to it in 1841.[23] White and massive, brave with the tinctured arms of the Brookes, the Brayes and the people whom the Brooke children by 1561 had married, the tomb stands in the centre of the chancel, dominating it. Guarded by the antelope and the winged lion crouched at their feet, the figures of Lord and Lady Cobham raise their eyes toward the great east window, while their children kneel on cushions near the incomparable brasses which mark on the floor the graves of their Brooke and de Cobham ancestors. Eulogists had come forward with epitaphs upon the death of George Lord Cobham: one piece of elegiac verse begins by describing him almost as a prince ("honoratus ac strenuus vir Georgius brocus, Cobham Regulus").[24] That which his son chose is



The Brooke Tomb
in the Church of St. Mary Magdalen, Cobham



The Brooke Tomb
in the Church of St. Mary Magdalen, Cobham
(Detail 1)



The Brooke Tomb
in the Church of St. Mary Magdalen, Cobham
(Detail 2)



The Brooke Tomb
in the Church of St. Mary Magdalen, Cobham
(Detail 3)

in prose, and must have been among the least extravagant of those offered. It is finely carved on the bevelled edge of the marble table, and in translation from the Latin reads:

> This most honoured and illustrious man was George Brooke Lord Cobham, so named from his lordship of the town of Cobham. He was for several years a most esteemed governor of Calais, and was elected to the Most Noble Order of the Knights of Saint George. Not only did he have a most outstanding claim to recognition by reason both of birth and honours; his nature, too, was of the best, and his mind was adorned with every kind of praiseworthy quality. In war he was a commander of great excellence; in peace he was a most wise councillor to those princes in whose times he lived. Singularly esteemed by the Kentishmen among whom he dwelt, he was in fact held extraordinarily dear by the whole state on account of his brilliant distinctions and abilities. Most celebrated he was, and beloved, and all the things which he did were the more illustrious for that he, when once he had taken upon himself the profession and the defence of the Gospel, maintained the same till his dying day. This most noble man, an ever faithful servant to God and a great adornment to his country, when he had reached a ripe old age and was in his sixty-second year, was consumed by a raging fever and died on the third calends of October in the year 1558. At his passing his children, his friends (of whom he left behind him many who were men of especial estimation), his kindred and, indeed, the whole nation felt a deep and fitting sense of loss. William Brooke, knight, deriving his style of Lord Cobham from the name of his ancient family, as the most dutiful son and heir of George his father, consecrated this monument to the memory of his dearly beloved father George in the year 1561, being the third year of Queen Elizabeth.[25]

On Lady Cobham's side of the tomb the inscription is shorter, and it is in verse.[26] Thynne translated it thus:

> She happye was her father lorde, her husbande lord & knighte.
> The fyrste was Braye by name & bloode, the second Cobham highte.
> The worthye ladye calléd Anne, was frugall in her kynde
> A prosperous mother with issue fayre, by natures gyft assinde.
> The liberall hande of this dame Anne, pourr'd forthe to those in nede
> Large giftes of greate relifie [sic], to stand theire harmful want in steede.
> Nothinge cold better be then she, moore happy nowe then she
> Since to her dere and lovinge mate more derer none cold be.
> The last yere of quene Maryes reigne, did take his lyfe awaye.
> Nouember followinge with lyke fate did eke her breth decaye.
> So they are joynéd in one tombe, after their Wordly [sic] dayes
> That joynéd were in marriage knot by concorde to their praise.

Together the baron and his wife still lie, their tomb the only sculptured monument in the church of St. Mary Magdalen. No memorial to their successors was ever erected to rival it, for the graves of their eldest son and his wives are unmarked, and where their ill-fated grandson was buried no one knows. Thus the Brookes, although they reached the height of their power and dignity in the later years of Elizabeth, are immortalized as they were when her age had hardly begun.

Footnotes to Book One

Chapter I (pp. 1-5)

[1] Cecil Paper 225/1; MS. Coll. of Arms Philipot E.1, f. 95. See also Appendix.

[2] There were from 1313 Lords Cobham of Kent; from 1324 Lords Cobham, without a territorial designation; from 1326 Lords Cobham of Rundale; and from 1347 Lords Cobham of Sterborough. This unusual circumstance of four titles only slightly differentiated from one another has given rise to much confusion. A brief account of the fortunes of each of these related lines, all of which had lost their titles by the sixteenth century except that of the Lords Cobham of Kent, is given in the third volume of Holinshed's Chronicles (unexpurgated ed., 1587), pp. 1499-1515. (This is the source of all references made to Holinshed in this work, unless another edition or volume is stipulated. See below, pp. 931-33, for a discussion of the excision of the treatise on the Lords Cobham from the second 1587 edition of Holinshed.) A seventeenth-century manuscript in the Bodleian Library (MS. Wood B.8, ff. 25b-26) shows, by means of a tabular pedigree illustrated with their arms, the relationships with one another of these branches of the Cobham family.

[3] See the notes to the family tree, p. 1079, n. 1; V.H.H. Green, The Later Plantagenets (1955), p. 210 n.; William Stubbs, The Constitutional History of England in Its Origin and Development (ed. 1880), II, 518, 540; Holinshed, p. 1504; D.N.B., under John de Cobham, Lord Cobham.

[4] The Complete Peerage (hereafter abbreviated to C.P.), III, 344.

[5] See especially Stubbs, III, 20.

[6] Ypodigma Neustriae, a Thoma Walsingham, quondam Monacho Monasterii S. Albani, Conscriptum, ed. Henry Thomas Riley (Rolls Series, No. 28, Part 7, 1876), p. 379.

[7] See C.P., III, 345.

[8] See the family tree for the marriages of Joan de la Pole.

[9] The writ summoning Oldcastle to Parliament was issued to him under his own patronymic, but he was always known as Lord Cobham, not Lord Oldcastle: see C.P., X, 47 n.

[10] See Stubbs, III, 70; Green, p. 253.

[11] William Henry Hamilton Rogers, "Brook, of Somerset and Devon, Barons of Cobham in Kent," Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, XLIV-XLVI (Taunton, 1898-1900), Pt. 1, p. 13.

[12] See James Gairdner, Lollardy and the Reformation (1908), I, 69-70.

[13] See Gairdner, I, 70.

[14] Gairdner, I, 78.

[15] C.P., X, 48.

[16] See Sir James H. Ramsay, Lancaster and York, a Century of English History (Oxford, 1892), I, 178.

[17] There is no doubt that Oldcastle took no part in Henry V's French wars. Yet a curious item printed by Francis Peck in Desiderata Curiosa (1732-35), II, vii, 5) inexplicably lists him among the English lords who took part in the siege of Rouen, which was conducted in the year following Oldcastle's death. It is a catalogue of "les Nosmes des Nobles qui fueront one [sic: auec?] le Roy Henrye le quint, au Siege de Roan; & lour Enseigns. 22. Aug. 1418. From a MS. in the Hands

of Mr. Robert New, of the Middle Temple, Gent.", which includes the name and arms of the "Sieur de Cobham. Quarterly. 1. Sur Cheveron Or, iij. Lions sa. 2 Arg. Chasteau sa. Oldcastle". Oddly enough, Sir John Fastolf, the other fifteenth-century knight in whom the original of Falstaff has been seen, was among the besiegers of Rouen (see H.S. Bennett, Six Medieval Men and Women (Cambridge, 1955), p. 46).

18 See Johannis Capgrave Liber de Illustribus Henricis, ed. F.C. Hingeston (Rolls Series, No. 7, 1858), p. 121; James Tait's article on Oldcastle in D.N.B.; The Victoria History of the County of Warwick, II (1908), 437.

19 Lord Cherleton of Powys has a place in the discussion of Oldcastle's posthumous career as a stage figure: see below, pp. 988, 1063 n. 146.

20 Gairdner, p. 97; Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, ed., English Historical Literature in the XVth Century (Oxford, 1913), p. 41.

21 Walter Farquhar Hook, Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury, 12 vols. (1860-76) III, 94.

22 Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, ed., Chronicles of London (Oxford, 1905), p. 72.

23 See W.T. Waugh, "Sir John Oldcastle," English Historical Review, XX (1905), 645, 651; Tait.

24 Lady Oldcastle was not released until three days after her husband's execution (see C.P., X, 48).

25 There is a brief biographical notice of Sir Thomas Brooke the elder in S.W. Bates Harbin's "Members of Parliament for the County of Somerset," Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, LXXVIII-LXXXV (Taunton, 1933-40), 67. His will is discussed in the notes to the family tree, p. , n. 4.

The approximate date of the knighthood of Sir Thomas Brooke the younger is established by the description of him in the official Return of Members of Parliament (Part I. Parliaments of England, 1213-1702)(1878), pp. 290, 298. In 1417 he is called "Thomas Brook' junior", in 1421 he has become "Thomas Broke, miles and chivaler".

Harbin's study (pp. 67-68, 71-74, 76, 78-79, 81, 84, 87, 89, 92) gives the dates recorded in the Return of Members to show that the elder Sir Thomas sat in Parliament for Dorset in 1413-14 and for Somerset twelve times between 1386 and June 1413, and that the younger sat for Somerset four times, in 1417, 1421, 1422 and 1427-28. The identity of the father's name with the son's has led Rogers (Pt. 1, p. 13) into error concerning the Brookes' parliamentary careers: Rogers says that Sir Thomas the younger, not the elder, sat for Dorset in 1413-14, and does not credit him with a seat in the Parliament before which Oldcastle was arraigned in 1417. The correct list of the sessions in which the younger Brooke sat is given in the Complete Peerage, III, 346.

26 C.P., X, 48. Literary commentators on the connection between the Elizabethan Lords Cobham and Shakespeare's Falstaff, originally named Oldcastle, constantly refer to the Brookes as descendants of Oldcastle, Sir Edmund Chambers being almost alone in putting the relationship correctly by saying that "Sir John Oldcastle married an ancestress" of the sixteenth-century lords (William Shakespeare, A Study of Facts and Problems (Oxford, 1930), I, 381). The deductions about the Brookes' reaction to Shakespeare's treatment of Oldcastle to which their false assumption leads most commentators are discussed below, pp. 961 ff.

27 The will (P.C.C. Luffenam 28) is printed by Frederick J. Furnivall in The Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate, London, A.D. 1387-1439 ... (1882), pp. 129-30. Proof of Sir Thomas's age is in the inquisition post mortem taken in January 1417/8, after his father's death, when he was found to be twenty-six years

old (cf. C.P., III, 346). For his fourteen children, see the family tree and the notes to it, p. 1081, nn. 7-8. Among these children was Reginald, who settled at Aspall in Suffolk and fathered a line of gentry which was seated at Ufford Place until this present century. One of the line had a pedigree of the family drawn up for him in the Elizabethan period: it is MS. Harl. 2134, ff. 129b-33b, and is inscribed, "This of the Brookes was made And delivered to George Brooke of Aspall in Suff. esqr the 16. ffebruary 1592[/3]." From a note opposite the name of Sir Thomas Brooke the younger, it is obvious that Sir Thomas's descendants regarded him as "the first Lord Baron of Cobham of this famelie" (f. 131b). Francis Capper Brooke, the nineteenth-century antiquary, was Reginald's direct descendant and the heir male of Sir Thomas Brooke and Joan Braybrooke. He collected at Ufford a great deal of material on the history of the various branches of his family; largely derivative, this material is now contained in several folio volumes and is in the possession of Captain T.E. Blois-Brooke and Mrs. Brooke of Cresborough, Rhos, Haverfordwest. Throughout this work it is referred to as MSS. Ufford.

28 Sir William Dugdale, A Perfect Copy of All Summons of the Nobility to the Great Councils and Parliaments of this Realm, From the XLIX. of King Henry the IIId. Until these present Times ... (1685), p. 435.

29 There is a brief biography of Edward Lord Cobham in Harbin, pp. 96-97. See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1080-83, nn. 6, 11, for his marriages and children. The date of his death (given in the Complete Peerage only as "1464, before 8 Nov.") is found in his inquisition post mortem (P.R.O., C140/13/26).

It was Edward whose government of London with the Earl of Salisbury in 1460 (see Ramsay, II, 171, 225, 227) is alluded to in the passage from Shakespeare quoted below, p. 977.

30 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1081-87, nn. 9-10, 16-22, for the career, marriages and children of John Lord Cobham.

31 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1083-95, nn. 12-15, 23, 26-37, for an account of Thomas Lord Cobham, his three wives and the twelve children whom he had besides his successor.

* * *

Chapter II

1 According to the inscription on his tomb, George Lord Cobham was in his sixty-second year when he died in September 1558. MS. Harl. 6157, f. 9b, says that he died "aetatis suae. 72", but the circumstances of his career (the dates at which he was knighted and fathered his large family) corroborate the statement which his son had placed on his tomb, so that one may take the manuscript '72' to be an error for '62'.

2 C.P., III, 347.

3 The Chronicle of Calais, ed. John Gough Nichols (Camden Society, 1846), p. 76.

4 Holinshed, p. 1507.

5 William A. Shaw's Knights of England ... (1906), II, 45, lists "George Cobham" among the knights made by the Earl of Surrey on 1 July 1523 "after the taking of Morlaix 'for their hardiness and noble courage'"; the Complete Peerage (III, 347) substantially agrees with Shaw, saying that George was knighted after Morlaix fell in July 1523. Morlaix, however, fell in 1522. Holinshed says that George was knighted in 1522 on account of his valour in Brittany and elsewhere in France (pp. 1507-08). The Chronicle of Calais, p. 31 (where MS. Harl. 542, f. 69b, is correctly transcribed), lists the knights who were made on 1 July 1522 following the capture

of Morlaix, but does not include George. It does, however, name a "ser John Cobham". This John might be thought to be George's elder brother but for the fact that there is nowhere any record of John Brooke's being a knight; it is probable, therefore, that 'John' is a mistake for 'George', especially since a "ser George Cobham" was among the Earl of Surrey's knights who left Calais in August 1522 to make a foray into Picardy (The Chronicle of Calais, p. 32). If this assumption is correct, George Brooke's knighthood may be dated 1 July 1522.

6 See Appendix, p. 1076, for the difficulty of dating exactly Elizabeth's birth.

7 Dugdale, Summons, p. 497.

8 Thomas Lord Cobham is listed among the residents of the Blackfriars as early as 1522 (see Eliza Jeffries Davis's "The Transformation of London," in R.W. Seton-Watson, ed., Tudor Studies Presented ... to Alfred Frederick Pollard (1924), p. 291). Cobham Hall is first mentioned in the inquisition taken after the death of John Lord Cobham in 1512 (P.R.O., C142/79/208). Cooling Castle was built in the reign of Richard II by John Lord Cobham (d. 1408) on the site of a manor which one of his ancestors had bought a hundred years before; the purpose of the fortress was made clear by the inscription which may still be read on the eastern tower of the gateway: "Knoweth that beth and schul be/ That i am mad in help of the cuntre/ In knowyng of whyche thyng/ Thys is chartre and wytnessyng." For two centuries Cooling fulfilled its rôle as guardian of the countryside east of Gravesend, suffering its last siege under the captaincy of George Lord Cobham early in 1554 (see below, pp. 58-60), and thereafter falling into the ruin which was the fate of most of its kind. An article on Cooling Castle by W.A. Scott-Robertson is in Archaeologia Cantiana, XI (1877), 128-44.

9 There is some difficulty in ascertaining exactly the dates of the births of George Lord Cobham's children. The summary given above seems most likely to be correct; it is the result of an analysis of the available information which is conducted in Appendix, pp. 1071-77. Also in the Appendix is a brief discussion of the sixteenth-century practice of naming children after their elder brothers and sisters (p. 1075).

10 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1084, n. 13, for George Lord Cobham's cousinship with Anne Boleyn. In S.P., Dom., 1591-94, p. 404, there is listed a "Pedigree, by Garter King at Arms, of the family of Boleyn", showing Queen Elizabeth's connections with some of her nobility, and in 1597, when the heralds drew up the pedigree of William Lord Cobham in order to decide what arms should be placed on the bannerols borne at his funeral, the connection between the Brookes and the Boleyns was carefully noted (see MS. Coll. of Arms Dethick's Funerals II, f. 58lb).

11 Holinshed, p. 1508; A.F. Pollard, Henry VIII (illus. ed., 1951), p. 236.

12 State Papers Published under the Authority of His Majesty's Commission: Henry VIII (1830), I, 407.

13 Anne Boleyn's only reappearance in the story of the Brookes is a curious one. On 20 March 1600/1 John Garnons, a justice in Herefordshire, sent to Sir Robert Cecil a letter written by a woman whose dreams seemed to her to be so disturbingly relevant to the political happenings of the time (Essex had just been executed) that she was anxious that Cecil should know of them. "In the dreams, various beasts seemed to offer hurt to the Queen and to Sir Robert Cecil, and in one dream, Queen Anne Boleyn, and 'your Lordship's mother[-in-law],' the lady Cobham, appeared warning Queen Elizabeth not to go further from London than St. James" (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XI, 135). (The Lady Cobham in question, Frances Newton, could have been no more than a child of seven when Anne Boleyn was executed.)

14 Thomas Brooke, in his will proved on 17 January 1547/8, desired "my Lord

Grace of Canterbury to be so good and gracious Lord unto Susan my wife, as for to move my Lord Cobham my brother of his promise made unto me concerning the jointure of £ 20 which he promised to Susan my wife ..." (Arthur Hussey, "Reculver and Hoath Wills," Archaeologia Cantiana, XXXII (1917), 93). See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1092-93, nn. 26-27.

15 "Excerpts from the Manuscript of William Dunche," edd. A.G.W. Murray and Eustace F. Bosanquet, The Genealogist, XXIX (1913), 239. See a similar account of the baptism of Edward VI in The Literary Remains of King Edward the Sixth. Ed. from his Autograph Manuscripts by John Gough Nichols (Roxburghe Club, 1857), p. cclix.

16 "Excerpts from the Manuscript of William Dunche," p. 146.

17 Joseph Foster's Register of Admission to Gray's Inn, 1521-1889 ... (1889), p. 1, includes among the names of "distinguished members of Gray's Inn, ancients and readers, prior to the admissions 1521" that of "(William Brooke), Lord Cobham". The section of the list in which this name occurs is dated between 1492 and 1518; some of the names are qualified with the particular statement, "admitted 1520", apparently drawn from MS. Harl. 1912, f. 276. No reference to a Lord Cobham is made in the manuscript cited at that folio position, but on f. 160b of the same is an index of noblemen admitted to Gray's Inn, in which the name "Lord Cobham" appears, with the reference "f. 18". Ff. 14-18 inclusive of the section which follows the index, however, have been removed from the manuscript. From what is contained in the remaining folios, it may be seen that on f. 18 would have been a drawing of the Cobham arms with the names and dates of those Lords Cobham who were members of Gray's Inn up to the middle of the seventeenth century. In Book 2, f. 64b, of the manuscript, the admission of Henry Brooke, later Lord Cobham, is entered, so that the reference in the index on f. 160b could conceivably have been only to Henry. Certainly, however, William (born in 1527) could not have been the Lord Cobham whom Foster, on whatever authority he had, placed among the members admitted between 1492 and 1518-21. The likelihood is, therefore, that if any Lord Cobham other than Henry was a member of the Inn, it was George, who would have been entered in the years between his fighting under Norfolk in Ireland and his knighthood on the Continent: that is, around 1520, when he would have been twenty-three years old. (His grandson, Henry Lord Cobham, was twenty-three when he was admitted to the Inn early in 1588.) If this assumption is correct, Foster's entry should read, "(George Brooke), Lord Cobham".

18 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 14-15, where Cobham's contribution to "Original depositions respecting the marriage of Anne of Cleves" is noted. The deposition itself, a simple one concerning public opinion about the marriage, is printed in John Strype's Ecclesiastical Memorials ... (Oxford, 1822), I, ii, 456.

19 S.P., Span., VI (Pt. 1), 314. This letter is also printed, in an abbreviated version which omits the reference to Lady Wyatt's adultery, in L. & P., H. VIII, XVI, 319-20. There are other proofs besides this of Wyatt's repudiation of his wife for misconduct. In L. & P., H. VIII, XII (Pt. 1), 335, is a letter of 29 March 1537, in which George Lord Cobham asks Cromwell to intercede with Wyatt "to remember his poor wife and give her something reasonable towards her living before he leaves for Spain", for Wyatt has said that he "would not find her any longer" and she is destitute. In MS. Add. 33271, ff. 25-26, are two letters from Wyatt to his son, written from Spain in 1537; these letters have been printed by several editors of Wyatt's works, but from transcripts of them in MS. Egerton 2711 which omit some revealing passages. Albert McHarg Hayes, in an article entitled "Wyatt's Letters to his Son" (MLN, XLIX (1934), 446-48), prints these omissions, one of which is especially significant. "Loue well and agree with your wief," Wyatt advises his newly married, fourteen- or fifteen-year-old son, "for where there is noyse and debate in the howse, there is vnquiett dwellinge, and much the more where it is in one bed. Frame well your self to loue and rule well your wief as your fellowe, and she shall loue and reuerence you as her head. Such as you are to her, such shall she be to you. Obey and reuerence your father in lawe as

you would me, and remember that long lief followeth them that reuerence theire parents and elders, and the blessinge of God for good agreement betwene the wief and the husbande -- as fruite of manye children, which I for the like thinge doe lacke, and the faulte is both in your mother and me, but cheiflie in her." It is the final statement, in which Wyatt blames principally his wife for the failure of their marriage, which is omitted from MS. Egerton 2711 and from the editions of Wyatt's works which rely upon it.

Wyatt's treatment of his wife was regarded by at least one other foreign correspondent as crucial to his situation early in 1541. On 18 January, when Wyatt was in the Tower expecting death, Charles de Marillac wrote home to France that 'Hoyet' (Wyatt) "has for enemies all who leagued against Cromwell, whose minion he was. The earl of Rotellan, of the house of 'Clerence,' his father-in-law, will do his worst, because Hoyet treated his daughter badly, whom he took in adultery and afterwards defamed ..." (L. & P., H. VIII, XVI, 228). The editors of the Letters and Papers note that Thomas Lord Cobham, not Thomas Earl of Rutland, was Wyatt's father-in-law, and that neither Cobham nor Rutland was "of the house of 'Clerence'" (that is, descended of Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury, daughter and heiress of George Duke of Clarence), but offer no explanation of Marillac's confusion.

20 P.R.O., 31/18/3/1 (transcripts of letters from the Imperial Archives at Vienna), under date 9 February 1541/2. There are at least three published versions of this letter from Eustace Chapuys to the emperor mentioning Henry VIII's favour to one of the Brookes. The version in Appendix B of L. & P., H. VIII, XVII, 717, is a modern translation of the transcript quoted above: the relevant passage reads, "she to whom, for the time, he [the king] showed most favour and affection was the sister of the lord Coban and of the wife whom Mr. Huyet repudiated for adultery. She is a beautiful girl, with wit enough, if she tried, to do as badly as the others." This version was included by the editors of the Letters and Papers after they had printed (on p. 40 of the same volume) an abbreviated transcript of the same dispatch as it appears in S.P., Span., VI (Pt. 1), 468. These three versions are substantially the same, but with one very significant difference. The version in the Spanish State Papers, and its derivative in the Letters and Papers, refer to the object of Henry's attentions as "the sister of Monsieur Coban (Cobham), the same lady whom Master Huyet (Whyatt) did some time ago repudiate on a charge of adultery." Reference to the transcript of the original dispatch shows that the sentence should read in translation as it does in Appendix B of Volume XVII of the Letters and Papers.

21 L. & P., H. VIII, XIII (Pt. 2), 215.

22 The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), II, 476.

23 See William Archer and W.J. Lawrence, "The Playhouse," in Shakespeare's England, edd. Sir Sidney Lee and C.T. Onions (Oxford, 1916), II, 287.

24 L. & P., H. VIII, XVIII (Pt. 1), 46. The act of Parliament by which Cobham was empowered "to purchase and receyue to his heires for ever, of the late Master and brethren of the College or Chauntry of Cobham in the Countie of Kent now being dissolued, the scite of the same College or Chauntry, and al and singuler their hereditaments and possessions as well temporal as ecclesiasticall whersoeuer [they] lay or were within the realm of England," was passed in 31 Henry VIII (1539-40) (Cecil Paper: Deeds 219/22). There is a long article on Cobham College by A.A. Arnold in Archaeologia Cantiana, XXVII (1905), 64-109.

25 P.C.C. Mellershe 58, the last will of George Lord Cobham.

26 L. & P., H. VIII, XVII, 175. Under Mary this matter of the debt was raised again, and Cobham on 31 August 1556 "toke upon him to pay the somme of five hundreth marks [£ 333.6.8], parcell of the debte he oweth unto the Quenes Majestie ... and for the rest of suche moneye as he oweth unto her Heighnes, he promised either to showe sufficient matter ... whie he ought not to paie it, orelles to make pay-

ment thereof" (A.P.C., 1554-56, p. 345). When he died there still had to be drawn up a "Note of debts due to the Crown by George, Lord Cobham" (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 40).

27 A.P.C., 1542-47, p. 114. The privilege of breaking fast by royal warrant was highly regarded. A licence like that pleaded by Cobham was granted by Edward VI to Sir Edward Warner, the second husband of Cobham's sister Elizabeth, Lady Wyatt, and to "Elizabeth his wife", in March 1550/1. It permitted the Warners, "with two or three guests, to eat flesh and white meats in Lent, and on other fasting days, during his life" (Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, II, ii, 242).

28 Holinshed, p. 1508. Letters written from the Border by the Earl of Hertford between March and May 1544 are in The Hamilton Papers ..., ed. Joseph Bain, II (1892), 316-18, 382, 384. In the first of these is an account of Cobham's close escape from drowning in Tynemouth harbour, in the last a commendation to the king of his service in the campaign.

29 Original Letters, Illustrative of English History ..., ed. Henry Ellis (Second series, 1827), II, 226-27; also quoted in The Chronicle of Calais, p. xxv.

30 Holinshed, p. 1508. The importance to sixteenth-century defence of the fortress watch, the watch-bell and the keeping of the gate is reflected in Othello (II, iii) and, of course, in Macbeth (II, iii).

31 Cobham's letters as Deputy of Calais are in MSS. Harl. 283, 284.

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Chapter III

1 See a letter from the imperial ambassador, Cornelius Scepperus, to the President of the Council of Flanders, written on 6 April 1546 (S.P., Span., VIII, 372-73), in which it is suggested that the Flemish government should make Cobham a present of "a few lasts of wheat ... for the nourishment of his household". The motive behind this proposed friendly gesture is made obvious by Scepperus's comment that "Lord Cobham and his friends may be very useful."

2 The Council letter summoning him to the first Edwardian Parliament is dated 20 October 1547 (A.P.C., 1547-50, p. 519).

3 The drawing, reproduced on p. 16, is described in K.T. Parker's Drawings of ... Holbein ... at Windsor (1945) as item 53. It is an arresting portrait; one is particularly struck by the steady, uncompromising strength of the sitter's gaze. John Gough Nichols, however, seems to have been distracted by the carelessness of Cobham's dress, for he says of it only that the baron is depicted "in singular dishabille, with a bald head, surmounted by a flat cap" (The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, From A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563, ed. Nichols (Camden Society, 1848), p. 368).

4 Where exactly the Lord Deputy's house was in Calais it is impossible to say, for the residence is not indicated in the Henrican view and plan of the town in MS. Cotton, Aug.I.ii.70-71 (reproduced in The Chronicle of Calais, pp. xxvi, xxviii).

5 L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 1), 132.

6 L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 1), 127.

7 L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 1), 171.

8 MS. Harl. 283, f. 236. In the letter the date is given only as "the xiij June", but, from internal evidence, and from its position among the other letters in the manuscript, it is clear that it was written in 1546.

9 L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 1), 47.

10 L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 1), 171.

11 L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 1), 745-46; the transcription from MS. Harl. 283, f. 240, is accurate.

12 A.P.C., 1542-47, pp. 115, 126, 128. It is noteworthy that Cobham's fifth son, John, later married a Cobbe; whether she was connected with the schoolmaster has not been discovered.

13 L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 1), 21.

14 L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 1), 21. On 7 March 1545/6 Vaughan wrote to Cobham: "I have delivered 100 cr. for Venyce, for your son, and will send you the bill of exchange" (L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 1), 171).

15 MS. Harl. 284, f. 24. J.G. Waller, citing this letter, mistakes the ambassador himself for George's tutor ("The Lords of Cobham," Archaeologia Cantiana, XI-XII (1877-78), Pt. 2, p. 135).

16 See a letter from Sir Henry Cobham to Secretary Wilson (A Collection of Letters, from the Original Manuscripts of Many Princes, great Personages and Statesmen ..., ed. Leonard Howard (1753), p. 354), in which Sir Henry writes of the Kentish farm of "the Parsonnage of Southfleete ... gyven in lease to George Cobham, my Brother, by Kynge Edwarde, servinge then Mr. Cheek ...."

17 MS. Harl. 283, f. 176; transcribed, with some modernization, in L. & P., H. VIII, XX (Pt. 2), 438. See below, p. 23.

18 Alumni Cantabrigienses ..., comp. John Venn and J.A. Venn (Cambridge, 1922-27), Part I, I, 361. That Thomas, unlike his brothers, should have been matriculated before making his tour of the Continent is curious. The other entry in Venn which might refer to him, however, is dated at Easter 1549, when he was most probably already abroad; it would seem to refer to Cobham's other son named Thomas (see the Appendix, p. 1075, for a discussion of this repetition of names in the same family).

19 It has been found impossible to identify this Nicholas Alen; Waller refers to him simply as "one Nicholas Alen". He may have been one of the two scholars entered as 'Nicholas Alyn' in the list of matriculations from Trinity Hall, Cambridge, only three years before Thomas's own matriculation (Venn, I, 19).

20 MS. Harl. 374, f. 5, cited and paraphrased in part by Waller, Pt. 2, pp. 135-36.

21 See S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 48; A.P.C., 1547-50, pp. 47, 225, 327. The editors of the State Papers give 'Hans' as the Christian name of the Dr. Bruno whose advice assisted Northumberland in 1552.

22 MS. Harl. 374, f. 1.

23 MS. Harl. 288, f. 101.

24 MS. Harl. 374, f. 2. Waller, citing this letter (Pt. 2, p. 139), makes too much of it, for he bases upon it his assertion that John Brooke's "education was under the care of Martin Bucer."

25 The Travels and Life of Sir Thomas Hoby, Kt. of Bisham Abbey, Written by Himself, 1547-1564, ed. Edgar Powell (Camden Miscellany Volume X, 1902), p. 6.

26 Venn, I, 361.

27 John Le Neve, comp., Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae ..., ed. T. Duffus Hardy

(Oxford, 1854), II, 133. The pre-Restoration custom of bestowing prebends upon laymen is alluded to in the article on prebendaries in Richard Burn's Ecclesiastical Law (3rd ed., 1775), II, 79 ff.

28 The fact that John Brooke was educated in the law is stated here by courtesy of the History of Parliament Trust.

The John 'Broke' to whom, as one of a group of "English noblemen", the Venetian Council of Ten granted licences "to carry arms for the next two months in Venice" on 1 August 1555, may have been John Brooke (see S.P., Ven., 1555-56, p. 145). See below, p. 24, for a similar licence granted to Cobham's eldest son.

29 Venn, I, 361.

30 Letters, ed. Howard, pp. 352-53. Dr. Howard left this letter undated, but, since Wilson's reply of January 1580/1 is mentioned in another of Sir Henry's letters, dated 1 March 1580/1 (S.P., For., 1581-82, pp. 78-79), one may assume that it was written some time in December 1580. See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1142-43, n. 55.

31 See an extremely amiable letter from the earl to Lord Cobham, written from Brussels on 22 July 1555, thanking him for his offer of a gift of horses (P.R.O., S.P. 11/5/50, abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 68).

32 S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 86. It is odd, in view of Sir Henry's own statement that he served Devonshire, that the earl never mentioned the youth in the many letters which he wrote to friends in England between May 1555, when he went abroad, and the time of his death (see S.P., Dom., 1547-80, pp. 65-86). In his letters Devonshire often reports to the fathers of some of the young men who were travelling in his suite, but never is Lord Cobham told about Henry, not even when Devonshire wrote the letter of thanks mentioned in the preceding note. It is possible that Henry was with the earl only in the last months of his life, when Devonshire was writing less frequently than before; Cobham's gift of the horses may even have been the gesture with which negotiations for placing the youth in the earl's service were opened.

33 Venn, I, 22, 361. The second Thomas, alone of the members of his family who went up to Cambridge after the foundation of Trinity in 1546, entered a college other than Trinity.

34 Le Neve, Fasti, II, 133.

35 MS. Harl. 283, f. 176; transcribed, with some modernization and paraphrase, in L. & P., H. VIII, XX (Pt. 2), 437-38. There is no punctuation in the original; periods only have been inserted here.

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Chapter IV

1 Venn, I, 361.

2 L. & P., H. VIII, XV, 76.

3 MS. Harl. 6986, f. 12; printed in Waller, Pt. 2, pp. 142-44.

4 The speech defect against which Lord Cobham warned his son was that of speaking so quickly that the words are slurred: cf. Northumberland's comments on this trait in Hotspur (2 Henry IV II.iii.24-28).

5 MS. Harl. 283, f. 133; also printed in Waller, Pt. 2, p. 144 (where the folio reference is erroneously given as f. 171).

[6] A John Shere was among the West Country rebels in 1551 (cf. A.P.C., 1550-52, p. 368). The editors of the Venetian State Papers (S.P., Ven., 1534-54, p. 119) suggest that the name 'Schiere' should read 'Squyer'.

[7] L. & P., H. VIII, XVIII (Pt. 2), 113, 152, 170, from S.P., Ven., 1534-54, pp. 119-20. See also above, Chapter III, n. 28.

[8] William Thomas, The historie of Italie ... (1549), sig. A2.

[9] Thomas, sigg. Aii^{v}-Aiii.

[10] L. & P., H. VIII, XX (Pt. 1), 471, from S.P., Ven., 1534-54, p. 139.

[11] Thomas, sig. Xiiii^{v}.

[12] L. & P., H. VIII, XX (Pt. 2), 239. Waller, Pt. 2, p. 144, refers to this letter as from "Edmonde Bailer ... dated at Arey (?), a town in the neighbourhood of Calais". As well as mistaking the signature, Waller obviously had difficulty in reading Baker's writing, for 'Arey' is a misconstruction of 'Acon' (Aachen). Waller also gives the wrong folio reference, citing MS. Harl. 283, f. 133b, where he should have put f. 171.

[13] See The New Cambridge Modern History, Volume II ("The Reformation, 1520-1559"), ed. G.R. Elton (Cambridge, 1958), p. 355.

[14] State Papers Published under the Authority of His Majesty's Commission: Henry VIII, X, 658-59.

[15] See a letter from Thomas Chamberlain to Sir William Paget, dated from Florennes, 22 October 1545 (L. & P., H. VIII, XX (Pt. 2), 294).

[16] L. & P., H. VIII, XX (Pt. 2), 354.

[17] L. & P., H. VIII, XX (Pt. 2), 372. The English commissioners must have been released soon afterward, for on 28 November Fane, Chamberlain, Dymock and Avery were sent once again to treat with the mercenaries (A.P.C., 1542-47, p. 277).

[18] P.C.C. Hogen 35. The Complete Peerage (III, 348) says that William was affianced at the age of thirteen, that is, in 1540-41. See in the notes to the family tree, pp. 1095-98, n. 38, a discussion of the difficulty encountered in seeking positive information about the relationships within the Neville family at the time of Dorothy's marriage to William Brooke.

[19] L. & P., H. VIII, XX (Pt. 1), 21.

[20] Dorothy Neville may have harboured a certain resentment against the Brooke family for her mother's sake, if her father's mistress, Mary Brooke, otherwise Mary Cobham, had been one of them. See the notes to the family tree, n. 38, p. 1098, regarding the possibility of this connection.

[21] MS. Harl. 284, f. 44.

[22] L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 2), 118.

[23] L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 1), 95. The allusion to Boulogne suggests that William was serving in the garrison there between the time of his first entry into the king's forces and that of his appointment to a place at Calais.

[24] See below, pp. 67-68. The Complete Peerage (III, 349 n.) says that William "did not live on good terms" with his wife, but mistakenly bases the assertion upon a misconstruction of a statement made about Henry Lord Cobham and his wife (see below, pp. 766, 892 n. 36).

25 Robert Glover's list of the children of William Lord Cobham (made before 1580, when marriages occurred in the Brooke family which are not noted by Glover) is in MS. Coll. of Arms Philipot E.1, f. 95, along with that noted in the Appendix (p. 1074) as a source of much of the information known about the births of George Lord Cobham's children. It was published, with some inaccuracies of transcription, by John Gough Nichols as a part of his "Memorials of the Family of Cobham" (Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica, VII (1841), 352-53). This second list is fuller than the first. The entry for the birth of Frances reads: "Filia eiusdem ex p'ma coniuge. Francisca nata in die mercurij ultimo Julij inter horas 3. et 4. pomeridianas in domo Reginaldi [Jacobi: crossed out] Peccham apud Wrotham. 1549." Nichols mistranscribes the year as 1594; in Holinshed it is given incorrectly as 31 July 1589 (p. 1512); but Francis Thynne, the author of the account of the Brookes in Holinshed, gets it right in MS. Add. 37666, f. 39b (corrected to f. 41b). The man in whose house Dorothy Brooke gave birth to her daughter was Reginald Peckham, "of Yaldham in y^e p'ish of Wrotham in Com. Kent, Ar:" (The Visitation of Kent, 1663-68 ..., ed. Sir George John Armytage (Harleian Society Volume LIV, 1906), p. 128); he does not seem to have been related to Lady Cobham's brother-in-law, Sir Robert Peckham (see the notes to the family tree, p. 1091, n. 25).

Nothing but Frances's birth suggests that William and Dorothy ever lived together after the first days of their marriage. The lack of other proof of their cohabitation, when combined with William's dislike of his wife and with what appears to have been his subsequent neglect of her daughter, naturally makes one wonder whether Frances was really his child at all. It seems, however, most likely that she was; certainly no explicit doubt was ever cast upon her paternity in her father's lifetime or later. For a fuller discussion of this problem, see the notes to the family tree, pp. 1177-80, n. 69.

26 A.P.C., 1542-47, p. 547. Although the position of a spearman seems a rather undistinguished one for the son and heir of the Lord Deputy to hold, it is impossible to interpret the wording of the appointment in the Council letter any differently. 'Spear' was synonymous with 'pensioner' at Court: Stow's Annals (ed. 1592, p. 975) relates how, "In the month of December [1539], were appointed to waite on the kings person 50. Gentlemen, called pencioners or speares, vnto whom was assigned the summe of fiftie poundes the peese yeerely, for the maintenaunce of themselues, and euerie man two horses, or one horse and a gelding of seruice:" but, however much more consonant with William's position this courtly appointment would have been, it is certain that at Calais there was no place for a 'speare' of that kind.

27 MS. Harl. 283, f. 373. The Wottons and the Brookes were related, perhaps fairly closely, and throughout the sixteenth century members of both families called one another 'cousin'. The commission of Philip II of Spain to his ambassador, issued at the time of Elizabeth's accession, concerning William Lord Cobham's mission to the Netherlands, describes Nicholas Wotton as "a friend and relative of Cobham" (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 36); Sir Henry Cobham refers in a letter to Sir Francis Walsingham of 7 March 1579/80 to "my cousin Edward Wootton" (Nicholas's grandnephew)(S.P., For., 1579-80, p. 184); throughout G. Eland's edition of Thomas Wotton's Letter-Book 1574-1586 (1960) the existence of a relationship between the two families is constantly mentioned. How they were related, however, has not been discovered. Mr. Eland searched unsuccessfully for the link (as he acknowledged in a private communication of 30 May 1961), and the extensive Wotton pedigree in MS. Add. 38692, ff. 51, 57-58, provides no clue to what it was.

28 See J.D. Mackie, The Earlier Tudors, 1485-1558 (Oxford, 1952), p. 493.

29 S.P., For., 1547-53, pp. 332-33.

30 A.F. Pollard, England under Protector Somerset (1900), p. 74. The assertions made here concerning the manner in which William Brooke probably obtained his first seat in Parliament are made by courtesy of the History of Parliament Trust. When the official Return of Members was published in 1878 it was stated that no returns had been found for Kent for this Parliament (p. 375).

31 For the reforms enacted by the Parliament of 1547, see particularly Mackie, p. 499, and Conyers Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth (1955), p. 45.

32 A.P.C., 1547-50, pp. 164-65.

33 Commissions of 19 April and 7 May 1547 to decide on the question of Northampton's first marriage are in the C.P.R., Edward VI, I, 137, 261, and are cited in the Complete Peerage, IX, 672, as well as in Jasper Ridley's Thomas Cranmer (Oxford, 1962), p. 277. Ridley mentions as a factor in Northampton's reliance upon the canonists to find him a free man the fact that Cranmer's niece was Elizabeth Brooke's aunt (p. 276).

34 Ridley, p. 277; C.P., IX, 672.

35 Journals of the House of Lords, Beginning Anno Primo Henrici Octavi [1846], I, 409. The text of the act is item 8 in a volume of miscellanies in the British Museum (press mark 806.k.15). It is in the form of a verified copy of the act printed by the Clerk of Parliament about 1670, when the Northampton case was used as a precedent by the first Duke of Rutland when he sought permission to marry again while his divorced wife was still living (see C.P., XI, 265 n.; The Diary of John Evelyn, ed. E.S. de Beer (Oxford, 1955), III, 545-46). Printed incorrectly at the head of the copy is "Anno V. Edw. vj."; the act was actually read and passed, according to the Journals of the House of Lords, in 6 Edward VI.

On the day that the act confirming the marriage was passed, another bill was read for the first time. It was surely provoked by the Council's fear of the "manifold disordres and inconveniences" to which the marquess's example might lead, and stipulated that "no Man shall put away his Wife and marry again, not being lawfully divorced by competent Judges" (p. 409). This became law on 19 March, Norwich again dissenting (p. 413), and in the first year of King James (1603) bigamy was at last made a felony.

36 A.P.C., 1550-52, p. 397. An account of the entertainment given to Queen Mary of Guise by the marquess and his wife is in the Literary Remains, p. 359.

37 See Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 60, 73; F.G. Emmison, Tudor Secretary: Sir William Petre at Court and Home (1961), p. 97.

38 Mackie, p. 485, where there is a succinct account of the Boulogne episode.

39 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 74.

40 Holinshed, p. 1510. The Privy Council on 10 February 1549/50 sent "Letters to the Treasaurer of Callais to paye to Sir William Cobham ..., to paye to him tharrerages for his bende of c men ..." (A.P.C., 1547-50, p. 390).

41 MS. Harl. 284, f. 44.

42 Some uncertainty is involved in the dating of William Brooke's knighthood. The source cited in the text is MS. Harl. 5177, f. 118, where the relevant passage reads: "S^{r} Willm̃ Cobham wth these 2 knightes following made att Westm^{r} the first day of December Anno tertio Edw^{d} Sexti: S^{r} Thomas Cornwall^{s} & S^{r} Richard Corbet." Shaw's Knights, II, 63, rejects this authority in favour of that of a manuscript written by Robert Glover (MS. Cotton. Claud. C. III) which has, on f. 172, in a list of "The name and Armes of those that were aduanced to the honorable Ordre of Knighthode, in the happy reigne of Kinge Edward the sixt," William's arms (those of Cobham differenced with the label of an eldest son) and the entry: "S^{r} Willm̃ Cobham dubbed at Westminster the first day of December. Anno.2.[1548]." The entry also gives the names of Sir Thomas Cornwallis and Sir Richard Corbet, who were knighted at the same time. John Gough Nichols also accepts Glover's statement (see the Literary Remains, p. cccvii, where the folio reference is given incorrectly as f. 151). To corroborate Glover's date there is only Holinshed's description of Brooke in the summer of 1549 as 'sir William'. To corroborate the date accepted in the text there are: (1) The greater likelihood that "Anno. 2." in

Glover's statement is a pen slip for 'Anno.3.' [1549] than that "Anno tertio" in MS. Harl. 5177 is a pen slip for 'Anno secundo'; (2) Paget's description of Brooke in his letter of 3 October 1549 as 'Master Brooke'; and (3) The improbability that Brooke, if already a knight in the autumn of 1549, would have been appointed an esquire of the body, that is, "he that is attendant vpõ a knight, to beare his headpeece, speare and shield" (John Baret, An aluearie or triple dictionarie, in Englishe, Latin and French (1573), item E289). Considering these points, it seems safer to accept the date 1 December 3 Edward VI (1549) than one a year earlier.

* * *

Chapter V

[1] See Mackie, p. 486.

[2] See Emmison, p. 82.

[3] That Cobham was not installed by proxy is proved by an account of the ceremony at Windsor, in which he personally took part, in MS. Ashmol. 1109, f. 84b.

The letter which notified Cobham of his election to the Order of the Garter addressed to him by the king and dated 24 April 1549, is transcribed on [illegible] William Harrison's Historicall description of the Iland of Britaine ... (part one of the first volume of Holinshed's Chronicles, ed. 1587). Harrison, who was domestic chaplain to Cobham's son, makes a curious comment on the name given to the knights of the order. Since it was only "in time of superstition" that their protector was "supposed to be S. George", he exclaims, "Would to God they might be called knights of honor, or by some other name, for the title of saint George argueth a wrong patrone." It is difficult to decide whether Harrison's criticism of the familiar appellation was based upon religious scruples or upon an antiquary's desire for accuracy; worthy of mention, perhaps, is the absence of any comment of this sort from Harrison's original account of the Order of the Garter, published in the 1577 edition of the first volume of Holinshed.

George Lord Cobham's stall-plate, unlike the plates of his son and grandson, still survives in St. George's Chapel. It shows "the arms, encircled by the garter, of Brooke, Cobham, De la Pole and Braybrooke, as four quarters, the crest of a saracen's head proper, mantling gules and argent, and supporters (dexter), an heraldic antelope sable, horns, tusks, and hoofs or, (sinister) a dragon gules, winged azure. The inscription reads: LE NOBLE SEN[altered to SEI]GNEVR GE/ORGE BROKE SNR^{E} DE COB/HAM LIENTENNANTE DV C/ALAYS ET GOVENOVR DE/LAMARCHES ENVIRON. At the head of the plate is the motto IE MAY FEV EN DIEV. He was nominated on the 24th April, and installed on the 13th December, 1549" (R.H. D'Elboux, "The Brooke Tomb, Cobham," Archaeologia Cantiana, LXII (1949), 51). MS. Harl. 304, f. 130, shows that Cobham was given the stall held by the famous Sir Anthony Browne, father of the first Viscount Montague, who had died the year before Cobham's election. Later, just before his death, Cobham was moved up to the ninth stall 'on the Prince's side', "'by removinge of Thomas Darcy, lord Darcy of Chiche,'" who died on 28 June 1558 (see the Literary Remains, p. cccx, where MS. Harl. 304, f. 130, is printed).

[4] The last Council letter addressed to Cobham at Calais is dated 2 April 1550 (A.P.C., 1547-50, p. 423); the first addressed to his successor, "Lord Willoughbie, nowe Deputie of Callays," is dated 20 September 1550 (A.P.C., 1550-52, p. 128). Francis Thynne, writing in Holinshed (p. 1508), says that Cobham "left his deputiship of Calis as I haue beene informed" on 3 May of that year, but his office seems to have been left unfilled for several months. Lord Willoughby was not 'constitutus' Deputy until 13 August, according to MS. Cotton Faustina E. VII (cited in the Chronicle of Calais, p. xxxix), and the emperor was not informed of the new governor's identity until 1 September (see S.P., Span., X, 167).

[5] A.P.C., 1547-50, p. 428.

[6] Emmison, p. 88; Literary Remains, pp. 268-69. Cobham and his fellows were

presented with gifts of silver-gilt plate by King Henry II before leaving France on 12 May (S.P., Span., X, 88). In the will which the baron made on 31 March 1551 (see below, Chapter V, n. 10) he stipulated that "Katheryn my daughter shalle haue alle & sing'ler my gylte plate whiche was geuen me by the ffrenche Kinge. To be delyuered vnto her at the daie of her mariage." The plate was apparently meant to be Catherine's dowry, since no other provision was made for her in the will; if she died before marrying, an elaborate entail was to come into effect so that the royal gift should always remain in the possession of the owner of the Cobham estates.

[7] A.P.C., 1550-52, p. 36.

[8] See A.P.C., 1550-52, concerning the case of Arundel, who, having helped Warwick to gain power, was charged with peculation and dismissed from the Lord Chamberlainship.

[9] King Edward's journal states that on 18 January 1550/1 "The lord Cobhame was apointed to bee generall lieutenant of Irland" (Literary Remains, p. 302). It was not until the next day that the Council, "Upon consideracion that the Frenche Kinge maketh great preparacion of warres by sea, specially in Brettaigne, and that he hathe alreadie Scotlande in possession, being thought by great presumpcions he shulde meane somme entreprise into Irelande, ... resolved preparacion shulde be made for his resistence bothe by sea and lande, and by the Kinges owne eleccion the Lorde Cobham appoincted Lieutenant for that purpose" (A.P.C., 1550-52, p. 195).

A further comment upon Edward's favour to Cobham is made by Strype, who says: "To gratify George Broke, Lord Cobham, a great soldier, who had done the King good service abroad, and was now going with an army into Ireland, the King gave him in fee-simple the lordship and manor of Great Hoo and Little Hoo, and the hundred of Hoo, with divers lands, tenements, &C. to the yearly value of 108 l. 3 s. 5 d. several rents reserved and deducted: to hold by the fortieth part of one knight's fee. Some of these lands lay in Rochester and Wrotham: to which was added the rectory of Earith" (Ecclesiastical Memorials, II, i, 444). "Extracts from ministers' accounts of the manor of Hoo, relating to a customary payment called Muskelles Potte," dated 30 June 1555 and noted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 35, show that the manor was then in the possession of Lord Cobham.

[10] Harleian Charter 57.H.7. This will, superseded by one drawn up on 13 January 1557/8, is clearly dated "one thowsande ffyve hundreth ffyftie & one", yet Waller dates it 31 March 1552 in two of his works ("Lords of Cobham," Pt. 2, p. 124; "On the Fate of Henry Brooke, tenth Lord Cobham," Archaeologia, XLVI (1881), 262). A curious feature of the will of 1551 is its listing of Cobham's sons in the wrong order, making John, the fifth son, senior in the line of succession to the Cobham estates to Thomas, the fourth son. See the Appendix, p. 1074.

[11] That Cobham was expected to go into Ireland in August 1551 is learned from a letter in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 88-89. For his visit there "withe a power this next springe", which had been anticipated a few days after his appointment to the Lieutenant Governorship in January, see the Council letter in A.P.C., 1550-52, p. 201; for the debate in Council on 11 April which decided that his personal presence in Ireland was not needed, but that Sir Anthony St. Leger should be replaced by Sir James Croft as Lord Deputy, see A.P.C., 1550-52, p. 256.

[12] Northumberland's investiture as a duke took place on 11 October. With him were elevated three other lords, and the combined ceremonies made up a day of gorgeous pageantry, an account of which (in MS. Add. 6113, f. 129) is printed in the Literary Remains, pp. 350-52 n. George Lord Cobham played a prominent part in the investitures.

[13] A.P.C., 1550-52, p. 397. In November the commission of oyer and terminer which had been issued for the trial of these men was revised to include Lord Cobham and three other lords (Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, II, ii, 247).

14 Machyn, p. 19; the square brackets in the quotation are the editor's. The 'Sarsunshed' was Cobham's crest, a saracen's head (see his arms as blazoned at Windsor, above, Chapter V, n. 3). A similar review had been held in Hyde Park in December 1551, less than a week after Somerset's condemnation; in this Cobham had also taken part (Machyn, p. 12).

15 S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 29.

16 Cobham was listed in King Edward's journal on 23 May as one of the lords who was to accompany the king on his progress, and was noted at the end of the summer as one whose retinue had had to be cut because of a lack of forage for the horses of the travelling Court in the counties which Edward visited (Literary Remains, pp. 419, 435 and n.).

Whether Cobham actually accompanied the commissioners to Eton, as Emmison says he did (p. 100 n., referring to Nichols's edition of the Literary Remains), is questionable. Nichols (p. 458 n.) quotes from a commission (MS. Reg. 18 C. xxiv, f. 258) issued on 25 September 1552 to Northumberland, Northampton, Darcy, Cobham, Petre, Cecil and Cheke "to visit the colledge of Eton, and to se that the statutes, lawes, and customes thereof be not contrary to the Christian religion nor th'ordinaunces in thinges of the Church ...." The king's journal, however, on 26 September, does not mention Cobham's name among those of the men who "endid a matter at Eton college between the master and the fellowes and also toke ordre for the amendment of ceirtein superstitiouse statutes" (Literary Remains, pp. 458-59).

17 Hoby, p. 65.

18 See, in A.P.C., 1550-52, p. 63, warrants of payment to Sir William Brooke for conveying large sums of money to the Treasurer of Calais in July 1550.

19 Hoby, pp. 66-67. The Privy Council on 6 May ordered that £ 1680 be turned over to the members of the embassy, in sums ranging from £ 200 (given to each of the three earls, Worcester, Rutland and Ormonde) to £ 40 (given to 'Litle Guillam' and to each of the six other attendants whose names are listed in the warrant). "Sir William Cobham", as a knight, was given £ 50 (A.P.C., 1550-52, p. 171).

For a suggestion that Lord Cobham was himself at one time expected to head the embassy later committed to Northampton, see a dispatch of the imperial agent, Jehan Scheyfve, written about January 1550/1 (S.P., Span., X, 217). Discussing the proposed betrothal of Edward VI with a French princess, Scheyfve wrote that "the Council are sending to France a certain painting, a portrait of the King of England, which the Vidame [François de Vendôme vidame de Chartres, the French emissary] requested to be allowed to present to the King, his master; but the Council were unwilling to permit this, and gave my Lord Cobham charge of it, though it is not yet known whether he will go." No doubt the expected necessity of sending Cobham to Ireland in the spring of 1551 prevented him from going again to France.

20 Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, II, i, 474-75.

21 S.P., For., 1547-53, pp. 139, 140.

22 C.P.R., Eliz., 1560-63, p. 592.

23 Literary Remains, p. 350.

24 A.P.C., 1550-52, p. 453.

25 Literary Remains, pp. 387-88. Rather surprising is the occurrence in this account, as well as in those of the embassies of 1551, of Thomas Brooke's name when his elder brother, George, is not mentioned. As one of Sir John Cheke's men (see above, p. 20), George must have been within the king's inner circle, yet he is not noticed in official records until May 1553, the month before Cheke joined Petre and Cecil in the secretariat. At that time George carried dispatches to the English ambassadors who were attempting at Brussels to make peace betwee

the French king and the emperor (A.P.C., 1552-54, p. 267; S.P., For., 1547-53, p. 279). (It should perhaps be observed here that George Brooke is called George Cobham in these references to him as a diplomatic courier, a circumstance which might be thought to give rise to more confusion than is ever caused by the use of the family title as the surname of his brothers and cousins, for there was another messenger who was really named George Cobham. The latter, however, was probably not known at Court before the second half of the reign of Elizabeth, when George Brooke was already dead, so that there is little danger of identifying one as the other. George Cobham, "one of the messengers of her Majesty's Chamber", is first noticed on 17 February 1585/6 (A.P.C., 1586-87, p. 15), constantly mentioned thereafter at least until 16 May 1600 (William Paley Baildon, ed., Les Reportes del Cases in Camera Stellata 1593 to 1609 ... (Privately printed, 1894), p. 111), and may presumably be regarded as the informant against recusants who was described on 24 August 1606 as "George Cobham, gent." (John Cordy Jeaffreson, ed., Middlesex County Records [n.d.], II, 22-23).)

26 On 5 January 1551/2, the day before the royal entertainment was staged, the Council, meeting at "St laurence pountney" and including George Lord Cobham, wrote to the Master of the Revels: "M^r Cawarden after our herty comendacions/ we shall requyre yow to putt order and prepare the apparel of two personages which to morow at night shall play a dialoge before the kinges Maiestie/ this bearer S^r Thomas Chaloner shall declare vnto yow the rest of the matter how they ar to be trymmed whome we pray yow credite/ ..." (Albert Feuillerat, ed., Documents Relating to the Revels at Court in the Time of King Edward VI and Queen Mary (The Loseley Manuscripts)(1914), p. 60). John Gough Nichols (Literary Remains, p. 388 n.) deduces from this commitment of the details of the interlude to Chaloner that he "was the author of the interlude of 'Youth and Riches'", a deduction which Alfred Harbage follows in tentatively attributing the work to Chaloner (Annals of English Drama 975-1700 (1940), p. 32). It is likely that the attribution is correct; the fanciful letters which Chaloner wrote to the Marchioness of Northampton, from which quotation will later be made, as well as the occasional verse which he wrote in Latin, suggest that he was capable of entertaining a courtly audience with his wit.

27 Warcop may have been the Thomas Warcop who was a Gentleman Pensioner under Elizabeth as late as 1580 (see S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 678).

28 Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 76.

29 See Mackie, p. 523, for an account of the seven ladies with Tudor blood who had a claim to the Throne in 1553. Jane Grey's was in a way preferable to that of any of the others, even to her mother's, because she had been debarred from the succession by none of the acts of Henry VIII and because she was not excluded by having been born a foreigner.

30 Hester W. Chapman (Two Tudor Portraits: Henry Howard Earl of Surrey and Lady Katherine Grey (1960), p. 165) and James Anthony Froude (History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada (1862-70), V, 156) give the date of the marriage as 25 May, but 21 May is generally accepted.

31 Emmison, p. 107, citing evidence recently discovered and published in 1953 by S.T. Bindoff.

32 Mackie, p. 523; Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 93-94; Emmison, pp. 107-09. Froude (V, 151 ff.) gives a detailed study of the transactions of May, June and July 1553.

33 S.P., Span., XI, 37.

34 Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 94-95.

35 See the frequent allusions to the Brookes in the household accounts of Northampton's steward for 1 February-3 July 1553 (P.R.O., Accounts (Exchequer,

Q.R.), 520/9, ff. 7b, 8, 11b): "To S^{r} Willm̃ Cobhm̃ the vjth of ffebruarie by my Lordes comandement ten poundes"; "To m^{r} Houghins [?] man the viijth of februar' for bringeing my Lord a p̃sent of p̃triche & pheazaunt payd by S^{r} Willm̃ Cobhm̃"; "To M^{r}is Newton the xth of m̃arche to p̃ay ... m^{r} Thom̃s Cobhm̃ twentie seven shillenges seven pence"; "To peter Rychardson Goldsmyth the xxixth of Aprell in full contentacõn of one hundreth & syxtene poundes xvj^{s} x^{d} for a Cupboarde of plate by him delyvered to my Lord for a newyeres gyfte for my ladie fyftie poundes two shillinges six pence and the saide peter acknowledgeth to haue Receyved of m^{r} Thom̃s Cobhm̃ before the delyvere of the saide plate thre skore six poundes thyrtene shillinges iiij^{d} [sic]". The gifts to "M^{r}is Bray" of "a pece of golde" worth 10s. on two occasions (ff. 13, 13b) suggest that one of Lady Cobham's unmarried sisters was also in the Northampton household. (Why only these fragmentary accounts, covering only six months, should have survived is curious; perhaps the Marian government appropriated them when it drew up its case against the marquess in August 1553: see C.P., IX, 673 n.).

For the marchioness's homage to Queen Jane, see Beatrice White's Mary Tudor (1935), p. 193. The presence of these same three female lieges in the train of the Princess Mary when she made her way through Fleet Street to visit her brother at Westminster on 10 February 1552/3 is not significant of their politics; so early in the year of Edward's death the princess was still heiress presumptive and, as such, received respectful attention from the entire Court. See Machyn, p. 30, for details of her procession through London on the occasion of this visit.

36 See for example one of 8 July to the county of Surrey in H.M.C., Report 7, p. 609.

37 This was George, whose name appears in a list of "Subjects sworne to the Queen's Majestie" on 14 July (A.P.C., 1552-54, p. 430). The list is dated 16 July by Samuel Haynes (A Collection of State Papers ... From the Year 1542 to 1570 ... (1740), p. 155).

38 See Emmison, pp. 109-10. The Spaniards' report to the emperor on this interview is in S.P., Span., XI, 83-88.

39 Froude, V, 195.

40 Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 98. The interview is reported in S.P., Span., XI, 88-89.

41 S.P., Span., XI, 93.

42 See MS. Lansdowne 3, f. 50, for a letter written to Lord Rich at this time. It is odd that, although the names of his fellow deserters from Northumberland's party are among the signatures on this letter, Cobham's name is missing. How he contrived to divorce himself from the rest at this critical juncture it is impossible to say. Conyers Read (Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 477, n. 59), obviously confident of finding Cobham's name among those of the other councillors, has misread 'Richard Cotton' as 'Cobham'. Emmison, p. 111, points out Read's error and endorses Froude's correct transcript of the list of signatories (V, 205 n.). Cobham certainly signed a letter from the Council of "our most gratious Sovereign Lady Queen Jane" as late as 16 July (H.M.C., Report 7, p. 610).

43 Machyn, p. 37. A list of those "Presente at the proclamacion'" which includes Cobham and is dated 19 July 1553 is in H.M.C., Finch Papers, I, 2-3.

44 Literary Remains, p. ccxl; Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, II, ii, 123, from a manuscript in the College of Arms.

45 Froude, V, 220.

46 Northampton did, however, take part in the histrionic scene of apostasy which occurred on the day before Northumberland died. Thinking that he too

would be executed the next morning, the marquess joined his former leader in availing himself "of the services of a confessor and the forms of the Catholic faith", probably in the desperate hope of moving the queen to mercy. A select group of London citizens was privileged to watch the humiliated noblemen and three of their colleagues as, "'first kneeling down, every one of them, upon their knees, they heard mass, saying devoutedly, with the Bishop, every one of them, Confiteor'" (Froude, V, 243). There is a striking parallel between Northampton's behaviour on this occasion and that of his nephew, Henry Lord Cobham, fifty years later, when, on 9 December 1603, he performed with remarkable ardour what he thought were his last devotions, while kneeling on the scaffold before a crowd of people in the courtyard of Winchester Castle. The many critics of King James's cruelty in allowing Cobham and his companions to think that they were about to die, when actually he had reprieved them, do not allude to Mary's similar persecution of Northumberland's friends. Perhaps James's motive, the desire to ascertain what further details of their plot the men might provide while clearing their consciences before the last reckoning, is regarded as more indictable than Mary's, who, as Froude sarcastically says, used her victims to demonstrate "a public and edifying lesson".

47 "Pardon Roll, 1 Mary: ... 14 Nov. William Broke of Cobham, co. Kent, knight" (C.P.R., 1553-54, p. 457).

48 Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, III, i, 84-85. In her father's will, made on 13 January 1557/8, she is described as "Elizabeth Late called and knowen by the name of Ladie marquess of Northampton" (P.C.C. Mellershe 58).

49 S.P., Span., XI, 186.

50 See Froude, V, 295.

* * *

Chapter VI

1 Dugdale, Summons, p. 514.

2 A detailed account of the events of September to January, so far as they relate to the question of the royal marriage, is given in Froude, V, 264-315.

3 Machyn, p. 51.

4 Froude, V, 317 n.

5 See Froude, V, 319-23.

6 His father's inquisition post mortem (P.R.O., C142/65/90) describes him as being in his twenty-second year on 8 January 1542/3. He was either fourteen or fifteen when he received the letters which the elder Sir Thomas sent him from Spain in 1537 (see above, Chapter II, n. 19, and Hayes, p. 446 n.). Sidney Lee's article on Queen Mary in D.N.B. incorrectly states that Wyatt was twenty-three when he led the rebellion of 1554.

7 The popular belief in Wyatt's patriotism continued long after his death as a traitor, gathering strength as the years passed, so that, by the early seventeenth century, his partisanship with Northumberland was forgotten. In 1607 was printed a play, The Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyat. With the Coronation of Queen Mary, and the coming in of King Philip.... (The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge, 1953), I, 397-469), in which Wyatt is depicted as a prominent supporter of Mary even in the days of Queen Jane; his rebellion is explained as nothing other than an Englishman's refusal to be ruled by a Spaniard. He is thus raised to heroic stature and made innocent of any political bias.

8 The History of Wyat's Rebellion: With the order and manner of resisting the same ... was written by John Proctor as the official account of the insurrection, and first published in December 1554. Proctor commented on the effect upon Wyatt's plans of the arrest of one of his relatives in London: "But, so it befell ... that, at his being in the country, the ... Council committed a Gentleman of that Shire to ward, one to Wyat above all others most dear: whereby the common bruit grew that he, (suspecting his secrets to be revealed, and upon that occasion to be sent for by the Council) felt himself, as it were for his own surety, compelled to anticipate his time. But whether that were the cause or no, doubtful it is" (A.F. Pollard, ed., Tudor Tracts 1532-1588 (Westminster, 1903), p. 208. Pollard's accurate text of Proctor's work, although modernized, is quoted here because of its accessibility; it is that of the second edition of the History, which appeared in January 1555/6 and which is shown, by a comparison of the copies of the two editions in the British Museum, to differ from the first generally only on minor typographical points.) The Kentish gentleman whose name Proctor suppresses, in accordance with his principle of forbearing "to touch any man by name, Wyat only except; and a few others which the story would not permit to be left out" (Pollard, p. 205), was most probably Wyatt's step-father, who, although a Norfolk man, had property in Kent.

8a P.R.O., S.P. 11/3/18.1 is "a Conffessyon w^{ch} one Anthony norton of trocheley gent brought vnto me wrytten w^{t} his owne hand," according to Sir Robert Southwell, who enclosed it in a letter of his to the Privy Council on 10 February 1553/4. The confession is listed in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 60, and an account of it is given in Froude, V, 324, where Norton's words are placed between quotation marks, although they are only an approximation of the originals. Froude mistranscribes the name of Wyatt's castle as 'Allingham'.

9 Machyn, p. 51: "The xxij day of January was reynyd at yeld hall the lord Robart Dudlay for tresun, the duke of Northumberland('s) sune, and cast [condemned] the same day."

10 See The Visitations of Norfolk ..., ed. Walter Rye (Harleian Society Volume XXXII, 1891), p. 261, where Southwell is shown to have married Margaret, "da. & sole heir of Sir Thomas Nevell", the younger brother of George Lord Abergavenny. Lady Southwell was thus the first cousin of Dorothy, Sir William Brooke's wife. The Southwells' son, Sir Thomas Southwell, was the brother-in-law of Frances Newton, Sir William's second wife (see the notes to the family tree, p. 116, n. 39).

11 Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 212.

12 P.R.O., S.P. 11/2/29; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 58.

13 Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 214.

14 John Proctor, The historie of wyates rebellion ... (1554), sigg. Aviii^{v}-Bi^{v}. Quotation is here made from the original edition, rather than from Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, pp. 212-13, because the second edition, which he reprints, omits certain words, apparently by accident, as well as one whole clause, "because you bee oure neighbours," the loss of which detracts from the effectiveness of the "Friends, Romans, countrymen" kind of rhetorical appeal.

15 The Chronicle of Queen Jane, and of Two Years of Queen Mary, and Especially of the Rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyat. Written by a Resident in the Tower of London, ed. John Gough Nichols (Camden Society, 1850), p. 36.

16 See Froude, V, 326; Arundel to Shrewsbury, 28 January (Lodge, I, 233).

17 The Chronicle of Queen Jane, p. 36. On 27 January the ambassadors who had treated with the queen's ministers about the articles of the marriage contract wrote to the emperor: "Various persons are under suspicion such as Warner and Mr. Roger Pickering, and the Marquis of Northampton's relationship with

Cobham causes it to be feared that he might also be on the rebel's side, so though he was at liberty he was thrown into the Tower yesterday with Warner, and others are about to be arrested" (S.P., Span., XII, 51-52).

18 A.P.C., 1552-54, pp. 156, 422.

19 Machyn, p. 52.

20 Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 222. Froude, V, 328, says that the 'white coats' numbered 500.

21 Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 216.

22 S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 57. Earlier that day Henry Earl of Arundel, whom Cobham had replaced at Calais ten years before, had written to the Earl of Shrewsbury that Norfolk, Cobham and others had gone out against the rebels. Arundel's neat summary of the situation was that, "God be thanked, the Queen's Highness is in good health of her body, but sick in certain naughty members of her commonwealth" (Edmund Lodge, Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners, in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, & James I ... (2nd ed., 1838), I, 231).

23 Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 216.

24 Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 222.

25 See Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, pp. 223-29. The skirmish was fought a mile from the top of "Wrotham Hill, directly over ... Yaldam, Master Peckham's house", where Sir William Brooke's daughter had been born less than five years before (see above, Chapter IV, n. 25).

26 S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 57, quoted at length in Froude, V, 330 n. See also Emmison, pp. 169, 172, and J.E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, A Biography (1934), p. 45.

27 P.R.O., S.P. 11/2/22; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 57.

28 P.R.O., S.P. 11/2/24.2. Although the letter is dated "the xxix. of Januarie. 1553", Cobham says in his letter to the queen of 29 January (P.R.O., S.P. 11/2/24), in which the one from Wyatt was enclosed, that it was "sent to me by wyat yesternight". The optimism expressed in it certainly suggests that it was written fairly early on the twenty-eighth, in the first flush of the rebels' assurance, as does Wyatt's ignorance of Norfolk's whereabouts, for the duke's arrival at Gravesend in the late afternoon of that day would have been reported to him at once.

29 The steward was probably John Wilkins, who had managed Cobham's estates while the baron was at Calais; who had still been his steward on 31 March 1551, when he was mentioned in Cobham's will of that date (Harl. Chart. 57.H.7); and who was a pallbearer at his master's funeral in 1558 (see below, p. 91).

30 Cobham, in his letter to the queen later in the day, was more explicit concerning Wyatt's attempt to communicate with his Brooke cousins. "I did vnderstand," the baron told Mary, "that ther had byn in myne absence [a messenger] sent from wyat to my sonnes who werre w^{t} me at Grauesend."

31 P.R.O., S.P. 11/2/23.1 (an enclosure in Norfolk's letter of the same date to the Privy Council); S.P. 11/2/24.1 (a copy enclosed in Cobham's own letter to the queen). Both are listed in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 57.

32 Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 229. Norfolk had been imprisoned with his son, Surrey, Wyatt's friend, in the last days of Henry VIII, his nephew by marriage, and had been saved from the block on which his son died only by the king's own death. He had not been restored to honour until the accession of Mary.

[33] P.R.O., S.P. 11/2/23; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 57.

[34] P.R.O., S.P. 11/2/24; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 57. Cobham obviously thought that Norfolk had left Gravesend as soon as the two men parted ("immedyatly after my depture from hym"); had he known that the duke had delayed long enough to receive his warning letter, write to the Council about it, and then move out, ignoring its advice, he might have been even more distressed. The queen and her Council, with all of the letters in their hands, of course knew this.

[35] Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 230.

[36] S.P., Span., XII, 52.

[37] See the letter of the five marriage ambassadors to the emperor, 31 January 1553/4 (S.P., Span., XII, 65).

[38] See S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 58.

[39] Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 235.

[40] Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 236. Proctor's phrase describing Wyatt as "beyng out of measure exalted into hault corage and pryde by the reuolt of the white cotes", which has lost its mediaeval ring in Pollard's modernization, is on sig. Fviii of the first edition of his History.

The anonymous historian who recorded the events of the rebellion in the third edition of A Breuiat Cronicle (Canterbury, 1553 [i.e., 1553/4]) erroneously dated the capture of Cooling 31 January ("The next daye [i.e., after 30 January], Wyat wente to Cooling, & toke the lord Cobham:" sig. N6^{v}). Proctor professed contempt for the little history which is contained in the chronicle, but, despite his correction of it on this point and elsewhere, he seems to have relied heavily upon it. See William H. Wiatt's "The Lost History of Wyatt's Rebellion" (Renaissance News, XV (1962), 129-33), in which the rediscovery of this the earliest account of the uprising is described and the account printed in full.

[41] P.R.O., S.P. 11/2/28; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 58, quoted in full in Scott-Robertson's "Coulyng Castle," pp. 141-42 n., and in part, in a modernized version, in Froude, V, 333 n. Froude, despite Cobham's own assertion that his promise to join their leader at Gravesend the next day satisfied the rebels, says that they, "perhaps seeing cause to mistrust him, carried him off to Wyatt a prisoner". Froude is followed in this misstatement by Robert Furley (see A History of the Weald of Kent, with an outline of the Early History of the County (Ashford, 1871-74), II, 472-73).

[42] See Winchester's letter to Petre, above, p. 50.

[43] Machyn, pp. 52-53; Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, pp. 237-38; Froude, V, 336-38.

[44] John Foxton to Sir Edward Montague, "From Serjauntes Inne, scribbled in haste, the third of this troublous February" (H.M.C., Buccleuch Papers (Montagu House), III, vi, 3-4). The underlined words are underlined in the original.

[45] The Chronicle of Queen Jane, p. 41. The account of Pembroke's decision early in the morning of 7 February to support the queen is given in a letter from Simon Renard to the emperor of 8 February (S.P., Span., XII, 85). Pembroke's wife, who had died two years before, was Anne Parr, the sister of Northampton and of Queen Catherine.

[46] Simon Renard to the emperor, 8 February 1553/4 (S.P., Span., XII, 85).

[47] S.P., Span., XII, 85. In a letter which he wrote to the emperor eleven days later, on 19 February, Renard spoke correctly of "Cobham and his three sons" (see below, p. 64). In her Mary Tudor (rev. ed., 1952), H.F.M. Prescott

refers to "Lord Cobham, cousin [sic] of Wyatt's, whose two sons ... had gone out with the rebels" (p. 237).

48 See Foxton's letter to Montague of 3 February; Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, pp. 241-44; Machyn, p. 53. A detailed account of the three days 3-5 February is given in Froude, V, 343-46.

49 Simon Renard to the emperor, 5 February 1553/4 (S.P., Span., XII, 82).

50 Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 248.

51 "All the Spaniards did depart out of London on Thursday ... in the morning last, some say out of the Realm ...; but the truth is this, gone they are" (Foxton to Montague, 3 February).

52 Edward Underhill, Examination and Imprisonment in August 1553; with Anecdotes of the Time, in Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 190.

53 See Renard's detailed account of the events in the palace on the morning of 7 February in his letter to the emperor of 8 February (S.P., Span., XII, 85).

54 See especially Froude, V, 350-54, where the other sources cited here are assimilated in a vivid whole. Machyn's brief account is on p. 54 of the Diary.

55 Tudor Tracts, ed. Pollard, p. 190.

56 John Speed, The History of Great Britaine ... (ed. 1650), p. 847. Berkeley's daughter later married George Brooke's son, Duke (see the notes to the family tree, pp. 1121-22, n. 44).

57 Holinshed, p. 1099. Sir Nicholas Pointz was the uncle of Frances Newton, the second wife of William Lord Cobham (see the notes to the family tree, p. 1101, n. 39).

58 Simon Renard to the emperor, 8 February 1553/4 (S.P., Span., XII, 85).

59 Froude, V, 368.

60 Simon Renard to the emperor, 19 February 1553/4 (S.P., Span., XII, 119).

61 Machyn, p. 55.

62 See Froude, V, 504 ff.

63 The Chronicle of Queen Jane, p. 62.

64 A.P.C., 1552-54, p. 395.

65 S.P., Span., XII, 125. The editors of the Spanish papers have apparently made two curious errors in this list, the original of which is in the Imperial Archives at Vienna. Henry Isley, one of the foremost rebels, is down as Henry 'Kiley'; and an identifying phrase which must have been intended for 'Wyets Kynsman' is misread as a proper name, "Wyets Rynsman", and accorded a line to itself it the list. (This kinsman of Wyatt's was probably Edward Wyatt who was imprisoned on 8-9 February (see above, p. 63). He may have been the '-- Wyat' listed in The Chronicle of Queen Jane, p. 62, as one of those who went out to trial with the Brookes on 19 February, and the "litle Wyat ... a bastard" who is mentioned by Gardiner in a letter to Sir William Petre on 11 February (P.R.O., S.P. 11/3/22, abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 60). Froude, V, 363 n., admits that he was unable to identify this 'litle Wyat'.)

Froude, V, 362, says incorrectly that "Lord Cobham's sons were condemned." Strype, who follows MS. Harl. 194, from which Stow and Holinshed took their

accounts of the rebellion and which has been printed as The Chronicle of Queen Jane, says that Sir William and George were tried on 19 February as well as Thomas, but that only Thomas was condemned (Ecclesiastical Memorials, III, i, 145).

66 Holinshed, p. 1100. MS. Add. 5507 (a copy of the 1619-21 visitation of Kent, that which was in the possession of the eighteenth-century Kentish antiquary, Edward Hasted, and which was edited for the Harleian Society by Hovenden), f. 303, has a note to the effect that "Tho^{s} Cobham younger son of Lord Cobham [was] condemned Feb. 19 Anno 1 Marie." "George Cobham & Sir W^{m} Cobham sons to the Lord Cobham" are listed among those rebels against whom no judicial action seems to have been taken.

67 S.P., Span., XII, 175. The curious slip in the letter, the writing of 'Daniel' for 'William', may be the ambassador's, or even the queen's, although there is always the possibility that the editors of the Spanish papers are responsible for it. The original is among the Imperial Archives at Vienna.

The emphasis on Northampton in Renard's account of his interview with Mary must be attributed rather to the marquess's former prominence and high rank than to his actual significance in national affairs at this time. He was not even a peer in 1554, having forfeited all of his honours and become plain Sir William Parr in August 1553; his pardon and restitution in blood on 5 May, following his release from the Tower, did not entail the restoration to him of his titles. For his apostasy, see above, Chapter V, n. 46.

68 Machyn, p. 58. The observer in the Tower names Sir William Brooke, but not George, among the released prisoners (The Chronicle of Queen Jane, p. 71). Holinshed, p. 1102, also names only Lord Cobham and his eldest son.

69 The texts of the three pardons are printed in the C.P.R., Mary, 1553-54, that of Sir William's on p. 381, George's on p. 388, and Thomas's on p. 389. They are almost identical in form; that for Sir William Brooke reads: "Whereas William Brooke, late of Cobham, co. Kent, knight, is indicted before the queen's councillors, William, marquis of Winchester, treasurer of England, John, earl of Bedford, keeper of the Privy Seal, Edward, earl of Derby, and others, their fellows, justices of oyer and terminer concerning certain treasons and other offences committed in Middlesex, for that he and other false traitors to the number of 3000 men at Braynforde on 7 Feb., 1 Mary, did rise in insurrection and marching towards the city of London, when the queen was at her palace of Westminster, made war at Charyngcrosse in the parish of St. Martin in the Fields, as appears by the indictment taken before the said Justices at Westminster on 15 Feb.; Pardon to Brooke of the said treasons and all other felonies committed by him before 10 Feb., so that he stand to right in the queen's court if imparled. By p.s."

70 See Simon Renard to the emperor, 3 April 1554 (S.P., Span., XII, 197).

71 Paget's acquaintanceship with Cobham may even have dated from the first years of Cobham's career at Court, for, in the heyday of Queen Anne, many men were introduced into the king's circle by the Boleyns, "especially y^{e} Lord Paget, who at that present was an earnest Protestant" (John Foxe, Actes and Monuments ... (1563), p. 509).

For Paget's recognized indispensability to the government formed after Wyatt's rebellion, see Froude, V, 366 ff.; Mackie, p. 532; Emmison, pp. 173-75. He and Petre were united in their recognition of the need for an oligarchy which, by its very size, would reduce the degree of factiousness which had previously been present in the Council, and which had made it so ineffectual in the recent crisis. Emmison's well substantiated view that they collaborated constantly, providing a solid core of common sense in a situation created by the rivalry of Gardiner and his opponents, indeed contradicts Froude's opinion that they were on opposing sides.

72 See Wiatt, p. 131, where it is shown that the description in the Cronicle of the execution of Suffolk on 23 February and the subsequent summoning of

Parliament, and the date '1553' on the title-page, leave a period of only a month in which the book could have been written.

73 P.R.O., S.P. 11/4/4; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 62.

74 Prescott, p. 262. For Mary's later pardoning of Sir William Brooke's uncle, John Lord Braye, at the request of Lady Braye, see below, p. 84, and the notes to the family tree, p. 1088, n. 25.

75 Machyn, pp. 61-63. The error in Froude, V, 348, which makes William Thomas a companion of the Brookes in the march from Southwark to London, is pointed out by Thomas's biographer in D.N.B.

76 Machyn, pp. 59-60; Simon Renard to the emperor, 22 April 1554 (S.P., Span., XII, 221). Wyatt's name remained tainted for almost thirty years; Elizabeth, who had had to deny her complicity in his plot when it was discovered, apparently chose to persist in her denial even after her accession to the Throne. She avoided showing favour to his heirs, and it was not until 23 May 1571 that "the Bill for Restitution in Bloud of the Children of Sir Thomas Wyatt Knight" was passed by Parliament (Sir Simonds D'Ewes, The Journals of all the Parliaments During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth ... (1682), p. 187).

77 See Machyn, p. 60; Froude, V, 390-91; A.L. Rowse, Ralegh and the Throckmortons (1962), pp. 21-23.

78 Simon Renard to the emperor, 22 April 1554 (S.P., Span., XII, 221).

79 See Machyn, p. 61; S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 61. Although Croft was seriously threatened by Wyatt's confessions, insufficient evidence was obtained from the rebel leader to make a case against the Princess Elizabeth and Courtenay. The latter was not long kept in prison, and, released, went abroad, where he died without again threatening Mary's Throne. It was after his confinement in the Tower that Courtenay must have taken Henry Brooke, Cobham's seventh son, into his service (see above, p. 22).

80 This is the gist of the proclamation, expressed in Machyn's inimitable style (p. 62).

81 Holinshed, p. 1508.

82 A.P.C., 1554-56, p. 87.

83 John Brand, in his "Account of Inscriptions discovered on the Walls of an Apartment in the Tower of London" (Archaeologia, XIII (1800), 83), mistranscribes the date as '1556'; Waller ("Lords of Cobham," Pt. 2, pp. 123-24) and William Hepworth Dixon (Her Majesty's Tower (5th ed., 1869), I, 192) give it correctly as '1555'.

84 Machyn, p. 80. A precise list in Latin of the prisoners released is given in Rerum Anglicarum Henrico VIII. Edwardo VI. et Maria Regnantibus Annales (1628), p. 227.

85 A.L. Rowse, who prints two of these inscriptions in Ralegh and the Throckmortons, p. 338, calls Thomas Brooke a "companion abroad" of Sir Arthur Throckmorton. The probability that Brooke died in 1578 (see below, p. 381), two years before Throckmorton's tour of the Continent began, makes this relationship between the two men unlikely. There must be some other explanation for the inclusion of Brooke's books among Throckmorton's library at Magdalen.

(pp. 71-77)

Attempts to identify the author of the French verse have been made without success by Professor Jourda, Doyen de la Faculté des Lettres at the University of Montpellier, who kindly took an interest in the poem at the instance of Mme. R.D. Best of the University of Birmingham. For earlier versions of the proverbs incorporated in it, see Proverbs xxvii, 15, and The Canterbury Tales (The Tale of Melibee, l. 1086; The Wife of Bath's Prologue, l. 278; The Parson's Tale, l. 631).

86 See below, pp. 87-88.

87 C.P.R., Mary, 1554-55, p. 293.

88 See Holinshed, p. 1099, where reference is made to "the principals of this faction, namelie Thomas Wiat, William Kneuet, Thomas Cobham, two brethren named Mantels, and Alexander Bret".

* * *

Chapter VII

1 Holinshed, pp. 1509-10.

2 His name is not among those of the peers to whom writs were issued (Dugdale, Summons, pp. 515-16).

3 See Froude, V, 392-93, and Mackie, pp. 541, 546, for accounts of Mary's second Parliament.

4 S.P., Span., XII, 238-39.

5 See Froude, V, 403 and n.

6 S.P., Span., XII, 239.

7 See Simon Renard to the emperor, 1 March 1553/4 (S.P., Span., XII, 130-31).

8 See the report of Paget's interview with Charles V at Brussels on 12 November 1554 in S.P., Span., XIII, 88.

9 Simon Renard to the emperor, 13 May 1554 (S.P., Span., XII, 250-51).

10 See Froude, V, 397-400.

11 S.P., Span., XII, 281.

12 The only courteous gesture which the Brooke family seems to have made to the queen, in recognition perhaps of her clemency in sparing the lives of the head of their house and his sons, apparently came from Elizabeth Marchioness of Northampton. On 16 June 1554 the Council issued a warrant to the Exchequer "to pay the Marchioness of Northampton for a glass of crystal garnished with jasper, procured by her for the Queen" (S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 62). There is a possibility that the lady referred to in this document was Anne Bourchier, Parr's first wife, whose marriage had been re-confirmed at the same time as Elizabeth Brooke's was annulled. If, however, either wife was styled 'marchioness' in the spring of 1554, despite their husband's forfeiture of his titles, it is more likely to have been Elizabeth, who had at least once been known as Lady Northampton, whereas Anne was only Countess of Essex at the time of her divorce and Lady Parr after her re-confirmation as Parr's wife. The only other official document of Mary's reign which mentions Elizabeth Brooke is one of 5 March 1557/8, in which she is styled simply "Elizabeth Cobham" and her former husband "the late Marq. of Northampton" (S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 100).

13 The Spanish ambassadors extraordinary to the emperor, Windsor, 8 August 1554 (S.P., Span., XIII, 23).

[14] See the report on England made to the Senate of Venice on 18 August 1554 by the retiring Venetian ambassador, Giacomo Soranzo (S.P., Ven., 1534-54, p. 559).

[15] The Count of Feria to Philip II, 25 November 1558 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 4).

[16] See a letter of 18 September 1554 from Simon Renard to the emperor (S.P., Span., XIII, 51) in which it is said that, while there was "a bitterness between Arundel and the Chancellor that will never disappear until one or the other has been discredited", Paget showed delight at the change effected at Court since Philip's arrival, and had proclaimed that "he would mend his ways."

[17] The list of peers to whom writs were issued (Dugdale, Summons, pp. 516-17) does not include Cobham.

[18] Simon Renard to the emperor, 18 September 1554 (S.P., Span., XIII, 49).

[19] See the very long report on Paget's visit to the imperial Court, attributed to the future Cardinal de Granvelle, in S.P., Span., XIII, 87-92.

[20] See A.P.C., 1554-56, p. 83.

[21] According to an Italian pamphlet in the British Museum (press mark G.6124(4).), Il Felicissimo ritorno del regno d'Inghilterra alla Catholica Vnione, & alla obedientia della Sede Apostolica, which was compiled at Rome and published in December 1554 from a report sent out of England by one of the cardinal's suite, "La sera [22 November] venimmo à Settimborgo [Sittingbourne] & di qui il de [day] seguente, partendo al solito dopo desinare, andãmo ad alloggiare a Rocestra: oue due miglia lontano alla terra fu il S. Legato con parte della famiglia receuuto da Milord Cobham Signor del paese in vn suo palazzo molto sontuosamente, & con bellissimo apparato" (sig. Aiii^{v}). Another pamphlet in the same series, written in Latin and dated 29 November 1554, is entitled Breuis narratio eorum, quae in proximo Anglicano conuentu, Londini habito, inter Reges, Cardinalem Polum, Proceres, populumq' de Religione pristina restituenda, acta sunt: ex uarijs literis bona fide excerpta. On sig. Aiii^{v} is an account of the cardinal's arrival in England and of his reception at Court, but no reference is made to his entertainment at Cooling.

[22] Machyn, pp. 75-76. The bracketed interpolations are all the editor's, except the modernization of Machyn's 'steleard'.

[23] See the vivid account in Froude, V, 446-62.

[24] Simon Renard to the emperor, 10 February 1554/5 (S.P., Span., XIII, 139).

[25] Simon Renard to the emperor, 27 March 1555 (S.P., Span., XIII, 147).

[26] See a letter from Courtenay of Devonshire to Sir John Mason, dated 20 November 1555, in which the earl regrets the death of the Lord Chancellor but says that he is "glad he died reconciled to Lord Paget" (S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 72).

[27] See a letter from Philip II to Ruy Gómez de Silva of 2 February 1556/7 (S.P., Span., XIII, 286), in which de Silva, on his way to England, is instructed not to take up the matter of the Spanish war against France "with the Queen or anyone else, except Paget", who is to proceed with the king's plans "as if of his own accord".

[28] Mackie, p. 647. See also H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 154.

[29] A.P.C., 1554-56, p. 121.

[30] See A.P.C., 1554-56, pp. 128-29. Emmison, p. 189, referring to Secretary Petre's private account books, says that "during the spring of 1555 ... little offerings came, for example, from Lord Cobham (a heronshew and a gammon of bacon), to whom Petre had probably written a day or two beforehand

telling him of the Council's decision in his dispute with another nobleman." Although no Council letter survives to show the outcome of Cobham's rivalry with Abergavenny over the right to direct the musters, it seems likely that the dispute to which Emmison refers was this one.

31 Lord Cobham to the Earl of Rutland, Greenwich, 24 June 1555 (H.M.C., Rutland Papers, I, 65). The editor of the Rutland Papers incorrectly attributes this letter to "W.", not "G., Lord Cobham". In the letter Cobham calls the earl's brother, Roger Manners, "my cousin". Whatever relationship existed between the two men, it was certainly not one of blood, except very remotely; there was a slight connection between the families of Neville and Manners (the Lady Frances Manners, sister of the earl and of Roger Manners, was the wife of Henry Lord Abergavenny), which, since Dorothy Neville was Cobham's daughter-in-law, might conceivably have justified the baron's using the term 'cousin' in a sixteenth-century courtesy sense.

32 See Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, III, i, 476-77, where the significance of the commission against heresy is discussed. The wording of the commission is given in C.P.R., Mary, 1555-57, pp. 24-25; that of a similar one is in Foxe, pp. 1561-63.

33 For Oxendon's connection with Cobham, see the notes to the family tree, p. 1095, n. 34.

34 Gardiner was deprived on 15 February 1550/1 of his bishopric of Winchester and imprisoned in the Tower (from which he was released only upon the accession of Mary), after a trial of which details are given by Foxe. Cobham's depositions concerning Gardiner's refusal to accept the Protestant attitude toward the sacraments, based upon a conversation which Somerset, Northampton and the baron had with the bishop, are printed in the Actes and Monuments, p. 825.

35 F.J. Hammond, The Story of an Outpost Parish, Allhallows, Hoo, Kent [1928], pp. 89-90. The records at Allhallows are particularly valuable in that they survive from a much earlier period than do most of the records of the diocese of Rochester; in them alone have references to Cobham's sitting as a commissioner been discovered.

36 See, for a detailed account of this Parliament, Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 106-12. Froude's treatment of this important episode in sixteenth-century history (V, 563, 566-71) is slight. Proof of Cobham's summons is in Dugdale, Summons, p. 518.

37 See Holinshed, p. 1127.

38 MS. Loseley 1331/2, in Guildford Museum, is a long list of the names of members who sat in 1555 and who opposed Mary's religious policy. Among the names are those of Sir William and George Brooke. Subscribed "Al theys in Quene Maryes tyme were in y^e^ Parliament first holden ageynste the general repele of al treasons etc. wherby the statute of y^e^ Supremicy was repelyd," the manuscript has been transcribed for the History of Parliament Trust, by whose courtesy use is made of it here. The subscription on the list is curiously misleading, for, since the Parliament as a whole was not 'ageynste' the measures submitted by the queen, but ultimately passed them, it must be the men whose names appear in the list who one is meant to understand were against them. Further confusion is created by the reference to the repeal of the Act of Supremacy, which was repealed, not in 1555, but in 1554, when Pole reunited England with Rome (see the documentary material in Froude, V, 472). From the retrospective wording of the subscription ("in Quene Maryes tyme were", &c.), it seems probable that it was added to the list sometime after 1558, by someone whose memory was faulty.

39 The Return of Members, pp. 393, 395; see also Frederick Francis Smith, Rochester in Parliament 1295-1933 ... (1933), pp. 95-96.

40 See Mackie, p. 554; Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 56; and, especially, J.E. Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559-1581 (1953), pp. 23-26.

41 P.R.O., S.P. 11/8/7 (abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 108), as quoted in Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 108.

42 See Machyn, p. 98; A.P.C., 1554-56, pp. 202, 207, 208.

43 Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 106.

44 See Froude, VI, 1-15.

45 See the notes to the family tree, p. 109, n. 25.

46 See Machyn, p. 102; the confession of John Daniell, 11 April 1556 (P.R.O., S.P. 11/8/6, abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 79).

47 See Sir Robert Peckham's statement of 30 April 1556 (P.R.O., S.P. 11/8/46, abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 82).

48 A.P.C., 1554-56, p. 285.

49 Machyn, p. 108.

50 Deposition of John Daniell, 28 May 1556 (P.R.O., S.P. 11/8/77, abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 84).

51 Declaration of Sir John St. Loe, 31 May 1556 (P.R.O., S.P. 11/8/81, abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 84).

52 Lodge, Illustrations, I, 267-68. See the notes to the family tree, p. 108, n. 25.

53 See below, p. 87, for Braye's release from the Tower, and p. 85 for his funeral.

54 Machyn, p. 109.

55 See P.R.O., S.P. 11/7/24, 25, listed in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 76.

56 Machyn, p. 129; the bracketed interpolations are the editor's.

57 See Machyn, p. 134; Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, III, ii, 3-4.

58 None of Elizabeth's biographers takes account of this letter of Cobham's to Cecil, although it seems most probable that it concerns her. The only English ladies who at this time would have been sufficiently identified for Cecil as "my lady's grace" (apart, that is, from Elizabeth) were Anne of Cleves, with whose estate Cecil had had dealings in the preceding April (see H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 140-41), but who had died on 16 July (Machyn, p. 144); and Catherine Bertie, Lady Willoughby, the widow of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who was in voluntary exile from Mary's rule, and against whom the abortive refugees bill of 1555 had been principally directed (see Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 104, 133-34; Evelyn Read, Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, A Portrait (1962), esp. pp. 148 ff., where the style 'my lady's grace' is used).

Conyers Read, from his careful investigation of Cecil's connections with his future mistress during the reign of Mary, concludes that there is "no evidence of direct contact between them" (Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 116). Cobham's informing Cecil of Elizabeth's health would seem to suggest, if not direct contact, at least close interest, yet Read does not mention the letter.

There is no mention other than this of the princess's illness at this time; perhaps she was politicly feigning indisposition in order to discourage visitors, whose courting of her would have provoked an outburst of the queen's

jealousy.

59 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 144. In this letter Cobham refers to Cecil's sister as "my cousin". He must have meant something like 'in-law', since no blood tie between the Brookes and the parvenu Cecils seems to have existed at this time; even so, it is hard to see what the connection was. The only brother-in-law whom Cecil had in 1557 was Robert Wingfield of Upton, Lincolnshire, who had married Elizabeth Cecil in September 1555 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 142; Northamptonshire Families, ed. Oswald Barron (Victoria History of the County of Northampton, Genealogical Volume I), I (1906), 27). Wingfield was related to the Howards through his great-grandmother, Elizabeth (Goushill) Lady Wingfield, who was a uterine sister of Margaret (Mowbray) Lady Howard, mother of the first Howard Duke of Norfolk and of Catherine (Howard) Lady Abergavenny. George Lord Cobham was the grandson of Margaret (Neville) Lady Cobham, the daughter of Lady Abergavenny (see the extensive Wingfield pedigree in The Visitation of the County of Huntingdon ..., ed. Sir Henry Ellis (Camden Society Volume XLIII, 1849), pp. 125-31). Perhaps this very remote relationship, of which a man so intrigued by genealogy as was Cecil would have been aware, justified Cobham's calling Elizabeth Wingfield 'cousin'.

60 Machyn, pp. 158-59.

61 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 145.

62 See above, pp. 74, 76.

63 Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 116.

64 A.P.C., 1556-58, p. 226.

65 A.P.C., 1556-58, p. 227. See below, pp. 88-89, for the probable explanation of the Council's unwillingness to see the command of 100 men entrusted to Thomas.

66 Cobham is among the peers to whom writs were issued (Dugdale, Summons, p. 518).

67 The statement that the will was made at London is not in the will itself (P.C.C. Mellershe 58), but in Cobham's inquisition post mortem (P.R.O., C142/121/118).

68 See the text of the instructions issued to the election officers in December 1557 as given in Froude, VI, 56 n.

69 See P.R.O., Chancery, C3/205/86. Attention was kindly drawn to this document by Professor Leslie Hotson.

70 H.M.C., Rutland Papers, I, 68. Sir John Brydges, who had been created Lord Chandos of Sudeley on 8 April 1554 as a reward for his faithful service to the queen in the office of Lieutenant of the Tower, in which capacity he presided over the executions of Northumberland and Queen Jane, had died on 12 April 1557 (C.P., III, 126). His elaborate funeral on 3 May is described in Machyn, p. 133. Chandos's son and heir, Edmund, was Lady Cobham's brother-in-law (see the notes to the family tree, pp. 1091-92, n. 25).

The young Smith whom the Brookes unmanned and perhaps killed was the son of the Catholic Sir Clement Smith, who died in 1552, by Dorothy Seymour (see Machyn, pp. 24, 326); he was thus a first cousin of the late King Edward VI.

71 Machyn, p. 131. The entry is fragmentary and undated, coming between the entries for 11 and 16 April; it reads in full, "The ... day of Aprell was slayn in Flestrete a man (blank) ...."

72 C.P.R., Mary, 1557-58, p. 358.

73 A.P.C., 1556-58, p. 127.

74 A.P.C., 1556-58, p. 134.

75 It is impossible to date Thomas Brooke's marriage other than at some time before 1561, when he was depicted on his parents' tomb as married. (The verses against domesticity which he copied into his Ariosto (see above, p. 71) needed no personal experience to be appreciated.) He may even have been already Sir William Cavendish's son-in-law when the knight died on 25 October 1557. Cavendish did not leave Catherine Brooke or his other daughter anything to relieve the want which perhaps led Brooke to rob his uncle. Lady Cavendsih was the fascinating Elizabeth Hardwick, to provide for whom and for whose children, and to set her on the way to fame and riches, her husband deprived his daughters by his first marriage of their expected estates. As Bess of Shrewsbury, Catherine Brooke's step-mother recurs frequently in the story of the Lords Cobham.

* * *

Chapter VIII

1 MS. Ashmol. 1109, f. 48. The date of death is expressed as "3. Calends octob. 1558" in MS. Harl. 6157, f. 9b, and as "tertio calendas octobris ... anno 1558" on Cobham's tomb, both of which sources use the Roman calendar. The date given in the inquisition post mortem (P.R.O., C142/121/118) is "xxix die Septembr'", as in MS. Coll. of Arms I.15, f. 287, where the exact time of day is also recorded. The manuscript in the College of Arms does not, despite Nichols's assertion to the contrary (Machyn, p. 367), contain an account of the ceremonial of the funerals: a certificate was there set out and introduced with a preamble giving the titles of the deceased and the circumstances of his death, but the herald's account of the rites was never entered. Nichols's reference ("f. 387") is incorrect. MS. Ashmol. 1109, ff. 48-51b, entitled "The Interment of the right hono^{ble}: S^{r} George Lord Cobham late Knight and Companion of the most Noble Order of the Garter", which is quoted at length in the text, is probably the account which should have been filed in the College of Arms.

Machyn, usually reliable, says that Cobham died "in Kentt" on 25 September (p. 175), and is followed by Strype (Ecclesiastical Memorials, III, ii, 118). The inquisition post mortem of William Lord Cobham (P.R.O., C142/248/24) curiously says that George Lord Cobham died "xxix^{mo} die Decembris" 1558; apparently the clerk wrote 'Decembris' for 'Septembris'.

2 Machyn, p. 176.

3 From his will, P.C.C. Mellershe 58.

4 MS. Coll. of Arms I.15, f. 292.

In the following extended quotation from MS. Ashmol. 1109, ff. 48-49, 'openned' refers to the process of embalming. 'Sc(h)ochions' is 'escutcheons'. It is impossible to establish the significance of 'Rechen Dressen'; in the context it looks as though these words were intended to refer to the nearby city of Rochester. 'Quire' or 'quere' is 'choir'. 'In manner' may mean 'in a formal, prescribed arrangement'; it may be, however, simply the phrase 'in like manner', from which 'like' has been inadvertently omitted. 'Principalls' were upright pillars having branches to bear tapers (cf. O.E.D.); each of those erected at Cobham apparently bore at least three lights, or tapers. 'Penseles' were small pennons, and a 'Matie' was a majesty, or depiction of God enthroned within an aureole. The use of 'arvell' as a substantive is curious: cf. O.E.D. 'arval', 'funereal'.

5 This Richard Brooke was remembered in Anne Lady Cobham's will, and was present at the funeral of Dorothy Lady Cobham (see below, p. 197).

6 Machyn, p. 176.

7 Works ..., ed. William Swan Sonnenschein [1906], p. 133.

8 A.P.C., 1552-54, p. 405.

9 The will is a private testament which appears never to have been proved. It remained among the Brooke papers until taken by the first Earl of Salisbury, and is now Cecil Paper 198/110; it is abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 147.

10 Holinshed, p. 1509.

11 Forks were still a novelty in the reign of James I: see the citations of passages referring to them in Jonson, Breton and Coryat in Ben Jonson, edd. C.H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford, 1925-52), IX, 722.

12 MS. Coll. of Arms I.15, f. 293.

13 MS. Coll. of Arms I.15, f. 296. Contrary to Nichols's assertion that the full ceremonial of Lady Cobham's funeral has been there preserved (Machyn, p. 368), the manuscript in the College of Arms contains a blank space where an account of the service ought to be.

14 MS. Cotton Vitellius F.V, f. 95. Quotation has been made here from the original manuscript rather than from Nichols's edition of it, p. 179, where the editor has made the entirely unsupported assumption that 'images' was the word, now torn away, which followed 'iiij baners of'.

15 P.R.O., C142/121/118, abstracted in the Index Library's Abstracts of Inquisitiones Post Mortem Relating to the City of London, Returned into the Court of Chancery. Part I. 1 Henry VII to 2 Elizabeth, 1485-1561, ed. George S. Rye (1896), pp. 184-85.

16 A complication in the descent of land in Kent which was avoided in the main line of the Brookes but which affected the property of Sir Henry Cobham (see the notes to the family tree, p , n. 57) is that presented by the custom of gavelkind. As William Harrison describes the practice, "Customarie law consisteth of certeine laudable customes vsed in some priuat countrie [county], intended first to begin vpon good and reasonable considerations, as gauell kind, which is all the male children equallie to inherit, and continued to this daie in Kent: where it is onelie to my knowledge reteined, and no where else in England" (Historicall description, p. 180). The obvious fault of gavelkind was its dissipation of wealth and power accumulated by a father among his sons; thus, when in the Parliament of 1540 an act was passed enabling Kentishmen to disgavel their lands, the far-sighted George Lord Cobham was among "such persons, as procured their possessions to be altered from the nature of Gauelkinde" (A Perambulation of Kent: ... Written in the yeere 1570 by William Lambarde ... (ed. 1596), p. 586; see also Mackie, p. 437). Thus William Lord Cobham did not succeed only to an eighth of his father's estates. One of George Lord Cobham's younger sons, however, Sir Henry Cobham, was still among those who held their land by gavelkind when he died in 1592. Indeed, as late as 5 December 1597, there was read in the House of Commons "the Bill that Lands in the nature of Gavelkind may descend according to the Custom of the Common Law ... and committed unto the Queens Learned Councel" (D'Ewes, p. 668). D'Ewes's revealing comment on this bill (p. 272) is that "this Custom of Gavelkind (by which all the Sons do Inherit the Lands of their Ancestors equally) is not only in Kent, but hath been also in the City of Exeter ...." In 1744 Giles Jacob, in his New Law-Dictionary ..., still spoke of the custom as obtaining in Kent, and gave the interesting information that "In the Reign of H.6. there were not above thirty or forty Persons in all Kent that held by any other Tenure." Jacob also says that the statute 31 H.8. cap.3, that of 1540, was brought about as a consequence of a "Petition of divers Kentish Gentlemen, in much of the Land of that County, ... [that their estates] be descendible of the eldest Son, according to the Course of Common Law."

Ironically, although it would have prevented the growth of the power of the house of Cobham had it been in effect at the time of George Lord Cobham's death, gavelkind might have saved the family's estates in 1603. Jacob, citing

a pithy proverb, says that "Altho' a Father be attainted of Treason or Felony, and hanged, the Heir of Gavelkind Land shall inherit; for the Custom is, the Father to the Bough, and the Son to the Plough."

17 The will is P.C.C. Mellershe 58.

18 William Lambarde to William Lord Burghley, 15 March 1596/7: see below, p. 652.

19 Sir Urian Brereton: see the notes to the family tree, p. 1088, n. 25.

20 See Joel Hurstfield, The Queen's Wards: Wardship and Marriage under Elizabeth I (1958), p. 172.

21 C.P.R., Elizabeth, 1560-63, p. 118.

22 Holinshed, p. 1509.

23 See the Gentleman's Magazine, XV (1841), 306, for an account of the renovation undertaken at the expense of Francis Capper Brooke of Ufford Place, Suffolk. Having "been entirely left to the devastating tooth of Time" for more than two centuries, the Ionic pillars had been all broken, and the figures of the fourteen children had been "all displaced, and mostly broken into shapeless limbs and torsos". See also D'Elboux, "The Brooke Tomb." Today the sculpture is again falling into disrepair: John Brooke's head has been broken off his kneeling figure, the horn of the heraldic antelope and the blades of several of the short swords carried by the lord's sons have also come away, and much of the sculptured braid festooning the effigies has been chipped. These fragments have been preserved in the parish chest; they were most obligingly brought out and placed in position by the churchwarden, Dr. M.S. Moore, so that the photographs reproduced on pp. 100-03 might be taken in July 1962. A view of the tomb is reproduced as Plate 77a in Eric Mercer's English Art 1553-1625 (Oxford, 1962).

24 MS. Harl. 284, f. 131.

25 Honoratissimus et clarissimus vir Georgius Brokus fuit dominus Cobhamus ex oppidi Cobami possessione cognominatus et idem laudatissimus aliquot annis Caleti praefectus. In illustrissimũ Collegium cooptatus equitum Divi Georgii. Nec sᵒlum hanc prestantissimam habuit honorum et familiae comendatione sed etiam natura fuit optima et animo omni genere laudis ornatissimo. Dux fuit in bello prestantissimus et sapientissimus in pace conciliarius principibus in quorum temporibus vixit. Egregie probatus Cantianis suis inter quos habitavit eximie charus deniq' toti reipublicae propter honorũ splendorem et virtutũ. Notissimus et dilectissimus et haec o'ia fuerunt in illo illustriora quoniam et professionem evangelii susceperat et defensionem ac eandem ad extremũ vsq' spiritum conservavit. Iste nobilissimus vir constantissimus Dei servus et ornatissimũ patriae membrũ cum ad maturam senectutem pervenisset annũ agens sexagesimũ secundũ et faebris ardoribus conflagrans tertio calendas octobris est mortuus anno 1558. Cuius discessu liberi quos post se multos et inprimis laudatos reliquit et amici; ac necessarii tota deniq' respublica magnũ et iustũ dolorem acceperunt. Gulielmus autem Brokus eques appellatus ex antiquae familiae cognominacõe [sic: cognominatione] d'ns Cobhamus filius Georgii patris et haeres benevalentissimus [sic: benevolentissimus] hoc monumentũ memoriae Georgii patris sui charissimi dedicavit anno 1561 et Elizabethae Reginae tertio. The inscription is recorded almost without inaccuracy by Waller ("Lords of Cobham," Pt. 2, p. 132); badly by Thynne (Holinshed, p. 1509); and perfectly by John Thorpe (MS. Harl. 6587, p. 126).

26 Patre fuit domino faelix, dominoq' marito,
Alter erat Braius: Cobamus alter erat.
Anna fuit frugi, fuit et prosperima mater,
Pauperibus larga praebuit Anna manu.
Nil erat hac melius, nil fortunatius una,
Donec erat charo, charior illa viro.

Ultimus hunc annus Mariae cũ funere mersit,
Illa pari fato mense Novembre ruit.
Sic quos vita duos concordes semper habebat,
Extinctos eadem nũc quoq' busta tenent.

The inscription is carelessly transcribed by Francis Thynne in Holinshed, and accurately by Waller and Thorpe.

Two English translations exist of this simple epitaph. That quoted in the text is Thynne's, and survives in a revised version of the account of the Brookes which he published in Holinshed in 1587, MS. Add. 12514, f. 68b. The other was written in 1877 by Reginald Cust and published by W.A. Scott-Robertson in "Six Wills Relating to Cobham Hall" (Archaeologia Cantiana, XI (1877), 200). Scott-Robertson says that the epitaph was originally written in Latin by William Lord Cobham at the time of his mother's death in September 1559 (sic: the date is that of Cobham's wife Dorothy's), a statement for which he offers no authority. The present Lord Darnley (whose great-grandfather was Cust's brother-in-law and his host at Cobham Hall), in a private communication of 18 April 1962, was unable to say either where Cust's manuscript might be, or from where the suggestion of Cobham's authorship might have come.

BOOK TWO

(1558-1570)

The keyes of the realme

Chapter I

William Brooke entered his thirty-second year on 1 November 1558, four days before the opening of the Parliamentary session to which he was summoned as eighth Lord Cobham of Kent.[1] His mother's death, occurring on his birthday and following so closely upon the deaths of his father and his grandmother Braye, can have allowed the new baron little time to devote to his legislative duties. He does not, in fact, seem ever to have taken his seat in the Marian House of Lords.[2] Parliament, in the autumn of 1558, was at any rate virtually paralysed by the knowledge that it would be dissolved at any moment by the death of the queen: the uncertainty in which it deliberated was prevalent throughout the city, where, on 12 November, "there was a woman sett on the pelere for sayhyng that the quen was ded, and her grace was not ded then."[3] 'Then' is here the operative word. Before dawn on Thursday, 17 November, Queen Mary died.

One can infer from his support of Wyatt in 1554, from his opposition to the Catholic legislation of 1555, and, especially, from his father's careful planning that Elizabeth should find, at her accession, his sons "in place to her lykinge",[4] that William Brooke was probably a known supporter of the princess who came to the Throne upon the death of Mary. So the Spanish ambassador regarded him. Yet no explicit statement survives to connect Cobham with Elizabeth during the years when they both waited to succeed to their respective places. Nor is there documentary proof that Brooke and Sir William Cecil, the man who took over the administration of the kingdom in the new queen's name as soon as the old one died, ever saw or communicated with each other in the decade when they moved as courtiers in the same Edwardian and Marian circles. That Cecil and the new Lord Cobham's father had been friendly in late years is known; that Elizabeth and her step-uncle Parr of Northampton, Cobham's brother-in-law, must have long been on good terms is also certain. An indication of the familiarity with the queen enjoyed by the former marquess (who as yet had not been legally

restored to his titles) is given in a report made by the Spanish ambassador to his master less than a month after the reign began. Elizabeth, he said, as she was riding through London, "saw the marquis of Northampton, who is ill with a quartan ague, at a window, and she stopped her palfrey and was a long while asking him about his health in the most cordial way in the world".[5] To point Cobham's own previous relationship with the queen or with her chief minister no such account exists. Yet that there was, even before Mary's death, a close connection between the new baron and Cecil at least is highly probable.

The queen died early on 17 November; during the morning Parliament was told the expected news, and, after accepting her half-sister as her successor, broke up in automatic dissolution. "Be-twyne a xj and xij a' for [noon, the lady Eliza]beth was proclamyd quen Elsabeth, quen of England, France and Yrland, and deffender of the feyth;" "at after non, all the chyrches in London dyd ryng, and at nyght dyd make bonefyres and set tabulls in the strett, and ded ett and drynke and mad mere for the newe quen Elsabeth."[6] The rejoicing of the crowds would have been increased had the people known that, while they revelled, the fiery agent and instigator of the late fanatic followed her in death; the remarkable coincidence of Cardinal Pole's demise within hours of his cousin's, however, a circumstance which the diarist Machyn would hardly have failed to mention had he known of it, seems not to have been made public knowledge, so that Machyn says that he died on 19 November.[7] The popular acclamation of Elizabeth and the fortuitous removal of the cardinal from the changed political and religious scene are the only events which followed immediately upon the death of Mary for which Sir William Cecil cannot be held directly responsible. He had been in close touch with the heiress presumptive during the queen's last days, and had obviously been empowered to act for her in London until she could quit Hatfield. Thus the drafting and publication of the royal proclamation, the securing of the Tower for Elizabeth's reception there, the closing of the ports, the measures for conducting the peace conference which was to end the French wars: these, and other less obvious steps like the appointing of a preacher of approved politics to speak at

St. Paul's on Sunday the twentieth, were taken by Cecil. Security was the consideration which lay behind each. It is therefore significant that one of the entries in Cecil's "Memoryall 18. Nov'br: 1558 at ye ẽtry of ye Q. to ye Crow̃" reads simply, "L Cobhã Kyng of Spayne".[8] Expanded, the entry means that the new lord had been chosen to go to Brussels on the crucial errand of informing King Philip of his wife's death and of enlisting his support for his sister-in-law against France. Cecil and, one assumes, his mistress, must have had confidence in Cobham's ability to have committed such a trust to him so unhesitatingly; their confidence must have been based upon intimate prior knowledge of what he could and would do to assure the Protestant succession.

On 18 November, the day that Cecil recorded his determination to send Cobham to their former king, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton was meanwhile writing from London to the queen that he was busy about carrying out her personal instructions. One of these orders reveals that Elizabeth shared Cecil's opinion of Cobham's reliability, for Throckmorton told her:

> I haue geuẽ your cõmyssyon yt you gaue me to my l off Norfolke my lord off Bedford & to the L cobham .... The lord cobham gevyth present charge to make a stay & seacege on kentes shore beyonde gravesend.[9]

The charge given to Cobham ought technically to have been committed to Sir Thomas Cheney, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, whose jurisdiction extended from Grange, the non-corporate member of the port of Hastings which now forms a part of Gillingham, to Seaford in Sussex; Cheney, however, had been Treasurer of the Household to Mary and, while he was not relieved of his key position on the coast under Elizabeth, his duties were delegated to new men. Cobham was chosen to be the chief of these.[10]

There is no mention of Cobham's presence at Hatfield on Sunday, 20 November, when the new queen held her first Council meeting and confirmed Cecil in the office which he had been already occupying for three days. Yet since "peers, courtiers, knights, and gentlemen" were there, "every statesman," as Froude says, "of any side or party of name or note," one may assume that Cobham was among the men who saw accomplished in the great hall of the old palace the contract between Elizabeth and her Principal Secretary.[11] The baron was certainly

uppermost in the minds of the queen and her advisers on that momentous weekend, for on the Tuesday following Elizabeth implemented Cecil's plan to send Cobham to the king. She accordingly wrote on that day to her former brother-in-law, announcing his wife's death and informing him that Cobham would present to him her personal condolences.[12] On Wednesday Cobham was given his instructions:

> 1. To repair to Flanders to the King of Spain and declare the departure to God of the Queen his late wife and the desire of the present Queen to continue the old and perfect amity maintained by both their progenitors, dilating her good will with meet and friendly words.
> 2. On landing in Flanders, and before going to the said King, he shall repair to the Earl of Arundel and the other Commissioners there, to declare to them her present state and the proceeding here of her affairs, and to recive their instructions for the better doing of her message.
>
> Any one of the Commissioners may accompany him on his mission to the King, who is to be reminded how the loss of Calais affects the interest and safety of his Low Countries, so as 'in no wise to let the French, upon any other conditions, to have either peace or any rest than to deliver Calais.'[13]

It was a responsible charge. The more personal part of it, requiring 'meet and friendly words', Cobham must have had enough experience of Courts by 1558 to have performed fairly easily; but the presentation to Philip of England's unreasonable demands about Calais was a more formidable assignment. The French conquerors of Calais and the harassed Spanish had been meeting since late summer at Cercamp, a Flemish village near Arras. Their deliberations would have been short, terminated by an agreement virtually to revert to the status quo ante bellum, had not Spain been forced to refuse any treaty unacceptable to its English allies. France could not countenance the demands made by the Earl of Arundel and his colleagues, Bishop Thirlby of Ely and Dean Wotton: Calais had been lost in a fair fight, yet England, as though still the nation of Henry VIII, was asking high-handedly that France should give up the fortress, pay into the English Exchequer the 2,000,000 crowns still owing to it from previous wars, and demolish the Scottish fort at Eyemouth, just over the border from Berwick. These terms, upon which alone Philip's wife had been forced by her subjects to agree to allow him to make peace with France, were in the circumstances ludicrously unrealistic.[14] Thus the two great belligerents found themselves at a stalemate when Mary died. The accession of Elizabeth brought about a subtle change in the atmosphere at

Cercamp. Concessions to the wife of the Spanish king, the unpopular ruler of a chaotic kingdom, France had no reason to make; a show of friendliness to a woman who might be persuaded to marry in the French interest, however, and moreover to one whose popularity indicated that she would be supported in her personal inclinations by the strength of a united England, might well be expedient. This new attitude was represented in secret communications between Paris and London; it was not publicly professed. Indeed the commissioners who spoke for Henry II at Cercamp openly challenged Elizabeth's title, alleging that the dauphiness, Mary of Scots, was the legitimate heir of Mary Tudor and urging that Spain join with their country in deposing the usurper. Philip, honouring his official treaty with England despite the termination of his sovereignty over that kingdom, would not hear of any such collusion: he too saw in his sister-in-law a sovereign potentially stronger than his wife had been, and hoped for a new matrimonial alliance between England and Spain which would be of more worth than the old. Under Elizabeth, because of her personal freedom and her people's enthusiastic reception of her accession, the bankrupt England of Mary suddenly found itself in a position to trade on renewed credit.

To represent this changed situation, to gain what he could for Elizabeth while the two Continental powers vied for her favour in their ignorance of what course she would eventually choose, Cobham was sent to the Low Countries. Why he, and not the experienced Sir Thomas Chaloner or Sir Henry Killigrew, cannot be demonstrated. His noble rank would have counted for something in the Spanish Court, but, if that was of importance, then a lord ought also to have been sent to the emperor, who had to be content with a knight, Chaloner.[15] The intention of complimenting the king by sending to him a man of high rank would, in fact, have been better served by dispatching any one of several earls assured to the new government. The considerations which decided Elizabeth and Cecil in the baron's favour must have been those which cannot now be confirmed: his known fidelity to the queen was almost certainly one of these, the likelihood that he would work well with his cousin Wotton and the other commissioners already at Cercamp another. Perhaps a third was the very freshness of the mind which he brought to the job: not being a professional diplomat, he could not be made to accept

from the Spanish and the French the polite but unproductive vocabulary of diplomacy in which the exchanges at the conference were being couched. This last trait in the ambassador designate, his being an unknown in diplomatic dealings, at first misled the Spanish ambassador in England. On 24 November Cobham went to visit Feria, and told him, as the count next day related to Philip, only that he was going "to inform your Majesty formally of what has occurred".[16] Feria was contemptuous of the queen's choice: the emissary, he told the king, "is the son of the Lord Cobham whom you knew and who recently died.... He has no place in the Queen's household." Referring also to one of the other Brookes, probably to Thomas, the ambassador went on: "he and his brother have not enjoyed a good reputation, but have always been adherents of the new Queen and she is attached to him. Your Majesty should have him well housed and treated, and a handsome chain or something should be given to him. I have written to my brother-in-law asking him to entertain him and to win his good graces." Feria's strictures upon Cobham's reputation have little meaning, for "no gozaba de buena fama en Londres," in the count's phraseology, was tantamount to a statement that Cobham was a Protestant. In the Spaniard's letters late in 1558 'bad' meant, usually, 'anti-Catholic'. His advice that Cobham should be treated with consideration also meant little. So far as Feria knew, the emissary was a loyal but as yet unrewarded servant of the new queen, who was going to Brussels only to announce officially what Philip already knew; he suspected that there was more to the embassy than that, but the comparative unimportance of the man who was being sent made it difficult for Feria to guess how vital was the secret part of the mission. He therefore took the precaution of advising that Cobham be given the treatment usually accorded a foreigner who had been entrusted with a grandiose mission. It was sensible advice: courtesy could do no harm, and, if Cobham turned out to be a more notable personage than the Spaniard had thought him to be, then the effort expended to honour him could not but do good.

Cecil had taken care that Philip should not be forewarned what the more significant charge committed to Cobham was. Feria told the king that he had been told only a few hours before Cobham's call upon him that the queen had

decided two days before whom she would send, and that Cobham had been ordered to visit the embassy before he left. It was not until 26 November that Feria discovered what was really afoot; as he wrote to the king's secretary,

> Last night I despatched a courier with a long letter to the King to accompany Lord Cobham. I send the present to catch him as I have since heard that they are ordering Lord Cobham to go direct to Cercamp to bear a new commission to the earl of Arundel and his colleagues, as their old commission expired with the death of the Queen. It will be well to advise our Commissioners to keep their eyes on these Englishmen, in case this should be some trick to our detriment, as I was told nothing about his going to Cercamp till he had gone.[17]

These couriers whom Feria dispatched were not merely bearers of letters; they had instructions to keep watch over the emissary's movements, and, although the first of them was later recommended for punishment because he "went to sleep at Dover, and Cobham crossed without him", the second, the one "who was sent on the 26th was more careful and crossed with Cobham."[18]

Cobham arrived at Dunkirk at three o'clock in the afternoon on 29 November. He had said farewell to the Spanish ambassador five days before, and so had had time to attend his mother's funeral at Cobham on the twenty-sixth, but there is no evidence that he performed this filial duty. In a letter which he wrote to Cecil from Newport on 30 November, he observed that, "if ye shall perceaue: y^{t} I am slack in this Journey: I praie yow to waie thoccasion of my abode at dovour ... & so to answer for me;"[19] an 'abode at Dover', however, can hardly be taken to refer to a stop-over at Cobham, and most probably alludes to time spent either in waiting for a fair wind or in dallying in order to give the Spanish courier the slip. Once come to Dunkirk, Cobham rode directly to Newport to meet the Earl of Arundel, and there he found the earl ready to return to the port to take passage for England. Arundel advised him to seek out the other commissioners at Cercamp, and Cobham, after writing to Cecil of his annoyance at having to go so far out of his way, especially since he had made the fruitless detour to see Arundel, rode back to Dunkirk and then proceeded south into the Artois. He thought, he told the Secretary, that it would take him three days at least to reach the king. Moving quickly, with his baggage train following at some distance behind, Cobham reached Arras on 1 December, and the next day conferred there with Dean Wotton and Bishop Thirlby, whom he had summoned from Cercamp. On 3 Dec-

ember the dean and he set out for Brussels, Cobham riding 'in post' while his cousin went 'in journey', but flood conditions so prolonged the baron's way that it was 7 December when he reached the capital. A further delay ensued while messengers passed between the city and "the monastery of Grunendale, in a forest, two great leagues from Brussels", where the king was, and it was 9 December when at last the Bishop of Arras (later famous as the Cardinal de Granvelle) escorted the two Englishmen to the royal retreat and presented them to Philip II.

The king received them cordially, accepting Cobham's letters from the queen and making Arras speak of his delight at the show of "universal agreement and good will of all the realm of England" with which she had succeeded his wife.[20] Cobham's public duty was completed by the delivery of the letters into the king's hands, and he withdrew to Brussels, where on 13 December he wrote a personal message to the queen to accompany the joint report of the audience which he and Wotton were sending to her. The king's reception of them, Cobham affirmed, had been as gratifying as had been expected, but the news which Arras's colleague, Ruy Gomez, had given Cobham of the behaviour of the French at the conference was less assuring. "Also at Circam," Gomez had reported,

> the french did not let to saie and talke openly, how y^{r} highnes is not lawfull Quene of englande and that they haue alredy sent to Rome, to disprove yo^{r} ma^{ties} right: In my pore opinion therfore I thinke it were expedient that either a psonage of some reputacõn might be suborned and sent vnto the pope, and so to lerne further what the french doo practise there in the matter, or elles that yo^{r} highnes through yo^{r} moost discrete wisedome did at home provide to frustrate their attempt in that behalf.
>
> The french shew theimselfes very hault and do make great bragges: y^{t} they haue assured freindes in england to vse when time and ocassion shall be offered, wherof at my retorne I will make more ample discourse vnto yo^{r} ma^{tie}.
>
> As touching my intertaynement here both of the kinges ma^{tie} and of the nobilitie: I assure yo^{r} highnes it hath been very honorable.[21]

Then Cobham saw Philip again. He told the king of the renewal of the commission of Arundel, Wotton and Thirlby, and apparently waited for some sort of indication from Philip of what support Elizabeth's plenipotentiaries might expect to receive from Spain. Philip, meanwhile, was waiting for some word from his sister-in-law which would acknowledge her dependence upon him and perhaps even ask for his protection against the pretensions of her French-supported cousin, the dauphiness: the king had offended Wotton and Thirlby by insisting upon seeing

Cobham in private audience, no doubt because he hoped for just such a personal message. The result of the confrontation was stalemate; the king had at last to say that he must study the report of the Duke of Alba and of Ruy Gomez, then still at Cercamp, before notifying Elizabeth of Spain's new attitude toward France, and Cobham took his leave without adding anything to what he had had to announce.[22] The situation was uncomfortable for Cobham. His mission was completed, and by 15 December Sir Thomas Chaloner, apparently on his way home from the imperial Court, wrote to Cecil that the young lord was looking for "his short despatch".[23] He was not to be let off so easily. Although a pall had been cast over the Flemish capital by the deaths of Philip's father in September, of his wife in November and of his aunt Mary, Queen of Hungary, a month later, all of whose "exequies in the towne of Brussels", in Holinshed's words, the king "did celebrate ... in this present moneth of December subsequentlie, after the most pompous and solemne manner",[24] Philip was determined to show Elizabeth's emissary every courtesy. The English government, for their own reasons, was equally anxious to keep the king's attention focussed on Cobham. Chaloner spoke of how welcome the baron was being made to feel, how "well entertained with great feasting, such as shows that the King here makes account of the Queen's amity", and Cobham indicated that the royal funerals were themselves put to use by the Spanish as a means of doing him honour. On 22 December he wrote to Cecil of the memorial service for their late queen:

> My Lord of Elie and my cousin Wotton were this daie p'nt at the said funeral, beinge specially required thervnto & also thambassad^r of mantua & thambassad^r of venise. I my self kept my lodging & saw not the execution of theis ceremonies, because I wanted my mournyrs apparell; & although I was required to come, vnto the same, yet being vnprovided to shew my self in such order as was met for the same: I absented my self from it.[25]

Obviously Cobham conducted himself discreetly, behaving with the utmost propriety as the representative of a monarch friendly to Spain (although his being unprepared to attend the memorial service for his own late queen may strike one as odd), but he gave no inkling of which way his government would turn when it made what was supposed to be the inevitable move of choosing one ally against the other. Elizabeth and Cecil were highly pleased: the queen, the Spanish

ambassador reported from London while Cobham was still at Brussels, "has promised him the wardenship of the Cinque Ports"; while Philip and Feria were thrown into consternation: "Cobham has been, and is," Feria authorized the Bishop of Aquila to inform the king, "so zealous with his letters from Brussels that it has been necessary to manage him a little, and his lordship [Aquila] has therefore thought well to promise him a pension, although he has not told him how much it will be,"[26] No more is heard of this bribe, one of many for which Feria in desperation asked that money be sent "at once, and in plenty": of that which the Spanish extended to Lord Howard of Effingham at the same time an amusing anecdote has been made by Dame Edith Sitwell:[27] but the offer of it shows that Feria had changed his mind rapidly about how seriously Cobham was to be taken. The Spaniard noted with pleasure only one aspect of Cobham's mission. "Wotton," wrote the ambassador, "who is a friend and relative of Cobham, has written here telling them not to trust to the French or their promises, and verbally requested Cobham to tell the same to the Queen." Yet even this known antipathy to the methods of Henry II, understandable from the minister of a queen whom France was openly insulting, was soon shown to be hardly encouraging to Spanish hopes. For, even as the French commissioners boasted at Cercamp of Elizabeth's imminent deposition, their king was bargaining most cordially with the queen, promising to restore Calais to her Crown if she would marry a dependent of France. Thus, by the time that Philip gave up trying to learn from Cobham his mistress's real intentions, Elizabeth had performed her first great sleight of hand. She was able to keep England from becoming an apanage of France by rejecting Henry II's offer, knowing that Philip would have to defend her in his own interests should France attempt to replace her by the dauphiness; she was able, also without fear of reprisal, to preserve England's new-found independence of Spain by publicly refusing Philip's hand when he proposed to her in January, because by so doing she enlisted the sympathy of Henry II, showing him that he could rely upon her determination never to renew the league against France. When the peace conference moved in February from Cercamp to Cateau-Cambrésis, the great protagonists in the late war therefore found themselves singly opposed, with England a neutral which neither could afford to slight for fear that it might disturb the new balance of power. Calais

itself was more than Elizabeth can ever have hoped for, but the shame of losing it outright, which upon her accession had seemed Mary's legacy to her people, she was now able to spare them. On 12 March a final arrangement was concluded whereby Calais would revert to England in eight years, or else 500,000 crowns would be forfeited to Elizabeth's treasury. The news was brought to Elizabeth's first Parliament, which, although surely knowing that France would not honour the treaty, seeing it as "obviously a face-saving device", acclaimed it for what it was, "peace without too much dishonour".[28] It gave to Elizabeth's Englishmen their first diplomatic victory in more than five years, and to Elizabeth herself confidence in her inimitable way of conducting foreign affairs.

The exact date of Cobham's return to England is not known. He did his duty in the last days of December by continuing to play his inscrutable rôle at Brussels, eliciting from Philip temporizing letters to Elizabeth about his pleasure at perceiving by her messages and by those of Feria, as well as "'by what Lord Coban has told him,' how really she responds to his brotherly affection".[29] Meanwhile, at home, Elizabeth and Cecil were busy casting off their dependence upon the king. Cobham then went to Antwerp where, before 2 January 1558/9, Sir Thomas Gresham's agent advanced him a sum of money from his financier master. The agent, Richard Clough, was much impressed by the gravity and courtesy which marked Cobham's deportment; as he told Gresham,

> I came to Andwarpe were I fonde my lorde Cobbam, and haue p^{d} to hym y^{e} 120^{l}, And guvyn myne attendanse appon hys lordeshippe for syche power as I coullde do, whome [sic] ys a very gentyll and sage young lorde, weishyng y^{t} wee had more seche in engglande.[30]

Cobham gave Clough a letter to deliver to a Master 'Henyche' (perhaps Thomas Heneage, who may have been the 'Mr Henage' at George Lord Cobham's funeral, and who was later knighted and made Elizabeth's Vice-Chamberlain), so that he cannot then have been expecting to return home at once. He was, however, at Westminster for the opening of Parliament on 25 January, and since the taking of the late Lord Cobham's inquisition post mortem and the great event of the coronation took place in the previous fortnight, one may assume that he came back before the end of the second week of the new year.

* * *

Chapter II

Upon his return to England at the beginning of 1559 William Lord Cobham must have found himself at last able to take stock not only of his own new position, but of that of the entire state. His father's death had left him the seventh baron of the realm in degree, with a prospective annual income of about £ 1080.[1] Had he been under age at the time of his succession to the title, or had his mother long survived her husband, Cobham would not have found himself so soon possessed of the entire estate; as it was, by the time that the late lord's inquisition post mortem was taken on 20 January 1558/9, Cobham had only to wait for his father's executors to complete the complicated business of performing his last will. The death of Lady Braye in the previous October had also brought to Cobham, as the heir of the senior co-heir of the baroness's estate, the dissolved monastery of Newnham in Bedfordshire and a right to a sixth of his grandmother's holdings in Cornwall, Devon, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Of this inheritance Cobham seems to have contented himself with the manor of Wellesbourne, near Stratford-upon-Avon, which he held by 1561 and of which he later disposed; none of Lady Braye's manors except Newnham appears in the list of the properties which Cobham owned at the time of his death in 1597. Of his uncle John Lord Braye's property Cobham got, probably among others of which he rid himself, the manor of Albury in Surrey.[2]

While his daughter might succeed to his share of the Braye estates, Cobham had as yet no child in 1559 to whom he might leave his vast patrimony, Frances's place in the entail set out in her grandfather's will being an inferior one. Nor, so far as is known, did Lady Cobham appear likely to give birth to a son. Thus the position of the new lord's brothers was subtly changed by their father's death. It is at this point that one may most conveniently digress from the story of the baron himself, and record what is known about these other young men.

George Brooke, the heir presumptive, had his twenty-sixth birthday in January 1559. His wife was something of an heiress, and had already given him a daughter.[3] Brooke's absence from his father's funeral, however curious, does not appear to have been because of any disgrace under which he was living when the queen came to the Throne: he was, in fact, a promising young man. Although an early

opponent of Queen Mary, he appears in the records of her reign within a year of the Wyatt rebellion when, on 12 February 1554/5, he purchased a twenty-one year lease, retroactive to Michaelmas 1554, of the Essex rectory of Northeweld Bassett.[4] From Elizabeth he expected more than he had from her sister, applying to the Crown before the end of the first two months of her reign for a monopoly of the use of a machine invented either by him or by an Italian colleague:

> The demaunde of George Cobhm̃ and Tomazo Chanata Straunger w^th^ other of their company
> ffirste for bringinge into this realme an Instrumente to clense and carye awaye all Shelfes of Lande, Bankes, owse, and suche lyke, out of all Ryvers, Creekes, or Havens, w^ch^ by the pmission of god, we do promes taccomplishe and pfourme for the cõmon wealthe of this Realme of Englande, and to the profitt of the Qwenes ma^tie^.
> Item we do demaunde of the Qwenes ma^tie^ a pryvelege for fyve and twentie yeres so that no maner of pson shall vse or exercyse the same Instrumente or other lyke durinnge the saide Yeres, but only suche as we shall apointe, vpon payne of losinge their Instruments, and also of fforfeicture for euery time so working therew^th^ one hundreth markes [£ 66.13.4], thone moytie to the Qwenes ma^tie^ and thother to him or them that shall take the same.
> Item we do demaunde in respecte that the saide Instrumente shalbe not only comodious vnto this Realme, but also profytable to the Qwenes ma^tie^, that it may please her to graunte vs lycence, to transporte into the pties beyonde the Seas, thre thousande Tonnes of Beere; w^thout^ imposte And we wilbe bounde to bringe into this realme two thousande quarters of Corne for the same.[5]

Brooke and Chanata got the monopoly, although upon terms not quite so profitable to them as those which they had requested: on 26 May 1562, "to encourage others to discover like good engines and devices", they were given ten years in which to prove themselves, "provided that in the mean time every man may use the old manner of scouring of havens and channels or any other of their own invention not like the engine which shall be brought by Brooke".[6]

In the grant of the monopoly Brooke was described as the queen's servant; he was in fact one of her household, and when a list of "Lyvereys geuen by the Quenes maiestie againste hir moste noble Coronacõn" was drawn up early in January 1558/9, "George Cobham" was among the sewers serving under the Earl of Sussex who each received five yards of scarlet cloth for their uniforms.[7] In the household subsidy list of 1559, entitled "Camera & Hospitium Dom. Reginae 1558", "M^r^ George Cobham" was assessed at £ 30 in fees.[8] As one of the queen's servants and a member of a prominent family, Brooke was assured of a place in Elizabeth's first Parliament; the day before the coronation he was returned for the

borough of Portsmouth.[9] Following the first years of the reign, however, Brooke somehow slipped into obscurity. It would seem that he was overspending himself. He had undoubtedly come into some money upon his father's death (there is mention in Lord Cobham's last will of "suche Annuall rentes or annuyties as I and my ... sonne S^r Willm broke haue by deede or dedes graunted vnto any of my saide sonnes or s'ruũtes", although nothing so explicit as the bequest made in the superseded testament of 1551, "vnto my sonne George Broke one annuytie or Annuall rente of Twentie poundes ... vntill suche tyme as the said George be otherwise provided for that he may dispend fortie poundes yerely aboue all charges"),[10] but whatever that sum was it was not enough to satisfy his creditors. Then, on 11 July 1561, William Herle wrote to Sir William Cecil from Antwerp that

> George Cobham has come to this town from Germany, in a miserable state, apparel consisting of a doublet and hosen. It appears he should have been apprehended for debt, and is still in doubt, for his chamber is guarded night and day with two of the margrave's officers.[11]

How long Brooke had been in so ignominious a predicament by this time is not known: he may have been the "master Cobam" who was still counted among "dyvers gentyllmen and servyng-men" at Court on 6 January 1559/60:[12] but when William Lord Cobham commissioned their parents' tomb he apparently instructed the sculptor even then to make an esoteric reference in that work to his brother's reduced circumstances. For, while his thirteen brothers and sisters kneel reverently about the effigies of their father and mother, George Brooke rests uneasily on only one knee, as if ready to run. R.H. D'Elboux not improbably suggests that in the lively little figure there is "a neat allusion" to Brooke's flight from his creditors.[13]

After his bitter experiences on the Continent, Brooke probably paid a visit home early in 1562, perhaps in order to hurry along the granting of the monopoly for dredging the waterways with his new machine. Before the patent was issued, however, he appears to have returned to the Low Countries, for it seems most likely to have been to his withdrawal from the country that the Spanish ambassador referred on 13 March 1561/2. On that day, discussing an abortive attempt made by sympathizers with the Countess of Lennox to assure her son Darnley of a place in the line of succession to the Throne, the Bishop of Avila wrote

to King Philip from London that "one of these men called Cobham must have gone very far in this business, as he is very uneasy, and has sought an excuse for going to the baths of Liege."[14] Brooke certainly returned to England later in that year; when, on 1 October, the provost of the Hanse town of Deventer wrote to Cecil from Cologne that he had a secret to impart to the queen, and accordingly asked that a gentleman might be sent "with full authority to confer with him", it was Brooke who carried his letter to England and Brooke who the provost suggested should return to him.[15] Once back at Court, however, he did not salvage his career. Elizabeth did not send him on the proposed secret embassy to the Netherlands, and henceforth, until he died in his late thirties about 1570, George Brooke made no mark at Court. He may be remembered in his last years only for the furtive appearance which he made in his piratic brother's behalf in 1565.

Of the younger brothers of William Lord Cobham who besides George Brooke survived their father, only Henry was rising in the great world when Elizabeth came to the Throne. Thomas, later notorious, perhaps made an attempt to retrieve his lost reputation in the first years of the new reign. Although it is unlikely that he had a place in the royal household,[16] it was probably he whom the Count of Feria, describing Lord Cobham to King Philip in November 1558, coupled with the baron as an old adherent of the queen.[17] He was returned to Parliament for Rochester on 7 January 1558/9,[18] and on 15 February 1562/3 a bill was finally introduced into the House of Lords for "the Restitution in Blood of Thomas Brooke, William Cromer, and Cutbert Vaughan, and others", veterans of the Wyatt rebellion who, although pardoned, had undergone sentence of death and therefore remained technically corrupt in estate. The restitution was effected on 10 March.[19] It is possible that Thomas had done the government some extraordinary service by this time. Bishop de Quadra of Avila, the Spanish ambassador who had succeeded Feria, was by 1562 so deeply involved in subversion that Cecil was seeking means of expelling him from England; the ambassador's confidential secretary turned traitor in June and gave promise of asssisting the government to compile sufficient evidence against his master to warrant a demand to Philip for de Quadra's recall. De Quadra, however, learning of his servant's treachery, forced Cecil to move more quickly than he had wished to do. Thus, on 6 June, the bishop

wrote to the king:

> They presently took a courier whom I had sent to the duchess of Parma, and who they thought was Gamboa, one of your Majesty's couriers here. They thought he carried letters of mine for your Majesty and verbal messages which they could get from him by torture. Those who took this courier were two brothers and other servants of Lord Cobham, who were ordered to undertake it much against their will.[20]

One must not trouble oneself here about de Quadra's opinion that the Brookes were averse to working against Spain: his words reflect an attitude which the family of Lord Cobham contrived to inculcate into the minds of Philip's representatives at the same time as they served Elizabeth against him, an attitude which will receive full study later. The important thing is that two of the Brookes, one of whom was most probably the swashbuckling Thomas, disguised themselves as the usual denizens of Gadshill and relieved the ambassador's courier of information which Cecil needed in order to denounce de Quadra to his master. This service appears to have been the last which Thomas Brooke performed for the government; restored in blood in 1563, he returned within a year to his old life, so that, by 1565, Lord Cobham had disowned him.

The baron's other brothers never gave him cause to treat them as he was forced to treat the elder Thomas; except for Henry, they pursued inconspicuous careers. The only disreputable affair of their recorded lives was the waylaying of the Spanish courier in 1562; assuming that Thomas was one of the actors in that daring undertaking, the other must have been one of the lesser known Brookes. John, the fourth of the brothers to reach manhood, may be envisaged as a rather stolid type. He long served the queen in the army abroad and at sea, but in England he seems always to have lived quietly as a Kentish squire, married at about the time of his parents' deaths to a widow considerably older than himself. Although he sat twice in Parliament, John seems to have been quite uninterested in the affairs of the Court and to have avoided them.[21] The younger Thomas, who was in his twentieth year when his father died, appeared at the old lord's funeral and, with Edmund, his junior by a year and a half, at that of his sister-in-law in 1559; nothing more is heard of Edmund, but an attempt appears to have been made in 1571 to get Thomas an appointment as Captain of Sandgate Castle in Kent.[22] Edward, the youngest son, went up to Cambridge after his brother had

become the head of their family, married obscurely, and, as late as 17 August 1579, had to be found a place in the queen's forces which would befit one "of his house and experience ... in former services".[23]

The one unmarried sister who was left to Lord Cobham's care in 1558 was the fourteen-year-old Catherine, who within three years of her parents' deaths was married to a Suffolk gentleman, John, the son and heir of George Jerningham of Somerleyton, near Great Yarmouth. The match was not what one would have expected for the daughter of George Lord Cobham: Jerningham, as well as being untitled, was a cousin of the great Marian officer, Sir Henry Jerningham, and thus brought into the Brooke family circle connections which were of little value socially and which were actually disadvantageous from a religious point of view. About the time of Catherine Brooke's marriage, it was reported to Cecil that among the recusants in Suffolk were Henry Jerningham and his wife, who

> 'come neither to church nor communion there; his child was baptized by the Lady Bedingfield's priest, Mr. John Baker, steward of his house, cometh not to church. Durham, his schoolmaster, persuaded the old Lady Jerningham, that for receiving the communion she had damned herself.'[24]

No such report was ever made of the household at Somerleyton, but even so, as the wife of John Jerningham and the mother of his children (one of whom eventually married one of the suspect Bedingfields), Catherine Brooke appears to have had nothing to do with the Court in which her brothers and sister moved.[25]

The social position of Elizabeth Marchioness of Northampton was far different from that of Catherine Jerningham, and in considering where she was placed early in Elizabeth's reign one leaves the private world of the Brookes to enter the wider realm of state affairs. "Young folks, heretics and traitors" was the phrase which the Spanish ambassador used to describe those to whom the government had been entrusted by December 1558. "The Queen," said Feria,

> does not favour a single man whom Her Majesty, who is now in heaven, would have received and will take no one into her service who served her sister when she was Lady Mary.... The old people and the Catholics are dissatisfied, but dare not open their lips. She [Elizabeth] seems to me incomparably more feared than her sister and gives her orders and has her way as absolutely as her father did.

Cited chief among the favourites of the new queen (Cecil always apart) was the Marquess of Northampton: "he had been a great traitor to her sister, and he

who was most prominent in this way is now best thought of."[26] The estimation in which Cobham's brother-in-law was held was shown by the dispatch with which the queen restored him to his old dignity. On 25 December 1558 the marquess was, "by the Queenes Majesties commaundement declared by Mr. Secretary, sworne one of hir Hieghnes Pryvey Counsell", taking his seat the next day,[27] and on 13 January he was formally restored to his marquessate (his other titles were allowed to lapse), with the precedence of the original Henrican creation so that he should take place as premier marquess before the Edwardian Lord Winchester. To maintain himself Northampton was given a list of manors, located throughout a wide area from Northumberland to Essex, from which to choose an estate worth £ 500 a year.[28] Early in the spring he was appointed Lord High Steward of England for the trial of Lord Wentworth,[29] and on 24 April was re-elected a Knight of the Garter, later serving twice as lieutenant to the queen in her capacity as Sovereign of the Order.[30] Nor were the honours conferred upon Northampton simply those public ones which could compensate him for the treatment which he had received under Mary. To the resolution of the religious problem more attention was given by the queen and Cecil than to any other, and when a committee was appointed to work in secret to prepare legislation with which to present Parliament, the marquess was one of the few laymen who was kept informed of the progress made by that significant body. As William Camden says,

> The care of correcting the Liturgy, which under King Edward the Sixth was set forth in the vulgar Tongue, was committed to Parker, Bill, May, Coxe, Grindall, Whitehead, and Pilkinton, learned and moderate Divines, and to Sir Thomas Smith, Knight, a most learned Gentleman; the matter being imparted to no man but the Marquess of Northampton, the Earl of Bedford, John Grey of Pyrgo [the executed Suffolk's surviving brother], and Cecyl.[31]

It may seem, perhaps, that rather more than is strictly permissible in a study of the Brookes has been said here about William Parr. Yet one must often read between the lines when one studies the accounts of his career, for it is almost indisputable that Northampton's signal eminence in the queen's circle was not entirely due to his own abilities. Behind him was always his wife, whose influence with their mistress must have accounted for much of the favour shown him.

Elizabeth Brooke, Northampton's love for whom had resulted in the sensa-

tionally uncanonical marriage of 1548, was immediately reinstated at Court upon the accession of Elizabeth, and rapidly became the foremost of the queen's women favourites. How much she had to do with her husband's advancement is suggested by the fact that when, within a year after her death, Northampton was indiscreet enough to insult her memory by marrying yet again in the lifetime of Anne Bourchier, the queen turned on him and forcibly reminded him that it had been only her royal consideration for the feelings of his late wife that had allowed him to forget how precarious was his position of honour. "She said," reported the Spanish ambassador on 4 November 1566, "that Northampton was of no account, and he had better talk about the arguments used to enable him to get married again, when he had a wife living, instead of mincing words with her."[32] If, however, the queen held a low opinion of the marquess while Elizabeth Brooke lived, she never expressed it; he was, according to Camden, "a man very well versed in the more delightfull sort of Studies, as Musick, Love-toys, and other Courtly Dalliances,"[33] and his personal qualities, so long as he was matched with a wife in whose private company Elizabeth found pleasure, assured him of public honour.

The Northamptons must have had great charm. Their steward's account books for a six-month period in 1553 survive to provide one with some idea of how they lived, and reveal tastes which there is no reason to suppose they did not as much indulge under Elizabeth as under Edward VI.[34] They both enjoyed gaming: there are entries of sums ranging from £ 5 to £ 20 for "my Lordes losse at the tẽnes" and "at premero", and from £ 2 to £ 3 for "my ladie to playe at gleke w^{t} my lorde deputy of Irelande" or at other games of "Cardes w^{t} my Lorde Robert Dudley & my Lorde Deputie". Corroborative of Camden's statement that the marquess loved music is the entry: "To Bytton the xjth of marche by my Lordes comaundement for a payer of Regalles w^{t} virgenalles & all together ten poundes w^{t} a rewarde to his men for setteng them vp Ten Shillinges". Both Northampton and his wife took an interest in the performing arts: their steward paid "To my Lorde westmerlandes syngeng men the xth of marche by my lordes Comaundment -- xx^{s}", "To one that spake in dyvers voyses the xxiiijth of Aprell by my lordes Comaundement -- xij^{s} iiij^{d}", "To my Lord Admyralles Musitions the iij^{o} of

May -- xx^{s}", and, indicative of Northampton's pleasure in a sport rather more raw than anything which Camden mentions, "To Allen & Walles the xijth of marche by my Lordes comaundement for baiteng bulles & beares fortie shillinges". The marquess also maintained his own acting company, which no doubt entertained the play-loving queen on occasion. His steward gave money "To my Lordes players the xth of februarie [1552/3] by my Ladies comaundement by wey of rewarde for their paynes in christmẽ": in recorded existence from 1551 to 1553, the troupe reappeared at Dover and at Canterbury as "ye mqwes off northamts players" in February 1560.[35]

In literature too the Northamptons were interested. When Thomas Hoby, after having been at Cambridge with the marchioness's brothers, undertook to translate Castiglione's Book of the Courtier, the third section of it he "Englisshed at the request of the Ladye Marquesse of Northampton, in anno 1551".[36] To the marquess seveal works were dedicated, mainly those of a religious nature: as the publisher John Harrington said, in dedicating to him in 1547 Sir Thomas Wyatt's Certayne psalmes chosen out of the psalter of Dauid, "I thought that I could not find a more worthy patron for such a mãs worke then your Lordship, whõ I haue allways knowen to be of so godlye a zeale, to thee furtheraunce of gods holy & a secret [? cf. O.E.D. 'i-sacred'] gospel."[37] One of the works offered to Northampton, however, while moral enough, is not so much a polemical tract as it is an anticipative rebuff to the work which the marchioness favoured, that of the Courtier. It has already been related how the marquess had learned to his chagrin that his rank was not enough to protect him from the anger with which the Privy Council received the news of his second marriage. An interesting sidelight on the affair of 1548 is provided by a glimpse of Northampton at that time; it shows him poring over a French work which expressed what must have been his own temporary feelings about the vanity of the courtier's life. As Sir Francis Bryan, one of his father's old protégés, reminded the marquess in August of that humiliating year:

> It is not lõg agone (my verye synguler good lord) that I foũd you loking in a lytell boke called in the Frenche language Mesprise de la court, et lalouãge de la vie rustique, whiche is to saye in Englishe, the Dispraise of the Courte, & the laude of the rustical life. And when I demaũded of you what boke it was, after your accustomed

> gentlenes, you were cõtented that I should for y^{e} tyme haue it, and loke on it, and I so doyng: after that I had in part ouersene it, I do ensure you I toke great pleasure therin, and not without good reason, forasmuche as the matter was not onely pleasaunt and fruitfull, but also full in euery where of olde auncient stories and wyse saiynges of the noble and notable Philosophers & clerkes. And at our nexte metyng together, partly at your request I promised to turne thesame out of Frenche into our maternall tong, whiche you right wel accepted. And so at conuenient laysure (as ye may see) I haue finished the same, praiyng your good lordship to take my pore labor in gre [cf. French 'gré'], y^{t} not only in suche a trifle as this is, but in any thyng els that I may do you seruice and pleasure in, ye shal fynde me as moost bounden, euer prest and redy aswel for the great goodnes shewed vnto me by your moost wise father duryng his dayes whom I toke as a speciall patron: But further hauyng respecte to your most noble sister, my most good and gracious lady the Quene, I thynke me fortunate to employ my poore engyn [cf. Latin 'ingenium'] to that y^{t} to her highnes or to your good lordship should seme either acceptable or agreable. This litle boke then, lette it come into light vnder your proteccion.[38]

Thus long established in the cultural life of London, higher socially than anyone but the self-made nonentity the Duchess of Suffolk and the young widower Duke of Norfolk, the Northamptons gave to Elizabeth's Court a Protestant yet sophisticated character at the very top of the aristocratic world; and the childless marchioness, aged thirty-two when the new reign began, a good deal younger than her husband and the queen's elder by only seven years, soon came to enjoy a position at Elizabeth's side which was almost that of a friend. Something of the informality which existed between the queen and her first lady is revealed in a letter which the dashing Spanish ambassador, Guzman de Silva, wrote to his king on 23 September 1564, when the marchioness was ill. "On the 15th instant," the Spaniard reported,

> I sent to ask after the Marchioness' indisposition, and to ask if I could visit her that afternoon. She sent to say that she should be delighted, and I went by water to Westminster, where she lives, and there [found] the Queen, who had gone over from St. James' to dine with her almost alone, and was there when I had sent word, as I afterwards found out. They played me this trick between them and kept the secret until I was in the Queen's presence, and then laughed greatly at it. I was there almost all [sic: till] night, the Marchioness on her couch and the Queen near her. What passed were mostly tales told by the Queen and ordinary conversation, into which she was constantly slipping some slight allusions to marriage. I told her she was wrong to keep the world in suspense and ought to decide. She laughed and said she had something to say to me about our business, and on her return at nightfall to St. James' through the park she went on foot, although she had a carriage waiting, and took me part of the way with her.[39]

On terms such as these with the queen, and surrounded by old companions like her card-playing associates of five years before, men such as Robert Dudley

and Sir James Croft who had suffered indignity with her in the intervening years of Mary, Elizabeth Brooke was treated with the utmost deference by the entire Court. When, to honour an ambassador designate, the queen treated the diplomat's child to godparents of note, Elizabeth coupled Lady Northampton and Lord Robert Dudley with a visiting prince from Europe;[40] when a lady-in-waiting lacked means to obey the queen's command that she should go with the Court on its annual progress, it was to "the Lady Marquis to stay her going" that an appeal was made.[41]

Yet one must doubt whether the personality of Elizabeth Brooke was quite so sunny, whether her life was quite so devoted to the pursuit of pleasure in the trivial, as the glimpses which one gets of her rather suggest. Her features survive in a medallion struck in 1562 and preserved in the British Museum;[42] in profile they seem to be at once strong and nicely defined, serene yet coldly regal. Nothing in the face dissuades one from the opinion that hers was a character of some depth and forcefulness. It was a character which foreign ambassadors in England thought might be used to political advantage. At the beginning of 1559, when the Bishop of Avila informed King Philip that William Lord Cobham had best be offered a secret pension, he also intimated that the baron's sister was worth cultivating: the marchioness, he observed, "who is in high favour with the Queen, has served His Majesty when opportunity has occurred."[43] Two years later, when it was rumoured that the queen was ill, "becoming dropsical ... extremely thin and the colour of a corpse", it was to the marchioness that foreign envoys went for definite news, she being "in a better position to judge than anyone else".[44] At the same time the Spanish were watching her suspiciously: she was "very intimate with the Swedish ambassador", the bishop reported, at a time when the queen's match with King Eric XIV was being broached, and had "received valuable presents from him".[45] Yet, if the marchioness took upon herself more authority to deal in political matters than was properly hers, she seems to have done so with the knowledge of the queen: "Sola tuta fides" was, from the evidence of the 1562 medallion, her motto: and if Guzman de Silva thought to gain useful information from her he was probably always thwarted as deftly as on the occasion when he found the queen herself present at what he had expected to be a tête-à-tête. Certainly Elizabeth never showed distrust of her intimate. How impor-

tant the marchioness was to her mistress is reflected in the agitated letters which her fellow courtiers wrote late in 1562 when Lady Northampton fell ill at Hampton Court. At first "gyuen over by the physycones, having a contynuall burnĩg fever, and y^{e} Jawndyce wthall," the marchioness was in danger of her life throughout the late summer. "Burcot the duchman at a pinch is lyke to do some good, if he may be suffred," thought Secretary Somers, and a month later the doctor, having been given a chance to try his skill, was indeed saying that he had pulled the patient through. Lady Throckmorton, however, in whose care the queen left the sick woman when the Court left for Hampton Court in September, had her doubts about the cure. "ffor," wrote the nurse concernedly to her husband in Paris, "she is yet verray fowle of the Jawndise & her legges swelle verray muche. But I truste in god that it will amend hereafter, as it hath begoonne."[46] Of the letters written from Court during the anxious weeks of the favourite's illness, perhaps that of Secretary Cecil to Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, dated 29 August, is at once the most brief and the most eloquent, coming as it does from the man who best appreciated how deeply her death would affect their sovereign:

> my lady Marquess is in grete daũger vppõ a Jaundish and a cõtynuall fever. Physicions grow from hope towardes dispayre. She is presently in delirio. Almighty God comefort hir, and pmitt vs to ẽioye hir for I thynk none shall be more grevoosly lost of a subject in this Court.[47]

The marchioness did not die of the attack of jaundice. It must have been with great relief that the members of her family, as well as the queen, learnedaat last of her recovery. Nor must this relief have been wholly disinterested. To illustrate how valuable Elizabeth Brooke was to her brothers, and also to complete the picture of their family by introducing in some detail into it the young man who has been ignored until now, one may discuss how Henry Cobham received from his sister the assistance which led eventually to his establishment as Lord Cobham's most substantial brother in the circles of Elizabethan society and government.[48]

Although evidence of it is lacking, there can be little doubt that Henry entered the queen's service and was rewarded with a place among the Gentlemen Pensioners largely through the good offices of the marchioness.[49] As early

as May 1559 he was in attendance at Court, being sent from there into Kent with letters from the queen and Cecil for his brother.[50] At Christmas 1561 a communication between two principal ambassadors revealed the terms of friendship on which the young man of twenty-four was being accepted in the world of high diplomacy: on 20 December Sir Nicholas Throckmorton wrote from Paris to Sir Thomas Chaloner at Madrid, asking him "to give his hearty commendations to Mr. Henry Cobham, and to assure him and the 'Lady Marquis,' his sister, that he trusts to satisfy their expectations before New Year's Day, if there be any truth in the French artizans".[51] Chaloner, whom the Brookes had known at the Court of Edward VI and in one of whose dramatic dialogues Henry's brothers had appeared,[52] had just taken up his post in Spain at this time, and had made Henry his companion there. From Madrid on 15 January 1561/2 the ambassador wrote to Throckmorton that "Cobham kisses his hand for the good news of the forwardness of his sister's New Year's gift," and on 28 February an Englishman in Bilbao informed Sir William Cecil of the delay in forwarding to Chaloner and his companion their trunks, which were held up by the searchers of the Inquisition.[53] It was while Henry Cobham stayed with the ambassador in Madrid that Chaloner wrote to the Marchioness of Northampton one of the most delightful letters which one can find among the State Papers of the reign of Elizabeth. Recently left a childless widower, stranded in Spain and worried lest the queen should leave him there until he was past the age to marry again and beget an heir, the forty-one-year-old diplomat was concerned about his estate. As he said,

> Having no child to inherit what God has sent him, it were now time for him to wed, his next brother's children not being what either their father or himself think much of.[54]

For the benefit of the marchioness, who was both his friend and a person whose influence with the queen might well get for him his recall, Chaloner displayed his powers of poetic fancy and pointed allegory in a deft treatise on his predicament, dated from the English embassy in Madrid on 26 June 1562.

> I do confesse my self Madame muche blame wourthie for that of all this while I haue written nothing vnto you. Nowe when I wourst may, being sicke of an Ague Terciane, I shall pray youre Ladiship to attẽpte theis rude Lynes in good pte. Cõsidering howe the laste ires that I received from my brother Fraunces Chaloner declaring amongst other matters what honorable demonstracion it pleased yor Ladiship to make of yor good opinion of me, hathe moued me of duety

to yeld yo^{u} my boũden thankes for the same. I do ꝑceive that my said brother apon alitle scope that I gave him to ꝑfele thenclynacion of a certayne Gentilwoman now I here saye a lady, in a certaine case not vnknowen to you, and therefore not repeted here, went further as a ꝑponent then either needed or I ment vntil I saw some more likelyhode of Speding. I am offended withe my brother for the rashe handlyng of it vnlesse ꝑchaunce there is no cawse for me to thincke. But y^{e} revealing of it came to passe as comenly al Secrets do that fall into womens custodye namely of that qualitie, where in counseil from one to an other of the Counseilleresses at last some oon or other tells tales owte of the Counseil chambre wiche always apere more putt so. So I dowbte not but my sute hathe been well skanned. And sorye I am that here in this Treeles Cuntrey I can gett no green wyllow to make me a garland of. But in stede thereof In a dreme the xijth of Maye last as yo^{r} brother M^{r} henry Cobbham at his retourne canne tell yo^{u} for I told it him and wrote it in a boke ymmediatly, I did almost divine before the Ires came what the event shuld be. for me thought I sawe the ꝑtye going from the privey Chamber towardes the Chapell very fayre trymmed, withe a grete nomber of ladies following her. And that I also was very trymme appareled but all in Tawnye, and that S^{r} Jacques granado and oon or two more of my frendes now deade told me that they nev^{r} sawe garmentes bett^{r} become me, whereat I reioysed and thought no more of her that went to churche. This dreame I write for that it was so notable, and write it to yo^{u} Madame to thend ye may See how well my tawnye garmentes pleased me. And now to tell yo^{u} my fantasye in all suche wowing cases ꝑchaunce I have more often refused, then been refused and being refused I count my haalfpeny nev^{r} the worse Silver -- for womens likinges as mens also ar but private to them selfes where xx^{tie} to oon ꝑchaunce wold not chosse the like. So god spede the plowghe and send the likers lyking vij yeres hence. Yo^{r} broth^{r} I thincke will make homewardes abowte thend of Septemb^{r} nexte. His company hathe been to me a grette good passing of my tyme. I wold it wold please the Queens Ma^{tie} to sett some churche man to this office so as I were at home to wowe for my self ere ever my berd waxe graye for then fayre women that are yonge will bid haue awaye the old man, as belike the last I sued to did thincke of me thoughe there was no cawse but that I also might thincke she was no gyrle. But this Ire is to longe all of tryfles. So good Madame withe my humblest comendacions to yo^{r} Ladiship and by yo^{u} to my very good L. my L. m^{r}ques my L. Cobbhame and my Lady his wief, I wishe vnto yowe in honou^{r} all good fortune and well to fare from Madrid.[55]

The form and style of the marchioness's reply contrast eloquently with those of Chaloner's letter to her: in a half-printed, childish scrawl, of the ungainliness of which its author was fully aware, the great lady wrote to him on 7 August, rehearsing how she did

vnderstand by my brother how much he is be holldyng to you, ther for I can not but as some show and part of thankfullnes send you my thankes by thes lynes of my vnlegebell hand, as one that wyshyth I coulld make sume requytans for the great fryndshyp my good brother harry hathe founde in you, whych beynge showyd in a strãge land ys more worthy thankes, than in a nother plase, and as I do except that done to my brother, as done to my selfe, so shall I requyt, and be as thankfull for yt, as your doynges merrityth. thys requestyng you to bear wth the vnlegebyll lynes wrytteng yn hast by caus the[y] ar wrytten by your assured frynd E. Northãpton.[56]

Gallantly the ambassador responded: "so curteys a letter from suche a Ladyes hande, which for remembrance and exemple of how muche I am bownden to the same I will kepe amongst my deerest papers:" but even Chaloner had to back down from what he had originally meant to promise, for the phrase "the same I will kepe and rede as oft" he crossed out before he posted his reply.[57] Lord Cobham also wrote to thank the ambassador for his kindness to his brother, and Chaloner answered the baron as graciously as he had the marchioness, continuing cryptically the allegory of his dream (he said that he asked Henry, "notwithstanding he returned clad in green, to wear a garland of green willow about his hat, and another about his arm" for Chaloner, but that the young man had said that he could not "sigh for what he never had," no more than Chaloner could), while also reminding Cobham of how, by his "service abroad", he had "two or three times lost his marriage adventures at home, as it has of late fallen forth by his Lordship's country-woman [i.e., of Kent], now the mother of so many children the first day."[58]

Thus assured of the protection and assistance of an important minister by his brother and sister's care of him, as well as by his own worth, Henry Cobham gained his first knowledge of the world of diplomacy in which he was later to rise. While in Madrid, Cobham kept up his old friendships in other places: Sir Nicholas Throckmorton enclosed messages for him in his letters to Chaloner; the English agent at Bilbao and his wife, the Cuertons, sent the ambassador gifts of cheese which were to be shared with his guest, and invited Cobham to Bilbao "for eight days, to go hunting, to refresh him among the green trees"; Sir William Cecil received from the young man "a cuero of St. Martin's wine", which Chaloner supposed would "be too strong for his drinking".[59] (Perhaps the wine was new, being only of the previous November's vintage when Cobham sent it to England in September.) When Cobham finally left Chaloner's house in October 1562, bearing an elegy which the ambassador had written for Cecil "touching the tumults in France",[60] there was some suggestion that the two men had lived together too long. By the time he reached Bilbao after a cold and wet journey in the course of which he had eaten "carbonadoed meat" in the company of a friar and gone "to 'couch' in a place where they were all lodged, mulus, arator, asinus, frater, sus, wench, and, besides a rablement of lice, a company of

gendarmery of cinches", Cobham gave bitter expression to all of his complaints against Chaloner's parsimoniousness and conceit. Assuring the ambassador "that though he thinks well of himself, others do not think the same," the ungrateful visitor smugly suggested that Chaloner should not "let his anger overcome him after reading this letter, but ... have patience and examine himself. He ... [would] find the writer's good will truer than the dissimulation of some."[61] After relaxing for a week with the Cuertons, however, Cobham wrote in a better mood to his former host, enclosing "a marvellous prognostication in Spanish, and, as he had it in secret," asked that Chaloner would so use it. "A friar made it and put it forth in the name of Nostradamus."[63] Chaloner responded in kind, assuring Cobham that he had taken his criticism as "such frankness as friends ought to use towards each other", and making a comment which suggests that the ambassador had not urged his guest to leave for home because he was weary of his company, but because he thought that it was time Cobham established himself in England in a profitable marriage, while his influential friends were still able to help him. (Perhaps the injunction to Cobham to wear green willow on his friend's behalf, alluded to in Chaloner's earlier letter to Lord Cobham, had been meant to remind the young man of the consequences of waiting too long to woo.) The Marchioness of Northampton was then just recovering from the attack of jaundice, while the queen herself had almost died of smallpox. Fortune was fickle: as Chaloner pointed out,

> the late narow skape of my lady yo^{r} Suster and in the wak therof the Quens Maties passed danger whose lief is the Raye of all our strẽthes [strengths], may now at last enduce yo^{w} to credit an old beaten friend who counsalled yo^{w} to plye the market whiles it lasted. But thus muche for this sufficeth: I hertely praye yo^{w} to make my duest comendacõns to my lord and lady Marquesse and to my lord and lady Cobham and to all the rest of your brethren.[63]

Thus reconciled with his most useful friend abroad, Henry Cobham returned home, although not to marry for a decade. He did not reach Court until the first week of January 1562/3 (his ship "fell upon a leak, but a Portingale ship took them in and carried them to Waterford"), and, having "escaped very dangerously the sea,"[64] was there reunited with all those relatives whose influence gave him his bartering power in the early Elizabethan world. Chaloner was later to write privately to his brother Francis, asking "what esteem he can make of Henry

Cobham's friendship",[65] but no such doubts were expressed openly. Cobham had arrived, and henceforth it was as much to Chaloner's advantage to oblige him for his own sake as once it had been to entertain him because of what the Brooke family could do in return. One imagines that the ambassador, when finally he got his recall, brought to Cobham the "Spanish book or two" which the rising young diplomat requested of him.[66]

The knowledge that she had contributed to her brother 'Harry's' advancement must have been one of the last consolations that Elizabeth Brooke was to have. For, before Chaloner could return to England and find there that his former pupil in diplomacy was already on the way to becoming his peer, the marchioness was dead. She had died of cancer, and the last year of her life was spent submitting to the doctors who tried vainly to save her.

The grave nature of Lady Northampton's condition became publicly known in April 1564, when, in Francis Thynne's words, she went "into Flanders, there to seeke remedie for an infirmitie wherewth the saidmarchionesse was greeuouslie troubled."[67] A letter which the queen wrote from Windsor on 4 April to the Spanish regent in the Netherlands, the Duchess of Parma, heralded the sick woman's coming: Elizabeth told the regent that Lady Northampton had the royal licence to travel "by reason of a disease in one of her breasts, which she thinks can be cured only in the Low Countries:" she asked therefore that the marchioness be shown every courtesy by the Flemish officials.[68]

With the marchioness, "for the tender loue that he bare vnto his sister", went Lord Cobham, accompanied by his second wife.[69] On 11 April Secretary Cecil noted what was apparently their departure for the Continent in his diary ("The Lady Marchioness of Northampton in Flanders"),[70] and five days later Cobham sent to him the news from Newport of their safe arrival there. "Amoonge the noomber of my good fryndes, good master Secretarye," the baron's letter began,

> I maye note [not] forget yow to whoom allwayes I am and haue byne moche boonde too, and therfore thowght yt good, to let yow know of my Ladye marquys estate and myne syns our latte passaygd. Surelye my Ladye marquys was littell or nothynge trubled, my wyfe muche more and I moste of all, but thaynkes be gewene to god whey [we] ar note batteryd by that distãs and macke hast to andP [Antwerp].[71]

Cecil must have been amused by his friend's admission of enduring the voyage

less equably
than had the ladies. The next letter from Cobham which survives, however, contains nothing for laughter. The baron was still concerned about his own health when he wrote it on 22 April, and, like a good minister of the Crown, conscientiously reported to the Secretary the commendable gestures of the English merchants in Antwerp who had honoured his sister with a formal reception; but it was the marchioness's condition which was his chief preoccupation. "Whey [we] aryved heare oõ Wensdaye Laste," Cobham wrote,

> wher by the waye the deputye of our natyoõ [merchant colony] dyde myet my Ladye marquys, accõpanyd w^t thoes ffew marchayntes that wer heare. Ther cam also a nomber of Italianes of owr acquaynttaynces w^t dyvers others, to brynge vs Into the toone. Seynces owr beyng heare my Ladye marquys has hade the phecytyaines and Surgeynes w^t herre of thys toone, as yet they agre not of the curyng of her breste. W^tyn thyes too dayes, they wyll delyver vp ther opinioones In wrytng, Et modũ curandi. I nowe entende the cure of my oolde soore, I meane my Lame arme, wherof what successe I shayll have I knowe not as yet. ... My Lady marquys and ry wyfe w^t my sealfe wyse [wish] yow all felycitye w^t healthe and thys I byde yow fare well. ffrõ Antwherpe the 22 of Apryll.[72]

On 4 May Richard Clough, who had been so impressed by Lord Cobham when he had met the baron during his embassy to Philip II late in 1558, wrote to Sir Thomas Chaloner of the hopelessness of the marchioness's condition: she was then still in Antwerp, according to Clough, and "in so sad a case that he doubts of her life".[73] It is not recorded whether the Flemish doctors discovered what it was that was wrong with Lady Northampton, but obviously they found no effective modum curandi, and she returned "from those parts vncured".[74]

When the Spanish ambassador paid his call on her in September 1564 and found the queen spending the afternoon with her, the marchioness was dying. It had become urgent that her affairs be tidied up. Even while she was still in Flanders the Privy Council had ordered the Earl of Cumberland

> to conforme him self to come to an ende with the Lady Marquess of Northampton for a mater of lande long hanging in controversye betwixt ther.[75]

In the autumn the famous John Dee took the opportunity of applying to her for a reward for what he described as his "great, faithfull, and carefull attendance about the Lady Marquess of Northampton (A. 1564) both beyond the seas, on the seas, and here in England, ... performed with her Majesties good will and well liking of;" on 8 December the queen gave Dee, "at the suite of the said Lady

Marquiss, ... for some recompence, the deanery of Gloucester".[76]

By January 1565 the Court was expecting at any time to be told of the death of the great favourite, but Lady Northampton lingered on. On the night of 16 January some sort of trouble ("a lewde maner of usage") broke out in the sick woman's chamber at Whitehall, "to the grete disturbance of the said Marchiones." A man called Griffith was arrested and sent to the porter's lodge at the palace, and the next day the Council ordered his removal to the Marshalsea. At the same time Griffith's master, a physician who seems to have been attending the invalid, was "required to put in writenge againste the next Counsell day the whole matter and all the circumstances thereof, in such sorte as he opened the same this day before the Lordes". Five days later it was

> orderid by the Lordes that Doctour Julio shuld, both for himself and his servant remayning in the Marshalsye, be a sutour to the Ladye Marchiones of Northampton, aswell for his owne purgacion, as also for his servantes delyverye, and what her Ladyshipp shall thinke convenient to be donne herein the Lordes will upon thunderstanding thereof take such furder order as shalbe mete.

There is no record of the judgement which the marchioness gave: one cannot discover what was done to Griffith when at last, on 27 January, he was brought before her: but since no further mention is made of the affair in the Council registers, one may assume that she showed herself forgiving and that no official action was taken against the man.[77]

The death of Elizabeth Brooke finally resolved the tension under which the Court was functioning. It occurred "on Monday morning about five of the clock, the 2nd of Aprell, 1565 ... at her lodgings within the Court at the Whyt Hall at Westminster". The queen honoured her in death as she had in life: not because of her birth, but because she had been Elizabeth's friend, the marchioness was buried at St. Paul's as "the Right Noble Pryncesse Elizabeth wife to Willm̃ Parre M^r^quys of Northampton, daughter to George Broke Knight of the Garter Lorde Cobhm̃".[78]

The funerals of such a personage as the marchioness was cost a great deal, and the dead woman left little to pay for hers. There were, besides, other pressing accounts to settle by the time she died. As early as 19 March her jewels were being sold at Antwerp; made up principally of gold, rubies,

diamonds, pearls and agates, they were bought by "m^{r} Phillippo Cattanio gẽt of genue [Genoa]" for £ 380, Benedict Spinola employing his brother to conduct the transaction.[79] The amount which the marchioness's private treasure thus realized was not enough to meet the needs of her executors. Three days before her death there had been drawn up "An estimat and rate made furth for thorder of the buriall of the Lady Marques"; this paper showed that at least two baronesses, two barons or knights, three knights' ladies and a bishop or a deanwould have to attend the deceased to her grave, and that to provide the trappings appropriate to such an occasion and to such participants would cost £ 490.6.0.[80] At the same time as the estimates for the funeral were made, "My Ladies Dettes" were listed. These were found to amount to £ 1879.6.8, and the total was rising steadily: £ 37.5.4. was already owing in wages to the marchioness's servants, and the £ 118.6.0 which was the bill of "m^{r} Mychaell the Surgion" was mounting by 15s. daily. This doctor of medicine was Michael ab Othen, an Hungarian visitor to England to whom the Emperor Maximilian, at the request of the queen, had given permission to prolong his stay in the country so long as the marchioness needed him.[81] The services of such a man were expensive; a note in the list of debts records the fact that "as longe as michill the surgion taryeth here he demandeth thre crownes the day."[82] As soon as Lady Northampton died her brother seems to have stepped into this ruinous situation and imposed order. Spinola on 3 May paid £ 100 to "the phizizion"; he also paid for many of the items required for the performance of the funerals, such as "one pouncion [puncheon] of wine of orlyaince [Orleans] dd [delivered] to my lo. at the blak ffreers for the buriall of my lady marques" and "viij smale diamondes to furnishe my lady Cobhams Jewell at viij^{s} the pece". There also were "ij tonne of frenche wine sent in to kent for my lo. vse -- xvij^{li}". Of the £ 380 Spinola was left at last with only £ 17.6.0 to turn over to the baron. Cobham presumably provided what was wanting to bury his sister and satisfy her creditors.

The marchioness had no doubt foreseen that it would be her brother and not her improvident husband who would see to her affairs when she died. On 31 March, when the other memoranda which provided for what would happen after her death

were drawn up, a list of bequests was made, presumably at Lady Northampton's dictation, since the copies of it which survive are expressed in the first person.[83] In the list Northampton was left only his own picture, most probably a miniature, and "the Georgis", perhaps part of the new set of regalia of the Garter which he had had made at the time of his re-election to the order in 1559.[84] Cobham was put down to receive a more curious memento; it was an object described both as "A Jewull wth a Table on the one Syd & fortune on thother syd", and as "A Jeowell wth a Crabbe on thone syde and ffortune on thother syde". Whatever it was, Lady Northampton assumed that the baron would want to claim this legacy, for she made a condition "That yf my brother do inJoye that [which] I haue bequested vnto him that then eche of my women to haue tenne poundes a peece." Apparently Cobham accepted the condition; from the check marks in the margin of the rude testament, it seems that he distributed his sister's effects as she had requested, and therefore probably took his strange piece of jewellery and paid the price in gifts to her attendants as she had prescribed.

Among the bequests which Cobham was to see performed was one which gave to the queen "The Bordry of pearrll and the heart with the marrygolde wth A blacke Jeyme [gem]". Various pearls of especial worth (that "in the pap", that "in the Cloth", that "in the Littil round box") went to the marchioness's sister-in-law, Lady Cobham, and to her great friend Lady Clinton, 'the fair Geraldine' of Surrey's poems. One hundred other pearls were left to Margaret Norris, the queen's dear 'Crow', while the "Reast of the great pearlls" also went to Lady Cobham, who received besides "a Sable wth the hedd & fett of gold",[85] a ring, and "a peace off browne laune". Lady Clinton was further remembered with the return of her own picture, and "a buckel for a gerdell of gold". To her sister, Catherine Jerningham, the marchioness gave "A Jewell w^{t} a diamond & a Ruby"; to her twin nieces, Elizabeth and Frances Brooke, she left ruby rings. Lord Cobham's friend Cecil and his family were not forgotten: "To my Lady Cicill a Barrill [beryl]", "To m^{r} Secretorye a Cloke of gold w^{t} A pearrll on yt", and "To m^{ris} Anne Cicill a Coffer embrothred with perle & Silver". Of the marchioness's younger brothers, George was left "A great Silver bell w^{t} a Cover all gilt" and "harrye A sawcer, a plat Candelsticke of Silver & a pare of Snuffers of Silver gilt":

these were the courtiers of the family whom their sister remembered, the renegade Thomas and the retiring John, the younger Thomas and Edward being forgotten by her. Lady Northampton by her death-bed bequests appears even to have tried to reconcile to her family those of the first Lady Cobham's relatives who had perhaps been estranged from the Brookes since the probable unpleasantness of her brother's marriage with Dorothy Neville. There were two Ladies Stafford at Court in 1565, one the dowager baroness who had been Lady Cobham's aunt, the other the wife of Sir William Stafford and herself Lady Cobham's first cousin. The marchioness left to an unspecified "Lady staff' a gilt dysh w^{t} A Cover", and to the other "lady Staff' A pfumynge panne and all that belongith therto & two Silver dishes": "yf," however, "She Refusse them then my Lady Throgmort' to haue the same." Lady Throckmorton, who had nursed the marchioness through her attack of jaundice three years before, was also to have "A longe Jeassymine", that is, a climbing jasmine. To record all of the individual bequests which Lady Northampton made would take up a great deal of space; it will be enough to note only the more unusual of the other articles which she left to her friends and acquaintances at Court. One, which went to a John Ashley, was "A Jewell w^{t} an aget on the one Syd and Cristall on thother syd wth hys ymage wthin"; another, set aside for the late Queen Jane's sister, Lady Mary Grey, was "A cupp of assaye", for tasting wine, "and a litill Aquavitie Cupp wth a cover"; "a castinge bottill gilt", for sprinkling perfumed waters, was left to a third person. For many years after her death the varied articles from her bedchamber and her jewel box must have reminded the Court of Elizabeth Brooke.

The marchioness "was buried in Paules on the north side of the quier, not farre from John of Gaunt".[86] Although she had no children to keep her memory alive, although her husband remarried within a year of her death, and although the second Lady Northampton eventually became almost as prominent at the Court of the aged Elizabeth as the first had been at the beginning of the queen's reign, 'the lady marquess' was not forgotten. Two epitaphs survive to commemorate her life; they come from widely separated strata of early Elizabethan society, and indicate how far her fame had spread and what respect for her it had inspired. One is in the clear, classic Latin of Dr. Walter Haddon, tutor to the English

Reformation and Master of the Requests to Elizabeth, of whom the queen thought so well that when she was asked whether she respected more his learning or that of the great George Buchanan, she could only equivocate with the adroit "Buchananum omnibus antepono, Haddonum nemini postpono."[87] Such a man wrote, in his In obitum dominae Elisabethae Marchionissae Northamtoniensis, of the dead woman's virtue and fidelity, of her beauty, charm and wit, of a compassion for the poor which rivalled that of her magnanimous mother, and of a devotion to her husband which William Parr can hardly have deserved:

> Elisabetha fuit naturae iure Cobama,
> Coniugis & proprio nomine Parra fuit.
> Forma, pudor, pietas, facundae gratia linguae,
> Ingenium, virtus inuiolata fides,
> Cum grauitate lepos, cum simplicitate venustas,
> Larga manus, pectus nobile, firmus amor,
> Deniq' quicquid habet natura quod addere possit,
> Addere quod possit, gratia quicquid habet,
> Omnia viuentem Parram comitata fuerunt,
> Omnia mors atrox obruit ista simul.
> Obruat ista licet tristi mors saeua sepulchro:
> Attamen illorum fama superstes erit.[88]

The other epitaph is A proper new balad in praise of my Ladie Marques. Whose death is bewailed, To the tune of new lusty gallant.[89] Published in broadsheet and directed at the city wives, this vulgar and charming tribute to a great lady was written some years after Lady Northampton died ("a great while a goe"). The name of the author was printed at the bottom of the sheet: he was William Elderton, later immortalized with Robert Greene in Gabriel Harvey's description of the "two notorious mates, & the very ringleaders of the riming and scribbling crew".[90] Grossly sentimentalizing the nation's loss, virtually travestying the conventions of courtly idealization of women in giving expression to his own mourning, Elderton produced verses which are vastly different from Haddon's. Yet their message is the same.

> Ladies I thinke you maruell that
> I writ no mery report to you,
> And what is the cause I court it not
> So merye as I was wont to dooe,
> Alas I let you vnderstand,
> It is no newes for me to show,
> The fairest flower of my garland
> Was caught from court a great while a goe.

For vnder the roufe of sweete Saint Paull,
There lyeth my Ladie buryed in claye,
Where I make memory for her soule,
With weepinge eyes once euerye daye,
All other sightes I haue forgot,
That euer in court I ioyed to see:
 And that is the cause I court it not,
 So mery as I was wont to be.

And though that shee be dead and gone,
Whose courting need not to be tolde,
And natures mould of fleshe and bone,
Whose lyke now liues not to be holde,
Me thinkes I see her walke in blacke,
In euery corner where I goe:
 To looke if anie bodie do lacke,
 A frend to help them of theyr woe.

Mee thinkes I see her sorowfull teares,
To princelye state approching nye
Mee thinkes I see her tremblinge feares,
Leste anie her suites shulde hit a wrie,
Mee thinkes she shuld be still in place
A pitifull speaker to a Queene,
 Be wailinge every poore mans case,
 As many a time shee hath ben seene.

Me thinkes I see her modeste mood
Her comlie clothig [sic] plainlie clad,
Her fare so sweete her cheere so good,
The courtlie countenance that she had
But chefe of all mee thinkes I see,
Her vertues [virtuous] deutie daie by daie,
 Homblie kneeling one [on] her knee
 As her desire was still to praie.

Mee thinkes I cold from morow to night
Do no thing ells with verie good will,
But spend the time to speake and writte:
The praise of my good ladies [sic] still
Though reason saith now she is dead
Go seeke and sarue as good as shee
 It will not sinke so in my head
 That euer the like in courte will bee.

But sure I am ther liueth yet,
In court a dearer frinde to mee,
Whome I to sarue am so vn fit,
I am sure the like will neuer bee,
For I with all that I can dooe,
Vnworthie most maie seeme to bee
 To vndoo the lachet of her shooe,
 Yet will I come to courte and see.

Then haue a mongste ye once a gaine,
Faint harts faire Ladies neuer win,
I trust ye will consider my payne,
When any good Venison cometh in,[91]
And gentill Ladies I you praie,
If my absentinge breede to blame,
 In my behalfe that ye will saie,
 In court is remedie for the same.

One cannot expect to find a reliable account of the details of Lady Northamp-

ton's conduct in such a poem: the apparel which she bequeathed to her heirs, for instance, gives the lie to the assertion that she went 'plainlie clad'. Nor can one expect it to be a formal, disciplined expression of grief: his exuberance leads the poet to think of present opportunities and of another great lady (perhaps even the queen herself) to whom to pay homage. Yet, for all that, one cannot but ask, with Harvey, the rhetorical question, "Who like Elderton for Ballating: ...?"

Thus the public expressed its sorrow at the death of Elizabeth Brooke. From her family there are no such outcries, yet to them, and especially to her eldest brother, her loss was great.

* * *

Chapter III

It is now necessary to go backward in time and rejoin William Lord Cobham where one left him at the beginning of 1559.

Enough has already been written to suggest how the prominence of his sister the marchioness, and how the significance for a time of at least three of his brothers at Court and in Parliament, had a superficial effect upon Cobham's career at its outset. Whereas, for instance, the baron himself appears to have taken no notable part in the pageantry of the coronation on 15 January 1558/9, he then saw his sister assume her place at the head of the queen's ladies, while George Brooke walked among the sewers in the procession of state and the young Henry Cobham was most probably somewhere else in the royal household. Ten days later George and Thomas Brooke took their seats in the Commons even as Cobham made his first appearance in the upper house.[1] In succeeding months "these men called Cobham" figured often in the dispatches of foreign representatives in London, while Lady Northampton established herself so securely beside the queen that her family came to rely upon her for the assistance which normally they should have sought from her father's successor. Thus, for some seven years, until his sister died and all but one of his brothers seem to have reached the end of their vain quests to find successful careers for themselves at Court, the importance of Lord Cobham as the chief of his house was eclipsed. When eventually he took over his predestined rôle of responsibility for his whole family,

Cobham probably found how useful to him had been that time of comparative freedom from the distraction of attending to the demands of his dependents.

Symbolic of the new life which was his to lead under Elizabeth was the general pardon granted to Cobham on 15 January 1558/9; one of the traditional amnesties granted at the time of coronation, this document erased from judicial memory for "William Broke, knight, Lord Cobham, of London alias of Cobham Hall, co. Kent", all but the most felonious offences of which he might have been guilty under previous sovereigns.[2] No longer of the Opposition, Cobham now thoroughly committed himself to the cause of the government. Lord Paget, his father's old friend and one who had taken a kindly interest in his own youth, was no longer of much real importance. Despite the Spanish ambassador's prediction of 14 November 1558, three days before the queen's accession, that Elizabeth would favour him,[3] and Paget's own later asseveration that "the Queen ... deceased hated me,"[4] the great minister of the three previous reigns was given no office in the new Council. Conyers Read considers that age and failing health led Paget to seek retirement, an opinion somewhat corroborated by the baron's own request to the queen to grant him "a writ of dotage, whereby I shall absent myself from all Parliaments, &c.," if she thought him unfit to continue to speak in the House of Lords.[5] Yet his former eminence still gave him a certain authority, and he continued to advise soundly and vigorously his successors in office upon the problems which his own government under Mary had bequeathed to them.[6] His former colleague, Sir William Petre, had even more influence: retained by Elizabeth as a Councillor, he appears to have substituted for Cecil himself during the Secretary's absences.[7] Although there is no record of Cobham's continuing to associate with Paget, other than the perhaps significant fact that as early as 1561 Paget nominated him Knight of the Garter;[8] and while there is no proof that he was friendly with Petre, beyond his sending to the former Secretary in the summer of 1560 "'a box filled with dried sampere' (samphire)" to relieve the pain of the stone,[9] it is not unlikely that the baron derived some benefit from knowing these two elder statesmen.

There is no such need of assumption in stating that Cobham was an intimate of the man then in power, for it is a matter of historical fact that he and

Sir William Cecil were close friends. As Cecil's son was told many years afterward, when both the Secretary and the baron were dead, Cobham "loved your worthy father above any man in the world"; Cecil, for his part, signed himself to Cobham "Your Lordshipp's assured at your Command, as any Brother you can have".[10] There is no reason to doubt these asseverations of friendship; there are, rather, many reasons for affirming their sincerity. Although he had been George Lord Cobham's associate, Cecil was William's own near contemporary in age, being only seven years his elder. In domestic matters, too, they had similar experiences to share. Both men had married young and each had a child by his girl-wife; within two years of Elizabeth's accession they were both married for a second time, to wives of strong wills and some dominance over their husbands, whom apparently they found infinitely more congenial than they had their first wives, and who gave them reason for great pride by bearing children of promise. Temperamentally Cecil and Cobham were much alike, if the discretion which they showed throughout their public lives, and the interests which they cultivated in common in their leisure hours and in their old age, may be taken as indications of how they felt and thought. In religion their backgrounds were similar, both being Protestant by patrimony and training, and in public service previous to the reign of Elizabeth they had already shown their sympathy with the Reformation. Cecil's political importance had, of course, especially under Edward VI, been much greater than his friend's, but Cobham in some degree inherited the position which his father had enjoyed among the Edwardians, and was treated with respect by George Lord Cobham's colleagues when, as veterans in the Council, they resumed some of their significance under Elizabeth. (It is noteworthy that, in the first nominations of Knights of the Garter to be held under the queen, it was the Earl of Arundel who, twenty-five years before Elizabeth would endorse the proposal, voted for Cobham's election to the stall vacated by the death of the young lord's father.)[11]

There was an undeniably great difference between the two men in birth and estate. Cobham's ancestors, on both the Brooke and de Cobham sides, had already been local magnates of knightly rank in the reign of King John. It was only in 1527, the year of Cobham's birth, that Cecil's grandfather bought the

family's first country seat, and it is this same grandfather beyond whom, for all Cecil's love of heraldry and his attempts to establish for himself a family tree of which he might be proud, one may not go in tracing his ancestry without encountering what is "nothing more than a list of names in pedigrees of doubtful validity".[12] The social gulf between them was, however, almost bridged by the honours which Cecil received from the queen and her predecessors, so that Cobham in no way demeaned himself when, as early as December 1558, he signed himself to Cecil 'your loving friend'.[13] In 1571 Cecil himself became a baron, and as the Elizabethan age lengthened few men could remember a time when Burghley had not governed England. Subtly the position of the Cecils changed, until it was the members of the old nobility who were honoured by inclusion in the 'regnum Cecilianum', and not the Howards and the de Veres, the Brookes and the Bourchiers who had, however graciously, to condescend to the queen's first minister. For Burghley's sons there was none of the need to prove their lineage which their father had once felt: Robert Cecil once spurned a sycophantic offering of "your pedigree out of Wales" with the scornful words, "I desire none of these vain toys, nor to hear of such absurdities."[14] When therefore one finds grouped together in 1596 "the two fathers and the two sons, the lord treasurer and the lord Cobham, Sir Robert Cecil and Henry Brooke",[15] one is struck not so much by the association of the Cecils on terms of equality with the Brookes, as by the inclusion of Cobham and his son in such powerful and exclusive company as that of Burghley and the brilliant heir of his policy and position.

Although the earliest references to the friendship of Sir William Cecil and William Lord Cobham are in no way as explicit as that which may be deduced from the pairing off of them and their sons in 1596, it is certain that the sure ground upon which such solidarity was built was being prepared at the time of Elizabeth's accession. It has been seen how, mere hours after assuming the office of Principal Secretary in 1558, Cecil decided to entrust to Cobham the mission of beguiling Philip II while the queen established her independence of Spain. This employment of the untried young lord argued Cecil's trust in Cobham's ability in public affairs. In private dealings also the Secretary believed in his friend's

acumen. By 24 May 1566 the two men had evidently been engaged for some time in a capitalistic venture together, the details of which emerge from their letter of that date to one John Keyler, an agent whom they were employing in negotiations with King Eric XIV of Sweden. "After our hartie Commendationes," begins the letter;

> Wheras at yo^{r} last departing out of Englande I the Lorde Cobham and I W^{m} Cecil delyuered vnto you the sciens of making of Salte, to be by you opened and Imparted to the King of Sweden both for the good w^{ch} we wish to his Cõtrees and allso vpon certain agreementes to haue bene made betwene his ma^{tie} & you, You shall vnderstande that now of late hauing by o^{r} trauayle and greate expences founde out a more easye waye for making of the saide salte, & to be don w^{t} lesser charges than our first waye did conteyne: we cõtynueing o^{r} former good willes, and mynding according therevnto to haue this o^{r} last waye of making salte to be lykewise opened vnto him, haue bene cõtent to aduertise you of thus muche and to send this bearer vnto you of purpose, to let you vnderstande the wholle manner, and whõ we haue willed to followe you, into Sweden, in case he shuld not ouertake yo^{u} vpon the waye, w^{ch} if he shuld doo, then we wold you shuld send him speedily back agayne vnto vs; for that we shall haue neede of him heere. But in yo^{r} dealing w^{t} the king, We must needes remember you so to proceede in yo^{r} agreement & bargayne w^{t} his Ma^{ty} that as in the fynding of this last easy waye of making salte, we ar burdened w^{t} greater charges than we were before, so that the sõme may be accordingly cõsydered at y^{e} Kinges handes, wherof in any case we must pray you to haue due remembrance, according to yo^{r} trust that we haue reposed in you, not doubting allso the Kinges honorable dealing w^{t} you in this poynt specially cõsideryng y^{e} inestymable comodite y^{t} may herof redoũd to his Ma^{ty} and his dominiõs, hauing great cause to vse so great a quãtite of salt ... in tyme of warres betwixt his states and y^{e} Kyng of Dennmark.[16]

The august and obviously astute promoters of a new commercial method did not waste their time in petty dealings; their objective was to arrange agreeable terms with no less than a sovereign prince, one who (had Elizabeth accepted his eager proposals) might have been their own master. Nothing is recorded of Keyler's success at Stockholm, but Cecil and Cobham persisted in their business ventures, and soon afterward became founder members of one of the first two great companies of professional metallurgists and their backers to be established in England. In the autumn of 1565 the queen had issued patents to certain adventurers who undertook to mine for various commodities in both of her kingdoms. To William Humphrey, assayer at the Mint, and the Saxon-born Christopher Schultz was granted a monopoly of calamine, "and the only Use, Employing and Commodity thereof, for the making and compounding of Latten [brass, or brass-like yellow metal] and all other mixt Metals, to take, have, use, enjoy and employ; and also all kinds and sorts of Battery Wares. cast Work. and Wire of Latten. Iron. Steel and Bat-

tery". (Battery is a term used for vessels made of hammered brass or copper.) Alum and copperas, a sulphate of iron, were granted to Cornelius de Vos, besides "divers Ewers of Metals that were to be found in digging for the said allom and Copperas incidently or consequently, without fraud or guile". Thomas Thurland, Master of the Savoy, and another German, Daniel Hochstetter, or Houghsetter, were commissioned to mine for "all manner of Ewers of Gold, Silver, Copper and Quicksilver", their province being several counties along the west coast, and all Wales. To the recipients of these patents went the right to "grant, convey and assign Parts and Portions of the said Licences, Privilege, Powers, Authorities, Benefits and Immunities". Within three years the success of these several ventures was apparent, and on 28 May 1568 the queen issued a new patent. Reciting the former letters, and noting how Humphrey and the other patentees had brought "into this our Realm of England, workmasters of great Cunning, Perfectness, Knowledge and Experience in all kinds of Mineral Works, and of Waterworks for the draining of all manner of Mines", the patent related that the metallurgists had sold speculative shares to various principal men of the kingdom. Among these shareholders were Lord Cobham, Sir William Cecil and his brother-in-law Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Leicester, the Earl of Pembroke and many knights and citizens of London. (One misses the name of George Brooke who, as Cobham's brother and as the inventor of a device for keeping mines drained of water, one might have thought would have been a shareholder.)[17] Expressing her delight at the proportions which the mining industry was assuming, the queen announced her decision to give the expanding ventures the protection of her official approval. Thurland and Hochstetter, whose backers included Cecil, became the principal officers of the new Company of Mines Royal, which was empowered to work the main copper-mining area in the kingdom. Humphrey and Schultz, Cecil, Cobham and the rest of the shareholders in the brass manufacturing monopoly, were at the same time also raised to company status. In the language of the letters patent, the queen,

> for the better and more advancement of the said working of the Calamine Stone and Battery-works, and other the Premises, and to prevent such Inconvenience as might hereafter be a lett or hindrance to the same; Of our especial Grace, and certain Knowledge and meer Motion have given and granted, and by these Presents, for

> us, our Heirs and Successors, do give and grant to the forenamed ...: That they, by the Name of Governours, Assistants and Society for the Mineral and Battery-works, shall be from henceforth forever, one Body Politick in it self, Incorporate, and a perpetual Society of themselves, both in Deed and Name.[18]

From the mid-'60s onward, as partners in business and as servants of the queen in the government, Cobham and Cecil are to be found constantly together. Because of this collaboration, and because of the absence of any allusion to his taking a political line independent of Cecil's, one may assume that Cobham was a staunch and publicly unquestioning supporter of the Principal Secretary's policy during the first quarter of the reign of Elizabeth.

Secure, then, as one of Cecil's party; honoured by Arundel's nomination of him to the Order of the Garter on 23 April, premature though it may have been; and possessed of the queen's gratitude for his Flemish service to her, Cobham in the spring of 1559 was soon given the first tangible proof of the government's determination to confirm him in favour. As she had promised while he was still at Brussels, Elizabeth on 28 April granted to him for life, in succession to Sir Thomas Cheney, the offices of Constable of the Castle of Dover and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.[19] In so doing she disappointed no less a personage than her first cousin, Henry Carey, whom she had just created Lord Hunsdon. Many years later, when Cobham was in temporary disgrace, Hunsdon wrote to Cecil that, while he "never sought to get anything from any other" and did not then intend to begin, yet

> if Lord Cobham's offence be such (whereof he protests he would be sorry) that her majesty thinks him not fit to enjoy his office, he would be glad to make friends for it for sundry respects. First, because his uncle of Rochford [Anne Boleyn's brother George] had it. Secondly, because it was once granted him upon the death of Sir Thomas Cheyny. Part of his living lies there [in Kent], his ancestors dwelt there, and he was born there. Lastly, he wearies of this place [Berwick, of which he was governor] by being so far from her majesty.[20]

The Marian Cheney had died most opportunely in December 1558, while Cobham was on the Continent; if Elizabeth had 'granted' his office to her cousin, she must indeed have been impressed by the reports of Cobham's successful handling of King Philip to have rescinded a gift already bestowed in order to give it to her emissary as a reward.

What Hunsdon had hoped to get, and what Cobham actually received, was a

position of princely importance. Henry VIII had himself graced the Wardenship of the Ports as Duke of York, and his illegitimate son, Elizabeth's half-brother the Duke of Richmond, had also held it.[21] Cobham, their successor, and after him his son, were possessed of privileges almost feudal in their scope and power. No attempt will be made in this work to study the Cinque Ports under their Elizabethan Wardens; that chapter in maritime history has already been well written by K.M.E. Murray, and in its particulars it reveals very little of interest to a student of the Brookes as family men, courtiers and politicians: as they were, that is, in their most personal aspects. For on the whole the Lords Cobham seem to have been competent administrators who seldom abused their authority in petty ways. When they exerted themselves as individuals and threw off the administrative anonymity which was theirs as Wardens, it was at times of such importance that their actions are best studied in the context of national, not merely maritime affairs.

Broadly considered, the picture of the sixteenth-century Ports which Murray draws explains a good deal about the rather special position which the Lords Cobham, as Wardens, held in Elizabethan governmental circles.[22] The Lord Warden, for one thing, remained as powerful as any mediaeval sheriff at a time when the ordinary shrievalty was being gradually reduced almost to a sinecure. Recognized to be jealous of their traditional immunity from outside interference, the Ports were never forced to accept the specialized officials of the Crown who had elsewhere usurped much of the sheriff's authority; it was rather their Warden who incorporated all of the powers which in the counties were distributed among several men.

> Every royal mandate, whether in a matter so directly concerning the Ports as the summons of the barons to perform their service at the coronation, or in one which was in the king's interest as the arrest of a delinquent local bailiff, must be directed in the first place to the Warden. From the 'office' of Dover Castle a copy was sent with a covering letter from the Warden to the Port concerned, and the return was made through the same channel. In the sixteenth century Lydd refused obedience to writs from muster masters unauthorised by the Warden, and in 1572 the Ports replied to the letters of special commissioners that although ready to carry out their orders 'if they came orderly' they were unable without breach of their liberties to make return of them unless 'they were fyrst directed to our Lord Warden, and so from his Honour's office unto us by letters of attendance.'
> Much of the Warden's business was thus concerned with the execution of writs such as those of <u>capias</u>, <u>venire facias</u> and <u>distringas</u> sent

from the Exchequer or other central courts.

There was no doubt a certain disadvantage to the Warden in this arrangement. While giving no account of his annual salary of £ 300, he had to enforce all writs passing through his hands or pay stiff fines:

> Although in most cases the execution of the writ was actually made by the officers of the individual Ports, the Warden was held responsible for the return. In the sixteenth century, when the number of such writs was multiplying, this responsibility became most burdensome. For the years 1575-76 the fines amounted to £ 41 and £ 55, among the records of Sandwich there are long lists of fines imposed on the Warden for inadequate returns, either from failure to produce the persons whose presence was required, or to make the attachment ordered, or from some mistake in the actual form. In 1560 Cobham complained of fines he had incurred for these reasons.

Yet the losses which the Warden suffered were concomitants of the power which he wielded, and which must have been ample compensation for any inconveniences attached to his office.

The Lord Warden's administrative authority was backed up by immense military power, power which, as the adjunct of a subject of the Tudors, was virtually unique.

> From the point of view of his relations with the Portsmen, the fact that the Wardenship was associated with the office of Constable of Dover rather than with any other local appointment had many important results. It added immensely, in the first place, to his powers and prestige by placing a military garrison and a castle under his control. In the second place, the importance of Dover, and the power of the Constable to regulate communications with the Continent, made the dual office one which it was vital to keep under central control. Had the Wardenship fallen upon a less high officer, the Ports might have had some chance of bargaining with the king for the greater share in his appointment, or alternatively of reducing the Warden to an honorary and insignificant position, but the holder of the joint offices of Constable and Warden was placed beyond their reach, even at the height of their power. The right to administer a formal oath to the person chosen for the post by the king was a meagre one compared to the right of election eventually gained by London in respect of their sheriffs.

To no one but the sovereign was the Lord Warden responsible for his strength in arms. The queen could always dismiss Cobham, of course, but to the disappointment of Hunsdon, as indicated above, and of others, she never did.

There is yet another aspect of the Warden's rule. There were two courts held traditionally in the Ports, both independent of both the Warden's office and the Crown. These, the Brodhull and the Guestling, were often confused with each other, and historians still find difficulty in distinguishing them. Generally speaking, the Brodhull was an annual assembly of the Port members, convened

to consider questions affecting the whole of the confederation; the Guestling was a sort of special Brodull, called to unite the members and even the non-corporate associate members in specific causes, and to receive from them contributions to funds set up for the good of the whole. These assemblies were conservative in nature, reduced, by the sixteenth century, to defending the traditional privileges of the Ports; in them the Warden had no constitutional place, but it has been discovered that under William Lord Cobham Guestlings were actually called as a result of his pointed letters of advice to the Speaker of the assembly. Thus, even in the ancient democracy of the Parliament of the Ports, the Warden could and did interfere. Properly speaking, of course, the Brodhull and the Guestling were not courts at all; the Warden's jurisdiction was exercised through more obviously judicial institutions.

> By the reign of Elizabeth it was stated generally that a court of equity existed in the Ports by prescription. A record of this date at Faversham distinguished between a court of common pleas held for the Ports at St. James's from which they obtained exemption by a charter of Edward IV., and the court of chancery, which it is claimed, 'Tyme out of minde before the ... statute of Articuli super Cartas and ever since hathe bene holden and is holden and kept and yett is kept at the said church of St. James.' It is unlikely that any strict division of the business of the court was actually made; the Warden would naturally use it for all plaints brought to him without troubling whether the remedy needed belonged to common law or to equity. A record at Sandwich of about the same date refers to the 'new erected court of chancery,' but this may simply refer to the recent adoption of the name in imitation of the Westminster Chancery. There was never a chancellor of the Castle of Dover, and the name of chancery was obviously a late borrowing. The Warden himself adopted the title of 'Chancellor' of the Cinque Ports some time about the middle of the sixteenth century, and about the same time the St. James's court became known as a chancery court. An attack on the court at the end of Elizabeth's reign, however, points out that the Warden 'ys neither appoynted chauncelloure over the Ports and their members ... neither hathe anye seale to the same court appointed;' all processes were issued in the Warden's own name and under seal of the office at Dover Castle. By the effective development of his court, however, the Warden had succeeded in equating it with those at Westminster, and in the seventeenth century the court at Dover was referred to as a 'mixed court of Star Chamber, Chequer and Chancerie.'
>
> The Warden had secured this position for his court in spite of the fact that it was open to opposition from two directions, from the central court, and from the Ports themselves. In point of fact, there seems to have been remarkably little question as to the legality of the court raised by either party. In 1595 a ruling was given that since the court of St. James's was held only by prescriptive right it could not claim to exercise equitable jurisdiction, because this was a royal prerogative which could only be delegated by express grant. Nevertheless the Warden upheld his position....
>
> From time to time indeed all the Ports joined in petitioning the

> Warden against 'enormities' practised by the court of St. James's. It was so useful and so adaptable an institution that there was a continual temptation to the Warden and his subordinate officers to add to their profits by increasing its fees and its powers. The abuses of the court were those of extortionate fees, delay, and summons in petty causes which could have been remedied in the local courts.

By 1574 Cobham had effectively silenced the complaints about his courts by entering into a compact with the Pots whereby, for his lifetime, the judicial charges were fixed at rates acceptable both to the chancery and to the litigants. Thus he preserved his comprehensive title of "conestable of Douer castle, warden of the fiue ports, chancellor and admerall of the same".[23]

Shrieval authority over them, combined with real power both military and judicial and with the unwritten privilege of advising them in their general assemblies, gave to the Elizabethan Lord Warden great weight among the Portsmen. Both they and he felt his influence most acutely at times of Parliamentary elections. The seven towns which made up the misnamed Cinque Ports sent, in all, fourteen 'barons' into the House of Commons. Fourteen seats filled by men over whose constituents he had anachronistically broad powers were a considerable bloc for any magnate to control, especially when they were added to the total of those other seats which were filled by members returned from boroughs over which he possessed the influence of a local landowner. Nor was the Warden's power simply influential. By an agreement of the reign of Henry VII, the Warden was empowered to create freemen of the Ports; this constitutional right permitted him to recommend to the freedom of any Port, without fear of refusal by the burgesses, anyone whom he wished to see returned to Parliament in an imminent election. With this appreciable power Cobham's predecessors had contented themselves; the baron wanted even more. His tenure of the Lord Wardenship coincided with the period of Tudor systematization of the practice of recommending candidates to the House of Commons. Infected by the spirit of the government in this respect, Cobham, within fifteen years of taking office, had tabulated his demands for further control over elections in the Ports: in 1574, "in a draft agreement between himself and the Ports he inserted a clause recognizing the right of the Warden to nominate one parliamentary burgess in each Port."[24] How much Cobham appreciated his singular position as patron of the Ports will be discussed

further on in this work, in connection with the particular elections of the reign of Elizabeth; here it need only be remarked that, while the Ports persisted in rejecting the written demands which he had made upon them, by the time that Cobham died "practice had drawn very close indeed to the theory propounded in 1574."[25]

Needless to say, the Lords Cobham did not attend personally to all the many facets of their control over the Ports. For, by the time of Elizabeth's accession to the Throne, the office of Lieutenant of Dover Castle had developed into one of extreme importance, and the Lieutenant had become the real administrator of the Warden's power.

> By the sixteenth century the bulk of the Warden's correspondence was in his hands, he no longer wrote merely a covering letter but delivered the Warden's message in his own words and often added instructions and advice on his behalf, while purely secretarial duties fell to the Clerk of the Castle. He retained, however, the charge of the Warden's seals and received fees for the issue of writs and processes. As the office of Warden became a perquisite of courtiers who were generally absent from Dover, the Lieutenant took over more and more of the duties. Although in his oath his original office of upholding the strength of the Castle came first, his newer activities were covered by a promise to administer equal justice and to maintain the privilege of the Courts of Admiralty and Chancery.

William Crispe, Richard Barry and Thomas Fane, William Lord Cobham's deputies, were able men;[26] their letters survive to show how constantly in touch with what was occurring in the Ports they kept him, whether he was in London or at Cobham. Fane, the last of them, was knighted in 1598 and served Henry Lord Cobham throughout his brief tenure of the Wardenship, ruling the Ports virtually alone during the troubled year 1603. Without such men ensconced in Dover Castle and from there directing the essential business of the bailiwick no matter how distracted by other affairs their chief might be, the Lords Cobham could not have risen as they did at Court without losing control of their most important office.

This résumé of the sway which the Elizabethan Lord Warden held over the Cinque Ports no doubt gives the impression that the Portsmen were hardly more free to act independently of him than his ancestors' mediaeval serfs had been of them. Yet the Ports were in some measure compensated for their extreme dependence upon their Warden. As Murray says, in his succinct summary of their position,

> as the Ports lost political importance, they profited from

> the shelter of the Warden's presence. The activities of the Warden in championing their liberties, in providing machinery of justice at home, and preserving their immunity from the normal administrative system, sustained their effete confederation. Thus the Ports remained immune from summons to courts at Westminster, from taxation, and from subjection to the Lord Admiral of England and his jurisdiction, and the persuasiveness of the Warden somehow blinded the central Government to the fact that their privileges had long ceased to bear any relation to their duties.

The apparent anomaly constituted by the Cinque Ports in the reign of Elizabeth was thus an efficient and advantageous arrangement both for the Portsmen and their Warden. The men of Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich, of Winchelsea and Rye and the thirty-odd towns associated with them, no doubt considered the Lieutenant of Dover to be their immediate authority; perhaps they also believed him to be the "very loving and approved auncient friend" that Sir Thomas Fane styled himself at the end of the Brooke era.[27] The Lord Warden was a figure far more remote than his deputy, one "knowing himselfe to be your Lord Warden by the king's selection and letters patents absolutelie, and therefore not tyed otherwise then by auncient courtesie and custom to yeeld more to your request then yow doe now unto his," as Fane reminded the Portsmen when they proved recalcitrant in the first year of King James. But even when at Court, where his duties kept him near the sovereign, the sixteenth-century Lord Cobham must have thought often of the coastal domain which was the basis of his power. The brilliant but unfortunate Henry Cuffe best expressed the significanceof their maritime offices to the position of the Brookes; he did not do so until the queen's reign was almost over, but what he said then would have been equally true when she had just come to her Throne and William Lord Cobham just been made her minister. "The Cinq Portes," declared Cuffe,

> the keyes of the realme, are in the handes of the Lord Cobham, as likewise the Countie of Kente, the nexte and directest waye to the Imperiall citie of this realme.[28]

One can conceive some idea of what must have been the mingled feelings of pride and anxiety which William Lord Cobham experienced in April 1559, if one considers the example of the conduct expected of a Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports which had been set by his immediate predecessor. Of Sir Thomas Cheney it is written in Holinshed:

> For twentie yeares before his departure, he kept in his stable

> continuallie winter and summer twentie great horsse at the least, and eight or nine geldings, besides sixteene or seuenteene geldings which were kept at grasse, and had in a readinesse furniture for them all to serue in the field: and no one of the same horsse or geldings but he was able and readie for anie man at armes to serue vpon. Beside this he kept so bountifull a house, and was so liberall and good to his men, that well was that noble mans son, gentlemans sonne, or other that might happen to be preferred into his seruice. And againe, the number of his seruants to whom he gaue liueries were 205, wherof in household were six score, besides strangers that were dailie comming and going.... Whether this realme hath not lost a worthie subiect, and speciallie his men a good maister, let all men iudge that knew him.[29]

An establishment such as Cheney's cannot have been needed or wanted by his heirs; only a public man could have maintained it. It seems likely that it was largely dispersed, Cobham possibly taking over some of it, for, while no record survives of the purchase by his successor of the late Lord Warden's stable and armoury, there are suggestions that some such transaction took place. Cobham had been left all of his father's "horses and Jennettes steele saddles harnesses with all others to them belonginge", but, unless George Lord Cobham had kept up the equestrian strength which he would have possessed as Lord Deputy of Calais, this bequest need not have been a particularly important one. Yet it is clear that William Lord Cobham had a stable of which he must have been extremely proud. Among the Brooke papers which are to be found in the Cecil collection are several notes, dating principally from the 1590s, of the horses, geldings, nags, mares and colts at Canterbury, at Court and, presumably, at Cobham Hall.[30] When Cobham was buried in 1597 his 'Gentleman of the Horse' was given a position of dignity in the funeral procession, walking with the baron's chief household officers, and because of this same keeper of the Cobham stud, George Smith, it is known that Cobham was interested in horse racing. Years after the attainder of Cobham's son, Smith, who had been left in charge of breeding of colts at Canterbury park, was recommended to the Earl of Salisbury as one who had been "the rider to the late Lord Cobham and his father and [who] has good experience in the ordering of a race, wherein he is desirous to do you service." Sir John Leveson, administrator of the forfeited Cobham estates, gave Salisbury his word that the man would "honestly and faithfully perform what shall be committed to his charge", and therefore sent Smith to the earl "to attend your pleasure about such mares as you shall appoint for your race at Canterbury Park".[31]

It is also known that Cobham imported mares from Holland,[32] and his interest and ability in things equine is probably reflected in his inclusion in a commission of 1580 to encourage "the increase and breed of Horses and ... the keeping of horses and geldings for service".[33] There is, of course, no reason to suppose that Cobham did not buy and breed his horses gradually over the years. It is, however, probable that the immediate need to increase his stable which he would have felt in 1559 moved him to take over as many of Cheney's horses as he could as soon as he was appointed to the Lord Wardenship. The stud which he may thus have founded eventually made almost as great an impression upon visitors as Cheney's own had done. In July 1596, less than a year before Cobham died, a young German prince who came to Kent said that "There was plenty of ornament to be seen in Combam's house. And in the stable, which was well littered with straw, there were standing many fine horses. For with him splendour was customary and not occasional."[34]

There is another circumstance which leads one to suspect that Cobham in 1559 took over not only Cheney's office but also part of his private establishment. Nothing in Holinshed indicates that any of Cheney's 205 liveried servants were players, but it is known from other sources that, like many of his fellow magnates, Sir Thomas was in fact the patron of an acting company. In the chamberlain's accounts of Canterbury and Folkestone are records of visits made to those places between 1542 and 1545 of "my lord Wardens pleyers", and the chamberlain of Dover, in the years following 1547, listed payments to Cheney's minstrels.[35] These players and musicians, or some of them, were almost certainly taken into the household of Lord Cobham. Much will be said later in this work about the tradition among historians of the stage ("scholarly folklore", the perceptive William Green calls it)[36] that Cobham was adamantly opposed to the theatre. At this point one is justified only in pointing out that the baron had a playing company of his own, and that it seems likely that his actors had been Cheney's. Tucker Murray has discovered five entries in municipal records which support this supposition. The chamberlain's accounts at Gloucester for the period extending from 29 September 1563 to 28 September 1564 he found to contain this

statement: "Also geven in rewarde this yeare likwise by the comaundemente of Mr Mayor to the lorde Cobhames players vs." Early in 1570 the accountant at Dover noted that "ther was gevyn to my Lord wardens players at ther comyng here for the playe beffor the Mayor and Juratts. xis;" at about the same time his counterpart in Canterbury entered, at the beginning of the list of disbursements in the "prima session" of the quarter, "Itm paid to my Lord Wardens plaiers at ye comandyment off m maior. xs." Later in the same year, at the end of June or the beginning of July, the treasurer of the corporation of Bristol wrote in his books: "Itm paid to my Lord Cobhms [Cobham's] players at thend of their play in the Yeld hall at the comedmt of Mr Mayor & the Aldermen. xs." The last entry relating to Cobham which Murray came across dates from the spring of 1571 ("Seconda session"), when the accountant at Canterbury again noted that 10s. had been "gyvyn to my Lord Wardyns players".[37] It is remarkable that when the company visited Gloucester and Bristol, cities in the area in which his second wife's family was well known, the baron's men were called by his own name, while in Kent they continued to be designated the Lord Warden's players. This was no doubt so because, while the actors seem to have first visited the Severn country under the patronage of a lord recently introduced to the countryside by his marriage with a local girl, they had long been known in the Ports as the company from Dover Castle: because, in short, they had been Cheney's servants. For, since his father is not known to have patronized the drama, and since he did not himself maintain a playing troupe when, later in the reign of Elizabeth, he might have been expected to do so because of his prominence in a play-loving Court, it would seem that Cobham kept a company in the first twelve years of his Lord Wardenship principally because he had inherited it from his predecessor and was content to allow it to continue. He is unlikely to have brought much enthusiasm to his rôle of patron. His men never seem to have visited London (and thus do not figure in Sir Edmund Chambers's lists of the Elizabethan companies),[38] and no trace is found of them after 1571. In that year, when fears for his very position obsessed him, Cobham perhaps decided at last to abandon what had probably never been more than an interest imposed upon him by his desire to emulate so far as possible

the standards of local magnificence set by Cheney. As perpetuator and not founder of a company can Cobham's patronage of the drama be best explained; the men to whom he extended his protection when they had lost their original master are most readily identified as Sir Thomas Cheney's.

His personal estate supplemented by what he could afford to take over from Cheney's establishment, Lord Cobham in April 1559 can hardly have become accustomed to his new position as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports when he was given yet another. He was named Lord Lieutenant of Kent. The office of Lord Lieutenant was a new one at this time: although its exact origins have not been discovered, it seems to have been created by Somerset, who issued the first recorded commissions of lieutenancy on 24 July 1549.[39] The function of these new royal officers was at first rigidly circumscribed. On 16 October 1549, for instance, the lieutenants of several counties were ordered "to levy men for the service at Boulogne, and to select those who had been ringleaders in the late commotions".[40] The service required of these men at the time of the French wars was to remain the basic reason for the lieutenants' existence: it was to see to the efficiency of the militia in the counties put under their control, both by overseeing the musters and by disciplining the soldiers and their officers. The fact that the lieutenants came into being under Edward VI contributed much to the rapid growth of their importance, for during that king's reign the conflict between the magnates who ruled in the Council made it essential that control of the armed forces be placed in the hands of strong men upon whom the ministers currently in power could depend in an emergency. Thus, for the summer before Northumberland's final defeat of Somerset, a full list of the "Commissioners of Lieutenantships throughout the realme" was drawn up, and to Northampton, the Lord Great Master's trusted colleague, were entrusted six key counties.[41] At this time Kent was given its first Lord Lieutenant, Sir Thomas Cheney, but the new office was too significant to become a mere apanage of the Lord Wardenship of the Cinque Ports, and under Mary Sir Henry Jerningham received the commission of lieutenancy. The presence in Kent of a Lord Warden claiming the right to levy soldiers within his extensive bailiwick, and of a royal officer specifically appointed to perform the

same duty throughout the whole county, led to quarrels, and as near the age of Elizabeth as 31 March 1558 the Privy Council had to order a resolution of the problem by means of a compromise. The Lords wrote on that date

> A lettre to the Master of thorsses [Jerningham] that where he hath conceyved a doubte that he muste muster himself in person all thinhabitauntes of his Lieutenancy, the same is cleared and he advertised that he may substitute suche as he thinketh mete to take musters under him in all places within his Lieutenancy, for that his Commission extendeth aswell to places pryveleged as not pryveleged, without further scruple; and touching Rochester and the Cinque Portes yt is signyfyed unto him that his Commission extendeth also to the same, for that it is within the countye of Kente appoynted to his Lyeutenauncy; he is, nevertheles, appoynted to wryte to the Lorde Wardein of the Cinque Portes for the mustering of them in those Portes and to signifye the same to him, &c.[42]

The government could not hope that so specious a settlement of the problem presented by Kent and that singular microcosm of a sovereign state, the Ports, would always be accepted. It was no doubt because of her awareness of this fact that Elizabeth directed her first commission of lieutenancy for the county to Lord Cobham himself, and that all succeeding commissions were also addressed to him. The document naming William Lord Cobham Lord Lieutenant of Kent does not survive, but the queen's letter giving her reasons for bestowing upon him that office does. In the spring of 1559 the King of France sent to England an embassy of courtesy constituted of Charles cardinal de Lorraine, the Bishop of Orleans, the Duc de Montmorency, the Marquis de Fronsac and the Chevalier de l'Aubespiere, and on 6 May Elizabeth informed Cobham of their imminent arrival:

> Right trusty and welbeloued we gret you well. And where as certayn psonages of honour which be thowght to be comyng towardes vs in Ambassade from o^{r} good brother the french kinge shall shortely as we thinck arrive at dover or in some other porte of that our countie of Kent wh^{r}of ye ar o^{r} wardē ffor as mooche as we thinke it convenient to have them honorably receyved & well vsed by the way even vntill their comyng to our presence: we have thought good aswell for that we mynde to appoynct you o^{r} lieutenaūt w^{t}in that countie as also for the rule & countenūce w^{ch} you have otherwyse there to comyt the chief charge of this mater vnto you. Requiring you for the better doing therof to Cōferre w^{t} our trusty & welbeloued Thomas Wotton esquier o^{r} sheref of that shere whom we for our opinion thinke a fit psonage to mete the said ambassadours at there first landing for seeing that he accompanied w^{t} vj viij or x genttelmen of his frendes such as have the french tongue & be most fittest to enterteyn straungers And so the said sheref receyving them in that sorte there at the see side, to kepe them company in their journey till they come to Canterbury where we woold you shuld w^{t} a convenient nomber of genttelmen w^{t} you mete them & receyving them gentilly to kepe company w^{t} them continually vntill they shall come to our p^{r}sence. And to thentent our towne

> of dover may be in some order for this purpose we require you by vertue of your office of warden of our fyve portes to give sp'iall charge for that purpose and to devise betwene you & our said sheref for that mater that he may fynde the said town of dover prepared in the best maner that may be for the receyving of the said ambassadours. Willing you furder to take suche order as immediatly vpon their arrivall w^t^in the porte we may be therof advertysed by poste w^t^ as muche diligence as may be.[43]

The ceremonious nature of the occasion which elicited from the Crown its first commission of lieutenancy to Lord Cobham suggests how, as England moved away from the turmoil of the 1550s, the office of Lord Lieutenant was to change. As late as 1587 it could still be said, in the revised edition of Harrison's Historicall description of the Iland of Britaine, that

> Ouer ech of these shires in time of necessitie is a seuerall lieutenant chosen vnder the prince, who being a noble man of calling, hath almost regall authoritie ouer the same for the time being in manie cases which doo concerne his office;[44]

yet, under Elizabeth, necessity was as often dictated by courtesy as by anxiety for the safety of the kingdom. It thus came to be essential that, without ever becoming a lifetime appointment, the Lord Lieutenancy of a particular county should be assigned whenever possible to the same person, one who would maintain the dignity of the Crown which he represented, as well as assure the efficiency of the local militia. Cobham appears to have satisfied the government in both respects, so that he and his son received all of the commissions sent into Kent for over forty years.[45] "Warden of the Cinque Ports and Lieutenant of the county of Kent, and city of Canterbury," he styled himself on 1 August 1559;[46] so he and Henry his successor were to be so long as the queen lived.

Parliament was dissolved on 8 May 1559, two days after the queen sent to Cobham her instructions for the reception of the French ambassadors, and the baron appears to have gone at once into Kent. On 23 May the Frenchmen reached London, so that he must have met them after their landing earlier that day.[47] Meanwhile Henry Cobham remained at Court, to receive the government's further orders and carry them down to Cobham Hall, and on 26 May his brother wrote from there to Cecil to report what preparations he was making to receive the ambassadors as they passed through Kent on their way home. Henry Cobham had probably brought disquieting news; someone at Court was maligning Lord Cobham, perhaps

accusing him of having failed to carry out properly the queen's orders when he welcomed her guests earlier in the week. Or perhaps the baron had displeased the queen herself by repeating his opinions about how the French should be treated: from Brussels he had written about them in a way which did not suggest that, less than a year later, he would be a suitable person to show them courtesy. In his letter to Cecil he was obviously defending himself against some charge of incompetence:

> I have recevyd by my brother Henrye Cobham her highenes Letters [enclosed] in yowres, they [the] contents wherof I wyll observe to her highenes honour, and my good honesty, and yf any defawlts therebe, yt shuylbe my vnabyllatye and not the lacke of my good wyll, wyche has bene, and ys, and shaylbe doryng Lyef most redye to serve. My humble Sutte oonly ys to her heighnes that she wyll excepte [i.e., accept] in good part my dewties wher in I meane as well as Anye.

Having defended himself against calumny, Cobham informed Cecil that Henry Cobham had gone that morning to Dover, "w^{t} hoom I have apoynted vij gentyll meyne to attend ther [the] Contes [sic] comyng who canne ether spek Lattyne, frenche" or another language, the defaced name of which cannot now be deciphered.[48] Two days later, on 28 May, the ambassadors departed: presented with gifts and conducted by barge to Gravesend,[49] Montmorency and his fellows were there most probably met by the Lord Lieutenant's men and escorted to Dover, where Henry Cobham and his multi-lingual companions would have seen them off.

The queen apparently paid little attention to the unfavourable comments which had been passed upon Cobham's conduct in May, for in July 1559 she gave the baron the supreme honour of visiting him at his house. As Machyn says,

> The xvij day of July the Quen('s) grace removyd from Grenwyche of [sic: on] her prograsse unto Darford in Kent; so the next day removyd unto Cobham, my lord Cobham('s) plasse, and ther her grace had grett chere.[50]

Elizabeth stayed at Cobham Hall for three days at least, writing from there on 21 July instructions to Sir Nicholas Throckmorton upon his appointment as Ambassador to France.[51] Francis Thynne, although only a boy at the time, was an eyewitness of the entertainment which Cobham prepared for his sovereign on this occasion; more than a quarter of a century later Thynne published the following account of the festivity in Holinshed:

> In which first yeare of hir maiesties reigne, falling in the yeare of our Lorde one thousand fiue hundred fiftie and nine, this lord did most honorablie interteine the queene with hir traine, at his house of Cobham hall with sumptuous fare, and manie delights of rare inuention. Amongst which, one comming now to mind, which I then being yoong beheld, vrgeth me forward in the setting downe thereof; which was: a banketing house made for hir maiestie in Cobham parke, with a goodlie gallerie therevnto, composed all of greene, with seuerall deuises of knotted flowers, supported on each side with a faire row of hawthorne trees, which nature seemed to haue planted there of purpose in summer time to welcome hir maiestie, and to honor their lord and maister. But because the beautie and maiestie, with the rare deuise thereof cannot be so well conceiued by pen, as the same was artificiallie made, vnlesse the reder might at one instant behold also the artificiall situation of the place; I thinke it better to passe the rest in silence, then not deliuering it in such grace as it meriteth, to offer disgrace vnto it, and shame to my selfe, in that I shall faile in due commendation of the deuise; and take vpon me to desscribe that which is beyond my reach. Wherefore leauing the maner thereof, I will set downe certeine verses made by doctor Haddon, and placed in the forefront of the same banketting house, which doo not onelie shew the ioifull welcome of hir maiestie to this honorable lord; but also to the whole countrie of Kent, which verses were these following:
>
> Regia progenies, clari stirps inclyta Bruti,
> Grata venis populis Elisabetha tuis:
> Quocúnque aspicias plausus & gaudia cernis,
> Laetatur vultu foemina vírque tuo:
> Imberbes pueri, cani, teneraeque puellae,
> Omnis ad aspectum turba profusa ruunt.
> Nos te reginam, tu nos agnosce clientes,
> Sic tibi, sic nobis, sic bona cuncta fluent.[52]

Doctor Walter Haddon, a brilliant Latinist, seems to have been a friend of the Brooke family: he wrote not only these verses for Lord Cobham, but also the epitaph on the Marchioness of Northampton, and it was not long after he died that his widow took as her second husband Henry Cobham.[53] This exuberant poem of Haddon's acclaiming the queen's visit to Kent was later translated by Thynne; the verses, only "the substaunce of whiche I haue conuerted into oure mother tonge," were rendered by him as:

> The kingely progenye and stocke of Brutes most famous race
> Elizabethe most welcome is to people of this place.
> Whiche waye thow casts thyne eye, thow mirthe & Ioye doest see
> For joyfull of thye princely face, boothe menne & women bee.
> The berdlesse boyes, thee hored age & maydes of tender yeres
> And troope confus'd flockes to thy sighte, in wche their love apperes.
> We knowledge the oure Quene, thy subiectes true us knowe,
> So vnto the, so vnto us all wished good shall flowe.[54]

There can be little doubt that Cobham felt deeply the advantages of living under Elizabeth; only in the dignity of his expression of it must his fervent

welcome of the queen have differed from that of the tenants, villagers and neighbours who flocked in 'troope confus'd' to see her that summer. For she had already loaded him with honours, and would confer more.

With two episodes concerning foreign royalty Cobham was associated in the months immediately following the queen's visit to him. When in August Philip II sailed from the Netherlands to Spain, he went as the betrothed of the Princess Elizabeth of France, and on 9 August the queen ordered four noblemen, Cobham among them, to prepare to receive the king with honour should he put into an English port.[55] It was common knowledge that England was alarmed at the drawing together of the two powers which, depending upon their traditional enmity to keep them apart, Elizabeth had treated so cavalierly a few months before; when, therefore, the English government took official notice of the king's passage through the Channel by ordering the officers of its south-eastern ports to stand by to receive the royal fleet, Spain was bewildered. Bishop de Quadra, Philip's ambassador in London, wrote to the king on 18 August that the Earl of Bedford had come to tell him of the progress of Elizabeth's marriage negotiations with the Archduke Charles of Austria; the bishop, however, felt that the real purpose of the earl's call on him was to let Spain know that

> the Queen has sent many gentlemen to the coast in order that your Majesty might be received in safety and honour if by chance you landed on her shores.

Why the English were so anxious that he should be informed of this de Quadra could not imagine, but he was sure that something was afoot. Not only had Bedford heralded his own visit by sending the diplomat Cavalcanti "to tell me the same thing as if of his own accord two days before", but, after the earl had been to see him, the ambassador was told it a third time by one of the Brookes ("a brother of Cobham"). "As I see," concluded the perplexed de Quadra,

> that they are trying to convince me that these preparations are compliments and friendship I think well to inform your Majesty so that you may know of them, whatever they may be.[56]

Apparently the Spaniard's fears were unfounded. If the orders given to the queen's officers were not as unambiguous as they appeared, few people besides Bedford, Cobham and his brother, and the other two peers who received the instructions of

9 August, knew what their hidden tenor was, and Philip passed uneventfully over the sea to Spain.

A month after paying her disturbing compliment to the Spanish king, the queen ordered that honour be shown to the late Henry II of France, whose accidental death in July had brought to the French Throne her Scottish cousin and her husband. Accordingly, on 8 September, a solemn memorial service which was to last for two days was begun at St. Paul's. A detailed account of the splendour of the ceremony is given by Machyn; he records the names of Lord Cobham and his brother-in-law Abergavenny among the peers who attended the Marquess of Winchester, the queen's representative, as he filled the rôle of chief mourner.[57] Cobham's uncle, Sir Edward Warner, took part as an assistant, and a Brooke who was most probably one of the baron's brothers served as a Gentleman Usher.[58]

Then Cobham was more closely touched by death, more intimately connected with funereal pomp. There is nowhere any suggestion that his wife was ill during those months when he was so busy establishing himself in his new honours, and it is therefore with something of a jolt that one learns that, about an hour after midnight on Friday, 22 September 1559, Lady Cobham died.[59] One finds it difficult to express an opinion about Dorothy Neville without assuming much that is unwarranted. If there seems to be little doubt that she contributed little either to her husband's private happiness or to the success of his career, there is no proof that, after the first years of their marriage at least, she was actually troublesome to him. She gave him no son, no daughter other than the little-loved Frances; she appears to have taken no part in the social life of Elizabeth's Court during the first year of the reign; she apparently had no influence with the queen, and can hardly have been in any way responsible for the appointment of her husband to her father's old post, the Lord Wardenship. She is not even mentioned in connection with the royal visit to Cobham Hall, when, unless she was dying even then, she ought to have presided with the baron over the entertainment given to the sovereign who was honouring them so signally. Not even Francis Thynne, who praised the Brooke family at every opportunity, could find anything to say about her.[60] Yet such silence concerning the baroness may indicate nothing more than her

shyness or the delicacy of her health; it need not have been caused by any real defect in her character or in her ability to please her husband. If one then appropriates to oneself the callousness required to say that the death of Cobham's first wife cannot have been much of a loss to him, one does so upon little or no positive evidence. Certainly, without the explicit proof which now seems not to exist, one cannot attribute such a feeling to Cobham himself.

Whatever Cobham's probable feelings were, he gave his wife so splendid a funeral that Machyn, an expert in such matters, commented that "the wyche was never shyche [such] sene with lyke fassyon."[61] William Harvey was in attendance at Cobham and, as Clarenceux King of Arms, recorded the ceremonial for the files of the College of Arms;[62] Machyn, too, made a detailed entry of it in his diary,[63] and from these two accounts one can get a pretty fair idea of how splendid the funeral must have been. "Aftre she was cold," says Harvey,

> her bodye was bowellyd tramelled [confined] & wrapped in lynnen cere clothe dyu'sse fold & then put in a coffyn cou'ed w^th^ blacke clothe by John Deye waxe-chaundler[64] her bowells were put into a Earthen pott & so caryed pryvelye to the Churche & leyd in thearth. And then the seyd bodye was leyd in the myddest of the great chambre.

While the body lay in state at Cobham Hall, services were held over it: "the Deane of Rochestre was Apoynted & dyd execute the s^r^uyce w^th^ the whole quere of Rochester & of other places. And the persson of Dertford Doctor Turner preachyd." Of the theology of the dean, who was probably the same Walter Philips who had held the benefice since the reign of Henry VIII, nothing is known, but the parson of Dartford was a famous man, and one whose Protestantism was notorious. He was William Turner, the founder of botany as a science in England. Turner was a prominent reformer, expending his efforts to bring the Anglican Church closer to Genevan practice, and his bishop had eventually to suspend him for non-conformity. In 1559 he had just returned from exile abroad; when Cobham invited him into Kent he was fresh from his triumph at Paul's Cross, where he had preached on 10 September before "my lord mayre and the [aldermen], and grett audyens of pepull boyth of the cowrt, [city, and country.]"[65] Turner had known the queen personally for many years. He had once been the Protector Somerset's physician and at Somerset House, where Elizabeth used to visit when she was a girl, he had

conceived a respect for her learning; as he later told her, he had had "a good tryal thereof, when as it pleased your grace to speake Latin vnto me".[66] Elizabeth returned his good opinion of her, and re-instated him in 1560 in the deanery of Wells, which Somerset had given him and Mary taken away.[67] Such, then, was the preacher whom Cobham brought down to Cobham Hall for his wife's funeral: a popular orator; an acquaintance of the queen's and one who was sure of preferment; most important of all, a known Protestant. The baron's choice leaves little room for doubt about his own basic religious preferences.

> And so all thinges beinge in A readynes on wenysdaye beinge the iiijth of octobre Abowt viij of the clocke in the mornynge they pceadyd frō the seyd place of Cobhm̄ halle vnto the seyd pyshe churche.

Machyn sketches a picture of the procession, the third within a year, which mo·d down the lane to the village. There were

> prestes and clarkes syngyng, and ij haroldes of armes, master Clarenshux and Ruges-Dragon, with ix baners of armes of hys and hers petegree; one was a grett baner of ys harmes and hers; and mony morners in blake a C., and a lx women in rosett cassokes of brod cloth, be-syd men in mantyll frys [frieze] gownes, and the women had nuw raylles [cloaks or loose gowns]; and ther was a goodly hers with-owtt wax, and garnyshed with grett baners and velvett, and xx dosen penselles, and vij dosen skochyons of armes.[68]

Several of the marchers are identified by Harvey. Two men called Edward Boucham and John Harmond led the procession as conductors; Cobham's personal chaplain was a priest described as "S^{r} Rychard"; between Rouge Dragon and Clarenceux walked the baron's uncle, William Okendon; eight yeomen bore the coffin, "And at the iiij corners for the iiij Assystaūces were my lordes iiij bretherne M^{r} Henrye M^{r} Thom̄s M^{r} Edmonde Cobhm̄ & Rychard Brooke [sic]." Thomas Brooke may have been either of the baron's brothers of that name; there is perhaps a suggestion that he was the second of them in the fact that his name was put down after that of Henry, who was himself younger than the scapegrace, elder Thomas. The fourth assistant, Richard Brooke (obviously not a legitimate son of George Lord Cobham, and, if a bastard, one who is nowhere mentioned as being such), was most probably a cousin, the third son of Edward Brooke of Aspall, Suffolk.[69] Anne Lady Cobham had remembered him in her will,

Harvey's funeral certificate also specifies what arms they were that showed

the 'petegree' of Lord Cobham and his late wife; prominent among them, proclaiming for Dorothy Neville a royal descent more exclusive than any other member of the Brooke family would ever be privileged to claim, were banners displaying the arms of Ralph Earl of Westmorland and Jane his wife, the daughter of John of Gaunt, and those of the Staffords of Buckingham, heirs of another of Edward III's sons, Thomas of Woodstock.

After the coffin came

> m^rys katheryn Cobhm̃ Sustre to the lorde Cobhm̃ as chyfe morner, Assysted by M^r John Cobhm̃ her brother her trayne borne by m^rys ffrauncysse Cobhm̃ her nece my lorde & ladyes onelye doughtre both in parryshe [i.e., Paris] Heades & the chyfe morner A hode. Then the ladye Durrell & the ladye Coppynger. Then m^rys ffeythe wif to Willm̃ Ockenden & m^rs Xpyan wyf to m^r George Cobhm̃. Then m^rys Norton & m^rs wylkyns all yn parryshe heades & hodes.

Thus attended by her only child and by her sister-in-law, who had presumably lived with her at Cobham Hall; by her friends; by the brothers, aunt and sister-in-law of her husband; lastly, by the wife of Cobham's steward Wilkins, Lady Cobham was brought to church. Machyn's account of the service is now hardly legible; pieced together by his editor, it reads:

> the chyrche and the plasse hangyd with blake and armes, and a bony . . the velvett a goodly bordur mad and gyldyd, and with ther armes; and so the dene of Rochastur and all the colege both prest and clarke dyd syng, and the qweresters; and Torner the prechar dyd pryche.

Harvey meant to record what text Turner took for his sermon, but left unfinished the sentence, "The Sermonde began by Doctor Turner parsson of Dertforde whose Antetheme was".

Finally Lady Cobham's body was interred, according to Harvey, "w^thin the chauncell of the parryshe Churche there in the vppre corner of the Sowthe syde". No trace of her grave remains, and no tablet seems ever to have been erected to mark its location.

"And after all done," says Machyn,

> they whent to the plasse to dener, for ther was a gret dener, and ther was a ij M. pepull that had ij d. apesse, and after dener pore pepull had boyth mett and drynke.

Cobham would have found the stuff of such hospitality on his own estate; in monetary terms (besides the £ 16.13.4 which he laid out in alms, if Machyn's

rather surprising figure of 2000 poor can be trusted), the funeral cost him £ 26.14.8 for the painting of the arms, £ 6.10.0 for the service of the chandler, £ 10 for the indispensable presence of Clarenceux, and, in the odd figures of the funeral certificate, £ 133.55.24 for the huge amount of cloth provided by the drapers.

There were no doubt evidences of sorrow amid the pageantry; Lady Cobham must have been mourned, if by no one else, by the child who bore the train of the chief mourner, "ffrancesse Broke", as Harvey describes her, "then my lord & hers onelye doughter". The ten-year-old girl appears here with her father, her aunt and paternal uncles for the first and last recorded time. Behind her in the procession walked a Lady Coppinger, and to a young man of this mourner's family Frances was married in 1566.[70] It was Lord Abergavenny, her mother's brother, who made the necessary arrangements for the marriage (although Lord Cobham was required to see that his daughter went to her wedding dressed as befitted her station), for the girl seems effectually to have lost both her parents when her mother died. Lord Cobham's remarriage in 1560 probably marks the approximate date of Frances's removal from Cobham Hall to Comfort, her uncle's delightfully named house at Birling, only five miles due south; there, with her little cousin, Mary Neville, she was no doubt more welcome than she would have been among the members of the new family which her father and step-mother quickly established. Cobham, for reasons which now appear to be unfathomable, turned his thoughts utterly away from his first child: he buried her mother,

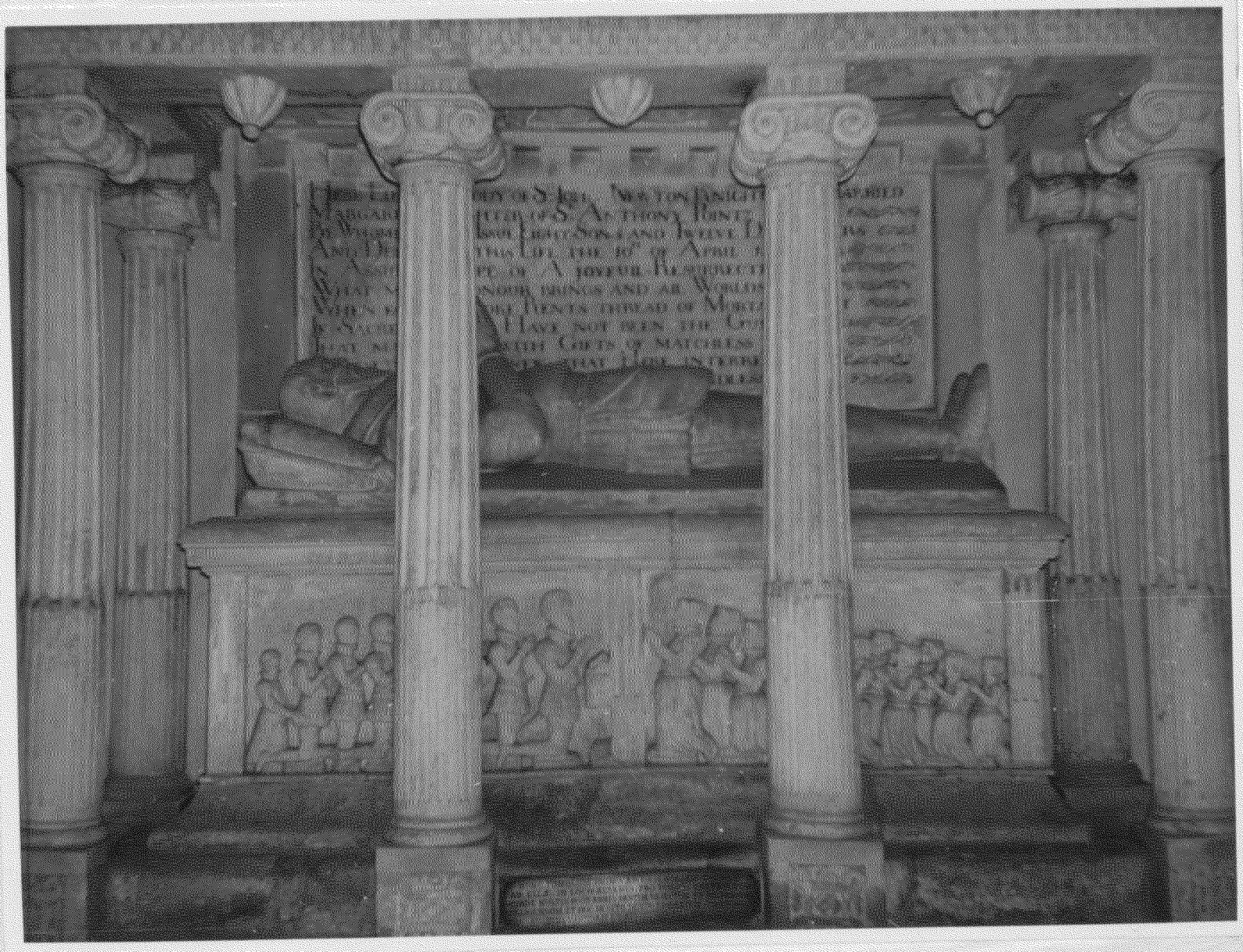
> Wherevpon hauing no issue male by hir, and desirous to perpetuat so long and honorable a title of the lords Cobham, which he would not to haue ended in himselfe; he applied his mind to the second marriage.[71]

* * *

Chapter IV

On 25 February 1559/60, just over five months after the death of his first wife, Lord Cobham made the marriage which confirmed him in the queen's favour and assured him of a permanent place in the inner circle of the Court.[1] The woman who brought him these advantages had no social standing to compare with

chat of the late Dorothy Neville: no princely arms would ever appear in her bannerols, and, while she shared blood with the queen and the other descendants of Edward IV, her ancestress was not a Plantagenet but a Woodville, and an illegitimate one at that. Nor was the second Lady Cobham as young as, recalling the baron's desire to have children, and the age in which he lived, one might have expected her to be: she was a spinster of thirty or thirty-one, perhaps less than a year younger than her husband: indeed, when the thirty-seven-year-old Elizabeth was considering a match with a youth of nineteen several years after Lady Cobham's own marriage, the baroness probably thought of her own situation when she dared to tell the queen that the best unions were those made between people of the same age. Nor, finally, was Cobham's choice a rich woman: her father was an obscure West Country knight with at least six sons and a dozen other daughters, and, while their marriage contract has not survived, Lady Cobham is unlikely to have brought to her husband more than the £ 100 which her father assigned by will to each of her sisters who had still not married when he died. It was nothing so tangible as money, cousinship with princes, or even youth which made Cobham's bride of 1560 so pre-eminently superior to his first wife. It is rather what is suggested in a letter which the second baroness received several years after her marriage. The letter was from a John Fitzherbert, an Englishman abroad, who addressed himself to Lady Cobham in such a way as to show what reputation she had among Elizabeth's attendants. Although he was not acquainted with her personally, Fitzherbert admitted, and although he knew that he must apologize for his "rewde wryting" to her, "howbeit y^e goodness y^t I hard of ye afoar y^t yo^r L. kam vnto y^t honar w^{ch} god kallid ye vnto or ever y^t I kam owt of Ingland," induced him to think that she would give him her attention.[2] Fitzherbert wanted what he had to say about foreign affairs to reach the queen's ears, and therefore no doubt hoped that by flattering Lady Cobham's sense of her own importance he would assure his message of a safe delivery. Yet his testimony to the respect with which the baroness was regarded even before her marriage is corroborated by Francis Thynne. Thynne also stresses the lady's intelligence, apparently with good cause (although the childish awkwardness of her handwriting



The Monument to Sir John Newton
at East Harptree, Bristol

makes one doubt that she had much formal education); his opinion of her beauty is less easily accepted, for the portrait of her which survives displays features more determined, even shrewish, than conventionally beautiful: but the fact that the portrait shows Lady Cobham at the age of thirty-eight, when her face no doubt showed the strain of seven years of serving the queen while in an almost constant state of pregnancy, should not be forgotten. Thynne, having made the succinct comment which has already been noted about Lord Cobham's applying "his mind to the second marriage" after the death of Dorothy Neville, says that,

> finding a gentlewoman in the court of modest behauior and knightlie birth, deseruing well, not onelie for the rare and good cariage of hir selfe in that place; but also for the dowries of hir mind (for she was bothe wise and learned) and for the beautie of hir person wherewith nature had adorned hir, he tooke hir to wife, being by name Francis, the daughter of Sir John Newton, knight.[3]

Frances Newton was the last of the six daughters whose births preceded that of their parents' eldest son and eventual heir; she was therefore one of the older children in that large family. She probably spent her girlhood in what is now the Bristol area, on her father's estates at Barrs Court, then in Gloucestershire, now engulfed by the city, and at East Harptree, then in Somerset. The mediaeval importance of the Newtons was fast diminishing in the sixteenth century, and Sir John himself took no part in national affairs; Frances's mother, however, was Margaret Pointz of Iron Acton, through the members of whose courtly family some of the excitement of the turbulent years of the Newton children's youth must have reached Barrs Court. The Pointzes were a step above the Newtons in the social ladder, marrying with the children of the local magnates, the Berkeleys, and proud that Lady Newton's grandmother had been a first cousin, if a base one, of Queen Elizabeth of York. Rather in the manner of country cousins, the maternal relatives of Frances Newton came up to London and found their way into lucrative employment and gratifying intimacy with the nobility through the good offices of those of their kinsmen who had already arrived. The Sir Nicholas Pointz who remonstrated with Thomas Brooke on the day when the Wyatt rebellion failed was Lady Newton's brother; it was her nephew, William Pointz, who served the great Leicester for seventeen years and who, long after the earl's death, wrote to the even greater Sir Robert Cecil in terms of

brave equality which were obviously founded in the knowledge that "my noble cousin" had been "your late wife".[4] As William Pointz pointed out to the Secretary in one of these letters:

> I have in the Court a great sort of cousins that care no less for me than I do for them, who when my Lord lived told me they loved me; but he being lodged at Warwick without a tomb, my fortune they think is buried with him. Therefore I scorn, being as free and well born, to be unto them a suppliant.[5]

Nor was it only at Court that the Pointzes associated with Elizabeth's great men. They brought them down on holiday to their house in the country, and John Aubrey tells of the effect which Ralegh, one of the most exotic of these courtiers, had upon his provincial hosts in Gloucestershire. Once, says Aubrey,

> Sir W.R., standing in a Stand at Sir Robert Poyntz parke at Acton (which was built by Sir Robert's Grandfather to keep his Whores in) tooke a pipe of Tobacco, which made the ladies quitt it till he had donne.[6]

The age of Cecil and Ralegh, her son's friends, was yet to come when Frances Newton first left home. Not improbably she came up to London under the auspices of her cousins, although it is possible that it was her sister Jane whom the Pointzes first introduced at Court, and that Jane herself had Frances brought up to join her. There was, as early as 1553, a woman in the Northampton household to whom the marquess's steward paid out the sums which the marchioness lost at cards;[7] this personal attendant on Elizabeth Brooke was a "M^ris Newton", to whom her mistress, at her death in 1565, left "a Crepine ꝑtlet A whit Call [caul] & tenne yeardes of ffurred velvet".[8] This gentlewoman must have been the "m^res Jane Newton" whom the improvident Lady Northampton died owing £ 30.6.0.[9] Jane Newton was her sister's intimate. They were separated only by about a year in age, and remained close throughout their lives: Jane Newton sat with the Cobhams and their children for the family portrait done in 1567; later, when she was about forty, she married a Kentishman who died soon afterward, and, although her second husband was a West Country knight, she continued to reside at Malling, where she was only a few miles from Cobham Hall; finally, when she herself died as the childless widow, Lady FitzJames, she left all of her property to her late sister's children.[10] If one can suggest any way in which Frances Newton got to know Lord Cobham, and any way in which she became so highly valued a member of the royal

household as she is known to have been, it is that she was shown favour by Elizabeth Marchioness of Northampton, her sister's mistress, Cobham's sister and the queen's friend.

By the time that the queen was crowned on 15 January 1558/9 there was in "The Quenes ma^{tes} Chamb^{r}" a chamberer to whom, as "Mris Newton", five yards of scarlet cloth was given as the stuff of her coronation costume.[11] This servant can hardly have been other than the "m^{rs} ffrancysse doughter to Sir John Newton knight one of the gentleweomen of the Quenes ma^{tes} bed chamber" to whom William Lord Cobham was married on the Shrove Sunday following his first wife's death. A contemporary account of the ceremony survives to inform one in detail of how grand the occasion was.

> Itm Sunday the 25 of februarye beinge Shrofsondaye 1559[/60], A^{o} 2ndo Elizabeth Regine, the Quenes ma^{tie} lyinge at her pallace of westm^{r} About x of the Clocke the younge lordes knightes & gentlemen of the Court cam to the Chambre of the seyd lord Cobhm̃ & conductyd hym vppe into the Quenes greate clossett.
> And afterwards she was frō her chambre lykewyse conductyd vppe to the seyd Clossett betweene Waltre vyskūt Hereford & John Lord Sheffelde bachelers (but shortlye after & in the same yere maryed) her trayne borne by a younge ladye.
> And after her ffolowyd the ladye m^{r}quys of Northm̃pton & the ladye Strange wth a greate noumbre of other ladyes & gentleweomen, where they stayd in the seyd great clossett tyll theye queare were com and the pcessyon was songe w^{ch} endyd the[y] pceadyd to the Espowsalls afore the quenes ma^{tie} who stode nere by them & the counsell & other lordes, ffyancyd by doctor barloe Busshoppe of Chychestre, And the lorde willm howard lorde Chamberleyne dyd geue her in thabsence of her father, and so the ffyancynge ffullye ffynnyshyd they knealyd downe againe at a fourme in the seyd Clossett wheruppon were bothe cuyssheons & carpett leyd, and the seruice beinge endyd she was agayne conductyd to her dynynge chambre w^{ch} was the greate chambre wthin the counsell chambre betwene James blunt lord Montjoye & Edwarde wyndsor lorde Wyndsor, where was great fare & cheare, And after dynn^{r} great dauncynge & other pastyme vntyll the Evenynge prayer and then to supper where suppyd wth the bryde the Ryght hon^{r}able hyghe & myghtye prynce John Duke of fyneland the son to the kinge of Swethen, who also dauncyd the aftre none wth the seyd Bryde, for the more honarynge of the seyd maryage.[12]

The young Duke of Finland was later to depose his mad brother, Eric XIV, and become King John III of Sweden. He had come to England in October to offer to Elizabeth the hand of his brother, then heir apparent to Gustavus Vasa, and had "kept the nobulle howse that ever dyd stranger in England for cher, for he spent more and gayff grett gyftes and rewardes".[13] The presence of such a prince at her wedding can only have added to the deference shown the new Lady Cobham: it made

an august occasion the more royal. It also no doubt served to obscure those participants in the festivities whose stations were not so elevated. Sir William Cecil is not mentioned by name in the account of the day, although he must have been among the Councillors who were there, and it was surely his opinion of the bride that Lord Cobham wanted most. That opinion seems to have been high. Cecil had himself found a second marriage much to his liking, and in Cobham's remarriage he probably saw the likelihood of his friend's finding similar contentment. Mildred Cooke was very different from Frances Newton: Lady Cecil was exceptionally well educated; she did not have a personal success with the queen, no doubt being too stern, too much a Puritan for Elizabeth's taste; ultimately, after the scandal of her daughter's marriage with the Earl of Oxford, she came to avoid the Court almost entirely: Lady Cobham appears to have had none of the formal classical learning of the other; she was indispensable at Court, adept at intrigue and full of a charm which assured her of the queen's affection; she was so far from Calvinism as to show sympathy with Mary of Scots. It is not surprising that, while Cobham corresponded with Lady Cecil, and Cecil with Lady Cobham, no account of anything that passed between the two women has survived. Yet in more than one important aspect of their divergent characters they were alike. Each became the effective centre of her husband's private life, giving him children in whom he took great pride and preserving for herself his respect and admiration throughout her life; each also intruded upon her husband's public life, influencing him to a degree so marked that her sway became common knowledge. Although one knows that the agents of the Scottish queen went to any lengths to keep buoyant the spirits of their captive mistress, even to letting her think that the people supposedly favourable to her interests were in stronger positions than actually they were, other indications of the baroness's importance allow one to record Thomas Morgan's statement, made in 1586, that "Lady Cobham beareth a great Stroke over her Husband."[14] Twenty years earlier the Spanish ambassador, writing to Philip II of the difficulty of guessing whom Queen Elizabeth would choose in her ostensible search for a consort, had observed that "if anybody has information on the matter it is Cecil's wife, and she is clever and greatly influences him."[15] It is not

uninteresting that it was as early as 1566, only six years after the Cobham marriage, that Lady Cecil's hold on her husband was spoken of so assuredly, for it indicates that Cecil, by the time that Lady Cobham took up her new position at Court at least, was accustomed to paying heed to petticoat advice. He would have known what his friend was letting himself in for when he made a match with a woman of pronounced character.

Judging from the extant evidence about their relationship, it took Cecil some time to express his appreciation of the baroness. It was in 1568 that the Secretary concluded a letter to Cobham with a charming variation of the standard formula of sending respects to a correspondent's wife: "I humbly take my leave of your good L.," Cecil wrote, "and wish to my Lady her own Wishyngs."[16] Then, in another letter to Cobham, written seven years later, he referred to "communing frendly with my Lady your Wiff".[17] But it is only from the 1580s that the letters date which show how close the two courtiers had by then become, letters which the baroness wrote in her large, unformed hand to provide her husband's friend with informal reports on what went on nearest the royal person. To Cecil the information must have been invaluable, for not even he could have possessed it had he not had in his confidence a lady who was so intimate with the queen.[18] For Lady Cobham, even during that early part of her married life in which she bore her husband seven children in less than ten years, never lost her place at Court. Thus, when for instance Elizabeth fell mysteriously ill in the late summer of 1561, the baroness, although already the mother of a son and within four months of giving birth to her twin daughters, was one of the two ladies to whom the Spanish ambassador turned for information about their mistress. The other lady was the Marchioness of Northampton, and the sisters-in-law convinced Bishop de Quadra that they considered the queen to be in a dangerous condition. "If they are mistaken," the ambassador assured King Philip, "I am mistaken also."[19] Elizabeth's condition in 1561 was not, it would seem, as serious as de Quadra was made to believe; she of course recovered, and so long as the baroness lived she required her presence about her. By July 1565 Lady Cobham had become Mistress of the Robes.[20] She was to attend the queen for twenty-seven years longer, Cecil's ally and a con-

stant, if occasionally misguided promoter of her husband's interests. Leagued at first with the Marchioness of Northampton, and, after her sister-in-law's death in 1565, alone, Lady Cobham assured the Brooke family of an unfailing audience with Elizabeth in the queen's most private moments.

* * *

Chapter V

What is known about Lord Cobham during the first four years of his new marriage indicates a certain placidity of existence, a happy period when he settled into the position of his father's heir, of the friend and colleague of the queen's first minister, and of family-man and father. One finds only one slight hint of trouble in his correspondence at this time; there is otherwise exceptionally little of that vague suggestion of difficulties and intrigues now unfathomable which teases one so persistently at other points in his career.

Although his two most important friends, his sister and Cecil, were not among the company, Cobham is first found after his marriage in attendance at Court[1] with a group with which soon afterward he dined in circumstances which might almost have been duplicated in the days of Edward VI. One recalls how the Spanish ambassador had regarded George Lord Cobham and Sir Philip Hoby as the foremost Protestant influences upon Lord Paget at the time of Philip II's arrival in England; one may also remember that Cecil, in the last years of Mary's reign, had probably considered too compromising to accept an invitation to visit Hoby at Bisham Abbey, his house in Berkshire.[2] Now, with Mary dead and Elizabeth on the Throne, the Hobys and their friends could meet as freely as they had ten years earlier, and, although Sir Philip was dead, his half-brother Sir Thomas Hoby continued the family practice of mixing on terms of equality with the great. Thus, on 8 September 1560, there dined at Bisham Lord Cobham and his brother-in-law Northampton; that veteran politician and current candidate for the hand of the queen, the Earl of Arundel; Somerset's young sons, the newly restored Earl of Hertford and Lord Henry Seymour, as well as one of the unfortunate Protector's daughters, Lady Jane Seymour; Lady Catherine Grey, sister of the short reigned Queen Jane; Lady Hoby's sister, Lady Cecil; Sir Roger North, already experienced

in politics and later to succeed to his father's barony and to become an important minister of the Crown; and two of the queen's maids, a "Mrs Mannsfeld" who may have been a young relative of Lady Cecil and Lady Hoby,[3] and the famous Blanche Parry, life-long servant of Elizabeth as princess and queen.[4]

In the month following his visit to Berkshire, Cobham was back at his own "poor howse" at Cobham Hall. From there he wrote on 24 October a letter to Cecil which testifies both to the Secretary's careful handling of Cobham's interests at Court and to the baron's determination to deserve his friend's trust; it also provides the solitary hint of what appears to have been Cobham's fear of calumny at this time. "Master Secretarye," the letter begins,

> I haue recevyd your gentyll Letter wheryn I fynd my sealfe muche bounde vnto you as allwayes I haue byn, for yowr carefull mynd of thys my charge. Wherof I woolde wyllynglye be dismysed of rather theyne eny reproofe sholde happyn vnto me. As I haue allwayes founde yow a reddy soliceter for all my cawses, so haue I found others slowe. Shoche ys my ysuell happe, and therfor mystrustyng that [which] maye follow, I could agayne wysse me vnbordenyd of this care.[5]

There is nothing more to indicate what was so disturbing to Cobham that he professed to find the Wardenship of the Ports almost insupportably burdensome; the rest of his letter retails, in his usual way, news of French doings on the Continent ("advertysmeyntes that came from Calleys yesterdaye"). This time the news was of preparations being made to transport the young Queen Mary to Scotland, and Cecil, having himself been in Edinburgh earlier that year and seen at first hand how fraught with danger for England was the situation there, no doubt considered the enclosure in Cobham's letter, which gave details of the Scottish queen's plans, to be of more importance than the baron's personal fears. The cause of Cobham's distress does not emerge from his succeeding correspondence with the Secretary.

The formality of proving his father's will was concluded on Friday, 6 December 1560. The probate was a matter of course, and must have been made even less momentous for Cobham by the other events of that week. For, between nine and ten o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, 4 December, Lady Cobham gave birth to her first son, and on Saturday the infant was taken to be christened from the Brooke town house

in the Blackfriars to the same room at Westminster where his parents had been married little more than nine months earlier. The unidentified reporter who left an account of the Cobham wedding also set down the details of the christening:

> Itm On Wenysdaye the iiijth of decembre 1560, A^{o} Tercio Elizabeth Regine, the sayd ladye [Cobham] lyinge at her howsse wthin the late Blacke ffreeres at london, abowt x of the Clocke in the fornone the seyd Wenysdaye, was delyu'ed of A sonne, and on Seturedaye next aftre in the aftre none towarde the Evenynge, she was caryed & conveyd to the Courte (the Quenes ma^{tie} lyinge at her pallace of westm') by dyu'sse ladyes as the ladye Dacres of the Sowthe theldre & the lady Dacres the yonger her doughter in lawe, the ladye harte, the ladye Broke, the ladye Mason & dyu'sse other, wth a greate companye of gentlemen of the seyd lordes s^{r}uantes & others, Where in the Quenes greate closset was preparyd the syluer fonte & all other thinges necessarye for the seyd Chrystenynge.

The ladies who figured most prominently in Lady Cobham's escort were her husband's relatives and the friends whom he had inherited from his father. Lady Hart was his aunt, by birth a Braye. Lady Brooke was the thrice widowed Margaret Butler, lately the wife of the Marian Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, Sir David Brooke, who had been a distant cousin of the Lords Cobham: she was soon to take as her last husband Edward Lord North of Kirtling. Lady Mason was an Isley of Kent, the sister of two of the leaders of the Wyatt rebellion; her husband was the experienced politician Sir John Mason, who had been important under Edward VI and Mary, but whom Elizabeth distrusted. The appearance of the Ladies Dacres in the procession going to the palace is more surprising than that of the others: Mary Lady Dacres was Cobham's sister-in-law when he was married to Dorothy Neville, and might have been expected to show some resentment toward the baron if her sister's life with him had been as unpleasant as one suspects it was. Yet there, beside Frances Newton's litter, were she and Anne Sackville, her son's wife and the sister of another of Cobham's friends, the brilliant Thomas Lord Buckhurst.[6]

Once Lady Cobham, her child and her escort were settled in the great closet, there,

> at the tyme of Evenynge prayer the Quenes ma^{tie} cam & christenyd the same who was godmother therunto & namyd Maxymylyan, Wyll̃m Parre m'quys of Northm̃pton & Henrye Erle of Arundell beinge the godfathers who aftre the Chrystenynge endyd there wasshyd & gaue presentes to the seyd Chylde as followeth.[7]

The account ends abruptly: no list of christening gifts and givers was ever added to it: but, from the names already mentioned, it is clear that the ceremony befitted

.n pomp the child of the marriage which had been celebrated so ostentatiously earlier in the year.

A most striking detail of the christening was the bestowal upon Cobham's son of the name 'Maximilian'. It was not a Brooke name, nor a Newton one; no Tudor ever bore it, nor, apparently, did a Parr or a FitzAlan of Arundel. Yet in 1560 it was a name full of significance, for it was that of the heir to the Holy Roman Empire. The project of allying England with Austria through the marriage of Queen Elizabeth with one of the sons of the Emperor Ferdinand had been broached as early as December 1558. Maximilian, the eldest of the princes, was not himself eligible, for he was already married; of his brothers, by the time that the first phase of the marriage negotiations ended in March 1560, Elizabeth had chosen the Archduke Charles as the prince whose suit she would consider. Yet it was Maximilian, not his younger brother, who would, as emperor, one day head the house of Austria; and, while it was merely a hope of the projectors of the marriage that Charles would prove amenable in the matter of religion should he come to England, it was common knowledge that Maximilian was already causing his Catholic father and the papacy much anxiety by his public show of unorthodoxy. For a noble couple at the English Court who wished to provide their son with a name which he could bear with pride, none was more auspicious than that of the man of whom Protestants expected much, and who Englishmen had reason to think might one day be the elder brother of their king. While there is no evidence that Lord Cobham favoured the Austrian match, it is known that his wife supported it, and there are cogent reasons for suspecting that she was as bold as she could be in showing her disapproval of the French alternative to it. A further indication that the Brookes were not inimical to the archduke is argued by the dispatch of Henry Cobham to Vienna with the Earl of Sussex when the negotiations were nearing the culmination of the second stage in 1567. Moreover, Secretary Cecil was a warmer advocate of the Austrian than he was of any other suitor for the queen's hand.[8] One may even suggest that it was at Elizabeth's instigation that Lord and Lady Cobham gave their first son that particular name. It is generally agreed that Elizabeth held the suit of the archduke in reserve during the first

.en years of her reign, that she used the threat of allying herself with Austria as a weapon against the French. In March 1560 the imperial ambassadors left England in disgust at "the wanton waywardness of this Queen";[9] if the Austrians were not to be permanently estranged, Elizabeth could not leave them long in their unfriendly mood before making a conciliatory, even an encouraging gesture toward them. By giving, at a splendid assembly of her Court in December, the name of the future emperor to the child of two of her most prominent subjects, the queen may well have been making one of those signs which was meant for the eyes of all Europe: committing her to nothing, too intangible an indication of renewed interest in the archduke ever to require explanation, yet meaningful enough to those who were looking for meaning, such a piece of subtlety was just what one imagines would have appealed to Elizabeth. If one attributes to it no more than that it seems to be eminently probable, one may accept the Austrian hypothesis as the answer to the problem of where Maximilian Brooke got his name.

The pride of seeing a child of his become the cynosure of the Court was one which Lord Cobham knew more than once. Having presented her husband with an heir to his title, Lady Cobham next bore him two daughters; Elizabeth was most probably named after the queen and the Marchioness of Northampton, and Frances, despite the existence of her half-sister, was given her mother's name. Although there is conflicting evidence concerning the exact date of their birth, Elizabeth and Frances Brooke seem to have been born at Cobham Hall in the evening of Monday, 12 January 1561/2;[10] they were probably christened in Kent, but one may assume that their birth created some excitement in the queen's circle, for, from the family protrait executed in 1567, it would appear that the Brooke girls were identical twins. One wonders why Sir John Harington, in commenting thirty years later upon

> the rare, and (as it were) cunning workmanship of nature; admirable, as well in making so many sundrie countenances, one vnlike another: as also somtimes in making some so exceeding like,

did not cite them among the twins whom he knew personally or by current report.[11]

In the year after the double birth the Cobhams' third and youngest daughter was born, in the morning of Wednesday, 2 June 1563.[12] It is possible that Lady

Cobham was staying with the Cecils at the time of her confinement, for Margaret was born at Hackney, where the Secretary had a house,[13] and since the plague was so rife in London that summer that by August important prisoners of state were being removed from the Tower in order to keep them from contagion,[14] it is conceivable that Lady Cobham was afraid of lying in at her own town house in the city. Margaret's christening also took place at Hackney, but, oddly enough, not until she was more than a year old, for the registers of St. John's record that the ceremony took place on 8 June 1564.[15] The little girl was given her grandmother Newton's name.

After Margaret Brooke's birth, Lord Cobham's wife bore only male children, the first of whom was born when the early period of quiet in Cobham's life was fast approaching its end. The child was eventually to succeed to the great patrimony of the Brookes and to waste it utterly; he was to become Henry, the last of the Brooke Lords Cobham of Kent. It is perplexing to find historiographers having difficulty in establishing Henry's birthdate,[16] for it is well substantiated, as are some of the circumstances of his christening. One can even say what was the state of the weather when he was born, and thus record a piece of information which was once regarded as indispensable by those who thought that they could see in such meteorological details portents of a baby's future. On 4 December 1564 the Spanish ambassador wrote to his king of the bad weather which London had been enduring (there had been "high winds and heavy rains") and a month later the Spaniard was noting that

> the changes of weather have been such that it suddenly turned from heat to a cold so intense that the river here is frozen over and people walk upon it as they do the streets. Natives say they have never seen such a thing before.[17]

In such a season was Henry Brooke born at Cobham Hall, in the early morning hours of Wednesday, 22 November 1564. Chosen to be one of his godparents was Henry Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, the brother-in-law of Leicester and the eldest son of the Pole heiress of the Plantagenets. A leading Protestant, Huntingdon was regarded by Spain as the principal rival to Mary of Scots for the position of heir presumptive to the Throne.[18] The child's godmother was Lady Abergavenny, the sister-in-law of Cobham's first wife. Whether or not the Nevilles were friendly

with the Brookes by 1564, only five years after Dorothy's death, Lady Abergavenny had personal connections with both Lord Cobham and his second wife which explain why she should have consented to be their son's sponsor, for she was by birth Frances Manners, a daughter of the house of Rutland and a grand-daughter of Sir William Paston, with whom the Newtons were closely allied. It was not, however, the earl or the baroness who lent most interest to the christening of Cobham's second son, nor who probably made it necessary to bring the infant up to Court for the ceremony. For the third godparent was a personage who could hardly have been asked to go into the country to honour a lord's younger son. He was Henry Stewart, Earl of Darnley, who was to become King of Scotland within a year and the victim of the atrocity of Kirk o' Fields in little more than another.[19] Darnley's father, the Earl of Lennox, had been permitted to go into Scotland in September, ostensibly to claim his Scottish estates, actually to prepare the way for his son's marriage with Queen Mary. By November, when Henry Brooke was born, the English government was trying desperately to call Lennox back to England, but already Cecil's agents were finding that there was "'marvellous good liking of the young Lord'" in the North, and that it was too late to prevent Darnley's becoming king.[20] Darnley was anxious to join his father and, although "My Lord Darlyes going [was] denyed by the Quene,"[21] in February 1565 Elizabeth suddenly did an about-face and gave the earl her permission to go to Edinburgh. It was while the question of what was to happen to Darnley was thus exercising the minds of the Court that Lord Cobham obtained the young man's consent to stand godfather to his son. The Countess of Lennox may have been the means whereby Cobham approached Darnley: although there is no more to go on than the word of the often misled Spanish ambassador, the countess is said to have regarded the Brookes as supporters of her claim to the succession.[22] In considering how likely it is that Cobham's acquaintance with Lady Lennox contributed to his getting her son to do the infant honour, one unfortunately raises the complex question of what was the real nature of the Brookes' association with the Catholic faction at Court, and the attempt to unravel this problem must be deferred to a later point in their story. One may remark, however, that the juxtaposition at his son's font of the Protestant Hunting-

don and the Catholic Darnley indicates in Cobham a Cecil-like refusal to commit himself to any one of the parties clamouring for the queen's recognition. One may also observe that, in 1564, it was as the English-born son of Lady Lennox that Darnley was asked to become Henry Brooke's godfather, not as the consort of the Scottish queen. The Brookes' involvement with Mary Stuart came later. Cobham's son, so long as Elizabeth lived, cannot have benefited from his baptismal connection with the unfortunate Henry Stewart; it was only after Darnley's son became King James I and forced Henry Brooke to plead to him for his life that there was any point to Brooke's reminding his sovereign that "yr matie noble father, did Christen me."[23]

All thoughts of the disaster which was to overtake the house of Cobham in the reign of James -- indeed, the very thought of a James itself -- were virtually inconceivable at the time when Lady Cobham assured her husband of an heir by bearing his second son. While the size of his family grew, Lord Cobham made the final break with his own youth. On 5 May 1561, six months after the birth of Maximilian, the baron was granted licence out of the Court of Wards and Liveries to take possession of his patrimony, and to receive the income from his estates which had accumulated since his father's death.[24] Soon afterward he seems to have begun to take an interest in trade.

On 12 July 1561 Cobham was granted a two-year licence to import 400 tuns of French or Gascon wine at the Port of London, at an especially low customs rate, and on condition that the importers export a fixed amount of "wares 'in the grough [produce] of this realme'".[25] The 'grough' in which the baron was particularly interested was wool, or, rather, cloth. Robert Furley, in his excellent study of the cloth industry which grew rapidly in Kent in the sixteenth century,[26] shows how prominent a part Cobham took in protecting the local clothiers. In this activity Cobham could not rely upon his friend Cecil's support. Indeed, Conyers Read has convincingly shown that the Secretary's thinking in matters of trade was definitely reactionary. Cecil regarded the cloth-making industry as pernicious to agriculture because it took up too many workers who had previously worked on the land. He thought that the clothiers were bad, because unruly, citizens: dependent

upon the fluctuations in foreign trade for their livelihood, they were less complacent than husbandmen, whose position was more stable. He disliked, moreover, England's dependence upon Antwerp, the clearing-house of English unfinished cloth, both because it could be shut to English traders by its Spanish rulers at a moment's notice, and because its location in the Netherlands made it too accessible to smugglers who could evade export duty by illegally transporting their wares from Kent and thus deprive the Exchequer of much of the revenue derived from shipping out of the Port of London. "In short," says Read, Cecil

> contemplated with equanimity the return to something like medieval conditions of English trade when the Staplers dominated the export business and primary commodities like wool, wool fells and leather were stock in trade.[27]

Cobham's attitude was markedly different, and after Parliament in 1566 passed an act by which Kent and Suffolk were forbidden to export the unfinished cloth which was the staple of the Antwerp market,[28] he did what he could to have the measure reversed. Cobham had a personal interest in the trade. He was seeking an export licence which Cecil, evidently attributing to the queen his own attitude to the request, refused him. "The Clothes Styck hard," wrote the Secretary on 23 March 1567/8, adding that he had told another peer interested in obtaining a licence

> That Hir Majty as I thought had Accorded If it shuld Pass to Gratefy your L with it, because yow first moved it.[29]

Initiation of the suit, however, availed Cobham little, and on 26 March Cecil reported that

> The matter of the Clothes for Kent is Utterly Refused hytherto, What tyme will Work better I will Attend.[30]

Nor did Cobham succeed with his further plea of 6 September 1568, in which he asserted that it would be a pity to strangle a growing manufacturing industry which was already producing 12,000 pieces of cloth a year in Kent alone.[31] To change Cecil's antipathetic attitude toward the new trade a good deal of time was required. Patiently Cobham petitioned the government not only to allow him personally to deal in cloth, but also to recognize the indispensability to his home county of the lucrative industry. As much as £ 26,000 a year was brought into Kent, according to one of the documents which the baron submitted to the

government, by the cloth trade. Half of the inhabitants of the cloth-making areas in Kent would be without jobs if they were forced to return to agricultural pursuits, and, if the act of 1566 were not soon repealed, this widespread unemployment would inevitably take place, for the Continental market would vanish when the Dutch realized that they could make their own fine cloth from the English wool with which Cecil's policy was so freely supplying them.

> 'For the said inhabitants ["'of the said dukedom of Burgundy'"] lack not our cloths because they cannot make them, but have them because they can buy them better cheap of the English merchants than they can make them selves, so as they buy them unwrought and otherwise they will buy none.'

"'Clothing'", ran the burden of the clothiers' plea and Cobham's,

> in the said Wylde [weald] of Kent is the nurse of the people, so that in maintaining clothing, the people are maintained; decay the clothing, and the people decay.'[32]

Cecil's attitude was that those for whom the wool trade could not provide employment could be sent as colonists to Ireland,[33] and nothing was done for the Kentishmen. To Cobham himself, however, the queen finally granted a licence to export 2000 unfinished Kentish cloths a year. The grant was unfortunately made in 1575, when the Prince of Orange was virtually blockading Antwerp and an Englishman's chances of having a cargo reach that city in safety were slight indeed. On 23 August, evidently in the hope that the queen would succeed in her attempts to make Orange change his policy,[34] Cobham asked Cecil for

> a favourable letter to the Custom House officers of London that he may pass the same, 'now that our merchants do begin to repair to Antwerp.[35]

Cecil replied from Theobalds on 15 September; his letter was courteous enough, but it displayed some of the Secretary's disapproval of the whole business of Kentish trade with the Low Countries. "My good Lord," it began,

> I did forbare to answer you at Woodstocke by my Letters there written concerning your Request for the Licenss to carry unwroght Kentish Clothes, because I was then sekeing Leaue to come Home, from whence I ment to send for Mr. Byrd, to conferr with hym thereupon; and I have willed hym to permit your Lordship and your Factors to take the yearly Benefit. Wherein I must require your Lordship, that there may good Regard be had that your Factors do duly pay to the Qvene Majesty hir Dutyes. For of late I am informed, that many Clothes pass by sundry Creeks in Kent that pay nothing; Mr. Byrd is desirous your Lordship would use London principally.[36]

One hears no more of Cobham's attempts to profit by, and also to relieve, the

cloth trade. The sack of Antwerp by the Spanish mercenaries in 1576, and the persistent instability of the situation in the Netherlands thereafter, no doubt discouraged him from sinking any more of his capital into so hazardous a venture as exportation to an uncertain market of a commodity whose manufacture the government was inhibiting.

It was early in the 1560s, at about the time from which the first indications of his interest in the Antwerp market come, that Cobham's employment of agents abroad seems to have begun. These men reported to him, as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, on activities on the Continent which might interest the English government, and about which it was especially important that the guardian of the south-eastern coast should know. They were generally Italians, and their letters, containing cryptic allusions to affairs now usually impenetrable but with which Cobham was at the time evidently too well acquainted for his correspondents to have to explain them to him, the baron seems always to have sent on to Cecil. They bear the Secretary's endorsements, and may be regarded as supplementary to his own intelligence methods.[37] Information which was probably obtained from one such informant, however, Cobham seems to have sent to the queen herself, and so to have provoked from the Earl of Leicester a letter which, because it comments upon the illegibility of the baron's handwriting, a biographer of Cobham must especially appreciate. "I haue showed her ma^{tie} y^{r} letter," wrote the perplexed earl,

> & nether of vs can Rede the name but I conceue it to be the matter y^{w} gaue warning of a good while sence. Yf yt be y^{r} L shall do well to be carefull of yt & yf y^{r} health did p^{r}myt yt I wysh y^{w} may to morrow or the next day to signyfye the mã & matter to her y^{r} self. She wyll take yt well. god kepe y^{w} & gev y^{w} health.[38]

Leicester wrote his note "lat at nyght"; if he and the queen had pored over Cobham's indecipherable scrawl by candle light, one can only commend him for the restraint with which he informed the baron of their failure to make it out.

Facetiousness must not, however, obscure the fact that in 1563, the year to which the great favourite's undated note is tentatively assigned, Leicester was chief among the powers at Court who treated Cobham with great honour. On 10 April the first session of Elizabeth's second Parliament was prorogued. Cobham had

attended the opening on 12 January, walking with his fellow barons, "their Mantles, Hoods, and Circot furr'd, and two Rows of Miniver on their right Shoulder";[39] in the Commons had sat at least three, and perhaps even five members for the Cinque Ports who Sir John Neale thinks owed their seats to Cobham's influence. The baron had been, says Neale, "clearly feeling his way" in this first election to take place since his assumption of office in the bailiwick over which he was later to wield wide political power.[40] Neither Cobham nor any of his nominees made a memorable impression upon the Parliament of 1563, that assembly which first seriously annoyed the queen about the question of her marriage and the establishment of the succession. After its prorogation, however, Cobham found that he was well regarded by the peers with whom he had been sitting in the Upper House. At the ceremonies held in celebration of St. George's Day the Knights of the Garter met to consider the candidates whose names would be submitted to the queen for election to their order. Thirteen Knights cast three votes each, one for a prince or a peer above the rank of viscount, one for a viscount or a baron, and another for a knight. Led by Leicester, who had regularly supported Cobham's nomination since his own election in 1559, all thirteen Knights gave their second votes to the baron. Cecil, too, was nominated, but four Knights withheld their approval of his candidacy. It was of course the Sovereign alone who could appoint her companions within the order, and, despite the expression of a unanimous wish to see Cobham elected, the queen in 1563 bestowed the Garter upon the Earl of Northumberland and upon Leicester's brother, Warwick. The right of the two earls to the first vacant stalls at Windsor had long been recognized, and it was evidently their senior claims which deprived Cobham of the honour. The fact that the Knights themselves had considered him worthy to sit among them, however, must have been accounted by the baron an honour scarcely less valuable than election to the order itself.[41]

* * *

Chapter VI

The years 1563 and 1564 are the last in which Cobham may be said to have lived at all privately. Henceforth circumstances forced him and his wife to play an

increasingly large part in the life of the Court. The fatal illness of the Marchioness of Northampton took her and Lady Cobham to Antwerp in April 1564, where the baron hoped that the Dutch specialists could cure his sister of the cancer in her breast. The inability of the doctors to do anything to save Elizabeth Brooke's life presaged a great change in aristocratic society, where the queen, deprived of her chief female favourite, would have to turn to other ladies for the kind of companionship and service which the marchioness had given her. Lady Cobham, when the seriousness of her sister-in-law's condition was made clear, was carrying her second son; she may not have known that, little more than a year later, the fact that she was again pregnant would give rise to an involved political joke with connotations of great interest to all the chancelleries of Europe. For the death of the Marchioness of Northampton in April 1565 was to result in a sharp increase in Lady Cobham's importance and influence about the queen.

Arising also out of the anxious visit to Antwerp was Cobham's first acknowledgement of a private worry which was soon to become a public embarrassment to the Brookes. In writing to Cecil on 16 April 1564 about the success of his party's crossing to the Continent, the baron added a note on the military activities of the Spanish authorities in the Netherlands. As he reported,

> thyr ys in thys too dayes mayd a proclamans [proclamation] that noo shyppe shayll passe Into Innglaynde In so moche that ther ys at thys preseynt In selaynde [Zealand] a 400 saylle that were reddy:[1]

that is, the government of the Netherlands had ordered a stay of merchant shipping because a fleet had been assembled in preparation for what looked like an imminent invasion of England. The stay of shipping was the answer of the Spanish regent, Margaret of Parma, to Elizabeth's embargo on imports into England from the Netherlands. Earlier in April an envoy of Margaret's had gone to London and unsuccessfully protested about it,[2] and the regent's move which Cobham reported was evidently intended to suggest that she had retaliatory measures to take where verbal opposition failed. No invasion seems actually to have been intended. (On 18 November 1564, however, long after the Brookes returned to England, the Privy Council ordered

> the Recevour of Kent to pay, according to suche warrante as the said Lord Cobham shall sende unto him, all suche somes of money as are due unto the nombers encreased in the late doubtfull tymes in the fortes and bulwarkes of Kent, being extraordinary.[3]

Yet if his letter of 16 April contained a false alarm, Cobham's next message to Cecil was better informed, for it stressed the complaints which Margaret of Parma and her ministers were making against English privateers. In writing it on 22 April, Cobham gave himself some personal pain:

> On[e] other thynge they fynde theym sealfes agrevyd, wyche ys they [the] gret depredatyons apoō they seese, wheryn all thowghe ther I doo towche a brother of myne, yet for deutye sacke, I cane not omytt yt.[4]

It was indeed the activities of English seamen, armed with letters of marque to attack and seize enemy ships during the recently concluded Anglo-French war, which were the main irritant in the international trade situation. As Read says,

> some 400 English adventurers were engaged in the business, with not less than 25,000 seamen and soldiers. Inevitably these English privateers were not too careful what shipping suffered in consequence, particularly the shipping to and from the Spanish Netherlands.[5]

The English government turned, as often as possible, a blind eye upon such depredations; the seamen took their own risks, not only in hazarding their lives in fights at sea, but in accepting the possibility that they might at any time be repudiated by their government, brought to justice for abusing their licences, and thus sacrificed in the interests of international diplomacy. All of the queen's ministers but one might accept the lot of the privateers with equanimity; the exception was Cobham, for one of the chief of the sea robbers who was liable at any time to summary arraignment for piracy was his brother Thomas, the elder of the two Brookes of that name.

Soon after the return of Lady Northampton, her brother and sister-in-law from Antwerp in 1564, the house of Cobham was thus forced to adapt itself to changed circumstances. The demands which the queen made upon Lady Cobham's time and strength became pressing, and necessitated the baroness's constant attendance at Court; meanwhile the case of Thomas Brooke began to occupy whatever was the Elizabethan counterpart of the modern news headline. Lady Cobham's new situation made the family more directly significant politically, while the privateer's apprehen-

sion and trial made it notorious.

By the time that the marchioness died in the spring of 1565, Lady Cobham must have begun to take over many of her duties about the queen's person; the baroness's appointment as Mistress of the Robes, at any rate, and her assumption, apparently in conjunction with Lady Clinton, of the rôle of royal confidante, followed almost immediately upon the favourite's death.[6] His wife's service to Elizabeth seems occasionally to have caused Cobham anxiety. In the summer of 1565 the Princess Cecilia Vasa, sister of the King of Sweden and of the prince who had dancedaat the Cobhams' wedding, came on an extravagant visit to England so that she might become acquainted with a queen whom she professed much to admire. With the princess came her husband, the Margrave of Baden. On 26 August the queen wrote to Lord Cobham to inform him of the imminent arrival of the royal couple at one of the ports within the baron's jurisdiction. Cecil's minute of the letter survives:

> By the Quen.
> Right trusty and welbeloued. We grete you well. Wheras the Lady Cecilia Sister to the King of Sweden is like to arryve very shortly at Dover with the Marquis of Baden her husband for that we are aduertised that she is commyng by Land from Emden to Dunkerke where she shuld be arryved as yesterdaye. Bycause our mynd is that both at her Landing and also in her waye to our Cite of London she be as honorably vsed as is mete for such a personnage our will and pleasr is that ye put your sealf in order to repayr vnto Dover aswell accompanyd as the tyme shall serve you both of your own gentlemen and srvauntes and also of the gentlemen of worship next dwelling about Cantrbury & Dover, and wtin ye cinq portes sending in the mean tyme sum man of your ow̃ thethr that may with all speed aduertise you of the sayd Ladyes arryvall so as you may be as our chief officer there at her Landyng redy to receve and byd her welcū in our name. And so conduct her so farr as the bounds of your office doth extende ....[7]

Four days later Elizabeth wrote in florid Latin to Cecilia, "Chariss' soror ac consanguinea nobis predilecta". Uncertain both of the specific port at which the princess would arrive, and of the exact date of her arrival, the queen said that she had instructed her dearly beloved servant the Lady Cobham ("chariss' nobis Dominam Cobhamā vxorem Baronis Cobham admirallij quíq' portuū") to stand by, ready to greet Cecilia in the queen's name at any time and to escort her to London.[8]

The matter seemed to be arranged: Lord and Lady Cobham would go to the coast and fetch the princess to the queen. Lady Cobham was, however, in the sixth

month of pregnancy in August 1565, the fifth in less than seven years of marriage, and Lord Cobham was anxious for her. The baron therefore wrote as plainly as he could to Cecil on 1 September, arguing both his own inability to sustain the cost of entertaining the royal visitors, and the lack of consideration which the queen had shown in expecting his wife to overtax her strength at that particular time. "Sir," Cobham began with unusual forthrightness,

> I had thowght that the state of my wyffes boddy, beinge now (as she is) a woman wt chylde: the consideration of the condition I stande in, beinge vnto dive. e persons in diverse sortes alredey grettley indetted (wyche I thincke yow arre not altogether ignorant of) and the busines that I ame at this tyme occupoyed abowte, wolde have helde (yff not my selffe) yet my wyffe at home. But I playnley see that that thinge, yt as a matter of sume detriment is by sute removed from other ys imposed vppõ me, wyche I wold make a smalle accompte off, yff my habilitey werre as good as my will. But suerley (sir) these extraordinarey charges to grett to be borne by me will erre it be long (I feere) drive me to make vnto her Maiestey some speciall sute and declaration of the plyght I stande in.
> I have gevon suche order (as the shortnesse off this tyme will suffer) for the bringinge of my wyffe to Cobham.
> As sone as I maye heare that the ladey Cecilia is like to arive at dover, my wyffe shall like wyse wt such spede as a woman in her case maye make, drawe towardes Cauntorburey, And I my selffe will wayte vppõ the sayd ladey at dover.
> I wolde be gladde to vnderstande what place in cauntorburey her Maiestey will thincke mete to have the sayde ladey lodged yn. The howse that I have there ys wholey vnfurnisshed of stuffe: and to saye the trowthe so bilded as yt is yet vnmete for anye suche purpose. And therefore I wolde in this pointe be gladd to knowe her mateys resolution. The cõmon Innes there be suche as betwene dover and gravesend arr noe worse....[9]

Cobham had cogent arguments indeed for asking to be excused from the duty assigned to him. His particular debts at this time cannot be singled out, but the 'busines that I ame at this tyme occupoyed abowte' was in itself enough to take up all his time, for it concerned a royal command to rid Kentish ports and harbours of pirates like his brother. Thomas Brooke was himself, moreover, when arrangements for the Swedish princess's visit were being made, about to be sentenced to death unless his family could somehow interfere with the processes of justice. The baron was obviously justified in thinking that he had enough on his hands without undertaking the reception of foreign royalty. Having put his case to Cecil on 1 September, Cobham became even bolder the next day. News had reached him of the arrival of Cecilia at Calais, and he was going to receive her at Dover. He himself would

do what was expected of him, he told Cecil on 2 September, but his wife would not be joining him in the reception committee. "I have (as I wrotte yesterdaye vnto yow)," Cobham wrote,

> geven order for the bringing of my wyffe vnto Cobham but I do not heare that she is yet there. And therefore I do muche feere she shall hardeley be able in any parte of the waye to awayte vpõ this sayde ladye aswell for the state of her owne boddey that cannot now well agree w^{t} spedey and hastey Jorneys as also wante of suche psonages of countenance in this sheare as sholde ther be in her cõpaney.[10]

Cobham, however, was fighting a losing battle, courageous though he was in attempting to cross the queen. Elizabeth knew as well as the baron that Lady Cobham was pregnant: that fact was evidently not to be considered. As for the deficiencies in the baroness's escort, these were summarily made up by a royal letter of 3 September to fourteen of Kent's most prominent inhabitants. Among them were Cobham's aunt, Lady Hart, and, probably, his brother John's wife, the widowed Lady Norton. Cobham himself, apparently to correct any possible misconceptions which he might have about his own duty, was included in the list.[11] When, therefore, Cecilia reached Canterbury,

> the honorable Lorde Cobbham Lorde wardein of the Cinque portes, and his vertuous Ladie (accoumpanied with the honorable and wourshippfull of the Shyre) Receaved her and Conveyed her to Rochester, where God encreased her joye: for beinge Lykelie there in her Inne to travayle, yt pleased him to reserve the same untill a better time: which she perceyvinge passed foorthe the nexte daie from thence to Gravesende.[12]

It had probably surprised Cobham and his wife to discover upon meeting the princess that she was herself about to bear a child; no doubt they were relieved when it was not born in one of the inns of which the baron had so poor an opinion, for the queen would then surely have taken them to task for refusing a prince a birthplace at least as appropriate as Cobham Hall.

On 11 September the princess entered London. As the Spanish ambassador wrote of her arrival,

> the king of Sweden's sister entered London at two o'clock in the afternoon. She is very far advanced in pregnancy, and was dressed in a black velvet robe with a mantle of black cloth of silver, and wore on her head a golden crown. As this seemed to me a new style of dress, I venture to relate these trifles to your Majesty. She had with her six ladies dressed in crimson taffety with mantles of the same. She was received at Dover by Lord and Lady Cobham, the latter of whom is mi stress of the robes to the Queen.[13]

Four days after reaching her destination, on 15 September, Cecilia was at last delivered of a son, whom she named Edward Fortunatus. Considering how awkward might have been a birth at sea or on the way up from Dover, the name was apt.

Lady Cobham's duties did not end with the dispatch of her commission to bring Cecilia to the queen. On 7 October Elizabeth went to see her visitor and the new baby, and she took the baroness with her. On the way back to the palace the queen and her companion were accompanied by the debonair Guzman de Silva, whose company Elizabeth found congenial and with whom she was often consciously indiscreet. Lady Cobham's pregnancy was on this occasion used by the queen as a gambit with which to open a conversation about the perennial question of the desirability of her having a consort. The next day de Silva told his master, King Philip, about what she had said:

> Although the Queen went by water on her visit, she returned by road in a coach with her Mistress of the Robes. She said we are three of us in this coach, and some people would make us out to be four, meaning by that that the Mistress of the Robes was pregnant. I answered that her people were right in wishing it were so, upon which she said, 'And you; whom do you wish it was by?' I replied that I was so anxious to please her that I would not venture to determine until she let me know her own wishes. As I have said, the Mistress of the Robes was with her, who has favoured the suit of the Archduke, and by their side was the equerry, who is a creature of Lord Robert [i.e., Leicester]. The latter, as he recently told me, must have lost all hope. There is so much change here that it is quite bewildering, and the Queen's question must have had some aim.[14]

Europe was for many years to debate the problem of whom Elizabeth would choose to sit beside her, whether on the Throne or in her public appearances. On 7 October 1565, at any rate, it was the foetal William Brooke who shared the royal coach with the queen and her companions. Lady Cobham gave birth to him two months later, on Thursday, 11 December, and, in recognition of the elevated circles into which his mother had carried him, the infant was made the godson of the Princess Cecilia, of the Duke of Norfolk, England's premier peer, and of the queen's great-uncle and Lord Chamberlain, William Lord Howard of Effingham.[15]

Cobham's anxiety over his wife's condition in the late summer of 1565 was by no means the only thing that occupied his mind in that year. In April there had been his sister's death, in July had come the frightening prospect of his brother Thomas's execution. Cobham's acknowledgement of Thomas Brooke's privateering

activities, in his letter to Cecil from Antwerp of April 1564, was rather belated: Brooke had already been denounced to the queen before Cobham and his party left England for the Netherlands that spring.

Modern opinions of Thomas Brooke vary. Rogers calls him "a man of infamous character, the 'scapegrace of the family,' ... [who] became a buccaneer of the worst class, with revolting cruelty".[16] A different view of him is taken by Spencer Hall who, rhapsodizing upon the exploits of any enemy of Philip of Spain, sees Brooke as a hero, and even assumes, incorrectly, that he led other members of his family into the privateering attack on Spanish shipping. "The Cobhams," writes Hall,

> are a type of the younger sons of noble families, and of races now honourable for centuries in their own counties, who left many an ancient mansion, and many a pleasant country-seat, thick-girt with patriarchal trees, accompanied with a few retainers, or alone, for brave adventure on the 'Narrow Seas.' They set forth, urged by the strong impulse of the age, to ravage the coast of Spain or of her colonial possessions, to intercept the fleet laden with the wealth of the Indies, and to fight beside the Huguenot in France, or the persecuted in the Netherlands, or wherever there was need of the stout heart, for that Reformed religion which to them was honour, fame, -- ay, even Life eternal.[17]

Froude of course agrees with Hall. "The sons of Lord Cobham of Cowling Castle," he writes,

> who had first distinguished themselves in Wyatt's rebellion, had grown up after the type of their boyhood, irregular lawless Protestants; and one of them, Thomas Cobham, was at this time roving the seas, half pirate, half knight-errant of the Reformation, doing battle on his own account with the enemies of the truth, where-ever the service to God was likely to be repaid with plunder. He was one of a thousand whom Elizabeth was forced for decency's sake to condemn and disclaim in proclamations, and whom she was as powerless as she was probably unwilling to interfere with in practice.[18]

Motives are notoriously difficult to ascertain. Historians, however, who think that Thomas Brooke went to sea to oppose Roman Catholicism do so in contravention of the facts of his later alliance with the papist elements in England. One cannot commend him for his defence of the Protestant faith. Deprived of Froude's romantic epithet, "half knight-errant of the Reformation", Brooke is pretty well left with only the name of pirate. He seems to have deserved it.

The exploit which brought Brooke into trouble in 1565 was his capture of a Spanish ship early in the previous year, just before the peace between England and

France was concluded. R.G. Marsden, whose careful examination of the records of the Court of Admiralty is incorporated in a series of articles in the English Historical Review, reconstructs the story.

> Before peace had been made with France Thomas Cobham in the 'George', also called the 'Bark Cobham', was cruising off St. Jean de Luz in company with Martin Frobisher in the 'Anne Appleyard'. Cobham fell in with a Spanish ship, the 'Katherine', which he says he mistook for a Frenchman. When he hailed her to come alongside she showed fight, and he thereupon fired upon her. After a severe engagement, in which forty of his men were killed or wounded, the 'Katherine' was captured, partly, no doubt, owing to the presence of the 'Anne Appleyard', which came up at the close of the fight. As it would not have been safe to take a Spanish prize to England she was taken by Cobham to Baltimore, in Ireland, where, 'to shadow their evil doings,' he purposely wrecked her, taking care, however, to preserve her cargo of wines. These were sent in small craft to St. Ives, where they were taken charge of by Peter Killigrew and Richard Erizye, who acted as receivers and agents for Cobham and Frobisher. Unfortunately for the captors the 'Katherine' had on board some tapestries, which seem to have been intended for the use of Philip himself. The Spanish ambassador demanded instant restitution of the goods and exemplary punishment of the spoilers. The council, having no excuse to offer, sent an urgent order to Arthur Champernowne, vice-admiral of Devonshire, to arrest the goods at Plymouth, whither they had been sent from St. Ives and there sold to William and John Hawkyns.... The vice-admiral was further directed to arrest John and Martin Frobisher and Thomas Cobham.[19]

Brooke's offence was obviously serious enough, but it was thought at the time to be even worse. Not knowing what had happened to the ship, her captain and crew after the English attack, the merchants of Antwerp banded together under the leadership of Louis Romano and made a concerted protest to their own government and to the English authorities. To Cardinal Granvelle, the Spanish regent's minister, Romano wrote on 20 February 1563/4. The 'Katherine', he said, had had on board a cargo worth 80,000 ducats (that is, about £ 36,000), and forty prisoners destined for the Spanish galleys in punishment for their "'graves delitos dignos de punicion y castigo'", offenders who Froude says were, "of course, Inquisition prisoners, for other offenders would have been dealt with on the spot".[20] Romano asserted that Brooke killed the captain's brother and several of the crew, then boarded the helpless ship and sewed up the captain and the rest of his men in the main-sail, and finally threw the grisly package overboard, to be washed up later on the Spanish coast. Romano was quite definite about his facts:

> 'Tomáron á todos los que dentro iban, y los cosiéron en las velas, y los echáron á la mar, y en una de las velas se habian hallado 18 hombres ahogados en la costa de España. Crueldad nunca vista, y que en solo oyrlo quiebra el corazon.'[21]

Froude accepted this story without reservation, and retailed it both in his History of England and in his English Seamen; in its account of what Romano called heart-breaking cruelty it is indeed sensational, and appealed to Edward Thompson enough to make him include it in his biography of Ralegh.[22] The editors of the Victoria County History of Kent, however, brand it as "a deliberate Spanish lie".[23] They do so on the best evidence, for Marsden searched unsuccessfully for any mention of it in the Admiralty records of Brooke's subsequent trial. He found nothing, and in fact learned that the atrocity can never have been committed. The sailors whose bodies were washed up on the coast of Spain were only a few of the crew: some of the men, said Brooke himself, "went ashore of their own will at Belle Isle", while others, although indeed victims of his cruelty, died of ill-treatment below decks. One of their fellows who survived testified that "Cobham had kept them all below hatches for seven days, where they were so badly treated that some died." Moreover the captain, one Martin Santz de Chaves, was found by an Admiralty official to be alive in Baltimore.[24] The story of the mass killing of the Spanish crew, and of the creation of an astounding shroud out of the 'Katherine's' sails, was evidently a fabrication.

It is thus interesting to find Louis Romano writing to Queen Elizabeth at about the same time as he wrote to Cardinal Granvelle, and omitting all references to the murder of the captain and the crew.[25] Even without that accusation, however, Romano's charges against Thomas Brooke compelled the queen to act. When, on 29 March, Margaret of Parma officially required Elizabeth to proceed against the privateers, the regent enclosed a petition from the Antwerp merchants which once again recited Brooke's crimes, and pointed out that "this pirate is a brother of Lord Cobham, one of the Queen's Privy Council."[26] Cobham was not, of course, a Councillor in 1564, but he was, as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, a minister of the Crown, and one with peculiar responsibilities for administering maritime law along the coasts facing the Continent. Both he and the government knew that Brooke could not go unpunished. As John Cuerton, Henry Cobham's English friend at Bilbao, wrote to Cecil on 14 March, the Spanish would take vengeance on English merchants if the pirate were not made to pay. Cuerton, who evidently accepted the story that

Captain Santz de Chaves had been killed, reported that

> another ship of this town has been spoiled by Cobham, and a friar and another man killed. And since, about Christmas, two ships of Passages coming out of Flanders met with Cobham upon this coast, who killed the owner of the Spaniards' ships and another man, and hurt many of the Spaniards. One ship escaped and the other they carried to Ireland. She is esteemed to be worth 50,000 ducats [the conservative estimate advanced by the Antwerp merchants in opposition to Romano's claim that the 'Katherine's' cargo was worth 80,000 ducats]. Upon this the justices stayed all English ships, men, and goods on this coast. But within eight days all were put at liberty saving in the province of Guipuscoa [the Basque region which includes San Sebastian].[27]

The tense situation created by the privateers coincided with the dispatch to England in the early summer of 1564 of Don Guzman de Silva, the Spanish ambassador whom Elizabeth was to find so charming. On 11 June King Philip handed his new envoy instructions to pursue the demands which Spain had already made through Francis de Sweveghem, an officer of the Duke of Alba's. Philip undertook to try to lessen the tension; Elizabeth was to be asked to do the same,

> even in the case of certain robberies committed by some of her subjects, amongst others by Thomas Cobham, who, the Queen had promised Zweveghem, should receive an exemplary punishment if he was in England, but who nevertheless was seen by Zweveghem's people at Dover at the very time.[28]

The public appearance of Thomas Brooke in his brother's own bailiwick of the Cinque Ports could not be tolerated, and the queen, when she had heard the protestations of de Silva, issued a proclamation designed to leave the Spanish in no doubt of her good intentions. "By the Quene," began the proclamation formulistically,

> The Quenes Maiestie perceauing, that not withstanding the notorious offence of Thomas Cobham, committed on the Seas, against certayne Subiectes of her good brother the Kynge of Spayne, for apprehension of whome, commaundement hath ben giuen to the Portes of the Realme: yet the sayde Thomas Cobham, as it is reported, hath ben secretly in certayne places on the lande, nere the Sea side, and not apprehended. For remedy hereof, and for a direct and speedy proceeding in Iustice against him:
> Willeth and commaundeth all manner of persons, of what condition soeuer they be, to doe theyr vttermost to apprehende by Sea or by Lande the sayde Thomas, or any of his complices. And if any person shall harbour, or any wyse directly or indirectly, succour or relieue him, or any of his complices, or shall forbeare to doe theyr indeuour to stay him, or any of them, wheresoeuer he or they may reasonably be stayed: her Maiestie wyll, that such persons for such succouring of him, or forbearing to doe theyr indeuour to apprehende hym or his complices, shalbe taken and ordered as accessories to pyracie.
> Yeuen at Grenewiche, the xxi. of Iuly, the Sixt yere of her Maiesties most noble Reigne.[29]

Publicly, everything seemed to be ordered for Brooke's capture. That Lord Cobham need not have felt bound to exert himself unduly in searching the area of the Cinque Ports, however, is suggested by news which is contained in a letter from Oliver Leson, an Englishman resident in Seville, to the ambassador at Madrid, Sir Thomas Chaloner. The proclamation had been printed in England on 21 July 1564; on 24 August Leson wrote about the rumour that

> the Queen has delivered certain ships to Mr. [Thomas] Stukley, and he is bound for Florida; and to Hawkins, and Cobham, and others, who are bound for Guinea and the Portuguese Indies.[30]

Evidently the queen's orders were not to be taken seriously. Thus, while the culprit was allowed to escape in one of Elizabeth's own ships, the harmless farce went on of searching for him. Sir John Perrott, who is supposed to have been a bastard son of Henry VIII, must have been infuriated by the Council's directive of 15 September that he suspend one of his kinsmen for "marvelous insufficientye" in the matter of apprehending some of Brooke's men at Tenby;[31] when the Crown itself was playing so peculiar a game, minor provincial officials could not fairly be expected to take the queen's proclamation to heart.

Thus, throughout the winter of 1564-65, Brooke remained at large, much nearer to home than to the Indies. His colleague Frobisher had been arrested, but the dashing Stucley was free; indeed, Stucley's biographer shows that he and Brooke revealed themselves quite arrogantly in Ireland while the search was on for them. An Admiralty Court official, who tracked Brooke to Waterford, found the pirate "actually staying as a guest of Black Tom, the Earl of Ormonde, Queen Elizabeth's cousin".[32]

Then, on 31 March 1565, Guzman de Silva sent good news to King Philip:

> I have written to your Majesty that Stukeley had been captured in Ireland. They have not brought him here yet, but on the 29th instant they took Thomas Cobham and lodged him in the Tower. It was he who robbed the ship in which there were 40 galley slaves.[33]

Brooke had dared show himself in London; according to Sir Thomas Smith, who reviewed the situation for Cecil in a letter on 2 May,

> Stukely was taken in Ireland; and Tho. Cobham in London, at the suit of the Spanish ambassador, and the other by the Queen's ships, which were sent to scour the seas; and so there is no English pirate left upon the sea.[34]

What Lord Cobham felt about his brother's apprehension can only be imagined. He

himself could do little to help Thomas, for the Spanish ambassador would have protested strongly if justice were threatened by the biased intervention in the case of the Lord Warden. Nor could Cobham hope for much assistance from Cecil, for the Secretary professed to "'hate all piracies mortally,'"[35] and one suspects that he meant it. The queen was no doubt less rigid in her views: some of the most splendid of her subjects were called pirates, one of them later to be described as "that noble pirate, sir Francis Drake ... said to have surrounded this globe of earth:"[36] and privateering, or the licensing of it, was profitable to her Crown. Yet even the queen could do little for Thomas Brooke so long as she kept up friendly relations with Spain, for Philip had to be humoured, and the Spanish ambassador would not accept the story which Sir Thomas Smith had given to the French. De Silva knew that it was nonsense to say that "there is no English pirate left upon the sea," and he intended to have Brooke punished in such a way that the buccaneers still at large would hesitate before spoiling a Spanish ship. The queen and the government were in a most embarrassing situation. Lord Cobham must have been obsessed throughout the spring of 1565 with the thought of the fate which awaited his brother, for he no doubt knew as well as Harrison his chaplain that

> Pirats and robbers by sea are condemned in the court of admeraltie, and hanged on the shore at lowe water marke, where they are left till three tides haue ouerwashed them.[37]

In a series of letters from Guzman de Silva to his king one finds recorded the attempts which were made to bring Brooke to trial. On 25 June 1565 the ambassador wrote:

> When I told this Queen of the large number of pirates who still infested the sea, she said she believed many of them were Scotsmen who spoke in English to avoid being known, and that the French Ambassador had also complained to her, and she would take measures of repression and would punish the offenders. I pressed her very much for the punishment of Thomas Cobham, whom they were trying to get off through the intrigues of his relatives. She promised me that justice should be done, and that within a fortnight Stukeley should be brought from Ireland. The words are fair, and I really believe she means well, but things are not attended to as they ought to be.[38]

An instance of the kind of shilly-shally which annoyed the Spaniard is related in his next letter, written on 13 July. Apparently one of de Silva's dispatches,

to which he here refers, has been lost, but it seems clear that what he describes was an attempt to try Brooke by ordinary jury methods, unfamiliar in Spain. "I wrote to your Majesty," the letter begins,

> that after arresting Thomas Cobham they had tried to get him off by means of twelve men who are appointed to decide criminal cases, and although these men acquitted him on certain charges, the judge of the Admiralty, seeing that they were biassed or perhaps bribed, did not submit the whole case to them, but only certain counts, and when they had absolved the prisoner he was taken back to prison again. The Queen having learnt what had taken place -- and I took care that she was well informed on the subject -- ordered her Council to summon the twelve men who had judged the case, and had them charged with a false judgment. They asked for time to answer the charge, and after they had made their excuses they were condemned by public vote to fines of 20 l. each, amounting in all to about 9,600 reals, or six months' imprisonment, and were put in the pillory with papers stuck on them like a cuirass. This has had a good effect here, and I praised the Queen for it, whereupon she seemed gratified. I am quite sure that justice will be done in the remainder of Cobham's case, as the Queen has given the strictest orders, and has begun by making this example. Every effort shall be used to make these pirates see that they will be punished for their misdeeds.[39]

It was the tendency of Spanish ambassadors in England to suspect all juries of being packed: one recalls the strictures which Renard made upon the panel which acquitted Sir Nicholas Throckmorton after the Wyatt rebellion. At least some of Thomas Brooke's contemporaries certainly thought that there was little evidence against him,[40] so that a jury need not have been bribed to find it insufficient to condemn him. Unfortunately there is no record in the extant registers of the Privy Council of the charges which de Silva says were brought against the jurymen, so that there is only the Spaniard's imperfect understanding of the English legal system to depend upon in considering just what this preliminary trial was.

That the trial by jury was merely a prelude to Brooke's real arraignment before the Court of Admiralty cannot, however, be doubted. On the very day that de Silva wrote to King Philip, the pirate appeared before his judges. Fragments of the evidence there presented survive and have been studied by Marsden, but the main thing about the trial was Brooke's refusal to plead. As Marsden says, he "thereby raised a nice point of law -- namely, whether, since piracy was not a felony at the common law, the punishment for standing mute, <u>peine forte et dure</u>, could be inflicted upon one who was a felon by statute. It was decided that Cobham had incurred the penalty, and sentence was passed accordingly."[41] The legal niceties

were lost upon de Silva, who wrote to the king that Brooke had been found guilty and sentenced to die horribly under the stone and iron press:

> Thomas Cobham was put on his trial, and on his being asked the usual question in criminal procedure here as to whether he wished to be judged by the laws of the realm, he answered No, and persisted therein. He was found guilty and sentenced to be taken back to the Tower, stripped entirely naked, his head shaved, and the soles of his feet beaten, and then, with his arms and legs stretched, his back resting on a sharp stone, a piece of artillery is to be placed on his stomach too heavy for him to bear but not heavy enough to kill him outright. In this torment he is to be fed on three grains weight of barley and the filthiest water in the prison until he die.[42]

If English criminal procedure sometimes eluded de Silva, the ghastly details of execution by pressing evidently did not.

Thomas Brooke did not, however, die in 1565. One is unfortunately dependent upon de Silva for the explanation of how the pirate evaded death, and therefore one cannot be sure of what happened. Certainly the Brookes did all they could to get him off, but their representations both to the queen and, through his ambassador, to Philip, do not seem to have had any success. In reporting the sentence, de Silva had added that Brooke's "relatives are making great efforts to procure a postponement of the execution." Lord Cobham himself was still not pleading for his brother's life, and seems even to have been trying to convince de Silva that he thought that any injury to Spain deserved death. As the ambassador wrote on 23 July,

> On the 16th instant I wrote to your Majesty the sentence that had been pronounced on Thomas Cobham, and the efforts being made by his brothers and kinsmen to obtain his pardon. The principal amongst them, Lord Cobham, has taken no part in these efforts as he considers his brother's crime a disgraceful one, and especially, as I am informed, because committed against your Majesty's subjects, but his wife, who is a [sic] mistress of the robes to the Queen, and the other brothers came secretly to beg of me, for her sake, since all their relatives on both sides were affectionate servants of your Majesty, to ask the Queen to suspend the execution of the sentence for some time until they had written to beg your Majesty's intercession to prevent this disgrace to their house and kin. She asked me not to tell the Queen that she had addressed this petition to me, as her Majesty would be very angry with her. I answered in the best way I could, expressing all affection for her house, her husband and her kin on your Majesty's behalf, but showed her the reasons that prevented me from doing as she asked me, and she thus understood that it was impossible. She begged me, in case the Queen herself should suspend the sentence, to write to your Majesty asking pardon for Cobham at the same time as they sent, which I promised I would do out of respect for the affection which I understood they all bore to your Majesty and your desire to favour them. The earl of Sussex spoke to me the same day to the same effect, saying that Cobham was a near kinsman of his

> own and of many of the highest people in the land who were attached to your Majesty, and on this account he urged me and even advised me as a friend to render all the good offices I could to get your Majesty to add this new obligation to what they owed you. I gave him the same answer as I gave to Lady Cobham.
> I will accordingly write to satisfy them when the time arrives although this is a bad man and a great heretic as I am assured, but I do not think they will carry out the sentence; they have not done so up to now. Lady Margaret [the Countess of Lennox] also has sent to intercede with me for him in order that his family who are her adherents may be confirmed in their friendship.[44]

Of all de Silva's letters which mention the Brookes, this is the most amazing. It states explicitly that the whole family, Cobham on the one hand and his wife and brothers on the other, protested that the divergent attitudes which they took to Thomas's predicament were dictated by their affection for the Spanish king. It would have one believe that Sussex professed to be anxious that Philip should increase his credit with the English nobility, Sussex, who it is generally agreed was one of Elizabeth's few ministers whose loyalty to his queen was unshakable,[45] Finally, the letter records that the Brookes were thought to support the claims upon the succession of Lady Margaret Douglas, who was at this time imprisoned in the Tower;[46] her son Darnley was, when de Silva wrote, within five days of becoming King of Scotland. One might thus take the ambassador to mean that the Brookes, Sussex and a large Court party wished well to Spain, that the Brookes belonged to the principal Roman Catholic faction in England, and that Lady Cobham especially risked the queen's extreme displeasure in order to assure Philip of their dependence upon him.

De Silva, however, was the most urbane and rational ambassador whom Philip II ever sent to England. He was not a Catholic zealot, ready to see religious apostates and political turncoats where there were only clever Englishmen emulating their queen in their attempts to deceive Spain. Nor was he a bigot, unable to recognize worth in anyone loyal to the heretic Elizabeth: Cecil, for instance, de Silva knew to be "'zealous in serving his Queen, which is one of his best traits'".[47] De Silva's predecessors, less balanced than he in their judgements, had been quick to misinterpret overtures from English courtiers; his successor, de Spes, was to be even more gullible, reporting when the Ridolfi conspiracy was exposed in 1571 that Sussex of all people was in danger of being imprisoned, at a

time when the earl was actually enjoying Elizabeth's confidence.[48] De Silva never sent so unreliable a dispatch to his king. He may have been wrong in thinking that Sussex was a near relative of Thomas Brooke (no close link between the two men seems to have existed, although Sussex's mother was a Howard and thus a distant connection of the house of Cobham as of most of the old nobility), but he did not make the mistake of attributing the earl's forwardness in addressing him either to a wish to betray Elizabeth or to love of Philip. De Silva contented himself with observing that Sussex wanted to have Brooke reprieved, and that he claimed that it would be to Spain's advantage to bring it about; for anything that the ambassador said to the contrary, one is free to deduce that Sussex was canvassing for support for himself in his heated Court struggle with Leicester. Nor did de Silva write, as Bishop de Quadra would have done, that Lady Cobham had come to him secretly, professing sentiments which would have got her into serious trouble with the queen had Elizabeth known of her visit; rather, he made it clear that it was the baroness who had protested that her mission was a clandestine one. Elizabeth herself, knowing that only Philip's forgiveness of the pirate who had wronged him would free her of the obligation to punish Brooke, may have given Lady Cobham's project her blessing. In the same way, de Silva placed the responsibility for the statement that the Brookes supported Darnley's mother squarely upon the lady herself; he did not claim to know whether the Countess of Lennox, desperately seeking friends from her prison in the Tower, was right in believing that she had the family's loyalty. In short, de Silva merely repeated to the king the words which had been addressed to him. He made no comment upon them, and he evidently trusted to Philip's good sense to judge them impartially. That the king understood and was satisfied with his ambassador's methods, both in dealing with the petitioners and in reporting his conversations with them, is manifest. "We may say," Philip replied with imperious terseness, "that we approve of the answer you gave the Mistress of the Robes who asked you to interfere for Cobham."[49] Neither king nor emissary can have valued very highly the professed friendship of Thomas Brooke's advocates to have treated it so cavalierly. Nor does the rebuff seem to have been unwisely given; it was, ironically enough,

only when they were dragged into it by Brooke himself, "a bad man and a great heretic", that Lord Cobham and his family entered willynilly the service of Philip of Spain.

After the failure of their concerted plea to de Silva in July 1565, the Brookes were given further reason for despairing of the pirate's life. A royal commission issued in mid-August indicated that the queen could hardly be expected to delay Thomas's execution much longer. Provoked by the persistent demands of her fellow sovereigns that she rid the Channel of piracy, Elizabeth ordered the Council to write a letter; it was directed to the condemned man's brother, Lord Cobham,

> signyfieng unto him that the Queen's Majestie is daylye importunately complained unto by the French and Spanyshe Embassadours resident here of spoiles commytted by Englishe pirattes upon the Kinges, their masters', subjectes upon the Narrow Seas, and [that the said pirates] be, as is vehemently to be suspectid, harborid, victuallid and maineteynyd by some dwelling in the V Portes, whereunto his Lordship is required in her Majesties name to have espetiall regard, and yf any of the said pyrattes shall happen to come into any porte or creke of his rule, to gyve order that he may be stayed and committed to safe warde, and to use the like with all their aydours.[50]

In November precise "'articles for the repressinge of piraties and other dysorders to be executed upon the sea costes'" were sent to Cobham, and when the baron sent pirates up to the Court of Admiralty to be examined, they were returned to him,

> 'acording to equyte and the qualytee of their offences within the liberties and jurisdiction of the V Portes, for that their Lordshippes do thinke it requysite that the same pryviledges of the Portes be not in any wyse touched or empeched by hearing and trying of their cawse out of the same.'[51]

One wishes that Cobham had left some personal expression of how he felt judging pirates who might, had Brooke been captured in the bailiwick of the Cinque Ports, have included his own brother.

The queen seemed indeed to be in earnest. The popular opinion of the chances of survival of Brooke and his fellows seems to have been expressed in a letter which one of Sir Thomas Gresham's men wrote late in July to the financier's agent in Spain, William Phayre. Phayre used the letter, which he did not receive until 9 October, to convince the Duke of Alba of Elizabeth's good intentions; as he informed Cecil,

> I told the Duke how that owr quenes ma^{te} ded punishe the yll factors as by example m^{r} Cobhame how he was condemned to deye & aftr what trial. beyng a gentilman of suche a howsse & friendes vnto the w^{ch}

> her mageste had no respect, but only to Iustis & I told also the lytle evydence was agaynst hime as by my mastres man I vnderstode that wrote me of his Casse the 24 of Iuly & I reseyued the lre not 3 days ago.[52]

Then, presumably while the abettors of humbler criminals were being prosecuted, the influential friends of Thomas Brooke succeeded in finding a loop-hole in the law. De Silva recounted on 3 September that he had been told

> that the principal reason that these robberies at sea do not cease is the small punishment meted out to the delinquents although they are sentenced. Amongst other articles of request that I have handed to the Queen's Council is one asking that the sentences pronounced on those convicted of these crimes should be carried out. This has been conveyed to me by Dr. Dale, who is at present acting for the Judge of the Admiralty, but he was to say that in the case of Thomas Cobham they could not well have the sentence carried out as the Judges who had condemned him had said to the Queen directly after the trial that for the discharge of their own consciences they were obliged to advise her that Cobham, being an ecclesiastic, could not be done to death, by the laws of the realm, and they had sentenced him as they had to deter others from committing like crimes.[53]

The pirate was not, so far as is known, a cleric; de Silva apparently misunderstood the convention of benefit of clergy, whereby, by reciting his neck-verse, Thomas Brooke seems to have saved his life. It is unfortunate that one hears of the end of his case only from a Spaniard, and that no one conversant with English legal practice left an account of it which survives. For even Marsden, expert in marine law though he is, has to confess himself incapable of understanding quite what de Silva meant; after searching unsuccessfully in the records of the Court of Admiralty, Marsden can only say that "clearly there is some confusion, but it looks as if Cobham eventually pleaded and escaped by claiming benefit of clergy."[54]

It can only be guessed who first devised that Brooke should be let off merely by reading the opening lines of the fifty-first Psalm; perhaps one would not be far wrong in suspecting that behind the appeal to Brooke's literacy was Valentine Dale himself, a brilliant civilian who was later to be the colleague of William Lord Cobham in the Dutch embassy of 1588. One would not think that the queen would ordinarily have condoned such a specious practice. She was opposed to the granting of benefit of clergy, and on one occasion delivered herself of the memorable opinion that to admit the plea "'where it is not alloweable by lawe ... is no pietye but wicked pitye.'"[55] Indeed it was in 1566, only a year after Thomas Brooke's

escape, that Parliament passed "An Acte to take away the benefite of Cleargie from certaine felonious offenders"; the statute was directed principally against pickpockets, but it also deprived other, unspecified felons of their traditional means of evading justice.[56] In 1565, however, private demands were made upon Elizabeth which conflicted with her sense of what was desirable in public administration. In April the house of Cobham had suffered the loss of Lady Northampton, a loss which Elizabeth must have felt personally and deeply. Since that time Lady Cobham had become increasingly useful to the queen, and in late August, when the Princess Cecilia was approaching England, the baroness was required to perform extraordinary service. If Elizabeth refused to permit an abuse of benefit of clergy, she would uphold her reputation for justice and she would please Spain, but Thomas Brooke would die a horrible death and pain and disgrace would be brought upon a family which was serving the Crown well and which was already in mourning for another of its members. If, however, the queen made an exception in Brooke's case and allowed his appeal of benefit of clergy, she would not only show mercy and give cause for gratitude to the reprieved man's family, but also provide herself with an excellent excuse for denying the demands of Spain. It was, not surprisingly, the latter alternative which Elizabeth seems to have chosen. In a happy compromise, it combined mercy with a means of shifting responsibility for her action from herself unto a legal device which she could truthfully tell Philip she disliked but could do little about.

Thus, by January 1565/6, an agent of the Earl of Lennox's, whose dispatch Cecil intercepted, was able to set down in a memorial recording events of the past few months that "Thomas Cobham and Wylson were pardoned and 10 pirates hanged."[57] There is no intimation in the dispatches of the Spanish ambassador of how de Silva and Philip received the news of the pardon, nor is there any evidence that Lady Cobham, once she was assured of her brother-in-law's life, troubled to ask the king for his forgiveness. The Brookes owed Spain nothing, and the pirate was soon again ravaging its shipping. His private war did not, unfortunately, last long, and it was when he made his peace with the Most Catholic King that Thomas Brooke really brought upon his family not only disgrace but near

disaster.

* * *

Chapter VII

The sensational affair of Thomas Brooke brought no discredit upon Lord Cobham. A letter from Sir William Cecil dated 9 January 1565/6 reveals the continuing and indeed increasing intimacy which existed between the baron and the queen's first minister. It reads in full:

> My very good Lord, my due Comendations to your good Lordship and to my good Lady. I am right sorry that I can not obteyne her Majesties Assent to your Sute, being so proffitable for hir self. But I see the Baseness of my Creditt both in this and such lyke; nevertheless I will not forbeare to prosequute it untill I ether obtayne it, or fynde it desperat.
> As for Mr. H. Cobham's Request, I cannot procure hir Majesty to allow of it, pretendyng it an Offence to sell an Office, in any other resonable Thyng she will, as I trust, be his good Lady.
> Your Lordship may I trust be bold to place Capt Wyndebank, but than most suerly whan his Bill shall be signed.
> This Ambassador cometh I thynk in gret Order, for, as I here, he cometh to be stalled for the French Kyng in the Order of the Garter, and he bryngeth the Order of France for my Lord of Leicester, and for my Lord of Norffolk or for my Lord Marquiss; and than he goeth into Scotland with the lyke for the Lord Darly. And so we see that this Order groweth still. Et id quidem Gallice. I thynk heruppon my Lord of Norfolk shall come upp. And so I end, beshrowyng the coming of this Ambassador, hath disordered my Lord Admiralls and my going into the Contry.[1]

This letter deserves some study. In it Cecil first mentions his determination to win Elizabeth's approval for some unspecified project of Cobham's, conceivably the subsidizing by the Crown of the exportation of salt to Scandinavia which the baron and Cecil undertook together several months later.[2] Next the Secretary touches upon the matter of Henry Cobham's advancement. Lord Cobham's younger brother was soon to join the chief of his family and his wife in repaying the queen with service for her favour to the Brookes; he was at this time, as he later recalled, "seruinge in the Roome of a [Gentleman] Pensioner, wherin I sticked and satyed, havinge no other greater Meanes in her Highness Courte, or Common Wealthe".[3] As a future diplomat, Henry needed a sinecure with which to support himself in his proud but expensive embassies abroad. The last of the baron's requests to which Cecil was replying concerned Richard Windbank, a Kentishman who had recently been engaged in the musters at Rye.[4] The Secretary

was probably giving Cobham the necessary authority to promote Windbank to a higher charge in the county militia.

Cecil's comments on current events are of wider interest than his personal messages to Cobham. Ever since 1565 it had been evident that the Privy Council was divided on the Scottish issue which had been created by the armed opposition of the Presbyter lords to Queen Mary's marriage with Darnley. Leicester apparently wanted England to fight alongside the Earl of Moray and his rebels; Cecil was for neutrality. The quarrel between Leicester and the Duke of Norfolk, Cecil's friend and the cousin and ally of the earl's enemy, Sussex, was exacerbated by this difference of opinion. At an unusally publicized audience with Elizabeth in October, Moray's plea for armed assistance was refused and Leicester rebuffed, but it was soon clear that this was merely a stagy gesture designed to reassure France that England had no intention of invading its northern neighbour. For the queen, although she appeared to reject the advice of her more belligerent advisers, by no means adopted Cecil's policy; Elizabeth kept her own counsel and indeed, as Conyers Read says, gave the impression that she "herself was guiding the helm."[5] Cecil was thus not being rhetorical when he deduced as though from no very sure knowledge the significance of the French embassy of January 1566. Part of the queen's object in receiving it was the reconciliation of her most noble councillors, and indeed the emissary of Charles IX presented to both Leicester and Norfolk the Order of St. Michael. (The Marquess of Northampton, Cobham's brother-in-law, had already begun to lose Elizabeth's favour; he received no foreign order in 1566 or ever again.) The Frenchman, however, intended to do Darnley like honour at Edinburgh, and it was this aspect of his mission, his visit to the north, which was supposed to have a secret purpose which only Elizabeth and the French king understood.

Cecil's letter to Cobham ends lightly, with a despairing comment on the effect which the ambassador's arrival would have upon his proposed holiday with Lord Clinton, a veteran politician who had worked with the Secretary and with George Lord Cobham in the time of Edward VI and whose wife was presently sharing with Lady Cobham the responsibility of intimate attendance upon the queen.

This, the first of many surviving letters from Cecil which Cobham received in the mid-1560s, has been analyzed at length because it indicates how wide was the range of subjects which the Secretary discussed in writing to his friend. (Very few of Cobham's replies are extant.)[6] The other letters cannot be treated so fully. Of one recurrent theme in them, however, Cecil's care for the baron's financial welfare, something should be said. Cobham seems perpetually to have been in debt; that is to say, he, like Cecil himself, complained often about being forced to reduce his expenses in order to meet his bills. Page after page of accounts of 'my Lord's estate of debts', obviously Cobham's, many of them George Lord Cobham's which his son inherited, are preserved among the Cecil Papers.[7] Most of these debts cannot have been large ones, and, besides, it was no disgrace for an Elizabethan gentleman to live beyond his immediate income. Sir Francis Walsingham wrote to Leicester on 6 November 1586 of the state of affairs in which Sir Philip Sidney left his affairs:

> [it] doth greatly afflyct me, [that] a gentleman that hath lyved so unspotted [a] reputatyon, and had so great care to see all men satysfyed, shoold be so [exposed] to the owtcrye of his creditors. His goodes wyll not suffyce to awnsware a third parte of his debtes alreadye knowen. This hard estate of this noble gentleman makethe me staye to take order for his buryall untyll your lordships returne.[8]

By far the largest item on the debit side of Cobham's ledgers, however, was a very serious one indeed; it was his debt to the Crown, amounting to the sum of his unpaid contributions to the periodic subsidy levied upon the nobility. A typical letter from the Privy Council to Cobham in the early years of Elizabeth's reign is that of 2 September 1562, which begins:

> After o^{r} right harty cõmendacõns Wheare we fynde that yow stand indebted vnto the Quenes Ma^{tie} in such Sõmes and for such causes as by the s[ch]edule here inclosed maye at better length appere vnto yow. fforasmuche as her highnes hath p'ntelie occasion for sondrye greate and weightie consideracons tending to the furtheraunce of her Ma^{ties} sruice and weale and suretie of the Realme to diffray greate sõmes of her treasure ....

The Council accordingly, on this occasion, ordered payment before 24 September of £ 120. Cobham managed to hand over that sum on 4 December, but there was still £ 480 owing on his father's bill.[9] Meanwhile the responsibility of his own tenure of the barony was costly, so that the subsidy 'schedules', often endorsed in

Cobham's own hand "Subsedyes for my father and my selfe", began to accumulate alarmingly. By 1566 the baron was pleading with Cecil to help him to a rebate. Elizabeth did not often pardon noble debtors; Helen Miller, in her short but solid article on "Subsidy Assessments of the Peerage in the Sixteenth Century", writes that subsidy defaulters

> were indeed regularly excepted from the general pardon issued at the end of each parliament, and there is no evidence that Elizabeth followed the example of Edward VI and Mary and gave special pardons to individual peers.[10]

Thus Cecil had to tell Cobham on 25 June 1566 that there was not much that he could do for him: "for the matter of your Dett, I am sory that Presently I can do yow no more good therin, for otherwise then my Lords shall Write unto yow: There is not at this time any hope."[11] The Secretary was, however, anxious to help. He added, as a postscript to his letter of 25 June, "I thynke your L: Presence shuld best Releve your L. at hir Majesties Hands," and, perhaps hinting that an informal dinner party might be an opportune time to approach the queen, he gave Cobham the information that "The Quenes Majesty Intendeth to be at my L. of Sussex at Soop on Monday."

Cobham unfortunately could not take up Cecil's suggestion, and when the Secretary wrote again on 29 June the situation was the same. "I am very sorry," he began his rather jocular letter,

> that it is out of my Power to Ease your L. from the Unplesant Callyng uppon yow for your Dett, but I see wher your L. is not Presently hable, No Remedy but to beare with yow. What I can your L. shall be sure of. Or els I Wish no good to my self. But I am most sorry for to Understand of your sycknes and Payne in your Head which must not be Increased by to much Musyng of this Trooblesome Age, and tyme.[12]

Perhaps Cecil annoyed his friend by calmly telling him not to distress himself unduly. Cobham, at any rate, through real desperation or in hope of frightening the government with the prospect of a weakening of the northern defences of Kent, seems to have sent word to Cecil that he would have to strip Cooling of its leaden roofs in order to raise the necessary money. The Secretary replied on 7 July with some urgency:

> My Good Lord. The Beror herof your servant hath Honestly and Discretly Answered for your L. and very sorry I am that yow shuld be Occasioned to Empayre your Howss. In no wise my Lord Styrr the Leayd of your Castell of Collyn. I had Rather you Shuld otherwise be Priviledged to

> have more favor than any other. Certenly the callyng of Your L. at this tyme cometh but uppon a generall and that a Necessary Order: And as yow have Alledged Lack, so have others. Wherwith though hir Majesty doth not Willyngly beare yet Necessite must Induce hir to forbeare wher it is not, as I am perswaded your Allegations be as Trew as they ar Aparant.[13]

A cryptic note at the end of this letter perhaps was meant to reassure Cobham that some joint venture of his and Cecil's would soon pay dividends: "our calf Increaseth at Southampton" could conceivably refer, by means of one of the Secretary's Biblical allusions, to 'the golden calf', to riches such as a cargo fortunately shipped into or out of Southampton might realize.

There was really very little that Cecil could do. In another letter, dated 20 July 1566, he repeated his assurances that not Cobham personally but all of the nobility were being pressed to pay their debts to the Crown, and offered the hope that "suerly hir Majesty will have some better Consideration." By this time other things were crying out for the Secretary's attention. The queen wanted him to take the opportunity of the christening of the infant Prince of Scotland, later King James I, to go north to investigate the situation there personally, and, although he had obliquely criticized the idea as "a Iornaye that is Invented for me to go into Scotland" in his letter of 7 July, and said in that of the twentieth that "I Trust I shall not be Trobled with the Scottish Iorneye," Cecil knew that if it were to be he or Leicester who went to Edinburgh it would be better if it were himself. Moreover the Secretary had to manage the renewed marriage negotiations between the queen and the Archduke Charles of Austria, and the prince's inopportune "Sicknes of the Small-Pocks" was holding up matters in Vienna. Finally, as he said, he was writing to Cobham "amydd the carts in tyme of Removing", which meant that the summer progress, with all the nuisances which it meant for an administrator, was under way.[14] The baron's debt could not occupy much more of Cecil's attention.

Thus, by about 1569, despite periodic attempts to pay off parts of it, the amount of Cobham's outstanding contribution to the subsidies stood at £ 628.6.8, £ 200 of which had been owed since his father's day.[15] Yet Cobham never got into serious difficulty over this debt, and after the 1560s the matter appears to have been allowed to lapse. Miss Miller's deduction from her study of similar cases

seems to be borne out by a study of the Brooke papers. "It seems," she says,

> to have been royal policy, or at least the policy of Burghley, to deal gently with noble debtors. A circular letter 'to such lords and ladies as have not paid the first pament of the subsidie' of 1581 reminded the debtors that the second payment was now also due, 'which we have no doubte but accordinge to the importance of the matter, your Lordship will consider, least in your Lordship's defalte herin and discharge of our duties we shalbe dreven otherwise to signifie to the Queen's majestie the wante, which for our partes we would be right sory to doe'. As a threat this was not, perhaps, very compelling, and it was in fact ignored by a number of peers. Yet no legal action appears to have been taken to recover subsidy debts from the nobility. If the crown did not insist overmuch on its dues in crude monetary terms, it was probably because there were more important issues at stake. The sums which might have been wrung from the nobility would never have met more than a fraction of the needs of government: the value of the nobility to the crown did not lie in its wealth alone, but in the authority which wealth and rank could give. The readiness of an Elizabethan nobleman to support the policy of the crown in the house of lords and to act as a royal agent in the counties where his was the dominating landed influence was worth more than money could buy; even his preference for ostentatious living rather than for sober tax-paying gave to the court a splendour and to the Queen a glory which could not be measured in monetary units alone.[16]

In his letter to Cobham of 7 July 1566 Cecil had stated that "the Parlement Certenly Shall hold." This news must have interested the baron, for the queen, having unwisely not dissolved the troublesome assembly which had pressed her to decide the succession question in 1563, had kept her second Parliament in being by a series of prorogations. She had not wanted it to meet again, and on four separate occasions had authorized commissions to put off the date of assembly. To "Willielmo Domino Cobham Gardiano sive Custodi quinq; portuum suorum" and eight other noblemen had gone the mandate of 5 October 1564; on 30 April 1565 the baron had met with fourteen of his peers further to prorogue the reassembling of the Members.[17] Finally, however, the queen's desperate need of money forced her to allow Parliament to sit again; it met on 30 September 1566, and, although Cobham may not have been at Westminster on that day, he was certainly there on 2 October to witness the formal presentation of the Speaker to the queen.[18]

Cobham made a substantial contribution to the life of the Parliament of 1566. He sat in committee to study a "Bill for the better Execution of certain Statutes, and for the reformation of certain disorders used in the Law", and so perhaps helped shape the statute designed to curtail the abuse of benefit of clergy, an act which was lent some urgency by Thomas Brooke's notorious case.[19] Cobham was

also one of the lords and legal officers who considered "the Bill for the punishment of Riots and Routs, and unlawful Assemblies", committed to them on 14 December.[20] Neither of these bills was very important, certainly not as significant to Cobham personally as that which, after a mechanical passage through both Houses, was returned to the Lords on 2 December for dispatch to the queen.[21] This was the private bill "for the Jointure of the Lady Frances Cobham in Cooling". It assured to the baron's wife the same dower which, estimated in 1558 to be worth £ 279.12.7 a year, had been enjoyed so briefly by "the Lady Anne Cobham now decessed late wife of ... George Lorde Cobham, And Mother of the saide William now Lorde Cobham". The preamble to the act is formulistic yet interesting, for it refers to Lady Cobham's direct connection with the royal household. "The Quenes most excellente Ma^{tie}," it begins,

> at the humble suite and peticõn made to her highnes, not only by her humble Subiecte William Brooke knighte Lorde Cobham, and Lord Warden of the five Portes sonne and heire of George late Lorde Cobham deceassed But also by the Lady ffrauncis now wife of the saide Wiłłm Lord Cobham and her highnes servante And in Consideracõn of both their good and faithfull services heretofore to her Ma^{tie} donne, ys pleased and Intented in forme hereafter mentioned.

The royal pleasure, the act continues, was that

> the Castell of Coolinge, and Manno^{rs} of Coolinge, Bekely, Stroode temple and Shatindon together with diuerse other landes Tenementes Rentes Reuercõns Remaynders Comons Services and other profittes and Comodities sett lyinge and beinge in the Townes hamlettes or parishes of Coolinge Bekely Stroode temple And frynesbury in the Countie of Kente, with their Members and their app^{r}tenũces. And of and in the Cyte Cercuyte and precyncte of the late dissolued Colledge of Cobham in the saide Countie, <u>with all the houses Edifications Buyldinges</u> Landes Tenementes and other profittes and Comodiłies to the saide Colledge lately belonginge or appertayninge, And of and in the hundreth of Shamell in the saide Countie wthall and singuler the Appurtenances of the same ... shall by authoritie aforesaide, from and ymediatly after the death of the same Lord Cobham be deemed and adiudged, and also be vnto the saide Lady ffrauncies now his wiefe, And in the Actuall possession and seazon of the same Ladye ffrauncys, yf she be then livinge.[22]

It was a fine jointure, especially to be bestowed upon the daughter of an obscure and excessively prolific Gloucestershire knight, but Frances Newton did not live to enjoy it.

The study of minor bills, and the enactment of his provision for his wife's widowhood, however, cannot have competed for Cobham's interest with other Parliamentary events of October and November 1566. As Conyers Read says of the autumn

session, "Elizabeth called it to get money, but it was not money that the Commons had in mind, or if money then as a quid pro quo."[23] The Members wanted decisions to the problems of the queen's marriage and the succession. Cecil was at this time apparently keener than he was ever to be again to find Elizabeth a consort, and his choice was Sussex's candidate, the archduke. Leicester seems to have wanted an act to settle the succession to the Throne; if he was not to be the queen's husband, then he hoped to keep a foreigner from occupying that position. Of Elizabeth's own attitude there is, as usual, no clear indication. She was determined not to recognize the claims of the Protestant Greys, sisters of Queen Jane, and the troubled situation in Scotland and the scandalous reputation which Mary Stuart was rapidly acquiring made that other claimant unacceptable to most Englishmen. Even had Elizabeth not been averse to appointing her heir, there would have been no easy solution to the succession question. The queen's marriage and motherhood would, of course, have obviated the need of choosing a Grey or a Stuart, but Elizabeth's courtships were singularly inconsequential. In 1566, however, the Commons was clamouring for some definite information about the queen's intentions, and the Lords, too, where Norfolk and Sussex carried on their quarrel with Leicester, was making unusual demands. Norfolk attempted to persuade the queen to admit the double question of marriage and succession to the Parliamentary agenda, and was soundly rebuffed. The Commons then approached the Upper House and suggested joint action; unless the queen consented to debates on the important questions of England's future, she would have to be shown that Parliament could be unco-operative, too, and make difficulties about granting her the subsidies which she needed.

The reply of the Lords to the Commons's request for a joint deputation to the queen seems to have been a decision to approach her independently. On the morning of Tuesday, 22 October, twenty peers were delegated to "repair in the Afternoon to the Queens Majesty". One of them was Cobham. Sir Simonds D'Ewes, in his Parliamentary journal, says that

> The business about which these Lords repaired to the Queen, is not in the Original Journal-Book it self of the Upper House, but it may be guessed it was concerning those two great businesses of the Queens

> Marriage, and the Declaration of the next Heir, and Successor after the Queens Decease, to the Crown; which business bred so much distast afterwards between her Majesty and her Subjects in this Session; so that, as afterwards the Lords did petition the Queen about it, so now (it should seem) these Lords repaired unto her, either to desire leave to prefer that Petition, and that they might confer with the House of Commons about it, or else to know of her Majesty a fitting time, when they might repair unto her, with their said Petition, and so receive Answer unto it. But what the Queen replied at this time, is hard to be conjectured.[24]

D'Ewes did not have access to the dispatches of the Spanish ambassador; on 4 November de Silva told King Philip how the queen received the presumptuous delegates, revealing that Elizabeth interpreted their deputation as a personal attack upon herself and that she answered it with vicious words about the individual peers themselves. Cobham apparently escaped unscathed, but his brother-in-law Northampton, no longer protected by the queen's affection for Elizabeth Brooke, was lashed with accusations of incompetence and charges of bigamy.[25] Norfolk also suffered from the royal outburst, and even Leicester, whose presence among the delegates was decidedly equivocal, was refused admission to the presence chamber.[26]

Badly shaken, the Lords apparently decided to seek safety in numbers by joining the Commons, and on 30 October Cobham again joined some of his fellows in agreeing to meet with representatives from the Lower House "touching Petition to be made to the Queens Highness, as well for the Succession, as for her Marriage".[27] Having given warning of what they might expect, Elizabeth on 5 November thus received not twenty but sixty of her subjects, and heard their request that she marry to assure the succession. Cecil's brother-in-law Bacon spoke for the group, and he spoke well, making the nation's utter dependence upon the queen the reason for their fears of what would happen should she not provide an heir to the Throne. "For every Prince," said Bacon,

> is anima Legis, and so reputed in Law; and therefore upon the Death of Princes the Law dyeth; all the Offices of Justice, whereby the Laws are to be executed, do cease; all Writs and Commandments to call parties to the Execution of Justice, do hang in suspence; all Commissions for the Peace and for the punishment of Offendors do determine, and lose their force; whereby it followeth consequently, that Strength and Will must Rule, and neither Law nor Reason, during such a Vacation and inter-Reign; wherein such an incertainty of Succession is like to last so long, as it is to be feared (if Gods mercy be not the greater) that thereby we may become a prey to Strangers (which our Lord defend) or at least lose the great honor and estimation that long time pertained to us.[28]

It was a cogent argument, which Cobham would not have disputed. Nor did the queen.

She replied to it only after upbraiding the Commons for having dared put pressure upon her, and the Lords for having leagued with humbler men against their sovereign, but when she eventually got to the point she answered firmly. No one, she told the delegates, knew better than she the dangers which an acknowledged heir to the Throne focused upon a state; she had no intention of placing a cousin of hers in the unenviable position which she had herself occupied in her sister's time, nor did she mean to make herself the target for plotters and assassins who devoted themselves to bringing about prematurely the reign of the man or woman chosen to succeed her. Cobham whose participation in Wyatt's conspiracy had helped make that enterprise formidable enough to place the Princess Elizabeth in jeopardy, must have appreciated fully the wisdom of the queen's words. He must also have welcomed them, for, desirable as the security of an established line of succession might be, it was Cecil's hope that the queen would provide her own heir. Norfolk and Sussex supported the Secretary, and one may assume that Cobham did so as well; the four men must have waited expectantly to hear what the queen, since she would not name her successor, was proposing to do. She told them. Negotiations for her marriage were in progress, she said, and she intended that they should be brought to fruition. She would marry, and her consort, although she did not say so, would evidently be Charles of Austria.[29]

Elizabeth warned the Parliamentary delegation that the majority of her subjects would not approve of the husband whom she chose, and indeed, when Cecil reported the queen's words to the Commons, there was much dissatisfaction. By November 1566, however, the Members were so concerned with the Crown's attempts to restrict debates that when Elizabeth made them a few concessions they subsided in a sort of Pyrrhic victory. The queen had got her subsidy, and she had made it seem a favour that she had announced her intention to marry a Roman Catholic dependent of Spain; the Commons was left with confirmation of Parliamentary liberties which ought never to have been challenged, with the question of the succession unsettled, and with no redress should the Austrian marriage, unpopular but still better than no match at all, go the way of the queen's other matrimonial schemes. On 2 January 1566/7 a difficult Parliament was dissolved.

There is every reason to suppose that Cobham, on the whole, regarded the session with satisfaction. He would no doubt have been happier if Cecil's hopes had been realized and the queen had given definite assurance to marry within a specified time, but in 1567 there was at least a prospect that the unsustainable situation in the Council would be terminated by the arrival of a king consort. Leicester's opponents could not rest easy so long as the favourite had any chance of winning the queen; the feud between them and him had previously seemed irresolvable by any but desperate means.

Cobham had probably not suffered from the dissension at Court; lacking any evidence to the contrary, one ought to assume that he followed Cecil's lead, and Cecil contrived to give an over-all impression of impartiality, working with Leicester when necessary, accepting the support of Norfolk and Sussex when it came his way in the course of the aristocrats' quarrel with the upstart. As Fuller says of Sussex,

> a constant Court Faction was maintained betwixt him and Robert Earl of Leicester; so that the Sussexians and the Leicestrians divided the Court, whilst the Cecilians, as neuters, did look upon them.[30]

The Secretary's affection and admiration for Norfolk, however, was clear, and in a crisis 'the Cecilians', Cobham among them, would have to take sides. One suspects that the baron was not anxious to do so. Leicester had shown him friendship and, although the earl voted regularly from 1564 to 1569 against Cobham's admission to the Order of the Garter,[31] the two ministers seem to have worked equably together. Little correspondence between them survives from the mid-'60s, but the politeness of their intercourse in 1568 indicates that no breach had occurred. Leicester valued Cobham's intelligence reports from the Continent, judging from the length and detail of those which the baron sent to him, and when in August 1568 the Lord Warden's men at Sandwich suborned a spy of the Duke of Alba's who had crossed the Channel to discover the state of the Kentish defences, it was to Leicester that Cobham expressed his anxiety about the meaning of troop movements in France and the Netherlands. The third civil war between the Guisans and the Huguenots was then about to break out, and the Prince of Orange's war with the Spanish was already raging. "Neither the French nor Fleming sleeps," wrote Cobham.

> What their meaning is to double the garrison at Calais. Boulogne and

> Dieppe, I dare not judge. I have often requested her Highness to have consideration of her frontier in this shire. In sundry doubtful times I have been commanded to lie on the frontier (to my great charges) -- a show to small terror to the enemy, for what can one with a few do? Things ought to be well digested while opportunity serves, lest that being taken away, hurt and shame come of it.[32]

Ten days later Cobham was writing to thank Leicester "for recommending my suit to the Queen for forseying [sic] and providing of these her frontier places";[33] he added much information about Dutch activities which seemed to support his contention that Kent had to be prepared to meet a threat from overseas.

Cobham was also of use to Leicester and Cecil early in 1568 in supplying them with news from Calais. The baron's familiarity with the fortress in his youth gave him a clearer idea of its strength and vulnerability than most of Elizabeth's ministers possessed; he was essential to the plans to recover Calais which the government apparently contemplated after France, by reneging in 1567 on the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, refused to return the town to England. Perhaps Cobham felt a sentimental desire to recover his father's old government; in 1570 he attempted it virtually on his own account and was reprimanded by Elizabeth for daring to do so.[34] Two years before that time, however, in opposing a similar plan, the queen had had the patriotic zeal of more important servants to discourage. For even Cecil, cautious as he generally was, had been annoyed that France had got away with the breach of treaty, and Leicester, reputed to be a soldier and known tobe an intriguer, favoured any plan to take Calais by force or by stealth. It must have been to some such stratagem that Cobham was won over by the representations of French traitors who approached him in the spring of 1568, when King Charles was distracted from keeping watch over Calais by his efforts to conclude the Peace of Longjumeau between the Guisans and their opponents. The baron at once imparted his plan to Cecil, Leicester and the Leicestrian Earl of Pembroke, who were to present it to the queen and seek her support. The Secretary was evidently interested; he wrote to Cobham on 20 March 1567/8:

> May it Please your L. I have Delyvered your Letter Directed to the LL of Penbrook and Lecester wherby they Perceave your Care and Circumspection for the Conveying over Suerly of La Vale, and do very well allow therof. I have Also Communicated to them the Letter in Itallion Directed to your L. from the other Syde and notwithstandyng any such Reason as your L. hath very Wisely Honorably and Naturally in your Privat Letter to me Explayned, Yet I Perceave they thynk not Presently mete to

> Deale with hir Majesty for the monny Required by the Itallion. I Perceave this matter is to Procede forward or els to Cess uppon Answer to be had from the French King to a Messadg Lately sent to the Kyng, to move hym that hir Majesty may be an Intercessor or Moyennor for a Peace with France, which If the Kyng deny to hir Majesty, than it semeth She will take hold of this Offer, otherwise not. We have Letters from our Ambassador of the 9 of this Moneth wherin He Wryteth that He seeth Manifest Arguments of a Peace Secretly Concluded and we here that on[e] Cripes Thambassadors Man is Depeched the 12 of this Month by Bullen [Boulogne], by whom We Look to here the very Truth. So as if your L. can staye the Party a whyle, Dout not but to advise your L. more amply.[35]

Apparently, if indeed the mysterious Italian agent's project concerned Calais, the queen was unwilling to encourage it until she had made sure either that she would not be in the compromising situation of acting as mediator in France while her ministers were engaged in a plot to take Calais from the king, or that a sudden conclusion of the French civil war, achieved without her intervention, would not rid Charles of distractions and permit him to concentrate his energies on the defence of the fortress. Three days after Cecil wrote his first letter to Cobham, the Secretary wrote another, disheartening one:

> My Honorable Good Lord. I am Sorry that Sence both your Self and your Causes ought in Reason to be more spedely Answered, that I can not so Doo, the Staye Remayning wher I can not Remedy it.
> First for the Itallion on the other side, I have Imparted both his Letters, which yow sent me and a Letter which being Directed to your L I did Oppen beyng therto Moved by M[r] Baptist by whom I Receaved it.
> But the coldnes is Such, wher heate shuld be, and Lack of a Vertue Resolutory, that I cannot send your L. any other Answer but this that your L. must by your Letter Admonish the Party to Stay Dealyng therin untill you shall furder Advertise hym -- which to be sayd to Yow, is Untill We here from our Ambassador out of France ....
> I send your L. also the Last Letter from Callice, which is Worth kepyng ether with yow or to be Retorned for in his Offerr, He Tenteth us farr to Harken to his Offer.[36]

The queen evidently refused to allow her ministers to enter into a league with those who would betray the French king. Cecil was discouraged; he seems to have thought that the weeks before the conclusion of the civil war in France provided England with what was probably its last opportunity to regain a foothold on the Continent. On 26 March 1568 he wrote to Cobham again, telling him that "I thynk yow shall have M[r] Baptista with yow shortly to Pass secretly over,"[37] but this intelligence officer between the baron and the Secretary, clearly one who was involved in the project, is heard of only once again. His mission to France cannot have been productive. Indeed, there was little that anyone could do without the queen's approval. On 28 March Cecil still seems to have thought that Elizabeth might tell

the plotters to proceed: "As yet," he wrote to Cobham, indicating that there was still a chance that she might change her mind, "I can not gett a Perfect Resolution for the Matter beyond Sea."[38] But on 11 April, in a letter of despair, Cecil showed that all hope was vain. "My Good Lord," the Secretary wrote,

> how it greveth me to hold and follow a Plow, wher the Ownor of the Ground forbeareth to Cast in Sede in Tyme Sesonable. I am also the more Greved that your self at this Tyme is in Lyke sort Discoraged. Moremus sepe sed Nihil Promoremus. Beside the Plough which yow follow, we ar Occupyed with another meaning to Joyne both togither for suerty, but still I Dispayre of Seede. Your Lo shall shortly know more. I thynk M^r Baptist is come to yow this Night Passed.[39]

What this other 'meaning' was is not made clear in Cecil's subsequent letters. If Hume is right in thinking that it concerned a plan to subsidize Moray's Scotsmen in an enterprise to rescue some Dutch princelings who were being sent as hostages to Spain,[40] it had nothing to do with Cobham.

If in 1568 Cecil and Cobham could work together with Leicester in a scheme in which Norfolk and Sussex appear to have had no part, it was only with the greatest expenditure of diplomatic tact by all three men. For Leicester had reason to doubt the Secretary and his friends. One suspects that the earl, for some time after the summer of 1566, would not have shown the special consideration for Lady Cobham with which he then seems to have won her husband's gratitude. "The courtesy you have shewn my wife at Killingworth," asseverated the baron on 5 September 1566, upon his wife's return from the provinces with the royal progress, "binds me always to serve you."[41] Cobham may have been sincere in his protestations of friendship, but Lady Cobham would not have shared them to any great extent. Her husband's agreeable relations with Leicester doubtless pleased the baroness, but it was his friendship with Cecil which she knew was the mainstay of his career. Once, when in the summer of 1568 she evidently thought that the reports of the progress of the Prince of Orange's campaign against Spain which Cobham was sending to the Secretary were becoming too formal, Lady Cobham undertook to assure her husband's friend that the business-like nature of the messages was not due to any lack of personal affection. As Cobham wrote to Cecil from Cobham Hall on 14 August 1568,

> Good master Secretarye, my wyf knoyng how well I loue to heare frome you, and of your well doyng, has rather told you so, thayne I yn they dellyvery of my letteres. my menyng ys not to troblye you w^t^ theym, but oonlye to let you know how myndfull I am of you.[42]

The Brookes, led by Lady Cobham and by her brother-in-law Henry, undoubtedly contributed much to Cecil's effort to persuade the queen to marry the archduke. After the Secretary had, at some time before Parliament met in 1566, drawn up his famous memorandum contrasting the eligibility of Charles of Austria with that of Leicester, it was clear that no friend of Cecil's could contemplate Elizabeth's matching with the earl. Leicester had personal beauty; otherwise he had the disadvantage of being a parvenu, unpopular among all who did not hope to use his favour with the queen for their own personal advancement. He was held in suspicion by many who suspected that he had killed his first wife, and in contempt by those who knew of his lasciviousness and apparent inability to beget an heir. In birth, alliances, virtue and the likelihood of making the queen happy and giving her children, the archduke was eminently preferable;[43] only a favourable report on his appearance was needed to destroy Leicester's chances, in Cecil's opinion at least, altogether. From what one knows of Lady Cobham's declared preference for the Austrian marriage project, it seems safe to assume that it was she who was willing to dispense even with the need for handsomeness in the person of the prospective royal consort. On 4 June 1565, long before Elizabeth gave the Parliamentary delegation to understand that she would marry Charles, the imperial ambassador wrote to his master that he had just assured the queen of the archduke's good character. "I swore by all I held dear," reported Zwetkovich,

> that the son has inherited the virtues of his father and that he would hold his wedded consort dear all his life long.
> The Queen was pleased to hear this and told me that she had a Lady of the Bedchamber who told her everything and who had said that even if her husband were not handsome, she, the Queen, should be content, if he but loved her and was kind to her.[44]

Whoever the lady was who, perhaps from personal experience, spoke thus -- and she may well have been Lady Cobham -- Leicester had reason to resent her bitterly, for his attractiveness to the queen was the only tangible asset which he had.

The Brookes may also have had a part in defaming Leicester in the matter of his wife's mysterious death; one of them, at any rate, was friendly with the party which tried hardest to embarrass the earl with it. John Appleyard was the half-

brother of Amy Robsart and the chief denouncer of Leicester as her murderer. By 1567 his public accusations forced the Privy Council to investigate his charges, and it is probably from that year that an undated letter from Appleyard to one of his servants comes. It concerns a man called Evans, who was seeking a patent; Appleyard was trying to arrange a loan for Evans through his friend, "Mr. Cobham", at a time when, by Appleyard's own admission, there was "great eye" given to all communications between him and his acquaintance. Which of the Brookes was thus involved with Leicester's accuser cannot be established: Appleyard's expression of hope that "Cobham is not so ill" as he himself was at the time of writing the letter does not help one to an identification:[45] but it seems likely that it was Henry Cobham who was meant, both because he alone of the baron's brothers could have been useful to a suitor at Court, and because he is known somehow to have earned Leicester's dislike. Years later, when Cobham was ambassador in France and was being commended by Cecil and by Secretary Walsingham for his conduct there, he learned that "my Lord of Leicester, to my great grief and discouragement, understands otherwise of my service;"[46] on another occasion he pleaded with Walsingham to defend him to the queen, who had "hearkened to the whispering and backbiting of those who have very unjustly delivered reports, as it seems, to the prejudicing of her better opinion towards me."[47] Cobham was, moreover, much attached to Sussex, and when the earl died Cobham wrote from Paris that he was extremely grieved. "God raise to me," he told Walsingham, "as good and noble a friend."[48]

Leicester may well have observed with anxiety, in the months following the dissolution of Parliament in January 1567, the marked favour which the queen showed not only to Cecil and Norfolk but to the Brookes as well. In April the Emperor Maximilian II, the archduke's brother, was elected to the Order of the Garter, and on 9 May Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, the most brilliant of the Leicestrians, informed the earl that Sussex was to bear the insignia of the honour to Vienna.[49] A fortnight later Cecil made explicit to Lord Cobham what Leicester must have known, that is, that Sussex's dispatch to the emperor was intimately concerned with the question of the royal marriage, and that Elizabeth had assured Norfolk

that she intended to keep her promise to make Charles her husband. Cecil's letter to the baron is of interest, both on this point and for its indication that the queen was being particularly gracious at that moment; even Cobham's refusal to take upon himself some unspecified duty, perhaps connected with the arrival of an ambassador, had been equably received. "I tooke occasion," wrote the Secretary,

> to shew the Queen's Majesty your Letter, to see your forwardnes in good Will, with the lack of Power to matche it: she tooke your will in good Part, with good Words; but she wold not have yow to be at Chardg, for so she commanded me to advise your Lordship; but how hard it is to sever Service from Chardg, I replyed. And so I take my Leave of your Lordship and my good Lady,
> My Lord of Norfolk will tarry this sevennight.
> The Embassador shall lodg at Dymmocks.
> My Lady Clynton hath underhand procured my Wiff to mak hir a Supper to Morrow, wher she sayth a gretar Person will be covertly, as she is wont: I meane not to take knolledg, but shall be glad to see hir content with my poverty.
> The Queen's Majesty hath made great Asseverations to perswade the Duke of hir effectuall meaning to marry, and to deale playnly in this Ambassade.[50]

Neither Throckmorton nor Cecil said anything about Sussex's companions in his embassy, but when the earl departed from London on 25 June he took with him as the third most important of his advisers the young Henry Cobham.

Lord Cobham's brother was just thirty when he was given his first significant experience as a diplomat, and in Sussex's train he was quickly introduced to the European world in which he was later to move. Embarking from Dover, the Englishmen landed at Calais, passed through the Netherlands and stopped at Antwerp to pay a courtesy call on the regent, Margaret of Parma, then proceeded through Cologne, Mainz and Augsburg to Vienna, which they reached on 5 August. Four days later Cobham wrote the long letter which Cecil had been awaiting. "Desirus to satisfye yowr Honors expectation," began the account in which conscientbusness competed with obvious excitement,

> and to pay with Ynke and Paper in Part what I have promised, I shall not fayle but to visite yow at Times with summe Lynes, of Austria. But firste to beginne at our setting furth, I must lette yow understande, that happely the Lorde Imbassador and his Trayne hath saffely passed this Journe, and thus cume to Vienna with good Healthes and without any Disgraces, only that the Hete was noysome.

There followed details of the journey: a visit to the Duke of Wurtemberg at Stuttgart, unusual summer floods along the Danube: and then Cobham reached the

interesting part of his narrative, dealing with the reception accorded to Sussex in Vienna. Considering that the Austrians had professed just a few years before to have had too much of Elizabeth's vacillation, it was extremely important to Cecil to know how the embassy was being treated. Cobham's account was reassuring:

> At my Lorde Imbassador's landing at Vyenna, there met with him honorably accompaned, Smecovitz and Preyner, his Cosen that was in Ingland, one of his elder House. My Lorde and all her Majestis Servants were furnished with Footecloth Horses; we did ride passinge throwghe the Cyte to my Lords Lodginge, which is very fayer and nigh the Courte, well furnished by the Emperor's Appointment. Also his Lordshippes Diet and his Traines with Offisers of sundry sorte to serve at all Occasiones; I have not sene the like. It is acounted great good Will the Emperor's Majesti shoeth to her Hightnes. The ayghte of this present my Lord was acompaned by Ungeaude the Emperor's Marchall, a principall Offiser, and Smecovite, with other Gentilmen to the Presens of the Emperor, the which I may giustly prase to be a Prince of as mutch Magiesty and as mield, with as good Grace in geving Audience, or to intertaine, as ever I did see. In my simple Opinion, his firste Sighte woolde please any one that shoolde cume to his Presens. As I did see him stande, my thowght he was of the Earles haythe, very well shaped, esspecially his Legge and Foote; my Lord had some Time of Confference with him, and praised his manner and choyse Woords in his Taulk, -- I besitche yow, Ser, that yow will accept this my particular settinge foorth of these triflinge Causes.

No doubt Cecil was glad to hear all that Cobham had to say, although it might not have done for the queen to hear another prince praised quite so highly. The important thing was not, however, the emperor's handsomeness, but his brother's, and of this Cobham could still say very little.

> Of arch Duke Charls I write nothinge, for that he is twenty Leages hence in his owne Terretories; but they sayd, he will shortly be here to visite the Emperor. The chefeste of the luste yownge Gentilmen be with him. The Fame is great of his Praises, I hope to be Oculariis testis to my better contentation.[51]

It was this eye-witness account of the man who was to compete with Leicester for Elizabeth's affections that Cecil wanted.

Unfortunately, however, there were more important things to be considered than the likelihood that the queen and the archduke would find each other personally pleasing. When the emperor wrote to his brother on 18 August, inviting him to come up from his principality on the Adriatic to receive Sussex, he enclosed in his letter what Charles later described as the "book of the English Confession and Church Ordinances".[52] It was the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-Nine Articles

which were to prove the obstacle to the Austrian match, for the archduke would not accept them, and Elizabeth, although she had no objection to her husband's private adherence to Roman Catholic practice, could not afford to affront English popular opinion by permitting him the public exercise of his religion. Charles did not come to Vienna, and Henry Cobham was not able to send Cecil any encouragement that he would come. Instead, on 23 October, Sussex was plainly told that there could be no marriage unless his queen would put in writing certain broad concessions to her suitor's orthodox scruples. On the twenty-seventh Cobham was sent home with the new demands.[53]

The state of excitement which existed at Court in the autumn of 1567 is reflected in a letter which Cecil wrote to Lord Cobham on 8 November. Some people were quick to say that the marriage project had failed, and so revealed their partiality to Leicester; others put different interpretations upon the indefinite news which had been forwarded from Vienna. Cecil himself was not sure what to think, and he was eager to talk with the baron's brother; apparently some of the opinions which were being expressed were said to be based on information which Henry had circulated, and Cecil was glad to hear that it was not true that the envoy had been indiscreet. "My good Lord," he told the baron,

> I thanke yow for your Letter Mentioning your Brothers Arryvall. Manny here saye to the best, That he hath bene at London Secretly 3 Dayes Past, and Discourses Discover every Mans Particular Affection, of the one Part not Particular for themselves but for the Head, And your good Terence Old Phrase Salva Res Est Releveth me that was almost Overthrowen with Tryumphes of Speches to the Contrary. And yet I Lyve in feare.
> For your Brothers Speche with me it can not be, But If He will come hyther to the Court in the Morning before 9 then may I Ordynarely in my Chamber Speke with hym befor Tyme will Allow hym to Speke with the Quene. If He Speke with Mr [Thomas] Hennadg at London, by Hym he shall Understand the Humor of this Place.[54]

Because of the consanguinity between King Philip and the emperor, and also because of the traditional enmity of both Austria and Spain to France, Guzman de Silva had been taken far into Elizabeth's confidence in the course of the marriage negotiations. It is thus from his dispatches to Madrid that one learns of Henry Cobham's activities in London late in 1567. On 8 November, when Cecil wrote to Lord Cobham, de Silva reported that the emissary had arrived only the day before, and that his mission was to gain the queen's assurance that, if the archduke came

to England, she "would not take from him, or limit him in the exercise of his religion".[55] A week later the ambassador told how Henry Cobham, after consultations with Elizabeth, had visited the Spanish embassy and delivered a letter from Sussex. "He told me verbally," said de Silva,

> that the Queen had been much pleased with what had been written and said to her on behalf of the Emperor and Archduke, and he has hopes of the marriage. I asked him whether the duke of Norfolk was coming to discuss the resolution he had brought with him and he said he thought he was as the matter was of great importance and, in the meanwhile, he (Cobham) was going to advise the countess of Sussex.[56]

Henry Cobham's hopes for the success of Sussex's mission were ill-founded; if the Leicestrians were worried and Norfolk pleased by the air of optimism which prevailed at the end of 1567, their attitudes would have been reversed had they known the contents of the letter which Elizabeth wrote to Maximilian II on 10 December. For, while protesting that it would be an evil-speaking 'miscreant' who would say that her words were "but subterfuges resorted to for the purpose of evading this business", the queen told the emperor that she must refuse to make the concessions which his brother demanded. "I shal, I hope," she stated,

> be excused when I do not at present comply with the Archduke's wish, as I prize quietude of conscience and the continuance of the peaceable reign which I have begun and desire to pursue higher than all the favours which the Princes of the world and all kingdoms can confer upon me.[57]

Elizabeth, however, seems to have let no one know what she had decided; although Cecil is reported to have handed the letter to Henry Cobham with words of encouragement that may have been intended to give heart to a discouraged man, rather than to assure a courier that he had worked in a successful cause, there is no proof that even the Secretary knew what his mistress was doing, As de Silva reported on 21 December,

> Cobham has already left for Vienna with the Queen's reply to the earl of Sussex about the Archduke's suit. I have not heard what is the substance of it, nor does Cobham himself know, although I am told that when the Secretary gave him the despatch he bade him go with a good heart.[58]

General ignorance about the outcome of the negotiations was soon to come to an end. Henry Cobham, after stopping over at Cobham Hall[59] and then at Brussels, where the Duke of Alba gave him letters to deliver in Vienna,[60] reached the imperial capital on New Year's Day. His arrival there seems to have been inten-

ionally contrived to mislead observers: a papal agent wrote on 2 January that,

> 'At a late hour yesterday returned Mr. Coban ..., the gentleman that had been sent by the English ambassador to his Queen; and to-day the said ambassador has been closeted a long while with his Majesty. It is said that he brings good news, and that the match with the Archduke Charles is deemed arranged; which is the more readily believed because the gentleman had no sooner entered the city than he caused the postilion to sound his horn all the way to the ambassador's quarters, crying, 'Live Austria and England!'[61]

Even as this report was written, all hope of the marriage was being given up. The emperor thought the worst of Elizabeth's letter, and would not believe the embarrassed protestations of Sussex that he at least was acting in good faith. The earl said that if he had been in England,

> the Queen would not have given this answer, which she has given under compulsion, being, as it were, forced thereto by the counsels of many who after his departure had speedily changed their minds.

Maximilian reserved his opinion about Sussex's sincerity in saying this and in asserting that

> we should not give the matter up for lost, for he would, as soon as he returned to England, see to it that this business was diverted into better channels and that much of it was dealt with in an entirely different spirit.

As the emperor told his brother,

> Whether he meant all this seriously or merely said it to cajole us and thereby have a more favourable exit, we of course do not know.[62]

Charles was equally cynical. When Sussex, Cobham and the other Englishmen visited him at Graz at the beginning of February, he received them graciously but without illusions, and at their departure on 3 February they took nothing with them in their diplomatic pouch but a polite letter of farewell from the archduke to his lost bride.

Henry Cobham returned to England at the end of March 1568.[63] His brother and Cecil knew long before the ambassadorial train reached London that their hope of seeing the queen married had ended in frustration. Elizabeth might, as one of Lord Cobham's Italian agents told him, consider the archduke so attractive that she could not display his portrait "'lest its beauty should dazzle the minds and sight of others'",[64] but once Charles was finally disillusioned neither Cecil nor anyone else in his party ever again seriously thought that they would have a king. Leicester was relieved of anxiety about his position as royal favourite, and became more con-

genial, and it was not long before even the Duke of Norfolk was unwisely taking the earl into his confidence. The letters already cited from the year 1568 show that relations between the great Court factions became much easier, despite the continued aloofness of the humliated Sussex. For Cobham, who could work well with most men, the failure of the Austrian negotiations was perhaps a disappointment, but it was not a disaster.

One aspect of the abortive embassy to Vienna was indeed auspicious for the Brooke family. Henry Cobham had conducted himself well,[65] and by 24 April 1568 he was busy with a new duty, the reception on behalf of the queen of the Portuguese ambassador; he had even contrived to get one of his brothers a place on the reception committee.[66]

Henry Cobham was never again to be long without diplomatic employment. Francis Walsingham was just beginning to take a notable part in the conduct of foreign affairs at the time of Henry's first promotions, and the favour of the new minister combined with Cecil's friendship to advance the young diplomat's career. By January 1571 Walsingham was interceding for his junior colleague in a court case which had been committed to the arbitration of Sir Walter Mildmay; Cobham, wrote Walsingham to the judge, "desireth your convenient favour, which I beseech you, Sir, the rather he may receive for my sake".[67] Indeed, possessing the confidence of the government, Henry Cobham was sent on embassies for which the rest of Europe considered him unfit. When Lord Cobham on 10 October 1570 forwarded to Cecil dispatches sent by his brother from his meeting with the Emperor Maximilian at Speyer,[68] the Secretary learned that the queen's envoy had been coolly received.[69] Cobham's charge, an impossible one, had been to deceive Maximilian into believing that Elizabeth was still interested in marrying his brother. He was utterly unsuccessful, and when he returned in December with no more from the disillusioned emperor than the conventional gift of silver plate it was remarked that his failure was not surprising. In a matter in which, as the French ambassador gleefully observed, the Earl of Sussex had achieved nothing in the comparatively propitious atmosphere of three years earlier, it was not to be believed that a young gentleman of no authority, so recently but a beardless youth, would succeed at so late a date

as 1570.[70]

Cobham's youthful appearance was, however, somewhat deceptive. He was thirty-three when La Mothe-Fénélon so casually discounted his importance, and he had moreover the full authority of an emissary from the queen. No one had really expected him to succeed at Speyer; the English would have been acutely embarrassed had the Austrians actually taken the renewal of the marriage negotiations seriously. Cecil had dispatched him under a cloud: "'I am occupyd in sendyng H. Cobham to the Duke of Alva and to the Queen of Spayne,'" the Secretary had informed Thomas Heneage on 16 August. "'Yf any body tell you that he also goth to Spyres wher the Emperor is, I will not saye that it is untrew. But I do not saye so to any.'"[71] Cobham's real task had indeed been to confer with Maximilian on matters arising from the rebellions in the Netherlands and in Scotland, and there is no indication that he performed this duty incompetently. That Elizabeth and her ministers had a far higher opinion of Cobham's capabilities than had the French and Spanish observers in London is argued by his dispatch on another embassy within three months of his return. Thus, from the late 1560s onward, Lord and Lady Cobham had another representative of their family in the more important circles of the Court.

* * *

Chapter VIII

In the years with which the second decade of the Elizabethan era begins one hears very little of William Brooke the man. The personal matters of the earlier 1560s: the birth of his children, the death of his sister and the consequent increase in his own and his wife's importance at Court, the shame caused by one brother and what must have been the pleasure occasioned by the recognition of diplomatic ability in another, his growing friendship with Sir William Cecil, his worries over debt: all of these had contributed to make Cobham the established figure he was by the end of 1568. He was the Secretary's friend, but an old one by then, to whom Cecil no longer needed to make protestations of friendship; he was an experienced courtier and the husband of one of the queen's two closest confidantes; he was, most apparently, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, an administrator entrusted

with the further charge of keeping an eye upon the Continent. One finds Cobham from 1568 to 1570 playing a responsible and therefore largely unremarkable rôle in the general affairs of the nation, not a principal one in more discrete and personal matters. Indeed, he was sharply told to attend to his own business when once he indulged what seems to have been a pet project of his, the recapture of Calais. Having personally bribed certain citizens of the town to rise against their French governor, Cobham told the queen on 15 August 1570 that she need only dispatch a few companies to take the prize from the willing hands of the conspirators within. His scheme, and the lack of security in Calais which its partial realization indicated, alarmed the French ambassador, who advised King Charles that the fortress garrison ought to be changed, "puisque les choses en sont en cest estat." Elizabeth, however, refused to take it seriously. Acidly she informed Cobham that he was rather late in broaching his plan ("son advertissment venoit tard," as La Mothe-Fénélon translated her words), since the distractions of yet another civil war in France, so advantageous to England, had just been ended by the conclusion of a treaty. He was soundly rebuffed and told that his suggestion was unseasonable.[1] Clearly, Cobham was to confine himself to his duties as a responsible minister of the Crown.

Yet no senior member of Elizabeth's government was ever expected to depend entirely upon official directives from above. Throughout the prolonged third French civil war of 1568-69 the need for personal initiative within the ministry was greater than ever, for England's position was decidedly equivocal. The struggle between the Huguenots and the house of Guise was carried directly into England even before war actually broke out, by the flight from France in the late summer of 1568 of the deprived Cardinal de Chatillon, one of the leaders of the Protestant party. The cardinal had two years earlier, in an attempt to rid his country of the political nuisance presented by the king's brother Anjou, proposed a marriage between the duke and Elizabeth. The English, their eyes upon Vienna, had not been interested in the cardinal's proposals at first, but after the failure of the Austrian negotiations Elizabeth let it be known that she might consider Anjou's suit. Chatillon was thus, as match-maker as well as co-religionist, well known to

the English government, and his disembarkment at Dover on 8 September 1568 caused a great stir. Cobham, informed of the arrival by one of his fiscal agents in the Ports area, immediately sent the news to Cecil, and two days later he wrote again to the Secretary to tell him that the cardinal and his rather undistinguished retinue were at Canterbury, awaiting permission from London to go to the queen.[2] On 10 September Cobham also informed Leicester of the Frenchman's movements, and said that, while not knowing what attitude the queen would take to the refugees, he had taken it upon himself to order that they be well used.[3] Cobham's behaviour was endorsed by Elizabeth, who received the cardinal with kindness and gave him the impression that she would assist his colleagues overseas. These were his brother, the Admiral de Coligny, and the titular chief of the Huguenots, the Prince de Condé. At once the Guisans protested and on 19 September Cobham reported from Canterbury that the French king had formally declared war on Condé's party, and that the Guisan Bishop of Rennes had arrived in England to demand of Elizabeth what she intended to do.[4] Cobham knew no more how he ought to receive the bishop than he had known how to treat the cardinal, and he was soon to learn that absence of orders from the queen was to become the order of the day. For Elizabeth, by extending one hand to King Charles in an autocratic gesture promising no aid to rebels against their prince, and another to Chatillon assuring him of asylum and of her continued friendship, effectually established the position of equivocality which England was to maintain for more than a year. It was one in which ministers had often to depend upon their own wits in order to do what the queen would have them do.

No officer needed to rely upon his own judgement more often than did Cobham, the maritime governor whose proximity to France gave him both opportunities to interfere in the war raging just across the Channel, and the embarrassment of being the first minister to have to decide what to do with new arrivals from the Continent. The baron's own views on the French situation are clearly revealed in a letter which he wrote to Leicester on 29 May 1569. At the Battle of Jarnac the Huguenot chief, Condé, had been killed, and although the future King Henry IV had taken over nominal leadership of the party, it was the Admiral de Coligny who

was effectively in charge of its fortunes. It was a rumour that the admiral had been killed which provoked from Cobham the observation that

> God who guides all good men's steps will not permit such a violent death to so godly a man, but if it be so, it is for our sins.[5]

Coligny was of course to die atrociously on St. Bartholomew's Day three years later, but Cobham's expression of opinion of the significance of his murder is no less interesting for being premature. The baron clearly felt, with Cecil, that the Huguenots were his brothers in religion. He was also, however, again like Cecil, apparently resigned to the fact that England could not afford to expend its resources in an open fight for Protestantism, especially when Elizabeth might through vacillation at a crucial time waste all that had previously gone into a war effort. Throughout the third civil war the Huguenots received arms and money from England as they could be spared, but never officially, never as a commitment.

Cobham, however, was able to provide Cecil and, one suspects, the French rebels, with aid of a non-military kind from time to time, for he sent them invaluable intelligence. La Mothe-Fénélon, the ambassador of King Charles whose espionage activities in England were multiplied by the need to keep watch over the Cardinal de Chatillon and his dealings with his colleagues overseas, stormed into Elizabeth's presence one June day to demand instant punishment of those responsible for waylaying his courier and depriving him of the dispatches which he was carrying. The queen protested that she was in no way guilty of this shocking breach of diplomatic privilege, and told the ambassador that "Milaris Coban" had just handed over to her certain letters from her husband, the governor of the region in which the theft had taken place, which explained everything. The courier had been a new man, wrote Cobham, unknown to the Lord Warden's men, and he had sought to pass overseas not only without a passport but in the company of several Englishmen who were suspected of being agents of the Duke of Alba. Naturally the man had been arrested and his belongings taken from him, the precious packet of dispatches among them. La Mothe-Fénélon might stiffly reply, as he informed King Charles that he had,

> que les paquetz de Vostre Majeste avoient accoustumé de servir de passeport et de seureté à ceulx qui les pourtoient;

the harm, however, had been done, and the secret intelligence certainly read. The Frenchman could not believe that such a queen would stoop to so low a trick; the organizer of the outrage must have been one of those who, compelled by trouble-making curiosity and deep hatred of France, had so often in the past year endangered the amity which existed between the two kingdoms. As he expressed himself to his king,

> l'indignité n'estoit procédée d'une telle princesse comme elle, ny de son commandement, ains de la mailicieuse curiosité et extrême passion de ceulx qui, en plusieurs aultres mauvaises sortes, avoient, ceste année, miz souvent la dicte Dame en hazard de perdre le bien de la paix et amytié de Vostre Majesty et celle de vostre royaulme.[6]

Perhaps the ambassador was right to believe the queen's protestations of innocence in the matter; with Elizabeth, and her disconcerting adroitness in shifting her more unbecoming actions upon her ministers, one can never be sure.

If La Mothe-Fénélon accused no one in particular in connection with the accident to his post in June 1569, he was not so reticent when a similar occurrence took place three months later. Then it was definitely Cobham whom he suspected of having arranged it, and, ironically, in September 1569, the queen was almost certainly behind the baron's manoeuvre. For this was a critical time in England, when the government needed all the information that it could get. Leicester, perhaps convinced that he had lulled Cecil into a sense of security about his position as the leader of the cabinet, began the year by gathering about him a party of malcontent Councillors and by confronting the queen with their collective grievances against the Secretary. Elizabeth rebuffed the delegation, but both she and Cecil realized that danger threatened. For Norfolk and his father-in-law Arundel, Pembroke and the two marquesses, Northampton and Winchester, supported Leicester, and when such a formidable section of the higher nobility leagued with the upstart favourite in any cause, it was obvious that the Secretary's control was slipping. Soon after he was alerted, Cecil learned that the frustrated opposition to him had gone underground and entered into negotiations to marry the widower Norfolk to the Queen of Scots, a captive in England since her flight from her own rebellious subjects in the previous year. Exposed to the queen, the duke

was severely reprimanded but not punished, and Leicester was warned that further promotion of the marriage would lose him Elizabeth's favour. Finally there was the rising in the north, where Roman Catholicism held on tenaciously and where the great reaving families of Percy and Neville had hoped that Norfolk would lead the old nobility back to its former, pre-Cecilian independence of the central government in so far as control of the Border lands was concerned. The disheartened Councillors in London were already being closely watched when rumours reached Cecil that the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland were not going to accept the failure of their southern colleagues' combined scheme to depose the Secretary and to marry Norfolk to Mary. The duke himself, who had gone off without the queen's permission to his estates in Norfolk and there attempted an anachronistically feudal show of power, was summarily recalled to Court; pusillanimously he obeyed, and found himself in the Tower by the end of the first week in October. Pembroke, Arundel and Leicester's genius, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, were also arrested, but the favourite himself, who knew that the northern earls would treat him no better than they would the other upstart, Cecil, came round to the Secretary's side and thus effected a temporary solidification of the elements still at liberty within the Council. Pembroke and his colleagues were soon freed, and Sussex, although Norfolk's friend and the brother of one of the imminent rebels, was trusted by Cecil and kept in his office of Lord President of the Council in the North, that is, the Crown's military commander in the trouble spot. Leicester's brother, Warwick, was sent to assist him. In the middle of October Northumberland and Westmorland proclaimed their intention to reform the government by force of arms and to re-establish the old faith; by Christmas they had been put to rout, and, except for one brief skirmish in the following February, the last internal, military opposition to Elizabeth's rule in England, soon discovered to have been a Spanish project, came to an end.[7]

The events of 1569 have been narrated because of the consequences which they were to have; of Cobham's public part in them at the time virtually nothing is known. The inconsequential Northampton was openly opposed to Cecil early in the year, but the relationship between Cobham and his brother-in-law seems to have

ended with the death of Elizabeth Brooke; the baron would not have shared the marquess's opinions for sentimental or family reasons. Nor does Cobham seem to have had anything to do with his brother Thomas's probable opposition to Cecil and consequent imprisonment, although he is said to have later communicated secretly, by Brooke's means, with Norfolk when the duke was in the Tower.[8] Of the Councillors other than Norfolk and Northampton, it was the Secretary himself to whom Cobham was attached. With Westmorland, among the rebels, the baron had a tie in blood: John Lord Cobham's wife had been, like the earl, a Neville, and her bannerol had been borne at the funeral of her grandson, Cobham's father: but the connection was a remote one. To indicate that Cobham felt any affinity with his northern cousin there is only the suspect testimony of the Bishop of Ross, who stated that in 1571 the baron was willing to assist the fugitive rebels in their financial distress overseas; Cobham said that "he wold be glad to help," swore Ross, "and named Therle of Westmerland, and his Freinds to be those whome he wold be glad to so help, sayinge, that he was of Kinne to Therle."[9] How far the bishop's words can be credited will be considered later; of Cobham's sympathy with Westmorland in 1569 there is no evidence. In fact, everything directly related to the crisis which one knows of the baron is that, by a commission of lieutenancy issued on 20 November 1569, he was given more complete control of Kent than he had ever before possessed. On 1 October, in preparing to meet the uprising, he, his brother John and several other Kentish gentlemen, had mustered the shire;[10] in November, "for the assured good Opinion we have conceyved of your Wysdome, Experience and Fidelitie towards us", Elizabeth informed the baron that he was not only to keep strict order in Kent to prevent insurrection there,

> but allso to putt the whole Force of all the Hablemen, bothe on Horsebacke and on Foote, within our sayd Countie, in such good Ordre and Redinesse, furnished with theyr Armour and Weapons, as they may allwayes uppon one Howers Warning be redy to serve us, wheresoever you shall appoint, either for the Suppression of any Stirre or Rebellion, that might be moved by disordred People, or for the meeting with any forrayne Enterprise that might be attemptyd.[11]

On 27 December the French ambassador reported that, should Sussex and Warwick need instant reinforcement in the north, "les gens de Queint, que milor Coban a levez", would be sent with Pembroke's militia from Somerset.[12] The rebellion was practically

over by this time, so that Cobham never had to march at the head of his Kentishmen. That Cecil was prepared to send him, however, indicates what the absence of his name from all the lists of malcontents argues in a negative way: Cobham was one of the few men who justified the Secretary's confidence, expressed when the troubles of 1569 were beginning, that "'all my lords from the greatest to the meanest, think my actions honest and painful and do profess inwardly to bear me as much good will as ever they did heretofore.'"[13]

If Cobham did not use his sword against the rebels, he seems at least to have made deft employment of his administrative weapons to embarrass their possible abettors. In so doing he once again incurred the French ambassador's impotent indignation. While Cecil worked ceaselessly to frustrate the plans of his personal enemies, of the promoters of the Scottish marriage, and of the northern earls, as Black says, "even La Mothe's correspondence was inspected, showing that the government was leaving nothing to chance."[14] This inspection could not be done officially, but it could be managed through the co-operation of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. La Mothe-Fénélon had learned his lesson about dispatching couriers who carried no passports, and when in the hectic month of September 1569 he had an urgent communication to make with Paris he took the precaution of having the courier go to Cobham personally for a safe-conduct. The baron took an hour and a half to give the fellow his authority to proceed, and by the time that the courier left him a group of men had been positioned in a wood three miles from the Lord Warden's office, on the road to the coast. Whether Cobham was then at his house in Canterbury or at Cobham Hall the ambassador's account of the incident does not specify, but the rest of the details are given graphically enough. "Despuys il a esté," wrote La Mothe-Fénélon on 3 October,

> à trois mille de la mayson du dict lord Coban, au passage d'ung boys, quelques ungs, montez à l'advantaige, ayantz les visages couvertz, mais non tant que l'ung d'eulx n'ayt esté recogneu, le sont venuz charger à coups d'espée par la teste, l'ont porté par terre, tout follé aulx piedz de leurs chevaulx, et luy ont demandé incontinent les lettres de France, puys les luy ayant ostées, l'ont garotté et attaché à ung arbre, et l'ont layssé là.

The ambassador of course complained vehemently both to the queen and to the Council, but he knew that he could hope for no satisfaction from them. The Court,

ne told King Charles, was torn by dissension, and the government, fearing that Norfolk would attempt to free the Scottish queen in order to marry her, desperately wanted to discover how far the French would go in order to assist him.[15] La Mothe-Fénélon was in the impossible situation of demanding justice from the instigators of the criminals.

The courier was attacked and robbed on 27 September; the ambassador sent his first account of the incident on 3 October, and later that day the queen sent him to Thomas Randolph, recently returned from a successful trade mission to Ivan the Terrible. Randolph informed the Frenchman that his mistress was much disturbed by the misfortune which had befallen his servant, and was sending a commission into Kent to investigate the crime and to see that the culprits were rigorously punished. Meanwhile the queen assured His Excellency that "les passaiges me seroient ouvertz quant je vouldrois envoyer quelcun en France." The trouble was that the commission had been sent to Cobham, and that it was through Cobham's territory that all dispatches had to pass.[16]

Without hope of fair treatment from the English authorities, La Mothe-Fénélon attempted to do some detective work on his own. Unfortunately his courier's identification of one of the men who waylaid him was useless; the ambassador never tracked down the ill-masked bandit, and never mentioned his name in his reports to the king. Nor did Elizabeth, inscrutable as always, betray anything in the long conversations which she held with La Mothe-Fénélon, and when she swore on her prayer-book that she was ignorant of the whole affair and as anxious to get to the bottom of it as he was, the Frenchman was almost convinced of her innocence once again.

Then, at eight o'clock in the evening of 3 December, a strange thing happened. Someone came up to the locked gate of the French embassy, threw over it a packet, and escaped before anyone within could get a look at him. The packet was picked up in the courtyard and found to contain not only the nine-weeks-old dispatches but a mysterious envelope on which had been written a few words in English. La Mothe-Fénélon obligingly translated the message into French and sent it, with the delayed intelligence reports from September, to King Charles; rendered back again

into English, the "bien peu de motz escriptz en anglois" read:

> 'Monsieur l'ambassadeur', I leave these letters for you, since they are of no use to me. I assure you, on my word of honour, that they have not been opened. My Lord Cobham has threatened to hang whoever it was who stole them, if he can but find him, so I, for fear of him, have brought them up to London. I do not dare tell you who I am, and indeed would give a fortune ("beaucoup d'escuz") to keep my name from being known.

One would hardly have expected La Mothe-Fénélon to believe his anonymous informant, especially since the stolen dispatches turn out to have included letters from the captive Queen Mary to the French Court. Yet this peculiar episode closes with the ambassador's asseveration that what the note said "je croy estre vray."[17]

Thus passed for Cobham the momentous year of 1569; he seems to have come through it well. Some indication of the esteem in which his peers held him, as well as of the more harmonious atmosphere which soon succeeded the outbreak of dissension at Court, is provided by the scrutiny lists of the Order of the Garter for April 1570. Nine Knights voted, among them Leicester and his brother Warwick, Northampton, Clinton and Arundel; all but the last, smarting under the humiliation of seeing his son-in-law Norfolk kept in the Tower, expressed the desire to have both Cobham and Cecil among them.[18] The Secretary's right to join the élite was never again to be challenged, and in 1572 the queen endorsed her Companions' choice by giving him the Garter. He received the honour, however, at a time when his friend's reputation was at its lowest, and when no Knight dared vote for Cobham. For the baron, having acquitted himself ably throughout the 1560s, practically disappears from historical record in 1570, and thereafter emerges only to lose almost all that he had built up for himself in one foolish move that came near to costing him his career.

* * *

Chapter IX

Before passing on to the story of Cobham's involvement in the Ridolfi plot, one may take a look at the Brookes as they appear at the only time when it seems they had their portrait painted. One may also notice the birth of George Brooke, and thus make the baron's family complete.

The portrait has a complicated history, which no one has succeeded in unravelling.



The Brooke Family, 1567

(By permission of the Marquess of Bath)

..t survives in two versions. One measures 49" by 38" and is painted on a wood panel which is in the possession of the Marquess of Bath at Longleat House; the other, a canvas 49¼" by 38¾", is preserved by the Duke of Devonshire at Bolton Abbey. Both works depict a dinner table surrounded by Lord and Lady Cobham, Lady Cobham's sister Jane, and several Brooke children; both bear annotations giving the ages of some of the sitters; both are dated 1567. In the Bolton painting the children are seven, one more than in the portrait at Longleat. The extra child stands at the end of the table, on the extreme right side of the painting, and to help to accommodate his figure the width of the Bolton painting extends one quarter of an inch beyond the limit of the Longleat version. Thus a Latin inscription which appears slightly to the right of centre at Longleat is exactly centred at Bolton. Apart from this extra figure, and but for the fact that the Bolton portrait stands three quarters of an inch higher than the Longleat one, the extra space being at the bottom of the canvas and filled up with table cloth, the paintings proper are identical. The Longleat annotations are the fewer. Who executed the works, and how they came to be in the possession of their present owners, is not known.

The problems presented by the two versions of the Cobham portrait are apparent. There is the question of who painted them. There is the question presented by their present whereabouts. There is, finally, the question of date: clearly, if both versions survive in their original forms, they cannot both come from 1567, since two different sizes are indicated for the baron's family in one year.

Of the possible identity of the painter much has been written but nothing positive has been concluded. He has long been thought to have been the master who signed some of his work with the monogram 'HE', and to whom are attributed more than eighty portraits of English courtiers who flourished between 1547 and 1573.[1] Horace Walpole, the first art critic and historian to consider the Longleat portrait, identified 'HE' with Lucas de Heere;[2] Waller accepted his identification.[3] Since the last century, 'HE' has come to be regarded as the signature of Hans Eworth, and Lionel Cust, in his excellent study of that painter's supposed work, stated without reservation that the Longleat portrait was by him.[4] David Piper,

however, is of the opinion that there seem "to be no very valid grounds for identification with either of these painters" of the master who executed the Cobham portraits. As he says, "I do not think anyone at the moment has a clear idea about the identity of the painter of the two family groups."[5] The work of Roy Strong, with its destruction of much of Cust's argument, would seem to justify Mr. Piper's refusal to commit himself.

There is also very little to be said about the location of the two paintings. One of them has been at Longleat since 1786 at least, when Walpole published his account of seeing it there. The house was built and owned in the lifetime of William Lord Cobham by the Thynnes, and it was at Longleat that Francis Thynne in 1578-79 wrote The Perfect Ambassadour, in the dedication of which he stressed his family's devotion to the baron.[6] There is, however, apart from Thynne's literary connection with Cobham, no indication that there was any intercourse between the Brookes and Sir John Thynne and his heirs, the masters of Longleat. To account for the presence of the other painting at Bolton there is at least the possibility of transmission through relatives of the Brooke family. Elizabeth, the elder of the twins depicted in the portrait, was the mother of Frances Countess of Cumberland, whose husband once owned Bolton Abbey, and the grandmother of Elizabeth Countess of Devonshire, ancestress of the present duke.[7] Yet there is no proof that either Frances or Elizabeth Cecil brought the portrait with her to the abbey.

There is much to be said in considering the date or dates of the portrait. On the evidence of the Longleat version, it must have first been completed between 2 June and 20 November 1567. That is to say, the extant inscriptions on the portrait record the ages of the six children as two years, one year, six years, five years, five years and four yaars old. These children may confidently be identified with Henry, William, Maximilian, the twins Elizabeth and Frances, and Margaret. Since Margaret had her fourth birthday on 2 June 1567, and Henry his third on 21 November 1567, the ages of the children could only have been correctly inscribed in the portrait on or after the first of these anniversaries and before the second. One may perhaps narrow this period even further. In the painting at Bolton the age of Lord Cobham is given as thirty-nine and that of his wife as

chirty-eight. The date of the baroness's birth is not known, but Cobham's is. If the Longleat portrait can be thought once to have borne inscriptions beside the heads of the parent figures, since faded out of sight, one may therefore say that the painter would have added the captions to his work before 1 November 1567, when the baron became forty years old.

In the Bolton portrait, the six children are given the same ages as those which appear in the Longleat version. They are, however, joined by a seventh, a little boy whose age is not stated but who looks like a five- or six-year-old. He cannot therefore be identified with George Brooke, the only child known to have been born to Lord and Lady Cobham after 1567, unless one dates the Bolton painting between 1573 and 1575. Certainly the date 1567which it bears is incorrect, but to revise that date even to 1573 would make the captions on the original six children and on their parents unconscionably out of date.

The whole problem of what happened to the painter's conception, so that it could be renovated from the present state in which it appears at Longleat, into the Bolton version, arises from the depiction in the latter of the unidentified little boy. It may perhaps occur to one to think that the Bolton and Longleat pictures were once identical, and that the latter has somehow lost its right edge. The end of the covered table in which the extreme right of the Longleat picture now neatly terminates could conceivably be a late addition to the painting: if one posits damage to the original, one might suggest that the ruined edge was touched up and a part of the space once occupied by the little boy filled up with the shadowy drape of the cloth hanging at the end of the table. This is all reasonable enough, and until evidence to the contrary is revealed by a scientific examination of the painting such as no one has yet undertaken, the theory must be considered feasible. It cannot, however, be extended to suggest that the Bolton portrait is as the Longleat one was in 1567. At no time in that year can Cobham have had four sons, unless one was an infant of whose birth and early death nothing is known; at any rate, even if this were the case, the child would have supplanted the year-old William as the baby in his aunt's lap, and William, not a boy scarcely younger than the six-year-old Maximilian, would have stood at the end

of the table. One may state definitely that, at the time when the captions giving the children's ages were originally painted in, there can have been only six children in the Brooke family.

The Longleat picture may, however, for some of the time intervening between 1567 and the present day, have been much like the Bolton version. When Walpole visited Longleat before he published his Anecdotes of Painting in 1786, the painting showed seven children, three of them captioned as five-year-olds. The visitor assumed that these were triplets.[8] Now, it is incredible that Elizabeth and Frances Brooke should have had a brother of their own age, who lived long enough to have his portrait painted in 1567, of whom nothing is recorded. Such an event as the birth of triplets would almost certainly have been noted in the list of Cobham's children which is preserved in the College of Arms, if not in Court gossip of the time. Yet Walpole can hardly have invented his account of the painting which he saw in the eighteenth century. It is in explaining his error that one can perhaps arrive at something like the truth of the story behind the Cobham portrait.

In 1567, let it be supposed, Cobham commissioned a family group. In the preceding year his only child by Dorothy Neville had been married, and the baron had thus been freed to regard his sons and daughters by Frances Newton as his only family. He probably thought that he and his wife would have no more children. Lady Cobham was, on the evidence of the Bolton picture, thirty-eight years old, and, even had she been younger, her duties about the queen would have given her no opportunity to bear a child in safety; their experiences while she was carrying William had no doubt taught the baron and his wife that they had little private life. Thus the 'complete' portrait of 1567 was painted. Then, however, Lady Cobham found herself pregnant again, perhaps even while the painter was working on her other children. Just when George Brooke was born cannot be definitely established, for two reliable primary authorities give the date as Saturday, 17 April 1568, while another records it as Saturday, 31 July 1569;[9] whichever date is the correct one, the family portrait, if it had been meant as a complete one, was quickly outdated by his birth. The child was christened nobly: his godparents were Lord

Clinton, the Lord Admiral; Edmund Guest, Bishop of Rochester; and Lady Cobham's great friend, Bess of Hardwick, who through the baroness's match-making had recently become Countess of Shrewsbury.[10] Thus introduced to the Court, George may well have been thought to warrant a place in the portrait, and when he was a year old and his brother Henry five years (between 11 December 1569 and 21 November 1570) his father decided to have the painting of 1567 revised. New sittings were not required: the baron would make do with the likenesses as they were: but a new figure would have to be introduced to represent the increase in the family. The copy which he had perhaps given to a friend, that which is now at Bolton, was called back into the artist's studio, and it and the baron's own version on a wooden surface were subjected to a summary metamorphosis. Maximilian and the girls were not affected, nor of course were the adults, but the figures of Henry and William, while not actually touched, lost their original identities. What had stood for Henry became William, and William, the baby, became George. Only Henry posed anew, and it was he who was given the previously unoccupied position at the end of the table. Henry's age was marked as five. The marking has now disappeared from the Bolton picture, but it could still be seen in the Longleat version when Walpole visited the house in the eighteenth century and he, seeing the twin girls and the little boy all described as being of the same age, assumed that they had been triplets. Sometime after Walpole's visit the portrait was damaged and retouched.

One cannot be entirely happy about this suppositional reconstruction of the effect which George Brooke's birth had upon the painting of 1567. If correct it means, for one thing, that at the end of 1569 or in 1570 all of the Brooke children but Henry and George could have looked upon portraits still wet with new paint and seen themselves depicted, and indeed still said to be, as they had been two or three years before. The adults may not have changed very much in that time, but Maximilian and his sisters must have grown up a good deal. William, four years old, would have seen himself represented as his brother Henry had been at the age of two. Nor would Jane Newton, one suspects, have appreciated being reminded of the plain spinster, apparently a dependent in her sister's household, that she had

once been; she had in the meantime most probably made her late but excellent match with Hugh Cartwright of Malling, which was to provide her with a jointure that would make her one of the most prosperous gentlewomen in Kent, and help her to a second, titled marriage.[11] There are indeed objections to be made. Yet behind the discrepancies between the Longleat and Bolton pictures must lie some such explanation. One cannot say simply, as Cust does, that the Bolton version "shows seven children, the youngest son, George Brooke, having been born in 1568," and go no further. Nor does Eric Mercer take into consideration the age of the additional figure in saying that "in 1568 another child was born and so an up-to-date record was obtained by copying the 1567 picture and adding the figure of one more child."[12] Mercer ignores Walpole's account of the Longleat picture, and apparently thinks that the present version is in its original form. He does, however, make the suppositional revision of 1569 or 1570 slightly more credible by noting that there was a "contemporary French practice of copying a portrait of a few years before and ageing the features of the sitter". For the portrait at Bolton is certainly eclectic, and can best be seen as a compromise between a desire to depict the whole of William Lord Cobham's family and a wish to preserve with as little falsification as possible a record of it as it was when it had not yet become complete.

It is a pity that one must trouble oneself with technicalities in looking at either version of the Cobham portrait. It is a charming study, clearly of the Flemish school both in the unflattering realism with which the sitters are depicted and in the minute attention to detail apparent in the objects on the dining table. The baron is a particularly arresting figure. He stares in preoccupation from heavy-lidded eyes, looking neither at the painter nor at his children, and yet not evasively. His head is massive, his features strong, thick without being in any way gross. There is a deep cleft in his forehead, a furrow that continues the final upward inflection of one severe brow. The set of his mouth is concealed by heavy, drooping moustaches. One cannot imagine the face resolved into laughter. Lady Cobham looks directly at one out of an angular, determined face that must have been often inscrutable. There is some strength in it, but rather more wilfulness,

and the mouth, with a strange upward quirk which her sister shares with her, is thin, pursed, somehow petulant. There is contradiction in the large, flat rectangle of the forehead, rising from sparse, straight brows, and the fast receding chin. Jane Newton looks very much like her sister, more feminine perhaps, but with a dowdy femininity of expression which denotes no great capacity for responsibility. She does not look at one, but her averted eyes are not rapt, merely indicative of patient waiting to be released from her pose. Her chin, too, is weak, and even the high ruff does not hide the fact that she is developing another.

The children, at first glance, seem to be much alike, with great, dominant dark eyes, yet each is very much an individual. Maximilian has his mother's long face and looks prim, even, for the moment, rather stupid. Henry, as the two-year-old must originally have been, eyes the painter and, unperturbed by the affectionate demonstrativeness of a little lap dog, reaches without bothering to turn round for some of the grapes which Maximilian is holding for a pet goldfinch. His delicate little face reveals both intelligence and a certain condescension. One cannot see it, however, as a younger version of the five-year-old in the Bolton portrait; the mannikin there has, although not the elongated features of Maximilian, at least his older brother's air of abstraction and complacency. There is in him little of the two-year-old's air of keen awareness. The youngest child, the one hugging an orange or a tangerine as he sits proudly in his aunt's lap, is plump, placid and babyishly supercilious; he watches the painter with interest.

The boys' sisters are delightful miniatures of the Elizabethan lady. The twins are much alike, although one of them has a more boyish air than the other: she looks frankly at one, the little fringe of her curly hair slightly awry, and she seems merely to be pausing before turning her attention to the cherries which she holds in her hand. The other is far more aware of herself, and looks away, almost affectedly; her hair is neatly arranged, and the hand which holds suspended a date has the little finger delicately crooked. Of all the people depicted in the picture only Elizabeth Brooke can certainly be seen elsewhere. The portrait of her as the thirty-three-year-old Lady Cecil, however, is too poor to be identified with any assurance with one of the twins in the 1567 portrait more than with the other.[13]

One might very cautiously suggest that it is more likely to be the adult version of the little girl on the right, the self-conscious one, than of her sister. The last child, Margaret, seems to be fairer than the other girls, extremely delicate, withdrawn, somehow elfin; her hand rests absently upon a marmoset. It was Margaret who later went mad.

If one can agree with Walpole that "the heads have great nature," one cannot quite see what he so found fault with in the other details in the portrait that he judged "the animals and fruit ... much inferior to the figures".[14] For the parrot which stands alone in the middle of the table, the belled perch to which Maximilian's goldfinch is attached by a string, the apples, pears, walnuts, grapes and citrus which make up the centre-piece, the goblet and the plate of peanuts, are all vividly and charmingly done. They and the children no doubt explain why Lu Emily Pearson chose the Longleat portrait as the frontispiece to her Elizabethans at Home (1957).

The anonymous painter was successful enough in his portrayal of the Newton sisters to enable Walpole, who was quite ignorant of Jane's identity, to guess at the relationship between them. Walpole was, however, woefully wrong in identifying the principal figure himself. Although he knew that the painting had been done in 1567, and that the baron had come to his title nine years before, the critic supposed that the father in the group was George Lord Cobham, for the figure seemed to him to be that of "an elderly gentleman". Much responsibility and, perhaps, the need of working rather harder than did his more clever colleagues in order to achieve what was expected of him, had no doubt aged William Lord Cobham by the time he was thirty-nine. Yet for his premature loss of youth he had been given the consolation of knowing that he had established a family of great hopefulness. There is every reason to suppose that the elegiac couplets placed on an ornate plaque between Lord and Lady Cobham expressed Cobham's own prayer at the end of the first decade of Elizabeth's reign. First in the original Latin, then in a very literal English translation, the inscription reads:

Nobilis hinc pater est illinc est optima mater
Circumfusa sedet digna parente cohors
Talis erat quondam patriarchae mensa Iacobi
Mensa fuit Iobo sic cumulata pio
Fac Deus ut multos haec gignat mensa Iosephos
Germinet ut Iobi stirps renouata fuit:
Fercula praeclaro donasti laeta Cobhamo
Haec habeant longos gaudia tanta dies.
AR DN. 1567.[15]

On this side is the noble sire, on that the most excellent mother.
Grouped all around sits the family, worthy of their parent.
Such long ago was the table of the patriarch Jacob;
Thus was his table piled high for the righteous Job.
Grant O God that this table may beget many Josephs:
May it sprout, just as his stock was renewed for Job.
Joyous courses hast thou granted to the illustrious Cobham;
May such great joys as these long endure.[16]

Footnotes to Book Two

Chapter I (pp. 138-40)

[1] See Sir William Dugdale's A Perfect Copy of All Summons of the Nobility to the Great Councils and Parliaments of this Realm, From the XLIX. of King Henry the IIIrd Until these present Times ... (1685), p. 519. William was the tenth holder of the title, Joan de la Pole and Joan Braybrooke (or the latter's husband, Sir Thomas Brooke) being considered the fourth and fifth holders of it. (Sir John Oldcastle, although known as Lord Cobham, is held to have been summoned to Parliament as Lord Oldcastle.) See the article on the title, C.P., III, 345 ff. The D.N.B. article on Henry, ninth Lord Cobham and eleventh holder of the title, unaccountably calls him eighth lord; its numbering system is in line with that used in the indices to Conyers Read's Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth (1955) and Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (1960), where William is described as "7th baron Cobham", as well as with John Venn and J.A. Venn's Alumni Cantabrigienses ... (Cambridge, 1922-27), Part I, I, 361, where George is called sixth lord. The Complete Baronetage, I, 204, in calling George fourth Lord Cobham, assumes incorrectly that the summons of Edward Brooke to Parliament constituted the creation of a new title, rather than the continued recognition of the old.

Regarding the age of William Lord Cobham, there are two contemporary legal documents which give it incorrectly. All the copies of the inquisition post mortem of his grandmother, Jane Lady Braye (P.R.O., C.142/124/207, &c.: see the notes to the family tree, p. 1088, n. 25), say that he was in his twenty-seventh year on 24 October 1558, eight days before his thirty-first birthday; and the inquisition post mortem of George Lord Cobham (P.R.O., C142/121/118) says that he was in his thirty-third year on 20 January 1558/9.

[2] Although listed among his peers throughout the last session of Mary's last Parliament, 5-17 November 1558, William Lord Cobham is never marked 'Present': cf. the Journals of the House of Lords, Beginning Anno Primo Henrici Octavi [1846], Vol. I.

[3] The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, From A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563, ed. John Gough Nichols (Camden Society, 1848), p. 178.

[4] See above, p. 22.

[5] Gomez Suárez de Figueroa conde de Feria to Philip II, London, 14 December 1558 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 7).

[6] Machyn, p. 178; the square brackets are the editor's.

[7] Machyn, p. 178. Machyn's editor, Nichols, deduces from this date that historians have been wrong in asserting that the queen and the cardinal died on the same day (p. 368); one ought, rather, to suggest that the citizens of London, in the excitement of Elizabeth's accession, did not learn of Pole's death until two days after it occurred. No historian other than Nichols contests the evidence (contained in the Spanish ambassador's dispatch cited in James Anthony Froude's History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada (1862-70), VI, 107 n., as elsewhere) that Pole died on 17 November, at night. J.B. Black, however, without commenting upon the problem of dating, says that he died on 19 November (The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603 (2nd ed., Oxford, 1959), p. 12 n.).

[8] P.R.O., S.P. 12/1/3; abstracted in S.P., For., 1558-59, p. 2. The editors of the State Papers add the misleadingly worded footnote to the entry, "This article is cancelled in the original." The entry has indeed been crossed out, but so have many of the others; Cecil obviously ticked off each instruction as it was carried out.

[9] P.R.O., S.P. 12/1/4; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 115.

[10] See the detailed map of the Cinque Ports which forms the frontispiece to K.M.E. Murray's Constitutional History of the Cinque Ports (Manchester, 1935).

11 See Froude, VI, 119; Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 119-22. Read's excellent studies of Cecil have been consulted constantly in the writing of the present work and will often be cited in the footnotes, since the career of William Lord Cobham was linked inextricably with that of his friend.

12 Documents from Simancas Relating to the Reign of Elizabeth, (1558-1568.) ..., ed. Spencer Hall (1865), p. 44; Feria to Philip II, 25 November 1558 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 4).

13 S.P., For., 1558-59, p. 11.

14 See Thomas Carte, A General History of England (1752), III, 369-70; Froude, VI, 135 ff.; Black, pp. 35-37; Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 124-26.

15 Carte, III, 356.

16 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 4; Catálogo de la Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España por Julián Paz del Cuerpo de Archiveros Bibliotecarios C. de la Academia de la Historia (Madrid, 1930-31), II, 283-84. Paz, in the index to his work, identifies William Lord Cobham incorrectly as Henry Cobham.

17 Feria to Gonzalo Pérez (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 6); Paz, II, 284.

18 Feria to Philip II, 14 December 1558 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 7).

19 P.R.O., S.P. 70/1/15; abstracted in S.P., For., 1558-59, p. 15.

20 See Cobham to the queen, Brussels, 13 December 1558 (S.P., For., 1558-59, pp. 28-29).

21 P.R.O., S.P. 70/1/30; abstracted in S.P., For., 1558-59, pp. 30-31, and quoted in Froude, VI, 136 n.

22 See the Bishop of Ely and Dean Wotton to the queen, 29 December 1558 (S.P., For., 1558-59, p. 49); Philip II to Feria, 28 December 1558 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 13).

23 S.P., For., 1558-59, p. 32.

24 The third volume of the Chronicles (unexpurgated edition of 1587), p. 1172.

25 P.R.O., S.P. 70/1/41; abstracted in S.P., For., 1558-59, pp. 38-39.

26 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 36. The "Memorandum of affairs entrusted to the bishop of Aquila to discuss with His Majesty" is dated 1559 by the editor of the Spanish State Papers; its reference to Cobham's being busy sending reports from Brussels shows that it must date, if from 1559 at all, from the first days of that year. More probably it was written at the end of December 1558 and endorsed later.

27 See The Queens and the Hive (1962), pp. 68-69.

28 Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 126.

29 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 39. The editors of the papers curiously read 'Essex' for the 'feria' of Cecil Paper 133/188; there was of course no Earl of Essex in 1558.

30 P.R.O., S.P. 70/2/83; abstracted in S.P., For., 1558-59, p. 66.

* * *

(pp. 149-52)

Chapter II

[1] See, for Cobham's position among his peers, the table of precedence set out by William Harrison in his Historicall description of the Ilande of Britaine ..., (part one of Holinshed's Chronicles, ed. 1587), p. 165. Abergavenny, his brother-in-law, was premier baron.

[2] See the notes to the family tree, p. *1088*, n. 25, and below, p. *663*. On 6 May 1600 Henry Lord Cobham instructed his steward to bring up from Cobham Hall to London "the pticõn of the Lo. Braies landes betweene his coheirs that advice maie [be] taken by the sight therof what course is mete for y^t [sic] the recoverie of my rent of the fee farme of Alberie in the Countie of Surr' w^th the arrerags therof behind for -- yeares" (Cobham to Richard Williams, P.R.O., S.P. 12/274/127; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1598-1601, p. 433).

[3] See the notes to the family tree, pp. *1120, 1124-25*, nn. 42, 47.

[4] See C.P.R., Mary, 1554-55, pp. 323-24. See also C.P.R., Elizabeth, 1558-60, p. 387, where it is shown that on 2 January 1558/9 William Dodington bought from a teller in the Exchequer the reversion of the lease of the rectory, as well as of the leases of several other properties, for £ 1,615.11.6.

[5] P.R.O., S.P. 12/1/56; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 119. It is to be noted how inconsistent is the use of 'u's' and 'v's' in this document.

[6] C.P.R., Elizabeth, 1560-63, p. 407. Further evidence of George Brooke's interest in the ingenious is to be found in a "Description of new invented furnaces for ale or beer brewers, &c., and pumps for raising water from mines, by Peter Jordayne and his coadjutors, with application for grant of the exclusive use of them in England, to George Cobham, for the term of twenty-five years" (S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 509). The original document bears no date; it was certainly drawn up before 1575, the date which the editors of the State Papers assign to it, for Brooke had then been dead for several years (see the notes to the family tree, p. *1120*, n. 41). There was great interest in mining about 1568 (see below, pp. 177-79).

[7] P.R.O., L.C. 2/4/3, p. 106; cited by C.G. Bayne both in "The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth" (English Historical Review, XXII (1907), 651) and in "The First House of Commons of Queen Elizabeth" (English Historical Review, XXIII (1908), 670).

[8] MS. Lansdowne 3, f. 193b; cited in Bayne, "The First House of Commons," p. 670.

[9] Return of Members of Parliament (Part I. Parliaments of England, 1213-1702) (1878), p. 401.

[10] See, for the will of 1551, Harl. Charter 57.H.7, and for that of 1558 P.C.C. Mellershe 58.

[11] S.P., For., 1561-62, p. 174.

[12] See Machyn, pp. 221-22.

[13] "The Brooke Tomb at Cobham," Archaeologia Cantiana, LXII (1949), 55.

[14] S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 231. See below, pp. 233-34, for a discussion of the connection between Lady Lennox and the house of Cobham.

[15] See John Vertusius to Cecil, Cologne, 1 October 1562; Cecil to Vertusius, 22 December 1562 (S.P., For., 1562, pp. 339, 587-88).

[16] In the list of the household servants who received livery in January 1558/9 (P.R.O., L.C. 2/4/3, p. 81) is the name of a Thomas Brooke, clerk of the pastry,

whom Bayne tentatively identifies with Lord Cobham's brother ("The First House of Commons," p. 671). It seems unlikely that this man was of the house of Cobham; Thomas Brooke's brother George appears in the same list as 'Cobham', whereas this man is not even called 'Brooke alias Cobham'. The clerk of the pastry was more probably the Thomas Brooke who by 31 May 1563 was described as a "Clerk of 'le woodyard'" in a grant of land which appears to have been connected with the property of another Brooke family (see C.P.R., Elizabeth, 1560-63, p. 608).

17 See above, p. 143.

18 Return of Members, p. 400. See also Frederick Francis Smith, Rochester in Parliament 1295-1933 (1933), pp. 97-98.

19 See Sir Simonds D'Ewes, The Journals of all the Parliaments during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth ... (1682), pp. 68, 86, 87; Journals of the House of Lords, I, 591.

20 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 241. See Froude, VI, 553; Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 245 ff., 485, n. 21.

21 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1127-35, nn. 52, 53.

22 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1173, nn. 62, 63.

23 A.P.C., 1578-80, p. 244. See also above, p. 22, and the notes to the family tree, pp. 1173-74, nn. 64, 65.

24 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 165.

25 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1174-77, n. 68.

26 Feria to Philip II, London, 14 December 1558 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 7).

27 A.P.C., 1558-70, p. 29.

28 The patent of restoration is given in Thomas Rymer's Foedera, Conventiones, Literae, ac Cujuscunque Generis Acta Publica ... Habita aut Tractata; ..., ed. Robert Sanderson (2nd ed., 1728), XV, 496-97. P.R.O., S.P. 12/2/19, abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 121, is Cecil's instructions to "make a warrãt to ye L. Tresorer rehersyng yt where ye L. Mar. Northpt' is restored to ye same state of a Marquess as he was before tyme, and yet lacketh his former estate," &c. By this warrant Northampton was to be given the £ 200 a year estate which had been "before tyme assured by hȳ to ye Lady Mrques by ye name of Elizab. Cobhã doughter to ye L. Cobhã", as well as £ 300 a year worth of "soch other landes as were ye sayd Marques in ye tyme of King Edward ye vjth." The restored estate was to remain and be to him and to his heirs male forever. The marchioness's personal property in Essex, Lancaster, York and Westmorland had been appropriated by the Marian Crown, apparently little by little and with some compensation being paid to her (see "Directions to compound with Elizabeth Cobham for lands held by her, parcel of the estate of the late Marq. of Northampton", dated 5 March 1557/8, S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 100, and particulars of the value of her holdings 1553-58 in P.R.O., S.P. 12/37/45, 46, abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 259). These estates were restored to her and reverted to the Crown at her death (see P.R.O., S.P. 12/37/45, 46, dated September 1565, just cited). By 1561 the Northamptons were again sufficiently well endowed with land that on 17 September they were in a position to buy a licence to alienate several properties in Yorkshire to Sir George Bowes (see C.P.R., Elizabeth, 1560-63, p. 172).

29 See a Council letter of 21 April 1559 (A.P.C., 1558-70, p. 91). Wentworth, as the last Lord Deputy of Calais, was charged with high treason for having surrendered the fortress to the French. He was acquitted of the charge.

30 See, in MS. Ashmol. 1109, f. 24, a letter from the queen ordering his installation, as well as that of Lord Robert Dudley and others, at Windsor on 4 June. For Northampton's service as the queen's lieutenant at the Garter feasts of 1566 and 1568, see the same manuscript, ff. 32b, 33b.

31 The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queen of England ... (4th ed., 1688), p. 16. See also Froude, VI, 131-32; Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 128; J.E. Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments, 1559-1581 (1953), pp. 37-38. In the anonymous Device for Alteration of Religion (MS. Cotton Julius F. vi), which is supposed to have greatly influenced Elizabeth (although see Sir John Neale's observations, in the work cited), in answer to the rhetorical question, "What noblemen be most fit to be made privy to these proceedings, before it be opened to the whole country?", Northampton's name is among those given (see John Strype, Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion, and Other Various Occurrences in the Church of England, during Queen Elizabeth's happy Reign: Together with an Appendix of Original Papers of State, Records, and Letters (Oxford, ed. 1824), I, ii, 397).

32 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 591-92. The queen's words are quoted by Charles Angell Bradford in Helena Marchioness of Northampton (1936), p. 43, and M.A.S. Hume, editor of the Spanish State Papers, bases upon them his assertion that, while recognizing Northampton's remarriages, Elizabeth "was quite ready to throw the matter in his teeth when angry" (I, 381 n.). Hume, however, ignores the date of the Spanish report and quotes from it to support his hypothesis that the legality of Elizabeth Brooke's marriage was threatened. Northampton's wife at the time of the queen's outburst was Helena 'Snackenbourgh', one of the gentlewomen of the Princess Cecilia of Sweden (see below, pp. 221-24). Although he did not marry her until April 1566, he had begun courting her not long after Elizabeth Brooke's death in April 1565; early in January 1565/6 it was being related how "My Lord Marquis was suitor, and ensured to one of the Sweden lady's women, and had given her divers jewels, and now hath repented, saying he had another wife alive [Anne Bourchier did not die until 1571], and would have his jewels, but he cannot get them" ("Memoranda by Fowler", H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 326). For the earlier part of Northampton's matrimonial history, see above, pp. 32-34.

33 Camden, p. 147.

34 "The pticulers of all suche sõmes of money, as I Anthony pker haue Receyved and defrayed in & by occasion of thaffrayres of the right honorable my lorde & master, The marques of Northampton from the first daye of ffebruarie, anno Reg' Edwardi sexti septimo vntill the thirde of Julie in the same yere" (P.R.O., Accounts (Exchequer Q.R.), 520/9. One of the more curious entries is that of the payment of 5s. "To preston the ixth of marche for makeng Clene my ladies teathe". See also above, pp. 120-21, n. 35.

35 See John Tucker Murray, English Dramatic Companies 1558-1642 (1910), II, 90, 224, 258, 259, 298.

36 The Courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio diuided into foure bookes. Very necessary and profitable for yonge Gentilmen and Gentilwomen abiding in Court, Palaice or Place, done into Englyshe by Thomas Hoby (1561), sig. Aa iiii^{v}.
It is notable that Northampton's wife was almost always called 'the lady marquess'. The term 'marchioness' was uncommon before the seventeenth century; the O.E.D. lists Shakespeare's "Marchioness of Pembroke" (Henry VIII II.iii.63) as one of the first instances of its use in English. The clerk of the Privy Council used it as early as 1565 (see below, p. 167).

37 Sig. Aii^{v}. See also Thomas Brice's dedication to Northampton of A compendious Register in metre, conteining the names, and pacient suffryngs of the membres of Jesus Christ, and the tormented; and cruelly burned within Englande, since the death of our famous kyng, of immortall memory EDWARDE the sixte: to the entrance and

beginnyng of the raign, of our soueraigne & derest Lady ELIZABETH ... (1559), and that to him of Nicholas Udall's translation of Peter Martyr's Discourse or traictise concerning the Sacrament of the Lordes supper ... (1550).

38 A Dispraise of the life of a Courtier, and a commendacion of the life of the labouryng man (1548), sigg. Aii-iiiiv. The colophon dates the work more exactly by the words 'mense Augustii'.

39 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 381. This letter is paraphrased in Elizabeth Jenkins's Elizabeth the Great (1958), p. 118; it is the source of the statement in E.K. Chambers's Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1924), IV, 81, that the queen had "Dinner with Marchioness of Northampton at Whitehall" on 15 September 1564.

40 See the account of the christening on 27 October 1559 of the son of Sir Thomas Chamberlain, appointed ambassador to Madrid, in Machyn, p. 216.

41 See Lady Throckmorton to Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, 10 July 1562 (S.P., For., 1562, p. 629).

42 The medallion is reproduced in Plate 2 of G.F. Hill's "Stephen H., Medallist and Painter," The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs, XII (1908), 355-63.

43 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 36.

44 Bishop de Quadra to Philip II, 13 September 1561 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 214).

45 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 214.

46 See Secretary Somers to Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, 29 August 1562 (P.R.O., S.P. 70/40/404; abstracted in S.P., For., 1562, p. 269); Lady Throckmorton to Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, 20 September 1562 (P.R.O., S.P. 70/41/483; abstracted in S.P., For., 1562, p.309).

47 P.R.O., S.P. 70/40/403; abstracted in S.P., For., 1562, p. 269.

48 See, for a discussion of the peculiar use of Cobham, a title, as a surname, the prefatory note on pp. xi-xii above.

49 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1135, n. 55, for evidence that Cobham's service with the queen dated from 1559.

50 See below, p. 192.

51 S.P., For., 1561-62, p. 451.

52 See above, p. 40.

53 See S.P., For., 1561-62, pp. 494, 540. The editors of the State Papers incorrectly transcribe the "Mr H. Cobbhm" of Chaloner's letter (P.R.O., S.P. 70/34/616) as "Mr. G. Cobham".

54 Chaloner to the marchioness, Madrid, 20 August 1562 (S.P., For., 1562, p. 257).

55 P.R.O., S.P. 70/38/181; abstracted in S.P., For., 1562, pp. 133-34. This letter and others from Chaloner at this time, stressing as they do his desire to marry again and have a child, point out an error in the D.N.B. article by John Westby-Gibson on his son, Sir Thomas Chaloner the younger, where it is stated that the ambassador had already married again and had a son by 1562. Dr. Westby-Gibson's authority for the statement that the younger Chaloner was born in 1561 is the memorial inscription on the man's tomb in the parish church at Chiswick. That inscription says, however, that the ambassador's son was fifty-one years old when

he died on 18 November 1615; that is, that he was born in 1563 or 1564.
Chaloner's references to green willow and tawny apparel signify disappointment in love: cf. John Ford's "Tawney? heigho! the pretty heart is wounded;/ A knot of willow-ribbons? She's foresaken" (The Fancies, Chaste and Noble (1638), ll. 1441-42, in W. Bang, Materialen ...).

56 P.R.O., S.P. 70/40/329; abstracted in S.P., For., 1562, p. 228. Henry Cobham and his sister appear to have been on excellent terms with each other, although when, in 1564, the marchioness was at Antwerp for her health, Cobham wrote to her servant Thomas Middleton to protest against her mistakenly low opinion of his way of conducting for her a sale of land to the philanthropic Marian lord, Hastings of Loughborough, who was then founding his hospital at Stoke Pogis (see H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 296). Brother and sister must have been reconciled soon after this misunderstanding, and Henry is remembered in the marchioness's will of 1565.

57 P.R.O., S.P. 70/40/375; abstracted in S.P., For., 1562, p. 257.

58 See Lord Cobham to Chaloner, 7 August 1562 (P.R.O., S.P. 70/40/328; abstracted in S.P., For., 1562, p. 228); Chaloner to Cobham, 14 October 1562 (S.P., For., 1562, p. 366).
The lady who jilted Chaloner for a widower with a large family has not been identified.

59 See Throckmorton to Chaloner, 14 June 1562; John Cuerton to Chaloner, 15, 16 June 1562; Chaloner to Cecil, 1 September 1562 (S.P., For., 1562, pp. 94, 98, 100, 277).

60 See Chaloner to Cecil, 20 December 1562 (S.P., For., 1562, p. 579).

61 Henry Cobham to Chaloner, Bilbao, 28 October 1562 (S.P., For., 1562, p. 401).

62 Henry Cobham to Chaloner, Bilbao, 9 November 1562 (S.P., For., 1562, p. 445).
Nostradamus's first "Four Centuries" had been published at Lyons in 1555. Coincidentally, another early English reference to the French seer is also to be found among material relating to the life of Henry Cobham. Robert Laneham, writing to a friend of the festivities held at Kenilworth Castle in July 1575, mentions Cobham's being knighted (see below, p. 393) and also speaks of a library in which were contained "Allmanaks of antiquitee ... from Iasper Laet of Antwarp vnto Nostradam of Frauns" (A Letter: whearin, part of the entertainment untoo the Queens Maiesty, at Killingworth Castl, in Warwik Sheer in this Soomers Progress 1575, is signified: from a friend officer attendant in the Coourt, unto his freend a Citizen, and Merchaunt of London, pp. 35-36).

63 Chaloner to Henry Cobham, 20 December 1562 (P.R.O., S.P. 70/47/1032; abstracted in S.P., For., 1562, p. 580). See also Chaloner to Henry Cobham, 15 November 1562 (S.P., For., 1562, p. 459).

64 See Harry King to Chaloner, London, 16 January 1562/3; Chaloner to Cecil, 3 February 1562/3; Cuerton to Chaloner, 5 March 1562/3 (S.P., For., 1563, pp. 48, 100, 185). On 22 January there was issued a "Warrant to thexchequer to pay Henry Cobham xxxiij^{li} vj^{s} viij^{d} for his charges in bringing letters hither from Sir Thomas Chaloner" (A.P.C., 1558-70, p. 137).

65 Chaloner to Francis Chaloner, 14 August 1563 (S.P., For., 1563, p. 499).

66 See Henry Cobham to Chaloner, Windsor, 21 December 1563 (S.P., For., 1563, p. 637

67 Holinshed, p. 1511. See also p. 1509: "Elisabeth marquesse of Northampton, ... went into Flanders to recouer helpe of an infirmitie which she had."

68 S.P., For., 1564-65, p. 93.

69 Holinshed, p. 1511.

70 A Collection of State Papers Relating to Affairs In the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, From the Year 1571 to 1596 ..., ed. William Murdin (1759), p. 755.

71 P.R.O., S.P. 12/33/61; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 239.

72 P.R.O., S.P. 12/33/67; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 239, where the date is given incorrectly as 23 April.

73 S.P., For., 1564-65, p. 124.

74 Holinshed, p. 1509.

75 A.P.C., 1558-70, p. 142.

76 The Autobiographical Tracts of Dr. John Dee, ed. James Crossley (Chetham Society Miscellanies, Volume I, 1851), pp. 12, 22. The royal gift of the deanery was later rescinded, and in 1565 the benefice was given to John Man. Dee continued to petition for the recognition of his right to the office throughout his life.

77 See A.P.C., 1558-70, pp. 185, 188, 189.

78 MS. Coll. of Arms I.13, f. 62, where there is an elaborate account of the funeral.

79 "The note of Sutche Jewells as were sent in to fflaunders vnto my brother Pasquall Spinola and by hyme solde as hereafter ffollowythe" (P.R.O., S.P. 12/36/63; listed in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 253).

80 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/36/30; listed in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 250.

81 See Elizabeth to the King of Hungary, 27 November 1564, in the first volume of the Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers Preserved in the Bodleian Library, edd. O. Ogle and W.H. Bliss (Oxford, 1872), p. 486.

82 P.R.O., S.P. 12/36/31; listed in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 253.

83 Cecil Paper 3/69, excerpted and the items occasionally described more fully than in the other in 3/70; appended to the list, in 3/71, is a list of small bequests in money to many people, apparently servants, whose names are now virtually illegible The papers are abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 336, and there peculiarly dated 31 March 1565/6 [sic].

84 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 165.

85 Furs thus extraordinarily adorned were a Tudor fashion: see an inventory of articles of dress left at Whitehall in 1553 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 128, 129).

86 Holinshed, p. 1509.

87 See Thomas Fuller, The History of the Worthies of England, ed. John Nichols (1811), I, 143.

88 Poematum Gualteri Haddoni, Legum Doctoris, sparsim Collectorum, Libri Duo (1576), sigg. K3-K3v. The epitaph is also published in D. Gualteri Haddoni, Legum Doctoris, serenissimae reginae Elisabethae, à supplicum libellis, Poëmata, studio & labore Thomae Hatcheri Cantabrigiensis sparsim collecta, & edita (1567), sigg. Ov-O2, and in Holinshed, p. 1509. Verbally the three versions of the epitaph are identical, but the punctuation in the 1567 edition of Haddon's poems differs from that in the later, more definitive edition, while that in Holinshed is erratic, differing

arbitrarily from both of the others.

89 "Imprinted at London in Fletestreat beneath the conduit, at the signe of S. John Euangelist, by Thomas Colwell", the ballad may be seen in the British Museum. It is dated 1569 in A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640, comp. A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave (1926), from an entry in the Stationers' Register for the period 22 July 1568-22 July 1569: "Recevyd of Thomas colwell for his lycense for pryntinge of a ballett intituled the prayse of my lady marques &c .. iiij^{d}".

90 Foure Letters and certeine Sonnets, especially touching Robert Greene and other parties by him abused 1592, ed. G.B. Harrison (The Bodley Head Quartos, 1922), p. 15.

91 One may presumably take this line either to mean literally that Elderton would appreciate an invitation to a feast of good game, or figuratively, 'venison' being sometimes used for a windfall of any sort (cf. O.E.D.). The phrase does not seem to be proverbial.

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Chapter III

1 The writ issued to Cobham on 5 December 1558 required his attendance in the House of Lords on 23 January (Dugdale, Summons, p. 521); a royal commission, however, was issued to prorogue the meeting until 25 January (see S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 120). That Cobham took his seat on the first day of the session, and attended regularly thereafter, is clear from the Journals of the House of Lords, I, 543. John William Disney Thorp, in his "Claims to the Baronies of Burgh, Strabolgi, and Cobham" (The Genealogist, XXIX (1913), 68), says incorrectly that he did not sit until 1 February.

2 See C.P.R., Elizabeth, 1558-60, p. 175.

3 See Patrick Fraser Tytler's England Under the Reigns of Edward VI. and Mary ... (1839), II, 499.

4 See Paget to Sir Thomas Parry, 23 April 1559 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 152).

5 See Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 123; Paget to Parry, as above.

6 See, for two of Paget's letters, one on the reform of the coinage and the other on foreign affairs, H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 151.

7 See, for Petre's continued importance under Elizabeth, F.G. Emmison's Tudor Secretary: Sir William Petre at Court and Home (1961), and Read's Mr. Secretary Cecil, especially pp. 177, 242, 329. Paget died in 1563, leaving three sons, of whom the second succeeded his niece as Lord Paget in 1570-71, became William Lord Cobham's brother-in-law (see the notes to the family tree, p. ///8, n. 39), and later left England to join his younger brother, the famous Charles Paget, in working for the Roman Catholic cause on the Continent. Petre died in 1572.

8 MS. Ashmol. 1129, p. 349.

9 Emmison, p. 253.

10 Henry Lord Cobham to Robert Earl of Salisbury, 12 July 1605 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XVII, 318); Burghley to Cobham, 23 July 1575 (Murdin, p. 281).

11 MS. Ashmol. 1129, p. 342.

12 Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 17. For the general observations made here about

Cecil's background and his position at the time of Elizabeth's coming to the Throne, see Read's chapter entitled "Youth".

It is remarkable that in the index to Read's work there is only one reference to William Lord Cobham, and that is an error, for the reference is actually to the baron's father (p. 98).

13 One may reject as conveniently here as elsewhere the unwarranted cynicism inherent in Wallace T. MacCaffrey's inclusion of Cobham and other prominent personal friends of Cecil's among men who "had an independent relationship with the Queen, but [whom] the lord treasurer's key position at the exchequer increasingly forced ... to turn to him for the fulfilment of their suits to the Queen" ("Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics," in Elizabethan Government and Society: Essays presented to Sir John Neale, edd. S.T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield and C.H. Williams (1961), p. 110).

14 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XVII, 595.

15 Anthony Bacon to Dr. Henry Hawkyns, 25 April 1596 (MEmoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth ..., ed. Thomas Birch (1754), I, 472).

16 P.R.O., S.P. 70/84/341; abstracted in S.P., For., 1566-68, p. 73, where Keyler's name is misspelled.

17 See above, p. 282, n. 6.

18 See Opera Mineralia Explicata: or, The Mineral Kingdom, Within the Dominions of Great Britain Display'd. Being a Compleat History of the Antient Corporations of the City of London, of and for the Mines, the Mineral and the Battery Works. By M[oses] S[tringer] M.D. [1713], pp. 52-59. Two excellent modern works cover the field of Elizabethan mining; they are Henry Hamilton's The English Brass & Copper Industries to 1800 (1926) and M.B. Donald's Elizabethan Copper: The History of the Company of Mines Royal 1568-1605 (1955).

It ought to be noticed that Cobham did not buy shares in Thurland and Hochstetter's venture, as Cecil did. Founder membership in the Company of Mines Royal would have been advantageous to the baron, for 'the first enterprisers and begynners' of that body were exempted by patent as early as 1567 from paying the state subsidy. Thus Cecil, Bacon, Leicester, Pembroke and several other men in Cobham's circle were released from the obligation of paying their share of the special tax which had been ordered by Parliament in 1566. The promised exoneration throughout their lives 'from all maner of fiftenes and tenthes Subsidies taxes and other like imposicions whatsoever' was not, however, confirmed to the partners in the Mines Royal, and, after they had been excused from paying the subsidy of 1566, Cecil and his fellows were again as ratable as Cobham. See below, pp. 240-43, and the significant article by Helen Miller on "Subsidy Assessments of the Peerage in the Sixteenth Century," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XXVIII (1955), 15-34.

If William Lord Cobham did not himself have an interest in the Company of Mines Royal, it appears that his son and heir was later a deputy governor of the company. On 22 February 1604/5, more than a year after being attainted and imprisoned, Henry Lord Cobham was mentioned in a warrant which was issued to his wife "to deliver a chest and certain books and writings concerning the Mines royal, of which company Lord Cobham was a deputy governor, to Sir John Smithe, Knight, and Arnold Oldesworth, esquire, present deputy governors" (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XVII, 63). Donald produces no evidence of the younger Cobham's part in the administration of the company, but his awareness of the baron's association with it is evidenced by his confused description of Henry Lord Windsor, a shareholder between 1590 and 1605, as "Henry Cobham, 5th Lord Windsor" (see p. 367 and index, and also pp. 80, 242).

19 C.P.R., Elizabeth, 1558-60, p. 103.

The grant to Cobham of the office of Constable of Dover (a post always conjoined with that of Lord Warden) has confused certain writers, who assign to him the Con-

stableship of the Tower of London (see Sidney Lee's article on Henry Lord Cobham in D.N.B.; Louis Thorn Golding's An Elizabethan Puritan: Arthur Golding the Translator of Ovid's Metamorphoses and also of John Calvin's Sermons (New York, 1937), p. 115).

20 Hunsdon to Burghley, 1 February 1571/2 (S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 105; also abstracted in S.P., For., 1572-74, p. 34).

21 See Murray, p. 137.

22 The observations made here on the powers of the Lord Warden are based almost exclusively upon Murray's excellent study, especially pp. 85-88, 91-101, 107-10, 136-40, 159, 166, 174, 192, 197-200. Oneerror in Murray's work should be pointed out. He says (p. 137) that "the Wardens were members of the Privy Council," as though ex officio; William Lord Cobham, however, held the post for almost twenty-seven years before becoming a Councillor, and his son held it without ever being admitted to the Council board. Edward P. Cheyney is no doubt right in observing that "Lord Cobham, warden of the Cinque Ports, and the earl of Warwick, master of the ordnance, were members of the council on account of their personality, probably, rather than because of their offices" (A History of England From the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth With an Account of English Institutions During the Later Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries (New York, 1914-26), I, 66).

23 Holinshed, p. 1510.

24 J.E. Neale, The Elizabethan House of Commons (1949), p. 219; see also Murray, p. 97.

25 Neale, Elizabethan Commons, p. 221; see also Murray, pp. 98-100.

26 See Holinshed, p. 1510. In MS. Add. 37666 Francis Thynne brought his account of the Lieutenants of Dover Castle up to date, adding Fane's name to those of Crispe and Barry, and correcting the spelling of the former from the 'Cripse' of Holinshed to 'Cryspe'.

27 See Fane's letter to Romney of 28 February 1603/4 in Murray, pp. 98-99, which Murray dates incorrectly 1603.

28 Henry Cuffe to Sir Robert Cecil (Correspondence of King James VI. of Scotland with Sir Robert Cecil and Others in England, during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth ... ed. John Bruce (Camden Society, 1861), pp. 82-83).

29 Holinshed, p. 1171.

30 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 566; V, 152, 154, 202, 464, 479, 533; VII, 541.

31 Sir John Leveson to the Earl of Salisbury, 28 May 1605 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XVII, 226).

32 See Henry Smith to Thomas Wilkes, 26 January 1586/7 (S.P., Dom., Add., 1580-1625, p. 203).

33 See S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 685. A report of 7 November 1583 to Cobham from two commissioners who were surveying the parks in the lathe of St. Augustine, and noting the numbers of horses bred in them, survives in P.R.O., S.P. 12/163/57, abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 129.

34 "'Es war gar viel zusehen/ In Combams haus an zierd: Im Mahrstall' hett 'er stehen/ Viel rosse schöner art, die hielt er auf der streu,/ Es war bey ihm die Pracht, gewönlich, und nicht neu.' -- (Fürst Ludwigs zu Anhalt-Köhten Reisebe-

schreibung.)" The quotation and the English translation are from William Brenchley Rye's England as Seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James the First ... (1865), pp. 257-58.

35 See Tucker Murray, II, 81, 223, 274, 275, 258 n.

36 Shakespeare's Merry Wives of Windsor (Princeton, New Jersey, 1962), p. 114. Green is alone among critics in noting how flimsy are the arguments of those who argue that Cobham was a Puritan and an opponent of the stage; he is also alone in referring to Tucker Murray's discoveries, ignored by Chambers, concerning the Lord Warden's playing company.

37 See Tucker Murray, II, 278, 260, 226, 212, 227. The square brackets are Murray's.

38 See The Elizabethan Stage, I, 341 n., where Chambers refers to Murray's documentation of "the names of from fifty to sixty patrons between 1559 and 1616 under whose names companies are not traceable in London". These patrons Chambers says he therefore omits from his work.

39 See Gladys Scott Thomson, Lords Lieutenants in the Sixteenth Century: A Study in Tudor Local Administration (1923), p. 25, where the date given by John Strype (Ecclesiastical Memorials ... (Oxford, 1822), II, i, 278) is accepted, as though for lack of a more precise one. The problems faced by a student of this office are revealed in the lists compiled, with avowed difficulty, by Joseph Haydn; Haydn gives Lord Cobham's name as that of the first Lord Lieutenant of Kent, and Sir Richard Sackville, appointed in Sussex in 1550, he says was the first created in England. See The Book of Dignities ..., ed. Horace Ockerby (1890). Both of these statements are patently incorrect.

40 S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 26.

41 See A.P.C., 1550-52, pp. 258-59.

42 A.P.C., 1556-58, p. 297.

43 P.R.O., S.P. 12/4/16; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 128, and in S.P., For., 1558-59, pp. 239-40. The names of the ambassadors are given in Rymer and in Machyn, p. 373.
In P.R.O., S.P. 12/4/29 is the first Elizabethan list of "names of the lieutenũtes in severall counties xxvj maij 1559", and in it "The lord Cobham lord warden of the Cinque portes" appears for Kent. P.R.O., S.P. 12/4/30 is the list for 1560; again Cobham is named, as he is in such lists thereafter.

44 Harrison, p. 155.

45 Related both to the Lord Lieutenancy of Kent and to the Lord Wardenship of the Cinque Ports, and yet independent of both, was the office of Vice-admiral of Kent. The records of this office are so fragmentary that it is impossible to say definitely when and on what occasions the Lords Cobham held it under Elizabeth. There is certainly some confusion concerning them in R.G. Marsden's article on "The Vice-Admirals of the Coast" (English Historical Review, XXII (1907), 468-77; XXIII (1908), 736-57), where it is said that "from 1557 to 1590 it [the vice-admiralty] was held by William and Henry, both Lords Cobham and wardens of the Ports" (p. 745). Marsden admits that these dates are merely tentative: "in most cases, the only clue to the date of an appointment is the disappearance from the records of a name and the appearance of its successor" (p. 737): but when he breaks them down to show that "William Brooke, Baron Cobham", was Vice-admiral ("from Northfleet eastward") from 1557 to 1589, and that "Henry Brooke, Baron Cobham", was Vice-admiral from 1565 to 1590, it becomes clear that Sir Henry Cobham, not his nephew (born in 1564), was the official whose name Marsden met in the records. One also suspects that the Lord

Cobham whose name Marsden found under the date 1557 was George, not William. The office was so minor, however, compared with the others which William Lord Cobham held in Kent, that one need not be troubled by the lack of precise information about his tenure of it; it is interesting merely to know that even so unimportant a post, when it concerned Kent, was given to the same family which was already so powerful there.

46 See Cobham to Sir Thomas Finch (H.M.C., Finch Papers, I, 4).

47 See Machyn, p. 197.

48 P.R.O., S.P. 12/4/28; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 129, and in S.P., For., 1558-59, p. 281.

49 See Machyn, p. 199.

50 Machyn, p. 204. The year is given incorrectly as 1558 in an editorial note to the Analytical Index to the ... Remembrancia ..., A.D. 1579-1664, comp. W.H. and H.C. Overall (1878), p. 378 n.

51 See S.P., For., 1558-59, p. 402. The draft of the instructions was endorsed by Cecil: "21 July 1559. The Queen to Sir N. Throckmorton, apud Cobham Hall." Chambers says that Elizabeth was at Cobham Hall from 18 July to the twenty-first or later (The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 77).

52 Holinshed, p. 1510.

53 See the notes to the family tree, pp. *1150-51*, n. 56.

54 MS. Add. 37666, f. 39b. The excerpt from Holinshed and Thynne's translation of the poem are in Rye, pp. 256-57, n. 109. Rye's transcription of the Latin is faithful to the original, but the English he has edited rather arbitrarily.

55 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/6/5; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 135.

56 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 93.

57 See Machyn, pp. 209-10.

58 See S.P., For., 1558-59, p. 547.

59 MSS. Coll. of Arms I.9, f. 161b; I.13, f. 14. The date, which is accepted by the Complete Peerage (III, 348) and by all editions of Burke's, differs from that given by Machyn: "The xxv day of September," he says, "ded my yonge lade Cobham in Kent, the wyff of lord Cobham, and the [lord] warden of the Synke Porttes in Kent" (p. 212, where MS. Cotton Vitellius F.vi, f. 112, is transcribed correctly, and editorial square brackets added). In such a case one must prefer the evidence afforded by the official funeral certificate deposited with the heralds to that set down in a tradesman's diary, however interested in the deaths of the nobility Machyn, "as a furnisher of funeral trappings", no doubt was (see Machyn, p. ix).

60 See Holinshed, p. 1510, where, with some confusion regarding chronology, Thynne praises Cobham's conduct at Brussels in December 1558 and then goes on to say only, "Which doone, his wife the ladie Dorothie the daughter of George Neuill lord of Aburgauennie parted the world."

61 Machyn, p. 213. The gloss is the editor's.

62 MSS. Coll. of Arms I.9, f. 161b, where the heading of the account begins; I.13, ff. 14-19b, which is the account itself.

63 [illegible]

64 Machyn, p. 210, records the funeral on 6 September 1559, sixteen days before Lady Cobham's death, of "master Day, the cheyffe chaffer of wax unto my lord chanseler of England"; it seems likely that the chandler who treated the baroness's corpse was of the same family.

65 Machyn, p. 210. The square brackets are the editor's.

66 See the dedication to the queen of The first and seconde partes of the Herbal of William Turner, Doctor in Phisick ... (1568), sig. *ij.

67 See the article on Turner by William Hunt in D.N.B.

68 The words in square brackets are supplied from the editor's glossary.

69 See MS. Harl. 2134, f. 132b, where Edward Brooke, the nephew of Edward Lord Cobham, is shown to have had eight sons, the youngest of whom was still living in 1593. Richard, the third, had by 1593 died without issue. The only other Brooke of Aspall whose name occurs in connection with the main branch of the family was also called Richard; he was probably the nephew of the other Richard, and one of the many sons of George Brooke, the gentleman who had drawn up the pedigree contained in MS. Harl. 2134. The younger Richard Brooke inherited property in Kent from the last male descendant of George Lord Cobham's brother, Thomas. See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1081, 1094, nn. 7, 31.

70 See below, p. 274, and the notes to the family tree, p. 1178, n. 69.

71 Holinshed, p. 1510.

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Chapter IV

1 The general remarks which follow about Lady Cobham are based upon the evidence presented in the notes to the family tree, pp. 1098-1103, n. 39.

2 John Fitzherbert to Lady Cobham, 1 January 1562/3 (P.R.O., S.P. 70/48/4; abstracted in S.P., For., 1563, pp. 1-2).

3 Holinshed, p. 1510. Thynne goes on to give a very long account of the mediaeval forebears of the Newtons, the salient points in which have been incorporated in the note on Lady Cobham's family which follows the family tree in the present work.

4 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 419-20.

5 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XII, 403.

6 Aubrey's Brief Lives, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (1949), p. 256.

7 See P.R.O., Accounts (Exchequer, Q.R.), 520/9, ff. 8, 9, 9b.

8 Cecil Paper 3/69; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 336. A crepine partlet was a ruff made of golden net (cf. the Inventory of stuff at the palace of Westminster in 1553 in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 131, 132).

9 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/36/31; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 250.

10 See below, p. 595, and the notes to the family tree, pp. 1111-12, n. 39.

11 See P.R.O., L.C. 2/4/3, p. 104.

12 MS. Add. 6113, f. 200b; quoted in full, but in modern spelling, by W.A. Scott-Robertson, "Six Wills Relating to Cobham Hall," Archaeologia Cantiana, XI (1877), 201. The date of the marriage, of which there appears to be no doubt, is not given in Holinshed; in his revision of the account in the chronicle (MS. Add. 37666), however, Francis Thynne says that it took place on "Shroue tewsdaye the 25 of febr." Shrove Tuesday 1559/60 fell on 27 February. One may pretty safely ignore the manuscript addition in this case.

13 Machyn, p. 230.

14 Morgan to Mary Queen of Scots, 21 March 1585/6 (Murdin, p. 489); the letter is abstracted in S.P., Scotland, 1585-86, pp. 262-78.

15 Guzman de Silva to Philip II, 22 April 1566 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 544).

16 Cecil to Cobham, 11 April 1568 (Cecil Paper 4/14; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 355).

17 Burghley to Cobham, 23 July 1575 (Murdin, p. 281; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 102).

18 See below, pp. 310-11, 518-19, 576.

19 See de Quadra to Philip II, 13 September 1561 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 214).

20 See Guzman de Silva to Philip II, 23 July, 17 September, 8 October 1565, and Philip II to de Silva, 20 October 1565 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 454, 475, 487, 493. The appointment as Mistress of the Robes was apparently unofficial, and it is only because of the references in these Spanish letters that Lady Cobham is known to have held the position. Violet A. Wilson, in her work entitled Queen Elizabeth's Maids of Honour and Ladies of the Privy Chamber (1922), p. 18, takes this evidence as proof of the baroness's tenure of the office; she is followed by John Izon (Sir Thomas Stucley c. 1525-1578: Traitor Extraordinary (1956), p. 59) and by Elizabeth Jenkins, p. 117.

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Chapter V

1 See Cobham to Sir Thomas Moyle, 28 July 1560 (H.M.C., Finch Papers, I, 5).

2 See above, pp. 74, 76, 86.

3 See Birch, I, 11, where one of Anne Cooke's step-children, a daughter of Sir Nicholas Bacon by his first marriage, is shown to have been the wife of Sir Robert Mansfield. Anne Cooke, Lady Bacon, was the sister of (Mildred) Lady Cecil and of (Elizabeth) Lady Hoby.

4 See The Travels and Life of Sir Thomas Hoby, Kt. of Bisham Abbey, Written by Himself, 1547-1564, ed. Edgar Powell (Camden Miscellany Volume X, 1902), p. 128.

5 P.R.O., S.P. 12/14/28; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 162.

6 See, for Lady Hart and the Ladies Dacres, the notes to the family tree, pp. 1090, 1097, nn. 25, 38; for Lady Brooke, the notes to the family tree, p. 1081, n. 8, the article on Sir David by Lord Sumner in D.N.B., and C.P., IX, 651; for Lady Mason and the Isleys, Hasted's History of Kent ..., ed. Henry H. Drake (1886), p. 250.

7 MS. Add. 6113, f. 201; quoted in full, but in modern spelling, in Scott-Robertson's "Six Wills," p. 201. In the manuscript the term "A° Tercio" was first expressed

"A° 2ndo", and, although the original form has been crossed out, Scott-Robertson in his transcript has accepted it rather than the correct one. Faulty reading of the manuscript has also led the genealogists who edited the Complete Peerage into the solecism of writing "the 'Younge Erle of Arundell'" for 'Henrye Erle of Arundell' (III, 349). In 1560 the last FitzAlan Earl of Arundel was already a man approaching his fifties, whose only son had died four years before; there was then no one in the Arundel family who could have been described as the 'young' earl.

The exact time and place of the child's birth ("natus in die Mercurij 4 Decembris 1560 inter horas 9. et 10. ante meridiem apud Nigras fratres Londini"), as well as the names of the godparents ("fideiussores in sacro fonte"), are given by Robert Glover in his list of the "Children of William Lord Cobham", MS. Coll. of Arms Philipot E.1, f. 95 (published, with some inaccuracies of transcription, by John Gough Nichols as a part of his "Memorials of the Family of Cobham," Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica, VII (1841), 352-53).

[8] For Lady Cobham's position, see below, pp. 224, 310. See also Queen Elizabeth and Some Foreigners, Being a Series of hitherto unpublished letters from the archives of the Hapsburg family, ed. Victor von Klarwill, trans. T.H. Nash (1928), especially pp. 9-10, 19; and Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 147, 334.

[9] Von Klarwill, p. 172.

[10] MS. Coll. of Arms, Philipot E.1, f. 95: "Elizabetha Broke, et Francisca Brooke [sic] gemellae natae apud Cobham hall in die Lunae 12 Januarij. 1561, inter horas 8. et 9. post meridiem." Cecil Paper 225/1 corroborates this statement. Francis Thynne says that the twins were born "on tuesdaie the fift daie of Januarie" (Holinshed, p. 1513), but his date seems to be unreliable. Not only was 5 January 1561/2 a Monday, not a Tuesday, but Thynne himself also showed uncertainty about the date. He changed it, without explanation, to 1 January 1561/2 in the rough revision of his Holinshed account which survives in the British Museum as "Castrations of Holinshed Annales of Scotl[d] in some p[t] continued from time in w[ch] Holinshed left, being the y[r] of our L[d] 1571. vntil the y[r] of Redemp[tion] 1586 by Francis Boteville cõmonlie called Thin" (MS. Add. 39184, f. 81). Yet, when Thynne drew up MS. Add. 37666 (for presentation in 1598 to Henry Lord Cobham, the twins' brother), he reverted to saying that "Elizabethe and francis Brooke twynnes were borne one tuesdaye the fyfte daye of Januarye in the yere of our redemptõne 1561."

Modern authorities reflect this imprecision about the date of the twins' birth. Scott-Robertson says that they were born on 1 January 1562, apparently using the new style ("Six Wills," p. 208). The Complete Peerage, while recognizing the twinship of Cobham's daughters, says that Elizabeth was born on 1 January 1562/3 (XI, 404) and Frances on 12 January 1561/2 (XII, Pt. 1, 309).

[11] Orlando Furioso in English heroical verse (1591), p. 208 (i.e., rightly 204).

[12] MS. Coll. of Arms, Philipot E.1, f. 95: "Margareta Broke nata apud Hackeney iuxta Londinũ in die mercurij 2 Junij 1563 inter horas 7 et 8 ante meridiem eiusdem diei." In Holinshed the date of Margaret's birth is not given, nor does one find it in any of the versions of Thynne's account of the Brookes. Cecil Paper 225/1 agrees with the manuscript in the College of Arms, recording that Margaret was born "at Hackeney the 2. day of June. 1563".

[13] See Cecil Paper 202/32, listed in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 318; it is an inventory of household stuff sent to the Blackfriars from Hackney, dated 23 February 1564/5. Scott-Robertson incorrectly dates it 23 February 1564, new style ("Six Wills," p. 205). The list appears to be of Cecil possessions, and makes no allusion to the Brookes. It is endorsed by Cecil.

[14] See the minute of a letter from Sir William Cecil to Lord John Grey, dated 22 August 1563, in which the temporary removal of Lady Catherine Grey from the Tower is attributed to "Her Majesty's compassionate desire to place her out of danger of the plague by which the Tower is now environed, which privilege Her Majesty has upon

much humble suit also granted to the E. of Hertford" (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 279).

15 In the records of baptisms at St. John's, Hackney, for 1555/6 to 1652, is an entry for 8 June 1564, "Margret Brooke the daughter of Sr. William Brooke Lord Cobham". It is quoted in William Henry Hamilton Rogers's "Brook, of Somerset and Devon, Barons of Cobham in Kent," Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, XLIV-XLVI (Taunton, 1898-1900), Pt. 3, p. 119.

16 The date is correctly given in the Complete Peerage, III, 349. No date at all is given in the biography in D.N.B. P.M. Handover makes Henry coeval with the Earl of Essex and King James I, "all born in 1566" (The Second Cecil: The Rise to Power 1563-1604 of Sir Robert Cecil, later first Earl of Salisbury (1959), p. 151). Other historians confuse Henry with his uncle, Sir Henry Cobham; in the index to Christopher Hill's The Century of Revolution 1603-1714 (1961), for instance, Henry is said to have lived "c. 1535-1619". That there is great difficulty in establishing when Henry was born is suggested by Eleanor Grace Clark, who says that "the most persistent researches have not availed to discover ... [his] age" (see below, p. 974).

17 See Guzman de Silva to Philip II (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 397, 401).

18 See Bishop de Quadra to Philip II, 18 March 1562/3 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 311); Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 265.

19 MS. Coll. of Arms, Philipot E.1, f. 95, records the names of the three godparents, as well as the date and place of the child's birth: "Henricus Broke natus apud Cobham hall in die Mercurij 22. die Nouembris, 1564. inter horas 4. et 5. ante meridianas. Susceptores in sacro fonte fuerunt Comites Huntingdoniae et dñ's Dareynley [in margin: Darnley] et dña de Abergavenny." Nichols, in his transcription of the entry, writes "dña Dareynley (Darnley)"; there was of course no Lady Darnley. Holinshed, p. 1512, and Cecil Paper 225/1 confirm the date given in the manuscript.

20 See Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 309 ff.

21 Murdin, p. 757.

22 See below, pp. 233-34.

23 Henry Lord Cobham to King James, November 1603 (Cecil Paper 102/34; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XV, 290). Michael Hickes, writing to Sir Robert Cecil on 6 December 1603, noted that Henry Lord Cobham "desired mercy of the King and alleged to draw on favour, that the King's father was his godfather" (Edmund Lodge, Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners, in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, & James I ... (2nd ed., 1838), III, 75).

24 See C.P.R., Elizabeth, 1560-63, p. 118.

25 See C.P.R., Elizabeth, 1560-63, p. 17.

26 See A History of the Weald of Kent, with an outline of the Early History of the County (1871-74), II, 480 ff.

27 Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 299.

28 See Furley, II, 480-81; P.R.O., S.P. 12/41/49, 50.

29 Cecil Paper 3/84; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 354. The paper is an eighteenth-century transcript of a letter now lost.

30 Cecil Paper 4/11, an eighteenth-century transcript; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 355.

(pp. 215-24)

31 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/47/55; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 315. See also Furley, II, 481.

32 Furley, II, 481-82.

33 Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 299.

34 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 158-59.

35 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 103.

36 Murdin, p. 288; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 110.

37 See Jacopo Antonio Gromo to Cobham, Dunkirk, 7 August 1562 (S.P., For., 1562, pp. 227-28); Antonio Buschetto to Cobham, 16 October 1563 (S.P., For., 1563, p. 563).

38 Cecil Paper 3/20; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 287, where the letter is tentatively dated 1563, apparently because it is located among papers which derive for the most part from that year.

39 D'Ewes, p. 59.

40 The Elizabethan House of Commons, p. 216.

41 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, pp. 352-53.

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Chapter VI

1 P.R.O., S.P. 12/33/61: see above, p. 165.

2 See Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 292.

3 A.P.C., 1558-70, p. 165.

4 P.R.O., S.P. 12/33/67: see above, p. 166.

5 Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 289.

6 See above, pp. 204 ff.

7 P.R.O., S.P. 12/37/19; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 257.

8 P.R.O., S.P. 70/79/1148, endorsed "30 Aug. 1565. M. of the Q. Ire to the lady Cecilia by the Lady Cobhm"; abstracted in S.P., For., 1564-65, p. 441.

9 P.R.O., S.P. 12/37/26; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 258.

10 P.R.O., S.P. 12/37/27; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 258.

11 See S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 258.

12 From MS. Royal 17 C. xxix in the British Museum, as transcribed in Ethel Seaton's Queen Elizabeth and a Swedish Princess, Being an Account of the visit of Princess Cecilia of Sweden to England in 1565 from the original Manuscript of James Bell (1926), p. 68.

13 Guzman de Silva to Philip II, 17 September 1565 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 475).

14 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 487.

15 MS. Coll. of Arms Philipot E.1, f. 95: "Gulihelmus Broke natus in die Martis undecimo Decembris. 1565. circa horam decimã ante meridiem. Susceptores fuere Dña Cecilia filia regis Sueuiae, Thomas Dux Norffolciae, et Gulielmus dñs Howard de Effingham Camerarius Sermae Reginae Elizabethae." The date is the same as that given in Holinshed, in Cecil Paper 225/1, and in all other authorities contemporary and modern.

16 Rogers, Pt. 2, p. 13.

17 Documents from Simancas, ed. Hall, p. vii.

18 Froude, VIII, 29-30. A similar eulogy appears in Froude's English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century (1909), pp. 38-39.

19 "The Early Career of Sir Martin Frobisher," English Historical Review, XXI (1906), 539-40.

20 English Seamen, p. 38.

21 The letter is paraphrased, with occasional quotations from the original, in Froude, VIII, 30-31.

22 See Sir Walter Ralegh: the Last of the Elizabethans (1935), p. 4.

23 The Victoria History of the County of Kent (1908-32), II, 290 n.

24 See "Thomas Cobham and the Capture of the 'St. Katherine'," English Historical Review, XXIII (1908), 290-91, which is based upon the Admiralty Court record of Brooke's trial on 13 July 1565 (Oyer and Term. 44, 7, 12).

25 See S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 354-55.

26 See P.R.O., S.P. 70/69/218 and its enclosure; abstracted in S.P., For., 1564-65, p. 46.

27 S.P., For., 1564-65, pp. 79-80.

28 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 359.

29 Arch. Bodl. G. c. 6, f. 83.

30 S.P., For., 1564-65, p. 192. The original, P.R.O., S.P. 70/73/540, contains nothing of interest which has not been printed in the published calendar.

31 See A.P.C., 1558-70, p. 148. Nine of Brooke's crew had been imprisoned and processes initiated against them in the Exchequer by 30 September (see p. 154).

32 Izon, pp. 51-52.

33 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 414.

34 S.P., For., 1564-65, p. 350.

35 See Cecil's endorsement of a letter which he wrote on 10 November 1590 to Archibald Douglas (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 72).

36 Paul Hentzner's Travels in England, During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, Translated by Horace [Walpole], late Earl of Orford, and first printed by him at Strawberry Hill ... (1797), p. 33.

37 Historicall description, p. 186.

38 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 440-41. This and the succeeding letters from de Silva are abstracted by Paz, who erroneously indexes all references to Thomas Brooke under the name of Henry Cobham.

The queen's excuse about Scots impersonating Englishmen may seem rather lame. In the case of Thomas Brooke, however, there seems actually to have been some danger of confusion, for there was a Scottish rogue called Cobbard, Cobol or Cobham who, although his Christian name was John, had a character not unlike Brooke's. In December 1568 it was reported to the English government that Portuguese shipping was suffering from the depredations of 'Johannes De Canes' and "another Englishman [sic], named John Cobol": De Canes was apparently John Hawkins, but Cobol is unlikely to have been, as the modern editors of the State Papers assume, one of the house of Cobham. Rather, he may have been "one John Cobbard, a Scotchman, servant to the Bishop of Ross", otherwise called "John Cobham, Scottishman", whom Cecil was anxious to apprehend at the time of the Ridolfi conspiracy (see Lord Burghley to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 14 May 1571, in Lodge's Illustrations, I, 523; William Drury to Burghley, 24 May 1571, S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, p. 585).

39 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 449.

40 See below, p. 236.

41 "The Early Career of Martin Frobisher," p. 540.

42 Guzman de Silva to Philip II, 16 July 1565 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 450).

44 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 454-55.

45 See Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 331 ff.

46 See Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 324-25.

47 Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 295.

48 See Guerau de Spes to Philip II, 15 October 1571 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 346).

49 Philip II to Guzman de Silva, 20 October 1565 (S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 493).

50 A.P.C., 1558-70, pp. 244-45. Because of a defect in the extant Council Registers, the letter cannot be dated more exactly than c. 16 August 1565.

51 A.P.C., 1558-70, pp. 280, 293.

52 William Phayre to Sir William Cecil, 12 October 1565 (P.R.O., S.P. 70/80/1252; abstracted in S.P., For., 1564-65, p. 487).

53 S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 472-73.

54 "Thomas Cobham and the Capture of the 'St. Katherine'," p. 291.

55 Les Reportes del Cases in Camera Stellata 1593 to 1609 ..., ed. William Paley Baildon (Privately printed, 1894), p. 21.

56 Cf. Stat. 8 Eliz. I, cap. 4.

57 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 325.

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Chapter VII

1 A Collection of State Papers, Relating to Affairs In the Reigns of King Henry

(pp. 238-44)

VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, From the Year 1542 to 1570 ..., ed. Samuel Haynes (1740), pp. 443-44; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 324.

2 See above, p. 177.

3 Sir Henry Cobham to Secretary Wilson, c. December 1580 (A Collection of Letters, from the Original Manuscripts of Many Princes, great Personages and Statesmen ..., ed. Leonard Howard (1753), p. 353).

4 See S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 206.

5 Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 344.

6 One suspects that the first Earl of Salisbury, when the Brooke family papers came into his possession in the early seventeenth century, was anxious only that his father's personal expressions of opinion should be safely locked away in the Cecil muniment room. Salisbury evidently cared less about what happened to Cobham's writings.

7 See especially Cecil Papers 145/174-81.

8 Correspondence of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leycester, During his Government of the Low Countries, in the Years 1585 and 1586, ed. John Bruce (Camden Society, 1844), pp. 456-57. All but the first set of square brackets are the editor's.

9 Cecil Paper 145/175; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 60. The receipt of Cobham's payment of £ 120 of the £ 600 is in Cecil Paper 145/174; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 40.

10 Miller, p. 33.

11 Cecil Paper 3/68, an eighteenth-century transcript; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 338.

12 Cecil Paper 3/75, an eighteenth-century transcript; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 338.

13 Cecil Paper 4/18, an eighteenth-century transcript; abstracted and incorrectly dated 7 July 1568 in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 357.

14 Cecil Paper 3/76, an eighteenth-century transcript of the now virtually illegible Cecil Paper 198/120; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 339.

15 See Cecil Paper 145/76; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 98.

16 Miller, pp. 33-34, quoting MS. Lansdowne 57, f. 5.

17 See D'Ewes, pp. 93-94.

18 See D'Ewes, p. 97.

19 D'Ewes, p. 99.

20 D'Ewes, p. 111.

21 See D'Ewes, p. 131. The progress of the bill through Parliament may be traced in D'Ewes, pp. 109, 128-31.

22 Cecil Paper Legal 11/7, a copy endorsed "ffor the Joynter of the Lady Cobham Anno octavo Elizabeth 1566". The underlined words perhaps reflect the interest of the

first Earl of Salisbury in the precise terms of reference to the appurtenances of Cobham College.

23 Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 360.

24 D'Ewes, p. 101.

25 See S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 591-92, and above, p. 156.

26 See Murdin, p. 762; Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 362; Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559-1581, p. 140.

27 D'Ewes, pp. 102-03.

28 D'Ewes, p. 106.

29 The queen's remarkable speech of 5 November 1566 is amply treated by Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559-1581, pp. 145-50, and by Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 363-64.

30 The Worthies, I, 351.

31 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, pp. 358-69.

32 Cobham to Leicester, 3 August 1568 (H.M.C., Pepys Manuscripts, pp. 125-26).

33 H.M.C., Pepys Manuscripts, p. 126. The square brackets are the editor's.

34 See below, p. 261.

35 Cecil Paper 3/83, an eighteenth-century transcript; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 354.

36 Cecil Paper 3/84, an eighteenth-century transcript; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 354.

37 Cecil Paper 4/11, an eighteenth-century transcript; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 355.

38 Cecil Paper 4/12, an eighteenth-century transcript; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 355.

39 Cecil Paper 4/14, an eighteenth-century transcript; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 355.

40 See Martin A.S. Hume, The Great Lord Burghley: A Study in Elizabethan Statecraft (1898), p. 209 n. Hume alone among historians acknowledges Cobham's part in what he describes as "a secret proposal of some Frenchmen in Calais to seize that citadel and deliver it to the Huguenots to be held for Elizabeth" (p. 208).

41 H.M.C., Pepys Manuscripts, p. 130. The letter is there dated 1568, no doubt because the rest of the extant correspondence between Cobham and Leicester comes from that year, but in 1568 the royal progress did not take in Kenilworth. The news from the Continent which Cobham included in this letter concerns insignificant manoeuvres which are too indefinitely described to be of much use in dating it; the events could have occurred during almost any summer in the late 1560s. Since Elizabeth went to Kenilworth in 1566 and 1575, it seems most likely that Cobham thanked the earl for his courtesy to the baroness during the visit made in the earlier year.

42 P.R.O., S.P. 12/47/39; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 314. On p. 313 of the calendar are abstracted Cobham's reports on activities in the Netherlands.

[43] The memorandum is printed in full in Froude, VI, 422-23 n., and in Sitwell, p. 152; it is abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 337, and discussed in Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 336-37.

[44] Von Klarwill, pp. 226-27. See also above, p. 224.

[45] See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 351.

[46] Sir Henry Cobham to Secretary Walsingham, 23 May 1580 (S.P., For., 1579-80, p. 271).

[47] Sir Henry Cobham to Secretary Walsingham, 14 May 1582 (S.P., For., 1582, p. 31).

[48] Sir Henry Cobham to Secretary Walsingham, 24 June 1583 (S.P., For., 1583, p. 421).

[49] See S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 291.

[50] Haynes, p. 449; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 345.

[51] Haynes, pp. 451-52.

[52] The archduke to the emperor, 22 August 1567 (von Klarwill, p. 268). The letters between the Habsburg brothers, and their answer to Sussex at the end of the first session of the negotiations, are in von Klarwill, pp. 264-82.

[53] See the news-letter from Vienna of 31 October 1567, in which it is said that "'On Monday ... the English ambassador ... despatched the gentleman who goes to England to learn the final decision as to the marriage'" (S.P., Vatican, 1558-71, p. 257).

[54] Cecil Paper 3/97, an eighteenth-century transcript; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 348.

[55] S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 683.

[56] S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 684.

[57] Von Klarwill, p. 283.

[58] S.P., Span., Eliz., I, 689.

[59] See the Earl of Arundel to Cecil, 26 December 1567, in which there is mention of "Henry Cobham's journey from Cobham towards my lord of Sussex" (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 349).

[60] See Henry Cobham to Cecil, Augsburg, 26 December 1567 (S.P., For., 1566-68, p. 384).

[61] S.P., Vatican, 1558-71, p. 267.

[62] Maximilian II to the Archduke Charles, 11 January 1567/8 (von Klarwill, p. 286).

[63] See the detailed account of the embassy of 1567-68 in The Annales, or Generall Chronicle of England, begun first by maister Iohn Stow, and after him continued and augmented with matters forreyne, and domestique, auncient and moderne, vnto the ende of this present yeere 1614. by Edmond Howes, gentleman (1615), pp. 660-61.

[64] Giovanni Battista Castiglione to Cobham, 26 May 1568 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 356).

65 Henry Cobham did not, however, receive from the archduke the commendation for "great prudence, integrity and loyalty" which von Klarwill's translation of the letter of 3 February indicates that he did. Von Klarwill prints incorrectly the copy of Charles's message to the queen which was preserved in the imperial archives; the original, which came into Cecil's possession, is abstracted in translation in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 353, and printed in full in Haynes, pp. 507-08. It is clearly Sussex whom the archduke praised "pro sua singulari prudentia, integritate, ac erga serenitatem vestram fide".

66 See Guzman de Silva to Philip II (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 26).

67 The Compleat Ambassador: or Two Treaties of the Intended Marriage of Qu: Elizabeth of Glorious Memory; Comprised in Letters of Negotiation of Sir Francis Walsingham, her Resident in France ..., Faithfully Collected by the truly Honourable, Sir Dudley Digges Knight, late Master of the Rolls (1655), p. 22.

68 See S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 394.

69 See Guerau de Spes to Philip II, 15 October 1570 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 283).

70 See the report given by the French ambassador, La Mothe-Fénélon, to the sieur de Sabran for secret delivery to Charles IX and Catherine de Medicis; it is enclosed in the ambassador's dispatch of 29 December 1570. Fénélon did not believe that the queen wanted a husband; "mesmes que n'y ayant le comte de Sussex rien advancé, quant il y alla, encores estoit il à croyre que ung jeune gentilhomme de nulle authorité, qui à peyne avoit poilu en barbe, y feroit à ceste heure encores moins" (Correspondance diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac de La Mothe Fénélon, ambassadeur de France en Angleterre de 1568 à 1575 ..., ed. A. Teulet (Paris, 1840), III, 424). Fénélon's description of Henry Cobham is freely translated in Sitwell, p. 282.

71 H.M.C., Finch Papers, I, 10-11.

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Chapter VIII

1 See the private enclosure in Fénélon's official dispatch of 5 September 1570 to King Charles IX (Correspondance diplomatique, III, 300). Carte, usually more acute, identifies the suborner of the citizens of Calais with Henry Cobham, and fancifully relates how the baron's brother, passing through the town on his way to see the emperor at Speyer, "entered into a conspiracy with some of the inhabitants". Carte's source is clearly Fénélon's dispatch, although he translates it badly: Elizabeth's statement that, to enter into a war with France, "il fauldroit rompre toutz les trettez," is rendered by Carte as the queen's instruction to Henry Cobham "'that he should break off his treaty with the conspirators'" (Carte, III, 502).

2 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/47/60, 65; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 316.

3 See H.M.C., Pepys Manuscripts, p. 133.

4 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/47/75; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 317.

5 H.M.C., Pepys Manuscripts, p. 161.

6 La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX, 3 June 1569 (Correspondance diplomatique, II, 2-3).

7 For the complex events of 1569, see especially Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, pp. 440-67; Froude, IX, 10-153.

8 See below, pp. 315-16.

9 Murdin, p. 36. See below, p. 350.

10 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/59/1; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 344, and discussed in Furley, II, 497-98.

11 Haynes, p. 560.

12 Correspondance diplomatique, II, 412.

13 Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 444.

14 Black, p. 134.

15 Correspondance diplomatique, II, 255-56.

16 La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX, 7 October 1569 (Correspondance diplomatique, II, 260-61).

17 La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX, 5 December 1569 (Correspondance diplomatique, II, 380-82).

18 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, p. 370.

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Chapter IX

1 See the list in Lionel Cust's "The Painter HE ('Hans Eworth')," The Second Annual Volume of the Walpole Society (Oxford, 1913), pp. 14-17.

2 See Anecdotes of Painting in England (1786 edition, reprinted 1871), p. 87.

3 "Lords of Cobham," Pt. 2, p. 126.

4 Cust, p. 35. Cust reproduces the portrait as Plate XIX in his article, and also refers to the Bolton version, calling it a copy.

5 Mr. Piper kindly reviewed the situation regarding the Cobham portraits in a private letter of 20 June 1961.

6 See below, pp. 928-29.

7 The Cumberland connection is thought by the present curator of the Duke of Devonshire's collection to be the most likely explanation of the presence of the portrait at Bolton; the Devonshire connection was tentatively accepted by John Sleigh in his note in N. & Q., 4th ser., VI (1870), 338.

8 Seated at table, says Walpole (p. 87), "are seven young children, their ages marked, which shows that three of them were born at a birth." Only six of the seven children in the Bolton version are actually seated.

9 MS. Coll. of Arms, Philipot E.1, f. 95: "Georgius Broke natus apud Cobham in die Sabbath vigilia Paschae 17. Aprilis 1568. circa horam 10. ante meridiem eiusdem diei." Cecil Paper 225/1 corroborates this date, which has been adopted by Charles Henry Cooper and Thompson Cooper in their Athenae Cantabrigienses (Cambridge, 1858-1913), II, 359; by Venn, I, 225; by Britiffe Constable Skottowe, writing in D.N.B.; and by Cust, p. 35. Francis Thynne, however, in Holinshed, p. 1512, and in MSS. Add. 39184, 37666, gives Saturday, 31 July 1569. It is just possible that Thynne was slightly bedevilled by the date which he gives: 31 July 1549 was the birth-date of

Frances Brooke the elder, George's half-sister, and in his published account in Holinshed, Thynne, or the printer, had given it as 31 July 1589. There is, however, no way of proving Thynne wrong and the other authorities correct.

10 MS. Coll. of Arms, Philipot E.1, f. 95: "Susceptores fuerunt Epus Roffeñ et Edwardus dñs Clynton Admirallus Angliae, et Comitissa Salopiae." In December 1568 the Earl of Shrewsbury wrote to his wife from Hampton Court that he had shared her gift of venison and puddings with "my Lade Cobbam", Pembroke and Leicester. "My Lade Cobam your dere frende," he wrote, "wyshes your presence here: she loves you well. I tell hur I have the cawse to love hur best, for that she wyshed me so well to speede as I dyd: & as the pene wrytes so the harte thynks, that offe all erthely joyes that hath happenyd unto me, I thanke God chefest for you" (Joseph Hunter, Hallamshire: The History and Topography of the Parish of Sheffield in the County of York: with Historical and Descriptive Notices of the Parishes of Eccles-field, Hansworth, Treeton, and Whiston, and of the Chapelry of Bradfield (1819), p. 8.; quoted in a modernized version in Maud Stepney Rawson's Bess of Hardwick and her Circle (1910), pp. 43, 44). The rivals for Elizabeth Hardwick's hand against whom Lady Cobham had encouraged Shrewsbury to compete had included the baroness's brother-in-law Henry (see the notes to the family tree, p. 1152, n. 56).

11 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1110, n. 39. Only the slightest trace of the descriptive caption beside Jane Newton's head survives in the Longleat portrait. What Cust transcribed as though from it is actually legible only in the Bolton version, where are the words: "Iohaña Soror Dominae Cobham Filia Iohannis Newton Militis, qui est Avus his Parvulis." Newton, thus described in the present tense as grandfather of the children, died in 1568.

12 English Art 1553-1625 (Oxford, 1962), p. 164.

13 See below, p. 553. It is unlikely that the painting of a lady of the Cartwright family which Oswald Barron identifies with Jane Newton is actually of Lady Cobham's sister; see the notes to the family tree, p. 1111, n. 39.

14 Walpole, p. 87.

15 The inscription at Bolton concurs in every respect with that at Longleat. Sleigh mistranscribes, as from the Bolton version, 'gignat mensa Iosephos' as 'gignas mensa Ioseph'. Cust's transcription (p. 35) is accurate except for the modernizing of the diphthong in 'praeclaro'.

16 This translation was kindly prepared by Professor R.E.D. Cattley, Head of the Department of Classics in the University of New Brunswick. Sleigh speaks of the portrait's "curious inscriptions, which still serve to puzzle the uninitiated".

BOOK THREE

(1571 - 1584)

He keapt my powre hous frõ distruction.

Chapter I

Elizabeth's third Parliament met on 2 April 1571. William Lord Cobham was appointed to the committee of peers which was at once established to receive petitions to Parliament from the whole of the British Isles, and two days later he was present when the queen came in person to Westminster to confirm the election of the Speaker.[1] No doubt he heard the vain expression of hope made by Elizabeth when she left the new Members, "'that they would be more quiet than they were at the last time'".[2] The queen had summoned Parliament only because she was desperately in need of money to meet the expenses of suppressing the Northern Rebellion of 1569; having broken her promise to marry, and having become even more averse to establishing the succession, she would have chosen to meet her assembled people for no other reason. Parliamentary patrons like the baron had evidently been instructed to make the session as painless as possible, but their efforts to keep out of the Lower House those exigent elements which had embarrassed Elizabeth in 1566 were unfortunately misdirected. Religion, the need of imposing conformity upon Englishmen so as to present a united front against the fulminations of Rome and the machinations of Spain, was to be the issue in 1571, not the royal marriage and the question of the queen's heirs. In the eight weeks during which Elizabeth allowed the Members to sit there was to be little quiet, and at the end of them the government was in the strange position of having sided with the nation against the Crown. For the bill which, by demanding not only an outward show of adherence to the Church of England but conformity of conscience as well, was supported by Lords and Commons alike, apparently by Cecil and the Council, probably by Cobham. Only Elizabeth rejected it, and by her vetoing of it gave recusancy, Catholic and Puritan, the means to grow.[3]

It is unlikely that Cobham, in choosing the fourteen burgesses whom he wanted to place in the Lower House as Barons of the Cinque Ports, had foreseen the issues on which the Members of the Parliament of 1571 were to be asked to vote. Protestants the men would have had to be, for the session was the first in which everyone was

required to take the oath of supremacy. Otherwise Cobham must have expected of them only strict compliance with the government's agenda, that is, prudent evasion of the subjects annoying to the queen. How he went about dictating his choices to the electors of the Cinque Ports is interesting. By prescriptive right the Lord Warden could create freemen in his bailiwick, and could thereby put up for election trusty men from outside who would not delay the business of Parliament by maintaining troublesome local bills. The situation was not a happy one for the townsmen of Sandwich and Hythe, Dover, New Romney and Rye, Hastings and Winchelsea, but it had been long accepted, and so long as each Port was allowed to return at least one burgess of its own choosing there was no trouble. By 1570, however, Cobham thought that he was powerful enough to demand more than half the fourteen seats by which the Ports were represented. He was returning officer, sole defender of the obsolescent liberties of the bailiwick, and a close colleague of the Secretary; he therefore used no subtlety in exerting his will upon the electors late in 1570, since it seemed impossible that they should resist him. It was Sandwich which felt his power most. There the popular recorder, Roger Manwood, had been the Lord Warden's candidate since 1555, and when Manwood wrote to the corporation that his brother John was standing for the other seat, traditionally reserved for a citizen of the town, the mayor and jurats were pleased. Cobham did not, however, like the Manwoods, and had condoned Roger's repeated elections to Parliament because, apparently, the man was too strong both in Sandwich and in legal circles in London to be ousted from his seat.[4] When therefore the baron heard that Manwood was not only promoting his own brother's candidature but even saying that Cobham approved it, he put an abrupt stop to the campaign. Manwood was forced to tell the corporation that he had been wrong in nominating John, and corrected the impression which he had earlier given that the Lord Warden's choice and his own were the same. John Vaughan, an outsider whom Cobham meant to make a freeman of Sandwich, was to be given the seat. The electors, however, were less acquiescent in the baron's demands than was Manwood. The recorder would, as an outsider, be given one seat; one of their own number must occupy the other. "'And yt please your Lordship,'" the bold townsmen wrote to Cobham,

> 'that by all Sir Thomas Cheyne's tyme and in all your Lordship's tyme also we have had both or one at least of our owne inhabitants according to the Queen's wryt and our liberties, and by our customs and liberties always used, one at the least must be such as was sworne to our liberties.'

Having thus stated their position, the men of Sandwich proceeded to elect both Roger and John Manwood to the Parliament of 1571.[5] Cobham had been rebuffed.

In Hythe the Lord Warden had only slightly more success. Roger Manwood's influence in the Ports was not restricted to Sandwich alone, for he was official solicitor to the whole bailiwick, and the corporations of all seven towns depended upon his advice. It seems to have been he who, following his own undeserved triumph, recommended to the corporation of Hythe that they give one of their seats to either of two friends of his. The town had suffered five years before when one of its own burgesses, an outsider most probably returned through the influence of the Lord Warden, had led the opposition in Parliament to a bill providing for the subsidizing of the decaying Port which he represented. In 1571 Hythe was therefore very much aware of the danger of accepting Cobham's nominees, and gladly received Manwood's suggestion to return at least one of his. Then, however, the corporation learned that the two candidates were by no means approved by the Lord Warden, for the seat which one of them was to fill was demanded by Cobham for his own choice, William Cromer of Tunstall. Frightened of what would happen should they offend either the baron or the solicitor by electing the other's nominee, the townsmen of Hythe decided to leave the choice up to Cobham himself; sending to him the names of Manwood's friends, his own candidate, and an independent entry in the election, they courteously informed the baron that they gave him the right to fill the seat with one of the four men. Cobham of course chose Cromer, but, to the townsmen's dismay, the Lieutenant of Dover Castle wrote back that his master was so annoyed by their daring to consider Manwood's candidates that they had best humour him by giving him the right to fill the other seat as well. The Lieutenant suggested that Cobham would like to see John Rede (probably a kinsman of the Brookes' relatives, the Wottons) made the second burgess from Hythe. As Sir John Neale says, this "was going altogether too far". The electors chose Cromer, as they had promised to do, but the seat traditionally held by a local man they did indeed give to one of their own number. "'We may not deny your Lordship any reason-

able request,'" the corporation wrote to Cobham, but "'our full meaning was at the beginning that your Lordship should have the nominating of [only] one of them;'" both seats were more than they could in all conscience surrender to him.[6]

The two-fold result of Cobham's high-handed attempt to force the Ports to grant him more than previously they had done was thus embarrassment for the baron himself, and a growth of resentment among the Portsmen which was later to lead to further difficulties between him and them. Like Sandwich and Hythe, Dover, New Romney and Rye each returned only one of his candidates, as they usually did, and Hastings and Winchelsea, emboldened perhaps by the successful opposition to unwarranted authority which their fellow towns had carried out, chose none but local representatives.[7] When Parliament met in April 1571 Cobham had only the satisfaction of knowing that he had done his best to fill the seats reserved for the Barons of the Cinque Ports with picked men. He did not have the added gratification of knowing that he had been very successful. As matters turned out, he could hardly have chosen Members prepared to consider the business which the unruly House placed before them.

If he received a reverse in the Cinque Ports, Cobham was otherwise strongly placed in early 1571. On 25 February his friend Cecil had at last been elevated to the peerage as Lord Burghley, and in the splendid ceremony in the Presence Chamber at Westminster Cobham had played a proud part. Preceded by heralds, by Garter King of Arms bearing the patent of creation, by Lord Hunsdon carrying the new peer's cloak, walked Cecil. On his right hand was Leicester and on his left Cobham, who remained near him while the patent was read in Latin and the ceremony concluded by the queen's addressing her servant by his baronial style.[8] Thus Cecil became Burghley and took his seat in the House of Lords. A year later, when the old Marquess of Winchester died and the office of Lord Treasurer was vacated, Burghley surrendered the Secretaryship and took up the higher post. Throughout 1571, however, the new lord held on to his key position next the queen and, one assumes, continued to share some of the advantages accruing from that intimacy with Cobham. It is unfortunate that no letters between the two men survive from this period of Cecil's advancement.

Lady Cobham was also in the public eye in February 1571. Elizabeth was then supposed to be considering seriously the proposal to match her with the Duke of Anjou, a "distinguished, witty, effeminate and fantastic prince"[9] whose nineteen years contrasted sharply with the queen's thirty-seven. Lady Cobham had supported the Austrian marriage and, one supposes, continued to hope that it might be arranged so long as her brother-in-law Henry was being instructed to re-open negotiations about it with the emperor. The baroness did not, in any event, approve of the French alternative, and she expressed her opinions as boldly as she could when, on 3 February 1570/1, the queen asked her for them. As the French ambassador reported the conversation, no doubt arranged for his benefit and carefully related to him, Elizabeth began by complaining to Lady Cobham and Lady Clinton that some of her advisers were objecting that the duke was too young for her. She wanted to know what the two women thought, and she wanted them to speak with absolute freedom, for she regarded them as the most loyal of her attendants, indeed as those in whom she put more trust than in any other women in the world. (In the words of La Mothe-Fénélon, "elle les avoit conjuré de luy en dire librement leur opinion, et que, comme les deux plus loyales, et où elle se fyoit plus qu'en dames de ce monde, elles ne luy en vollussent rien dissimuler.") Lady Clinton answered first. Praising the queen's perfections and wholly seconding her determination to marry, 'the fair Geraldine' advised Elizabeth to choose Anjou and not to fear that the difference in their ages would prove difficult. He was a virtuous young man, and she was equipped in every way to give him more satisfaction than any other princess in the world could provide. Apparently Lady Clinton made quite a speech, and Lady Cobham was hard put to it to speak after her, especially since what she had to say was far less romantic. "Ce que la dicte Dame avoit accepté avec tant de démonstration de playsir," said the ambassador, Lady Cobham hardly dared contradict. In her paucity of words, however, and in her lack of enthusiasm, she managed to say a good deal. Marriages, her verdict was, were always better arranged and more auspicious when the parties were as nearly as possible of an age with each other, than when there was great inequality between them. ("Milady Coban, n'y ozant rien contradire, avoit seulement dict que les mariages estoient toutjour

mieulx faictz et plus plains de contantement, quant l'on espousoit personne de âge pareil, ou aprochant au sien, que quant il y avoit grande inégalité.") Elizabeth's reply was tart and not quite truthful. Between her and Anjou there were only ten years, she said, and besides, if there had to be an age difference, she was glad that it was not he who was the elder. As it was, she hoped that she could offer him enough to make up for her lack of youth.[10] It seemed to La Mothe-Fénélon that the queen, in displaying spirit, autocracy and, perhaps, even a little carnality, sharply reprimanded Lady Cobham for speaking out of turn. Soon it was to be clear, however, that Elizabeth's words meant little, that it was the disapproval of the Anjou marriage expressed by the baroness which was to be heeded.

The Brookes were not represented at Court early in 1571 only by Lord Cobham at Burghley's side and by his wife in her acknowledged position as one of the queen's two most trusted ladies. Tension between England and Spain had been growing for more than a year, with no outlet in ordinary diplomatic channels. Elizabeth had recalled her ambassador from Spain following King Philip's enunciation of objections to him in 1569, and she had not sent a replacement; in London, not long before, the urbane Guzman de Silva had given way to the truculent and subversive Guerau de Spes, whose complicity in the Northern Rebellion and in Norfolk's attempts to change the government made him unacceptable to Elizabeth. There was thus no regular means of demanding the extradition from Spain of Thomas Stucley when in 1570 that former colleague in piracy of Thomas Brooke fled the queen's service and went over to the service of the pope, offering to join with the fugitive Archbishop of Cashel in leading an invasion of Ireland. Stucley's defection was not in itself much loss to England, but Philip's reported entertainment and knighting of him, and the granting to him and his son of a pension reported to amount in all to something like £ 10,000, was an open incitement to further betrayal of the English Crown which Elizabeth could not ignore.[11] Her government decided late in 1570 to send a personal protest to the king, and in October, while still on his embassy to the emperor, Henry Cobham was chosen to convey it.[12]

One cannot here go into the manifold details of the mission entrusted to Cobham, for, once it was determined to send him to Madrid, he was given far more to handle

than merely the topical issue presented by Stucley's presence there. An accumulation of diplomatic affairs needed attention. Chiefly, there was the embargo on English trade with the Low Countries, and Elizabeth's retaliatory seizure of Spanish ships: this situation had existed since 1569, and could not longer be tolerated by either side. Then there was the necessity of re-establishing ordinary diplomatic relations. Finally, related rather embarrassingly to the second point, there was the subject of Guerau de Spes, whose intrigues had brought him to the highly undignified state of being virtually a prisoner in his own embassy at Durham Place, closely watched by the English government. It was not surprising that it took Burghley some time to draft the envoy's instructions. Henry Cobham was going to raise issues which were individually delicate, and which taken together might well prove explosive were they not treated with the utmost care; the courtier was not far wrong who thought, when the envoy was prematurely expected to return a month later, that at his coming "either war or peace is looked for."[13] On 16 March Burghley noted in his journal that "Mr. H. Cobham was sent into Spayn uppon the Bruits of Stuckley's Entertaynment there;"[14] on 28 March Cobham was still in London, having just been to see de Spes in order to obtain a passport to enter Spain when the ambassador wrote home on that day.[15] As Parliament met, the envoy was reaching Paris, and it was not until the last day of April that he was at last received by King Philip in Madrid.[16]

From the Spanish Cobham received no satisfaction. Philip showed himself not ungracious, but his government made it clear that it was Spain which considered itself the aggrieved party in the matters of the embargo, the inability to maintain proper diplomatic relations, and the treatment being given to de Spes. As the Earl of Leicester later wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham of Cobham's reception,

> we have no cause to look for any friendship. The King used him gently, but those of Authority and Credit about him most proudly and arrogantly.[17]

Stucley, the original cause of the mission of 1571, the Spanish insisted that they had repudiated; Cobham could not get them to admit anything further. He had, however, on his way to Spain, managed to bribe both the Archbishop of Cashel and Stucley's steward, and had thus not only learned that the Irish scheme was indeed being subsidized by Spain, but also had assured the English government of constant

reports on Stucley's activities.[18] The acquisition of two valuable informants was to be the only positive good to come out of Cobham's mission. For more than a month after seeing the king, the envoy lingered in Madrid while Stucley the traitor lived in comfort in a royal villa in the hills a few miles away. Philip, anxious that Cobham should leave, did not provide him with the lodging usually given to an emissary, and at about the end of the first week in May told his ministers to "get rid of this Cobham as soon as possible, as he is doing no good here."[19] But the Englishman refused to go. The king suggested to his advisers that Cobham was postponing his departure in order to give rise "in England to the idea that he was entrusted with great affairs"; however, Philip was also aware of the envoy's real purpose, which was to gain further information about Stucley and also to delay the dispatch to Elizabeth of the counter-demands which she had expected to be made to her requirements about Anglo-Flemish shipping. Philip, said his secretary, understood that, indeed, "all of Cobham's points were simply to gain time and delay a settlement, in order never to reach the stage of actual restitution."[20] It was a war of nerves, and the Spanish were relieved when on 8 June Cobham finally presented himself at the Escurial and took leave of the king. Philip had been debating for some time about the propriety of giving the envoy his traditional due, a gift of plate or a golden chain; he decided against it, advising his ambassador in England that, if Cobham upon his return

> should mention in London that he was not given a lodging and received no chain or other present, he will simply say what is true, because the question having been well considered, it was not thought advisable to give him either, as he neither came for peace nor war, in which cases it is usual to give presents to envoys. He came under false pretences with hidden threats, as you will see when you receive the copy of the Queen's letter, and it would have appeared weakness on our part to do anything of the sort for him.

In less tangible form than in gold, however, Philip paid Cobham a compliment. The letter to de Spes was sent by the returning envoy himself, and in it the king's secretary expressed the opinion that Cobham had been "very artful". It was assumed that the message would be read before it reached de Spes, and therefore Philip had had it written in plain Spanish, the secretary explaining slyly that if Cobham should open it, "as it is piously to be expected that he will, he shall find nothing offensive."[21]

Back in London on 6 July, Cobham was said to find "the Queen very sad, and Lord Burleigh not very boastful, as they are more alarmed than they were".[22] This opinion was, however, only the Spanish ambassador's. Elizabeth and the Secretary would have had to be ingenuous indeed not to have foreseen the outcome of the mission. They had positive knowledge of Stucley and knew at least that Philip was not prepared openly to support him; they could expect little more. Their public reactions to Cobham's return from Spain must have been as far from honest as was the envoy's account of his treatment there: Henry Cobham was, according to the French ambassador, congratulating himself upon having been made much of by the Spanish Court, and talked about the king's favourable audition and kind response to his words. It was not, however, concealed from the French that Cobham came back without the significant chain ("sans qu'on luy ayt faict de présent"),[23] for if overtures to Spain had, not surprisingly, failed, it was time for Elizabeth to appear to take France into her confidence. In August a special emissary of Queen Catherine de Medicis arrived in England to talk with the government about a mutual defence treaty against Spain, and Henry Cobham ("le jeune Coban", La Mothe-Fénélon called him, apparently to distinguish him from his brother the baron) was appointed by the queen to receive him at Dover.[24] Evidently no blame was attached to the envoy for his failure to accomplish the impossible at Madrid; it was now time to try him among the French, upon whom his diplomacy was later to be exclusively expended for many years.

There is yet another person to be introduced into the story of the Brookes as they were in 1571. He, if not the key figure, is at least the motivator of the plot. Thomas Brooke, having narrowly escaped death in 1565, disappears for a time from the records of the family, and when he reappears it is in a sinister context. For once it is not his piratical activities which need concern one most about Brooke, although they continued. In 1570 he had a hand in the profitable sale of a cargo of woad and other goods stolen from French and Spanish vessels,[25] and in the same year he also did some bloody work off the coast of Spain. This one learns from a group of Bristol merchants which, driven by the embargo on shipping with the Netherlands to trade directly with the Basque provinces, had to petition the Privy Council to set right with the Spanish authorities a misunderstanding which

was proving costly. It seems that

> to Englishe shippis men of war mettinge w^{t} two Spannish shippis apon the Cost of Spaine Cominge owght of fflaunde^{r} fowght w^{t} them and in the fight, Tooke the one and went a way w^{t} her and the other eskappid from them, and recoverrid the Cost of Spaine w^{t} their owner and M^{r} slaine w^{t} too o^{r} three of the Cumpene sore hurt.

The Spanish, in retaliation, were holding in port three ships of Bristol, confiscating their cargoes and imprisoning their captains and crews. This, the merchants protested, was grossly unfair, for their ships "was at the doinge of the saide ffacte, nethe^{r} cvlppable therein." The guilty party, "as we be Creadably Cearty-ffeyd by owre lers from Spaine," was "one Thomas Cobham"; the Council was entreated to tell King Philip as much, and to see to it that the impounded ships were released.[26] Brooke's piracy, however, did not cause much stir in 1570. It was his new, political rôle which interested the authorities most.

In the spring of 1569, when Norfolk, Leicester and the other Councillors jealous of Cecil's authority had attempted to unseat him, there had been rumours that the conspirators were in league with the Spanish in the Netherlands. De Spes, then new to the ambassadorship at London and eager to make up for the time lost to the cause of Spanish imperialism and Catholic supremacy by the equable embassy of de Silva, on 12 March 1568/9 sent to his king a highly coloured account of the political atmosphere. Norfolk and Arundel were the heroes of his tale, Cecil the villain.

> The people are already beginning to murmer, and these gentlemen will find means to raise and punish the evil doers. To add strength to their enterprise, they sent me the draft of a proclamation for me to forward to the duke of Alba for publication.... They wish the affair to be conducted very secretly for the present, for the Queen and Cecil are suspicious, even of the birds of the air. They have put Thomas Cobham and many other gentlemen in the Tower for a simple word in favour of the duke (of Alba).[27]

There was evidently a threat that Alba would invade England at this time, if he could be assured of strong support from within the country. Few Englishmen were above suspicion of favouring Alba's purpose, and Thomas Brooke, the lawless opportunist, would not have been one of them.

Yet, high-handed as Elizabeth's methods of dealing with potential traitors may have been, it does not seem to have been her despotic reaction to Brooke's imprudent

speeches which put the baron's brother in the Tower. It appears, rather, to have been de Spes himself who had Brooke imprisoned, perhaps for further offences against Spanish shipping, perhaps for debt. One cannot be sure. That Brooke went to the Tower suggests some fairly serious crime, unless there was more in the ambassador's account of why he was locked up than a desire to exaggerate the political atmosphere in England so far as he could; conceivably, if a complaint had been lodged against Brooke at a time when the government wanted an excuse to put him out of harm's way until the political situation moderated, Elizabeth might have had him arrested on a fairly trivial charge and put in a place usually reserved for more important offenders. Exactly why Thomas Brooke went to the Tower in 1569 is, in any event, of minor interest compared with the consequences of his being imprisoned there. For it was through a fellow captive, Thomas Bishop, a Scot who had long served the Earl of Lennox but who was working for Mary Stuart, that Brooke met the Bishop of Ross. John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, was the brilliant politician who spoke for the imprisoned queen, who served, that is, so long as Mary was regarded as a sovereign, as her ambassador in England. Through his hands passed every scheme to free Mary and to reinstate her in Scotland, and, as the queen became increasingly the centre of conspiracies to depose Elizabeth and to replace her with her cousin, every project to topple the English state.

In 1571 Ross related how he had come to know Thomas Brooke. Thomas Bishop, he said, met Brooke in the Tower in 1569 and was much impressed, apparently by his propensity for intrigue. As Ross put it, Bishop wrote to him, "praysyng T. Cobham beyond Measure". Brooke, evidently on his new friend's advice, sent Catherine his wife to the bishop to implore him "to get the Spanish Ambassador to agrea [sic] that he might be deliverid by compownding with Anthony Guerras." Guaras was a Spaniard resident in London; he later became King Philip's agent there when the Spanish embassy was closed. Ross, "with mych ado at last," went bond for Brooke, and Guaras and de Spes agreed "that they would no more oppose agaynst hym but hold ther Peace; and so Thomas Cobham comyng fourth, fell with Thanks in Acquaintaunce" with the bishop his deliverer.[28]

Brooke had not been closely confined in the Tower, and had disseminated news

among the other prisoners. Later he professed to recall little of his activities, "nott more then of convoying of Letters from one Prisonner to an other, of sutch Occurrants as that Tyme yelded".[29] The authorities, however, had better memories, and the questions which they put to him in October 1571 prove that he had been a prisoner when Norfolk was sent to the Tower at the beginning of October 1569. What the Council wanted to know two years later was

> how many tymes did he wryte and send to y^e^ D of Norfolk and to his s^r^vauntes whylest he was in y^e^ tower,

and also, assuming that Brooke knew something of the plans of the northern rebels,

> what did he certify to y^e^ Duke y^t^ he hard how y^e^ rebells shuld haue taken barwyk, if they had ꝑspered in their Iorney to põtefract.

Brooke denied giving Norfolk "any suche certificat" of the intentions of the rebels, but he did admit that "he hathe often writtẽ & sent ẏres to the Duke at the first beinge of the D in the tower."[30] Oddly enough, Brooke was not asked about the part which he played in conducting Norfolk's correspondence outside the Tower as well as within in. Yet, more than a fortnight before he was questioned, Brooke had been charged by one of the duke's secretaries with forwarding letters from Norfolk to Howard House by means of an intermediary called Nell. Brooke had chosen Nell himself and arranged for her to talk with the duke's chaplain "downe from a Hoole in a Privie-howse, in an uther Chamber, over a Privie-howse also in her Mistris's Howse". Among the letters was said to be at least one to Lord Cobham, to which the baron seems to have replied.[31]

Thus, as early as 1569, Brooke was in touch with the leaders of subversion in England, and indeed he seems to have repaid Ross in some part even before leaving the Tower, for he had bribed an obscure fellow called John Moon to transport funds out of Scotland for the use of Queen Mary.[32] Thereafter he was busy in the bishop's service.

Lord Cobham seems not to have had anything to do with his brother's treasonable activities in the 1560s, although it is possible that some observers abroad thought that it was he and not Brooke who was responsible for them. A report was sent to Antwerp on 1 May 1569 that "Milord Cobham, who was Governor of Calais when it was taken by the French [sic], had been put in prison on a charge of treason."[33] The

statement was quite unfounded in fact. Even if one had no other means of detecting its error, it would be exposed by the letter which the baron, obviously free and concerned only for the success of the Huguenot cause in France, wrote from his own house at Cobham Hall to the Earl of Leicester later in May.[34] The prisoner of 1569 was Thomas 'Cobham', accounts of whose apprehension the Italian news-letter writer took to concern Lord Cobham. It is unfortunate that nothing is known of the baron's reaction to his brother's arrest. No trace of contact between the two men survives from the years 1566 to 1570, nor is there any indication that Cecil, who, if he had not known of it before, was made aware of Brooke's treasonable association with Ross through the apprehension and confession of John Moon in October 1570, told Cobham that his brother was under suspicion. Again one feels the lack of the letters which must have passed between the Secretary and his friend at this time, but which have been lost.

By January 1571 the disparate careers of the two Brookes seem not yet to have drawn in toward each other. Thomas was then seeking money and was apparently unable to get it from his family. That, at least, is what is suggested by what Robert Higford later remembered of the events of that time. Higford, one of Norfolk's men, stated on 1 March 1571/2 that,

> abowt hillarye Terme was twelvemonthe, Mr Thomŝ Cobham did write vnto me, declaringe that he had great need of money, And knew wheare he might borrow xl^{li} if he coulde gette anye one to stand bounde wth him for the repayment of it: he wold not haue it longe in his handes, not above one quarter of a year, And therefore required me to get him some Cytizyn to be suretie for it, if I weare Acquaynted wth anye one, that wold do so muche for me: ffor as for me selfe (said he) it is well knowen, in what case I stand, a Condempned man, & the^{r}fore theare is no bodye that will do so muche for me.

Just what Brooke meant when he said that he was condemned is uncertain. He was at liberty, and apparently going about getting a loan quite openly; he cannot therefore have been under sentence of death for having committed a felony. Most probably he was so seriously in debt, perhaps to the Bishop of Ross for having got him out of the Tower in 1569, that his credit was quite exhausted. Higford, at any rate, said that he was unable to do anything for him, and Brooke thereupon pleaded for help from Norfolk himself. The duke was annoyed when he heard of the man's importunity, and "strayt wayes answeared",

> What meanes Thomᾶ Cobhm̃, must I become one to sek out suertyes to borowe money for him. I know it weare as good for me to gyve him as muche money out of my purse, for he will neuer repaye it wheare soeu' he shall borrowe it.

"So for that tyme," Higford related, "I said no more, bycause I sawe my Lo: offended at it." Brooke's persistence finally won out, however, and Norfolk arranged with a merchant named Good to stand bond for the loan. Good very much disliked the arrangement. Immediately after talking with the duke in the garden at the Charterhouse the poor man went to Higford and, as Higford later said,

> told me what my Lo. willed him to do, & said to me, yf it weare not for my Lo. Gr[ace's]. pleasure that he wold not be bound for Tho. Cobhm̃ for two poynttes: for (q^{oth} he) it wilbe, I fear me, a discreadit for me to be bound for anye suche as he is.

Good's fears were justified. As predicted, Brooke welched on the loan and in the end the money-lender ("one M^{r} Dapers, or Tapers," said Higford, "I do not well remember whiche") demanded satisfaction of the merchant: Good complained to the duke: and the duke surrendered £ 40 with interest out of his own pocket, ending the matter early in June 1571, just after Whitsunday.[35]

The most interesting aspect of Thomas Brooke's dealings with Norfolk is not so much that the baron's brother should have gone to an outsider for the means of obtaining the money he needed, as that the duke should have allowed himself to be used. Norfolk knew that Brooke could not be trusted, and evidently had no good opinion of him, yet he took upon himself Brooke's debt and settled it. Why he did so was no clearer to most men at the time than it was to the bewildered Good; Higford, however, must have understood the reason, as all were soon to do. For Norfolk and Brooke, sharing a common acquaintance in the Bishop of Ross, were colleagues in a conspiracy which, although it may today be called "pretentious and thoroughly impracticable",[36] was treated with deadly seriousness in its own time. It was the Ridolfi Plot.

Ever since 1569, when Norfolk had first dared consider marrying the Queen of Scots without Elizabeth's knowledge, the Florentine financier Roberto Ridolfi had been projecting the deposition of the English queen and the overthrow of her government, the release of Mary, and the uniting of England and Scotland under the former captive and the duke. He thought that he could effect all this, Italian-style, by leaguing together the pope, Philip of Spain, the Duke of Alba, Ross, Norfolk, and

the dissatisfied English nobles who, with the duke and de Spes, had attempted to unseat Cecil. Ridolfi never got to the stage of precision in his plans; he was for almost two years fully occupied with trying to assemble the sheer force of arms required to seize England from within and without. How much Thomas Brooke knew of the over-all plot it is hard to say; indeed, how much plot there actually was will probably never be known, for, when it was discovered, the urgency with which so many people made their confessions produced a mass of unsubstantiated detail which often tends to be extravagant and which generally serves only to obscure the true dimensions of Ridolfi's original scheme. Brooke had, however, served Ross since 1569. The bishop later confessed that Cobham's brother and the baron's servant Francis Bertie "from Tyme to Tyme" informed him

> who were Freends and who were Enemyes to the Scots Quene; and how the Maters went forward, somtyme well, and somtyme evill, as it chauncid in the Court, as far as they could get Intelligence.[37]

One need not, perhaps, be as cautious in accepting the words of a suspiciously voluble informer as one of Burghley's agents, William Herle, was in 1571. Thomas Brooke, said the man, "was a dear and secret friend of the bishop", but Herle warned Burghley not to take the statement too seriously: the informer had said what he thought that the government wanted to hear, speaking "in such manner 'as though he were a vewer of thinges to currye more favour'".[38] Currying favour the fellow may have been, but he seems that he did not have to lie to do so.

Brooke seems also to have been involved in the transmission to and from the Continent of secret messages concerning the plot. Proof of this activity of his is slight, but it suggests much. A man called William Brownridge, described as a "waterman dwellyng at Pysshe garden s^{r}vant to m^{r} Thomas Cobhm", confessed that he had "diu^{r}s tymes" made the long trip from Bankside to the little ward known as Limestreet, next Bishopsgate, in order to pick up letters from "one Bertewe of sainte marie Axe". This seems to have been Francis Bertie, Cobham's traitrous servant; from him Brownridge received letters to carry to Dover and Sandwich, evidently for conveyance overseas.[39]

Norfolk was uneasy about Brooke's association with the plot. "Ones," said Ross, he sent "a Letter by Thomas Cobham to the Duke, but the Duke liked not to have hym

a Messenger, and so he usid him no more."[40] Even Norfolk himself was later forced to admit that he had personal dealings with the baron's brother, confessing that "Thomas Cobham dyd write in one of his Tyketts" to him "that he had Intelligence from Lewys De Pase, of Matters from the Spanyshe Embassador." The duke professed inability to remember what the matters were, saying that he had never thought them to be "of any Moment",[41] but any intercourse between de Spes and Norfolk which was conducted by so unlikely a go-between as Thomas Brooke can hardly have been innocent. It seems certain that Norfolk, not long out of the Tower where Brooke had served him in 1569, was too far implicated in treason in the spring of 1571 to risk offending his erstwhile messenger. Desperate for money and notoriously untrustworthy, Brooke knew enough to embarrass the conspirators in England, and there was nothing in his character to suggest that, in exchange for a pardon, he would not tell Burghley things that could well cost Norfolk his life. Brooke, after all, had little to lose: Norfolk had much: it was common prudence which led the duke to placate the incorrigible troublemaker.

There may have been another reason which prompted Norfolk to do as Thomas Brooke asked in January 1571. It would have been unwise to estrange anyone who had access to the offices in Dover and London of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, through which passed much of the covert intelligence which was Ridolfi's means of keeping the many elements in his grand design in touch with one another. Norfolk knew that, in a crisis, Cobham's brother would have a better chance than anyone else in the plot of sabotaging the government's invigilation of the foreign postal service. Brooke may in many ways have been a dangerous nuisance, but he could also be useful.

Perhaps, however, Norfolk did not think that he had to worry about the interception of illicit messages from abroad; he may have depended upon Lord Cobham himself to see to it that Burghley never received intelligence that was not meant for him. Ever since 1567 papal spies in England had considered Cobham to be one of the peers "well affected towards Catholics". This description of him means little, for it appears in a list of all the English lords, both peers and those of their heirs who bore courtesy titles, in which only fourteen men are labelled Protestants:

everyone else, from the Catholic but staunchly loyal Shrewsbury, to the supposed Puritan Leicester and the queen's great-uncle and life-long supporter Howard of Effingham, was designated either a Catholic or a Catholic sympathizer.[42] In March 1571, however, when Norfolk sent to Ridolfi a similar list, it must be supposed that the scrutiny of the House of Lords was intended as a more reliable guide to what attitudes Rome might expect to find among the nobility. Indeed, Norfolk did not use religious labels for his peers; he divided them into groups formed by the likelihood of their forwarding, opposing or merely looking indecisively upon the proposed Hispano-papal reformation of the kingdom. Nor did he bother with lords by courtesy: they were the chiefs of noble families, backed by retainers, in whom Ridolfi was interested, and Norfolk's list is accordingly of the sixty-four temporal peers only. A mere six of them were men from whom Norfolk thought that the conspirators could expect no assistance. Eighteen of them the duke considered to be neutral, men who might turn either way in the event of an attempt upon Elizabeth's Throne. No fewer than forty peers, in Norfolk's opinion, would befriend the plotters, and among these was Cobham.[43]

It is hard to tell what criteria the duke used in making his amazing survey of the House of Lords. The foes to Ridolfi's enterprise were, of course, Burghley, and five other men who for various reasons were sure to oppose the elements which made up the plot: they were extreme Protestants, or rivals to the Queen of Scots in her claims upon the succession, or supposed friends of France, like Wentworth, who many people thought had betrayed Calais to Henry II. The neutrals included Sussex and Leicester, Northampton, Hunsdon and Buckhurst; they appear to have been those peers who, while not qualifying as foes, were either too dependent upon Elizabeth to be likely to cast in their lot with Mary, or too inimical to Norfolk to collaborate in any scheme in which he figured prominently. Cobham's brother-in-law the marquess is rather surprisingly numbered among these neutrals. As a veteran of the Reformation he ought to have been considered an inveterate enemy to Rome; as a nonentity, he might have been depended upon to go with the majority constituted by the forty friendly peers. Perhaps because of his time-serving, Northampton's religion was not thought to be a serious obstacle to his eventual support of Norfolk

while the two marriages which he had contracted while his first wife still lived made him unacceptable to a Roman government. Finally, having run through only twenty-four members of the House of Lords, Norfolk was left with a majority of the peerage, many members of it insignificant but almost all of them bearing proud old titles which owed their existence neither to the Tudors nor to the Reformation. These forty men the duke called friends, and thus yoked Cobham with some ill-assorted companions. There were, for instance, Norfolk's malcontent self, his father-in-law Arundel and brothers-in-law Lumley, Scrope and Berkeley; there were the fugitives Westmorland, Northumberland and Morley; there were old Howard of Effingham, very near to Elizabeth both as kinsman and adviser, and his contemporary Clinton, the queen's staunch Lord Admiral; there were the nonagenarian Lord Treasurer Winchester and the twelve-year-old Cumberland. So motley a group can have existed only on paper. Yet it must represent Norfolk's estimate of the support which Ridolfi's enterprise would command among the nobility, and it would be as unwise to think that the duke was wholly irresponsible in making such an estimate as it is impossible to suppose that he intentionally misled the conspirator about the feelings of so many men. The cause was as much Norfolk's as Ridolfi's; the duke must have had his reasons for deciding which of his acquaintances would oppose and which support it.

Some of the peers had perhaps been bribed. The Leicestrian Earl of Pembroke had been extremely embarrassed in January 1569/70 when Cobham sent to the queen four overseas letters which had been intercepted in the Cinque Ports. These letters, two without signatures and two signed pseudonymously, had claimed that the Duke of Alba was planning an imminent invasion in the assurance that "la plus part de la noblesse d'Angleterre" was receiving Spanish pensions and would welcome him. When these accusations against a majority of the lords were read out in Council in Pembroke's presence, said the French ambassador, "toutz les Protestantz ont incontinent jetté les yeux sur luy." The earl replied with more vigour than the ambassador thought was necessary in the circumstances, and dared the writers of the letters to name names and cite sums for the bribes which were supposed to have been taken. Pembroke concluded his heated defence of the nobility by saying that

Alba would be easily repulsed should he try to invade England, but there was a strong feeling that the earl really hoped otherwise.[44] He died soon afterward and his son took his place among the forty peers in the list. One is concerned here to discover how far Cobham might justifiably have been thought to share the elder Pembroke's views.

One can posit five touchstones by which, early in 1571, a man's aptitude to favour the Ridolfi Plot might perhaps have been tested. These may, roughly defined, be expressed as his personal relationship with Norfolk and his own profession of religion; and, among more public considerations, his attitude to the inchoate schemes which had been directed against Cecil in 1569 and in which the more comprehensive conspiracy had its origins; his attitude to the claims of the various personages who hoped to succeed Elizabeth; and his position with regard to England's alliance either with France or Spain. One must try to judge Cobham on each of these points, and suppose that one does so on the facts which Norfolk knew.

The duke would probably have had the greatest difficulty in deciding what were Cobham's private feelings about him. Cobham was Burghley's friend, and Burghley was for many years lyrical in his admiration of Norfolk. "'England hath not had in this age a nobleman more likely to prove a father and a stay to his country,'" wrote the Secretary in 1565. "'He is wise, just, modest, careful, et timens Deum.'"[45] It was almost certainly Burghley himself who forgave Norfolk his designs against him in 1569 and who interceded for the duke with the queen. Indeed, even when Norfolk had disappointed all of the Secretary's hopes and been adjudged a traitor, Burghley's private attitude to the duke was still warm enough in 1572 to encourage the condemned man to commend his children to "'my very good Lord Burghley for the old love good will and friendship that he hath borne to me'".[46] Lady Cobham perhaps shared Burghley's intimacy with the duke; her son later recalled to the Secretary's son how "y^{r} father and my mother writt continually to y^{e} Duk of norfolk after he was condemned."[47] If Cobham himself felt great affection for Norfolk it is strange that no expression of friendship between them survives; there is, on the other hand, no reason to suspect any ill feeling, or to doubt that the baron respec-

ted Norfolk and that relations between them, apart from a difference over property which was being discussed in 1571, were cordial. The probability is that their amicability depended much upon their sharing a common friend in Burghley, and that Norfolk was hardly justified in hoping that Cobham would desert the Secretary to join his enemy, Ridolfi.

One also doubts whether Norfolk could expect much sympathy from Cobham for the Catholic cause, even if it were not associated with the expansion of papal power. The baron was the son of a reformer, of an astute politician it is true, and therefore of a compromiser, but of a man who died and was buried as a proponent of evangelistic Protestantism. In his youth Cobham had spoken out in Parliament against the pope's supremacy, and in maturity he had supported the comfortably Anglican policies of Cecil. By 1571 two religious works had been dedicated to him, one Thomas Tymme's translation of a Lutheran book of devotions and the other the first part of Tymme's translations of the Calvinist Marlorat's tetralogy on the evangels. It is generally agreed that trust cannot be placed unreservedly in the wording of dedications. Tymme, however, in telling Cobham in 1570 that he was addressing his work to him especially because of "the zeale (Right honourable) which fame and report certefieth me to be in you", did not offend the baron. Cobham received the Lutheran work well, encouraging Tymme to dedicate the other to him immediately afterward because of the "frendship at your honours handes, tempered with liberalitie," which he had gained with his first effort.[48] One ought not, however, to assume that Cobham was an extremist. His friendship with Burghley argues strongly against the likelihood that he displayed much public zeal. Nor do Cobham's associations with clerics in his private life indicate violent prejudice. If in October 1559 he chose the outspokenly Calvinistic William Turner to preach the funeral sermon of his first wife, he did so after presenting to the rectory of Radwinter in Essex on 16 February 1558/9[49] a twenty-three-year-old priest who had at Oxford "flung himself into the filth of papistry and ... [become] a shaven worshipper of Baal".[50] This man was William Harrison, famous afterward for his Historicall Description of the Islande of Britayne;[51] Cobham first gave him his patronage only three months after the death of Mary Tudor, and Harrison had embraced the faith of

Ridley and Latimer only shortly before the queen died. It was thus a recent convert whom the baron preferred to Radwinter and whom he later made his household chaplain; Harrison's mature and impeccable Anglicanism had not yet materialized when Cobham favoured him with his advowson. There would appear to have been little to suggest to Norfolk that Cobham would wish to see frustrated the Elizabethan religious settlement, for the baron's private preferences seem to have been for the same sort of compromise as that which the queen established publicly. Froude's unqualified statement that Norfolk's forty 'friends' were men "notoriously opposed to the Reformation policy of Elizabeth's Government"[52] cannot be substantiated in the baron's case.

Cobham's attitude to three national issues may help to indicate where he stood with regard to Norfolk and Ridolfi. That, so far as one knows, the baron was nothing but a loyal supporter of the Secretary during the troubles of 1569 has already been shown: Norfolk cannot have thought him a friend for anything that he had done to assist the opposition to Burghley. Yet, between the time of Norfolk's imprisonment early in October 1569, and the beginning of August 1570, when the duke was released from the Tower, Cobham corresponded with him without the Secretary's knowledge. For this assertion one has the word of Robert Higford, a secretary of Norfolk's, who was examined upon the exposure of the Ridolfi Plot in 1571. Higford, who had been taken into custody with his master in 1569, stated that he was not himself lodged near Norfolk when Thomas Brooke contrived to get the duke's messages out of the Tower to Howard House and thence to their destinations; what he had to say about the device was therefore only what his fellows had told him later. Higford, frightened no doubt of the consequences of being found out in a lie, seems always to have tried to answer truthfully, and when asked who were Norfolk's correspondents he gave names only after emphasizing his imperfect knowledge of the matter. "Now," he said,

> to say to whom his Lordship in all that Tyme did write any Letters, and from where he receaved anye, it is verie harde for me, at this present, upon the sodaine, to remembre their Names: But in good Trust is [sic: if] it will please your Lordships to take in good Parte so manye of them as I can now call to my ill Remembrance. My said Lord hath written owt of the Tower to my Lord Lumley, my Lord Cobham, Mr. Dyer, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, and others before named [Queen Mary and the Bishop of Ross]: and from them he hathe receaved

also Letters againe.[53]

No comment need be made on the queen and the bishop. Of the other names, one is that of the peer whom Ridolfi accounted second only to Norfolk himself as an essential element in his plot, the duke's brother-in-law Lumley. Throckmorton was imprisoned in 1569 for his part in Norfolk and Leicester's concerted attempt to unseat Cecil, but he was soon released; Edward Dier was a Leicestrian, but if he got into trouble in 1569 he was not committed to the Tower for it, and by June 1570 was receiving from the queen the favour of being appointed keeper of her manor of Woodstock.[54] Neither Throckmorton, who died early in 1571, nor Dier was implicated in the Ridolfi Plot. The significance of Cobham's inclusion in such a list as this of some of Norfolk's correspondents during a ten-month period is thus difficult to assess, the more so because Higford may well have named the baron by mistake, forgetting that a name which had often been spoken in his hearing in the months immediately preceding his questioning had not always been so much a part of the conspiratorial consciousness of Howard House. Assuming that the secretary did not make a mistake, one must yet observe that the fact that the interchange of letters was carried out secretly does not necessarily mean that one ought to suspect the baron and the duke of collusion in very serious matters: Norfolk directed a voluminous correspondence from the Tower ("theare scarcely scaped two Dayes in a Wyke but either his Lordship hard from his Men, or sent out to them," said Higford), and apparently conducted much of his ordinary business in this clandestine way. Yet the duke's confidence that Cobham would assist him and his fellow conspirators in 1571 may well have been caused in part by the baron's complicity in evading Cecil's vigilance in this instance, if in no other. More one cannot deduce from Higford's statement.

Even if a closer friend of his than it is now known that he was, however, Norfolk can hardly have expected Cobham to join in the conspiracy because of his affection for the Queen of Scots. For in the matter of the succession the Brookes are known only to have been regarded as supporters of the claims of the junior branch of the Scottish royal house. It is from Spanish sources exclusively that one learns of the Brooke connection with Margaret Stewart, Countess of Lennox, the grand-daughter of King Henry VII and the rival of her niece, Queen Mary. In 1562, when attempts were

made to have the countess declared illegitimate and so to invalidate her claims to the English Throne, Bishop Quadra reported from London that one of the Brookes, probably the baron's brother George, had been involved in a scheme to remove the lady's son to a place of safety where the extreme Protestant supporters of the Earl of Huntingdon could not harm him. Two years later this princeling, as Lord Darnley, stood godfather to Cobham's second son, and in 1565, when Thomas Brooke was under sentence of death, Lady Lennox approached Guzman de Silva on the pirate's behalf, saying that the Brookes were her adherents and that she wanted to confirm them in their friendship for her. [55] How far Cobham and his family publicly favoured the countess in the 1560s can be gauged only by these second-hand reports, and by Darnley's presence at Henry Brooke's christening (where Huntingdon, the countess's most prominent English rival, also served as godfather to the infant). One would not expect to hear anything directly from Cobham: on the question of the succession he probably emulated Burghley who, even though he seems to have leaned toward the Greys, "was extraordinarily careful to avoid commitments, even in his intimate correspondence".[56]

Whatever his sympathies may have been in the 1560s, Cobham cannot have belonged to the Lennox faction in 1571; that party had been effectively dissolved by the murder of Darnley in 1567 and by the consequent fusion in James VI, his son by his mother's rival, of the claims both of Lady Lennox and of the Queen of Scots. Henceforth, until her own death in 1578, the countess opposed herself to her daughter-in-law, seeing in her grandson the likeliest candidate for recognition as Elizabeth's heir presumptive. Indeed, in 1570, Lady Lennox and the Scottish regent her husband were assisting Burghley in his attempts to circumvent the Bishop of Ross's schemes for setting Mary free.[57] Ross himself later admitted that when in May 1570 Elizabeth seemed to be considering the restoration of Mary to her Throne, he had to resort to suborning one of Cobham's servants in order to share the knowledge of the queen's intentions which was held by the baron and by Lady Cobham's relatives, Thomas Heneage and his wife, Anne Pointz. The servant, Francis Bertie, already noted to have been the colleague of Thomas Brooke, would tell the bishop what he had heard his master discussing with his friends, "not that either my Lord Cobham, or Mr.

Henage, did know that he sought eny Intelligence" for Ross.[58]

If the Brookes had once looked to a future time when Margaret Stewart or her heir succeeded Elizabeth, and if they continued to do so after Darnley's death, their hopes lay with the King of Scotland, not with his mother and rival. Lacking all evidence but that provided by the two Spanish ambassadors, one must conclude that Cobham is most unlikely to have encouraged Norfolk to think that he desired the premature accession of the captive Queen of Scots. It was only by distorting the facts, by confounding coincidence with choice in order to turn to advantage an unhappy incident in his family's past, that the baron's son was able to claim favour from King James some thirty years later by saying that "his own father had suffered imprisonment for the King's mother."[59] One ought, almost certainly, to read 'because of' in place of 'for'. There is a significant difference.

It is in considering Cobham's attitude to France and Spain that one finds where Norfolk is most likely to have conceived his opinion that the baron would favour the conspiracy. Ridolfi excluded France from his plans, and he and his colleagues took care that the French should know nothing of them. Had they succeeded, France would have found itself virtually encircled by Spain and Spain's new protectorate, Britain. It was the chief of Elizabeth's foreign cares throughout her reign to prevent just such an upsetting of the balance of power. Cobham's part in giving the queen, at the beginning of her reign, the means to play off one state against the other has already been described, and it was Elizabeth's ability to hold to that regulating position between France and Spain which kept England independent so long as she lived. Her policy did not, however, constitute absolute neutrality. Traditionally, when confronted with the temporary expedient of allying themselves with one neighbour or the other, English governments had preferred Spain to France. The feeling that Spain, the heir of Burgundy, was a more reliable friend than perfidious France was one of the mediaeval heritages of Elizabethan England, and it was more than a sentimental one, for English prosperity depended upon trade with the Spanish-held Netherlands. Elizabeth herself coquetted with Philip II and his ambassadors so long as she could: the Secretary's prejudices were always against France: as Conyers Read has shown, even when the Ridolfi Plot had been discovered

and defeated, "despite Spanish intrigues, Burghley still favoured the old Burgundian alliance."[60] Cobham's family was in astute company when it professed, as it did concertedly and extravagantly in the desperate time of Thomas Brooke's trial and sentence to death in 1565, to be "affectionate servants" of Philip II.[61] The baron never expressed himself so directly, but his hostility to France was evident in the warmth with which he approved the fight of the Huguenots against the Guisan rulers of that kingdom, and in the resentment with which he beheld his father's old town of Calais under the control of a French governor. To Leicester at least, the principal Francophile on Elizabeth's Council, anyone reactionary enough to seek to maintain peace by distrusting France and remaining on good terms with Spain was, in 1571 as later, of "the Spanish faction in England".[62]

An ingrained habit of thinking more favourably of Spain than of France was, however, far from enough to make a man a potential traitor. What Norfolk probably thought in 1571 was that the prospect of Elizabeth married to the Duke of Anjou would frighten Cobham and many others of his bent into taking action to prevent what would have been a radical reversal of English foreign policy. The attitude which Cobham took to the Anjou match is not known, nor is it indicated by the positions assumed by two of the people nearest him. For Lady Cobham and Burghley seem to have differed with each other about it. In February 1571 Lady Cobham, unless hers was purely a stage part in the conversation which she and Lady Clinton held with the queen for the French ambassador's enlightenment or bewilderment, had opposed the marriage as boldly as she could. Burghley, on the other hand, advocated it. He was convinced that Elizabeth's entry into the French royal family would frighten Spain into a less aggressive attitude toward England than lately it had been displaying, and that it would also put an end to the support which France, independently of Spain, had been giving to Mary Stuart's pretensions to the English Throne ever since the days of Henry II. (One should forget, however, neither that Burghley had earlier promoted the Austrian match, nor that he seems to have been sceptical after the failure of the negotiations at Vienna of Elizabeth's intention ever to marry.) De Spes reported to Philip II on 16 March that there was general alarm among the nobility over the inevitable consequences of the Anjou marriage,

which Elizabeth seemed indeed to be determined to accept.[63] Even if, however, Cobham disliked the match as much as many of his peers did, the question with regard to him is how much he knew of Burghley's intention to forward it. One assumes that the baron would not have panicked so long as he thought that not only the queen's notorious vacillation stood between Anjou and the Throne, but Burghley's usual dislike of the French as well. Cobham almost certainly would have relied upon the Secretary to oppose the suggested Anglo-French league which did not include the marriage, for his friend regarded the mere word of Charles IX as no security that a treaty would not be broken when it ceased to serve French interests.[64] It was the certainty of a royal match alone which might have driven Cobham into a secret arrangement with Norfolk to help repulse the French threat by embracing Ridolfi's scheme. That the baron would have gone to such desperate lengths in March 1571, when Burghley did not succeed in convincing even the eager French ambassador that he would support Anjou's suit until mid-April,[65] seems most unlikely. It was one thing to want Elizabeth to choose Spain rather than France as her ally in times of emergency, quite another to be willing, especially before the Anjou match seemed to have the Secretary's backing, to be willing to depose the queen, annul the Reformation and set a Spanish dependent upon the Throne, rather than to accept even the possibility that England might have a French king consort.

One seems bound to conclude that Cobham has been regarded, to use Camden's words, as "a favourer of the Duke's purpose",[66] because of his involvement in the confused exposure of Norfolk, not because of his premeditated complicity in the duke's plot. Even Froude, who accepts further than most historians Norfolk's estimate of the number of English noblemen who were willing to fall in with Ridolfi, admits that "it need not be supposed that all the party had been consulted severally, or could have been admitted safely to a dangerous secret."[67] One doubts that Norfolk ever opened with Cobham, and also that the baron ever gave him reason to think that he could do so with impunity. In Cobham, as in others whose names he placed in that troublesome list, Norfolk mistook conservatism for corruptibility.

It has been necessary to establish at length the improbability that Cobham had personal knowledge of the Ridolfi Plot when he took his seat in Parliament on 2 April

1571. The course of the baron's life in subsequent months can best be followed if one assumes that during the first week of the session his cares were no greater than those of most of his fellows, and far less than those of some. If Cobham, like many others, was anxious about the queen's seeming intention to marry Anjou, and if he was preoccupied with the demands of the Puritan Commons for reform of religion, he had also at least the satisfaction of knowing that the new year had begun very well for him and his associates. Near him in the Upper House sat Cecil, now Lord Burghley; recognized as indispensable to the queen was his wife; on his way to Spain on an important mission for the government was his brother. Henry Cobham, however, could not contribute enough to the baron's sense of well-being to counteract the power which his other brother had to destroy it, and early in April Thomas Brooke abruptly put an end not only to Lord Cobham's peace of mind, but almost to the fortunes of his entire family.

Ridolfi, whom the English authorities unsuspectingly allowed to go freely about his banking business, had left London in March. On the Continent he consulted with the Duke of Alba, assuring him that the imminent assembly in Parliament of the forty peers supposed to favour Norfolk would provide the best possible opportunity for the effecting of their plans. Ridolfi then prepared to go on to Madrid and Rome with the same message, but before leaving the Netherlands he wrote to Norfolk and to the other son-in-law of the Earl of Arundel, Lumley, reporting to them as to the leaders of the English faction on his success with Alba. The writing of the letters, in code and addressed to the two peers only under their ciphers of 40 and 30 though they were, was foolish and unnecessary; the means of conveying them to England was disastrous, for to carry them over Ridolfi chose Charles Baillie. Baillie was a Fleming of Scottish origin, then in his late twenties. He was a zealous and indiscreet servant of Queen Mary, and had recently been involved in the printing of A Treatise concerning the Defence of the Honour of his mistress. This work, written by the Bishop of Ross, was an able argument against Elizabeth's legitimate possession of the Throne, and, while it had been originally published in England in so very different a version that the queen herself is supposed to have approved it, an attempt to print a second edition at Islington in 1570 had

resulted in Ross's temporary imprisonment. Its printing and distribution in 1571 had thus to be illicit.[68] Baillie went personally to Louvain in March to collect copies of the book for dissemination in England, stopping on the way from Antwerp at Malines, where the leaders of the Northern Rebellion of 1569 were living, and at Brussels, where Ridolfi had seen Alba. Thus, when he embarked at Calais, he had with him not only a quantity of contraband books, but letters for delivery to Ross and Norfolk from the fugitives Westmorland and Lady Northumberland, and, of course, from Ridolfi.[69]

Baillie's first week in England aroused such interest that one is confronted with a welter of evidence in dealing with it, evidence which is unfortunately sometimes irreconcilable. The Bishop of Ross noted in his diary many of the incidents caused by Baillie's coming; Burghley's journal refers to a few of them; one of Burghley's informers reported at second hand on them; and, when the Ridolfi Plot was finally exposed, confessions of varying veracity were extracted from all who had been illicitly connected with them. It is only by borrowing from all of these accounts that one can piece together a narrative in which Baillie's movements will appear in their proper sequence, and it is only by reconstructing Baillie's life early in April 1571 that one can estimate the extent of Lord Cobham's collusion with the Duke of Norfolk and the Bishop of Ross.

The first important information that Burghley is known to have been given about Baillie's arrival in England is contained in a letter addressed to him "ffrō ye marshalsea ye 9. of Aprll. 1571". His prison informant was William Herle, a man thought by Catholics to be a sufferer for their cause; Herle received the confidences of Marian agitators and agents newly arrived at the Marshalsea, and passed them on to Burghley. In his letter dated 9 April, Herle reported a conversation which he had had with one Makinson, a man who the day before had been detained in the prison after coming there to visit Baillie. The substance of this report will be considered later: one need now only note that, if Herle had not lost track of time while in the Marshalsea and so dated his letter incorrectly, Baillie was in prison by Palm Sunday, 8 April.[70] In a letter dated 11 April Herle informed the Secretary that if Baillie could be committed 'to close prison', that is, to solitary

confinement, rather than to be allowed the freedom which existed among most prisoners in the Marshalsea, and if Baillie's gaoler could be given 'some secret token' so that Herle might be allowed to hold apparently illicit conversation with the prisoner, much information might be obtained about Baillie's mission to England.[71] Finally, ostensibly on 16 April, the day after Easter, Herle wrote to Burghley that Baillie had that day been forbidden company.[72] So much for the chronology relating to Baillie's imprisonment as it is indicated by Herle's letters. It is disputed by several other accounts. Norfolk's man Higford, in asserting later that he had had a conversation with Thomas Brooke in April, said:

> One Daye he sent for me, I thinke it was a litle after Easter [15 April], I can not certenly speake of the Time, but it was imediately upon the Apprehension of Charles, the Byshoppe of Rosse his Man.[73]

Perhaps one need not take Higford's words too seriously: as he himself admitted, he could not be sure of the date of Baillie's arrest, and some five months after making this statement he changed his mind, saying that it had been "abowt one wyke after the apprehension of charles servaunt to the Byshoppe of Rosse" that Brooke spoke with him.[74] The testimony of both the bishop and of Burghley himself, in their private journals, one might be less inclined to contest, and, according to them, Baillie was imprisoned in the Marshalsea on 13 April.[75] Burghley further stated that it was "about the 12th of April" that Baillie had been apprehended at Dover.[76] If, however, Herle may have been without a calendar when he wrote his letters from prison in April, both Ross and Burghley were also at a disadvantage when they drew up their journals, for they did not compile them at the time when the events which they recorded took place. The forms in which both journals survive suggest memorial reconstruction, assisted only by rough notes.

One is thus confronted with a conflict of dates. According to Herle, Baillie was in the Marshalsea by 8 April 1571, and was placed in strict confinement on 16 April; according to the Secretary and the bishop, Baillie was committed to prison on Good Friday, 13 April. Higford's contradictory statements provide one with the approximate dates c.16 April to c.6 April for Baillie's arrest; if the latter date, which appears in a painstaking attempt at exact recollection of events then almost a year old, is the more nearly correct, it would seem to be compatible with Herle's dating.

All that one can say is that Baillie came to England in April 157⅓, that he was put in prison before Easter (15 April), and that it may be deduced from the accounts of all parties that he was in the country for two days at least before his committal. Chronological inconsistency in the material used in the following discussion of what occurred at the time is thus unavoidable; for the same reasons, it is impossible to assign exact dates to the events in which Cobham betrayed his trust.

When Charles Baillie landed at Dover, he was stopped by the Lord Warden's officers; they examined the books which he had with him and presumably consulted William Crispe, the Lieutenant of Dover Castle. Crispe would have been understandably reluctant to insult Baillie by searching his person, for the man professed to be in the employ of the Bishop of Ross and thereby, as the servant of an ambassador, claimed diplomatic immunity. Crispe might also have been unsure of his right to seize what purported to be merely a second edition of a work which Elizabeth had allowed two years before, had he probably not been forewarned that such a trunk as Baillie's, when it arrived in Dover, should be sent unopened up to London. For Lord Cobham knew something of the plan to bring the revised Treatise into England; his knowledge of it is, in fact, a peculiar aspect of his part in the Ridolfi affair.

All the evidence which one has of the baron's connection with the illicit books is that which Francis Bertie, his untrustworthy servant, confessed to the Privy Council in the following October. "'If hitt maie please your honours,'" Bertie wrote,

> 'for the male [cf. French 'malle' and O.E.D. 'mail'] with the bookes, I gave my lord Cobbham warning that hitt was requyred to have brought over and tould him for that hitt was so earnestly commended to me I suspeckted hitt should not be drogges [drugs] nor for the quene of Skotes, as I was made beleive, thearefore tould my lord thatt I wisshed the male to be brought in his handes, and when he had hitt to vue hitt, and if nothing wheare in hitt other than was tould me praied that I might have hitt delivered, if otherwyse his lordship to do as wheare cause.'

Bertie went on to show that he gave his master notice of the arrival of the trunk long before Baillie actually brought it over: the matter was, he claimed, "'owte of my remembraunce almoste'" by April 1571.[77] One certainty only is revealed by this

statement: it was considered imperative that the searchers at Dover should not see the books. The question is whether it was Bertie alone, acting for Ross, who hoped by ensuring their conveyance to London that he could keep them from confiscation, or whether Cobham himself was party to a scheme to prevent his own office from carrying out its duties. The baron would probably not have suspected his servant of subversion simply because Bertie had prior knowledge of the shipping of an important trunk: it is evident that requests were regularly made and bribes often offered to customs officials such as Cobham's men, in order that contraband goods might get through the searchers on the coast. If Cobham was innocent of complicity with Ross, however, it is hard to see why Bertie hoped that the Lord Warden, any more than his lieutenant at Dover, would admit into England copies of such a work as the Treatise. If, on the other hand, Cobham were guilty, and the story told to the Council merely a fabrication designed to help his case in the autumn of 1571, the baron was taking a tremendous risk. As soon as a copy of the book turned up in England, the government would want to know how it had got into the country: the lax officer who had admitted it would not be found at Dover: the trunk sent expressly to the Lord Warden's house in London would be recalled, and traced to Cobham himself. Both Cobham's usual prudence, and the alacrity with which, once the books came into his hands, he turned them over to Burghley, argue strongly for the baron's innocence. Arguing, however negatively, against it is the difficulty of explaining what it was that Bertie intended in putting his master on his guard against their arrival. Perhaps Bertie enjoyed the Lord Warden's confidence fully enough to think that, by convincing Cobham of his disinterested attitude toward the mysterious trunk, he would himself be given full authority to deal with it. Ultimately he would have been found out, but he might well have expected the government to be too distracted by rebellion by that time to concern itself with him. One knows so little of Bertie the trusted servant, so much of Bertie the exposed traitor, that one hesitates to make such an assumption. Yet it seems to be the only feasible way of accounting for his confession, without assuming Cobham's own uncharacteristic, premeditated complicity in treason.

Down at Dover, early in April 1571, Crispe would presumably not have known much

about the intrigues at the Blackfriars. He did what seemed to him to be the safe thing and decided to turn both books and Baillie over to the Lord Warden for his personal attention. He sent them under guard up to London. Baillie may yet have felt fairly cocky when he and his escort reached the capital. He had been treated with respect, and only his weapons had been taken from him at Dover, "my 'rapper' and pistolets, with the 'flasher'", as he later described them.[78] He had still with him the rest of his personal belongings, consisting of a trunk in which were his dirty shirts and his riding gear, and another trunk containing minutes of letters which he had written for Ross during the bishop's troubles over the attempt at an English printing of the Treatise a year before. Baillie can have carried about with him such proof of his part in subversive actiıties only because he was confident that Burghley and his fellow ministers suspected nothing, and when Crispe's men confiscated the keys to his luggage he ought not to have been so unalarmed as it seems he was.[79] The precious letters, however, were still with him, Ridolfi's hidden next his body: if the Lord Warden's men in London treated him no more roughly than had those at Dover, he might yet fulfil the most important part of his mission.

From the moment that Baillie first arrived at Cobham's house in the Blackfriars one finds oneself dependent upon conflicting accounts of what happened. The baron himself stated six months later, in a private statement recorded "vnder the hand of the lord Burghley",

> that true it was when Charles the Fleminge was first brought to him at his howse at the Blackfryers wth the mallet [trunk] the bookes and packettes of ıres all the ıres were found vpon Charles the principall whereof were founde behinde tyed at his back secretly & other ıres that were also brought by an other man whome this examinate [Cobham] knoweth not, were by Randall Macklin who brought Charles put together in one bagg, and being taken out Thomas Cobham as this examinate supposeth haueinge secretely learned of Charles that there were ıres of great importance besought the lord Cobham wth all earnestnes even kneling on his knees and weepinge that those ıres might not be deliuered to the Counsell but savede for the BP of Rosse for he said they would otherwise be the vndoeinge of the Duke of Norffolk and of him self & other the good freinds of this examinate and yet this examinate did not yeld thereto but tooke that packet w^{ch} was of importance & put it into his pocket and therwth a sheete a [sic: of] paper that he found open and so went to the Courte wth the male [trunk] of bookes w^{ch} he deliuered to me the lord Burghley, wthout speakeinge of any ıres and so returneinge home he was newly entreted most vehemently, by his brother & partly by Francis Bartie to let the BP of Ross haue the pacquet wherevpon this

> [examinate] being overcome wth the importunitye of his vnhappy broth^{r} yelded & yet determinede that he would not sodainely deliuer it but would vnderstand more of the matter what should be conteyned in it.[80]

Cobham's is the fullest account of this protracted episode, so full of drama for himself, and Froude and other historians are quite right in depending upon it. Of all Ross's accomplices, willing or unwilling, the baron told the story most consistent with the ascertained facts. Before analyzing it, however, one must point out that it is extremely misleading, for it gives the impression that between Baillie's appearance before Cobham, and the baron's acquiescence in his brother's request, there elapsed only a few hours. Thus Froude, giving without substantiation a specific time to the episode ("the evening of the 10th of April"), assumes that Baillie came from Dover and that Cobham failed in his duty all on the same day.[81] On the contrary, Baillie was twice at the Blackfriars, and between his visits he spent the night under guard in a private house in London. Burghley almost certainly knew this, and in condoning Cobham's deceptive statement he must have been attempting to protect his friend. Only Cobham's revealing phrase, 'when Charles the Fleming was <u>first</u> brought to him', indicates that there was more to the story than the baron told.

On 20 April Baillie wrote to Ross from the Marshalsea a long letter in which he confusedly recounted what had befallen him. In it he mentioned that, "la premiere nuict quand je suis arrivé" in London, he was taken to a house in a part of the city unfamiliar to him: "je vous asseure je ne pourrois monstrer bonnement la rûe." He was guarded throughout the night, and the next morning, leaving his trunks behind him, taken back to the Blackfriars. 'Back' is the right word, for "il estoit commandé a ceulx qui me gardoyent de me ramener le matin vers Monsieur de <u>Cobham</u>."[82] Baillie's purpose in telling the bishop all this was only to explain why he could not direct Ross to the trunk containing the drafts of the old letters; he knew that he could rely upon Bertie and Brooke to give the bishop a full account of what had happened when he went the second time to the Blackfriars. Today one wishes that Baillie had given his own version of it. It seems that, without his story, one must interpolate as best one can the night which he spent in lodgings into the sequence of events as Cobham described them.

The point at which the interpolation should be made is fairly obvious. There is something peculiar about the baron's elliptical statement that 'Randall Macklin' brought Baillie to the Lord Warden's, saw the messenger searched and the letters discovered, and then put the letters into a bag with others which he had presumably carried up from Dover, and that thereupon, as though immediately afterward, the letters were extracted again in the presence of Cobham and his brother. 'Macklin' was Rowland Macklyn, Cobham's droitsman in the Cinque Ports,[83] and Thomas Brooke, recollecting in October the time when Baillie was examined, revealed that he was the official chosen by William Crispe to convey the books to London. Brooke, according to the transcript of his examination,

> Sayethe That Rowland Meclyn gatherer of my Lde Cobhams droites brought a bouget [budget: i.e., a portmanteau] from Dover to my L Cobhams at the blacke freres in which certen bokes were.[84]

Brooke was at this time trying to convince the authorities that he knew next to nothing about the letters, but there would have been no reason for him to mislead them about Macklyn's errand. If, then, Macklyn brought the books and certain letters up from Dover, as well as escorting Baillie to the Blackfriars, it would seem likely that, Baillie having been arrested in Kent, Macklyn's responsibilities would not have ended until his prisoner had been searched in his presence by his colleagues in the London office of the Lord Warden. Once Baillie's letters were discovered, Macklyn would have put them into the case containing the other things intercepted on the coast, and turned case, books and Baillie over to the officers at the Blackfriars, thus freeing himself to return to Dover, his duty discharged. Lord Cobham did not say that he had personally supervised Baillie's reception at his house; it will presently be shown that, if he and not Macklyn had done so, it is unlikely that the fellow would have been allowed to go into lodgings in the city for the night. It can pretty well be assumed that Cobham did not meet Baillie until the day after his arrival in London, and that it was only the baron's men who received the prisoner from Macklyn and who arranged for his safe keeping and reappearance at the Blackfriars in the morning.

The letters which Macklyn had made into a bundle were left to lie in the Lord Warden's office overnight. They did not lie undisturbed. After Baillie had been

taken away, someone took the opportunity to go to Paul's Wharf and inform the Bishop of Ross of his messenger's apprehension and imminent examination. Ross admitted later to having given instructions that Cobham should be prevented from forwarding the intercepted letters to the government:

> F. Barty and Thomas Cobham wer Suters to the Lord Cobham, at this Examinate's [Ross's] Request, to get those Letters to this Examinate,

is the substance of Ross's reply to a question put to him months afterward.[85] One might think, because of a statement in William Herle's dubiously dated letter to Burghley of Monday, 9 April, that the bishop made his request directly to at least one of his two accomplices. Herle said, as though in connection with Baillie's apprehension, that "Thomas Cobham was on Tuesday night with the Bishop of Rosse, and certain other gentlemen with him." Something in Ross's own confession of 26 October, however, makes it fairly clear that no one so important as the baron's brother visited him after Baillie had been successfully searched. It was an insignificant man who came down the river to the bishop's house, and who was entrusted with an errand so weighty that it would almost certainly not have been given him had one of the principal plotters dared go to the bishop's house that night in his stead. For the man carried the intercepted letters themselves, which Bertie, perhaps without much difficulty, since he may well have been the senior of Cobham's men to whom Macklyn committed them, had removed from the Lord Warden's office. As the transcript of Ross's examination states,

> Thoriginall Pacquet was sent to the Bishop, with Robinson his Man, by Barty, to take the [copie] of it, and make the like Pacquet in [haste] and then the true Pacquett was rendrid to the Lord Cobham.[86]

The letters of course had to be returned before morning, and there was no time to make carefully innocuous forgeries to replace them, but Ross was able to read and roughly copy them before giving them back. He knew as he surrendered them to Robinson that they would cause no less trouble when Cobham examined them for having already been seen, and it was no doubt Robinson who conveyed to Bertie the bishop's orders to forestall their delivery to the government if at all possible, but at least the bishop, even if Cobham proved constant, did not have to wonder about just what was in them. One cannot be sure that this is what happened on the night between

Baillie's deprival of the letters and the baron's confrontation with them: Ross's examination gives few clues to the chronology of the events which he described: but it would seem that there is no other point in the sequence at which the bishop can have seen the letters as he said that he did.

One must ignore for a little while longer what actually happened when Cobham found that Baillie's appearance before him involved him in a cruel personal dilemma, and go on for a moment to consider how the baron dealt with the man once he had seen him. For Cobham's actions then indicate further that one has here been right to interpolate a night's events into the baron's own story. Cobham, returning from Court with the letters still in his pocket, promised his brother not to turn them over to Burghley, and then desired time to think about what he would do. Meanwhile Baillie awaited his fate. Cobham could not let him out of his control, yet he could not keep him in the Blackfriars, for the baron by then knew that his house harboured Marian agents with whom he could not allow his prisoner to converse. Nor could the baron put Baillie in gaol for his patent complicity in treason, without the man's coming to the attention of the government. He decided to restrain Baillie as though upon a triviality, under a trustworthy warder who would be ignorant of his charge's true offence but who would nevertheless keep him safe on the Lord Warden's authority until Cobham had made up his mind about what to do about the whole affair. Baillie was accordingly handed over to the porter of the Marshalsea, to be guarded, not in that open prison where there were no secrets, but in the porter's own house. Had the baron personally examined Baillie upon his arrival in London the night before, it is evident that the prisonr would not have been so carelessly treated as he had been then.

Unfortunately, despite his careful plan to hold Baillie <u>incommunicado</u>, Cobham was crossed. Baillie never spent a night at Mr. Lego's, for within hours of being taken out of Cobham's direct control he found himself a fellow prisoner of William Herle in the Marshalsea itself. Soon afterward Burghley was told that 'Charles' had come over from the Continent with a trunk full of books,

> '"and yett ignorant whatt it conteyned [<u>sic</u>]; who att his arrivall was stayed, and brought to ye Lord Cobham and examined. Which Lord findeng small cawse against hym, mynded to discharge hym, yett till he had pawsed further sent hym to on Lego's howse, ye porter of ye Marshallsea.

> to be kept there on night under payne of xl li., pretending therby as though it were som actyon against Charlles, butt ye Porter contrary to ye Lord Cobham's order brought him straight to ye Marshallsea, wheratt he [Cobham] was no les moved, than thought som grett wrong don to hym to have his prisoner committed close, butt marvaileng more whence this sodein intelligence should procede to the Cowncel, whom otherwise he had ment to have discharged affter a daye or two att th'uttermost, and being sollicited by mi Lord of Rosse" (saith Makinson [Herle's informant]) "he sent in grett chollor for ye porter, who excused he had no other place than the Marshallsea to kepe hym in saffety," and that he was ignorant how he was made close prisoner, butt by a warrant from ye Cowncell, as he hard by ye keper of ye prison.'[87]

Herle's informant, who had just visited Baillie, was no doubt slightly confused about the reasons for Cobham's rage and amazement, for the baron was not worrying about infringements of his prerogative. It was Burghley who had ordered Baillie's committal to the Marshalsea, apparently because the attempt to smuggle the Treatise into England was a crime serious enough to justify imprisonment; Cobham, having delivered the copies of the book to the Secretary earlier that day, before Baillie was handed over first to Lego and then to the keeper of the prison, would soon have been told why the fellow had been confined. As Burghley wrote later,

> About the 12th of April two men were taken at Dover coming from the Low Countries; one was a servant to an English merchant; the other was one Charles Bally, who served the bishop of Rosse; and being examined it was found that Charles had a portmanteau full of English books printed at Lorayne [sic: 'Lovayne'], and certain letters also to the bishop of Rosse. The officers of Dover sent him to Lord Cobham, then lying at Black friars, and he finding those books brought them to Lord Burghley, who, finding cause to mislike the books, for that they were the same that had been attempted to have been secretly printed at Islington by the bishop of Rosse the year before, for the which the bishop of Rosse was committed to the bishop of London, and also the books were entitled for the defence of the Queen of Scots, both for her title to this crown and for the murder of her husband Lord Darnley, and contained a great number of manifest untruths, and namely to the prejudice of her majesty's right. Whereupon Lord Burghley commanded the said Charles to be committed to the Marshalsea, there to be kept close.[88]

When in January 1571/2 Burghley set out this version of Baillie's reception in England, he knew the truth but suppressed it in order to protect Cobham. At the time, however, the Secretary obviously did not know everything, although he suspected that something was being kept back from him; Cobham's reactions to the countermanding of his orders concerning Baillie, as reported by Herle, were no doubt caused by fear of just how many of the facts his friend possessed.

Having established the likelihood that Baillie arrived in London and was searched on one day, and that neither he nor the letters which he had carried were

seen by the Lord Warden until the next, one may return to Cobham's circumstantial account of his introduction to the Ridolfi Plot and of the turmoil into which it plunged him. It will be recalled how the baron asserted that he was preparing to go to Court with the letters and the books when his brother suddenly went down on his knees to him and begged him to consider what would happen if the Secretary were given such damning evidence against Norfolk and the duke's and the bishop's accomplices, Brooke himself among them. Cobham said that he refused to consider his brother's shocking appeal and went off to Westminster with "that packet w^{ch} was of importance", that is, Baillie's letters rather than those which had been taken from the other intercepted courier, the merchant's servant; a loose sheet of paper, which seems to have been the key to Ridolfi's cipher, "le dechiphrement" which Baillie was later to be so relieved to know that the bishop had received "en sauveté", and the conveyance of which by the messenger who carried the letters themselves indicates the extent of Ridolfi's incompetence; and the trunk of books. Cobham, that is, stated, and was allowed by his friend the Secretary to state, that he behaved quite properly up to the point at which he pretended to Burghley that his only errand was to deliver the books. Francis Bertie's story corroborates his master's. Bertie was apparently not at the Blackfriars when his colleague Brooke first attempted to dissuade Cobham from exposing their conspiracy; he had direct knowledge only of what the baron set out to do after ignoring his brother's plea. When the trunk of books arrived in London, Bertie later asserted,

> my lord sent for me at the 'Blackfreres,' where I met him coming down [the waterfront] stairs, one of the men having the mail [trunk] under his arm, and my lord said to me that he 'had kaught the bird,' and told me 'whatt'; adding more that he would not for 1000 l. but it so happened, and when I asked 'whatt', he told me the mail was such that he was 'karring' it to my Lord Berley, and so willed me to tarry his return from the Court. For any packets, I saw none but one my lord pulled out of the pocket of his gown, which he carried to the Court.[89]

Thomas Brooke was of course directly involved in everything that happened on that momentous day, and his various versions of the events of the first part of it conflict sharply with his brother's. In fact, one story which he told completely exonerated Cobham of knowing anything more than what the baron informed Burghley when he went to Court. His audience was Robert Higford, Norfolk's servant, who, in

cerror of his life, confessed on 28 September that,

> upon the Apprehension of one Charles, Servaunt to the Byshoppe of Rosse, certen Letters weare taken aboute him in a Pacquet, which was directed to the Bysshope of Rosse. Mr. Thomas Cobham tolde me, that he openinge the Same founde two Letters, the one whereof was the Earle of Westmorland's Letter, and the other Rodolphe's Letter; but what became of them, or what he did with them, he told me not. Theis two Letters he said that he toke owt whiles my Lord Cobham was in talke with Charles, and so closed up the Pacquet againe; all the Pacquets weare afterwards, as he said, presently sent to the Courte: And surely I do thinke he carryed those two Letters to the Bysshoppe of Rosse, for I never harde anye thinge of them after. This I confesse I have hitherto likewise concealed, to no small Grief of my Conscience nowe.[90]

Higford was less implicated in treason than others in Norfolk's household, and once he had directed the government to the ciphers hidden at Howard House, used by him and the rest of the duke's secretariat for decoding the conspirators' criminal correspondence, he talked freely. On 1 October he answered more questions about Thomas Brooke, and this time gave a circumstantial account of Brooke's supposed theft of the letters while Cobham's back was turned. "One Daye he sent for me," said Higford, imperfectly adding an approximate date which has already been considered,

> and thus he said to me, Well, Higford, I have now payde my Price for the Duke your Master; theare is one Charles, a Man of the Bysshoppe of Rossy's, taken cumyng out of Flanders, with certen Pacquetts of Letters to his Master, and to the Frenche Ambassador; I have provided well ynowghe that theare shall no Hurte, I thinke, fall by it: How so, said I. Marye, said he, whiles my Lord my Brother was examininge of the said Charles, I stale awaye the Letters that laye in a Wyndowe, and opened the Pacquett that was to the Bysshoppe of Rosse, wherin I founde a Letter of my Lord of Westmoreland's, and a Letter of Rodolphe's, bothe which I toke owt, closed up the Pacquet againe, and so laide it wheare I found it; yf I have done your Master good, let him thanke me for it. Well, quoth I, I shall let my Lord understand thus muche; but I do not know that he hathe anye thinge to do with my Lord of Westmorland, or els with Rodolphe. And I assure your Lordships, of my Faithe and Conscience, I never knew, nor do yett know, that my Lord had anye Dealings with either of them, whereunto I was privie. This is the only thinge that I am able to charge him [Brooke] with, other then, that as himselfe hathe confessed to me, that he hath byne a Dealer with the Bysshoppe of Rosse, but to what End I know not; for sure I am, he had never anye thinge to do theare for my Lord. And as, in my most humble Submission, I have alreadye said, that I thinke he carryed the said two Letters to the Bysshoppe of Rosse, so I remaine still of that Minde, thowgh I can not further charge him therein then by myne owne Conjecture.[91]

Several things are apparent in this statement. One is that Higford was clinging solely to his defence, that is, his essential ignorance of Norfolk's plans. Another is that he was thought by Brooke to know nothing of the true destination of Baillie's

packets, for he was told that one was meant for La Mothe-Fénélon, a story invented by Ross after Baillie's arrival in England; another, and the most important feature of Higford's account, is Brooke's obvious desire to make Norfolk feel that he had saved him. Brooke, it will be remembered, had got £ 40 by the duke's means three months before; that debt, at least, Brooke intimated to Higford, had been wiped out by his theft of Baillie's letters.

The most curious aspect of Brooke's boast that he had deceived his brother, however, is that his accomplice Bertie substantiated his story. On 13 October Higford, examined anew, told the Council

> that Francis Bartye tolde this Examinate, in my Lord Cobham's Galerye here in London, that Thomas Cobham had done such a Dede as he could not doe a better; for, sayd he, he had taken away two Letters out of a Pacquet brought over by Charles Baylie, and so handled yt that my Lord Cobham did not know it.[92]

As late as 28 February 1571/2, long after Cobham had made his own confession and Burghley been satisfied that there was nothing significant still to be learned about the whole affair, Higford was still swearing to his stories about his conversations with Brooke and Bertie. At that time he even gave a detailed account of the occasion on which Bertie had talked with him. It was in August, four months after the event and only a fortnight before Norfolk's arrest marked the beginning of the end for the conspirators. "A litle before Barthelmew tyde last," said Higford,

> I beinge wth my Lo. Cobhm̃ at his howse in the black ffryers, & talkinge wth his Lo: in the matter of the Landes in variance betwene my Lo. my late m^{r} and him, havinge occasion to stand a parte a while, in meane tyme that my Ladye Cobhm̃ (as I do remember) was talkinge wth my said Lo. her husband, m^{r} Bartie cumynge then into the gallerye wth her, the saide m^{r} Bartie came to me, & said, How saye y^{u} by this, that for those l̃res that Thom̃s Cobhm̃ conveyed awaye, my Lo. Cobhm̃ is yet never the wyser for it.[93]

Bertie of course knew that the letters had not been stolen: he and Brooke had worked hard before persuading Cobham to turn them over to Ross rather than to the government: he deserved Norfolk's gratitude as much as Brooke did. Yet Bertie let Higford think that the duke owed everything to the other man. Whether Norfolk would have known by Ross that this was not so does not matter: evidently both of the traitors at the Blackfriars thought that Higford was not sufficiently trusted by his master to be told very much, and this may, in the case of Baillie's exposure

at least, may have been so. Whatever Bertie's reason was for lying, the story which he made Higford think was true would have been useful in exonerating Lord Cobham had the baron not admitted his own guilt. Again, however, one must ask why Bertie should have protected his master. That he did so is clear, not only in conversation with Higford but later, when he confessed to the authorities that he had acted as intermediary between Cobham and Norfolk in the tense months which elapsed between Baillie's coming and the final exposure of the conspiracy. Describing his master's message to the duke on one occasion during that summer, Bertie made Cobham appear as an earnest and loyal friend both to Norfolk and the state, one who had heard rumours of the duke's subversive activities and who urged him not to be such a fool as to forfeit his favour with the queen by dabbling in such matters.[94] Perhaps Bertie had decided, even before there seemed to be any danger that the Ridolfi Plot would fail, that if Thomas Brooke wanted to appear an even worse villain than he was, then Bertie would not restrain him, but take the opportunity to let it be known that Cobham himself was innocent. The baron might always be able to help a servant in trouble.

If Thomas Brooke lied about what really happened to the letters brought by Baillie, he stopped saying that he had stolen them as soon as he was taken into custody in September. In October he wrote to the Council, denying that he had ever told Higford any such story. A confession which Brooke seems already to have made by this time, and to which he refers in his letter, has been lost. "I most humblye praye your Honors," he wrote on 2 October,

> to stande my good and gracious Lords, and to account of my dewtifull Desire to repaire my former Life, and not of my Speechs to anye utterred to shadow my Doings: My Words to Hieckforde imported no furder Sense than I have confessed to your Honors (as neere as I can remembre) the Tyme so long passed. I humblye crave Pardon to use that Addition; but suerr I am, I never named either Therle of Westmerland's or Ridolphi's Letters, nor knewe of anye sutch Letters, nor came neere the Mallet [trunk], to do any sutch Thing. I thought itt had nott byne hidden to my Lord of Bourghley, that the taking of the Mallet was by my Means; for both to Sir Henrye Knevill, and to my Cosine Pelham, I imparted my Doings therein.

What trunk it was that Brooke said he took it is impossible to establish, nor can the Pelham whom he calls cousin be identified.[95] "The Ciphres written by the D. of Norffolk in the back of Graftons Chronicles" which Burghley's agents found in Howard

House included symbols for both a 'Pellam' and for Sir Henry Neville, but it cannot be deduced from Pelham's being mentioned in Norfolk's coded correspondence that he was a conspirator. Neville, for instance, the duke's custodian, was faithful to the government, yet there was a cipher for him.[96] The question of the 'mallet' is perplexing, but it can hardly have arisen from the events at the Blackfriars on the day that Baillie was brought before Cobham there. Brooke did not take the trunk of books mentioned in connection with what happened then; the baron certainly carried it himself to Court.

Brooke concluded his letter of 2 October with a promise:

> suerr, my good Lords, iff there be anye thing demanded off me by your Honors, what now I have not in Memorie, most plainly and dewtifullye, being examined, I will reveile itt. Wherefore, iff itt maye like your Honors to send me Articles [formal questions], I will so trewlye aunsweer, as I hoop your Honors shall have Occasion to continew, or rather encreass your pitiefull Goodness commenced towards me.[97]

It is not likely that the Councillors were taken in by Brooke's asseverations that he meant to reform. Since he denied that Higford was telling the truth, however, they gave him the chance to tell his version of the story. What Brooke replied to the questions put to him coincided with his brother's account in only one respect. Asked "What he knoweth of y^{e} pacq. of ỉres brought by Charles bally afor Ester", Brooke related how the trunk of books had been brought up from Dover by Rowland Macklyn and seized by Cobham for delivery to Burghley; he insisted, however, that he could "not tell that any ỉres were in the bouget,

> & Saithe that the L Cobham said that Meclyn had also brought a pacqet of ỉres whiche the lord Cobham Sayd he wold deliv^{r} to the lordes of the Coũsell & went to the Court so to doe & more he can not tell of those ỉres[98]

Brooke could hardly have done otherwise than to state that his brother had gone off to see Burghley on the day of Baillie's examination. Having made such a denial of knowledge of the letters, however, and by thus insinuating that Cobham was responsible for their failure to reach the Secretary, Brooke could plead ignorance to another question. "How knew he y^{t} their were in those pacquettes ỉres fro y^{e} Coũtes of Northũb^{r}land y^{e} Earle of westm^{r}land and Rydolfi or any of them"? he was asked. With his reply that "he knewe of no suche letter^{s} as be tould in that article," his account diverges sharply from Cobham's. He had already asserted that,

although he had seen Baillie at the Blackfriars, "he thynks also he spake not with hym, Rowland Macklyn went in to the chamber with the said Charles but he & yong Thomas stod without."[99] Denying all conversation with Baillie, and even his presence in Cobham's office when the prisoner was questioned, Brooke thus effectively called his brother a liar. It cannot definitely be established that the man who Brooke said remained outside with him during the interview was another brother, Thomas the younger, then about to have his thirty-second birthday and therefore Brooke's junior by five years. Yet since this other Thomas appears on two other occasions in 1571, having been lost from sight since 1558 and never being seen again, there is a probability that he was at the Blackfriars that day.[100] He does not seem to have been involved in the troubles of his elder brothers, and was not, so far as one can discover, called upon by the authorities to say which of them was telling the truth about who was present when Cobham examined Baillie.

Brooke was certainly the one who lied when asked, on 18 October,

> What conference hade you w^{t} the Bysshoppe [of] Rosse, when, and to what end, or w^{t} any other touchȳge y^{e} Scotyshe Queene;

he replied that, "for a Suretye, he was never with the byshoppe of Rosse in his life nor ev^{r} spoke with him." There is too much evidence to the contrary, from too many people, to allow one to entertain for a moment the idea that Brooke did not know Ross. Brooke seems also to have played false when, sticking to his story that he knew nothing about the letters found on Baillie but that which the baron had told him, he explained away his brother's account of the plea which Brooke had made to him on behalf of Norfolk. He was asked, in connection with the packet of letters,

> Whath^{r} did you nott then saye vnto hym That if it were deliu^{r}ed that the Duke of norff & diu^{r}s others would be vndone thereby & what moved you so to praye or thinck.

His reply was

> that he dothe remēber he sayd to the Lord Cobham that the bokes taken might hinder the Duke, but did not say that the Duke shuld be vndone by shewinge of the letters or any suche thing.

Presumably there was no witness to the brothers' excited conversation that April day; it is the word of one against the other. Yet Cobham's rings true, while Brooke's assertion that it was the books, not the letters, which worried him is illogical.

The Treatise could not have done much, if any, harm to Norfolk; certainly Brooke would not have confessed his own complicity in treason simply to keep the baron from letting Burghley know that the book had been smuggled into England. Only the fear that Ridolfi's indiscreet messages would reach the government can have driven Brooke to his knees before his brother. But then, Brooke denied that the scene in the Lord Warden's office had been so dramatic. "What moved you on yo^{r} knees to make intercession to the L Cobhm̃ yo^{r} brother"? he was asked. Indignantly he said that "he did not knell to the Lde Cobhã nor never made suche sute or request." The examiners did not press him further. Evidently they regarded him as incorrigible, for there is no evidence that he was ever questioned again. One is once more left with a bald assertion from him that Cobham was a liar, and one can only choose between their conflicting statements on the basis of what one knows of them. Perhaps Brooke did not actually abase himself before his brother, but certainly something beyond the mere discovery of contraband books must have put Cobham into the agitation in which he went to Court that day. The 'whatt' which he confided to Francis Bertie when they met on Blackfriars Stairs, that first 'whatt' which Cobham would not have had happen for £ 1,000, can seemingly only have been Brooke's wretched admission that he had drawn their family into treason.

In recapitulation, then, one may probably accept Cobham's story in its essentials: he went off to Burghley with both letters and books but, weakening when he considered what would happen to his brother and what infamy would be brought upon his whole house if Burghley got the letters, he returned home without delivering them. Brooke renewed his pleas and, reinforced by Bertie, brought Cobham to relent. One must accept with reservation Cobham's claim that he yielded only to prolonged and intense importunity; he may just as well have decided to handle the matter as best he could, and in his own way, at the time when he made up his mind a few hours earlier to hold back the letters from Burghley. One cannot discover the truth of his real conduct that evening. What one must consider is what Cobham said that he did when he had made his decision to sacrifice his integrity to the public honour of his family and the preservation of his brother and God knew what elements among his friends and acquaintances.

According to Cobham, he took some time to "vnderstand more of the matter;" then, "at length as he thinketh the next daye", he sent off the packet to the Bishop of Ross. This seems indeed to be true, but once again the baron has left out an important stage in the proceedings. For the Bishop of Ross confessed that, when he "desired the Pacquet,

> the Lord Cobham seyd, If there be any Letters in the Pacquet concerning the Queene my Mistris, or hir Estat, he wold not deliver them to hym, nor no other, but to hir Majesty only; but if it were but for small Maters of [Money] or Relief of those which were beyond the Seas, and now in Misery, he wold be glad to help them.[101]

This statement, made almost a fortnight after Cobham had told his own story and omitted any mention of what might have been an extenuating circumstance in the case against him, aroused the suspicions of the authorities. "When the Lord Cobham toulde youe," they asked the bishop again,

> that he would not delyver the Paquet of Letters ... if there were any thinge therein concerning the Queene's Majesty, or hir Estate, but if thei were for small Matters of Money, or Relief of those that were beyonde the Seas, and now in Misyrye, he would be glad to help; whome named he, of those beyonde the Seas, and whome ment he therebye.[102]

Ross reiterated his statement, expanding it only slightly:

> When the Lord Cobham conferred with this Examinate about the Deliverye of the Paquet of Letters, and said he wold not deliver yt if yt concerned the Quene; he sayd further, that if the Letters did but concerne the small Matters of Moneye, or Relief of those beyonde the Seas, and now in Misyrye, he wold be glad to help, and named Therle of Westmerland, and his Freinds to be of those whome he wold be glad so to help, sayinge, that he was of Kinne to Therle.[103]

The fugitive Westmorland was only a distant cousin of Cobham's and from no one but Ross does one hear that the baron felt pity for his condition. Nor does one find anyone but the bishop attributing such naïveté to Cobham. One thus considers Ross's words only after granting that they may be merely a fabrication designed rather to protect Cobham, to what end one can only guess, than to testify to the baron's good sense.

Aware, then, of the objections to treating the bishop's testimony seriously, one may say that the important thing about it is its emphatic suggestion that Cobham saw Ross before the day on which he actually turned over the letters to him, or that he at least conferred with the bishop by means of a go-between. The baron did not admit to such conference in his own confession. It probably took place on

the evening of the day on which he had taken the trunk to Burghley and withheld the letters, and while the Secretary may have been told about it when Cobham made his statement to him, both men would have realized how difficult it would have been to account for it to the queen and the other Councillors. For Cobham, having already admitted that he knew when he went to Court that day that the letters could destroy Norfolk, could hardly have claimed that a few hours later he honestly thought that they concerned no more than the financial problems of the English exiles. Nor would the queen have been impressed by the baron's compassionate interest in Westmorland, if she learned of it only by also learning that Cobham was fool enough to suppose that, once he had turned the letters over to Ross, he would be able to retrieve the more significant of them. By agreeing to let the bishop have the letters, Cobham lost all control over them; the conditions which he imposed upon Ross in that preparatory conference served only to protect him from immediate exposure as an accomplice in treason. It was far better for the baron, in drawing up his statement with Burghley in October, to admit only to having given Ross what should have been turned over to the government; the offence was grave enough without adding to it details of how it came to be committed.

Before Cobham met Ross and supervised the bishop's examination of the letters, two things happened. Burghley, as has already been related, committed Baillie to the Marshalsea, and then he wrote to Cobham. As the baron's confession records, the Secretary told

> that he heard there were also certaine pacquets of Ires brought w^th^ the bookes & desired that they might be also sent to him.

From whom Burghley learned that Baillie had brought over letters as well as books does not appear; it was not until Herle wrote his third letter from the Marshalsea concerning the messenger that he reported to Burghley that Baillie had carried "sundry writings that are dangerous, as he hears, and intercepted by Lord Cobham".[104] This message is dated 11 April, two days after Herle narrated at length his conversation with Baillie's visitor, and how long after he wrote his undated letter referring to Baillie's committal the night before it cannot be established. Burghley's informant at the precise time that Baillie was taken away from his private warder and given over to the keeper of the Marshalsea must have been someone other

than Herle. There may indeed have been no informant: perhaps Burghley was honest when he stated later that he merely suspected, did not know, that more than books had been intercepted. However the Secretary was made to ask about the letters, he demanded them of Cobham on the very day that the baron said that he gave them to Ross: that is, in Cobham's own words, "the day after that he [Burghley] had the bookes". Thus, when Cobham saw the bishop, it was already imperative that the government be given something which it could be made to believe was the packet which Baillie had brought over.

One may now take up Cobham's confession at the point at which it was broken off earlier, and follow him to his rendezvous with the bishop. He seems to have gone first to the great house, "large of roomes, fayre courts and garden plottes", known as Bevis Marks and owned by Lady Cobham's relative, Thomas Heneage, and then on down the street beside London wall to Francis Bertie's place at St. Mary Axe.[105] Anyone who might have been watching Cobham's journey into Aldgate would have thought that he was going only to see his friend Heneage; the baron did not even take the risk of carrying the letters with him. Resuming his statement after the point at which he stated that he had considered 'the matter' overnight, one reads:

> And so at length as he thinketh the next daye he sealed the pacquet w^th^ his owne seale of armes & deliu^r^ed it to Francisce Berty to be carryed to the BP of Rosses w^th^ condicon that the BP of Rosse should not open it but in the presence of this examinate. And so it was accorded that the BP of Rosse should come to Barties howse. And this examinate for that purpose went to M^r^ Hennages howse because it was nere Barties. And when the BP was come to Bartyes This examinate there met w^th^ him. And there the BP gaue him great thanckes. And opened the pacquet, where the BP found & shewed to him [Letters] in Ciphre from the lady of Northumberland to the B. and from thearle of Westmerland to a Scott named the lord Gartles who was then in London w^ch^ when the BP did see he saide Surely if these ℔res from the Earle of Westmerland had bene taken Gartlesse would haue bene hanged. There were also ℔res from [Thomas] Jenny And S^r^ fr. English [Francis Englefield] and ℔res superscribed in ciphre w^ch^ the BP oft said were for the Spanish Amb^r^ and that he would first look in them ere they shpuld be deliuered. And there were other ℔res from Ridolphi in Ciphre w^ch^ the BP did w^th^drawe aside sayeinge These I cannot deciphre w^ch^ this examinate thinketh were the lres of most moment, and those that were sent to the Duke of Norffolk. ffurdermore he saieth that the lord Burghley wrote to this examinate the day after that he had the bookes that he heard there were also certaine pacquets of ℔res brought w^th^ the bookes & desired that they might be also sent to him. Wherevpon was devised that an other pacquet was conterfayted by the BP of Rosse and so by the lord Cobham sent to the lord Burghley conteyneinge certaine ℔res of no moment.[106]

Thomas Brooke does not seem to have been present when Ross opened the letters in

front of Cobham: the bishop stated emphatically that "at the openyng of those Letters was F. Barty, and the Lord Cobham:"[107] so that Brooke was able to reply, without demonstrably lying, that he could "saye nothinge" to the question put to him in October,

> Did he not know y^{t} the L. Cobham did delyver y^{e} same [the packet] to frãcise barty, sealed vpp w^{t} his seale of armes to kepe vntill y^{e} B. shuld receave the same in y^{e} L. Cobhãs sight at frãc. bartyes howss.[108]

Brooke must have been told of the conveyance of the letters to Ross, but he had evidently been kept by his brother from first-hand knowledge of the transaction.

Free of the complications which Brooke's prevarication always introduce into the story of the Ridolfi Plot, one may accept Cobham's account of his meeting with Ross as true enough. Besides him, only the bishop himself gave a version of it which survives (Bertie's examination concerning it has apparently been lost),[109] and Ross's testimony corroborates the baron's. Ross had of course read the letters before Cobham brought them to him, and therefore knew exactly what they were. The letters which he claimed to be unable to decipher and which Cobham rightly assumed or knew to be from Ridolfi, Ross later described as "a Letter written to the Duke of Norfolk, entitlid 40; and an other entitlid 30, that is the Lord Lumley", one to himself, and others "to the Spanish Embassador, and to the Quene of Scotts: Thes cam from Ridolphi." The letters from the refugees Ross truthfully accounted for to Cobham.[110]

Where Ross's confession is useful is in its explanation of how Burghley's demands to have the letters were met. It had first been agreed that the government, if they learned that Baillie had carried over more than books from the Continent, should be told by the French ambassador that the letters were meant for him. Ross does not say when this plan "was devisid emongs them", but it was probably drawn up the night before Cobham's meeting with the bishop at Bertie's house: when, that is, the baron was first in touch with Ross about how it could be contrived that he turn over the letters without being detected. The conspirators must indeed have been desperate if they were willing to take La Mothe-Fénélon into their confidence, since Ridolfi had originally intended that France should know nothing of his plot. According to Ross, however, it was decided "that the French Ambassador should say

they were his Pacquet", and Cobham, too, in connection with another point in his statement to Burghley, stated

> that the B^p of Rosse had moued the French Amb^r that he should take vpon him that the ires brought by Charles were directede to him. And so he was priuye to the matter howe the B^p of Rosse had the pacquet that Charles brought ouer w^th him.

Francis Bertie, in fact, was as late as 17 October still trying to cover up his knowledge of the more intimate details of the affair by telling the Council that he had heard Cobham say of the packets of letters that he had delivered them himself, "'and as I remember one was to the Frenshe imbasdor, thother to the bishop of Ros.'"[111] This was also the story which Robert Higford said was given him by Thomas Brooke.[112]

After having taken La Mothe-Fénélon into his confidence, however, Ross learned from Cobham on the day that he received the letters from the baron that Burghley was already demanding them. He and Bertie then decided to make up a bogus set and give them to Cobham for delivery to the Secretary. As Ross confessed,

> when they were earnestly demandid by the Lord Burley, he, and F. Barty, fownde the Meanes to get one old Letter from the Scots Quene to the Spanish Ambassador, and two from . . . . to the French Ambassador, and one sent from the Italian [Ridolfi], left here by the Marquess Vitelli, to the Scots Quene, or this Examinate; all old Letters, to make therby a lyke Pacquet as the true Pacquet was, which was sent to the Lord Burley, to content hym therwith, as though he had had the true Pacquet.[113]

Should Burghley not have been 'contented', "if Fault had bene fownde, the true Pacquet had bene deliverid by the Lord Cobham."

Thus Cobham's two-day ordeal came to an end. Burghley did not at once tumble to the fact that he had been deceived, and the letters were distributed to their intended recipients. As the Secretary wrote later, protecting Cobham as he did so but unable quite to evade the question of how he had been tricked, it was Charles Baillie's correspondence with the bishop from the Marshalsea which at last gave the government to understand what had really happened.

> Whereof knowledge being had, the same was suffered, and at the same time also a secretary of the Spanish ambassador and one or two of the bishop of Rosse's men were known to resort to him in the night by stealth. Whereupon suspicion was then conceived that Charles had some greater matter in charge than the bringing of the said books; and so, after that Charles had sent four or five small letters to the bishop and had received as many or more -- all which were written in cipher -- it was thought good suddenly to attach Charles and cause him to decipher

> those letters, for that as they passed, there were true copies kept of some of them. In the end, after much ado with Charles, an alphabet was gotten, and about the week after Easter it was perceived by those letters that Charles had brought over certain packets of letters from Rydolphe, the Earl of Westmorland, the Countess of Northumberland, and others, as appeared by the letters betwixt Charles and the bishop, and how the bishop had with much difficulty received those letters of Rydolph, and how Lord Burghley was abused by having a wrong packet of forged letters delivered to him instead of Rydolphe's.[114]

For a time, then, Cobham was safe. Even when, probably within a week or so, Burghley learned that he had been tricked and therefore must have realized that it was Cobham who had made it possible for him to be so, the baron was not aware that he had been found out. It took time to browbeat, rack and finally surprise Baillie into confessing what he knew, and this turned out to be fairly little. He could only say that a conspiracy was afoot to invade England and depose the queen; he was vague about details, even vaguer than Ridolfi had been in making his plans. Baillie knew that the letters which he had brought from the projector of the plot were addressed to two noblemen, but he could not say who '40' and '30' were. Ross of course knew all, but he held out, even after intensive questioning and confinement at the Bishop of Ely's. It took months for Burghley to identify Norfolk and Lumley with enough certainty to begin proper investigations. Thus, for the rest of the spring and for much of the summer of 1571, Cobham seems to have thought that his deception had gone undetected. They were anxious months.

The first fright which the baron got after his treasonable interview with the bishop must have shown him how deeply immeshed in danger he really was. From Rome letters were sent to Norfolk and the Queen of Scots in May;[115] written by Pope Pius in accord with the urgings of Ridolfi, they somehow reached England and were deciphered by Ross's secretary, John Cuthbert. The government was watching Cuthbert, but it can hardly have known at the time that it was he "who deciphered the Pope's letters,"[116] or, indeed, that there were such messages. Something, however, made Burghley decide to call Cuthbert in for questioning, and it was then that Cobham was again forced to frustrate the Secretary's purposes. The Lord Warden was, apparently, never charged with having let the pope's letters pass into England, but Cuthbert had been used by Ross to decipher Baillie's post[117] and Cobham knew that it was to his own advantage as much as to Ross's that the interpreter should not be taken. He therefore readily acceded to a hastily contrived plan to get

Cuthbert out of London. As Cobham confessed to Burghley on 14 October,

> When Cuthbert was sent for by the lord Burghley he heard that he was conueyed to the french Amb^rs howse and w^thin a while after came to this examinate the French Amb^rs Steward of howshold & openly requyred a pas port fr one to passe ouer Seas. To which this exa[illegible]ate did assent And then the Steward comeinge nerer to this examinate did rounde him in his eare sayeing that the French Amb^r doubtinge that his howse should be searched for Cuthbert required w^t [sic: w^tall?] that he would devise howe he might be had thence to this examinates howse. And therevpon it was that this examinate did first send his Sister in law Tho. Cob. wife to the Duke of Norff. to procure that Cuthbert might be conueyed to some place secretly.[118]

One is apparently to understand Cobham to mean that he sent Catherine Brooke to the duke to arrange for Cuthbert's concealment until the fellow could be given a means to use his passport. Robert Higford later told how Norfolk had said to him, "when privie Serche was made" for Cuthbert, "that he had conveyed him into a Close Corner, whare he shoulde hardly be founde; Marye, into what Place he tolde me not."[119]

The curious thing about the Cuthbert affair is that, long after the rest of the Ridolfi Plot had been discovered, the interpreter was still at large: Burghley received inconclusive reports of his whereabouts as late as February and March 1571/2.[120] Baffled, the Secretary doubted that Cobham had told him all that he knew of the way in which Cuthbert had eluded the authorities back in April. Apparently the baron, when he was dictating his confession, gave his friend some supplementary information, suggesting that his brother had been instrumental in conveying the fellow into France, perhaps later in the year. Thomas Brooke denied any knowledge of the affair, replying unhelpfully to three questions put to him four days after Cobham had talked with Burghley, He was asked:

> Did he not know y^t his wiff carryed a messadg frõ y^e L Cobhã to cawse Cuthb^t y^e B. of Rosses s^rvaunt to be cõveyed awey or hydd.
> Did he not here y^t y^e sayd Cuthb^t was sought for, and y^t he was firste hydd in y^e fr. ãbassadors howss.
> Was he not p^rve of late tyme to y^e Cõveyãce of y^e sayd Cuthb^t awey to pass beyõd y^e seas and that vnder y^e Collor and name of an other.

To the question about his wife's part in the business, Brooke said that he knew "of no suche message as ys ment"; he admitted only to having heard a rumour that "the busshop of Rosses secretay^rie was taken," swearing that he knew no more; he emphati-

cally denied that he

> was priuey to the conveyinge of Cutbert out of the Realm or to any place ells nor evr Sawe hi.[121]

The next day Burghley had to write to Sir Thomas Smith that Cobham had said that he understood Cuthbert to have been "conveyed into France by means of his brother, but whether Cobham is himself abused or means to 'disguise' with him, he knows not".[122]

Cobham probably did not know what happened to Cuthbert once he had done what he could to help him escape. Robert Higford, his knowledge imperfect as always yet interesting, told later how anxious for news of Cuthbert Cobham was throughout the spring and summer. Higford had a legitimate reason for visiting the Blackfriars, since his master and the baron were disputing a piece of land which had come to the duke with his second wife, the daughter of Henry VIII's infamous Lord Chancellor Audley. What the property was, or why Cobham had a claim upon it, does not appear: both George Lord Cobham and Audley had profitted from the dissolution of the monasteries, and it is conceivable that the elder Cobham and his heirs had some reversionary right to one of Audley's estates, since the Lord Chancellor had died without a male heir. Higford's account of his visits to Cobham may here be quoted in full, both as a concluding comment upon the baron's part in the Cuthbert affair and as an indication of the nervous interest which Cobham took in Norfolk's career after they had become accomplices in the Ridolfi Plot. "I have repaired divers Tymes to my Lord Cobham, at his Howse in Black Fryers," stated Higford on 1 October,

> first towchinge a Peice of Land, that somtymes was the Lord Awdeley's, and now in some Difference betwene my Lord my Master, and his Lordship; wherein my Lord Cobham's Request was, that it might please my Lord, that their learned Councell on bothe Sides might heare and end the Matter betwene them; wherewithall my Lord my Master was verie well contented also, as Mr. Hasset [Norfolk's surveyor] can best tell. Afterwards my Lord Cobham wolde divers Tymes send for me, as well to heare of my Lord my Master his Healthe, as also of the Forwardnes of his Libertie; beinge, as it showlde seme, verrye glad to understand bothe of the one, and the other. Marye, whensoever I came to him, he wolde be inquisitive of me, wheither my Lord had anye Dealings with anye of the Ambassadors; and I wolde alwayes answeare him that I knew not. Then would he saye, Let him take heade of it; for surely if he do, they will in the End deceive him. Now, after the Apprehension of Charles, and the committinge of him to the Marshalsey (whither I thinke he was first sent before he came to the Tower) my Lord Cobham could not be in Rest till he had spoken with me,

and therefore sent for me. When I came to him, he asked me whether I knew one Cuthbert, the Bysshoppe of Rosse his Man: I tolde him no, I never sawe him. Well, saide he, he hathe byne serched for, and can not be founde; let my Lord your Master take hede (if ever he had to deale with the Bysshoppe of Rosse) that Cuthberd be not founde, for then he will disclose all; I do heare that he is a timerous Fellowe. Well, my Lord, said I, you shall not neade to doubt that. After this my Lord my Master sent me to Cobham-Hall (a Fortnight or three Wykes before Barthelmewtide) to his Lordship, wheare I lay one Night. The Cause why I went thither was only bycause my Lord Cobham sent me Worde, that he wolde fayne speake with me. When I came thither, he asked me what Newes my Lord had from Courte: I tolde him, that towchinge his owne Case, he remayned as he did, neither better nor worse, for owght I could heare. Then I tolde him, as my Lord bad me, that they weare so busye at Courte aboute Offices, as he thowght his Cause coulde not yet be well remembred; for my Lord of Leicestre is like to be Lord Steward of Howseholde, my Lord of Sussex Lord Privie Seale, my Lord Burley Lord Treasurer; and one theare was mentiond to be Master of the Quene's Majestie's Horse, whose Name I do not now remembre, unlesse it weare Sir Harrye Sydney. In the End of this Talke he asked me againe, if I hearde anye thinge of Cuthberd, wheither he was taken or not: I answeared, that I harde nothinge of him. Well, quothe he, it stands my Lord upon, I feare, to see well to it. And this was the Substance of our Talke at that Tyme, ending with his hartie Comendations to my Lord; for in the Morninge I was gone by the Breake of Daye. Sythens this, at Barthelmew-tyde last, when his Lordship was heare in London, I was sent to him from my Lord to see him; wheare in his Gallerye at the Black Fryers, he had such common Talke with me of my Lord, and of his Cause, as commonly he used before; and in the End enquired of me againe, wheither I knew what was become of Cuthberd: To whom I answeared, that in good Faithe I knew not, but I doubted not but he was saffe ynowgh. In the End he wounde up his Talke, and said, that it behoved my Lord to see he weare so. And sithens that Tyme I neither sawe, nor spake with his Lordship.[123]

The 'cause' to which Higford often referred was a private suit of Norfolk's to the queen, who, although she knew of the threat to her Crown and herself, was so far from suspecting the duke that summer that she spent some time with him at his house at Audley End late in August. Yet both Higford and Cobham knew that Norfolk was involved in bigger things, and it is the short statement of which the preceding account is merely an expansion which indicates best how the two men felt about the duke's dangerous enterprise. Cobham, Higford had said three days before making his lengthy confession,

> was desierous to heare often of my Lord's State of Healthe, and Proceadinge of his Cause at Courte (beinge one, as I toke him to be, a Favorer also of my Lord's Case, and the Quene of Scottes) wolde manye Tymes saye unto me, that it behoved my Lord to feare the takinge of Cuthbert, for upon him rested my Lord's utter Undoinge, meaning that if he weare apprehended, he might disclose all: But, to saye Truthe, he alwayes verye wisely advised my Lord, by me, to take heade that he dealte not with any Ambassador or Scottesman, for they wolde in the End deceave him.[124]

Cobham evidently had no illusions about the folly of deserting Burghley for Ross, de Spes and La Mothe-Fénélon. His part in Cuthbert's escape seems to have been the last overt connection which the baron made with the conspirators, and afterward he returned to the queen's service, even drawing his traitorous brother into employment under the Crown. Yet there was nothing to do to ensure that Norfolk, Brooke and the other Ridolfians would behave with the prudence which he himself used; he went about the ordinary business of his life in extraordinary isolation and fear, surely knowing that what he had done in April could not remain hidden forever.

Outwardly Cobham's routine of home and office, Court and Parliament, continued as before. The Bishop of Ross had helped to avert suspicion from the baron by writing Burghley an arrogant letter on 16 April, in which he asked the Secretary

> most 'hartly' to further me to recover the packet taken at Dover, which, as I understand, has been taken by my Lord Cobham's servants, It is not the first time that those who bring anything to me have been so narrowly shifted by my lord's deputies at his command. Where it proceeds from, I cannot judge, for I cannot believe he has any such commands from the Council; and, therefore, it appears to be done as much for malice borne to my mistress' cause as for duty to his own mistress.[125]

It was a daring stroke, and may well have fooled Burghley for a time. A week after it was written, on St. George's Day, Cobham and the Secretary were linked together by six of their most important colleagues, when Leicester, Sussex, Bedford, Hunsdon, Clinton and Howard of Effingham nominated both men to the Order of the Garter.[126] Then, on 26 April according to Burghley's journal, "Charles Ballys Wrytings to the Bp. of Ross [were] taken,"[127] and thereafter the Secretary learned that Cobham could not be trusted. The show of friendship which the two men maintained during the following months must have required a good deal of effort on both sides.

Parliament was of course still in session, and on 3 May Cobham was appointed to a committee to study an insignificant religious bill "touching Delapidations [sic] by Ecclesiastical persons".[128] No more is heard of this measure, but on 9 May the baron was included in a group which considered a far more important bill, With Burghley, Sussex, Huntingdon and Bedford, as well as the undetected traitor Lumley

and other Catholic peers, Cobham received the draft of "the Bill for coming to Church and receiving the Communion".[129] This measure epitomized the attitude of Elizabeth's third Parliament toward the Catholic threat. Promoted by bishops, Councillors and Puritan Commoners, it was designed not only to force every Englishman to attend church or suffer a stiffer fine than had ever before been imposed, but also to contravene the queen's earlier promise to assure freedom of conscience by insisting that everyone take the sacrament. Introduced at the very beginning of the session, hotly debated and often revised, the bill had already received the third reading in the Commons and the second in the Lords when it was turned over to Burghley, Cobham and their colleagues. The committee endorsed it and returned it to the House, perhaps after reinserting in it a proviso which exempted gentlemen owning private chapels from compulsory attendance at public worship; no record remains to show whether the proviso, which had been earlier debated and then deleted in the Lower House, was added in committee or in the debate attendant upon the third reading before the Lords. In any event, the bill got the requisite third hearing and was passed with only four dissenting voices, and the amendments which it contained when it was returned to the Commons were not serious enough to prevent the Lower House from agreeing with the Lords formally to 'conclude' it on 25 May. Only the queen's signature was needed to make it unlawful for an Englishman to live without receiving the communion at least once a year from the hands of an Anglican priest. Elizabeth refused to sign. She imposed her veto upon the popular bill, as Sir John Neale says,

> in defiance of her advisers: a striking illustration of personal monarchy. Tolerance was undoubtedly her motive. She refused to go back on her liberal declaration of 1570; she would open no window into men's souls.[130]

On 29 May Parliament was dissolved.

Before Cobham went down to Kent he seems to have made sure that his brother Thomas was given a job of work to do which might keep him out of trouble for a few months. On 5 May a news-letter from Antwerp recorded that Queen Elizabeth had

> sent the brother of Milord Cubam [Cobham], who is her admiral, to take the Bastard of Brederode, an exile from these countries, and chief of the Huguenots that did so much damage by sea, and that the Bastard had been brought prisoner into the port of Jours [Dover] in England with eight others his chief accomplices.[131]

The reporter was, like so many other Continental observers of English affairs, slightly wrong about Cobham's position: it was Clinton, not he, who was the queen's admiral: but certainly Cobham had much maritime authority, and he may well have decided to get for his piratical brother a commission which would allow Brooke to turn some of his knowledge of the sea to good use. Brederode was a privateer operating under de la Marck, the grandiose pirate chief who claimed to be the rebel Prince of Orange's admiral. In 1569 Elizabeth had herself granted Brederode letters of marque,[132] but the presence of unruly privateers in the queen's ports became increasingly embarrassing when Brederode's men turned freebooters and attacked the German shipping of towns with which Elizabeth traded during the embargo on commerce with the Spanish Netherlands. The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports was himself accused of complicity in these attacks: on 4 August 1571 the Dowager Countess of Emden wrote to Elizabeth asking for

> restitution of goods belonging to one of her son's subjects, which have been seized at sea and taken into Dover, and ... [complained] of the connivance of the Captain of Dover Castle, Cobing [Cobham], with the robbers.[133]

Clearly it was time for Elizabeth to withdraw her official support from Brederode, and, although there seems to be no corroboration of the report from Antwerp that the privateer was actually imprisoned, the government put up a front of repudiating its unbecoming alliance with the Dutch seamen. At the same time, however, Louis of Nassau, Orange's brother and the leader of the Dutch rebels who had taken refuge with the Huguenots at La Rochelle following the suppression by Alba of the revolt in the Netherlands of 1568, managed to interest Elizabeth in a plan to attack Alba by sea. By July 1571 Nassau had conceived a scheme whereby England, France and the Protestant states of Germany should make a concerted attempt to deprive Spain of the Netherlands and to divide those provinces among them. Charles IX and the German princes agreed to Nassau's plans, and in August 1571 Sir Francis Walsingham, then Elizabeth's ambassador at Paris, encouraged the Dutch to think that the queen would also accede to them.[134]

The situation in the Cinque Ports which Cobham was allowed to commit to his brother's management was thus a complicated one. Thomas Brooke brought to his res-

ponsibility some of the industry which he had previously shown in frustrating the law. On 24 July, when news was circulating among the seamen that Nassau had made his league with the French king, and when at the same time the German merchants from Emden were taking their own steps against the privateers whose activities Elizabeth was merely pretending to curtail, Brooke wrote his brother a report of what he had been doing. Since it is the only apparently honest message which Brooke ever sent to Cobham, it is here given in full. "I arrived att dover att vij off the clock," the letter peremptorily begins,

> where I cauled afore me raffine and cornelius Rousseau and demanded off them what comission was come to these Rovers Fro the count loedevieck [Louis of Nassau] y^{t} they departed nott owt off the narrow seas according to bombergines letter written to yo^{r} L: then they aunsweerd me that the 14th off this monnth le seighneur ettinck was sent either [i.e., hither] to all the captaines w^{t} a letter from the count to haesten them to rochell: w^{ch} letter I send hereinclosed to yo^{r} L w^{t} a litle noote in french off raffine: they all weer in readiness to depart: and now the 19th off this monnth there is arrived here a precher who willess them to be in all rediness either to depart to Rochell or ells where the count shall comand them: and is retorned on Sondaye last to calleics w^{t} all diligence and in his compenie one Jhon abells the eldest and best captaine Fro the other captaines to declare to the count there readiness and willingness to sarve him: they kepe itt verey secrett but this I haue gotten among them y^{t} the count comes on poast through frannce, and passeth by the french court. and mons de Combreis comes by sea w^{t} all the shipps they haue att rochell, w^{t} the first wynd, Me seems y^{t} they hoop the count wilbe w^{t} them w^{t}in viijth dayess. I humblye praye to know yo^{r} L pleasure what course I shall take herein: the towne is clere of them. They now lye in the downes: on satt^{r}daye last there was a hoye by wether driven into Sandewiech w^{ch} came from emdeen: where there came an viijth off these venturers prayeng passadg and so being receyved, as they weer vndeer the north forrelande, these pretended passadgers seett vpon the skippers and stoyed them vnder aetches [hatches] and in the night sett them on land and war goone w^{t} the hoye I yett can nott lerne weither but I haue sent a long the coast. I dowt they be goone towards laestowe road for there they report to haue manye buyers, and great enterteynment: the hoye is laeden w^{t} sundrie mens goods and sonndrie waerr as hoepps, pruns Nayles, steele linnen cloth and sutch Like: this preacher George Ips came nott long since this waye from the prince off orange. he landed att Sandwiedg in a boate off emdeen he hath secrettlye waerned the captaines to kepe here together till the counts coming w^{ch} he hathe assured them wilbe w^{t}in viijth dayes. Thus w^{t} my most humble comendations to yo^{r} good L I betake both yow and yo^{rs} to th'almightie.[135]

Brooke signed his letter "Yo^{r} L most obedient and faithfull brother during liffe", and Cobham may for a time have thought that the reprobate was for once conducting himself well. Soon, however, the baron was to find that his brother had failed to see that the ban against provisionment of the Dutch was carried out. On

28 September Cobham gave strict instructions to William Crispe, the Lieutenant of Dover Castle, that no more victuals or relief of the fleet serving the Prince of Orange be permitted, and on 4 October he informed his deputy that Elizabeth was angry that her directives concerning the pirate captains had been ignored. Crispe was to see that no more provisions were given them, and that all privateers who dared enter "'the portes and crekes within my rule'" were arrested and their goods confiscated.[136] Cobham's treasonable activities were by this time being discovered, and it is therefore a letter from the Council which reveals how unable Brooke had been to abstain from crime even when he was supposed to be suppressing it. On 21 October 1571 the Council wrote to Crispe that a commission had been set up to inquire into piracy on the coasts of Kent, to manage, that is, part of the Lord Warden's office, since Cobham himself "'is nowe here so stayed by her Majesty's commandment as he is not presentlie to be imploied in this service'". The commissioners, wrote the Council, had already taken an inventory at Dover of goods "'supposed to be had from the freebutters,

> amongest which there was in Courtnei's shipe of Dover and now laden into a hoye called the Whit Cocke of Dover 22 lastes of tarr, three dryefittes [dryfats] of tallowe, thre packets with flax and one hundred of lose flax in bondelles, reportted to be kept to the use of Thomas Cobham and Francis Barties.'

Crispe was ordered to confiscate the booty, which might the more appropriately be turned over to the queen's own use because both Brooke and Bertie, for their other, more serious "'offence against her Majesty, are at this present imprisoned'". Crispe's duties were not, however, to be restricted to the confiscation of what it was already known the profiteer had seized for himself and his colleague. "'We shall very well like also,'" wrote the Council,

> 'that you make perticuler inquiry of all the doinges of Thomas Cobham in these his dealinges with the freebutters, or eny others of their conditions, specially touchinge the raunsominge of a Flemyng that to escape the frebutters did swime frome a shipe in Dover Rode to the towne, and what you shall finde in that behalf donne by him to advertice us with as good spede as you maye. And without respecte of faviour towardes him of whome he heares so many complaintes for his misbehavior as we cannot passe the same over without this manner of inquisition.'[137]

Brooke was beyond doubt incorrigible.

It would appear that Burghley gave no sign in the spring and summer of 1571

that the Brookes were not to be trusted. It is true that Henry Cobham, upon his return from Spain on 6 July, did not go alone to pay his courtesy call at the Spanish embassy. As de Spes wrote to Philip II on 12 July,

> Cobham's visit to me was very short. He brought another [Gentleman] pensioner with him, as a witness, and did not enter into business matters at all. He said that they were pressing Englishmen in Spain more than usual to submit to the Catholic Church, to which I replied that there could not be very many English there whom they could oppress as they were all Catholics. He well sees that he has been treated in conformity with his sinister object, whereat all your Majesty's servants in this country rejoice exceedingly.[138]

Had Cobham not had a witness to his conversation with the Spaniard, there is every likelihood that de Spes would have said that the queen's envoy had confessed to the truth of his reception in Spain, whereas Cobham was publicly avowing that he had been treated with the consideration owed to the bearer of Elizabeth's message. It was probably for his own good that Cobham took a colleague with him to the embassy; Burghley seems never to have suspected him of complicity in the events which took place at the Blackfriars during his absence abroad in April, and would hardly have prevented him from seeing de Spes alone out of fear that he and the ambassador were in collusion. Neither in de Spes's private correspondence with his king nor in the examinations of the conspirators which were made in the autumn is there any hint of Henry Cobham's involvement in his brothers' disloyalty. The Spaniard's letter of 12 July is in fact remarkable for the striking contrast between its reports on the Brooke family. Henry Cobham appears as the instrument of Elizabeth and Burghley in their machinations against Spain, and Philip is commended for having repulsed him; Thomas Brooke emerges as an agent of de Spes, through whose "good offices and help" the ambassador claims to have recovered Baillie's letters and the key to the cipher in which they were written, "before lord Burleigh heard of it". Lord Cobham is not mentioned in the letter, but one can deduce nothing from that omission, for de Spes's knowledge of the trick played on Burghley was obviously imperfect. One cannot believe that Philip was deceived by his ambassador's contention that it was he and not the Bishop of Ross who had saved the situation in April. July was a rather late date at which to claim credit for that masterstroke. Philip must have smiled knowingly when he read de Spes's boast, "I have no doubt I shall be able to throw them still further off the scent."

It must have seemed to Lord Cobham even as late as August that the authorities were indeed unaware of his treachery. Higford's account of his conversations with the baron before and after St. Bartholomew's Day show how uneasy Cobham was lest John Cuthbert be taken, but also how little, for anything that the government seemed to be doing, he needed to worry about being discovered. The good advice which he asked Higford to give Norfolk indicates how the baron hoped that, if the duke would but desist from further communication with Ridolfi, Burghley need never know what had occurred four months earlier. Francis Bertie, whom Cobham sent to Higford in August to invite him to Cobham Hall, later corroborated Higford's story of what the baron had said to him. "The errand which I did from my lord to Higford," Bertie confessed in October,

> was that Lord Cobham understood from the Court, that the Duke began to grow in better liking of the Queen's majesty, and therefore wished him for God's sake to deal in no practices, either with French, Spanish, or Scottish, and only to seek to depend on the Queen's majesty's goodness, of whom he should find more assurance than by any other means, and assuring his grace that if he went about any other practices it would be 'espyed' to his undoing, and misliking of his friends, and willed his grace to remember what little trust was to be had in Scots, and that if any of them were taken it would utterly undo him.[139]

If, however, Cobham was prudent, his brother Thomas was not. Higford, whose partial knowledge of the Ridolfi Plot drew him into many conferences distasteful to him, said of Brooke that he "liked not to deale with him that had so busie a Head, and wold be so inquisitive, remembringe an old Leasson of Cato, Percontatorem fugito." Busy-bodies, however, are hard to avoid, When Higford told Brooke that Norfolk "hard not from the Quene of Scottes, nor the Bysshoppe of Rosse of a good while, for owght that I knew,

> What, wolde he saye, will you tell me that; was not Mr. [William] Barker [Norfolk's secretary] with him [Ross] this other Day? I can not tell that, I wolde answeare, I speake only of myne owne Knowledge, and further I can not saye. Then wolde he tell me, that he had byne with the Byshoppe of Rosse, and that he perceaved by him, that the Quene of Scottes' Causes weare like to come to good End (for this was in the Tyme of the last Treatie of the said Causes heare) and that he doubted not but all shoulde be well in the End, to my Lord's best contentation. But alwayes he wolde make a Doubte wheither my Lord of Leicestre, and my Lord Burley, that now is, weare assured and trusty Fryndes to my Lord, bycause the Worlde spake otherwise of them; I wolde answeare him, that albeit, in dede the Worlde might speake what it listed, yet I could not perceave but that my Lord had good and evident Cause to thinke well of them, and that they weare his verie Fryndes

> alwayes. Then wolde he tell me if he had anye Newes owte of France, or Flanders, as of the Mariage to be had betwene the Quene's Majestie and the Duke of Angeoy; that somtymes it was well liked of in France, and somtymes not liked of, as the Factions theare either grew with the Quene Mother, or the said Duke. From Flanders he wolde somtimes tell me, that he harde that the Duke of Alva had manie Men and Shippes in Readines, but for what Exploite he coulde not learne of Certentie; some thowght rather to invade England, or enter into Scotland then otherwise; other some, that his Men weare to defend his Countrey from the Frenche Forces, for that theare was like to be a Breche of Amitie betwene the Frenche Kinge, and the Kinge his Master, and that his Shippes weare provided, to lett, as muche as might be, that theare shoulde come no Ayde from hence to the Frenche Kinge. This and suche fonde Talke he wolde have with me, as in dede he hathe a Head full of Common-weales. But as for any certen Matter of Practise, eyther tendinge to the Perill of the Quene's Majestie's Person, or to the State of the Realme, I assure your Honors I never heard him speake of.[140]

Cobham's own interests were more mundane; only so indiscreet a man as Thomas Brooke would have discussed Alba, the prospective Franco-Dutch league against Spain, the queen's marriage with Anjou, in 1571.

Only one letter from the baron to Burghley survives from this time, and it is ironic that, with its reminders of the intimacy which existed between the two men, it should date from 5 September. For on that day, with the confinement of Norfolk to Howard House, the exposure of the Brookes' part in the Ridolfi Plot became imminent. It was only by accident that what looked like an ordinary business transaction of the duke's had been found to conceal the conveyance of letters into Scotland; then Robert Higford had been secretly arrested and made to disclose enough about his master's illicit correspondence to justify Burghley in taking action. Norfolk, within a fortnight of entertaining Elizabeth at his country seat in Essex, was put under house arrest in London. Cobham was evidently unaware of what was happening elsewhere when he talked with Paul de Foix at Canterbury. The French emissary, returning home with nothing to show for his many conferences with the queen and her Council but procrastinating messages to Charles IX about the prospects of a royal marriage or an Anglo-French league, seems to have expressed his disappointment to Cobham. De Foix thought that hope for the Anjou match lay with Burghley alone, whose dispatch to the French Court and negotiation there, away from the distractions made by Leicester and his colleagues, were what Catherine de Medicis most desired. Cobham therefore wrote to the Secretary to tell him of the impression which he had made upon the Frenchman.

> My very good Lorde. It ys my happe to be at Cantorbery a will [while] as my s^r de foix passed, at his Logging I whent to wesete [visit] hym, and browght hym to dyen w^t me when he speynt they most part of theye daye vntyll he toke his horsyes. Afte Loonge and soondrye spechyes heylde towchIg this great cause of his negotiatioone he tolde me that he was right sorry that he schulld retourne w^t smayll hoppe or none of this cause, but y^t he woolde doe all they good offecyes he myght and hopyd that er yt were Loonge that her maiestye woolde seynd oõ so throwghllye instructyde of her resolution as ther myght be some good doone. Wyche Legation he wyssed oonllye to your good Lordeshypp: w^t as manye good wordes and honorable speeches of your serteine procedyng as myght be, wherat I as your ffrynd dyd greatlye reJoice.

Cobham did not say that he was glad that there was still a chance that the queen would marry Anjou, only that it delighted him to see his friend's astuteness recognized; even so, one wonders how far the Secretary allowed himself to believe that the baron was sincere in protesting to take pleasure in the Frenchman's commendation of him. Almost certainly Burghley would not have risked bestowing further favour or responsibility upon the Brookes at that time, and he must therefore have refused the request which Cobham in his letter went on to make. The royally allied Serjeant Thomas Keyes had just died, and Cobham hoped that one of the two Thomas Brookes, apparently the younger, might succeed to the captaincy of Sandgate, the castle on the coast between Folkestone and Hythe. Brooke was in Leicester's service, and the baron depended upon the combined recommendations made by himself and the earl to get his brother the post. As he wrote to Burghley,

> Captayne keyes ys departyd. I praye be mi entreatyo^r to recõmynd my yownker brother Thomas vnto yt: trewlleye he ys right honest and cane do right well, for that he ys my l of lecesters sarvaynt I haue also wrytyne vnto hym to speke to her highnes. I shullde receve some Iniurye yf Enye shulld be preferryd vnto yt: beyng vnder my charge.[141]

Thomas Brooke did not become Captain of Sandgate,[142] but one does not imagine that Cobham could afford to take offence at the government's refusal to advance his brother. The baron had more serious things to worry about in the autumn of 1571, as already Burghley knew when he read the complacent conclusion of his friend's letter of 5 September. "Thus wyssing vnto your Lordeshipp as to my sellfe," wrote Cobham, "I cõmyt yow to all myghty god." The time was past when the Secretary could endorse so equivocally magnanimous a wish.

Norfolk, imprisoned in his own house in London, at first refused to confess his guilt. "Hereupon within a day or two," writes Camden, "namely, the 7. of September, he was, to the great Grief of the people, brought back again to the Tower of London."

Committed with the duke were many of his servants and accomplices, "who every one of them in hopes of pardon confessed what they knew".[143] Of the men from Howard House it was Robert Higford who was first examined, and in his depositions of 28 September and 1 October he revealed both how deeply Thomas Brooke was implicated in treason, and how suspiciously interested Lord Cobham was in the affair of John Cuthbert. By 2 October Brooke was in custody, writing to the Council of his resolution to tell them everything he knew; on 4 October the baron was still at Court, writing a letter of instruction to his deputy in the Cinque Ports, but he too was soon put under restraint. Brooke had apparently made a desperate attempt to escape to Flanders when he was discovered,[144] and, while Burghley probably did not think that Cobham would use his authority on the coast to arrange such an exit for himself, control of the situation had by then passed out of the Secretary's hands into those of the queen. Elizabeth broadcast throughout Europe her fury at the way in which her cousins Mary and Norfolk had betrayed her trust in them. On 7 October she turned on La Mothe-Fénélon when, during an audience concerned with de Foix's recent embassy, he dared suggest that she was treating the Scottish queen with some severity in her captivity at Chatsworth. "The Queen," reported de Spes to Philip,

> burst into a most furious rage at this and dwelt very strongly upon the evils which she said were being brought upon this country by the queen of Scotland. She afterwards went on to speak of the plots which she and the duke of Norfolk were weaving jointly with your Majesty to turn her (the queen of England) off of her throne, and afterwards to make war on France. She screamed all this out with so much vehemence that almost everybody in the palace could hear her.[145]

De Spes also told his master that on the day of La Mothe-Fénélon's audience "Lord Cobham and his brother Thomas were arrested at Court and lodged in the house of Secretary Bernard Hampton." There is clearly something wrong with this statement, since Brooke had been apprehended at least five days before. Hampton's position at Court, however, suggests that, by the end of the first week of October, his house may well have been considered the most appropriate place in which to confine Cobham until it should be decided further what to do with him. For Hampton, a man of approved loyalty and recognized importance who seems to have been Elizabeth's personal secretary, was not a minister; he might therefore act as a responsible but private warder, without giving the impression that Cobham had been handed over to an

official from whose custody, once having been publicly committed to it, he could only pass into stricter imprisonment. Thus Cobham did not, when he left Hampton's house, find his barathrum in the Tower; he was instead, in the words of the Secretary's own journal, "kept as a Presonar at the L. Burgley's House in Westminster".[146] The list of those in the Tower which was drawn up on 18 October included the names of Thomas Brooke and Francis Bertie, but of no one else from the Blackfriars.[147]

There can be little doubt about who saved Cobham from the public shame and the real danger of committal to the Tower. Lady Cobham had no means of helping her husband, for she had by this time been denied the queen's presence.[148] It was Burghley's influence which protected him, Burghley, whom Lord Macaulay has so memorably judged to be a man who "never deserted his friends till it was very inconvenient to stand by them".[149] Evidently the Secretary did not think that the inconvenience of maintaining friendship with Cobham had yet become insupportable when, on 19 October 1571, he wrote to the Earl of Shrewsbury. "This matter of the Duke of Norfolk grows daily larger upon examination," the earl was informed.

> I am sorry to see so many touched therewith. My Lord Cobham is in my house as a prisoner, who otherwise should have been in the Tower: I loved him well, and therefore am sorry for his offence.[150]

One ought not, however, to suppose that Cobham was out of danger as soon as he entered Cecil House. Burghley had great affection for several of his colleagues, notably Norfolk, Sussex and Cobham, but he seems never to have allowed that affection to interfere with his estimation of their reliability as ministers. Loyalty to the queen was what mattered to him. When Sussex was slandered at Court, Burghley was pleased to receive a favourable report of the earl's doings which he might show to Elizabeth: thus he hoped to ensure that Sussex's favour with her might "dayly amend," observing that "it is a good dede to hold upp any noble man when he meaneth well."[151] On the other hand, when Norfolk first came under strong suspidon, Burghley could write with equal impartiality that "sorry I shall be that my Lord of Norfolk shall be found undutiful; and yet if he be, I am glad it shall be known."[152] Cobham would be saved only if Burghley decided that the evidence against him did not warrant punishment.

In Cobham's favour was the fact that no accusations were made against him by either Laurence Bannister or William Barker, Norfolk's steward and principal secretary. The most important depositions of the latter were made on 19 September and 10 October, and effectively exposed the Ridolfi Plot; as Barker's examiner wrote of him, "he was the common Doer in the Practise, as aperith; but rather, it may seme, chosen for Zele then for Wit."[153] What Barker said alone sufficed to condemn his master of treason, for he told all. It was therefore significant that Barker mentioned Cobham only when asked a direct question, a question prompted by Higford's earlier confession, about the letters which "were in the Paquet taken by the Lord Cobham". On 13 October the duke's secretary admitted that John Cuthbert had told him

> that the Letters sent from Ridolphi to the Duke, and my Lord Lumley, whereupon were written Trente and Quaranta, were in that Pacquet that my Lord Cobham had, but more he doth not remember.[154]

That Barker added nothing to the charges already made against the baron was reassuring, and it must have relieved Burghley especially to find that Cobham had not played an important enough part in the conspiracy to cause Barker to name him among the peers whom Norfolk and Ridolfi had included in the list of the forty favourers of the plot. Barker remembered fifteen of the conspirators, besides principal malcontents like Lumley, and a dozen knights, but Cobham was to him merely one of "a great Nomber" more, such as were, he thought, "of the Duke's Kynred, or of the Scotts Quene's Religion".[155]

William Barker was not, however, the government's only important witness. Norfolk later protested to the queen that he had been betrayed by two false accusers: "the one," he said,

> beynge a schamlesse Scote, and the other ane Italianfyd Inglyschemane, ther Facys wyll be to brasen to yealde to enye Truthe that I schall charge them with.[156]

Barker was the Englishman; the Scot was the Bishop of Ross, who, had he held firm and demanded to be treated with the respect due an accredited ambassador, might yet have restrained the government from moving against Norfolk. Barker's statements were full enough, but they were those of a servant, extracted probably under torture, and could only have been used with caution. Ross's volubility alone corroborated Barker's story and made its truth unimpeachable throughout Europe. For the

bishop, examined first on 26 October, talked without restraint for weeks, and told the government everything he knew, including what Conyers Read calls "the hanky-panky with Bailly's packet".[157]

What Ross had to say about Cobham's part in the affair was not news to Burghley when first he heard it. As the Secretary himself recorded, on the night of 14 October,

> The lord Cobham tolde me that he would declare to me the whole truthe of the matter wherw[th] he was chardged trustinge that I would saue his honor & name in that the matter touched his vngracious brother Thomas whome to accuse he was most loth And for that also the truth might be knowne by his said brother.[158]

Nor did Ross inculpate Cobham further than the baron had inculpated himself: if the bishop's story differed from Cobham's, it was in the latter's favour, for Ross stressed Thomas Brooke's crimes and sought partially to excuse Cobham's as proceeding from a commendable desire to relieve the sufferings of the exiles overseas. Yet Ross's testimony was less to Cobham's advantage than was Barker's. It showed, for one thing, how the baron had allowed himself to be deceived both by his brother and, less excusably perhaps, by his own servant, Francis Bertie, over a long period. It suggested how lax had been the manner in which Baillie was received at the Blackfriars. It provided, finally, full corroboration of Cobham's own story, and, since it was given before examiners, thus exposed the baron to the whole Council and therefore to the Court. Burghley may have had his reservations about the statement which he had taken down at his friend's dictation. The fact that the 'ungracious' Thomas Brooke contested his brother's veracity was inconvenient, no matter how much it was to be expected, and on one debated point at least, the means whereby John Cuthbert had escaped, Burghley seems seriously to have doubted that Cobham had told him the truth.[159] Yet the baron's statement had the advantage of being a private one, which Burghley, but for Ross, might have taken time to consider alone. Once Ross confessed, and once other examinants showed that they knew of Cobham's part in delivering to the government counterfeit versions of Baillie's letters,[160] Burghley could not longer hope to judge his friend himself. The Secretary was, in fact, running the risk of compromising himself by protecting Cobham too much.

A rumour seems to have begun to circulate in mid-October which further compli-

cated Cobham's position and Burghley's. On the thirteenth a writer who signed himself only R.G. sent to the press a little news-letter entitled Salutem in Christo. This publication, evidently inspired by the government, took as its theme the duplicity of the pope: Pius V had, in his spiritual capacity, greeted his 'beloved son' Norfolk by a letter beginning with the words used ironically as the title of the pamphlet, while at the same time he had made the very temporal gesture of ordering Alba to take up arms against England. The principal papal agent was assumed to be

> that vngratious Priest named the Bisshop of Rosse (the Instrument of all the Dukes calamytie, and the Seede man of all Treasons againste this Realme);[161]

R.G.'s readers were left to imagine that the bishop had been publicly denounced by the Privy Council to the Lord Mayor and aldermen, who had been summoned to the Star Chamber on 13 October to be notified of the exposure of the plot. Ross and Norfolk were not, however, the only traitors, and the pamphleteer placed many men under suspicion by making insinuations against others. "It was deuised & determined," wrote R.G.,

> that a new Rebellion should bee mooued neere London. The Cittie should be taken by force and possessed: In the meane time a nomber of Strangers men of warre shuld be brought by Sea from the lowe Countreyes beyond the Seas, to a notable Port of this Realm meete for the purpose, and so both forces of ennemies and Rebelles should ioyne, and than proceede to further thynges than is expedient (as I heare) to be spoken off at this tyme.[162]

The reference to a port, together with the suggestion that much information was still being withheld from the public, must have made Londoners wonder whether one of the coastal towns under the rule of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports had not been put atthe disposal of the invaders. Indeed, by 20 October, La Mothe-Fénélon was informing the French king that Cobham had been arrested, not only for withholding knowledge of the plot from the government ("comme ayant esté de l'intelligence"), but also for having offered, as it was said, one of the Cinque Ports to the Spaniards (for "ayant offert, à ce qu'on dict, quelcun des cinq portz dont il est gardien, pour servyr à la descente des dicts Espaignolz").[163] There was no substance to this rumour. Harwich was to be the landing place, as Burghley was assured at least as early as 11 October by Barker's circumstantial account of Nor-

folk's questioning him about its suitability.[164] La Mothe-Fénélon and other observers, however, understandably connected the confinement of the Lord Warden with the talk of a Spanish descent upon the coast, and on 15 October de Spes reported that Cobham had been taken to the Tower. He was almost certainly wrong, just as he erred in asserting that the Earl of Sussex was in danger because Leicester and Burghley "seem to be in accord, for once, that the enemies of both of them shall be molested".[166] The Secretary's list of prisoners in the Tower on 18 October, it has already been shown, did not include the name of Lord Cobham. Yet, with London and the Continental chancelleries buzzing with the news of Cobham's treason, Burghley must have kept his friend in his house only with the greatest difficulty. One assumes that the baron stayed out of sight when, on 19 December, the badly shaken Court was feasted at Cecil House upon the occasion of the Earl of Oxford's marriage with the Secretary's daughter.[166]

By the beginning of November the government was possessed of an unanswerable case against the Duke of Norfolk. Examinations of his accomplices went on into February, but nothing further was revealed about Cobham's involvement in the plot. On 16 January the duke was tried; Burghley, sitting with his peers in judgement on that day, must have known even as he condemned Norfolk to death that all the evidence about Cobham's offence had already been collected. He would have been mistaken had he hoped that Thomas Brooke would withdraw his denial of his brother's story. On 22 November Brooke had been said by a foreigner in England to be facing trial,[167] but on 14 June 1572 he was still in the Tower, and thereafter one of Burghley's clerks noted that he had been "cõdẽnid to be p^{r}/sed [pressed] wherof he claymeth p̄dõ."[168] This annotation suggests that Brooke repeated in 1571-72 the device which he had so successfully employed in 1565, that is, that he stood mute at his trial, was condemned to the peine forte et dure, and was finally let off. Whether he again claimed benefit of clergy does not appear. Certainly Brooke was still alive on 5 April 1573, when the Lieutenant of the Tower was ordered

> to permitte Thomas Cobham's wife to have once or twice a weke accesse unto her husbande at suche tymes as shalbe thought by him convenient,[169]

and on 4 April 1574 he was set free, "uppon bandes taken of him and his sureties for his good behaviour".[170] One doubts whether Brooke, in the winter of 1571-72,

incriminated himself by giving evidence which would have reassured Burghley about the truth of Cobham's confession.

Possessed, then, of what he had learned from the examinations held in September and October, Burghley had to decide what ought to be done with Cobham. Lacking any indication that it was otherwise, one may assume that the queen had given the Secretary complete charge of his friend's case; the Privy Council seems not to have interfered in it. There were three things to be considered: the honesty with which Cobham had made his confession, the punishment which his acknowledged offence deserved, and the reliability which could be expected of him in the future. That Cobham's account of what he had done coincided on every material point with that of the Bishop of Ross argued strongly for the baron's veracity. When Elizabeth in July 1573 at last released the bishop from the Tower and turned him over to the Scottish regent, she asked that he be well treated, because

> he hath also opened so frankly and sincerely those evil dealings and counsels whereof he was privy and a party, and as afterwards appeared to be wholly true, and verified by others, that we cannot well condescend to deliver him to any extremity.[171]

Evidently the government believed Ross, and just as his testimony destroyed Norfolk, so it acquitted Cobham of suspicion of having done anything other than what he himself admitted. What must have been Burghley's own personal wish to credit his friend's story was thus vindicated by evidence. Thomas Brooke's denial of his own crimes, coupled with his attempt to shift the responsibility for some of them unto his brother, was ignored, and presumably it was decided that he had lied about Cuthbert's escape as about almost everything else.

Yet, even exonerated of everything but the deception of Burghley in the matter of Baillie's letters and the illegal granting of a passport to a man wanted by the government, Cobham had gravely erred. Ross, busy at work in the Tower on the scathing, anonymous denunciation of Burghley which he incorporated in his specious Treatise of Treasons against Q. Elizabeth, might claim that it was only "their owne honour, vertue, and fidelitie" which had undone Norfolk and his friends, that their misfortune was to live in a state where all were destroyed who sought to rescue the queen from the subservience in which the evil Secretary held her. "Let this example, I saie," raved the bishop,

> (ioyned vnto the vniust captiuitie of the Earles of Arundel, worcester and Sowthampton, of the Lordes Cobham & Lumley, the B. of Rosse, with so many other Knightes & Gentlemen imprisoned at this present, for the very same cause & none other) be a paterne & president vnto some others of the Nobilitie now, that yet thinke themselues ful safe.

Addressing Shrewsbury, who had presided over Norfolk's trial, Sussex and Leicester, Derby, Huntingdon and Bedford, and continuing in an unctuous vein of devotion to Elizabeth, Ross warned against the perils presented by the regnum Cecilianum:

> Let them, I saie, (as safe as now they thinke them selues) looke at the ende, for the end y^{t} the others had: vnlesse they can in the meane while winne so much of themselues by litle and litle, as when the end shal appeare, headlong to tumble do wne with the reast into the depth of al dishonour and infamy of deposing their iust Princes, to their owne perpetual reproch and vtter extirpation of their succession for euer.[172]

Only to those deceived by Ross can Cobham's fault have seemed an excess of integrity, a refusal to compromise with Burghley's nefarious ambition. Nor would many Englishmen in the baron's own day have considered his confinement to Cecil House unjust; they would not have treated his offence so lightly as does Sir John Neale when, writing of the arrival of Charles Baillie, he says that

> The noble official who took him, unwittingly covered the treason, for being friendly disposed to Norfolk, in a lax mood he let the incriminating letters be extracted and sent on to the Bishop of Ross.[173]

Cobham was fully conscious of what he did in April, and aware of the consequences to which he made himself liable. He got off, in the circumstances, very easily indeed.

Burghley seems to have decided that the months of anxiety which his friend had experienced, and the disgrace of being arrested and exposed to public censure as an accomplice of attainted traitors, together formed a severe punishment for one who had shortly before been so eminent and so apparently secure in his eminence. To such a penalty for dangerous weakness the Secretary added, probably partly on the queen's insistence, only a prolonged restraint on Cobham's physical liberty. On 24 May 1572, more than seven and a half months after being taken into custody, Cobham was said by the Spanish agent in London to be still "under guard at Burleigh [sic: Cecil] House".[174] Outside, life went on. St. George's Day came and went, leaving Burghley a Knight of the Garter and Cobham, for the first time since he succeeded his father, with the knowledge that not a single vote had been cast for

nim.[175] Writs for the queen's fourth Parliament were issued on 28 March. Cobham was not summoned, and in the first session, held from 8 May to 30 June and marked by the execution of Norfolk, the Brooke family was represented only by John, who was returned to the Commons by Queenborough on 3 May.[176] Nor were many of the so-called Barons of the Cinque Ports the Lord Warden's nominees. Cobham had evidently meant to chastise the recalcitrant electors for flouting his desires in the previous year, and on 20 September 1571 delegates from Sandwich and Rye, and presumably from the other Ports as well, were supposed to have met in Canterbury to allow Roger Manwood and Cobham's representatives

> to hear what is to be alleged for and concerning such controversies as at this present are between the said Lord Warden and the Five Ports and their members.[177]

There is no record of this meeting; perhaps, owing to its coincidence with the beginning of Cobham's real troubles that autumn, it was never held. Certainly the baron had no attention to give to the elections in his bailiwick a few months later, and only Winchelsea is known certainly to have returned one of the Lord Warden's men to the Parliament of 1572. He was Richard Barry, later to succeed William Crispe as Cobham's Lieutenant of Dover Castle. Taking further advantage of the temporary impotence of their overlord, the Ports met after Parliament was prorogued and, at one of their general assemblies known as Brodhulls, decreed that only resident freemen and officials of the federation like Manwood should henceforth represent them.[178] Cobham certainly lost both prestige and influence during his confinement.

Yet, as Lord Warden, the baron had powers of which he could be deprived only by the queen's removal of him from office. When, for instance, one of Cobham's men committed some unspecified misdemeanour, the fellow could not properly be arrested without the Lord Warden's authority; as the Deputy Mayor of Rye wrote to the commissioners appointed by the Crown for the control of freebooters, it was only out of courtesy that one Robert Jackson had been instructed to appear before the royal officers, for their order for his apprehension had been invalid.[179] The Portsmen were alarmed, knowing that the only defence of their peculiar liberties was the interposition between them and the Crown of their Lord Warden. Indeed, on 19 March,

the mayors, bailiffs and jurats of all the Ports and their members wrote collectively to the captive Lord Cobham that they were resisting the demands of the commissioners "'bycause we were very lothe to certefie anythinge either hurtful to your Lordshipps office or imparement of our liberties'".[180] Cobham's suspension from his duties was obviously inconvenient. From Dover Castle William Crispe carried on the routine business of the Lord Wardenship, but he could not supply his master's place at Court, and it was Cobham's ministerial rôle at the centre of affairs which assured his bailiwick of its continued existence.

Nor could the baron be long kept in disgrace without permanent injury to his public reputation, that necessary adjunct to any Elizabethan officer. Not only had London and the capitals abroad been given to understand that Cobham was untrustworthy; even courtiers wondered whether he had failed the queen too seriously ever to be allowed to serve her again. From his governorship of Berwick on 1 February Elizabeth's cousin Hunsdon wrote to Burghley that, while he had never sought to take advantage of the misfortune of others,

> if Lord Cobham's offence be such (whereof he protests he would be sorry) that her majesty thinks him not fit to enjoy his office, he would be glad to make friends for it for sundry respects. First, because his uncle of Rochford [Anne Boleyn's brother George] had it. Secondly, because it was once granted him upon the death of Sir Thomas Cheyny. Part of his living lies there [in Kent], his ancestors dwelt there, and he was born there. Lastly, he wearies of this place by being so far from her majesty.[181]

Hunsdon seems to have received no reply from Burghley: the two men corresponded regularly throughout the spring of 1572, but the Cinque Ports was not mentioned again. No doubt, however, the Secretary was made to realize by Hunsdon's representation to him that a decision would have to be reached in Cobham's case, that the baron could not be kept indefinitely in political limbo.

On 20 May 1572 the Privy Council issued to Cobham from St. James's an order requiring him to withhold passports from a company of volunteer soldiers which was attempting to join, without the government's authority, the forces of the Prince of Orange overseas.[182] One may assume that the date of this warrant marks the approximate end of Cobham's term of confinement. Conceivably the baron was not yet at liberty when he received the Council's letter: he may for some time afterward have used his rooms at Cecil House as his office. Only one document signed by him sur-

vives from 1572, an order for the survey of his park at Leicester; it is dated only 22 June 1572, and does not indicate where the baron was when he gave his surveyors their instructions.[183] Yet, whether or not Cobham was at once allowed to return to the Blackfriars and to Cobham Hall, it had clearly been determined by the third week in May to retain him in the Lord Wardenship.

Also preserved from ruin was one of the baron's principal seducers. As early as January 1572, presumably before Cobham's fate was decided, Burghley had drawn up the case against Norfolk without mentioning the part which the Lord Warden's London office had played in the concealment of the Ridolfi Plot. As it has already been shown, the Secretary referred only to Cobham's proper behaviour in delivering to him the trunk of books; of the manner in which the bishop received the treasonable letters nothing more was said than that it had entailed "much difficulty". When, therefore, it was decided to confirm Cobham in his office in May 1572, it was easy to reinstate the dangerous Francis Bertie in the Lord Warden's household. Bertie, probably by telling the government all he knew, seems to have won greater leniency than did Thomas Brooke. Brooke remained in the Tower till April 1574, while Bertie, his equal in intrigue, was soon again at liberty. Bertie was probably not given an opportunity to abuse his master's trust a second time; that no proof of his further dereliction exists cannot, however, be attributed to his reform, nor even to his increased discretion. At the end of 1573 the Bishop of Ross, having recently been released from prison and turned over to the Scots, took passage from Dover for France. There was nothing surreptitious about his going: on 31 December Secretary Walsingham wrote "to my Lord Cobham by her Majesties commaundment for the convoye of the Bishop of Ros":[184] yet a Marian agent later revealed that Francis Bertie had taken pains to give the impression that it was by his means that Ross's request to cross the Channel had been granted.[185] It was also said that Bertie corresponded personally with Queen Mary, and in 1575 he spent some time in the Tower and was released only after close interrogation.[186] Bertie's purpose in obliging the Marians, or at least in making them think that they were obliged to him, can hardly have been an honest one, and one will learn later that in the mid-1580s he was still thought to be a suitable agent for implicating Lady Cobham in a practice similar to that

which had once almost destroyed her husband.[187]

Francis Bertie seems to have outlived every other participant in the Ridolfi Plot, and in 1609, confident that there was no one left to contest his words, he made a bold attempt to clear his record. Mary's son was then king, and Bertie asked him for satisfaction of "a debt betweene 11: and 1200li due to mee by the Queene, his Mates mother wch I haue nowe forborne above 40 yeares". The request was made through the Earl of Salisbury, Burghley's son, to whom the devious old man intimated that he had never done anything more treasonable than to treat with Mary about the money which she owed him: "by occasion of writinge and vseinge other meanes for the gettinge thereof," Bertie stated,

> in the tyme of the said Queenes restreint here [I] haue at two Comittemts in the Tower endewred neare three wholl yeares imprisonmt.

Like so many another petitioner to the younger Cecil, Bertie considered that it would be to his advantage to stress the confidence which Burghley had placed in him. This he proceeded to do, implying that it was only his association with those whose business with Mary Stuart was less innocent than his own which had rendered suspect him and his correspondence with her about the debt. Relevant proof of the late minister's trust in him was lacking: all that Bertie had were letters more than forty years old, written when Burghley and Cobham were engaged in their venture in salt manufacturing and when the problem of the captive Queen of Scots had not yet arisen. As undeterred by so small a point, however, as by the need of explaining logically the course of events which had led him to lend Mary so much money, Bertie depicted himself as a much wronged man. "I haue," he told Salisbury,

> divers lres of my Hoble Lo: your ffathers owne writinge to mee to Antwerpe at my beinge in those ptes aboute the beginninge of the late Queenes reigne, wch doe showe his Lops earneste desire for psecutinge the Salt Workes, the firste occasion to bringe mee to the knowledge, and soe to imployment of the Queene of Scotts; and by the same lres yt pleased his Lop to shewe his good opinyon and greate favor towardes mee wch I keepe as Comfortable Testymoinyes thereof: not wthstandinge all the malice of others wch I felt in my troubles, especially for my Lo: Cobhams sake.[188]

One doubts that Bertie fooled the king's Secretary: the minutely detailed records of Marian activities in England which Burghley had left to his son spoke more eloquently than any living witness could have done, and they spoke against Bertie.

fet, even if the old man never got his money, and although he was probably never called from his "poore dwellinge neare your Lo^ps howse in Stronde" to an audience with the great man, Bertie did manage to make the last contemporary comment upon the Ridolfi Plot. It cast, however obliquely, the last aspersion on the character and the career of his late master.

Thus Burghley, in saving Cobham, seems to have preserved as well one of the two men most responsible for putting him in jeopardy. The other accomplice of the Bishop of Ross, Thomas Brooke, was set free in 1574 and soon afterward claimed with some success to have been treated unjustly in the matter of the freebooters' goods confiscated at Dover.[189] A judgement of the Court of Admiralty restored to him in June 1574 "certen goods sequestrid from him before his last imprisonment",[190] and in the following spring his cousin, Thomas Wotton, enlisted for him Secretary Walsingham's support in a case against "the wydowe of Peper", who was holding on to other goods which Brooke said were his.[191] In June 1575 there was heard before judges appointed by the Privy Council a case in which Brooke was charged with wrongful possession of a cargo belonging to a Dutch merchant.[192] The complicated aftermath of Brooke's term as commissioner for the control of freebooters, in fact, necessitated the establishment on 14 August 1575 of an authority

> to examine a controversye betwene Thomas Cobham and certen the inhabitauntes of the towne of Dover for goodes committed heretofore to their custodie, and either ende the matter betwene them, or make report thereof to their Lordships [of the Council].[193]

At the same time Brooke was back at his old game of attacking Spanish shipping, now on behalf of the French Huguenot leaders. On 27 August 1575 La Mothe-Fénélon reported that a fleet of five ships under Brooke, John Hawkins, Martin Frobisher and "quelques aultres cappitaynes de mer" were about to emerge from creeks along the Thames "en equippage de guerre". There was then no word about the privateers' objectives, but examinations made in the Court of Admiralty at the time reveal that Brooke's prey was the merchant navy passing between Spain and the Duke of Alba.[194] Thomas Brooke could not, however, long remain on the right side of even the ambiguous laws regarding privateering. On 21 October 1576 the Council wrote to Lord Cobham about an act of piracy which had taken place off the Isle of Thanet: an argosy had been boarded "by a certaine barke of Englishmen, whereof some were slaine

and others wounded, and sum said to remaine at Mr. Crispe's howse thereabout".[195] A fortnight later the Judge of the Admiralty was informed that Brooke "is accused to have ben a dealer and of consort with those that assaulted the Aragousye".[196]

The Council's order for Brooke's apprehension is the last that one hears of the activities of that dangerous man. He died obscurely, apparently abroad: all one knows is that the Recorder of London wrote to Lord Burghley on 22 October 1578 that "there is newes that Thomas Cobham is dead in fflanders."[197] One would have preferred a more revealing obituary for a man who, while he lived, so constantly troubled the peace of his family and of the kingdom, but none seems to have been written. Evidently it was thought best to allow Thomas Brooke to be buried quietly, and quickly to be forgotten. What a threat he had continued to present to the security of his house is suggested by the single, implicit reference which Lord Cobham made to him after his death. On 22 August 1580 Cobham informed Burghley that the husband of one of Brooke's daughters had been ransacking the stores and books of his brother's widow. The fellow, one Daniel Gyrton, denied any intention to rob his mother-in-law, and said that he would send to the Blackfriars any articles which were demanded of him. Then, according to the baron, Gyrton told him

> that among them there was an English book dedicated to the Queen of Scots. He answered that he marvelled much that Gyrton would keep any such thing, and not deliver it to some of the Council. Since then he had sent it to Lord Cobham, and he to Burghley.[198]

The haste with which Cobham dispossessed himself of anything which even hinted of complicity in the activities of the Marians indicates how thoroughly he had learned his lessons in 1571. The fact that there was, among his brother's belongings when he died, a book addressed to Mary Stuart shows how imprudent Thomas Brooke had been to the very end.

In restoring Cobham to his liberty and to the Lord Wardenship in 1572, Burghley thus displayed both faith in his friend's good intentions and confidence in his strength of character. For with Francis Bertie's return to the Blackfriars, and with Thomas Brooke's inevitable reappearance in the backstreets of London and the pirate haunts of Kent, the Secretary knew that Cobham would once again be surrounded by men inveterately susceptible to the charms of intrigue. Yet he also knew that the baron would henceforth be both more vigilant and more careful of his own interests,

for it must have been made clear to Cobham that, in such times, a second lapse would not be tolerated in the man who guarded the coast and scrutinized its multifarious traffic. A shrewd estimate of the baron's prudence, then, combined with Cobham's long record of loyalty to the queen and to himself, evidently persuaded Burghley that his friend was not likely to sacrifice ever again the security of the state to personal sentiment. The Secretary took a personal risk when he decided neither to dissociate Cobham from his private counsels nor to deprive the government of the services of so experienced an officer, for if Cobham had failed him Burghley would surely have been held guilty of negligence by many of his fellow Councillors. Lord Hunsdon, when the Duke of Norfolk's execution was postponed from from month to month in the spring of 1572, was particularly bitter about the leniency which was being shown the conspirators. What was the use of the government's instructing him to control the situation along the Scottish border, Hunsdon rhetorically asked the Secretary,

> when their own matters at home that touch the preservation of her majesty's person and the whole state of the realm are so slenderly, or (if he might write it without offence) so negligently looked unto, so many being of conspiracy of so notorious and heinous treasons, neither [are] any of the principals executed nor like to be for anything he can hear; and, indeed, unless the rest may have their deserts as well as the Duke -- having deserved it as well as he -- she may as well let him live as the rest, whose death shall not cause them to forbear to attempt the like or worse. It is small policy, not worthy to be termed mercy, to be so careless of weighty matters that touch the quick so near, and therefore let Burghley look well to it, for surely if these matters do overpass this, neither her majesty's person can be sure nor her estate long continue.[199]

It must thus have been in the face of some opposition that Burghley set Cobham free.

The Secretary's judgement was vindicated. Seemingly without ever referring to the painful circumstances in which he had incurred the debt, Cobham repaid his friend's magnanimity and trust with more than twenty-five years of companionship and service. It was left to Henry Brooke, the baron's son, to put into words what his family acknowledged that Burghley had done for them in the year of the Ridolfi Plot. In 1605 Henry Lord Cobham found himself in a situation arrestingly similar to that in which his father had been a generation earlier. James I was then on the Throne, Salisbury in the Secretaryship, the younger Cobham in prison for his foolish part in a supposed conspiracy to procure the invasion of England by Spain and the

Spanish Netherlands. Begging Salisbury to get for him the king's pardon, Cobham's son besought Burghley's to consider that,

> as in all thoughts you ryghtly hau ingrafted in you ye virtues of yr noble father, this shall not be ye least for he keapt my powre hous frõ distruction.[200]

* * *

Chapter II

"As gold," wrote Francis Thynne,

> the more it is purified by the fire the brighter and better it becommeth: so the lord Cobham, hauing well cleered himselfe of whatsoeuer was laied against him, did like Joseph not onelie receiue an honorable libertie, but did also in following time rise to greater honor than he had before.[1]

Even Cobham's dedicated apologist, however, who considered the baron's career to be important enough to form a part of the chronicle history of England, could find nothing of interest to say about Cobham during the seven years which followed the discovery of the Ridolfi Plot. Thynne, after stating that Cobham had been confined to Cecil House in 1571 only through the malice and envy of his enemies, had to go on to 1578 in order to find more material for his story of the Brookes. A student of the family is today only slightly better informed.

After hearing nothing of him for a year, one finds Cobham on 13 July 1573 writing to the Earl of Sussex, who had become Lord Chamberlain when Burghley gave up the Secretaryship in order to assume the office of Lord Treasurer. Cobham's letter is a fairly formal one, and makes no allusion to an important event which occurred in the baron's private life on the day when he wrote it: this was the birth of William Coppinger, the eldest of Cobham's grandchildren of whom anything is recorded and, so far as one knows, the first of them to be born.[2] Thus the baron was, at forty-five, a grandfather when he reported to Sussex from Cobham Hall on the preparations which were being made for the queen's progress that summer. It is clear from what Cobham wrote that one of the Lord Chamberlain's principal concerns was to protect Elizabeth from contagion in the packed country towns near the Kentish coast, where the plague could so easily have been brought in from abroad. "My very good Lorde," the baron began,

> According to my bounden Dewtey, I have come along the Coaste, especially in those Porte-Townes where it is appointed that her Majesty will come, in this her Progress: And have taken Order, that the Officers of the said Townes shall, from time to time, advertise your good Lordship how the same doe stande in Health. Hoping, ere this tyme, that your Lordship have heard from the Mayor of Sandewyche, of the State of that Town; where I am informed, that some of late have dyed, and some Sickness yet remaining in other Houses there.

Then Cobham put at the disposal of his mistress the fortress which, as Constable, he held in her name. "I do herewith," he wrote,

> recommend unto your good Lordship the State of Dover Castle: The Lodginges whereof I have seen, and do fynde them (by reason they have not been of longe tyme lyen in) to be both dampysh and mustey, and therefore very necessary that some be sent down to make Fyres in the said Lodgings, a good while before her Majesty come thither, and to see the same both well ayred and sweted; for otherwise they will be noysome unto her Highnesse.[3]

Sussex accepted the baron's suggestion, and three days later Cobham informed him that,

> according to your good Lordship's Letter, I have taken Order for the ayring and makinge swete of her Majesty's Lodgings in Dover Castell.
> I send yow herein enclosed, a Letter written unto me, from the Mayor of Canterbury, wherein your good Lordship shall perceive in what State of Health the said City dothe stand in.[4]

Having assisted the Lord Chamberlain in his task of providing accommodation for the queen, Cobham then arranged for a guard of honour to be present at Dover Castle during the royal visit. The force was probably made up of soldiers from all the Cinque Ports, but details survive only of the contingent sent from Rye; it consisted of 100 light musketeers ("Caliverers"), besides "'the ensigns drume, phife and vj halberds'".[5] There were 300 armed Kentishmen at the castle when the queen at length reached it.[6]

Elizabeth arrived at Dover on 25 August 1573 after a leisurely journey which had included visits to Cobham's uncle, Sir Percival Hart, and to the Brookes' kinsman and friend, Thomas Wotton. The Lord Warden went out to Folkestone to meet the queen and to conduct her into the town; with him was the Archbishop of Canterbury and more than 300 knights and gentlemen, accompanied by their retainers. At the castle Elizabeth found waiting for her the principal Kentish magistrates, and as she took up residence in the royal apartments salvoes were fired from the battlements and from the ships drawn up in the harbour. For six days the Court remained at Dover,

Cobham presiding as Constable of the Castle over the presentation of the gentry which flocked into the town to see their queen.[7] One assumes that the baron also took the opportunity to demonstrate to his mistress his gratitude for the magnanimity with which she had allowed him to be treated in the previous year. Details of a personal gift which he made to her during her stay in the castle show that he spent £ 150.10.0 on delicacies for consumption by her and her attendants. The list of fruit, much of it the summer produce of the orchards of Kent, and of imported spice, is curiously drawn up in French and dated "Le 16 Jor de Juillet 1573", more than a month before the queen's arrival at Dover. Probably it indicates that the gift was carefully planned to delight the tastes of the Court, and worked out well in advance of purchase and delivery to the castle. Vast quantities of pears, apples and strawberries made up much of it: "poires seches couuvertes", "poires ptys seches" and "paste de franboizes" were some of the more special items: but there were also cucumbers and apricots, and, among imported commodities, ginger.[8]

Appropriately fêted, Elizabeth stayed at Dover until the beginning of September, and then made her way slowly back to Greenwich by way of Sandwich, Canterbury and Dartford. There is a tradition at Cobham that she visited the Hall on the way, but the gift which Lady Cobham is known to have given her that summer was more probably presented at Dover than at the baroness's own house.[9] Neither W.A. Scott-Robertson nor Esmé Wingfield-Stratford offers any proof for his assertion that the queen was entertained at Cobham Hall on 23-24 September;[10] one assumes that it was based upon the statement in Nichols's Progresses that there was in the eighteenth century an inscription in "a spacious apartment at Cobham" which recorded the queen's second visit to the place.[11] Nichols does not say that he saw the inscription himself; one suspects that, if it existed in his time, it was, like the date '1599' in the ornamental plaster ceiling of 1817 which dominates the chamber now misknown as 'Queen Elizabeth's Bedroom', a late addition to the house. Certainly no such inscription is at Cobham Hall today, and the present Earl of Darnley says that to him "it has always been doubtful if Queen Elizabeth did go to Cobham Hall" in 1573.[12] Thynne's failure to mention a second royal visit to Cobham,

both in his narrative of the progress[13] and in his account of the honours which the queen extended to the baron, is strong negative evidence for its not having taken place, and Nichols, when he comes to discuss the actual progress of 1573, relies upon a contemporary Latin description which states that the queen went directly from Rochester to Dartford ("A Roffa ad suas aedes Dartfordiae sitas progressa est").[14] One must reluctantly conclude that Elizabeth probably never repeated the official visit to Cobham which she had made in the first year of her reign.

Before moving on from the year 1573, one ought to pause for a moment to consider an interesting document which purports to date from that time. It is a list of jewellery endorsed "The bequestes to my Childerne", which shows that Cobham made an inventory of the contents of his strong-box at this time and allocated choice pieces to members of his family. The list is in the baron's own handwriting and is in part illegible, but one can read enough of it to appreciate the richness and the variety of his private treasure. The eleven-year-old twin girls, Elizabeth and Frances, were apparently at first meant to receive jewels of unequal value: Elizabeth was to be given £ 500 worth, made up of

> A bordeyre of diamons rubyes and perles to the wallor of three hundryth poundes & A schyppe wt dyamones and rubyes to the wallor 200. poundes,

while Frances was to get only £ 133.6.8, being

> A borderie wt nine diamones: and nine pecys of perlle; yn ffriens-knottes: & A fflower wt an Emerade and a rubye. the prisse of 200 markes.

Then, however, Cobham seems to have realized just how much he had to distribute, and he crossed out the bequest to Frances altogether and proceeded to set down what the ten-year-old Margaret would receive. His liberality to her suggests that he drew up a new legacy for Frances, probably on a separate sheet of paper which has since been lost. For, with jewels amounting to £ 500 having been ear-marked for the eldest of his daughters, the baron gave to his youngest

> A borde^{r} wt sixe diamoones, sixe rubbyes thyrtye peyres of perlles wt too yn eche pesse worthye 200 poundes: a fflower wt thre great diamoones,

and a great piece of rock crystal ("roke crileys") with three pearls appendant to

it, worth £ 133.6.8.

To his sons Cobham gave articles which were used by Elizabethan gentlemen for their personal adornment. Maximilian was to regard the things given to him as heirlooms: "all thyes thyngs," wrote the baron, "to retoorne all wayes to the ayer of the howse." There were "a cappe baynde w^{t} chayne of dyamonons [sic] fyue peecyes", "Elevne peyrs of knottes baked namelly [enamel]", "a chayne of perlles fyue pecyes", "A cheyne w^{t} bottoones of diamones oone the one side and robyes to the other", and quantities of diamonds of no specified value. Henry, William and George were treated with less generosity: they were younger sons, and got only £ 50 each, in the form of a chain. Only George's chain was specifically required to be made of gold.

The remainder of his valuables the baron left to his wife; he gave nothing to his married daughter, Frances Coppinger. Most of Lady Cobham's legacy was made up of unmounted diamonds, although the baroness was also to receive "a deppe bason w^{t} an oppen yewer parcell gyllte" and something which, in Cobham's handwriting, looks like "a pin of pooks pur". One is at a loss to decide what this may have been.[15]

This list of bequests is perplexing because there seems to have been no reason why Cobham should have made it in 1573. The paper is not dated, and one can only suggest that the date written on the back of it is not contemporary with the rest of the endorsement, which was made by the baron himself. If this is so, then it is possible that the clerk who added the date at some later time erred by a year. The list may then have been drawn up early in 1572, when, as a prisoner in Cecil House, the baron considered his fate uncertain, and when he would also have had the leisure to make such an inventory of his jewel chest.

There seems to be no doubt that the men of the Cinque Ports co-operated with their Lord Warden in giving a splendid reception to the queen in 1573. Relations between Cobham and the Portsmen were, however, extremely strained at this time, and once Elizabeth had made her progress through Kent, an attempt had to be made to establish a modus vivendi between the baron and the municipalities in his bailiwick. Typical of the difficulties which had been harassing the local corporations was the claim which Cobham made upon the money received by Rye as ransom for a French mer-

chant who had been six months a prisoner in that port "'a cause des troubles de France'".[16] On 17 September 1573, while the queen was still in Kent, the Mayor and Jurats of Rye empowered six citizens to treat with the Lord Warden about the Frenchman's £ 200 redemption. The corporation was willing to give Cobham a share of the money, but by the time that its representatives met him, the Lord Warden had the queen's authority to claim the entire sum. "'Much grevid at the same considering the great charge they have of late benne at frankely and of mere good-will,'" especially in preparing for the royal visit, the townsmen made a strong protest. Knowing that Cobham had the power to reverse his decision to deprive them of the money, some of which had apparently been already expended, the Mayor and Jurats warned him that so arbitrary an action as that which he proposed to take would have a bad effect upon their fellow citizens. "'Theis thinges,'" they said, referring to their recent extraordinary expenses,

> 'wilbe very burdenous to our commons which we wold to God your Lordship did as well knowe as we doe, and are leike to feele. And nowe to departe frome that mony beinge so frely geven doth kill the hartes of them clene. In consideration whereof we most humblie beseche your Honor to stand our good Lorde and that with your favor and good will we may enjoye that mony without eny further troble; and if your Lordship will nedes have it then must we crave of your Honor some staie for levyinge it by way of cease, as we are determined, havinge of purpose sent theis berres [bearers] to have conference with your Lordship about the same for in you it lieth to staie all.[17]

There is no record of Cobham's decision in the matter of the Frenchman's £ 200; one assumes that he refused to give way, for on 26 November 1573 Serjeant William Lovelace, Roger Manwood's successor in the office of Solicitor to the Cinque Ports, wrote a general letter to the seven towns which indicated the approach of a crisis in the bailiwick. "'Wheras there hath bene some stryffe betwene your Lord Warden and you,'" wrote Lovelace,

> 'the soner yt is in hand the soner you shall rypp your owne quitnes with hym that is your hedd and maie stand you in all your sutes and doeinges havinge his favor, in great stedd, otherwise such poore sutes as some of your townes have or anie of yourselves maie have, cannot well by any sute to his Lordship be urgid to be furthered. Thus leving the consideration thereof to yourselves as one that both doth honor hym and well wisheth unto you all, I trust you will take this my wrytinge in good parte.'[18]

The Portsmen took Lovelace's advice.

In 1574 an agreement was drawn up between the Cinque Ports and the Lord Warden

which provided both sides with a clear understanding of the rights which had previously been in dispute. The question of Cobham's share in the profits of wrecks and prizes, like the ransom paid by the Frenchman, was discussed at length, and it was decided that, while each Port should have full salvage rights to boats hailing from other Ports in the federation, the Lord Warden should receive half the value of foreign wrecks. The long-standing complaint of the Lord Warden's office that processes which it was its duty to serve were often mishandled by the municipal authorities to whom they were committed was also resolved. Henceforth the Ports would pay the fines imposed by the Exchequer for failure to make adequate returns of legal summonses; Cobham had previously been put to great expense in this regard, for his was the ultimate responsibility for the execution of writs in his bailiwick. Another bone of contention in the Ports area was the cost of court proceedings, and in 1574 it was at last agreed that the charges in the Lord Warden's Court of Chancery should be fixed. Impeccable legal methods were also assured by the stipulation that the Steward of Dover Castle, who presided over the court, should always be a bencher of Westminster or of one of the Inns of Court. Only one outstanding problem remained unsolved at the end of 1574. Cobham at first demanded that his right to nominate one Member of Parliament for each Port be recognized; the Portsmen refused to allow this demand, however, and in the final agreement the clause was not inserted.[19]

The significance of the composition between the Cinque Ports and the Lord Warden might be misconstrued. For it was not the compromise which it appears to have been. The Portsmen conceded salvage rights to Cobham which he had not previously had, and unburdened him of the expense of paying fines into the Exchequer. They did not get in return a sure guarantee of reduced costs in litigation or of freedom to conduct Parliamentary elections without interference. For, by the end of his life, Cobham had managed to wrest, by what Sir John Neale calls "a process of gradual usurpation", virtual recognition from the Ports of his prescriptive right to appoint a Member of Parliament in each borough; also, by the late 1590s, all of the old complaints against extortionate legal costs were being made again.[20] The agreement of 1574 indicates, not a growth of strength in the Ports, but the need of

the Portsmen to settle outstanding differences with their Lord Warden in order to ensure against his desertion of them in the event of a concerted attack from the central government upon their anachronistic liberties. They had no effective means of holding him to his promises, whereas he, once they made their written concessions to his claims upon them, had his power over them reinforced by law. A contract made by parties so unequal was inherently useless to the weaker side; the Portsmen in 1574 bought themselves temporary alleviation of some of their complaints, at the price of even greater subservience to the Lord Warden in the years to come.

If it did not take Cobham long to make up the loss in influence which he had sustained in his government at home, he was also soon released from the ostracism to which he had been subjected by his peers following the exposure of the Ridolfi Plot. By St. George's Day 1574 he was considered eligible for the Garter by all but four of the Knights, among them Hunsdon, and a year later only the extreme Puritan, Bedford, withheld from him his vote.[21] These years of the mid-1570s were comparatively uneventful ones: Froude, in saying that for them "the annals of England are almost a blank,"[22] admits that Elizabeth, with her devious foreign policy, managed to keep her kingdom at peace while wars and rebellions raged on the Continent. Cobham, once he had retrieved his reputation, played a small part in the queen's practices.

England's flirtation with France continued. The Duke of Anjou was superseded as the leading suitor for Elizabeth's hand by his younger brother, Alençon, and in March 1574 it was suggested how the prince might have a personal interview with the queen without committing either party to participation in a formal marriage treaty. If, Elizabeth told La Mothe-Fénélon, Alençon would care to come over to England with a small retinue of, say, twelve or fifteen gentlemen, and loiter about in Kent for a time, she could go off hunting into that county and, as if by chance, meet him far away from the officialdom of the Court. The most appropriate place for such a fortuitous rendezvous, Elizabeth suggested, would be Cobham Hall.[23] The ambassador relayed the idea in all seriousness to King Charles, who, since he was then holding his brother prisoner in the Louvre to prevent his running off to join the Huguenots, can have given it scant attention. Later, however, when Alençon did

at last visit England, Cobham's house was the setting for at least one scene in the Frenchman's courtship of the queen.

Beguilement of France had of course to be offset by overtures to Spain. Elizabeth's relations with Philip II were complicated by the unofficial assistance which the English were giving to the Prince of Orange, but in June 1575 a temporary directness entered into the queen's policy when Orange forfeited her goodwill by refusing to permit the peaceful re-establishment of trade between the Spanish Netherlands and England. Elizabeth at once embarrassed her recalcitrant ally by arranging a deal with Philip's governor at Brussels, whereby the Spanish withdrew their protection from the English Catholic exiles in exchange for the queen's expulsion from the Cinque Ports of Orange's sea captains and their French Huguenot colleagues. Evidently Elizabeth had been expecting trouble from the Dutch: as early as 16 April she had given Cobham authority to shut all of the harbours under his rule to the disloyal subjects of her "'very good brother, frynd and alley, the Kynge Catholique of Spayne'".[24] The Portsmen were understandably reluctant to take such an order seriously when it was at last passed on to them on 8 June, and were even further perplexed when they were told that the Huguenot artisans who had taken refuge with them were to be expelled. The Mayor of Rye wrote to Cobham on 17 June that the French colony in his town was "'loth to go'" and that the corporation "'could very well spare them'". Yet royal commands were not to be challenged, and "'what your Honor shall thinke well of concerninge their departure or abode,'" wrote the mayor accommodatingly, "'we shall for our partes leike well of also.'"[25] Presumably the Huguenots went.

It was not long before the men of the Cinque Ports understood why their queen had lost patience with the Prince of Orange and the unruly men who served him in his fight against Spain. For the arrogance of the Dutch grew rapidly throughout 1575, and in the following spring two incidents occurred which touched English sensibilities profoundly. One was the capture by some of Orange's freebooters of Burghley's son-in-law the Earl of Oxford; the Lord Great Chamberlain escaped the pirates with his life and nothing more besides his shirt. The other episode is less famous, but it affected Kent and especially Cobham very closely. In it the victim

was the baron's brother John. John Brooke had been commissioned to fetch from the Netherlands an Italian lady, the daughter of a rich merchant, who was to be married at London to the emissary to Elizabeth of the King of Portugal. Brooke crossed the Channel, picked up his important passenger, and, flying the English flag, brought his ship back to within six miles of Dover. Then catastrophe struck. As he wrote from Middelburg on 4 March 1575/6, three days after the event,

> on thursday last at vj of the clocke in the afternon iiij^{or} shippes of warr of Flusshing and of Armewdin mett with me within vj myles of Douer and shott iiij^{or} greate shott at me, and with one of there shott the[y] hitt ouer boat with in iiij^{or} inches of the water so that I was forced to yeald unto them. They by force entered the boates and haue robbed and spowled us of all ouer goods and money, and I was turned into Armewy in my hoss and my dublett. The[y] toke away from us ouer swerdes and daggers; the[y] haue allso robbed the poore lady of all there [sic] chaynes and brasslettes, wyche they haue. I tolld them, before the[y] came aburd, what we ware the[y] might eassly deserne by ouer flagg, but they mayed no accompt of no wordes. When we spake unto them of ouer good Quene, they like varletts ansswered unreuerently, They toke ouer mayster, olde Watson, of Douer, away from us, and would haue throwen the good olde man into the seas; but, as God would haue it amongest meany ungodly persons, when [i.e., one] honest man stode up and saued him, and all to this was, as the[y] say, because I would strike my cappsayle to the Prince of Orrandges shipps. Surly I know no cause why Her Magestes seruantes or subjectes shuld strike to any man, but to Her Magestes shippes, being within her Magestes streame. But, if my shipp had byne equall to his, I would haue sent him to God or to the deuill.

God had, however, as Brooke ruefully acknowledged, "other wyss appoynted it", and it took a sharp remonstrance from Elizabeth to make Orange order the release of his captives. Only a humble apology from the prince, and the safe conveyance through the Channel of "M^{r} Cobbham with the ladie in the Quenes shippe Achates", averted an international indident of the first order.[26]

Lord Cobham stayed in Kent throughout the summer of 1575. Meanwhile the Court went on progress into the Midlands, and there was entertained with shows so magnificent that none but the favoured Dudleys would have dared rival royalty by putting them on. For this was the year of Leicester's triumphant reception of Elizabeth in his home county. Yet the queen and her ministers could not give themselves up wholly even to 'the princely pleasures of Kenilworth'; they were forced to consider the imminent danger of a drastic realignment of power on the Continent, where Orange, rebuffed by England, was being driven into a league with France. It had been decided early in the summer that Philip II should be urged to come to terms with his rebel-

lious subjects in time to prevent the French from entering the Netherlands. Elizabeth might have forestalled an expansion of French domination by going herself to the aid of the rebels, for she knew that Orange still preferred her assistance to that of France. In determining to interfere in the situation by diplomatic means only, Elizabeth gave Philip proof of her desire to re-establish good relations with his government; she tested his willingness to reciprocate by pointedly choosing as her emissary to him a man who had been treated with scant courtesy on his last visit to Madrid. "Henry Cobham goes to Spain," it was announced from the Court at Grafton on 28 June;[27] the warmth of the reception accorded to him would indicate the extent to which Philip would go in healing the long-standing breach between England and Spain. Perhaps to provide the envoy with a rank which would be recognized in the punctilious Escurial, perhaps to demonstrate to Philip that Cobham had the queen's confidence and must not be slighted, it was decided to reward the baron's brother with a knighthood before he left for overseas.

It was to Kenilworth that Henry Cobham, at the age of thirty-eight, travelled to receive the accolade for which he had served the queen some fifteen years. The new knight's brother was probably given an account of the ceremony, at which Thomas Cecil was also honoured, for Burghley said later that he had written to Lord Cobham from Kenilworth, but the letter does not survive. For a record of the events of 18 July 1575 one must turn to a famous document upon which students of Elizabethan drama and literature have been accustomed to rely; that is, to the published newsletter attributed to Robert Laneham, which states:

> This daye waz a day of grace beside, whearin wear auaunced fyue Gentlemen of woorshippe vnto the degree of knighthood, Sir Thomas Cecyl, sun & heyr vntoo the right honorabl the Lord Treazorer, Syr Henry Cobham, brother vnto the Lord Cobhã, Syr Thomas Stanhop, Syr Arthur Basset, and Syr Thomas Tresham: and allso by her highnes accustumed mercy & charitee, nyne cured of the peynfull and daungerous diseaz, called y^e^ kings euill, for that Kings & Queenz of this Realm, withoout oother medsin (saue only by handling & prayerz) only doo cure it: bear with me, though perchauns I place not thoz Gentlmen in my recitall heer, after theyr estatez: for I am neyther good heraud of armez, nor yet kno hoow they are set in the Subsydy bookez. Men of great woorship I vnderstand they are all.[28]

Three days before becoming Sir Henry Cobham, the queen's envoy had been issued a permit to requisition a cart from the royal stores "to carye his stuffe to London".[29] Yet on 13 August he had still not set out, and had indeed fallen ill; the French

ambassador reported that he hoped to leave as soon as he was feeling better.[30] The delay confused Antonio de Guaras, the Spanish merchant whose letters from London served King Philip in place of official dispatches following Guerau de Spes's expulsion at the end of 1571. Early in July de Guaras thought that Sir Henry was going to Spain "to learn for certain his Majesty's feelings with regard to friendship,"[31] but he was not sure whether the envoy might not be going to take up permanent residence in Madrid as ambassador ledger. On 18 July the Spaniard reported from London that there was some doubt that Cobham would be going abroad at all.[32] A week later, however, de Guaras knew that the envoy had been made a knight, that he had received his instructions, and that he would be travelling to Spain through France. The rumour that Cobham would embark from Plymouth with his wife and two baby sons had by then been discredited, so that there seemed to be no likelihood that he would remain away for very long.[33] Sometime in the middle of August he at last set sail for the Continent.

Meanwhile the ordinary business of the Court went on. By this time Lady Cobham was once again busy about her duties near the queen, and busy also about her absent husband's affairs. On 8 September, when the royal household had moved on to Elizabeth's own palace at Woodstock, Lord Cobham heard how hard the summer had been on his wife. His informant was Leicester, who had himself found constant attendance upon the queen as her host a tiring, if gratifying, business. "My veary good L.," wrote the earl;

> I haue byn oft about to wryte to yᵂ but always at the tymes of yʳ messengers depture. I was letted spetyally wyelst her maᵗ was at Kenelw.

Cobham was not to attribute Leicester's silence to any lack of affection: his "fryndeship & good wille" could be depended upon: but he had been extremely busy. Lady Cobham could testify to this: "yᵉ earnest desyer of yoʳ wyffe ys," Leicester told the baron, "to rest her wery boones a whyle" in Kent, for she was as worn out as he was.[34]

There are other suggestions that Lady Cobham had little leisure at this time for visits to her own house. It cannot be discovered how long it was after the exposure of the Ridolfi Plot that she returned to the queen's inner circle. It has been stated

that she wrote frequently to Norfolk in the spring of 1572,[35] but one hesitates to assume that the letters came from the Court, much more that they were composed in accordance with the queen's instructions or that they conveyed messages from Elizabeth during those five months of vacillation which she interposed between the duke's condemnation and his execution. One cannot even be certain that the baroness was at Court during the winter of 1573-74, when, among the gold and silver plate brought out for the queen's use, there was an elaborate utensil which may have been a special gift designed to help Lady Cobham assure Elizabeth of her devotion. It was "oone tankerde of allablaster, garnished with silver, and guilt; in the top of the cover is a woman's hedde;" "Geven by the lady Cobham," it weighed 18¼ oz troy.[36] Despite the lack of definite dates, one may assume that the baroness had long been settled again into the routine of regular attendance about the queen when, on 28 June 1574, a message was relayed from her to Bess of Shrewsbury. "My lady Cobbam," wrote young Gilbert Talbot to his step-mother from "the cowrte of Grenewidg",

> asketh daly how your La. dothe, and yesterday prayed me, the next tyme I wryt, to doe her very hartie cõmendacõns unto your La. saynge openly she remayneth unto your La. as she was wonte, as unto her deereste frend.[37]

Friendship with Lady Shrewsbury did not, however, prevent Lady Cobham during that same summer of 1574 from making an equivocal gesture which practically defies explanation. For it concerned the captive Queen of Scots, the countess's ill will for whom was notorious. One of the men implicated in the treasons of 1571 and subsequently kept under observation by the government was Henry Cockyn. Early in 1575 Cockyn was taken into custody and examined about the illicit correspondence which Secretary Walsingham allowed Mary Stuart to carry on even after it was detected, in order to keep watch over the desperate plans which she thought that she was hatching in secret. On 21 February Sir Owen Hopton, Lieutenant of the Tower, delivered to the Secretary a letter from his prisoner which accounted for Cockyn's initial reluctance to tell all that he knew. "Whereas Mr. Lieutenant," Cockyn wrote to Walsingham,

> informed your honour that I seemed to be afraid to discover anything that might touch great personages, indeed, at first I was afraid to discover that which I knew of Lord Henry [Howard] and the Lady Cobham, who were the personages I stood in doubt of, and no others.

Part of what had restrained Cockyn is clear enough, for the accusations which he proceeded to make against the late Norfolk's brother were serious and could hardly have been made with impunity except at the insistence of the Secretary himself. With which to charge Lady Cobham, however, the man had nothing more definite to say than that his party regarded her as their chief friend in the queen's circle: "What favourers the Scottish Queen has in Court," he wrote, "I know not, other than Lady Cobham." Lord Cobham was not implicated, although Francis Bertie, his servant, was taken into the Tower for questioning; otherwise the more prominent English actors in the Ridolfi Plot remained free from suspicion in 1575. As Cockyn averred after naming Bertie and some of the Bishop of Ross's minor correspondents,

> Of those that were in trouble for the said Queen, who showed themselves affected to her, or have any dealings for her, I know none other than I have already made mention of. Mr. Good and Morgan be the chiefest that deal for her, I never knew any pension given by the said Queen, either in Court or out of Court, to any besides myself.[38]

Conyers Read says that Elizabeth was severely jolted to learn that Lady Cobham was regarded as a Marian sympathizer, and that she ordered a full examination of Cockyn's reasons for thinking that she was.[39] The course of the investigation, however, while admittedly difficult to reconstruct, does not seem to indicate that it was the baroness in whose activities Elizabeth was most interested. Cockyn remained the government's chief source of information: Thomas Morgan was beyond Walsingham's reach, for he was the Scottish queen's agent in Paris, and James Good (who was a physician and can hardly be identified with the London merchant whom Norfolk had known), although closely interrogated, seems to have revealed nothing which the Secretary did not already know. Elizabeth studied all the evidence personally, and when she became impatient for more she instructed Leicester to write a letter to Walsingham about how she herself regarded the affair. "Her majesty," said the earl,

> doubts there is great dissimulation used in sundry the examinations, finding their answers to grow near in some points, and yet far from appearance of truth, the matters being discovered as they be. Her majesty would also that all others who be touched by any the accusations be dealt withal according as you have sufficient to charge them with; as specially she named my Lord Harry Howard, that my Lord Treasurer and you shall call him and charge him with that he is touched withal, for that it appears he both heard from the bishop of Ross and

> received the writings, and concealed that whereby she thinks him greatly in fault.[40]

It is to be noted that Leicester did not mention Lady Cobham; the baroness's name occurs in none of the extant correspondence which passed between the queen's ministers that spring. Finally, before the Court set out upon its summer perambulations, Walsingham turned again to Henry Cockyn and took from him a summary of the accusations which he had made. The prisoner had probably revealed earlier what precisely it was that he meant by saying that Lady Cobham was sympathetic to the captive Queen of Scots; it is inconceivable, unless the government knew that the allegations made against the baroness were false, that specific facts should not have been extracted from her accuser. Of the evidence which survives, however, there is only one statement which bears upon the matter; it is endorsed, "'20 May 1575 Henrie Cockyn towchynge a letter written by D[octor] Good concerninge the Ladie Cobham'". The relevant portion of it reads:

> 'The woordes which Doctor Good wrote in a letter to the Scottish Queen tochinge the Ladie Cobham this last somer, 1574.
> 'Havinge occasion to ride abrode this last somer, it was my chance to passe by a house of the Ladie Cobham's (wheare she then laye); with whome I had sum conference; and surelie, madam, I finde her to be your good freind and welwiller.'

This was the sum of Cockyn's evidence against Lady Cobham, except for his assertion that Good had mentioned in his letter to Mary that "a box of mithridate" which he was sending to her came from the baroness.[41] The doctor was accustomed to dealing in alexipharmics, specifically mithridate and treacle, which he procured from an apothecary in Fleet Street for the French ambassador;[42] Lady Cobham, if she actually made Mary a present of such a compound, indicated that she thought the captive to be in danger from poisoning.

With Cockyn's statement of 20 May the incident of Lady Cobham and the Marians, so far as one knows it today, was closed. One is utterly perplexed by it. It was not safe for anyone in England but the queen herself to express sympathy for Mary Stuart; to send her an assurance of affection, accompanied with a tangible token of solicitude for her well-being, was to court trouble. One would have thought that Lady Cobham, the wife of a minister who had been involved with Norfolk and the Bishop of Ross, ought to have been especially circumspect in her attitude toward her mistress's principal enemies. The facts indicate that she was not. Cockyn's

story was no fabrication: his allegation that Lady Cobham had been in touch with Queen Mary is substantiated by nothing less than a letter written to the captive herself many years later, in which Thomas Morgan urged the queen to "consyder how to revive your Intelligence with my Lady Cobham." Morgan wrote thus in 1586, when the baroness almost certainly had nothing to do with the Marians: her name was used by them then through sheer irresponsibility, and one may reserve for a more appropriate place consideration of what they hoped to gain by doing so.[43] In 1574, however, it is clear that she gave them reason to regard her as at least a potential accomplice.

Conceivably Lady Cobham was merely following instructions from above when she talked with Dr. Good. It is known that it was Walsingham's policy in the 1570s to plant people faithful to the queen in the counsels of Mary's agents; the names of government spies occur side by side with those of traitors in the examinations made of conspirators and malcontents who were arrested throughout the decade. Yet no one so elevated socially as the baroness can be proved to have been employed by the machiavellian Secretary in his espionage system. If Lady Cobham had not been acting on the orders of Walsingham or of Elizabeth herself when she communicated with Mary, she seems to have escaped with remarkable impunity the consequences of her conduct. For Elizabeth, whether because she did not believe Cockyn's story in so far as it compromised the baroness, or because she chose to deal with her servant in a private manner of which history could not be expected to record the details, seems to have allowed no stigma to attach itself to her Mistress of the Robes. Lady Cobham is known to have been shut out of the queen's presence only when her husband was arrested in 1571. Henry Cockyn's statements in the spring of 1575 did not exclude her from the tiring delights offered at Kenilworth and Woodstock a few weeks later, nor did any other accusations made against her thereafter keep her from intimate service near the Throne for the rest of her life. One may wonder whether she wavered in her allegiance in 1574, but one would be unjustified by the evidence which survives if one assumed that she was disloyal. While Francis Bertie and other suspect Englishmen fretted in the Tower, Lady Cobham was 'communing friendly' with the Lord Treasurer at Court, and it is as the confidante of such powerful men as

ner husband's friend that one must continue to think of her.

Much has already been heard of the members of the house of Cobham in 1575, but little of their chief. One might have encountered Lord Cobham more often in this year had he been able to come to Court; with the queen and her government away in the Midlands for several months, and with the situation in the Channel such that it required the Lord Warden's constant personal surveillance, however, he seems to have spent his little leisure time at Cobham Hall. It is in a way fortunate that this was the case, for separation from his friends meant that he had to keep in touch with them by correspondence, and of this a little survives. Leicester's note about Lady Cobham's fatigue at the end of the summer has already been quoted. Two other letters are of greater interest, for they are from Burghley and are the first of his to Cobham which date from the post-Ridolfi period. Burghley had only recently returned to public life when the Court set out on its progress in 1575; since 1573, probably because of ill health, he had been living in virtual retirement.[44] The international situation forced him back into the centre of affairs, and it was only with difficulty that he managed to get a few days' leave from the queen to visit his own house in Northamptonshire. From there on 23 July Burghley wrote to his old friend. The letter is reminiscent of earlier ones, for it is a reassuring reply to an expression of Cobham's fear that Elizabeth was or would be displeased with him, on this occasion for a fault committed by one of the Lord Warden's officials on the coast. It explains itself, and is particularly interesting because it concerns the Queen of Scots and indicates how nervous Cobham became whenever he was associated, however indirectly, with that dangerous personage. That both the baron's wife and his friend fully appreciated his worry the letter makes clear. "My very good Lord," it begins;

> I was both glad and sorry to receave your Lordship's two Letters, glad to hear from you, and sorry to perceave how much you are greved with the Matter whereof I did lately wryte to your Lordship from Kennelworth; whereof I wold not haue wrytten at all, but that communing frendly with my Lady your Wiff amongst other Thyngs, I told hir how I had moved hir Majesty for the Sercher of Gravesend, whom I commended to hir Majesty both in your Name and of mine own Knowledge. And so having some Words concerning your Lordship, though not directly, but as it seemed directly, touching the sayd Sercher, as though he had permitted certen Juells of the Quene of Scotts to pass out of the Realm unstayed. And so though I found no playne Offence in hir Majesty, yet my Lady required me to wryte to your

> Lordship thereof; and so the rather I did, because it might be, that your Lordship had hard of some such Matter, and yet therein nothing touched at all. But now I shall be sorry, if your Lordshipp shall contynew in any Anguish or Greeff of Mynd, as doubting of hir Majesty's Favour, whereof suerly my Lord, I know not but you may make assured Accompt, as others do; and yet must sometimes beare with a Cast of cross Words, as I myself haue had long Experience, sometyme, when I deserve, in my Opinion, best, and look least for such Mishhapps. Good my Lord, content and arme yourself with your own Brestplate of a cleare Conscience; and for this Matter, I will further serch out how hir Majesty was informed of these Juells, and wether any Information was directly given ageynst this Sercher, or that hir Majesty being only informed of the conveying away of certen Juells at Gravesend, I did but conjecturally touch this Man, because I did commend hym; and theraf ter I trust to understand, whyther hir Majesty conceaved any Thing directly of your Lordshipp as a Favoror of the Man in such a Cause, which, if I shall understand, I will truly lett your Lordshipp understand, to the End your Innocency may be therein knowen to hir Majesty. And if any have otherwise noted your Lordshipp, ther Injurye done to your Lordshipp may be knowen; and so still, my good Lord, I do most heartily intreat you, and in God's Name, as with some Authority, I charge you not to move yourself with any Spark of Greeff. I will contynew my Sute for this Man; and yet I doubt, whyther my Lord Admyrall [Clinton, Earl of Lincoln since 1572] will think it appertaineing to hys Office, whom I wold be loth to offend any wise. And so I end, having had a short Licenss to come hyther to Burghley, whither I came on Tuesday at Night, and must be at Kynellworth on Monday next.[45]

Burghley signed himself "Your Lordshipp's assured at your Command, as any Brother you can have;" Cobham was evidently reassured by his letter, for the next thing which survives from their correspondence is a confident little note written on 23 August, in which the baron asked his friend for assistance in exporting a cargo of Kentish cloth. Elizabeth had made a special concession in granting the export licence; it will be recalled that official government policy, inspired by Burghley, was opposed to such trade. One therefore assumes that Cobham had been wrong to doubt the queen's goodwill. On 15 September, from his house at Theobalds, Burghley wrote to say that he had arranged with the customs men in London that Cobham's goods should pass out of that port;[46] he made no allusion to the matter of the searcher at Gravesend, which, if there was anything at all to it, must have been settled without difficulty.

Burghley, in his letter of 15 September, made an interesting comment upon the problems which were exercising the government that summer. La Mothe-Fénélon had been instructed by his king to frustrate as well as he oould the rapprochement between England and Spain which was expected to result from Sir Henry Cobham's discussions with King Philip in Madrid. The Frenchman therefore broached once again the possibility of a marriage between Elizabeth and the Duke of Alençon. It has

been suggested that, four years before this time, Cobham may have feared that Burghley was moving away from his old attitude of preferring a Spanish to a French alliance; in 1575 the baron was given no cause for such anxiety, for Burghley's reaction to the ambassador's tactic was cynical. "Our French Ambassador," he wrote,

> hath set a Foot of new the French Marriage, but I look for nothing of them but Dallyance to use us to their Avantage, And yit I am ernestly moved to seke her Majesty's Marriage as far forth as I may; and if this shall not spedely succede, suerly we that would be accompted good Counsellors may not be careless. God send hir to marry without Respect of any my particular Lyking. For I take God to wytness, I do not regard any privet Interest in hir Marriage.[47]

The red herring was unsuccessful, and soon after expressing his contempt for its obviousness Burghley learned that King Henry III did not have his brother's marriage at his disposal at all. For Alençon, after intriguing for months to do so, fled Paris in September 1575 and joined the Huguenot princes.[48]

The French could not be trusted, neither could the Spanish. As he waited for news from Sir Henry Cobham, Burghley heard that ships of King Philip's navy had been cruising off the south coast. Lord Cobham was ordered to do his best to avoid unpleasantness should the Spaniards wish to land in the Cinque Ports, since they might be coming as allies and not with any sinister intentions. From Dover Castle on 10 October the Lord Warden instructed the Portsmen to admit the foreign fleet with courtesy, but to inform him of its arrival without delay.[49] Meanwhile, in Madrid, the baron's brother knew no better than the queen's ministers at home what might be expected from Spain. Sir Henry was having a hard time. The Duke of Alba, aware of the dangers of either a French or an English invasion of the Netherlands, welcomed the prospect of a treaty between Elizabeth and his master. His fellow ministers, however, led by the Inquisitor General and by the pious President Hopper, chief of the Council for the Netherlands, refused to consider a league with a heretic queen. Philip himself was torn between a personal inclination to return to the old days of peace with England, and an equally strong feeling of horrr against Protestantism. His conscience had not allowed him even to receive Cobham until the pope had given him a dispensation to talk with the heretic. His subjects, ruled by the Inquisition, shared the king's scruples: on 15 October Cobham wrote to Burghley that his baggage had been searched on arrival, an unheard of insult to an accredited

ambassador, that no lodging had been provided for him and that he could hardly find anyone who would rent him a house. "None of those courteous offices which are due in respect of her Majesty," he informed Burghley, were being shown him.[50] On the way to Madrid the envoy's travelling companion had died, and this added greatly to Cobham's distress, for Richard Verney had been not only his first cousin, his mother's nephew, but his close friend as well.[51] He was thus in no mood to be trifled with, and one day in November he appears to have given vent to his feelings in no very dignified way. As Alba wrote to the Spanish Secretary of State, Cobham

> 'has just rushed into my room to kill me. I have Cobham at one ear and Hopper at the other, and between them both I am at my wits' end. Hopper will ruin all. The Queen of France will throw herself on France: the objection will be the same as long as she lives, and Hopper is such an obstinate ass that I can drive no conviction into his head. The King knows what I think, and I shall say no more. The Englishman is ready to tear me in pieces because he and his mistress are called heretics.[52]

On another occasion, it was said back in London, Cobham had a stormy interview with the king himself. "A great councillor" was quoted as having revealed to the world that

> his Majesty has used very hard words to the ambassador Cobham respecting the action of the Queen, saying that he could not tolerate her unneighbourly behaviour in helping Orange.[53]

Cobham's own account of the castigation given him by Philip does not survive among the dispatches which he sent from Spain; he must have written about it, however, for it showed exactly how wilful the Spanish were in misconstruing his message. It was precisely in order to terminate a state of affairs in which Orange existed as an independent agent capable of soliciting aid from any foreign power that Elizabeth had sent her representative to Madrid. Cobham remonstrated with the king and his ministers, but they were too obsessed with hatred of heresy to settle down to consider the pressing affairs about which he had come among them to consult. Only Alba saw that Philip, if he was to put his own Burgundian house in order before France made it impossible for him to do so, would be well advised to conciliate Elizabeth, and Cobham, appreciating the duke's desire to eliminate some of the obstacles in the way of an Anglo-Spanish understanding, accepted from him a private assurance that the Inquisition would meddle with none of the queen's subjects who did not openly

flout the Catholic Church while in Spain. Alba had no real authority to make such a promise, and Cobham was wrong to accept it: Protestant sailors and merchants continued to be harassed, and when another envoy, sent to Philip to protest, learned that Alba had over-reached himself, Cobham was "much blamed and attacked at Court" for having given the impression, upon his return to England, that the duke's assurance meant anything.[54] As for the king, he himself made no promises; all that Cobham could get Philip to hold out to him was a hope that ordinary diplomatic relations could soon be re-established. He was pointedly told that whoever it was that Elizabeth should choose to send to Spain as her resident ambassador, the man had better be quiet, unassuming and congenial to the Inquisition, that is, that he should be a Catholic.[55] The results of an embassy which cost the Exchequer £ 1,046.12.4, in Burghley's precise reckoning,[56] were little enough, and Cobham, when he left Madrid early in December 1575, must have known that he would not be returning to that city again.[57]

On 6 January 1575/6 Sir Henry Cobham returned to Court,[58] where he was soon joined by the envoys whom the queen had sent to Orange and to the Spanish governor, Requescens, to urge upon them the need of a speedy and peaceful settlement of the problem in the Netherlands. The Council deliberated with the three men. Cobham's report on his talks in Spain discouraged Elizabeth, while John Hastings not only informed her that Orange was sceptical about the chances of a peace, but had even sent to England a deputation of his ministers who were to plead with her for armed assistance against Philip. Only Robert Corbet, who had gone to Brussels, had any encouragement to offer: Requescens had shown himself eager to accept Elizabeth's offer to mediate between his king and the rebels. By February the queen had decided to deal directly with the governor, and Cobham was chosen

> to urge upon the Commendator the necessity of taking steps for the pacification of the Low Countries, and more especially of granting an abstinence from arms in the meanwhile; and in the case of his refusal, to say that the Queen will be of necessity forced to take steps for her own preservation.

Presumably it was because of Cobham's intimate knowledge of the situation in Spain itself that he and not Corbet, who alone of Elizabeth's diplomats had actually met Requescens, was entrusted with the complicated errand of browbeating Philip's vice-

gerent into doing what the king himself had been prevented by his militantly Catholic advisers from doing. Cobham did not, however, have a chance to try his skill in persuasion upon the Spaniard. Requescens died on 5 March and the envoy's instructions were cancelled with the simple words, "'The Commendator died before his despatch and so these were never used.'"[59] Cobham was never again employed in Spanish affairs. Elizabeth had seen that she had made him *persona non grata* with Philip by assigning to him the most vexatious of errands when he went to Spain, but evidently this awareness did not prevent her from intending that he should next speak for her at the king's Flemish Court. The death of Requescens frustrated her plans, for Philip appointed no new governor for almost a year. Meanwhile Orange grew in strength and arrogance: the indignity has already been described which John Brooke suffered in the excited days which followed immediately upon the sudden decease of the Spanish ruler: and Don John of Austria, when he arrived at Brussels in 1577, found himself not with a revolt to suppress but a full-scale war to conduct. There was no longer occasion for the kind of exploratory negotiations in which Henry Cobham had been engaged, and when Elizabeth next made representations to the Netherlands she did so by means of a lordly embassy in which not Cobham but his brother the baron took part. Sir Henry's days of posting across Europe were over. He remained at Court for more than three years, and was then given the resident ambassadorship at Paris.

While one of his brothers was doing his best to keep England from having to enter the Dutch wars, and while another was being attacked by the unruly associates of one of the belligerents, William Lord Cobham sat in the Parliament which voted to the queen the means of assisting Orange should she be forced to take upon herself the militant leadership of the Protestant cause against either France or Spain. The baron, who had not been summoned to Parliament when it met in 1572, does not seem to have been at Westminster when the second session began on 8 February 1575/6.[60] A week later, however, he was in his seat, and his appointment to an important committee at that time does not allow one to doubt that he had recovered much of the prestige lost to him in 1571. Unwilling to accept the queen's veto of the bill of 1571 which would have bound all Englishmen to take communion within the Estab-

lished Church, several of the bishops and peers made a move independent of the Commons in 1576, and re-introduced "The Bill for coming to Church and receiving of the Communion". It was read twice in February, and on the fifteenth of the month committed to a group which included the chief proponent of the bill, the new Archbishop Grindal, as well as Burghley, Leicester, Sussex and Bedford, four of the most prominent bishops and four other barons, among them Cobham. By 3 March the bill had been converted in committee into a milder one, but even this was thrown out after one reading. Neale seems to be justified in assuming that "the Queen's great ministers, if they did not bring explicit orders from her, must, one suspects, have reported that there was not a chance of securing her consent to compulsory attendance at Communion."[61]

The only other record of Cobham's activities in the Parliament of 1576 shows that he sat with Burghley and other magnates on a committee which considered a bill for the maintenance of Rochester Bridge, erected two centuries earlier by one of his ancestors.[62]

The baron seems to have taken no part in the extraordinary business occasioned by the refusal of the Commons to countenance the queen's determination to restore in blood the young Lord Stourton. John Stourton was the elder of the two sons of a baron who had shocked England in 1556: in Aubrey's words,

> the Lord Stourton was attainted by his murthering of Mr. Hargill his Steward, whom he killed and buryed in his Cellar, for which he was hanged in a silken halter at Salisbury.[63]

In 1576 the baron's son, having come of age since the first session of Parliament was prorogued in 1572, was summoned to take his seat in the Lords, and Elizabeth at the same time signed a bill restoring the new peer in blood. Her action was arbitrary in the extreme, since it reduced to a mere formality the passage of the bill through Parliament, but the Upper House did not take offence at the reversal of the usual legislative practice: the Lords passed it and sent it on to the Commons. There, however, sharply resenting the queen's signature to a measure which they had not yet endorsed, the Members caused trouble.

> It was first alledged in the House of Commons against the further proceeding of the Bill for the restitution in Blood of the Lord Stourton (whose Father was Attainted of Murther, and thereby his Blood corrupted) by some in the said House, that the said party who

> now sued to be restored in Blood, had before given cause for men to think that he would not hereafter be worthy of so much favour.

Stourton was a Catholic and unpopular with the Commons, but it was boldness indeed to impugn the character of a man whom the queen had adjudged worthy of her confidence. Startled to learn that his suit was being opposed, the young man made a personal appearance before the committee to which the bill had been assigned, and then went to Burghley himself. Burghley summoned the leaders of the Commons to the Upper House, and there, accompanied by "the persons of the principal Noblemen of that House, after they had taken their places at a long Table," the Lord Treasurer reprimanded the Members for their insolence. "They took themselves greatly touched in honor," he said of himself and his peers,

> and thought that the House of Commons did not use that reverence towards them which they ought to do; the cause he said besides, was such as they saw no reason why the House of Commons should proceed in that Order; for the Bill being signed by her Majesty, he said, none might presume to alter or add any thing to it without the assent of her Majesty, which they for their parts durst not do.

The Commons, however, refused to pass the bill at all without adding to it provisos which would curtail the advantages to be bestowed upon Stourton by being restored in blood. A stalemate was thus reached, and, presumably to the queen's annoyance and the affronted peer's great disappointment, the session was prorogued on 15 March without anything having been done to clear Stourton's name.[64] One wishes that Cobham had expressed some opinion about the case, for, four years later, he gave the younger of his twin daughters to the unpopular and, as it later appeared, unreliable young man.

Released from his parliamentary duties in mid-March 1576, Cobham remained in London for a short time, and on the twenty-fourth he wrote to his Lieutenant of Dover Castle from what he called "my house at the Tower hill". Just what this residence was cannot be established: perhaps it was a temporary one which the baron used during the changes which took place at the Blackfriars in 1576, when Richard Farrant leased from him the old refectory of the priory and turned a part of it into the first private theatre to be opened in England.[65] From this new address, Cobham ordered William Crispe to prevent the illegal passage of English volunteers from the Cinque Ports to the Netherlands, there to serve "'some forren prince or governors'".[66]

The injunction against assisting Orange is an interesting one, for it indicates how quickly Elizabeth, once the death of Requescens had given the prince his chance to free Holland of its Spanish rulers, withdrew from him all hopes of immediate reinforcement from England. Always reluctant to assist rebels against their rightful sovereign, she had no intention of using the funds recently given her by Parliament to assure the triumph of Dutch Protestantism. By her vacillation, and by the perennial desire to re-establish the old Anglo-Spanish alliance which she and Burghley continued to foster, was England's foreign policy dictated for some eight years longer. It was a policy of diplomatic intervention radically opposed to the armed interference which Leicester and Walsingham advocated so urgently, and it elicited from many a compromising politician a commitment of himself to one side or the other. Cobham must have pronounced himself firmly in favour of Burghley's position, for it was as a minister who could be trusted to look after the Spanish interest that the baron resumed his diplomatic career in the great embassy which Elizabeth sent to Holland in 1578.

* * *

Chapter III

Until 1578 it appeared to English observers abroad that the Prince of Orange might well succeed in his struggle against John of Austria. Each new conquest by the prince put a little more Dutch territory under the control of the nationalist Estates, which, governing in the name of Philip II, seemed destined to deprive the king of all but nominal sovereignty over the United Provinces of the Netherlands. Her conscience perhaps reassured by the ironically punctilious recognition by the Estates of Philip's title, Queen Elizabeth in September 1577 even went so far as to commit herself to supplying Orange with money and troops. She soon repented of having made such a promise, especially since the Estates had no sooner received it than they announced the appointment of a governor, the Archduke Matthias of Austria. Although care was taken that Matthias should be proclaimed as his cousin Philip's vicegerent only, the king's authority was reduced to the status of a rubber stamp: as Motley says, "Such a reservation in favour of his Majesty seemed a superfluous

sarcasm:"[1] and Elizabeth was confronted with the imminent establishment of a separate, revolutionary state which she would have helped Orange to create by assisting him against Spain. Frantically the queen dispatched envoys to Philip and to Don John, proposing an armistice before Dutch independence under the Protestants' puppet Matthias became a reality.[2] Meanwhile, availing themselves of her unfortunate decision to send troops to the Netherlands, volunteers crossed the Channel from England and enlisted with the Estates. Among these mercenaries was John Brooke, who, two years after suffering at the hands of Orange's privateers, on 21 April 1578 accepted a commission from the archduke to raise three companies of 200 men each for the service of "'his Majesty, us, and the States General, at the same rate of pay as other English troops'".[3]

Then, quite unexpectedly, Don John in a major engagement put the Dutch to rout: by February 1578 the victor of Lepanto seemed about to restore King Philip to his former power. Orange, desperate, was ready to accept whatever assistance he could get, and France, the old bugbear of both England and Spain in so far as the Netherlands were concerned, was quick to oblige him. In May a deputation from the Duke of Alençon arrived at Antwerp and prospects for a league between the rebels and the duke soon seemed good. The situation was the more complicated because it was understood that Alençon, who had been for so long at odds with Henry III, would have his brother's blessing and support if he invaded the Netherlands with the intention of helping Orange only until he could proclaim himself sovereign of the United Netherlands and make them an apanage of France. In England Burghley was alarmed. All of "his inveterate distrust of the French", to use Read's term for it, came into play, and he urged the queen to forestall Alençon's purpose by herself making representations to Orange. The burden of her message to the prince, Burghley advised, ought to be the folly of trusting the perfidious French, the perpetrators of St. Bartholomew's Day. It was not to be kept from Orange that England appreciated fully the difficulty of his situation: Burghley knew that Alençon, his offers of help rejected by the Estates, might well enter the Netherlands on the side of Don John. If such a Catholic league were formed, however, Orange was to be assured that Elizabeth would at long last embrace his cause and go openly to war against his enemies.

If, on the other hand, the prince accepted Alençon's aid, England would have no choice but itself to become the ally of Don John and, bringing in with it the German princes and the emperor, enter a war which could only result in the utter extirpation of all hopes for a free and Protestant Holland.[4] Burghley's advice was by no means that of most of the Privy Council. Leicester especially, and seemingly his colleague Walsingham as well, were all for going at once to the assistance of the Dutch, and Bacon, the Lord Keeper, was of the opinion that, if the queen did not herself intend to support the prince with arms, she had better allow Orange to accept Alençon's offers than to risk the formation of a Franco-Spanish religious league.[5] To such men it was imperative that Philip II should not regain uncontested ascendancy over the Netherlands, Walsingham indeed so distrusted the king that when the long-awaited Spanish ambassador came to take up residence in England in March 1578, thus marking the end of the diplomatic breach which Sir Henry Cobham had been instrumental in healing, the Secretary branded as "'evil affected and inclined to Spain'" those ministers who saw in Mendoza's arrival the hope of a settlement of the Dutch situation through English mediation.[6] The spring of 1578, however, was a time of crisis, and in a crisis Elizabeth almost invariably chose to be guided by her Lord Treasurer. Burghley's counsel prevailed: England's answer to the demands made upon it by warring western Europe was not to be armed defiance of Spain, but an embassy empowered to cajole and threaten the Dutch.

It seemed at first that Burghley's policy would be entrusted to his opponents. Walsingham, although unhappy about the queen's decision, had at least the gratification of knowing that he would be the most important minister to go to the Netherlands. A letter which he wrote to another Puritan, William Davison, indicates that on 11 May 1578 the Secretary even expected that Leicester himself would head the embassy. "'I find,'" he sent word to Davison in Holland,

> 'some disposition in her Majesty to send out of hand some personages of quality to the States to deal effectually with them in devising some good way for their safety, wherein I see some inclination in her to use my services. And if it so fall out I doubt not but that we shall bring over matter of contentment. The Earl of Leicester doth labour greatly to be employed in this journey and is not without hope to win the same at her Majesty's hands.'[7]

Soon after expressing himself thus optimistically, however, Walsingham learned that

his party was not to have its own way. Burghley's intention was that the embassy should be recognized by both Orange and Don John as an instrument for the re-establishment of peace. To have sent to the Netherlands two such advocates of war as Leicester and the Secretary would have given to the Dutch unwarranted hope of military aid and to the Spanish cause for suspicion of Elizabeth's motives. A prominent conservative was needed to give the requisite appearance of neutrality to the embassy; he had to be a man whose weight in public affairs was sufficient to counter-balance that of the queen's Principal Secretary, and he had also to be known to share the Lord Treasurer's desire to maintain peaceful relations with Spain. Elizabeth, almost certainly urged by Burghley, accordingly refused her favourite the office which he sought and gave it instead to Lord Cobham. One first hears of her decision in a letter which Walsingham wrote to Davison on 16 May, when the news was obviously already a few days old. "Her Majesty," Davison was informed,

> continues disposed to have the Lord Warden and me to come over. For myself, I am moved upon very great causes to seek to rid my hands from the voyage.[8]

For all his reluctance to take upon himself a mission which was evidently designed to defer too much to Spain to suit his own, militant brand of Protestantism, Walsingham had to tell Davison on 18 May that he and Cobham were definitely to undertake the embassy.[9] Leicester, rebuffed, took himself off to Buxton, to nurse a conveniently sore leg in the waters there; he found himself, he told Walsingham, too indisposed to correspond with Cobham.[10]

It is impossible to think of a man who would have been better qualified than Cobham to accompany Secretary Walsingham to the Netherlands in 1578. Both the nature of Walsingham's position and his peculiar concern with Dutch affairs made it clear that the baron's rôle could only be a secondary one, but his rank gave him nominal leadership of the embassy and thereby made it more acceptable to Spain. Bernardino de Mendoza, Philip's new ambassador in London, was of two minds about the significance of Cobham's going. He announced to his king on 16 May that Walsingham and the baron were to be the emissaries to Holland,[11] and on 13 June, when he thought that Elizabeth was being dominated by the war party in her Council, he told the Spanish Secretary of State that "Cobham is only going for the sake of appearances." At the

same time, however, he revealed how reassuring to Spain was the queen's preference of Cobham to Leicester, for he spoke of Cobham as a friend of Spain. It was of course Burghley's intention that the Spanish government should think so of his friend; indeed, the Lord Treasurer had probably foreseen that Mendoza, relying upon his predecessors' opinions of the baron's affection for Philip II, would write rather as he did about the likelihood that Cobham would do all in his power to protect Spanish interests. Mendoza went so far as to reckon that

> if the wind change in this country he will not be amongst the worst of these people, as he is much aggrieved against those who are now rule [sic], although he does not show it.[12]

Cobham, even if he was to be merely a figure-head, made a contribution to the viability of Burghley's scheme for English mediation from its very inception.

Too much was at stake, however, both in international issues and in the Court at home, for Burghley to have entrusted the defence of his policy to one who had no more than his rank and his supposed Spanish proclivities to recommend him. Historians ignore Cobham, Conyers Read among the rest, but Read has to admit that the baron was in 1578 "not by any means a nonentity".[13] Cobham had gradually regained the prestige which he had lost, and the queen's choice of him to fill a post which Leicester coveted is the less surprising when one studies the scrutiny rolls of nominations to the Order of the Garter at the time. In 1577 the baron had been unanimously recommended to Elizabeth for admission to the order, and in 1578, only a fortnight or so before Leicester lost the ambassadorship to him, he received the votes of all the Knights at Windsor except two, the Puritan Lords Grey and Warwick, the latter of whom was Leicester's brother. The earl himself nominated Cobham, and did so again in 1579, with all of his fellows but Hunsdon.[14] Elizabeth withheld the honour from the baron until 1584, but in the exchange of New Year's gifts at the beginning of 1578 she showed him and his wife marked favour. Cobham presented his mistress with an extravagant garment, "a petticote of yelow satten, leyed al over with a pasmane of silver and tawnye sylke, frenged with silver and sylke, and lyned with tawny sarceonet"; the queen gave to him and Lady Cobham 70 oz of silver and gilt plate, while the Burghleys received from her only 64 oz.[15] One may assume that the baron again had both the respect of his peers and the approval of

the queen when Burghley made him the spokesman of the peace party.

There was something besides his rank and prestige to recommend Cobham for responsible participation in the affairs of the Netherlands. As Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports he was kept directly in touch with what was occurring across the Channel, and he had moreover the inestimable advantage of being John Brooke's brother. Brooke, having accepted a commission from the Estates, was a constant visitor to the Netherlands in the troubled months of early 1578, and was used by William Davison, Elizabeth's representative at Antwerp, to convey messages to the English government. Davison, writing to Cobham on 24 April, apologized for his long silence in terms which suggest how detailed was the knowledge which the baron's brother had of the situation overseas. "I have so long forborne to write to you," the letter began,

> that I know not what reason to allege in excuse that may be accepted, unless it be my restless occupations, which Mr. John Cobham can bear witness afford me little intermission.
> Of the troublesome estate of things here I can write little that Mr. Cobham is not able to particularise.[16]

Davison finished off his message by saying that "Mr. Cobham's haste to be gone and my little leisure shorten my letter;" Brooke's trips were indeed urgent, and after Cobham and Walsingham had left England he was even busier, for he acted at times as their courier. Secretary Wilson, Walsingham's colleague, paid tribute to Brooke's astuteness by writing to the ambassadors in plain English, explaining that he did not use a cipher "because of the faithfulness of this bearer".[17] Brooke wrote frequently to Burghley, and it can be taken for granted that both Cobham and his friend learned much from the soldier's reports of what was happening abroad. Besides his brother, Cobham had also other regular informants on the Continent, and even Walsingham, in the months before the two men went overseas together, availed himself of the baron's contacts there. When, for instance, the Dutch governor of Gravelines turned his fortress over to the Spanish, the Secretary requested in the queen's name that Cobham should ascertain what the defection meant.[18] Later, when the ambassadors had returned to England, Walsingham seems to have been less ready to accept Cobham's participation in the affairs of the Netherlands: on one occasion an informant whose services they had used abroad went so far as to ask the Secretary's per-

mission before sending news-letters from Antwerp to the baron:[19] but Walsingham was a new man and Cobham a minister of long standing, so that the baron's sources of information could not be cut off and he continued to know better than any but the queen's most senior advisers just what was happening across the Channel. His influence upon the embassy was considerable.

Walsingham informed Davison on 18 May that it would not be many days before he and Cobham were dispatched. It was not until 31 May, however, that Elizabeth announced her intention to the archduke to send over ambassadors to "devote themselves to the matter of making peace",[20] and on 5 June she was still instructing Davison to do what he could to prevent an alliance between Orange and Alençon, since his superiors were not yet ready to come to his relief.[21] Secretary Wilson, writing to Davison at the same time, encouraged him to think that it would "not be long 'but' Lord Cobham and Mr. Walsingham will follow this messenger";[22] it was yet another week, however, before the queen presented her envoys with their official instructions, and at the same time handed them a letter to be delivered to the Estates. Addressing herself to Matthias, Elizabeth said:

> I have always desired to procure peace in all Christian realms; but above all it would give me pleasure to see my allies the Belgians enjoying their ancient rights. To this end I have sent many of my people both to the governor of the country and to the king himself. Although my efforts have not been as successful as I could wish, I cannot refrain from making a last effort, and I am sending Baron Cobham, Warden of the Cinque Ports, and Sir Francis Walsingham, my privy councillor, to do what they can to bring matters to a good issue; as you will understand if you talk with them, in whom I pray you to confide as in myself.[23]

To her servants the queen gave details of what they were to do. First they were to attempt to persuade Orange that there was no need of bringing in the French, that a build-up of arms would alone suffice to show the Spanish that Dutch nationalism could not be suppressed by war. As soon as Orange's immediate fears were allayed, the ambassadors were to go to Don John and assure him that England was anxious to see the Netherlands pacified without foreign interference. Elizabeth told her envoys to say that,

> as we have seen lately the intention of the French King's brother to attain to the usurpation of that country, we cannot but continue in our former purpose to leave nothing undone that may tend to the honour of our good brother, the welfare of his country, and the repose and quietness of all Christendom. You may also say that we never had any

> other meaning but that they of the Low Country should be always kept in due obedience to their natural prince, receiving benefit of their freedom and privileges as they heretofore have done. And as the French seek by all means to alter the state of their government and to usurp the country to themselves under colour of giving aid to them, you shall say to Don John that we have ever used our uttermost force to hinder that course.

In other words, Don John was to restore to the Dutch the autonomy under the Spanish Crown which the citizens ofthe old Burgundian duchy used to enjoy. Only thus could Orange be placated and the danger of French invasion averted. One supposes that Walsingham's special charge was to deal with the prince, Cobham's with the governor. Yet Elizabeth did not really expect that a settlement of the problem would result from the reiteration of suggestions which she had been making to the belligerents for several years. "If you see no likelihood of agreement," the ambassadors were therefore further instructed, "you are to deal with the second part of your charge." This was the more important part of the mission. It required Cobham and Walsingham to make a close study of the financial resources of the Dutch, and to make an impartial estimate of the chances which Orange and his ally, the German Duke Casimir of the Palatinate, would have in an all-out war against Don John. If there seemed little likelihood that the Dutch would win such a contest, the Estates were to be advised that England would approve their acceptance of aid from Alençon so long as they required of him securities that he would bring into the country only such an army as would help and not overrule them. Finally, if Orange, Casimir and the duke were to league together, the ambassadors were to make sure that they had all the strength they needed to crush Spanish control in the Netherlands once and for all. Elizabeth, if she went so far as mortally to affront Philip II by advising his enemies, wanted nothing left to chance in the campaign against him. She therefore empowered Cobham and Walsingham to promise the Estates that she would personally intervene at any crucial point in the struggle. It was in making such a promise that the greatest difficulty in the ambassadors' mission would arise, and both men knew it. For the queen meant to lose nothing by promoting the cause of Dutch Calvinism, and she demanded stringent securities that any aid which she gave the Dutch would be fully repaid. "If the forces of the States," Elizabeth grudgingly conceded,

> together with Casimir and the Duke of Anjou [as Alençon had been styled since 1574], shall appear to you insufficient to withstand the power of Don John, we are content upon necessity so appearing to send our forces

> out of England for their better relief. And we would have you ask of them what towns and fortresses they are disposed to deliver upon our people's first landing, to keep the same for their indemnity.

Only if the Dutch surrendered to the English landing-force the towns of Sluis and Flushing, and if they undertook to reimburse the queen for the expenses of garrisoning the fortresses there and, at the end of the war, to pay back to her all of the loans which she had previously made to them, would Elizabeth consider going to their aid. The queen, conscious of the magnitude of the task which she entrusted to her two ministers, gave them some liberty to handle it as they should see fit. "As it is hard precisely to set down every particular," she admitted,

> we are pleased that you use your discretions, having a principal regard to direct the course of your doings as may seem best to further the charge committed to you.[24]

It was to be in availing themselves of this latitude, especially in money matters, that Cobham and Walsingham incurred her displeasure.

The instructions were issued on 12 June. The next day warrants were drawn up in the Court of Star Chamber,

> the one for my Lord Cobham and the other for Mr. Secretarie Walsingham, for the taking uppe of cartes and horses for their carriages in their voiages to the Lowe Countries.[25]

On Friday the thirteenth "The Lord Cobham tooke his leave of her Majestie,"[26] and the next day went into Kent, not to Cobham Hall but to Walsingham's house just outside London at Foots Cray.[27] There the Secretary joined him and together they proceeded to Canterbury, where Roger Manwood provided them with lodgings. The judge was not at home, but his servants so well acquitted their master's reputation for hospitality that Walsingham wrote to Sir Christopher Hatton about "the honourable entertainment the Lord Cobham and I have received at Mr. Justice Manwood's house in his absence". Hatton was evidently meant to show the Secretary's letter to the queen, for Walsingham went on to commend his host in terms which helped Manwood win the knighthood which Elizabeth bestowed upon him a few months later. "The man is greatly loved and esteemed here, for his uprightness and integrity," Hatton was informed, "of the best sort of the gentlemen of this shire."[28] Cobham, who knew Manwood well, would not have concurred with Walsingham's opinion, and in 1582 he was to show up the judge for the corrupt opportunist which history reveals Manwood

to have been. In 1578, however, Cobham was no doubt glad to be able to stop at Canterbury without having to play host to Walsingham at his own house there, for both ambassadors had much to do in order to get away at all. On 17 June they wrote jointly to William Davison to tell him that, although they had set out from Court, they had to move slowly because of the great train of more than 120 persons which they were bringing with them.[29] Elizabeth was spending £ 50,000[30] on her representatives and their party in order to impress the Netherlands with the weight which she attached to the matters committed to the embassy. It was thus a stately company indeed, if a somewhat cumbersome one, which boarded the Achates at Dover on 20 June.[31]

Disembarking at Dunkirk the next day, Cobham and Walsingham were met by one of the archduke's courtiers and conducted by him to Newport, where they were received, as the ambassadors told Davison, "in such sort that we can do no less than desire you to show some part of our thankfulness to the Archduke for the same and signify to him that our meaning is to advertise her Majesty of it that he may receive thanks from her". The "greatness of our train," Davison was told, "and trouble of our carriages cause us to be longer on the way than we would, but on Friday night we mean to lodge at Steken, where we desire you to meet us."[32] On 27 June Cobham and Walsingham accordingly conferred with their colleague outside Antwerp, and the next day entered the city, where Matthias had been expecting them with much eagerness.[33] Cobham took time off on Sunday the twenty-ninth to write to Burghley. "We arrived here on the 28th," he told his friend,

> marvellously honoured by the nobility and the States. What success we shall have in our negotiation I cannot as yet judge; the humours are divers. I fear ere many months pass there will be divers kinds of commonwealths. Tomorrow we shall have audience of Duke Matthias, and so of the rest.[34]

This was the first of several fairly informal letters which Cobham wrote to Burghley from the Netherlands. Interspersed in them with personal messages, like the commendations which Cobham sent on 29 June to Lady Burghley, her daughter and grandchildren ("all my little friends"), were the baron's private observations on the course of the embassy. These remarks frequently supplement the rather stiff dispatches written by the ambassadors together, and show clearly that Cobham was Burghley's man as opposed to Walsingham, the spokesman of the avowed Puritan element in the English

Council.

One of the most revealing of Cobham's letters to the Lord Treasurer is that of 5 July. The ambassadors had by then talked with Orange and the leading ministers of the Estates, who showed gratitude for Elizabeth's interest in their cause but who made it plain that it was money and armed support which they needed from her, not impracticable advice. "They did not think Don John would hearken to such a peace as was secure for them," were Cobham's simple words, "and they found by experience that all treaties of the peace have brought them danger as in alienating some from them." The refusal of the Dutch to consider any but a military solution to their problem came as no surprise to Cobham and Walsingham. It is enlightening to find the baron admitting that, as soon as they landed at Dunkirk, they proceeded to execute the second part of their commission, that is, to calculate the odds of a victory for Orange in case the English attempt at mediation failed. Its failure was a foregone conclusion, and Cobham told Burghley that,

> For the better knowledge of the country, on landing at Dunkirk we sent gentlemen, some along the frontier, some into the heart of the country, and others along the sea-coast, which several reports you shall receive.

Acutely the baron observed that there was in the Estates "a general mislike inwardly" of the Duke of Alençon, but that the Dutch would not offend the French so long as they could not be sure of powerful aid from another source.

Cobham was also particularly interested in the extent to which the war for Dutch independence was a religious one. Elizabeth regarded the growth of Calvinism among the people of the Netherlands as a principal obstacle to a peaceful reconciliation of King Philip with his rebellious subjects; Walsingham of course saw it as the Hollanders' greatest strength, that which would in the end enable them, as God's people, to come out from under Catholic domination.[35] Cobham was of the queen's opinion, and indeed he gave Burghley to understand that the Prince of Orange was himself unhappy about the prospects of an internecine struggle fought on religious lines. "If any harm come to the country," wrote the baron,

> it is the bursting out of religion which I fear will breed disunion among them, for though the common people much embrace it there are few of the nobles affected to it. The Prince does what he may to stay it both here and other places. He told me himself that it troubled him; 'for,' said he, 'if it be granted or permitted, we grow presently

> to a disunion; if we grant it not, the common people having arms in their hands will go and spoil the churches.' You will receive a request made to the States for the exercise of religion.

Cobham was modest about his own qualifications for reporting on the Netherlands, and frankly impressed by Walsingham's. He told Burghley so in a way which shows that he had been instructed to act as the Lord Treasurer's special observer, and that he was anxious to satisfy his friend's confidence in him. "If anything has been omitted," he wrote of his long account of 5 July,

> deal with me plainly. Truly Mr. Secretary has taken great pains; but as you know, I am ignorant of what has passed and have not for a long time had any use of my language.[36]

By 12 July the incipient pessimism shown by Cobham a week earlier had become pronounced. The baron told Burghley in a letter of that date that Orange positively refused to consider referring the cause of the Estates to Don John's statesmanship, and that he could not himself see any reason to prolong the embassy. He hoped, he said, "now that there is no great cause of our stay, [that] it may please your Lordship to help us home." Two things had happened to confirm Cobham in the belief that Antwerp was no place for peacemakers. The Estates, nominally subservient to the Most Catholic King, had suddenly acceded to the popular demand and granted freedom of religion, and Alençon, although not yet formally invited to enter the Netherlands, had moved up to Mons. Cobham thought that his action was "very strange; he will come and aid them, and command, whether they will or not." Only Hainault among the United Provinces, the baron reckoned, would welcome the French, but he detected "a general disposition, rather than be under the tyranny of the Spaniards, to seek a new master". This proclivity "to change masters" was, to the Francophobe Cobham, "a thing in my opinion to be feared".[37]

The queen's reaction to the reports of her ambassadors was typical of the woman. The "sudden alteration" in religion she did not like, for the same reasons which moved Cobham to disapprove it: "such a hasty change," Elizabeth foresaw, "would bring ruin among them through division." To the dangers presented by Alençon's advance she seemed curiously blind: "for Monsieur there was little fear, because of the promises he has made to use moderation and do good for honour's sake." Her ministers were appalled at her attitude, but then, none of them except Burghley and her ambassador at Paris knew that it was she herself who had secretly encouraged

Alençon to think that she approved his invasion of the Netherlands.[38] On the question of the demands made by the Estates for financial support from England, however, the queen was adamant: "the third point, being a money matter," wrote Secretary Wilson, "is hardly digested here."[39] When she finally learned that Orange would not allow the ambassadors to offer any hope of a peaceful settlement to Don John, and that all the prince wanted of her was money, Elizabeth flew into a rage. Readily she granted Cobham's request to come home, and on 18 July the Privy Council dispatched a letter to him and Walsingham conveying the queen's pleasure and command that they should return. They were not at this time held responsible for the failure of their impossible mission: the Council wrote resignedly that,

> being heartily sorry that you found no readier means to work the peace, we recommend the cause of the afflicted to God's favour and defence.

All of the blame was to be placed upon the Estates, and the ambassadors' final charge was to declare to the Dutch rulers

> that since the principal cause of your coming was to be mediator for a peace (wherein the States know in what sort they have proceeded), and finding by their answer that they cannot or will not assent to any peace without such extreme conditions as her Majesty cannot 'allow' to propose to Don John, for she is sure he will never agree thereto, and thereby seeing that your abode there is in vain, you shall prepare to come thence without any further expense of time.[40]

Burghley was extremely upset when Elizabeth made her snap decision to recall the ambassadors. The Council's letter was dispatched from Havering, in Essex, where the Court was on progress, and on the day that it was written Burghley wrote a personal note to Cobham and Walsingham. Dating his message "From Havering, where I am kept only to receive some chidings upon daily debate of these matters," the Lord Treasurer hinted at the full extent of the queen's rage. "When she perceived that the States required more money," he related, "I will not write how greatly she misliked thereof. I did as much as I could to mitigate her offence, though it fell sharply in speech upon myself." Walsingham, too, although apparently not Cobham, had come in for a royal tongue-lashing: the bearer of Burghley's letter could tell the two men "how sharp her Majesty has been with some of us here as Councillors, whereof you, Mr. Secretary, was not free of some portion of her words." Burghley was not, however, completely disheartened. "We all most dutifully bear with her

offence," he said placidly,

> not despairing but that however she mislikes things at one time, at another she will alter her sharpness, especially when she is persuaded that we all mean truly for her safety, though she sometimes will not so understand.

Across the Channel, at exactly the same time, Walsingham was writing less stoically. Furious about the humiliating position in which the queen had placed him, the Secretary criticized his mistress's pusillanimity in a letter to Burghley. "The sending of Lord Cobham and me into these countries with so slender matter," he wrote,

> when they looked to have by us her Majesty's resolution touching such assistance as she might please to give, not a little advances Monsieur's affairs, who is likely to make his profit of their necessity. For though they have no great affection to the French, yet being resolved, as it appears to us, never to return to the Spanish obedience, and seeing no assurance of English help, standing as it does always upon doubtful terms, and being ready to alter upon every cross accident, it is to be feared they will be driven to throw themselves into the French protection.[41]

What Burghley knew on 18 July, however, which Walsingham did not know, was that the Council's letter ordering the return of the ambassadors had contained a clause which permitted the embassy to remain a little longer in the Netherlands. "Nevertheless," the Lords had written,

> if you have entered into conference with the Duke of Alençon's Commissioners, you shall as you see cause abide there some time longer for that purpose, and proceed therein to such effect as may tend to help the States against the forces of their enemies, without danger of making the French, under colour of aid, a possessor of the Low Countries.

That this proviso was Burghley's doing his own letter of 18 July makes clear. Although he knew that the ambassadors themselves, "for private reasons", were quite ready to return home, the Lord Treasurer said that he "would you might have stayed." "And now since we heard last night of Monsieur's arrival at Mons,

> I wished that her Majesty would not in this hasty sort call you away; and to that she yields, that upon that occasion if you have any just cause to stay longer she wishes you to do so.[42]

On 21 July Secretary Wilson sent explicit instructions to the ambassadors about how they were to handle Alençon. The duke was to be encouraged to aid the Dutch, but he was at the same time to be confronted with information which the queen professed to have about his intention of marrying Orange's daughter and of thus setting up with

the prince a dynasty which would completely exclude Philip II from the sovereignty of the Netherlands. Elizabeth, the ambassadors were to tell the duke, regarded herself as his mistress, and could not but take offence if he was considering another marriage.[43] The move was a clever one, and it provoked from Alençon protestations of devotion to Elizabeth. She played a dangerous game with him, but she did so confident that she and not his brother the French king was his only sure support, and that he knew it. Her ministers were less sanguine than she on this point.

Walsingham was in no way mollified by the prolongation of the embassy. He wanted no truck with the French, and, although his suspicions were founded in a hatred of Catholicism while the baron's were based more upon a congenital distrust of French promises, Cobham agreed with him. Cobham had not come in for direct abuse from the queen, conceivably because, in that long summer of 1578 when foreign observers in England thought that Elizabeth was depending more than usually upon the counsel of her ladies-in-waiting,[44] Lady Cobham was vigorous and diligent in her attendance upon the queen.[45] Yet Cobham had been as responsible as Walsingham for offending the queen by giving their personal bonds to the merchants of Antwerp that Elizabeth would stand by her promises to aid the Dutch cause by financial means at least. Even Leicester, when he returned from the baths at Buxton, appealed to the queen to consider the position in which the ambassadors would be left if she proceeded with her determination to repudiate her word. "But all will not serve," wrote Secretary Wilson, "for which Lord Leicester is very sorry and so I think are all that love the Queen's safety."[46] From Antwerp on 23 July Cobham spoke his mind freely to Burghley. "In our letter to Mr. Secretary [Wilson]," the baron said,

> we wrote of the necessity the States were in of money, and therefore requested him to move her Majesty to sign those two bills, which she misliking made a flat denial; a matter to me very grievous, being only ... a confirmation of an act that she had passed under the great seal, a discredit to her ministers, and very dangerous to the States. For when it is known that she will neither enter into open action, nor 'allow' them with her credit, it will force them to change masters, and to take one that England will hardly brook. I may truly say that if by her Majesty's credit the want had been supplied, their army would long ago have been in the field, Don John driven to fight, fly, or yield to a peace, and M. d'Anjou's [Alençon's] claim cast off. If her Majesty dislikes having lent her money and given her credit upon only ink and paper, I think that upon a new supply she might have a maritime

> town. I am sorry that your good and sound advice did not take good effect, both for the staying of the common cause from ruin and for the sure payment of her Majesty's money; but my hope is that however she mislikes at one time, when she is persuaded that what you say is for her safety, she will at length do it.[47]

Walsingham was less confident than was Cobham that the queen would eventually come round to Burghley's point of view, which was that the Estates must be financially supported. He was informed by one of his servants on 29 July that Elizabeth had told Sir Christopher Hatton that, while she was convinced that Walsingham was serving her loyally, yet "she would never consent to allow the money."[48] Knowing this, the Secretary wrote bitterly to Burghley that he saw little point in visiting Alençon at Mons. "I shall receive some flourishes of great goodwill," he said, devised only to make the queen "the less suspect his intentions". Walsingham was honestly incapable of understanding what Elizabeth was doing:

> Though it be a grief to us to receive so hard measure, yet for her Majesty's sake we are chiefly sorry to see her deal so unkindly with those that serve her faithfully. So beseeching you to accept these few lines in good part, being written by an indisposed body, but a more indisposed mind, I take my leave.[49]

At the same time Walsingham expressed his disgust in a more satirical vein in a letter which he wrote to Thomas Randolph, his cousin by marriage. "It is given out both there and here," at Court and in Antwerp, he wrote,

> that we shall be hanging at our return, so ill have we behaved ourselves here. The worst is, I hope, we shall enjoy our ordinary trial; my Lord to be tried by his peers and myself by a jury of Middlesex. The most heinous matter they can charge us with is that we have had more regard to her Majesty's honour and safety than to her treasure.[50]

Cobham was less contemptuous of Elizabeth's parsimony than was Walsingham. The baron knew that, if she so chose, the queen could be very difficult indeed about the bonds which he and Walsingham had issued. On 31 July he pleaded his case before Burghley. "Finding our doings called in question," Cobham wrote to the one man who needed absolutely no persuading to acquit the ambassadors of misdemeanour,

> I repair to your Lordship as to my <u>'Azilum'</u> for help and succour. By sundry information sent over, we hear that we are as it were thrown into her Majesty's displeasure. These reports are general, therefore generally I may say I know not the just cause of them. If it be that we have not pressed a peace, nor dissuaded the States from insisting on so hard terms, we 'have injury', for truly we have omitted no opportunity to deal openly and privately with all persons that are affected that way, for the attaining of a good peace; and I assure you that those who are best affected to peace and to the King of Spain will not allow of any peace 'without' Don John retire. Credit me, my Lord,

> this is true. At the last we have so urged the matter that the Emperor's ambassador goes to Don John to sound him as to his inclination. That it may appear to my Lords what passed between us, we have sent it to them, and his answer.
> If it be for encouraging the merchants to disburse a sum of money to the States in advance, what good subject would suffer his (sic) Majesty's credit and honour to be called in question and not help it to his power? seeing it was done to so good a purpose, to daunt the enemy and to withstand the French practices, which daily increase [erased: 'and shall carry all away'] if her Majesty do not 'forsee'.[51]

Cobham's letter evidently did some good. He and Walsingham were not so much afraid that they would themselves have to fork out the £ 5,000 which they had borrowed for the Estates on their own private bonds, as that, in the event of a further cataclysm in the Netherlands, they would be made the scapegoats of the English Crown. The Tudors had not in the past hesitated to sacrifice their ministers upon occasion. Walsingham, indeed, told Burghley on 29 July that he would see Alençon but afterward endanger his reputation no further by loitering on the Continent doing nothing constructive. "Seeing no hope of doing good here," the Secretary said,

> and that we begin to grow in contempt (though the people here still hope in her Majesty) we mean to repair homeward, where we are given to understand we shall receive a very hard welcome.[52]

To have left their post without leave would indeed have endangered the ambassadors, but in the event they did not have to do so. The queen, late one night about a week after Cobham wrote to Burghley his letter of 31 July, called her Lord Treasurer to her and made him write "in all haste" to Walsingham. The next day she seemed to have forgotten about giving the order, and Burghley was in a quandary as to what to do, for the letter was exactly what was needed to restore heart to the ambassadors. "Although you may conceive," Elizabeth had dictated,

> that we have misliked some part of your proceeding, since the issue of it answers not our expectation, or at least our desire, and Lord Cobham and you may be in your minds somewhat grieved therewith; yet being well assured of both your good wills and faithful meaning, we would not that you should dismay yourselves, or 'take conceit of grief,' but continue your endeavours either to procure peace, as hitherto you have done, or to devise how the aid of France may be tempered to do the States good against the Spaniards, which we see by many tokens very doubtful.

It was a letter very much in the queen's old style, high-handed yet reassuring, and, although he did not agree with his mistress when she went on to instruct Walsingham to see to it that the Estates got rid of Alençon unless the duke gave up his intention to make the Netherlands his own. Burghley was anxious that the ambassadors

should receive it. He was therefore much relieved when, about three o'clock on Friday afternoon, 8 August, as he told the story to Walsingham,

> she calls for me with some misliking that the letter was not dispatched. I answered that without signing it could neither go nor ride; which I spoke merrily, but in earnest I told her I had no liking to the latter part of the letter, to move Monsieur to depart, as a thing dishonourable and unreasonable without other motive than bare words.

Leicester and Secretary Wilson, "being by her", agreed with Burghley, but Elizabeth was constrained by the ambassadors of the French king to leave her instructions to Walsingham as they were; by this time both she and Henry III were afraid that they had let Alençon go too far. "So," wrote Burghley,

> she signed the letter, but commanded a sentence to be added, the last, with which make Lord Cobham acquainted, to comfort him.

The sentence was encouraging to Cobham only because he was not mentioned in it. "And you, Walsingham," the queen had dictated,

> shall at your return know what we have misliked in your actions; at which time we will not refuse, like a good mistress, to hear your answer with our accustomed favour.

Burghley, however, described the circumstances in which Elizabeth had made her final remark, and showed that even Walsingham needed not to be alarmed by it. "And truly," he told the Secretary,

> though she added that she would talk with you when you return, this was spoken with no anger at all, nor would I have you or Lord Cobham take any 'greve' to discourage your spirits, for however the event of things may be, no more can be required of you but your faithful and 'painful travells'. I speak not of the cost of your residence there, which must be excessive for many respects; and indeed I told her with some weight that the whole world would condemn her if the Low Countries were joined to France which by helping the States she might have stayed, and in the end pleasured the King of Spain against his will by restoring his countries.

The queen's letter and Burghley's were handed over to Thomas Gurley, the servant whom Cobham kept near the Court as it made its summer progress, and the man hurried off with them toward Antwerp.[53]

No sooner had Gurley left Bury St. Edmund's, where the queen was, than Elizabeth, by this time extremely worried about Alençon's progress into the Netherlands, again sent for Burghley. On 9 August the Lord Treasurer wrote again to the ambassadors, remarking that they might "both think it strange to receive a letter from her Majesty written by me in such haste," and went on to explain the circumstances in which was

dictated the message dispatched that day. It was a letter which indeed required explanation, for in it Elizabeth, "more and more moved 'to doubt of his doings to prove very dangerous'", instructed Walsingham and Cobham to inform the estates that Alençon must be resisted at all costs. Though admittedly late in the day in making such an offer, wrote the redoubtable queen, she proposed to send to the Estates between 10,000 and 12,000 men or a sum of money capable of paying the wages of an equivalent number of German mercenaries.[54] Burghley said that she had reached her decision after a consultation with himself, Leicester and Hatton; he was not sure of what the sudden volte-face meant, but he hoped for the best. "She is greatly perplexed to think that the Low Countries may become French," he reported,

> and while she is in fear of this, she seems ready to hazard any expense. It is now determined that if upon your answer necessity shall induce her to send forces, Lord Leicester will come over without delay and the army shall follow. Nevertheless, though this is at present earnestly meant, I can assure nothing, but only this, that I am uncertain of much.[55]

Unfortunately for Walsingham and Cobham the long-awaited instructions reached them too late. On 13 August an agreement was signed between the Estates and Alençon whereby the duke, admittedly on very moderate terms, should undertake the Dutch quarrel from 1 September. Cobham, three days after the treaty was concluded, wrote a letter to Burghley which revealed the extent of the consternation in which the ambassadors found themselves. There was bitterness caused by the receipt of the queen's letter too late for them to use it to keep the Estates from committing themselves to Alençon; there was also grim determination to use the thirteen days of grace before the actual installation of the duke at Antwerp in order to reach an agreement with Don John which would obviate the need for further war. Having sent John Somers off to England to ask Elizabeth for the £ 25,000 and the 5,000 men which Orange required before he would consent to accept the result of the ambassadors' last attempt to talk peace with the Spanish,[56] Cobham on 16 August wrote to Burghley about how much depended upon Somers's return. The baron began by thanking his friend for all that Burghley had done for him and Walsingham. "Your honourable dealing with all persons in her Majesty's service," he said,

> assures me of your great care of us as public persons; therefore I do mistrust anything but good to come from you, though your business serves you not to answer my letters, yet I am sure that if you might do as you would we should both receive encouragement in the great and the weighty

> causes which daily grow upon us. The hard opinion conceived of us at home, and the little comfort we can give these poor afflicted here, so amaze me that if you knew our minds you would pity us. Yet, God willing, we will proceed as faithful servants to her Majesty and good members of the commonwealth. This I say, that if we had delivered as hard comfort to the States as we have had from my Lords, this country had been French; but as occasion served, we kept them in hope of the continuance of her Majesty's favour, hoping that by your good mediation, and others of my Lords, her Majesty would answer directly what she will do. There is no lack of means here at present, but of money. If this can be supplied, Don John would be forced to yield to a peace, and Monsieur cut off from possessing any town; some 'reburs ing' of his charges, otherwise nothing, if the supply comes in time.
>
> The Emperor's ambassador is returned from Don John with a general answer, which I send, as his speech to the States. Upon this the States have set down their demands, which we send to my Lords; and have requested us to repair to Don John, which we have yielded to, and are now sending for a safe-conduct, which had, we will repair to him and see what may be done for a peace. I assure you it will soon take effect if they may be helped with £ 30,000 or thereabout to pay their footmen who are now in town unpaid. What you do must be done at once.[57]

Cobham evidently expected the queen to send Somers back to him and Walsingham with money for the Estates and instructions to proceed to the Spanish camp, that is, he expected Elizabeth to provide her ambassadors with the means of concluding their business. "Help, my good lord," he wrote at the foot of his letter to Burghley, "that at Mr. Sommers' return we may have her Majesty's resolution on all points, and leave to return home. Our charges are too great for us." A week later, however, the Flemish merchants were still supplying the Englishmen with expensive items for the lavish banquets which Cobham and Walsingham continued to have to put on in order to uphold the dignity of their position. Marzipan and cinnamon, pistachios, almonds and hippocras, a bay tree "silvered" and rosemary trees "garnished", were all bought at high prices for the ambassadorial board; the quantities of these and lesser delicacies which were "supplied for my Lords the Ambassadors of the Queen of England" suggest that Cobham knew then that it would still be many weeks before he got back to Cobham Hall.[58] For Elizabeth, after making her extravagant promises to assist Orange at the beginning of August, had embarked upon a new course for dealing with the French menace by the time that John Somers got to England. While the ambassadors waited anxiously for him to return, the queen kept him cooling his heels in her ante-chamber as she consulted with the French ambassadors about the re-opening of negotiations for her marriage with Alençon. By dangling before the duke's eyes once again the prospect of the English Crown, Elizabeth thought that she could best control him and make the army which he would lead into the Netherlands

on 1 September not an enemy force but an extension of her own power. She would need to send no money to Orange.

Cobham and Walsingham did not know what was happening in England, but they suspected the worst. When they finally learned on 2 September that they were to regard Alençon as their future king and not as the invader whose designs they had been instructed to circumvent, Walsingham wrote resignedly to Burghley that the queen's decision was "such as I looked for, having seen by experience that your long consultations most commonly end with the worst resolutions".[59] In August, however, with the date of Alencon's inauguration as Défenseur de la liberté Belgique contre la tyrannie Espagnole drawing ever closer, the ambassadors had to make a move. Without waiting to hear from Somers, therefore, they set out from Antwerp on 18 August[60] and on the twenty-fourth arrived at the Spanish camp at Perwus. Don John there received them. "He met us about an English mile and a half on this side his camp," wrote Cobham and Walsingham to the Council three days later,

> in a great plain, being accompanied by well-nigh two thousand horse; and under a great oak standing in the midst of the plain gave us audience.[61]

The ambassadors were much impressed by the heroic figure of the governor: they were not to know that Don John would die suddenly, aged only thirty-three, little more than a month later: and it was obvious to them that they brought nothing with which to dissuade so fearless a soldier from pursuing his declared purpose of returning a subjugated people to the allegiance of the Spanish king his half-brother. There was a courteous exchange of compliment and little more, and dejectedly on 25 August Cobham and Walsingham returned to Louvain, greatly doubting "the going forward of the treaty of pacification".[62] From that town on 27 August Cobham wrote to Burghley that Don John would willingly make peace "if he might, with the King's honour and his own credit", but the baron knew well that it would be "a most cruel and unfortunate war" and not "a blessed peace" which he would have to announce to his friend when he informed him of the governor's final decision.[63] In the event, Don John was not called upon to make a decision, for the Dutch would not entrust their fortunes to peaceful arbitration unless England provided them with the means of demanding satisfactory terms. When John Somers at last reported to the ambassadors

that Elizabeth would send to the Estates neither money nor men, the last attempt to conclude a treaty lapsed. Sarcastically Walsingham wrote to Sir Christopher Hatton on 2 September,

> Sir, if it be good to have these countries possessed by the French, and alienated in good will from England, then you have returned Mr. Sommers with a good dispatch.[64]

Elizabeth, who had found it useful to have two senior ministers on the spot, attempted to keep Cobham and Walsingham in the Netherlands. On 15 September she ordered them to deal with the Estates and the imperial ambassadors to do what they could to decrease the number of forces on both sides, but an outbreak of war was now obviously imminent and even she could not bring herself to force her servants to labour in a lost cause when her government at home was accommodating itself to her sudden shift in policy. Cobham and Walsingham were in a backwater, and Elizabeth knew that they were aware of it. "For your return to our presence," she accordingly instructed them,

> we leave that to your consideration, that if your abode there be for our better service then 'you to tarry' a longer time; otherwise make your undelayed repair homeward.[65]

The ambassadors lost no time in declaring their wish to return to England, and when the queen did not at once give them official leave Cobham wrote pressingly to Burghley to get her to do so. On 24 September he told his friend,

> I must pray you to put a helping hand that my colleague and I may take our leave .... We remain here unprofitable servants to her Majesty and to ourselves great hindrances. You would hardly believe what our daily expenses are.[66]

The baron was going to be reimbursed at the rate of only £ 5 a day, and he knew that the deficit which he would have to make up out of his own pocket would be enormous.[67] Moreover he had narrowly escaped the plague at Louvain, where one of his servants had died of it. Walsingham wrote from Antwerp on 2 September that

> I greatly fear our train is tainted. The French ambassador who stayed only two days there lost two of his chief gentlemen of the plague; and therefore we that stayed ten days at least are greatly in doubt that we shall not escape so 'good cheap', beside the danger of our own persons, having no privilege above the rest.[68]

Finally, on 5 October, the two ambassadors embarked at Flushing and made their way dejectedly homeward in the Achates, the same ship which had carried them overseas so proudly more than three months before.[69]

Conyers Read sums up admirably the effect of the embassy of 1578. Calling it "rather disastrous than otherwise" to the interests of England in the Netherlands, he says:

> The Estates, by reason of the Queen's promises, by reason of the rank of the envoys and of the pomp and ceremony in which they came, had been led to expect great things of them. They got little or nothing, and with their disappointment came a revulsion of feeling against England which might have worked great harm had Alençon been an abler man than he was.
>
> Walsingham and Cobham are in no sense to be blamed for the ill success which attended their efforts. They failed in a part of their mission because they attempted to accomplish the impossible -- that is to say, to patch up a peace between the Estates and Spain. In the other part they failed because the Queen would not support them in the work she had sent them out to do. It is pretty certain that the Estates General did not want to receive the Duke of Alençon. They delayed negotiations with him as long as possible and they offered him terms which they frankly did not believe he would accept. Had the Queen come to their assistance in time with men and money, it seems highly probable that Alençon would never have gained the foothold that he did. At least such was the opinion of Walsingham. But Elizabeth, when she had her opportunity, threw it away. Perhaps she thought a policy of active intervention in the Low Countries too expensive and too dangerous, perhaps she was beguiled into believing that she could direct Alençon at her will, and so save expense and obviate the danger of war with Spain. Perhaps she realized what was without doubt true, that Alençon's expedition into the Low Countries was not likely to be nearly so dangerous to her as her councillors made it out to be. It is hard to say. Very often what appeared to be feminine caprice in the Virgin Queen proved in the end to be very subtle policy. But this much is certain, that her change of viewpoint on the Alençon matter effectually prevented Walsingham and his colleague from keeping Alençon out of the Netherlands or from limiting his influence there, things which they had by the express terms of their instructions been sent out to do.
>
> It was the Queen's fault that they failed. Perhaps it was well for England that they did fail. But it was hard for them.[70]

How very hard it was is made abundantly clear by the letters which the ambassadors wrote home even before they themselves returned. Burghley they did not blame. To the Lord Treasurer's friend, Sir Thomas Heneage, Walsingham wrote on 2 September that "we both have cause to acknowledge ourselves beholden to your best friend; whose honourable friendship has stood us in best stead."[71] Cobham of course, throughout the embassy, expressed his awareness of Burghley's devotion to them. It was the queen whom the ambassadors condemned, and in doing so they echoed one another's feelings to a degree which would have been inconceivable in two such different men three months earlier. "We ... shall return home," Walsingham told Leicester,

> the most discontented ministers that ever were employed on foreign service in respect not of our credits, which but for places we hold would be of no great weight, but of the mischief likely to ensue both at once to her Majesty, and to her successors by the alienation of these people's hearts

from her.[72]

Something of the fanatic belief in the intervention of the unseen in human affairs which occasionally marked Walsingham's judgements led the Secretary to attribute the queen's folly to divine displeasure. "Where the advice of counsellors cannot prevail with a prince of her judgement," he told Hatton,

> it is a sign that God has closed up her heart from seeing and executing what may be her safety.... Lord Cobham and I particularly have cause to think ourselves most unfortunate to be employed in a legation that is like to have so hard an issue. But I hope the world can witness that there lacked no good will in us to do what our calling required.[73]

He was through with diplomacy, he told Heneage:

> God send me well to return, and I will hereafter take my leave of foreign service, or as this bearer, Captain Colborne [sic: Cockburn], terms it, ambassador's craft; seeing men are so ready to pick quarrels and 'to deprave careful, painful, and good meaning.'[74]

Both ambassadors were in later years to go abroad again, but in 1578 Cobham probably shared Walsingham's determination never to undertake another mission. Before leaving Antwerp the baron expressed his disgust for diplomacy in a letter to Burghley which exactly parallels those written by Walsingham to his particular friends. "We may think ourselves most unfortunate," Cobham said,

> to be employed in such a negotiation. I hope the world will witness that we have spared neither life nor travail to advance her Majesty's service; but if the success be hard the fault is not ours.[75]

The invasion of the Netherlands by Alençon was to Cobham an even more bitter blow than it was to Walsingham, who had always preferred France to Spain when it came to a choice between the two Catholic powers. The baron's hatred of the French allowed him to take no satisfaction in the knowledge that Philip II was left, in the autumn of 1578, with less chance than before of re-establishing his rule over the Dutch. Walsingham, for all his despair, took heart when the news of Don John's death reached England soon after the ambassadors returned; he thought that it changed the situation sufficiently to give the queen an excuse for doing yet another volte-face and for sending troops to Orange to help him drive out the momentarily leaderless Spaniards without Alençon's assistance. In Cobham, however, Don John's sudden death seems to have raised no spark of interest. Like Walsingham he came to Court on 7 October, showing himself "much dissatisfied with this mode of proceeding and conduct".[77] Elizabeth was suffering from what appears to have

oeen neuralgia, and saw her returned ministers only briefly. It is not known when her condition allowed her to give them an official audience; they were to have made their report on 8 October, but three days later Walsingham still saw no hope of her speedy recovery, she "being more troubled with conference with physicians ... than with any other matter of State".[78] As soon as he could Cobham slipped away from Court, and by mid-November he was back in the routine of local administration in the Cinque Ports.[79] It must have been with relief that he settled down at Cobham Hall for Christmas.[80]

* * *

Chapter IV

One wonders whether Lord Cobham can have foreseen, when he and Walsingham were doing their utmost to keep Alençon out of the Netherlands in the summer of 1578, that a year later he would entertain the duke at Cobham Hall. It is unlikely that the ambassadors had taken seriously the talk of a royal marriage which had been bandied about while they were overseas. Yet the queen celebrated her forty-ninth birthday in September 1578, and it was clear to the Court that if she did not mean to die a virgin she had soon to make choice of a husband. Alençon proposed to her in August, and she encouraged him to send to England a negotiator who was fully empowered to speak for him. This agent was the duke's particular favourite, Jean le Simier, and in December, two months after Cobham's return to his duties in Kent, the baron arranged for the Frenchman's reception at Dover and conveyance to Court.[1] Elizabeth got on well with Simier, and Burghley, who had seen how reluctant his mistress was to commit herself to the Protestant cause on the Continent, came to the conclusion that only by a French marriage could England hope to secure an ally overseas to assist it in the inevitable war with Spain. The Lord Treasurer therefore encouraged the queen in her liking for Alençon's representative, and throughout the spring of 1579 negotiations for the marriage went forward. Meanwhile the duke, whose campaign in the Netherlands had been disheartenningly unsuccessful, stood by for the summons to present himself before Elizabeth for her approval of his person. In the middle of August he came, completely without fuss, and spent a fortnight in private

conversation and dalliance with the queen at Greenwich, and when he departed Elizabeth went with him a part of the way to the coast. At Cobham Hall the doubly royal party stopped and there Alençon, on 27 August,

> gave the Queen a diamond ring worth, the French say, 10,000 crowns, which he handed to her when he bade her farewell .... The parting was very tender on both sides, and the Queen presented Alençon with another jewel.[2]

Of Cobham's opinion of his guest and of the whole marriage project nothing explicit is known. Popular feeling both at Court and in the country was against Alençon, and the queen herself, although in November 1579 she was determined to oppose the majority of her Councillors and proceed with the match, had so far lost her enthusiasm about it by January 1580 that even Burghley concluded that there was no hope that she would ever marry.[3] For two years longer, according to the fluctuations in English relations with Spain, Elizabeth vacillated, sometimes provoking Alençon to make fresh suits for her hand, sometimes ignoring him for months on end. For the Brooke family her attitude created problems, but it was not Lord Cobham who had to deal with them. In August 1579, during Alençon's first visit to England, the two Secretaries of State had summoned to their office at Greenwich the baron's brother, Sir Henry Cobham, and informed him that he was to leave at once to take over the English embassy at Paris.[4] The new ambassador and his wife were thus subject to perpetual quizzing from the French Court and government about their mistress's intentions regarding King Henry's brother. Elizabeth had instructed Lady Cobham, the knight's wife, to do all that she could to persuade the Valois that she wished to marry into their family; by her account of a reception at which she was presented to the French king and queen on 15 February 1579/80, the ambassadress seems to have played her part well. "I told them," she reported,

> her Majesty had commanded that whenever I came in the presence of them both, I should wish her there. They said again that if wishing would have prevailed, they would have been together many times long ago.[5]

Sir Henry's methods of convincing the French that his queen really meant to marry Alençon were necessarily less courtly and more business-like than those which his wife used. Henry III wanted to see his brother possessed of a kingdom of his own to trouble, and to rid France of him the king was therefore willing to go far toward cajoling Elizabeth into marrying him. Elizabeth, however, was far better off as

Alençon's betrothed than she would have been as his wife, for France in order to please her would fight her battles against Spain, while France when the marriage had been performed could not be trusted not to leave her bearing the full brunt of Philip's resentment for her meddling in the Netherlands. Sir Henry Cobham had to string Henry III along as well as he could. When Alençon had made a second visit to England and still seemed no nearer to becoming Elizabeth's husband, the king's suspicions made life in Paris very difficult for the ambassador. Timorously Cobham put forward the queen's outrageous suggestion that France was to blame for the failure to arrive at a satisfactory marriage contract. Henry III, at the end of his patience, said that he

> coveted the marriage as much as ever he did, and was not become cold in his desire for it; howbeit when he remembers the sending of his commissioners to England, and the twice passing thither of his brother, and yet no conclusion of the cause, he cannot tell whether her Majesty intends to proceed to the effecting of the marriage.[6]

Desperate to carry out his mistress's impossible orders to keep France convinced of her honourable intentions, Cobham went so far as to tell Catherine de Medicis that all England was anxious to see two dying houses revived in the issue of Elizabeth and Alençon. If the marriage went forward, said the ambassador with an ingenuousness born of confusion, the queen mother would see a continuation of the "ligne de France". Elizabeth was furious. She was almost fifty when Cobham had his unfortunate conversation with Catherine, and she knew that the French could be duped only so far. "Her Majesty marvelleth," the ambassador was told, "that you should use any such speeches concerning the matter."[7] Heartsick, the reprimand fresh in his letter-case, Sir Henry returned home in November 1583. Seven months later Alençon was dead, and the twelve-year farce of his courtship of Elizabeth brought to an end.

For Lord Cobham the course of the French marriage negotiations was shorter than it was for his brother. When the principal advisers of Henry III came over in April 1581 to discuss with the queen and her Council the details of the contract, they were entertained resplendently and Burghley gave them a dinner at his house in Covent Garden which cost £ 362.19.11 for food alone. All of the Lord Treasurer's friends came forward to help him lay out his lavish board, and John Brooke, from

his orchards at Newington in Kent, sent a basket of pippins worth a shilling. Brooke was a country squire and his apples were perhaps, like Shallow's, "of his own graffing". Lord Cobham contributed 5 s. worth of heronsews and congers, a rather fishy gift which perhaps indicates the sort of diet to which Cobham Hall was accustomed.[8] The baron took no part in the more serious aspects of the embassy, for it was only Privy Councillors who met the French and drew up a tentative agreement which the queen did not intend ever to endorse.

Even before the commissioners left for home in June, it was expected at Court that Alençon would himself come to see the queen again. Friends of Lord Hunsdon's wrote to him at Berwick that the duke was "looked for at Lord Cobham's" on the second or third of the month,[9] Alençon did not, as matters turned out, visit Cobham Hall a second time, but when he eventually did reach England in October 1581 it was thought that the baron might entertain him before he returned home. On 13 December, after a hectic few weeks in which Elizabeth gave no lesser personages than the duke himself, Leicester, Walsingham and the French ambassador to understand that she would make Alençon her husband,[10] it was decided that "Monsieur should return in God's peace and the Queen's. On Saturday next, her Majesty will bring him on his way to Lord Cobham's."[11] Although the decision was by no means sure to hold, Cobham could not risk offending the man who might soon be his king, and by 19 December "the supper for the Queen and him was all prepared at Cobham."[12] It did indeed look as though Alençon would get away before Christmas. The Lord Admiral went to Dover to do the duke the honour of escorting him across the Channel;[13] on 18 December it was thought that the royal party would set out next day, "Her Majesty's horses and stuffe" having been sent on before;[14] on the nineteenth, although Alençon was still at Court, some of his train had already started off and barges were standing by to convey Cobham's guests to Gravesend.[15] Then "a strong north-east gale sprang up," and the Spanish ambassador reported on Christmas Day that a Channel crossing was considered an impossibility. Alençon's departure, once delayed, was put off again and again until, when the duke finally left for home in February 1582, the queen was said to be so glad to see him go that she danced for joy in her chamber.[16] Apparently the entertainment at Cobham Hall was called off, and although

Elizabeth said farewell to her lover at Canterbury, there is no record of a royal stop at the baron's house on the way. Neither Cobham nor his mistress ever saw Alençon again.

For several years after his return from the Netherlands in 1578 Cobham made little mark upon the public records of the kingdom. He enjoyed the queen's favour. On 28 June 1581 Burghley was authorized to prepare a grant of lands to his friend which would amount to £ 100 a year and be of Cobham's own choosing,[17] and in the same year he was as usual allowed to get off with paying only £ 20 toward each of the three instalments of the general subsidy.[18] As Cheyney says, "Nearness to the queen was reflected in favorable assessments;"[19] Cobham, with a yearly income from his property of between £ 550 and £ 1,000,[20] was indeed favoured to be assessed, as was Leicester, at only £ 300. Yet Elizabeth seems to have been content to require no more in the way of service from the baron than the efficient management of the Cinque Ports. He did not even bother to attend the opening on 16 January 1580/1 of the last session of her fourth Parliament,[21] and, if he sat in the Lords at any time before the dissolution on 18 March, he worked on no committees and did nothing to cause his name to be recorded in the Parliamentary journals. He maintained his interest in Continental affairs, forwarding to Burghley reports of things which his eldest son and his brother John had observed abroad,[22] and when Philip II usurped the Portuguese Throne and drove his principal rival to seek aid in England, Cobham met the pretender and probably gave the Lord Treasurer his opinion of him.[23] Almost the only letters to survive from the correspondence which the two friends carried on at this period are from Cobham's hand; written on 10 and 14 August 1582, they deal with municipal politics in Rye in which the baron had to interfere. Cobham thought that the "ambition of mayoralty" was the chief cause of trouble, and singled out for blame the town clerk, who, he told Burghley,

> having made himself so strong in voices amongst the fishermen can make whom he will mayor. Lately one Fagge within five years had been mayor four times. This usage is not only in Rye, but generally throughout all the Cinque Ports.

Cobham's solution was to summon the offender and two of the leading fishermen to Cobham Hall and there, after a scolding, to dismiss them with a warning against continuing to abuse the electorate.[24]

On only one occasion in the early 1580s does Cobham seem to have departed from his usual practice of avoiding trouble with his colleagues. For many years the baron had resented Roger Manwood, the man whom he had continued in the offices of Solicitor to the Cinque Ports and Steward of the local Courts of Chancery and Admiralty as a part of his legacy from Sir Thomas Cheney. Manwood in 1572 had given up his seat in Parliament as Member for Sandwich in order to become a Judge of the Common Pleas. In 1578, shortly after Cobham's return from the Netherlands, he had been knighted and made Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer. Manwood was an opportunist as well as a corrupt judge who often got into trouble with the Privy Council, but he was also an eccentric whom many people admired for the wholehearted way in which he advanced himself and his family, as well as for the brazenness with which he maintained his autocracy in the courts over which he presided. Cobham hated him, but it is unlikely that the baron would have publicized their feud had Manwood in 1582 not thought himself powerful enough to make complaint against Cobham to the Council. A pained letter from their mutual friend and cousin, Thomas Wotton, shows how much this altercation between two principal men of the shire upset the gentry of Kent. Wotton wrote to Cobham on 16 September 1582, and, after beginning formally enough, proceeded to make some amusingly frank comments upon the folly of a quarrel between two men who were long past Elizabethan middle age. "For the honorable curtesye and great good cheere latelye receyved at the handes of your good Lordeshippe," the would-be mediator began,

> I doo most humblie and hartelye thancke you.
> Yf yt shall rest in mee any waye to stande you in stedde, you shall in a faythfull sorte fynde mee redye to doo yt. I doo most humblie beseeche you, sir, wythe yourselfe a little to consider the motion I made unto you in the behalfe of the Lorde Cheefe Baron. If eche of you be (as eche of you unto eche other of you seeme to be), professed ennemyes, in respecte of your being here in earthe (which cannot be long), yll yt ys unto you bothe; in respecte of your being out of the earthe (whiche without ende must have a course of contynuance), woorse yt ys unto you bothe.
> Yf in stedde of your woonted familiaritie ther be nowe betwene you (your myndes not offended), nothing but a strangenes, that may be soone reformed, And surelye that offence and injurye ought to be great, the rememberaunce wherof sholde in the brest of any person, have a perpetuall place. And yf suche a thing be meete to be removed, the sooner yt ys done, the better ys yt done. And on bothe sydes most woorthye of prayse and honoure ys hee by whom yt ys thus done. This hee saythe that for your estates dothe honoure you bothe, that for his mynde dothe love you bothe, that for poyntes of singular curtesye dothe accompt hym selfe moche bounde to you bothe.

> And so I beseeche the Lorde in honorable estate to sende you a course of manye joyfull yeres,[25]

Thomas Wotton was not a very persuasive writer, but even had he been he could hardly have dissuaded Cobham from the course of vindicating his honour upon which the baron had at last embarked. He was determined to make what he called "My aunswere to the surmized discurtesies obiectid by the Lord chiefe Barone against me". It is difficult to choose points for quotation from among those which Manwood raised and Cobham answered. There were eight in all, most of them petty, some of them so ridiculously simple to rebut that one wonders at Manwood's audacity in setting them down. The first, for instance, was the Chief Baron's claim that his career had been hindered by the Earl of Lincoln's dislike of him. Lincoln was Lord Admiral, and Manwood said to Cobham that it was only "for standing in defence of yo^{r} office and iurisdiction againste the Judge of the Admiraltie" that he had incurred the earl's displeasure. Cobham retorted that Manwood had merely done his duty as steward of the courts in the Cinque Ports and that Lincoln had taken no personal offence to what he had executed in that capacity. "Beter youe maie remember," said the baron to his critic,

> that 15. or 16. yeares past my verie good Lord the L. Admirall hearing that youe had taken a fine, and otherwiese hardely dealt (as it is saied) towardes his Lordshippes frinds and kinnesmen, had no great cause to like of youe.

On another point, Manwood's claim that his salary as court steward had been regularly paid in Sir Thomas Cheney's time but not, except for "a littell space", since Cobham had become Lord Warden, the baron had little need to say much. Manwood's desire to show his independence of Cobham had led him to leave untouched at Dover Castle his accumulated pay. "Yf youe had asked it," was Cobham's lofty reply,

> either of mee or mine and ben denied there had ben some shewe of iuste complainte.

Equally unproven remained Manwood's charge that, in a strange murder case which had been tried fourteen years earlier, Cobham had tried to implicate him and his brother Thomas, then Mayor of Sandwich. The baron had had nothing directly to do with the episode, but Manwood suspected that it was the Lord Warden who had stirred up public opinion against his family at the time. "By yo^{r} ires," he accused Cobham,

> and other meanes they practicede soundrie devises to haue putt my saied brothe^{r} Thomas as an accessorie in dainger of his Lieffe to his greate

> grieffe and mine hinderaũce more then a houndereth marches [£ 66.13.4] in loosing one or twoe Assisses profittes.

Cobham cast his accuser's story in his teeth. "By informacõn geeuen vnto me," the baron began his narrative of an Elizabethan atrocity,

> I finde that 14. yeares or there aboutes one Crispe being keeper of M. Dudley and M^r. Seriaunt Louelace warrein in the Downes besides Sandwich but no drunckerd certaine Personnes of the Towne being a hounting of Connies in the seide Warreine in the night time were mett, by the seide Keeper and others and made some bickering betwene them and they of the Towne repulced homewardes. Two nightes after that, the keeper happeninge to be at Sandwiche Towne, and goeing homewardes in the night three or foure of the Towne belaied the waie against him, and meeting with him betwene the wyndmilles set vpon him with staues and there gaue him his deathes wounde wher of he shortely died. Upon whose death there were suspectid for the facte, diuers of the Towne, and three callid into question for the same, whereof one was a Butcher callid Grene and thother twoe were Tailors. The Butcher fled and within two or three yeares after cam againe when he had obteynid his pardon (which in the opinion of the worlde was not procurid with owte your grate furtheraunce and charges and soe it is lyke that youe were hinderid one or two assises profittes as youe writt) and by the Iurie was founde guiltie but of mans slaughter, wherof he was acquitted by the pleding of his pardonne. But howe the Tailours were dischargid youe knowe best. Nowe yf this proceeding be probable (as it is deliuerid vnto me for trueth) I hope it will not apeere in the iudgement of others that your Brother Thomas was practized to be put in dainger of his liefe by my Letters or my meanes as youe verie vntruly laie downe, wherin youe are verie scandalous towardes mee, but yf M^r. Seriaunt Louelace were lyving youe woulde neuer haue renewid this sore.

In dealing with certain other matters the baron had more difficulty than in replying to Manwood's vague complaints about the Earl of Lincoln's dislike of him, about the withholding of his salary and about the murder case of 1568. "Men doe geue to their frindes and not to foes" was the burden of his defence against the charges made against him of favouritism in dealing in local affairs. Manwood certainly revealed nothing criminal in Cobham's protection of his servants, but it was embarrassing for the baron to have to explain actions which he had performed over twenty years, and he found it especially vexing to have to do so to a man who had often no business to concern himself in the matters which he raised. To one accusation Cobham could not bring himself to make a reasoned reply at all; indeed, it seems to have deserved none. Manwood had once competed for an office with a man whose name was spelled 'Eiere', one of the baron's men who had long since died. Cobham had naturally supported his servant, and Manwood, maintaining that his rival had been dishonest, for some reason thought that he could injure the baron by saying no more than that

> yo^{W} did soe farre countenaunce him againste mee, as emoungest other thinges yo^{W} saiede that I shoulde finde that Eiere had as good frindes as I.

Cobham was obviously at a loss to know what to reply. He could only say that there was nothing extraordinary in a lord's promotion of his servant's interests, and that,

> for the craftie and vnhonest dealinge of him towardes you or any others, in his liefe time youe might haue better to haue chardgid him therwith when as he might and would haue aunswerid youe, then nowe so long after his death to dig him vp with hard speeches, and to contend as it were with his shaddowe.

Another of Manwood's objections against Cobham's defence of his servants had some basis in law, but the baron was able to show that it would impugn the integrity of the queen herself to take the matter any further. Manwood had coveted a farm which had come through marriage to a man named Cole, and which would remain in Cole's hands until the expiry of a fifty-year lease. The lease was defective, however, for in it the farm was described as lying solely in Kent, whereas some of it was within "the libertie of the Cittie of Caunterburie", and Manwood had seen in this loop-hole a means of curtailing Cole's tenure of the property and of buying it himself. He was proceeding to break the lease when Cobham and his wife came to Cole's assistance: "I did well enoughe till yo^{W} and my Ladie tooke that parte," Manwood admitted unabashedly. It was soon seen that the lease could be easily mended, and, as Cobham recorded,

> her Ma^{tie} being alreadie mouid by my wiefe for the amẽdement and making good the rest of the yeres that were then to com in the olde Lease whiche were fifte yeares, was pleased to graunte it at her humble suite.

Cobham was on firm ground when he said,

> Now yf in this it do apeere in mee any partaking with my servaunt to doe iniurie and not rather to defende a manifest discurtesie, I referr my selfe to the iudgment of others.

Oddly enough, Manwood was, as he must have known that he would be, further shown up for an unscrupulous opportunist in the course of Cobham's reply. For the Chief Baron had managed to get the lease from Cole after all, by offering him money for it after the queen had made it regular, and had then, despite Cole's repeated demands, failed to pay for it. "And this," Cobham contemptuously concluded his version of the affair, "youe saie is Lawe."

Only one of Manwood's grievances against Cobham in matters concerned with real

estate would appear to have been justified, although one again cannot see what the Lord Chief Baron hoped to gain by expressing it before the Privy Council. A friend of Cobham's had died impoverished and, rather than see his farm dismembered by his son for want of means to maintain it, Cobham had offered to buy it in its entirety from the heir. Manwood had claimed the property as his wife's and had tried to get it from the young man for almost nothing by making him believe that his father's lease had never been valid. The trick had failed to work and Cobham had bought the farm. Manwood, unable to resign himself to its loss, charged Cobham with depriving his wife of a valuable part of her inheritance. Lady Manwood's claim had been disallowed by the courts, but Cobham, evidently determined to show that it was not for great profits that he had taken over the farm from his friend's heir, took the trouble to inform her husband how little she had lost by the legal decision against her. "As for anie suche hinderaunce shee sustaines," he said,

> I do not finde in my purse that to be true, for that I doe let the same to your owne seruantes and receaue no more per annum ouer and aboue the rente goeing owte of the same but six poundes and odde money with a fewe pewettes [pewits], notwithstanding the fine of fiftie poundes by me paied. I mervaile that youe are not a shamed to writ downe suche an vntrueth.

Cobham's reproofs of Manwood were generally mild enough, but in replying to the Chief Baron's final charges against him the Lord Warden lost all patience. Manwood claimed "Seashoare soylage and libertie of wreacke and warrein" at his manor of Lidcourt, part of the old Maisondieu near Sandwich; Richard Barry, who had succeeded William Crispe as Lieutenant of Dover Castle, denied that there were any such rights attached to the property. Manwood insisted that he had the backing of judgements enrolled in legal record and that Barry was flouting the law of the land in opposing him. "My ffarmo^{r} and keepers there," he said of Lidcourt,

> haue ben interrupted and euill intreated by yo^{r} Lieuetennant of Dovo^{r} Castell, and other your Servauntes by your commaundement as hee reporteth, and besides that iniurie to mee the Queenes inheritaunce of Recordes also appeeringe, is by them also intruded vpon. In these maters yo^{r} L. taketh their partes as hee reporteth.

It will be noted that Manwood, in making this seventh point against Cobham, used some deference: for the first time he addressed the baron, not by the insolent personal pronoun, but as 'your Lordship'. No doubt he knew how he was enraging his enemy. Cobham's reply was at first measured, then sarcastic, at last uncharacteris-

tically exasperated. "I knowe of no suche libertie that youe haue," he told Manwood,

> or maie haue there where youe pretende; I can remembre that disorderly youe sought it, and to impeache me her Ma^ties servaunte and officer, and them vnder mee in executing my office as my Predecessors haue euer doen and I these three and twentie yeares withowte interruption of anie besides your selfe, where in youe doe contrarie to that your selfe haue saied and ben of opinion for knowledge in Lawe when Roulfe or Seriaunte Louelace, was owner of it, as nowe youe are but Tennant, which for a litell glorie in seeming to Rule all, will intrude your selfe quo iure, quaq' iniuria, into euerie mannes doeinges. And as for your Seignniorie (as youe terme it at home) percell of the Masendewe, I thinck youe shall finde neither free warreine nor Libertie of wreackes bellonging vnto it. Albeit I knowe youe haue sought manie Recordes and busied your selfe ouer muche. And for commaunding to intrude vpon her Ma^ties inheritaunce (as you chardge me withall) therin youe doe mee greate iniurie, for my bloud shalbe more reddie to defende that, then youe with your Pen or lawe can doe.

Now Cobham, who was fifty-five in November 1582, was not a man of blood. He never fought a duel, so far as one knows, and the prospect of defending his honour with his sword cannot have appealed to him. For all his contempt of his critic's legal jargon and verbosity he was himself no mean man with words, and the sly dig at Manwood's pretensions to seigniorial rank in the provinces cannot but have had its effect upon the Council. Yet, if his habitual dependence upon his wits had to give way to more violent weapons, he must have been prepared to fight when he made such an avowal before his peers. Manwood had touched upon the delicate subject of his loyalty to the queen, the man had gone too far.

In the event, Manwood laid himself open to the same charge that he had levelled against the baron. His last grievance was of a singularly petty nature. "For Seagulls," he complained,

> bredding in the Cliffes belonginge to somme of my friendes and acquainetance whereas I haue had yearely some w^ch I haue spent amoungest my frindes, of late by yo^r Lieuetennant, and others by his meanes the saied gulles are taken, not onlie the firste flighte, but the seconde and all, and parte hee sent to your Lordshippe and other his ffrendes, but a farre greater parte solde to the Poulterer for Lucrous gaine, w^ch is farr abusede more then in the time of m^r Crispe and other Lieuetennantes before. And I hauinge Lawfull interest, did not meane but that yo^r L. shoulde haue yearlie as manie Gulles as yo^w had before. But in this matter yo^r Lieutennant w^th greate disorder of companie and weapone hath doen mee iniurie, and reporteth that yo^r L. will beare him owte againste mee, and soe to controuersie with me for it.

"Trew it is," replied Cobham with smug gratitude for the opening which his enemy had given him,

> I haue ben infourmed that youe to make more questions which youe loue well: tooke a lease (or causide one Neuinson to take it) of foure or fiue acres of lande, thereby to haue a pretence of title, to some of the Gulles bredding within her Maties warreine at Douor, whereof youe saie youe were wonte to haue parte. Men doe geue to their frindes and not to foes. Yf anie be solde to the Poulterer, it is not otherwiese vsed nowe, then it was by Mr Crispe or other Lieutenauntes before. But that is no iniurie to youe, hauing no good interest vnto anie there, neithe[r] of your selfe, nor yeat in the right of anie of your frindes, as youe pretende, as nowe youe haue commencid diuers suites against my Lieutennant and his Servauntes as well in your owne name, as also youe haue occasioinde one Valentine Upton to do the Like contrarie to your oathe, I holding the same as in her Maties right. Nowe whether I or youe doe intrude vpon the Queenes Maties inheritaunce of Recorde as youe chardge mee in the seauenth article, my Lordes whoe shall see this maie easely perceaue by these your doeinges.[26]

Thus ends the surviving evidence of Cobham's confrontation with Sir Roger Manwood in 1582. What judgement the Council handed down is not recorded. One suspects, however, that it was the baron who carried the day, for the next and last time that Cobham mentioned his enemy he spoke of Manwood's desire for vengeance. In June 1588, when the baron was again on embassy on the Continent, he heard that the Lord Chief Baron was seeking to preside over the Kentish assizes during the forthcoming term. To Secretary Walsingham, like himself a Kentishman, Cobham wrote:

> I am informed that the lord chief baron is a suitor to her Majesty to have the circuit of Kent. I heartily pray you, for our country's sake that you will be a means to stay it. Except he carried a revenging mind he would never seek it.[27]

Cobham took time off from other matters to quarrel with Manwood in 1582, for that was the year when, according to the 1587 edition of Holinshed, he erected "his goodlie buildings at the Blacke friers in London".[28] The extent of Cobham's renovation of his town house is examined minutely by Sir Edmund Chambers in his work on the Blackfriars as the home of England's first real theatre;[29] it would be superfluous here to follow again the course of rebuilding. For some fifteen years Cobham was preoccupied with directing the work. To his neighbour Sir William More he wrote from Cobham Hall on 30 August 1580 a letter which shows that even then, two years before the result of his efforts became apparent, the baron was aware of the need of renovating the old house. "Sr," he said,

> being nowe giuen to vnderstande, that my howse in the Blackfriers is in greate dainger of falling, and by the opinion of skilfull woorkmen whoe haue surveyed the same, aduised, to vnderpropte [sic] that side, towards your gardeine, vntill the spring of the yeare when as they maie more conveniently goe in hande wth the repayring thereof, then nowe, winter drawing on at hande, I am to praie yor favor, for the vse of soe muche of yor garden, as maie effecte the doeing therof, and the rather, for that

> by the ruine of my howse, yo^{r} annoyaunce must be verie greate, for the avoyding wherof I praie yo^{u} to giue order to yo^{r} Servauntes, according to yo^{r} former graunte made vnto me, that my woorck men maie haue egresse and regresse, in the doeing therof as occasion shall require. And I wilbe readie to doe yo^{u} anie the like pleasure I can.[30]

Presumably major repairs to the house were undertaken early in 1581, yet on 23 April 1592 Cobham had still not completed them. He and More had shared a common water conduit which was inadequate to the needs of both households, and was moreover defective,[31] and it was a part of the scheme for rebuilding and modernizing the ancient edifice that Cobham should have a water supply of his own. In 1592 the Lord Mayor acknowledged the baron's "request for a quill of water from the Conduit at Ludgate to his house within the Blackfriars, which request he had laid before the Court of Aldermen". Unfortunately the City was just then dealing with Frederick Genebelli for a general improvement of the waterworks, so that no immediate reply to Cobham's request could be made.[32] Two years later, on 30 September 1594, the house in the Blackfriars was still waiting to be connected with the mains when Burghley tried to nudge the corporation in his friend's behalf.[33] Whether or not the Lord Treasurer's influence prevailed cannot be established, but presumably Cobham's rebuilding was complete when the baron died. A Dutch visitor to London took a stroll through the Blackfriars on 25 September 1599 and described the pleasant, bustling neighbourhood which Cobham left behind him. His son and heir then lived in the great house, his youngest son George nearby; out the lane and down Fleet Street into another lane was the Fleet prison. All around were what Ben Jonson was to call the profane and choleric glass-men, the foreigners whose Venetian glassware the younger Lord Cobham recommended to his friends.[34] Thomas Platter was delighted. "On my way to mylord Cobham in the Blackfriars Road," he recorded,

> I saw the prison and the Queen's statue in stone on the tower, then I passed through the French street populated almost entirely by French people to mylord Cobham's house which is a charming residence; I paid a call on his brother Mr. Brooke opposite, with whom my brother-in-law, Heinrich Jäckelmann stayed. From there I crossed again to a glazier's where I saw some beautiful glass being made.[35]

One of the reasons which moved Cobham not only to repair but also to expand his town house in the 1580s was no doubt the growing demands made upon him by his children. His twin daughters were seventeen years old in January 1579; it was time that they be married. It would seem that it was not intended that the younger of

the twins should marry first. George Lord Hunsdon, whose only child was born in 1576, spoke in later life of Elizabeth Brooke as "that honorable lady of great worth that was my wife" before she became Robert Cecil's in 1589;[36] but evidently the betrothal of the elder girl was broken, so that Frances Brooke was the first of Cobham's children by his second wife to leave her father's household. On 3 October 1579 the baron wrote formally from the Blackfriars to his neighbour More to ask his assistance in arranging a grand wedding. "Sir," Cobham began,

> by reason I ame to marrey one of my Dawghters abowt Allontyde in my howse att the blackeffryers where my romes are so scante, as I cannot well doo it wythe owt the helpe of my good neyghbors (specialley of yow): I ame thereffore moste herteley to requyer yow, thatt yow will ffor a ffew dayes spare me iij or iiij of yor Romes Lyinge next towardes me wherein yow shall right greattley pleasure me. And I hoope so to vse them as shalbe smalley to yower Anoyance, prayinge yowe thatt I may wythe some convenyent spede vnderstand yor mynde ffor thatt I muste otherwayes provide my selffe, yf my turne be nott thatt waye served.[37]

The daughter was almost certainly Frances, her prospective husband young John Lord Stourton, the Catholic peer whose attempts to get himself restored in blood had created a sensation in the Parliament of 1576. For some reason the marriage did not go forward as Cobham had planned, and it was not until the autumn of 1580 that Frances, "being a person not degenerat from the honor of hir house," was "married to John Lord Sturton at the Blacke friers in London".[38] Because of his Marian sympathies, Cobham's new son-in-law was to prove a dangerous addition to the Brookes' circle. He was, however, a "Baron of ancient Family and great Paternall Estate",[39] with a seat in Wiltshire and a rank which gave Frances Brooke social precedence over the rest of Cobham's children throughout the remainder of her father's lifetime.

Cobham's eldest daughter, the child of his first wife, had become a widow while the Stourton marriage was pending, and at about the same time as one Frances Brooke became a baroness the other married again and became the wife of a London gentleman. Cobham apparently took no more interest in Frances Beecher than he had in Frances Coppinger, and it was only on his death-bed that he remembered his grandchildren by her. "Some consideratiõ," he told his executors in 1597, "should bee taken of the poore estate of his daughters chyldrẽ by mr Edward Becher;" while he lived, however, the baron concerned himself only with the needs of his second family.[40]

The second of his younger children to be married was Margaret, who in 1584, at the age of twenty-one, became Lady Sondes.[41] Sir Thomas Sondes was a childless widower of forty, whose first wife had recently died,[42] wnen Cobham gave him and his bride a county wedding at Cobham Hall.[43] Knighted in 1583,[44] Sondes came of an old family and had a seat at Throwley, southwest of Faversham, as well as estates in Sussex, Surrey, Middlesex, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. He seemed a good match for the baron's youngest daughter. Unfortunately the Sondeses soon fell out with each other, and by 1592 Sir Thomas was so recklessly mishandling his estate, in direct contravention of the terms of his wife's marriage contract, that Cobham had to appeal to Lord Burghley for an injunction against him. "I haue thowght yt very necessarye," wrote the baron,

> to aquaynt your Lo: w^t the cawsyes that haue movyd me to requyer a Staye of S^r Thomas Soondeys procedyngeanes [sic] for vnto me yt semythe verye straynge that havyng mayde suche and so many ordonayncyes w^t me, yn my daughters Joynter, that he woolde w^tout my prevetye, Levye a fine of all hys Layndes whatsoewer and to suffer a recovery I know not to what vsyses: whereby to defrayde my daughter and her Issue by him: of suche somes of money; and inheritaynances [sic] that he has convenaynt to deveyde. I wryte vnto your Lo: thys muche that If he soo vnto yow: your Lo: maye let him knoo yt ys my humble suitte to have the wryttes stayde -- vntyll I may see that nothing doo passe contrarye to his wryttyng signyd zelyd and delyveryd by hem.[45]

Cobham had in effect very little legal control over his son-in-law. "For the trueth is," he ruefully admitted,

> That haying be [i.e., by] his marriage with my doughter, w^th whom I gaue 1500. li in money besides other chardges, Contracted w^th me by Convenant only (suche was the Confidence y^t I then had of his integritie and good deling) not onlie to assure for her Jointure during her liefe, Landes to y^e yearly value of fiue houndrid markes [£ 333.6.8] And to make to be paied vnto her viij^C li in money, yf it shoulde happen to her to overliue him. But alsoe to suffer to descend to the assines male betweene him and my doughter all suche Landes as were intailide to him and his heires male, by the last will of his father, (One houndrid poundes by y^e yeare excepted, w^ch will suffice to discharge his debtes) and in default of suche issue male, to leve to the only doughter betweene them either a houndred poundes yearely in Landes, or 2000li in money .... He hath nowe vpon what good grounde I cannot yet see taken offence against my doughter his wiefe, and in [h]ys displeasure, and w^thowte my priuitie hath alreadie levyed fines of all the said landes soe intailede by his fathers will.[46]

The probable reason for Sondes's estrangement from his wife emerges from letters written only after the knight's death on 7 February 1592/3. Their only child, a daughter named Frances, was born in the late summer of 1592, less than six months before Sondes died;[47] widowed, Margaret Brooke, taking her baby with her, went back

to Cobham Hall to live. There her father administered for her the estates which made up her dowry, and when the baron died in 1597 he committed the task to his son Henry, who later spoke of his sister and her child as the two people most dependent upon him. As he told Sir Robert Cecil in 1603,

> y^e^ care of y^e^ mother and y^e^ daughter is one of y^e^ greatest cares I hav now to think of as a charg cõmitted vnto me by my lord my father at his death.[48]

It was in the course of attending Lady Sondes at Cobham Hall, where the younger baron left her all year round, that servants at the house wrote about their charge in terms which show that the widow was mentally incompetent. A woman called Mrs. Harcourt seems to have had the chief care of her, and on 16 July 1596, while the elder lord still lived, the steward of the estate wrote from London a letter which reveals how incapable of responsibility Lady Sondes was even then. "This bearer comming to see me," Richard Williams told Mrs. Harcourt,

> and to bring me your Commen^d^acõns, I could not let him retourne withowte these lines of recõmendacõns and thanckes. And Michall to impart vnto youe my conceipt of D: John, the newe phisician, who I thinck is nowe com downe with mr Morrice, to doo him selfe more good, then any ease to y^r^ poore La. .... I doe hartely wish y^t^ your Lady were capable to manage her owne state and dispose of her owne Liuelyhood or ells some Course taken for the Letting of her farmes to the best commoditie. The howse at Croyden and many other of her landes for lack of power to make grauntes for longer time then from yeare to yeare dooth not nowe yeld the most benefitt y^t^ might be made of yt, neither are the thinges them selfes so well vsed by the farmers as by having some assurance for their continuance in the occupacõn of their holdinges, yt would be .... And for poore men to stand withowt certainty in their dwellinges is boeth vncharitable and vnhonest. Therfore I pray youe, yeld your aduice and help y^t^ yf youe thincke my La. be in case and wilbe perswadid to put her hand to y^e^ poore mens leases, then they shalbe sent youe in such good sorte as to my vnderstanding shalbe meete for her to graunt.[49]

This letter and others written up to the time of the collapse of the family in 1603 show that Margaret Sondes had lost her reason, and thereby enable one to guess that it was her tainting of his blood lines with madness which had turned her husband against her. Sir Thomas may even have doubted his wife's fidelity to him: as late as 1612, when their daughter married at the age of nineteen, a Court gossip described the girl as "a pretended daughter of Sir Thomas Sandes ... who hath a great portion, but a greater blemish in her birth".[50] Henry Lord Cobham did what he could to have his sister cured, perhaps partly because Richard Williams constantly complained to his master about the burden placed upon him by the necessity of

managing not only the Cobham estates but those of the widow as well,[51] and drew up for the baron's inspection accounts which showed how expensive it was to run "my Lo howse at Cobham During the time of my La: remayning there".[52] Cobham even called in his parents' old acquaintance, John Dee, and on 4 November 1602 "the common report is that Dr. Dee hath delivered the Lady Sandes of a devill or of some other straunge possession."[53] Yet no effective cure was found, and of Lady Sondes it may well have been said, with more truth than Ben Jonson's characters say it of Doll Common, "A lords sister, sir. ... She's mad, sir." She died so in 1621,[54] aged fifty-seven, and was, unless Lady Stourton survived her by a year or so, the last of her father's children to go.

His youngest daughter's future misfortunes were probably quite unforeseen by Lord Cobham when he gave her to Sir Thomas Sondes in 1584. The baron's sorrow would then have been for the loss of his eldest son, for Maximilian Brooke, the most promising of Cobham's children, had recently died before he was twenty-three. Francis Thynne, writing in Holinshed, helps one to sketch in the youth's childhood. Maximilian, he says,

> growing after to be a goodlie yoong gentleman, was first in his yoongest yeares brought vp in his fathers house, where he learned the Latine, the French, & other languages; then going to Cambridge, where he bestowed some time in philosophicall exercises.[55]

Young Brooke made a good impression at the university, where he matriculated fellow-commoner from King's at Easter 1577.[56] He was then sixteen, and was understandably his father's great hope for the future advancement of their family. Thomas Wotton, the Kentish gentleman who tried to make peace between Cobham and the Lord Chief Baron, wrote a letter to Maximilian on 20 June 1577 which reflects the aspirations which his parents and friends shared. "My good cousyn," Wotton wrote,

> The dutye I owe unto your most honorable parentes dothe often tymes constrayne mee to repayre unto them. The love I am bounde to beare (and indeed beare) unto you dothe often tymes occasion mee withe theym to common [i.e., commune] of you. The joye they have, the hope I have grounded upon the reaporte of your good inclination unto, and diligence in studye, dothe make theym as your parentes to love you deerely, dothe make mee as one of your frendes and meane kynsmen (and besyde mee a nomber of others), to esteeme you highelye. Of whiche thing to comforte you, and in the Trade you ar in to encourage you, I thought meete to wryte you a woorde or twayne.
>
> That that you have well begonne you must in Studye well contynue. Your parentes, your frendes, your countreye, all which have interest in you, look dulye for yt. The place where you be dothe promyse yt, your selfe

> therby greatlye honored, shall hereafter blesse the tyme in whiche, and reverence the personnes by whiche you ar moved unto yt. Yf I doo not (as for lacke of learnyng to my great greefe I cannot), herein deale largelye and skylfullye, yet towarde you as a frende herein deale I faythfullye. And so I praye you take yt, for surelye so I meane yt.[57]

There seems to be no doubt that Maximilian Brooke took his responsibilities seriously, perhaps a little priggishly. Thynne tells how his earnestness impressed Dr. Fletcher. "This yoong gentleman," writes the chronicler of the Cobham family,

> hauing his mind mounted to the hight of good actions, and desirous to make shew that patience reioiseth in expecting the good success of hard and high things, tooke this posie to him; Gaudet patientia duris. Of which words and the blacke lion placed in a siluer field being his crest, one Giles Fletcher (now doctor of law in Cambridge in this yeare one thousand fiue hundred fourescore and six) and one that greatlie loued this gentleman, did some yeares past compose these following persuasiue verses, as followeth:
>
> Ecce niger vestrae referens insignia stirpis,
> Stat leo candenti conspiciendus agro:
> Admonet vt niuei tibi sint in pectore mores,
> Hic color & fortem te iubet esse leo.
> Quàm bene conueniunt nigro coniuncta leoni?
> Quae tria sunt titulis addita verba tuis.
> Haec quoq; te fortem, Gaudet patientia duris,
> Haec quoq; te niueis moribus esse iubet.
> Ergò sit vt tituli, sic vitae regula, verbo
> Sed quod inest, factis debet inesse tuis.
> Ut te nobilitas humilem, sors ampla modestum
> Reddat, honor mitem, copia magna pium.
> Dura quidem res est, Gaudet patientia duris.
> Conueniens verbo laus erit ista tuo.
> Si malè quid placeat, quod vis non velle, carere,
> Quod cupis, a placidis abstinuisse malis.
> Dura quidem res est, Gaudet patientia duris.
> Deterior verbo ne videare, caue.
> Si quid displiceat, motus lenire feroces,
> Pectoris ac irae fraena tenere tuae:
> Dura quidem res est, Gaudet patientia duris.
> Hic quoq; sint verbo consona facta tuo:
> Si mala contingant, tranquilla mente dolorem
> Ferre, nec aduersus succubuisse malis.
> Dura quidem res est, Gaudet patientia duris.
> Dissimilia verbo ne videare, caue.
> Haec bene si facias, re, sanguine, nomine magnus,
> Et magno maior Maximilianus eris.[58]

Thynne himself attempted to translate the versified moral catechism, defending the gracelessness of his version as translators have ever done: "nothinge turned into ane other tonge canne so delighte or carrye the same grace that yt hathe in the tonge wherin yt was fyrst written."[59] Yet his verses at least contrive to convey the highmindedness of the original:

> Beholde the blacke lyone, the ensigne of youre race
> Is to bee seene in syluer cheuerne to haue a noble place

> The Whyte dothe the[e] forewarne, thy brest adornid to bee
> Withe manners white and good, the lyon most valiãte maketh thee.
> Howe well thy worde or poesye, to thy armes added here
> And yoyned wth the blacke lyone, agree, shall soone appere.
> The lyone makes the[e] hardye, In harde thynges patiẽce yoyes.
> That biddes to be of manners white, w^{c}he vices blacke destroyes
> Wherefore as is thy title, lett be thy rule of lyfe.
> What thy woordes shewes, lett they dedes haue, betwene them sett no stryfe.
> Lett nooblenesse the[e] humble, lett lott of greate successione
> Thee modest make, thy honor lett of myldnesse take possessione,
> Thy greate plentye, see that yt the[e] do godly make.
> These things be harde In harde thynges yet, doth pacience Plesure take.
> Wherefore contynuall prayse, yt shalbe vnto thee
> Yf to thy worde thy worke also conveniently agree.
> If euill doo the[e] please, thy motions to refrayne
> to lacke what thowe woldst haue, from swete ylls to absteyne,
> Are thinges most harde, In harde thynges yet sweete patience doth delighte.
> Beware thy deede then [i.e., than] worde seme not farre worse in any plighte.
> If oughte do thee displease, those pasiones to suppresse
> And by the bridlinge of thy mynde, thyne anger to redresse
> A harde thinge is, In harde things yt will patience yoyinge bee.
> And here also as in the woorde, so lett thy worke agree
> If euill to the[e] happen, beare that withe quiet mynde.
> Suppresse the greife, to aduerse ills, yelde not in any kynde.
> This is a thinge most harde, In harde thynges Patence yoyeth styll.
> Seme not vnlyke vnto thy worde, shonne that with deede and wyll.
> These thinges yf that thow doeste, In dedes, in blood, in name
> thowe shalt be great & as thy name, moeste greate by worthy fame.

Upon leaving the university without a degree, Maximilian went abroad. He went first, like his uncle George's son Duke Brooke,[60] to Paris, where his father's younger brother was ambassador. Sir Henry Cobham wrote to Secretary Walsingham on 20 December 1581, informing him that

> My nephew Maximilian is this day come to me; but I am right sorry he will not stay in these parts that I might show my zeal and natural affection to him, and humbly thank you for your favourable disposition towards him.[61]

A fortnight later Walsingham was told that the young man had received a letter from his father and, having replied to it and also written to the Secretary, had that day set out for the south.[62] That Walsingham had more than a personal interest in the heir to the barony of Cobham is revealed in the earliest of the letters to survive from the traveller's pen, for Maximilian made a prolonged visit to Lyons and was therefore able to report to England on the threatening gestures which the Catholic Duke of Savoy was offering to the theocratic Republic of Geneva. Oddly enough, in his letter to Walsingham himself of 26 April 1582, the young man gave no account of the political situation abroad;[63] it was in writing to his father two days earlier that Maximilian had discussed the religious wars, a fact which perhaps indicates that Cobham had instructed his son to communicate matters of state directly

to him. The baron of course passed such information on to Burghley:

> I seeynde your L: a letter that my soon Maxe: hathe wryttyn me vpp̃o hes retorne froo̅ Geneua to Lyoons,

Cobham wrote to his friend four months after Maximilian's arrival in the south.[64] The young man did not, however, in his letter of 24 April, mean to send his father only a political report. His tour of France had an educative purpose and he therefore expressed himself rather self-consciously in French, no doubt in order to impress Cobham ("Monseigneur & Pere") with his progress in the language. "Monseigneur," Maximilian began,

> hier qui estoit le 22 d'April Je receus les vostres du 31 de Mars par lequels vous me mandes, que je vous feray entendre le nouuelles de par deça il ny a rien suruenu depuis mes derneurs lettres, sinon que Geneua estoit en grand daunger estre surprins par le Duc de Sauoy, mais il pleut a dieu deliuruer son peuple des mains de leur persecuteurs par moien impourveu. Un cousturier, qui autrefois, auoit demeure à Geneua, estat en Piemond, en oyant ['en oyant' crossed out] & oyant battre le tambourin, s'enroulle, sans scauour par quelle expedition c'estoit. les compaynies assemblees en Piemond, sont conduites par leur esgares & presque tousiours de nuict. En fin ce soldat cousturier, recognoit le lac de Lousane et s'appercoit, quil est pre de Geneua, Partant il doute voir s'asseure, que ceste entreprinse est contre Geneua. Il faict semblant de s'estre tellemẽt blece le pied, quil ne peut plus aucunemẽt marcher. Les trouppes estans esloignes, il se faict, passer le lac, & sen ua à Geneua, ou il declaire ce quil pouuoit scauour, & ses coniectures. Ceux de Geneua alors s'aduisent d'un de Louuon, qui depuis deux ans, s'estoit venu accasser à Geneua, & auoit achette vne maisson fort cheremẽt, tout ioignãt les murailes. Cesluy cy se nomme Plan. On luy bailla le question. Il l'endure par deux fois: On luy confronte sa famme, qui le prie de ne se faire plus tant tormenter, quil confesse libremẽt, qu'il scait bien, qu'il n'y auoit pas quinze iours que pour ceste traison il auoit receu deux cents escues. Alors il confesse. On prend Balan secretaire du Luetenant & son 6 autres qu'on met en prison. La faction se dauoit faire le iour de pasques. Ceux de Berne se mettent en armes pour ses reuenger du Duc de Sauoy: Voila tout cela que je puis scauoir des affaires de Geneua. Je prie dieu mons. quil vous donne & a ma Dame en santé longue & heureuse vie. De Lion 24 d'April. 1582,
>
> Vostre treshumble & tresobeisant filz
> Maximilian Brooke.[65]

Reading this letter, one wishes that one from Cobham to his eldest son had also survived. Maximilian writes so conscientiously and so formally that one wonders whether relations between father and son can have been quite so correct as the young man's style suggests. The fervour with which his son commends the Calvinist cause may possibly indicate that the baron found that he had bred a son far more straight-laced than himself. None of Cobham's charm was, to judge from his letters, inherited by Maximilian.

The first passage from the young man to Walsingham which survives is dated from

Lyons on 17 July 1582; it contains bits of news of Catholic troop movements in Italy, information admittedly unimportant ("at this time there are not many novelties current in these parts worthy of writing"), yet sent to show the Secretary how sincerely the traveller wished to serve him. "I would to God," asseverated Maximilian to the Puritan Walsingham,

> my pen could give such grace to describe with what zeal and singleness of heart I have always honoured you; or that you might descend into the secret parts of my mind. Then you should certainly find how I am affected to you. But many words may breed suspicion of flattery. My love towards you is not so great in affection, as I desire to effect it in action.[66]

On 16 February 1582/3, from an unspecified address which was presumably still Lyons, the young man wrote again to the Secretary, in the same extravagant fashion. Even "l'envye qu'J'avois de voir Italie", Maximilian protested, he would not indulge until Walsingham gave the proposed journey south his approval.

Cobham's son never got to see the Italy which the baron had known in his youth. Two months after writing to Walsingham, Maximilian was on his way north and it was from Orleans that on 11 April 1583 he wrote to his father's great friend at home. No other letter from him to Burghley survives; this one, despite its fulsomeness, deserves quotation, not only because it is the last which the young man is known to have written, but also because it shows what a deep sense of obligation to the Lord Treasurer had been implanted in Cobham's children. "Monseigneur," Maximilian began, in his best hand and most careful French,

> si les interieures parties du corps estoient exposées à la veüe de l'oeil, aussi bien comme sont les mains les yeux le chef et autres membres d'iceluy, et si les pensemens du coeur se pouuoient cognoistre aussi aisément comme les actions exterieures, la peine que ie prends en vous escriuant ceste-cy seroit perdue et la fascherie que vous endurez en la lisant se diminueroit. Car vous verrez ausi clairement comme on void [sic: voit] en plein midy, que le bruit de voz vertus et la souuenance que j'ay des faveurs dont il vous a pleu m'honnorer autrefois, est penetré iusques au plus profond de mon coeur, ou m'admonestant tous-iours de mon debuoir enuers vous qui me rend tellement esveillé et prompt à vous fair service, que nul seruiteur que vous ayes ne me pourroit esgaller. Car m'asseurant que mon coeur est genereux et mon naturel conforme a celuy du pere, qui m'a engendré ie serois bien marry, que les actions procedantes d'iceluy fussent villaines et indignes de la maison dont ie suis descendu. Or d'aultant que le plus grand nombre de vos seruiteurs n'a eu cest heur-là d'estre né de parents si nobles comme sont les miens, grand honte me seront de ceder au plus vertueus d'iceux en quelque chose vertueuse, ou bien approchante de la vertu, et certes si ce n'est vne vraye vertu au moins cest vne chose,

> qui luy ressemble fort bien d'honnorer respecter et seruir personnages dotles de telles vertus comme vous estes. Ie vous supplie donques, que de la splendeur de vos dignites ie reçoiue vn peu d'honneur, ce qui m'adveindra si vous me mettez au rang de ceux qui prennent plaisir en vostre prosperité et contentement en voz commandements. Et ainsi ie prie dieu Monseigneur vous donner bonne, longue, et contente uie
> D'Orleans ce 11me D'Apuril 1583
>
> Vostre treshumble et tresobeisant seruiteur
> Maximilian Cobham.[68]

It is to be noted that Maximilian, who signed himself 'Brooke' in his only extant letter to his father, had by April 1583 fallen into the old family practice of using 'Cobham' as his surname. On 8 June he endorsed a set of testimonial letters for Dr. Gilbert Bourne, using the style 'Maximilian de Cobham'.[69]

Dr. Bourne was on his way to Oxford; soon after he left Orleans, the city was disturbed by violent riots, "nation against nation, and English gentlemen in great danger". Nicholas Wilson, safely back in Paris on 8 July, informed Walsingham that the little colony had grouped itself about his young friend while its existence was threatened by French patriots. "They have received no harm," the Secretary was assured,

> but have been threatened greatly, watched for at every street's end, and forced to remain at Mr. Cobham's lodging, where we were, and not suffered to come out, for the space of five days in danger of our lives.[70]

Then, while Orleans was in turmoil, Maximilian Brooke suddenly died. His death sent a wave of grief through his family and friends, grief so intense that no one who expressed it thought to make an objective record of what had killed the twenty-two-year-old heir to the Cobham patrimony, or even to set down the day on which he died.[71] Sir Henry Cobham was the first of the family to receive news of his nephew's death. It reached the ambassador at a time when he was seeking his recall from Paris, and on 27 July 1583 Sir Henry explained to Walsingham how important it was to him that he be allowed to return home. "'I beseech your Honour to pardon me,'" he wrote,

> 'that I do not write at large unto you, being not well in health and in grief for the death of my dear nephew, who was not only a hope to his father, but to all others of his poor house; beseeching you, with your honourable persuasions to lighten and ease the sorrow which will, I know, overmuch oppress my Lord and Lady Cobham, because he was justly entirely beloved of them, as their first-born child of great expectations....
> 'Since I have been deprived of my nephew Maximilian's life, it seemeth to me this court is become very noisome; wishing her Majesty, either in respect of her better service, or for compassion, would vouchsafe to release me from hence.'[72]

By 6 August the news "of Mr. Cobham's death at Orleans" had reached London,[73] and

three days later Thomas Wotton wrote a letter of consolation to the bereaved father. "Comforte your selfe," the kindly old man said, beginning what Professor Hurstfield calls "a rather fine example of Elizabethan rhythmic prose",[74]

> wythe the rememberaunce of the blessed chaunge your sonne my Cousyn hathe made, that losing earthe hathe gotten heaven, that for a short mortall lyfe (the course wherof might happelye have been subjecte to sondrie sortes of sorrowes), lyvethe everlastinglye, and wythe the almightie and immortall God most joyfullye.
> Comforte your selfe as a wyse man wythe the state of the thing that ys nowe brought to a poynt remedilesse. Comforte your selfe as a Christian man wythe the provydence and pleasure of almightie God whose power orderethe all thing, whose wysdome knowethe all thing, whose goodnesse procurethe no yll thing.
> Comforte your selfe for your good Ladye, and other the cheefe of your familie, that by your example maye w^th^ some good patience receyve God's gratious visitation.
> Comforte your selfe for your frendes and Countrye that have good interest in you, and w^th^ good myndes wyshe well unto you. Comforte your selfe for your selfe, that lyving here (as ye maye), in mynde joyfullye, ye maye (yf the Lorde so wyll), long lyve here in Bodye helthelye. Hearing of the deathe of your said sonne yesterdaye, I have written this thing unto your good Lordeshippe this daye, sondrie of your good frendes can doo yt more largelye and wyselye (none can doo yt more faythfullye), then I have done. And so I beseeche the Lorde in honorable estate to sende you a course of many joyfull yeres.[75]

From Lord Cobham himself comes no comment upon Maximilian's death. The baron had been preoccupied in June with efforts to persuade the queen to allow his brother to give up the French embassy,[76] and on 14 July he was in Kent, anxiously watching the course of the Dutch wars and ruefully admitting to Walsingham that he feared "we shall have hard neighbours of the Spaniards."[77] How he took the blow to his hopes no one knows. Nor does one hear from Burghley at this sad time in his friend's life. Francis Thynne, in his account of the Brookes published in 1587, tried to depict the family's sorrow at the death of its heir, but he had to express himself suppositionally. In doing so he gave rise to the tradition that Maximilian died at Naples.[78] Thynne's tortuous prose records how the young man, having gone up to Cambridge,

> forsaking that place, did after trauell beyond the seas, where most vnfortunatlie (about the yeare of Christ one thousand fiue hundred fourescore and three) he ended his desired life, which might greatlie in time haue beene beneficiall to his countrie, whose death (being greeuous to his parents at Cobham performing the funerals of him their sonne, who should by the course of nature haue discharged that dutie to them) maie iustlie mooue them to write vpon the toome of the same Maximilian these verses, set vpon a toome of the hospitals of the incurable in Naples, which in the like cause I haue read to be set by the now liuing mother vpon the toome of hir lamented sonne, departing in hir life time to hir great griefe and heauines:

Quae mihi debueras suprema munera vitae,
Infoelix seruo nunc tibi nate prior:
Fortuna inconstans, lex & variabilis aeui,
Debueras cineri iam superesse meae.

The which I haue seene turned into French in this sort expressing the words & the true meaning therof:

Par ces derneirs honores, que puet lauie attender,
Ie te paye primer ce que tu me deuois,
Sort mutable ô du temps les variable loix,
Tu deuois ah mon filz ah suire ma cender.[79]

No tomb of Maximilian Brooke exists at Cobham, nor any monument to him. Lord Cobham had to turn his back upon his 'soon Maxe' and fix his hopes upon 'soon Harry'; he seems to have done so without any public show of grief.

Lord and Lady Cobham were more fortunate than many of their contemporaries, for, although their first-born died young, they had three other sons to carry on their line. William Harrison, the baron's household chaplain, paid tribute to "your Honors children, whome God hath indued with a singular towardnesse vnto all vertue & learning",[80] and Thynne too wrote of the young Brookes, because it was not only "for their honorable birth, as for that their good education giuen by their parents deserueth not that they should be forgotten".[81] Henry, the second son, matriculated fellow commoner from King's, his brother's college at Cambridge, in February or March 1579/80,[82] and was eighteen when Maximilian's death left him heir apparent to the barony of Cobham. Thynne wrote of him in 1586 as of

> a gentleman, of whome great hope is conceiued, that his following yeares giuing increase to his good parts by nature, and to the like gifts of the languages by education, will not onelie make him a beneficiall member to his commonwealth, but also a person worthie of such a father.[83]

William Brooke, Cobham's second surviving son, is not certainly known to have gone to the university. Thynne's eulogy of him, however, while it stresses the youth's aptitude for social life, suggests that William had also received a formal education. "A comelie gentleman, and inclined to follow the court (for which he seemeth by the gift of nature to be created)," he was by 1586

> beautified with the knowledge of the languages, and therefore likelie in following time to prooue a glorie to his house, as well abroad as at home.

Thynne's words lead one to suspect that, despite Venn's deduction, the lawyer William Brooke, a Cheshire man, was not the same as the William Brooke who matricu-

lated fellow commoner from King's College, Cambridge, at the same time as did Henry Brooke.[84] Cobham's son William was only a year younger than his brother and may well, at the age of fourteen, have gone up to Cambridge with Henry during Lent 1579/80. He did not, at any rate, take a degree, and on 7 November 1584, when only eighteen, was returned to Parliament for Rochester.[85] William deserves a place in Sir John Neale's list of youths who, "noble blood overcoming all obstacles," began their Parliamentary careers at an unusually early age: "the man who," says Neale, "was possibly the babe of all Elizabethan members" was only a year younger than Brooke when they took their seats in 1584.[86] On 3 October 1586 Rochester again elected Cobham's son to the House of Commons.[87] It was as well that William Brooke made his mark when little more than a boy, for his manhood was cut short by his violent death at the age of thirty-two.

Lord Cobham may have had all four of his sons at King's in a single term. For, a year before Maximilian went abroad, the ten- or eleven-year-old George went up to Cambridge and at Easter 1580 matriculated from his brothers' college.[88] The name of one of his tutors is known, although it is difficult to establish when George was in his charge. He was Camillo Cordoini who, as the son of a Neapolitan nobleman, matriculated at Gloucester Hall, Oxford, on 5 November 1584.[89] The Italian Protestant was then forty, and had been commended by Sir Henry Cobham at Paris in 1580 as the son of a worthy man "'devout of the [reformed] Religion'"; as late as 1603 Cordoini was working for the Calvinist cause at Geneva.[90]

George Brooke was somehow deformed. Thynne speaks of his "hauing by an accidentall chance in his youth some imperfection in one part of his bodie"; presumably it was one of his legs which had been injured, for in later years he was said to be "Lame & Creple",[91] Henry Lord Cobham's "lame brother".[92] It was perhaps this infirmity which persuaded George to follow the elder of his two surviving brothers into peaceful pursuits, rather than William, who was a soldier, into the military profession. As he himself admitted to Essex in 1598, when the earl was gathering his forces about him for the Irish campaign,

> If myself were able to wait upon you in this journey of Ireland I would not recommend any man's service unto you before mine own, but being utterly unable in that kind to shew my love unto you, I desire that,

instead of myself, I may recommend my near kinsman Calisthenes Brooke.[93]

George Brooke remained at Cambridge for six years, unlike his brothers taking a degree,[94] so that in 1586 Thynne was able to write that he was

> so well indowed with the gifts of nature, and so furthered therein by the helpe of studie, which he imploied in the uniuersitie of Cambridge, where he recelued the degree of master of art, in the yeare of Christ one thousand fiue hundred eightie and six, that he fullie and more recompenseth that accidentall imperfection, with naturall and procured beautie of the mind, and therefore with Ouid (a man more wittie than wel-fauored) may iustlie saie:
>
> Ingenio formae damna rependo meae.[95]

When Geoffrey Whitney's Choice of Emblemes was published at Leiden in 1586, it contained an allegorical poem to George Brooke which appropriately commended "the inwarde vertues", shunning "the outwarde showe".[96]

George was not, however, despite his injury, an entirely sedentary young man. He went to the Continent in the late 1580s, like his brothers, although even abroad he was a scholar. Having travelled to Leiden as one of the Earl of Leicester's gentlemen in the Dutch expedition of 1585,[97] he spent only a fortnight in military quarters before being taken in January 1585/6 into the house of Jacob van Walraven, a man whose position in the University of Leiden exempted him from the general order to billet the English soldiery.[98] Walraven was a poet, and, in the years when Anglo-Dutch literary relations were growing ever closer, he was anxious to improve his English. Brooke's visit gave him the opportunity to do so, for the Dutchman found that he had a delightful companion in 'the refined, upright, godfearing young man of noble blood' ("een treftich Edelman, G. Broock, een fijn, oprecht eñ [i.e., ende] Godvruchtich Heere"). Both men of course spoke Latin, and, using that as their common language, Walraven gave his guest lessons in conversational French while George instructed the poet in English.[99] Tutoring Jacob van Walraven was, so far as one knows, the extent of the youngest Brooke's participation in the Dutch expedition.

It was thus as the father of a family which was rapidly growing up that Lord Cobham in 1584 ended what may be considered the middle stage of his career. His weakness at the time of the Ridolfi Plot had cost him much. Before 1571 he had clearly been destined for promotion to the highest ranks within the government; after the exposure of the conspiracy he had had to begin all over again to convince the queen of his fitness to enjoy her trust. Gradually he proved himself, and on

St. George's Day 1584 Elizabeth effectively announced the conclusion of his term of trial. For several years the majority of the Knights of the Garter, led by Burghley and Leicester, had expressed their wish to see the baron admitted to their number; only the Puritan Lords Huntingdon and Grey had consistently opposed his nomination, and, on one occasion, the Earl of Bedford.[100] Always the queen had declined to endorse the recommendation made to her by her Companions. Again in 1584 the scrutiny was taken, this time at Westminster, where Leicester presided as the sovereign's lieutenant.[101] Burghley was unable to attend the chapter because of illness, Huntingdon did not cast his votes, Grey gave his to candidates other than Cobham. As they had done before, Leicester, Pembroke, Derby, Worcester and Lincoln, Montague, Howard of Effingham, Hunsdon and Sir Henry Sidney signified to the queen that they thought the baron worthy of association with them. Elizabeth agreed, and Cobham became the 367th Knight of the Garter.[102] On 5 June the queen authorized her servants at the Wardrobe to prepare liveries for the Knight-elect and his two fellows,[103] and the ceremony of installation at St. George's Chapel was set for 15 April 1585. It was to provide a major spectacle for the delectation of the Court in the eventful year which followed.

Footnotes to Book Three

Chapter I (pp. 306-12)

1 See Sir Simonds D'Ewes, The Journals of all the Parliaments During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth ... (1682), pp. 139-40.

2 J.E. Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559-1581 (1953), p. 190.

3 See Neale, pp. 177-217; James Anthony Froude, History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada (1862-70), IX, 421-25, 428-43; Conyers Read, Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (1960), pp. 36-37. See also below, p. 360.

4 For the culmination in 1582 of Cobham's protracted quarrel with the Manwoods, see below, pp. 436-42.

5 See K.M.E. Murray, The Constitutional History of the Cinque Ports (Manchester, 1935), pp. 95-96, and the discussion of the material there presented in J.E. Neale's The Elizabethan House of Commons (1949), p. 216. See also the letters from Sandwich to Lord Cobham which are abstracted in H.M.C., Report 5, p. 570.

6 See Murray, p. 96 n.; Neale, House of Commons, pp. 217-18.

7 See Neale, House of Commons, p. 218.

8 See Read, pp. 33-34.

9 Louis Battifol, The Century of the Renaissance, trans. Elsie Finnimore Buckley (1916), p. 245.

10 See the secret memorial sent to Charles IX of France and the Queen Mother in the ambassadorial dispatch of La Mothe-Fénélon of 6 February 1570/1 (Correspondance diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac de La Mothe Fénélon, ambassadeur de France en Angleterre de 1568 à 1575 ..., ed. A. Teulet (Paris, 1840), III, 468). The conversation is cited by Martin A.S. Hume in The Courtships of Queen Elizabeth: A History of the Various Negotiations for Her Marriage (ed. 1904), p. 119, and paraphrased in an English translation by Edith Sitwell in The Queens and the Hive (1962), pp. 285-86.

11 See John Izon, Sir Thomas Stucley c.1525-1578: Traitor Extraordinary (1956), especially pp. 127, 134.

12 See A Collection of State Papers Relating to Affairs In the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, From the Year 1571 to 1596 ..., ed. William Murdin (1759), p. 770.

13 George Delves to the Earl of Rutland, 14 May 1571 (H.M.C., Rutland Papers, I, 92).

14 Murdin, p. 771.

15 See Guerau de Spes to Zayas, the Spanish Secretary of State, 28 March 1571 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 301).

16 See S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 310. Sir Francis Walsingham, the ambassador resident in France, saw Cobham off from Paris on 6 April (see the Journal of Sir Francis Walsingham, from Dec. 1570 to April 1583, ed. Charles Trice Martin (Camden Society Miscellany Volume VI, 1871), p. 6).

17 Leicester to Walsingham, 7 July 1571 (The Compleat Ambassador: or Two Treaties of the Intended Marriage of Qu: Elizabeth of Glorious Memory; Comprised in Letters of Negotiation of Sir Francis Walsingham, her Resident in France ..., Faithfully Collected by the truly Honourable, Sir Dudley Digges Knight, late Master of the Rolls (1655), p. 116).

18 See Cobham to Burghley, Paris, 3 April 1571 (S.P., For., 1569-71, p. 425); Izon, p. 134.

19 S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 308.

20 S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 311.

21 S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 316-17.

22 De Spes to Philip II, 12 July 1571 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 321).

23 La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX, 14 July 1571 (Correspondance diplomatique, IV, 179).

24 La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX, 19 August 1571 (Correspondance diplomatique, IV, 217).

25 See de Spes to Philip II, 22 June 1570 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 253-54).

26 P.R.O., S.P. 12/75/100; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 405.

27 S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 136.

28 The confession of the Bishop of Ross, 26 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 29).

29 Thomas Brooke to the Privy Council, 2 October 1571 (Murdin, pp. 156-57).

30 The examination of Thomas Brooke, 18 October 1571 (Cecil Paper 6/51; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 543).

31 The confession of Robert Higford, 1 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 80). See below, p. 326.

32 See the confession of John Moon, 4 October 1570, enclosed in a letter of 10 October from the Earl of Lennox to Cecil (S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, p. 384).

33 See the anonymous news-letter in S.P., Vatican, 1558-71, p. 306. The editor of the State Papers says that "William Brooke, Lord Cobham, is here confounded with Lord Wentworth, Governor of Calais in 1557-8." Wentworth does not, however, appear to have been imprisoned for treason in 1569, or even suspected of it; indeed, he was one of the few peers thought to be vehemently opposed to Spanish intervention in England (see below, p. 322). George Lord Cobham's Deputyship of Calais, and a confusion of the eldest of his sons with another of them, occasioned by the use of 'Cobham' both as title and surname, must lie behind the inaccurate report.

34 See above, pp. 262-63.

35 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/85/62; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 437, where the 'my Lord' of the text is incorrectly identified, not with Norfolk, but with Cobham.

36 J.B. Black, The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603 (2nd ed., Oxford, 1959), p. 148.

37 The confession of the Bishop of Ross, 26 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 29).

38 William Herle to Burghley, 16 April 1571 (S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, p. 544).

39 Cecil Paper 158/115, October 1571; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 559, where 'Bertewe' is not identified with Francis Bertie. The fact that Bertie lived near Bevis Marks, however, makes it likely that it was he whom Brownridge went to see at St. Mary Axe. See below, p. 352.

40 The confession of the Bishop of Ross, 26 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 29).

41 The examination of the Duke of Norfolk, 31 October 1571 (Murdin, pp. 162-63).

42 See the list, shown to date from 1567 by the mention in it of Sussex's presence in Vienna, in S.P., Vatican, 1558-71, pp. 265-66.

43 S.P., Vatican, 1558-71, p. 400. A similar, undated list which seems also to come from the spring of 1571, is on pp. 411-12. The forty peers are named in Froude, IX, 393-94 n.

44 See La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX, 20 January 1569/70 (Correspondance diplomatique, III, 27-28).

45 Conyers Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth (1955), p. 332.

46 Read, Lord Burghley, p. 48.

47 Henry Lord Cobham to Robert Lord Cranborne, [after 20 August] 1604 (Cecil Paper 189/86; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XVI, 410).

48 See below, pp. 913-19.

49 See Richard Newcourt, Repertorium ecclesiasticum parochiale Londinense ... (1708-10), II, 479.

50 See Georges Edelen's excellent article, "William Harrison (1535-1593)," Studies in the Renaissance, IX (1962), 258, where is translated a Latin annotation in the copy of John Bale's Scriptorum illustrium majoris Britannie ... catalogus (Basle, 1557-59) preserved in the diocesan library of the Church of Ireland at Londonderry.

51 See below, pp. 923-27.

52 Froude, IX, 394.

53 The confession of Robert Higford, 1 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 80).

54 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 472.

55 See above, pp. 151-52, 213-14, 233-34.

56 Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil, p. 265.

57 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 27.

58 The confession of the Bishop of Ross, 26 October 1571 (Murdin, pp. 28-29).

59 Michael Hickes to Sir Robert Cecil, 6 December 1603 (Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners, in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, & James I ..., ed. Edmund Lodge (2nd ed., 1838), III, 75). It is apparently to this letter that Robert Boies Sharpe refers when he speaks of Henry Lord Cobham's "pleading for mercy from King James on the ground of his father's attachment to the Queen's [sic] mother" (The Real War of the Theaters: Shakespeare's Fellows in Rivalry with the Admiral's Men, 1594-1603: Repertories, Devices, and Types (Boston, 1935), p. 69 n.).

60 Lord Burghley, pp. 60-61.

61 See above, p. 232.

62 Leicester to Sir Francis Walsingham, 30 April 1586 (Correspondence of Robert

Dudley, Earl of Leycester, During his Government of the Low Countries, in the Years 1585 and 1586, ed. John Bruce (Camden Society, 1844), pp. 253-54).

63 See S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 308.

64 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 57-61.

65 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 32.

66 The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princesse Elizabeth, late Queen of England ... (4th ed., 1688), p. 161.

67 Froude, IX, 394.

68 See A.C. Southern, Elizabethan Recusant Prose 1559-1582 ... (1950), pp. 438-44; Burghley's reference to the abortive Islington printing (S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 88); Baillie to Ross, 20 April 1571 (Murdin, p. 2); the confession of Charles Baillie, 10 May 1571 (S.P., Vatican, 1558-71, p. 409). Alba refused to give the book his imprimatur; Baillie attempted to get the duke to change his mind.

69 See Baillie to Ross, The Marshalsea, 20 April 1571 (Murdin, p. 2).

70 See MS. Cotton Caligula, C. iii, ff. 174-77; abstracted in S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, pp. 521-26. Another letter of Herle's to Burghley states that there "was one commited yesternight to the Marshalsea whose name is Charlles [Bailly]" (S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, p. 528; the square brackets are the editor's). This letter is unfortunately not dated.

71 See MS. Cotton Caligula, C. iii, f. 57; abstracted in S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, p. 528, where the editor has incorrectly transcribed 'token' as 'taken'.

72 See S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, p. 544.

73 The confession of Robert Higford, 1 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 77).

74 The confession of Robert Higford, 28 February 1571/2 (P.R.O., S.P. 12/85/55; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 437).

75 See "'Comentaria diurna Joannis Leslie, episcopi Rossensis'" (S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, p. 529); Burghley's notes (Murdin, p. 771).

76 S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 88.

77 Bertie to the Privy Council, 17 October 1571 (S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 12).

78 See Baillie to Ross, The Tower, 2 May 1571 (S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, p. 561). 'Flasher' does not occur in O.E.D., although one of the meanings given in that work for the verb 'to flash' suggests that the substantive may mean a device for igniting gun-powder. There is also the possibility that Baillie, like Pompey's "Master Starve-lackey the rapier and dagger man" (Measure for Measure IV.iii.16), was fashionably accoutred with both a sword and a stabbing weapon designed for sudden, flashing attack. 'Flesher' would, of course, mean any ensiform instrument.

79 See Baillie to Ross, The Marshalsea, 20 April 1571 (Murdin, p. 3).

80 MS. Cotton Caligula, C. iii, ff. 102-02b. The confession is copied in P.R.O., S.P. 12/81/47. The transcript in S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, pp. 9-10, is dependable, although its 'wallet' for 'mallet' in l. 2 above is certainly a misreading.

81 See Froude, IX, 452. There is a long and highly coloured account of Cobham's dereliction in William Hepworth Dixon's Her Majesty's Tower (5th ed., 1869), I,

275-87, replete with passages like this: "Cobham got into his boat and pulled for Burghley's house; but on the way he softened towards his brother's prayer; the more so, as he thought despondingly of much that had passed between Ridolfi and himself. For Cobham was one of the barons in Ridolfi's secret list. Yet, what could he do?"

82 Baillie to Ross, The Marshalsea, 20 April 1571 (Murdin, p. 3).

83 Elsewhere Cobham calls him 'Rowland Mekley' (see S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 316).

84 The examination of Thomas Brooke, 18 October 1571 (Cecil Paper 6/51; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 542).

85 The examination of the Bishop of Ross, 26 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 23).

86 Murdin, p. 23, supplemented with the words in square brackets from Cecil Paper 6/80.

87 Herle to Burghley, 9 April 1571 (S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, p. 522).

88 S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 88.

89 Bertie to the Privy Council, 17 October 1571 (S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, pp. 12-13).

90 "Higford's humble Submission, with Some Declarations needful to be knowen" (Murdin, p. 74).

91 Murdin, pp. 77-78.

92 Murdin, pp. 85-86.

93 P.R.O., SP. 12/85/55; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 437.

94 See below, p. 365.

95 There was a Pelham who, since he dealt illegally "with pirates' goods" (see the Earl of Lincoln to Burghley, 9 October 1578, H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 164), sounds a likely associate for Thomas Brooke. Perhaps Pelham was a Cavendish connection, and therefore related to Brooke through marriage.

96 See MS. Cotton Caligula, C. iii, f. 103b, dated 17 October 1571.

97 Murdin, pp. 156-57.

98 The examination of Thomas Brooke, 18 October 1571 (Cecil Papers 6/51, 52; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 542-43).

99 The answers of Thomas Brooke and others to an examination made on 17 October 1571 (Cecil Paper 6/49; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 542).

100 He had been with the Earl of Sussex's army in Scotland that winter, holding a captaincy as "Tho. Cobham, gent." (H.M.C., Foljambe Papers, p. 9), when his brother and namesake was trying to borrow money in London. In September, having entered Leicester's household, he was being considered for a post in Kent (see below, p. 367).

101 The examination of the Bishop of Ross, 26 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 23); the word in square brackets has been provided from Cecil Paper 6/80.

102 The interrogatories for the Bishop of Ross, 31 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 33).

103 The examination of the Bishop of Ross, 31 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 36).

104 S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, p. 528.

105 John Stow describes Bevis Markes (once belonging "to the Abbots of Bury in Suffolke, and therefore called Buries Markes, corruptly Beuis markes, and since the dissolution of the Abbey of Bury to Thomas Henage the father, and to Sir Thomas his son") in A Survey of London by John Stow reprinted from the Text of 1603, ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Oxford, 1908), I, 146. One 'Bertewe' who lived in 1571 at St. Mary Axe (see above, p. 320) was most probably Bertie.

106 MS. Cotton Caligula, C. iii, f. 102b. The transcript in S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 10, contains errors: in l. 2 above, 'Berty' is printed 'Bewly', and in l. 15 'superscribed' becomes 'subscribed'. Of the people mentioned in the statement, Gartles' was the Laird of Gartly, a Scottish baron loyal to Mary, who was the former queen's representative in her son James's Parliament (see S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, p. 605); Thomas Jenny was one of the northern rebels (see his confession of April (?) 1570 in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 373); Englefield was an English traitor who dealt on the Continent between Alba and the English refugees. He had been a Councillor to Mary Tudor.

107 The examination of the Bishop of Ross, 26 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 23).

108 The examination of Thomas Brooke, 18 October 1571 (Cecil Paper 6/51; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 542).

109 A set of interrogatories for Bertie is in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 11-12, but no answers to it survive.

110 The examination of the Bishop of Ross, 26 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 23).

111 S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 13.

112 See above, p. 344.

113 Murdin, pp. 23-24. The name of the writer of the letters to the French ambassador, missing from Murdin's transcript, is illegible in Cecil Paper 6/80.

114 S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, pp. 88-89.

115 See Pius V to Queen Mary and to Norfolk, 16 May 1571 (S.P., Vatican, 1558-71, p. 411).

116 See "Matters wherewith the Duke of Norfolk is Chargeable", October 1571 (S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 27).

117 See Baillie to Ross, The Marshalsea, 20 April 1571 (Murdin, p. 2), where Baillie offers to help Cuthbert with the ciphers.

118 MS. Cotton Caligula, C. iii, ff. 102b-03. The transcript in S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 10, is accurate, omitting only the intrusive 'wt' in l. 8 above.

119 Higford to the Privy Council, 28 September 1571 (Murdin, p. 74).

120 See S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, pp. 138, 169.

121 The examination of Thomas Brooke, 18 October 1571 (Cecil Paper 6/51; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 543).

122 Burghley to Smith, 19 October 1571 (S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 16).

123 Murdin, pp. 78-79.

124 Higford to the Privy Council, 28 September 1571 (Murdin, pp. 74-75).

125 S.P., Scotland, 1569-71, pp. 544-45.

126 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, pp. 371-72.

127 Murdin, p. 771.

128 D'Ewes, p. 145.

129 D'Ewes, p. 146.

130 Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559-1581, p. 216; see Neale's detailed discussion of the bill, pp. 192-96, 212-16.

131 S.P., Vatican, 1558-71, p. 407; the square brackets are the editor's.

132 See S.P., Vatican, 1558-71, p. 313.

133 S.P., For., 1569-71, pp. 502-03; the second set of square brackets is the editor's.

134 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 58.

135 P.R.O., S.P. 12/80/8; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 417.

136 See H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, pp. 3-4.

137 H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, pp. 8-11.

138 S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 321-22.

139 Bertie to the Privy Council, 17 October 1571 (S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 13).

140 The confession of Robert Higford, 1 October 1571 (Murdin, p. 77).

141 P.R.O., S.P. 12/81/10; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 422. The letter is dated "ffrom Cantorbery they V. of September"; the endorsement by Burghley's clerk seems in this instance to record the date on which the Secretary received the letter, for it is "vj^{o} Sept 1571. y^{e} L. Cobham. M. de Foix."
Cobham was quick to nominate his brother to the vacant post: Keyes, the huge, middle-aged man whose marriage in 1565 to the dwarfish young sister of Queen Jane Grey had amazed the Court, can have been dead hardly a day by 5 September. Sir Thomas Gresham reported Lady Mary Grey's bereavement, which she took heavily, as fresh news from London on 8 September (see P.R.O., S.P. 12/81/12; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 422).

142 See a short article by R.J. Fynmore in the Genealogist, XXI (1915), 67. Fynmore is almost certainly correct in identifying Thomas Brooke with the younger of that name, a recent veteran of Sussex's Scottish campaign (see above, p. 462, n. 100). Cobham would hardly have stipulated that the man whom he was recommending was his younger brother Thomas, if he meant only the all-too-familiar figure of the pirate. This is the only instance in which there is a possibility of confounding the two Thomas Brookes.

143 History (4th ed., 1688), p. 163.

144 Edmund Mather, one of the two zealots who are supposed to have planned to assassinate the queen in order to save Norfolk's life, mentioned in his confession of

28 January 1571/2 that the "Words for Thomas Cobham's Escape into Flanders I likewise avowe" (Murdin, p. 203). What these 'words' were cannot be discovered.

145 Guerau de Spes to Philip II, 13 October 1571 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 339-40).

146 Murdin, p. 772.

147 See Burghley's list in S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 14.

148 On 20 October La Mothe-Fénélon wrote to Charles IX that Cobham was under arrest "comme ayant esté de l'intelligence", that "sa femme est hors de court, et ung de ses frères mis à la Tour" (Correspondance diplomatique, IV, 261).

149 Critical & Historical Essays by Thomas Babington Macaulay (ed. 1907), I, 79.

150 Lodge, Illustrations, I, 529; quoted in Read, Lord Burghley, p. 39.

151 Sir William Cecil to Sir Ralph Sadler, 28 December 1569 (The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, Knight-Banneret, ed. Arthur Clifford (Edinburgh, 1809), II, 78.

152 Burghley to Sir Francis Walsingham, 2 September 1571 (Digges, p. 134).

153 Sir Thomas Smith to Burghley, 20 September 1571 (Murdin, p. 101).

154 Murdin, pp. 117-18.

155 The examination of William Barker, 22 September 1571 (Murdin, p. 103).

156 Norfolk to the queen, 23 January 1571/2 (Murdin, p. 170).

157 Lord Burghley, p. 43.

158 MS. Cotton Caligula, C. iii, f. 102, endorsed: "xiiij^{to} Octobris 1571. at night. The Lord Cobhams declaracion of sondry packets vndir the hand of the Lord Burghley." This introductory statement is transcribed in S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 9, where 'accuse' in l. 4 above is erroneously rendered 'accost'. The whole confession has been quoted above, pp. 337, 352, 354, 356.

159 See above, p. 357.

160 See the confessions of Sir Thomas Stanley, 17 October 1571, and of Edmund Powell, 19 October 1571 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, I, 339-40, 546-47).

161 Salutem in Christo, sig. A5^{v}. The Bishop of Ross took R.G. to be the publisher Richard Grafton (see Southern, p. 444 n.).

162 Salutem in Christo, sigg. A5^{r-v}.

163 Correspondance diplomatique, IV, 261.

164 See Murdin, p. 110.

165 S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 346. See also a news-letter from Brussels of 30 October (S.P., Vatican, 1558-71, pp. 468-69).

166 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 128. The young Oxford had been named in Norfolk's list among the forty peers who were well disposed to the Ridolfi Plot.

167 See Antonio Fogaza, a Portuguese agent of Philip II, to Ruy Gomez de Silva (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 353).

168 MS. Lansdowne 14, f. 42, which is a list of prisoners in the Tower, with annotations in a different hand noting the cases in which the prisoners stood at some later date.

169 A.P.C., 1571-75, p. 95.

170 A.P.C., 1571-75, p. 217.

171 The queen to the regent, Morton, 19 July 1573 (S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 599).

172 A Treatise of Treasons against Q. Elizabeth, and the Croune of England, diuided into two Partes: Whereof, The first Parte answereth certaine Treasons pretended, that neuer were intended: And the second, discouereth greater Treasons committed, that are by few perceiued: as more largely appeareth in the Page folowing. Imprinted in the Moneth of Ianuarie, and in the Yeare of our Lord. M.D.LXXII, sig. $Q2^{v}$-$Q3^{v}$. The work was published at Louvain. Its attribution to Ross is virtually certain to be correct; see Southern, pp. 310-17, 444-47.

173 Queen Elizabeth I, A Biography (1934), p. 196.

174 Antonio de Guaras to [the Duke of Alba], 24 May 1572 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 393).

175 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, pp. 373-74.

176 See the Return of Members of Parliament (Part I, Parliaments of England, 1213-1702) (1878), p. 409.

177 H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, pp. 2, 3.

178 See Murray, p. 97; Neale, Elizabethan House of Commons, p. 218.

179 See H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, pp. 17-18. Jackson, who was not a freeman of Rye, was later brought to court in the town for debts amounting to £ 84, of which £ 50 was claimed by the landlord of a "'brewhouse, a wind mille and certeine mershelande in St. Mary mershe'", and £ 15 by "an impotent widow". Cobham interceded for his servant in 1573 (see H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, pp. 26, 27). Jackson's failure to pay his debts was not due to insolvency. On 16 October 1575 the corporation of Rye wrote to Cobham about the disastrous effect produced upon the baking industry by the encroachments upon it of the brewers, and Jackson was cited as a principal offender. "'The brewers,'" Cobham was informed, "'(who ought by the lawes of this realme not to be bakers also) have by our sufferance (but the rather for that Robert Jackson is towardes [i.e., inward with] your Lordship) used bothe to bake and brewe of long tyme, wherby Robert Jacson (God be thankid) is growen to good welthe and the whole company of the bakers therby utterly impoverished'" (H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, pp. 47-48).

180 H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 15.

181 S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, p. 105; also quoted above, p. 179.

182 See H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 19.

183 See Cecil Paper 145/53; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 110.

184 Walsingham's Journal, p. 15.

185 See the confession of Henry Cockyn, 20 February 1574/5 (S.P., Scotland, 1574-81, p. 89).

186 See S.P., Scotland, 1574-81, pp. 136-37; see also below, p. 396.

187 See below, pp. 508-12.

188 Francis Bertie to the Earl of Salisbury, 4 February 1608/9 (P.R.O., S.P. 14/43/62; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1603-10, p. 490).

189 See A.P.C., 1571-75, p. 249.

190 A.P.C., 1571-75, pp. 255-56.

191 See Thomas Wotton to Walsingham, 21 April 1575 (Thomas Wotton's Letter-Book 1574-1586, ed. G. Eland (1960), p. 8).

192 See A.P.C., 1571-75, pp. 353, 394.

193 A.P.C., 1575-77, p. 14.

194 See Correspondance diplomatique, VI, 496; R.G. Marsden, "Early Prize Jurisdiction and Prize Law in England," English Historical Review, XXIV (1909), 686.

195 A.P.C., 1575-77, p. 216.

196 A.P.C., 1575-77, p. 226.

197 Sir William Fleetwood to Burghley (Cecil Paper 161/92; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 222). Esmé Wingfield-Stratford's supposition that Thomas Brooke was among "the sea dogs who are reported to have put forth against the Armada" cannot be substantiated (The Lords of Cobham Hall (1959), p. 69).

198 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 340. See also the notes to the family tree, p. 1127, n. 51.

199 Hunsdon to Burghley, 11 February 1571/2 (S.P., Scotland, 1571-74, pp. 112-13); the square brackets are the editor's.

200 Henry Lord Cobham to Robert Earl of Salisbury, 12 July 1605 (Cecil Paper 111/116; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XVII, 318).

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Chapter II

1 The third volume of Holinshed's Chronicles (unexpurgated edition of 1587), p. 1511.

2 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1180, n. 69.

3 A Collection of Letters, from the Original Manuscripts of Many Princes, great Personages and Statesmen ..., ed. Leonard Howard (1753), pp. 211-12. A copy of the original letter is in MS. Lambeth 1168, f. 21, from which a modernized transcript has been made by W.A. Scott-Robertson, "Six Wills Relating to Cobham Hall," Archaeologia Cantiana, XI (1877), 203-04.

4 Howard's Letters, p. 212; Scot-Robertson, p. 204.

5 See a note dated 21 August 1573 which survives among the records of the coporation of Rye (H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 22).

6 See the Latin inscription of the queen's progress which seems to have been intended for inclusion in a contemporary biography of Archbishop Parker; it is printed from the Baker manuscripts in John Strype's Annals of the Reformation and

Establishment of Religion, and Other Various Occurrences in the Church of England, during Queen Elizabeth's Happy Reign: Together with an Appendix of Original Papers of State, Records, and Letters (Oxford, ed. 1824), II, ii, 539-44.

7 See Strype, II, ii, 539-40. A paraphrase of the Latin description is in John Nichols's Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth ... (1788), Vol. I, p. 34 of the ninth arabically numbered section.

8 See Cecil Paper 202/109; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 54.

9 See Nichols, Vol. I, p. 31 of the ninth arabically numbered section.

10 See Scott-Robertson's "Six Wills," p. 204; Wingfield-Stratford, p. 69. Scott-Robertson's statement is accepted by Sir Edmund Chambers (The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), IV, 89).

11 Nichols's Preface, I, viii n.

12 His Lordship kindly considered the problem in a private letter of 23 May 1963. The guide-books which are sold to the public at Cobham Hall accept the tradition that Elizabeth visited the house in 1559 and 1573, while pointing out that she can never have slept in the 'Queen's Bedroom', since the Tudor building had not been erected even at the time of her supposed second visit.

13 See Holinshed, p. 1494.

14 Strype, II, ii, 544.

15 The list of bequests is Cecil Paper 145/181; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 120.

16 See a passport granted on 8 September 1573 by the Mayor of Rye to M. Vincent Henry (H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 22).

17 The Mayor and Jurats of Rye to Cobham, 18 September 1573 (H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 23); the square brackets are the editor's.

18 H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, pp. 25-26.

19 See H.M.C., Report 5, p. 569; Murray, pp. 126, 86, 108-09, 137, 97; Neale, Elizabethan House of Commons, pp. 218-19.

20 See Neale, Elizabethan House of Commons, p. 221; Murray, p. 110.

21 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, pp. 377-79.

22 History, X, 328.

23 See La Mothe-Fénélon to Charles IX, 17 March 1573/4 (Correspondance diplomatique, VI, 55-56).

24 See Cobham to the mayors of the Cinque Ports, 8 June 1575, enclosing the queen's letter to him of 16 April (H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, pp. 41-42).

25 The Mayor and Jurats of Rye to Cobham, 17 June 1575 (H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 42).

26 See the notes to the family tree, pp. *1128-29*, n. 52, for the full text of John Brooke's letter to Burghley, and for that of the Prince of Orange to the queen, as well as for the curious misinterpretation of the episode which has been made by Scott-Robertson.

27 The Earl of Sussex to the Earl of Rutland (H.M.C., Rutland Papers, I, 105).

28 A Letter: whearin, part of the entertainment vntoo the Queenz Maiesty, at Killingwoorth Castl, in Warwik Sheer in this Soomers Progress 1575, iz signified: from a freend officer attendant in the Coourt, vnto hiz freend a Citizen and Merchaunt of London, pp. 44-45.

29 A.P.C., 1575-77, p. 7.

30 See La Mothe-Fénélon to Henry III (Correspondance diplomatique, VI, 490).

31 Antonio de Guaras to Gabriel de Zayas, the Spanish Secretary of State, 11 July 1575 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 496).

32 De Guaras to de Zayas (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 499).

33 De Guaras to de Zayas (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 499-500).

34 Cecil Paper 10/34; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 106-07. The original letter has faded badly since the abstract was made of it.

35 See above, p. 324.

36 Nichols, Progresses of Queen Elizabeth, Vol. II, p. 8 of the nineteenth arabically numbered section. The gift is cited as a novelty by Elizabeth Burton in The Elizabethans at Home (1958), p. 107.

37 Joseph Hunter, Hallamshire: The History and Topography of the Parish of Sheffield in the County of York: with Historical and Descriptive Notices of the Parishes of Ecclesfield, Hansworth, Treeton, and Whiston, and of the Chapelry of Bradfield (1819), p. 84; quoted in a modernized version from Hunter's transcript in Maud Stepney Rawson's Bess of Hardwick and her Circle (1910), p. 118. Mrs. Rawson renders the date of the letter, "this xxviiith June 1574", as 27 June 1573.

38 S.P., Scotland, 1574-81, pp. 93-94; the square brackets are the editor's.

39 See Mr Secretary Walsingham and the policy of Queen Elizabeth (Oxford, 1925), II, 352-54.

40 Leicester to Walsingham, 1 May 1575 (S.P., Scotland, 1574-81, p. 134).

41 S.P., Scotland, 1574-81, p. 145.

42 See S.P., Scotland, 1574-81, p. 144.

43 See below, pp. 509-11.

44 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 162.

45 Murdin, p. 281.

46 See above, p. 216.

47 Murdin, p. 288. The first part of the letter is quoted above, p. 216.

48 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 160.

49 See H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 47.

50 S.P., For., 1575-77, pp. 156-57.

51 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1089, n. 25.

52 Froude, X, 355.

53 Antonio de Guaras to Gabriel de Zayas, 17 December 1575 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 514).

54 See de Guaras to de Zayas, 27 August 1577 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 543).

55 See "Fragment of Document headed: 'What the duke of Alba replied to Henry Cobham, ambassador to the queen of England in Madrid. -- 2nd December 1575'" (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 515).

56 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 126, a list of "Ambassador's Diets" dated 19 February 1575/6.

57 The only suggestion that Sir Henry Cobham was, in the face of Philip's obvious antipathy to him, considered for another embassy to Spain is contained in a letter from Bernardino de Mendoza to Gabriel de Zayas, dated 11 September 1578. This letter is not published in the calendar of Spanish State Papers, but it is included in the abstracts of letters given in the Catálogo de la Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España por Julián Paz del Cuerpo de Archiveros Bibliotecarios C. de la Academia de la Historia (Madrid, 1930-31), II, 407. The relevant phrase is, "partida de Guillermo Cobham para Sevilla". 'Guillermo' is almost certainly an error. Lord Cobham, even if one could imagine his being called merely 'William Cobham', was at the time indeed on an embassy, but to the Netherlands; if any of the family was thought to be going to Spain, it must have been Henry. Nothing in English archives suggests that it was proposed to send anyone there in 1578.

58 See Antonio de Guaras to Gabriel de Zayas, 9 January 1575/6 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 518).

59 S.P., For., 1575-77, p. 254.

60 See D'Ewes, p. 227, where Cobham's name does not appear in the list of peers who were present at the opening of the session.

61 Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559-1581, p. 349. See also D'Ewes, p. 228.

62 See D'Ewes, p. 228.

63 Aubrey's Brief Lives, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (1949), p. 142.

64 D'Ewes, pp. 228, 230, 232, 260-65; Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559-1581, pp. 356-59, where the implications of the Stourton case in so far as it affected the liberties of the Commons is fully discussed.

65 See Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 495; William Archer and W.J. Lawrence, "The Playhouse" (Shakespeare's England ..., [edd. Sir Sidney Lee and C.T. Onions] (Oxford, 1916), II, 287).

66 See H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 52.

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Chapter III

1 John Lothrop Motley, The Rise of the Dutch Republic: a History (Chandos Classics ed., c.1886), III, 296.

2 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 186-87.

3 See the notes to the family tree, p. *1130*, n. 52.

4 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 190 ff.; Froude, X, 437 ff.

5 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 179, 190.

6 See Read, Walsingham, I, 369.

7 Read, Walsingham, I, 378.

8 S.P., For., 1577-78, p. 689.

9 See S.P., For., 1577-78, p. 694.

10 See Leicester to Walsingham, Buxton, 24 June 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 30).

11 See Paz, II, 403, where Lord Cobham is wrongly indexed as Sir Henry Cobham.

12 S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 598-99.

13 Walsingham, I, 384. Read's fullest analysis of the embassy of 1578 is in his study of the Secretary; in Lord Burghley he says comparatively little about it, and remarks only that Cobham "definitely belonged to the other camp" than that of Leicester and Walsingham. "He played little more than a nominal part in the embassy" (p. 192).

14 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, pp. 381-86.

15 Nichols, Progresses of Queen Elizabeth, Vol. II, pp. 69, 81, 84 of the nineteenth arabically numbered section. Lady Cobham's gift to the queen on 1 January 1577/8 was also a splendid petticoat.

16 S.P., For., 1577-78, pp. 631-32.

17 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 37.

18 See Walsingham to Cobham, 15 April 1578 (S.P., For., 1577-78, pp. 622-23).

19 See Jacques Rossel to Walsingham, 13 December 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 342-43); 7 May 1582 (S.P., For., 1582, p. 13).

20 The Fugger News-Letters, Second Series ..., ed. Victor von Klarwill, trans. L.S.R. Byrne (1926), p. 21, where Lord Cobham is incorrectly called by the editor "Henry Cobham of the highest nobility and Warden of the Ports". The baron is said to have lived from 1538 to 1605.

21 See S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 2.

22 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 3.

23 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 13.

24 S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 11-13.

25 A.P.C., 1577-78, p. 252.

26 Walsingham's Journal, p. 38.

27 See Henry Killigrew to Davison, London, 15 June 1578 (S.P., Dom. (Addenda), 1566-

79, p. 546).

28 Sir Harris Nicolas, Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton, K.G., Vice-Chamberlain and Lord Chancellor to Queen Elizabeth (1847), pp. 67-68. Nicolas mistranscribes 17 June, the date found on the letter in MS. Add. 15891, as 27 June 1578.

29 See S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 17-18, where the editor has incorrectly transcribed 17 June as 17 August. Read renders the "six score and odd persons" who the ambassadors said made up their retinue as "more than 180 persons" (Walsingham, I, 384).

30 See Bernardino de Mendoza to Philip II, London, 21 May 1578 (Paz, II, 403, where Lord Cobham is confounded with his brother).

31 See S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 601.

32 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 29.

33 See Davison to the ambassadors, 25 June 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 31).

34 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 36.

35 See Froude, X, 440-41.

36 S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 49-50.

37 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 57.

38 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 196; Froude, X, 443-44.

39 See Secretary Wilson to the ambassadors, 12 July 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, p58).

40 S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 72-74.

41 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 64.

42 S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 74-75.

43 See S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 85-86.

44 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 196-97.

45 See Secretary Wilson to William Davison, The Court at Audley End, 26 July 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 93).

46 Wilson to Walsingham, 21 July 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 86).

47 S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 86-87.

48 Edmund Tremayne to Walsingham (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 100).

49 Walsingham to Burghley, 29 July 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 98).

50 Walsingham to Randolph, 29 July 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 100).

51 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 105; the square brackets are the editor's.

52 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 98.

53 The queen's letter is in S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 123-25, Burghley's on pp. 125-26.

54 S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 128-29.

55 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 130.

56 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 199-200.

57 S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 135-36.

58 See S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 143.

59 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 171.

60 See William Davison to Burghley, 24 August 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 143).

61 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 149.

62 Walsingham to Davison, 25 August 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 148).

63 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 150.

64 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 173.

65 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 194.

66 S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 205-06.

67 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 163.

68 Walsingham to Secretary Wilson, (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 171).

69 See A.P.C., 1577-78, pp. 369-70.

70 Walsingham, I, 421-22.

71 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 176.

72 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 174.

73 S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 173.

74 Walsingham to Heneage, 2 September 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 176).

75 Cobham to Burghley, 9 September 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 191-92).

76 See Walsingham to Davison, Richmond, 11 October 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, pp. 231-32).

77 Bernardino de Mendoza to Philip II, London, 7 October 1578 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 620).

78 Walsingham to Davison, 11 October 1578 (S.P., For., 1578-79, p. 231).

79 See Walsingham to Cobham, 12 November 1578, instructing him to deal in a case involving the fraudulent execution of a lease in Kent (S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 605).

80 He was at home on 18 December, when he wrote to Burghley about the sinking of a French bark carrying wine off the coast near Margate (see H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 225-26); presumably he was at Cobham Hall for the holidays.

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Chapter IV

1 See A.P.C., 1577-78, p. 437.

2 Bernardino de Mendoza to the Spanish Secretary of State, 5 September 1579 (S.P., Span., Eliz., II, 694). Another letter from the ambassador, dated 27 August, shows that it was written on the day that Alençon made his way from Greenwich to Dover (p. 694). In Arthur Throckmorton's diary there is corroboration of Mendoza's statement that Elizabeth parted from the duke at Cobham Hall (see A.L. Rowse, Ralegh and the Throckmortons (1962), p. 76).

3 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 217-21.

4 See Sir Henry Cobham to Secretary Wilson (?), 12 February 1579/80 (S.P., For., 1579-80, p. 154).

5 Lady Cobham's full report of the reception is transcribed in the notes to the family tree, pp. 1152-54, n. 56.

6 Sir Henry Cobham to Walsingham, 22 April 1582 (S.P., For., 1581-82, p. 641).

7 Robert Beale to Sir Henry Cobham, 27 August 1583 (S.P., For., 1583-84, p. 84).

8 See MS. Lansdowne 33, ff. 171b, 172b, 174b.

9 Hunsdon to Walsingham, 6 June 1581 (S.P., Scotland, 1581-83, p. 27).

10 See Bernardino de Mendoza to Philip II, 24 November 1581 (S.P., Span., Eliz., III, 226).

11 Roger Manners to the Earl of Rutland, 14 December 1581 (H.M.C., Rutland Papers, I, 130).

12 Bernardino de Mendoza to Philip II, 25 December 1581 (S.P., Span., Eliz., III, 242).

13 See Bernardino de Mendoza to Philip II, 17 December 1581 (S.P., Span., Eliz., III, 240).

14 Robert Beale to the Earl of Rutland, 18 December 1581 (H.M.C., Rutland Papers, I, 131).

15 See Mendoza to Philip II, 25 December 1581, as in n. 12 above.

16 See S.P., Span., Eliz., III, 243.

17 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 395.

18 See the list headed "Taxatio Nobiliũ p prima Solucõe Subsidij Anno xxiij R^ne Elizabeth" (MS. Lansdowne 32, f. 54).

19 Edward P. Cheyney, A History of England From the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth With an Account of English Institutions During the Later Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries (New York, 1914-26), II, 242.

20 See below, p. 662, for the reduction in Cobham's declared income between 1558 and 1597.

21 See the list in D'Ewes, p. 267, of the peers who attended the opening.

22 See Cobham to Burghley, 14 August 1582 (Cecil Paper 5/58; abstracted in H.M.C.,

Salisbury Papers, II, 55). See also n. 24 below.

23 See Bernardino de Mendoza to Philip II, 26 June 1581 (S.P., Span., Eliz., III, 139); Read, Lord Burghley, p. 261.

24 The letters are abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 514, 55, where the latter (Cecil Paper 5/58) is erroneously dated 1573.

25 Eland, p. 43.

26 MS. Lansdowne 31, ff. 158-61b, endorsed: "L. ch. bar. obiect, L. Cobhãs answ^{r}". The paper is undated, apart from a pencilled '1581' in a modern hand, but it is clearly from the year 1582.

27 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 462.

28 Holinshed, p. 1512.

29 See The Elizabethan Stage, II, 475-515.

30 MS. Folger L.b.452, kindly transcribed for the purposes of this study by Dr. Giles E. Dawson, Curator of Manuscripts, The Folger Shakespeare Library; abstracted in H.M.C., Report 7, p. 634.

31 See Cobham to More, 16 November 1581, 2 April 1587, as abstracted in H.M.C., Report 7, pp. 636, 643. The original letters are neither at the Folger nor in the Guildford Museum.

32 Analytical Index to the ... Remembrancia ..., A.D. 1579-1664, comp. W.H. Overall and H.C. Overall (1878), p. 554.

33 See the Analytical Index, p. 554.

34 See Sir Robert Cecil to Sir George Carew, 15 December 1600 (Letters from Sir Robert Cecil to Sir George Carew, ed. Sir John Maclean (Camden Society Volume LXXXVIII, 1864), p. 63).

35 Thomas Platter's Travels in England 1599, trans. Clare Williams (1937), p. 179.

36 Sir George Carey to Sir Robert Cecil, 2 August 1593 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 346). Algernon Cecil, although failing to identify Carey with the second Lord Hunsdon, notes that Elizabeth Brooke was "at one time, it would seem, the affianced bride of Sir George Carey" (A Life of Robert Cecil First Earl of Salisbury (1915), p. 43).

37 MS. Folger L.b.451, transcribed by Dr. Dawson; abstracted in H.M.C., Report 7, p. 633.

38 Holinshed, p. 1513. The marriage contract was signed on 5 November 1580 (see the proofs cited in the Complete Peerage, XII (Pt. 1), 309).

39 Aubrey's Brief Lives, ed. Dick, p. 142, where there is an account of the Stourtons' feud with the parvenu Herberts.

40 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1179-80, n. 69.

41 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/175/17, endorsed: "1584. Briefe of the Conuenantes agreed betweene the Lo: Cobham and S^{r} Tho: Sondes knyght at the Mariadge of the La. M: his wiefe one of the Daughters of the sayd Lord". The paper is abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 214, where Margaret is erroneously described as "sister of the said Lord Cobham".

42 See Edward Hasted, The History ... of Kent ... (1778), II, 764.

43 See Holinshed, p. 1513.

44 See William A. Shaw, The Knights of England ... (1906), II, 81.

45 Cobham to Burghley, 1 May 1592 (P.R.O., S.P. 12/242/1; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1591-94, p. 217).

46 Cobham to Burghley, a statement enclosed in the letter of 1 May 1592 (P.R.O., S.P. 12/242/2; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1591-94, p. 217).

47 See P.R.O., C142/237/116, which is the inquisition post mortem of Sir Thomas Sondes, taken on 11 September 1593. The document states that Frances Sondes was between five and six months old when her father died.

48 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1204, n. 79.

49 P.R.O., S.P. 12/259/65; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 255, where the references to Lady Sondes are erroneously taken to be to the younger Lady Cobham, and where Mrs. Harcourt is called Mr. Harcourt.

50 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1205, n. 79.

51 See S.P., Dom., 1598-1601, pp. 170, 431-33, 512, 513-14.

52 Cecil Paper 145/199; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XVI, 411. See also Williams to Lord Cobham, 1600 (P.R.O., S.P. 12/276/36), where it is said that "of my knowlege the charge of yo^{r} Lo. howskeeping is muche more to yo^{w} then her yearly revenew comes vnto, And that most therof might be spared weere it not for her La. cause, of whome in honor^{and} nature, had she noo foote or penyworth of lyving or liuelyhood yo^{r} Lo must haue care As yo^{r} Lo hathe."

53 John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton (The Letters of John Chamberlain, ed. Norman Egbert McClure (Philadelphia, 1939), I, 170).

54 See Chamberlain to Carleton, 7 April 1621 (Letters, ed. McClure, II, 361): "Sir John Morgan of Surrey (a man of threescore and sixe yeares old) died this weeke of the small pockes. Sir Marmaduke Durrells Lady is gon likewise, the last of her Sisters: and the mad Lady Sandes mother to her that was young Sir John Lewsons wife, and since to Sir Thomas Savill." Another Lady Sondes was mad by the time Margaret Brooke died, and McClure therefore takes Chamberlain's news to refer either to the wife of "Sir Richard or Sir Thomas Sandys". His caution is unnecessary, for the account of her daughter's marriages identifies the dead woman as Margaret Brooke.

55 Holinshed, p. 1512.

56 See Alumni Cantabrigienses ..., comp. John Venn and J.A. Venn (Cambridge, 1922-27), Part I, I, 227.

57 Eland, pp. 19-20.

58 In Holinshed, p. 1512, the poem is printed in italic, the recurrent motto in Roman.

59 MS. Add. 37666, f. 42b. Thynne's manuscript version of the original Latin is curiously inaccurate. Not only is its punctuation erratic: l. 19 reads "Si quid displiciat, inotus lenire feroces;" l. 22, "Haec quoque sunt verbo consona facta tuo;" in l. 24 "aduersus" is rendered "aduersis", and in l. 27 "facias" becomes "facies".

60 Duke Brooke of Somerset (1563-1606), whose career is discussed in the notes to the family tree (pp. 1120-21, n. 43), served as courier between Sir Henry Cobham and the English government during Cobham's tenure of the embassy at Paris. On 22 February 1581/2 the ambassador informed Secretary Walsingham that he had "resolved to send my nephew with the present dispatch, recommending him to your favourable protection.... I beseech you that after my nephew has done his duty to his parents [Christina Duke and her second husband, Gregory Sprinte], he may be returned at your pleasure" (S.P., For., 1581-82, p. 500). The editor of the State Papers incorrectly identifies this nephew with Maximilian, who was at the time the letter was written on his way to Lyons; the youth mentioned was Duke, whose parents were perhaps resident in London, where Sprinte sat in Parliament in the 1580s. By 3 April Cobham was telling Walsingham that "I have received your letter by my nephew," and by 10 April the young man had already returned to England, for the ambassador asked "that my nephew, Duke Brooke, may next be dispatched hither" (S.P., For., 1581-82, pp. 608, 624. See also S.P., For., 1582, pp. 343-44, 352.) In the autumn of 1582 the Treasurer of the Queen's Privy Chamber paid £ 13.6.8 to "Duke Cobham gent vpon a warr' signed by m^{r} secretarie Walsingham dated at windsore primo Octobr' 1582 for bringing lres in poste for her ma^{ties} affaires from the ... Ambassadoure resident at parris in ffraunce" (P.R.O., E351/542, f. 34b). There is no indication that the cousins met while visiting France in 1582. Duke was serving his uncle as late as May 1583 (see S.P., For., 1583, p. 319).

61 S.P., For., 1581-82, p. 411.

62 See S.P., For., 1581-82, p. 441.

63 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/153/18; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 51.

64 Cobham to Burghley, 14 August 1582 (Cecil Paper 5/58; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, II, 55. See above, p. 475, n. 24, for the date of this letter.)

65 MS. Lansdowne 36, ff. 192-93b, endorsed: "24 of Appril. 7 of Maiy. M^{r} Maximilian Cobham to his Father".

66 S.P., For., 1582, pp. 163-64.

67 P.R.O., S.P. 12/158/68; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 96.

68 MS. Lansdowne 38, f. 101a-b.

69 See Register of the University of Oxford, Volume II (1571-1622), ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1887-89), I, 378, where Bourne is shown to have been incorporated at Oxford on 10 July 1583 on the strength of credentials issued at Orleans on 8 June 1583. Besides Maximilian de Cobham the signatories include Dr. Tertullian Pine, whom Lady Cobham and her eldest son had recommended to Walsingham's attention (see Maximilian Brooke to Walsingham, 16 February 1582/3, P.R.O., S.P. 12/158/68).

70 S.P., For., 1583-84, p. 13.

71 It is evident that Maximilian died between 8 June and 27 July 1583, and most likely that he was still alive when Wilson wrote from Paris on 8 July. Francis Thynne was uncertain even about the year ("most vnfortunatlie (about the yeare of Christ one thousand fiue hundred fourescore and three) he ended his desired life:" Holinshed, p. 1512), and the Complete Peerage (III, 349 n.) somehow arrives at the date of his death as 5 December 1583. Venn (Alumni, Part I, I, 227) accepts the Peerage's date. Eland, citing Wotton's letter of 8 August 1583, rightly observes that he must have died before that date (p. 54).

72 S.P., For., 1583-84, pp. 38-39. The editor of the State Papers confounds Lady Cobham with her sister-in-law, Sir Henry's wife, and therefore indexes the bereaved mother as "Brooke, Anne, Lady Cobham".

(pp. 452-55)

73 Nicholas Faunt to Anthony Bacon (Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth ..., ed. Thomas Birch (1754), I, 40).

74 Joel Hurstfield, reviewing Eland's edition of Wotton's letters in the English Historical Review, LXXVII (1962), 154.

75 Eland, p. 54.

76 See Walsingham to Sir Henry Cobham, 24 June 1583 (S.P., For., 1583, p. 421).

77 Cobham to Walsingham, Cobham Hall, 14 July 1583 (S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 115).

78 The Brooke pedigree in MS. Harl. 1529, f. 63b, states that Maximilian died without issue "at Orlians in France", as evidently he did, and Thynne himself, in his manuscript version of the account in Holinshed, says that he died "beyonde the seas ... at Orleans". It was Thynne's published work which historians followed, however, all except Lodge (see Illustrations, II, 506 n.). Thus Maximilian is said to have died at Naples by Charles Henry Cooper and Thompson Cooper (Athenae Cantabrigienses (Cambridge, 1858-1913), II, 533), by Scott-Robertson ("Six Wills," p. 208), by the editors of the Complete Peerage (III, 349 n.), and by Eland (p. 20), who even imagines that "the poor fellow developed some disease, possibly pulmonary, for he was taken to Naples, and died in the hospital degli Incurabili of that city."

79 Holinshed, p. 1512. The verses which Thynne quotes are no longer to be seen in the Hospital of the Incurables at Naples.

80 See below, p. 925.

81 Holinshed, p. 1512.

82 See Venn, Alumni, Part I, I, 225.

83 Holinshed, p. 1512.

84 See Venn, Alumni, Part I, I, 228: "Brooke, William. Matric. Fell.-Com. from King's, Lent, 1579-80, as Brookes. Of Chester. Adm. at the Inner Temple, Nov. 1584. Barrister, 1594. Bencher, 1605." Henry Brooke's name is also written 'Brookes' in the Cambridge registers.

85 Return of Members, p. 414; see also Frederick Francis Smith, Rochester in Parliament 1295-1933 ... (1933), p. 102.

86 Elizabethan House of Commons, p. 317.

87 Return of Members, p. 418.

88 Venn, Alumni, Part I, I, 225.

89 See the Register of the University of Oxford, ed Clark, II, 138.

90 Sir Henry Cobham to Secretary Walsingham, 4 October 1580 (S.P., For., 1579-80, p. 442); see also Cordoini to Henry Lord Cobham, 30 June 1603 (S.P., Dom., 1603-10, p. 17). Cordoini's name is written "Camillus Cordoinus" in the Oxford registers; in the published calendars of State Papers it is variously rendered 'Cardoini' and 'Cardonio'.

91 MS. Coll. of Arms, Dethick's Funerals II, f. 581b.

92 John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 17 January 1598/9 (Letters, ed. McClure, I, 64).

93 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VIII, 554.

94 The Book of Matriculations and Degrees ..., comp. John Venn and J.A. Venn (Cambridge, 1913), p. 101.

95 Holinshed, p. 1512.

96 See below, p. 950.

97 See S.P., Span., Eliz., OIII, 555.

98 See J.A. van Dorsten, Poets, Patrons, and Professors: Sir Philip Sidney, Daniel Rogers, and the Leiden Humanists (Leiden, 1962), p. 140. Van Dorsten fails to identify George Brooke as Cobham's son.

99 George Whetstone, The Honourable Reputation of a Souldier ..., translated into Dutch by Jacob van Walraven and published in both that language and English at Leiden in 1586, p. 11; quoted by van Dorsten, p. 216, and paraphrased by him, p. 140

100 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, pp. 388-97, for the scrutiny lists for the years 1580-83.

101 See MS. Ashmol. 1109, f. 34b.

102 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, pp. 398-99.

103 See MS. Ashmol. 1116, f. 70b.

BOOK FOUR

(1584-1597)

A counseller of Estate vnder the rarest princesse and Quene of oure Age

Chapter I

William Lord Cobham was honoured with the Garter, and thus given to understand that he might expect further advancement, in a year of turmoil. "Loyal Englishmen," writes Conyers Read of 1584,

> were disturbed about the progress of the Jesuits, about the state of the Church, about the Puritans; most of all about the Queen's safety. The grim revelations of the Throgmorton Plot in the autumn of 1583 were accentuated by the assassination of William of Orange in July 1584, both of which seemed to forecast a concerted effort by the Catholic powers to invade the realm and destroy the Queen. It was primarily to deal with that menace that Elizabeth called for the election of a new Parliament, which assembled late in November of 1584. It represented the first parliamentary election in over twelve years, and the House of Commons was for the most part new men. Less than a quarter of its members had sat before. But it retained, indeed accentuated, the attributes of its predecessor. What it lacked in experience it made up in fervour. Its outstanding characteristics were exuberant loyalty to the Queen, intense hostility to her competitor, Mary Stuart, and a very critical attitude towards the Established Church. It was indeed definitely in accord with the Puritans in such matters. The inevitable consequence was that it clashed sharply with the Queen. Of all her Parliaments it was perhaps the one least manageable, not from any lack of loyalty, but from lack of experience in coping with the royal will.[1]

Elizabeth's personal attitude to Mary Stuart was at the root of much of the trouble. The queen refused to take action against her cousin, even though it was clearly not only Mary's continued existence, but her ceaseless intrigue which spurred desperate Catholics on to attempt to bring about her premature accession to the Throne. Burghley and his fellow ministers seemingly could not make their mistress appreciate the folly of allowing Mary to hatch with impunity plot after plot against her. In their fear that one day a madman would succeed where others had failed, individual members of the Council resorted to every subterfuge in order to give the impression that nothing would be gained by assassinating the queen which could not be eventually achieved by peaceful means. Burghley and Sir Christopher Hatton were particularly determined to convince Mary that, with Elizabeth's hope of children a thing of the past, they looked upon her as their future sovereign, and that it was in her best interests to wait out patiently her term as

heiress presumptive. The captive seems to have been persuaded that the Lord Treasurer meant well by her: certainly she trusted Hatton, who had a carefully fostered reputation as a Catholic sympathizer: and in June 1584 Burghley even succeeded in bringing Elizabeth to the point of promising her cousin greater personal liberty within England in return for an assurance that Mary would leave the matter of the succession "'in suspense, as it is during her Majesty's life'".[2] The death of the Duke of Alençon in August 1584 marked the final end of Elizabeth's matrimonial chances, and in November Mary sent Claude Nau, her secretary, to London to discuss the possibility of her release on the terms proposed by Burghley. So sure was she of the Lord Treasurer's goodwill that she instructed Nau to take his advice in all things before going to Court to raise support for her cause.

It is important to see Nau's visit to Whitehall as a vain errand instigated by the duplicity of the English ministers. Otherwise one might be perplexed to find an article concerning Lady Cobham in "'Nau his private notes of remembrance what to say from the Q. of Scots to every particular counseller at his coming to London'". The baroness, who was the only woman whom Nau was to call upon, had persisted in her friendship with the Countess of Shrewsbury, Mary's implacable enemy, and she was therefore regarded with suspicion by the same Marians who a few years earlier had thought her to be friendly to their purposes. Bess of Shrewsbury's supposed influence was, however, too widespread to allow Mary to shun all whom she had tainted. Hatton, who had so far taken the countess into his confidence that Nau was told to warn him that she "will do him wrong, as she has done to all her other friends, only keeping faith as long as it suits her",[3] was greeted warmly by Mary. Lady Cobham was also warned and wooed, in condescending terms suitable to the future Queen of England. "The Queen of Scotland," Nau was instructed to say to her,

> assures her that she will never do her harm, although it has been reported that she was an enemy of the said Queen and a friend of the countess.[4]

It was, of course, the baroness who was in a position to injure Mary Stuart, not the other way about, and the captive knew it. Francis Thynne wrote in 1586 of Lady Cobham "in court in the good fauor of hir prince", "being a person in no lesse credit with hir maiestie, than hir worthinesse dooth well merit",[5] and indeed she

was exceptionally close to the queen at that time. Under her direction her unmarried daughter had also been introduced into the royal circle, so that Thynne could write of the twenty-four-year-old Elizabeth Brooke as "a modest and vertuous gentlewoman [who] dooth worthilie serue hir maiestie as one of hir priuie chamber".[6] An indication of the senior position to which the baroness herself had been advanced by the time her daughter began to follow in her footsteps at Court is provided by a letter which Lady Cobham wrote to Burghley from Richmond on 15 June 1584. The queen had then been refusing for some days to give audience to her ministers because she was "much out of quiet, probably upon some cause given her by Mr. Vice-Chamberlain [Hatton]",[7] when the baroness was commanded to assure her husband's friend that their difficult mistress was harbouring no ill will against him. "Yt may please yowr lordshype," she half-wrote, half-printed in her bold calligraphy,

> her magessti hathe reseuyd yowr gloues and lykethe well of them and wylled me to thanke yow for them the boutenes [buttons] and the blauneket sylk wherewythe the[y] ar garneshyd plesethe her much. Yt pleaseth her to reed all yowr letter and wyshed that yow had not broken so greuyis a matter to her. i do thanke god she ys quieter then she was and spak not one bitter worde. Thys i homebely craue pardone for troublelynge of yowr lorde shype wythe thes illegybell lynes.[8]

It is not hard to see why Mary Stuart thought that so intimate a servant of the queen was worth cultivating. Nor, although Read professes himself unable to discover whether Burghley, in his relations with Elizabeth's ladies, "utilized their influence or resented it",[9] need one doubt that the Lord Treasurer approved Nau's intention to visit the baroness. Lady Cobham, it will later be shown, seems to have encouraged Mary's agent to think that she sympathized with his mistress; one imagines that she did so with Burghley's concurrence.

To beguile the Queen of Scots was an easier task than to ensure Elizabeth against death at the hands of a fanatic who thought that by extirpating the line of the Tudors he could bring about the rule of the Stuarts. At Hampton Court on 19 October 1584, a week after the writs were issued for the queen's fifth Parliament, the Privy Council therefore drew up a momentous document entitled "The Oath of assotiation". To sign it was to undertake a positive commitment not to recognize the sovereignty of any person who succeeded to the Throne as the direct result of regi-

cide. Mary was not mentioned by name, but it must have been clear to any of her followers that, should Elizabeth be assassinated, the English lords who had so long sought the captive's death would feel free to wreak vengeance upon her and choose whom they preferred as their sovereign. That Burghley and his colleagues were in deadly earnest in thus seeking to protect their mistress against her own foolhardy contempt of assassination is obvious. "Wee whose names are or shall be subscribed to this wrytinge," ran the text of the oath,

> (beinge naturall borne subiectes of this Realme of England, and havinge so gratious a Lady our Soveraigne Elizabeth, by the ordinance of God, our most rightfull Queene Raigninge over us these many yeeres w^th^ great ffelicitie to our inestimable Comforte: And fyndinge of late by dyvers deposicõns, confessions, and sondrye advertisemen tes out of forreine partes from credible persons well knowne to her Ma^ties^: Counsell, and to divers others: That for the firtherance & advaunce-ment of some pretended Titles to the Crowne of this Realme, It hathe bene manifest that the lyfe of our gratious Sov^r^aigne Lady Queene Elizabeth, hathe ben most trayterously and devillishly sought; and the same followed most daungerously to the perill of her person yf Almightie God her perpetuall defendor, of his great mercye had not revealed and w^th^stoode the same. By whose lyfe, we and all others her Ma^ties^: loyall and true subiectes doe enioye an Inestimable benefitt of peace in this land) doe, for the reasons and causes before alleaged, not onlie acknowledge our selves most iustlye bounde, w^th^ our bodies, lyves, landes and goodes, in her defence and her safetie to w^th^stand, pursue, & suppresse, all such mischievous persons, and all her enemyes: of what Nation, condition, or degree soever they shall bee, or by what coulor or titie they shall pretend to be her enemyes, or attempt any harm unto her person: But we doe also thinke it our most bounden dutyes, for the great benefites of peace, wealth, and godly government, w^ch^ we have more plentifully receyved these many yeeres under her Ma^ties^: most happie government, then our forefathers have done in any longer tyme of any other her progenitors kinges of this Realme, to declare, & by this wrytinge make manifest, our loyall & bounden dutyes to our said Sov^r^aigne Ladie for her saffetye. And to that ende, we: and everie of us, ffirst callinge to witnesse the holie name of Almightie God: doe voluntarilie & most willinglye, binde our selves: everie one of us to the other, Jointlye & severallye in the bond of our fyrme and loyall societie, and doe hereby vowe & promysse before the Ma^tie^: of Almightie God, That w^th^ our whole powers, bodyes, lyves, landes & goodes: and w^th^ our Children and servantes and uttermost habilities: ... if any suche wicked attempt against her most Royall person shall be taken in hand or procured, whereby any that have, may, or shall pretend title to come to this Crowne by the untymely death of her Ma^tie^: so wickedly procured (w^ch^ God for his Mercyes sake forbid) may be advaunced; we doe not onlie vowe and binde our selves bothe Jointlye & sev'allye, never to allowe, accept, or favour any such pretended successor, by whome any such detestable acte shall be attempted or commytted, or any y^t^ may any way clayme by, or from suche person or pretence as is afore said, by whome or for whom suche an acte shall be attempted or comytted, as unworthie of all government in any Christian Realme or Civill Societie; But doe also further vow & protest as we are most bounde, and y^t^ in the presence of the Eternall and ever lasting God, to prosecute suche person or persons to the death, w^th^ our Joynte & perticuler forces, and to take the uttermost revenge on them y^t^ by any possible meanes wee or any of us can devyse or doe, or cause to be devysed and done for their utter overthrow and extirpacõn .... In Wittnes of all w^ch^ premysses to be inviolablye

> kept: we doe to this wrytinge put our handes & seales and shall be most ready to accept and admytt any others hereafter to this our Societie and Association.[10]

The bond was the most potent deterrent which the queen's ministers could devise, and Burghley, as he sent copies of it throughout the country to obtain the signatures of thousands of Elizabeth's subjects,[11] was anxious that Cobham should be among the first to commit himself, his family and the gentry of his county to its execution. On 27 October he accordingly wrote to his friend from Westminster:

> My very good Lord.
> I have expected a good time for your Lordship's repair to London, upon such report made to me; but now, finding the continuance of your absence, I have thought good to advertise your Lordship by writing of that which I meant to have done by speech. I doubt not but your Lordship has lately heard how, upon a consultation in Council, it was accorded that there should be such noblemen and others, principal gentlemen and officers, as should like thereof, voluntarily to bind themselves to her Majesty, and every one to other, for defence and safety of her Majesty's person against all her evil willers; whereupon all the Council have already accorded, subscribed, and sealed, such a bond as I do herewith send your Lordship a true copy thereof, and there are the like made by all the Judges, Serjeants, and principal officers at Westminster. The like is made by the gentlemen and Justices of the Peace, in sundry counties; and now, considering that I am sure that many, or the most part of the Justices of the Peace in Kent will not be behind others, I have thought good to impart to yourself thus much, that your Lordship might make this known to such of your acquaintance there in Kent as you shall think convenient, leaving it voluntarily to their own judgments whether they will hereupon enter into the like union and association; and if your Lordship shall find them so willing, I wish your Lordship had the honour to obtain the same, and to present it to her Majesty, as a matter offered to yourself for her Majesty's service. And, for your own person to be of this society, I think it more convenient for your Lordship to adjoin yourself, now at your coming to London, with other noblemen, being Lords of Parliament; but yet, all this that I write to your Lordship, I pray you accept it as a matter that I leave to your own consideration: and so I take my leave of your good Lordship, with my very hearty commendations to yourself and to my Lady.[12]

Edmund Lodge, in printing this letter, bases upon his acceptance of the testimony of an unreliable witness his remark that Cobham was inclined to favour the Queen of Scots, and that "we may presume, from some passages in this crafty epistle before us, that he was not entirely unsuspected at Court."[13] There is no reason to suspect that Burghley doubted Cobham's readiness to defend Queen Elizabeth, nor that the baron did not sign the bond when he got to London.

Cobham was at Westminster when, on 26 November, the queen addressed the Parliament which had assembled three days earlier; he had probably been there on the twenty-third, when he was appointed a trier of petitions "for Gascoigne and the

Countries beyond the Seas, and the Isles," perhaps as one who had recently been acquainted with the situation of Englishmen abroad.[14] One of the reasons that the baron was not in London when the Council drew up the Bond of Association was the necessity of superintending the elections in Kent. On 25 October he had been still at Cobham Hall, for on that day he wrote from there to the electors in Hythe in order to instruct them in making their choice of burgesses. "'I commende me unto you,'" he peremptorily began his letter.

> 'According to my speeches uterred unto you, Mr. Mayor, and to one of your Jurats at your late beinge with me, I have nowe receaved aunswer from the Courte, whereby I am requyred to recommende unto you Thomas Bodyly to be chosen by you for a burgesse to the Parliament with some other personne of your owne towne, whom you shall knowe to be sufficient for the place, and namely well affected in religion and towardes the present state of this government. Wherein I woold wishe that good consideration should be had of the man, who shalbe soe elected, for the partie whome I am willed to nominate, besydes the comendacion which is delyvered unto me of him, I am persuaded that he is such a one as maie and will be readye to pleasure you and your towne, and of that credite as may staunde you in steede. So fare ye hartely well.'[15]

Cobham's recommendation of Bodley, the founder of the library which bears his name, carried the election at Hythe, although the government's determination to get the man into the House of Commons had led the Parliamentary patron at Portsmouth to nominate him there, and, in the event, Bodley chose to represent the constituents of the Hampshire port.[16] Indeed, backed by the Council, the Lord Warden's attempts to dictate to the electors of the Cinque Ports in 1584 were generally more successful than they had been in the past.[17] Although Dover returned a Puritan in John Moore, one of the Members who led the attack in the House on ministerial abuses and episcopal disorders in south-eastern Kent,[18] it also provided a seat for Cobham's right-hand man, Lieutenant Richard Barry of Dover Castle. Similarly, while it reluctantly gave one of its seats to William Southland, a powerful jurat who had led a trouble-making group opposed to the Lord Warden's domination of the town,[19] New Romney returned as its other Member one of Cobham's servants, Richard Williams, later to preside over the Brooke estates as steward in the time of the baron's son. Winchelsea elected Dr. Giles Fletcher, the Cambridge friend of Maximilian Brooke, and a man whose name is illegible in the official returns: he may

have been Herbert Morley, who made no mark on the Commons. Sandwich chose local men of whom little is known; Hytho chose its distinguished mayor and, deprived of Bodley's services, another man whose name cannot be read in the returns. Hastings's only known Member, Thomas Lake, was perhaps Cobham's nominee. Only Rye returned men of whom the Lord Warden would probably not have approved, giving one of its seats to a jurat who had been appointed to contest Cobham's authority at the abortive conference of September 1571.[20]

The baron had thus some reason to feel proud of his achievement in helping to provide the government with the support it desired when he surveyed the House of Commons late in 1584. There was also a source of pride for him in the presence in the House of his brother John, who again represented Queenborough;[21] John Brooke may have been the "Mr. Brooke" who served that session on the committee for "the better and more reverent observing of the Sabbath day",[22] and on 18 February 1584/5 he was left sole representative of his constituency when the House "disabled to be any longer a Member" his colleague, the traitor Parry.[23] His brother's share in the work of Parliament would not, however, have pleased Cobham so much as the knowledge that sitting in the Lower House, for his own old constituency of Rochester, was the eighteen-year-old William Brooke. That promising young man Robert Cecil, Burghley's second son, had probably first taken his seat at the same age three years earlier;[24] now Cobham's own sons were beginning to assume their public responsibilities. Finally, to complete the representation of the baron's family in Parliament, there was Cobham's son-in-law Lord Stourton, sitting with him in the Upper House.

Elizabeth did not prorogue her fifth Parliament until 29 March 1585, so that the legislators, while free to go home during the long Christmas recess, had to be at Westminster throughout February and March of the new year. Cobham was present when the Members re-assembled on 4 February, and thereafter he served on various committees related to private bills.[25] It was during the recess, however, that the result of his labours in connection with the problem of establishing an efficient postal service appeared in print. On 29 January was posted a proclamation which was headed:

> Orders agreed vpon, and set downe by the right honourable Sir William Brooke Knight, L. Cobham, and L. Warden of her Maiesties Cinque Ports: and the right worshipfull Thomas Randolph Esquire, Master and Comptroller generall of all her Highnesse Postes, for her Maiesties seruice, concerning the Postes established in Kent, according to the direction and auctoritie giuen by the Lords of her Highnesse most honorable priuie Councill in that behalfe.

The reason why Cobham and Randolph had been set to work was also explained:

> Forasmuch as the Lords of her Maiesties most honorable priuie Councill, haue found it expedient and necessary, by publique orders imprinted (both for the preuenting of inconueniences in time to come, and her Maiesties better seruice hereafter) to set downe and signifie her Maiesties pleasure touching the Postes of this Realme in generall: And by those orders haue bene pleased to giue authoritie, and specially to appoint vs. The Lord Warden of the Cinque ports, and the Master of the Postes, to determine of, and set downe some speciall Articles for the reformation of matters of Posting particularly within the shire of Kent: we, according to the direction and intent of their honorable Lordships in that behalfe, haue appointed and published these Orders and Articles following.

There were then given twelve distinct injunctions by which the special privileges and duties of postmen were circumscribed, the number and condition of their horses regulated, the charges which they were to make in renting their horses to the public stipulated, the rate at which they were to ride (seven miles an hour in summer, five in winter) prescribed, and the rules of the road codified: "They shall ... haue three hornes, & the same shall blow ... passing through any towne, and meeting of companie, and thrice at the least in euery mile."[26] For some time after they came into effect, Cobham and Randolph's orders seem to have been observed; then they began to be ignored. The letters which the baron's Lieutenant of Dover Castle wrote to his master at London are especially interesting, for the endorsements made on the backs of them reveal how long it took postmen in the 1590s to ride 70 miles. On 20 May 1593, for instance, the Lieutenant superscribed his letter "For her Majesty's affairs; hast, hast post hast, hast," and delivered it to the courier at 9 o'clock in the evening. It was almost 1 o'clock when the postman reached Canterbury, past 4 when his relief came to Sittingbourne, past 6:30 when the next man rode into Rochester, and 10 o'clock in the morning of 21 May when the last endorsement was made on the letter at Dartford.[27] The Lieutenant's dispatch had covered 55 miles in eleven hours. The postmen's pace would not have earned them praise for diligence, for they ought, by the terms of the summer schedule, to have ridden not five but seven miles an hour; they had virtually flown, however, when

compared with their counterparts who took twenty-two hours to make the same journey with a similarly superscribed letter from the lieutenant to the younger Lord Cobham in August 1600.[28] By the seventeenth century, indeed, the orders promulgated in 1585 had so far fallen into disuse that Henry Lord Cobham made urgent representations to the government about the inadequate postal service. "If the posts were as careful of their duties as they ought," the baron wrote to Secretary Sir Robert Cecil on 27 October 1601,

> I had acquainted you with this Scottish Duke's arrival before his coming to London. It is that I have oftentimes complained of; believe me, there must some example be made, otherwise when occasion of greater importance shall happen, in this sort we shall be served. I pray you, sir, apprehend it and so direct that the abuses of this post may be amended.[29]

On 1 July 1602 a memorandum was drawn up at Cecil's command which, entitled "Directions for Posts", effectively revived the injunctions made by the younger Cobham's father, and further provided for priority to be accorded to messages directed to the Lord Warden and several other high officers of state.[30] The new orders did some good: a letter delivered to the postman by the Lieutenant of Dover Castle on 15 July 1603 took twelve hours to cover the 55 miles to Dartford, another written the next day took only slightly more than eleven:[31] but the seven-miles-an-hour rate established in 1585 seems not to have been achieved again.

A fortnight after the queen prorogued Parliament at the end of March 1585, William Lord Cobham was confirmed in the honour which had been bestowed upon him in the previous year. The investment of the new Knights of the Garter in April was a particularly splendid affair, for it began with the installation by proxy of the French king as part of the Anglo-French rapprochement. The queen did not herself go to Windsor for the ceremonies, but commissioned her cousin Hunsdon and Viscout Montague to preside over them in her stead. On 14 April, three days after Easter, "y^{e} Erle of Rutland, the Lord Cobham and y^{e} Lord Hunsdon came to Windsore Castell and weare lodged." The other Knight-elect, Lord Scrope of Bolton, was Warden of the Northern Marches and could not get the queen's leave to come south, but his eldest son was allowed to represent him at Windsor; on 14 April, therefore, "S^{r} Tho. Scroope sonne and heyre to y^{e} Lo: Scrope of Bolton who came to be installed

for his father was also lodged amongst y^e^ prebends." Only Montague's presence was needed to permit the chapter to proceed, and early the next morning the viscount arrived. "Straightways all the lords went ... to y^e^ Church," and there, in St. George's Chapel, after divine service was celebrated and the hatchments of the late Earls of Sussex and Lincoln were taken down, Cobham was at last inducted into the order. First, Hunsdon and Montague retired into the chapter house with Sir William Segar, Clarenceux King of Arms and acting Garter, and called in the young Earl of Rutland. Solemnly proceeding to one of the empty stalls, the officers indicated to the earl that it would henceforth be his seat, and, "putting on him the blew Robe and the whode, and the Coller ouer all", left him. Across from Rutland, on 'the Prince's side' of the chapel, was the vacant seventh stall, two up from that which Cobham's father had occupied at the time of his death;[32] this was to be the baron's. Watching, Cobham would have seen Hunsdon, Montague and Segar salute the newly ensconced Knight, and then,

> as they came went back orderly to the Chapter Howse, and then came Garter againe to y^e^ Dore & called y^e^ Lord Cobham, and the aforesd. 2 lords receyued him in at y^e^ dore as before, and being ready they brought him forthe as they did the Earle and in the same order installed him and left him Also in his place opposite against the Earle.[33]

With young Scrope's receiving of his father's insignia, and with the formal dedication to God of the banners, swords, helms and crests of the dead Knights whose places had been taken, the simple, dignified ceremony came to an end. Cobham, at the age of fifty-seven, was a Knight of the Garter.

The new Knights presumably remained at Windsor for more than a week, feasting and, since there was still one seat vacant in the chapel,[34] casting their ballots for the election of yet another fellow. Cobham, availing himself of the privileges of nomination for the first time, gave his three 'princely' votes to the Earls of Oxford, Kent and Cumberland, his three 'baronial' votes to Lords Sandes, Chandos and St. John, and his three 'knightly' votes to the queen's cousin, Sir Francis Knollys, her favourite Hatton, and to Secretary Walsingham. Burghley made the same choices, with only three exceptions: significantly, the Lord Treasurer did not second his friend's nomination of Walsingham, but gave the third of his knightly

votes to Sir John Perrot, supposedly the bastard of Henry VIII.[35]

Elizabethan honours did not, of course, come cheaply, and Cobham, before he left Windsor, had to settle his accounts with various officials. On 20 April the baron paid out £ 19.3.0 in the following manner:[36]

To the college of Windesore.....v^{lb}
Item to the Register [sic] of the Order.....xl^{s}
Item to Garter his gowne and.....xl^{s}
Item to the hyuissher [usher] of the order.....xx^{s}
Item to the Officers of Armes.....v^{lb}
Item to the vicars and clerkes.....xx^{s}
Item to the verger.....vj^{s} viij^{d}
Item to the sextons.....xiij^{s} iiij^{d}
Item to the Quyresters.....iij^{s}

Sum xvij^{lb} iij^{s} iiij^{d} [sic]

Item to the poore Knyghtes.....xl^{s}

Cobham's fees, like Scrope's, were appreciably less than Rutland's, for an earl had by tradition to be more munificent than a baron at the time of his installation at Windsor.[37] Even so, "The Lo. Cobham & the Lo. Scropes charges for the hatchmentes set vp at wyndsore" were hardly less than those levied upon their more august companion. Rutland paid £ 24.6.8, the barons each paid half a crown less, for the splendid heraldic trappings by which their places in the chapel were henceforth to be marked. Cobham was presumably supplied with as complete a set of trappings as were Rutland and Scrope, so that, while no list of the baron's insignia seems to survive, one may deduce from what is known of his companions' how they must have looked. Besides the personal jewellery, the "Coller of the Order of golde with the George of Diamontes therto belonginge", which his father had left to him in 1558,[38] there would have been a "Large healme parcell gilt wrought with fyne gold in oyle with rabesks [arabesques] & other works": "a Wreath of Sarcenet of his colours", silver and red;[39] and his crest of a saracen's head, "carved and gilt". Then there would have been "a Large Banner of his Armes wrought on double Sarcenet with fyne gold and silver in oyle, frynged", quartering the coats of Brooke, Cobham, de la Pole, Braybrooke, Peverell and Braye with some of the ancestral arms to which the Braye heiresses' children were entitled, those of Longvale, Halighwell, Norbury, Butler, Sudeley and Montfort.[40] The mantling in silver and red would have been "of clothe of gold Lyned with white Sattin". There

would have been "two Knottes of burnyshed gold and two tassels of silke of his colours", and "arminge sworde, the skabbard of clothe of gold, the Hyltes, pommell, buckell, chape and pendant gilt with fyne gold", and "a staffe to beare the banner paynted with his colours". "Vj Lodgings Eschucheons" would have been set up over the new Knight's stall, the hatchments proper which denoted Cobham's exclusive right to occupy it. The baron had also to provide himself with "a book of the Statutes of the Order", such as that owned by his son and heir and described by Elias Ashmole.[41] Finally, Cobham had to have made "a plate of his Armes and brasses supportinge the same within the Garter graven in copper and gylt".[42] This stall-plate has been lost, although that of George Lord Cobham may still be seen above the eighteenth stall on the north side of St. George's Chapel. The Edwardian Knight had chosen 'Ie may feu en Dieu' as his motto. What device William Lord Cobham preferred one cannot be sure, although it was probably the 'Espoir en Dieu' which he placed on his plaque,[43] rather than the epigrammatic 'Ad adita virtuti Aditus', 'Approaching the approaches of virtue', which John Philipot took to be "Lord W^m Cobhames" when he saw it inscribed in the church at Boughton under Blean in the seventeenth century.[44] Nothing survives at Windsor to show that Cobham once had there a place so pompously marked. Elsewhere, however, on letters and documents bearing his seal, are evidences of how the baron's dignity had been enhanced in April 1585: for, by surrounding his coat of arms with the proud motto of the Garter, he indicated during the last twelve years of his life the exclusive society to which he belonged.

Cobham seems to have gone into Kent when he came down from Windsor. An indication of the kind of work which he did at home is provided by a letter written to him by the queen in August, in which Elizabeth expressed her especial pleasure in the ease with which the musters in the lathe of St. Augustine's had been completed.[45] In September the baron was still at Cobham Hall, from which he wrote on the second day of the month to ask Burghley to grant him the wardship of a local gentleman's son,[46] and on the twentieth to Walsingham, inquiring rather testily whether his authority in the Cinque Ports was to be infringed by the Vice-Admiral of Sussex.[47]

Cobham also had to deal with a rather unpleasant affair at this time, for his

neighbour, Sir Christopher Allen of Ightham, was suspected of harbouring Catholic recusants; under surveillance with him was Sir Walter Waller of Groombridge, whose activities in protecting "vagrant persons, being minstrels and players of interludes", the baron had had to investigate two years earlier.[48] Allen had worked with Cobham on commissions from the Privy Council,[49] and, previously enjoying a good reputation, deplored "his hard hap, that these bruits should be spread of him". The baron sympathized with Allen, but the knight had been charged with keeping "a vile and papistical house" and with receiving messages from Lady Cobham's brother-in-law, Lord Paget, who had fled abroad to the Catholic exiles.[50] Such accusations had to be followed up, and Cobham, in order to save Allen as much embarrassment as he possibly could, entrusted the investigation to a gentleman of his own kindred, his cousin Catherine Hart's husband.[51] Thomas Willoughby's reports from Ightham and Groombridge were inconclusive, but they at least indicated that something was amiss in the Allen and Waller households, something connected with the arrival in England throughout the autumn of 1585 of seminary priests and other subversives.[52] It was no longer to the Spanish embassy in London that Catholic agitators made their way if they were clever enough to escape detection on the coast. Than Bernardino de Mendoza, Sir Henry Cobham had written from Paris as early as 1582, "no minister ever set foot in England who had done greater harm,"[53] and early in 1584 the ambassador had at last been summarily expelled from the kingdom. It thus remained to the Sieur de la Mauvissière to provide asylum for the men and boys whom the Jesuits sent into England. The French ambassador, although recalled to France in November 1584, lingered in London, first in the hope that his diplomacy would expedite the release of the Queen of Scots, then, however reluctantly, to help make the furtive plans by which her enlargement could be brought about by violence. In August 1585 Mauvissière at last took his leave; his successor, the Guisan Baron de Châteauneuf, displayed no compunction in advancing conspiracies against Elizabeth's Throne.[54] The agents of the Papacy and the other Catholic powers who crossed the Channel were for the most part young English fanatics, often difficult for the searchers at the Ports to identify as enemies of the state, often friends and relations of the recusants of Kent and Surrey. Extraordinary vigilance

was expected of the Lord Warden and his officers in the latter months of 1585, and Cobham's reports to the government about suspicious new-comers as well as households like Sir Christopher Allen's and Sir Walter Waller's indicate how vigorously the baron applied himself to his job.[55]

It would have been obvious to anyone in a position such as Cobham's that a crisis both political and religious was approaching in 1585. Attempts had been made upon the queen's life and more, it was feared, were being planned; rumours of a Spanish or even a Franco-Spanish invasion were bruited; the Prince of Parma, the Spanish general, was bringing all of his great military skill to bear upon the problem of the rebellion in the Netherlands, and the Dutch, without Orange to lead them and without Alençon to give them the appearance of being supported by France, retreated before the concerted power of Philip II. In August Antwerp fell, and even Elizabeth was frightened, for the reconquered Netherlands would give Spain the base it needed for an unimpeded onslaught upon England. Before, it had been the warlike members of the queen's Council who had demanded armed intervention in the Dutch situation; now Burghley himself, although aware that it would mean a full-scale struggle with Philip, admitted that forces must be sent to the aid of the United Provinces in their last-ditch attempt to resist Parma's advance. The Lord Treasurer agreed with his fellow Councillors in opposing the queen when she characteristically attempted to assist the Dutch unofficially. The time for deceit was past. Only if they knew that she was as committed as they were themselves would the United Provinces accept Elizabeth as an ally in preference to France; only if she made sure that the Netherlands remained in Protestant hands could Elizabeth hope to survive.[56] Late in December 1585 the Earl of Leicester was dispatched to the Estates to take command of the Dutch forces and of the 5,000 foot and 1,000 horse which Elizabeth allowed him.

Cobham's youngest son, George Brooke, accompanied Leicester to the Netherlands; their departure cannot have pleased the baron. Like Burghley, Cobham would have been reluctant to admit that there was no way for England to extricate itself from its predicament but by going to war with Spain. Even as the queen's army crossed the Channel, the Lord Treasurer was attempting to avert the dread consequences of an

Anglo-Spanish clash by testing Parma's willingness to enter into negotiations for peace. Burghley's method was to prevail upon two merchants, Andrea de Loo in London and an Italian in Antwerp, to bring to bear upon the prince the influence of the mercantile community of the Netherlands, which was suffering much from wartime disruption of trade. At the same time, other Councillors and men of affairs were trying to win the queen's gratitude by terminating a situation in which she had no desire to be. Sir James Croft, Comptroller of the Household and a Spanish pensioner, took advantage of his cousinship with one of Parma's servants and commissioned the man to tell his master of the English government's sincere desire for peace; Sir Horatio Palavicino, the banker, communicated with a relative who governed in the Hispanophile Republic of Genoa and who was therefore in a position to reach King Philip; even Secretary Walsingham, averse as he was to compromising with Roman Catholicism, so far acquiesced in the queen's desires as to establish a link with two Portuguese who could keep him secretly in touch with the Spanish government. All of these schemes, says Conyers Read, "were virtually independent one of the other, and more or less in competition. It is not unlikely that the Queen encouraged them all."[57]

Cobham, whose reputation as a friend of Spain had partly saved him from Philip's general contumely of the English government when Mendoza was expelled, was in an advantageous position from which to play peacemaker. When so many men were trying their hand at the rôle, it is not surprising that the baron too yielded to the ambition to please his queen by rescuing the old Anglo-Burgundian alliance from certain destruction. As late as May 1585 even Pedro de Çubiare, a Spanish merchant who had moved freely about in England until imprisoned as an informant of the Prince of Parma at the time of Orange's assassination, so far valued the Lord Warden's usefulness in granting passports as to "thank God for his goodwill."[58] Cobham decided to avail himself of this Spanish inclination to regard him as one who was not an enemy. He had kept up his contacts with informers abroad, and since 1584 he had been corresponding with an Italian merchant in London, a man called Agostino Grafigna,[59] who had once served his father and sister's friend, Benedict Spinola.[60] This man the baron made his agent. Before proceeding with his attempt to make peace,

however, Cobham was given the kind of authority which he needed if his representations to the Spanish were to be taken seriously. Elizabeth made him a Privy Councillor.

* * *

Chapter II

On 24 January 1585/6 the Earl of Leicester, contrary to the queen's express command, accepted the position of Governor General of the Netherlands. Elizabeth's anger when she heard of her favourite's presumption knew no bounds. She demanded his instant resignation of the office and it was only with the greatest difficulty that Burghley convinced her that she should not shame the earl by requiring him publicly to resign before the Estates.[1] Meanwhile, Secretary Walsingham, whose admiration of Leicester abated as the earl's imprudence grew, was turning gradually toward Burghley, so that the two ministers, even as they defended the absent favourite from his mistress's wrath, came increasingly to work together in moderating both the mercuriality of the queen and the demands of the more hysterical warmongers. Burghley knew that, so long as Leicester was at Court, Elizabeth could never be relied upon to prefer the advice of her Council to the earl's private persuasions; while he was away, however, and especially while he was in disgrace, there was an opportunity for the Council to make its influence felt. Burghley determined to bring the board up to its full strength, and to replace the late Earls of Sussex, Bedford and Lincoln with new Councillors who were known to be inimical to Leicester's habitual antagonizing of Spain. One assumes, therefore, that it was he who placed before Elizabeth in January 1586, during her displeasure at Leicester's activities in the Netherlands, the names of three men whose promotion the earl would surely have opposed.[2]

The first of the nominees was John Whitgift, the autocratic High-Churchman who, as the new Archbishop of Canterbury, had recently tangled with Burghley over the Lord Treasurer's condemnation of ecclesiastical lethargy and corruption.[3] Whitgift was an avowed opponent of Leicester, defender of the Puritans, and Burghley, while personally inclined to favour the simpler forms of religion, was aware of the menace

to the Establishment which Puritan nonconformity represented.[4] It was a political and not a religious observation which Roger Manners made when, writing from Court a fortnight after Whitgift's inauguration as a Councillor, he told the Earl of Rutland that

> 'The Lord Archbishop we say here was only made a conselor by old Wyllyam to the overthrow of the Puritans, wherat they much malign and yet dare not complayn but in secrett.'[5]

Another of the names presented to the queen was that of Lord Buckhurst, who, as Thomas Sackville, had been a brilliant member of literary circles at Cambridge, and who, as a first cousin once removed of the queen, had advanced quickly through the ranks of the House of Commons to a barony and to distinguished ambassadorships abroad. Buckhurst's personal antipathy to Leicester was well known, and he was indeed to be the only one of the new Councillors whose exile from Court the earl was to bring about upon his return from the Netherlands.[6]

The other candidate for a seat on the Council was Lord Cobham, whose name is always mentioned before that of Buckhurst in contemporary comments on the promotions of February 1586. William Pierce has said that it was the Archbishop of Canterbury who "seized the opportunity to get himself and two of his supporters, the Lords Cobham and Buckhurst, sworn members of the Privy Council"[7] during Leicester's absence, Although it is true that Cobham as a Councillor was frequently commissioned to act with the archbishop in the trials of nonconformists, and even that the baron seems, as Pierce says, to have been "among the unwavering advocates of persecuting severity of treatment", it would be unwise to attribute Cobham's advancement to Whitgift. No record of collusion between the two men previous to 1586 exists. Rather, it would seem that Burghley made his three nominations in the knowledge that the new Councillors would work well together, united in their dislike of Leicester's policies regarding Spain and the Puritans, and thus introduce no new factiouness into an already divided cabinet. It is also probable that, while Buckhurst disliked Leicester personally, and the archbishop opposed the earl on public questions of religion, Cobham maintained amicable relations with him as Burghley did. Only on basic issues -- war or peace, French alliance or Spanish alliance -- did the baron allow himselfoopenly to differ with the queen's favourite.

> On the second daie of Februarie [1585/6], or feast of the purification of our blessed ladie, doctor Iohn Whitegift archbishop of Canturburie, William lord Cobham lord warden of the fiue ports and Thomas lord Buckhurst, were chosen & taken to be of hir maiesties priuie councell: the two first ... were swoorne the same daie, and the third on the next morrow; ... persons worthie of that place, both in respect of their deserts for their former good cariage in the commonwealth, & for the gifts of nature & learning wherewith they are richlie adorned.[8]

Reactions to the new appointments were soon forthcoming. On 5 February Walsingham wrote to Sir Edward Stafford, Henry Cobham's successor at Paris, telling him that the queen,

> 'finding that her Council by the decease of the late Lord Admiral, the Earl of Bedford and absence of my Lord of Leicester was now grown somewhat naked, hath lately made choice of my Lord of Canterbury, my Lord Cobham and my Lord of Buckhurst to supply the places of councillors.'[9]

Walsingham made no comment upon the significance of the change in the Council, but the French ambassador, who thought that the Secretary was still solidly behind Leicester, sent to the Queen of Scots on 16 March his opinion that the earl's supporters were much put out by the queen's action. "The Earl of Leicester is in Flanders," wrote Châteauneuf, reviewing the situation at Court,

> where he establishes himself; and they say that the Queen of England is already in anger at his behaviour, fearing lest he make himself too great. Mr. Walsingham is his friend, and supports him here as much as he can; but mylord Burleigh is contrary to him, and has caused the Archbishop of Canterbury and my lord Cobham and my lord Buckhurst to be appointed to the Council of the Queen of England; all three of the faction against which the Earl of Leicester and his followers are much irritated.[10]

Five days after Châteauneuf penned his letter to Mary Stuart, the captive queen's agent Thomas Morgan, himself a prisoner in the Bastille, wrote at length to his mistress about what Leicester had tried to do to thwart Burghley's formation of a conservative Council. Morgan's knowledge of English affairs was necessarily limited, but one may assume that his impressions of them were widely shared by Catholic observers of Elizabeth's Court. "Leycester, before his Departure out England," Morgan informed the Scottish queen,

> labored to make foure new Counsellors to the State to helpe to backe him in all Causes. The Counsellors whom he sought to preferre were the Erles of Huntington [sic], Penbroke, and Kent, and the Lord Graye; but Burghley, who was weake of Frendes in the Privye Counsell, in Leycester's Absence, hath made that Queen admitt of the Privye Counsell the Archbishoppe of Canterburye, the lord Cobham, and the Lord Buckhurste, being all three for their Lines [policies] opposite to

> Leycester, and to his Desseingnements, although all three be depelye overcome with Hereyse; though yett some holde Buckhurste for a Catholike in his Harte; but if he be, he dissembleth the Matter egregiouslye.[11]

Leicester himself reserved all but the most guarded comment until 8 August. Then, having been frustrated for months by the vacillating support which his expedition received from England, he wrote darkly to Walsingham about his enemies. "The fruit of faction here," he said,

> will fall out as it hath done in England. I am not so simple but I can see how [I] am handled, and how litle reckoning is made either of my requests or advises, and how those are most cherished that anie [way] can vse me worst; but I will beare all for the cause sake, and my humble dewty to her majestie, which shall neuer be forgotten; but if matters fall not well out, remember my prophecie long since. My conscience telleth me I haue deserued better fauor and more consideracion.
> I haue such encouragment as I am faine now to vse flattery to these that ought to haue sought me. Hir majesties great fauor[s] to them are so signified by letters, by messengers, and all, as either I must hazard all, or beare all, but I trust to end honorablie here and complayne neuer more.[12]

Cobham, committed to Burghley's policy of pursuing peace, made his first recorded appearance at a Council meeting on 19 February 1585/6, when, from Greenwich, he helped issue an unimportant order to the Justices of the Peace in Northamptonshire regarding the due observance of the dietary laws during Lent.[13] The registers of the Privy Council are missing from June 1582 until February 1586, and when they begin again they record Cobham's presence at the first meeting which is fully minuted in them. Thereafter the baron attended as regularly as his duties in Kent would permit him to do: for the six-month period March-August 1586 he was absent on only eighteen of the fifty-nine days on which the attendance was recorded. Burghley, who had no specific duties to keep him away from Court, was absent on twelve of them.

To Cobham, as a tyro Councillor, there fell the responsibilities of entertaining foreign ambassadors who came on courtesy calls to the queen. One such was Henry Ramelius, an envoy from Frederick II of Denmark, who was greeted at Tower Wharf upon his arrival on 8 May by Cobham and other magnates. The baron saw to Ramelius's lodging at Crosby Place and generally kept the ambassador company until he returned home three weeks later, having had no success in his avowed mission of acting as peacemaker between England and Spain.[14] There is in Holinshed a charming description

of how the whole Court combined to impress the visitor with the magnificence in which Elizabeth lived. "The said Ramelius," wrote Francis Thynne,

> during the time of his tariance, had attendance doone him conuenient for his person, both by water and by land: the queens maiesties barges and seruants imploied about him to and from London, the court then being at Greenewich; whither alwaies when he came, the nobilitie of England failed in no point of courtesie that might be shewed, Which he seemed (as he could no lesse) verie acceptablie to take. Now being in England, and in the English court, he might (and no doubt did) marke the magnificence of her maiestie, in all respects admirable. Whereof a notable president was giuen in Whitsunweeke; at what time the said ambassador, being at the court, was accompanied with certeine English lords to hir highnesse chapell, and placed not far from hir excellencie [sic], did heare diuine seruice so melodiouslie said and soong, both by voice and instruments of consort, as a man halfe dead might thereby haue beene quickened. The gentlemen of the chapell with the rest of the quier bending themselues, both with skill and zeale, that daie to honor their prince according to their place. The bishop of Salisburie and others distinctlie reading part of diuine seruice, and in presence of all the auditorie dooing such obeisance with knee and countenance, as the presence of so gratious a souereigne as they had in their eies did require.
>
> Now when this solemnitie was ended, hir maiestie departed; and so did the ambassador, attended vpon and accompanied vnto the place appointed for dinner: where standing neere to a faire window fronting vnto the open court, he might (being in communication now with one, and then with another English lord, as the lord Charles Howard lord admerall, the lord Cobham lord warden of the cinque ports, &c:) behold the roiall seruice of hir maiestie, verie personable gentlemen thereto sorted, carrieng couered dishes, all of siluer & gilt verie beautifull; themselues in veluet and silke sutable in each respect, and as decentlie made, so decentlie worne; the trumpets sounding, and the drum plaieng therevnto: a maruellous delightsome thing to heare, and a passing gallant sight to behold.[15]

While displaying the pride of England to the Dane, Cobham had to take time out to attend a meeting of the Council in the Star Chamber on 17 May. The Earl of Arundel, son of the executed Norfolk, had "'of her Majesties own mere mocion'" been brought from the Tower for trial before his peers on charges of contempt. It was being rumoured that the earl was unjustly imprisoned: to silence controversy, the Lord Chancellor charged him with the harbouring of Jesuits, with the dissemination of a letter in which he alleged that the Crown had dealt tyranically with him and his father, with an attempt to flee to the Continent and with the appropriation of the title of "'Philipp, Duke of Norfolke Earle of Arundell'". Cobham and the other Councillors found Arundel guilty as charged, and the earl, admitting his offence and submitting to the court, was fined £ 10,000 and sentenced to be detained in the Tower during the queen's pleasure.[16]

Later in the summer Cobham seems to have been involved in the conclusion of the Treaty of Berwick, whereby James VI of Scotland became a pensioner of the English Crown and tacitly agreed to stop interfering in the matter of the succession in return for some sort of assurance that Elizabeth would protect his claims upon it should Parliament try to disallow them. The Earl of Rutland, Lord Eure and the experienced diplomat Thomas Randolph were entrusted with the negotiations on the Scottish border. Cobham, who had apparently come to appreciate Randolph's talents while working with him on the orders for the posts, wrote a knowledgeable letter to Rutland from Greenwich on 4 July, during a temporary hitch in the proceedings at Berwick. "I am sorry," the baron said,

> the causes are not such that your Lordship can honourably finish your negotiation and so return. Mr. Randolph is well acquainted with these accidents, so I hope his patience will move you to second him. I find he is much 'affectionated' to you and commends your care and manner of proceeding in the treaty. I find such correspondence between you that I expect her Majesty will be well served, and you will return shortly.[17]

Rutland was back in Essex by 19 August, when his servant wrote to him from London a letter which indicates that the earl was interested in Cobham's doings. "'The Lord Cobham,'" reported Thomas Screven, "'is com to his howse at Blackfriers, and as I heare will to the Court to-morrow.'"[18]

Meanwhile, possessed of his new authority as a Councillor, the baron proceeded to make an attempt to bring about negotiations for peace in the Netherlands. In April 1568 Agostino Grafigna, "an Italian merchant in London, by persuasion of the Lord Cobham 'took upon him to go over to the Prince of Parma.'"[19] Upon the agent's return, it was given out at Court, he reported to the queen that, as he was about to leave Antwerp after visiting the city on business, "the prince of Parma, understanding that he was to returne into England, sent for him, and, ...

> prayed him to let eyther her majestye or somme of her cownsell understande, that, althowghe he myght be thowghte more inclyned to contynewe the warres then to affect peace, yet no man woold be more wyllyng then himselve to be a medyator therof, and, for that purpose, yf he myght understand that her majestye wold lyke therof, he woold send somme well chosen instrumentes unto her to make some sooche overture in that behalf as she shoold have cause to lyke of. He dyd, for the incoragement of Grafyni, assure him that the king shoold bestowe some honorable rewarde on him, so as he coold bryng the same to passe that some myght be sent over with her majestyes good lykyng....

"This myche," wrote Secretary Walsingham to Leicester on 21 April,

> have I receyved from her majestye towching Grafyinis proceading, wherwith her plesure was I shoold acquaynt your lordship, whoe doth think meet that you shoold, yf you shall see no cause to the contrarye, acquaynt the cownsell of the state there, that certeyn overtures for peace are dayly made unto her, but that she meanethe not to proceade therein without ther good lyking and privyty, being perswaded that ther can be no peace made profitable or suer for her that shall [not] also stande with ther savetye, [and] that she dothe acknowledge [hers] to be so lynked with thers as [nothing] can faule owt to ther prejudyce but she must be partaker of theire harme. Her pleasure ys, that you shall not acquaynt them with the partycularyties of the overture, but woold have you deale with them in generall termes, usyng the matter in sooche sorte as they may not enter into any jeabouse conceypt of any alyenation of her good meaning towarde them.[20]

Evidently the queen had anticipated Leicester's objections. A week after Walsingham wrote his letter, and before it could have reached Utrecht, the earl, ignorant of the true state of affairs regarding the amateur peacemakers but suspicious nonetheless, informed the Secretary of Gáfigna's visit. "You gave a pasport to one Aug. Graffyn to goe to Antwerpe of late," Leicester recounted accusingly;

> he had letters to me to giue him leave alsoe, but he speed soe well as he neuer sent me my letters till he had done all his busines, and returned with a great masse of merchandizes, and then he sent me my letters and a dish of plumes, which I will boldly say to you, by the liuing God, is all that ever I had since I came into these countreys. This man I vnderstand ys great with the prince of Parma, and receaued great favors for the dispach of his merchandises, and the rather as it is secretly and assuredly giuen me to vnderstand from my intelligencer, for that he hath vndertaken to sett abroch [abroach] the peace betwene her majestie and the kinge of Spayne, a matter for my parte I doe not mislike, soe that it be not mard in the handlinge. For, as it is not vnfitt for princes to heare anie offers that may be made, soe is it most necessary to make their best bargaine that anie way maie be procured, but I beseech you lett these advantages be considered that her majestie now hath, and to assure her, she may bringe the kinge of Spaine to anie peace if it be princly and well handled, but if you relent one iotte all is overthrowen. I meane not, that you should not entertayne and heare, in some sort, to these offers made, but not to shewe to haue to great a desire to it, as in troth it is here geuen out, to to much to the disadvantage of her majestyes service. What sending, what practising there is, on every side, some in Spayne, some in the Low Countreys, from some of yourselues in England, it is a world to heare.

Leicester's letter, up to this point, is that of a statesman, aware of the dangers of appearing too anxious for peace with an enemy with which his country was currently at war. He did not want England to lose face before he had had a chance to prove what its forces could do in the field. "If it shall please her majestie to back me princly, and to shew a care indeed to settle these countreys in good securitye," he promised Walsingham, "I will adventure my hedd of it, that her majestie shall haue what peace she will." Then, however, the earl revealed how desperately afraid he was that he would be betrayed and left in command of an army for which there was no

employment. With a contempt which ill concealed his uneasiness that more was afoot than he knew, he told Walsingham that peace "shall grow not by a merchants brokerage

> but from the verie states of Heynalt, Flaunders, and Artoys themselues, wherevpppon [sic] there maie be good ground taken indeed to worke uppon, which otherwise thother is dellitorye and equall, and he that seeks maie leaue vppon anie advantage, as he likes best. And I haue no doubt but to bringe such a manner of dealing to passe, soe that you by paultring dealing, by beggerly instruments, be cutt of; which at all times maie be vsed, if God should send our case harder than it is. And beside, when it is sought by men of creditt, whoe are interessed in the cause, you are like to obteine better conditions then when it shall growe by a broker; beside the honor is as much worth almost as the matter. I can assure you, by all faith and trueth, that the brutes of your treatinge vnderhande hath done more harme to the cause here then anie one thinge in the world, ioyned with the mislike geven out by lewd fellowes, that her majestie had noe care what became of these countreys, and that she sought but for a peace for herself ....
>
> To conclude, if her majestie doe wish a peace, as I beleeue she doth, this is the only way to cause the enemie to seeke hir, which neuer beleeue me if he doe not. So that there, as I saied before, [be] geuen the enemy noe hope of by [i.e., bye, crooked] and vnderhand dealinge, and that her majestie doe deale playnly and franklye with these people, as sometimes in sending some men of creditt to visitt them, and to see their estate, to comfort them, and me also, as her servant amonge them.[21]

'Paultring dealing', 'beggerly instruments', honour 'as much worth almost as the matter': Leicester's lofty words, incongruous in the mouth of a Dudley, could have little effect upon a set of men, and more especially upon a queen, who were determined to make overtures to peace by any means. Walsingham's letter of 21 April must have reached the earl before Leicester wrote again on 30 April, for he was by then confirmed in his belief "that there is dealing for peace as well by Grefyne as others". Once more Walsingham was implored to advise the queen that, if she wanted peace, all she had to do was "vse her advantage" and so "bringe the kinge, and specially this prince of Parma, to seeke it in other sort then by waie of merchantes." Leicester even went so far as to boast that Parma, for whom the earl was no match, "was never soe deiected, nor soe mallancholy, since he came into these countreys, as he is at this daye, nor so far owt of courage ...,

> soe that for peace, you maie see whether it be not like that it wilbe sought in better sort at her majesties hands then by merchants. I am borne in hand of all, the lords and cheif gentlemen of Heynalt, Arteyes, and Flaunders will seeke it, and presse the prince for it, and there is one that will geue me knowlege verie shortlie thereof, and, if I be not abused, the prince and kinge both will dailie, as longe as theie can, to entertain, talke of peace, and to discourage these countreys thereby, before theie will either harken indeed to a peace, or to treat of anie. And, vnder correction be it spoken, if these men here conceave once her majestie to be in hand with a peace, theie are gone without once looking

> back, and will make their men, and overthrow her majesties, or lett me suffer for it. God I take to record, vppon that I haue conceaued, and what you haue written, of her majesties disposition, I would creepe vppon the ground as farr as my hands and knees would bere me, to haue a good peace for her majestie, but my care is to haue a peace indeed, and not a shew of it devid her freinds and her insonder; they loaue her not that wish that kind of weake dealing.

Leicester did not name the Councillors who he knew were in touch with Parma: writing to Walsingham with his Portuguese contacts, the earl could hardly accuse particular men without including the Secretary himself in the indictment: but by insinuation he could pick out Burghley, Cobham and Croft, the friends of Spain, in such a way as to avoid reflecting upon Walsingham's own integrity. "Yf all the Spanish faction in England," Leicester therefore wrote,

> procure her majestie a peace fitt for hir, in any respect, lett me be hanged for it. Nay I thinke, if you or I should shew to haue so much creditt that waie as some doe as I heare of in England, I doubt whether we should be thought worthy to be hanged or noe; but I haue not to doe with other mens doings, God preserve her majestie, and send her trew faithfull councellors. And the best waie for a good peace, I thinke still, is to bring it by a good sharp warr; .... But, soe long as pedlers and merchantes be seking and paultringe in so weighty a cause, the enemy will make his profitt of it, or, if it were knowen that I did but advise thus much, the enemy would be in the greatest prid in the world, and hold out to the vttermost houre, whereas now, hard handling must doe the feate, without conceat of hasty or easy beleeuing.[22]

Had Leicester been as good as his word one might be able to sympathize with him. Unfortunately he could not manage the Dutch, clever cheese-parers distrustful of the English, whose control over the finances of the Protestant campaign was rigid. The promised 'good sharp warr' never materialized. Leicester could not bring Parma down, as Walsingham well knew, nor could Elizabeth permit her resources to be drained in a long and inconclusive struggle on behalf of Calvinism. She wanted a speedy peace on favourable terms, or, failing that, an opportunity to withdraw with some show of honour from the Netherlands as soon as the immediate danger to England should seem to have passed. Her Councillors were therefore encouraged to proceed with their private plans for shortening the period of Leicester's stay with the army abroad. Walsingham kept his correspondence with the Portuguese separate from the other enterprises, but gradually, in the late spring of 1586, Burghley consolidated Croft's efforts with his own and instructed Palavicino to abandon his project with the Genoese. Thus Burghley's own man, Andrea de Loo, and Cobham's agent Grafigna were left in possession of the devious channels through which, using

them as factors, individual members of the Council trafficked in diplomacy while the queen's general fought the first rounds of her war with Spain.

What one knows of the manoeuvres in which de Loo and Grafigna were engaged after Leicester had been alerted to their activities comes, unfortunately, from a report which the queen later had drawn up to satisfy the earl.[23] Read thinks that Walsingham prepared the account which was sent to Leicester;[24] if he is right, then the Secretary's shift toward Burghley would explain why he suppressed the Lord Treasurer's part in instigating the overtures to peace. In telling Leicester how de Loo was persuaded to go to Parma again in May, Walsingham mentioned Croft, Hatton, Sir Walter Mildmay, Cobham and two others, "of whom one is, as is thought, the Lord Buckhurst", but he did not mention Burghley, to whom de Loo made his reports and for whom he principally spoke. One understands the Secretary's reluctance to involve Burghley when one reads how de Loo was instructed by his promoters

> to go neither into Zeeland or Holland, lest the lord of Leicester 'that sought rather war than peace' should by stopping his return hinder the proceedings.

It was not de Loo, however, for whose subversive doings Walsingham had most to apologize to Leicester, and therefore the Secretary did not entirely conceal Burghley's interest in the agent. The report to the earl was made in August 1586, when the full onus of the negotiations had been placed upon Grafigna. Walsingham thus told how, as de Loo was being dispatched in early May,

> Augustin Grafigna 'was won again by the Lord Cobham to go over ... and advised to go before [de Loo] that he might win the spurs.' He started on May 8, and on May 11, 'with many good words from her Majesty,' de Loe departed.
> As to Grafigna, both the Lord Treasurer and Mr. Controller told de Loe not to fear him, as the Prince of Parma had promised not to take the matter out of his [de Loo's] hands.

If Parma had actually given this assurance, he broke his word. For Grafigna, certainly the more forward of the two agents, got much more satisfaction from the prince than did de Loo. He was in Parma's camp, having brought with him gifts which presumably came from Cobham, when Leicester wrote on 6 June to tell Walsingham of the furore created among the Dutch by the tales which the English businessmen were spreading. "Divers particularities I haue written," recounted the earl,

> Among others this late coming into Antwerpe of August. Grafino and Andreas de Lope [sic], who make noe secret talke of it, but doe imparte to the merchants flatly, that the peace betweene her majestie and [the] king is agreed on. Graffyn is at the campe with the prince, having ij English geldings to present him, and a brace of greyhounds. These newes being certen, as theie be, for I haue them brought me also by an Englishman from thence purposely, you maie imagine what care it will cast these people in; specially hit will appere what an alienacion it will worke in the wiser and higher sort her, perhapps cause you haue butt a badd peace, and that is it the prince seeks to make with you, and perhaps some care not much for, soe it beare the name of a peace. Well, I am noe fitt councellor![25]

The announcements of peace were, however, premature, and Leicester's indignation must soon have given way to grim satisfaction. For, upon Grafigna's return to England, it was found that the cynics had been right all along in suspecting that Elizabeth had never intended to give Spain the advantage of ruling once more over a pacified Holland. Châteauneuf, the French ambassador, had felt that the dispatch of Leicester to the Netherlands, coupled with the comings and goings of Grafigna, de Loo and the others, merely showed that the queen was up to her old tricks of confusing the powers on all sides. He believed that she would not commit herself to any definite stand.[26] Whether Grafigna himself recognized the essential futility of the mission on which he had been sent -- whether, indeed, Cobham saw it -- must remain a matter of opinion. For the agent had, as he claimed at Antwerp, succeeded in persuading Parma to consider a peace treaty, and had with much difficulty extracted from the prince written assurances to the queen and to Burghley that he was willing to negotiate. By succeeding where he ought perhaps to have failed, Grafigna forced the queen's hand. He also, by giving her the chance to reject Parma's offer of peace, provided her with the means of reassuring the Dutch of her honourable intentions toward them. This patently contrived device Elizabeth chose to employ, and Grafigna, or at any rate his reputation, was sacrificed to international diplomacy. Grafigna was constrained to deny that he had represented himself to Parma as the spokesman of Burghley and the queen as well as of Cobham. He was then exposed as a liar on the grounds of the evident sincerity with which the prince had written his letters, letters inspired by the belief that Grafigna was the accredited envoy of the English Crown. There is only Elizabeth's word for the appearance of Grafigna before the Council: the registers contain no entry recording

his confrontation by the Lords: but the queen at any rate insisted that the man had been formally unmasked as an imposter. Informing the prince on 8 July that she could not be deflected from her declared intention to "make safe our own state and to free our ancient neighbours from misery and from starving", she disposed of Grafigna's claims to represent her by sending to Parma a signed statement of what purported to be the agent's examination by her ministers. "As he had already told them by word of mouth," ran the evidence of Grafigna's mendacity,

> so he now confirms it that he had said to the Prince of Parma that he had reported to Lord Cobham what his Highness had said to him in Brussels.
> That his Highness had demanded whether he had spoken with her Majesty, he answered 'No.'
> That Signor Cosmo [Parma's private secretary] had inquired whether he had spoken with Mr. Controller, to which he said no.
> And as to the Lord Treasurer, there was no mention of him whatever.[27]

The dispatch of the queen's letter of 8 July 1586 closed Grafigna's career as a diplomat; he seems to have come to no harm. It also put a stop to secret correspondence between the Council and the Prince of Parma, although Burghley was still trying to approach the prince anew through Andrea de Loo as late as 1587. Croft alone, who, Walsingham told Leicester when in August he sent the earl his long account of the extraordinary activity of the previous few months, "had perfect knowledge of all that had passed", continued to hope that he might single-handed bring about a reconciliation of his queen with Philip II. Croft was a pensioner of Spain, and in 1588 risked incurring a charge of treason by visiting Parma personally. Cobham, who was left to bear the brunt of the Council's responsibility for encouraging Grafigna, suffered no loss of favour or position. He lost face, certainly. Once the nature of Elizabeth's reply to Parma was made public, Cobham was exposed both on the Continent and at home as the instigator or the dupe of a mean, thoroughly unqualified meddler in international affairs. Yet uninformed public opinion was not that of the inner circles of the Court, and when Elizabeth eventually did send commissioners to Parma, Cobham was among them. There would seem to be little doubt that he was following orders when he sent Grafigna to the Netherlands, and that Burghley was kept informed of the agent's progress. If either Cobham or his agent, motivated by a distaste for war with Spain or by a desire to win the queen's especial gratitude, went further than he ought to have done, there

is no evidence that the baron was rebuked because of it. It is a pity that one's knowledge of the whole, complex affair comes from half-truths prepared for the eyes of Leicester and of Parma. One must rely upon the indications of favour and confidence which Burghley and the queen continued to display in their relations with Cobham in deciding that the baron's employment of Agostino Grafigna did him no harm.

The termination of the Council's unofficial negotiations with the Prince of Parma coincided with the discovery of a plot against Elizabeth which, in its enormity, effectively distracted the minds of Englishmen from any lesser concern. Cobham seems to have had no part in the exposure of Anthony Babington and his companions in attempted regicide: the credit for that achievement goes almost exclusively to Walsingham. Babington was arrested on 14 August 1586 and five days later Cobham, who had perhaps made a show of being in disgrace following the queen's repudiation of Grafigna, was expected back at Court.[28] He was at once appointed to a commission of oyer and terminer "of all manner of treasons, rebellions, felonies, offences, routes, riottes, etc.," and on 13 September he sat as senior commissioner, with Buckhurst, Hatton, Walsingham and others, to try the conspirators.[29] All seven were summarily found guilty of treason and rigorously executed.[30]

The trial of Babington and his fellows was merely a prelude to the greater events of the autumn and winter of 1586-87. Mary Stuart was fatally involved in the attempt to assassinate Elizabeth, and Burghley was determined that her complicity be known. The queen herself was convinced only after prolonged argument that use should be made of the evidence against her cousin which the examiners of Babington had discovered. On "12 Sept., at night, neare IX of the cloc.," when it was only a matter of hours before Cobham should head the commission by which the conspirators were to be tried, Burghley wrote from Windsor to Sir Christopher Hatton in London of Elizabeth's meagre concession to the advice of her Council. "After my very harty Commendations," began the Lord Treasurer at the end of a long day in which he had finally won his mistress's assent to proceed against Mary,

> I hve receaved and shewed the lettre signed by yow and others of her Majesties Prive and Lerned Counsell, and, settyng asyde myn opinion concurryng with the tenor of your lettre, I must delyver her Majesties answer resolvt. She semeth to mislyke that the particularetyis of the Scotish Quene lettres war conteaned in the indytment, but how soever I allowed therof, and hir Majesty mislyking, yet now I concluded with hir Majesty ther was no remedy left to change that, and for the prosequutyng therof in delyveryng of the evidence, hir pleasvr is that ther be no enlargment of hir cryme, but breffly declared for maytenance of the endytment, that she allowed of Babyntons wrytyng or lettre. Nether wold she that ether by my Lord Cobham, your self, or by any other, any sharp speches be vsed in condemnation or reproof of the Scottis Quene cryme. The only reason that hir Majesty alledgeth is, that when any of hir frendes or partisans shall, by this oppen procedyng, fynd hir in davnger, some what may be attempted to hir Majesties davnger of hir person in the meane tyme.
>
> For the form in the jvdgment, hir Majesty is content it be kept, and so I wrot to daye, but she will that it be added in the end, that nevertheless such ane extraordinary cryme deserveth a furder extraordinary payne, which is to be left to hir Majesty and hir Covnsell to consider of.
>
> Thus in hast I end, prayeng yow to commvnicat this, or as much as you shall thynk mete, to the rest of hir Majestis Counsell and jvdges.[31]

Although so grudgingly and so conditionally granted, the permission to reveal her cousin's complicity in high treason which Elizabeth gave to her ministers on the eve of Babington's trial was a gesture of far-reaching importance. It had its effect upon England and, as a microcosm of the society in which they lived, upon the family of the Brookes. It was to lead Cobham, as a public person, to participation in the death of Mary Queen of Scots; it was to relieve him, as a husband and a father, of a threat to his personal contentment which had existed for twenty years

On 21 March 1585/6, in Cobham's second month as a Privy Councillor, Thomas Morgan set down in a letter to Mary his plan for drawing the Brookes and others into a scheme for her release. Lady Cobham's reception of Claude Nau when he visited her at Court late in 1584 may have encouraged the Marians to suppose in their last years that the baroness might help them, and, in the months immediately before Babington was set to work, all such hopes that the captive would be supported at Court were zealously pursued. Morgan, although a prisoner in the Bastille, was the most active of the agents and plotters by whom Mary's affairs were conducted, and in his eagerness to enlist aid for his mistress he let no possible sympathizer go unapproached. Unfortunately for him, the messengr whom he employed was one of Walsingham's secret-service agents. Father Pollen has thus written, in his explanation of how the Earl of Arundel's name came to appear in Morgan's letters, that "the

improvident Welshman

> wrote with a frequency, a freedom and an unnecessary plenitude of detail, which in a conspirator was folly. Had he had any intimate acquaintance with the affairs of the Earl or Countess this would infallibly have come to the knowledge of the English Government, for every one of these letters was read en route. Nothing, however, was learned, because there was nothing to learn, except that Arundel's catholicism and consequent suffering inspired Morgan with hopes.[32]

That Arundel was innocent of complicity with the Marians has been by no means proved: Pollen's study of the earl's life is of course a Catholic apology, and one must not forget in reading it that the earl admitted his offences to the Privy Council on 17 May 1586, when Cobham and his fellows sentenced him to further imprisonment and to a crushing fine.[33] In Lady Cobham's case, however, Morgan's guarded optimism about her attitude to Mary would seem to have been founded solely upon her communication with the queen through the agency of Dr. Good in 1574,[34] upon the continued employment of the Ridolfian Bertie at the Blackfriars, and, perhaps, upon her treatment of Claude Nau. There is nothing to indicate that Cobham's wife had not acted upon her mistress's orders when she made these contacts with the Queen of Scots. In considering Morgan's allusions to the baroness in the following quotation from his letter of 21 March 1585/6 one may thus bear in mind Pollen's estimate of the indiscreet and desperate character of the agent who went to any lengths in canvassing support for his sovereign's cause.

Morgan described to Mary Stuart how Whitgift, Cobham and Buckhurst had been made Priy Councillors, and how, although "all three be depelye overcome with Hereyse," the two barons at least might be approached on her behalf. "My Lady Cobham beareth a great Stroke over her Husband," he advised the captive queen.

> Your Majesty may consyder how to revive your Intelligence with my Lady Cobham, and you may take Occasion to congratulate [her] of the Estimation of her Husband, and that he had wronge that he was not called to that Place rather [i.e., sooner?], and that you doubt not but he will use his Creditt it [sic: in] that Place to the Honor and Good of the Realme, and to his owne Commendation, and that he will ever favour Equitye and Honor in all your Causes. But I know not well how to instruct your Majesty how to finde your Letter well delivered to the Lady Cobham by a Partye zealous unto your Majesty's Service, and agreable to her also, which ought to concurre in this Poynt. Francis Bertye were a Man for the Purpose, if they continue Frendes, as I harde there was some Difference betwene them; if it be so, he is not to be employed, and therfore the Countesse of Arundell may do this for your Majesty, although I know [not] well at what Termes they stande, though I heare rather well then otherwise; and I hope the doing of this Office will encrease liking betwene them, for the good of your Ser-

> vice, though Giftes and Presents be Thinges that shalbe welcome to the Lady Cobham, and worke moch with her. But your Majesty knoweth best how the Lady Cobham standeth towardes your Majesty still; and can consider for the best how to procede to deale with her, and by whome, and whether she may profitt your Majesty. For if she sholde not use your Letter well, there might grow some Inconvenience therbye, which I must leave to your Majesty's good Consyderation. My Lady Cobham was much disposed towardes the Lady Cavendishe, otherwise called the Countesse of Shreusburye, and if theyr League be great still, then is the Lady Cobham to be delt withall with more Discretion, or perhapps not to be delt with at all.... The more I thinke of the Countesse of Arundell, the more necessarye I thinke it for your Majesty to enter into Intelligence with her, having Devotion to serve your Majesty, and able to do it many Wayes; she is one of the Daughters and Heyres of the Lord Dacres of the North, which, I thinke, your Majesty remembreth, and by that Meanes hath Landes and Tenants on the Borders of Scotland, and many Frendes which she may and will convert to serve your Majesty's Turne for Intelligence with Scotland; and therfore your Majesty may boldlye call uppon her for this and other Offices, for she hath bene to my Knowledg long since in Hande with some Frendes to have some fitt Thinge to be presented from her to your Majesty. And consydring the Honor [sic: Humour] of the Lady Cobham, I holde it not amisse that your Majesty pray the Countesse of Arundell to bestowe some Token uppon her in your Name to soch a Valew, as your Majesty shall thinke good. The sayd Countesse will do this and the like Offices willinglye for your Majesty, and she is able to do it, and will attende till your Majesty may make her amendes. Yett to herselfe you may send some Token of no great Charge, which coming from you, neverthelesse she will moch Esteme. My Lord Sturton is a Catholike, and maried the Daughter of the Lord Cobham; and the Lord Sturton, being in that Degree of Alliance with that Familye, were a fitt Instrument to be imployed towardes the Lord and Lady Cobham. Sir John Arundell maried the Lord Sturton's Mother, being Sister to the Erle of Derbye that now is; and Sir John Arundell were a fitt Man to pushe on the Lord Sturton for your Service. But Sir John is kept under by the State, and verye fearefull to intermeddle with any Matter, and your Majesty doth moch want some Personage of Accompt to sollicite your Causes and to do other Offices ....

Morgan had, by the time he completed his letter, so far convinced himself of Lady Cobham's aptitude to act as Mary's advocate with Elizabeth that he sent his mistress a draft of the message which he thought she should send to Lady Arundel. In it he suggested that Mary tell the countess how to proceed in delivering a note which she had written to her cousin's Mistress of the Robes. "We have also written herewith a few Lines to the Lady Cobham," the captive was to say,

> which we likewise desire to be delivered to her, and pray you further to buy for us of the best Silkes or Velvets that you can finde, as moch as will serve to make her a cople of Gownes, [for the which we shall remayne answerable unto you, and this ringe enclosed we pray you] to weare for our Sake. Yet because we wolde be very loth to committ an Error, which may be easily committed in soch a jealous Time, and not knoweing at what Termes of Frendshippe you stand with the Lady Cobham, which is requisite in the best Degree, if you shold discover your Intelligence with us; for the Inconvenience that may ensue by Discoverye of yourselfe, whom we moch honor and tender, we leave you to use your own Discretion, for the Deliverye of the sayde Letter and Silkes to the Lady Cobham, or stay of the same; though perhaps our Service may be some Way advanced by the Delivery thereof. But as we have sayd, we remitt the

Matter to your Discretion and Experience of her and of the Time.[35]

Lord Cobham was among the Councillors who read a deciphered copy of Morgan's letter before Walsingham's agents allowed the original to pass on to the unsuspecting Queen of Scots: the baron's signature occupies, with those of Burghley, the Secretary, the Earl of Shrewsbury and Lord Hunsdon, the back of the document presented to them. One need not suppose that Cobham was disturbed by the revelation of Morgan's hopes of enlisting his wife in the Marian cause. Only by the appearance of the word 'revive' in the discussion of Mary's correspondence with the baroness was Lady Cobham definitely implicated in illicit activities; whatever was the true nature of that implication, the government had known about it for at least twelve years, ever since the time of Dr. Good's exposure. All else that Morgan wrote served only to damn him, and presumably his mistress, as would-be suborners of Elizabeth's servants. It reflected upon nothing more culpable in Lady Cobham than a known love of finery, nothing less astute than the ability to keep the Marians guessing and so to leave open channels of communication through which might still pass in a crisis information essential to the preservation of the queen. It is not of course impossible to see in the persistence with which the Marians courted the baroness a suggestion that the lady was regarded as politically something of a trimmer. Yet one would need more evidence than the vagaries of a Thomas Morgan upon which to base any such assertion, and there is in fact nothing substantial to indicate that she helped to prepare, or even that she looked forward to a future established upon the destruction of the Elizabethan settlement of Church and State. If one accepted the statements of Mary and her agents, one would doubt the loyalty of Burghley himself.[36] Nor does the obvious uncertainty with which the Marians viewed Lady Cobham as late as March 1586 suggest that there would have been any proof of her disloyalty among the correspondence between the English nobility and the Queen of Scots which Elizabeth confiscated three months later and then, true to her motto 'Video sed taceo', burnt, in a gesture of incomparable magnanimity and wisdom.[37] Throughout the crisis of 1586-87 Lady Cobham was to remain close to her mistress, apparently receiving her confidences at a time when Elizabeth, "struggling with contending feelings", surrounded by ministers who demanded her cousin's blood,

> wrote secretly to Mary Stuart to tell her that if she would confess her guilt and ask for forgiveness in a private letter to herself, her crime should be again overlooked, and she should hear no more of it.[38]

At such a juncture in her career as queen and woman, Elizabeth must have found Lady Cobham a comfortingly moderate companion. If the baroness seems never to have corresponded with the Catholic Anne of Arundel, there also remains nothing to show that she kept up her friendship with the virulently anti-Marian Bess of Shrewsbury.

Lord Cobham would, however, no matter how assured he was of his wife's loyalty to their sovereign, have been anxious to see the end of a situation in which Elizabeth's most intimate servants were the targets of Marian bribes. What Morgan had to say about the baron's son-in-law was, moreover, true. John Lord Stourton was indeed a Catholic malcontent, and on 13 August 1586 the former Spanish ambassador, Bernardino de Mendoza, reported to Philip II on the activities of "Lord Morley and Lord Stourton of the province of Lancashire [sic], who have all the nobility of the county on their side, as well as the commonalty".[39] It was only the apprehension of Babington and the exposure of his plot that saved Stourton from becoming a rebel. Instead, the young man became one of the judges of Mary Stuart, and died, leaving no child by Frances Brooke, a few months after the defeat of the Armada.[40] In 1586 Cobham cannot have known that he would, in Camden's phrase, pay his "Debt of Nature" rather than the cost of militant treason against the Crown. Only the death of Mary could assure tranquillity to a family which was so diversely concerned in her affairs. It must therefore have been with relief that Cobham on 6 October 1586 received his appointment to the forty-two man commission which was to try the Queen of Scots.[41]

Cobham played an insignificant part in the trial at which Mary Stuart was specifically charged with having been party to the Babington Plot against Elizabeth and her Crown. The baron had appeared intermittently at the Council board at Windsor throughout September, both before and after the sentencing of Babington and his fellows, and was presumably present at the conferences in which the royal commissioners were briefed before going north to confront Mary. When the court met at Fotheringhay on 12 October, however, Cobham was not among the peers who were there.[42] He had been still at Windsor on 10 October, and perhaps he assisted the new Secre-

tary, William Davison, in carrying on the work of the Council during the absence of the majority of the ministers.[43] On 25 October he was back in company with the other commissioners in the Star Chamber, where Mary was unanimously adjudged guilty: on that occasion only the Earls of Shrewsbury and Warwick were absent.[44] Three days later the baron was acting with Buckhurst in intervening in a town-and-gown dispute at Oxford,[45] and on 29 October he attended the opening of Parliament, being that day named one of the triers of petitions from all over the British Isles.[46] Thus, seemingly bearing his part of the everyday business of government while others accomplished the extraordinary feat of carrying through the trial of Mary Stuart in the face of Elizabeth's indecision, Cobham passed the momentous autumn of 1586. No writing of his survives to indicate how he thought and felt about the events which it encompassed.

The commission's condemnation of Mary did not of course put an end to her feckless career. The queen's signature to a writ of execution could alone secure that consummation. It was to avoid the sort of delay which had kept the Duke of Norfolk alive for five months under sentence of death that Burghley and other Councillors brought about the summoning of Parliament in 1586. Elizabeth, her ministers reckoned, could not withstand both their advice and her people's desire for blood, expressed through their representatives at Westminster. The queen was therefore prevailed upon to dissolve the existing Parliament, which was not to have come alive again until mid-November, and to call a new one to assemble on 15 October. In the event, the Members did not come together until the end of October, when the commission had ready for them a formal declaration of the sentence passed on the Queen of Scots. Elizabeth indicated the unprecedented nature of the business to be conducted by her sixth Parliament by refusing to come in person to the opening of the session, professing her disinclination to participate in the capital proceedings against her cousin.[47] The queen did not, however, prevent her Council from urging upon the electors the necessity of returning the same men who had represented them in 1584. Thus was assured a Puritan majority in the voting which was to pronounce the nation's judgement on the Catholic Mary. Seven, or perhaps even eight of the Barons of the Cinque Ports were re-elected,[48] the young

William Brooke held his seat at Rochester, and, although Cobham's brother John was not again returned by Queenborough, the senior Kentish Member was the baron's other brother, Sir Henry Cobham. The retired ambassador became Knight of the Shire.[49]

Sir Christopher Hatton, as Lord Chancellor, on 3 November opened the case against Mary. The House of Lords was already committed to demanding her death by the part which its members had taken in the judicial commission; only the concurrence of the Commons was required, and this the Lower House promptly gave. On 4 November it was concluded:

> That considering the late horrible Treasons and Practices conspired against the Life of the Queens Majesty, and also for the procuring of Foreign Invasion in respect of the Attempt; and also for endeavouring to raise Rebellion within the Realm for and by Mary late Queen of Scots, therefore of necessity present remedy and provision must be had for preventing the like attempts and practices hereafter, which could never be, unless the said Scottish Queen did presently suffer the due Execution of Justice according to her deserts.

It was resolved that Parliament should petition the queen to move against her cousin. A committee was accordingly formed and that afternoon it met to decide the form in which the Commons should approach the Lords with their proposal; Sir Henry Cobham was one of the Members who recommended to the House three days later that it should send a delegation to the peers.[50] Thus,

> On Monday the 7th day of November while the Lords were debating the matter of the Queen of Scots, the House of Commons came up and desired a Conference with some of the Lords of this House, what number it should please them to appoint, about the great matter of the Queen of Scots already opened unto them.

The peers responded by appointing twenty-one of their number, including Lord Cobham,[51] to consult with the Commons and to frame the petition to Elizabeth. The next day the Commons was given a full account of Mary's trial and on 9 November the sentence pronounced against her by the commission was also read and endorsed unanimously in both chambers. Mary was to die.

> On Thursday the 10th day of November the Lords Committees made report unto the whole House, that they of the House of Commons upon hearing the Sentence and divers of the special Evidences and Proofs whereupon the Sentence was grounded, openly read unto them, after long deliberation and consultation had betwixt them both publickly and privately, they all with one assent allowed the same Sentence to be just, true and honourable, and that they humbly desired their Lordships to make choice of such number of Lords as their Lordships should think meet to joyn with them in Petition to her Majesty.

Lord Cobham was one of the peers who, with Members of the other House, constituted the delegation which on 12 November was received by Elizabeth at Richmond.[52] She had, before accepting the petition, insisted that the Speaker, in presenting it to her, should state that the consciences of the men sworn to avenge the wrongs done to her could only be satisfied by Mary's death. Sir John Neale thinks that she forced this reference to the Bond of Association in order to make the execution "appear to the world as the act of an indignant nation;" perhaps, as Read also suggests, she hoped that, following the official recognition of the society by the spokesman of the Commons, one of the signatories to the Bond might take the law into his own hands and thus relieve her of the anguish, both personal and political, of having herself to order that justice be done upon her cousin.[53] The Queen of Bohemia was to give the impression more than seventy years later that James I had not held the queen alone responsible for his mother's execution: "as for my father," wrote Elizabeth Stuart, "he coulde punish none for my Grandmothers death, they being not in his hands and dead before he came into England."[54] Certainly Elizabeth seems to have done her utmost to make many men, Cobham among them, partakers of what she considered to be her guilt in disposing of Mary Stuart. Whatever her exact reasons for stressing the rôle which the Bond of Association played in the affair, the queen on 12 November told the representatives of Parliament that she was only waiting for divine guidance before proceeding to the final act against her cousin, and that she would soon inform them of her decision. Calculated vacillation, however, rather than decisiveness, was the predominant royal characteristic, and on 14 November, when Hatton reported the success of the audience to the assembled Commons, he had to tell them that over the weekend the queen had expressed her earnest wish that Parliament consider every possible alternative to execution before forcing her to proceed. For a week there was debate. Then, on 22 November, committee members who had been in conference with some of the Lords stated in the House that

> their Lordships wholly and only insisting upon the said Petition, like as this House also doth, do purpose this Afternoon to send two Lords, to wit the Lord Admiral and the Lord Cobham, to be Suiters for that House for access unto her Majesty for delivering their Lordships answer to the said Message; and so moved likewise, that Two of this House of

> the Privy Council, or such other as this House shall appoint, may also on the behalf of this House be Suiters unto her Majesty for like access in the same matter also.[55]

Lord Cobham and Lord Howard of Effingham succeeded in obtaining a further audience for the petitioners, and on 24 November Elizabeth again expressed both her determination to see justice done and her reluctance to shed her cousin's blood. She thus gave the Parliamentarians, in her own words, an "'answer-answerless'",[56] and entered upon another week of uncertainty, in which Burghley barely managed to keep her from proroguing Parliament. At last, on 2 December, the session was adjourned until 15 February, and on 4 December 1586 the sentence against the Queen of Scots was, as the essential prelude to her execution, openly proclaimed in London and throughout the country.

When Parliament reassembled on 15 February the first business of the House of Commons was, "for that at their Petition her Majesty had done Justice upon the Scottish Queen to the greater Safeguard of her Majesties Person and the whole Realm," to move "that her Majesty might receive from them their humble thanks".[57] For at Fotheringhay on 8 February 1586/7 Mary Stuart paid with queenly dignity the price of her unqueenly life. No part which Lord Cobham took in the momentous events which immediately preceded her execution justifies reiteration of the familiar story here, for he and his family were only slightly involved in them.

The Christmas season of 1586-87 was for the baron, as for the rest of the Court, a troubled time. Leicester had returned on leave from the Continent late in November, consumed with the desire to avenge what he considered the betrayal made of him during his absence. The new Privy Councillors themselves the earl could not attack without some definite justification, but lesser men were easier marks. One of these was Thomas Wilkes, a clever diplomat and a Clerk of the Privy Council, whom Burghley had sent to assist Leicester in his dealings with the Dutch Estates. The earl resented the man's trespass upon what he regarded as his own domain,[58] and on 26 January 1586/7, when Leicester had been once again the queen's daily companion for two months, Wilkes's brother-in-law wrote him a disturbed letter from London. "The news in Court this Christmas," warned Henry Smith,

> is not good on your behalf, for it is bruited here of a most heavy displeasure conceived against you by my Lord of Leicester, who has

> protested he will be revenged of you, and will procure you more enemies, and has revealed to the Lord Treasurer and Secretary Davison some injurious speeches you used of them to him, at your last being with him. Some of the servants of his Lordship and the Secretary have reported that it will be good for you never to return hither, and that if their Lordships are appointed to go over again, it will be too hot for you to tarry there. Your friends fear lest the wonderful power of this man should do your hurt, while there are none to answer for you. We doubt not of your integrity in Her Majesty's service, but fear lest, by means of your adversaries, she should be possessed with some misliking of you in your absence. Entertain your chief friends about her with continually writing to them, and to the Queen herself, of your proceedings. Mr. Vice-Chamberlain [Hatton] and Lord Cobham have asked me for you several times, and were desirous to hear of your well doing. Walsingham has been absent from Court a long time, and is still at Barn Elms. These be men that love you well, and you will do yourself much good in often remembering them with letters.
> P.S. -- Lord Cobham sends his hearty commendations, and says he shall shortly trouble you for a licence for mares.[59]

Smith's postscript about Cobham's intention to import new additions to his stud suggests that the baron may have had a personal link with the brothers-in-law: the chief trainer in the Cobham stables was one George Smith.[60] Cobham did not perhaps break openly with Leicester, but this information about his favouring a man whom the earl wished to destroy, combined with the fact that no correspondence between him and Leicester survives from the last few years in the favourite's life, suggests that the cordiality which once had marked their relationship disappeared after Cobham's appointment to the Privy Council. The baron's eldest son had gone to the Continent in the train of Edward Wotton, ambassador to France, in October 1586,[61] and when Lord Buckhurst was sent to the Netherlands in March to investigate the situation which Leicester had left behind him there, Henry Brooke wrote glowing reports to Walsingham of the warm reception which the Dutch had accorded the queen's special envoy.[62] Leicester, who was on Buckhurst's advice ordered back to his command before Buckhurst left for home in June, bitterly resented the popularity which the other man had won. He misrepresented Buckhurst's doings to the queen with such dexterity that the new Councillor, although highly regarded by both Burghley and Walsingham, lost Elizabeth's favour for the remainder of Leicester's life.[63] The disgraced minister was evidently supported by the Brookes, for many years later, when Cobham was dead and Buckhurst held Burghley's office of Lord Treasurer, he declared that Henry, by then Lord Cobham, "was a Nobleman, gracious in her Majesties Fauor, and one that he had speciall Cause to respect; for hauing in his Troubles,

when my Lord Lester liued, neuer forsaken him".[64]

If Cobham had reason to avoid the Court during Leicester's time of leave, the importance of the issue which preoccupied all England gave him little opportunity to do so. After Parliament was prorogued on 2 December 1586 the baron seems to have had a short respite from attendance at the Council board, but he did not spend much of the recess at home. On Christmas Eve he was at Greenwich, deliberating with the other ministers a question of the cloth trade in the West Country,[65] and from early January onward he was regularly in Council, ordering among other things the censorship of an edition of Holinshed in which a history of the Brooke family had been presented to the public.[66] On 3 February he signed, with Burghley, Leicester, Howard, Hatton, William Davison and three others, one of them the invalid Walsingham, the momentous document by which the Earls of Shrewsbury and Kent were authorized to proceed with the execution at Fotheringhay.[67] He must thus also have agreed with his fellows not to reveal to the queen that they had dispatched her warrant for the act until it should have been made irrevocable.[68] Perhaps Cobham knew even before most of the Council did when Elizabeth at last signed the document which she had so many times refused to do. When the scapegoat Davison later told in minute detail what happened on that morning of Wednesday, 1 February, when Howard of Effingham brought him word that the queen had made her decision and that he was to fetch the warrant as instructed, he said that he "entreated Mrs. Brooke to give her Majesty knowledge of my being there, who immediately called for me".[69] That lady-in-waiting can only have been Elizabeth, Cobham's daughter, who must thus have been the fourth person in England to know that Mary Stuart's time was almost run out.

Elizabeth's reaction to the news that her cousin was at last dead is well known. She made Davison a martyr to expediency, banished Burghley from her presence for months, made the life of the other Councillors virtually unbearable, and retreated into herself, allowing few to see her. One of the few who must have known how the queen really behaved during those tense days early in 1587 was Lady Cobham, who on 10 April wrote to the exiled Burghley a simple letter which tells much. "I hopeyd that your lordeshype woulde haue ben at the courte or [i.e., ere] this time," the

baroness bluntly began,

> but now fyndeding [sic] that yt pleasethe yow to staye longer then i lyke yow shoulde i do bi thes lynes offer mi seruys to your lordeshype frome mi harte. Wherin i may not forgettinge [sic] how much mi Lorde and i haue ben behowldeng to yow and to no counseler eles. Her magessti continewes disscontendtid: and settellethe her selefe to weare morninge garmentes. i do besyche your Lordshype to hassten your comynge hether. Yf yow wyll wryte i wyll delyuer yt, i do desir to be commandid bi yow. Others heyr in presence do speke for them seleues, and do excuse that wyche is don in poutting ther hãdes to the letter, as thow the[y] knewe not what the[y] did, nor what was therin contayned. i do mene the .ii. lordes wyche ar heer. Wythe mi moste humbl dewtey to your lordeshype i leue prayinge god to blesse and protect yow.[70]

Conyers Read, who examines with care the situation in which Burghley found himself in the spring of 1587, cannot decide who the Councillors were who blamed the Lord Treasurer for hurrying through Mary's execution by instructing Shrewsbury and Kent to proceed with it without the queen's further knowledge. "There is," he says,

> a constant temptation to single out Leicester as the invariable villain in the piece. Burghley himself always regarded him as such. But in this case the evidence, though it establishes a presumption, is too scant to justify a verdict.[71]

Lady Cobham's letter, to which Read does not refer, would at first glance seem to contain a clue to the identities of the Lord Treasurer's abusers. Closer study of it, however, reveals little, for it is impossible to say which two lords were claiming at Greenwich in the second week of April that they had acted in ignorance when on 3 February they countersigned the Council order which Burghley had drafted. Cobham, Howard, Hunsdon, Derby, Walsingham and Hatton, of the ten signatories, were all at the Council board at that time, and Burghley himself, as well as Leicester and Sir Francis Knollys, had attended it earlier in the month and were to return to it later.[72] Only Davison, incarcerated in the Tower, could tell no tales to the queen. Lady Cobham was evidently sure that Burghley would know whom she meant by "the .ii. lordes wyche ar heer" and therefore felt no need of indiscreetly naming them at a time when it looked as though the end had come for the regnum Cecilianum upon which, as she admitted, her husband's fortunes as well as her own depended. Burghley endorsed the baroness's letter "xij. Apr̃l 1587. y^{e} lady Cobhã offer of hir frendsh:"; whether he accepted her undertaking to deliver a letter from him to the queen does not appear, although he must have been grateful for it, since others which he had written to her had apparently been returned to him marked

'unreceived'.[73] The baroness's letter may not make clear who the devious Councillors were who sought to save their own skins by damning a better man, but it leaves no doubt that, when he needed them most, Burghley found the Cobhams there, anxious to help him.

A fortnight after Lady Cobham wrote, the Lord Treasurer returned to Greenwich and in June Elizabeth at last took him back into her favour. Her gesture marked the end, not only of his last and longest estrangement from her, but also of the twenty years of internal troubles which Mary Stuart's captivity in England had brought upon the Court and the kingdom.

* * *

Chapter III

Lord Cobham carried on with his ordinary duties during the months of tension which followed the death of Mary Stuart. He attended the meetings of the Council, dispatched the business of the Lord Wardenship which required more than the attention of the Lieutenant of Dover Castle, and sat in Parliament, being present when the session reassembled on 15 February 1586/7.[1] On 22 February, during a debate in the Commons on the advisability of taking the offensive against Spain, Sir Christopher Hatton mentioned the baron's name in order to illustrate how little respect England owed to Philip II. "Her Majesty sought for his good will," recalled the Vice-Chamberlain, "sending the Lord Mountague, the Lord Cobham, Sir Thomas Chamberlain Knight, M^r^ Maun and others, and they were but hardly used, some of them were offered great indignity."[2] One would have expected a reference to the insults suffered by Sir Henry Cobham rather than one to Philip's reception of his brother, for the baron had been cordially treated in 1558; in recent years, however, the disastrous diplomatic relations between Spain and England had been caused by both sides, so that it was safest for Hatton to go back thirty years or so to look for discourtesies, real and imaginary, with which to charge the king. Lord Cobham would probably not have objected to the use of his name in anti-Spanish propaganda, for the dangers through which the kingdom had just passed, as well as those which it faced from would-be invaders, seem to have awakened him at last to the folly of

looking for anything but enmity from Philip. When, for instance, the bench of bishops offered the queen a huge benevolence in order to tempt her to accelerate the Anglo-Dutch campaign, and it was suggested that the lay Lords follow suit, Cobham accepted a seat on the committee which considered the wisdom of thus giving Elizabeth a further inducement to go to war. Consulting with the regular subsidy committee, Cobham and his fellows decided not only to advise that the bribe be made to the queen, but also to set an example to their peers by announcing their intention to make a personal gift to her even if the House rejected their recommendation. In the words of Simonds D'Ewes,

> The Lords Committees last named upon Conference had betwixt them in respect of the great Charges that her Majesty hath sustained heretofore, and that her Highness shall be enforced hereafter to be at for the defence of this Realm and other her Majesties Dominions, did resolve amongst themselves freely to give to her Majesty two shillings in the pound, after the rate of the valuation of the Subsidy of the Temporality granted in this present Session of Parliament, to be paid unto such persons, and at such time as it shall please her Majesty to appoint. Which being after openly declared to the whole House, the Temporal Lords (in as much as the Lords Spiritual had made former offer of Contribution unto her Majesty) did all together with one consent most willingly ratifie the said resolution, both touching the Sum and the payment thereof; and ordered that this their free gift should be entred upon Record: And that such of the Lords of her Majesties Privy Council as were there present, should signifie the same to her Highness in all their Names.[3]

The gift which Cobham thus undertook to present to the queen would have cost him £ 30, or half the amount which he paid in three instalments each general subsidy, had Elizabeth accepted it.[4] The queen, however, when he and the other Councillors from the Upper House offered her the large grant, refused to take any money either from the Lords Temporal or from the Commons. The bishops' benevolence she condescended to take from them, although she seems never to have used it, certainly not to prosecute the war against Philip II. Differing from the rest of England in thinking that a struggle to the death with Spain was not inevitable, the queen valued, as Neale has succinctly said, "independence above bribes".[5]

On 23 March 1586/7 Elizabeth dissolved Parliament as she had initiated it, by a commission, presided over by the acting Lord Chancellor and including in its personnel Lord Cobham.[6] The baron perhaps took a week off as soon as the session broke up; his name does not again appear in the lists of attendance at the Council board until 1 April. Thereafter he participated in the work of administration almost daily until

mid-May, and even when he left Greenwich he seems to have done so on official business, such as going to the Cinque Ports to investigate reports of a dearth of grain. On St. George's Day he took part in the Garter ceremonies, again nominating Walsingham and the eight other men whom he had proposed for election a year before.[7] From 19 May till 18 June he does not seem to have been in Council; upon his return he entered again into a busy period as an administrator, by then serving with the restored Lord Burghley.[8] A token of royal esteem may perhaps be seen in the granting of a lease of land to Cobham in May.[9] An indication of royal displeasure is certainly contained in a letter which the queen wrote to the baron on 20 August, sarcastically informing him that she found it strange that the men of the Cinque Ports, immune from many of the responsibilities of citizenship because of their particular trust in keeping foreign marauders off the south-east coast, were failing utterly to avenge themselves and the honour of England upon privateers based at Dunkirk. Elizabeth concluded her letter with a threat to rescind the privileges of the Ports unless the Dutch raiders were brought to a reckoning.[10] Since even the "shippes and barkes belonging to fishermen" had already been requisitioned to defend the coast against the Spanish fleet when the queen sent this reprimand to Cobham,[11] and since the whole of Kent had been on the alert for the better part of a year, "with sea watches and beacons ... kept and continued on the sea coaste and places of most danger and subject to anie landinge",[12] it is unlikely that the queen ever carried her threat any further. The men of Cobham's bailiwick, and of the county of which, assisted by two of his friends and by his brother Sir Henry,[13] he was Lord Lieutenant, acquitted themselves nobly in the year of the Armada.

The queen's refusal to accept the contribution from Parliament toward the cost of extending the campaign against the Spanish in the Netherlands seems not to have discouraged Cobham from advocating war against Philip II. When Lord Buckhurst went on embassy to the Dutch in the spring of 1587, Elizabeth was persuaded to give the nation with which she was reluctantly allied some tangible assurance of her intention to fight their battles. Sir Francis Drake was dispatched with a squadron to the coast of Spain, there to menace Philip and give courage to the Estates. Although restrained by his orders from striking directly at the heart of Philippine naval

power, Drake did enough running damage thoroughly to upset the Spaniards, and then, in a sudden move which remains inexplicable, he made for the Azores in time to waylay the great East Indian carrack, the 'San Felipe', homeward bound from Goa with a cargo of spices, silks, ivories, gold, silver and jewels worth £ 114,000. This stupendous prize Drake took, and when he sailed into Plymouth in June he brought his queen the means of outfitting her fleet for the encounter with Spain which, if it might possibly have been avoided before, his exploit had made inevitable.[14] While Philip's admiral, Santa Cruz, waited in Lisbon for orders to sail against England which were not to come that summer, one of Bernardino de Mendoza's agents in London wrote to the former ambassador at Paris to tell him of the excitement which the capture of the carrack had created in the Privy Council. His report shows that Cobham was most appreciative of Drake's achievement: that the baron, who had for so long preferred to conciliate Philip II, now delighted in the singeing of the king's beard: and that the loot from the 'San Felipe' had made him greedy for more. "In consequence of certain despatches which the Queen had recently received from France," wrote the intelligencer on 28 July,

> she had sent orders to Drake on no account to come to London, but to remain where he is and make ready with all haste to put to sea shortly. ... It is suspected that the Queen had private intelligence of something from her ambassador in France, which made her change her mind. Although Lord Admiral Howard, Lord Hunsdon, Cobham, and Walsingham, are of opinion that Drake should return at once with the ships he had ready, so as not to miss the opportunity of capturing the Indian flotillas, the Treasurer points out what a risk they are running if these ships were lost, as might be feared, since the marquis of Santa Cruz would certainly meet them at sea now that so much time had passed. The question was referred to the Queen, the Treasurer saying it was a matter she must herself decide, like that of the beheading of the queen of Scotland. The advantages, and otherwise, of sending the ships out having been represented to her, she decided; and there is now no sign of Drake's returning or sailing with a fleet. The Queen has since sent him permission to come to London, and has ordered her ambassador in France to use the utmost efforts to discover the number of ships and men of the Spanish fleet, and when it can put to sea.[15]

Burghley's prudent counsel evidently prevailed, although one doubts that he would have been so tactless as to raise the question of Mary Stuart's execution in offering it to the queen.

Cobham would have been disappointed by Elizabeth's decision; he had parted company with his friend in the matter of Anglo-Spanish relations, and opposed Burghley's attempts to revive the secret negotiations with the Prince of Parma in which he had

once induced Agostino Grafigna to take part. Burghley had continued his correspondence with Andrea de Loo, and had, like Elizabeth, acquiesced in Sir James Croft's plans for making a general peace with Spain. Croft, Comptroller of the Household, was almost alone in clinging to the old policy of preferring a Spanish alliance to any other other, and he went to desperate lengths to forward his desires.[16] Cobham, when Croft's activities seemed to offer a hope of concluding the war in the Netherlands in the autumn of 1586, bluntly told Walsingham that he thought it "better to prepare arms than to negotiate a dissembled peace".[17] To this opinion the baron clung. It was therefore against his will that he acceded to Elizabeth's demands that, with the Earl of Derby, Dr. Valentine Dale and Croft, he employ his knowledge of Spanish affairs in a final attempt to come to terms with Philip and his general in the Netherlands. Read, accustomed to thinking of Cobham as pro-Spanish, fails to notice the change which had taken place in the baron's attitude before he went abroad in the embassy of 1588. Reminding his readers of Cobham's involvement in the Ridolfi Plot, the historian says that among the ambassadors "the war party lacked representation." He is thus led into inconsistency, for, remarking that "Croft proved to be the only enthusiastic pacifist in the group," he is forced to acknowledge that the Comptroller's utter failure to accomplish his purpose must be attributed to the fact that Cobham and Dale "counterchecked" him at every turn.[18] Read's mistake is his assumption that Cobham was thought of as a peacemaker when preparations for the embassy were made; actually, the baron must even then have been regarded as a man who knew that only war could resolve the impossible situation in which England and Spain found themselves after thirty years of duplicity on both sides.

It was rumoured as early as August 1587 that Elizabeth would send representatives to Parma, and guesses were made as to their identity. "'Commissionersis hath beyn nominate heir to deall in the peace wyth King of Spayn,'" wrote a correspondent from London,

> 'viz. the Erllis Darby, Kent, Lord Cobban, Sir Hary Cobban and Doctor Deyke [sic: Dale], or any thre of theayne, but it is supposed that no graite effect shall follow thayrupon nather that it shall haif ony fordar progresse.'[19]

Despite the general feeling that the queen could not seriously be going ahead with negotiations for peace, and despite Leicester's revulsion for his task of informing the Estates that they must prepare for a rapprochement which they feared would leave them abandoned, Burghley proceeded to narrow the list of potential commissioners. By the end of August the appointments of Derby, Cobham and Croft had been confirmed, and later Valentine Dale, a Doctor of Civil Law, and Dr. John Rogers were also named; Walsingham, although his inclusion in the embassy would have increased its weight immeasurably, utterly refused to take part in what he was sure would be an even greater fiasco than the mission which he had undertaken with Cobham ten years before.[20] To Sir Edward Stafford, who had succeeded Sir Henry Cobham at Paris and who was, although suspected, apparently never known by the government to be in collusion with the Duke of Guise and the English Catholics abroad,[21] it was inconceivable that the queen should earnestly seek peace with Philip II and he not be informed of her plans. On 1 October he wrote to Walsingham a letter in which he added what he evidently hoped would look like a light-hearted postscript. "'I had forgotten to write you a thing worth the laughing at,'" Stafford told the Secretary,

> 'of a news that is here that a great many did believe of a treaty of peace with Spain and her Majesty; that my lord of Derby and my lord Cobham were going over for the matter, And that was written so confidently out of the Low Countries hither that the Spanish ambassador himself could not tell what to believe of it; and for fear it should be so indeed and that men should not think but that he was acquainted with all things, he told a very private friend of his that what show soever he made, he had perchance more wrought in the matter than he was aware of; but bid him keep it secret. But he desired nothing more than to have it told abroad.'[22]

The uncertainty of Stafford and Mendoza about the intentions of their respective sovereigns was shared even at Richmond, where, as late 11 November, Philip Gawdy wrote to his brother,

> Some speache ther is bothe at the courte and at London that certeyne comyssiones [sic] should go over into fflaunders about a peace. These that be nomynated be my L. of Darby, My L. Cobham, Sr Jeames Craftes [Crofts] and Doctor Dale. But whether any suche newes will hold or no it is to me vncerteyne.[23]

When Leicester returned from the Netherlands on 9 December the ambassadors had still not been dispatched, and more time was consumed while his objections to the embassy were considered. He finally gave in, no doubt because he thought that their going

would make no impression upon the situation and was therefore not worth opposing. Whether Cobham was among the Councillors who joined Buckhurst in an attempt to impeach the earl for his mismanagement of the Dutch campaign does not appear; Leicester was at any rate fully restored to his old position beside the queen and remained there until he died a year later.[24]

Finally, on 15 January 1587/8, the Prince of Parma issued a safe-conduct for the commissioners,[25] and Cobham prepared to take his leave. Apparently he had pressing business to dispatch in Kent before going abroad, for on 7 January he sat with the Council at Greenwich for the last time before his departure,[26] and when he wrote to Burghley from Dover on 17 February he was still not happy about leaving. One of the advantages with which a student is provided by Cobham's rare absences from England is the copious written material which they provide. So long as he could see Burghley and his other friends in the course of regular attendance at Court and at the Council board, the baron had no reason to write to them letters which they would have preserved. The messages which he sent from the Netherlands in 1558, 1564, 1578 and 1588 are therefore particularly significant, not only for what they reveal about the business with which Cobham was specifically entrusted, but for the personal remarks which they contain as well. None of the baron's letters to his wife, unfortunately, nor any of hers to him, survives.

Cobham had just reached Dover, where he was to be delayed for more than a week by bad weather, when he sent his first message to Burghley on 17 February. With him was his friend's son, Robert, into whose hands the whole destiny of the Brooke family was later to come. Robert Cecil was then twenty-four, a brilliant young man who had already thrice served in Parliament and had perhaps taken part in the government's official propaganda campaign at the time of Mary Stuart's public defamation and death.[27] He was going to the Netherlands with the commissioners as an observer of the kind of diplomacy for which his father wished him to equip himself. Cobham seems to have had a peculiar affection for the earnest youth, who must have reminded him a little of his own sons, for a variety of reasons. Like William Brooke, Cecil had entered public life early: both boys had been Members of Parliament at eighteen. Like George, Cecil was a cripple, deformed in a way which was to

enable his enemies in later life to call him "'a little hunchback'".[28] Finally, like the dead Maximilian, Cecil was of delicate health; when he called at Cobham Hall on his way home from his youthful tour of France in October 1584, the baron must have reflected upon the providence which, a year before, had denied his own son a similar escape from the dangers of foreign travel. It would have been with some emotion that Cobham read Burghley's gay announcement of Cecil's return at that time: "I think there will come to your house," his friend had written,

> by the way homewards out of France, a fugitive, that cometh home for lack of money to continue longer abroad. He is your Lordship's poor servant, whose name I leave to be guessed, to be merry with your Lordship.[29]

Cobham's concern for the young man's welfare as they waited to set out for the Netherlands in 1588 is not hard to understand. "Though for urgent causes of my estate I would have stayed longer at home," he wrote to Burghley on 17 February,

> yet it being though fit for us to be at Dover on a day prefixed, I took my journey accordingly; having embarked some of my servants and stuff at Gravesend; but cannot depart while this easterly wind is blowing. I hope her Majesty will not look for our departure before our said servants be arrived here with necessaries for the comfort of our sick bodies, for at Ostend there is no relief to be had, if that which is reported speaks truly, of treason within the town and attempt to assail or besiege it. We have sent you the letter brought by Pappot the post from André de Loo, 'full of courtesy and show of good entertainment.' I assure you that I think all I can do for Mr. Robert Cecil is all too little. This easterly wind is very piercing but thank God he is well.[30]

Reluctant as he was to go, on 21 February Cobham joined with Derby, Croft, Dale and Rogers in informing Lord Willoughby, whom Leicester had left in command in the Netherlands, that they meant to embark at once.[31] On the same day the baron wrote again to Burghley, acknowledging the receipt of letters from him and Lady Burghley and telling his friend that, "if the wind holds", they meant to take ship that night. "I hope our provision will be at Ostend this afternoon," Cobham added,

> that he may find wood to warm us and meat to relieve us. Mr. Cecil goes with Lord Derby in the Charles. As soon as we arrive your lordship shall know how we have passed. I commend to you 'all my own particular causes as occasion shall suit, and my children to your fatherly counsel.[32]

The wind did not hold and the party did not set out that night, but four days later, when the Duke of Medina Sidonia was already assembling down at Lisbon the fleet with which his master meant to render diplomacy superfluous, the Earl of Derby led

his companions on board ship. Cobham was not to set foot in England again until the Armada had come and been summarily dismissed.

Cobham had never been a good sailor: in 1564, when he took his wife and dying sister to Antwerp, it was he who suffered most from the crossing: and in 1588 he was an old man, sixty years of age. From Ostend on 26 February he wrote to Walsingham, in misery from "'an evil head and sickly stomach'":

> 'we arrived here this morning; where we found Andrea de Loo, who meaneth to write or go to the Duke to acquaint him with our arrival; he was desirous to know where the place of meeting should be. I answered that after our commissions were received and allowed of us and of them, their commissioners should know. We hear that Mr. Controller is landed at Dunkerke. I pray acquaint my Lord Treasurer with this, and that his son is safely arrived. He came in the Martin, only himself with his servant .... I pray you let my wife have this enclosed.'[33]

The next day both Cobham and Cecil wrote to Burghley. A letter from Thomas Worthington, a Lancashire priest, "to one Captain Bostock" had been intercepted; Cobham sent his friend a copy of it,[34] and Cecil, who seems to have shared his father's optimism about a treaty, revealed the indignation with which the commissioners had read the libel. From it, the young man concluded,

> 'may be gathered that our greatest enemies are our own unnatural countrymen, who will leave neither practice nor slander unsearched to interrupt any good or quiet.'[35]

Worthington had dated his letter 27 February, which presumably means that by the Julian calendar he wrote it on 17 February. His contempt for the embassy was due in part to his belief that Sir Amias Paulet, the last warder of Mary Stuart, was one of Derby's colleagues, although Paulet had long before resigned his proposed place to Dale or Rogers,[36] so that he expressed himself with peculiar virulence. "'They say,'" the priest wrote,

> 'the English beggars of Peaux [qy. peace] will come certainly and very shortly, accompanied with 400 attendants; besides Derby, Cobham and Crofts, Amias Powlett is also adjoined in commission, that hard gaoler to the Holy Queen and Martyress. Man [qy. on] muses they are so mad and shameless to sue for that they are impossible to obtain; but if they now be come so near an end of their tyranny as we hope and themselves fear, they will be blind indeed, and play more foolish pranks yet.'[37]

Unfortunately, Worthington's words were not so gratuitously libellous as Robert Cecil pretended to think they were. The English commissioners were indeed in an embarrassing position, for their instructions were vague: they were to treat of

peace, but, since there was no assurance that Parma would even see them, they could hardly reassure the Dutch of their queen's seriousness in professing to mean to do so. Certainly they could not give an exact account of what conditions should be imposed by such a treaty until they knew what terms the prince would demand. There was only Andrea de Loo's word that the Spanish would still consider negotiating, and Cobham, who had learned to his shame how little reliance could be placed in the doings of merchant-diplomats, remarked pointedly to Walsingham in March that "De Loo's letters were not so hot to call us over as now we find coldness in proceeding."[38] It did indeed seem that the commissioners, caps in hands, had come begging for peace into an area where everyone but themselves knew that there could only be war. As Cobham told Walsingham, the Spanish intended nothing good, and only the English Roman Catholics were pleased that Elizabeth should dither with diplomacy when she ought to have been preparing to fight: the exiles were confident that they would soon be coming home to take over the country which she was so ineffectually defending.[39] The baron intensely disliked the false position in which he had been placed, and evidently spoke his resentment freely to the minister to whom he now signed himself "Yo^{r} assured ffrend as y^{w} know". In 1578 the Secretary and he had suffered together the indignity of being sent to the Netherlands on a vain mission, and of then being left there in ignorance of what the government meant to use them to do; in 1588 the baron relied upon Walsingham, left at home, to keep him informed of the shifts in the queen's policy, and to tell him frankly when in his letters he went too far in expressing his disgust. On 20 March, writing partly in cipher, he assured his colleague that it was

> no litle comfort unto me S^{r} amongst the fewe pleasures I fynd here, that yo^{w} tak my playnesse in so good part, and deale so roundly with me agayne, as by the sẽcures [?] of your owne hand in yo^{r} lettre of the xij March I perceyve: oppose your self still agaynst such resolusions ffor, for myne owne part I would thinck my self most unhappy to be a meanes to conclude an irreligious peace.[40]

One notes that the baron claimed to be opposed to an Anglo-Spanish treaty because of the religious heterogeneity of such a pact; one ought also to remember, however, that he may well have been adapting himself to his audience, the Puritan Secretary.

To Burghley the baron wrote more encouragingly, since the negotiations were peculiarly his friend's bright hope for the avoidance of war. On 22 March Cobham

commiserated with Burghley about the illness which kept the Lord Treasurer at his house at Theobalds throughout the spring,[41] and assured him that he and his companions were doing their best to gain an audience with Parma. "I am very sorry," he said,

> that your lp. is troubled with pain but more I am grieved that there should be any causes to unquiet your mind.... Mr. Rogers is to go to the duke to deliver her Majesty's good pleasure. I have prayed him ... not to aggravate things for I heard that a message delivered in milder sort though in substance quick hath done good and been well taken. Mr. Controller and Dr. Dale are greatly grieved for your pain, which letteth your answering their letters. I sent my servant Williams to follow my particular causes, as may appear by a letter I wrote to you touching Southfryth. My wife writes that her Majesty has referred her suit to your lp. I pray that it may receive your favourable precedence and expedition.[42]

A fortnight later John Brooke came to see his brother, and on 7 April Cobham dispatched him with a letter to Burghley in which he asked, on behalf of the whole commission, for instructions about how to proceed should Parma send representatives to meet them between Ostend and Newport, as he had promised that he would do within five days.[43]

Meanwhile Cobham was becoming alarmed for his personal safety and for that of his companions. John Brooke had brought him news that the queen was ordering two pinnaces to stand by off the coast in order to pick them up should the Spanish violate their safe-conducts and attempt to seize them and their attendants, to hold them as hostages in the event of general war. "It is both comfort and contentment," the baron told Burghley gratefully, "that it may appear that she hath care of us." Fear of official capture, however, was less pressing than that inspired by the atmosphere in the Anglo-Dutch camp at Ostend. As early as 29 February, Cobham had been moved by the plight of the soldiers to observe to Walsingham that "it is most lamentable to see their poor estate ... a great number naked, no victuals to be had, for that they have no money."[44] The commissioners did their best to relieve the men, not only out of pity but also from prudence. "The necessity of the soldiers is such," Cobham warned Burghley on 3 March, "for lack of money, apparel and victual that I fear some mutiny, for they speak shrewdly."[45] There was good reason for the baron's anxiety. The food consumed at his table, to which Robert Cecil was forced "often to go a begging" when Lord Derby fell ill, contrasted sharply with the priva-

tion suffered by the soldiery. Derby, said Burghley's son, "had a sore touch of the stone". Cobham, attempting to turn the earl's particular indisposition to his own general advantage, was not quite honest when he claimed to his friend that, "if your lordship help us not hence, we shall all be sick,"[46] but one can see why he was eager to get out of Ostend when one learns that Parma's lavish gifts of game were transported to the ambassadors' quarters through the town in which hundreds of violent men were starving.[47] It is not surprising that Cobham's house was subject nightly to attempts at burglary, nor that the baron should have worried when nothing was done to avert a general mutiny among the troops. "Although the wind hath been good to come out of England," he wrote to Walsingham in March,

> yet there is neither money nor apparel come for the garrison, which is a great grief to us. I heartily pray you help it speedily, lest some inconvenience should fall.... Our houses are sought to be robbed every night.[48]

Even Sir James Croft, the only one of the commissioners who thought that some good might come out of the embassy, had to admit to Burghley on 14 March that he often wished himself out of Ostend because of "the filthiness and dissolution of the soldiers who have already robbed my L. of Derby and offered the same to L. Cobham, myself and Dr. Dale". Croft was a very old man and not a very wise one; he could not see why, since "there is no day but either at my table or with my steward I give meat to 20 of them," the soldiers should tear down his provision huts to get at more food.[49] So long as they remained at Ostend, the commissioners lived with danger.

By April there seemed to be some chance of coming to terms with Parma, and on the seventh of the month Cobham advised Burghley to instruct the Dutch to agree to a cease-fire in order to help along the prince's pacific mood. He also pleaded for some definite orders from the queen.[50] Burghley, however, could no nothing with Elizabeth, whose indecision was greater than ever. On 10 April he wrote to Walsingham of his distress. "'Surely, Sir,'" he said,

> 'as God will be best pleased with peace, so in nothing can her Majesty content her realm better than in procuring of peace, which, if it cannot be had, yet is she excused afore God and the world. I have received many letters from the L. Cobham requiring my furtherance for resolutions of things but I can only answer his expectation with my prayers.'[51]

On 11 April, after the commissioners had conferred with the prince's men at a place

half-way between Ostend and Newport, Cobham informed his friend that Robert Cecil was setting out for home with news of the meeting. The baron thought that Parma would agree to a cessation of fighting until a place for a full conference could be decided upon, and swore that he could do no more until the queen sent Derby specific instructions. "I hope your lordship sees how we have hitherto proceeded to her Majesty's great honour," Cobham said wearily. "If there be any that think otherwise I wish they had my place." He was afraid that, unless Burghley soon learned "'in points her Majesty's pleasure'", the Spanish would think "'that we do but seek to win time, as now they daily charge us. I heartily pray you to have care of us; that we may not stay here, to our great charges and doubt of our health.'"[52] The baron was sixty, and feeling the strain; he seems to have been willing by this time to present almost any case which Elizabeth would choose to assign to him. "Any reasonable conditions of peace, as I hear," he told Burghley in another letter of the same date, "will be granted. Let the iron be stricken whiles it is hot if it be thought convenient and profitable. You know my hand and name."[53] With Derby, the nominal leader of the embassy, ill, Burghley was indeed accustomed to receiving his friend's urgent demands; unfortunately, the Lord Treasurer could do little to assist Cobham in discharging the responsibilities which had devolved upon him.

It was to Walsingham that Cobham turned when, to add to his problems as an ambassador whom his sovereign was apparently determined to leave to his own devices, Sir James Croft detached himself from the mission and went off to see Parma on his own. The baron had an idea of how, if the English were to continue to interfere in the affairs of the Netherlands, the queen's interests might best be served: to Walsingham he suggested that the prince be tempted to desert Philip II and himself take up the sovereignty of the United Provinces. "Methinkes S^r," he suggested,

> as thinges May be caried, yf the treaty continewe P: Par: holding his forces about him still as he doth, beloued on both sides saue the Spanardes, and matters out of frame in Spaine the oportunity might be nowe so taken and folowed, that P: Par: might be sownded to continew and become master of al.[54]

Cobham would not of course have made such a proposition to Parma without the queen's authority. Croft was less disciplined, and, with his Spanish proclivities, was capable of creating any amount of mischief in private conversation with the prince.

Yet the Comptroller had long held the queen's ear, and Cobham, to whom Elizabeth seems to have written nothing throughout March and April, could not be sure that the old man was not acting upon royal orders when he left Ostend. In desperation the baron made one last plea to Walsingham on 16 April. "It is my comforte," he said, "that your good will is to yelde me any satisfaction," and then, without mentioning Croft's defection, he went on to make clear that he could not carry on without direction from the government.[55] His letter reached Court when the Knights of the Garter were assembling for their spring-time rite of nominating candidates for admission to their order. Derby and Cobham were not forgotten: they were officially marked absent as "deligati a Suprema in inferiorem Germaniam, siue Galliam Belgicam, vt cum Philippo Hispaniarũ Rege de pace tractarent:" and, as the Sovereign endorsed her companions' choice of new Knights in the persons of Sir Christopher Hatton, the Earl of Ormonde, and the young Earl of Essex,[56] who was later to prove so implacable an enemy to the house of the Brookes, she agreed to allow Walsingham and Burghley to write in her name to her emissaries abroad.

Although Cobham later wrote to the Secretary to thank him for obtaining "her Majesty's acceptation of our proceedings", the queen's message of 22 April cannot have been of much use to him. Addressing him and Derby, her ministers had written only of her approval of the cease-fire which they had procured from Parma, and of her desire that they "continue the like course,

> so as there may be no colour for the other party to pretend that the necessity of her own estate presses her to desire or beg a peace. She would have you put in mind that you have to deal with Italians and Spaniards, 'reputed two of the subtlest and sharpest witted nations in these parts of the world with whom she doubteth not but that you will carry yourselves so warily ... as they shall find no advantage to overreach you with their cunning.'[57]

This was all very well, but it gave Cobham no practical instructions about how he was to proceed, and it did not allay his anxieties regarding Croft. The only order which he received with enthusiasm was the queen's insistence that Parma should be forced to yield hostages to them before they set foot in his camp: "For my own part," the baron observed to Walsingham on 27 April,

> I will not willingly put myself into their hands, to shorten my days and overthrow my houses [sic]. His safe-conduct is of no validity, as President Rychardotto [President of the Spanish Council of Artois]

> plainly said; and withal I pray forget not that nulla fides servanda hereticis; and how this holy league doth combine themselves.[58]

Soon after receiving word from the queen, the commissioners at Ostend learned what had passed between Croft and Parma. The prince had received the Comptroller cordially, and Croft, anxious to interpret any gesture of goodwill from the Spanish as an indication of their determination to make peace, had written extravagantly to the queen to tell her that Parma would make almost any concession in order to put an end to the Dutch war. Elizabeth was pleased, but she was also sceptical, and, upon further investigation of what had transpired between the two men, she discovered that the prince had remained non-committal as always on all of the major points at issue. Andrea de Loo had served as interpreter between Croft, who spoke only English, and Parma, who did not speak it, and may conceivably have misled the Comptroller about what the prince was actually saying to him.[59] A good deal of damage to English prestige was done between the time when Croft, puffed up with a sense of his own ability as a peacemaker, gave the other commissioners to understand that they might proceed to approach Parma in full confidence that he would accept their overtures with pleasure, and the time a fortnight later when the queen's letter exposing the Comptroller as a dupe was received at Ostend.[60]

Cobham's reaction to this new evidence of the impossibility of negotiating with the Spanish was typical of the man. He had not wanted to go to the Netherlands, and when his objections to the embassy were upheld by events he turned to consideration of his own personal position. On 27 April he had written to Walsingham that,

> 'As I was afore my coming, so have I always been since my being here [convinced] that our actions will be but vain; therefore the sooner her Majesty doth resolve to call us hence [the sooner] she shall be eased of her great charge, and we relieved.[61]

On 9 May, even before his suspicions about Croft had been confirmed, he requested three things of Burghley. One was that the enormous expenses of the embassy should be undertaken by the government and not be left to the Estates to discharge: the baron had no faith in the future of the Dutch republic, and he did not intend that the other commissioners and himself should pay their bills out of their own estates, "to the overthrow of our houses". Another point which he made was the desirability of bringing home to the queen the incongruity of the position in which her emissaries found themselves as they sought peace in Spanish territory while her navy prepared

to go to war with Spain:

> It is here said that my Lord Admiral has taken his leave to join with Sir Francis Drake. How these actions will agree with ours I refer to your honourable consideration.

Thirdly, Cobham required that Sir James Croft be restrained from further meddling in the affairs of the embassy: "His zeal," the baron drily observed, "doth transport him."[62] At last, after the queen's letter revealing the full extent of Croft's fiasco had been delivered to the commissioners, and the folly of trying to keep face before the Spaniards been thus fully demonstrated, Cobham made his most urgent demand. Derby had insisted upon remaining at Ostend, despite its dangers, because Parma had declared that he could not confer with the English there and it would have seemed weakness on the part of the queen's representatives to have moved to Antwerp, the place proposed by the prince for their meeting. Cobham thought that the time for such punctiliousness had long passed, and, in the middle of May, he expressed his very practical opinion to Walsingham. "By this litle tast S^r^," he wrote, apparently referring to Parma's treatment of Croft,

> yow will see, what may be forther hoped for at their hands. I am of opinion, that our aboad in this towne is so aduantagious for them that thay play vpon vs. If her Maiestie entend to go through with this treaty, the only way to proceed therin withe her Maties honor and our salfty is to gyue vs leaue to yeald to the dukes exceptions against this towne and to Pretend to remoue to Andwerp for therby either from Andwerp or from --- we may speak as big as they and so either proceid or breake of with honor which in this place wee can not hope for.... Dictum sapienti sat est.[63]

Cobham's word to the wise Walsingham was indeed enough: when the baron wrote to Burghley on 24 May to tell him that commissioners from Parma would be coming to them the next day, he dated his letter at Bourbourg, "'a sweet little town well watered,' two market days every week, courteous people desirous of peace".[64]

It was well for Cobham that he found Bourbourg a pleasant place to be in; he was to spend some ten weeks there, a peacemaker for whom no one had any time in the summer of the Armada. He himself harboured no illusive hopes of peace, and his attitude was well known. On 29 May, less than a week after the baron's arrival in Bourbourg, Andrea de Loo added a postscript to a letter which he had written to Burghley. "After closing the packet," wrote the agent,

> I met President Richardot who told me plainly that he finds Lord Cobham is minded to do nothing about concluding the peace, but to disturb the business, and that it is necessary to remedy this to arrive at a good accord. Time will enlighten us and her Majesty will know where the fault lies when Truth displays her forces. I cannot disguise from myself and say paucis verbis quod opus est hic viris.[65]

While one cannot vouch for Richardot's opinion that Cobham intended to wreck the proceedings, one may pretty well see in it an indication that the baron considered them futile. Impediments to the success of the conference he probably knew would be too plentiful to require supplementation from him. On 21 June, after a month of discussion, Cobham described in a letter to Walsingham the effect which he thought that the Holy League, concluded between the Guisan faction in France and the King of Spain with the avowed intention of extirpating heresy, would have upon the negotiations. "Afore my coming into these parts," the baron stated,

> I said unto you what I thought touching the peace, I think you now find it by their actions and preparations. If there be any that think that a chief of a league can or will without consent of his associates conclude a peace with her Majesty, who is of a contrary religion, in my poor opinion it is against all reason; but if the treaty were for causes mal intendu between the two princes it would be easily compounded, for both their estates do require it.
>
> The strangeness of the holy league is such, bound by oaths and words, the contributions of money great, gathered of all the clergy that profess that religion in Europe. The leaders of the enterprise resolute to execute. Their enterprises divulged by printed books and letters. The soldiers' minds prepared partly for their religion but specially in hope of a great prey of gold and silver they expect. God of his goodness take pity of his church and people. There is no way but by dint of swords to defend the religion, their malicious, resolute mind is such.
>
> If these actions and preparations ... will not move an impression in my lords [of the Council] that their intention is against us, then may it be said that OBJECAT ANIMOS DEUS CUM VIM SUAM INGRUENTEM OBTRUDI NON VULT.[66]

Six days later Cobham was able to report that his prediction about the Spaniards' behaviour had been correct:

> The commissioners delivered their answer so far from reason and without answering the points whereon we desired their resolute answer, so either they are resolute to take some other course or unskilful of treaties. They may hope for two things, the coming of the Armado or to make her Majesty suspect with the United Provinces, the sooner to draw them to the D[uke]. Now H[er] M[aj_esty] knows the answer our hope is it will be considered how we shall retire home for we have but a bare safe conduct. But as the treaty may be renewed hereafter it were good to send some one of quality to the D. to let him know that she expected the answer to be otherwise; but as they express a readiness to confirm the treaties between Charles V and Henry VIII, these treaties would be examined at further leisure. And as they will not refuse the toleration for two years, and the treaties will ask for long consideration, she has

> thought good to revoke her commissioners until an opportunity may arise of finishing this treaty, assuring herself of finding the D. as well disposed as he hath always been.
> This my poor opinion is to yourself, leaving to my lords to direct what is meet for us to do.[67]

Cobham's elaborate plan for effecting his recall to England was not, to his dismay, adopted by the Council. On 1 July Dr. Dale received a letter from the queen ordering him to go to Parma himself; off he went at once, "my Lo. Earle of Derby and my Lo. Cobham onely according unto yor Maty Commandment" knowing what his errand was.[68] It was with business such as this that Cobham was preoccupied as the Armada set sail.

The baron was not, however, completely prevented from taking part in the defence of England, although what he contributed to the defeat of the Spanish fleet has not been accredited to him by any modern historian. By early June 1588 Cobham had realized that he would be surrounded by the enemies of England when the crisis came: it was by then already clear, as he wrote to Lord Willoughby on the fifth, that letters to and from him at Bourbourg had better be sent under military escort from the English camp, "'for it is not liked that any messengers shall come through their [i.e., the Spanish] towns and country; besides it is not without danger to them that come.'"[69] The baron suggested that couriers from Calais could most easily reach him.[70] Brought up in the military tradition of his father, Cobham appreciated the strategic value of Calais to any fight which might take place in the Channel, and he seems therefore to have cultivated connections in that port. Although no letter from him survives to describe how carefully he ensured that the Spanish would get no exceptional assistance from M. de Gourdan, the governor, there do still exist two messages which his son sent to the English government eleven years later, when England was again anticipating the arrival of an armada from Spain. These letters from Henry Lord Cobham explain a good deal about the part which Calais played in the destruction of Philip's invincible fleet in 1588. Professor Mattingly attributes to discretion coupled with indecision Gourdan's refusal to do more for the frantic Medina Sidonia early in August than to allow him to pick up some fresh food from the town. With the English by this time in hot pursuit, the Spanish admiral wanted also to buy powder and round shot, and to anchor his ships

in the harbour until Parma could join him there with troops and supplies. The governor refused him permission to do so, because, says Mattingly, he was unsure of what his king expected him to do. Henry III was currently supposed to be supporting Guise in his Holy League with Spain, but

> Calais is a long way from Chartres, and, like a good many placeholders in France that summer, M. Gourdan may have been wondering how much there was to this reconciliationbbetween the King and the Duke of Guise, and waiting to see which way after all the cat would jump. At any rate, he seems to have decided on an attitude of correct neutrality. He did give permission for the stewards of the Armada to buy what fresh food they could ashore, a permission which would account for most of the movements of small boats which the English saw, but there is no reason to suppose that he would not have extended similar courtesies to Howard on request. Howard and his council assumed that the French were hostile; as far as the Governor of Calais is concerned, there is no confirming evidence.[71]

On the contrary, there is evidence to suggest that the English would have known that Gourdan would not allow the Spanish to recover their strength under the protecting guns of his fortress. Twice on 31 July 1599 Henry Lord Cobham, hoping to win the same sort of honour which his father had gained for himself on a similar occasion, begged Burghley's son to allow him a signal part in the repulsion of what he thought was Philip of Spain's second attempt to invade England. From the Blackfriars he wrote to Sir Robert Cecil on that summer morning:

> Since my coming to London, I have been advertised of their expectation and preparation at Dunkirk of the coming of the galleys, and so I am confident the design is for England. I know not howit may be taken, and therefore pray your advice, and that you will move Her Majesty in it. My father did the like in '88. Though he was at Bourbon [sic: Bourbourg], he wrote to ask the governor of Calais whether, if the Spanish fleet came, he would receive them into his harbour and give them succour; whereupon the governor wrote to the King, and received his command not to suffer them to come in, and if they desired to water, they should be permitted but one boat after another, which he precisely kept.[72]

Later that same day the younger Cobham wrote again to Cecil. He had in the meantime consulted a French agent, who had given him to understand that he would not be called upon to repeat his father's feat. Nevertheless, he gave glowing credit to what had resulted from the late baron's correspondence with Gourdan. "I still think that design is for England," his successor insisted,

> yet since my coming home, I have had conference with La Fontaine, who assures me the French King will not suffer the Spaniards to enter any port of his; thus they have no port to enter between Spain and the Low Countries, which all the world knows was one of the causes that lost the fleet in '88.[73]

Historians are silent concerning the achievement attributed to William Lord Cobham by his son; Mattingly does not even mention the presence of the Lord Warden on the Continent in 1588, referring only to Croft, Dale and "the sceptical Earl of Derby" in his discussion of the commission at Bourbourg.[74] It would seem, however, that the baron's contemporaries -- 'all the world' -- gave him credit for helping to send Medina Sidonia home a ruined man. His son's story sounds like a proud tale often told among the Brookes; it would not have been offered to Cecil, who could not easily have been misled about recent history, if it had not been true.

Further reason for believing the younger Cobham's version of why Gourdan refused aid to the Spaniards lies in the fact that the baron's son not only joined Robert Cecil and the rest of the youth of England in taking up arms in 1588, but was even present in the engagement with the enemy which occurred of Calais itself on 29 July. Sir Henry Cobham, in his brother's absence that summer, shared with the Lord Warden's lieutenant the leadership of the western half of Kent as the county prepared to defend itself against a Spanish invasion;[75] serving with him was his other brother, John, a captain of foot.[76] Henry Brooke, however, was not content to await with his uncles the fight on land which never came, and when it became clear that a major battle would be fought off Portland Bill on 23 July he joined the volunteers who were rushing to the south coast. Richard Hakluyt, sometimes assigning knightly rank to men who had not then earned it, describes the company in which Cobham's son found himself. "The English nauie," he writes,

> in the meane while increased, whereunto out of all Hauens of the Realme resorted ships and men: for they all with one accord came flocking thither as vnto a set field, where immortall fame and glory was to be attained and faithfull seruice to bee performed vnto their prince and countrey.
> In which number there were many great and honourable personages, as namely, the Erles of Oxford, of Northumberland, of Cumberland, &c. with many Knights and Gentlemen: to witt, Sir Thomas Cecill, Sir [sic] Robert Cecill, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir William Hatton, Sir Horatio Palauicini, Sir [sic] Henry Brooke, Sir Robert Carew, Sir Charles Blunt ....[77]

From Portland Bill the Armada passed into Calais Roads; among the English who pursued it was young Brooke. According to Burghley, or to whoever it was who wrote the celebrated piece of English propaganda which was published later that year,

> to shew the great readines in a generalitie of sundrie others at the same time, to aduenture their liues in the said seruice, there went to

> the Seas at the same time diuers Gentlemen of good reputation, who voluntarily without any charge, & without knowledge of the Queen, put themselues into the Queens Nauie in sundry ships, wherein they serued at the fight afore Callice: of which number being very great, I remember that the names of some of them were these: Master Henry Brooke sonne and heire to the Lord Cobham, ... [&c.].[78]

Cobham would not have known that his son, who seems generally to have been a most unmilitary sort of person, was proving himself under Spanish fire. He sat out the battles of 1588 stranded in Flanders, where, had the fight in the Channel gone the other way, he would have had reason to regret his outspoken opinions about Spain. Cobham's last extant letter from the Netherlands was not written until the communications system between England and the Continent must have become very unreliable. It is a plaintive message to Walsingham, penned on 23 July in a mood of anxiety created by fatigue, illness, and, most obviously, by the baron's awareness that he was quite ignorant of what was happening at home. "'It seemeth very strange unto these Commissioners,'" he wrote, suggesting that the Spanish negotiators knew no more than their English counterparts,

> 'that there hath been no conference since the fourth of this, and we marvel that we hear not from her Majesty for further proceeding in this treaty, but rather for our revocation.
> 'In the meantime we here remain as persons forlorn. Were it not for your private letters to me, by the which I am relieved and think myself greatly friended by you, I assure you I should fall into a deep melancholy (as partly I am already); whereof I prayed Sprytwell to inform you, of the state of my body, and that we had been here these six months in this public service (a case seldom seen) without relief or respect had to our great charges, and that every one of us have wife and children to care for and a poor family to uphold.
> 'I do therefore heartily pray you, that in respect of the evil disposition of my body and that no honourable peace will be had hence, you would move her Majesty for my return.[79]

The 'my' is worth noting: Derby had always been a figure-head to the mission, and Cobham, since the disgrace of Croft, had had only the clever Dale to share with him the burden of an extraordinarily frustrating ambassadorship: it was for his own safety and relief alone that the baron was concerned by the fourth week in July. Elizabeth must by then have appreciated the pointlessness of leaving him abroad, and some time during the week which followed the receipt of his letter she seems to have given order for his recall. On 8 August the bedraggled commissioners for peace landed at Dover; they had been gone 164 days.[80] They were at once besieged with demands for information about Parma's intentions, for the Council still expected to

nave to repulse a Spanish invasion: as Burghley wrote to Walsingham the day after the commissioners arrived, "'It is in vain to write any more ... until by my Lord Cobham we may learn some things of the Duke of Parma who now resteth the enemy to be withstood.'"[81] Parma, however, did not come, and Cobham must soon have realized that the threat from Spain which had been so long awaited had materialized, been met and been resolved while he was away.

The day of Cobham's return to England was the day when Queen Elizabeth visited Tilbury. There, reviewing her army, she made the speech which epitomized her peculiar genius for making herself beloved of such a people as hers. There is no reason to doubt that Cobham, had he been able to hear them, would have been as moved by her words as, surely, were they who did. Yet, when he came to appreciate the importance of the errand on which he had been kept so long and so dangerously abroad, the baron must have admired the queen's deviousness even more than he did the bluff qualities on which she publicly prided herself. For Elizabeth, by maintaining negotiations in Spanish territory while she suffered invasion of her kingdom, enabled herself, in Mattingly's words,

> to declare then and afterwards that she had never closed the door on peace, and had patiently and honestly pursued it to the last.[82]

For the purposes of propaganda, in an age of ideology, the fact of the conference at Bourbourg was as useful in its way as was the might which had defeated the Armada.

* * *

Chapter IV

Lord Cobham was given little time in which to relax after returning from the Netherlands. By 11 August 1588 he, Derby and Croft were sitting in Council at St. James's, acquainting themselves with the preparations with which their colleagues had decided the Spanish should be met upon their expected return.[1] Within a fortnight, while Croft was committed to prison for his folly in dealing personally with the Prince of Parma, Cobham was arranging for the defence of Kent. On 23 August, for instance, he signed with the other Councillors an order to himself as Lord Warden, requiring him

> to levie 1,000 of the hablest and best practised shotte in the said countie, whereof the most to be musketttiers, and to send them to Dover, the Downes, Sandwich and Margatt, there to be employed by the Lord Admirall according to such direccion as his Lordship hathe receaved in that behalf.[2]

Wartime conditions created new problems with which the baron had also to deal: the soldiery, concentrated along the coasts, became restless, so that Cobham, as a Justice of the Peace, had on occasion to commit the more unruly of them "to the Gaoell of Rochester for their misdemeanours".[3]

Then, as the threat of the Spaniards diminished and as Cobham, on 3 October, received "present order for the dischargeing of the Beacon Watches" in Kent,[4] the Council turned its attention to the financial position in which the government was left after a summer of extraordinary expenditure. It was clear that money was needed at once, and on 18 September writs for the queen's seventh Parliament went out. Neither in the Cinque Ports nor elsewhere in the country was a partisan election fought, for the triumph over the Armada had united England in a rare moment of zenophobia and pride. Thomas Fane, to whom Cobham seems first to have referred as his Lieutenant of Dover Castle in succession to Richard Barry on 21 December 1588,[5] was returned for Dover, and throughout the bailiwick the usual distribution of seats among the Lord Warden's candidates and the proponents of local interests was effected.[6] So far as Cobham himself was concerned, there can be little doubt that his chief satisfaction in the autumn of 1588 came from the return by his home county on 7 October of his brother Henry and his son of the same name.[7]

By the end of 1588 Sir Henry Cobham had, by his share in the business of the last session and by his participation in the defence of the realm against the Spanish, regained some of his old prestige. He had returned from France three years earlier under a cloud, and it would seem that the queen's opinion of him was for some time regulated by the estimate which his successor at Paris made of the success of his mission. Sir Edward Stafford disliked Sir Henry, and made sure that the ambassador's integrity had been put in question before he could get back to England to defend himself. On 31 October 1583 Stafford, anticipating his rival's disembarkation at Sandwich by three days,[8] wrote to Walsingham:

> 'I have cause for suspicion by his close keeping of anything from me that might help me to serve her Majesty, and also by his seeking, both before and since I came, to make the few Englishmen of reputation here

> to have a doubtful opinion of me. What he has done with strangers I know not, but have great cause to doubt it. God forgive him if he have; it is but a Spanish trick.'
> ... If when I return, 'I have not more goodwill to me of honest men that serve her behind me than he, let her hang me when I come home.'[9]

Later, however, when Walsingham came to suspect that it was Stafford who was betraying secrets to the Holy League, not that his predecessor had done so, the attacks on Cobham's character were seen to have been merely slanderous. By August 1587 the former diplomat was again being mentioned as a possible member of the commission on which his brother the baron was going to the Netherlands to treat of peace,[10] and by March 1589, after engaging energetically in the work of the Parliamentary session to which he had been returned in the previous autumn,[11] he was considered eligible by Burghley to go to Scotland to handle a ticklish matter arising out of the young King James's immoderate display of affection for a male favourite.[12] In the event no envoy was sent north, but that the Lord Treasurer would have chosen Sir Henry for the mission had it gone forward indicates that Lord Cobham's brother had been re-established among the queen's senior men in the foreign office by the end of the 1580s.

The baron's son apparently took no notable part in the work of the House of Commons during his first session there, serving on only two, insignificant committees.[13] Nevertheless, it must have gratified Cobham to know that the young man had at last taken his place in public life. On 11 March 1587/8, while his father was at Ostend, Henry Brooke had at the age of twenty-three entered Gray's Inn on the recommendation of Lord Burghley; enrolled with him were two men who were later to affect his life, for Sir Robert Sidney was to compete with him for the Cinque Ports when his father died, and Henry Earl of Kildare was to become the first husband of the woman whom he eventually married.[14] It was probably his son's admission to the Inn which moved Cobham to say, in a letter to Walsingham of 20 March,

> I maye not forget to yellde vnto yow my houmble [?] thankes for my soon Herrye who wrytes vnto me of yowr good vsayge and ... [?] favor that you show him: I praye yow contenew yet [i.e., it] for I have a good houppe that he wyll lyve by the favor of god: and be honest: he sent me a coppy of a Letter that yow gave him for the wych I thaynke yow.[15]

The Secretary, who had taken an interest in Maximilian Brooke, evidently meant to do well by the baron's second son also. He had felt bound to apologize to the young

man in Aptil 1587 when, during Henry's absence on the Continent, he had failed to advance some suit or other of his at Court because "'nobody did solicit me in the same."[16] Once solicitation was made, Walsingham did his best, and twice during the early summer of 1588 Cobham wrote from the Netherlands to thank him for favours granted to his son.[17]

One wonders how much the Secretary's affection for Henry Brooke had to do with the treatment accorded a complaint which was made late in 1588 against the use to which Lord Cobham's family put the baron's power over Kent. The charge, which seems to have been unique unless one counts Sir Roger Manwood's indictment of the Lord Warden, came from the pen of Thomas Randolph, who was not only, as Master of the Posts and a leading diplomat, a close colleague of Cobham and the rest of the Councillors, but also a cousin of Walsingham's by marriage. On 28 November Randolph wrote, with unaccustomed formality, a long and tortuously worded letter to the Secretary:

> My duty unto your lordship remembered. As it has pleased you ever to give me leave to write unto your honour either of my own griefs or of such as concern my friends being injuriously or hardly dealt withal, so am I now both to let your honour understand of two matters, the one that concerneth many of her majesty's good subjects, the other one person only, my near and dear friend though not in all points, as I would he were, yet so much I dare say, if of a papist I may so write. But before I discover their names I foresee what danger may ensue unto my self, and in opening of the matter -- except it be used with great secrecy by your honour and used with that wisdom that the evil may be remedied and my self saved harmless for declaring of the same -- I know that it were much better for me to leave the matter unspoken of and my poor neighbours to content themselves with the wrong -- though foul and slanderous to have her majesty's good subjects abused against all law and good conscience -- than to lay my self open to that danger that I do. Be as it may be and fall out as it may fall I will no longer hold your honour in suspense, but as I am credibly informed of the misusages which I wish were amended, so will I lay them open before you.
>
> The one matter concerning Mr. John Cobham appoynted to be a captain as other were of divers selected soldiers within Kent -- what benefit he got in the choice of his men, taking up and leaving out as many as for money he liked I speak not of -- but for that which is complained unto me of by my neighbours of Milton and most of them her majesty's tenants is, that their captain having received pay of her majesty for a time for such soldiers as served under him that he retaineth their whole wages in his hands and payeth them nothing to whom it is due, your honour considereth whether this be to be borne with or not, though I fear it to be too common with other captains that use the like.
>
> The other matter is [one] that toucheth myself near -- and yet very loth to deal far in it -- that a gentleman called Mr. Norton Grene dwelling within the hundred of Milton, indeed a papist, and yet if there be any of that sort better than other I dare affirm that he is of that kind one of the best. He is of late as I am informed by your honour's letter willed

> to yield his body unto the custody of any such as Mr. Harrie Brooke would appoint. He is now in the hands and custody of one, Mr. Antonie Sampson, servant to my Lord Cobham -- sorry I am to utter so much as I write -- and friend to Mr. Brooke and supposed to be contriver of the whole matter against the said Mr. Grene. There are demanded of him two thousand marks [£ 1,333.6.8] for his liberty and to live fitly where he likes, and that is to be confirmed unto him by letters from her majesty's Council, which, though I believe in this case will hardly be obtained, yet is their honours' name used to save their turn, and occasion given to other to judge very hardly of these kinds of dealing, specially I am sorry -- with pardon let it be spoken -- that your honour in this matter is only named, and your only letter to be the cause of his apprehension and trouble. He was once indeed by Mr. Yonge committed to the clink. There never yet appeared other offence in him than that he went not to the church. I was then a suitor unto your honour for his liberty which then was granted. I know that there is no new offence to charge him with, though this new manner of dealing be far other than I have heard of, that before a man be either indicted or convicted, to be given into his enemies [sic: enemies'] hands to his utter spoil and undoing. Your honour seeth how far I have hazarded myself both against the son and brother of a noble man to whom I am bound, as also towards your honour, to write as I have done how far soever this offence towards your honour may be drawn, I crave pardon, and this far of your honour crave that if there be any doubt of disloyalty to her majesty or mistrust of any treachery against this realm -- more than plain disobedience that he cometh not to the church -- that I say the bonds of his brethren in law, Mr. Brente that married his own sister and Mr. Levin that married his wife's sister, may be taken, both honest gentlemen of Kent and very religious, will offer to be bound for him to appear whensoever your honour shall call for him. For my own part I humbly beseech you that I neither be named, nor thought to be party herein, as before I have shewed what displeasure may ensue unto me.[18]

Robert Boies Sharpe thinks that "Randolph's tone of extreme caution in making these revelations proves the tyrannous sway of the Cobhams over Kent."[19] There could no doubt be found some truth in this assertion, were it a conclusion which might be drawn from the letter. Although the presence in the county of great courtly houses such as those of Sidney and Neville assured the gentry of a means of communicating its grievances to the queen, a gentleman would certainly have hesitated before denouncing a Lord Lieutenant whose power to promote or to retard the prosperity of a minor family could be but little affected by any particular reprimand from the government. Yet it was not Lord Cobham about whom Randolph wrote to Walsingham: the Master of the Posts was careful to stress the respect in which he held the baron: and without the knowledge and consent of the head of their family the Brookes, even had they desired to do so, could not have imposed their will upon Kent. Randolph did not write in the trepidation felt by a private citizen who makes a complaint, however justified, against a local magnate; he wrote furtively because, himself a figure of importance, he was interfering in a matter which he knew was the

responsibility of another minister. Randolph was an upright man, but, much as he wanted to do what he could for his recusant friend and for the disaffected soldiery in the neighbourhood of Sittingbourne, he wanted more to keep on the right side of his powerful colleague. If Cobham learned that his brother and his son were abusing their position of trust under him, Randolph did not want the baron to know that it was he who was responsible for exposing their misdoings.

Walsingham does not seem to have acted upon Randolph's letter; today it lies out of place among the dispatches which its author had sent from Scotland in the days of his embassy there, filed away far from the papers which relate to the administration of justice in England. Because the charges were not apparently investigated, it is virtually impossible to judge them. John Brooke had certainly commanded land troops earlier in 1588, and since he was still a captain among the Kentish bands on 22 September 1589 one assumes that he was not relieved of his command because of any Falstaffian misconduct. Until his death in 1594 he received regular tokens of royal or governmental approval.[20] One knows no more than that about Brooke's supposed taking of bribes from those who wated to stay out of the army, or about his withholding of their pay from those who enlisted.

Of the Brookes' dealings in recusants there is some proof. On 5 February 1587/8, before setting out for the Netherlands, Lord Cobham asked Walsingham to commit to the custody of his brother Sir Henry two Roman Catholic gentlemen, Sir Alexander Culpepper and William Tyrwhitt.[21] Randolph's letter shows that Norton Green of Bobbing, a connection of Cobham's first Lieutenant of Dover Castle,[22] had been turned over to the baron's son. Trade in recusants was lucrative: Sir Henry Cobham, or the person to whom he had sold the custody of Tyrwhitt, would have profited from the transaction by which the recusant was granted bail on 9 December, after almost a year of enforced separation from his ailing wife.[23] It was, moreover, legal. The registers of the Privy Council contain a great many references to the rigorous treatment given to recusants in the year of the Armada, and show how extensive were the powers enjoyed by their warders; Randolph's allusion to Walsingham's letter proves that loyal Protestants were authorized to place their Catholic charges where they would, so long as security was maintained. Much of Randolph's complaint is

thus irrelevant: no matter how trustworthy was Norton Green, by law he was subject to arrest and confinement. Anthony Sampson's conduct in trying to extort a ransom from his prisoner was of course an offence: 'pinching' of recusants and thereby endangering the safety of the kingdom for personal gain, if proved against a man, merited a fine and imprisonment: but Randolph adduced no evidence but hearsay by which Henry Brooke might be implicated in the sharp practice of his father's servant. Walsingham apparently did not procced to search for more substantial proof of the young man's collusion with Sampson, and Randolph seems to have subsided into silence. Whether he received any satisfaction from the Secretary is not known; one hears no more about him in connection with the Brookes.

As, presumably unknown to him, accusations were being made against his family in Kent, Cobham prepared for the forthcoming session of Parliament. It was to open on 4 February 1588/9. Meanwhile the Court celebrated its safe passage through a crucial year. On Sunday, 24 November, the queen went in triumph to St. Paul's, and two days later Elizabeth Countess of Lincoln issued an invitation to Sir William More to come into the country "'to keepe my lo: Cobhame companie'" at a little gathering at Horseley.[24] The countess's letter has unfortunately been misplaced since it was calendared in the last century, so that one cannot be sure which Elizabeth Clinton it was who played host to her friends that autumn, nor can one know who were Cobham's fellow guests. One suspects that the lady was Surrey's 'Fair Geraldine', Lady Cobham's companion for so many years in the queen's most intimate circle, rather than the young wife of the current earl, for it was the dowager who was of the same generation as the baron and Sir William. Her friends would have been veteran courtiers, men and women who could remember the day when Philip of Spain was not a distant enemy but their handsome young king, men and women for whom the defeat of the Armada marked the end of their age and of the battles which they had fought. As Sir Ralph Sadler remarked to Lord Burghley when the countess's husband died,

> The departure of myne old acquaintance, as your L. writeth, therle of Lincolne, puttith elder folk in remembrance to prepare themselfs to passe that pase.[25]

In 1590 the countess herself died; Cobham served as an overseer of her will.[26]

Cobham, who had several years ahead of him in 1588, may not have thought that it was yet time to give himself over to reflections upon mortality, but the list of gifts which were exchanged by the queen and her servants at New Year's 1589 shows that the generation which was to come after him was by then already well represented at Court. The baron had been at the Council board at Greenwich on 1 December; after that he perhaps went into Kent for the holidays, before paying his respects to his sovereign. As his colleague Buckhurst once wrote,

> According to the ancient custom of housekeepers, this day I eat my Christmas pie in my own house, and after this day I will wait on her Majesty all this Christmas.[27]

On 26 December Cobham was at Richmond, where he attended meetings of the Council regularly until the last day of the month.[28] On New Year's Day, among the "guiftes gyven to the Queenes Majesty at her Highnes Manour of Richmond", there were presented £ 10 in gold by the baron; "By the Barrones Cobham, a petticote of faire cullored caffa laid with vi laces of Venis silver with plate"; "By Mrs. Elizabeth Brooke, a skarf of white stitcht cloth, striped with black and silver, and florished with silver"; "By Mr. Henry Brooke, a petticote of carnation capha florished with silver, with fyne broade passamayn laces of gold, silver, and watched [watchet: i.e., light blue] silke". Elizabeth presented the family with a total amount of 108 oz of gilt plate in generous return for their offerings,[29] and prepared to honour them even more signally, by advancing them two rungs up the ladder of social eminence.

The first intimation of the queen's intention to increase the number of her pers is contained in a letter which Burghley wrote to the Earl of Shrewsbury on 18 January 1588/9. "'Her Majesty,'" said the Lord Treasurer, "'finding a great want of noblemen for parliament is minded to create some earls and barons.'"[30] There appears to have been no pressing reason why Elizabeth should have wanted to do so: in 1589 it cannot have been a matter of 'packing' the House of Lords. Perhaps it was the spate of recent deaths among peers who left no heirs (Leicester had himself died without recognized issue in September) which led her to think that the ranks of the nobility needed replenishing. Certainly there were few peers left to count as princes in the registers of the orders of chivalry: ever chary of granting honours

Elizabeth had no duke among her English subjects, only one marquess, and nineteen earls, including Arundel in the Tower and several minors. Thus one finds among the records of her reign a memorandum drawn up by Secretary Walsingham, entitled "Erles & Barons to be made", which, copied in a clerical hand and dated, reads as follows:

> 24 Januarie 1588[/9] A Choise of such ꝑsons as her ma^tie is pleased to nobyllitat
>
> Erles
>
> The L. Thrēr — Erle of Northampton
> The L. Admirall — Erle of Nottingham
> The L. Chamb^rlen — Erle of Somersett
> The L. Cobham — E. of Suffolk
> The L. of Buckhurst — E. of Lewis
>
> Barons by Creation
>
> The L. Chancello^r — L. of Purbeck
>
> Barons by writt
>
> The L. Tho: Howard — Walden
> S^r Henry Grey — Growby
> S^r John Parrett
> S^r Robt Sydney — Pensurst
> Ry. Fynes — To be dealt w^tall touching his place in Parlam^t
> S^r Edw: Cleer
>
> Erles sonnes to be called by writt to Parlam^t
>
> The L. Taulbott
> The L. Strange
>
> A Title of a Barony to be examined
> Between Neuill and Van[31]

One can only guess why the Earldom of Suffolk was earmarked for Cobham. The mediaeval de la Poles had held it, and it was one of their family who, in marriage with the heiress of the last Lord Cobham of the original line, begot Joan de la Pole, the five-times married Lady Cobham in her own right whose daughter married Sir Thomas Brooke and founded the house of which the baron was the Elizabethan representative. Cobham was proud of his de la Pole blood, and when he died in 1597 his son took special care that the blazoners of the College of Arms should assign to their proper places in the great funeral banner the coats which he had inherited from the Suffolk family.[32] The last de la Pole claimant to the Earldom of Suffolk had died, as the Yorkist pretender to the Throne, at Pavia in 1525; the ducal house of Suffolk had become extinct in the male line upon the execution of Lady Jane Grey's father in 1554; there was thus no title derived from the county in existence in 1589.

Cobham was not, however, to take his place in the proud line of men who had been Lords of Suffolk. When Burghley wrote to Shrewsbury of the queen's intention to

create new peers, he said that his own name would not be in the honours list:

> 'Her Majesty hath some speech with me to call me to some other degree, but I have showed her Majesty just cause to leave me as I am, having cause to diminish my livelihood by providing for my younger son. And beside that I am meeter to be let down into my grave than to be set up any higher. And with these and many other reasons I hope to have satisfied her Majesty.'

Sir John Neale is very hard on Burghley in his comment on this statement. "'Too poor'! a characteristic wail," he writes. "He was to die a very rich man, worthy of his wealth, but not of such humbug."[33] Neale's strictures upon the other lords would presumably be equally or even more severe, for they too declined the proferred earldoms, and with less apparent financial reason. In the list of contributions to the subsidy granted when Parliament met on 4 February, Howard of Effingham alone is assessed of an income which, like Burghley's, was taxed at only £ 8.17.9 a year. Hunsdon is shown to have had to pay £ 13.6.8, Cobham £ 20, and Buckhurst, the heir of old 'Will-Sack' Sackville, £ 24.8.10¾.[34] Yet all of these men had younger sons for whom to provide, Hunsdon no fewer than four of them, and they probably all agreed with Burghley that they could not maintain the sort of estate which Leicester had made the Court expect of great earls. Perhaps, too, Cobham's distaste for assuming a personal rank which would have set him above the Lord Treasurer was a factor contributing to his refusal of the honour; perhaps Elizabeth herself retracted all of the promotions when her chief minister declined to accept his. One cannot be sure why Cobham did not take the opportunity to crown the achievement of so ancient a baronial family as his with an earldom, for no comment from him on the matter survives. At any rate, the queen did not get her new peers in 1589. It was not until 1596 that Howard accepted the Earldom of Nottingham, and it was 1597 before his cousin Thomas, to whom James I was to give the title which Cobham had refused, became Lord Howard de Walden. Lord Grey of Groby and Lord Sidney of Penshurst came into being shortly after the queen's death in 1603, and the other creations proposed in Walsingham's list were never made. The heirs of the Earls of Shrewsbury and Derby, however, received summonses to Parliament while their fathers lived, and it was Cobham who, with Lord Stafford, introduced young Gilbert Talbot into the House of Lords ten days after Parliament opened.[35]

Still as a baron, then, Cobham took his seat in the legislature on 4 February

.588/9, becoming once again a trier of petitions for the British Isles.[36] The records of the activities of individual peers in this session are scant; most of the business conducted concerned domestic problems, and Cobham is known to have served on two committees, one which framed a bill "concerning Captains and Souldiers" and another which joined with representatives of the Commons in studying "a Bill for the abridgment of Proclamations upon Fines to be levied at the Common Law".[37]

On 29 March Cobham was present when the queen dissolved Parliament.[38] A fortnight later he was in Westminster Hall, sitting with his peers under the presidency of Lord Derby, when, at 8 o'clock in the morning of 14 April, the Earl of Arundel was brought to trial for treason."'Here is as trew a mans hande as ever came into this hall,'" declared Arundel, announcing his readiness to stand, but, at the end of the day, each of his judges found him guilty of attempting to subvert the state, of committing lèse majesté by calling the queen a heretic unworthy to rule, and of commissioning a Mass for the success of the Armada.[39] Cobham, as the peers "from the youngest to the Lord Tresorer" condemned the earl to the sentence of horrible death which Derby pronounced upon him, would have recalled how the Marians had tried three years before to draw his wife into similar treason through the agency of Arundel's countess; he would no doubt have thought as well of the time when he himself betrayed his trust in order to protect the accomplices of the earl's father. Arundel, unlike Norfolk, escaped execution and died naturally in the Tower in 1595; it is, however, the vote which Cobham cast against him in 1589 which closes the chapter of Howard family history in which the Brookes hold so equivocal a place.

The trial of Arundel was conducted at a dark time in the life of the Cecils and their circle, for at the beginning of April Lady Burghley died. Deeply learned, fervently Puritanic, drawing from her husband when she died a dutiful testimonial to her piety and good works rather than an expression of his sorrow at losing her,[40] Mildred Cecil is seldom mentioned in connection with the Brookes, and then always as the recipient of letters from Cobham, not his wife. The baroness, however, just as she had served at the obsequies of Anne Cecil, Countess of Oxford, on 25 June 1588,[41]

walked as a principal mourner in Lady Burghley's funeral procession at Westminster on 21 April.[42] With her, among the "'assistants to the corpse'", was the dead woman's only son, who was soon to enter the Brooke family as his mother had planned that he should.

At some time in the first half of 1589 Robert Cecil wrote a guarded little letter to his half-brother Thomas's wife. "The obiect to myne eye yesternight at supp^{r}," he abruptly began,

> hath taken so diep impression in my hart, as every tryfling thought Increaseth my affection.
> I know yo^{r} Inwardnes wth all ^{p}ties to be such, as only it lyeth in yo^{r} power to draw from them, wither the myslyke of my ^{p}son be such, as it may not be qualified by any oth^{r} Circumstances.
> W^{ch} if it be so as of lykelyhood it is, I will then lay hand on my mouthe thoughe I can not governe my harte, and saving my dutie to god, exclayme on nature who hath yelded me a ^{p}sonage to hynder me [from] all oth^{r} good ffortune.
> Otherwise good Madame, there shalbe no good meanes thought of o^{r} paynes devised w^{ch} I will not most willingly vse for y^{r} pu^{r}chase of my la favo^{r} & lyking. The managinge of w^{ch} my sute I leave to yo^{r} la dyrection wherin if it please yo^{r} la to yeld me yo^{r} furtherance as an addition to yo^{r} former favors I shall as muste be made [to] remayne yo^{r} affectionat broth^{r} in Lawe to do yo^{w} any s^{r}vice shall lye wthin the compasse of my smale power.[43]

It is to be noted that Cecil did not mention the name of the young woman who had made such an impression upon him. Miss Handover, his biographer, is no doubt right in identifying her with Elizabeth Brooke, although she is wrong in calling Cobham's eldest daughter "a newcomer among the ladies at the Court" at the Christmas festivities of 1588-89:[44] Elizabeth was already a lady of the queen's Privy Chamber when Francis Thynne wrote his account of the Brooke family in 1586.[45] When Cecil wrote his letter to his sister-in-law he was twenty-five years old, with a splendid future before him and only the painful knowledge of his deformity to make him hesitate to offer himself to a woman. Elizabeth Brooke was two years older than he, already a spinster, one of those noble young gentlewomen whom the queen liked to keep about her. The portrait of her which survives, done when she was thirty-three, depicts a woman who was by no means beautiful: large black eyes strive in it for domination over a sharply triangular face in which, unfortunately, the most prominent feature is a nose so large and so very masculine that even her brother Henry's can hardly have excelled it. The nose was bequeathed to Elizabeth by her father; her



Elizabeth Brooke, Lady Cecil, 1595

(By permission of the Marquess of Salisbury)

mother's legacy was a small, wry mouth set above a long, pointed, rather receding chin.[46] Even allowing for changed conceptions of what constitutes physical beauty, 'the object to his eyes' cannot have been the fairest which young Cecil had ever beheld. Yet Elizabeth Brooke had qualities which more than compensated for her lack of formal loveliness, and these Cecil must have known. If his letter to Dorothy Cecil suggests that he had only just met the woman of whom he wrote, and if that woman was indeed Cobham's daughter, then he meant to imply only that he was seeing her for the first time as a possible wife. For, both as the child of his father's old friend and as a constant attendant upon the queen, Elizabeth must have been someone whom Cecil knew well. It is not inconceivable that Cobham and Burghley had long hoped that the young people would one day marry, and that they had been waiting for Cecil, a prematurely self-disciplined man, to decide that he was able to take on a wife. Certainly one cannot imagine either of them opposing the match. Burghley had advised his son to "match neere home & at Leisure," and to choose a wife who was not poor, nor yet "base & uncomely", neither a "Dwarfe or [a] Fool";[47] Elizabeth Brooke was a girl whom the Lord Treasurer had seen grow up, who he knew would be well dowered, whose blood was far superior to that of the Cecils, who was evidently not ugly and in no way ridiculous. Since February 1587/8 young Cecil had been master of a house of his own; by 1589 he was no doubt ready to share it. If he proposed and was accepted early in the year, it was perhaps his mother's death in April which delayed the wedding, but by early summer the arrangements approved by Lady Burghley[48] had been made.

On 31 May a document was signed which must have given great pleasure to two of the queen's senior ministers. "This Indenture made the laste daye of Maye," ran the preamble,

> in the one and thirtith yere of the raigne of our Soveraigne Ladie Elizabeth by the grace of God, Queen of England France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc. Between the Rt. Hon^ble Sir William Cecill of the most noble order of the Garter Knight Baron of Burghley, Lord High Treasorer of England and Master of the Courte of Wardes and Lyveries on the one partie, and the Right Honorable Sir William Brooke of the said Order of the Garter Knight, Lord Cobham and Lord Wardeyne of the Cynque Portes, Henry Brooke Esquier sonne and heire apparannte of the said Lord Cobham, Sir Thomas Cecill Knight sonne and heire apparan't of the said Lord Burghley Edward Wotton of Boughton Malherbe in the Countie of Kente Esquier William Fitzwilliams Esquier sonne and

> heire apparannt of Sir William Fitzwilliams Knight Anthony Cooke of Guydehall in the Countie of Essex Esquier Francis Bacon of Graies Inne in the Countie of Middlesex Esquier Vyncent Skynner of London gentleman and Barnerd Dewhurst syrvant to the said Lord Burghley on the other partie Witnesseth that whereas It is entended and meante that a mariage shall by the sufferannce of God, be had and solempnized betwene Robert Cecill Esquier second sonne of the said Baron of Burghley on thone partie and Elizabeth Brooke one of the daughters of the said Lord Cobham on the other partie, Nowe in considerac'on of the said mariage so to be had and solempnized as aforsaid, and for a convenient joincture to be had and assured to the said Elizabeth (yf it shall happen her to overlyve the said Robert Cecill) And for the better advanncement of the said Robert Cecill .... And for that the said Lord Burghley is mynded to Dispose convey and assure all his messuages lands tenements and hereditaments hereafter in theis presents mencioned, and to declare lymyt, and appointe certen uses and entents of the same for the entailleing and establyshment of the Inheritannce thereof to remayne to the said Rob^{t} Cecill and his Issue with certen remaynders over hereafter in theis presents expressed And for dyvers and sonndry other good causes and reasonable consideracons the said parties to theis presents especially moving. It is covenanted grannted concluded condiscended and fullie agreed by and betwene the said parties to theis presents in maner and forme following.

Elizabeth Brooke was to bring to the marriage a dowry of £ 2,000; so far as she was concerned, the indenture meant that, "To the use and behouff of the said Robt Cecill and of the said Elizabeth Brooke for her Joyncture", there were to be turned over before 30 November following

> two farmes and tenements with the appurtenances in Edelmeton alias Edmonnton in the Countie of Middlesex commonly called by the severall name or names of Bury Farme Clastons Farme alias Caustons Farme and ... that Capitall Messuage or Tenement called or knowen by the name of Pymmes situate lieng and being in Edelmeton alias Edmonnton aforsaid.[49]

News of the imminent marriage was circulated at Court when, on 17 August, the bridegroom's cousin, Anthony Bacon, was brought up to date with the latest gossip in a letter from Francis Allen.

> He inform'd Mr. Bacon, that the earl of Essex had chased Mr. Ralegh from the court, and confined him into Ireland. 'Conjecture you, adds he, the rest of that matter.' ... That Mr. Robert Cecil was very shortly to marry lord Cobham's daughter; as lord chancellor Hatton's heir, Sir William Hatton, had judge Gawdy's daughter and heiress, the lord chancellor having danced the measures at the solemnity, and left his gown on the chair, saying, Lie there, chancellor. That the countess dowager of Leicester, mother of the earl of Essex, had married the gentleman of her horse, Sir Christopher Blunte, knighted by the lord Willoughby of Eresby, in Flanders, where that nobleman had been general during the absence of Sir John Norreys, whom the States demanded again; 'and I hope, says captain Allen, he goeth with as ample authority, as ever my lord Leicester had.'

"'There was,'" added Allen, "'never in court such emulation, such envy, such backbiting, as is now at this time.'"[50] It was in such an atmosphere that Robert and Elizabeth Cecil were married at Lord Cobham's house in the Blackfriars on 31 August.[51]

Although no one would have known it at the time, the alliance of the ambitious young Brookes, the bride's brothers, with Cecil, who was to rule England more absolutely than his father had ever done, was to provide the background against which Essex and Ralegh would play out their game of mortal hatred.

It would be pleasant if one could introduce into the story of the house of Cobham during the years 1589 to 1597 some of the details of the married life of the young couple, for it was remarkably happy. To do so would be too inconvenient; one can only make a short digression here and try to give some idea of the domestic world which could exist within the wider scene of Elizabethan Court life and politics. When Cecil was abroad with his prospective father-in-law in 1588 he had commended "a fair gentlewoman of discreet and modest behaviour and yet not unwilling sometime to hear herself speak";[52] in his wife he seems to have found the same kind of woman. His biographers agree in describing Elizabeth as self-effacing yet lovable and good, "an inconspicuous figure, against whom it is impossible to find a harsh word, and almost as hard a word of positive praise";[53] even A.L. Rowse, who has little praise for the Brookes, remarks that, among her father's children, "she was much the best of a bad bunch."[54] She fitted easily and well into the Cecil household, and with her husband's friend and secretary, Michael Hickes, a shrewd, droll, sometimes difficult man to whose prolonged bachelorhood and distrust of women one finds many joking allusions, she seems to have become a particular favourite. Typical of some of the letters exchanged between Cecil and Hickes is this one, which is impossible to date:

> Mr Michael. I haue not leisure to answer ye fruits of yor Idle bald Pate, wch hath bene redd by those yow left togither, tyll our bellys burst almost with laughing, for, more cogging descriptions, more knauysh Constructions, more wicked Interpretations or ingratefull acceptations of our honest Ientlemanly and freendly Intertainment could no pen Express. Yor Mother hath lent me a Sute of hangings wch she sends me woord withall, yt she hath kept them for Michael these 32 yeares and If he wyll not marry and yf I do know so much, she wyll then make me a Conueiance of her howse and her stuff, this I sweare to yow from her (receauyd this day) and I beleeue yow wyll sweare, yt I am not like to refuse such an Offer for folish Baby kindnes to yow my freend, neither is there any here, yt doth aduise me to reIect the kindnes. For ye matter on Sonday promised I wyll beleeue it the Monday after and on Tuesday following I will conceaue you may proue an honest man when miracles fly abroade. Send me woord how my lord [Burghley] doth and in tyme and Season, thanking Coppin for his willingnes to pleasure me. Desire him to let him so know my wife and I according to our duties

send to heare how his Lo: doth. And thus in hast I leaue you to god.
Your freend
Ro. Cecill

Mrs Mackwylliams comends her to ye Clerk of Kytchyn wch comonly caryes the badg of a whyte Crowne.
And poore bess Cecill wyll know you she sayth for a Cosyner in leauing her yor Polpate in steed of a french Crowne.
Tell Coppin If he wyll bestow a Byskyt vppon me I wyll eate it, If he can not desire him to tell yow who made them.[55]

The bawdy reminds one of the exchange between Bottom and Quince in A Midsummer Night's Dream (I.ii). On another occasion, when Cecil was in London and his wife at Pymmes, the young husband wrote in loving exasperation to his friend following a visit which he and Ralegh had paid to the shop of Hickes's brother, the mercer who later became Viscount Campden:

Mr Hyckes. yor ĺres ar welcome because they be not short, let mine not be vnwelcõe because they be not longe for the good will is all one.
Syr W. Rawley and I dining together in London we went to yor brothers shop, where yor brother desired me to write to my wife in any wise not to let any body know yt she paied vnder 3li xs a yard for her Cloth of siluer, I meruaile she is so simple as to tell any body what she paies for eury thing.
Yor frend being Saterday night late
If my wife will send me her black Cuff I will send her on Monday a better.[56]

At last Hickes got married, and in 1596 a son was born to him to whom both Lord Burghley and Lord Cobham stood godfathers.[57] The young Cecils, parents themselves, were pleased for him, and Robert, by then a married man of some seven years' standing, wrote him a chaffing little note of compliment on his new wife. "Good Mich:" the message began with unusual informality,

I and Bess do send to you to tell yow how yor wyfe and yor Iewell do, being for my part in some question wth my Affections Whither I shold be more glad of gods blessing to you, then enuious yt a stale batchelor shold haue so good luck whyle I do styck at a stey.[58]

The Cecils' own children were two.[59] William, named after both his grandfathers, was born in February 1590/1;[60] he was the first child to be born to one of Cobham's second family, and the queen acted as his god mother at his christening in April.[61] Frances, their daughter, was born in July 1593[62] and received the Christian name which the Brookes preferred to give to their female children: the baby's late grandmother had borne it, and in her lifetime two of her aunts and three first cousins were also called 'Frances'. There was an epidemic of smallpox when she was born. Lord Lumley wrote to Cecil from Nonsuch on 14 August 1593 to tell him that he

and his wife, who had escaped contagion, were "right glad to hear that you and your good lady remain well".[63] Young William Cecil had not been so lucky; on the same day, Cecil's steward sent word from the country of his master's "little ones, who are both very well, and in good health", but evidently the little boy had been ill, for the letter goes on to say that Cecil's "son's face is whole, without any scabs or itch, if it please God, it may continue so."[64] A few months later, on 27 December, Burghley's sister wrote from Theobalds to assure her nephew that his son had recovered, but in doing so old Mrs. White raised another troublesome matter. "Your son, God be thanked, is merry and well, and your daughter in health," she said,

> yet I could wish she did suck better milk or none, for truly that which she doth get is but wind. I speak but of duty I owe to you and my Lady, and love and goodwill I bear unto the child. If it please you so to think of it, at your last being at Theobalds I could have said my mind, but I did find you so altered that I was doubtful in what sort I should answer you. Since that time your child hath not bred teeth, yet is not the flesh increased, but doth decrease by means of her fretting and beastly sorrowing, and a shame to all women. She fretteth away her own flesh and waxeth blear-eyed which is given her by nature, I have heard that it hath not been good for a child to look upon any such.[65]

The 'her' of Mrs. White's letter was Frances Cecil's wet-nurse, a slatternly woman who was having an affair with the steward's boy; Cecil's aunt was something of a shrew, but she was not exaggerating when she described the harm which was being done to her little grand-niece. Burghley's steward sent the young father a similar account, telling him how the nurse and her lover had taken over the nursery, "and what an unseemly and ungodly thing this example of theirs is in such a house, I refer it to your honour's consideration."[66] The woman was fired, but not, perhaps, before she had done irreparable harm to the baby, for Frances grew up deformed by rickets, and was a cause of much anxiety to her father after her mother died.[67]

Elizabeth Cecil was not of course free to spend much time with her children, for she continued to serve the queen after her marriage. The Lord Chamberlain wrote to Cecil on 7 April 1594 to apologize to him for the poor accommodation which had been reserved at Court for him and his wife, and on the same day gave instructions to a gentleman usher that Elizabeth Cecil should have the lodgings she desired.[68] At Greenwich the young matron continued to share the queen's private moments; Dr. Dee

the astrologer found her and the Countess of Warwick, Elizabeth's last female favourite, strolling together "in the privy garden" when he went there on the evening of 3 May to deliver a "hevenly admonition" which the queen took "thankfully".[69] Yet, despite her propinquity to power, despite her husband's meteoric rise following his knighthood in 1591, Elizabeth Cecil does not seem to have interfered very much in matters of state. One finds people making to her the usual requests for wardships with which a minister's wife was always beset,[70] and there is evidence that the queen sometimes used her house in the Strand as a place in which she could talk in confidence with the Lord Treasurer about government business,[71] but on the whole Lady Cecil seems to have been content to remain in the background. Although she was considered to be a "nobleaand virtuous lady, my very good friend", by so arch an intriguer as Bess of Shrewsbury,[72] and although she and her husband were on amiable terms with the redoubtable Penelope Rich,[73] it is exceptional to find an account of her engaging in dangerous gossip with such women. One must consider a rarity a letter which Sir Anthony Standen wrote to Anthony Bacon on 20 May 1595, at the time of Elizabeth Vernon's hurried marriage with the Earl of Southampton:

> Mr. Standen inform'd Mr. Bacon what he had learned the night before among the court ladies, that the lady Rich, the earl of Essex's sister, having visited the lady of Sir Robert Cecil, at her house, understood, that the countess of Southampton and her ill good man had waited on Sunday two hours to have spoken with the queen, but could not. At last the countess sent in word, that she desired her Majesty's resolution; to which the queen answered, that she was sufficiently resolved; but that the next day she would talk with her farther: 'About this matter, says Mr. Standen, imposed upon the earl for gendering, the lady Scudamore and Dr. Gifford are also in the class. Most, that talk, do judge this not to be the principal cause, neither that of the new-coined countess; but that some other matter hath been discovered unto the queen not known to the vulgar, which doth pinch nearer.[74]

Usually Lady Cecil must have been more discreet, for, despite the power to injure further the reputation of fallen maids of honour which her intimate service with the queen gave her, she seems to have been liked and trusted by courtiers of all factions. Letters praising her kindness to friends in their sickness came from her brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Cecil; from Sir Edward Hoby, her husband's first cousin and his close friend, who said that she was "of all the Court" the person to whom he was most bound; from Lord Lumley. Compliments of undoubted sincerity were made to

her by Lady Kildare, who was later to marry her brother; by Edward More, the husband of her twin sister; by Vice-Chamberlain Sir Thomas Heneage and his wife, her cousin Anne Pointz; by old Sir Matthew Arundell, who took up space in a business letter to her husband to wish her a "happy delivery of a second son" when she was pregnant of her daughter; by Mary Talbot, Bess of Shrewsbury's harassed daughter-in-law; by Sir George Carey, who had once hoped to marry her. Ralegh's wife was her friend, expressing the wish to visit the Cecils "and to enjoy both your companies" during one of her beloved Sir Walter's long absences at sea. Essex himself swore that he "would be proud of any occasion to do her service".[75] Such tributes can leave no doubt of the affection with which Elizabeth was regarded by the whole Court. Both as his wife and the mother of his children, and as an asset to his career in politics, she must have pleased her husband. Only in one respect was Cecil's marriage with her unwise. As he himself later wrote, a sovereign ought, in choosing a Principal Secretary, to make sure "That he match not in a factious family";[76] and Elizabeth Brooke, through no fault of her own, was the sister of two of the most reckless partisans of their age. The extent of the difficulties in which he had immersed himself by marrying her, however, cannot have been clear to Cecil while his wife lived, and her death in 1597 must then have seemed an unmitigated disaster to both his family and hers.

* * *

Chapter V

Lord Cobham had been in Kent a month before his daughter's wedding to Robert Cecil, writing from his house there to Walsingham on 26 July 1589 to ask a favour for a young Irishman.[1] In September he was back in the country, busily supervising the raising of troops which the queen was sending to assist Henry IV to make good his succession to the French Throne upon the assassination of Henry III.[2] Sir Thomas Sondes, who had not yet become a source of trouble to his father-in-law, was on 9 September promoted on orders from the Council to a deputy lieutenantship in the county,[3] and with John Brooke, Cobham's friend Sir John Leveson and his Lieutenant of Dover Castle, Sir Thomas Fane, served under the baron in mustering the soldiery.

Meanwhile Cobham discharged some of his advisory duties as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, and on 28 November his opinion was delivered to the corporation of Rye that they should not attempt to extend their harbour, since he thought "that generally inning of marshes mar [sic] good havens".[4] At about this time Cobham also had Thomas Milles draw up for him an elaborate map of the town and harbour of Dover.[5]

The baron had problems with the management of his estates late in 1589. The letter which he wrote to Michael Hickes on 12 November, asking him "to procuer my Lo. Threa'rers warrant to m^r auditor Tompson that I maie haue a ꝑticuler of the percelles of Lande conteynide in this scedule",[6] probably was occasioned by the claim which one of his own bailiffs was then making upon a piece of his property at Cliffe.[7]

Cobham's concern with local matters at this time makes it seem likely that he spent some time in personal supervision of the rebuilding which he had commissioned at Cobham Hall. Soon after deciding to renovate the Blackfriars in the early '80s, he seems to have turned his attention to the seat of his family and, finding it unfit to receive visitors so distinguished as those whom the queen's flirtation with the princes of Europe was attracting to Kent, made up his mind to enlarge and beautify it. All over England rich men were turning mediaeval strongholds into stately residences; with the derelict castle at Cooling Cobham could do nothing, but to the modest manor in which the Brookes had lived since the beginning of the sixteenth century he could make additions which would allow it to compete with the finest of the new houses. As Richard Church writes of these "demonstrations of a faith in enduring things, an aspiration that was monumental",

> The old baronial castles, out of date in a country no longer subject to local raiding and private warfare, were transformed, or partially transformed, into the magnificent palaces and manors (much of the material supplied from the raped monasteries and abbeys) which survive today. I think of those in Kent, where they abound; Knole, Penshurst, Leeds, Hever, Cobham, Chiddingstone, dozens of smaller manors, rivalling in brick and stone the poetry of the Elizabethan dramatists.[8]

Cobham was never to see his dream realized, but so long as he lived he worked hard to bring it about.

The French wars no doubt disrupted the building of the new Cobham Hall. As early as 17 January 1584/5 Henry III had issued letters patent to the Governor of Normandy

whereby Cobham was permitted "to take and transport as much worked Caen stone as he requires for the building he is erecting in England",[9] but on 18 November 1591 it was still necessary for Henry IV to confirm the order before Cobham could get his "quantité de deuz cent tonneaux de pierre propre à bastir" delivered "franchement & quietement" by Captain Richard Bellot to the coast of Kent.[10] Meanwhile the new south wing of the house, begun in 1584, was completed in 1587, and a list of general memoranda drawn up by the baron's steward in 1587 shows that the north wing had been started when the other was finished.[11] The Caen stone went into the great doorway in this wing, which was ready for occupancy in 1594. An annual "Brief of the Accompt for the buildinges at Cobham", dated 15 January 1595/6,[12] indicates how expensive this work was. Cobham had turned over to the contractor £ 924.2.0, only £ 36.4.5¾ of which remained when the following costs had been met:

Carpenters wages	xxxix li			xj d	ob
Ioynors wages	lxxiiij li	iiij s		xd	
Bricke laiers Tylers and Laborors wages	Cxxix li	xv s		vij d	
Massons worke	xxiiij li	x li	v s	j d	
Stone bought	xxiiij li	xvj li	xvj s	vij d	
makenge of Bricke	xxxj li	xvj s			
Smithes worke	lj li	iij s		j d	ob q^{a}
Tyll bought		C s			
Lyme bought	lvj li	vj s			
makinge of woode		Cix s		ij d	
Lathe bought	xiij li				
Sawinge	xxiiij li	xvj s			
Plombers worke wth leade bought	xxiiij li	iiij li	xj s	ix d	
Glasinge	xlij li	ij s			
Timber bought	xxxix li			vj d	
Watter carriages	vij li	x s			
Lande carriages	xlvij li	xiij s		xd	
Extraordinarie Charges	xlix li	vj s		jd	
Sm̃ To^{lis}	xxviij^{C} iiij	vij li	xvij s	vj d	q^{a}

In his enthusiasm for the new house which he saw rising before him, Cobham canvassed his acquaintance for permission to explore the natural resources of their properties. To his wife's old friend, Bess of Shrewsbury, he sent into Derbyshire on 27 February 1595/6 a letter of thanks for her kindness in admitting his agents to Hardwick. "My honorable good Lady," he wrote;

> I understand from my cosin Jo^{n} Manners, that you ar well pleased searche should be made in certeine grownds of yours for such black stone as I stand in present neade of for my buildings. For your La.' greate courtesees towards me in this, I yelde you my humble thancks:

> and w^th^ my service I wyll requite yt yf yt lye in my smale power: as knoweth the Almightie God.[13]

When he died, however, his house was still so disarranged that his son was ashamed to have his friends there for the funeral.[14]

Nor was Henry Lord Cobham to see the work completed, for when he lost his estates in 1603 the new wings were finished but the original building, which formed the nucleus of the whole, had still not been renovated. Yet the younger baron had carried out so far as he could his father's intentions. He hired a Flemish craftsman to ornament the Hall with massive chimney-pieces, one of which, in the present picture gallery in the north wing, bears the date '1599'; two others were being commissioned for the rooms downstairs, next the new chapel, when the baron's steward wrote on 30 May 1601 to inform his master that 'Jellies de Whitt' was demanding £ 65 for the work. "I will not give above 50 l.," declared Richard Williams, "and he will accept it in the end rather than fail."[15] Giles de Whitt, whatever he was finally paid, made the chimney-pieces, and, as he worked, other men were flooring rooms, making staircases, completing the set of four octagonal lead-capped turrets, all at the cost of £ 221.[16] Despite all this activity, however, the Brookes left Cobham Hall far different from the house it is today. In 1610 a German travelling in Kent thought it "very fine, but bewailing the absence of its master";[17] it was to stand unfinished, part-Tudor, part-mediaeval, until the Restoration, when the Stewarts of Lennox and Richmond finally carried William Lord Cobham's work through to completion, although on lines which an Elizabethan would not have envisioned. Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges, even more romantic than most genealogists, was stirred to generous indignation when he visited the house at the end of the eighteenth century. "I have rambled over this large mansion," he wrote,

> with many emotions of regret at the hard fate of the Cobhams, whose antient glories were surely too severely punished with ruin and extinction, for the doubtful crimes of one weak man. With them, if I recollect, the antient nobility of Kent expired; and the descendants of feudal chiefs could no longer be found to display the trophies of their ancestors in the Baronial Hall.[18]

That his splendid new house would ever give rise to such melancholy thoughts would not have occurred to the elder Lord Cobham. Rather, the baron would have endorsed the sentiments reflected (somewhat tortuously) in the Latin verses written by Francis Thynne to commemorate the impressive display which "the stately buildinge of this

lorde Cobhame" already presented in 1589. They are an Elizabethan expression of what Richard Church has called a "faith in enduring things":

> Temporis Invidia domus haec subiecta ruinae,
> Orbata Antiquo pene nitore Iacens,
> Sumptibus effusis Dominus renovare volebat
> Cobhaminus, nomen cui Gulielmus erat.
> Esset vt hospitij sedes sibi grata, quisq'
> Qui cupiunt ruris commoditate frui.
> Octoginta novem Sol christi aspexerit annus
> Mille & Quingentos, quid nova facta fuit
> Magnificas faxit, deus, vt stirps Inclyta Broci
> Has aedes placide, possideatq' diu.
> Sic niger ille leo, fuluo redimitus & auro.
> (Pignora chara patri) stemmata larga dabit.[19]

The baron's desire to create a mansion at Cobham would have been fully understood by Lord Burghley. The letter which he wrote to Hatton on first visiting Holdenby reveals how lively was the Lord Treasurer's delight in architecture,[20] and the magnificent houses which he had constructed by the mid-1580s at Theobalds, Stamford and Westminster support the contention of his anonymous biographer that Burghley "spent infinite Sommes in Buylding; [in] Hospitality; & in Maintenaunce of his honorable Port".[21] In another of Cobham's schemes for improving his property Burghley would also have been interested, for, a man who "greatlie delighted in making Gardens, Fountaines, & Walks", he would have found at Cobham Hall xysti which excelled his own, despite the fact that the pleasance at Theobalds had been perfected so "costly, bewtyfully, & pleasantly" that "one might walk twoe Myle[s] in the Walks, before he came to their Ends."[22] For Lord Cobham had early recognised that gardens could provide recreation for a public man, and enhance his dignity, as well as supply fruits and vegetables for his table. William Harrison, the baron's household chaplain, wrote in 1586 of the practical little plot which he tended at his Essex rectory of Radwinter, and in so doing paid a compliment to his master's achievement in Kent. "For mine own part, good reader," Harrison confidently addressed his public,

> let me boast a litle of my garden, which is but small, and the whole Area thereof little aboue 300 foot of ground, and yet, such hath beene my good lucke in purchase of the varietie of simples, that notwithstanding my small abilitie, there are verie neere three hundred of one sort and other conteined therein, no one of them being common or vsuallie to hee had. If therefore my little plot, void of all cost in keeping be so well furnished, what shall we thinke of those of Hampton court, Nonesuch, Tibaults, Cobham garden, and sundrie other apperteining to diuerse citi-

> zens of London, whom I could particularlie name, if I should not seeme to offend them by such my demeanour and dealing?[23]

What Francis Thynne thought of one of the gardens which Harrison so admired he memorably expressed. Writing also in 1586, Thynne spoke of Cobham's "statelie augmenting of his house at Cobham hall,

> with the rare garden there, in which no varietie of strange flowers and trees doo want, which praise or price maie obteine from the furthest part of Europe, or from other strange countries, wherby it is not inferior to the garden of Semiramis.[24]

That Thynne was not exaggerating when he mentioned 'the furthest part of Europe' is proved by a note made "of the routs that Iohn Cornelyous brought to Cobham the last of August 1596:

> A rout of constantinoble, of dyu's coullors.
> A whit Iries.
> A whit dubble piony.
> A yeullow Iries.
> A whit Tillopase [tulip].
> A stamell [i.e., red] Tillopase.
> A orenge Tillopase.[25]

Cobham evidently brought up his children to think that the garden was important, for his son and heir, even when he was frantically trying to escape prosecution for treason in July 1603, included in a little list of "perticuler remembrans" a memorandum "To wryght vnto kelk my servant at Sandwich to hau 6 spayds prouided for my garden at Cobham".[26] The younger lord for years supplied his friends with fruit of his father's planting, with "melacotons", which were peaches grafted on quinces, with baskets of "apricoks", grapes and plums which, he would boast, "I think be the best you have eaten this year."[27]

Complementary to the garden was an exceptionally lovely park. When the Stewarts were resuming work on the rebuilding of Cobham Hall in the reign of Charles II, a young man made a note of "some remarkable Things" which he saw during a journey into Kent. Proceeding from Aylesford to Gravesend, wrote Thomas Baskerville,

> your way leads on foot through Cobham Park, a place which will feast the spectator's eyes with delightful objects. Fair lawns bedecked with flourishing groves of yew, oak, teal [sic], and hawthorn trees, under which the nimble deer and coneys do sport the time away. This park or rather paradise I may call it belongs to the Duke of Richmond and Len ox, in which he hath at the upper end a fair palace surrounded with stately groves of elm and walnuts, and such tall sycamore trees, that had I not seen them I could not have imagined a sycamore could have attained to such height and bigness. The house seems to groan under some abuses offered to it in our late sad times, but the Duke is completing that which was wanting.[28]

No comparable picture of the park survives from the days of Elizabeth, but Cobham must surely have known the oaks and the great sycamores, and one may assume that, if in his last years he anticipated the craze for importing exotic tulips from the markets of Holland, he would also have acquired rare specimens for his arboretum.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that Cobham devoted his old age to the improvement and beautification of his country seat. What time he had to spend at Cobham Hall was snatched from a public life which never allowed him to retire. Despite the complaints made throughout 1588 that his enforced stay in Flanders was endangering his health, the baron seems to have been an exceptionally healthy man. In 1564 he had hoped that the physicians to whom he had taken his cancer-ridden sister would be able to cure "my oollde soore, I meane my Lame arme":[29] perhaps they did, for one hears no more of Cobham's disability. The tension under which he lived in the years before the Ridolfi Plot, when Burghley worried about his friend's headaches and advised him not to aggravate them "by to much Musyng of this Trooblesome Age, and tyme",[30] seems also to have disappeared as the baron acquired a sense of security about his position in the queen's service. In his middle and late sixties, till the last year of his life, he was apparently vigorous; rarely did he have to present his apologies for failing in his attendance at Court because of indisposition. It was this kind of strength, as well as his undoubted willingness to do the work for which Burghley had had him appointed to the Privy Council, which enabled Cobham to move into his fourth decade as a public servant without markedly decreasing his pace.

The baron was at his house in the Blackfriars when, shortly after his sixty-second birthday, he wrote to Michael Hickes on 12 November 1589.[31] Four days later he was appointed to a commission of great importance, for it was occasioned by Archbishop Whitgift's confidence that the leaders of the most articulate disestablishmentarian movement yet to plague England were at last at his mercy. For almost two years the episcopate had been attacked in print by the brilliantly ribald Martin Marprelate. Parliament had scarcely met early in 1589 when the queen issued her proclamation against the pamphlets, their author and his readers, and yet throughout the year the devastatingly effective lampoons continued to spew forth

from their secret press. Then, in August, the press was discovered at Manchester, and, although the last of the series somehow got printed in the following month, Whitgift assured himself that his denigrators would be unmasked. On 16 November the Council issued

> A letter to the Lord Busshoppe of Rochester, Lord Cobham, Lord Buckhurst, Mr. Comptroller, Mr. Vicechamb[er]laine, Mr. Secretary, Sir John Perrot, Mr. Wolley and Mr. Fortescue, &c., that whereas there hathe bene of late printed and published certen lewde and seditious libells and pamphlettes tending not onely to the disturbance of the common peace of the churche, but also to the discrediting and defaming of divers of the Busshoppes and other Ecclesiasticall persones, thereby to bring their functions into contempt, the author whereof entituleth himself by the name of Martin Mar Prelate, and whereas yt is discovered that Sir Richard Knightly, Roger Wigston and John Hales have bene acquainted with the printing and publishing of the said bookes, and have bene favorers and abettours of the said Martin Mar Prelate in his disordered proceedings. For the meeting wherewith and to the ende the author and his sectaries and favorers may be the rather discovered, and for that the persones before mencioned are by all probabilitye acquainted with the said Martin, and can disclose who and where he is, yt hathe bene thought meet by her Majestie and by their Lordships that some persones of credytt and understanding should be nominated to have the examining of the said Sir Richard and the rest, and the bolting out of the matters meet to be discovered in that behalf, and therefore choice hathe bene specially made of them, who are hereby required and authorized or anie foure of them, of whome two to be of the Privie Councell, forthwith to assemble themselves together and to call before them the said Richard Knightly, Wigston, and Hales, nowe prisoners in the Fleete, and effectually to examine them either together or a parte, as to them shalbe thought meet, uppon suche interrogatories as after viewe of the matters wherewith they are charged they shall frame against them, and therein to use their best and uttermost endevours to finde the author of the said libells, and suche as have sett forthe and dispersed any of those seditious books and pamphlettes by the direction either of the author or of any others, and suche as by the examinacion they shall finde and perceave to have bene doers therein they shall likewise call before them, examine and commytt according to their discretions.[32]

Burghley's name is notably absent from the list of commissioners. Walsingham, although included in their number, was both too ill and, probably, too indisposed to assist the archbishop against the Puritans to take any significant part in the proceedings. Cobham, Buckhurst and Fortescue, Chancellor of the Exchequer, dominated the commission, and when on 10 December the stationers Valentine Symmes and Arthur Tamlin made the statements which implicated Job Throckmorton as the author of the Marprelate tracts, it was Cobham who headed the group which examined them.[33]

Whether Martin Marprelate was indeed Throckmorton has, of course, never been decided. That "explosive Puritan", as Neale calls him, whose outspoken career in Parliament alone would entitle him to a leading place among the most militant non-

conformists of the day, denied writing the sensational squibs. There was strong evidence to suggest that he lied in doing so, yet, inexplicably, he was let off. Cobham was perhaps not sorry to see him escape punishment, for he was one of a family which the Brookes seem to have known well: his first cousin Arthur was entertained both at Cobham Hall and at the English embassy in Paris, when Sir Henry Cobham was the resident there,34 and his uncle Sir Nicholas had had connections with the baron and his brothers which went back to the days of Queen Mary: but if Throckmorton was indeed responsible for emboldening the so-called Martinist movement, his activities in 1588-89 added appreciably to Cobham's public cares. Not long afterward, on 18 February 1590/1, when the judges were preparing to leave London on their spring circuits, Cobham was one of a distinguished party of ministers which met them at Sir Christopher Hatton's house and conveyed to them the royal will regarding the treatment which they were to give Puritan extremists at the coming assizes. Sir Francis Wyndham gave an account of the meeting to his brother-in-law, Sir Nathaniel Bacon:

> 'I am sorry I have not suffycyent tyme to wryte so largely unto you as the circumstances of matters do requyre; for fyrst you shall understande that within these three or four dayes my Lord of Canterbury in the presens of the Councsell (except my Lord Treasorer who was sicke) dyd delyver to her Majestie that her Government by her ecclesiastical courts were like cleane to be overthrowen by reason of a charge geven by me and Mr Cocke at Sessions vidz. that ther ordynarye cowld not cyte men to appere pro salute anime to awnswer upon oathe, the rumour whereof hath bred a scruple to all the byshops in Englande, that they dowbt how to procede in theyr cowrts, for that they have ever synce the Conquest used no other cowrse. With this her Majestie was greatly grieved with me and sayd that she wold have all the Counsell calle all the judges together before theyr cyrcuyte to comand them not to geve yt any more in chardge. And then dyd my Lord Chamberlayne take opportunitye to exasperat the Quenes Majestie further agaynst me saying also that I dyd impugn her Majestie's comissions and other her prerogatyves and procedyngs in her service in Norffolke, which complaynt the Cownsell was lykewyse comanded to call me to awnser. So as this daye my Lord of Canterburye my Lord Chancelor, my Lord Admyrall, my Lord Chamberlayne, my Lord Cobbham, and my Lord of Buckherst were assembled at my Lord Chancelor's howse where all the judges were appoynted to hear her Majestie's pleasure before we went in cyrcuyt. So at our beyng there my Lord shewed her Majestie's myslyke that the judges as she harde were not all of one mynde towchinge the offence of the Martynists and some favored them which yf she knewe she wold remove from theyr places, and then as to the charge geven towchinge the oathes in spyrytuall courts we were comanded from her Majestie to forbeare to geve yt any further till more consultatyon were had theref [sic]. Then my Lord shewed further her Majestie's pleasure towchinge such as were convicted of the Martynists. That yf they wold not submytt themselves accordyng to a draft made thereof that they shuld be executed! So the judges departed, but myselfe.'35

With both Church and State determined to take the most high-handed attitude toward the Martinists, it was essential that the more glaring irregularities which Marprelate had exposed in the episcopate should be corrected. Marmaduke Middleton, a troublesome cleric who held the see of St. David's, had been accused by the pamphleteer of bigamy; other Puritans held that he had abused his position by forging a will. On 22 February 1589/90 the archbishop was appointed to the presidency of a commission which included Cobham, Buckhurst, Hunsdon and three others, and which was to investigate Middleton's private and public life. "Whereas," reads the Council's letter establishing the commission,

> there hath bene exhibited against the Busshoppe of St. Davydes many artickles of fowle and badd behaviour used by the said Busshopp ..., forasmuche as the Quene's Majesty is desirous to understand the truthe of the informacions delivered against him, her pleasure is that the examinacion of the matters shalbe committed them, to th'end she may be duely certifyed what proofe and verificatyon may be made of them, and that if yt shall appeare he be culpable, there may be order taken to have him proceeded against for example, according to his merittes ...; and so not doubting but they will have an extraordinary care hereof, in respect they doe concerne a persone of his place and qualytie, and therefore to be regarded in respect of the example.[36]

The bishop was not found to be a bigamist, but Cobham and his fellow commissioners seem to have discovered proofs of simony against him, as well as of misuse of a charity and of an intention to alienate some of the episcopal lands in order to settle them upon his son. He was summarily deprived of the see and died degraded in 1593.[37]

Yet another result of the intense scrutiny to which the Established Church had been subjected by Marprelate was an increased strictness in the observation of the laws, part canonical, part economic, concerning fasting. During that busy winter of 1589-90 Cobham wrote from London on 24 February to his Lieutenant of Dover Castle that,

> Whereas last yere certeine orders were sent unto you for restraint of kyllinge and eating of flesh in the tyme of Lent, which although for lack of due execution, wrought not that good effect which was required, yet her Majesty upon hope of better care to be had hereafter hath streightly charged and commaunded me to see the same orders to be now likewise put in execution in all the cheyfe townes and places in my Levetenancy.

As Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Cobham ordered that all the royal decrees be strictly enforced,

> and to the ende her Majesty's gracyous purpose herein may not be defrauded by cullor of fayned sycknes or other excuse ... no lycence shalbe fgeven to any bocher or other victualler to kyll and sell fleshe, in tyme prohybyted, to any person whatsoever without speciall lycence from me the Lieutenant and that to suche only as upon good cause of sicknes and greater necessyty shalbe thought requisyt, that the prejudice dayly growing to the realme by dysordered eating of flesh in contempt of the lawes may be prohybyted.[38]

In the midst of the Church's reaction to the attacks of the Puritans, on 7 April 1590, Secretary Walsingham, the nonconformists' most powerful protector, died. Although his end did not come unexpectedly, the government was obviously not prepared for it, and in succeeding months an increased load of work was carried by each of the Councillors. Upon Burghley especially, despite his seventy years and his disabling gout, the duties of the Secretariat fell once more, and, for all his pleas, the queen seemed not at all inclined to relieve him of them. Sir Christopher Hatton and Lord Cobham, who were in attendance upon Elizabeth at Eltham, on 15 July sent the Lord Treasurer an expression of their sympathetic understanding of his position. "'My very good Lord,'" began their letter, which is in Hatton's hand;

> 'We have received your honourable letters, and can well witness your endless travails, which in her Majesty's princely consideration she should relieve you of, but it is true the affairs are in a good hand, as well [sic: we all] know, and thereby her Majesty is the more sure, and we her poor servants the better satisfied. God send you help and happiness to your best contentment.'[39]

"All of which, though very flattering," remarks Conyers Read, "was not very helpful."[40] The truth was that there was no one in the Council who was capable of discharging Walsingham's duties; besides, the queen was no doubt pleased to have nearest her once again the minister whom she best knew and trusted. She appointed no new Principal Secretary until 1596, leaving the office in the meantime to Burghley and his son. Cobham does not seem to have been present at Theobalds during the royal visit to his friend's house in the spring of 1591, and so probably did not see Robert Cecil knighted; he was certainly not at Nonsuch on 2 August when his son-in-law was, at the exceptionally early age of twenty-eight, admitted to the Privy Council and given the increased authority which permitted him to help his father in acting as the queen's Secretary.[41] A fortnight later, however, when the Council met at Cowdray during the queen's spectacular visit to Lord Montague, the baron had the gratification of joining both the old Cecil and the young in dispat-

ching the government's business.[42]

Cobham's attendance at the Council board throughout 1591 was somewhat sporadic, for what reason it has been impossible to discover. He may have been paying particular attention to the Cinque Ports, through which the Catholic exiles, whose hopes of a speedy return to England had been shattered by the defeat of the Armada, were attempting with more than usual persistence to smuggle messages to their allies at home. Cobham had contacts in Spain,[43] and probably was able to anticipate the moves which the papists made with regard to England; Charles Paget, that inveterate intriguer and Spanish pensioner, who had shared a sister-in-law with the baron, wrote anxiously on 3 July 1591 of his suspicion that Cobham was intecepting his letters, four of which in the last two months had not reached their destinations.[44] The efficiency of the Lord Lieutenant's government of his county was being criticized at this time, for "those hollsome and necessarye orders" which he had given Thomas Fane concerning Lenten fasting had not been carried out. The queen, according to a letter which his fellow Councillors wrote to Cobham on 30 January 1591/2,[45] "doth note this slackness and remiseness in you and those that have byn appoynted and authorized in that countye to have care and regard thereof." To reform the laxity which had elicited such a reprimand may also have forced the baron to spend time in Kent. Nor need he have done so merely to avoid the queen's further displeasure; there was a sound economic reasn for regulating the consumption of beef in the spring, "that tyme, wherein younge cattle should most be spared for increase", and Cobham seems himself to have appreciated it, for he provided his household with less expensive, less hearty fare during Lent than at other times. At Cobham Hall in the mid-'90s it cost the baron on the average a third less to feed his family each week then than it did during each of the other forty-five weeks of the year.[46] Presumably Cobham, backed up by the royal threat that unless his officers carried out their orders "they wyll aunswere to the contrarye," saw that the law was enforced in 1592 and thereafter, for one hears no more complaints about his remissness.

The queen's reluctance to bestow senior offices upon the rising courtiers and politicians who jostled for position about the Throne in the last quarter of her reign became apparent once again before the end of 1591. The year before Elizabeth

had lost Walsingham, an exceptionally able servant although probably not a man for whom the queen cared much in a personal way; now Hatton died, the handsome and charming favourite who had proved to be so surprisingly capable a Lord Chancellor. Refusing to appoint a successor to him, the queen delegated the work which had been his to Burghley, Cobham and two of their contemporaries, making them Commissioners of the Great Seal. As Stow relates:

> The twentieth of Nouember sir Christopher Hatton knight, Lord Chauncellour of England, deceased at his house in Holborne, commonly called Ely house because it beelongeth to the Byshoppe of Elie. On the sixteenth of December, hee was honourably buried in Saint Paules Church at London, one hundred poore people hauing gownes and Cappes giuen them, goeing before them, of Gentlemen and Yeomen, in Gownes, Cloakes, and Coates, more then three hundred, with Lords of the Counsell, and other, besides fourscore of the Guarde that Followed ....
> After whose death none beeing elected to succeede him in that office and dignity, her Maiesty committed the charge and the authority of the ensealing of all Writings with the great Seale of Englande (whereunto it shall bee requisite to haue the same annexed) unto the lord Burghley Lorde Treasurer of Englande, the Lorde Hunsdone Lord Chamberlayne of her highnesse houshould, the Lorde Cobham lorde Warden of the Cinque Portes, and the Lorde Buckhurst beeing all Lords of her Maiesties most honourable priuie Counsel.[47]

A perquisite also came Cobham's way upon the death of the much-favoured Hatton. In July 1592 a grant was made to the baron of

> the Custody of the House at Eltham, and the great and little Parks, with divers Fees for the House and the Park, and to be surveyor of the Towne and Mannor of Eltham, and Steward also there; and a Lease of the Mannor of Eltham, and of a House called Corby-hall, with the Rents and Services of the Heyres of Jo. Roper.[48]

The fees for the keeping of Eltham, one of the richest of the royal manors, amounted to more than £ 31 a year;[49] Cobham's appointment to succeed Hatton as its custodian gave the baron another residence, a splendid one very near London.

The baron was made Keeper of Eltham Palace during a very busy summer. London was beset by plague, and the dissidents among its population took advantage of the general feeling of depression to express their dissatisfaction with a Council which, depleted in numbers and weakened by the frequent absences of the ailing Lord Treasurer, was trying to cope not only with the ordinary business of administration but also with the management of Elizabeth's participation in a foreign war on behalf of the Huguenot King of France, with the problem of increased Jesuitical activity throughout the country, and with the derangement of governmental machinery which the sickness always caused. On 23 June the Council issued letters to several of the

principal inhabitants of London, many of its own members among them, to warn them of imminent danger. "Whereas," Cobham was informed as the leading householder in the Blackfriars,

> her Majestie is informed that certaine apprentyces and other idle people theire adherentes that were authors and partakers of the late mutynous and foule disorder in Southwarke in most outrageous and tumultuous sorte, have a further purpose and meaninge on Midsommer eveninge or Midsommer nighte or about that tyme to renewe theire lewd assemblye togeather by cullour of the tyme for some bad and mischeivous intencion, to the disturbance and breache of her Majesty's Peace and comyttinge some outrage. To prevente in tyme theis wicked and mischeivous purposes wee have given straighte order to the Maiour of London for the cittye and the liberties thereunto belonginge and to all other places neere to the same to have regarde hereunto, and so likewyse wee are in her Majesty's name straightlie to chardge and comaunde you presentlye upon sighte hereof to sende for the constables and some of the cheifest and discreetest inhabitauntes ..., and to chardge and comaunde them to take order that there maye be a stronge and substancyall watche kept bothe on Midsommer eveninge, Midsommer night and Sondaye at nighte of housholders and masters of families, to contynue from the beginninge of the eveninge untill the morninge, and that all masters of servauntes and of apprentyces be straightlie chardged, as they will answere to the contrarye at theire perilles, to keepe theire servauntes in theire houses for those two nightes, so as they maie be within the dores before the evenynge and not suffered to come forthe, nor to have anye weapons yf they shoulde be so lewdlie disposed to execute anye evill purpose. And yf notwithstandinge this straighte chardge and comaundment any servantes, apprentyces or other suspected persons shalbe founde in the streetes, to see them presentlie commytted to pryson. Especiallie you shall take order that theis watches of housholders maye be of that strength with theire weapons as they maie be hable yf there be anie uprore, tumult or unlawful assemblye to suppresse the same. Moreover for avoidinge of theis unlawfull assemblies in those quarters it is thoughte meete you shall take order that there be noe playes used in anye place neere thereaboutes, as the theator, curtayne or other usuall places there where the same are comonly used, nor no other sorte of unlawfull or forbidden pastymes that drawe togeather the baser sorte of people from hence forth untill the feast of St. Michaell.[50]

It must have been a dull summer for the innocent people of the Blackfriars, but it was at least an orderly one. Meanwhile, as most of the Councillors left the plague-stricken city for the comparative safety of their estates, Cobham and a few of the old guard stayed on. On 12 September Edward Jones, secretary to Lord Keeper Puckering, and one of the bright young men who was soon to enter the service of the Earl of Essex and so become inimical to Cobham, wrote from Stepney to Anthony Bacon to tell him of the tension under which the government had been operating in the past few weeks. "'The plague increaseth in London,'" he said,

> 'which maketh speech of keeping the term either at Hertford or Reading. My lord [keeper] continueth at Stepney, being commanded to have care of

the city; with whom there remain likewise about London my lord of Canterbury, my lord Buckhurst, my lord Cobham, and Mr. Fortescu to assist. These counsellors have now great business about jesuits and seminary priests, by some whereof there are matters of great weight discovered concerning the state, as a new practise or plot of invasion between Spain, Scotland, the Pope, and some other adherents as Savoy, &c. I have but a taste of the matter, being a thing kept very close; and this little, which I advertise, came to me by the sight of a little paper of obscure notes of examination.'[51]

* * *

Chapter VI

It was while helping to carry this exceptionally heavy load of business that Lord Cobham suffered a great personal loss. On 13 January 1591/2 his brother Henry had died in his fifty-fifth year;[1] the baron was then sixty-four. Cobham left no comment upon his brother's death, although it must have given him not only cause for sorrow but also a certain amount of added responsibility, for the former ambassador died deeply in debt, leaving little provision for his widow and five children. It was perhaps through the baron's good offices that his nephews Calisthenes, John and Maximilian Brooke were well placed by the end of 1592, the eldest serving in the band of the queen's Gentlemen Pensioners and the younger two in the households of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.[2] Then, in the summer of 1592, Lady Cobham fell ill. She had perhaps not been well for some time, but one doubts that the seriousness of her condition was appreciated until her life was almost at an end. One knows nothing about what killed her, except that it was a "languishing Maladie", perhaps even such a cancer as that which had destroyed the Marchioness of Northampton.

It was, curiously enough, Lady Cobham's patronage of that amazing man, Dr. John Dee, which allows one to guess when it was that the fatality of her condition was recognized. Dee's second wife was Jane Fromond, a gentlewoman who had served as lady-in-waiting to Catherine Howard, wife of the Lord Admiral and daghter to Lord Hunsdon.[3] Early in 1590 Mrs. Dee gave birth to a daughter, who on 5 March was christened at the doctor's house in Mortlake in the presence of distinguished godparents, Sir George Carey, Lady Walsingham and Lady Cobham, and given the names Madimi Newton.[4] The second of these was evidently bestowed upon her in honour of the baroness, whose maiden name had been Newton; the other was less substantial in

origin, for it was that of a little spirit, part polyglot linguist, part sexual exhibitionist, who had prevailed upon Dee's shameless assistant, Edward Kelly, to make him and the doctor draw up a pact to have their wives in common.[5] Lady Cobham must have been on rather familiar terms with the Dees to have allowed her name to be joined with that of so visionary a creature at the baptismal font; one wishes that Miss Mirrlees had invented a contribution from the baroness in writing her fanciful account of the conversation which she assumes Dee to have held with the ladies of the Court when he explained how his daughter had come by her peculiar Christian name.[6] At any rate, Lady Cobham maintained friendly relations with the astrologer and his wife, sending to Mrs. Dee gifts of "suger and pepper, &c.",[7] and Lord Cobham too permitted himself to meet the doctor socially. In Dee's diary under the date 9 August 1592 is this account of two rather motley dinner parties given during that busy summer by Henry Maynard, Lord Burghley's secretary and Dee's neighbour:

> Aug. 9th, the Lord Threasorer invited me to dynner at Mr. Maynards at Mortlak, where Sir Robert Cecill and Sir Thomas Cisell and his lady wer allso. The Lord Threasorer allso sent me some venison to supper. He invited me to dynner allso the tenth day, where the Lord Cobham cam also to dynner, and after dynner he requested the Lord Threasorer to help me to [the wardenship of the hospital of] St. Crosses, which he promised to do his best in.[8]

It was perhaps at the second of these dinners that Cobham asked Dr. Dee to go to the Blackfriars to see what could be done for his wife, for the diary relates that, on "Aug. 21st, I went to the Lord Cobham and the Lady Cobham to London."[9] The physician's most pressing advice was probably that the sick woman should be moved out of the city at once. It is rather surprising that she had remained there at all during the plague season; perhaps, since her husband could not leave the place of his work, she preferred to be near him in what she may have known was her last illness. Soon after the visit to her of Dr. Dee, the baroness went into Kent, and there,

> departinge this lyfe at Cobham Hall the .5. of September in the yere of oure redemptiõ 1592 the xxxiiij yere of Quene Elizabethe was honorablye buryed in the Collegiate churche of Cobhame accordinge to her estate and woorthynesse.[10]

Francis Thynne says that, upon the death of Lady Cobham, "she beinge a womanne of rare vertues I composed these followinge verses:

> Ioyefull to the[e], but mornefull to vs, thy wayled deathe of late
> Hathe happened (right woorthy dame) by course of secrete fate
> Whose wyshed lyfe, what comforte yt did bringe wee dayly see
> By teares of manye whiche do lyve, thoughe I sholde sylent bee.
> Thy selfe of Newtons lyne extracte, and matched in Barons race
> Of noble Brooke deserues that prayse, whiche spite cannot deface.
> Whome seuerall giftes of nature did in comely sorte adorne.
> And giftes of fortune Whereunto thow seemest to be borne
> Thy vertues yet surpassed booth, whiche courte & countrye knewe
> When princes grace & peoples love did yelde the[e] but thy due
> A secret and assured helpe to poore, to better sorte
> A furtherer in euerye good, as fame doth gyve reporte.
> But why sholde I attempte thy prayse, whiche cannot that displaye.
> For yf farre greter thinges I tolde, I onlye truthe sholde saye
> Wherefore farewell whome natures course hathe forced for to dye.
> And vertue caused well to dye, to lyve eternallye.
> But as thow lyuest in blessed heauen, whiche grace of christe did gyve,
> So in the Worlde by thy desarte thy fame shall euer lyve.[11]

A simpler and more effective tribute came from an unknown translator of French history. Compliments to "manie high and loftie Ladies, who often times to be meete with wearisomnes, exercised themselues in studie, & reading of worthie writers", were made in the dedication of The Historie of France: the Foure First Bookes, which John Windet printed in 1595. It is there that one gets one's last glimpse of

> that wise good, and godly Ladie aduancer of so many excellent personages, both in Arte and Armes, employing her credite with her Soueraigne, (then whome none had greater) in doing good offices, for all sortes in generall, but especially preferring those, in whome she might perceiue any signification of vertue to appeare. That graue Matron, harmelesse Courtier, and faithfull seruant Francis Barones of Cobham, (late wife to the noble L. and trustie Councellor yet liuing) to whome I was so much bound (in many duties being likewise to the whole house) as that both in her health and languishing Maladie, she sundrie times admitted me, to conferre or reade with her, finding in the Ecclesasticall Historie her most delight.[12]

The reading of the Actes and Monuments and similar works was a fitting death-bed occupation for a woman who had chosen as her motto "Only Christ Crucefied".[13]

Lady Cobham had served the queen long and, apparently, well, and even if one considers inappropriate to someone who had certainly once been deeply involved in Marian politics the epithet 'harmlesse Courtier', one cannot discover that she ever abused her position. In the common Elizabethan practice, for instance, whereby a person who was well placed at Court sought to promote his relatives, the baroness does not seem to have taken part. She came from a family of some twenty children, few of whom married particularly well or moved at a high social level, yet she did not use her influence to advance them, and when on one occasion her brother-in-law Norton asked her to help him to retain a position in the Somerset militia for which

he was well qualified ("I knowe my selfe being a horsman as able as Som'setshire hath anye"), the application was made with a deference which leaves one in no doubt that the baroness's family knew better than to be "trublesome vnto youre honor in requestes".[14] In death she was not soon forgotten and it was with affection that the queen, although it cannot be shown that Lady Cobham was one of those favoured courtiers upon whom Elizabeth bestowed nicknames, always remembered her. When in 1594 George Brooke sought a sinecure from the see of York, the Privy Council informed Archbishop Hutton that the young man's suit had the queen's approval, "especially for the remembrance of her [sic: his] mother, whom she esteemed so dear in her life time"; in 1599, when his father was also dead, Brooke was again recommended to the archbishop as "one of whom her Majestie maketh extraordynary estymacion, ... in regard of the affeccion which she hath heretofore borne to his parents".[15] As late as 1601, in the troubled fancy of at least one country gentlewoman who was anxious for the queen's personal safety at the time of the Essex rebellion, Lady Cobham seemed to share with Anne Boleyn the protective rôle of warning Elizabeth against the dangers which surrounded her.[16] By the beginning of the seventeenth century it was Helena Marchioness of Northampton who took precedence over the rest of the queen's noble confidantes, just as Elizabeth Brooke had led them when the reign began. The last of William Parr's wives did not, however, immediately succeed the other in that position of trust. For twenty-seven years after the death of the first marchioness it was Frances Lady Cobham, her sister-in-law, who strove with much success to fill her place.

One knows of no comment from Lord Cobham upon the death of the wife who had contributed so much to his advancement and with whom he had lived for almost thirty-two years. Perhaps one can read a desire to honour a last promise made to her in his acquisition in May 1594 of the next advowson of the hospital of St. Cross; Dr. Dee, her physician, had long wanted the wardenship of it, and may have exacted from the dying baroness an assurance that her husband would get it for him upon the death or resignation of the incumbent.[17]

The baron was sixty-four when he became a widower for a second time; he had not, except during a few months in 1559, been without a wife since he was eighteen. He

had perhaps become too accustomed to living with a woman of strong character to do without one, for at some time in the last four and a half years of his life he is said to have proposed marriage to a lady who rivalled the queen herself in individuality. She was Magdalen Browne, the widow of that Viscount Montague who had performed with Cobham before the Court of Edward VI in their youth, who had officiated at the baron's induction into the Order of the Garter in 1585, and who had entertained the Court at Cowdray in 1591.[18] The viscountess lost her husband on 19 October 1592, only six weeks after Lady Cobham died. Montague had remained faithful to Rome, but he was a discreet man of great integrity and he managed to do so without betraying his queen. His wife, not burdened by public responsibilities, was less careful of her position, and her house at St. Mary Overy,

> from the first beginning of persecution by Queen Elizabeth was a common retire for priests coming in and going out of England, and also a refuge for such as resided in London; wherein also one priest had his residence, to minister the sacraments to such Catholics as resorted thither.[19]

Presumably the priest-holes at Montague House were kept secret from the government, for William Browne, a committed recusant, was granted a special favour by the Council as late as 26 April 1591 because he was "brother to our verie good lord the Lord Mountague".[20] Left a widow and her own mistress at the age of fifty-three, with eight children to protect from the blandishments of Anglicanism, Lady Montague dispensed with circumspection. "Whiles she was present either at mass or sermon," wrote her chaplain,

> she did not conceal herself for fear to be betrayed by some false brother, as it sometimes happeneth in England, but she did serve God publicly in the sight of all, that by her example she might encourage all; and, when she walked abroad, by her beads or cross which she used to wear about her neck she professed herself to be a Catholic, even to whatsoever heretical beholders; and so manifest was her religion that scarce any in England had heard her name who knew her not also to be a Catholic.[21]

It was this matron, whose "gown in summer was of say, in winter of cotton, on which, to keep her shoulders from cold, she commonly wore a coarse Irish mantle," whose "smock was of rude and coarse linen such as noblewomen would esteem a penance to wear," who "never in her life dressed her head or adorned herself by a glass, which

in a woman, especially noble and a courtier, may be esteemed as a miracle",[22] whom Cobham is supposed to have courted when the elegant Frances Newton died. He made his proposal in vain, for the lady's confessor relates that elderly wooers fared ill with that would-be saint. "When," writes Richard Smith,

> being eighteen years of age and newly married, her husband was sent to that famous siege of St. Quintins, she made a firm resolution, if he should die, never to know any other man; so that we may judge of her, as St. Jerome writeth of St. Paula: 'Having once entered matrimony she never thought of other thing day or night but, the fruit of marriage being rendered, how to attain the second degree of chastity'. For her husband being dead, the Lord Cobham, a man of great estate, honour, and authority in the realm, did most earnestly seek her in marriage and offered her a very fair dowry, but she gave him so resolute a denial, that thenceforward she was no more solicited by suitors. This example is not ordinary in England in this so corrupt an age, where sometimes women of honour, after the death of their husbands, not finding others equal to themselves in dignity, do marry even their servants, or men of mean condition.[23]

One demurs at suggesting why Cobham should have wanted to marry Magdalen Browne. Only the queen herself, one imagines, would not have been outraged by such a match, for Elizabeth, perhaps impressed by the dowager's showy zeal, held Lady Montague in particular respect. On one occasion, Smith avers,

> the Lady Scudamore, a lady of her bedchamber, in her name wrote to the Lady Magdalen: 'The Queen commanded me to signify to your ladyship that she is persuaded she fareth much the better for your prayers, and therefore desireth you ever hereafter to be mindful of her in your prayers'.[24]

To the distinguished readers of Puritan divines like Thomas Tymme, however, the man who dedicated his Plaine Discouerie of ten English Lepers to Cobham in 1592 because he was "a principall piller of common wealth",[25] the prospect of the baron's marrying the arrogant symbol of papistry must have come as a shock. One feels more strongly than ever the lack of a comment from Cobham himself upon the subject. He does not even mention the lady in his extant letters, although, as his hostess at Cowdray if in no other connection, he must have known her personally. Unless Smith's statement is a libel upon the baron's Protestantism, which seems most unlikely, one can only conclude that Cobham was so securely established as an Anglican by the mid-1590s that he allowed himself as much latitude in his private life as did the queen in hers. Certainly one cannot imagine Burghley proposing to ally himself with so notorious a Catholic as Lady Montague.

Whenever it was that Cobham contemplated marrying for a third time, it does not seem that he came much into society in the months which followed immediately upon his bereavement in the late summer of 1592. On 4 January 1592/3 writs were issued for the Parliament which was to provide the queen with funds to maintain her armies in France and the Netherlands and her navy on the coasts which Philip of Spain was again threatening. The severe blow dealt to organized Puritanism by the exposure of Marprelate and his supporters had its effect upon the elections, and a Commons led for the most part by old Councillors and unusually acquiescent to the royal will was returned.[26] Dover again chose as its senior Member Cobham's lieutenant, Thomas Fane, and throughout the Ports veteran politicians kept their seats, while the new men were a quiet lot who seem to have made no great impression upon the House. Only Henry Apsley, the experienced Parliamentarian from Hastings, caused trouble which the Crown would have preferred to avoid, by participating in the religious agitation fomented by Peter Wentworth.[27] It is a little surprising that Lord Cobham's eldest son was not again returned as junior Member for Kent. Since his colleague in the Parliament of 1589, his uncle Henry, had died in the meantime, it is possible that Henry Brooke was considered too inexperienced to speak for the shire unaided by an older member of his family. His only surviving uncle, John Brooke, was returned for the third and last time by Queenborough,[28] but he had never won his spurs and could not become Knight of the Shire. The two county seats were taken by Sir Edward Hoby, Burghley's nephew and a young man who had recently had the honour of entertaining the queen at his house at Bisham, in Berkshire; and Sir Moyle Finch, a Kentish gentleman whose wife was the only child of the Brookes' and the Cecils' friend, Vice-Chamberlain Sir Thomas Heneage.[29] For Henry Brooke a seat was found at Hedon, in Yorkshire,[30] which his uncle George had represented in the stormy third Parliament of Mary Tudor almost forty years before.[31] The Constables of Burton Halsham, later the Lords Dunbar, were the dominant Parliamentary patrons at Hedon, and they were, like Sir Edward Hoby, closely related to the powerful Lords Scrope of Bolton;[32] one suspects that it was by an amicable private arrangement that Hoby was allowed to go into Kent for his seat, and Brooke into Yorkshire.

Cobham himself may not have been well enough to attend the opening of the session on

19 February 1592/3. He was once again named a trier of petitions for the British Isles on that day, but was not listed among the peers who were present when the queen addressed them that afternoon.[33] One does not hear from him before 26 March, when he wrote to Sir Robert Cecil to tell him that he was "not well disposed" and in "the physician's hands". The baron dated his letter from the Blackfriars, which he had apparently reached only a little while before: "at his coming from Cobham", he informed his son-in-law, "he meant presently to have gone to the Court:"[34] so that he may well have spent as much as half a year at Cobham Hall after his wife died. Cobham's indisposition did not last long, and on 7 April he sent the first of seven or more letters which he dispatched to his Lieutenant of Dover Castle in the spring and summer of 1593, instructing him to deal rigorously with the flood of "'Englysh and Iryshe and Scottyshe fugytyves and rebells'" whom Philip II had abandoned and who were furtively making for England after years of expecting to return home in papist triumph.[35] Despite his activity in this matter, however, the baron took no recorded part in Elizabeth's eighth Parliament, the last to which he was summoned. The baron may of course have been more active than the records show. Conyers Read says of Burghley's rôle in 1593 that "the Lords Journals are so very brief that we get no inkling of his activity. Indeed, the only mention of him is in the list of attendance."[36] Cobham, like his important friend, may have been busy in ways which the Parliamentary reporters failed to notice. The legislators rose on 10 April 1593, and when they met again four and a half years later the baron was dead.

At St. George's feast Cobham met with the other Knights of the Garter. He voted unsuccessfully for the admission to the order of his first cousin, Giles Lord Chandos; of his late wife's relative, Sir Thomas Heneage, and of five other perennial candidates, but he had the satisfaction of seeing elected the Earl of Worcester and old Sir Francis Knollys, the queen's Puritan cousin. Elected too, although not on Cobham's recommendation, were Lord Sheffield; Lord Burgh, the soldier whose eldest daughter George Brooke was later to marry; and the young Earl of Northumberland, Henry Brooke's friend.[37]

On 26 April Cobham was attending to the business of the Lord Wardenship. Writing

to Sir Robert Cecil, he told of the apprehension at Dover of a man suspected of complicity in the treasonable activities of the late Sir John Perrot, the putative son of Henry VIII. Cobham also informed his son-in-law of the progress of the wars which still devastated the Low Countries, and in so doing mentioned for the first time a man whom he must have met during his embassy to the Prince of Parma in 1588 and who was to play a key rôle in the destiny of the Brookes.[38] He was Charles de Ligne, Count of Arenberg, then attached to Parma's staff and later ambassador from the Spanish Archdukes of the Netherlands to James I; the unauthorized conferences which Henry Lord Cobham had with Arenberg exposed him in 1603 to the charge of treason by which his house was destroyed. Meanwhile, in the spring of 1593, the course of the French civil war was creating more alarm in England than that of the Dutch campaign was any longer capable of doing. Henry IV was supported by Elizabeth in his attempts to maintain himself as the first Huguenot King of France, but he was opposed by the Guisans and Spain, united in the Holy League. On 20 May, while Henry and his enemies fought desperately in Normandy, Thomas Fane sent post haste from Dover to inform Cobham that Boulogne was in need of succour and that it was already rumoured abroad that a further English force was on its way to Henry's aid.[39] The next day Lord Burghley told his son that Cobham had had dinner with him at his house in Covent Garden, and been ordered to levy 300 Kentishmen for immediate dispatch to the relief of Boulogne should the situation there require their intervention.[40] On 25 May Cobham acknowledged, in a letter to Sir Robert, the receipt of the queen's orders for raising the men, and, commending himself to his daughter, announced his intention of withdrawing into Kent until the plague in London should abate. He left with his son-in-law the management of a suit to the Crown whereby he hoped to acquire the lease of South Mimms, a manor between Hatfield and Barnet;[41] this the baron was granted in June.[42]

By 1 June Cobham was at Cobham Hall,[43] and it was probably there that he learned of Henry IV's politic defection to the Church of Rome. "Paris vaut bien une Messe." Bereft of his excuse for remaining in France, Philip II continued to interfere in its domestic issues with but desultory vigour for the next few years, and his general in the Netherlands turned once again to the prosecution of the war against the Dutch

rebels. Elizabeth, shocked by Henry's apostasy, ordered an immediate withdrawal of her troops from France, and, although her decision was later modified so that some English forces remained on the Breton coasts, operations for the removal of thousands of men from Normandy and Brittany to the Netherlands and England were undertaken at once. In Kent, where Cobham, when the international situation changed, had not yet levied the full contingent of 300 soldiers allocated to his charge in May, the authorities found themselves caught in the middle of troop movements to and from the coast. On 2 August the baron wrote to Cecil from Cobham Hall of the problems which were besetting him. "Soon Cicell," he said,

> I doo retorne vnto yow thys Letter brought me by my sonne henrye, wyche I hadde forgottene to sende vnto yow. Yesterdaye I recevyd ther LL [i.e., Lordships'] Letters for the Staye of Leveing of 133 soldeours for the wyche I toke order presently. I harttellye praye yow, remember the despache of the soldeoures, remaynyng at Rye.[44]

The soldiers at Rye were new arrivals from France; they had no permits with which to travel inland to their homes, and were causing trouble in the port. By 13 August Cobham was able to write to his son-in-law that they had been given their dismissal papers,[45] but their place was soon taken by other companies returning from the Continent. Nor was it always only pressure of business which caused the hold-ups on the coast; the more militant members of the Council, reluctant to believe that the queen was really withdrawing from France, often tried to keep the companies together so long as they could, in case they were needed again. On 24 October 1593 the Council sent instructions from Windsor to the queen's ambassador to Henry IV that he should "insist, that the King of <u>France</u> should give Leave to Sir <u>Edward Brooke</u>, with the <u>English</u> Troops, to remove to <u>Ostend</u>, which was then in Danger of being besieged."[46] Brooke was Cobham's cousin, a gallant soldier who had been knighted by the Earl of Essex during the English expedition to France of 1591;[47] he was apparently allowed to leave Dieppe and go to the relief of Ostend, where he received a wound which seems to have killed him before the end of 1593. On 4 November Lord Cobham and the Lord Admiral were at Dover supervising the reception of returning soldiers when Howard wrote a letter to the Council which reveals how far the persuasions of the war party had worked upon the queen. He and his fellow Councillor had, reported the Admiral,

> stayed the passing over of the soldiers, until Her Majesty's pleasure is further known, keeping them on board the hoys, lest they should run away.... These companies, under Sir Edw. Brook, are 800 very gallant men, and well appointed, and if once broken and dismissed, it will be long before such a number of such men can be gathered together.... Sir Edw. Brook being dangerously sick, any directions for him are to be sent to Capt. Maisterson, who commands in his absence.[48]

Howard asked that he and Cobham, having discharged their duties on the coast, should be allowed to return to Court. Back at Cobham Hall on 11 November, the baron wrote to Sir Robert Cecil about his chaplain, William Harrison, in a manner which suggests that he had recently been at Windsor;[49] he had certainly sat with the Council at Whitehall on 26 October when letters regarding the education of his sons, kept at home in time of plague, had been written to the baron's nephew by marriage, the recusant Henry Jerningham.[50] Cobham had at this time the especial favour of the queen and of those closest to her. Essex, the rising favourite, already a Privy Councillor and Robert Cecil's chief rival for the leadership of the nation among the younger generation, wrote to the baron on 6 November to tell him of Elizabeth's appreciation of his services and of the commendations bestowed upon him by Lord Admiral Howard.[51] Essex made specific reference to Cobham's activities as an observer of Continental affairs and as an essential link in the counter-intelligence system by which the English government kept abreast of Spanish intentions in the Netherlands and Portugal. Certainly a vast amount of foreign news reached the Council through Cobham's agency in 1593. There were reports from the corporation of Rye on new personalities in the French Court and on suspicious visitors to the Ports, like the little page who claimed to have escaped from the wrath of one of Catherine of Navarre's gentlemen but who was not allowed to seek courtly employment in England until Cobham had interrogated him.[52] There was a letter meant for the eyes either of Cobham or his son-in-law and written by Richard Hesketh, a dangerous fellow who entreated the queen to give him her favour while he was active stirring up Roman Catholic support abroad and at home for the royally-descended Earl of Derby.[53] There were letters from Dover about seminary priests from Douai,[54] reports on the military situation in the Netherlands from a contact of the baron's at Calais,[55] information collected from another agent at Calais by Cobham's secretary, Christopher Milles.[56] When Burghley suggested to the queen a plan whereby she might keep her troops near France without actually leaving them in the terri-

cories of the apostate king,[57] and a commission was set up to assess the possibility of stationing a force in the Channel Islands, it was Cobham who recommended the military surveyor Paul Ive to the Lord Treasurer's attention. Ive had dedicated his Practise of Fortification to the baron and Secretary Walsingham in 1589.[58] By the end of 1593 Cobham seems to have regained some of his old enthusiasm for participating in foreign espionage; on 25 November he sent to Burghley a proposal for testing the security of the fortresses which the English, as allies of the Dutch and lately of the Huguenot Henry IV, still occupied on the Continent. The baron was, however, more cautious than he had been in the days when he thought that he could precipitate a betrayal of Calais to the English Crown; in 1593 he asked for royal permission to interfere at Boulogne and elsewhere, "with such instructions as shall please Her Majesty to let me know, for in these causes I would not deal without a warrant".[59] Cobham, "till the day of his death", availed himself of the services of spies in the Netherlands, one of whom was still looking for his pay in 1602.[60]

Yet, for all the respect accorded him at Court as a senior member of the queen's Council, Cobham seems to have developed a distaste for society after his wife's death. When he wrote to Cecil, with the informality which marked his correspondence with the son-in-law whom he so much admired and liked, to thank him for preparing a chamber for him at Court in August 1593, the baron made it clear that he was going to pay his respects to the queen only because it was his duty to do so.[61] On 29 October Henry Brooke, deputizing for the baron at Dover as hoys were sent across to Dieppe to pick up troops, informed Cecil that his father's visit to Court had not provoked in him any desire to take up his old life. "I find by my Lord," wrote his son,

> that he doth not mean to return in haste to the Court. I pray you advise him not to be long absent.[62]

Perhaps Cobham visited the queen at Christmas, but if he presented a New Year's gift to her it was not noted by the keepers of the royal wardrobe and jewel house. On 4 March 1593/4 at least the baron was still at Cobham Hall.[63] In April he kept the Garter feast at Greenwich with his Companions, when Hunsdon acted as the queen's

lieutenant; voting as usual for the admission to the order of Kent, Sandes and St. John, of Sir Thomas Heneage and Sir Henry Grey, Cobham also nominated the new Lord Scrope of Bolton, whose father had been elected with him in 1584.[64] The strained relations between Elizabeth and Philip of Spain were indicated by the queen's instructions to Burghley and Howard, which Cobham conveyed to Garter King of Arms, that "the King of Spaine Armes were not [to be] set vp at this tyme."[65] It was difficult for a Knight to get leave to absent himself from the Garter festivities, but having attended them the baron seems to have returned as soon as he could to Kent. He was not idle there. A letter which he wrote to Burghley on 13 May was delivered to the post before 7:30 in the morning. In it Cobham asked Burghley whether he ought to allow a messenger from a Spanish nobleman to proceed to the queen, and he also reported the bloody capture of La Rochelle.[66] Other letters sent up to London in the spring of 1594 relate the queen's determination to send 300 Kentishmen to join the remnants of her army in France; on one occasion Cobham asked his son-in-law to send him more specific instructions about the numbers required, whether exactly 300 men or "a deduction of 10 'dead pays' in every 100 men ... 'for a band of 150 men were never levied more than 135 men complete.'"[67] When a petition was made to the baron by a man whom the Council knew as 'Malinus', apparently a foreign agent, Cobham sent the request to Lord Buckhurst to handle.[68] In other words, it would seem that the baron, while willing to continue with his duties as Lord Lieutenant of Kent and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, was doing his best to cut his attendance at Court and the Council board to a minimum in 1593 and 1594. It does not much matter whether Cobham was referring to his house in the Blackfriars or to his quarters at Court when he told Sir Robert and Lady Cecil on 29 June 1594 that they might use his lodgings in his absence.[69]

One of the things which might have made Cobham consider retiring in his sixty-sixth year was the evidence of mortality which he saw all about him. Men of his own generation were either succumbing to the weight of years and illness, like Burghley, who from 1593 onward tended more and more to communicate his advice to the queen and Council through his eminently able son, or else they were dying. One notes the absence from the lists of commissioners for the levying and transportation of troops

in the early '90s of John Brooke. The baron's brother was nearing the end of his long and inconspicuous career in the queen's service, and on 8 February 1593/4, a childless widower "sicke in bodye", he made a will by which all of his extensive lands between Gillingham and Sittingbourne were left to the baron's second son, William, with remainder to the late Sir Henry Cobham's eldest son, and then to the baron himself and his heirs. On 25 September John Brooke, whom his nephews loyally described on his tomb at Newington as a man of complete integrity in peace and of forceful and fortunate pugnacity in the wars with Spain, died, leaving no brother to survive him but the eldest of their father's ten sons.[70] Cobham yet had a sister, Catherine Jerningham, but she belonged more to his eldest daughter's generation than to his own, having been only a child in her second year when he married for the first time. She had lived quietly in Suffolk and had never had much to do with her brotherand the courtly circles in which he moved. Her husband was an impoverished gentleman who had with great difficulty managed to get their three daughters married. One of these three women had been Secretary Walsingham's sister-in-law. Another of them, Elizabeth Forth, made an unhappy match, and when her father-in-law evicted her from his house soon after her marriage she had to appeal to her uncle to protect "that small portion of marriage money which friends bestowed upon me". At first, the young man claimed to Sir Robert Cecil in 1593, Forth "promised before my good lord and uncle, the Lord Cobham, and also my lord of Buckhurst", to use his daughter-in-law better; then he resumed his abuse of her and she had finally to sue him in the Court of Requests. Evidently she went to law confident of the support of her rich brother-in-law, the recusant Henry Jerningham, and of her mother's powerful brother; as she told Cecil, however,

> I did intend to use my lord Cobham's name, because he was privy to the payment of the most of my portion, till since hearing he was not pleased I should do so, I have withdrawn that complaint, and exhibited the same only in my brother Jernegam's name and my own.[71]

It would seem that Cobham's relations with his sister and her family were not close, so that, once John Brooke was dead, the baron probably stood alone as the representative of the older generation of the Brookes. Not only the future but already much of the present strength of his house depended upon his own children and those of his

brothers. George Brooke, dead since about 1570, had left three sons, of whom Duke Brooke had remained on the fringes of Court life since the time when he acted as his uncle Henry's courier, carrying dispatches between London and Paris. Peter and Charles, his brothers, seem to have made no impression upon the world of Elizabeth, and Peter may even have been mentally incompetent.[72] Thomas the pirate had left only daughters, married inconspicuously.[73] Sir Henry Cobham's sons were soldiers, who fought the queen's wars in the Netherlands and Ireland in the 1590s, the two older youths winning knighthoods and the youngest losing his life.[74] The only other grandchildren of George Lord Cobham were the baron's own sons and daughters.

Before considering the position in which Cobham's sons found themselves in 1594, one may take a brief look at their sisters, and in particular at the second of these. Although the most influential of the baron's daughters was undoubtedly Elizabeth, Cecil's wife, it was her twin sister Frances who, as a dowager baroness, took pride of rank. Mistress of her own estate, on which for the purposes of the subsidy of 1590 she was taxed £ 4.8.10¾,[75] Lady Stourton perhaps went back to Cobham Hall when she was widowed, where she would have been joined in 1593 by her younger sister, Lady Sondes. There was probably no hope that Margaret would marry again: her insanity seems to have created in her family the very human feeling that she was better ignored, and when Lady FitzJames, the late Lady Cobham's sister and neighbour, died early in 1595, she left "to my Ladie Sysell my neece one carpett and one cochin of silke of nedleworke" and "to my Ladie Sturton my neice a halfe cannapie imbrodered with golde and syluer and two cushinns one of silke nedleworke the other imbrodered with golde", but nothing to Lady Sondes.[76] Frances, on the other hand, was a very eligible young woman, and she attracted a very dashing suitor. He was Sir Thomas Sherley, eldest of the three sons of the flamboyant knight of that name who had been one of Leicester's favourites. The younger Sir Thomas, Sir Anthony and Sir Robert Sherley made up Fuller's famous 'leash of brethren',[77] and by 1591 the eldest of them was already known for his reckless soldiering when he began to woo Cobham's daughter. Then, suddenly, the young man was discovered to be already married, and to a girl whose reputation did not bear comparison with that of the dowager baroness. By the time that the Court went on progress to Lord Montague's

house everyone knew that Frances Brooke had been shamefully deceived. The queen was furious, She threw the bridegroom into prison and turned upon old Sherley, to whom Sir Robert Cecil was commanded

> to signify Her Majesty's pleasure that Sir Thomas should make it publicly known that he cannot digest such an act of contempt to her Court, as well as wilful perjury and disobedience to herself, nor do for a son that has highly offended her, who always furthers any honourable marriage or preferment for any of hers, when broken to her without scandal and infamy. She will tell Sir Thomas her mind should he come to Oatlands.

Cecil, however, knew that the old knight had been hoodwinked into believing that the queen had approved the match which his son had made, and he also knew that Sherley was ignorant of the trick which had been played on the Brookes. He therefore took it upon himself to add a word of encouragement to the letter which he wrote. Although he could not, he said, "be so simple as not to see the injury Sir Thomas's son offered to him at Cowdray, in abusing a lady and her friends" whom he was bound to respect, yet Cecil, "seeing that he forgot his duty to his father, remembered his own wrongs no longer, and was content to write to him as he did on his son's behalf, to relieve his grief".[78]

The wronged father might be considered worthy of consolation, but the Brookes were not quick to forget an injury, and in 1594 it was rumoured that the elder Sherley was to lose one of his offices about the Court through the machinations of Cecil, Henry Brooke and the Countess of Warwick.[79] Young Sherley himself, kept in prison till 1592 and then summarily shipped off to serve in the Dutch wars, returned to Court in 1595 to find that Cecil especially, and Lady Stourton's aunt Anne, the widow of Sir Henry Cobham, were determined to keep public opinion still against him. Desperately in need of preferment, he therefore wrote on 4 September a sad little plea to Sir Thomas Heneage, to whom he told all. "I doe holde myselfe mutche bounden vnto you," he protested to the Vice-Chamberlain, whose first wife had been Lady Stourton's cousin,

> in that you wyll please to doo y^{r} best to reconcile mee vnto S^{r} Roberte Cecille and Ladye Cobhã, bothe whyche I haue myghtelye wronged in the cariadge of my marriadge. for in verye truethe I being moued wth the woorthe of my Ladye Sturtonne, and the greate honor of hir house had a desire to make her possessor of all my Loue, and thoughtes tylle Loue (whose qualitye I doubte not but y^{r} honor is acquayneted wthall) forced mee to sette all my fancies and resolutiones on another, whose Loue I

> nowe posses, yett Duringe the tyeme of myne affection vnto her I was often wandringe some time beinge shakenne wth the slaunders, shee was subiecte vnto some other tyme deepelye consideringe the inestimable woorthe of my Ladye Sturton all whyche thinges ryghtelye wayed, I hope that S^{r} Roberte Cecille and all those honorable Ladyes, who I haue thus wronged wyll be pleased rather to blame Loue then me whoe was constreyned by Loue: yett is there behinde a greater offens, whyche I wyll vnfolde vnto y^{r} honor y^{t} when you knowe yt you maye the better excuse yt; y^{t} is y^{t} beinge maryed I continued goinge to my Lorde Cobhã, whyche I assure yo^{r} honor I dyd for feare of offeendinge my father wth my Dubble Dealinge, neither durste in outward showe to him seme to leaue my first desyres tyll I had founde some good meanes to wynne to lyke the second. In whyche course thoughe I dyd verie yll yet not so badeley as some doe thynke for I neuer spake vnto that ladie of mariadge neither wolde her honorable father suffer me to doe, beynge moued by some holeye influence y^{t} I was not fyt for soche a motion. Now your honor perceiueth the depthe of my case, I hombeley beseeche you to holde soch a course as may wyn this whole noble familie once agayne to thynke me honest and I wyll euer holde those dyrecte courses and be so thankefull vnto yo^{r} honor as you shall haue no cause to be ashamed of y^{t} you shall doe for me.[80]

Sherley's poor defence of himself persuades one to believe that Lady Stourton was well rid of him. Meanwhile, during the wretched fellow's banishment from Court, the widow seems to have accepted the suit of a man of whom her father did not feel intuitive distrust. He was Edward More, a Gentleman Pensioner[81] and a widower, seated at Odiham in Hampshire and possessed of the lordships of Worth in Sussex and Hartmere in Surrey. Frances Brooke may have been married to More by 13 June 1595, when he wrote to Sir Robert Cecil of his regret that Lady Cecil could not attend some funeral or other.[82] Certainly she was his wife by 12 January 1596/7 when, on their thirty-fifth birthday, she wrote to her twin sister from Odiham two days before Lady Cecil's death, asking her to influence her husband the Secretary to interfere in the case of her brother-in-law, Charles Stourton was to be committed as a recusant, but, a posthumous son for whom his father had not provided, he was too poor to live away from Wiltshire, where his mother maintained him.[83] Apparently Frances continued to interest herself in her first husband's family long after her second marriage; as late as 16 July 1602, still signing herself in the manner of a lady who had married beneath herself socially, she was writing to Cecil about Charles Stourton's problems. "Good M^{r} Secretary," she then asked,

> vnderstanding by this bearer my brother in lawe m^{r} Charles Sturton that he is bownd to apeare at the next assises to be holden within the county of Dorset, and that he is in dought to be there, and then committed except he may in the meane time procure some meanes to the contrary and beinge ernestly intreted by him to wright vnto you in his behalf for that he was in sum sort left vnto me in charge by his brother my first husband I doe very earnestly request you good brother that you will vouch safe to wright vnto the Judges of the western cyrcute for his present

> discharge in that behalf in so doing I shall yealde my self hyghly behoulding vnto you for the same. And so with my very frindly salutations vnto your good self I take my leaue.
>
> from Odyham the xvi of July
> Your louing sister in law
> Francis Sturton.[84]

One assumes that Cecil acceded to this request, for he had his brother-in-law More in particular respect and owed much to Frances herself: as he wrote to Sir George Carew on 24 June 1602, "Sir Edward More ... is one I doe esteeme extraordinarily both for himself and for my Lady his wife, to whom you can well gess how iust respects doe tye me."[85] More also had the confidence of at least one of his wife's brothers, George Brooke informing Cecil on 7 February 1597/8 that he was sending the knight to him on business matters, "which you shall receive from him as from myself".[86] More had then just returned from a tour of duty with the army in Ireland, where he had won his knighthood;[87] he was merely "m^r^ Edw More" when he attended his father-in-law's funeral at Cobham in April 1597.[88]

By Sir Edward More Frances Brooke had her only child, a daughter, Frances, who later married her mother's nephew by marriage and, like her mother, became Baroness Stourton.[89] It was her care of a child other than her own, however, which gave the lady her influence with Secretary Cecil. When her sister Elizabeth died in 1597 she left her husband a six-year-old son of whom Cecil was rightly proud, and a little girl of three, a cripple whom he called 'poor Frank' and about whom he worried a great deal; himself deformed, the Secretary well knew what a mis-shapen person had to suffer at the gallant Court of Elizabeth. Unable to care for the little girl himself, and unwilling to leave her in the hands of servants, Cecil turned to Lady Stourton for help. A series of letters written over the next six or seven years shows how his sister-in-law responded. They are for the most part undated letters, but the time at which they were written matters less than the sentiments which they contain, and they deserve a place here. "Good Madame," wrote Cecil in the first of them,

> I can not but acknoledg, the great Fauour I receaue by your voutchsafing my request, in y^e^ behalf of this poor orphant y^e^ daghter of my deare wyfe yor louing sister, I hope you think y^t^ I am not Ignorant, what a comber [i.e., encumbrance] she shalbe to you, but I see, Loue couereth all such matt^rs^ in you, and therefore will use no further Excuse. She y^t^ is gon, was euer wont to accompt your well doing her greatest Comfort. If her Sowle dyd know, this requitall of yours, and cold be capable of more Ioyes, her hart wold be pleased to think who hath her. But seing we

> y^{t} are in y^{e} world, must look to things wherof we are capable, I must only now Indevour to assure you, y^{t} my hart is discharged of a great care, who cold pforme to her in this time of her youth, no office necessary for her Education, being a Man, and wholly dedicated to y^{e} publick seruices, w^{ch} made me neclect all howsehold cogitations. To you therfore Madame, do I giue yt, w^{ch} God and your sister gaue me, and as I will pvyde her some pence for her marriadg purss, (If she live to it), so will I for y^{e} rest, while you will please to let it be so, comitt and comend her wholly to you, my one [i.e., mine own] whom I must euer Loue and Succor, both for her sake (with whom I concluded all wordly [sic] contentment) and for your owne treu kindnes in this, w^{ch} easeth my mind of so great vexation.
> Yo^{r} nephew Will is a gladd man to acompayny his sister, when he leaueth you, my brother will tell you whyther he wandreth.[90]

So Frances Cecil went down to Odiham, where she was soon strong enough to be put into the hands of a bone-setter who might do something for her deformity. In October 1599 her aunt assured Cecil of her co-operation in anything regarding the child which he might undertake. "Good brother," she affirmed,

> I might iustly hate my self if I should forgett to Loue the children of so deer a sister or the father of those children who hath geuen so grete testymonye to the worlde of his loue towardes the mother and them. Wherfore as there Compayne and weldoing shall euer be one of my gretest Comfortes so will I neuer ceasse to wishe your gretest happines. And so Comitting youe to him that geueth that and all othere blessings I rest your most Louing sister.[91]

By the end of the month a man called Hugh Bailey was writing a self-satisfied note to the Secretary. "The charge which I haue taken in hand for the cure of m^{res} ffrauncys Cecill," he said,

> that shee should go well & pfect of her self, now thankes be to god shee is well & out of her instrumentes. My bargayn was when I tooke her in hand to receyve for the curing of her one hundreth poundes. I desire yo^{r} honor therefore that I may be satisfied.[92]

Cecil apparently insisted on seeing his child for himself, and back in London after paying a hurried visit to Odiham he wrote gratefully to Lady Stourton of what he had found there.

> My good sister. Because my last sight of my poor Girl hath giuen me bett^{r} hope at her recovery then euer I had, (for w^{ch} next vnder God I can acknoledg no greater Meanes then your great care and kyndnes towards her,) I haue ben y^{e} more willing to consider further what might do her more good then heretofore I was, when I dyd less hope in her Amendment. For w^{ch} purpose hauing vnd^{r}stood of a very honest man, y^{t} hath don very great things to many yong Gentlewomen, and of all others y^{t} are knowen, hath y^{e} best way to make bodys [i.e., bodices] to couer deformitys with out any painefull thing to be worn, I haue intreated him to take pains to come downe to see her, w^{ch} I pray you giue him Leaue to do, wherby at his Retourn he may informe me how farr he thinks he can do any thing to her. This being all for this Time y^{t} I can say but to yeld my brother and you my afectionate thanks, for y^{r} last Intertainment, I end Your louing broth^{r} in law at Com.[93]

Evidently the clever craftsman thought that Frances's deformity could be concealed. "My good Sister," reads Cecil's next letter to Lady Stourton;

> Because I know ye fashion of ye Court and London, is to lagh at all deformitys and yt I wold be exceeding glad, that somewhat were don to couer the poor gyrls Infirmity, before such Ladys and others as here will find her out wch shold see her in so ill case as she is, I am bold to intreate you most ernestly to be pleased yt she may wth her mayd be sent vp to me, on Monday next of whom I will dispose for some 2 Months Time, vntill He haue don somewhat for her, to put her outwardly (though not indead) into some better plight, for I wold not haue ye q. see her till somewhat be altered, for any thing. She shalbe in a friends house of mine privatly, where nobody shall know, within a mile of London and then I will retourn her to you, as to her best freend and so I end.[94]

Perhaps the little girl's trip to London was delayed for a time, but at last, in September 1600, she set out for the capital. With her went not only her maid, but her aunt, who wrote to announce their coming to Cecil. "Good brother," said Lady Stouton after dispatching another man whom the Secretary had sent down to see his daughter,

> the man whom you sent hether hath sene your daughter and doth promise very great amendment vnto her and therfore god willing frank Cicille and I wilbe in London within theis three wekes that he may goe in hand with her for while I liue she shall neuer Lack both my Care and prayer to doe her good for if I could forget hoth her good mother and her self your owne kindnes towards me hath deserued much more then I doe and soe I most kindly Comend me vnto you.[95]

How long Frances Cecil stayed in London cannot be discovered; perhaps the queen did not give her the reception for which Cecil hoped, for it was not until 1604 or 1605, when the Secretary was Viscount Cranborne, that his daughter was said to be coming to live with him permanently. As she passed out of her aunt's care there were some strictures expressed upon the education which she had received. Cecil's redoubtable old aunt, the Puritan Lady Russell, disliked Lady Stourton's continued association with her first husband's family. Indeed, the late Lord Stourton's mother had suffered throughout the 1590s for her suspected harbouring of Jesuits, until the queen in 1601 granted her special immunity from "any farther proceeding againste her";[96] and Elizabeth Russell was not a woman to be restrained by the lack of evidence against Lady Stourton herself from impugning her character. "Hering that yr L. daughter Frances is come to London not to returne," the dowager wrote to her nephew,

> as my Lady Cope telleth me I being lothe that eny of my Fathers Bludd sholde be infected w^t^ bad religion wherof Her Awnt my La Sturton hath ben suspected yf it please y^r^ L: to have her w^t^ me I will vse her as I woold myne owne and fare as my self doth. She shall see here no bad example of life but w^t^ me may learne to know god and what soever it shall please yo^r^ L: to appoynt. This is all I haue to say.[97]

One hopes that Cecil did not commit his daughter to the household of the stern old woman who signed herself "Y^r^ L: owld Awnte Elizabeth Russell Douageer"; one knows at least that he paid little attention to the accusations made against his sister-in-law, for Frances Brooke continued to correspond with him in her familiar, affectionate way, and her husband was the only person in the Brooke family circle to whom the Secretary, when he died in 1612 laden with honours and power, left anything in his will.[98]

If one cannot be sure when Lord Cobham married his widowed daughter to a man whom his other, infinitely more important son-in-law could treat as a friend, one can say with more confidence how the baron's three sons were placed in 1594. The second of them, William, accompanied the Earl of Essex on his expedition to Normandy in 1591 and there received, on 27 September, one of the knighthoods which the earl conferred with a liberality which annoyed the queen.[99] Apparently Sir William Brooke paid a visit to England immediately after winning his spurs, for one finds him first referred to as a knight on 29 October, when he was at Dover, awaiting passage back to France.[100] He was at Court in January 1592, arriving there with others of Essex's returning gentlemen in time for the Twelfth Night festivities;[101] two months later he was granted a lease of land.[102] Sir William was, as a soldier, his uncle John's favourite nephew, and in John Brooke's will of 8 February 1593/4 the young man was left extensive property near Newington; the improvidence of his heir no doubt explains why the old gentleman's will was proved on 26 September 1594, the day after his death.[103] Meanwhile, by a tripartite indenture of 12 June 1594, Sir William's father had assured to him a valuable estate near Leicester; called variously New Park, Bird's Ness or Bird's Nest Lodge, and Frith's Park, the house and lands there brought in £ 100 a year.[104] Provision having been made for him to establish a younger branch of the Brooke family, Sir William presumably resumed his career as a courtier, "for which," as Francis Thynne had observed in 1586, "he seemeth by the gift of nature to be created." An indication of his apti-

cude at least for picking up those choice perquisites, wardships, is provided by a list of guardians appointed by Lord Burghley between 1594 and 1598: in it Brooke figures three times, his wards being young gentlemen from Gloucestershire, Surrey and Kent. Brooke's charge in his home county was one of the Sulyards, a family with which he was connected through the Jerninghams and the Stourtons. Compared with his three wardships, his elder brother's two seem surprisingly few; Henry Brooke was given the custody of a young man from Dorsetshire, by Lord Cobham's means, and of another, from Bedfordshire, through the good offices of Lord De La Ware.[105]

Of Sir William's social life one hears only of his attendance at a rather lugubrious occasion, the marriage of Thomas Posthumus Hoby with Essex's widowed sister-in-law on 9nAugust 1596. Hoby's mother was the dowager Lady Russell, whose strictures upon Lady Stourton have already been noted. As dour a Puritan then as later, she asked her nephew Cecil and his wife to attend the wedding at her house in the Blackfriars as guests of honour,[106] but the entertainment which she offered them included neither music nor dancing. As the bridegroom himself observed, it was intended to "seek only to please the Beholders with a Sermon and a Dinner."[107]

Just as Cobham provided for his son and namesake, so the baron allocated a part of his property to his youngest son. To George Brooke on 1 January 1582/3, "tunc quarti filij", was granted the reversion of the whole of his father's estates in the Isle of Grain.[108] By his uncle John's will George received nothing, but Lady FitzJames, his mother's sister and the woman who was depicted in the revised family portrait of about 1570 holding George in her lap, left him executor and principal heir of her estate when she died on 20 February 1594/5. Her will was contested by her brother, Brooke's uncle Sir Henry Newton, but two years after her death it was declared valid and the young man came into some property at Malling in Kent and into all of his late aunt's personal estate, accumulated in the course of two prosperous and childless marriages. He thus became his elder brother Henry's creditor for a sum of £ 20, owing to Lady FitzJames by her nephew when she died, and owing still to her heir when Brooke died in 1603.[109]

Since George Brooke's infirmity prevented him from seeking his fortune in the

wars, the baron's youngest son seems to have decided to take advantage of the credit which his family had at Court. The sinecure which he sought was a prebend in the cathedral at York, or, failing that, a lease of one of the archiepiscopal properties of that see. Old John Piers, with whom the Brookes would have been associated when he was Bishop of Rochester in the mid-1570s, was the Archbishop of York of whom the queen first asked a favour for George Brooke. An accommodating man who had often been useful to Elizabeth in salving her conscience in matters of state, Piers raised no objection to granting a layman a stipend out of the revenues of his see, but on 28 September 1594, before anything had been done for Brooke, the archbishop died,[110] and the man who it was recognized would succeed him was less acquiescent to the royal will. On 10 December the Council informed Matthew Hutton, a bishop known to be a favourer of Puritanism, that the queen had granted to the Dean and Chapter of York her congé d'élire. At the same time they raised the matter of Piers's intention to favour George Brooke, and by doing so made it clear that Elizabeth's endorsement of Hutton's candidacy for the archbishopric was not wholly free from conditions. "Before his death," wrote the Councillors,

> it pleased her Majesty (as by a copy of a letter here enclosed you may perceive) to request at his hands a favour for the younger [sic: youngest] son of the Lord Cobham, which he would willingly have performed, as by his own letter may appear, in answer of a letter to the Lord Treasurer, if God had not taken him out of this life; and that to the full number of years required, in regard that the site and manor and demesnes are so long out of lease as a grant for shorter time would have been little use to the gentleman. These things having thus passed, her Majesty hath commanded us seriously to recommend this request of hers before any other things required at your hands, both for her favour to the gentleman, as especially for the remembrance of her [sic: his] mother whom she esteemed so dear in her life time. We pray you therefore to consider of this copy of her Majesty's letter, which you may in case of doubt compare with the original, which you may easily recover out of the hands of some of the Archbishop's executors, and after you have determined with yourself what course to take (the matter having been thus far dealt in already), to certify by your handwriting unto us what measure the gentleman shall find at your hands; wherein we will not farther enlarge ourselves, but leave it to your good consideration how fit it shall be not to deny her Majesty his satisfaction.[111]

Hutton was not a man to be so coerced. Claiming to be averse to the alienation of Church lands, and claiming too that he was not at all eager to become Archbishop of York ("this is the third time," he said, "that, without my suit, her Majesty hath preferred me in the church far above desert or desire"), he replied to the Council

in a letter written from Bishop Auckland, his residence as Bishop of Durham, on 29 December. "Concerning a lease to be granted of Marston to young Mr. Brooke," Hutton daringly declared,

> I did indeed hear of such a motion made unto the late good Archbishop, but I did hear also it did very much grieve him, and it is thought that it did no good to his health. And surely, if I should yield unto it, I think verily it would be a mean to bring my hoary hairs with grief unto my grave. I did never hurt any ecclesiastical living in my life; I think it not lawful; and I am persuaded in conscience that I ought not to leave any living in worse case to my successor than my predecessor did leave it unto me.

These were words which the queen was unlikely to swallow, especially from a man who was not himself free from suspicion of leasing ecclesiastical property to his own children.[112] Even Hutton's reiteration of an offer which he had previously made to Elizabeth, whereby he meant to give her certain lands in Durham which he held personally,[113] apparently did not palliate his refusal to grant a lease to George Brooke. He was elected archbishop, but not before promising that, if she would allow his plea of conscience, he would work out his own method of benefiting the young man. From Whitehall on the evening of 16 April 1595 Robert Cecil acknowledged the receipt of "a lettre from your Grace concerning my brother Brook",[114] which must have been the compromise suggested to him by Hutton earlier that day in a note written from the archbishop's town house in fashionable Cannon Row, Westminster. "According to my promise unto the Queen," Hutton affirmed,

> I am ready to pass a lease to the use of young Mr. Geo. Brooke for 21 years or three lives; but because there is nothing near out of lease, I was and am still content to pass into his use an advowson of some prebend without cure, either the next that shall fall or such as you shall choose, with most humble thanks to her Majesty that it hath pleased her to forbear to urge me to do anything against my conscience.[115]

On these promissory terms all parties apparently agreed, and Brooke settled down to await a vacant prebendary's stall at York.

It was the spring of 1600, three years after his father died, before George Brooke finally got a prebend from Archbishop Hutton. He had apparently lost one in 1598 through neglecting to confirm it to himself when it was offered to him, and Hutton had subsequently refused to allow him the Archdeaconry of York, which the archbishop pointed out was "no prebend".[116] Then, in December 1599, Dr. Thomas Byng died. A distinguished Cambridge official, Byng had for more than thirty years held

the prebend of Strensall,[117] and Brooke's friends were quick to lay claim upon his place. Cecil wrote to the archbishop from Richmond on 26 December:

> After my very harty commendacions to your Grace. Where her Majestie hath ben informed of the deathe of Mr Do. Binge, who in his liefe tyme enioyed a prebend in this churche, which nowe is become voyde by that accydent; fforsomuch as it pleased her Majestie to use her recommendacion unto your Grace for a lease to be made to my brother-in-lawe Mr George Brooke, whereunto you dyd not assent, but in lieu thereof you made hym a graunt of the next prebend that should fall voyd and be in your Grace's dysposycion, I have thought good to let you knowe that her Majestie (uppon this occasion) dothe expect from you a confyrmacion of that which you have begonne and intended towerds the gentleman, being one of whom her Majestie maketh extraordynary estymacion, bothe in regard of the affeccion which she hathe heretofore borne to his parents, and the partyculer quallities and good partes wherwith himself is quallyfyed. Thes being all I have to wryte unto your Grace for the present, I take my leave.[118]

By this time, however, Brooke was angling for a richer prize than Hutton had to offer him, and after so much trouble the archbishop found that he extended the prebend to the royal favourite in January 1600 only to be met with silence from both Brooke and the Secretary. On 30 March he wrote to Cecil, asking why he had not heard from him. "The prebend of Strensall in this church," said Hutton in perplexity, would be for Brooke,

> together with a mandate to the Chapter to give him real possession by his proctor ..., the best prebend in this church, the second at the least. Having a dispensation, he ... [need] only to procure three sermons a year, which the farmer of his house in York is bound to discharge. It is thought well worth 200 l. by year, if it were out of lease; and, leased, about one hundred marks [£ 66.13.4] de claro. Her Majesty is to give a dispensation because he is not clericus.[119]

The reply to the archbishop did not come promptly, but when it did it was in the hand of Brooke himself. Courteously yet with a casualness which must have surprised Hutton and irritated him, Brooke on 8 May announced his intention to refuse the prebend after all, and to let it go to Walter Whally, a contemporary of his at Cambridge and a Fellow of Pembroke College.[120] "Right Reverend Father and my very good Lord," he wrote,

> I accompte my selfe most bounde unto your Grace, nexte unto her Majestie, for bestowing upon me the prebende of Strensall. But for that the same is so small a thinge, and lyes so farre from me that I cannot take that benefit by it which otherwise I mighte, I am therefore determyned to resigne my interest unto Mr Whaly, a Bachelor of Divynitie, and a gentleman above all exception both for his learneinge and conversation, for whome I humbly pray your Grace's favourable allowaunce, and that you wilbe pleased to admitte him thereunto; which I shall take for as greatt a favour as if I were to holde it myselfe. And for that I knowe you prize more my frendes' thanckes

> then myne owne, I assure your Grace they will also holde themselves as well satisfied. So, recommending the same to your Grace's good consideration, I humbly take my leave.[121]

Brooke's confidence in 1600 seemed well founded, for he was indeed a man whom the queen might be expected to favour extraordinarily. It was, however, to be a favour which had its rewards in ephemeral reputation and standing only, not in terms of money and land. It would seem that even as early as 1594 Brooke embarked upon the career in which he was to waste his cleverness, sour his mind and bring himself to a premature and disgraceful death.

If much of George Brooke's influence was, as he admitted to the Archbishop of York, derived from his relationship with Secretary Cecil, Cobham's eldest son was by the mid-'90s a man of some authority in his own right. In 1594, when George was seeking favour from Archbishop Piers, Henry Brooke was also petitioning clergymen for sinecures, but he did so, not for himself, but, in company with the queen and Cecil, for Philip Ferdinand, an Hebraist from Oxford.[122] It was Cecil's request that King's College, Cambridge, should grant Ferdinand a lease in the disposal of the college, and the queen's wish that it should give him the rectory of Fordingbridge. Ferdinand received neither, but in refusing the concerted demands of the Court the Provost and Fellows of King's showed themselves anxious to convince the queen and her ministers of their loyalty and of the regret which they felt in disappointing the royal candidate's hopes.[123] The long letter which the eminent civilian, Dr. John Cowell, wrote to Henry Brooke on 13 September 1594 indicates the deference which Cobham's son was already being accorded at that time. Incidentally, it indicates too that the modern researcher is not alone in wishing that Brooke had not followed the deplorable calligraphic example set by his father. "Your letters," wrote Dr. Cowell apologetically,

> make me think that those I received not long since in the behalf of Mr. Fernando were likewise from you, which I then took to be written from your brother Sir William Brooke. If I then mistook, I humbly crave pardon, assuring that I used the best eyes I had to read the name underneath and could not otherwise decipher it. Of the rectory (for the which it pleaseth you to commend Mr. Fernando) a very dear friend of mine is possessed, and one that next Mr. [Henry] Mowtelowe I best loved among mine equals during his abode in our house, to wit Mr. John Smithe, son to Mr. Charles, sometime of her Majesty's wardrobe, and brother to William Smith, my next chamberfellow after Dr. Fletcher's departure, so that this your request so far troubleth me that I would give more than a poor man may well spare to be honestly rid of the cause. Yourself are the man upon whom I profess myself as much to rely as upon any in the

> world, and, therefore, I assure you I will not fear to displease him rather than hazard your good favour, if the matter must grow to that point; but, in regard of that constancy you have (I trust) always found in me towards my friends, if it may please you to deal mildly with me in this cause, I shall account it none of the least of your benefits.

Cowell then went on to explain that the granting of the lease to Ferdinand was totally inconsistent with the statutes of the college, an opinion also expressed in the other letters from the collegians to the Court, and he concluded by insisting that he would not deceive Brooke "to gain the world".[124] It was a tribute to the success which the young man had achieved by his thirtieth year that one of the most distinguished sons of his old college should write thus humbly to him.

References to Henry Brooke in the early 1590s are frequent, for, although a Justice of the Peace in Kent,[125] from about the time when a lease was granted to him in July 1592[126] he was constantly at Court. Occasionally he seems to have taken upon himself some of his father's authority, as when he requested the foreign agent Gerard de Malynes to continue to direct the intelligence service which had been his charge in Spain in the time of Secretary Walsingham; Malynes was no doubt the mysterious 'Malinus' with whom Lord Cobham refused to deal personally in 1594.[127] Generally, however, Brooke's influence came directly from his position near the queen. Elizabeth used him in sending private messages to his brother-in-law and through Cecil to Lord Burghley,[128] and, thus placed between the queen and Cecil, Brooke was often instrumental in the bestowal of royal and ministerial favour. One finds Lord Windsor thanking him on 20 September 1593 for forwarding a private business transaction between the baron and Cecil;[129] on 5 August 1595 Brooke put in a good word for Mr. Charrayd in a case concerning the royal manor of Chramister in Dorsetshire, which Burghley was to hear later that day.[130] When the agent of the Duke of Wurtemberg tried in April 1595 to raise support for his master's candidature for admission to the Order of the Garter, he approached both Cecils through Henry Brooke.[131] On 18 October 1595 a gossip wrote of a man to whom the queen had given £ 25: he had been, "as I heare, cowntenanced by Mr. Brooke".[132] Even in great matters such as the bestowal of bishoprics Cobham's son had a hand. In 1596 Dr. Edward Grant, petitioning Cecil for the long-vacant see of Bristol, revealed that it was Brooke who had encouraged him to think that he had Cecil's

'great favour" and that Elizabeth was about to decide with Archbishop Whitgift who should have the appointment.[133]

Brooke and his brothers engged in the financing of commercial trading ventures in the early '90s, as one learns from a rogue called Charles Chester. Arrested by the dread criminal investigator Richard Young on 19 June 1592, and found to be possessed of "vain and papistical books, especially in the Spanish language ... pictures, beads, mass-books, pax, shirt of hair, whips and others trumpery",[134] Chester was imprisoned in the Gatehouse at Westminster. Thence in the summer of 1592 he wrote desperate letters to Lord Howard and to Cecil, protesting that he was innocent of Catholicism and claiming that many prominent people were his friends. To the Lord Admiral Chester swore that he had been "conversant most", not with papists, but "with my lord Cobham's sons that hath helped me and ventured with me in my voyage pretended to Constantinople".[135] Writing of Sir Walter Ralegh, whose "voice was small," Aubrey relates how,

> In his youthful time was one Charles Chester, that often kept company with his acquaintance: he was a bold, impertenent fellowe, and they could never be at quiet for him; a perpetuall talker, and made a noyse like a drumme in a roome. So one time at a taverne, Sir W.R. beates him and seales up his mouth, i.e. his upper and neather beard, with hard wax. From him Ben Jonson takes his Carlo Buffono (i.e. Jester) in Every Man out of his Humour.[136]

It is quite possible that among the men who brought Chester and Ralegh so memorably together was Henry Brooke. The first undoubted connection between Cobham's eldest son and that dark genius with whom his name has become inextricably linked is their appointment to a committee established in the Parliament fof 1593 for the relief of maimed soldiers and mariners. Whether "Sir Walter Raleigh", "Mr. Harry Brooke" and "Sir Robert Cecill" were already friends when they were joined in committee on 24 March 1592/3[137] cannot be established, but for precisely a decade afterward, so long as Elizabeth lived, their fortunes were never to be entirely separate. Ralegh probably won Cecil's affection and admiration in 1592, when, during the queen's first outburst of anger against him because of his marriage with Elizabeth Throckmorton, he was imprisoned in the Cecils' house in Westminster.[138] Conceivably Henry Brooke (who was, on his mother's side, a third cousin of Ralegh, who referred to him and Lady Cecil as his kin)[139] got to know the fallen favourite there, just as

Ralegh then came to appreciate the charm of Brooke's sister; for Lady Cecil the Raleghs had afterward a particular affection, as is indicated by a letter which Lady Ralegh wrote to Cecil from Sherborne on 20 March 1595/6. "Amongst many virtues it is not your least to be a comfort to the grieved," she said, referring to her lonely wait in Dorsetshire for her husband's return from sea,

> and so are you to me with your honourable and kind letter, whereby you fulfil the desire of your absent friend, as also bind me for ever to honour you. Sir Walter's remembrance of me to you at his last departure, shall add and increase, if it were possible, in me more love and dear respect to him.... I thank my honourable mistress for wishing me near her to do her service and to enjoy both your companies; I oft wish it with her, else is an hermit's cell most fit for me and my mind at this time, being for a time disserved from him that I am.[140]

Less than a year later Elizabeth Cecil's death was to call forth from Ralegh one of the rarest pieces of Elizabethan prose on the subject of death and bereavement. It seemingly took some time before Lady Ralegh expressed much affection for Henry Brooke, but eventually she did so, and made her house one in which he received the warmest of receptions. By 1594 the foundations of that friendship had been well laid, and one finds Brooke putting himself so far out for Ralegh in that year that the Bishop of Salisbury had to tell his "Honorable good Frend" that he was using his influence in a bad cause. Bishop Coldwell had lately been Dean of Rochester and had perhaps then known the Brookes well as his neighbours at Cobham; such familiarity would account for the abruptness with which he wrote from Salisbury on 10 April 1594. "Good Sir," began the bishop,

> I receavyd your Lettres written in the Behalf of Sir Walter Raleigh, concernynge Burton, Holmes and Upcorne; whearin, as I wolde be verie readie to satisfie your Desyer, yf I knowe which waye withoute open Wronge to the Sea for ever; so hath Sir Walter, of all Men livinge, least deservyd the same, in Regarde of his Unkyndnes and Wrongs doone to me, which I can not redresse bye anye good Meanes. First, he hathe abatyd the Rent 6 l. bye the Yeare lesse then ever was payd before: He layeth uppon mee the Payments of all Fees for doing his Busynes within those Manoures. I never coulde yeat receave mye Rent reservyd in anye due Tyme to paye the Queene; and even nowe he owith mee a good Parte of the Rent due at Michaelmas laste. Whereas I am to have soone to have twenty Marks [£ 13.6.8] for Knowledge Money, due to everie Bishopp immediatelie after his Consecration, he hathe taken yt up from mee, and I can not get a Penye thearof.

Coldwell went on to recite Ralegh's misdeeds, and to say finally that he would, for Brooke's sake, lease the manors to the queen and let her do what she would with them. For himself he would take no further risk by sub-letting to Ralegh; "the evil

Reports, that I beare for hym," he told Brooke, "and his evil Usage of mee, doe make mee in good Faythe weare of all."[141] Whether Ralegh got his manors does not appear, but that Brooke rejected the bishop's indictment of his friend's reliability is evident. As the sixteenth century entered its last phase, the brilliant adventurer from Devon and the heir to the barony of Cobham grew ever closer together.

Thus it would seem that, if William Lord Cobham hoped to retire from some of his more onerous duties about 1594, he need not have done so unthinkingly. His children were well advanced in the world, his younger sons courtiers and his eldest son not only a courtier but an associate of the most promising men of the new generation. If the queen could dispense more and more with Burghley's personal attendance upon her, communicating with her Spirit, as she called him, through Robert Cecil, there should have been little reason why Cobham might not also turn over much of his authority and care to Henry Brooke. Yet things did not turn out that way. Although the year 1594 was not a particularly momentous one, it was marked in February by the trial and condemnation of Roderigo Lopez, the queen's Jewish physician, who, having served in Burghley's secret service, was supposed to have turned traitor and attempted to poison the queen. Of Cobham's opinion of Lopez's guilt nothing is known, although on one occasion at least the baron placed at the disposal of the physician the means of sending to one of his agents at Calais the queen's appreciation of the fellow's services.[142] Of Cobham's position regarding the controversy which Lopez's case aroused, however, there can be little doubt. The rivalry for power between the queen's young favourite, the Earl of Essex, and the Cecils had been intense ever since the earl's appointment to the Council in February 1593. It reached its first climax during the Lopez episode, with Essex's claim that only his insistence that the physician be examined had saved Elizabeth from the fate to which the Cecils' carelessness would surely have delivered her. Although the earl gained nothing material from slandering the Lord Treasurer and his son, he made it clear that he intended to unseat them whenever he was given the proper chance. Much of the Brookes' influence depended upon the Cecils, and one may be sure that Cobham, even if he was thinking of withdrawing from the life of the Court, would have realized how important it was not only to his friends but to his

own family that he stand by to give Burghley all the support he could muster. By the late summer of 1594 one finds him back at the centre of affairs, not relieved of any of his responsibilities but rather with an addition to the load.

* * *

Chapter VII

When Lord Cobham returned to Court in the summer of 1594, he found his son-in-law Principal Secretary in all but name. In Anthony Standen's memorable phrase, Robert Cecil was to be seen ever on his way to or from the queen, "his hands full of papers and head full of matter".[1] Burghley was fast declining and Cobham's other old colleague and sometime rival, Hunsdon the Lord Chamberlain, was also ill. Essex, temporarily reconciled with the Cecils, was working hard.

All men were preoccupied with the question of the succession. One of Cobham's first duties upon taking up again the business of a Privy Councillor was the examination of Edmund Yorke, a young fanatic whom the queen had allowed to return from exile and who, suborned by English Catholic agitators on the Continent, had plotted to kill her. "Some spoke of a poisoned arrow or rapier, or a dagger, as she walked in the garden." Yorke made his confession before Cobham and Essex on 21 August, and revealed that the object of the regicide was the setting up of the Earl of Derby, a descendant of Henry VII, as king under the protection of Spain. Had Yorke and his associates, one of whomwas a priest whom the two Councillors also examined and who was the namesake of Cobham's steward, Richard Williams, failed in their attempt to take Elizabeth's life, "they were to move some rebellion in the Earl of Derby's name, though he were not privy to it."[2] There was virtually no chance that such wild schemes would succeed, but the exposure and execution of Yorke, Williams and others like them impressed upon the nobility the need to affirm their uncompromising loyalty to the queen. The aftermath of Ferdinando Lord Derby's refusal to consider the Jesuitical proposal had been his suspicious, early death, but other peers with claims upon the succession managed to remain both loyal and alive, and the queen's enemies had soon to turn to a foreigner in their search for a candidate for her Throne. Throughout the rest of Elizabeth's reign, and during the few heady

months in 1603 in which the Brookes were destroyed, the Catholic claimant was the Infanta Isabel, Archduchess of the Netherlands, the daughter of Philip II of Spain and hence a descendant of John of Gaunt.

Cobham's connections with the Netherlands through Calais were valuable to the government so long as the Jesuit Holte and his associates were determined to infiltrate their agents into England. Even the redoubtable Richard Topcliffe, the lawyer whose unsparing efforts to extract information from Catholics made his name a byword for cruel efficiency, admitted the excellence of the baron's contacts. On 11 February 1594/5 Topcliffe sent to Cecil a recommendation of a young man who, sent to him by Cobham,

> came to his lordship from Brussels, of purpose to give knowledge, amongst other priests, of his own brother, come to England, a priest (with condition to have his brother's life saved), and what rancour he found in the hearts of Holte and others towards her sacred Majesty and his native country. [Topcliffe] never found anyone he had a better liking to, or more trustworthy to live in the company of Father Holte, [Sir William] Stanley, Jacques [an Irish priest in Flanders], and that rabble of traitors. He served at Brussels as an attendant of Holte and Stanley; he asks that he may have but twenty crowns, or what can be gotten. [Topcliffe] durst adventure 100 l. of his head, he shall earn a better recompense.[3]

Indicative of Cobham's influence with Topcliffe, who ruled almost absolute in that sinister world of police cells in which great ministers were reluctant to interfere, is a request made to the baron on 8 October 1596 by one of Cecil's agents. A suspected Catholic had been committed to the Marshalsea on Topcliffe's warrant alone; the Council had had nothing to do with his arrest. "Sick and without relief" in prison, the man could be useful to the intelligence service if released, and so the agent asked Cobham to bring it about.[4]

By 1594, however, the baron's contacts with the Continent were in danger of being broken, for Calais, in which Englishmen and especially the house of Cobham continued to take a particular interest even though the town had been French for almost forty years, was threatened by the Spanish forces which still remained in Henry IV's territories. In September it was rumoured that Henry and Philip might be coming to terms with each other, and Burghley, who distrusted the apostate French king, no doubt questioned M. de Beauvoir la Nocle about his master's intentions when the ambassador dined with him, Cobham and Howard at Covent Garden late in the

month.[5] Henry did not make peace with Philip, but rather, in January 1595, declared open war on him. This development seriously disturbed the English system of communicating via Calais with the Antwerp markets, for couriers were henceforth required to make their way from London to the Flemish metropolis through the United Provinces. On 15 February the postmaster at Antwerp, Charles de Tassy, wrote to Cobham to suggest that the baron ask the Governor of Calais to allow letters still to pass through that port, notwithstanding the French ban on "commodity and traffic" with the Spanish Netherlands, "as well for the merchants as for the poor couriers, who have no other means to provide subsistence for their wives and children".[6] A month later, having received de Tassy's letter, Cobham wrote from the Blackfriars to Cecil that it was his "poor opinion" that a restoration of the ordinary postal service would be advantageous to the queen, who "might often be advertised of the actions there".[7] Calais still seemed to the baron to be an essential link in England's contact with the Continent. As late as 22 August Henry Brooke was able to learn from some merchants who were in London on business that the town was "well and in security"; the young man was worried, however, that the carelessness of the French governor was endangering Henry's hold on Calais.[8] That winter the Spanish moved up to its walls, and in mid-April 1596 the fortress fell. It was to remain in Spanish hands until 1598, so that Cobham, like his father before him, died in the disturbing knowledge that the Narrow Seas had come under the control of the enemy.

While acquainting himself with the topical issues of Jesuit plots and Franco-Spanish relations, Cobham in the autumn of 1594 had to take over some of the duties of Henry Lord Hunsdon. Hunsdon, a bluff soldier who had once thought that he might be given Cobham's Lord Wardenship, was not particularly suited to the ceremonious rôle of Lord Chamberlain in which his cousin the queen had cast him, and when he fell ill he seems to have relinquished some of his authority in the management of the royal household. Arranging quarters for the courtiers who followed Elizabeth on her progresses and visits to private houses was a complicated and exasperating task for which only the prestige of the Chamberlainship could in any way compensate. Yet Hunsdon would not have been required to resign his title when he was relieved of the

duties of his office; Cobham seems to have been called Lord Chamberlain during his predecessor's lifetime, but one assumes that technically he was merely a lieutenant. Whether the baron was responsible for the staging of the Christmas entertainment at Court at the end of 1594 does not appear; Hunsdon was again signing letters under his formal style on 24 February 1594/5,[9] and continued to do so intermittently for the rest of his life, whenever he emerged from his recurrent bouts of illness. One can be sure only that Cobham was acting for him in November 1594, when, on the eighth of the month, Burghley's secretary begged Cecil to see what he and his wife could do to forestall the queen's proposed visit to him. "I am scared," wrote Henry Maynard from the Strand,

> with a message that hath been sent to me from Clapham by a man of mine that I have left there, that one of the Guard hath been at my house this day to see it, signifying her Majesty's meaning to drive there on Thursday next in her remove hither. If there be any such speech (as I hope their [sic] is not) I beseech you be a means to alter that purpose. For I may truly say to you I am not yet certain whether I shall agree for the house or not, the executors of D. Clarke, from whom I have my interest, and those of his widow, being in question about the same. I doubt not, by Lord Cobham's favour, being now the director of these removes as Lord Chamberlain, and your good means in such sort as you can best devise the same, but to be rid of this fear.
> P.S.-- I doubt not but my lady will put to her helping hand herein. But if there should be no remedy, I must disclaim from being owner of the house.[10]

No commission appointing Cobham to deputize for the Lord Chamberlain survives, but an impressive document issued by the queen in the spring of 1595 shows officially that he may be included in a distinguished list of peers, those who, with Leicester and the Marquess of Northampton, acted as the Sovereign's lieutenants at various chapters of the Order of the Garter. The commission, signed by the queen and therefore presumably the original, was once in the baron's hands and now is preserved in the Bodleian Library; it reads thus:

> Elizabeth by the grace of God Queene of England ffrance and Irland defender of the faith To our trustie and right welbeloued Will^m^ Lorde Cobham knight and companion of the most noble Order of the Garter greeting. Forasmuchas We for diuers causes us mouing may not be present in our parson at all the Diuine seruices, and other the Ceremonies to be don and executed this daie being the Eve and Vigile of S^t^ George for the celebrating of the said Order, neither at some tyme tomorowe which shalbe the daie and feaste or the next daie after in the morninge That is to saie the xxij^tie^ xxiij^tie^ and xxiiij^tie^ daies of this present Moneth. We do therfore name ordeine constitute and appointe you in our

absence to be our Lieutenante for that purpose Geving vnto you full power and authoritie to do and accomplish all and everie thinge and thinges at all and everie of the daies before named, wch to our Lieutenante in this behalfe belongeth and hath ben accustomed. Willing and by the tenor herof comaundinge all and everie the companions of our said order, and officers of the same and all others to be to you in the executing of this our authoritie obedient and attending as shall apperteine. Geuen vnder our Seale of our said order at or Pallace of Westmr the xxijth daie of Aprill 1595. In the xxxvijth yeare of or Raign.[11]

The queen's choice of Cobham was evidently made at the last minute. There are two contemporary accounts of the ceremonies performed on Tuesday, 22 April 1595, in the course of which the baron enjoyed the most pompous position which he ever filled, and they indicate that the royal commission was not addressed to any specific Knight until the day itself. Cobham had been on his Kentish estates while preparations for the feast were being made over Easter, and "did not arrive in London much before St. George's Day".[12] These accounts are full of rich detail and deserve to be quoted liberally. The first is a record made by an official of the order, headed "1595. AR 37. Eliz: Feast of ST. George at Whitehall":

The 22 of Aprill the Queenes Maty: at Westm' on Tewesday in the Easter weeke All thinges prpared viz: Ires made longe before to the 4. Knightes absent signed by the Q: Maty: by the meanes of Sr John Woolley chancellor of the Order & a Bill was deliu'ed to him before for the Note of the Stalls voyde and for the Lieutenante lately past with a Cõmission written by the Clarke of the signett for the Lieutenãte: which onely was that 22. of Aprill to be signed adding therevnto the name of the Lo: Cobham the Coppie whereof appeareth: & the Originall his Lopp: required of Garter to be deliu'ed to him.

At the hower accustomed the said 22th of Aprill all the Knightes assembled into the prsence Chamber and the Sou'aigne came & proceeded to the great Closett & there held a Chapter for the appointing of her said Lieutenant, the Cõmission beinge read by the Chancellor & deliu'ed to the said Lord Cobham lowely vpon his knees by her Maty: and so he arose & [she] went into the Oratory leaveing the Lieutenant to take the Oathe of Doctor William Wickham late Bishopp of Linc: now BPP of Winton & prelate of the said Order who had his Robe & was brought to the prsence of the Lieutenant & there vpon his knees made his Oath read by the Registrer & kissed the Booke held by the Ussher of the Order Mr Boyer called the black rodd and soe departed all the Knightes downe to the Chappell by the narrow Stayers & makeing their obeysance came to the Stall of the Sou'aigne the Lieutenant first stood before the same. After his entry & obeysance hee went vp to his Seate, where was a Cushion & then the Lord Salsberrye [sic: Winchester?] made reu'ences & tooke his place.[13]

The other account was made by the emissary of the Duke of Wurtemberg, whose interest in the ceremonies was piqued by his desire to see his master admitted to the order. It has already been noted that Henry Brooke had undertaken to approach Burghley and Cecil on the duke's behalf; the German envoy himself spoke to Cobham. As he told Wurtemberg.

> When Mylord Cobham arrived, I had myself announced to him. He, however, requested for special reasons which he kept to himself, that I should not call upon him; but he promised to leave nothing undone and with all diligence and earnestness to labour for Your Grace in this matter.[14]

Cobham knew that Elizabeth was not prodigal in bestowing honours, especially the Garter, and that he could promise to urge the duke's suit without ever being blamed for failing to achieve it. Wurtemberg's rather pathetic attempts, first to win the Garter from the queen, then to have the honour confirmed when it had been tentatively granted, were to amuse the Court for years and, perhaps, to echo in Shakespeare's Merry Wives. Hans Jacob Breuning von und zu Buchenbach, however, had high hopes of Cobham's success in his master's cause. His report to the duke was therefore designed to impress upon him the splendour of the society into which he might expect soon to be admitted. "When we arrived at Court," he wrote,

> we were led by Sir Henry Neville, who never left our side during the whole of the subsequent proceedings, into the Presence Chamber. The Knights of the Garter gradually assembled till there were thirteen in all. Their names follow in the order in which they afterwards walked in procession and seated themselves at table.
> 1. Mylord Cobham.
> 2. Mylord Hunsdon.
> 3. Baron Burleigh.
> 4. Baron [Howard of] Effingham.
> 5. The Earl of Essex.
> 6. The Keeper of the Privy Purse [Sir Francis Knollys].
> 7. The Earl of Northumberland.
> 8. The Baron de Burros [Burgh of Gainsborough].
> 9. The Baron Chefel [Sheffield].
> 10. The Earl of Wurstel [Worcester].
> 11. The Earl of Cumberland.
> 12. The Baron [sic] Shrewsbury.

The German then proceeded to describe the habits in which the Knights were so resplendently dressed. Of the things which they wore, he observed,

> the usual articles of attire, the breeches and doublet, were for the most part of silver cloth and other material. Over this they wore a red velvet gown which hung down to their calves. This gown was girded with a broad gilt belt, from the front of which tassels of gold and silk depended. Over this gown they wore another long cloak of fig-brown velvet which trailed somewhat upon the ground. Both cloak and gown were lined with white taffeta or silk. Over the fig-brown cloaks they wore slung across the shoulders a special tippet in old Franconian style, of the same stuff and colour. On one side of this tippet was a round hole, lined with white. Round this hole in embroidered letters was the motto, 'Hony soit qui mal y pense.' These tippets were similar to those worn by the Venetian nobility or by the town-councillors of Siena or by the rectors of the university of Padua. There they are styled Liripipium. Over the very long fig-brown cloaks they wore a rather broad gold, enamelled, bejewelled collar resting upon their shoulders and having large rings like those of the Golden Fleece. Suspended from the collar is a medallion of St. George of fair size,

> and round this in enamelled letters, 'Hony soit qui mal y pense.' On their heads they wore little black bonnets and atop of these a white plume. On the left thigh they wore the Garter like a girdle, on which were embroidered in pearls and precious stones the words quoted above. Each of them bore a gold dirk or rapier.

The picture presented by this description may be compared for accuracy with the striking portrait of the Earl of Nottingham ("Baron Effingham", as Breuning von Buchenbach called him in 1595), which now hangs in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich.[15]

After telling how the Knights appeared to him as they walked from the chapel back to dinner, the duke's observer described the munificence of the feast. One suspects that it was to a less costly meal that the note in Elias Ashmole's records of the order refers; if "Lord Cobham made a feast"[16] of such proportions as that which the German saw, the baron paid heavily indeed for the honour of representing his queen. "Her Majesty," the account continues,

> returned to the Presence Chamber, where was the most splendid array of all meats imaginable that were to be had at this time of the year and from beyond the seas. No expense was spared. There were three long tables laid and prepared. The table at the top of the room stood under a splendid canopy of cloth of gold. It was the table at which the courses are carved and served up for Her Royal Majesty, and to wit, with the same ceremoniousness in her absence as when she is present. This is done even when no one sits and dines there. At this table sat this time Mylord Cobham all alone, who at this festival had to represent the Queen. He was also served, and waited upon exactly as if Her Majesty had been present in person.

One gets one last glimpse of Cobham, seated proudly in isolated splendour above the rest, receiving their homage:

> The Knights sat down to the banquet at one o'clock and rose again between four and five o'clock, after two Anglican clergymen in the middle of the hall had made a low obeisance and then offered up a short prayer. This had also been done before the meal. Before leaving the room all the Knights bowed with due reverence before Lord Cobham.[17]

Conyers Read fails to note that Burghley was able to attend the Garter ceremonies in April; he says that the Lord Treasurer was at Theobalds at the end of that month, and that by 6 May he was back at Covent Garden, too indisposed by illness and the pain of the gout to get out of bed. By June, however, Burghley was better and by July he was remarkably fit again, and working hard.[18] Cobham wrote to him from London on 3 May, sending him news of affairs in Italy and "a catalogue of Englishmen dispersed in many places", and asking for "word of his good health".[19] The two old

friends were to see much of each other in succeeding months. Cobham was in London throughout July, arranging with his son-in-law the dispatch to the Continent of yet another intelligence serviceman;[20] taking with Burghley, Heneage and Fortescue the account of the Master of the Jewel House before that office was turned over to the brother-in-law of his niece Catherine Jerningham in August;[21] and writing to one of his deputies in Kent, his friend Sir John Leveson, regarding the payment of the county militia.[22] One is reminded of the Edwardian days in which Burghley and Cobham must first have known each other by the endorsement which the Lord Treasurer made on a document on 27 July: an exemplification of the enrolment of the will of Henry VIII, dated at Westminster on 14 February 1546/7, the document bears the notation in Burghley's hand, "27 July, 1595. This was sent to me by ye Lord Cobham ffrom Mrs. Ashley, wiff to Sir Tho. Asshley."[23]

In August Cobham went down to his estates, taking his friend with him. On the ninth Thomas Screven wrote to Thomas Lake, Clerk of the Signet, to ask his help in delivering to Anthony Standen a buck which Cobham had bestowed on him,[24] and on the twentieth Burghley himself, evidently in high spirits, told his son that his messages from Court had interrupted his sport at Cobham Hall. "I and Lord Cobham were disposing ourselves on horseback," he said, "but changed on receipt of your later letters. We have been hunting a stag."[25]

Cobham was also interested in the West Indian voyage of Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins, in which Burghley was a heavy investor, so that the two men may have waited eagerly together for reports of the departure of the expedition from Plymouth in mid-August. Although a private venture, dependent for its financial success upon the interception of the Spanish fleet which bore precious plate across the Atlantic from the New World, Drake's undertaking had the queen's support, and much delay in the dispatch of the ships was caused by Elizabeth's insistence that Sir Francis promise before he left port that he would bring back within six months the seven men-of-war which she allowed him.[26] This time limit had almost expired when, on 28 January 1595/6, Henry Brooke wrote to Cecil from the Blackfriars that his father had received word of Drake's safe return to Plymouth. "What you hear thereby he prayeth you to send him word," said Brooke, revealing Cobham's interest

in the success of the voyage.[27] Unfortunately the baron had been misinformed: on the very day that this letter was written Sir Francis died at sea, far from home. Hawkins too had died, just after the English fleet anchored off Puerto Rico in November, so that the venture of 1595, instead of bringing new wealth to Burghley and his associates, cost them the lives of their most stalwart defenders by sea.

Cobham's August holiday was over on 22 August, when he returned to London, but a feeling for the outdoors lingered with him for a day or two. "If you make account of a Barbary hawk," he wrote to his son-in-law on the twenty-third, "a good friend to me will present you with one; I pray you let me know your answer." Cares of state, however, had impinged upon his lighter mood as soon as he set foot in the Blackfriars. His son Henry had talked with a merchant whose servant, returning from the Netherlands to London, had been brought before the Governor of Calais and begged for six lasts of powder, to be delivered to the garrison on the understanding that the ammunition would be paid for within six months. The man had refused to consider the request, demanding cash payment or nothing at all. The merchant, when his servant returned, had spoken with Sir John Fortescue and given the impression that Calais was desperately in need not only of means of warding off ta Spanish attack but also of victuals.[28] The Court was soon buzzing with rumours that the fortress would fall. Cobham seems to have lost no time in getting to the bottom of them. "Yesternight at my return to London," he wrote to Cecil on 23 August,

> I had speech with the merchant upon whose speeches this bruit is grounded, and find that his servant was dealt withal for certain lasts of powder in trade of merchandise; for the which if he would help him he would put him good security; neither do I find that he made any report of want of victuals [or] of any distresses that they were in. Only that the peasantry of the country were in great fear and repaired near unto the frontier towns.[29]

Cobham could not stay long in London in the late summer of 1595, because, as he informed Cecil on 6 September, the training and mustering of troops in Kent began on 11 September. Having written to Leveson from London on 25 August about the soldiery,[30] the baron was at Cobham Hall when he notified his son-in-law of the imminent commencement of the autumn manoeuvres; among the muster-masters whose appointments he recommended and secured was Thomas Wyatt, grandson of the Marian rebel.[31] Another of Cobham's relatives also took a prominent part in local military affairs

at this time: the late Sir Henry Cobham's second son, already Captain John Brooke, on 8 October took charge of sixty-eight of the 135 men whom his uncle's lieutenants had raised for the service of the queen in France.[32]

By early October the baron was at Court at Richmond; he perhaps left his married daughter at his country house, for on 22 September Cecil was informed by a servant that he had "sennt iij tymes to my lo. Cobhames house but there canne not learne any thinge how my la: dooth since her going to Cobhame".[33] Writing to his eldest son on 9 October about the arrival at Dover of a Mrs. Broom, whose husband was going on government business to Ireland, Cobham announced the queen's intention to move to Somerset House in a week's time and from there to Whitehall on 18 October.[34] Evidently the baron's constant attendance upon Elizabeth was required at this time, for his friend Sir Thomas Heneage, the Vice-Chamberlain, was dying and the management of the Court was severely disrupted. The Lord Chamberlain was himself then in good health: it was Hunsdon who informed Cecil on 19 October that Heneage's "looks are again very ghastly and his speech fails:"[35] but it is possible that it took the endeavours of both lords to substitute for the work done by the man who had served them both so well as deputy. Whatever the reason why he was needed so urgently at Court, Cobham sent post haste to his son-in-law on 25 October to explain that, while he had gone down to Cobham Hall for a day or two, he would do all he could to hurry back to Richmond, "as he would be right sorry that her Majesty should be displeased with him".[36]

Back in London the baron was associated with Lord Buckhurst in the unpleasant duty of relieving Sir Michael Blount of his Lieutenancy of the Tower. On 27 November the two Councillors wrote to Cecil that, while they had agreed in their conferences at the Blackfriars to accept the task, yet,

> considering the importance and weight of the matter concerning the lieutenant of the Tower and the placing of Sir Dru Drury in his room, we are to pray you to let her Majesty understand that we cannot without special warrant either remove the now lieutenant or place any other in his room. And therefore we must crave sufficient warrant in that behalf, the matter being extraordinary and of so great weight; and if we should begin to enter into examinations of the matters, and finding ground to proceed against him, omit it because we have no warrant, it might prejudice greatly the service. Therefore we have forborne to deal in the examination of the witnesses until you shall move her Majesty that we may

> receive order by warrant from her Majesty to remove and restrain the now lieutenant and place in his charge Sir Dru Drury, or such as her Majesty shall make choice of. For we are of opinion, although her Majesty's commandment is sufficient warrant for the restraining of Sir Michael Blount, yet how we may adventure to commit the charge of the Tower of London unto any person without her Majesty's special warrant in writing, we think it might have a dangerous consequence; neither do we think that any would undertake the charge in that sort, upon our bare words, without special warrant from her Majesty.[37]

Elizabeth's ministers had, by the example of William Davison in the matter of Mary Stuart's execution, been taught the dangers of doing her will without ensuring themselves against her subsequent dissatisfaction. Within twenty-four hours Cecil had got his father-in-law the required papers from the queen; one was a letter informing Blount of his dismissal and arrest for "'lewd behaviour'", another authorizing Drury to receive from Hunsdon, Cobham and Buckhurst "the keys of our said Tower, with all the further charge that shall be delivered you".[38]

Before Christmas Cobham had to leave Richmond, and the letters which he wrote from his house in the Blackfriars suggest that he did so without taking formal farewell of the queen. Apparently he went home in the midst of the Earl of Essex's attempts to stir Elizabeth to do something to check the advance of the Spanish forces in both the United Provinces and Normandy. The earl was as impatient with the queen as his step-father Leicester had been about her refusal to interfere positively on the Continent; in 1595 he wanted troops sent, ostensibly to protect the Dutch port of Ostend, actually to stand by to come to the aid of Calais. His attitude was that of the Lord Admiral, who, when a Spanish invasion was threatened from Dunkirk in 1593, had written in desperation to Cecil, "'I look that Bowlyne will be gone and after our Islands [in Zealand], and peradventure Calys too. We are very negligent; God amend it; we are ever too late.'"[39] Cobham had not been unduly excited about Dunkirk, nor did he succumb to war fever when Essex wrote to him late in 1595 about the rumour that Ostend was being threatened. Cobham's reasoned reply is indeed worth quoting. "This evening late," the baron began on 10 December,

> I received your letter with the other enclosed, which maketh mention of the coming down of the 8000 men not far from Dunkirk with artillery and other munition of war, and that it is for the siege of Ostend. It is proper to every commander to be jealous of his place, and in time to seek to have everything necessary to the defence thereof, and to advertise what he heareth of the enemy's proceedings and preparations. But, my good lord, let the time of the year be considered, the seat of the country adjoining to it, and that there is no wood to be had nor place

> to lodge a camp but in the sandhills, and all desolate; besides her Majesty commanding the Narrow Seas, and that Ostend is a place always to be succoured by sea with men and victuals in despite of the enemy, which caused the Duke of Parma to raise his siege from it: in my opinion it is not likely, especially considering the opinion they have in France, that they mean to succour La Fere. Yet I wish that all their wants were supplied (if they have any), which being performed presently might be a means to alter any further resolution, if any be. Such advertisements as of late I have received from Calais, I send you enclosed, and for the better and true knowledge how their actions pass on the other side I have presently [sent] over to Calais a messenger, with a letter to the governor and other my friends, to know as much as may be. Her Majesty's ships being in the Narrow Seas will, I hope, look carefully to the descent of any Dunkirker, as that they shall not dare to attempt to land and take prisoners; and yet I can not say but that it is feasible, and therefore I have given warning. It were necessary that my Lord Admiral wrote to Sir Henry Palmer to prevent by sea. I pray make my excuses to her Majesty that I came so suddenly from the Court. I was enforced so to do to take physic, which being done I will not fail to do my duty.[40]

Cobham's letter was courteous enough, and for other reasons, notably his collaboration with Burghley before leaving Court in an attempt to bring the queen to decide a property matter which Essex had long wished to have settled,[41] the young earl ought not to have been offended by it. Yet Essex was prone to regard any lack of warmth for his causes as evidence of opposition to them, and he was stung by the baron's refusal to acknowledge that a Spanish success at Ostend would imperil Calais. His bitterness increased when Calais did in fact fall to Spain in April 1596. When Cobham was dead Essex therefore did not hesitate to use against the late Councillor's son the tepid reply which had been made a year before to his proposal that the Spanish be confronted with an English force. On 16 March 1596/7, during the heated contest between the younger Lord Cobham and Sir Robert Sidney for the Cinque Ports, the latter's man of affairs had no difficulty in bringing Essex to approach the queen with the following objections against the reappointment of a Brooke to the post:

> When the great Invasion was threatned from Duncarke, the litle Assistance that then was giuen by the Lord Warden.
> The Nearnes now of Calais, and the smale Help your Lordship found in the last Matter of Calais to come from the Warden; theirfor very fitt for the Safety of the Places, her Majestie wold please to comitt it to a Soldior.[42]

Cobham was no doubt aware of the dangers inherent in corresponding with Essex on military matters, and he took care that, while one secretary wrote his letter of 10 December 1595 to the earl, another should make a copy of it. This copy the baron enclosed in the note which he sent to his son-in-law that same night. "If urgent

causes for my health had not caused me to come from the Court," Cobham told Cecil,

> I would not have come so soon away, and so I pray you let her Highness know. Upon the receipt of my lord of Essex's letter and yours I presently wrote a letter to the governor of Calais and other of my friends to be truly informed of the enemy's proceedings, and what the governor thinks of these forces now assembled. I mean to-morrow to procure one to go into their camp, if it may be.[43]

So ended the year 1595, in which Cobham had enjoyed much of the prestige of his seniority among the queen's ministers and had yet served with a vigour which would have become a younger man. He was sixty-eight in November 1595, the junior of Burghley and the octogenarian Sir Francis Knollys, and, possibly by a year or so, of Hunsdon. Buckhurst was probably slightly younger than he, but Buckhurst was not a veteran minister as were Cobham, Burghley, Knollys and Hunsdon. They had held senior offices of state since the queen's accession. By the end of 1596 only Cobham and Burghley were to remain, elder statesmen whose league with each other had begun long before the new magnates at Court could remember.

Cobham's last recorded act in 1595 was the issuing of stringent instructions to Sandwich on the conduct of local government: backed by an order from the Privy Council that the town should obey the Lord Warden's directive, Cobham on 13 December ordered the men of Sandwich to fill up the ranks of their thirty-six Common Councillors and to elect twelve more, "of the discreeter sort of commons", so that no "freeman of the vulgar sort ... shall have voice or power to intermeddle, save only to hear and see for better experience," in the affairs of the town.[44] The baron's first public duties in the new year also entailed the dispatch of letters to the provinces. Sitting in Council with Burghley, Hunsdon, Essex and others at Richmond on 18 January 1595/6, Cobham helped to draw up a plan whereby Northamptonshire might continue to fill its quota of victuals for the army without exacerbating the mild famine from which the county was suffering.[45]

In February the baron became involved in the affair of Thomas Arundell, a gentleman from Wiltshire and the brother-in-law of Essex's friend, the Earl of Southampton, whose services to Rudolf II were rewarded on 14 December 1595 with the title of Count of the Holy Roman Empire. Elizabeth took her subject's acceptance of a foreign honour as a personal affront, and upon Count Arundell's return to England undertook

to teach him, as he said, that "'nemo potest duobis dominis inservire.'" From Richmond on 7 February Cobham, who surely knew that the Cecils would be pained to hear that the queen meant to punish their friend, wrote to his son-in-law. "This morning, after eight of the clock," he said,

> Mr. Michael Stanhope brought me this message from her Majesty, that I should write unto you to speak to your father in her name that he should send and find Thomas Arundell to let him know that she is much offended that he hath presumed to take any dignity from the Emperor without her privity, and that his lordship do require to see the patent that he has, which when he has perused, he may detain, and, as it shall seem good to him, to commit him either to his lodging or to the Fleet, until her pleasure be further known.[46]

Arundell was placed under house arrest and for two months pleaded with the queen to recognize his new dignity and to give him precedence as an earl. On 15 April he learned his fate: he was neither to be regarded as a nobleman nor to be released from confinement. Writing the next day to Cecil, he expressed his gratitude for Burghley's public acknowledgment, "in presence of Lord Cobham and others", of the affection which their house felt for him, but he also implored that both father and son consider the injustice which had been done him.[47] The Cecils could do little beyond securing his release; so long as Elizabeth lived, Arundell remained a commoner.

Cobham seems also to have been concerned in the case of another courtier who suffered from the queen's displeasure in the spring of 1596. This was the Bishop of London, the brother of the Cambridge poet who had been a friend of Maximilian Brooke. On 4 April Dr. Fletcher begged Cecil to help him to the opportunity of recovering Elizabeth's favour by preaching before her four days later, on Maundy Thursday. The bishop knew that "of late she named him to Lord Cobham and others," but since that time she had spoken favourably of Bishop Young of Rochester.[48] Fletcher had not long to worry about Elizabeth's attitude to him: two months later, still out of favour, he died, and soon the coldly efficient Bancroft, the colleague of Whitgift, Cobham and the other exposers of the Marprelate movement, was in his room.

By April 1596 Cobham would not have had much time for courtly suits and intrigues. When he attended the Garter ceremonies on 23 April, this time as an ordinary Knight,[49] the baron was taking time off from an important series of meetings which

was being held in "a little pleasure house in the park" at Greenwich. This was the Anglo-French treaty conference, the result of the fall of Calais to the Spaniards. Headed by the Duke of Bouillon, the French negotiators first met Elizabeth's ministers on 20 April and for a month thereafter discussed with them the feasibility of England's increasing its military and financial aid to France in return for Henry's assurance that he would not make peace with Philip II and leave the queen alone to face her enemy. Five English Councillors represented Elizabeth, but Cobham, Cecil, Hunsdon and Sir John Fortescue seem merely to have provided a dignified background against which Burghley played out the last great act in the magnificent performance of statecraft which was his public life. Professor Cheyney's careful account of the peace conference, which culminated in the signing on English terms of an offensive and defensive treaty on 14 May, shows that Cobham contributed nothing memorable to the discussions.[50]

Notably absent from the negotiating board was Essex. The young earl had won the admiration of the French during his expedition to Brittany in 1591, and Bouillon and his companions remarked upon the queen's failure to include him among the commissioners. Actually Elizabeth at the time of the Frenchmen's arrival had her hands full merely restraining Essex from setting out on his voyage to Spain, to take vengeance on Philip for the siege and capture of Calais; she had no intention of allowing her headstrong young favourite to meddle in the conference at Greenwich. Meanwhile Essex and Lord Howard were preparing their raiding fleet down on the coast, quarrelling with each other over the command of the expedition and waiting for the queen to give them permission to sail. Between 1593 and the time of his death Cobham is known to have attended only one session of the Court of Star Chamber, that "schoole of Englaunde to punishe all fraude & practises";[51] the occasion was the sentencing on 29 April 1596 of a sailor named Smith. Smith was spreading a story about the embarrassing lack of co-operation which the two commanders were displaying; according to him,

> the Lord Admiral's 'shippe beinge searchte by th'erle of Essexe & openinge divers barrelles, wherein he supposed to haue bene gunpowder, he fownde ashes, duste & sande, & therevpon he Called him Traitor, and so theye Came bothe to the Cowrte, & there th'erle of Essexe & th'erle of Cumberlande before the Queene tooke the Lord Admiralle by the Berde & sayde "ah thou Traytor" ....'

the story may well have been true: the old lord and the young one were resorting to every device to discredit each other: but it did not do for ordinary seamen to say so, and Cobham and his peers sentenced Smith to what seems today a horrible punishment. He was

> 'to loose one of his eares vpon the pillorie at Westminster, the other at Windsor, to be whipped, & to haue a paper one his heade Contayning the wordes, & imprisoned duringe pleasure, & fined 20li, wch showlde haue bene farre greater but for his baseness, beinge a peasante & a boye.'[52]

Soon afterward the Council associated Ralegh and Lord Thomas Howard in the command of the fleet, in the vain hope that they would act as pacifying influences upon Howard and Essex.

At the same time the Court was rife with tales of Essex's anger against those of his enemies who blamed his mentor, the Spanish traitor Antonio Pérez, for persuading Elizabeth to send Drake and Hawkins on their disastrous voyage to the West Indies in the previous year. Gustav Ungerer has written,

> It has become evident that during a period of twenty-seven months (April 1593-August 1595) Antonio Pérez was the topic of the conversation of the Londoners and the gossip of the courtiers .... Antonio Pérez's first stage in England was a sort of triumph, whereas the second stage (April-May, 1596) was a mortification.[53]

The Cecils and the Brookes had almost alone resisted the charms of the Spaniard when he arrived in England in the train of the exiled pretender to the Portuguese Throne, and when Pérez's popularity decreased the two families took the opportunity to get rid of him altogether. It is in fact to a commentator upon the Pérez affair that one is indebted for a memorable linking together of Lord Burghley, Lord Cobham and their sons, the heirs of their positions at Court. On Sunday, 25 April 1596, Anthony Bacon wrote to Dr. Hawkins

> that the earl of Essex, notwithstanding the loss of Calais, and the presence of the duke of Bouillon, an earnest intercessor for sufficient succour to the French king, was yet firm to the design of his sea-voyage; and on the Monday following was to depart for Plymouth, and from thence to sea, being wonderfully confident of good success, and that he should be able to give the king of Spain so deadly a wound, that he would never recover it. He mentioned likewise, that tho' Antonio Perez was return'd to England, he was not likely to stay long there, as he had purposed, by reason, that he found the queen extremely incensed against him by the two fathers and the two sons, the lord treasurer and the lord Cobham, Sir Robert Cecil and Henry Brooke, who had so slandered and ill treated him, that he was determin'd either to return to France with the duke of Bouillon, and to go with the earl of Essex to sea, or to retire

into the Low Countries.[54]

Pérez, by the time of Bacon's letter, was already practically out of the political picture. The true object of the Cecilian drive to convince the queen of the unworthiness of Essex's clique was the confirmation of Robert Cecil's Secretaryship, for, so long as Cecil executed the business of that office without enjoying the prerogatives which his official appointment to it would bestow upon him, there was little that the peace party in the Council could do to check the irresponsible dabbling in state affairs in which the earl's rival secretariat engaged. Essex, well known on the Continent, had an intelligence service run by Francis and Anthony Bacon through which passed much important correspondence; indeed, the Duke of Bouillon wondered where, when the earl was off at sea, his king should send the dispatches between the French and English governments. The difficulties presented to the management of the queen's foreign policy by this division within the Council itself were serious, and would certainly become worse when Burghley died. Essex's absence in the early summer of 1596 provided Cecil with his opportunity to gain the Secretaryship and all the added weight which went with it. The earl's advisers, more politically acute than he, detected signs of acceleration in the Cecils' campaign even before the fleet left port.

A secret clause was added to the French treaty before the whole document was signed at 5 o'clock in the afternoon of Sunday, 16 May;[55] afterward the Duke of Bouillon went to the queen to take his formal farewell of her. Two days later Essex's secretary, Edward Reynolds, sent his master an account of what had been said at the interview concerning the earl's absence from the conference. "The duke," Reynolds related,

> had been told by some, who had credit, as he said, with the queen, and men of good intelligence, that she was resolved to stay the earl and the lord admiral, and the greater part of the fleet; and that some part of it should go, and be disposed for some other service. The author of this report appear'd to mr. Reynoldes from circumstances to be mr. Henry Brooke, son of the lord Cobham, and mr. Reynoldes doubted much, that if the earl's expedition should be stayed, it would be turn'd into some *** voyage, and then his lordship would easily discover the plot; and the delay of the rest of the fleet minister'd this jealousy .... The duke observ'd, that at his last audience, the queen desired, that she might receive sometimes news from him, with continuance of all former correspondence. He asked her, to whom he should address his letters, now the earl was absent? She made choice of mr. Henry Brooke, and directed, that they might be first sent to mons. de la Fontaine to be delivered to mr. Brooke.[56]

Elizabeth must have been in a mischievous mood when she directed Bouillon to send Henry IV's dispatches to her through Henry Brooke. M. Le Maçon de La Fontaine, the pastor of the French Protestant church in London and a political agent of the king, appreciated her gesture and enjoyed the prospect of diverting into the Cecilian party the intelligence which Essex had laboured to establish. On one occasion later that year, Anthony Bacon told how the little Huguenot "had that afternoon visited him,

> and at the last of himself, after the French curious civility or rather malepertness, ask'd him, Oh! je vous prie, monsieur, comment vont les petites querrelles de vostre cour? To which mr. Bacon answering with a smile, Il vous plaist demander ce que vous scaves mieux que moy, mons. de la Fontaine replied, 'Non pas cela, mais la cause de ceste mienne privauté c'est pour vous rendre la pareille, que mons. H. Brooke me manda l'autre jour en toute haste pour m'offrir son entremise au fait du pendart garçon protestant, que mons. le secretaire ne demandoit pas mieux que d'avoir quelque fondement pour solliciter la grace de sa majesté. Et pourtant, je vous prie, instruisezmoy, car je diray le tout à la reine. Ne vous desplaise ce, said la Fontaine, N'advienne que je faille tant à mon debvoir, & abuse tant vostre facilité, que de favoriser aucunement ce marand [sic: maraud], depuis que j'ay discouvert le fonds de sa meschanteté, dont l'honeste gentilhomme, tout quinaud et camus, non obstant son grand nes, estoit si sage, que de condemner soy meme pour luy en avoir parle.' Mons. de la Fontaine also intimated to mr. Bacon an earnest desire, which he had, to do his duty to the earl at some certain time and place, which his lordship should assign him out of the court.[57]

La Fontaine might laugh with the Bacons about Henry Brooke's inept attempt to oblige him, and to make a cheap joke about the Brooke nose ("the good man was quite abashed and, as it were, 'flattened', despite that big nose of his, which can hardly be called flat");[58] he might even offer to continue his services to Essex unofficially: but the rôle which Brooke was playing in the Cecils' take-over of some of the business of their private secretariat was nevertheless disturbing to Essex's men, who knew that La Fontaine, for all his protestations of friendship, was co-operating with their rivals.

The earl indeed had reason to doubt the wisdom of leaving England in 1596. Although news of his destruction of a part of the Spanish fleet and his capture of Cadiz on 22 June was received with joy and pride at home, eliciting from Burghley a splendid prayer of thanksgiving,[59] the reputation of being the first English general in history to set foot as conqueror on the mainland of Spain hardly compensated Essex for the reverse which he suffered when, on 5 July, Sir Robert Cecil was

sworn Principal Secretary. As soon as the returned fleet anchored at Plymouth the earl was made to understand that he would be given by the queen neither a victor's welcome nor an increase in favour and influence. His voyage had cost Elizabeth £ 50,000 in equipment, half of which sum Essex might have refunded had he not overlooked a cache of treasure worth £ 11,000 in Cadiz Castle and distributed among his men money and jewels worth even more. A man did not have to be an enemy to the earl to be pained by this carelessness with public funds; the Cecils, remembering the profits which Drake had brought back from his raids on the Spanish, and knowing that it would be they whom the queen would require to retrieve from the returned soldiers as much of their loot as could be found, were determined that Essex should be made to account for his prodigality.[60] By the time that Edward Reynolds wrote to his master on 9 August, the new Secretary and his friends, Henry Brooke prominent among them, had stirred the queen to extreme dissatisfaction with the whole Cadiz voyage. "The truth was," runs Birch's paraphrase of Reynolds's letter,

> that her majesty was wholly possess'd with discontented humours, which the earl's backward friends nourish'd by all means possible, suggesting, that she had been abus'd in the giving away of so rich a spoil, and extenuating the worthiness of the action to his lordship's great disadvantage; and yet attributing the uttermost to the sea-faction [Howard, Lord Thomas Howard and Ralegh]; so that these speeches, among others, had pass'd, as mr. Reynoldes was inform'd, that she had hitherto, to her great damage, been contented to follow the earl's humours; and now he had had his desire; but from henceforth she would please herself, and serve her own. Of those, who extenuated the victory, that party was one, and the chief, who sought to hinder the voyage [apparently Cecil]. And another great man being ask'd news of the expedition, answer'd, 'that there were many knights made; and that the queen should not hereafter be troubled with beggars, all were become so rich by Cadiz. But, saith he, what hath her majesty by it? She hath ships anough, and ordnance enough, and may easily have more. But where is the 50,000 l. she hath bestowed in the setting forth her navy and army to perform that service?' [Sir William] Cornwallis, H. Brooke, and some others play'd also their parts.[61]

On 10 August Reynolds wrote again, suggesting that Essex's return after only two months' absence had upset plans which his enemies had made for his total discrediting, and charging Cobham's son more specifically with malice. Reynolds remarked, says Birch,

> that his lordship's more speedy return than some expected had much crossed their designs; for their meaning was to have holden him longer in this employment, because they would have more time to work and effect their purposes for officers and counsellors. 'Their malice, continues he, worketh still, and her majesty is much incensed; which your lordship shall be more particularly advertised from others, that have the most

> secret intelligence. But honour may suffer some small eclipse for a time, but shall never lose her most glorious light, and the world doth and will the more publish and extol your worthy actions, the more that malice seeketh to obscure and oppress the fame of them. One malicious suggestion of H. Brooke I forgot in my former letter, which was, that this service was but a matter of chance: that your lordship went to seek blows at adventure without any certain knowledge: and, saith he, what if the [Spanish] fleet at Cadiz had been departed? what service then should your majesty have had, and to what purpose had your 50,000 l. been consumed?[62]

On 12 August Essex returned to Court, to face a Council which behaved more like a board of auditors than a committee welcoming home a triumphant general. By the end of the summer the earl was in that position which he was to occupy till he died, to the distress of himself and of England. To the London crowds he was and ever remained a hero, frank, dashing, brave; to his fellow ministers he was the author of faction, unreliable, petulant, dangerous. No man of mean talents could have been so many things to so many people. To one who knew him well, however, Essex was never anything but hateful. Henry Brooke saw in the earl only a threat both to himself and to that circle of government and society to which he belonged. Essex fervently reciprocated Brooke's enmity, and so long as they both lived they struggled to destroy each other. Essex and Cecil, even Essex and Ralegh, who returned from Cadiz bitter enemies, knew periods of reconciliation, but never Essex and the younger Lord Cobham. The seeds of this mortal hatred were germinating fast by the time that the year 1596 ended. Brooke had probably been less instrumental than his brother-in-law in discrediting Essex, but what he had done he had done with a lack of policy of which Cecil would never have been guilty; Cecil, moreover, was Secretary and thus too powerful for Essex openly to affront, whereas Brooke was officially nothing but the heir apparent to a barony. The earl's vengeance for the attacks of the Cecilians could only fall upon Brooke.

Essex, on his part, had incurred the other man's jealousy, for he had returned to the queen's personal favour even as he was being publicly condemned by her ministers for his carelessness of her treasure. A handsome man of twenty-nine, possessed of all the glamour of a soldier, the earl must have been far more than a match in masculine appeal for Brooke, who had about him no aura but that of a denizen of the Privy Chamber. At thirty-two he knew nothing of war and had not even received a courtier's knighthood, and as for the "good looks" which Miss Handover says "won

him the Queen's favour",[63] they are a romantic invention. No portrait of the younger Cobham exists,[64] and all that is known of his physiognomy is what La Fontaine said about his big nose. There may well be a suggestion of Brooke's fear that he was being cut off from the queen in a note which he sent to his brother-in-law on 16 November 1596. Writing from his quarters in his father's house in the Blackfriars Brooke asked Cecil to let him know whether he was wrong in thinking that Elizabeth would be leaving Richmond for Whitehall in two days' time. "If my man mistook not your speech unto him, you sent me word her Majesty would not come at all. What you hear, I pray you let me know."[65] Brooke's ignorance of the movements of the Court is the more strange because his father was by this time responsible for the arrangement of the removals from one palace to another; perhaps it even indicates that he had gone into voluntary retirement for a week or so. Soon he was to return to engage Essex in the first formal, tempestuous round of their battle for position.

Meanwhile, some of their confidence restored by their leader's return, the Essexians indulged in some private fun at their enemies' expense. One of the ministers attached to M. de La Fontaine's French church was Jean Castol, whose naturalization Anthony Bacon undertook to secure from the queen by means of the earl. Transmitting Castol's request to Essex's secretary on 12 October, Bacon enclosed in his letter a squib which the Frenchman had sent to him. Of his "entire devotion to his lordship ... 'he giveth,'" wrote Bacon,

> as you may see in the beginning of his letter, good proof by his free, pleasant, poetical jargon of his own companion [La Fontaine?], of mr. secretary, of Harry Brooke, and sir Walter Ralegh; all which have their proper marks and items therein. I refer to my lord's leisure and your discretion, whether you will present the sight of his letter to his lordship or no; who, I doubt not, but according to his honourable regard and custom for their indemnity, that honour and love him nothing near the infinite worth of his lordship's virtues, but yet more than they esteem their own advancement or safety, burneth all letters, that contain any advertisement of importance or prejudice.'[66]

It is unfortunate that Essex should have chosen to follow Bacon's discreet advice about destroying Castol's letter: one would like to know what were Henry Brooke's 'proper marks and items'. After 1596 the earl's faction did not have much time in which to dilate poetically upon his enemy's more amusing characteristics.

In the whole business of the expedition to Cadiz and its aftermath Lord Cobham had apparently little to do. Even before the conference with the Duke of Bouillon

was concluded in the spring of 1596, the baron was given an extra job to do, the niggling task of going over with the Lord Chamberlain and Lord Buckhurst the accounts of the Keeper of the Wardrobe.[67] It was perhaps in connection with this making of an audit and an inventory that Sir John Fortescue wrote to Cecil from the Wardrobe on 29 June that he was sending him "six parcels of the pearl" and that he had already sent by Henry Brooke the "'patrons [patterns?]' for the great diamond", about which he wanted the queen's opinion.[68] Conceivably related to some fault which Cobham found in the accounts was a letter which the baron wrote to Sir Anthony Ashley, a former Clerk of the Council and a follower of Essex, about the middle of May, demanding the surrender to the queen of a diamond. Ashley told Cecil that he showed the letter to a man named Langley at 3 o'clock in the morning, who apparently was in possession of the jewel. Langley at first refused to give it up, then relented and said that he would deliver it personally to Cecil; Ashley declared that he had instructed the man "in any case that he should not repair to Lord Cobham by reason I utterly misliked the phrase of the letter, doubting thereby some danger intended to us both". At 4 o'clock Ashley fled from Langley's house for fear of the queen's displeasure, and when he wrote to Cecil on 16 May he did so from "Harford Bridge near Hartley Rew", in Hampshire; there, as though out of reach of the London authorities, he dared reprove the minister for what seems to have been Cecil's refusal to be party to a swindle. "You see that yourself might by mine industry have made your choice in share with me of the gain of 2,000 l. or 3,000 l.," he impertinently pointed out.[69] Ashley's dealings in diamonds are seemingly beyond explanation. In August he got into trouble through trying to smuggle treasure from Cadiz into England,[70] and two years later he was frantically trying to explain to Cecil that his part in an illicit sale of 500 diamonds was not criminal. By then he seems to have been working for the government, and received "very gracious thanks and promises from the Queen by the means of my singular good Lord Cobham".[71] Whether there was a link between the elder Cobham's threatening letter to Ashley in 1596, and the younger lord's favouring of the same man in 1598, all in the matter of diamonds, it would be pointless even to guess without making a more careful study of Sir Anthony's evidently chequered career than the question

warrants.

Discrepancies in the accounts of the Keeper of the Wardrobe cannot have troubled Cobham unduly as the summer of 1596 began. There was the supervision by post of the levies in Kent to take up some of his time,[72] and in May the added duties which it was a senior minister's lot to discharge when one of his colleagues died. Old Sir John Puckering, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, passed away on 30 April, and when he was buried in Westminster Abbey on 27 May the chief mourners were Sir Thomas Egerton his successor, Lord Hunsdon, and Cobham.[73]

Then the baron's private life was suddenly upset by a curious episode which it is difficult quite to reconstruct. On 29 May 1596 Dr. William Lewin, Judge of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, wrote to Cobham from his house in Holywell, near Shoreditch. Lewin had been associated with the baron in the investigation of the Marprelate affair, and, as an eminent civilian, he had evidently been asked for his opinion of the legality of a "disordered and inconsiderate marriage" contracted between first cousins, one of them Cobham's "grandchild and ward". He accordingly informed the baron that it was only by canon law that the children of brother and sister might not marry, being persons within "the equall collaterall line, and second degree".[74] "By the Statute law of this realm," wrote Lewin,

> all marriages made in the face of the Church are made good and lawful which are not contrary and repugnant to the law of God, as being not within the Levitical degrees, or otherwise forbidden by God's word.

This had been so ever since the days of Henry VIII, of whose fifth wife Thomas Fuller writes:

> Of this Katherine Howard little is reported; and yet too much, if all be true, of her incontinency, which cost her her life. The greatest good the Land got by this match was a general leave to marry Cousin-germans, formerly prohibited by the Canon, and hereafter permitted by the Common law; a door of lawful liberty left open by God in Scripture, shut by the Pope for his private profit, opened again by the King, first for his own admittance (this Katherine being Cousin-german to Anna Bollen, his former Wife), and then for the service of such Subjects as would follow him upon the like occasion.[75]

Lewin therefore conditionally pronounced in favour of the union about which Cobham had questioned him. He took the marriage to be, he said,

> indissoluble in regard of the Statute, in case the manner of solemnization were not contrary to the Statute; but the parties married, and the minister that married them in the night, and without consent of his Lordship, who

> was governor of one of them, and the persons that were present at the marriage, were all punishable by law, and that in very severe manner.

Lewin advised Cobham,

> having possession of his ward, to examine him closely as to the circumstances of making and solemnizing the marriage, to see what strength the form of such marriage has, and how it may either be lawfully undone or necessarily stand and continue. 'The Earl of Bath, that now is, made an untimely marriage by night with the daughter of Sir Thomas Cornwallys, which was undone, and the Earl since married to another, to the daughter (as I think) of the late Earl of Bedford.'[76]

A fortnight later, on 14 June 1596, another letter was written to Cobham. Dr. William Mount, a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and a former chaplain to Lord Burghley, wrote as Master of the Savoy to tell the baron what was being done to punish the clergyman who had performed the clandestine marriage. The man was one Bigge, a chaplain at the Savoy, whom Sir Robert Somerville has tentatively identified with the John Bigge who was licensed to preach on 7 February 1592/3.[77] Mount stated that the chaplain had been arraigned on Friday, 11 June, at Lambeth Palace in the presence of Archbishop Whitgift, himself, Dr. Lewin, Dr. Bancroft (who was soon to succeed Bishop Fletcher at London), and Dr. Richard Cosin, Dean of the Arches and Vicar-General of the Province of Canterbury. Cosin, ironically, had in the past been accused of giving "many blank licenses, the common occasions of unlawful marriages, and," says Fuller, "the procurer herein is as bad as the thief, robbing many a parent of his dear child thereby."[78] Before these formidable judges Bigge confessed that he had indeed married Cobham's grandson to his cousin, offering as his excuse the precedents set by his fellow chaplains, John Lyly's brother William[79] and a man named Horwood, who "had married without licence as many or more than he had". The offending priest was committed to the Gatehouse "until Lord Cobham's pleasure was known"; Mount assumed that the archbishop would deprive him of his chaplaincy. Meanwhile the examinations were going forward of John Field, "a carpenter, who has been a special compounder of this mischief", and of two men who were servants to Ambrose Coppinger. The confessions of these fellows, Powell and Dugdale, were expected "to clear the substance and most of the circumstances of this unhappy marriage".[80]

What neither Mount nor anyone else informed Cobham in the extant letters about the affair was that the marriage could be declared invalid. Yet a diriment impedi-

ment must have been found, or else the young bride and groom were separated and kept so until the girl died, for in no pedigree of the Brooke family is it indicated that any of the baron's grandsons married a first cousin. Indeed, it is only because of Mount's mention of Ambrose Coppinger that one is able to identify the young man; the failure of the heralds to record the clandestine alliance, and the absence from the archives at The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy of the registers for the end of the sixteenth century,[81] prevent one from learning his name from any other source. None of Cobham's children but Frances, the daughter of his first marriage, had a child of marriageable age in 1596, and of her sons only Francis, the seventeen- or eighteen-year-old surviving child of Thomas Coppinger, could have been a ward at that time. Her three sons by her second husband still had their father alive when Cobham died. Francis Coppinger had at least ten female first cousins on his father's side, and it may be that his uncle Ambrose, a former Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and once a Member of Parliament, determined to marry one of his nieces to the young heir, rather than let one of the Brookes' friends get him. Whatever Coppinger's plans for his late brother's son, the boy's maternal grandfather seems to have frustrated them, and when Cobham died his son George succeeded him as Francis's guardian. It was George Brooke's sister-in-law (and, as they said, his mistress) whom Francis Coppinger at length married and by whom he had his heir. As late as 1602, however, the young man was described as the husband of an unknown woman who cannot have been the one who was later his wife.[82] Thus the whole episode of the clandestine marriage of May 1596 is obscure. One can only imagine Cobham's annoyance, for no letters from him on the subject survive.

The baron was at Court when Dr. Mount wrote to him on 14 June. Soon afterward Cobham went down to Kent, where his house was visited by the German prince, Ludwig von Anhalt-Köhten. In a poetic description of his tour of southern England, Anhalt wrote of going from Rochesterto Gravesend and of stopping on the way to see Cobham Hall and to admire its trappings. The prince was particularly impressed by the baron's stable. The relevant stanza in his <u>Reisebeschreibung</u> runs:

> 'Wir fügten uns zu fuss in Baron Combams Haus
> Des andern tages früh, von dannen wider aus
> Und hin gen Gravesend. Es war gar viel zusehen

> In Combams haus an zierd: Im Mahrstall' hett 'er stehen
> Viel rosse schöner art, die hielt er auf der streu,
> Es war bey ihm die Pracht, gewönlich, und nicht neu.'

Rye's translation of the last line is neat: "For with him splendour was customary and not occasional."[83]

Cobham cannot have been long in Kent before it was rumoured that the Duke of Bouillon was about to cross over to England again, to witness the queen's formal ratification of the treaty signed in May. Upon going down to Dover, however, the baron learned by a letter from Dieppe that Bouillon "was not so ready to come as it was said". Waiting there, Cobham found that in the meantime plans for the reception of the envoy had been drastically changed. The young Earl of Northumberland had been charged with the reciprocal mission of going to France to secure Henry IV's signature to the treaty, but on 13 July the earl wrote from his Sussex estates to tell Cecil that he could not undertake the embassy. Prematurely deaf and in deep financial trouble, Northumberland felt himself ill qualified to play counterpart to the splendid and witty Bouillon.[84] The queen, upon hearing of his refusal to go, ordered Cecil to give the earl Cobham's job of welcoming the French party in Kent, and to instruct the baron to proceed to Rouen. In great distress, Cobham wrote to his son-in-law from Dover on 19 July to protest his unsuitability for the mission. "It is true," he said,

> that her Majesty hath honoured me with the order of the Garter, called me most unworthy to be a Councillor, and given me credit in my country, but yet far unfit to take charge of such journey. I know my own weakness and unaptness, therefore I pray you and my lord your father so to deal with her Majesty that I may not be thought of; and surely it were an inequality for a poor baron to be sent thither, and a Duke and a Marshal of France to be sent hither.

Cobham was prepared to have the sheriff meet Bouillon between Canterbury and Dover and to escort him to Sittingbourne, "and thereabouts I will do my good will to meet with him and bring him to his lodging at Dartford, if it be her Majesty's good pleasure."[85] He could do no more. Elizabeth, who was soon to have urgent need of the baron at her own Court, evidently accepted his reasons for refusing the honour of going in pomp to that of Henry IV, and when the king signed the treaty in October his act was witnessed by the Earl of Shrewsbury.[86] The queen even relieved Cobham of the duty of escorting Bouillon to Dartford; her second set of instructions to

Northumberland was allowed to stand, and from Cobham Hall on 25 July the baron informed Cecil that his men were ready to assist the earl in receiving the envoy. Knowing that Northumberland might not be familiar with the state of the Kentish roads that rainy summer, Cobham reminded Cecil about "the coaches for the Duke, for there are none in the country to be had, and the ways are marvellous foul. It were convenient that they were sent presently away." He also told his son-in-law not to forget to have the queen send a message of welcome to Bouillon; one imagines that such a reminder was unnecessary to such an efficient man as the new Secretary.[87]

Meanwhile Cobham made a tour of the defences of north-east Kent. On 20 July a report of Spanish activities at Dunkirk was sent to a gentleman named Arthur Mills, in which the suggestion was made that "My Lord should know that six or seven boats of Dunkirk have been scouring the coast from Harwich to the northward."[88] Since Mills was a son-in-law of the late Thomas Brooke, the pirate, one assumes that Cobham was the lord for whom the message was meant. On the coast, accompanied by Admiral Sir Henry Palmer, the baron surveyed the fortifications from Dover to Sheppey. He seems also to have cast a critical eye upon the officers of the Cinque Ports, who were spending more time and money than the Lord Warden thought necessary on preparations for their annual summer assembly in their private Parliament, the Brodhull. Back in London that autumn, Cobham ordered his Lieutenant of Dover Castle to have the Portsmen set up a beacon watch against a fleet of Spanish boats from Calais which meant to harass the English coast, and at the same time he expressed to Fane his opinion of what he had seen during the tour of his bailiwick. "I thought it good also at this time to signyfye unto you," wrote the Lieutenant to the town officials of the Ports in October,

> that the right honorable our Lord Warden being advertysed of your great and superfluous expences commonly used at your generall assemblyes doth much myslyke thereof and wysheth you would spare the same for better uses.[89]

The Lord Warden had no right to interfere in the local government of the Portsmen, but one doubts that by 1596 any of the corporations would have been inclined to express resentment of his censure.

Cobham returned home in July by way of Queenborough Castle, the home of Sir Edward Hoby. The baron was probably able to relax with the young man, Burghley's

nephew and the friend of Cobham's children; a letter which Hoby wrote to Cecil later that summer suggests the informality which characterized his relations with the Brookes, for in it he spoke of waiting until Elizabeth Cecil was free of her duties at Court and might entertain him before seeing "for one short day how the city of London looketh, having not yet been nearer to it than yesterday at Cobham to visit my cousin G. Brooke".[90]

Presumably the baron was enjoying Hoby's amusing company, and perhaps dreading slightly the return to Court, when unknown to him, on 22 July, "betwixt eleven and twelve of the o'clock at night, my Lord Chamberlain departed this life."[91] Fuller tells a story of Hunsdon's last hours which indicates something of the man's character. "Three times was this Lord in election to be Earl of Wiltshire," says Fuller, evidently ignorant that it was the Earldom of Somerset which had been earmarked for the Lord Chamberlain,[92] "a Title which in some sort belonged unto him in the right of Mary his Mother," who like Anne Boleyn had been a daughter of Thomas Earl of Wiltshire; "but still some intervening accident retarded it.

> When he lay on his death-bed, the Queen gave him a gracious visit, causing his Patent for the said Earldom to be drawn, his Robes to be made, and both to be laid down upon his bed; but this Lord (who could dissemble neither well nor sick) 'Madam,' said he, 'seeing you counted me not worthy of this honour whilst I was living, I count myself unworthy of it now I am dying.'[93]

This anecdote is, like most of its kind, of dubious historicity. Yet it has, also like most such stories, an essential truth. Henry Carey was a bluff, honest man, a good soldier and a sensible Councillor. Elizabeth was to miss him greatly, for he was her nearest relative and her oldest friend; the Court was to feel the lack of his restraining influence upon Essex, for, himself a man of the sword, Hunsdon alone among the Councillors commanded the earl's respect in military discussions. Although never suave enough to be a successful courtier, he had for more than a decade presided over all ceremonies and festivities in the royal palaces as Lord Chamberlain, and to the cultural life and entertainment of Court and City he had contributed much, both as the virtually absolute licenser of plays and as the private patron of the acting company which numbered Shakespeare among its members. The death of so eminent a man could not but leave an enormous gap in the social and political structure of the England of Elizabeth's last years.

Cobham learned of Hunsdon's death the morning after it occurred, and from Queenborough, where Lady Hoby would have been mourning her father, the baron thanked Secretary Cecil for sending him the news so promptly. "I received your letter," he told his son-in-law,

> whereby I perceive it is her Majesty's good pleasure that I make my repair to the Court as conveniently as I can, having my health; which, God willing, I mean to do, giving you thanks for your courteous letter.[94]

Two days later, on 25 July, Cobham wrote again to Cecil, this time from Cobham Hall, where he was laid up. "I had been this day at the Court," he explained, "had I not been very [sick?] and out of temper, but, God willing, to-morrow, if I live, I will be there."[95] The Secretary's anxiety to see his father-in-law requires little explanation. Although the Lord Chamberlainship was a post for which only a senior courtier was qualified, Essex had dared suggest during Hunsdon's illness that it should go to his protégé, Sir Philip Sidney's younger brother Sir Robert,[96] and, "insensate proposal" though Sir John Neale rightly says it was,[97] Cecil could not rest while Essex's suit had even the remotest chance of succeeding.

At last the baron arrived at Greenwich, in time to be included in a commission "to survey the Feilds about London for Archery".[98] Then, on "Sonday the 8th of August,

> the Lord Cobham, Lord Warden of the Cinq Portes, was made Lord Chamberlain by her Majestie in delivering to his Lordship the White Staffe before her Majesty went to the Chapple in the foornoon.[99]

The baron's new office brought with it an emolument of £ 133.6.8 a year, as well as numerous perquisites, including a table at Court and a splendid livery of tawny velvet,[100] but it was no sinecure and an old man might without shame have doubted his ability to accept responsibility for the management of the queen's household and for the supervision of the world of the theatre. Only the white staff, the proud symbol of the dignity and authority which Elizabeth had accorded him for his lifetime of service to her Throne, can have made Cobham take delight in his last and greatest honour.

Because his tenure of the Lord Chamberlainship was short, and because so little is known of it that the records now preserved at St. James's Palace and in the Public Record Office do not even number him among Lord Cobbold's predecessors,[101]

one may consider Cobham's term of office fairly briefly. The baron took over from Hunsdon at a time when the City of London's campaign against the theatres was being intensified sharply. Restrictions upon the freedom of the actors had been made even when Hunsdon, protector of the most important acting company, ruled over their profession. Stage historians have made wild guesses about the way in which the former Lord Chamberlain's Men and their fellows received the appointment of Cobham to succeed the late patron; calling the baron a Puritan and an enemy of the drama, these scholars have, with few exceptions, assumed that he was feared, hated and lampooned by the men placed under his control. The groundlessness of these conjectures is discussed elsewhere in this work, as is the likelihood that Shakespeare did not intend Falstaff to be the embarrassment to the Brookes which the family's political enemies seem to have made him.[102] Here one need only recall what has already been shown of Cobham's religious position, which was that of an Anglican who may possibly have leaned rather to Rome than to Geneva in his private life, and who in public staunchly supported the Established Church. Of his attitude to the stage one knows nothing for certain, although several facts assembled by the acute William Green may not be irrelevant. Referring to the baron's patronage of an acting company of his own at least as late as 1571, Green asks whether, "unless a radical change came over Cobham, would he by the 1590's have become so antitheatrical?" He also points out that, during Cobham's term of office,

> not one piece of legislation hostile to the theatrical interests was enacted. In fact, the first decree for <u>permanent</u> suppression of a public theater was issued on July 28, 1597, four months after Cobham's death. But between 1597 and 1603 -- during the tenure of George, Lord Hunsdon, as Lord Chamberlain -- attempts to restrain the players were numerous and effective. Moreover, while it is impossible to surmise what behind-the-scenes maneuvering may have taken place, the Privy Council records show that Cobham attended few meetings of the Council between 1592 and 1596. More startling, in light of Cobham's supposed hostility toward the theater is the fact that during this period Lord Cobham was absent from every meeting of the Council at which a restraining piece of theatrical legislation was passed.[103]

One is justified in deducing little from the fact that Cobham is not known to have seen a play before his position as Lord Chamberlain made it necessary for him to do so; such negative evidence permits one to remark only that the baron, when writing those letters of his which survive, did not feel inclined to mention to

his friends anything which he had seen on the stage. Other evidence, while also negative, deserves more attention. In 1596 there was a concerted attempt made by the inhabitants of the Blackfriars to put down the theatre there, and Cobham apparently took no part in it, although the theatre was located in the midst of that conglomeration of buildings in which the baron and the younger Lord Hunsdon both lived.[104] Hunsdon himself, as it will be shown, was not so tolerant of the hubbub which a public playhouse created on his doorstep. No doubt Shakespeare's company felt the loss of the magnate who was both their official controller and their private patron, but one cannot assume that Cobham did anything to exacerbate their predicament during the eight months which separated Henry Lord Hunsdon's tenure of the Lord Chamberlainship from that of his son. "It seems more reasonable to conclude," writes Green in making the judgement with which one must concur,

> that the Hunsdons, with their keen interest in the drama, made special efforts to protect their players. But Lord Cobham simply may not have manifested as much concern with this particular problem. If this were the case, Cobham was not responsible for repressing the dramatic companies, and he has been much maligned by writers who, in erroneously equating indifference with enmity, have created their own special brand of scholarly folklore.

Moving from the general to the particular, one finds Cobham indirectly concerned with two pieces of historical material which are important to students of the theatre, and directly involved in two occurrences which marked his tenure of office and which are of less moment to the stage historian. The first document is the famous letter which Thomas Nashe wrote to William Cotton in September 1596, informing him of the intensification of the City's campaign against the actors who had lost their patron:

> Sir this tedious dead vacation is to mee as vnfortunate as a terme at Hertford or St Albons to poore cuntry clients or Iack Cades rebellion to the lawyers, wherein they hanged vp the L cheife iustice/ In towne I stayd (being earnestly inuited elsewhere) vpon had I wist hopes, & an after haruest I expected by writing for the stage & for the presse, when now the players as if they had writt another Christs tears, ar piteously psecuted by the L. Maior & the aldermen, & howeuer in there old Lords tyme they thought there state setled, it is now so vncertayne they cannot build vpon it; & for the printers there is sutch gaping amongst them for the coppy of my L. of essex voyage & the ballet of the thre score & foure knights.[105]

Related to this general drive against the players was the petition which Cobham's neighbours in the Blackfriars drew up in November against the theatre which Burbage

was planning to open in the property which Sir William More had sold him earlier that year. The leader of the complainants was Elizabeth Lady Russell, Burghley's sister-in-law, the Puritanic old termagant who carried unbated the fiery zeal of Edwardian Protestantism even into the governing circles of Elizabethan society in the last years of the queen's reign. Neighbours and members of the same social set, the Brookes and the Russells had much to do with one another, and it would seem that Cobham generally deferred to the dowager's demands. Berating his son in later years for not keeping a promise made to her, Lady Russell told the young man that "your father would not have thus acted against any of mine."[106] Perhaps Cobham's late wife had been on friendly terms with their difficult neighbour; pleading in 1600 for a royal favour which had been promised her for many years, Lady Russell told her nephew Cecil that she had once delivered a New Year's bribe of £ 30 to the queen "by my Lady Cobham, your mother-in-law".[107] It was easier to acquiesce in than to oppose the desires of the woman who signed herself "Elizabeth Russell, that liveth in scorn of disdain, malice, and rancour, fearing, serving, and depending only upon God and my Sovereign, &c. Dowager".[108] Yet, although she got the signatures of George Lord Hunsdon and twenty-nine other men, Lady Russell apparently could not prevail upon Cobham to endorse the following petition "of the Inhabitants of the Blackfriars" which she made to the Privy Council late in 1596,

> Humbly shewing and beseeching your honors, the inhabitants of the precinct of the Blackfryers London, That whereas one Burbage has lately bought certaine roomes in the same precinct neere adioyning unto the dwelling-houses of the Rt. Honorable the Lord Chamberlain and the Lord of Hunsdon, which roomes the said Burbage is now altering and meaneth very shortly to convert and turn the same into a common playhouse which will grow to be a very great annoyance and trouble, not only to all the noblemen and gentlemen thereabout inhabiting but allso a generall inconvenience to all the inhabitants of the same Precinct both by reason of the great resort and gathering together of all manner of vagrant and lewde persons, that under cullor resorting to the Playes will come thither and worke all manner of mischeefe and allso to the greate pestering and filling up of the same precinct, yf it should please God to send any visitation of sicknesse as heretofore hath been, for that the same Precinct is allready growne very populous And besides that the same Playhouse is so neere the Church that the noyse of the Drumms and Trumpets will greatly disturbe and hinder both the Ministers and Parishioners in tyme of devine service and sermons. In tender consideracion whereof As allso for that there hath not at any tyme heretofore been used any comon Playhouse within the same Precinct But that now all Players being banished by the Lord Mayor from playing within the Cittie, by reason of the great inconv[en]iences and ill rule that followeth them they now thincke to plant themselves in Liberties. That therefore it would please

> your honors to take order that the same Roomes may be converted to some other use and that no Playhouse may be used or kept there. And your suppliants as most bounden shall and will dayly pray for your Lordships in all honor and happiness long to live.[109]

A comfortable concatenation of prejudices lay behind the Puritan objections to the stage players. As John Stockwood put it, "'They ought not to be suffred to prophane the Sabboth day in such sportes, and much lesse to lose time on the dayes of trauayle.'"[110] Cobham knew as well as anyone the distracting effect which a theatre might have upon the busy industrial community contained in the Blackfriars: it had for years been one of his duties to assist in the taking of the census of the Huguenot artisans and the Venetian glass-blowers who worked near his house:[111] yet one doubts that he feared, as Lady Russell professed to do, that Burbage's enterprise would disrupt life, work and worship in their neighbourhood. Nor would the baron have considered that the danger of plagues was appreciably increased by the presence of a theatre in the Blackfriars, for in time of sickness plays, and the congestion of people which they invited, were usually forbidden. There is much shrewd criticism of Puritan complaints against the stage in a little piece of verse written many years after Cobham, Lady Russell and their generation passed away; it is perhaps, considering the absence of his name from the signatures to the petition of 1596, not too fanciful to imagine that the baron would have appreciated its point. The verse, the work of a poet who signed himself 'R.C.' and who may have been the epigrammatist Robert Chamberlain, appeared in the introductory material to Alexander Goughe's 1653 edition of The Queen, or the Excellency of her Sex, a play attributed to John Ford. Between the age of Elizabeth and the time of the Puritans' triumph under the Commonwealth, two disasters had occurred in the Blackfriars, each of them involving the destruction of a place of worship. In 1597, just after Cobham died, the parish church fell down; it was quickly rebuilt, and dedicated to St. Anne in a dedication ceremony on 11 December,[112] and to the maintenance of its priest, "the minister of the friers", the baron's son thereafter made a quarterly "Beneuolens" of 10 s.[113] Twenty-five years later, a Roman Catholic service which was being held in private in the house of the French ambassador was tragically cut short when the floor of the room into which hundreds of people had been packed suddenly collapsed.[114] It was to one or

other of these accidents that the poet of 1653 referred when, slyly noting that it had been upon a church and not a theatre that the wrath of God foretold by the Puritans had fallen, he wrote against the utter ban on plays which Cromwell's authorities had imposed. Although he could not allude slightingly to the religious forerunners of the nation's present rulers, he managed, by the strategic marking of a certain word with an asterisk, to point out in a mock-scholar's marginal gloss that "In the originall it is Puritans."

What though we dare not say the Poets art,

he asked,

> Can save while it delights, please and convert;
> Or that blackfriers we heare which in this age
> Fell when it was a church, not when a stage,
> Or that the *Presbiters that once dwelt there,
> Prayed and thriv'd though the playhouse were so near.

Details of Cobham's actual performance of his duties as Lord Chamberlain are scant. One searches in vain for some official act which would connect him with Shakespeare or Jonson. He is, however, known to have exercised his authority (ineffectually, one gathers) in a case concerning Thomas Lodge. Richard Topping, a tailor, had since the late 1580s been trying to make Lodge pay a debt which he owed him. Philip Henslowe had stood surety for the dramatist, and when Lodge fled the country the tailor went to Lord Hunsdon, asking him to make Henslowe accept responsibility for the money and to arrest him if he refused. Hunsdon, however, admitted Henslowe's claim of immunity from arrest for debt as one of the grooms of the queen's chamber, and the tailor was left unsatisfied. As soon as Cobham took over the Lord Chamberlainship, Topping renewed his efforts to prosecute. This one learns from a petition which Topping made to George Lord Hunsdon early in 1598, in which,

> In all humilitie besecheth yo^{r} good Lo: yo^{r} dailie Sup: Richarde Toppin that whereas yo^{r} Sup: about iij yeres past was constrayned to psecute sute against one Thomas Lodge for a debt of vij^{ll}; and vpwardes principall debt, w^{ch} wth Charges of lawe surmounteth xij^{ll}, the debt at the first vij yeres forborne before yo^{r} sup. attempted any sute, Nowe so it is Right Ho: That one Phillip Hinchlow One of the gromes of her Ma^{ts} Chamber, of his owne willingnes and wth intent to delaie yo^{r} supp. became Bayle for the saide Lodge and bothe vnconcianablie and very arrogantly ptesteth to spende jC^{ll} to kepe yo^{r} supp: from his saide debt, althoughe the saide Lodge affirmeth that he hathe made Henchley full satisfacon to thende yo^{r} sup: might be paide/

> vppõ these Jniuries yo^{r} sup: Complayned to yo^{r} lo. late father of Right H. memorie) by peticõn and then henchley entreated yo^{r} sup. staie, vowinge yo^{r} supp: shold be paide, neverthelesse contrarie to all honestie and equitie, ymeediatly after pcured a writt of Error for further delaye and enforced yo^{r} sup. to make his further sute to the L. Cobham late L. Chamberlaine who tooke the cause into his hearinge, and ordered the sd Henchley shold ether paie yo^{r} supp: his debt, or bringe in Lodge vppon warrant w^{ch} his Lo. granted and Henchley thereof possessed, But nothinge pformed so greatly henchley beareth him selfe of his place He therefore most humblie besecheth yo^{r} hono^{r} to extende yo^{r} Lordships releefe herein to yo^{r} sup: as to yor ho^{s}: wisdome shall seeme good and most agreeinge wth equitie/

Hunsdon's judgement was speedily and curtly given: he endorsed Topping's petition with the words, "Henchley yo^{u} are to satisfie this Petitioner in what shalbe due vnto him, or otherwise he is to take his remedie by Course of lawe against yo^{u}." The Lord Chamberlain issued his command to Henslowe at Court on 29 January 1597/8. The shrewd theatre manager, however, had his version of the story to tell. "Toppin hath made sundrie form^{r} Complaintes to yo^{r} late honorable father," wrote Henslowe to Hunsdon,

> and y^{e} late Lord Cobham•before whome in this like reasonable manner J made my excuse But where Toppin affirmeth that Lodge hath lefte sufficient in my hands to pay y^{e} debte, and y^{t} J have wilfullie refused to satisfie y^{e} same, wth pr̃tence to put him to chardge & trouble, And y^{t} therefore y^{e} Lo: Cobham did enioyne me either to pay y^{e} debte, or bringe forth Lodge: My good Lo: theis informacõns are in all pointes most vntrue, onlie this was don, ffor that Toppin suggested y^{t} J was privie to y^{e} place of Lodge his beinge (w^{ch} was also vntrue) Then Lo: Cobham enioyed me to doe my endevour to attache him, and to y^{t} ende gave me his Lppes warrant, w^{ch} accordinglie J put in Execution, but by noe meanes coulde attaine to him, for that he is (as J heare) passed beyonnde y^{e} seas, and more then this his Lpp: did not enioyne me vnto.[115]

Whether Topping or Henslowe told the truth of the matter does not appear. Lodge returned to England, and, the tailor's bill perhaps still unsettled, died in Henslowe's debt.

If one cannot more directly connect Cobham with one of the Elizabethan dramatic immortals than to show him issuing a warrant for the arrest of the improvident Lodge, one can do hardly more to prove that the baron attended any of the plays of the period. The only positive knowledge that, in his capacity as Lord Chamberlain, he presided over performances at Court is derived from a letter written to him late in 1596 or early in 1597 by one Edward Jones. Of Jones, "a common friend of Mr. Anthony and Mr. Francis Bacon", one has heard something before in this work, because it was he who, serving Sir John Puckering, tried in the busy summer

of 1592 to discover the nature of the secret work with which Cobham and his fellow Councillors were preoccupied.[116] Jones had been received into the secretariat of the Earl of Essex in August 1596, much to the distress of Essex's senior secretary, Edward Reynolds; writing of his rival for the earl's favour, Reynolds called Jones "a great translator of books, and ... preferred by mr. Waad for a special man of language," but attributed his success with Essex only to the fact that he had powerful supporters.[117] If he was the gentleman of that name, termed 'Esquire', to whom was issued on 7 June 1595 a marriage licence, Jones had matched with the widow of the late Richard Braynthwayt, a Serjeant-at-law;[118] his wife's social status and his favour with Essex may have made him feel that he was a rising man. Even men of Cobham's age and rank had no doubt to acknowledge that he seemed to have reason to think so, but they did not have to like it. The baron certainly appears to have resented Jones's presumption, and he did not restrain himself from expressing his contempt for Essex's latest creature. Thus the following letter from Jones to the Lord Chamberlain came to be written:

> You have done me some disgraces which grieve me so much as I must complain thereof to you. That which grieves me most is the public disgrace which you gave me at the play on Sunday night, not only before many of my friends that thought you did me wrong, but in the hearing of my wife who being with child did take it so ill tas she wept and complained in the place, for I came to her but to ask her how she did, and not to stay there; and you lifting up your staff at me called me 'sirra' and bid me 'get me lower, sawcy fellow'; beside other words of disgrace. All which, though I bear patiently at your hands, yet because it seems to proceed of some spiteful information of me, which I am loath should harbour in your opinion, I beseech you to give me leave to say that I know no cause why you or any other should despise me. For my birth I am indeed one of the meanest of my kindred, but yet not base, but well descended, as many honourable persons, the Lord Keeper, the Earl of Essex, the Countess of Warwick and others of good quality in the Court, to whom I am allied, do know. My education has been always like a gentleman, both here in England and beyond the seas, and such as has been so made known to her Majesty by divers of her Council, as her Majesty was pleased to know me and think me worthy to serve her, as Sir John Stanhope can witness; Sir Robert Cecil also was present when her Majesty herself named me for secretary in the French tongue.[119] Besides, my life has been honest and my behaviour respective, and I thank God I am no beggar (though the worse by 1,000 l. by means of your crossing of me.) These things I speak not in vain glory, but to let you know that I deserve not so much your displeasure or scorn. Therefore, I beseech you cancel your ill opinion of me, forbear to despise me or to disgrace me till you shall see me do anything indiscreetly or unworthy a gentleman. I could have procured many either of the Council or the nobility, to deal with you herein, and to be mediators for your favour, but it shall be needless if you will be pleased to take this in good part at my hands, which is

> meant only to remove your ill opinion from me and to prevent further disgrace, this being the greatest that ever I received in my life and most unworthy.[120]

Sir Edmund Chambers, who quotes the letter and says that the episode in which Jones was insulted must have occurred either on 27 December or on 6 February, the only Sundays in the winter season of 1596-97 when plays are known to have been given at Court, assumes that Cobham's treatment of the ambitious young man was connected with the dispute between the Cecilians and the Essexians.[121] Probably, in part, it was. Yet the Lord Chamberlain's arrogance might also be imputed to a testiness created by age, illness and grief. Cobham in his last months cannot have been in any mood for the frivolities and the petty intrigues of the Court, for he died slowly and sadly, as one must now proceed to see.

* * *

Chapter VIII

Lord Cobham was ill just before he became Lord Chamberlain in August 1596, delaying his trip to Court in answer to the queen's summons because of the need to rest at Cobham Hall. In September he was sick again, "of an ague",[1] and although he was back in harness later that autumn, attending to his new office as well as to the regular cares of the Lord Wardenship and the Council,[2] he must have ended the year in a weakened condition. On 1 November the baron had celebrated his sixty-ninth birthday. The last glimpse which one gets of him at work comes from a letter which the Irish Lord Dunsany wrote to Secretary Cecil a few months after Cobham's death. A prudent man, who began his letter by stating that he had "always been of opinion that this age is too full of hot blood", Dunsany had come to Court in December 1596 to answer charges of cowardice made against him because of his restraint of young hotheads in the Irish wars. "That most noble gentleman my Lord Cobham, late deceased," took his part, and, evidently agreeing with him that "wars are not overcome with rash fight, but by the grave and mature judgment of old and experienced captains," suggested how best he might give his detractors the lie. "He sent for me," Dunsany recalled,

> into his chamber at Whitehall a little before Xmas last, and advised me to make offer of my service at the Council table, which I did accordingly.[3]

Had the winter passed without event, Cobham's native strength might have allowed him to recuperate. In January, however, what ought to have been a happy occurrence turned into a tragedy for the whole Brooke family, for the baron's daughter Elizabeth died in giving birth to her third child, and the old man was struck down with grief. Two days before Christmas, although far advanced in pregnancy, Lady Cecil had entertained the queen at her house in the Strand;[4] a month later she was dead. Her funeral certificate, witnessed by her husband, her brother Henry and their friend, old Roger Manners, testifies to the respect in which the thirty-five-year-old woman had been held, and indicates how splendid a gathering of Elizabethan worthies could be recruited from the ranks of the Brooke and Cecil family connections alone. "Elizabeth Brooke," the document reads,

> Ladye Cycill, daughter to the Lorde Cobham, Lorde Chamberleyne of her Ma^ties housholde, and Lo: Warden of the sinque portes, Knight of the Garter, and one of her Ma^ts most honourable Privie Counsell, late wife of S^r Robte Cycill, knight, principall Secretarie to her Ma^tie, had by her said husband yssue one sonne and one daughter, viz. Wiłłm, their sonne & heire, of the age of five years & eleaven moneths, and Fraunncis their daughter about three yeares & sixe monethes, both lyvinge at this present. The aforesaid Ladye most Christianlye departed this transitorie life at her house in the Strand, on Mondaye the xxiiijth of Januarye 1596[/7]. And by her Ma^ties especiall comaundement (for that she was a Ladye of her Privie Chamber & one of the Bed Chamber) was honorably buryed as a Barones w^thin the Abbye Churche of Westminster, wheare for her was erected a fayre square hearse of foure principalls, furnished with vellvett, and garnished accordinglie w^th eschochens, watertables [projecting ledges], wordes, and pencills. The proscedinge of her said funerall was accomplished as followeth: First two conductores w^th staves to leade the waye. Then followed 50 poore women in gownes and kerchiefes. After them came the servauntes of Gentlemen, Gentlewomen, Ladies, & Knightes, in cloakes, to the nomber of 44. Then two other cundoctores w^th staves goinge before M^r Secretaries own yeomen & gentlemen in cloakes, to the nomber of 42. Then followed of the Lo: Threasor^s gentlemen and others in cloakes, 12. After them of gentlemen in gownes, both Doctors of Phisicke & Divinitie, Doctor [Lancelot] Andrewes the Preacher, M^r [Gabriel Goodman] Deane of Westminster, in nomber 17. The great baner borne by S^r Wiłłm Brooke, brother to the Ladie deceased. After whom followed Robte Treswell, Blewemantle, and Thomas Lant, Portcullis, Officers of Armes; Clarencieulx [Richard] Lee, Kinge of Armes, takinge his place next before the bodye, w^ch was borne by sixe of her own gentlemen. The 4 corners of the paule weare supported by S^r Walter Rawleighe, S^r Thomas Gorge, S^r Edwarde Dyer, & S^r George Carewe, knightes. The 4 bannor^lls borne by S^r Edwarde Hobby, S^r Edwarde Dennye, S^r Edwarde Wotton, & S^r Anthony Cooke, Knightes. Next after the bodye followed the chefe mourner, Ladye Cycell, wife to S^r Thomas Cycill, knight, one her right hande M^r Roger Mannors, one her left hande M^r Henrye Brooke, with her trayne borne by M^ris Mannors. After her followed the sixe assistauntes, viz. M^ris Jerningham [Cobham's sister], M^ris Elizabeth Russell, M^ris Eliz. Burgh, M^ris Eliz. Bridges, M^ris Anne Russell (Barrons daughters), and the Ladie Newton, one of the Bedchamber.

> After them folowed an usher, goinge before certeyne Knightes daughters; and other gentle women, waytinge women, and mayde servauntes in morninge gownes and white attyers one their heades, to the nomber of 21. Last of all divers yeomen & servingemen in coates. And thus all the mourners, beinge 220 & odd, proceeded to the aforesaid Abbye Churche of Westminster. Wheare all beinge setled, and a a [sic] psalme songe, the preacher held them an hower. The sermon ended, the offeringe & other rytes pformed, the aforesaid mourners in like order before menconed, retorned to Mr Deanes house (from whence they came) and there dyned.[5]

Tributes to the dead woman and messages of condolence to her husband poured in from Cecil's friends. All testify to the exceptional love which the couple had known. Sir Edward Hoby came to see his cousin but one look at his stricken face, as he later wrote, "dulled my senses and my lips became 'tongelesse'". Hoby had come to offer Cecil the use of his house in Cannon Row, "if for the nearness thereof to the Court it mought any ways be agreeable unto your honour to remove yourself thither from the place I know you can take no great delight in".[6] Others could not bear even to visit the Secretary's house. "If I could have mastered so myself as that I might have any ways been any comfort unto you," wrote the Lord Admiral,

> I would not have been so long from visiting you, whom, I do protest before the Lord, I do love as well as myself, but God knoweth it to be true that the loss of the dearest sister I have in respect of herself as also of you could not have grieved me more, and I know I should rather have wished that which is not fit for me to write nor speak that might have excused the cause of your sorrow. But the Lord's will must be fulfilled, and she was too virtuous and good to live in so wretched a world, and you that hath an extraordinary judgment by His gifts that doth all must with that wisdom seek now to master your good and kind nature and to think that sorrow nor anything else can now redeem it. And as she is now most assured happier than all we that live in this 'pudeled' and troubled world, so do I assure you, as long as God shall spare me life in it, there shall not any tread on the earth that shall love you better than my poor self: and I vow it to God I think none doth or can so much as I do. I would be glad to see you and when it might be to your comfort, if it were at midnight. I should be glad God send you as much comfort as he did ever send to any and to bless you and yours.[7]

From the bluff, brave soldier Burgh of Gainsborough, whose wife had provided the directors of the state funeral with a precedent enabling the queen to bury her Lady in Waiting as a baroness,[8] came a high-minded piece of advice. "What by the comfort of true friends sufficeth not to counterpoise your greatest loss," wrote Lord Burgh,

> or what in your private estate and fortune is unsuitable to your former

> contentment, is yet supplied in some measure from the High Disposer of all things, who hath constituted you a member for your country, raised you to public use, made you an instrument of His providence in matters of State, and enabled you to these cases which to you must be chariora uxore et liberis. Deject not then your own mind ordained to a worthier scope than to be mated with the private disasters of a family. The sense of a natural man (whereof none I must say could have a greater attainte) must give place to the reason of a judicial distinguisher between those things which be irrecoverable and those which, by more thinking of them, we may anyways alter. This is the case, to the due consideration whereof I summon you in your wisdom.[9]

Even old Lady Russell, when her nephew's mourning persisted too long, condoled with him in the only way she understood, sending him a long, stern, morbid lecture on mortality and then giving him the simple but practical advice to let "patience have her perfect work, which is antidotum vitae."[10]

It is not surprising that it should have been Ralegh who appreciated best the loss which his friend had suffered, and who was able to give most articulate expression to his sympathy. On the very day that Lady Cecil died, Ralegh wrote what Dr. Rowse has justly described as his "lofty, much-admired letter of consolation";[11] as much as any biographer of either of the two friends, one must quote it:

> Sir, because I know not how you dispose of yourself I forbear to visit you, preferring your pleasing before mine own desire. I had rather be with you now than at any other time if I could thereby either take off from you the burden of your sorrows or lay the greater part thereof on mine own heart. In the mean time I would but mind you of this, that you should not overshadow your wisdom with passion but look aright unto things as they are. There is no man sorry for death it self but only for the time of death, every one knowing that it is a bond never forfeited to God. If then we know the same to be certain and inevitable we ought withal to take the time of his arrival in as good part as the knowledge and not to lament at the instant of every seeming adversity; which we are assured have been on their way towards us from the beginning. It appertaineth to every man of a wise and worthy spirit to draw together into suffrance the unknown future to the known present, looking no less with the eyes of the mind than those of the body, the one beholding afar off and the other at hand, that those things of this world in which we live be not strange unto us when they approach, as to feebleness which is moved with novelties, but that like true men participating immortality and know (sic) our destinies to be of God, we do then make our estates and wishes, our fortunes and desires all one.
>
> It is true that you have lost a good and virtuous wife and myself an honourable friend and kinswoman; but there was a time when she was unknown to you, for whom you then lamented not, she is now no more yours nor of your acquaintance but immortal and not needing or knowing your love or sorrow. Therefore you shall but grieve for that which now is as then it was when not yours, only bettered by the difference in this that she hath passed the wearisome journey of this dark world and hath possession of her inheritance. She hath left behind her the

font of her love, for whose sakes you ought to care for yourself that you leave them not without a guide, and not by grieving to repine at His will that gave them you, or by sorrowing to dry up your own times that ought to establish them.

Sir, believe it, that sorrows are dangerous companions, converting bad into evil and evil in worse, and do no other service than multiply harms. They are the treasures of weak hearts and of the foolish. The mind that entertaineth them is as the earth and dust whereon sorrows and the adversities of the world do us, the beasts of the field, trend [sic: tread], trample and defile. The mind of man is that part of God which is in us, why by how much it is subject to passion by so much it is farther from him that gave it us. Sorrows draw not the dead to life but the living to death, and if I were myself to advise myself in the like, I would never forget my patience till I saw all and the worst of evils and so grieve for all at once, lest, lamenting for some one, another might yet remain in the purse of destiny of greater discomfort.

Yours ever beyond the power of words to utter, W. RALEGH.[12]

It is no wonder that Elizabeth Cecil's son, to whom Ralegh was in some ways more a father than the Secretary himself had time to be, treasured this letter, and when he grew up took care to write on it the words with which it is still endorsed, "'Sir Wa. Ra. letter to my father touching the death of my mother.'"

Cecil commissioned several Latinists to write epitaphs, from which he would choose one to place on the altar-tomb of alabaster and black marble which he erected opposite that of his mother in St. Nicholas's Chapel, Westminster.[13] From a Latin note covering the verses which George Goodwin sent to the Secretary, it appears that Cecil wanted his wife commemorated in brief, unaffected terms which would remember her as a sober matron.[14] Goodwin's epitaphs, all thirty-six of them, were extravagant productions, as were the odes written by the schoolboys at King's, Westminster, among them one by the late Lady Cecil's godson Robert Kirkham;[15] evidently none of them was to Cecil's taste, nor was anything offered to her "sorrowful nephew" by that redoubtably learned daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, Lady Russell herself.[16] The verses finally chosen by the Secretary were in the form of a dialogue in Latin between a loving husband and wife, with a subtle reminiscence of his father's honest motto in the fourth line, and a simple English epitaph. Cecil had them placed on the sides of the dead woman's tomb, where they may yet be read:

Uxor
Reginae a Cameris Baronis Filia Chari
Fida Equitis Coniux Elizabetha fui
Unus amor nobis una indiuulsa voluntas
Cor unum una fides inuiolata fuit.
Ille mei si quando potest deponere curam
Ille potest animo non memor esse duae.

Maritus
Si lacrimis constaret amor (charissima coniux)
Prosequerer lacrimis funera saepe tua
Nam mihi quam fueris redamata tuum (pia sponsa)
Testatur meritum conscius ipse mihi
Sed nec amor patitur (socia regnante) dolere
Et Christi maior te sibi strinscit amor:
Erga tuo (dilecta) bono cum pace fruare
Spero mihi tecum portio pacis erit.

The epitaph records the cause of the lady's death:

A Brooke by name the Baron Cobhams Childe
A Newton was she by her Mothers side
Cecill her Husbande this for her did builde
To prove his love did after death abide
Which tells unto the worldes that after come
The worldes concepte whilste heare she held a roõe
How Nature made wise and wel besseeminge
Witt and Condition silente trew and chaste
Her vertues rare wan her much esteeminge
In course with Soveraigne still with favoure gracd.
Earth coulde not yealde more pleasïge earthlye blise
Blest with two Babes the thirde brought her to this.[17]

Cecil did not marry again, although he was only thirty-three when he was left a widower. In November 1599 it was rumoured that he meant to take a second wife and that the queen was angry with him, "affirming he promised never to marry". Cecil denied that he had done any such thing, saying "that he only promised to forbeare it 3 Yeares, which within 9 Weekes is expired",[18] yet he never took advantage of his right to remarry. As late as January 1603 he referred to his life with Elizabeth Brooke as "the dearest bond, that ever I was tied in".[19] It was to George Brooke that Cecil expressed himself thus, to one of those two men who alone were privileged to call themselves the all-powerful Secretary's brothers-in-law and friends. That privilege was a mixed blessing, and in the end it was to contribute to the destruction of the house of Cobham, but, so long as Queen Elizabeth lived, her Secretary's refusal to cast off the ties in which his wife had bound him gave the younger Lord Cobham and his brother a vicarious significance which they could not have won for themselves.

The fidelity with which his son-in-law would honour his daughter's memory, and

the consequent benefit to his sons, could not have been foreseen with any certainty by Lord Cobham. He took Lady Cecil's death extremely hard. Rowland Whyte, whose letters to Sir Robert Sidney provide a running commentary on the intrigues at Court in 1597, first informed his patron of Cobham's serious condition on 18 February. Essex had promised Sidney that the next appointment to the Lord Wardenship of the Cinque Ports would be his, and Whyte was therefore intensely interested in the health of the old courtier who held that office among others. Writing to Sidney, who was himself at Flushing as military governor, the industrious little agent used a cipher in which '1000' represented Essex, '500' Lord Cobham, '30' Henry Brooke, and '200' Cecil. On 18 February he reported that "My Lord Chamberlain is sayd to be very ill," and promised that,

> 'as sone as I can have any meanes to come to 1000 ... presence I will desire hym to have you in remembrance for the cinq portes. My Lord of Hunsdon is thought shalbe Lord Chamberlain by his death, or by resignation if he live, for his body is to weake to brave the burden of the place.'[20]

The day after this letter was written, the bereaved Cecil went to see his father-in-law. One cannot suppose that the visit was purely sentimental: Cobham's continued life, or at least a politic surrender of his offices should he die or retire, was essential to the Secretary's control of the Court: yet the account which Whyte gave Sidney of the meeting of the two men indicates that it was an emotional one. Evidently some of the Court intruded upon their privacy, for Whyte, who would hardly have been admitted to Cobham's house unless he was merely one of a crowd, seems to have had first-hand knowledge of the episode. "Mr. Secretary," he wrote,

> went upon Saturday to Blackfriers, to see my Lord Cobham, which was the first Day they mett, since my Lady Cecils Death. Yet [sic: it] was long er that they speake one to another; there appeared the fulnes of Greiff and Passion in them.

Whyte had, however, no time for sentiment. Cobham had agreed with what was probably his son-in-law's plan that he should give up his official posts to the younger Brookes if it seemed that he would not recover; thus would be averted, if the queen's acquiescence in the scheme could also be gained, the contest between the candidates of Cecil and Essex which was sure to follow his death in office. Eliza-

beth had recently shown especial favour to Henry Brooke by granting to him on 13 January an eighty-nine year lease of the Cornish manors of Pawton, Trefussis and Ide, charging him an annual rent of only £ 106.0.5½ and waiving the fees which were usually payable by the recipient of a lease. The docquet had made it clear that the queen meant the grant as a recognition of Brooke's private services to her,[21] and Sidney's agent feared that she might bestow further grace upon him by complying with the Secretary's plans for his future. Whyte therefore, after describing Cecil's visit to his father-in-law, informed the ambitious soldier that "My Lord Cobham is ill in Deed, and much fallen away,

> and now as I heare his Sonne Mr. Harry comes daily to the Queen, and the Father is willing to make Resignacion of such Places as he holds by the Queen, to his Sonnes; especially of the Cinque Ports. I doe vnderstand likewise, that my Lord of Hunsdon will stand for yt, and my Lord of Buckhurst. Yf you meane to be a Sutor for yt, I doe not see what way to deuise (being, as you are absent) how the Matter may be compassed for you; for vnlesse a priuate Motion be made in your Behalf to the Queen before he dy, you know yet [sic: it] wilbe to late after his Death, to send you Word of it: Where you will fynd an assured Frend to deale in this Matter for you, is the principall Care. You know well enough how all they that haue Access to her Majesty are inclined. Yf my Lord of Essex, wold deale, tanquam pro seipso, he were the fittest Man of all others; because feare to offend, might make others fearfull to deale for you. Your Lordship [as Governor of Flushing] in my former Letters may vnderstand, that I purposed to haue spoken to my Lord of Essex, to haue you in Remembrance for that Place, but now your Lordship willes me to keape yt secret till I hear further from you, which I will not faile to doe.[22]

A day later Whyte was writing again, stressing the desirability of gaining Essex's total support for Sidney, now that the earl was receiving much royal attention, for "My Lord Chamberlain's Weaknes makes all this World thincke he cannot live long; what you determine to doe for the Cinq Portes you must doe speedely."[23]

On 24 February Cobham made his will. Its substance need not detain one here, but the wording of the preamble is interesting, for the baron, as though refusing to admit how ill he was, unconventionally omitted the phrase 'sick in body' which one finds in the wills of his contemporaries. In fact, he implied that it might not even be in England that he died. "I William Brooke," the document begins, listing first his titles,

> of the most noble order of the Garter Knight, Lord Cobham, and by the benignitie of her most excellent Matie Lord Wardene of the Five Ports, Lord Chamberlayne of her highnesse housholde and one of her Mats most honourable Privy Counsell beeinge of perfect mynde & memorie thankes

> be given to Almightie God doe ordeine & declare this my last Wille & Testament in manner & forme following First I commend & committ my soule into the handes of the Almightie God and (as everie good Christian ought to doe) I trust and assuredlie hope (my synnes & offences for Christ his sake beeing clearly forgiven) wholie & only by the meritts of his death and passion to come vnto & have salvacon & ioy everlasting And if by the providence of Almightie God it shall happen me (beeing wthin the Realme of Englande) to departe out of this mortal life I will that by the discretion of myne executors my body be buryed after a laudable sorte wthout vayne pompe in the parishe churche of Cobham in the countie of Kent wheare myne auncestors are buryed.

Perhaps the effort required to make his will restored to Cobham some of his strength: the day after he made it, Sidney was told that

> The Phisicians vary in their Opinion of my Lord Chamberlain, for some say he will dy shortly: Others say, that they can perceue no such Thinge: But sure yt is, that he means to giue over waiting at Court.[24]

Meanwhile the contest for the dying man's offices began in earnest, with Essex's formal embracement of Sidney's cause and his declaration of hatred and contempt for Cobham's eldest son. On 27 February Whyte told his patron of an audience which he had just had with the earl.

> Yesternight late, I attended at Court, 1000 ... Pleasure as soe comanded by hym; and in his Chamber he called me a Syde, and privately sayd this vnto me, Your Master hath wrytten vnto me, that yf 500 ... dy, he will stand for such a Place, and named yt vnto me (which is the same you wryt vnto me of) and therein desires my Furtherance, which I protest he shall haue, and none other. Yt wilbe obiected, peraduenture, that hauing the Gouernment of Flushing, he cannot attend the Safety of both Places; but seing he is born in Kent, and his Liuing and Dwelling their to, I hold no Body so fitt for yt as hymself. Neither doe I heare that any Body stands for yt, but 30 ..., who, of all Men, is the vnfittest; and such hath his base Villanies bene towards me, which, to the World, is to well known, that he shalbe sure neuer to haue yt, if I can keape hym from yt. I make no Doubt, but that great Meanes wilbe vsed for hym; and at this Instant he hath a stronge Party for hym: But hath your Master wrytten to any Body els about yt? My Answer was, I assure your Honor, he hath wrytten to no Body els; to me only he signified that he meant to seeke yt by your Fauor, which he charged me to keape very secret: But to all Things my Master desires, her Majesty is by those that hinder his Preferment made beleue, that Flushing is of soe great Worth, as makes the Queen thinke hym vnworthy of any other Place; but I very humbly beseach your Honour, in your Loue to hym, to consider the Vncertainty of his Gouernment, which by the States Restitucion of her Majestys Money, or by an vsuall Courrs of changing forrein Comands, may end; and Places here at Home, are not at all Tymes found voyd. As for 30, I vnderstand by some of good Credyt, that his Purpose is, with all the Credyt he can make, to haue yt by Resignacion, or by being ioined in the Patent with hym that hath yt. And the like Cours are intended by others for other Places he hath. I will, sayd he, take speedy Care to prevent yt.
> In my Opinion (said I) my Master hath don her Majesty farr better Service, then thother that stands for yt, either hath don or can euer doe, and I can best Witness how chargeable her Services and Imploiments haue bene vnto hym, and as yet without Reward.[25]

On the last day of the month Whyte learned that

> My Lord Chamberlain growes weaker and weaker, and the Doctors are doutful of his Recouery. His eldest Sonne doth, with all the Frends he hath, earnestly sue to be Lord Warden of the Cinq Portes.[26]

Cobham had his will sealed on 1 March, and the rumour reached Court that he could not live and that, dying, he would leave "to his eldest Sonne 3000 l. a Yeare Land, and 10000 l. in Goods". Whyte became extremely worried about Sidney's chances, for Essex, although hotly opposed to Henry Brooke in private conversation, was behaving with more circumspection toward the Cecilians in public than he was accustomed to do. When Whyte learned that the earl meant to go to his estates in the west for a short vacation, he became really desperate. "Yt is giuen out that he doth it for his Healths Sake," the agent wrote, "for by Chaunge of the Aire he hoped to recouer it. In the meane Time, it giues Opportunity for others to effect their Wills." Whyte's fears of the effect which Essex's absence would have upon the contest were confirmed by a conversation which he had with one of the queen's intimates, perhaps the Countess of Huntingdon. "Cc told me," he informed Sidney,

> that she spake with Mr. Secretary about your Leaue, who promises to effect it, as Occasion may giue her Leaue; but assured me (vpon the Motion I made vnto her, who was like to haue the Cinq Ports) that 30 ... wold cary it away from all; for his own Fauor was great, and his Frends in Greatnes and Autority here, and was of Opinion that no Body wold or durst speake against it, vnles 1000.[27]

On 2 March, determined to know how much time he had left to work up his campaign for Sidney, Whyte went himself to see how Lord Cobham was doing. "At a Scriueners Shop by the Exchange," on his way home, he wrote to his patron his opinion of the situation as it then stood, stressing the popularity of the Sidneys in Kent, the unpopularity of the Brookes (of which one hears nothing from any pen but Whyte's), and the connection of Sir Robert with the late Earls of Leicester and Warwick. "This Morning I was at Blackfriers," he said,

> and their I fownd my Lord Admirall had bene with my Lord Cobham: Yt is now held certain he cannot liue. I haue hereof giuen Notice from Tyme to Tyme to my Lord Essex, who hath already had you in Remembrance for the Cinq Portes, as I heare. Mr. Harry Brooke stands for that Place, and to be Lord Lifetenant of the Shire; both which Places, I know not how it growes, are wished vnto you by the Gentlemen of Kent, as you are born there. Yf my Lord of Essex is able to doe any Thing, yt will now appeare; for certainly he opposes hymself against thother, laying before her Majestie his Vnworthines, and Vnablenes to doe her Service. And by thadvancing of you to Honor, she furthers her own Service, and strengthens yt. My Lady Essex doth continually put her

> Lord in mynd of you.
> In my Opinion your Lordship may doe well to wryte vnto his Lordship such a Lettre, as may be shewed to the Queen, and desire him earnestly to deale for you in your Absence for the Place of the Cinq Portes, being soe fitt for you in Respect of your Liuing; and seeing it was her princely Pleasure to bestow all Offices that had bene your two Vnkles vpon others, hauing promised the Butlership vnto you; yt will now please her to bestow this honourable Place vpon you, as an Honor in your Countrey....
> Yt neuer concernd you, in my Opinion, to be here soe much, as it doth at this Instant, but I feare me yt will not be graunted, till it be seen that their Purpose is served; for yt cannot be, but they heare of my Lord of Essex standing for you.[28]

'They', the opposition to Sidney, were of course Secretary Cecil and his party, but Essex himself, feeling the full weight of the responsibility upon him to promote the interests of his supporters, was not being very helpful to the Governor of Flushing. The earl's indecision is reflected in two letters written on 4 March. The first Essex wrote to Sidney, evidently at the insistence of the countess his wife. "Robin," it began,

> I do beleeue now that my Lord Chamberlayne will dy. And I am resolved yf his Lordship do teake himself to another World to deal ernestly and confidently for you. I know Lord [sic] Brooke doth resolve to try both his Credit with the Queen and all his Frendes in this Cause. But I will protest vnto the Queen against him, and avow that I will think it is the Reward of his Slanders and Practice against me, yf the Queen should lay Honor vpon him. Of these Things I will geue you Accompt and so with my best Wishes I rest, your true Friend Essex.
> You know by my Hand that this is my Wifes Pen and Ink.[29]

The other letter was written by Whyte to Sidney, and suggests that Essex, despite his assurance to his friend that he thought that Cobham would die, was willing to say otherwise if, by doing so, he could relieve the pressure upon him created by Whyte's insistent demands that he wait out the time of crisis at Court. "My Lord of Essex," Sidney reported that Friday,

> goes vpon Monday next, by her Majesties Leaue, for xx Dayes, towards Wigmor Castell, and soe to Raglan. I desired of my Lord Essex very humbly to remember before his Departure, two Thinges, as he loued your Lordship: Thone was, to desire her Majesty, according to his Promise, to license your Return for a Moneth or two: Thother, to moue her in the Matter of the Cinq Portes, my Lord Chamberlains Weakness being such, as there was little Hope his Lordship shuld fynd hym aliue, at his Return out of Wales; and by his Absence and yours with all, your Sute would not preuaile, hauing here no Body left to procure yt. Your Leaue he promises to deal earnestly in; and, for my Lord Chamberlain, sayd he, yt is here sayd he will liue. Mr. Hen. Brooke, Sir Ed. Wotton, and the two Lords, Buckhurst, and Hunsdon, doe stand for the Cinq Portes....
> In the Matter of the Cinq Portes Mr. Leonard hath wished me to be carefull, of you to your Freinds at Court. But God knowes what

> hindrance your own Absence gives to this Sute, now that my Lord Essex goes away; neither doe I know to whom I shuld repaire, my Lady Warwicke being full of her own Discontentmente and my Lady Huntingdon a Sutor for her Leases of her Jointur. All soe firme to the stronger Party, that Nobody dares speake for you. I wold your Lordship wold consider, yf yt were best for you, to wryte to the Queen her self.

Whyte also gave Sidney a hint of why Essex was behaving so indecisively: Sir Walter Ralegh (ciphered as '24', to Cecil's '200'), he revealed,

> Hath bene very often very priuate with 1000 ... and is the Mediator of a Peace betwene hym and 200..., who likewise hath bene priuat with him; 24 alledges how much good may grow by it.[30]

It is with interest that one now turns to a letter about Cobham's condition written not by an outsider but by one of the baron's own sons. Not surprisingly, considering the daily conversations which the Brookes and the Cecils must have been having with one another round the old man's death-bed, there was little need for letters to be written within the family at this time. That which George Brooke wrote to his brother-in-law on 5 March is exceptional. One would be naif, however, if one expected to find that the young man's letter was a sentimental one; Brooke knew that his father was dying, but his private sorrow had to yield place to his fears for his own future, both financially and politically. Upon Secretary Cecil he laid all his hopes, and therefore, "My honourable good brother," he wrote,

> the iust greef I conceave for the extreme danger wherein I see my Father without hope of recovery, ioyned w^{t} the perfect feelinge of mine owne vnhappines necessarily dependinge vppon his losse, shalle not yeat amase me so muche as to make me senceles of y^{r} free and vnexpected kindnes preventinge of my parte all deserte aswell as sute. I will not dessemble that I am ashamed, that what degree of favour so ever I have wth y^{u} is meerly of imputation without merite. Therfore have I no means to remove this confusion from my selfe and to great inequality, vnless y^{u} will graunte me this sute that as y^{u} have in parte applied vnto y^{r} self the affection that my sister bare me so y^{u} will wholy claime that interest that she had in me and if I be not altogether vnprofitable and good for nothinge make vse of it by comaundinge of me wth alle security. I can write nothinge wherein wee are not both touched to the quicke therfore protestinge my thankfulnes I will leave to renue our greeves wherein wee are equally worne out, y^{u} by yealdinge and I by resistinge. From the Blakfriers this 5^{t} of Marche.
>
> Y^{r} brother in law assured in alle love.[31]

That night, worn out by his long fight, knowing that the eyes of the whole Court were fixed avidly upon him, William Lord Cobham died. The time was shortly after midnight on the morning of Sunday, 6 March 1596/7.[32]

It is remarkable that one hears nothing from Lord Burghley of his concern for

his old friend's condition, although it is known that Cobham's death and that of Sir William Hatton, occurring in the same week, much depressed the Lord Treasurer. He "takes yt very heavily," wrote Sidney on 12 March,

> and weepes pitifully, calling to remembraunce the many late Crosses he hath bene afflicted withall, by the Death of his Frends.[33]

Despite his grief, however, as soon as Cobham died, Burghley took control of the situation regarding the Cinque Ports, writing from Whitehall on 7 March to the Portsmen a general letter in which they were instructed to carry on as before, ignoring the rumours from Court that the Brooke influence might soon be replaced by the domination of the Sidneys in Kent. "'Whereas,'" wrote Burghley with his old authority,

> 'the right honourable the Lord Cobham late Lord Chamberlain and Warden of the Cinque Portes, for the better government of the said Portes dyd from tyme to tyme as any just occasion was mynystered, conceave and establish divers good and necessary orders, which he delivered unto you to be dulie and carefully putt in execution by you, which in his lyffe tyme under hys aucthorytie you dyd see accordinglie performed in the severall Portes as I have bene credybly enformed. Forasmuch as by reason of his Lordship's death you may make some doubt and scruple touching your warrant and aucthority to execute the sayde orders, therefore these are to notyfy unto you and to every one of you as it may concerne, that her Majesty's pleasure and comaundement is that every of you in your severall places and accordeng to your severall officeis do contynue the execution of the said orders with lyke care and diligence and in lyke sorte and manner as you dyd in his Lordship's lyffe tyme.'[34]

Having ensured that the new Lord Cobham, should he be appointed to succeed his father as Lord Warden, would find the Ports as the old lord had left them, Burghley turned to consider the private affairs of the Brooke family. Cobham had made several behests on his death-bed, providing for individuals whom he had not seen fit to remember formally in his will. His daughter Margaret, who lived with her madness and her little girl down at Cobham Hall, had been on his mind; her care he committed to his eldest son.[35] Other matters he had communicated to his friends and executors. These were Sir John Leveson, his neighbour at Halling; Thomas Fane, his Lieutenant of Dover Castle and a younger son of a prominent family which, through marriage with the first Lady Cobham's niece Mary, claimed the Neville titles of Abergavenny and Westmorland; and the well-known antiquary, William Lambarde. It was Lambarde who, on 15 March 1596/7, gave Burghley a detailed

account of the Brooke family as they were in the first weeks following Cobham's death. "Albeit (my most Honourable and gracious Lorde)," he wrote to the Lord Treasurer,

> that my Lorde Cobham will present your Lordshippe w^th^ a Breif, and Large Copie, of the Last Wille of that most Honourable and Christian Lorde, both in Life and deathe, his Late departed good Father: Yet, forasmuche as his Last Disposition standeth, not only in his knowne Testament, but Cheiflie in the Declaratiõ of a seccrate confidence reposed in Syr Jhon Leveson, M^r^ Fane the Lieutenant of Dover Castle, and mee selfe, whearof he hath also (in theise his Last Desyres) recõmended the oversight to yo^r^ good Lordship and M^r^ Secretarie: I take it to stande, both w^th^ his owne good pleasure and my Duetie to make knowne hearby (synce yo^r^ Lordships indispositiõ of bodie permitteth not myne accesse) the heades, and verie contentes of the same. His Lo^rp^ therfore, mynding an vndoubted accomplishment of his godlie and fatherly intentions, aswel towardes the poore, as his owne chyldren, did, in his Lyfe tyme, putt into the handes of S^r^ Jhon Leveson, the sũme of .5600li. almost in readie money, over and besides riche furnitures of his Late Ladies provision, amounting in his own estimaciõ to the valore of 2000 markes [£ 1,333.6.8]. His cõmandemẽt to vs, was, that w^th^ .2000li. or more of theise moneys, the Late suppressed college of Cobhã should be reedified, and endowed w^th^ Lyvelyhoode for the perpetual mayntenance of .20. poore. Next, that w^th^ .2000li. (or thear aboutes), his second Son, S^r^ Willm Brooke, should be freed out of Debte: for, to so muche he knewe him to be endaungered, by morgage of his Landes and Leases, and by other Bondes. And Lastly, that an interest for Life in some competent dwelling house should be procured for his Thyrd Son, m^r^ George Brooke, and that some consideratiõ should bee taken of the poore estate of his daughters chyldrẽ by m^r^ Edward Becher. As for those Furnitures, he would theim to be delyvered to suche of his three Sonnes as should first bestowe him selfe in Marraige. Give me Leave (most Honourable Lorde) to adde somwhat of his, and of myne, concerninge my now Lorde Cobham, and his Brethren, w^ch^ neyther it will greive you to heare nor I w^thout^ theire Wrong may pretermitt to Write. Wee fynde theim alle not only to concurre in most chearfull obedience to the vttermost executiõ of theire good Fathers Wille and purposes, but also to contend amongst theimselves, Wheather of theim shalbe more kyend and bountifull to the other; Whearof I most humblie beseche yo^r^ good Lordship to take knowledge, and to confirme it in theim w^th^ your good Liking. Theire Honourable father beeing mooved by me to vse theim, or some of theim now for thexecutiõ of his Wille, howsoever in the setting downe of his former Willes he had pretermitted theim in regarde (as I conceaved) of theire Minorities: He aunsweared thus: I Like well to followe the example of my father hearin, Whoe (notw^thstanding^ that I and other of my Brethren weare then of mans estate) ordeyned Benedict Spinola and m^r^ Osborn, to be his executors. I have sayed enough, if not to muche, considering the present Weakness of your Lordship's Bodie, w^ch^ I most hartylye pray the heavenly phisition to recure, and so most humblie take my Leave. From Lincolnes Inne this xv^th^ of Marche 1596[/7].
> Yo^r^ good Lordships most humble and boundẽ by yo^r^ mannefolde Favoures.[36]

There is much of interest in this letter. One notes that Cobham, dying, thought of the children of the daughter whom he had ignored while he lived; one notes that Frances Lady Cobham's reported love of luxury extended not only to clothes but also

to the furnishings of her rooms; one notes, too, that Cobham's son and namesake, who it seems possible was soon to be refused his seat in Parliament because of his being so deeply in debt, was already seriously embarrassed when his father died. Lambarde's emphasis on the reliance which the late baron continued to place in the examples set by his own father is also interesting; most significant of all, perhaps, is the proof which this letter provides of the harmony which existed among Cobham's sons as late as 1597.

To Burghley, however, Lambarde's information about the plans for Cobham College was more important than anything else, and his clerk duly endorsed the letter, "Concerning L. Cobhams Wil for a College to be reedified". The Lord Treasurer was himself considering the establishment of an alms-house at this time, his instructions for the founding in Northamptonshire of a house for thirteen poor men being dated 20 August 1597.[37] In his friend's careful provision for twenty-one of the destitute in the neighbourhood of Cobham and Cooling, Burghley would have found much to help him in drawing up his own plans. Lord Cobham, assisted by Leveson and Lambarde, had decided that the buildings of the dissolved mediaeval college, adjoining the church in the village from which his family derived its baronial title, should be divided into twenty-one houses, each consisting of two rooms and two storeys. The original hall was to remain as it was, to provide a meeting place for the pensioners, wherein each morning and evening they were to pray to God "with loud and audible Voices ... in English" to save His Church, the reigning sovereign, "the Nobility and Counsellors, the Lord Cobham, the Presidents of this Colledge, and the whole Clergy and Commonalty of this Realm". It was also to be in the hall that the poor ate their meals and received their pension of 6/8 a month.[38]

Twice on every Sunday and holy day the pensioners were to attend divine service at St. Mary Magdalen's, the church in which the baron's father and mother lay splendidly entombed. The incumbent there was to have the chief voice in the selection of twenty of the poor (the warden alone being chosen by Cobham's heir), and for looking after the spiritual well-being of the college he was to receive 13/4 a year. The baron's dislike of pluralism in the Church, as well as his carelessness of terminology, is suggested by his stipulation that this clergyman should be "The

Parson, Vicar, Minister, Curate, or by whatsoeuer other name he shall be called that for that time being shall be the daily Incumbent and residenciarie within that parish for celebration of Diuine Seruice, and administration of the Sacraments; and not he that shall bear the name only, and liue absent".

Discipline within the college was to be strict. Out of their monthly pittance each pensioner was expected to "maintain the Glass-windows of their own Lodging at their own Charge," to pay for any other damage done to the fabric of the college, and to meet all the various fines imposed for such offences as missing prayers without justifiable excuse (4d.), swearing "any manner of blasphemous or unlawful Oaths" (11d.), and failing to wear on the right shoulder the badge of the college when walking abroad (6d.). No fine, however, could acquit a man or woman of having eaten, drunk or otherwise haunted "any Tippling-House, Inn or Tavern within two Miles of this Colledge, except it be during such time only as they shall work at their own-finding near to such House"; of keeping "Tippling or Victualling within this Colledge"; of refusing more than twice to accept honest daily labour if it was not too strenuous; or of failing to learn "the Lords Prayer, the Articles of the Christian Faith, and the Ten Commandements": for such offences the penalty was expulsion from the college, "as unmeet to be relieved".

Cobham had very strong opinions about just what sort of person was 'meet to be relieved'. He set them down in strict order of precedence, according priority to

> the honest and godly poore and needie, man or woman (being married or vnmarried) that hath formerly been relieued at the charge of the parish, and hath there dwelt by all the space of three years next before at the least, and which is become aged, and (which hauing before time been a labourer) is now past worke and labour.

After the retired labourer was to be considered the old soldier, he who had "become lame, or maymed, by sickenes, by seruice of the Prince, or by any other misfortune without their owne fault"; then came the blind man, the financially ruined man (who had "fallen from riches to pouertie by any sudden casualtie, as fire, robberie, shipwracke, or otherwise, so that it be not by their own fault"), the chronically ill ("so that it be not of any contagious disease, for such may not be admitted to company with others"), and, last of all, he or she "which is ouer-

charged with a burden of children, which they cannot by their honest labour finde and sustain".

The essentially paternalistic attitude which Cobham took in setting up his alms-houses is revealed by his insistence that the pensioners express their gratitude to their benefactors. "All the poor People of this Colledge that shall be able to travail," he stipulated,

> shall upon the second Sunday of each Quarter of the year, go to Cobham-Hall, (if the Lord Cobham or the Lady his Wife shall then keep Houshold there,) to present themselves in thankful manner for their Maintenance given by the said Lord William Baron Cobham.[39]

It is good to be able to state that, although all Cobham's other plans for the future were frustrated, his vision of Cobham College was realized. His son was present in the House of Lords when, in November and December of the year in which the baron died, the "Bill for the establishment of the new College of the Poor of Cobham in the County of Kent" was given its three readings, sent to the Lower House, read and returned unaltered, and received the royal assent.[40] A year later the rebuilding was completed, and the first pensioners took up residence. They and their successors have occupied it ever since, and today, apart from a few modern improvements, the college is much as it was when Lord Harley visited it in 1723. As the visitor noted then,

> The ruins of the College, which was founded by one of the Cobhams, are on the north side of the church; and the cloisters belonging to it did join to the church on that side. The ruins of it are now converted into almshouses for some poor people of this and the neighbouring parishes. The old hall on the south side is still standing pretty entire, and is about the bigness of the refectory of Edmund Hall in Oxford, but it is now a mere lumber-room. The screen at the entrance into it is likewise entire, as is the doorway into the buttery, which was locked, and now doubtless converted to some other use.[41]

The pensioners were of course able to pray for their benefactor's heirs for no more than five years, but for over three and a half centuries they have been reminded of the man who claimed their gratitude. Not only does the alms-box of solid oak which still stands in the entrance passage bear the arms of the mediaeval John de Cobham as well as those of the Elizabethan William Brooke, but over the doorway of the ruined refectory at the back of the quadrangle one may yet read, despite its partial defacement, an eloquent inscription in stone. Under the

arms of Brooke of Cobham are the words:

> This new College of Cobham in the County of Kent was founded for the relief of the poore at the charge of the late Right Honourable Sir William Brooke Knight of the Garter Lord Cobham late Warden of the Cinque Ports Lieutenant for the same County to the Excellent Majesty of Elizabeth Queen of England one of her Highnesses Privy Councillors and Chamberlayne of Her most Honourable Household. He died 6th March 1596. This was finished 29th September 1598.

In his letter to Lord Burghley of 15 March 1596/7, Lambarde mentioned the late baron's will and assured him that the new Lord Cobham would be sending the Lord Treasurer a copy of it. Three such copies are extant, as well as two transcripts of it at Somerset House and a résumé of it at Hatfield House.[42] Although the formality of probate was not completed until 23 May, one may consider the substance of the will here.

Cobham's first wish was that his debts, which he did not enumerate, should be settled out of his "moveable goodes & Cattalls". He then provided for his servants, willing

> that my whole families bothe at Cobham Halle in Kent and at the Blackfryers London be continewed & kept togeather wth allowance of meate drinke and lodging vntill the full ende of ten dayes next after the accomplishement of my funeral solempnitie wthin the w^{ch} tyme I wille that theare be given & payd to everie of my servants then beeing in the Check Rolle of my housholde,[43] as well the whole of his or her wages of that quarter of the yeare in w^{ch} it shall happen me to dye as also one whole half yeares wages after the rate of his or her covenaunte of Service.

Of his servants only his steward, Richard Williams, was left an annuity: by a charter sealed on 15 February 1596/7 Williams was assigned £ 60 a year.[44] The money with which his debts were to be paid, his servants given their wages and bonuses, and his funeral performed, as well as the sums required for the fulfilment of his private instructions to Leveson and Lambarde ("all which I require them faithfullie to accomplishe according to that special and secrete trust w^{ch} I have reposed in theim"), was to be raised from the sale of

> all & everie my Jewells ornaments plate of gold and silver of what soever sorte (excepte one cup of gold given to me by my late deceased servant Jhon Taylor gent to remayne as an heyre loome to suche as shall from tyme to tyme be Lord Cobham) The w^{ch} alsoe I doe leave to my said sonne Henrie And except also all suche my said Jewells ornaments & plate as in & by this my last will & testament shalbe otherwise disposed by me.

The foundation of Cobham College was evidently much on Cobham's mind in his

last days. Granting to his executors as first presidents of the new college,

> & to their heires for ever all those edifices ruines buildings and soile & grounde with thappurtenances lying in Cobham aforesaid which sometyme weare the scite of the College of Cobham,

Cobham spoke of the rules and ordinances which he intended ("if God give me life") to prescribe in writing for therunning of the poor house. He also meant to draw up a plan whereby the rebuilding might be completed within three years after his death; failing such instruction to his executors, he relied upon them to see the work completed within four years at least. "And to that end," he willed, thinking of the materials which he had stocked for the renovation of his own country residence,

> I give vnto theim one hundred thousand of suche burned brickes as shalbe within my parke, or about my house at Cobham Halle aforesaide & ffortie Tunnes of Tymbre to be taken in any my landes within the countie of Kent, the Parkes at Cobham & Cooling only excepted.

Finally, ensuring against any interference with his plans, Cobham conditionally bequeathed to the Presidents of Cobham College a large portion of his patrimony; this consisted of

> all & singular my leases interests, & termes of or ffor any yeares whatsoever which I have of or in the Pallace Parke & landes at Canterburie, of or in any the manors or tenements or landes of or at Denton, Chalk, Ickham, Islingham and Stonclarke or any of theim, of or in the personage of Cobham, the prebend of Cobham Berrie in the said countie of Kent or of or in the fferme called Brookes ferme within the countie of Sussex.

These properties were to go to Leveson, Lambarde and Fane if Henry Brooke refused to allow his father's will to be executed in every detail. "If," however,

> my said sonne Henrie shall quietlie & without disturbance, let, molestation, contradiction or empeachement permitte & suffer thexecutors of this my last wille & testament to execute the same my wille & meaning in all pointes aswel according to the expresse meaning therof as according to such secrete & special trust & confidence as I have reposed in the said Sr Jhon Leveson, Thomas ffane & William Lambarde, and shall & will also within one yeare next after my decease, vpon resonable request therof ratifie or assure by suche good conveighance in lawe as shalbe advised & required to his said brothers Sr William Brooke & George and to the said Sr Jhon Leveson, Thomas ffane & William Lambarde, all & everie the edifices, buildings, landes, leases, & yearly rents which I have either heartofore by any writing or in & by this my last wille & testament given and appointed severally vnto theim, or any of theim, according to suche several estates & interests & suche several condicõns & limitacõns as I have annexed to every of theim, then they the said Sr John Leveson, Thomas ffane, and William Lambarde or the survivors, or survivor of theim shall within one moneth next after suche ratification & assureances

> (so by him my said sonne Henrie to be made) assigne & set over to him & his assignes all & singular my said interests termes & leases for yeares, so to theim given (as is aforesaid) vpon goode securitie & bonde to be made or given by him vnto theim that imediately after his decease the said interests and termes for yeares & everie of theim shall come & be to suche as shalbe from tyme to tyme Lord Cobham & to none other.

The absence of the park at Canterbury, Brooke's Farm in Sussex and the other holdings from the list of properties which, according to his inquisition post mortem, passed from Cobham to his son, is no doubt explained by this cautionary clause in his will.

The baron seems to have arranged with his executors what bequests should be made to his daughters: the will makes no mention of them. That document is concerned only with his sons, for the younger of whom Cobham provided well. Sir William had been given in his father's lifetime Bird's Nest Lodge at Leicester;[45] moreover, Cobham's executors had been entrusted with £ 2,000 with which to clear the young man of debt. In the will itself he was bequeathed his father's third-best "bason and ewer of silver"; twelve pieces of the baron's second-best silver service; all of the household stuff at Cobham's residence in Canterbury, including "all suche Damaske lynnen & dyapre lynnen as I have in any my said houses, or at the Pallace in Canterburie"; and three horses from the stables at Cobham, complete with "their proper furniture". The horses bore the descriptive names "Bay Gaynsforde, Bay Shepey, and Gray Penbrock". Grey Pembroke was still in his stall at Cobham in 1603.[46]

To George Brooke, not yet thirty when Cobham died, his father left so much that one must conclude that this, his youngest son and a cripple, was his favourite. Of the baron's personal things some of the most beautiful went to George, as well as his entire library. They were listed in the will as:

> my bason & ewer of silver that is the fourthe in price or value together with twelve of my dishes of silver vessell next in price and worthe to those former fower & twentie that I have before given to his brothers;
>
> all and singular my bookes writings and papers of whatsoever learning written or emprinted in whatsoever language, not meaning to include or comprehende in this my guifte any Evidences Chartres Muniments bondes plottes or draughts concerning any my landes or leases (not assured or bequeathed to him) nor any bookes rolles or papers concerning any my accompts receipts or rekoninges;

> those few peeces of hangings w^ch^ I my self doe vsuallie occupie at her Ma^tS^ Courte whilest I doe attende theare.

One notes that none of Cobham's horses went to his youngest son, whose infirmity no doubt prevented him from riding. It is, however, not in moveables but in the lands and income which the baron settled upon George that his care for the young man's future is revealed most plainly. Recalling the grant made to him in 1583 of all the Brooke property in the Isle of Grain,[47] the will further bestowed upon George, "for the increase of his said portion", all the leases, interests and terms which the baron had held in that peninsula. It also granted him an annuity of £ 65.13.4, "to be issuing & going out of all & singular my manors, landes, tenements & hereditaments whatsoever w^th^in the Realme of England", to be paid to him by his elder brother in four instalments. Should Henry Brooke have failed to make payment at any time, he was to have forfeited to George £ 6.13.4 for each omission, and to have become subject (in the formidable language of the law) to distrainment: that is,

> it shalbe lawfull to & for my said sonne George Brooke & his assignes into all & singular the said manors landes tenements & hereditaments or into any parte or parcell thearof to enter and distreine, and the distresse so taken, to leade dryve, carry away, impounde, deteine, or keepe vntill the said annuitie or annual rent so beeinge behinde or the arrearages of the same (if any shall happen to bee) and also the said peine or penaltie of sixe poundes thirteene shillings and fower pence or everie part therof be to the said George Brooke or his assignes fully satisfied contented and payd.

Should Henry have died without issue and Sir William have succeeded to the title, George's annuity was to have been increased to £ 132.6.8. The will also contained a warning for George, however. Cobham evidently feared that his estate would be split up by a revival of the old custom of gavelkind,[48] and he therefore required his youngest son to make, within a year of his brother Henry's accession to the barony, a legal release of any such claims of which he might think himself possessed. If George refused to do so, his annuity was to be forfeit. No such disclaimer was required of Sir William; perhaps their father suspected George, the more learned of the two and the further from the title, of designs against his brother's estate.

All that remained of Cobham's possessions went to his eldest son. Within ten days of his funeral, the baron decreed, his houses at Cobham and in the Black-

friars were to be delivered into Henry's hands,

> togeather w^th^ all suche implements vtensiles of housholde & other goodes moveable as I doe in this my present last wille & testament speciallie appointe to & for him.

Among these specific articles were:

> all myne armours gunnes weapons & furniture for the warre whatsoever togeather w^th^ theise my horses & their proper furnitures viz Quasto myne eldest horse, my youngest horse also called Gray Canterburie, Gray Mott, and Bay Mott. And to my saide sonne Henrie I wille and give my Bason and Ewer of silver that is second in price or value, togeather with twelve of my best dishes of silver vessell.

In only one detail is Cobham's will ambiguous, and that is when, enumerating those of his moveables which were to go to his heir, the testator stated:

> And I give to my said sonne Henrie all & singular the implements vtensiles of houshoulde that shalbe at the tyme of my deathe remayning in or about my said houses at Cobham & Blackfryers or any of theim except alwayes jewells ornaments plate and money & all & singular suche trunkes Chestes cofers Casketts & boxes (togeather with all manner of things in everie of theim conteyned) as his good mother my late wife vsuallie in her life tyme had and kept; and except all those few peeces of hangings w^ch^ I my self doe vsuaullie occupie at her Ma^ts^ Courte whilest I doe attende theare: And except also all suche Damaske lynnen & dyapre lynnen as I have in any my said houses, or at the Pallace in Canterburie.

One can understand why all but one of these exceptions were made: Cobham's jewels and plate had been reserved to the use of the Presidents of Cobham College; the hangings at Court went to George Brooke; the damask and linen were to be Sir William's. Only the late Lady Cobham's treasure chests were not disposed of elsewhere in the will. Possibly the baron did not mean them to be withheld from his eldest son, or, possibly, they were to be considered as part of his wife's furnishings, those rich items which he thought were worth more than £ 1,333 and which, according to Lambarde's letter to Burghley, he turned over to his executors

The source of all this wealth, his estates throughout southern England and in the Midlands, Cobham left, as by law and by the terms of his own father's will he was required to do, to his primogenitural heir, Henry Brooke. Unlike George Lord Cobham, William did not evaluate his lands in his will. One wishes that he had done so, for when one turns to consider the inquisition post mortem which was taken at Maidstone on 15 September 1597, six months after his death, one finds that the patrimony which he left to his son was assessed at a much lower figure

than his predecessor's had been. The escheator in 1559 had found the Cobham lands to be worth £ 1,084.1.6½ a year;[49] in 1597 the annual income which Henry Lord Cobham inherited was stated officially to be £ 550.10.5½.[50] This figure accords ill with the Court rumour which circulated on 1 March 1596/7 and which led Rowland Whyte to say that Cobham was leaving his eldest son £ 3,000 a year in land and £ 10,000 in goods.[51] Whyte's estimate was no doubt exaggeratedly high, but it may well have been nearer the truth than that contained in the inquisition post mortem. All of Cobham's holdings in Kent, for instance, except those which constituted the conditional bequest to the Presidents of Cobham College, were said in that document to yield £ 200 a year. They were listed as the manors of Burycourt, near Cooling, West Cliffe, also near Cooling, Shorne, south-east of Gravesend, Abbats Court, east of Hoo, and West and East Chalk, near Gravesend; the hundred of Hoo; Ranscomb, between Rochester and Cobham; Halstow, in Hoo; Cobham Hall, Merston, Randoll and Okingden; property in Maidstone, including the site of the dissolved college there; other property in Maidstone, in Cobham, Loose, Merston, Hulston, Higham, the Isle of Grain, Halling, Cuxton and Luddesdown; Cooling Castle, Beckley, Strood, Chattenden, the hundred of Shamble and the site of Cobham College. (Not included in the total revenue was the manor of Gravesend, which brought to its owner £ 14 a year; when Cobham died, possessed of the reversion of it, the manor was still held by a widow, Anne Fowler, alias Hobson.) Six of these holdings alone, the last named in the list, which traditionally made up the jointure of a dowager Lady Cobham, had been worth £ 279.12.7 a year in 1559. Evidently the baron's estate was markedly underrated in 1597, conceivably as a royal favour to his heir, for it was on the basis of the official assessment that a peer's contributions to the Parliamentary subsidy were prescribed.

The estate which Henry Lord Cobham inherited in 1597 was a far more consolidated one than his grandfather had left. William Lord Cobham had sold land in Kent, notably the manors of Buckland, Haidon and Hayton, and other lands in Frindsbury; he had bought East Chalk, Merston, all the property which he left in the Isle of Grain, and the reversion of the manor of Gravesend, and he had completed the purchase, initiated by his father, of Abbats Court. These transactions concentrated his holdings in his home county into a neat demesne, shaped rather like a wedge

with broadly curving sides, bounded by Gravesend in the north-west, Maidstone in the south, Grain in the north-east. The concave right side of the imaginary wedge touched Gillingham, the sloping top of the wedge bordered the Thames, The right side of Cobham's territory was pierced from top to bottom by the Medway, the mid-section was studded by Cobham Hall, round which the concentration of the baron's lands was most intense, while around Cooling, mid-way along the top boundary of his seigniory, he had let some of the old de Cobham holdings go.

The pattern of concentration which the baron imposed upon his property in Kent can be seen to have been repeated throughout the whole of England. The ancestral lands of the Brookes in Somerset, Dorset and Devon had numbered twenty manors and lordships in 1559; Cobham sold eight of them, leaving himself with an income from his western estates which was stated in 1597 to be only £ 124.5.0. It was derived from his properties at Chard, Hurtham, Brooke's Court in Ilchester, Wilmington, Cotleigh, Bewdich, Melplash, South Bowood, King's Lynn in Dorset, Weycroft, Stagmore and Olditch. He also sold the manor of Bicknoll, one of two left him in Wiltshire, retaining only that of Chessbury. The baron did not re-invest in this area; his only purchase in the west was of the lease of Upton St. Leonards, in Gloucester, for which he paid to the Crown £ 49.2.9 a year, having himself a declared annual profit of £ 10. It was evidently preferable to own land that was not so far removed from Kent; in 1600, for instance, his heir was forced to consider making the long trip to Gloucester to see what his dishonest steward was doing there.[52] Only once did Cobham go far afield in buying land, and that was when he purchased Bird's Nest Lodge at Leicester, the estate which he left to his second son, The manor of Wellesbourne in Warwickshire he sold.[53] In Essex he retained his father's lordships of Bendyshall and Radwinter, which were said in 1597 to bring in £ 20 a year. In Bedfordshire he not only held on to the Braye property at Newnham, worth £ 30 a year, but bought the dissolved chantry of St. Cuthbert, at Bedford, worth £ 3. In Surrey he held part of the Brayes' manor of Albury,[54] Brooke's Farm, and also a piece of land worth ten shillings a year at Worplesdon. In Hertfordshire he owned two watermills ("molendinis granaticis aquaticis"), called Hamper Mills, near Watford; these brought him £ 2 a year. Finally, in London it-

self, the baron had his house in the Blackfriars and another house and garden in the same Liberty, near the Thames; both his father had owned. In 1597 their yearly value was said to be £ 6 and £ 2.

To see to the execution of the will by which he left his sons so much, William Lord Cobham appointed his "Cosine S^r^ Edward Wotton Knight" and the three other executors whose particular charge was to establish Cobham College. Each of these men was to receive "the sume of ffortie poundes in money togeather with allowance of all their reasonable charges & expences". It does not surprise one that the men to whom was entrusted the responsibility for supervising the transfer of Cobham's wealth to his heirs were the Cecils. "And I desyre," concludes the baron's will,

> my most honorable freinde the Baron of Burghley, Lord High Treasurer of England and myne honourable sonne in Law Sir Robert Cecille knight to be overseers of the same my wille & to assist & countenaunce thexecution of the same & of all my said confidences with their honourable counsell or auctoritie. To which my said good Lord I give ffyfty poundes of money in golde to make him a cup of golde & to the said S^r^ Robert I give the best one of all my silver basons & ewers.

Burghley wrote in the margin of his copy of the will opposite this clause, "A Cup of golde for an Heyr Lome".

His last wishes made known to his friends, copies of his will circulated among its executors and overseers, the acquiescence of his sons in every detail of it obtained, there remained nothing to do for the late baron but to bury him as he instructed, "after a laudable sorte w^th^out vayne pompe in the parishe churche of Cobham in the countie of Kent wheare myne auncestors are buryed". Oddly enough, his eldest son was reluctant to do this, and it was only at the insistence of Lord Burghley that the funeral was held at Cobham. Perhaps Henry Lord Cobham wanted to see his father entombed near Lady Cecil, among the kings and statesmen whose interment there had already begun to make Westminster Abbey the national shrine which it has since become; perhaps, as he suggested rather obscurely, he honestly felt that the dead man would himself have chosen to be buried in London had he known how much it would cost to carry his body into Kent. Whatever were the young lord's reasons for wanting to disregard his father's will, Burghley would have none of them. Tradition meant much to him, and just as, when he himself died,

he ordered that he be laid to rest among his forefathers at Stamford, so he required that his friend's last wishes should be respected. The first extant letter which the younger Cobham wrote from 'my' house at Cobham Hall was therefore one in which, with evident reluctance, he deferred to Burghley's insistence. "I could have wished your father," he told Cecil on 17 March,

> would have allowed my lord my father's funeral to have been performed at London. The reason why I did desire it I acquainted you when I last spake with you, as yourself shall bear me witness, when you come hither, whether I had not cause to desire it, for neither house nor the church is fit for the performing of it here. Your father's will amongst us must stand for a law without any further dispute, otherwise this place is so unmeet for it, as whereas I had hoped to have had honour in burying of my father, I shall now receive shame. I thank you greatly for assuring me that you will be here. One kindness more I must entreat of you, that you will be pleased to mourn in the place of baron. My house is so mean and lodging so scarce as in yielding unto it you shall do me a very great favour. I humbly thank you for that the tender of my livery is received. I meant in good manner to entreat my lord, your father, to be here, though I think he cannot. Whether it be best for me to do so, I pray you let me hear from you, for so I will direct myself. Thus to God's protection I leave you. --From my house at Cobham Hall, the 17 March 1596[/7], your loving brother in law to command, Henry Cobham.
> P.S. --Do but imagine what trouble I am put unto, for of necessity I must bring all the staff from Blackfriars and from Canterbury hither; which I should not need of if the funeral might be at London. The charge which is appointed for his burial exceeds his meaning that himself has appointed his burial here. I am heartily sorry my lord will not allow the burial to be at London.[55]

Dissatisfied as he was, however, Cobham's son addressed himself to the task of burying his father well. While his rivals for the dead man's offices tried to outbid him at Court, and while the process of suing his livery, by which he was to take possession of his inheritance, went forward in London, Henry wrote letters to his friends and connections, asking them to help him give the late minister his last dues. His secretary, Christopher Milles, busied himself about the heraldic trappings which would add pomp, colour and traditional meaning to the funeral ceremony. To Edmund Shaw, one of the baron's servants who had been left at the Blackfriars, Milles wrote on 17 March, instructing him

> to Let m^r morris knowe, yt ys my Lo pleasure, he should goo to the Kinge at Arms, and to praie him to haue spetiall Care in placinge all his Lo Arms in the Bannerolls, and espetiallie the greate one, in w^ch his Lo ys informed, he hath cawsed two Coates of the Delapoles to be incerted, wher as y^e last of the two should be y^e Coate of Peuerell or Peuerle.[56]

Meanwhile the baron himself wrote to another of his men in London about the

materials needed to erect the hearse. "After my harty Cõmendacõns vnto yo^{w}," the letter abruptly began,

> I haue receaved yo^{r} ẖre and accordinge to the same, wyll presentlie take order for the pvicõn of Tymber, for postes and Rayles, and for the better orderinge therof, as also of other matters of the same nature, I hartelie praie yo^{w} to be here on Tuesdaie or Wednesdaie next.[57]

Finally all was ready for the funeral service, which was set for Tuesday, 5 April. Late on Saturday night Rowland Whyte wrote to Sir Robert Sidney to tell him that "Mr. Secretary goes vpon Monday next to Cobham, to the Buriall of the Lord Chamberlaine." Burghley had evidently decided that the strain of travelling into the country to attend his friend's funeral would be too much for him; he went instead to Court, moving into the dead man's suite. "My Lord Treasurer comes to Morrow to Court," Whyte reported, "And lies in the Lord Chamberlains Lodgings." There was no question of the Earl of Essex's going down to Cobham, but Ralegh, who was to have a prominent place in the ceremonies there, was constantly to be found with the earl at this time,[58] and even Cecil promised Whyte before leaving Court on Monday that "at his return from the cowntrey" he would do what he could to get Sidney leave to come home from Flushing.[59] Apparently there was a short truce between the jarring factions at Court while Lord Cobham was buried.

The bill which William Dethick, Garter King of Arms, presented to the baron gives one some idea of the splendour of the funeral. The fees charged by the heralds for their attendance at Cobham Hall, for their expenses in transporting themselves and their servants from London, for outfitting their party in "gownes & lyveries" and for paying their board in the village, totalled £ 63.6.8. The blazoners charged £ 41 "ffor the Bann^{r} of hon^{r} Standart Bãrolles Cote of Arms helẽtt Crest Sword Targett mãtelles Complete Scrowles pencelles escucheons &c". Other trappings, like the "paul of velvett for the Corps. And velvettes for the hearsse, pyllars, cushions & Viell of Taffeta", cost £ 16; "frenges and valence of silke" were the baron's responsibility to provide, "or to compound for the same". It was finally "Agreed betwene my Lo. Cobhã & m^{r} Garter, for & in all," that the baron should pay £ 120.6.8.[60] There was evidently some difficulty in deciding who of the distinguished mourners should walk where in the procession; from the

lists which Dethick drew up, juggled, and finally revised into a practicable table of precedence for the event, it would appear that the assistance of the King of Arms was invaluable to the distracted young lord.

No complete account of the funeral service survives among the papers in the College of Arms. There is extant, however, a diagram of the procession from which it is possible to deduce who accompanied Cobham's body on its last journey from Cobham Hall down the lane to the Church of St. Mary Magdalen in the village.[61] From two lists of names, evidently of those men who were expected to attend the funeral, one can also say who failed to appear in the procession.[62] Most notably absent were Sir John Fortescue, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and William Lord Chandos, the dead man's first cousin.[63] One of Cobham's chaplains, a Mr. Dickinson, did not walk with his fellows; he was probably George Dickinson, a Cambridge man who since 1570 had been Vicar of Buxhall, Suffolk, where the baron's grandson Francis Coppinger was lord of the manor.[64] George Wyatt of Boxley, the son of Cobham's cousin the Marian rebel, was also expected at Cobham on the day of the funeral but did not come. Finally, Thomas Mudde, the musician whose excellence is commemorated by Francis Meres and who, under Cobham's lordship, had been Rector of Cooling and was by 1603 to be Vicar of Cobham,[65] was not in the company of priests who preceded the hearse. It was apparently never thought that George Brooke would accompany his father to the grave: perhaps his infirmity prevented him from walking at a measured pace in company.

The procession must have consisted of some 200 people, including unspecified numbers of servants. It was led by two of the late baron's bailiffs acting as conductors; their names were William Boulton and Wykes. Immediately behind them walked 71 poor men. Then came "Gent & Knyghtes servãtes in Clookes 2 & ij". "Then the Trompett^r," Henry Allen, a Kentish gentleman, bore the great standard, preceding the servants of the mourning peers and all those employees of the dead man who had worked his estates. "Then the Lo. Cobhãs servãtes in Clokes."

Behind the van walked two sewers, 'Kellke' and Owen. Kelke was a Sandwich man, no doubt a relative of the Edward Kelke who by 1603 was Town Clerk of Sandwich and a dependent of the younger Cobham,[66] and John Owen was a man who had worked for

Secretary Walsingham and who in 1601 was recommended into Secretary Cecil's service by the baron and Lord Henry Seymour.[67] With the sewers came the household officers at Cobham:

> The gent of horse George Smythe[68]
> The Secretarye m^r^ Xp^r^ Milles
> The Steward m^r^ [Richard] Williãs.

"Then the Cusheon & Carpett" on which the chief mourner was to kneel in the church, borne by the new lord's servant Wood; this man, whose Christian name has not been established, was one of a family which had long served the Brookes, and he remained with his master even after Henry Lord Cobham's imprisonment in the Tower.[69]

A veritable discretion of priests seems to have converged upon Cobham for the funeral. After Wood walked "the Queir & prebendes of Rochester", then the late baron's chaplains, named as Mr. Kitchell, Mr. Ratcliffe or Radcliffe, Mr. Daye or Deye, Mr. Ball and Mr. Roper. Kitchell it has been impossible to identify; his Christian name is not given, and the word 'servant' written beside his entry in the list of mourners in the College of Arms suggests that he may have been included among the chaplins by mistake. The similarity of his name to that of the 'm^r^ Ketredge' whom Sir Robert Cecil recommended to his father-in-law's attention in 1593, however, makes one wonder whether the herald did not get the name wrong.[70] One has similar doubts of Ratcliffe's right to be included among the clergy; in another paper relating to Cobham's funeral he is described as "Auditor".[71] Daye, on the other hand, is definitely described as "Chaplen"; he could have been either Richard or John Deye, the father the printer and also a cleric, the son a prominent divine. Ball was also certainly a chaplain; his surname is too common to admit even of a guess at identification. Thomas Roper was most probably the Cambridge man who matriculated pensioner from St. John's College in 1555 and who was thus a contemporary at the university of the dead man's younger brothers.[72]

With the clergymen walked Edward Beecher, Cobham's son-in-law and the father of the children for whom the baron provided in his instructions to his executors;[73] Percival Hart of Lullingstone, the grand-nephew of Anne Lady Cobham;[74] Thomas Walsingham of Chislehurst, cousin to the late Secretary;[75] and two professional

men whom the Brookes patronized. One of these, "m^r^ Gosnall Solicit^r^", was the William Gosnall who was admitted to a chamber in the Middle Temple in 1596, no paying, doubt as Cobham's protégé, "no fine, for certain consideration moving the Treasurer".[76] In 1599 one of his name was mentioned in a bewildering letter which Sir Robert Drury, then engaged in a heated argument with the younger Lord Cobham, wrote to his uncle and agent in London.[77] In the next year he was working for his patron in handling the affairs in controversy between the mad Lady Sondes and her brother-in-law,[78] and in 1603 he got into serious trouble by advising Cobham on the course which he ought to take in answering the charges of treason made against him. Gosnall was then "of my Lord's counsel learned and having his fee".[79] After Cobham's condemnation, the authorities allowed an annuity of £ 6.13.4 which the baron had granted "to one Gosnoll, of the Temple Student at Lawe", to stand and be paid out of the revenues of the confiscated Brooke estates.[80]

The other professional man who walked in the elder Cobham's funeral procession was Dr. Thomas Langton, "one of the more eminent physicians of the time. A Cambridge man, he was in 1581 admitted Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, serving in various offices until he became President, 1604-6."[81] Langton had attended the baron's brother in his last illness, witnessing the will which John Brooke made on 8 February 1593/4,[82] and, while no proof exists that he performed the same service to Cobham, his attendance at the funeral suggests that he did. Langton was the younger lord's physician, being mentioned as such between August 1603 and September 1605;[83] it seems likely that his holograph letter to Secretary Cecil of 30 July 1602, in which he promises to be "very careful of my good Lord's health", also refers to Cobham.[84]

The four executors, Sir Edward Wotton, Sir John Leveson, Thomas Fane and William Lambarde, walked behind the lesser clergymen, the lawyer, the physician and the family friends. After them came two very distinguished representatives of the Church, Thomas Blague, who was Dean of Rochester, and Dr. Richard Edes, who was a chaplain to the queen and soon to be Dean of Worcester. "The precher M^r^ Edes" was

something of a 'catch', whose presence at a funeral lent a touch of eloquence and elegance which the later Elizabethans much appreciated, for he was "'held in great admiration at court, not only for his preaching, but most excellent and polite discourse'".[85]

There then followed the cortège itself. First came Edward Morr, Lady Stourton's husband, walking alone and holding aloft the great banner in which all of his father-in-law's arms were quartered. After him came servants bearing the baron's helmet and crest, his sword and his ceremonial surcoat. Picturing them, one recalls Cobham's bequest to his heir of all his "furniture for the warre". At last the coffin appeared, borne by six servants, "Peryne fyneux Morece Lanman Genett Questor". Of these men to whom their master's corpse was entrusted only a little is known, and of two of them -- John Peryne or Pyrne, and Fineux -- nothing, although the latter may conceivably have entered Cobham's employment through the baron's sister-in-law Lady Norton, a relative of Chief Justice Sir John Fineux.[86] The man whose name appears in the heralds' lists as "Walter Genett" was probably Warham Jemmett, who had been one of Cobham's agents at Canterbury in 1594[87] and who on 8 June 1606 thanked Secretary Cecil "for continuing his occupancy of 34 acres of land within Canterbury Park pale; which he first had from his late dear master Lord William Cobham".[88] Edward Morris, who seems to have had particular responsibility for keeping the accounts of Cobham's daughter Lady Sondes,[89] held a senior position in the Brooke household under the younger baron; he acted as his master's man of affairs at Court while Henry Lord Cobham was in the Tower, receiving an annual salary of £ 20,[90] and was still with him in 1609. Thomas Lanman, or Langman, also remained in Cobham's service as a body servant after the baron's imprisonment.[91] The last of the men who carried William Lord Cobham to the grave was a foreign of unknown origin, whom his master had brought to England in the 1560s for employment in his intelligence service.[92] He was sometimes called Matthew de Questor, sometimes simply Questor, and to his service to the government eloquent testimony was made in the House of Commons on 14 December 1601, when a bill of naturalization in which his name was to be included was debated. Sir Walter Ralegh said,

'I know Questor well, he hath served the Queen long, and done Her good service, he hath been these 36. Years in England, & hath ever shewed himself a good Subject ....'
Mr. Secretary Cecil said: 'I know this man Questor well; this Testimony I am able to give of him, that he is a man of good Substance, and of Qualitie, and of his quality I know not an honester man in England; he hath done good Service both to the Queen and to the State; and that to knowledg....'[93]

Unlike his English fellows, Questor did not share his master's hardships when the younger Cobham was imprisoned in 1603. Instead, he accommodatingly told the government what he knew of the baron's treasonable activities,[94] and, rewarded in 1604 with the office "of one of the King's posts, for beyond seas, for life," returned to the Continent.[95]

Behind the coffin walked John Gittings, who was perhaps also a servant, holding up the ends of the pall.[96] Of the honorary pall-bearers, the two on the right side of the corpse were friends of the Brookes and the Cecils, Sir Edward Hoby and Sir George Carew. The latter was a cousin of the late Lady Cobham; he had been a particular friend of Elizabeth Cecil's and was to become the only confidant of the Secretary. Cecil once recommended Edward More to Carew as the husband of Lady Stourton, "your kinswoeman, and the Sister of her that held you so deare."[97] On the left were Edward Darcy, one of the baronial family of that name which it has been found impossible to connect with the Brookes, and young William Paget, son of the attainted Roman Catholic exile and of the lady Lady Cobham's sister. Paget was soon to marry into the influential Knollys family and, under James I, to be restored to the barony of Paget of Beaudesert.[98]

Flanking the honorary pall-bearers were four gentlemen bearing bannerols. One was the dead man's nephew, "Mr duke Brook son to mr George Brook". The others were Sir James Wotton, younger brother of the baron's executor and one of the knights newly created by Essex at Cadiz; Sir Henry Guildford of Hempstead, in Kent, son-in-law of the Earl of Worcester; and Sir Thomas Wilford of Cranbrook, also in Kent, who had served as a military lieutenant to the elder Cobham and who was to continue in that capacity under his son.

The cortège was followed immediately by Dethick, the presiding herald; since Garter's bill included the fees of "Towe officers of Arms" and "one pursuivant of Armes" besides his own, one assumes that he did not walk alone.

Then, his train hâld by his nephew Francis Coppinger, came the new Lord Cobham, the chief mourner. He was supported by eight representatives of the great families of England. They were Charles Lord Howard of Effingham, the Lord Admiral, whose son-in-law the young lord was later to become; Lord Thomas Howard, younger son of the executed Duke of Norfolk, to whom James I was to give the earldom which Elizabeth had reserved for Cobham; Thomas Lord Buckhurst, who had been appointed to the Privy Council at the same time as the late baron, and who was to outlive all of the queen's other senior ministers and die possessed of Burghley's Lord Treasurership; and, assuming the rôle of the fourth nobleman among the mourners, Secretary Sir Robert Cecil. Had Essex and Lord Henry Howard, the late Norfolk's brother, been in the funeral procession, all of the great powers who were to struggle among themselves for power in Elizabeth's last days would have been assembled in that quiet prelude to a new age of storm. For Sir Walter Ralegh was there too, the second Cecil's and the second Cobham's intractable friend. With him, walking in company with the lords but deferentially behind them, was the new heir presumptive to the barony, Sir William Brooke. Brooke's partner in procession was Roger Manners of Uffington in Lincolnshire, an old man now but destined to live for another ten years; he was a younger son of one of those Earls of Rutland who called the Brookes cousins.[99] Linking the end of the Elizabethan era with its beginning was Ralegh's cousin and companion, Sir Thomas Gorges, whose wife Helena was the Swedish widow of that Marquess of Northampton who, in the days of Edward VI, had been married so sensationally to Elizabeth Brooke, Cobham's sister and Queen Elizabeth's first great female favourite.

Two unmistakably Kentish men ushered the mourners into the church, separating them from "all yeõ' & Strãgers" who, not dressed in appropriate garments, made up the motley tail of the procession. These yeomen ushers were John and Robert Iden. They were no doubt as unused as was their Shakespearian ancestor to associating with those great men who, their visit of courtesy to Cobham concluded, would return to 'live turmoiled in the Court'.

So William Lord Cobham was honoured in death. Nothing now marks his grave in the Church of St. Mary Magdalen, for his son, although advised by his steward in

1601 to put the Fleming Giles de Whitt to work on erecting Cobham's tomb,[100] was soon distracted from performing his filial duty by more pressing concerns. Thus Cobham College remains the baron's only monument.

No one has troubled to put into print the mediocre results of Francis Thynne's attempt to perpetuate his patron's fame in words. "The cheyned verses framed vppone his deathe (as vntymely to mee as yt was losse to others)," Thynne said in submitting his work to Cobham's son in 1598, "are in this sorte:

> Gloria magnifici signis fint vlla senatus
> Inter precipuos, Iure Cobãmus erat.
> Si quem preclarae et antiquae gloria stirpis
> Euehit euectus, Iure Cobãmus erat.
> Si quem vel pietas, vel docta volumina, vel laus
> Historiae celebrant, Iure Cobãmus erat.
> Si quẽ sanearũ feruens meditatio verũ
> Extulit ante alios, Iure Cobãmus erat.
> Si quem vera fides, si quem vis enthea mentis
> Effecit celebrem, Iure Cobãmus erat.
> Si quis erat Iustus, sapiens, bonus atq' benignus,
> Munificus, clarus, Iure Cobãmus erat.
> Pulchrae virtutis morũq' requiris honores,
> Optimus in primis, Iure Cobãmus erat.
> Magna quidem haec sunt, sed maior in omnib's illae:
> Deflendus semper, Iure Cobãmus erit.
> Namq' pater patriae et recti dulcis Alũnus
> Nestoreos Annos viuere dignus erat.[101]

Thynne's verses constitute an elegy too formalistic and high-flown to say much more than that Cobham had been a great lord at a time when lords received, as it were e titulo, their portion of praise. "If it signify greatness in a man," one may translate the verses,

> that he should sit among the foremost councillors of his land, then had Cobham the right to be considered great. If birth into an old and illustrious family distinguish a man, then was Cobham distinguished. If history praise the man of duty, of wide learning and high reputation, then is Cobham praiseworthy. If in truth anyone has ever raised himself above others through contemplation of the good, the true and the healthful, then was Cobham surely that man. If insoluble fidelity, if God-given strength of mind, merit renown, then ought Cobham to be renowned. If ever man was just, wise, good and kind, generous and truly great, that man was Cobham. If you seek one distinguished by the comeliness of his character and the seemliness of his way of life, it is in Cobham above all others that you shall find him. Certain it is that these were great qualities which he possessed, and greater even than they and all besides were others which were in him; forever ought Cobham to be mourned. To his country and to the tradition of uprightness both father and beloved son, he deserved to live as long as Nestor.

It was stuff not unlike Thynne's which led Burke once to denounce uncritical biographers of state worthies. "'These historians,' says he,

> 'recorders, and blazoners of virtues and arms, differ wholly from that other description of historians, who never assign any act of politicians to a good motive. These gentle historians, on the contrary, dip their pens in nothing but the milk of human kindness. They seek no further for merit than the preamble of a patent, or in the inscription of a tomb. With them every man created a peer is first an hero ready made. They judge of every man's capacity for office by the offices he has filled; and the more offices the more ability. Every general officer with them is a Marlborough; every statesman a Burleigh; every judge a Murray or a Yorke. They, who, alive, were laughed at, or pitied by all their acquaintance, make as good a figure as the best of them in the pages of Gwillim, Edmondson, and Collins.'[102]

One would not wish to incur a similar rebuke. Happily, since the practice of concluding a biography with a character of the subject has now fallen out of use, one need of course no longer run the risks which Burke's victims ran. Happily, because to generalize about men who lived long ago is worse than futile. One would arrogate authority if one judged Cobham, of whom one knows so little, as a man and not merely a public figure. Whether he was tall or short, fat or thin, good-natured or ill-tempered, at ease with his friends and family or stiff and formal with them, complacent about his place in the government or dissatisfied with it, devout or merely observant in his Anglicanism, one ought not even to guess.

Nor is there anything to indicate whether, in serving the state as long as he did, Cobham was motivated by a real desire to assist in the Elizabethan settlement, or by, after 1571 at least, a fear of the penalty which he might incur by refusing to do his part, or indeed whether he felt very strongly one way or the other. The tradition which required a man merely to serve as well as he could in his appointed place may well have been stronger in him than patriotism or self-interest. Certainly he always behaved as a conservative, eschewing radical methods and approving change only when its worth had been demonstrated to him. One has to make assumptions about these things, but it does not do to forget that one only assumes.

Again, although in studying the life of an Elizabethan courtier, one encounters the queen at every turning, and although Cobham must have known her well, one

finds no circumstantial account of any meeting between the baron and Elizabeth, no report of any direct words which passed between them. One must conclude that the baron, while valuable to her, was not a personal favourite with his mistress, not at least one of those men who, because they charmed her or counselled her or did both better than most, won for themselves peculiarly royal, hypocoristic titles which meant more than any dukedom.

Yet again, one deduces from the manner in which Elizabethans in high society wrote to one another, particularly from the way in which they signed themselves, that Cobham was on terms of intimacy with some of his fellow courtiers more than with others; one cannot, however, look at many sixteenth-century holographs without realizing that 'your Lordship's very loving friend' was more a formula than an expression of sincerity, and that one must know a good deal about the relationship between the correspondents before one dares either to take the letter at its face value or to discount the sentiments expressed in it. Cobham at Court must remain what his acquaintance said they thought him to be, not what he was either to himself or to others.

All that one can do in considering a man from whom one is at such a remove is to set down both on paper and in the ever-varying conception which one has of him those facts which are attested by the documents of his age. These have almost always to do with things public, not personal. Where one is fortunate enough to possess other material which seems relevant to two such pieces of documentary evidence, one proceeds to make a transition from one to the other. In this way one can reconstruct the pattern of a life such as Cobham's from month to month, occasionally from day to day, sometimes only from year to year, moving always from one level of social existence to another as one does so.

There are a few constant factors. In Cobham's case there is his friendship with Burghley and his consequent staunch support of the queen's chief minister throughout almost forty years. How warm a friendship it was one cannot hope to know, both because neither man seems to have been given to emotional expression and because the purely personal messages which passed between them have been destroyed or otherwise lost. It was, however, an enduring relationship, based

primarily, it seems, upon the recognition by each man of a need in himself which the other could supply. Cobham, one suspects, needed always to be led in great affairs, and in Burghley he had a strong leader, as secure as any Tudor minister ever was and as conservative as the baron himself. Burghley, for his part, was a new man who was not ashamed to admit that he would have preferred to be an aristocrat by birth, and his acceptance on terms of equality by the scion of the Brookes, the de la Poles and the de Cobhams must have gratified him and helped him to fit more easily into the still-mediaeval hierarchy of the Elizabethan nobility. After the dangers of 1571 the bond between the two men was certainly strengthened by Cobham's sense of obligation to Burghley and by the justification of Burghley's trust in his friend. That justification was achieved by Cobham's capacity for service, another of the constant factors in the baron's career. Grandiose and gratifying though his titles as Lord Warden, Lord Lieutenant, Privy Councillor and Lord Chamberlain undoubtedly were to Cobham, they imposed upon him a heavy load of work, which, increasing with the years, he apparently bore to his exacting queen's satisfaction to the end. Finally, Cobham had always, besides Burghley, a spokesman in the inmost circle of the Court. First his sister, then his second wife, then his daughter and son-in-law, one of the queen's favourites was throughout the baron's lifetime a Brooke. None of these people could have kept him where he was had he been incapable of proving his worth to Elizabeth, but any and all of them could and surely did contrive to keep his mistress aware of Cobham's dedication to her and of his deserts.

Even if, then, one demurs at writing a character of Lord Cobham, one can claim to know enough to judge those criticisms of him which others have made. Edmund Lodge, for instance, averts Burke's imprecation only to incur the charge of writing in total ignorance of his subject when he says that Cobham's "consequence was derived entirely from his birth and great fortune."[103] Lodge, unjustifiably hostile to Cobham's memory, revealed how little he knew of the baron's career in the short pen-sketch which he offered in support of his judgement of him. Conyers Read, while assuming an attitude more favourable to Cobham's reputation ("He was

not by any means a nonentity"), apparently knew little more, for he relied for his information upon the brief and inaccurate account of the baron given in the biography of his son in the Dictionary of National Biography.[104] Sir John Neale is alone among historians in summarizing Cobham's position without inaccuracy, but he is content merely to list the baron's offices, making no attempt to assess his public character.[105] No other writer since Cobham's own time has considered him worth more than a fleeting mention.

It is thus to a man of the sixteenth century, once more to Francis Thynne, that one must turn to find a criticism of William Lord Cobham which, while extravagantly expressed, does not seem to be unduly flattering, and which, while summary, does its subject no injustice. After enumerating Plato's four degrees of nobility, Thynne asks:

> Nowe yf anye of all these thinges by themselues in particular, fawlinge in seuerall persons makethe euerye suche person noble, howe muche moore is that personne to be termed nooble and rightlye to be honored therefore in whome all these fowere partes or the mooste of them doo concurre, as to be descended of good, of myghtie, of ancient, and of warlike ancestours, and hymselfe not to degenerat from them, euen in the cheefest poynt of all others, whiche is in his owne actyons, therin moost of all to nobilitat hym selfe and his posteritie? All whiche as I ame perswaded are to be founde in one ... who of late emongest others for his woorthynesse and merytte was advanced to the height of a counseller of Estate vnder the rarest princesse and Quene of oure Age.[106]

Footnotes to Book Four

Chapter I (pp. 480-85)

1 Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (1960), pp. 298-99.

2 Read, Lord Burghley, p. 290. See also p. 237; and Eric St. John Brooks, Sir Christopher Hatton, Queen Elizabeth's Favourite (1946), p. 305.

3 S.P., Scotland, 1584-85, p. 389.

4 S.P., Scotland, 1584-85, p. 391.

5 The third volume of Holinshed's Chronicles (unexpurgated edition of 1587), p. 1511.

6 Holinshed, p. 1513.

7 Walsingham to Burghley, 12 June 1584 (S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 181).

8 P.R.O., S.P. 12/171/25; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 181.

9 Lord Burghley, p. 197.

10 From the transcript in MS. Folger V.a.321, ff. 36b-37b.

11 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 293.

12 Edmund Lodge, Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners, in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, & James I ... (2nd ed., 1838), II, 250-53.

13 Lodge takes at its face value an observation upon Lord Cobham in Thomas Morgan's letter of 21 March 1585/6 (see below, p. 509).

14 Sir Simonds D'Ewes, The Journals of all the Parliaments During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth ... (1682), pp. 312, 313.

15 H.M.C., Report 4, pp. 430-31, where Cobham's signature is misread as "F. Cobham" and where the letter is therefore said to be from "Sir Francis Cobham". William Dunn Macray, in his D.N.B. biography of Bodley, is thus led to say that "he was recommended by Sir Francis Cobham." The paraph which precedes the 'H' in the baron's ornate signature has misled many editors and other scholars into thinking that there was a Privy Councillor who signed himself "F. Cobham": see, for instance, S.P., Scotland, 1585-86, p. 278, and H.M.C., Report 11, Appendix IV, p. 8. The Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum (1808), I, 134, expands the supposed "F. Cobham" of MS. Harl. 286, f. 168b, into "Francis Brooke Lord Cobham", and the editor of H.M.C., Report 7, p. 540, even expands the baron's signature on a letter of 10 August 1592 into "Thomas Cobham". John Green Waller noted the frequent editorial error in his article, "On the Fate of Henry Brooke, tenth Lord Cobham" (Archaeologia, XLVI (1881), 265), and correctly attributed it to a simple misreading of Cobham's usual signature. He did so, however, only after quoting W.A. Scott-Robertson's naive suggestion that "Frances, Lady Cobham, may perhaps have taken an unusual part in assisting her lord in the discharge of his many public duties." It is amusing to picture an Elizabethan lady seated among the Lords of the Council. Waller also reproduces the signatures of George Lord Cobham, William and his wife, and Henry their son.

16 See the official Return of Members of Parliament (Part I. Parliaments of England, 1213-1702) (1878), p. 415; J.E. Neale, The Elizabethan House of Commons (1949), p. 219. W.D. Macray, in the biography in D.N.B., says in error that Bodley lost the Hythe election and was returned by Plymouth. K.M.E. Murray, without offering

evidence in support of his insinuation, says that Cobham secured the Council's letter regarding Bodley in order to provide himself with "a poor disguise for his private interest" (The Constitutional History of the Cinque Ports (Manchester, 1935), p. 96).

17 See the list of the Barons of the Cinque Ports who were elected in 1584 in the Return of Members, p. 416.

18 See J.E. Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584-1601 (1957), p. 64.

19 Murray, p. 93: "In 1583-89 Romney apparently lost all control over William Southland, one of their jurats, and asked the Warden to punish him, to re-establish order and good government, to examine their town accounts and to force restoration of their marshland which had been alienated."

20 See above, p. 376.

21 Return of Members, p. 414.

22 D'Ewes, p. 333.

23 D'Ewes, p. 352.

24 See P.M. Handover, The Second Cecil: The Rise to Power 1563-1604 of Sir Robert Cecil, later first Earl of Salisbury (1959), p. 22.

25 See D'Ewes, pp. 319, 322.

26 Arch. Bodl. F. c. 11, f. 246.

27 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 317.

28 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, X, 261.

29 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XI, 450. A similar warning was delivered to Cecil by Sir Walter Ralegh, who, because the Secretary's letters had taken two nights to come to Sherborne in Dorset, wrote on 13 August 1600: "I myself went it in half a day less, and if there were any danger, it would be no otherwise handled" (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, X, 273).

30 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/284/59; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1601-03, p. 215.

31 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XV, 191, 195.

32 See above, p. 117, n. 3.

33 MS. Ashmol. 1109, ff. 170-72b. See also MSS. Ashmol. 1121, f. 187; 1129, pp. 399-401; Edmund H. Fellowes, The Knights of the Garter 1348-1939. With a complete list of the Stall-Plates in St. George's Chapel (1939), p. 80.

34 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, p. 399: "Habita quoq' de mortuorū Equitum ratione cum iam loca plurima (quatuor ad minimum) vacare cernerent," &c.

35 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, p. 402.

36 MS. Ashmol. 1113, f. 89.

37 See MS. Ashmol. 1113, f. 90b.

38 See above, p. 96.

(pp. 490-93)

39 For Cobham's colours, see R.H. D'Elboux's excellent discussion of the Brooke arms in his article on the "Brooke Tomb, Cobham," Archaeologia Cantiana, LXII (1949), 48-56.

40 There is an illustration of William Lord Cobham's coat of arms, consisting of twelve quarterings surrounded by the Garter, in William Green's Shakespeare's Merry Wives of Windsor (Princeton, New Jersey, 1962), Plate 10. In MS. Harl. 6157, f. 7, is the "Complementū armoriale Wiłłmi Brooke militis Dnī et Baronis de Cobham. superstitis 1589": it shows twenty quarterings, being the arms of Cobham, Hannaps, Braybrooke, Leddett, Foliot, Deyncourt, de la Pole, Peverell, de Cobham, Braye, [Longvale], Halighwell, Norbury, Butler, Sudeley, Montfort, de la Planche, Haversham, Crosher and Dabernon. All but the arms of Hannaps, de la Planche and Haversham are blazoned in the beautifully tricked achievement which serves as a frontispiece to MS. Add. 37666. The coat of twelve quarterings also appears on the tomb of Elizabeth Brooke, Lady Cecil, in St. Nicholas's chapel, Westminster.

41 See the coat of arms tricked in MS. Ashmol. 1121, f. 207, described as being that "Du tres noble Seigr Henry Brooke Baron de Cobham, Seigr Guardian dez Cinque-Portz de la Mer. Chlr du tres noble Ordre de la Jarretiere le 6. iour de June. L'an 1599", and said to have been "Placed before his Booke of the Statutes of the Ordre".

42 The list of Cobham's insignia is deduced from those drawn up for Rutland and Scrope and transcribed in MS. Ashmol. 1113, ff. 89, 90b.

43 MS. Coll. of Arms, Dethick's Funerals II, f. 588b.

44 "Church noates of Kent," MS. Harl. 3917, f. 2.

45 See H.M.C., Foljambe Papers, p. 13.

46 See Cecil Paper 2410; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 284.

47 See S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 267.

48 Cobham to the Privy Council, 1 November 1583 (S.P., Dom., 1581-90, pp. 127-28). The reference to the players is noted by Sir Edmund Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), I, 280 n.

49 See Secretary Walsingham to Cobham, 12 November 1578 (S.P., Dom., 1547-80, p. 605).

50 Cobham to Walsingham, 22, 28 September 1585 (S.P., Dom., 1581-90, pp. 267-68, 270). For Paget's connection with the Brookes, see the notes to the family tree, pp. 1117-18, n. 39.

51 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1090, n. 25.

52 See Willoughby's letters to Cobham of 20 and 21 September enclosed in the baron's letter to Walsingham of 22 September, and that of 24 September (S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 269).

53 Mendoza to Philip II, 25 July 1582 (S.P., Span., Eliz., III, 389).

54 See Conyers Read, Mr Secretary Walsingham and the policy of Queen Elizabeth (Oxford, 1925), III, 193; James Anthony Froude, History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada (1862-70), XI, 504, 570, XII, 228 ff.

55 See Cobham's dispatches for September 1585 (S.P., Dom., 1581-90, pp. 267, 268).

56 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 311-27; Froude, XII, 1-30.

57 Lord Burghley, p. 554. See also Lawrence Stone, An Elizabethan: Sir Horatio Palavicino (Oxford, 1956), p. 259.

58 S.P., For., 1584-85, p. 453. There is a short, documented life of Cubiare (Zubiaur, Seabarrow, Sebeauro) in The Ven. Philip Howard Earl of Arundel 1557-1595, edd. John Hungerford Pollen and William MacMahon (Publications of the Catholic Record Society, XXI (1919), 130 n.).

59 See H.M.C., Report 4, p. 223.

60 See Correspondence of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leycester, During his Government of the Low Countries, in the Years 1585 and 1586, ed. John Bruce (Camden Society, 1844), p. 231.

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Chapter II

1 See Read, Walsingham, III, 132-44; Lord Burghley, pp. 327-28.

2 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 334; J.E. Neale, "The Elizabethan Political Scene" (1948), in Essays in Elizabethan History (1958), p. 73; A.L. Rowse, The England of Elizabeth: the Structure of Society (1950), p. 283. Dr. Rowse implies that Burghley's promotion of Cobham was due partly to the fact that their children, Robert Cecil and Elizabeth Brooke, were already married in 1586. See below, p. 552.

3 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 294-98.

4 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 325.

5 Roger Manners to Rutland, 14 February 1585/6 (H.M.C., Rutland Papers, I, 190).

6 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 392. As a connection of the Boleyns, Buckhurst was also related to Cobham: see the notes to the family tree, p. 1084, n. 13.

7 An Historical Introduction to the Marprelate Tracts (1908), p. 116.

8 Holinshed, p. 1434. See also Roger Manners to the Earl of Rutland, 5 February 1585/6 (H.M.C., Rutland Papers, I, 189).

9 S.P., For., 1585-86, pp. 352-53.

10 S.P., Scotland, 1585-86, p. 248.

11 Thomas Morgan to Mary Queen of Scots, 21/31 March 1585/6 (A Collection of State Papers Relating to Affairs In the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, From the Year 1571 to 1596 ..., ed. William Murdin (1759), p. 489). The letter, a very long one from which quotation is also made below, pp. 509-11, is transcribed in a modernized version which omits several references to Lady Cobham in S.P., Scotland, 1585-86, pp. 262-78.

12 Correspondence, ed. Bruce, pp. 393-94; the square brackets are the editor's.

13 See H.M.C., Buccleuch Papers (Montagu House), III, 26; A.P.C., 1586-87, pp. 5-6.

14 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 390.

15 Holinshed, p. 1561.

16 See MS. Yelverton 33, p. 111, as transcribed and edited in Pollen and MacMahon,

pp. 138-44.

17 H.M.C., Rutland Papers, I, 198. See also J.B. Black, The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603 (2nd ed., Oxford, 1959), p. 370.

18 H.M.C., Rutland Papers, I, 204.

19 See "A declaration of the manner of treating of peace underhand to the Earl of Leicester", dated August 1586 (S.P., For., June 1586-March 1587, p. 144).

20 Correspondence, ed. Bruce, pp. 231-32; the square brackets are the editor's.

21 Correspondence, ed. Bruce, pp. 246-48; only the third set of square brackets is the editor's.

22 Correspondence, ed. Bruce, pp. 250-54.

23 S.P., For., June 1586-March 1587, pp. 143-44; the square brackets are the editor's. The document is transcribed in full in Read's Walsingham, III, 174-77.

24 See Walsingham, III, 174.

25 Correspondence, ed. Bruce, pp. 289-90; the last set of square brackets is the editor's.

26 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 336.

27 S.P., For., June 1586-March 1587, p. 80. See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 337. Froude, who makes no mention of Cobham in his account of the affair, lays all of the blame for Grafigna's mission of deception and for his repudiation squarely upon Elizabeth herself (XII, 72).

28 See above, p. 500.

29 See S.P., Scotland, 1586-88, pp. 12 ff.

30 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 347; Froude, XII, 171-74.

31 The Bardon Papers, Documents Relating to the Imprisonment & Trial of Mary Queen of Scots, ed. Conyers Read (Camden Society, 1909), pp. 46-47.

32 Pollen and MacMahon, p. 148.

33 See above, p. 499.

34 See above, pp. 395-99.

35 Murdin, pp. 489-90, 493, 504. The interpolations and corrections in square brackets are from the transcript of the letter in S.P., Scotland, 1585-86, pp. 267-78.

36 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 350-51.

37 See Froude, XII, 160-61.

38 Froude, XII, 168.

39 S.P., Span., Eliz., III, 604.

40 See William Camden, The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princesse

Elizabeth, late Queen of England ... (4th ed., 1688), pp. 438-39: "Now likewise these following Persons paid their Debt of Nature, viz. John Lord Stourton, the eldest son of Charles (whom Queen Mary made an Example of her Justice for Murther) by the Lady Ann Stanley, the Daughter of Edward Earl of Derby, whom Edward his Brother succeeded ...." Stourton died on 13 October 1588, and was buried at Stourton (see The Registers of Stourton, County Wilts., From 1570 to 1800, ed. John Henry Ellis (Harleian Society, Volume XII, 1887), pp. viii, 64).

41 See Holinshed, p. 1586; Nicholas Harris Nicolas, Life of William Davison ... (1823), p. 38; Froude, XII, 161; Read, Lord Burghley, p. 351. Froude says that Cobham had been one of "the keenest advocates of her [Mary's] claims ... and ... had more than once been implicated in conspiracies in her favour:" his readers are evidently expected to recall the Ridolfi Plot, since he offers nothing in support of his assertion.

42 See the list of peers present at Fotheringhay in Froude, XII, 188.

43 See A.P.C., 1586-87, p. 244.

44 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 359.

45 See H.M.C., Report 4, p. 464.

46 See D'Ewes, pp. 376, 378.

47 See Froude, XII, 197-98; Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584-1601, pp. 104-05; Read, Lord Burghley, p. 361.

48 See Return of Members, p. 421.

49 See Return of Members, p. 418. J. Cave-Browne confounds Sir Henry Cobham with Henry Brooke and thus implies that two of Lord Cobham's sons sat in the Parliament which condemned Mary Stuart (see "Knights of the Shire for Kent from A.D. 1275 to A.D. 1831," Archaeologia Cantiana, XXI (1895), 229).

50 D'Ewes, pp. 393-94.

51 D'Ewes, p. 379.

52 D'Ewes, p. 379.

53 Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584-1601, p. 115; Lord Burghley, p. 363.

54 The Letters of Elizabeth Queen of Bohemia, ed. L.M. Baker (1953), p. 325.

55 D'Ewes, p. 405.

56 Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584-1601, p. 129; Read, Lord Burghley, p. 363.

57 D'Ewes, p. 407.

58 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 393.

59 S.P., Dom., Addenda, 1580-1625, pp. 202-03.

60 See below, p. 668.

61 See Bernardino de Mendoza to Philip II, Paris, 19 November 1586 (S.P., Span., Eliz., III, 660-61, where the ambassador is incorrectly called "Harry Wotton").

(pp. 517-22)

62 See S.P., For., April-December 1587, p. 113.

63 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 392; Froude, XII, 301, where Elizabeth's cruel reprimand to Buckhurst is quoted.

64 Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney, London, 11 March 1599/1600 (Letters and Memorials of State ..., ed. Arthur Collins (1746), II, 177).

65 See A.P.C., 1586-87, p. 272.

66 See below, pp. 931-33.

67 The letter, MS. Cotton Calig. C.ix, f. 156, is transcribed in Nicolas, Davison, pp. 96-97. See also Read, Lord Burghley, p. 368.

68 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 369.

69 Nicolas, Davison, p. 258, where is transcribed from MS. Harl. 290, f. 213, "A true Relation of that which passed betwixt her Majesty and me [Davison] in the Cause of the late Scottish Queen." Elizabeth Jenkins refers to the attendance upon the queen on that morning of "Mrs. Brooks" [sic], citing Nicolas, but fails to identify the lady-in-waiting with Robert Cecil's future wife (Elizabeth the Great (1958), p. 276).

70 P.R.O., S.P. 12/200/20; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 404, where the florid "F" of Lady Cobham's signature is mistaken for an "E" and unwarrantably expanded to "Elizabeth".

71 Read, Lord Burghley, p. 375; see also p. 576.

72 See A.P.C., 1587-88, pp. 17-33.

73 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 372.

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Chapter III

1 See D'Ewes, p. 384.

2 D'Ewes, p. 408. See also Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584-1601, pp. 166-68.

3 D'Ewes, p. 387.

4 Cobham was assessed at £ 300 a year. The lists on which his name was entered in 1585 and 1590 are in MSS. Lansdowne 44, f. 183b; 63, ff. 40-41b.

5 Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584-1601, p. 183. Cobham had also served on the committee which decided against allowing the contribution from the Commons to be presented with that from the Lords (see D'Ewes, pp. 386-87).

6 See D'Ewes, pp. 389-90.

7 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, p. 407.

8 See A.P.C., 1587-88, pp. 10-79, especially p. 23; pp. 132 ff.

9 See An Index to Bills of Privy Signet ..., ed. W.P.W. Phillimore (1890), p. 8.

10 See H.M.C., Foljambe Papers, pp. 24-25.

11 A.P.C., 1587-88, p. 218; see also H.M.C., Report 5, p. 570.

12 A.P.C., 1586-87, p. 246.

13 See "The names of the Lieutenants and their Deputies," 1587 (H.M.C., Foljambe Papers, p. 25).

14 See Froude, XII, 290-98; Garrett Mattingly, The Defeat of the Spanish Armada (1959), pp. 90-122.

15 S.P., Span., Eliz., IV, 126.

16 See Froude, XII, 74 ff., 298 ff.; Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 396-97.

17 Cobham to Walsingham, 23 October 1586 (S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 364).

18 Lord Burghley, p. 403.

19 H.M.C., Laing Manuscripts, I, 57, where the news-letter is erroneously dated August 1586.

20 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 403; Froude, XII, 309.

21 See Conyers Read, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford," American Historical Review, XX (1915), 292-313; Lord Burghley, p. 388.

22 S.P., For., 1586-88, p. 385.

23 Letters of Philip Gawdy of West Harling, Norfolk, and of London to Various Members of his Family 1579-1616, ed. Isaac Herbert Jeayes (1906), p. 21; the second set of square brackets is the editor's.

24 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 395.

25 See S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 536.

26 See A.P.C., 1587-88, p. 326.

27 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 363; Handover, Cecil, pp. 48-50.

28 Handover, Cecil, p. 55.

29 Lodge, Illustrations, II, 252; cited in Handover, Cecil, p. 43.

30 S.P., For., January-June 1588, pp. 101-02.

31 See H.M.C., Ancaster Manuscripts, p. 89.

32 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 121.

33 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 130.

34 See S.P., For., January-June 1588, pp. 134-35.

35 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 131.

36 Paulet certainly did not go to the Netherlands: his signature appears on none of the joint reports from the commissioners: yet Froude makes him one of the embassy (XII, 328). Read correctly says that he was not (Lord Burghley, p. 403).

(pp. 528-35)

37 This is the text of the letter which Cobham sent to Burghley; the square brackets are those of the editor of the State Papers. An identical letter, endorsed as from Thomas Worthington to John Smith, is transcribed in S.P., Dom., Addenda, 1580-1625, p. 242, where the word 'tyranny' is incorrectly rendered 'treaty'. Froude (XII, 328-29 n.) quotes the same letter and says that it was written to Sir William Stanley, the English soldier who had betrayed Deventer to the Spanish.

38 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 235.

39 See Cobham to Walsingham, Ostend, 14 March 1587/8 (MS. Harl. 287, ff. 63-64).

40 MS. Harl. 287, f. 72; the words in italics are in cipher in the original. Read (Walsingham, III, 273 n.) quotes the message from 'oppose' to 'peace'.

41 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 404.

42 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 216.

43 See S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 272.

44 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 145.

45 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 161.

46 Cobham to Burghley, 6 April 1588 (S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 267).

47 Robert Cecil to Burghley, 5 April 1588 (S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 261).

48 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 235.

49 S.P., For., January-June 1588, pp. 196-97.

50 See S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 272.

51 Transcribed from P.R.O., S.P. 12/208/56 in Read, Lord Burghley, p. 405.

52 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 282.

53 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 540.

54 MS. Harl. 287, f. 78b.

55 MS. Harl. 287, ff. 77-78.

56 MS. Ashmol. 1129, p. 408. On 5 April Cobham and Derby had asked leave of the queen to be absent "on St. George's Day, the time of their return being uncertain" (S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 473).

57 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 313.

58 S.P., For., January-June 1588, pp. 330-31.

59 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 403-04; Froude, XII, 342.

60 See S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 363.

61 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 330; the square brackets are the editor's.

62 S.P., For., January-June 1588, pp. 370-71.

63 MS. Harl. 287, f. 89; the words in italics are in cipher in the original.

(pp. 535-42)

64 S.P., For., January-June 1588, pp. 418-19.

65 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 430.

66 S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 508.

67 S.P., For., January-June 1588, pp. 521-22.

68 Valentine Dale to the queen, 12 July 1588, as transcribed from MS. Cotton Vespasian C. viii, f. 165, in Pollen and MacMahon, p. 172.

69 H.M.C., Ancaster Manuscripts, p. 151.

70 See H.M.C., Ancaster Manuscripts, p. 150.

71 Mattingly, pp. 272-73.

72 S.P., Dom., 1598-1601, p. 270.

73 S.P., Dom., 1598-1601, p. 270.

74 Mattingly, p. 173.

75 See Sir Thomas Scott to Burghley, 13 July 1588 (S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 502); Hasted's History of Kent ..., ed. Henry H. Drake (1886), p. 281.

76 See Murdin, p. 598; H.M.C., Foljambe Papers, p. 37.

77 The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, made by Sea or ouer-land, to the remote and farthest distant quarters of the Earth, at any time within the compasse of these 1600 yeres: Diuided into three æuerall Volumes ... (1599), I, 599.

78 The Copie of a letter sent out of England to Don Bernardin Mendoza ... declaring the state of England ... (1588), pp. 27-28. Read attributes the pamphlet to Burghley (Lord Burghley, p. 431).

79 S.P., For., July-December 1588, pp. 70-71.

80 See Walsingham to Burghley, 8 August 1588 (MS. Harl. 6994, f. 136; quoted in Read, Walsingham, III, 276 n.).

81 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 430.

82 Mattingly, p. 173.

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Chapter IV

1 See A.P.C., 1588, p. 227.

2 A.P.C., 1588, p. 248.

3 A.P.C., 1588, p. 286.

4 A.P.C., 1588, p. 297.

5 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 387.

6 See Return of Members, p. 426.

7 See Return of Members, p. 423. The uncle and the nephew are confounded badly by Cave-Browne, pp. 229-30.

8 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1147, n. 55.

9 S.P., For., 1583-84, pp. 183-84.

10 See above, p. 524.

11 See D'Ewes, pp. 430, 440, 443; Heywood Townshend, Historical Collections: or, An exact Account of the Proceedings of the Four last Parliaments of Q. Elizabeth of Famous Memory ... (1680), p. 20.

12 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1147, n. 55.

13 See D'Ewes, pp. 437, 454.

14 See Joseph Hunter, The Register of Admissions to Gray's Inn, 1521-1889 ... (1889), p. 66.

15 MS. Harl. 287, f. 72b.

16 S.P., For., April-December 1587, p. 113.

17 See S.P., For., January-June 1588, pp. 387, 519.

18 S.P., Scotland, 1586-88, pp. 638-40.

19 The Real War of the Theaters: Shakespeare's Fellows in Rivalry with the Admiral's Men, 1594-1603: Repertories, Devices, and Types (Boston, 1935), p. 72 n.

20 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1132-33, n. 52.

21 See S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 461.

22 See the pedigree of Brente in The Visitation of Kent, Taken in the Years 1619-21 ..., ed. Robert Hovenden (Harleian Society, Volume XLII, 1898), p. 212.

23 See A.P.C., 1588, p. 389.

24 H.M.C., Report 7, p. 646. The letter is not among the Loseley manuscripts either at the Guildford Museum or in the Folger Shakespeare Library.

25 Sadler to Burghley, 25 January 1584/5 (The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler, Knight-Banneret, ed. Arthur Clifford (Edinburgh, 1809), II, 496).

26 See Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 38-39.

27 Buckhurst to Sir Robert Cecil, 25 December 1601 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XI, 530).

28 See A.P.C., 1588, pp. 362, 408, 424.

29 See John Nichols, Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth ... (1788), II, pp. 97, 102, 104, 109, 111, 112 of the nineteenth arabically numbered section.

30 Read, Lord Burghley, p. 437.

31 P.R.O., S.P. 12/222/33.

32 See Christopher Milles to Edmund Shaw, 17 March 1596/7 (MS, Coll. of Arms, Dethick's Funerals II, f. 585).

33 Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584-1601, p. 194.

34 See MS. Lansdowne 63, ff. 40-41b.

35 See D'Ewes, p. 423; Townshend, p. 6.

36 See D'Ewes, p. 420; Townshend, p. 3.

37 See D'Ewes, pp. 422, 423.

38 See D'Ewes, pp. 426-27; Townshend, p. 12.

39 The account of the trial of Arundel in MS. Yelverton 33, ff. 74-80, is transcribed in Pollen and MacMahon, pp. 264-74; the indictment is rehearsed on pp. 251-52.

40 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 446-48.

41 See B.M. Ward, The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford 1550-1604 from Contemporary Documents (1928), p. 287.

42 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 409.

43 MS. Lansdowne 101, f. 127; cited by Handover, Cecil, p. 67.

44 Handover, Cecil, p. 67.

45 See above, p. 482.

46 The portrait, reproduced above, p. 553, is also reproduced by Joel Hurstfield in "Robert Cecil Earl of Salisbury: Minister of Elizabeth and James I," History Today, VII (1957), 285. For the comment on Henry Lord Cobham's nose, see below, p. 621.

47 Francis Peck, Desiderata Curiosa (1732-35), I, 64.

48 On the tomb of Lady Burghley in St. Nicholas's chapel, Westminster, it is said that Cecil "parum ante Matris obitū ambiebat conscia matre, nobilem virginem Dnām Elizabethā Brook in priuato Cubiculo Reginae inservientem, filiā praeclari Baronis regni Wi: Dñi de Cobhā, eamq post mortē Matris consensu patris in uxorē duxit ultimo Augusti Ao: 1589."

49 Settlement of Lands in Edmonton, Enfield, and elsewhere, Made the 31st of May, 1589, with a View to the Marriage of Robert Cecil, Second Son of William, Lord Burghley, with Elizabeth Brooke, Daughter of William, Lord Cobham. With Sketches of the Lives, and a Pedigree shewing the Relations of the Parties to the Deed, ed. Charles E.B. Bowles (1889), pp. 3-5, 11. The original indenture which Bowles edited is Cecil Paper Legal 22/5.

50 Thomas Birch, Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth ... (1754), I, 55-57.

51 Murdin, p. 791: "Robertus Cecill cepit in uxorem Elizabetham Brook filiam Wm. D. Cobham apud aedes D. Cobham Londini." See Cecil Paper 140/15; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 71. It is curious to find Augustus Jessopp saying in his article on Cecil in D.N.B. that "we are ignorant of the exact place or time of his birth ... of his marriage, of the births of his children. of his wife's death."

52 Cecil to Burghley, Ghent, 10 March 1587/8 (S.P., For., January-June 1588, p. 185).

53 Handover, Cecil, p. 148.

54 Ralegh and the Throckmortons (1962), p. 204.

55 MS. Lansdowne 107, f. 66; cited in Algernon Cecil, A Life of Robert Cecil First Earl of Salisbury (1915), p. 45.

56 MS. Lansdowne 107, f. 63; cited in Cecil, p. 44.

57 See John Nichols, The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First ... (1828), III, 557 n.

58 MS. Lansdowne 107, f. 98.

59 There is a possibility that the Cecils also had a son who died in infancy: see the notes to the family tree, p. 1200, n. 77.

60 He was a month short of being six years old when his mother's funeral certificate was drawn up on 24 January 1596/7: see below, p. 641.

61 See Constance E.B. Rye, "Queen Elizabeth's God-children," The Genealogist, II (new series), 296.

62 She was three and a half years old in January 1596/7.

63 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 356.

64 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 355-56.

65 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 444-45.

66 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 445. The episode of the wet-nurse is discussed in Cecil, p. 86.

67 See below, pp. 591-94.

68 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 505-05.

69 The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee ..., ed. James Orchard Halliwell (Camden Society, 1842), p. 49.

70 See Mrs. Dorothy Tamworth to Lady Cecil, 1 May 1594 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 521); George Goring to Cecil, 2 September 1596 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 363).

71 See Murdin, p. 805.

72 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 213.

73 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 236.

74 Birch, Memoirs, I, 238.

75 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 273; VI, 202, 348, 407; VI, 334; VI, 214; V, 241; V, 277; IV, 292; VI, 434; IV, 346; VI, 104; VI, 196.

76 The State and Dignity of a Secretary of State's Place, with the Care and Peril

thereof; written by the Right Honourable Robert, late Earl of Salisbury ... (1642), in Harleian Miscellany, II (1809), 281.

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Chapter V

1 See S.P., Dom., 1581-90, p. 611.

2 See H.M.C., Report 5, p. 138.

3 See A.P.C., 1589-90, pp. 93-94.

4 H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, pp. 89-90.

5 Cecil Papers Maps 1/58; described in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 475.

6 MS. Lansdowne 60, f. 202.

7 See John Rotheram to Cobham, 2 December 1589 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 418).

8 A Portrait of Canterbury (1953), pp. 83, 192.

9 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 292, where the editor has unwarrantably assumed that the king, in dating his letter 1585, was following the English convention of recognizing a new year only after 24 March.

10 MS. Lansdowne 255, f. 360. William Brenhhley Rye (England as Seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James the First ... (1865), p. 257 n.) incorrectly dates the document 12 November 1595 and wrongly assumes that the stone was used in the rebuilding of Cobham College, work on which did not begin until after Cobham's death.

11 See Cecil Paper 16/66; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 352-53.

12 Cecil Papers Accounts 27/31.

13 Joseph Hunter, Hallamshire: The History and Topography of the Parish of Sheffield in the County of York: with Historical and Descriptive Notices of the Parishes of Ecclesfield, Hansworth, Treeton, and Whiston, and of the Chapelry of Bradfield (1819), p. 91.

14 See below, p. 665.

15 S.P., Dom., 1601-03, p. 46; cited by Eric Mercer, English Art 1553-1625 (Oxford, 1962), p. 118 n.

16 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/282/64; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1601-03, p. 139.

17 Rye, England as Seen by Foreigners, p. 66.

18 Memoirs of the Peers of England, During the Reign of James the First (1802), I, 272.

19 MS. Add. 37666, ff. 44-44b.

20 See Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 216-17.

21 Peck, I, i, 35; the square brackets are the editor's.

22 Peck, I, i, 34; the square brackets are the editor's. See also Read, Lord Burghley, p. 123.

23 Historicall description of the Iland of Britaine ... (Part One of the first volume of Holinshed's Chronicles, ed. 1587), p. 210.

24 Holinshed, p. 1512.

25 Cecil Paper 145/82; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 357-58.

26 P.R.O., S.P. 14/2/41; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1603-10, p. 20.

27 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 430; X, 297; XII, 303.

28 H.M.C., Portland Papers, II, 281.

29 See above, p. 166.

30 See above, p. 241.

31 See above, p. 561.

32 A.P.C., 1589-90, pp. 225-26. What is virtually a copy of this letter has been erroneously included among the business transactions of the Council of 3 July 1590 (cf. A.P.C., 1590, pp. 291-92).

33 See H.M.C., Report 8, II, 27.

34 See Rowse, pp. 68, 93.

35 H.M.C., Townshend Papers, p. 9. The date 18 February 1596 (i.e., 1596/7?) was assigned to this letter by the editors, probably because, as Mr. T.S. Blakeney stated in a private communication of 10 July 1963 after examining the original, the '0' in '1590[/1]' might be mistaken for a '6'. There is no doubt of the correct date. Not only did Judge Wyndham die in July 1592 (see the article by E. Irving Carlyle in D.N.B.); Queen Elizabeth appointed no Lord Chancellor in succession to Hatton, who died in November 1591. One can see, from a reference at a later point in the letter to Hunsdon's declaration of an intention presently to punish one Drury for speaking disrespectfully of him, that it was written before Thomas Drury's imprisonment for offences against an important person and for indiscretion concerning affairs of state on 13 May 1591 (see A.P.C., 1590, pp. 119, 409). The problem of dating the letter in print has been further complicated by its inclusion among The Official Papers of Sir Nathaniel Bacon of Stiffkey, Norfolk as Justice of the Peace 1580-1620, ed. H.W. Saunders (Camden Society, 3rd ser., Volume XXVI, 1915), pp. 186-88, for Saunders seems to have assumed that it formed the first part of a very long epistle which Wyndham wrote to Bacon on 30 December 1575. There is no doubt that this latter date is correct for the second part of the composite document (beginning with the words, "I perceyve by two Lynes"), for it appears at the end of a news-letter about the death of Sir Peter Carew, the grant of an annuity of £ 400 to Hatton, and other events of late 1575. The references to the Martinists and to the inclusion of Cobham and Buckhurst in a deputation from the Council, however, should have indicated to Saunders that the first part of the letter which he purports to publish was written some twenty years after the second, dated part. Saunders must have failed to notice that the letter of 1591 had been dated 1596 and published by the Historical Manuscripts Commissioners in 1887, for he intended to exclude from his collection any materials abstracted by them (see his p. xix).

36 A.P.C., 1589-90, p. 379.

37 See the article on Middleton in D.N.B., written by Robert Dunlop.

38 H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 93.

39 Nicolas, Hatton, p. 488, from P.R.O., S.P. 12/233/12.

40 Lord Burghley, p. 466.

41 See A.P.C., 1591, p. 358, where the names of the Councillors who were present at Cecil's induction are listed.

42 See A.P.C., 1591, p. 386.

43 See H.M.C., Report 5, p. 266; Salisbury Papers, IV, 204, 288.

44 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/239/77; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1591-94, p. 66.

45 H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 102.

46 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/264/124; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 566.

47 The Annales, or Generall chronicle of England, begun first by maister Iohn Stow, and after him continued and augmented with matters forreyne, and domestique, auncient and moderne, vnto the ende of this present yeere 1614. by Edmond Howes, gentleman (1615), p. 763.

48 Murdin, p. 799; see Phillimore, p. 27, and Hasted, ed. Drake, p. 179.

49 See Peck, I, ii, 17.

50 A.P.C., 1591-92, pp. 549-50. The text is that of the letter sent to the Master of the Rolls and other dignitaries for the setting up of watches in Holborn, Clerkenwell and St. Giles in the Fields; a letter "of the like tenour" was sent to Cobham.

51 Birch, Memoirs, I, 87; the square brackets are the editor's.

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Chapter VI

1 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1148, n. 55.

2 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1157-71, nn. 57-59.

3 See Denis Meadows, Elizabethan Quintet (1956), p. 202.

4 See Dee, ed. Halliwell, p. 33. Halliwell incorrectly transcribes the 'Madimi' of the diary entry in MS. Ashmol. 488 as 'Madinia'.

5 See A True & Faithful Relation of What passed for many Yeers Between Dr. John Dee (A Mathematician of Great Fame in Q. Eliz. and King James their Reignes) and Some Spirits: ..., ed. Meric. Casaubon (1659), sig. Ccc3. Cf. Meadows, pp. 222-23.

6 See Hope Mirrlees, A Fly in Amber being an extravagant biography of the romantic antiquary Sir Robert Bruce Cotton (1962), pp. 343-44. Neither Meadows nor Miss Mirrlees connects the presence of Lady Cobham at the christening with the bestowal upon the child of the name 'Newton'.

7 Dee, ed. Halliwell, p. 34.

8 Dee, ed. Halliwell, pp. 40-41.

9 Dee, ed. Halliwell, p. 41.

10 MS. Add. 37666, f. 43b. There is known no certificate of Lady Cobham's funeral among the manuscripts of the College of Arms. Lacking such a certificate one must accept as reliable this statement by Francis Thynne of the date of the baroness's death, for it is contained in the account of the Brooke family which was presented to her son in 1598. The pedigree notes drawn up in the mid-seventeenth century by Henry Oxenden and published by Keith W. Murray in The Genealogist (XXXIII (1917), 62) are surely in error when they state that Lord Cobham "ma: Francisca da: of S^r John Newton K^t (the said Francisca dyed 1594). Secondly (quere if not first) hee married Dorothy da: of George Lo: Aburgaveny & shee dyed 1559." In a Brooke pedigree drawn up in 1592 and dated 16 February 1592/3 Lady Cobham is said to have died "In Ano 1592" (MS. Harl. 2134, f. 133). For the statement made in several peerages (cf. C.P., III, 348; Burke's Peerage, ed. 1959, p. 495) that she died on 17 October 1592 there is offered no documentary proof.

11 MS. Add. 37666, f. 44.

12 See below, pp. 937-38. In the original the text is in italic, the proper names only being in Roman; the practice has been reversed in the quotation made above.

13 MS. Coll. of Arms, Dethick's Funerals II, f. 588b.

14 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1114, n. 39.

15 See below, p. 598.

16 See above, p. 108, n. 13.

17 See S.P., Dom., 1591-94, p. 513, where the Latin 'Sancta Crux' is unusually rendered 'Holyrood'.

18 See above, pp. 40, 489, 570.

19 An Elizabethan Recusant House comprising The Life of the Lady Magdalen Viscountess Montague (1538-1608) Translated into English from the Original Latin of Dr. Richard Smith, Bishop of Chalcedon, by Cuthbert Fursdon, O.S.B., in the year 1627, ed. A.C. Southern (1954), p. 42.

20 A.P.C., 1591, p. 77.

21 Recusant House, p. 44.

22 Recusant House, p. 26.

23 Recusant House, pp. 31-32. Dr. Southern is almost certainly incorrect in identifying the Lord Cobham mentioned by Smith with Henry Lord Cobham, who was Lady Montague's junior by almost twenty-six years; his error would seem to derive from the unexpected lack in D.N.B. of a biography of that 'man of great estate, honour, and authority in the realm', William Lord Cobham. In the Vita Illustrissimae, ac Piissimae Dominae Magdalenae Montis-Acuti in Anglia Vicecomitissae: Scripta per Richardum Smitheum ... (Romae, 1609), p. 40, which Fursdon translated faithfully, the relevant passage reads: "Etenim cum defuncto marito suo Illustrissimus Baro de Cobham, vir in Anglia multarū diuitiarum, honoris & auctoritatis, nuptias eius ardenter ambiret, amplissimamq. ille dotem offerret, vt in posterum non amplius a procis sollicitaretur."

24 Recusant House, p. 67.

25 See below, pp. 918-19.

26 See Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584-1601, pp. 241-45.

27 See Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584-1601, pp. 257-61. The 1593 Barons of the Cinque Ports are listed in the Return of Members, p. 431.

28 See Return of Members, p. 428.

29 See Return of Members, p. 428.

30 See Return of Members, p. 431.

31 See above, p. 82.

32 See Sir Robert Douglas's Peerage of Scotland ..., ed. John Philip Wood (2nd ed., 1813), I, 457. Both Hoby and Scrope of Bolton were married to daughters of Lord Hunsdon.

33 See D'Ewes, pp. 457-58; Townshend, pp. 31, 33. Cobham's last summons to Parliament is noted in Sir William Dugdale's A Perfect Copy of All Summons of the Nobility to the Great Councils and Parliaments of this Realm, From the XLIX. of King Henry the IIIth Until these present Times ... (1685), p. 534.

34 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 297.

35 H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, pp. 105-06.

36 Lord Burghley, p. 488.

37 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, p. 420.

38 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 305.

39 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 317.

40 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 318. The young Earl of Essex, who wanted relief sent to Boulogne at once, was checked by Burghley in Council, so that the 300 Kentishmen were ordered merely to stand by and await developments. Read, convinced that it was the earl and his supporters, Hunsdon and Howard, who were responsible for the Council's alarm over Boulogne, states in ignorance of Fane's letter to Cobham that "it may be that the need to succour Boulogne was based upon very imperfect information, the fruit perhaps of Essex's new intelligence service. We hear nothing of it otherwise" (Lord Burghley, p. 483).

41 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 321.

42 See Phillimore, p. 30.

43 Cobham wrote to Thomas Fane from Cobham Hall on 1 June (see H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 105).

44 Cecil Paper 23/7; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 345.

45 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 355.

46 Thomas Birch, An Historical View of the Negotiations between the Courts of England, France and Brussels, from the Year 1592 to 1617 ... (1749), p. II.

47 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1093-94, n. 29.

48 S.P., Dom., 1591-94, pp. 382-83.

49 See below, p. 926.

50 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1174, n. 68.

51 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 409.

52 See H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, pp. 106-07.

53 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 389-90, 402.

54 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 419.

55 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 415.

56 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 487-88.

57 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 483.

58 See below, pp. 935-37.

59 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 422.

60 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1163-64, n. 57.

61 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 355.

62 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 403-04.

63 See a letter written from Cobham Hall to Cecil on that day (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 487-88).

64 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, p. 423.

65 MS. Ashmol. 1109, f. 36.

66 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 529.

67 Cobham to Cecil, 17 July 1594 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 565; see also p. 569).

68 See Buckhurst to Cecil, 24 June 1594 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 552).

69 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 554.

70 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1133-34, n. 52.

71 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1176, n. 68.

72 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1120-21, 1122-24, nn. 43, 45, 46.

73 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1125-27, nn. 50, 51.

74 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1156-71, nn. 57, 58, 59.

75 See MS. Lansdowne 63, ff. 40-41b.

76 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1111, n. 39.

77 See The Sherley Brothers, an Historical Memoir of the Lives of Sir Thomas Sherley, Sir Anthony Sherley, and Sir Robert Sherley, Knights. By one of the same

house [Evelyn Philip Shirley] (Cheswick, The Roxburghe Club, 1848).

78 Sir Robert Cecil to Sir Thomas Sherley the elder, 21 September 1591 (S.P., Dom., 1591-94, p. 105).

79 See Sir Thomas Sherley the elder to Sir Robert Cecil, 8 July 1594 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 558).

80 Cecil Paper 34/91; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 361.

81 See MS. Add. 37666, f. 43b.

82 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 241.

83 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 18.

84 Cecil Paper 94/33; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XII, 227.

85 Letters from Sir Robert Cecil to Sir George Carew, ed. Sir John Maclean (Camden Society, Volume LXXXVIII, 1864), p. III.

86 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VIII, 38.

87 See More to Cecil, 2 January 1597/8 (S.P., Dom., 1598-1601, p. 1).

88 See below, p. 670.

89 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1202, n. 78.

90 MS. Add. 29974, f. 3.

91 Cecil Paper 74/66, endorsed "October 1599"; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IX, 383.

92 Cecil Paper 74/65, endorsed "Oct 1599 Hugh Baylie. For a hundred poundes for curing ye la: fra: Cecyll"; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IX, 383.

93 MS. Add. 29974, f. 5.

94 MS. Add. 29974, f. 7; cited by Algernon Cecil, pp. 372-73, where the little girl is erroneously identified with a 'sister' of Mrs who never existed (see the notes to the family tree, p. 1199, n. 77).

95 Cecil Paper 251/185, endorsed "September 1600"; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, X, 335. The editors of the printed calendar incorrectly identify Lady Stourton as Frances Tresham, the wife of her brother-in-law, Edward Lord Stourton.

96 A.P.C., 1601-04, p. 28.

97 Cecil Paper 109/27; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XVI, 292-93.

98 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1203, n. 78.

99 See William A. Shaw, The Knights of England ... (1906), II, 89, for the list of knights created by Essex and confirmed in their new dignities on 8 October 1592. In the Brooke pedigree of 16 February 1592/3 (MS. Harl. 2134, f. 133b) he is described as "S^{r} Wiłłm Brooke 3 sone Knighted in fraunce".

100 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 154.

101 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 464.

102 See Phillimore, p. 27.

103 See the notes to the family tree, p. ///33, n. 52.

104 See the inquisition post mortem of William Lord Cobham (P.R.O., C142/248/24).

105 See Joel Hurstfield, The Queen's Wards: Wardship and Marriage under Elizabeth I (1958), pp. 125-26.

106 See Lady Russell to Sir Robert Cecil, 1 August 1596 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 309-10).

107 Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599-1605, ed. Dorothy M. Meads (1930), p. 32.

108 See the inquisition post mortem of William Lord Cobham (P.R.O., C142/248/24).

109 See the notes to the family tree, p. ///2 , n. 39.

110 See the biography of Piers in D.N.B., written by E. Venables.

111 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 35.

112 See the biography of Hutton in D.N.B., written by C.W. Sutton.

113 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 49-50.

114 The Correspondence of Dr. Matthew Hutton, Archbishop of York ..., [ed. James Raine] (Surtees Society, Volume XVII, 1843), p. 101. Sutton is evidently incorrect in stating in D.N.B. that Hutton was not elected to York until 14 February 1595/6.

115 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 174.

116 See Edward Stanhope to Cecil, 14 October 1598; Archbishop Hutton to Cecil, 29 October 1598 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VIII, 390, 414).

117 See the article on Byng in D.N.B., written by Sir Sidney Lee.

118 Correspondence, ed. Raine, p. 149.

119 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, X, 86.

120 See Alumni Cantabrigienses ..., comp. John Venn and J.A. Venn (Cambridge, 1922-27), I, iv, 377; Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae ..., comp. John Le Neve, ed. T. Duffus Hardy (Oxford, 1854), III, 216.

121 Correspondence, ed. Raine, p. 153.

122 See the article on Ferdinand in D.N.B., written by Thompson Cooper.

123 See Dr. Henry Moutlowe to Cecil, 30 August; Dr. Roger Goade to Cecil, 13 September; Dr. Henry Moutlowe to Henry Brooke, 14 September; the Provost and Fellows of King's College to the queen, 17 September 1594 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 597, 612-13).

124 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 611-12.

125 See A Perambulation of Kent: ... Written in the yeere 1570 by William Lambarde (ed. 1596), p. 32.

126 See Phillimore, p. 27.

127 See Malynes to Cecil, 14 July, 26 October 1596 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 262-63, 455-56); see also above, p. 586. Stone refers to Brooke's employment of Malynes as if it were connected with the competition for the securing of intelligences between Cecil and Essex; he incorrectly calls Brooke "Sir Harry" (see Palavicino, p. 252).

128 See Brooke to Cecil, 1 October 1594, 29 March 1596 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 1; VI, 120).

129 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 376.

130 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 578.

131 See Queen Elizabeth and some Foreigners: Being a Series of hitherto unpublished letters from the archives of the Hapsburg family, ed. Victor von Klarwill, trans. T.H. Nash (1928), pp. 369-70.

132 Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney (Collins, I, 355).

133 See S.P., Dom., 1595-97, pp. 26162.

134 H.M.C., Salisbury Papes, IV, 211.

135 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 221.

136 Aubrey's Brief Lives, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (1949), p. 255.

137 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 296.

138 See Rowse, p. 161.

139 See below, p. 643, and the notes to the family tree, p. 1102, n. 39.

140 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 104.

141 Murdin, pp. 675-76.

142 See Emanuel Dandrades to Burghley, Calais, 10 July 1593 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 483-84).

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Chapter VII

1 Birch, Memoirs, I, 155.

2 S.P., Dom., 1591-94, pp. 546-48.

3 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 107.

4 See Robert Poly to Cobham (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 424).

5 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 505; Read, Lord Burghley, p. 501.

6 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 112.

7 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 145.

8 See Henry Brooke to Cecil (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 339); see also below, pp. 612 ff.

9 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 121.

10 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 19; quoted in part in Sharpe, p. 70 n.

11 MS. Ashmol. 1543.

12 Queen Elizabeth and some Foreigners, ed. von Klarwill, p. 359.

13 MS. Ashmol. 1109, ff. 95-95b.

14 Queen Elizabeth and some Foreigners, ed. von Klarwill, pp. 372-73.

15 It is reproduced in Mattingly, Plate 8.

16 MS. Ashmol. 1109, f. 35b.

17 Queen Elizabeth and some Foreigners, ed. von Klarwill, pp. 375-76, 377-79; quoted in part by Green, Shakespeare's Merry Wives, pp. 28-29.

18 See Lord Burghley, p. 504.

19 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 196.

20 Cobham to Cecil, 13 July 1595 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 279).

21 See Murdin, p. 807. Sir Edward Carey, Master of the Jewel House, was the half-brother of Secretary Walsingham and the full brother of Sir Wymond Carey, Cobham's nephew by marriage: see the notes to the family tree, p. 1174, n. 68.

22 See Cobham to Leveson, 31 July 1595 (H.M.C., Report 5, p. 138).

23 L. & P., H. VIII, XXI (Pt. 2), 323.

24 See S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 89.

25 S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 96.

26 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 505.

27 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 32.

28 See Henry Brooke to Cecil, 22 August 1595 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 339); cited above, p. 606.

29 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 340; the square brackets are the editor's.

30 See H.M.C., Report 5, p. 138.

31 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 365, 523.

32 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 405-06.

33 Cecil Paper 35/24; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 385, where it is incorrectly said to be endorsed "22 Sept. 1596".

34 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 407; cited below, p. 999.

35 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 425. Sir Sidney Lee states incorrectly in D.N.B. that Heneage died on 17 October.

36 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 431.

37 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 475.

38 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 476.

39 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 325.

40 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 492; the square brackets are the editor's.

41 See Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney, 14 December 1595 (H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 200).

42 Collins, II, 31. See below, p. 719.

43 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, V, 493.

44 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 547-48.

45 See H.M.C., Montagu Papers, p. 24.

46 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 49.

47 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 145.

48 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 134-35.

49 See MS. Ashmol. 1129, p. 428.

50 See Edward P. Cheyney, A History of England From the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth With an Account of English Institutions During the Later Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries (New York, 1914-26), II, 142-51; Read, Lord Burghley, pp. 517-18.

51 Les Reportes del Cases in Camera Stellata 1593 to 1609 ..., ed. William Paley Baildon (Privately printed, 1894), p. 174.

52 Baildon, pp. 39-40.

53 Anglo-Spanish Relations in Tudor Literature (Berne, 1956), p. 101. Ungerer's close study of Pérez accords closely with that of Gregorio Marañón (Antonio Pérez 'Spanish Traitor', trans. Charles David Ley, 1954).

54 Birch, Memoirs, I, 472-73.

55 See Cheyney, II, 148.

56 Birch, Memoirs, II, 4-6.

57 Birch, Memoirs, II, 227-28.

58 For the pun on 'camus', see A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues, comp. Randle Cotgrave (1611): "Il fut rendu camus. He was very much ashamed, extreamely out of countenance, exceedingly put downe." The ordinary, modern meaning of 'camus', and of its English equivalent 'camois', is pug-nosed, flat-nosed.

59 See Read, Lord Burghley, p. 520.

60 See Handover, Cecil, pp. 139-40.

61 Memoirs, II, 95-96. The reference in this letter to the chief opponent to the voyage would seem to supply the lack felt by Read, who professes himself unable to

find evidence that the Essexians thought that anyone but the queen herself disliked the Cadiz voyage from the start (see Lord Burghley, p. 519).

62 Memoirs, II, 100.

63 Cecil, p. 69.

64 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1150 , n. 55, for the mistaken identification of Sir Henry Cobham with his nephew in a portrait executed during the ambassador's term at Paris; see also below, p. 899, n. 211, for the impossibility of identifying one of the figures in the so-called Blackfriars Procession portrait with Henry Lord Cobham.

65 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 477.

66 Birch, Memoirs, II, 172. The original of Bacon's letter is preserved in the archiepiscopal library at Lambeth (MS. Bacon 13, f. 219), but the enclosure is no longer in it.

67 See Murdin, p. 808.

68 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 227. Fortescue referred to Henry Brooke as his cousin; they both shared Boleyn blood with the queen (see the notes to the family tree, pp. 1084-85, n. 13).

69 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 184-85.

70 See Sir Ferdinando Gorges to Cecil, 7 August 1596 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 321); Handover, Cecil, p. 140.

71 See Sir Anthony Ashley to Henry Lord Cobham, 17 January 1597/8; Ashley to Cecil, 6 May 1598 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VIII, 18-19, 159).

72 See Thomas Wilsford to Cobham, 27 May 1596 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 198).

73 See Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica, III (1836), 289.

74 William Clerke, The Triall of Bastardie: that part of the second part of Policie, or maner of Gouernment of the Realme of England: so termed, Spirituall, or Ecclesiasticall. Annexed at the end of this Treatise, touching the prohibition of marriage, a Table of the Leuitical, English and Positiue Canon Catalogues, their concordance and difference (1594), sig. N2.

75 The History of the Worthies of England, ed. John Nichols (1811), II, 62.

76 H.M.C., Report 5, p. 138, where Mount's name is erroneously rendered 'Moune'.

77 See The Savoy: Manor: Hospital: Chapel (1960), p. 245.

78 Worthies, I, 331.

79 See The Complete Works of John Lyly ..., ed. R. Warwick Bond (Oxford, 1902), I, 392-93.

80 H.M.C., Report 5, p. 139.

81 Queries concerning the marriage of 1596 were courteously answered by the chaplain, the Rev. Roger L. Roberts, in a private communication of 6 January 1962. Miss I. Darlington, Archivist and Librarian for the London County Council, searched without success in the act books and deposition books of the Consistory Court of London, as well as in the Vicar General's book for 1595-97, for any

references to the confirmation or annulment of the marriage.

82 For a study of the genealogical problems raised by Francis Coppinger's marriages, see the notes to the family tree, pp. *11 81-84*, n. 69.

83 Rye, England as Seen by Foreigners, pp. 257-58; also quoted in part above, p. 290, n. 34.

84 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 260.

85 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 269.

86 See Cheyney, II, 155-57, where the problems of finding an ambassador to send to France in 1596 are discussed.

87 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 285.

88 Benjamin Grove to Arthur Mills (S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 258).

89 H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 113.

90 Hoby to Cecil, 28 September 1596 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 407).

91 Anonymous to Sir Thomas Kitson, 23 July 1596 (The Court of King James the First; by Dr. Godfrey Goodman, Bishop of Gloucester; to which are added, Letters Illustrative of the Personal History of the Most Distinguished Characters in the Court of that Monarch and his Predecessors ..., ed. John S. Brewer (1839), II, 10. Brewer identifies the Lord Chamberlain as "Henry Brook, Lord Cobham".

92 See above, p. 549.

93 Worthies, I, 433.

94 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 279.

95 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 285; the square brackets are the editor's.

96 See S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 181.

97 Essays, p. 82.

98 Murdin, p. 810.

99 A.P.C., 1596-97, p. 98; see also Birch, Memoirs, II, 102.

100 See Peck, I, ii, 8, and the authorities cited in Chambers's Elizabethan Stage, I, 40.

101 In a personal communication of 15 February 1962 the Comptroller of the Lord Chamberlain's Office stated that "the records we have in this Office give George, Lord Hunsdon as Lord Chamberlain in the years you mention [1596-97], and there is no record of William, Lord Cobham ever having been Lord Chamberlain." In P.R.O., L.C. 5/37, which contains the warrants issued under the Lord Chamberlain's hand between 1593 and 1603, there is no document signed by Cobham.

102 See below, pp. *973-82*.

103 Green, pp. 113-14.

104 See MS. Folger L.b.356; abstracted in H.M.C., Report 7, p. 653. This is the indenture drawn up on 4 February 1595/6 by which Sir William More sold to James

Burbage the site of the Blackfriars theatre; it has been often printed by historians of the stage.

105 The Works of Thomas Nashe, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow (1910), V, 194.

106 S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 147. The editors of the State Papers date this letter "Dec? 1595", but it clearly belongs to the period 1599-1603. See below, p. 759.

107 Lady Russell to Cecil, 5 March 1599/1600 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, X, 52).

108 Lady Russell to Cecil, "Dec? 1595" [?] (S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 147).

109 P.R.O., S.P. 12/260/116; as transcribed by Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, Burbage and Shakespeare's Stage (1913), pp. 174-75. The document is endorsed merely '1596', but Mrs. Stopes adduces convincing evidence to assign it to the month of November in that year (see p. 65). Chambers, who also prints the petition, says that "the document has been suspected as a forgery, but it is probably genuine, although it is odd to find Lord Hunsdon as a signatory" (Elizabethan Stage, IV, 319-20). Virginia Crocheron Gildersleeve (Government Regulation of the Elizabethan Drama (New York, 1961), p. 185) points out that the absence of Cobham's signature from the petition, and the presence of Hunsdon's, seem "to reverse the attitude towards players usually attributed to these two noblemen". Mrs. Stopes, curiously enough, in another of her works (Southampton, p. 102), prefers to trust rather to the customary view of Cobham's relations with the players than to the documentary evidence which she herself presents, saying that Cobham signed the petition. F.E. Halliday (Shakespeare in His Age (1956), p. 182), like Evelyn May Albright before him (Dramatic Publication in England, 1580-1640 ... (1927), pp. 172-73), also uncritically assumes that the baron joined the petitioners.

110 Quoted in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 195.

111 See the "treue certificat of the nombre names and trade of lyvinge of all Straingers as well denizons as others inhabiting wthin the precincte of the late Blackfriers", dated 28 April 1583 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 219-27).

112 See A Survey of London by John Stow Reprinted from the Text of 1603, ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Oxford, 1908), I, 341.

113 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/274/83, a list of the income and expenses of Henry Lord Cobham for the half-year ending 25 March 1600.

114 There are several accounts of the catastrophe of 26 October 1623. See Thomas Goad, The Dolefull Euen-Song ... (1623); Something Written by occasion of that fatall and memorable accident in the Blacke Friers ... (1623); W[illiam] C[rashaw], The Fatall Vesper ... (1623). There is a vivid letter about it in The Knyvett Letters (1620-1644), ed. Bertram Schofield (1949), pp. 62-63.

115 Henslowe Papers Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe's Diary, ed. Walter W. Greg (1907), pp. 45-46, 47. Transcripts of Topping's petition and of Henslowe's letter are also in John Payne Collier's Memoirs of Edward Alleyn, Founder of Dulwich College ... (1841), pp. 44-45, 45-46; they are sometimes misleading, as when Collier omits an 'and' and so has Henslowe write to the younger Hunsdon of "your late honorable father, the late Lo. Cobham".

116 See above, pp. 573-74.

117 Birch, Memoirs, I, 118; II, 107.

118 See Allegations for Marriage Licences Issued by the Bishop of London, 1520 to 1610, extracted by Joseph Lemuel Chester, ed. George J. Armytage (Harleian Society,

Volume XXV, 1887), I, 222. The best marriage made in London by an Edward Jones in the 1580s and '90s seems to have been this one.

119 Jones on 26 April 1595 offered Sir Robert Cecil a £ 300 bribe to procure for him the French Secretariat (see S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 32), but the office went to Thomas Edmondes. For all his assurance that the queen favoured him, Jones received no preferment in the reign of Elizabeth; under James I, like many former servants of Essex, he was attached to the civil service, being appointed on 25 July 1607 Receiver of Post Fines and of Fines for Licences Recorded (see S.P., Dom., 1603-10, p. 366).

120 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIV, 288, where, through an erroneous identification of Lord Cobham with his son and heir, the letter is dated "[1596-1603]".

121 "Elizabethan Stage Gleanings," Review of English Studies, I (1925), 76-77.

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Chapter VIII

1 See Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney, 22, 24 September 1596 (H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 218, 221).

2 See Cobham to his military lieutenants in Kent, Richmond, 7 November 1596 (H.M.C., Report 5, p. 139); the townsmen of Lincoln to Cobham and Cecil, 7 October 1596 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIII, 587); A.P.C., 1595-96, 1596-97.

3 Dunsany to Cecil, 11 August 1597 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 344).

4 See Handover, Cecil, p. 148.

5 Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica, III (1836), 290-91. Despite the existence of the funeral certificate and of the many references to Lady Cecil up to and including 1597, historians have insisted upon saying that she died in 1591. The error begins in 1633, when Anthony Munday misread the date on her tomb and incorporated the misreading in The Survey of London: Contayning the Originall, Increase, Moderne Estate, and Government of that City, Methodically set downe .... Begunne first by the paines and industry of Iohn Stow, in the yeere 1598. Afterwards inlarged by the cares and diligence of A.M. in the yeere 1618. And now completely finished by the study and labour of A.M. H.D. and others, this present yeere 1633, p. 514. Relying upon Munday rather than upon their own inspections of the tomb, other antiquaries recorded that Lady Cecil died in 1591 (see Henry Keepe, Monumenta Westmonasteriensia: or an Historical Account of the Original, Increase, and Present State of St. Peter's, or The Abby Church of Westminster ... (1683), p. 81; [Edward Hatton], A New View of London; or, An Ample Account of that City ... (1708), p. 504; John Hackett, Select and Remarkable Epitaphs on Illustrious and Other Persons in several parts of Europe ... (1757), I, 131). Collins's Peerage (5th ed., 1779), III, 146, accepted the published date, although professing to cite "Inscrip. Tumuli": W.A. Scott-Robertson followed Collins ("Six Wills Relating to Cobham Hall," Archaeologia Cantiana, XI (1877), 208). Even more surprising is the perpetuation of the erroneous date in the report of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) (see An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in London, I (1924), 41). It was not until 1949 that the Complete Peerage (XI, 404), by citing the funeral certificate, put things right; even since that time, however, uncertainty about the exact date of Lady Cecil's death has persisted, so that Hurstfield says "In 1596 she died" ("Cecil," p. 280), and Miss Handover, "About 20 January [1596/7] she died" (Cecil, p. 286).

6 Hoby to Cecil, 25 January 1596/7 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 39-40).

7 Howard to Cecil (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 39); quoted in part, from Cecil Paper 37/102, by Edward Edwards, The Life of Sir Walter Ralegh ... (1868), II, 158.

8 See Sir John Stanhope to Cecil, 27 January 1596/7 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 41-42).

9 Thomas Lord Burgh to Cecil, 3 February 1596/7 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 56).

10 Lady Russell to Cecil, June 1597 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 281-82).

11 Ralegh and the Throckmortons, p. 204.

12 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 35-36, from the original, Cecil Paper 37/97.2. Edwards, quoting a part of the letter, erroneously assumes that Ralegh wrote it from Sherborne (II, 161-63); the news of Lady Cecil's death could not have reached Dorsetshire so quickly.

13 There is a description of the tomb in the volume published by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments in 1924; Keepe, p. 81, gives a full but not always accurate blazonment of the Brooke and Cecil arms on the tomb, which, quartered with those of the Brookes, include those of Cobham, Braybrooke, de la Pole, Peverell, Longvale, Braye, Halighwell, Norbury, Butler, Sudeley and Montfort.

14 See P.R.O., S.P. 12/262/53; abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 365.

15 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIV, 10. Young Kirkham, who in addressing the dead woman described himself as "'a te in baptismo susceptus'", was no doubt the child of "George Kircome, gent. & Frances Pcivall, puel', gen' to the Lady Cobham," who were married on 25 February 1578/9 (see The Registers of St. Olave, Hart Street, London, 1563-1700, ed. W. Bruce Bannerman (Harleian Society, Volume XLVI, 1916), p. 251).

16 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VI, 87.

17 The inscriptions are printed in William Camden's Reges, Reginae, Nobiles, & alij in Ecclesia Collegiata B. Petri Westmonasterij Sepulti, Vsque ad Annum reparatae salutis 1600 (1600), sigg. Fv-F2; in Munday's 1633 edition of Stow's Survey, p. 514; in Keepe, pp. 244-45; and in Hackett, I, 130-31. All of these versions vary in spelling and punctuation from the originals, but only in Keepe are the discrepancies serious. There 'voluntas' is rendered 'voluptas'.

18 Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney, 13 November 1599 (Collins, II, 140).

19 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XII, 631.

20 H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 234.

21 See S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 347.

22 Whyte to Sidney, 21 February 1596/7 (Collins, II, 18; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 236, where the omissions in Collins's transcript, none of them relevant to the condition of Lord Cobham, are noted and in part supplied). Dr. Rowse (Ralegh and the Throckmortons, p. 204) mistakenly says of the letter that it records how "Cecil went to call on his brother-in-law, Lord Cobham."

23 Collins, II, 18; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 236-37.

24 Collins, II, 19; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 237.

25 Collins, II, 20; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 238. Collins glosses the cipher '30' as "Lord Brook", which, as Sharpe notes (p. 71), ought to be "Henry Brooke". On two occasions Collins seems to have misread the 'H. Brooke' of letters to Sidney as 'L. Brooke' (see below, pp. 650, 720). In the sixteenth century, however, it was not unknown for writers to use that fabricated title for the head of the house of Cobham (see Holinshed, p. 1506, where John Lord Cobham (d. 1512) is called "this lord Brooke", and below, p. 756, where Henry Lord Cobham is described as "L^{d} Broke Lo. Wa^{n}"). Among modern writers it seems occasionally to be assumed that 'Lord Brooke' was the courtesy title borne by the heir to the barony of Cobham. Thus David Jardine describes Henry Lord Cobham as "Henry Lord Brooke, afterwards Lord Cobham" (Criminal Trials (1832), I, 286), and Margaret Irwin calls George Brooke "Lord Brooke" (That Great Lucifer, a Portrait of Sir Walter Ralegh (1960), pp. 190, 197). For the description of George Brooke as "le sieur Brouc" by a Frenchman writing in 1603, see the notes to the family tree, p. 1190, n. 73.

26 Collins, II, 22; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 240.

27 Collins, II, 23; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 241.

28 Collins, II, 24; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 242.

29 Collins, I, 115; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 242, from Collins's transcript, not from the original, which the editors professed to be unable to find. The original is P.R.O., S.P. 12/256/75, abstracted in S.P., Dom., 1595-97, p. 181; there the phrase "Lord Brooke" is seen to be "H. Brooke". The editors of the State Papers misdate the letter by a year, assigning it to 4 March 1595/6, and are followed in their error by Miss Handover (Cecil, p. 136).

30 Collins, II, 25, 24; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 243.

31 Cecil Paper 38/95; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 96. Mrs. Stopes cites this letter and erroneously describes George Brooke as the "second son of Lord Cobham" (Southampton, p. 103).

32 See Whyte to Sidney, 6 March 1596/7 (Collins, II, 25; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 245). Whyte said that the death occurred "About Midnight"; that it happened early on the sixth may be deduced from Cobham's inquisition post mortem, in which it is said that he "obijt apud dcām domū in le Blacke ffriers p^{r}d' sexto die Mensis M^{r}cij" (P.R.O., C142/248/24). Published errors concerning the date of death are many. One may cite Henry Drake's contradictory statements, both incorrect, that Cobham died on 6 March 1596 [i.e., 1595/6] and on 16 March 1597 [i.e., 1596/7] (Hasted's Kent, pp. xix, 179); J.W. Draper's, that he died on 6 March 1595/6 (see below, p. 1059); Miss Albright's, that he was Lord Chamberlain till 17 March 1596/7 (p. 26); Brydges's, that his son succeeded him on 5 April 1597 (I, 261); and those of Lodge (Illustrations, II, 506 n.) and Nichols (Progresses of James I, I, 67 n.), that he died on 24 February 1597/8. Some of these errors are due to a confusion of the Julian with the Gregorian calendar; one of Drake's dates, 16 March 1597, is the New Style form of 6 March 1596/7; the date given by Lodge and Nichols is evidently based upon a confusion with the date of Cobham's will of 24 February 1596/7; and the date 5 April 1597 is that of the baron's funeral. In the Brooke pedigree in MS. Harl. 1174, f. 49, which is of unknown provenance and period and is incomplete, it is said that Cobham died on 5 April 1597.

33 Collins, II, 27; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 250.

34 H.M.C., Report 13, Appendix IV, p. 114.

35 See above, pp. 445-47.

36 MS. Lansdowne 83, ff. 122-23b, incorrectly cited as MS. Harl. 83 by Edwards, II, 160 n.; transcribed most imperfectly by A.A. Arnold, "Cobham College," Archaeologia Cantiana, XXVII (1905), 79-80. There is a better but still imperfect transcript in John Strype's Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion, and Other Various Occurrences in the Church of England, during Queen Elizabeth's Happy Reign ... (Oxford, ed. 1824), IV, 376-78.

37 See Peck, I, v, 14-19.

38 There is a good plan of the present college in G.H. Cook's English Collegiate Churches of the Middle Ages (1959), p. 209.

39 All the quotations made above are taken from An Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinances of the New-Colledge of Cobham in the County of Kent; Of the Foundation of the Right Honorable the Late Lord William Baron Cobham. This pamphlet, reprinted in 1687 by Sir Joseph Williamson, who then lived at Cobham Hall, and reprinted again in 1733, was derived directly from William Lambarde's manuscript, MS. Harl. 7567, ff. 135-38b.

40 See Journals of the House of Lords, Beginning Anno Primo Henrici Octavi [1846], II, 199b, 200a, 201a, 205b; D'Ewes, p. 529. The act of 1597, supplemented with provisions made by the Charity Commissioners, still regulates the administration of the college.

41 H.M.C., Portland Papers, VI, 77.

42 These copies are P.R.O., S.P. 12/262/48; MS. Lansdowne 83, ff. 103-09b, endorsed "A Breefe, and Copie at Large, of the Lo. Cobhams Last Wille. For my Lo. Treasorer"; MS. Lansdowne 830, ff. 247-52b, endorsed "A Copie of the Lo. Cobhams Last Wille. For mr Secretarie, his Honour". The transcripts at Somerset House are P.C.C. Cobham 1 and 45. The résumé, endorsed "Effects of the points of the will", is Cecil Paper 176/8; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 82. A transcript of the will, from Secretary Cecil's copy, has been published by W.A. Scott-Robertson in his "Six Wills". Quotation in the present work is made from the same copy as that which Scott-Robertson used.

43 Three lists of Cobham's servants, drawn up in 1596, are Cecil Papers 145/184, 185, 188; an earlier one is Cecil Paper 145/216.

44 See the baron's inquisition post mortem, P.R.O., C142/248/24.

45 See above, p. 594.

46 See MS. Lansdowne 168, f. 172.

47 See above, p. 595.

48 See above, p. 135, n. 16, for the disgavelment of the Cobham estates in 1540.

49 See above, p. 97.

50 The inquisition post mortem of William Lord Cobham is preserved in the Public Record Office as C142/248/24; a brief abstract is in The Genealogist, XI (new series), 121. The clear annual income from the baron's lands was said to be £ 497.15.0; rents from other properties totalled £ 38.15.5½; and the manor of Gravesend would upon reversion to Cobham's heir be worth £ 14 a year.

51 See above, p. 649.

52 See S.P., Dom., 1598-1601, p. 511.

53 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1089, n. 25.

54 See above, p. 149.

55 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 117.

56 MS. Coll. of Arms, Dethick's Funerals II, f. 585.

57 MS. Coll. of Arms, Dethick's Funerals II, f. 585.

58 Collins, II, 36; abstracted in H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 259. Whyte dated his letter "Strand, this Saturday, 11 Clocke at Night, 3 Aprill 1597"; he ought probably to have written 'Saturday, 2 April,' since the third was Sunday.

59 Whyte to Sidney, 4 April 1597 (H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, II, 260).

60 MS. Coll. of Arms, Dethick's Funerals II, f. 579.

61 MS. Coll. of Arms, Dethick's Funerals II, f. 584b, which appears to be the final plan for the procession, the first draft of which is on f. 582.

62 MS. Coll. of Arms, Dethick's Funerals II, ff. 579, 584, the first a short list of names, the second a rough list much corrected and interlineated.

63 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1091, n. 25.

64 See Venn, Alumni, II, 40.

65 See below, p. 951.

66 See above, p. 565, and H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XV, 169-70.

67 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XI, 371.

68 See above, pp. 186-87.

69 George Lord Cobham left his servant Alleyn Wood an annuity in the will which he drew up on 31 March 1552 (Harl. Charter 57.H.7). Henry Lord Cobham's servant Wood was with the baron in the Tower in November 1603 (see H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XV, 289) and was still serving him there in September 1605 (see H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XVII, 444).

70 See below, p. 926.

71 MS. Coll. of Arms, Dethick's Funerals II, f. 584.

72 See Venn, Alumni, III, 487.

73 See above, p. 653, and the notes to the family tree, p. 1179, n. 69.

74 See the notes to the family tree, pp. 1090-91, n. 25.

75 See the Walsingham pedigree in MS. Harl. 1174, f. 53, and in Read, Walsingham, III, 427.

76 Minutes of Parliament of the Middle Temple, ed. Charles Trice Martin, I, 362, in Middle Temple Records, ed. Charles Henry Hopwood (1904).

77 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XIV, 117. R.C. Bald, in construing Drury's letter, calls Gosnall a tenant farmer, without citing ay authority for his statement (Donne and the Drurys (Cambridge, 1959), p. 82).

78 See S.P., Dom., 1598-1601, p. 511.

79 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XV, 271, 272-73, 365-67.

80 The Privy Council to Sir John Leveson, 30 April 1604 (MS. Add. 5755, f. 194).

81 Rowse, Ralegh and the Throckmortons, p. 113 n., citing William Munk's Roll of the Royal College of Physicians of London ... (2nd ed., 1878), I, 82.

82 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1133, n. 52.

83 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XV, 231, 276; XVI, 193, 198; XVII, 444, 601.

84 Cecil Paper 94/86; abstracted in H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XII, 264. See below, p. 867.

85 See the article on Edes in D.N.B., written by Gordon Goodwin.

86 See The Visitation of Kent, ed. Hovenden, p. 80, and the notes to the family tree, p. 1134, n. 53.

87 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, IV, 475.

88 H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XVIII, 161.

89 See S.P., Dom., 1598-1601, p. 170.

90 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, VII, 175; XII, 88-89; XV, 273; XVI, 193, 198; XVII, 151, 158-59, 444; S.P., Dom., 1603-10, pp. 211, 491.

91 See H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XVI, 193, 198; XVII, 151, 444.

92 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1163, n. 57.

93 Townshend, pp. 322-23.

94 See Questor to [Cecil?], [July] 1603 (H.M.C., Salisbury Papers, XV, 218).

95 S.P., Dom., 1603-10, p. 162.

96 MS. Coll. of Arms, Dethick's Funerals II, f. 588b.

97 Cecil to Carew, 24 June 1602 (Letters of Sir Robert Cecil, ed. Maclean, p. 112). See below, the notes to the family tree, pp. 1102, 1202, nn. 39, 78.

98 See the notes to the family tree, p. 1118, n. 39.

99 See above, p. 131, n. 31.

100 See S.P., Dom., 1601-03, p. 139.

101 MS. Add. 37666, f. 44b. There is apparently a scribal error in the last line, where the final 'e' in 'viuere' has had added to it the mark which turns an 'e' in Thynne's script into an 'ae' ('é').

102 Quoted by Brydges, Memoirs of the Peers, I, xiii.

103 Illustrations, II, 506 n., where, in few words, Lodge states incorrectly that Cobham was imprisoned in the Tower as an advocate of the Duke of Norfolk's marriage with Mary Stuart; that he died on 24 February 1597/8; and that his youngest son was Sir William Brooke and his eldest daughter Margaret, whose marriage is not recorded.

104 See Walsingham, I, 384. The indices to Read's works on Burghley and Walsingham reflect extreme uncertainty about differentiating George, William and Henry Lord Cobham, and Sir Henry Cobham, from one another.

105 See The Elizabethan House of Commons, p. 214.

106 MS. Add. 37666, ff. 3-3b, a version of which is printed in Holinshed, p. 1499.