

ROBERT HARLEY AND THE GREAT TORY MINISTRY,  
1710-1713

APPROVED:

*Harry F. Snapp*  
Major Professor

*Lee W. Miller*  
Minor Professor

*Jack B. Cross*  
Director of the Department of History

*Robert B. Toulouse*  
Dean of the Graduate School

ROBERT HARLEY AND THE GREAT TORY MINISTRY,  
1710-1713

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the  
North Texas State University in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Guy Howard Miller, B. A.

Denton, Texas

August, 1966

## PREFACE

The many studies of the reign of Queen Anne range from the politically motivated works of Jonathan Swift to the scholarly three-volume study of the period by the eminent British historian, George Macaulay Trevelyan. While several areas of the period have been studied intensively, many subjects have been neglected or dealt with only superficially. The life of Robert Harley (1661-1724), the first Earl of Oxford and from 1711 to 1714 the Lord High Treasurer of England, is one subject which has been dealt with only superficially. Writing recently in The American Historical Review on the significant works of the last twenty years in later Stuart studies, Robert Walcott stated, "Such important political personalities as . . . Robert Harley . . . still lack adequate modern treatment."<sup>1</sup>

The only full-length biography of Robert Harley is E. S. Roscoe's Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford (1902). The chief weakness of the book is that it was written before the complete publication of the Harley papers in the possession of the Duke of Portland and the Marquis of Bath. Documentation in the biography is quite sketchy, and manuscript material

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert Walcott, Jr., "The Later Stuarts (1660-1714): Significant Work of the Last Twenty Years (1939-1959)," The American Historical Review, LXVII (January, 1962), 354-355.

is used infrequently. Roscoe's discussion of the principal issues and forces of the late Stuart period is often shallow, and, although it does attempt to explore many facets of English life during the period, the book hardly deserves its sub-title, A Study of Politics and Letters in the Age of Queen Anne. The only other published biography of Harley, Oswald B. Miller's Robert Harley, won Oxford's Stanhope Prize in 1925, but it is a short essay of only fifty-two pages and devotes less than twenty of these pages to the period from 1710 to 1713.

The purpose of this study is to investigate Harley's activities in the years from 1710 to 1713, a short but extremely important period of Harley's life. Emphasis will be placed on Harley as a parliamentary and party leader and on the personal and political connections that made him successful as both. One important connection that will be discussed at some length is Harley's relationship with the literary figures of the early Augustan age. Almost half of the thesis will be concerned with the efforts of the Great Tory Ministry to end the War of the Spanish Succession and with the effects of the Treaty of Utrecht on the political fortunes of Robert Harley. The study will conclude with a discussion and evaluation of conflicting interpretations of Harley. The perspective of the thesis will be essentially English, and events in Scotland and Ireland will be

discussed only as they directly affect the English political scene.

From 1710 to 1713 Robert Harley was one of the most important men in England. Often, however, his dominating position is overlooked by historians. Harley is frequently overshadowed by his more colorful and dramatic nemesis, Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke. St. John's participation in the negotiations at Utrecht and his complete, if short-lived, victory over Harley in 1714 have led many historians to look upon the Great Tory Ministry as a Harley-St. John ministry. Such was not the case. From 1710 to the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 Robert Harley was the acknowledged head of Her Majesty's Government, and Henry St. John could only chafe in a subordinate position. With the coming of peace, though, the moderate Harley began to lose control of the radical elements in the Tory party, and St. John began to whisper condemnations of the Lord Treasurer into the ear of the dying Queen Anne. Consequently, Robert Harley was dismissed from office on July 27, 1714.

After 1700 the Julian Calendar used in England was eleven days behind the New Style of Gregory III's calendar, which was being used in all of the continental countries of Europe except Russia. Also, the English New Year fell on March 25 instead of January 1. To add to the confusion Englishmen abroad sometimes used the New Style and sometimes

the Old Style. In this thesis the New Style of reckoning the year has been followed; the days of the month have been given as cited by the respective sources.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. THE PURSUIT OF POWER: THE MINISTERIAL SACKING OF 1710 . . . . .	1
II. THE PURSUIT OF A BROAD BOTTOM: NOVEMBER, 1710, TO JUNE, 1711 . . . . .	25
III. THE PURSUIT OF PEACE: JULY, 1710, TO DECEMBER, 1711 . . . . .	49
IV. THE PURSUIT OF PEACE: JANUARY, 1712, TO AUGUST, 1713 . . . . .	76
V. THE PURSUIT OF MODERATION: THE PER- SONALITY OF OXFORD AND HIS PLACE IN HISTORY . . . . .	104
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	125

## CHAPTER I

### THE PURSUIT OF POWER: THE MINISTERIAL

#### SACKING OF 1710

Robert Harley entered the House of Commons for the first time in 1689 amid the constitutional crisis occasioned by the Glorious Revolution. Remotely related to the De Veres, Earls of Oxford,<sup>1</sup> Harley represented Herfordshire and Radnorshire, as three generations of Harleys before him had done. Harley had been raised by Presbyterian parents, who instilled in him ". . . the Principles of Sincere Piety and Virtue, and . . . the Love of the Liberties and Constitution of their Country."<sup>2</sup> Harley had been educated in a nonconformist school, and he entered Parliament in sympathy with the principles of the Revolution and as a friend of civil and religious liberty. From the beginning of his career he supported moderate men and measures. This pursuit of moderation

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert Walcott contends that this relation was "absurdly remote," because it rested solely on the marriage of the sister of Harley's great grandmother to Lord Vere of Tilbury, the son of a younger son of the fifth Earl of Oxford. Robert Walcott, Jr., English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century, Vol. XXVIII of Harvard Historical Monographs (Cambridge, 1956), p. 66n.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Harley, "Memoirs of the Harley Family and particularly of Robert, Earl of Oxford," British Museum, London, Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 8.



is perhaps the central theme dominating the long and eventful political career of Robert Harley.

Harley quickly assumed a position of leadership in the House of Commons. As the leader of the Harley-Foley connection,<sup>3</sup> between 1690 and 1704 he opposed a large standing army, the expansion of the number of place men in the Commons, and the Whig-sponsored Bank of England. During the same years Harley supported the Triennial Act, which he introduced in the Commons; the Act of Settlement, which he persuaded the Tories to support in 1701; and a Tory national land bank, which he proposed in 1696. Harley sought to ally the Harley-Foley connection with the independent country members and with the older Tory connections such as the Granvilles, led by John Granville, the Hydes, led by the Earl of Rochester, and the Seymours, led by Sir Edward Seymour. It was this very loose coalition, often called the "New Country Party," which was responsible for the fall in 1698 of the Whig Junto, composed of the Earl of Orford, the Earl of Halifax, the Earl of Sunderland, Baron John Somers, and Baron Thomas Wharton.<sup>4</sup>

Although Harley had been largely responsible for the overthrow of the Junto, he was not immediately given a high

---

<sup>3</sup>Harley was related by marriage to the Foley family, a great iron-producing and landed family of the Marches. In 1701 the connection consisted of three Harleys, four Foleys, and a dozen distant relatives including Sir Simon Harcourt and Lord Poulett. Walcott, English Politics, p. 67.

<sup>4</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, pp. 16, 22, 23.

office in the new government. Between 1698 and 1700 he consolidated his power and in 1701 was elected Speaker of the House of Commons. Between 1700 and 1704 Harley served three times as Speaker, enhancing his reputation as a parliamentary leader. As Speaker, Harley's ". . . perfect knowledge of the Order of the House, prevented all Debates about the order or wording of Questions . . . ." <sup>5</sup> In 1704 Queen Anne appointed Harley Secretary of State, and, for a while, he served as Secretary of State while retaining the Speakership. <sup>6</sup> As Secretary of State Harley soon came into conflict with the two ministerial leaders, the Earl of Godolphin, the Lord Treasurer, and the Duke of Marlborough, the commander-in-chief of England's armed forces in Europe. The conflict centered chiefly around methods of conducting the War of the Spanish Succession. <sup>7</sup>

Between 1704 and 1707 Godolphin and Marlborough made a tenuous alliance with the Whig Junto. The two ministers by 1707 were experiencing great difficulty in remaining on good terms with the Junto while retaining Harley as a member of the ministry. The Junto put continuous pressure on Godolphin and Marlborough to dismiss Harley and his Tory supporters. Eventually, the two ministers were forced to choose between

---

<sup>5</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup>G. N. Clark, The Later Stuarts, 1660-1714, Vol. X of The Oxford History of England, 15 vols. (Oxford, 1934), p. 245.

<sup>7</sup>Walcott, English Politics, p. 143.

the Junto and Harley; they chose the former. In December of 1709 Godolphin discovered that William Gregg, a clerk in Harley's office, was engaged in treasonous correspondence with the French. The Lord Treasurer, under pressure from the Junto, decided to use this discovery as an excuse for breaking with Harley. On January 29 Harley was informed that he had fallen from Godolphin's favor.<sup>8</sup> When Harley refused to resign, Marlborough and Godolphin informed the Queen that they could no longer serve with him. Harley then simplified matters by voluntarily submitting his resignation.<sup>9</sup>

The fall of Harley in 1708 has been the subject of much historical debate. Some historians have contended that the Junto and the majority of the ministry determined to force Harley out of office when he and Henry St. John, then one of his staunchest supporters, attempted to cause a ministerial crisis on January 26 by introducing evidence in Parliament

---

<sup>8</sup> Robert Harley to the Earl of Godolphin, January 30, 1708, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath, preserved at Longleat, Wiltshire, 3 vols. (London, 1904-1908), I, 189-190.

<sup>9</sup> Harley's brother states that Harley resigned in order to save the Queen from having to choose between her two chief ministers and Harley. Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 28. A more probable reason for his resignation is to be found in the failure of his efforts to solidify still nascent plans to supersede Godolphin and Marlborough as head of the ministry. F. Elrington Ball, editor, The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D., 6 vols. (London, 1914), I, 74; G. S. Holmes and W. A. Speck, "The Fall of Harley in 1708 Reconsidered," The English Historical Review, LXXX (October, 1965), 673, 698; Walcott, English Politics, p. 154.

showing mismanagement of the Almanza campaign of April, 1707.<sup>10</sup> Godfrey Davies, however, is probably correct in pointing out that this disclosure was only the occasion for and not the cause of the Junto's insistence that Godolphin finally dismiss Harley.<sup>11</sup> G. S. Holmes and W. A. Speck, in a recent study, also contend that the cause of Harley's fall in 1708 lies much deeper than the surface issues and that it was ultimately due to his attempts to prevent the Junto from gaining more offices in the Godolphin-Marlborough ministry.<sup>12</sup>

While out of office Harley increased his influence over the Queen by listening to her patiently and politely,<sup>13</sup> a marked contrast to the reception Anne received from her Whig ministers. The Duchess of Marlborough, at one time the Queen's favorite, contends that Harley's influence over Anne was the primary reason for the deterioration of the relations of the Queen, the Junto, and the two leading ministers.<sup>14</sup> Although this contention is probably exaggerated, it is evident that

---

<sup>10</sup>George Macaulay Trevelyan, Ramillies and the Union with Scotland, Vol. II of England Under Queen Anne, 3 vols. (London, 1934), p. 327; Winston S. Churchill, Marlborough: His Life and Times, 6 vols. (New York, 1938), VI, 351-352; Keith Felling, A History of the Tory Party, 1640-1714 (Oxford, 1924), p. 399.

<sup>11</sup>Godfrey Davies, "The Fall of Harley in 1708," The English Historical Review, LXVI (April, 1951), 253.

<sup>12</sup>Holmes and Speck, "Fall Reconsidered," pp. 673, 698.

<sup>13</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup>Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough, An Account of the Conduct of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, From Her First Coming to Court, to the Year 1710 (London, 1742), p. 233.

from 1708 to 1710 Robert Harley remained an influential person at Court through his personal connections with the Queen.

During this period public opinion began to turn against the Whigs and especially against the Godolphin-Marlborough ministry. England had been involved in a continental war intermittently for almost twenty years, and much of the populace longed for the end of a war which had long since lost any meaning for the general public. This dissatisfaction with the proponents of the war was intensified by the Duke of Marlborough's demand for a lifetime commission as commander of the allied armies.<sup>15</sup> Public opinion against the Whigs became greatest, however, when they decided to pursue a policy that seemed to many, including the Queen, to threaten the security of the Church. This policy was the unfortunate decision of the Whigs to impeach Dr. Henry Sacheverell, a leading High Church minister.

On November 5, 1709, the double anniversary of Guy Fawkes's attempt to blow up Parliament and of the landing of William of Orange at Torbay, Sacheverell preached two sermons stoutly defending the doctrine of non-resistance to the Crown.<sup>16</sup> On

---

<sup>15</sup>A. S. Turberville, The House of Lords in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1927), p. 2.

<sup>16</sup>One of the sermons was dedicated to the Lord Mayor of London, although the Mayor disclaimed any connection with them at the trial. Sir John Perceval to Archdeacon William Perceval, December 10, 1709, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont, 2 vols. (London, 1909), II, 244.

earlier occasions he had compared Godolphin to the conniving and unprincipled Volpone in Jonson's play of the same name.<sup>17</sup> Although the Duke of Somerset, a moderate Whig, and Marlborough tried to persuade Godolphin not to do so,<sup>18</sup> the Lord Treasurer decided to impeach Sacheverell and to make a political issue of the case. In so doing he greatly misjudged public opinion. Harley, realizing the strength of High Church sentiment in London at the time, decided to make the defense of the preacher a political case. When the Whig-controlled Commons voted to make the trial a public one to be held in Westminster Hall, Godolphin tried to drop the matter, but Wharton and the more radical Whigs would not allow it.<sup>19</sup>

Public reaction to the proposed trial was violent. In London supporters of Sacheverell led a series of riots which reached a peak during the Christmas season. Much like the riots in London during the Christmas season of 1641, the trial ". . . cast a Damp on the usual Rejoycings of the Christmas Holy-Days . . . ,"<sup>20</sup> and demonstrations against the Whigs were more prevalent than Christmas goodwill. The

---

<sup>17</sup>Jonathan Swift, Political Tracts, 1713-1719, edited by Herbert Davis and Irvin Ehrenpreis (Oxford, 1953), p. 115.

<sup>18</sup>William T. Morgan, English Political Parties and Leaders in the Reign of Queen Anne, 1702-1710 (New Haven, 1920), p. 392.

<sup>19</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 34.

<sup>20</sup>Abel Boyer, History of the Reign of Queen Anne Digested into Annals (London, 1703-1713), VIII, 225.

articles of impeachment against Sacheverell were drawn up on January 4, 1710,<sup>21</sup> and on January 18 Sacheverell asked that Sir Simon Harcourt, an ally and relative of Harley, be allowed to represent him. On February 18 Parliament presented to the Queen an address asking that Marlborough, who was in England at the time, be sent to Holland to resume his command. Harley recognized the advantages of having Marlborough out of the country during the trial, and he used his influence with the Queen to get her to send Marlborough back to Holland. The Duke was dispatched with embarrassing rapidity.<sup>22</sup>

The trial began on February 27 accompanied by even more severe riots than those that had occurred at Christmas.<sup>23</sup> The London mob were rioting not only because of their fear for the Church but also because they were hungry, because they were afraid of the press-gang, and because they were tired of having charity funds being spent on the Palatinate refugees. Harley realized, however, that the main force

---

<sup>21</sup> Ebenezer Timberland, The History and Proceedings of the House of Lords from the Restoration in 1660, to the Present Time (London, 1742), p. 268.

<sup>22</sup> LaPrade incorrectly states that Harley did not recognize the benefits to be gained from the Duke's absence. W. T. LaPrade, Public Opinion and Politics in Eighteenth Century England (New York, 1936), p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, New Series, 8 vols. (London, 1923), VIII, 367.

behind their agitation was a desire for a peace that might at least partially eliminate these abuses.<sup>24</sup>

When the Whigs realized their mistake, the moderates of their party sought excuses to justify the light sentence that Sacheverell was almost sure to receive. While the ladies and politicians of London talked of little besides the trial, the ministry began to lose the support of the moderates Somerset, Earl Rivers, and the Scottish peers Mar and Ilay.<sup>25</sup> Louis Kronenberger, a biographer of Marlborough's wife, even contends that the moderate Whigs, such as the Duke of Shrewsbury, the Duke of Somerset, and the Duke of Argyll, used the trial to hurt the power and prestige of the Junto.<sup>26</sup> When the Lords voted on March 20, Somerset was conveniently absent, and Shrewsbury and Argyll voted for acquittal. Although Daniel Defoe, for example, did not consider it a light sentence,<sup>27</sup> Sacheverell was sentenced only to have his sermons

---

<sup>24</sup>E. S. Roscoe, Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford (New York, 1902), p. 134.

<sup>25</sup>Elizabeth Coke to Vice-Chamberlain Coke, May 24, 1710, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the Earl Cowper, K. G., 3 vols. (London, 1889), III, 171.

<sup>26</sup>Louis Kronenberger, Marlborough's Duchess: A Study in Worldliness (New York, 1958), p. 185.

<sup>27</sup>[Daniel Defoe], A Review of the State of the British Nation, edited by A. W. Secord, 9 vols. (New York, 1938), VII, 5.



burned and to refrain from preaching for three years.<sup>28</sup> The Tories had won an important victory over the chagrined Whigs. It had cost the ministry £60,000 to have Christopher Wren remodel Westminster Hall and to pay the court costs to impeach Sacheverell, while all they accomplished had been to impress Anne with the strength of the Tories.<sup>29</sup>

Harley skillfully used the Sacheverell trial to further consolidate his position with the Queen. Although the doctrines of non-resistance and the divine right of kings would have had strange consequences for her throne if carried to their logical conclusion,<sup>30</sup> the Queen supported Sacheverell and attended almost all of the sessions of the trial. She even allowed two of her personal chaplains to escort the

---

<sup>28</sup>A List of the Lords who Protested against some Proceedings, in Relation to the Case of Dr. Henry Sacheverell, in the House of Lords; with their Lordships Reasons for Entering their Protestations (London, 1710), p. 15. At least some of the Whig clergy favored a more severe sentence. See [William Wake and Charles Trimmell], The Bishop of Lincoln's and the Bishop of Norwich's Speeches in the House of Lords, March 17th, at the Opening of the Second Article of the Impeachment against Dr. Sacheverell (London, 1710).

<sup>29</sup>William T. Morgan, "The Ministerial Revolution of 1710 in England," Political Science Quarterly, XXXVI (March, 1921), 190n. Morgan, who follows Lecky at this point, incorrectly states that the Pretender would have succeeded Anne had she died during the trial because Harley was working in the Stuart interest. See W. E. H. Lecky, A History of England in the Eighteenth Century, 8 vols. (London, 1878-1890), I, 74.

<sup>30</sup>Katherine Campbell, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough (Boston, 1932), p. 205; G. V. Bennett, White Kennett, 1660-1728: Bishop of Peterborough (London, 1957), p. 86.

minister to his trial.<sup>31</sup> Anne was a devout daughter of the Church who guarded no part of her prerogative as jealously as she did her position as Governor and defender of the Church. During the reign of William, most of the Crown patronage of the Church had gone to the Whig clergy, causing much dissatisfaction in the lower clergy, which was predominantly Tory.<sup>32</sup> Anne was determined to change this situation. Harley used the Sacheverell trial to convince the Queen that the Church was in grave danger. This fear for the safety of the Church, when combined with the Queen's growing personal aversions to the Whig ministers, provided the incentive for the sweeping ministerial changes which brought Robert Harley back to office.

The Queen prorogued Parliament on April 8, 1710. On April 13, without consulting either Godolphin or Marlborough, she dismissed the Lord Chamberlain, the Marquis of Kent, who, according to G. M. Trevelyan, was the least important and the most ineffective of the Whig ministers.<sup>33</sup> After rewarding the Marquis with a dukedom, Anne named the Duke of Shrewsbury as Lord Chamberlain. At the same time she bestowed upon

---

<sup>31</sup>Louise Creighton, Life of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (New York, 1904), p. 251.

<sup>32</sup>Norman Sykes, "Queen Anne and the Episcopate," The English Historical Review, L (July, 1935), 433.

<sup>33</sup>George Macaulay Trevelyan, The Peace and the Protestant Succession, Vol. III of England Under Queen Anne, 3 vols. (London, 1934), p. 64.

Sacheverell an appointment at St. Andrew's, Holborn.<sup>34</sup> Negotiations between Harley and Shrewsbury had begun before the Sacheverell trial,<sup>35</sup> and Shrewsbury, bringing Somerset and Argyll with him, had sided unequivocally with the Tories during the trial. Harley highly valued the assistance of Shrewsbury and stated that to gain him was "to gain a host."<sup>36</sup> Shrewsbury was a nominal Whig. He had been very important during both the Glorious Revolution and the reign of William. Harley thus expected him to be well-received by the Whig ministers, but he was soon relieved of this illusion. It was quite obvious to all concerned that Harley was responsible for Kent's dismissal and Shrewsbury's elevation. In a letter to Marlborough, Godolphin stated that Harley was behind both events,<sup>37</sup> and he later warned the Queen of the ill effects that a Tory ministry would have on Great Britain's allies and on the continental war.<sup>38</sup> The allies highly respected Marlborough for his military ability and favored the Whig party because it had always liberally financed the war effort.

---

<sup>34</sup>Arthur Hassall, Life of Viscount Bolingbroke (Oxford, 1915), p. 38.

<sup>35</sup>Turberville, Lords, p. 101.

<sup>36</sup>William Coxe, Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough, 3 vols. (London, 1848), III, 57.

<sup>37</sup>Godolphin to Marlborough, April 17, 1710, Coxe, Marlborough, III, 166.

<sup>38</sup>Duchess of Marlborough, Conduct, p. 250.

In the weeks immediately following Shrewsbury's elevation the negotiations at Gertruydenberg between Great Britain and France ended in failure. This failure to end the war further increased popular discontent with the Whigs. The position of the Whigs was further weakened when the Duke of Somerset, after several secret and mysterious meetings with Harley,<sup>39</sup> officially went over to the Tories early in June. Shortly thereafter Defoe wrote in the Review, "The War between the Parties seems to be over, and the Weapons laid aside . . . ."<sup>40</sup> Defoe proved to be over-optimistic, though. The fragile calm between the parties was soon shattered by a minor crisis in the army.

The crisis had been precipitated when the death of the Earl of Essex in January of 1710 left both the command of the Tower and the command of a regiment vacant. Anne awarded the Tower command to Earl Rivers, a friend of Harley and an avowed enemy of Marlborough. The Duke protested the move but submitted after finding the Queen adamant. When Anne awarded the regimental command to Jack Hill, though, Marlborough threatened to resign his own command. Hill was the brother of Abigail Masham, a distant relative of both Harley and the Duchess of Marlborough; Abigail had recently replaced the Duchess as

---

<sup>39</sup>Duke of Somerset to Harley, May 24, 1710, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the Duke of Portland preserved at Welbeck Abbey, 10 vols. (London, 1931), IV, 542.

<sup>40</sup>[Defoe], Review, VII, 129.

Anne's favorite. Hill's relation to the Duchess's successor only served to further anger the Duke when Hill was awarded the command. The disunited Whig ministers insisted that the Duke retain his command, thereby refusing to support him in his protest.<sup>41</sup> Their refusal to support Marlborough is an indication of the internal dissension within the Whig party and the ministry. In the following months this dissension was artfully exploited and intensified by Harley and the Tories.

The Whigs' disunity soon emboldened Harley and Anne to dismiss Lord Sunderland, Secretary of State for the Southern Department and a prominent member of the Junto. Sunderland was the minister most obnoxious to Anne, perhaps because he was also the son-in-law of the Duke of Marlborough. On June 14 Sunderland was replaced by the Tory Lord Dartmouth. Dartmouth was a moderate and was also a rather colorless man. For these reasons Harley named him to the office rather than the Earl of Anglesey, whose appointment had been urged by the radical Tories.<sup>42</sup>

Although Campbell's statement that the Whigs were unified in their opposition to the measure<sup>43</sup> is greatly exaggerated,

<sup>41</sup>Marlborough was later forced to make Hill a brigadier general. William Coxe, Memoirs of Horatio, Lord Walpole, Selected from His Correspondence and Papers, and Connected with the History of the Times, from 1678 to 1757, 2 vols. (London, 1820), II, 11-14.

<sup>42</sup>Churchill, Marlborough, VI, 272-275.

<sup>43</sup>Campbell, Sarah, p. 211.

Sunderland's dismissal did evoke more protests from the Whigs than had either the elevation of Shrewsbury or the promotion of Hill. The Duke of Devonshire, the Lord High Steward, and the Duke of Newcastle, the Lord Privy Seal, met with Sir Gilbert Heathcote, the governor of the Bank of England, and drew up a petition asking Anne to make no further ministerial changes.<sup>44</sup> On June 16 Heathcote presented the petition to the Queen and pointed out the adverse effects which the dismissal of Sunderland was having on public credit, a matter of prime concern to the "monied" interests in the Whig party.<sup>45</sup> Anne lightly promised the banker that she would make no further changes,<sup>46</sup> and the financial situation quickly improved. Again the Whigs persuaded Marlborough to retain his command when he threatened to resign in protest over his son-in-law's dismissal.<sup>47</sup>

The allies' concern about Sunderland's dismissal and its possible effect on Marlborough was evident in Emperor Joseph of Austria's letter to Anne strongly deprecating any

---

<sup>44</sup>Harley to Arthur Moore, June 19, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 545.

<sup>45</sup>James Brydges to George Brydges, June 17, 1710, Godfrey Davies and Clara Buck, editors, "Letters on Godolphin's Dismissal in 1710," The Huntington Library Quarterly, III (January, 1940), 230.

<sup>46</sup>Boyer, History, IX, 232.

<sup>47</sup>Marlborough to the Duchess of Marlborough, June 15, 1710, Coxe, Marlborough, III, 90.

further ministerial changes.<sup>48</sup> The Queen quickly assured the Emperor that there would be no further changes, and this royal promise satisfied both the allies and the divided and mutually-suspicious Whigs.<sup>49</sup> One by one the great officers of state ceased their loud protestations and came forward to congratulate the new Secretary of State. Once again the Whigs had failed to form a united front against the attack of Harley and the Queen.

In July of 1710 there were widespread rumors of a new Parliament.<sup>50</sup> As early as June 15 one member of Parliament observed that ". . . a new ministry with an old Parliament will be worse than the gospel absurdity of a piece of new cloth in an old garment, or new wine in old bottles."<sup>51</sup> Rumors that Parliament was to be dissolved at any moment were heard frequently, and many of Harley's more ardent disciples felt that their leader delayed too long in having the Queen dissolve Parliament.<sup>52</sup> Harley, however, sought to further consolidate his position before taking such an irrevocable

<sup>48</sup>Emperor Joseph to Queen Anne, July 16, 1710, Coxe, Marlborough, III, 100-101.

<sup>49</sup>Gilbert Burnet, History of His Own Time, 2 vols. (London, 1734), II, 552.

<sup>50</sup>Brydges to Lord Stair, July 3, 1710, Davies and Buck, editors, "Godolphin's Dismissal," pp. 231-232.

<sup>51</sup>Sir Thomas Hanmer to Matthew Prior, June 15, 1710, H. M. C., Bath MSS., III, 437.

<sup>52</sup>Viscount Dupplin to Harley, July 26, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 552.

step. Furthermore, he felt that his position was being daily strengthened by the Queen's growing alienation from Godolphin and Marlborough.<sup>53</sup>

While both Harley and the Queen were busy making insincere addresses to the remaining Whig ministers and assuring them that there would be no further changes, plans were being made to overthrow the head of the ministry, Lord Treasurer Godolphin. On August 5 Harley stated in a letter to Newcastle that it was neither possible nor practical for the Queen and Godolphin to work together any longer because the Lord Treasurer grew daily more rude to the Queen.<sup>54</sup> On August 7 Godolphin had an audience with Anne during which he reprimanded her for confiding in those who were not her legally appointed advisors. This indirect blow at Harley is indicative of the scolding attitude which the Whig ministers so often adopted toward the Queen and which ultimately contributed to their downfall. When Godolphin asked the Queen if she wanted him to continue in office, she quickly answered in the affirmative. For this reason, he was quite shocked when, on the next day, he received a letter from Anne dismissing him, granting him a pension of £4,000, and instructing

---

<sup>53</sup>Harley to Newcastle, July 1, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., II, 211.

<sup>54</sup>Harley to Newcastle, August 5, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., II, 213.



him to break his staff of office rather than bring it to her personally.<sup>55</sup>

On August 1 Harley had received a letter from the Emperor Joseph strongly advising against any further ministerial changes. There is no evidence to substantiate Churchill's rather far-fetched charge that Harley used this foreign interference as an excuse to dismiss Godolphin.<sup>56</sup> Harley did not have to look to Europe for reasons to dismiss the Lord Treasurer; the relations between Anne and Godolphin had almost reached the breaking point. A more likely immediate reason for Godolphin's dismissal may be found in the letters of James Brydges, a distant relative of Harley who also was closely connected to the Court.<sup>57</sup> Brydges states that on August 7 Godolphin delivered to Anne a representation from the directors of the Bank of England. They intimated that they would lend her no more money until she made further guarantees that she would make no more ministerial changes or dissolve Parliament.<sup>58</sup> It is a matter of fact that upon the fall of Godolphin, Bank shares fell from 140 to 110 and that

---

<sup>55</sup>Burnet, History, II, 552; Coxe, Marlborough, III, 124.

<sup>56</sup>Churchill, Marlborough, VI, 302.

<sup>57</sup>Godfrey Davies and Marion Trilling, editors, "Correspondence of James Brydges and Robert Harley," The Huntington Library Quarterly, I (July, 1938), 457.

<sup>58</sup>Brydges to Seneuf, August 17, 1710, Davies and Buck, editors, "Godolphin's Dismissal," p. 232.

when the new treasury commission requested a loan, it was refused.<sup>59</sup>

After dismissing the head of the Whig ministry, the Queen effected an entire ministerial change. The treasury was placed in commission with Lord Poulett as First Lord. Harley succeeded John Smith as Chancellor of the Exchequer. From this position Robert Harley directed the formation of the Great Tory Ministry. The Earl of Rochester, the Queen's uncle, replaced Somers, one of the strongest leaders of the Junto, as President of the Council, and the Tory Duke of Buckingham succeeded Devonshire as Lord Steward. When Shrewsbury suddenly resigned,<sup>60</sup> Harley placed the Chamberlainship in commission, but eventually it devolved upon Harcourt, who also became Attorney-General. The Duke of Ormonde replaced Wharton as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Henry St. John became Secretary of State, although Harley had first tried to put him in the relatively minor post of Secretary of War.<sup>61</sup> The High Clergy's support of these ministerial changes was manifested on August 22 in an address to Anne congratulating her on the ministerial

---

<sup>59</sup>Creighton, Marlborough, p. 267.

<sup>60</sup>Burnet, History, II, 553.

<sup>61</sup>Jonathan Swift, An Enquiry Into the Behavior of the Queen's last Ministry, with Relation to their Quarrels among themselves, and the Design charged upon them of altering the Succession of the Crown, edited by Irvin Ehrenpreis (Bloomington, 1956), xiii.

changes.<sup>62</sup> In addition to acquiring an almost entirely new ministry, Anne finally dismissed the Duchess of Marlborough from all of her employments at court.<sup>63</sup> By September, 1710, then, the Godolphin-Marlborough ministry had been overthrown and replaced by one made up of moderate Whigs and of Tories personally devoted and politically obligated to Robert Harley.

In September Harley went out of his way to appear conciliatory to the Whig opposition and to counsel what he called "blessed moderation" to the more radical Tories. These moderate measures did much to solidify public opinion behind the Tory Ministry. Indeed, by September 15 Harley was being called the "prime minister," and on September 23 Henry Somerset, the Tory Duke of Beaufort, confided to Harley that he was ". . . almost deaf with the huzzas for Queen, Church, prosperity and success to the new faithful Ministry, a good Parliament and a speedy peace."<sup>64</sup> Harley expended every effort to retain this public support because it was becoming increasingly obvious that Parliament would soon be dissolved.

<sup>62</sup>Led by White Kennett, "one of the foremost opponents of the High Church case," half of the clergy of London refused to sign the address. Bennett, White Kennett, pp. 86, 110; Edward Carpenter, The Protestant Bishop: Being the Life of Henry Compton, 1632-1713, Bishop of London (London, 1956), p. 199.

<sup>63</sup>William Cowper, Earl Cowper, "An Impartial History of Parties, 1714," Complaint and Reform in England 1436-1714, edited by William Huse Dunham and Stanley Pargellis (New York, 1938), p. 919.

<sup>64</sup>Duke of Beaufort to Harley, September 23, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 599.

An imminent dissolution of Parliament had been a near certainty since the first of August,<sup>65</sup> and on September 14 Harley stated that the Queen had definitely decided on dissolution.<sup>66</sup> Although Parliament was not dissolved until September 25, a Lady Oglethorpe, wife of a country gentleman, reported to Harley on September 6 that the two old knights in her district had already begun their campaign and that they were campaigning ten times as hard as in previous elections.<sup>67</sup>

The enthusiasm with which Lady Oglethorpe's two elderly gentlemen conducted their campaign was indicative of the tone of the Parliamentary campaign which was held in October of 1710. The campaign was complete with the usual accompaniment of promises, invectives, bribes, and, if Defoe is to be believed, it was a particularly drunken campaign.<sup>68</sup> The Whigs tried to identify the Tories with Jacobism and Popery while the Tories represented themselves as the only true defenders of the Monarchy and the Church. Harley made a special effort to calm the Dissenters' traditional fears of the Tories. His

---

<sup>65</sup>Henry St. John to Brydges, August 1, 1710, Godfrey Davies and Marion Trilling, editors, "Letters of Henry St. John to James Brydges," The Huntington Library Bulletin, Number 8 (October, 1935), 168; Col. Horatio Walpole to Harley, August 11, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 561-562.

<sup>66</sup>Harley to Newcastle, September 14, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., II, 219.

<sup>67</sup>Lady Oglethorpe to Harley, September 6, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 590.

<sup>68</sup>[Defoe], Review, VII, 328.

own Dissenter background and his friendship with William Penn were especially helpful in attracting Quakers to his cause.<sup>69</sup>

The election was a Tory landslide. In several respects, however, it may be seen as more representative of anti-Whig sentiment than pro-Tory sentiment. Many of the squires felt that a Whig defeat would bring an end to the war and, consequently, an end to increased land taxes. The bad harvests of 1708 and 1709 had further increased public antipathy toward the Whigs. These factors, when combined with the extremely important religious aspects of the election, were enough to insure a Tory victory at the polls in 1710.<sup>70</sup>

The overthrow of the Godolphin-Marlborough ministry and the election of a Tory Parliament in 1710 amounted to a political revolution. The two events were especially important because they occurred in the midst of a war and at the expense of a party which enjoyed the complete confidence of England's financial community and of her allies. On the other hand, regardless of the formidable outward appearance of the Whigs, they were rent by fatal cleavages. The most important of these cleavages was the one between the Junto and the leaders of the ministry. Godolphin and Marlborough never whole-heartedly supported the great Whig Lords. Indeed, in many respects, the two ministers more closely resembled their

---

<sup>69</sup>Mary Ransome, "Church and Dissent in the Election of 1710," The English Historical Review, LVI (January, 1941), 86.

<sup>70</sup>Ransome, "Church and Dissent," pp. 88-89.

opponent, Harley, than their Whig allies. The moderate Whigs, Shrewsbury, Somerset, Argyll, Newcastle, and Poulett were all willing to come to some kind of agreement with Harley in order to weaken the influence of the Junto.<sup>71</sup>

While the Whigs were becoming increasingly disunited, the Tories were finally coming together under the leadership of one man, Robert Harley. Many of the Tories had never trusted Harley because of his Dissenter background and because he had once opposed a bill outlawing Occasional Conformity. Harley was now able to overcome many of these objections. In 1710 Harley's Tories included men of moderation like himself, "high-flying" churchmen, political opportunists, and men such as Rochester, who followed him simply because his methods got results. It did not take long for the Tory solidarity to begin to break down. For the moment, however, Harley headed a unified party.

Ultimately, Harley was able to engineer his political revolution because he enjoyed the favor and support of the Crown and the Whigs did not.<sup>72</sup> In 1709 the Prince Consort had died, and the Queen, who had earlier lost all of her

<sup>71</sup>Coxe, Marlborough, III, 133.

<sup>72</sup>This interpretation is shared by a number of modern scholars and by at least two contemporary observers: Morgan, "Ministerial Revolution," p. 210; Churchill, Marlborough, VI, 309; Walcott, English Politics, p. 153; Roscoe, Harley, p. 83; Burnet, History, II, 554; Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, "A Letter to Sir William Windham, 1717," The Works of Lord Bolingbroke, 4 vols. (Philadelphia, 1841), I, 114.

children, never recovered. The Whig ministers never seemed to realize that the Queen could be swayed by common courtesy and kindness. They particularly offended her by seeking to force their will on her in the matter of ecclesiastical appointments. Through the agency of Mrs. Masham, Harley ingratiated himself with Anne by advising her to follow her own inclinations in making ecclesiastical appointments.<sup>72</sup> By listening patiently to the Queen when she spoke and advising her only when she wished advice, Harley won the support of the woman who, although she might not rule by divine right, was still the most powerful person in England when she chose to exercise her prerogative. Because of this royal support, Robert Harley by October of 1710 had effected a political revolution. In the parliamentary session of 1710-1711 his main efforts would be directed toward limiting the bounds of his revolution.

---

<sup>72</sup>Walcott, English Politics, pp. 122-123.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PURSUIT OF A BROAD BOTTOM: NOVEMBER, 1710, TO JUNE, 1711

Among Robert Harley's most powerful assets in his struggle for moderation were his awareness of the importance of public opinion and his skillful manipulation of that force by means of the press. During the reign of Anne, the great literary figures of the day were often employed by the leaders of political parties to present and to defend the views of their parties in the popular press. Jonathan Swift, Daniel Defoe, Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, Matthew Prior, Arthur Mainwaring, and Archibald Arbuthnot all contributed to the political pamphlet wars of the reign of Anne and in so doing produced some of the most delightful, entertaining, and informative prose in the English language. For this reason the period from 1700 to 1714 may well be called "The Golden Age of British Political Pamphleteering."<sup>1</sup>

All of these writers were acquainted with and influenced in varying degrees by Robert Harley. Thomas Bateson, a student of the Augustan age, has stated that Harley was one of the first British statesmen to appreciate, to understand,

---

<sup>1</sup>Richard I. Cook, "'Mr. Examiner' and 'Mr. Review': The Tory Apologetics of Swift and Defoe," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XXIX (February, 1966), 127.



and to utilize the power of the popular press.<sup>2</sup> An intention to use them as political propagandists provides one reason for Harley's close relations with the men of letters, but he was also drawn to these literary figures by a desire for comradeship and by a genuine interest in matters of the intellect. Harley was a poet in his own right, although a very poor one. His insatiable desire for rare books led him to collect a rather large and impressive library which became the foundation of the Harleian Collection in the British Museum.<sup>3</sup>

Harley was perhaps most intimately associated with the Irish clergyman, Jonathan Swift. The author of The Battle of the Books and The Tale of a Tub had supported the Whigs until he discovered that they did not intend to use their power to advance the cause of the Church. In the summer of 1710 Swift arrived in London to seek to secure the extension of the remission of the first fruits to the Church of Ireland.<sup>4</sup> When he approached the Whigs with his request, he received a rude rebuff and, at the same time, discovered that the Whigs were

---

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Bateson, "The Relations of Defoe and Harley," The English Historical Review, XV (April, 1900), 239.

<sup>3</sup>For Harley's efforts to save the Cottonian Library see Great Britain, Public Records Office, Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Anne, 1703-1704 (London, 1924), pp. 359-360.

<sup>4</sup>Archbishop King to Jonathan Swift, September 16, 1710, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 197; Douglas Harkness, Bolingbroke, the Man and His Career (London, 1957), pp. 74-75.

threatening to remove the sacramental test in Ireland.<sup>5</sup> Smarting from his rebuke by the Whigs, Jonathan Swift was introduced to Harley by Erasmus Lewis, Harley's secretary. Harley quickly appreciated the worth and the potential of the Irish Churchman and also correctly deduced that the vain Swift would have to be treated as an equal by anyone seeking his services.<sup>6</sup>

From August to November of 1710 Swift was a principal contributor to the Tory paper, the Examiner, along with Arbuthnot, Prior, and St. John.<sup>7</sup> Swift became the editor of the paper in November, and as the editor of the Examiner he served as a very vocal advocate of Harley's moderate and conciliatory policies. Herbert Davis, an editor of Swift's works, contends that "Swift, like Harley, refused to believe that it was inevitable that the Government should be either Whig or Tory."<sup>8</sup> When Harley began his campaign against the continental war, however, Swift proved capable of very partisan attacks on the Whigs. Kent Clark, a student of the Augustan age, even contends that much of the anti-war

---

<sup>5</sup>J. Kent Clark, "Swift and the Dutch," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XVII (August, 1954), 350.

<sup>6</sup>Cook, "Mr. Examiner," p. 130.

<sup>7</sup>L. G. Wickham Legg, Matthew Prior: A Study of His Public Career and Correspondence (Cambridge, 1921), p. 141.

<sup>8</sup>Jonathan Swift, The "Examiner" and Other Prose Pieces Written in 1710-1711, edited by Herbert Davis (Oxford, 1957), p. xiii.

sentiment in Gulliver's Travels is a result of Swift's experience as a Tory propagandist.<sup>9</sup> Harley especially used Swift to develop anti-Dutch sentiment in England, and the satirist's personal anti-Dutch prejudices found expression in his Conduct of the Allies, which was published in 1711. Harley used Swift to appeal mainly to the country squires with whom the intolerant Churchman had much in common.<sup>10</sup> Country parsons read the Examiner faithfully, often commented on it from the pulpit, and carried it about with them all week ". . . to read to such of . . . [their] parishioners as . . . [were] weak in the faith . . . ." <sup>11</sup> While he defended the Church and praised the country gentry, Swift vigorously attacked the monied interests of England and blamed them for most of the nation's ills.

The relationship between Harley and Swift, for the most part, was quite cordial. Swift was often Harley's dinner guest and was involved in many discussions of matters of state. Swift was profuse with praise for his benefactor, and in 1712 he may have saved Harley's life when he stopped Harley from opening a box which contained explosives meant

---

<sup>9</sup>Clark, "Swift and the Dutch," p. 353n.

<sup>10</sup>Jonathan Swift, Journal to Stella, edited by Harold Williams, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1948), II, 441.

<sup>11</sup>J. Durden to Harley, December 5, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 641.

to go off when Harley opened it.<sup>12</sup> Early in 1713 Swift was rewarded by being named Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin. Harley wanted to give his friend an English appointment, but Anne, who personally disliked Swift, would go no further than the Irish appointment.<sup>13</sup>

Jonathan Swift served Harley as a proud and demanding friend; Daniel Defoe served him as a furtive, and often pathetic, hireling. The relationship between Harley and Defoe began in 1703 when Harley secured Defoe's release from prison in order to send him to Scotland as a spy. Harley changed his mind, though, and kept Defoe in England, using him as a political propagandist and sending him throughout England to keep Harley informed of changes in public opinion.<sup>14</sup>

In 1706 Defoe was sent to Scotland by Harley, and his reports influenced Harley's ideas about the proposed Union with Scotland.<sup>15</sup> The relationship between Harley and Defoe was always kept secret, and when Harley regained power in 1710 Defoe continued to write for him. Defoe, like Harley, had a Dissenter background and supported religious toleration,

<sup>12</sup>Charles H. Firth, "Dean Swift and Ecclesiastical Preference," The Review of English Studies, II (January, 1926), 8.

<sup>13</sup>John Barber to Jonathan Swift, August 3, 1714, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, II, 212.

<sup>14</sup>Henry L. Snyder, "Daniel Defoe, the Duchess of Marlborough, and the Advice to the Electors of Great Britain," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XXIX (November, 1965), 56.

<sup>15</sup>Defoe to Harley, August 23, 1706, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 323.

party peace, and above all, moderation.<sup>16</sup> In these respects, Defoe was perhaps more a Whig than a Tory.

Defoe's organ for political propaganda was The Review of the State of the British Nation, which he had begun while in Newgate in 1703. The tone of the Review was very informal, and its columns of small talk became so popular that they were occasionally printed as separate supplements. Bateson contends that the Review was ". . . in style and argument the model of what a newspaper should be."<sup>17</sup> Although the truth was evident to many, Defoe continually denied that the Review was a Tory paper.<sup>18</sup> Whereas the Examiner was intended to appeal to the landed interests, the Review was directed toward the growing commercial middle class, which had gained strength since the Restoration. This class included shopkeepers, investors in colonial and East Indian enterprises, and wholesale dealers, in short the monied interest that Swift so detested. In contrast to Swift's genteel and aristocratic approach, the Review was characterized by a warm, personal tone that quickly established an identity between Defoe and his readers. Defoe's more personal appeal may have been necessary because his audience was largely hostile to the Tories and had to be won over.

---

<sup>16</sup>Defoe to Harley, July 17, July 28, August 12, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 550-551, 553, 562-563; [Defoe], Review, VIII, 89, 149.

<sup>17</sup>Bateson, "Relations of Defoe and Harley," p. 242.

<sup>18</sup>[Defoe], Review, VII, 375; IX, 49.

One of the methods Defoe used to win over the traditionally Whig mercantile interest was to advocate more liberal international trade policies and to attack the narrow ideas of mercantilism and national self-sufficiency.<sup>19</sup> In The Merchant in 1713 and 1714, Defoe further expounded his liberal views on reciprocal trade with France.<sup>20</sup> These views, although ridiculed at the time, were to be vindicated by Pitt's commercial treaty with France in 1786. Defoe also attempted to lure as many Dissenters as possible away from their traditional Whig loyalties.<sup>21</sup>

With the signing of the peace preliminaries between England and France in October of 1711, Defoe turned to defending the ministry's foreign policy. Harley used Defoe to develop anti-Austrian sentiments.<sup>22</sup> Defoe, like Harley, was much interested in maintaining the balance of power in Europe. He particularly saw Austria as a threat to this balance after the death of the Emperor Joseph brought about the possibility of a revival of the empire of Charles V through a union of

---

<sup>19</sup> [Defoe], Review, VIII, 25, 90; John Robert Moore, "Defoe, Steele, and the Demolition of Dunkirk," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XIII (May, 1950), 301.

<sup>20</sup> Rae Blanchard, "Steele, Charles King, and the Dunkirk Pamphlets," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XIV (August, 1951), 425.

<sup>21</sup> Defoe to Harley, December 7, 1713, George Harris Healey, editor, The Letters of Daniel Defoe (Oxford, 1955), p. 429.

<sup>22</sup> Lawrence Poston III, "Defoe and the Peace Campaign, 1710-1713: A Reconsideration," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XXVII (November, 1963), 6, 7, 17, 19.

the Austrian and Spanish crowns. Joseph's successor, Charles VI, was also the Habsburg candidate for the throne of Spain.<sup>23</sup>

The differences between Swift and Defoe were religious, economic, and social as well as political. That they both worked for Harley at the same time is only indicative of the diversity of personalities and points of view which their employer could utilize in his service. These diversities were nowhere so evident as in the pages of the Examiner and the Review.<sup>24</sup>

Harley's attempts at conciliation and moderation are further evidenced by his relations with the vacillating essayist and journalist Richard Steele. With his partner, Joseph Addison, Steele in 1709 started the Whig paper, the Tatler, which was succeeded by the Spectator in 1710. Harley, in an effort to gain the support of Steele, gave him a position on the Stamp Commission, and they were obviously on good terms in October, 1710.<sup>25</sup> Rae Blanchard, an authority on Steele, suggests that Harley interceded for Steele when some of the Tory ministers threatened his position on the Commission.<sup>26</sup> In March, 1713, Steele sought unsuccessfully

<sup>23</sup>[Defoe], Review, VIII, 349.

<sup>24</sup>John F. Ross, Swift and Defoe: A Study in Relationship (Berkeley, 1941), p. 14.

<sup>25</sup>Richard Steele to Harley, October 9, 1710, Rae Blanchard, editor, The Correspondence of Richard Steele (London, 1941), p. 43.

<sup>26</sup>Blanchard, editor, Steele Correspondence, p. 60n.

to interest Harley in a new theater, the Censorium,<sup>27</sup> and in the winter of 1713/1714 Steele's feelings toward Harley began to change. Steele resigned his position on the Commission in June, 1713, to run for Parliament.<sup>28</sup> In a tract (which Blanchard incorrectly assigns to the period from 1705-1707)<sup>29</sup> Steele delivered a blistering attack on Harley to Sunderland, director of Whig propaganda.<sup>30</sup>

Ultimately the split between Harley and Steele was caused by the latter's continued pro-Whig activities, such as attacking the ministry in the Whig press. Early in 1714 these activities caused his expulsion from the House of Commons. In 1714 he renewed his attack on Harley in a new periodical, The Lover;<sup>31</sup> and upon the accession of George I, Steele was rewarded by the Whigs by being made supervisor of the Drury Lane Theater.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup>John Loftis, "Richard Steele's Censorium," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XIV (November, 1950), 51, 52n; George A. Aitken, The Life of Richard Steele, 2 vols. (London, 1889), II, 62.

<sup>28</sup>Steele to Harley, June 4, 1713, British Museum, London, Lansdowne MS. 1236, f. 227.

<sup>29</sup>John Robert Moore, "Steele's Unassigned Tract Against the Earl of Oxford," Philological Quarterly, XXVIII (July, 1949), 413.

<sup>30</sup>Rae Blanchard, editor, Tracts and Pamphlets by Richard Steele (Baltimore, 1944), pp. 618-621.

<sup>31</sup>Calhoun Winton, "Steele and the Fall of Harley in 1714," Philological Quarterly, XXXVII (October, 1958), 445.

<sup>32</sup>John Loftis, "Richard Steele, Drury Lane, and the Tories," Modern Language Quarterly, X (1949), 72.



Closely related to the political pamphlet wars of Anne's reign were the political clubs which often grew out of London's coffee houses. All of the Whig literary figures, such as the journalists Addison and Steele and the dramatists William Congreve<sup>33</sup> and John Vanbrugh, belonged to the Kit-Cat Club, of which the bookseller, Jacob Tonson, was secretary. The Tory counterpart of the Kit-Cat Club was the Brothers Club, formed by St. John in the summer of 1711 with Harley, Prior, Swift, and Arbuthnot, the Queen's private physician, as principal members. Prior joined the Club after he was expelled from the Kit-Cat Club by the Whigs.<sup>34</sup> The Brothers Club divided its time between politics and hard drinking, and eventually the dinners given by the Club became so elaborate that Harley began to lose interest in its activities. When St. John formed the new Scriblerus Club, Harley was not asked to join because the relations between Harley and St. John were growing increasingly strained.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, in the period from 1710 to 1713 Robert Harley continued to be the friend and patron of many of the literary figures of the early Augustan age. In return for his support, many of these writers aided

---

<sup>33</sup>Apparently Harley was responsible for securing a minor government position for Congreve. Halifax to Oxford, April 25, 1712, H. M. C., Portland MSS., V, 166.

<sup>34</sup>Charles Kenneth Eves, Matthew Prior: Poet and Diplomatist (New York, 1939), p. 225.

<sup>35</sup>Gall, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 25n.

Harley in his efforts to establish the new Tory ministry on a firm and broad foundation based on moderation and conciliation. These efforts began with the convening of the new Tory-dominated Parliament in November of 1710.

The new Parliament convened in an atmosphere singularly unfavorable to comprehension and conciliation. The disunity of the Whigs, the growing strength of the radical Tories, and the ill feelings fostered by the parliamentary election created a political climate in which Harley's hopes for "blessed moderation" were to be short-lived. Swift in an early issue of the Examiner described this political atmosphere when he wrote,

We are unhappily divided into two Parties, both of which pretend a mighty zeal for our Religion and Government, only they disagree about the Means. The evils we must fence against are, on one side Fanaticism and Infidelity in Religion; and Anarchy under the Name of a Commonwealth, in Government; On the other Side, Popery, Slavery, and the Pretender from France.<sup>36</sup>

The biggest problem Harley had to face in the parliamentary session of 1710-1711 was the army of Tory squires who descended upon the House of Commons determined to protect the land they tilled so assiduously and the Church they supported so faithfully. About 320 of the new MP's were Tories, 150 were Whigs, and about a fourth of them could be classified only as "doubtful."<sup>37</sup> The majority of the Tories did

---

<sup>36</sup>Swift, "Examiner" and Other Prose, p. 13.

<sup>37</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 73.

not favor moderation and immediately began to agitate for the dismissal of all Whig officeholders and for the distribution of patronage to deserving Tories. The new Tory majority was simply too large, however, for Harley to provide all of the Tories with offices and patronage without dismissing all Whig officials.

About 150 of the more radical Tories became increasingly dissatisfied with Harley's refusal to dismiss all Whigs, and under the leadership of St. John they revived the October Club.<sup>38</sup> The Club had been in existence since the reign of William III and was said to have received its name from its strong October ale. The Club was dedicated to thoroughly discrediting the previous administration and to protecting the landed interests and the Church. The October Club specifically wanted a bill to resume the grants of William III, a repeal of the Naturalization Act of 1708, a new Place Bill, a bill to establish property qualifications for the House of Commons, and an investigation of the military and financial programs of the Godolphin-Marlborough ministry. The October Club grew to encompass almost one-third of the members of the House of Commons;<sup>39</sup> in February of 1711 Swift reported that ". . . it is now growing up to be a party by itself, and

---

<sup>38</sup>Felling, Tory Party, p. 431; Clark, Later Stuarts, p. 228.

<sup>39</sup>Swift, Political Tracts, 1713-1719, p. 125.

begins to rail at the Ministry as much as the Whigs do, but from topics directly contrary."<sup>40</sup>

The Tory strength in the Commons was manifested early in the session by the virtually unopposed election of William Bromley, representative of Oxford and a leader of the High Churchmen, to the Speakership. Anne's opening speech to Parliament further strengthened the Tory position by promising to uphold the Church above all.<sup>41</sup> The replies of both Houses reflected support for this policy, even in the House of Lords, where the Whigs still held a slight majority.<sup>42</sup>

One of the most pressing duties of Parliament was to provide funds for the war even though secret peace negotiations were beginning at the same time. With the help of Halifax, who was trying to win Harley over to the Whigs, Harley pushed through Parliament two bills which raised £3,500,000 through two lotteries secured by new taxes on hops, playing cards, postage, and leather.<sup>43</sup> In spite of this, Harley was not successful in stabilizing the public credit, because the mercantile interests were still apprehensive about the intentions of the new ministry.

---

<sup>40</sup>Swift to the Earl of Peterborough, February 19, 1711, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 236.

<sup>41</sup>Boyer, History, IX, 256.

<sup>42</sup>Timberland, History, p. 281.

<sup>43</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, p. 431.

Harley also found it difficult to placate the increasingly vocal October Club. He did, however, support their bill which established a property qualification for the Commons of £600 a year in land for a knight of the shire and £300 for a burgess.<sup>44</sup> In December the Club forced him to dismiss several more Whigs, including Robert Walpole in the War Office. At the end of 1710 the only Whigs remaining in important offices were Newcastle as Privy Seal, Somerset as Master of the Horse, and Marlborough. The attempts of Harley to reach an understanding with Marlborough were ruined when the radical Tories forced upon Harley a parliamentary investigation of the conduct of the war in Spain.<sup>45</sup> The Club became increasingly suspicious that Harley was working with the Whigs in the House of Lords to obstruct their program. When the Lords failed to pass the Resumption and Place Bills and refused to repeal the Naturalization Bill of 1708, the radical Tories' suspicions of Harley "deepened into certainty." Harley's actions lead Felling to conclude that ". . . the

---

<sup>44</sup>Sir James Dunbar to Lord Grange, December 12, 1710, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Mar and Kellie (London, 1930), p. 486; Examiner, I, No. 45, p. 1, expresses Swift's support of the measure.

<sup>45</sup>St. John to John Drummond, December 12, 1710, Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, Letters and Correspondence Public and Private of the Right Honourable Henry St. John, During the Time He Was Secretary of State to Queen Anne, 2 vols. (London, 1798), I, 125; Timberland, History, p. 247.

high Tories' general distrust of him was well-grounded<sup>46</sup> and lead Trevelyan to charge that Harley allowed the Club to expend some of its radical fervor in passing bills which he knew the Lords would never pass.<sup>47</sup> Both contentions are reasonably fair estimates of the situation.

By the first of March, 1711, Harley's position as leader of the Tory party and as head of the ministry was becoming tenuous. The peace that the Tories had promised during the elections had not materialized. Harley's control of the Tory party was weakening daily, and the allies still did not trust the new ministry. For all its signs of increasing stability, the domestic financial situation was still very insecure and at the mercy of every rumor of ill fortune on the continental battlefields. Fears of Popery and the French were still rampant as were rumors of threats to the Protestant Succession. Swift on March 5, 1711, concisely summed up the situation: "The Ministry is on a very narrow bottom, and stands like an Isthmus between the Whigs on one side, and violent Tories on the other. They are able seamen, but the tempest is too great, the ship too rotten, and the crew all against them."<sup>48</sup>

On March 8, however, an event occurred which changed Swift's mood of black pessimism first to deepest despair and then to extreme optimism. The attempted assassination of

<sup>46</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, pp. 432-433.

<sup>47</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 107.      <sup>48</sup>Swift, Journal, I, 206.

Robert Harley on that day made him a national hero and a near-martyr, silenced almost all political opposition to the Tory leader, cleared the way for the unopposed passage of his financial program, and finally raised Harley to the House of Lords and to the office of Lord High Treasurer. As Feiling states, the assassination attempt decided the whole future of the Tory government.<sup>49</sup>

Early in March Harley had come into possession of several incriminating letters belonging to a Monsieur Guiscard, a French agent in the employ of the British government. Guiscard's pension had recently been cut from £500 to £400 by Harley, and when the Frenchman failed to secure added income from the British government, he attempted to sell British military secrets to the French government. After consulting with Shrewsbury, Rochester, and the Queen about the letters,<sup>50</sup> Harley ordered St. John to issue the warrant for Guiscard's arrest on March 8, 1711. The Frenchman was brought before the Cabinet Council at St. John's office where St. John, Lord Poulett, Ormonde, Harley, and most of the other high officials were in attendance.<sup>51</sup>

Contemporary accounts differ greatly as to what actually happened at the hearing. Swift, in one of his three versions,

<sup>49</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, p. 434.

<sup>50</sup>Duke of Shrewsbury to Harley, March 6, 1711, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 666; Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 51.

<sup>51</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 56.

states that Guiscard stabbed Harley after the latter reprimanded him for "swearing and looking disrespectful" at the court.<sup>52</sup> In another account Swift states that Harley presented one of the incriminating letters at the hearing and that this caused Guiscard to stab him.<sup>53</sup> In yet another account, Swift states that Guiscard did not even intend to stab Harley but rather to stab St. John, who had "used him very ill."<sup>54</sup> Leslie Stephen, in the Dictionary of National Biography, agrees with this last contention and points out that Guiscard had shared in many of St. John's increasingly frequent excesses and intended to stab St. John because of his part in Guiscard's arrest.<sup>55</sup> Deacon Coxe, the biographer of Marlborough, states that Guiscard meant to kill St. John and settled for Harley only when the Secretary of State took a seat out of Guiscard's reach.<sup>56</sup> Several modern historians agree with Swift and Coxe that Guiscard's penknife was meant for St. John and not for Robert Harley,<sup>57</sup> but Edward Harley

<sup>52</sup>Swift to King, March 8, 1711, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 239.

<sup>53</sup>Swift, Political Tracts, 1713-1719, p. 127.

<sup>54</sup>Swift, Enquiry, p. 28.

<sup>55</sup>Leslie Stephen, "Henry St. John," Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XVII (London, 1921-1922), 620.

<sup>56</sup>Coxe, Marlborough, III, 196-197.

<sup>57</sup>Churchill, Marlborough, VI, 387; Hassall, Bolingbroke, p. 74; Harkness, Bolingbroke, p. 107.



contends that Harley was Guiscard's intended victim.<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, neither Harley nor St. John has left first hand accounts of the attempted assassination.

Guiscard stabbed Harley twice with a small penknife. The first blow was broken by the heavy brocade on Harley's best blue vest, which he wore in honor of Anne's Accession Day. The knife broke on the second blow when it struck a bone near Harley's heart. Evidently Harley was not hurt seriously, and he never lost consciousness. St. John then violently attacked Guiscard and was kept from killing him only by the combined efforts of several of the spectators. The Frenchman was taken to prison, where he died a few days later of the wounds received at the hands of St. John and Lord Poulett.<sup>59</sup>

In the next few days London talked of little other than the attempt on Harley's life. In order to capitalize on the public sympathy aroused by the event, St. John's supporters tried to make it appear that their leader had been the intended victim. Apparently there were suggestions in some circles that St. John had hired Guiscard to kill Harley and that St. John attacked the Frenchman to forever silence him.<sup>60</sup> In the

---

<sup>58</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, pp. 60, 67.

<sup>59</sup>H. T. Dickinson, "The Attempt to Assassinate Harley, 1711," History Today, XV (November, 1965), 791.

<sup>60</sup>King to Swift, March 17, 1711, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 243.

Review Defoe stated that the assassination attempt should be looked upon as an attempt on the life of the Queen and as an insult to the entire nation.<sup>61</sup> The attempted assassination also brought forth a stream of invective from the pen of Jonathan Swift. In the Examiner he compared the attempt on Harley's life to the assassinations of Julius Caesar and Henry IV of France.<sup>62</sup> Swift also addressed a rather trite and sentimental poem to Harley's French physician.

On Europe Britain's Safety lyes;  
 Britain is lost if Harley dyes;  
 Harley depends upon your Skill;  
 Think what you save, or what you kill.<sup>63</sup>

Harley had been ill the week before the assassination attempt, and consequently he did not mend as quickly as his physicians had hoped he would. He had several relapses and colds and did not appear in the Commons until April 26. His absence from Parliament brought almost to a complete standstill the work of the Treasury<sup>64</sup> and severely hampered the work of the House of Commons. During Harley's absence St. John consolidated his power in the Commons, and the rivalry between the two men became increasingly apparent. But, as H. T. Dickinson points out, Harley's absence was merely the

<sup>61</sup>[Defoe], Review, VII, 562.

<sup>62</sup>Swift, "Examiner" and Other Prose, p. 106.

<sup>63</sup>Swift, Journal, I, 492.

<sup>64</sup>St. John to Drummond, March 20, 1711, St. John, Letters and Correspondence, I, 70.

occasion for the revelation of the growing rivalry between Harley and St. John and not the cause of it.<sup>65</sup>

Upon his return to Parliament Harley presented his financial program,<sup>66</sup> which contained two main provisions. The first provided that the debts of the navy, army, and other departments were to be funded at 6 per cent; the second set up the South Sea Company to carry on trade and colonization in the Caribbean. The South Sea Company was based on the same principle as the Bank of England and the Tory Land Bank. It was meant to place part of the unfunded national debt into the hands of certain individuals, many of whom already held government securities. Harley also hoped that it would overcome some of the animosity of the monied interest for the Tory ministry.<sup>67</sup> These proposals were passed with little debate and almost no opposition. The force of Harley's public popularity seems to have been the principal reason for this extremely unusual unanimity. St. John, however, correctly

<sup>65</sup>Dickinson, "Attempt," p. 793.

<sup>66</sup>Harley was somewhat of a mercantilist and was concerned with the outflow of specie from England. In 1711 he was disturbed by the practice of paying sailors on board ship just prior to sailing. He argued that the specie would, for the most part, be spent abroad. Secretary of the Treasury to the Navy Board, September 20, 1711, R. D. Merriman, editor, Queen Anne's Navy: Documents Concerning the Administration of the Navy of Queen Anne, 1702-1714 (London, 1961), p. 202.

<sup>67</sup>Although Defoe is usually given a great deal of credit for the South Sea scheme, he was actually rather skeptical of the idea. Healey, editor, Defoe Letters, 338n; John Robert Moore, "Defoe's Political Propaganda in The Dumb Philosopher," The Huntington Library Quarterly, IV (October, 1940), 114.

predicted the end result of both proposals. "I make no doubt, however, but these devices will end in the confusion of those who devise and promote them."<sup>68</sup>

At the moment Robert Harley's prospects for continued success were very good, and no one was strong enough to oppose him. Public sympathy for him forced Parliament to acquiesce in his programs, and Anne needed no encouragement to support her favorite minister and advisor. Even St. John had to admit, although rather sullenly, that Harley was the Queen's closest and most influential advisor. The Tory cause was also growing stronger in Scotland. After receiving Defoe's reports from Scotland, Harley on March 8 expressed his and the Queen's determination to uphold the Union in all its parts.<sup>69</sup> Harley had been on the Commission that had effected the Scottish Union, and he was eager to preserve and to strengthen its work.

There seemed to be nothing now to prevent Anne from making Harley her Lord High Treasurer. Newcastle and Somers told Edward Harley that nothing would ". . . establish the security of the Protestant Religion and the Tranquility of England but Mr. Harley's taking ye White Staff and thereby

<sup>68</sup>St. John to the Duke of Marlborough, May 8, 1711, St. John, Letters and Correspondence, I, 124.

<sup>69</sup>Harley to Principal Castares, March 8, 1711, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Laing Manuscripts, preserved in the University of Edinburgh, 2 vols. (London, 1914), II, 161.

becoming the Prime Minister . . . ."<sup>70</sup> First, however, he would have to be raised to the Peerage, and as the titles of Mortimer and Oxford were vacant at the time, the Queen decided to bestow them on Harley. This occasioned much comment since Harley was related only slightly to the De Veres, the historical Earls of Oxford, and not at all to the Mortimers. Harold Williams, one of the editors of the works of Swift, quite aptly calls the title an "extraordinary and audacious" one.<sup>71</sup> One Peregrine Bertie, a descendant of Lord Willoughby, an Elizabethan commander, claims that Harley confided to him that had the title not been granted to him, it would have been bestowed on someone else within the month.<sup>72</sup> Regardless of propriety, Harley's patent<sup>73</sup> was issued, and on May 23 he was created Baron Harley of Wigmore in the county of Hereford, and Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer. Many were offended by the fulsome tract prepared by the Queen stating the reasons for which Harley had been raised to

---

<sup>70</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 70.

<sup>71</sup>Swift, Journal, I, 278-279n.

<sup>72</sup>Peregrine Bertie to Marquis of Lindsey, May 19, 1711, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Ancaster, preserved at Grims-thorpe (London, 1907), p. 443; Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of Sir William Fitz-herbert, Bart., and Others (London, 1893), p. 252.

<sup>73</sup>"Lord Harley's Patent in 1711," Notes and Queries (1st Series), II (September 7, 1850), 235.

the Peerage.<sup>74</sup> The far more prevalent reaction to the move was exuberant praise of the new Lord. Swift enshrined Harley's character in his Enquiry<sup>75</sup> while Alexander Pope intertwined the names of Oxford and Mortimer into a luxurious tapestry of classical allusions and heroic couplets.<sup>76</sup> On May 28 the Scottish General Assembly expressed its pleasure at Harley's elevation,<sup>77</sup> and on May 29 the Duke of Marlborough added his voice to the swelling chorus of praise for Harley, who on that day was made the Lord High Treasurer of England.<sup>78</sup>

On June 1, 1711, Robert Harley entered the House of Lords for the first time as the Earl of Oxford. His elevation to the Peerage and appointment as Lord High Treasurer were the pinnacle of his political career and the culmination of a year's struggle to consolidate his power and to hold the Tory party together. Ultimately, he had been successful because the public sympathy aroused by the attempt on his

<sup>74</sup>"The Reasons which induced her Majesty to create the Right Honourable Robert Harley, Esq. a Peer of Great Britain, in the Year 1711," The Harleian Miscellany, edited by William Oldys and Thomas Park, 10 vols. (London, 1808-1813), I, 2.

<sup>75</sup>Swift, Enquiry, p. 10.

<sup>76</sup>Alexander Pope, "Epistle to Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford and Mortimer," Pope: Complete Poetical Works, edited by Henry W. Boynton (Boston, 1903), pp. 116-119.

<sup>77</sup>Marquis of Annandale to Harley, May 28, 1711, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of J. J. Hope Johnstone, Esq. of Annandale (London, 1897), pp. 125-126.

<sup>78</sup>Marlborough to Harley, May 29, 1711, E. M. C., Bath MSS., I, 204.

life made him a national hero and gave Anne an excuse to promote her favorite minister. In the months following his promotion Robert Harley was able to retain this power because the Tory party was fortunately committed to a foreign policy which was quickly becoming very popular.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE PURSUIT OF PEACE: JULY, 1710, TO DECEMBER, 1711

Jonathan Swift states in his history of the Great Tory Ministry that during the first two years of the ministry Robert Harley had the support of the Crown, the Church, and the people because, for the moment, his private ambitions and the public good "had the same bottom."<sup>1</sup> Although exaggerated, this statement does point out the fundamental reason for Harley's maintaining his power until the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. By committing himself and the Tory party to ending the war with France, Harley identified himself with a foreign policy for which there was no real alternative. As long as the peace negotiations were in progress, he retained his control of the Tory party. In 1711 the efforts of Robert Harley, now Lord Oxford, were largely directed toward drawing up a preliminary peace treaty with France and toward persuading the Tory-dominated House of Commons, the Whig-controlled House of Lords, and England's allies to accept the preliminaries.

Although Oxford did not give in to the radical Tories' demands that all Whigs be removed from office, during the

---

<sup>1</sup>Swift, Enquiry, p. 26.



summer of 1711 the Lord Treasurer did put the ministry on a more solidly Tory basis. The two most important ministerial changes were brought about by the deaths of two high officials. In May the President of the Council, the Earl of Rochester, died; and in June the Duke of Newcastle, the Lord Privy Seal, was killed in a hunting accident.<sup>2</sup> Although the Earl was a High Churchman and the Duke a Whig, both men had staunchly supported the moderate policies of Oxford. Their deaths deprived the Lord Treasurer of two extremely valuable allies in his struggle with the radical members of the October Club, who had now formed the March Club dedicated to the removal of all Whigs. John Sheffield, the innocuous Tory Duke of Buckinghamshire, replaced Rochester as President of the Council. Buckinghamshire was then succeeded as Lord Steward by Oxford's kinsman Lord Poulett.<sup>3</sup>

The Duke of Newcastle, one of the wealthiest men in England,<sup>4</sup> had been one of Oxford's closest friends and advisors, and his death was a great personal loss to the Lord Treasurer.<sup>5</sup> The death of Newcastle also presented to Oxford a serious political problem. Immediately, the radical Tories urged Oxford to name Charles Finch, the Earl of Nottingham, to replace Newcastle as Lord Privy Seal. At the same time, the Duke and

---

<sup>2</sup>Boyer, History, X, 225.

<sup>3</sup>Boyer, History, X, 218.

<sup>4</sup>Burnet, History, II, 580.

<sup>5</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 74.

Duchess of Somerset, whose Whig sympathies were becoming increasingly pronounced, sought to have Lord Somers named to the position. Dubbed "Dismal" by Swift because of his sour disposition, Nottingham was one of the most violent of the radical Tories and a leader of the High Church party. He was also the man whom Oxford had replaced as Secretary of State in 1704. For these reasons Oxford refused to name him as Newcastle's successor.<sup>6</sup> Because of the Baron's obvious Whig connections, Oxford also withstood the Somersets' attempts to have Somers appointed Lord Privy Seal.

Oxford first appointed Edward Villiers, the Tory Earl of Jersey, to replace Newcastle. When the Earl died almost immediately, the Lord Treasurer named Dr. John Robinson, the Bishop of Bristol, as Lord Privy Seal. The appointment of a clergyman to a high office of state caused much critical comment, especially among the Whigs. Swift reported that Robinson's appointment "will fret . . . [the Whigs] to death [and] will bind the church to . . . [Oxford] forever."<sup>7</sup> Oxford thought the appointment would please the moderates of both parties because the Bishop was a moderate, and he thought that it would calm the High Church Tories since Robinson was a cleric. He was correct in both instances, but particularly in the latter. Many clergymen looked upon the appointment

---

<sup>6</sup>Coxe, Marlborough, III, 215-216.

<sup>7</sup>Swift, Journal, II, 215.

as the portent of an era of increased clerical influence in political affairs.<sup>8</sup>

During the summer of 1711 the Whig Duke and Duchess of Somerset increased their influence at Court. The Duchess began to share Mrs. Masham's position as the Queen's favorite. Indeed, the Somersets seemed to be filling the position in the Royal Bedchamber left vacant by the fall of the Marlboroughs. Somerset had always wanted the ministry to have a Whig foundation. For this reason, his relations with Oxford became rather cold while he and St. John became open enemies. When the Secretary of State asked Anne to dismiss the Duchess, the Queen sharply retorted that apparently she had only exchanged her Whig masters for equally offensive Tory ones.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, during the summer of 1711 Oxford had to deal with the March Club's demands for the removal of all Whigs and with the growing influence of the Somersets over the Queen. His own position with Anne was slightly injured when Mrs. Masham left the Court for the summer. Furthermore, Oxford was ill all summer with a sore chest and with failing eyesight.<sup>10</sup> Amid these untoward circumstances, then, Oxford

---

<sup>8</sup>Norman Sykes, Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century (Cambridge, 1934), p. 43.

<sup>9</sup>Swift to King, August 26, 1711, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 279.

<sup>10</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, p. 437.

sought to complete the preliminary peace negotiations between England and France.

The War of the Spanish Succession had begun in 1701 when Charles II of Spain died and left the Spanish throne to his grandnephew, Philip of Anjou, who was also the grandson of Louis XIV. Shortly thereafter William III had formed the Grand Alliance of England, the Netherlands, Prussia, and Austria. The Alliance was dedicated to preventing the union of the French and Spanish thrones, and the allies championed the claim of Archduke Charles of Austria to the Spanish throne. The war had dragged on for ten years punctuated by allied victories at Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malpaquet. In the Barrier Treaty of 1709 the Whigs had promised the Dutch a strong barrier against the French and trading concessions from the English in order to retain their support. As early as November, 1709, Shrewsbury had written to Oxford, "I do not doubt but the generality of the nation long for a peace . . . ,"<sup>11</sup> and by 1710 it was obvious that many Englishmen were ready for an end to the war.

Upon regaining power in 1710, Oxford immediately began to seek ways of carrying out his election promises to end the war. The method he and Shrewsbury finally decided upon centered on the Earl of Jersey and the Abbé Gaultier. Jersey, who was not even a minister of the Crown, was one of the Tory

---

<sup>11</sup>Shrewsbury to Harley, November 3, 1709, H. M. C., Bath MSS., I, 197.

Lords with known Jacobite feelings; Gaultier was connected with the household of the Earl and was also the agent of the Marquis de Torcy, the French Secretary of State. In August, 1710, at the direction of Oxford, Shrewsbury, and Jersey, Gaultier intimated to Torcy that the Tory ministers might be willing to open secret and tentative negotiations with the French.<sup>12</sup> Torcy quickly agreed to negotiations because the French desperately needed peace. The talks between Jersey and Gaultier were very secret, and not even all of the English ministers were aware of them. It is particularly important to note that, although he is usually given complete credit for the Treaty of Utrecht, St. John did not know about the secret negotiations until nine months after they began.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the discussions were so tentative and secret that the Pretender was not even told of them.<sup>14</sup>

Although secret and tentative, the Gaultier-Jersey discussions did lay the basic framework for the Treaty of Utrecht. In December, 1710, Jersey agreed that Philip would retain Spain and Spanish America and that the Dutch would have to be satisfied with a much smaller barrier than the one

---

<sup>12</sup>William Cobbett, The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803, 36 vols. (London, 1806-1820), VII, ciii.

<sup>13</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 176; Harkness, Bolingbroke, p. 72; Kronenberger, Duchess, p. 206.

<sup>14</sup>H. N. Fieldhouse, "Bolingbroke's Share in the Jacobite Intrigue of 1710-1714," The English Historical Review, LII (July, 1937), 444.

promised them in 1709. In return England would receive trade concessions in the French and Spanish empires.<sup>15</sup> These provisions are basically those contained in the French proposals of April, 1711.

While carrying on secret negotiations with the French, Oxford also had to convince the allies that England would still honor her commitments to the war effort. To this end in the autumn of 1711 he sent Earl Rivers to Hanover. Rivers' trip was apparently successful, and the allies, including the Electress Sophia, were reassured.<sup>16</sup> Oxford also pushed through Parliament approval of a year's military supplies ". . . in hopes that those Vigorous Resolutions would bring France to make Peace, or Enable the Queen to force one upon them."<sup>17</sup> Ultimately, however, it was the Tory ministers' willingness to end the war and not a fear of continued fighting that brought France to the conference table.

Oxford's choice of Jersey as negotiator for the English was an unfortunate one. Even more unfortunate was the

<sup>15</sup>Gaultier to Torcy, December 23, 1710, George Macaulay Trevelyan, "The Ministerial Jacobite Intrigue, As Revealed in the French Foreign Office Archives," The English Historical Review, XLIX (January, 1934), 103.

<sup>16</sup>Drummond to Harley, October 28, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 618-619; A. W. Ward, "The Electress Sophia and the Hanoverian Succession," The English Historical Review, I (July, 1886), 498; Rivers to Harley, December 5, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 641; Marlborough to Harley, March 10, 1711, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 200.

<sup>17</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 41.

Lord Treasurer's decision to allow Jersey so much freedom in the negotiations. If Oxford had more carefully supervised the negotiations, they perhaps would not have taken on the deep Jacobite overtones that Jersey gave them. Shrewsbury seems to have been less willing than Oxford to give Jersey a free hand. Trevelyan contends that because of his anti-Jacobite feelings, Shrewsbury was kept ignorant of the Jacobite implications of the discussions.<sup>18</sup>

In March and April of 1711 several events occurred which facilitated the Anglo-French secret negotiations. The attempted assassination of Oxford on March 8, 1711, was one such event. With Oxford incapacitated, St. John was finally brought into the negotiations, and he quickly assumed control of the discussions. Guiscard informed Torcy that

. . . the illness resulting from . . . [Harley's] wound kept him for some time from paying attention to the negotiations, and during this interval St. John, Secretary of State, introduced himself into the affair, although the intention of those in charge of it had been to keep him in ignorance.<sup>19</sup>

St. John was much more energetic than Oxford and quickly relegated Jersey to a secondary position. Also in April Thomas Wentworth, the Tory Lord Raby (created Earl of Stafford in September, 1711), replaced Charles Townshend, the

<sup>18</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 178.

<sup>19</sup>Paris Foreign Office MSS., Quai d'Orsay, "Affaires étrangères Correspondance politique Angleterre," 233, f. 44, cited in Trevelyan, Peace, p. 179; see also Lord Raby to Harley, May 5, 1711, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 290, 292.

Whig Viscount Townshend, as the English Ambassador to The Hague.<sup>20</sup> Raby was a close associate of Oxford, and his appointment to The Hague strengthened the Tory position in the Dutch capital.

On April 17, 1711, the Austrian Emperor Joseph died. This event immediately made Oxford's and St. John's positions much stronger.<sup>21</sup> Joseph was succeeded by the Archduke Charles, his brother and the Habsburg candidate for the throne of Spain. After Charles became Emperor Charles VI, only an Austrian or a very partisan Whig could argue that he should also be made the King of Spain. After the death of Joseph, Oxford and St. John could argue with strength that they were remaining true to William's policy of maintaining a balance of power rather than a system of individual alliances. Immediately, anti-Austrian expressions began to appear in the Review.<sup>22</sup>

Shortly after the death of the Emperor, the French peace proposals were sent to England.<sup>23</sup> Although many English officials thought that they had emanated spontaneously from France, it is obvious that they were the result of the

<sup>20</sup>Boyer, History, X, 8.

<sup>21</sup>Poulett to Harley, April 18, 1711, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 674-675; Earl of Rochester to Harley, April 18, 1711, H. M. C., Portland MSS., 675.

<sup>22</sup>Poston, "Peace Campaign," p. 6.

<sup>23</sup>Cobbett, Parliamentary History, VII, ciii. Entitled "First Proposals of France," they are dated April 22, 1711.



secret negotiations that had been begun by Oxford in August, 1710. Based on the proposition of Spain for Philip, the French proposals recommended that England and France arrange a barrier treaty for Holland and substantial economic concessions for England. After the receipt of the proposals, Shrewsbury insisted that information about the negotiations be made public and that the proposals be sent to The Hague.<sup>24</sup>

During the summer and autumn of 1711 the French and the English settled the major Anglo-French problems, leaving the problems of the allies to be dealt with in a general conference to be held in 1712. St. John knew that England's prosperity and security depended upon her navy and her colonies. He was determined, therefore, to secure important financial, naval, and colonial concessions for England. He intended that the Asiento<sup>25</sup> be given to England, that the Hudson Bay Company's forts and territory be restored, that English sovereignty in Newfoundland and Acadia be guaranteed, that England retain Gibraltar and Port Mahon, that England

---

<sup>24</sup>Edward Harley's contention that the Dutch welcomed the negotiations and urged Oxford to continue them can probably be discounted as either wishful thinking or an outright falsification. Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 80.

<sup>25</sup>The Spanish government awarded a contract of monopoly, or an "Asiento," of her colonial slave trade sometimes to Spanish merchants, but more often to foreigners. From 1701 it had been held by the French Guinea Company. The Dutch mercantile interests hoped that they would gain a portion of the Asiento by the provisions of the Treaty of Utrecht.

be granted most-favored status in Spain, and that the fortifications of Dunkirk be dismantled. As Trevelyan succinctly phrases it: "It was a popular program."<sup>26</sup> When Oxford and St. John decided to send an unofficial envoy to France to open direct negotiations, they chose the poet Matthew Prior. Prior's excellent knowledge of French, his familiarity with diplomatic and commercial affairs, and his previous experiences at the French court made him an excellent choice.<sup>27</sup> Traveling in disguise, Prior arrived at Versailles in July, 1711. He had been instructed not to promise or sign anything; he was only to present forcefully England's views and to defend them. Neither Torcy's diplomatic skills nor the Sun King's flattery could force the poet-diplomat to make any concessions.<sup>28</sup> Rather, Torcy and his master were persuaded that the English ministers were in earnest.

Still in disguise, Prior returned to England on August 17.<sup>29</sup> He was accompanied by a new French agent, Monsieur

<sup>26</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 183.

<sup>27</sup>Cobbett, Parliamentary History, VII, ciii.

<sup>28</sup>"Prior's Negotiations in France," H. M. G., Portland MSS., V, 35; Gaultier to Torcy, February 16, 1713, L. G. Wickham Legg, "Extracts from Jacobite Correspondence," The English Historical Review, XXX (July, 1915), 502-503; Legg, Prior, pp. 217-218; Jean Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Torcy, Memoirs of the Marquis of Torcy, Secretary of State to Lewis XIV. Containing the History of the Negotiations from the Treaty of Ryswic to the Peace of Utrecht, 2 vols. (London, 1757), II, 130.

<sup>29</sup>An over-zealous customs official decided that Prior was a French spy and detained the poet until St. John and Oxford ordered his release. Boyer, History, X, 231-232.

Mesnager, who was quite skilled in financial affairs. At Prior's home, Oxford, St. John, and Mesnager hammered out a more definite Anglo-French agreement.<sup>30</sup> The French agreed to postpone their demand for Lille and Tournai until the general conference. England's rights in Newfoundland were guaranteed, but the French were given the right to dry fish in designated areas.<sup>31</sup> Louis recognized Anne's right to the throne and promised to honor the Protestant Succession.<sup>32</sup> The last stipulation was due largely to Shrewsbury's insistence that it be included.<sup>33</sup>

While the negotiations between the ministers and Mesnager progressed, Oxford again sent Rivers to Hanover. This time Rivers tried to persuade the Elector to approve the Anglo-French negotiations. He failed, and his failure somewhat dampened the Tories' hope for a peace. News from the battlefield also boded ill for hopes of a speedy peace. In July

---

<sup>30</sup>St. John spoke and wrote French fluently. Torcy, Memoirs, II, 153.

<sup>31</sup>This British concession may have been caused by the arrival of the news of the failure of the Quebec expedition. Great Britain, Public Records Office, Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies, 1710-1711 (Vaduz, 1964), 254-257; J. Holland Rose, A. F. Newton, and E. A. Benians, editors, The Cambridge History of the British Empire, 8 vols. (New York, 1929-1936), VI, 87.

<sup>32</sup>St. John to Strafford, December 12, 1711, St. John, Letters and Correspondence, I, 307; Torcy, Memoirs, II, 165; H. M. C., Bath MSS., I, 210-214.

<sup>33</sup>Dorothy H. Somerville, "Shrewsbury and the Peace of Utrecht," The English Historical Review, XLVII (October, 1932), 646.

Marlborough won a resounding victory at Bouchain. Boyer reported that the victory did not suit the plans of those working for peace at any price.<sup>34</sup> The Tory ministers were perhaps reminded of Sunderland's well-publicized remarks to Newcastle after the allied victory in Spain in August, 1710: "[It] puts it out the Power of Them all to sell us to France by an ill Peace."<sup>35</sup>

On October 1, 1711, Swift reported to Archbishop King, "All matters are agreed between France and us, and very much to the advantage and honour of England; but I believe no farther steps will be taken without giving notice to the Allies."<sup>36</sup> On October 8, 1711, without giving any notice to the allies, Dartmouth, St. John, and Mesnager signed the preliminary peace treaty between England and France. As Secretary of State for the Southern Department, Dartmouth's signature on the document was necessary. On the following day the document was summarily presented to the ministers of Savoy and Portugal and to Count Gallas, the Imperial ambassador.<sup>37</sup> Gallas, who was intriguing with the Whigs to defeat the peace treaty, had the articles published on October 13 in

---

<sup>34</sup>Boyer, History, X, 222-223.

<sup>35</sup>Earl of Sunderland to Newcastle, August 31, 1710, Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 1236, f. 255.

<sup>36</sup>Swift to King, October 1, 1711, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 290.

<sup>37</sup>Boyer, History, X, 247-248.

the Whig newspaper, the Daily Courant, in an effort to arouse public opinion against the Tory peace. His move failed to arouse public opinion, but it did cause him to be forbidden by Oxford and St. John to appear at Court.<sup>38</sup>

Swift's statement that the preliminary articles were "very much to the advantage and honour of England" was an understatement. Louis not only pledged himself to recognize the legality of Anne's reign and of the Protestant Succession but also promised that the Spanish and French crowns would never be joined. He also agreed to grant to England a commercial treaty and the Asiento; to recognize English sovereignty in Gibraltar, Port Mahon, and Newfoundland; and to dismantle the fortifications at Dunkirk. The dissatisfied Dutch had to be content with vague promises of a barrier of unstipulated proportions.<sup>39</sup>

England's signing of this "separate" peace has been the subject of much comment by historians. G. N. Clark contends that the Tories were justified in deserting the allies because the latter insisted upon intriguing with the Whigs. He also states that the main reason for this desertion was St. John's personal dislike of the Dutch. St. John believed that the Dutch were ruining English trade when, in reality, English

---

<sup>38</sup>Burnet, History, II, 580; Boyer, History, X, 252.

<sup>39</sup>The preliminary articles may be found in Cobbett, Parliamentary History, VII, cvii-cxiv; St. John, Letters and Correspondence, I, 372-377.

trade was prospering and Dutch trade was being ruined.<sup>40</sup> It is true that by the autumn of 1711 St. John wholeheartedly believed the anti-Dutch material that Swift was writing in the Examiner. Even the strongly pro-Whig Trevelyan admits that the decision to work out the Anglo-French difficulties and then to deal with the problems of the allies at a general conference was the only way to force the self-seeking allies to stop fighting. He compares this procedure to the way in which Louis and William dictated the Treaty of Ryswick to Europe in 1697.<sup>41</sup> The editor of Coxe's memoir of Marlborough quite aptly points out that the decision of the Tory ministers to make a separate peace was "politic," and he states that if the matter had been left to Prince Eugene of Savoy and Marlborough, the peace of Europe ". . . would have certainly been postponed sine die."<sup>42</sup>

In October and November the Whigs and the Tories prepared to do battle over the adoption of the peace preliminaries. Late in October the new Emperor announced his intentions to send Prince Eugene to England to aid the opposition to the peace, and Buys, the Dutch envoy, arrived in England to lend his support in the struggle. On November 7 the Elector of Hanover wrote to Oxford warning that the

---

<sup>40</sup>Clark, Later Stuarts, p. 225.

<sup>41</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, pp. 180-181.

<sup>42</sup>Coxe, Marlborough, III, 254n.

peace treaty left France in a position from which she could still rule Europe.<sup>43</sup> And on November 17 Marlborough landed in England to take command of the forces opposing the peace.<sup>44</sup> As Feiling states, "It was abundantly clear that the war party were mobilizing all their forces."<sup>45</sup>

Although he was ill with "the Gravel, and a great Rheum,"<sup>46</sup> Oxford marshaled the Tory forces to oppose the Whig opposition. His awareness of the selfish nature of the allies was manifested when Buys (the Dutch envoy) complained that the preliminaries did not give enough power to the Emperor. Oxford dryly answered, "My Lord, before five years if the Peace be made upon this plan the States of Holland will complain that the Emperor hath too great a Power."<sup>47</sup> The Whig press immediately began to attack the proposed peace. The ministry silenced some of the libel and lampoons by arresting dozens of booksellers, publishers, and writers for printing sedition.<sup>48</sup> The political agitation in London reached a peak in November. On November 16 the ministry

<sup>43</sup>The Elector of Hanover to Oxford, November 7, 1711, Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 1236, f. 277. See also Oxford to Strafford, December, 1711, St. John, Letters and Correspondence, I, 328n.

<sup>44</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 82.

<sup>45</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, p. 441.

<sup>46</sup>Boyer, History, X, 259.

<sup>47</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 81.

<sup>48</sup>Boyer, History, X, 264.

confiscated the effigies of the Pope, the Pretender, and the Devil that were traditionally burned on November 17, Elizabeth's Accession Day. The Tories stated that the Whigs were planning an insurrection, called out the trained-bands, and claimed to have saved the nation from civil war.<sup>49</sup>

The excitement caused by calling out the trained-bands was as nothing when compared to the furor caused by the publication on November 27 of Jonathan Swift's Conduct of the Allies. More a state paper than a mere piece of party propaganda, the Conduct had been composed in a small house at Windsor by St. John and Swift with many revisions by Oxford. Eleven thousand copies of the book were sold in the first month of its publication.<sup>50</sup> In the Conduct Swift argued that England was now fighting a war in which her vital interests were no longer at stake. He contended that the English were only the tool of the Dutch and the Austrians, who were using the resources of the English to achieve their own selfish goals. In general, the Conduct was intended to make England forget her debt to Marlborough and to turn her hatred of France upon the allies. To a large extent, it did just that.

November of 1711 was a month of high political intrigue in England. Parliament was scheduled to convene in late November, and Oxford was confronted with a party which was

<sup>49</sup>Boyer, History, X, 278-279.

<sup>50</sup>Canon Stratford to Edward Harley, December 4, 1711, H. M. C., Portland MSS., VII, 79.



becoming increasingly disunited. The High Church members still called for the expulsion of all Whig officeholders, and Somerset had by now gone into undisguised opposition.<sup>51</sup> Oxford was warned that the Whigs were holding daily strategy-planning sessions at the home of Lord Orford.<sup>52</sup> At this juncture Halifax and Somers attempted to form an alliance with Oxford by promising to help push an Occasional Conformity Bill through the Lords if the Lord Treasurer would revise the proposed articles of peace and his ministry. Oxford, however, did not really want an Occasional Conformity Bill, and he deeply believed in the basic provisions of the proposed peace. He refused the alliance and later wrote to Somerset,

No honest or wise man will take upon him the consequences which will follow the defeating of this opportunity, for if the arts and restlessness of any here should wrest this treaty out of the Queen's hands, there will be a peace, but such a one, whenever it is, as Britain will have no share in, either of honour, safety or profit.<sup>53</sup>

Because of the poor health of Oxford and of the Queen, along with the growing opposition of the Whigs, and the tardiness of some Tory members in arriving in London, Anne on November 25 prorogued the meeting of Parliament until December 7. Boyer reports that the delay was caused by ". . . a

<sup>51</sup>Queen Anne to Oxford, November 16, 1711, Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 1236, f. 261.

<sup>52</sup>Sir Robert Davers to Oxford, November 12, 1711, H. M. C., Portland MSS., V, 106.

<sup>53</sup>Oxford to Somerset, December 1, 1711, H. M. C., Portland MSS., V, 194.

Discovery of a late Coalition of some eminent Peers of the High Church Party, with those of the contrary Side, and of their having concerted a Representation against a Peace . . . ."54 The reference, of course, is to the alliance between the Whigs and "Dismal," the Earl of Nottingham.

In November Poulett had reported to Oxford, "I find Nottingham as sour and fiercely wild as you can imagine anything to be that has lived long in the desert . . . ."55 Nottingham was displeased because he had not been made Privy Seal at the death of Newcastle, but this was not the only reason he made an alliance with the Whigs. As both F. G. James and Trevelyan point out, Nottingham had always advocated an aggressive war with France and considered the retention of Spain for Charles to be the chief object of the war.<sup>56</sup> On December 5 Dismal's compact with the Whigs was made public. Nottingham agreed to introduce in the Lords an amendment to the Address to the Queen, calling for "no peace without Spain." In return, the Whigs would allow him to pass in the Lords a bill outlawing occasional conformity. Thus, while the Whigs

---

<sup>54</sup>Boyer, History, X, 278.

<sup>55</sup>Poulett to Oxford, November, 1711, H. M. G., Portland MSS., V, 119.

<sup>56</sup>F. G. James, "The Bishops in Politics, 1688-1714," Conflict in Stuart England: Essays in honour of Wallace Notestein, edited by William Appleton Aiken and Basil Duke Henning (New York, 1960), pp. 245-246; Trevelyan, Peace, p. 195.

sacrificed their traditional religious principle of toleration, the bargain cost Nottingham nothing.

Parliament convened on December 7, 1711. In her opening Address to both Houses Anne stated, ". . . not withstanding the Acts of those who delight in War, both Place and Time are appointed for Opening the Treaty of a General Peace."<sup>57</sup> She also stated (quite falsely) that the allies had expressed their complete confidence in her in the matter. She then put aside her robes of state and took her place in the House of Lords ". . . both to hear the debates, and by Her awful, respectable Presence, to moderate any heats that might arise."<sup>58</sup>

A moderating influence was needed in the Lords on December 7, 1711, for on that day Nottingham introduced his "no peace without Spain" amendment.<sup>59</sup> Seconded by Wharton and the Earl of Scarborough, Nottingham's motion was carried by a vote of sixty-two to fifty-four. The vote took place on the first day of the session, in the middle of winter, and only three weeks before Christmas. Consequently not all the Tory Lords were present. Trevelyan blames Oxford for failing to get the Tories, especially the Scottish Lords, to London in time for the vote.<sup>60</sup> Most of the Scottish Lords,

---

<sup>57</sup>Great Britain, Journals of the House of Commons, XVII (1711-1714), 1; hereafter cited as CJ.

<sup>58</sup>Boyer, History, X, 282-284.

<sup>59</sup>Timberland, History, pp. 353-357.

<sup>60</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 196.

however, voted by proxy, and the proxies were held by the Scottish Duke of Hamilton, who was refusing to take his seat in the Lords because the Whigs had refused to allow him to sit as an English Lord.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, Oxford was not entirely responsible for the defeat. In spite of that, the Lord Treasurer was not as zealous as he should have been in assuring a good Tory attendance on the opening day of Parliament.<sup>62</sup>

On December 7 a motion identical to Nottingham's was introduced in the Tory-dominated House of Commons by Robert Walpole. The vote in the Commons was a foregone conclusion; the bill was defeated 232 to 106.<sup>63</sup> G. S. Holmes, however, reports that eleven Tories voted for Walpole's bill and that a majority of these men later became Whimsical or Hanoverian Tories. From this observation he suggests that the split between the Hanoverian Tories and the rest of the party goes back to 1711 and that the eleven Tories were motivated by fear for the Protestant Succession and not by actual disapproval of the peace preliminaries.<sup>64</sup>

On December 15, 1711, the Whigs kept their end of the bargain, and Nottingham's Occasional Conformity Bill was

<sup>61</sup>Burnet, History, II, 588-589.

<sup>62</sup>Duke of Hamilton to Oxford, November 23, 1711, H. M. C., Portland MSS., V, 109-110.

<sup>63</sup>CJ, XVII, 2.

<sup>64</sup>G. S. Holmes, "The Commons Division on 'No Peace Without Spain,' 7 December, 1711," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XXXIII (November, 1960), 228-229.

passed by the House of Lords. The Bill was in reality not as severe as the Tory Occasional Conformity Bill of 1702. James, then, is probably correct in disagreeing with Trevelyan's statement that the Whigs were motivated only by a desire to overthrow the ministry and the peace. He contends, rather, that since the Whigs knew that the Tories would pass an Occasional Conformity Bill, they made an alliance with Dismal in order to make sure that the Bill would be less extreme than a Tory one.<sup>65</sup> Both Swift and Burnet agree with him.<sup>66</sup>

While they were generally pleased with the Occasional Conformity Bill, most of the Tories were horrified at the demonstration of Whig strength in the House of Lords. Dartmouth talked of resigning, and the Whigs spoke of a new ministry headed by Somers and Walpole. Swift "gave up all for lost."<sup>67</sup>

Immediately after the passage of Nottingham's "no peace without Spain" amendment, the Tories suffered another defeat in the House of Lords. On December 20 the Lords voted by fifty-seven to fifty-two not to allow the Scottish Duke of

---

<sup>65</sup>James, "Bishops," p. 246; Trevelyan, Peace, p. 195. The Occasional Conformity Act is reprinted in Andrew Browning, editor, English Historical Documents, 1660-1714, Vol. VIII of English Historical Documents, edited by David C. Douglas, 13 vols. (New York, 1953), pp. 406-408.

<sup>66</sup>Swift to King, January 8, 1712, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 314; Burnet, History, II, 586.

<sup>67</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, p. 445.

Hamilton to be seated as the English Duke of Brandon.<sup>68</sup> On the following day Oxford and nineteen other Peers signed a protest stating that this decision infringed upon the prerogative of the Crown and pointing out that the Duke of Queensberry had been allowed to sit as an English Lord.<sup>69</sup> The Whigs chose to overlook the latter fact. They were apparently motivated by the fear that the Queen would create new Peers and overthrow the Whig majority in the House of Lords. The sixteen Scottish Lords began to threaten to join the Whigs if Oxford did nothing to reverse the decision of the Lords.<sup>70</sup> The Lord Treasurer then began to look for more support in the House of Lords. He secured this support by a method which was legal but completely unprecedented and revolutionary. With one stroke the Whig majority in the House of Lords was overthrown by the creation of twelve new Peers, all of whom were personally obligated and devoted to the Earl of Oxford.

While most of the Tories were despairing over the possibility of a Whig ministry, Oxford was quietly taking steps to prevent such an event. The secret methods he employed were quite agreeable to his love for political intrigue.

---

<sup>68</sup>Cobbett, Parliamentary History, VI, 1066; H. M. C., Lords MSS., New Series, IX, 174; Timberland, History, p. 357.

<sup>69</sup>Timberland, History, pp. 358-359.

<sup>70</sup>G. S. Holmes, "The Hamilton Affair of 1711-1712," The English Historical Review, LXXVII (April, 1962), 271.

Although St. John later charged that the creation of the twelve Peers was ". . . to be excused by nothing but the necessity, and hardly by that,"<sup>71</sup> it is fairly certain that St. John had some knowledge of Oxford's plans. Feiling states that St. John did work with Oxford in creating the twelve Peers even though it was the last occasion on which they worked together.<sup>72</sup>

The creation of the twelve Peers was announced in the London Gazette on January 1, 1712. Two of the new Peers were the eldest sons of members of the House of Lords, the Earl of Northampton and the Earl of Ailesbury. Baronies were conferred upon Henry Paget and Viscount Dupplin; the Irish Viscount Windsor was created the English Baron Mountjoy; Baronet Sir Thomas Mansell became Baron Mansell; Baronet Sir Thomas Willoughby became Baron Middleton; and the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Sir Thomas Trevor, became Baron Trevor. George Granville, a patron of Steele,<sup>73</sup> was made Baron Lansdowne; Thomas Foley became Baron Foley; and Allen Bathurst became Baron Bathurst. Finally, Samuel Masham, Abigail's husband, became Baron Masham. Oxford attempted to raise Sir Miles Wharton to the Peerage, but the latter

---

<sup>71</sup>St. John, "Letter to Windham," p. 117.

<sup>72</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, p. 445.

<sup>73</sup>Loftis, "Richard Steele," p. 75.

refused, saying that men should be honored for services rendered and not for services expected.<sup>74</sup>

Each of the twelve<sup>75</sup> Peers was obligated in some degree to Oxford. Half of them were part of his "inner circle." Granville and Foley were members of two of the families that had made up the New Country Party; Trevor, Mansell, Paget, and Masham owed all of their positions to Oxford; and Dupplin was the Lord Treasurer's son-in-law. They would do the bidding of the man responsible for their elevation, and the Whigs knew it.

Coxe states that when the twelve Peers were introduced in the Lords, ". . . the sober Whigs cast their eyes down, as if they had been invited to the funeral of the peerage."<sup>76</sup> James contends that that is exactly what it was and that by creating the Peers Anne ". . . demonstrated the ultimate impotence of the Lords."<sup>77</sup> According to Trevelyan, Oxford made the Constitution "so elastic that it has been able to survive,"<sup>78</sup> and the threat to revive his method enabled Lord

<sup>74</sup>Burnet, History, II, 589; Boyer, History, X, 383.

<sup>75</sup>There was some confusion as to the number of Peers created. As late as 1735 Walpole insisted that they numbered thirteen. Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont, Diary of the First Earl of Egmont (Viscount Percival), 5 vols. (London, 1923), II, 158.

<sup>76</sup>Coxe, Marlborough, III, 282.

<sup>77</sup>James, "Bishops," p. 249.

<sup>78</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 198.



Grey to triumph in 1832 and Asquith in 1911. His vigorous action rallied the disgruntled Tories to Oxford's banner, and "Tory enthusiasm, English loyalty to the Crown and national thirst for peace were blended in a passion that overwhelmed the Whig and Allied resistance."<sup>79</sup> According to Swift, Oxford was also overwhelmed by office seekers who were now convinced that the Lord Treasurer was the most powerful man in England.<sup>80</sup>

Armed with the knowledge that he would soon have a majority in both Houses, Oxford now determined to be rid of the most important single impediment to the peace, the Duke of Marlborough. In October, 1711, the Tory press had begun castigating Marlborough mercilessly.<sup>81</sup> When the Duke complained, Oxford declared that he knew none of the authors and wished that the slanderous press war was over.<sup>82</sup> Although he personally was exasperated with the selfish allies, Marlborough returned to England to lead the fight against the peace. On December 21 the Commission of Account brought charges of peculation against Marlborough.<sup>83</sup> In so doing, they created an international uproar and scandal. The Tories had to make sure that fighting would not break out the next spring. Therefore, they needed a commander-in-chief who was

---

<sup>79</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 197.      <sup>80</sup>Swift, Enquiry, p. 41.

<sup>81</sup>Coxe, Marlborough, III, 259.

<sup>82</sup>CJ, XVII, 16-17.

<sup>83</sup>Coxe, Marlborough, III, 261.

closer to the ministry than to the allies. The charges brought against Marlborough were absurd, and the practices Marlborough was charged with were continued openly and unquestioned by his Tory successor. Although the Tories could not quite bring themselves to convict a man who had been a national hero for twenty years, on December 31, 1711, the Duke of Marlborough was dismissed from all of his employments. He was succeeded by the Duke of Ormonde, much to the delight of the French.<sup>84</sup> Shortly thereafter, Robert Walpole, the young Whig leader, was convicted of peculation, expelled from the Commons, and sent to the Tower.<sup>85</sup>

By January 1, 1712, then, Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, had effectively reasserted his control of the Tory party and of the government. He had regained power in 1710 because of his connections with the Queen. He had increased his power through 1711 because of his personal popularity occasioned by the attempt on his life. In the winter of 1711 he had maintained his power only by resorting to the radical expedient of creating the twelve new Peers.

---

<sup>84</sup>Boyer, History, X, 311.

<sup>85</sup>CJ, XVII, 29-30; Cobbett, Parliamentary History, VI, 1067-1068.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PURSUIT OF PEACE: JANUARY, 1712, TO AUGUST, 1713

Superficially at least, the position of Oxford on January 1, 1712, was quite secure. The signing of the peace preliminaries and the dismissal of Marlborough had assured the dominance of the peace party in England, and the creation of the twelve Peers had rallied to the Lord Treasurer the temporary support of the more radical Tories as well as providing him with a majority in both houses of Parliament. In January the position of the Lord Treasurer was further strengthened when Anne was persuaded to dismiss Somerset as Master of the Horse.<sup>1</sup> But this outward security was deceptive. The Tory majority in both Houses was rent by internal dissensions which became increasingly marked as the year progressed. The methods employed by St. John to force the peace upon the allies only served to further widen the gulf between the Secretary of State and Oxford. Steadily, the differences between Oxford and a large portion of the Tory party became glaringly obvious.

Despite these disadvantages Oxford managed to retain control of the Tory party until the signing of the Treaty of

---

<sup>1</sup>Boyer, History, x, 315.

Utrecht in 1713, though he made many enemies and undermined his health. These two factors, when coupled with the growth of the influence of St. John and Oxford's ambiguous attitude toward the Protestant Succession, are the principal reasons for his loss of power in the winter of 1713/1714 and for his dismissal four days before the death of Anne.

The winter of 1711/1712 was the high point of political animosity in the reign of Anne. The attacks on Marlborough and the allies, the dismissal of Marlborough and Walpole, and the passage of the Occasional Conformity Act created in the capital a political atmosphere charged with slander, abuse, and intrigue. During this period the political pamphlet war reached its height with the publication of Swift's Conduct of the Allies and the responses it evoked from the Whig press. On January 12, 1712, Defoe observed, "Our Parties now are not only divided one against another, but the animosity is come to that height, that we are perfectly raging, and if I should call it Madness, I think you cannot blame me . . . ." <sup>2</sup> On January 8 Swift commented, ". . . there is a perpetual trial of skill between those who are out and those who are in; and the former are generally more industrious at watching opportunities." <sup>3</sup> The Lord Treasurer

---

<sup>2</sup> [Defoe], Review, VIII, 505.

<sup>3</sup> Swift to King, January 8, 1712, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 312.

wished to prorogue Parliament in order to secure time to consolidate his forces and to prepare for the general peace conference that was to convene in Utrecht in the last week of January. Using the tense political situation as an excuse, Oxford persuaded Anne to prorogue Parliament first to January 14 and then to January 17.<sup>4</sup>

The arrival of Prince Eugene in January added yet another element to the turbulent London political scene. Eugene, Prince of Savoy, was very personable, quite popular in England, and as a general in the War of the Spanish Succession he had ranked second only to Marlborough on the allied side. The Emperor Charles had decided to send the Prince to London because it was thought in Vienna that neither the Tory ministers nor their Queen would dare to be rude to Eugene.<sup>5</sup> The Prince was to offer, rather belatedly, 30,000 Austrian and Imperial troops for the Spanish campaign of 1712. He was also to seek to assuage some of the ill feelings caused in the ministry by Count Gallas' open intrigue with the Whigs. The Prince was accorded a royal welcome by both parties; the Whigs praised him as Marlborough's equal; and the Tories declared that he was a general far superior to the fallen Duke. London made the Prince's visit an excuse for prolonged

---

<sup>4</sup>Boyer, History, X, 316-317.

<sup>5</sup>Onno Klopp, Der Fall des Hauses Stuart und die Succession des Hauses Hannover in Gross-Brittanien und Ireland, 14 vols. (Wien, 1875-1888), XIV, 175-184, 682-683.

festivities, and every time the Prince ventured forth his coach was mobbed by well wishers.<sup>6</sup>

Edward Harley reports that Prince Eugene came to England to ". . . animate ye Party, which opposed the Peace or that by his great Dexterity He might subvert the Measures of it."<sup>7</sup> The Prince was entertained by Tories and Whigs alike, but he realized that he had arrived too late to achieve his goal. Eugene had several meetings with Oxford but found the Lord Treasurer aloof and reticent. Harley's brother explains that the Prince found Oxford ". . . so fully apprized of his Embassy that his great skill could make no impressions on him, and therefore was pleased to say that he was an unfathomable man."<sup>8</sup>

During Eugene's visit, London was also treated to the spectacle of the "Mohocks." A group of four Indian chiefs from the American colonies had been brought to London in 1711 and had created a sudden interest in all things American. The ruffians who appeared in the streets during the political furor of the winter of 1711/1712 were often dressed as Indians but were, in reality, only young law students intoxicated with the political atmosphere of the capital and with good English ale. They ". . . distinguished themselves by

---

<sup>6</sup>British Museum, London, Additional MSS., 17677 EEE, ff. 22-23, 26.

<sup>7</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 82.

<sup>8</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 83.

committing some outrage every Night, by cutting off ye Noses and Ears of several Persons or by wounding them desperately."<sup>9</sup> In the Spectator Addison cleverly depicted the "Mohocks" disturbing the jovial country squire, Sir Roger de Coverly, during his Christmas visit to London.<sup>10</sup> The Tory press foolishly proclaimed that the "Mohocks" were part of a plot by Marlborough and Eugene to kidnap Anne, capture the Tower, burn the city, and kill the ministers.<sup>11</sup> Oxford, for one, did not seem concerned. When Anne warned him to be careful on the streets, the Lord Treasurer replied, "Madam I would sooner be a worm than a Man if I did not believe a Providence."<sup>12</sup> Even if apocryphal, the anecdote illustrates the personal courage which was to be one of Oxford's principal characteristics during the trying days of 1714 and 1715.

Amid the excitement created by the visit of Eugene and the pranks of the "Mohocks," Parliament reconvened on January 17. Oxford's first move was a moderate and conciliatory one and was obviously intended to persuade the suspicious Whigs that no Jacobite restoration was intended to accompany a peace with France. On the first day of Parliament Oxford introduced a motion guaranteeing the Protestant Succession,

<sup>9</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 83.

<sup>10</sup>British Museum, London, Additional MSS., 17677 FFF, f. 113.

<sup>11</sup>Klopp, Der Fall, XIV, 256.

<sup>12</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 83.

and the motion was quickly adopted.<sup>13</sup> The Queen's address, read by St. John because Anne was still ill, was intended to further calm the Whigs' suspicions about the peace conference. Anne assured the Parliament that England would resolutely support the claims of the allies at the conference and that no separate peace with France was intended. In order to assure France's compliance with the claims of the allies, the Queen pledged that England would launch an early major offensive against the French.<sup>14</sup> Although read by St. John, the Queen's speech shows the influence of Oxford in its composition. While the Secretary of State had no intention of carrying out the pledges made to the allies, the Lord Treasurer in January, 1712, still hoped that some method of making peace with France and dealing honorably with the allies might be found.

When the general peace conference convened at Utrecht in the last days of January, it was quite obvious how difficult it would be to achieve Oxford's goals. From the beginning of the negotiations all the allies were angry with England for making a separate preliminary peace with France. The Austrians knew that they were not to have Spain; and the Dutch knew that they had probably lost the Asiento, the

---

<sup>13</sup>Timberland, History, X, 364.

<sup>14</sup>Boyer, History, X, 319; CJ, XVII, 28.



Mediterranean trade concessions, and an adequate barrier against the French.<sup>15</sup> For these reasons both the Dutch and the Imperial representatives at Utrecht adopted delaying and obstructing tactics early in the negotiations. In contrast, the French felt that the English, while insisting upon no more concessions from them, would strive to compel the allies to lessen their demands. Thus, the French representatives were quite amiable when the negotiations began. Lord Strafford, England's principal representative at Utrecht, reported to Oxford his amazement at ". . . how extremely easy the French seemed to be in everything, and how difficult the Dutch . . . ."16

Strafford's pleasure with the actions of the French was shortlived, though. Early in February the French presented their terms for peace to the conference. The terms were very ambitious and reflected the French confidence in England's coercive powers over the allies. The French demanded a large number of fortresses on the Franco-Belgian border and the cession of the Spanish Netherlands to the Elector of Bavaria, an ally of France. As Trevelyan comments, "The proposal could scarcely have been worse for England and Holland if

---

<sup>15</sup>Drummond to Oxford, April 15, 1712, H. M. C., Portland MSS., V, 158-159; Strafford to Oxford, February 19, 1712, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IX, 324.

<sup>16</sup>Strafford to Oxford, January 26, 1712, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IX, 322.

they had lost the battle of Ramillies."<sup>17</sup> Not even the English could agree to these demands, and the English plenipotentiaries began to seek ways to modify the French demands.

The complexity of the problem facing the English representatives was increased in the winter of 1712 by a series of deaths in the French royal family. The Tory ministers had been willing to allow Philip to retain his throne in Spain simply because they felt that he would never be eligible to sit on the throne of France. This assumption seemed justified in 1710, but in 1711 the Dauphin of France died suddenly. In February, 1712, the Dauphin's son, the Duke of Burgundy, died; and in the following month Burgundy's son followed him to the grave. This bizarre series of deaths left the sickly two-year-old younger son of Burgundy heir to the throne of Louis XIV, who was now seventy-four years old. Next in line to the throne after the infant was Philip V, King of Spain. It became obvious, even to St. John, that a firm guarantee that the French and Spanish thrones would never be joined would have to be made by the French. The responsibility of extracting this guarantee was taken by St. John. While the wily Secretary of State opened negotiations with Torcy, the discussions at Utrecht were all but abandoned.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 211. The French demands are to be found in Arsène Legrelle, La diplomatie française et la succession d'Espagne, 4 vols. (Gand, 1888-1892), IV, 642-643.

<sup>18</sup>Shrewsbury to Bolingbroke, April 3, 1713, St. John, Letters and Correspondence, II, 327.

While St. John tested his considerable talents of persuasion against the equally impressive ones of Torcy, Oxford sought to control the growing radical elements of the Tory party, to direct the actions of Parliament, and to insure a favorable reception in Parliament for the peace. Shortly after Parliament reconvened, Swift reported that Oxford would never achieve his goals at Utrecht because he was opposed by ". . . all the allies, the moneyed men in England, the army and the fleet, and the majority of the old Lords . . . ."19 Despite his small majority in the House of Lords, Oxford allowed the "old Lords" on February 15 to draw up an address asking the Queen to reject the peace offers and pledging their support for continuing the war.<sup>20</sup> The Lord Treasurer knew that without a French guarantee against the union of the French and Spanish crowns the Tory case was not yet strong enough to stand a floor fight in the House of Lords. At any rate, the Lords' address had little or no effect on the Queen, who replied curtly that she was quite capable of managing her country's foreign affairs.<sup>21</sup>

While Oxford's failure to oppose the Lords' address may have pleased the Whig Peers, the Lord Treasurer's stand on two questions relating to the Scottish Union displeased most

---

<sup>19</sup>Swift to King, February 11, 1712, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, II, 327.

<sup>20</sup>Timberland, History, pp. 367-368.

<sup>21</sup>Timberland, History, p. 369.

of the Tory Lords. The two questions concerned the toleration of Episcopacy and the restoration of lay patronage in Scotland. The question of the toleration of Episcopacy in Scotland had been discreetly ignored by the English ministers in drawing up the Act of Union in 1707, but in reality the use of the Prayer Book was tolerated in Scotland. This situation changed in 1709 when the Reverend James Greenshields read from the English liturgy in a meeting house across from St. Giles, Edinburgh, "the citadel of Scottish Presbyterians";<sup>22</sup> the Presbytery suspended him from officiating at worship services. He refused to comply and appealed to the House of Lords. In March, 1711, in a precedent-setting decision, the House of Lords ruled that it had the right of jurisdiction over Scotland. After this question of jurisdiction was settled, the Lords then reversed Greenshields' suspension. The decision meant that henceforth the limits of the jurisdiction of the Scottish Kirk would be determined by the House of Lords.<sup>23</sup> As Trevelyan points out, "The discovery that the House of Lords was the final Court of Appeal for the whole island . . . came as a severe shock to . . . [Scottish] pride."<sup>24</sup>

Paying no attention to the protests of the Scottish Presbyterians, the Tories introduced a bill to tolerate

<sup>22</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 236.

<sup>23</sup>H. M. C., Lords MSS., New Series, IX, 356-359; Turberville, Lords, p. 95.

<sup>24</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 238.

Episcopacy in Scotland in the Lords on January 21, 1712, and in the Commons on January 23.<sup>25</sup> Both bills were passed by comfortable margins. In a move which further angered the Presbyterians, Parliament passed a bill restoring the right to appoint ministers to old patrons, many of whom were Jacobites or Episcopalians.<sup>26</sup> Prior to this the final authority in appointing ministers had been the Presbytery.

Oxford opposed both the Toleration and the Patronage Acts, and in so doing, he alienated many of his High Church supporters. The Lord Treasurer feared that the bills would cause the Scottish Presbyterians to turn against the Union and to seek to destroy it. He could not, however, overcome the Tory majority's determination to pass the two acts. All he could do was allow the two bills to be passed and try to persuade the Presbyterians to remain loyal to the Union. He even paid the expenses of some of the Presbyterians who came to London to protest against the acts.<sup>27</sup> The Lord Treasurer also had Defoe attack the measures in the Review.<sup>28</sup> Oxford's attempts to conciliate the Scottish Presbyterians lead Trevelyan to state that the Lord Treasurer remained truer to the

---

<sup>25</sup>Boyer, History, X, 325, 327; CJ, XVII, 38.

<sup>26</sup>Boyer, History, XI, 5; Timberland, History, p. 371.

<sup>27</sup>William Carstares to Oxford, May 3, 1712, Brit. Mus., Loan 29/221, f. 1559, cited in P. W. J. Riley, The English Ministers and Scotland, 1707-1727 (London, 1964), p. 234.

<sup>28</sup>[Defoe], Review, VIII, 65-68, 533-535.

spirit of the Union than did the Whigs who created it and that this was one of the reasons why the Whigs hated him.<sup>29</sup> The Whig historian overlooks Oxford's very significant part in creating the Scottish Union.

The Tory opposition to Oxford's policies of moderation increased after the Lord Treasurer helped defeat a new Place Bill and a bill to resume the grants of William III. Many of the Tories were quite displeased by Oxford's statement in Parliament that a Resumption Bill should not

Design absolutely to resume the Grants of King William, but only to make the Possessors pay the value of four or five Years Rent, for which they would have the said Grants confirm'd to them for ever.<sup>30</sup>

This was too much for the Whigs and not enough for the Tories. Such was often the case in the political career of the Earl of Oxford.

On March 29, 1712, Swift reported to Archbishop King that the Tories were growing increasingly discontented at Oxford's "slowness in the changing of commissions and employments," and that the Whigs were out to put the Lord Treasurer in the Tower.<sup>31</sup> In April Oxford, as well as St. John, vigorously supported a newspaper tax meant to reduce Whig opposition to

<sup>29</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 240. Indeed, a bill to consider the repeal of the Union was introduced in the Lords but was defeated. Cobbett, Parliamentary History, VI, 1216-1220.

<sup>30</sup>Boyer, History, XI, 32.

<sup>31</sup>Swift to King, March 29, 1712, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 324.

the peace and the ministry. In doing so, Oxford regained some Tory support. Largely meant to silence Whig answers to the Conduct of the Allies, the act put a tax of one cent a sheet on every pamphlet and newspaper and a shilling tax on every advertisement. The Queen had called for such a tax as early as January 17.<sup>32</sup> Although the government could still afford to support Swift and to publish his writings, the day of the popular free press was gone. Most of the many small newspapers that had contributed so much to the lively pamphlet wars of the early Augustan age were forced to cease publication and to leave the field to the giants: Addison, Steele, Swift, and Defoe.

Oxford was too well acquainted with the power of the press to allow unrestrained opposition to the peace to continue in the Whig newspapers. As Lord Treasurer, he allowed the press censorship act to be made a part of the general revenue bill.<sup>33</sup> The Lord Treasurer's disapproval of complete freedom of the press was reflected in the writings of both Defoe and Swift. On the day the tax was passed Defoe wrote in the Review,

Of the stopping the Press--As to putting an End to the Strife of the Street, and the Railing at one another from the Press, no Man will ever find me offering to

---

<sup>32</sup>Boyer, History, X, 319.

<sup>33</sup>Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 323n; Roscoe, Harley, p. 73.

say one word against it; I have wonder'd some years, that no steps have been taken to do it before.<sup>34</sup>

Swift used his sharp pen to attack Sir Thomas Parker, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench, who was irremovable as long as Anne lived and who, much to the annoyance of the ministers, refused to make any distinction between Whig and Tory pamphleteers.<sup>35</sup>

While Oxford sought to maintain his control of Parliament, St. John attempted to force the French to guarantee that the French and Spanish crowns would never be united. The Secretary of State refused to continue the peace negotiations until this most important matter was settled. It was obvious to Oxford and St. John that Philip would have to renounce either the French or the Spanish throne. The Lord Treasurer hoped that Philip would renounce the Spanish throne, which would then probably pass to the Duke of Savoy, the Tories' favorite European ally.<sup>36</sup> Under the guidance of Elizabeth Farnese, his wife, Philip had developed a strong bond of affection with the Spanish people, and when St. John forced him to choose between Paris or Madrid, he chose the latter.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> [Defoe], Review, VIII, 689.

<sup>35</sup> Swift, Political Tracts, 1713-1719, p. 65.

<sup>36</sup> Feiling, Tory Party, p. 448.

<sup>37</sup> Legrelle, La diplomatie française, IV, 669-670; St. John to Prior, March 3, 1713, St. John, Letters and Correspondence, II, 284.



After obtaining Philip's renunciation of the French throne, St. John determined to conclude the peace quickly. In order to do this the Dutch would have to be forced to accept the peace terms, and St. John was convinced that the only way to force them to do so was to withdraw the English forces from the field.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, the Secretary of State embarked upon a course of action which was to become one of the most damaging pieces of evidence brought against the Tories in the Whig reaction following the death of Anne. On May 10 the Queen instructed the English commander-in-chief, Ormonde, to engage in no more battles with the French. Ormonde, who did not receive the Restraining Order until May 25, promised to do his best to avoid battle although he knew that it would be very difficult to do so.<sup>39</sup> To make matters worse, a copy of the Restraining Order was also sent to Villars, the commander of the French troops. In effect, the English became neutral in the war.

The Restraining Order put Ormonde in a very awkward position. He was to have little or no communication with the allied commanders while he avoided battle with the French. The hapless general wrote several letters to Oxford requesting further instructions; but Oxford, not knowing what to

---

<sup>38</sup>St. John to Torcy, June 18, 1712, St. John, Letters and Correspondence, II, 353.

<sup>39</sup>Duke of Ormonde to St. John, May 25, 1712, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of J. Eliot-Hodgkin, Esq., F. S. A. (London, 1897), p. 203.

tell Ormonde, told him nothing.<sup>40</sup> Many of the foreign mercenaries in the allied army sacrificed the English portion of their pay in order to support the Dutch and Imperial forces; and most of the English soldiers, many of whom had served in the earlier campaigns of Marlborough, smarted under the humiliation imposed upon them by the Restraining Order.<sup>41</sup>

Oxford's part in issuing the Restraining Order has been the subject of considerable historical debate. Burnet is content to blame the Lord Treasurer completely for the order,<sup>42</sup> whereas Roscoe, Clark, and even Trevelyan all agree that Oxford knew nothing about the order before it was issued.<sup>43</sup> Oxford himself testified in 1715 that the order had been drawn up completely without his knowledge.<sup>44</sup> If this is true, it indicates how completely St. John had taken

<sup>40</sup>Ormonde to Oxford, June 4, 1712, July 14, 1712, H. M. C., Eliot-Hodgkin MSS., pp. 203, 204. Oxford was perhaps even a little contemptuous of Ormonde's acquiescence in the Restraining Order. When Ormonde "seized" Ghent in a sham battle, the Lord Treasurer congratulated him and called the move a coup de maître. The editor of Ormonde's papers dryly observes that Ormonde was ". . . even a duller man than history represents him to have been, if he did not see the contemptuous satire of the Lord Treasurer's affected admiration of the coup de maître." Oxford to Ormonde, August 16, 1712, H. M. C., Eliot-Hodgkin MSS., p. 205.

<sup>41</sup>Ormonde to Oxford, July 16, 1712, H. M. C., Eliot-Hodgkin MSS., p. 204.

<sup>42</sup>Burnet, History, II, 606.

<sup>43</sup>Roscoe, Harley, p. 139; Clark, Later Stuarts, p. 223; Trevelyan, Peace, p. 217.

<sup>44</sup>Gobbett, Parliamentary History, VII, 175.

over the peace negotiations. Whether or not he had anything to do with sending the order, Oxford did defend the measure in the House of Lords. His defense, though, was labored, clumsy, and unenthusiastic.<sup>45</sup>

After preventing a renewal of hostilities between the English and French troops, St. John set to work in earnest to complete a separate peace with the French. On June 4 Queen Anne announced that since the Dutch had refused her offer to join them in making a peace, she was now justified in making a separate peace.<sup>46</sup> Shortly thereafter the Queen presented an address to Parliament in which she expressed further unhappiness over the obstructive tactics employed by the allies at Utrecht and in which she spoke again of a separate peace.<sup>47</sup> In the Examiner Swift even began to say that peace could have been obtained after Ramillies if the Queen's Whig ministers had seriously sought a peaceful settlement.<sup>48</sup>

All of these moves toward a separate peace aroused serious Whig opposition in the Lords. On June 10 twenty-four

<sup>45</sup>Timberland, History, p. 372; Cobbett, Parliamentary History, VI, 1136; Turberville, Lords, p. 121. Hassall makes an interesting point when he seeks to defend the Restraining Order by pointing out that the Emperor had once used 17,000 troops to capture Naples for himself and had refused to aid the English attack on Toulon. Hassall, Bolingbroke, p. 62.

<sup>46</sup>Burnet, History, II, 607.

<sup>47</sup>Timberland, History, p. 376.

<sup>48</sup>Examiner, II, No. 28, p. 1.

Whig Lords issued a protest calling for solidarity among the allies.<sup>49</sup> Three days later the protest was expunged from the journal of the House; and when it was later printed and distributed, the Queen offered a £50 reward for the discovery of the guilty printer.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the Whig protests, in June St. John told Torcy that Anne would sign a separate peace if Ormonde were allowed to occupy Dunkirk.<sup>51</sup> According to Torcy, only the opposition of Oxford prevented this from happening.<sup>52</sup> The Lord Treasurer had been alarmed at the strength of the opposition in the Lords to the Restraining Order and knew that a separate peace would have a rough time in the upper house. Also, unlike St. John, Oxford was not yet ready to completely desert the allies.<sup>53</sup> Although no separate peace was signed, on June 22 the English and the French finally signed a two month armistice; and on July 8, 1712, a small group of English soldiers landed at Dunkirk commanded by the indefatigable Jack Hill. After the English occupation of Dunkirk, Villars, the commander of the French troops, took the field against

---

<sup>49</sup>Timberland, History, pp. 377-380.

<sup>50</sup>Timberland, History, p. 380.

<sup>51</sup>St. John, Letters and Correspondence, II, 403-404.

<sup>52</sup>Torcy, Memoirs, II, 347-348.

<sup>53</sup>Cobbett, Parliamentary History, VI, 1138.

the allies and quickly retook Le Quesnay, Bouchain, and Douai. St. John had succeeded in showing the allies that they could not hope to win the war without England's help.<sup>54</sup>

Because of continued French reluctance to destroy the fortifications at Dunkirk and because the armistice needed to be renewed, St. John traveled to Paris in August, 1712, taking Prior along as his secretary. Many details needed to be worked out between St. John and Torcy before the general conference could begin again at Utrecht. The Secretary of State with his charming wit and fluent French was royally received by the French, and he greatly enjoyed his brief stay in Paris. News of St. John's warm reception aroused the jealousy of the Lord Treasurer, and this jealousy was turned to anger when unconfirmed reports that St. John was seeing the Pretender reached London. Quite ill-advisedly Oxford tried to undermine the position of St. John by turning the negotiations over to Dartmouth. The Lord Treasurer reasoned that correspondence and negotiations with France were the rightful province of the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, Lord Dartmouth. Dartmouth quickly proved unequal to the task, however, and the Lord Treasurer was forced to return the negotiations to St. John's hands.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 222.

<sup>55</sup>Erasmus Lewis to Oxford, October 13, 1712, H. M. C., Portland MSS., V, 234-235.

The already strained relations between St. John and Oxford had received a severe blow on July 4, 1712. On that day St. John was made Viscount Bolingbroke. The vain Secretary of State wanted the Queen to revive in him the title of Earl of Bolingbroke,<sup>56</sup> and he was furious that he was made merely a Viscount a year after Oxford had become an Earl. He later contended that he was ". . . dragged into the house of lords in such a manner, as to make . . . his promotion a punishment, not a reward . . ." <sup>57</sup> Bolingbroke's pride was hurt again when in October, 1712, Oxford was made a Knight of the Garter; and he was not.

Bolingbroke returned from Paris late in August, leaving Prior there as an unofficial envoy. Upon his return the Tory press began to predict an early separate peace with France. Public feeling against the Whigs was constantly stirred up by stories circulated by the Tories about the Whigs' refusal to make peace throughout the war in order to profit from the fighting. Under these circumstances Marlborough thought it best for him and the Duchess to go into voluntary exile. In November, 1712, the Duke and Duchess secretly left England not to return again until they did so in triumph at the Hanoverian Succession. The man to whom

---

<sup>56</sup>St. John to Oxford, June 28, 1712, H. M. C., Portland MSS., V, 194.

<sup>57</sup>St. John, "Letter to Windham," p. 117.

Marlborough turned for aid in fleeing the country was his alleged enemy, the Earl of Oxford.<sup>58</sup>

Amid all the demands of the summer, the Lord Treasurer found time to work with Swift on one of the latter's favorite projects. The Irish churchman had for some time wanted to set up a royal academy of literature and science, and he had been encouraged by Oxford to work out his plans in detail. In June, 1712, Swift reported that he and the Lord Treasurer had selected about twenty men from both parties as a beginning for the academy even though "it may all come to nothing."<sup>59</sup> Unfortunately, the plans of Oxford and Swift for a royal academy of literature did come to nothing.

With the return of Bolingbroke from Paris, the English ministers began to prepare in earnest to conclude peace with France and to force the allies to accept this peace. One of the first things that the ministers had to do was appoint an official envoy to Paris. As early as November, 1711, Anne had informed Oxford that Prior's humble birth would preclude him from becoming England's official representative at Versailles.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, in November, 1712, Oxford persuaded the Queen to appoint the Duke of Hamilton, leader of

<sup>58</sup>Cobbett, Parliamentary History, VI, 1137.

<sup>59</sup>Swift to King, June 26, 1712, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 331.

<sup>60</sup>Anne to Oxford, November 16, 1711, Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 1236, f. 262.

the Scottish Tories, as Ambassador to France, possibly to get the fiery Scot out of the country. Before he left for Paris the Duke was killed in a sensational duel with the Whig Duke of Mohun. The Queen then appointed the Duke of Shrewsbury to represent England at Versailles.<sup>61</sup>

During the fall and winter of 1712, the English and French representatives at Utrecht, directed by Bolingbroke and Torcy, drew up the Treaty of Utrecht. Oxford again sent Defoe into the northern part of England to determine public opinion.<sup>62</sup> The ministry also continued to use the Tory press to belittle the French threat and to expose the greed of the allies.<sup>63</sup> By December it was obvious to all that a separate treaty with France was imminent, for on December 7 the armistice was extended to April 22, 1713.<sup>64</sup> By the time it expired, the Treaty of Utrecht would be an accomplished fact.

During the final negotiations Bolingbroke found that by allowing the French to win some victories through issuing the Restraining Order, he had strengthened the French diplomatically. Louis made many demands, and Bolingbroke found that he had to grant most of them. When, however, the French

<sup>61</sup>Boyer, History, XI, 312.

<sup>62</sup>Defoe reported that many people, especially the Dissenters, feared that the ministry was preparing the way for a Jacobite restoration. Defoe to Oxford, September 20, 1712, Healey, editor, Defoe Letters, p. 387.

<sup>63</sup>Examiner, II, No. 37, p. 1; No. 39, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup>Boyer, History, XI, 329-330.



remained obstinate, the Secretary of State brought the negotiations to a speedy conclusion by resolutely offering the French the choice of concluding a peace immediately or resuming the war. On April 11, 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht was signed by Strafford and the Bishop of Bristol for England and by Auxelles and Mesnager for France.<sup>65</sup>

According to Trevelyan, the Treaty of Utrecht ". . . proved in the working more satisfactory than any other that has ended a general European conflict in modern times."<sup>66</sup> By the terms of the treaty England received the Asiento allowing her to import 4800 Negroes a year into the American colonies for thirty years. England also received commercial concessions in the French and Spanish Empires. English maritime interests were protected by the treaty. England retained Gibraltar and Port Mahon, while Sicily, with its important naval base, went to Victor Amadeus of Savoy, England's closest continental ally. The treaty also stipulated that the harbor and sluices at Dunkirk be destroyed within five months, although nothing ever came of the directive. As late as October, 1713, Oxford was saying, "We are at last in earnest demolishing Dunkirk."<sup>67</sup> In reality, the French not only did not destroy the facilities; Dunkirk was actually strengthened.

---

<sup>65</sup>Browning, editor, Historical Documents, pp. 885-889.

<sup>66</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 230.

<sup>67</sup>Oxford to Dartmouth, October 2, 1713, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth, 2 vols. (London, 1887), I, 319.

The treaty did not provide so well for England's allies. The Dutch had to be satisfied with a barrier much smaller than the one promised them by the Whigs in 1709, but they did gain some protection when the buffer state between them and France was taken from Spain and given to Austria. The Dutch acquiesced in the Treaty; Austria did not. Furious at the provision that gave Spain to Philip, Charles fought on alone for a year but was finally forced to sign the Treaty of Radstadt with Louis in March, 1714. Thus ended the War of the Spanish Succession.

Swift admitted to Archbishop King on March 28, ". . . from a distant view of things, abundance of Objections may be raised against many parts of our conduct."<sup>68</sup> The Whigs immediately began to raise these objections. In the Commons Stanhope led the fight against the peace, and in the Lords the struggle was led by Somers, Halifax, Cowper, and Nottingham. One of the principal objections was that England had signed a treaty with the country that harbored the Pretender.<sup>69</sup>

Although many Whigs feared a Jacobite restoration, the majority of Englishmen increasingly favored the treaty that

<sup>68</sup>Swift to King, March 28, 1713, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, II, 17.

<sup>69</sup>By February, 1713, in order to quiet Whig suspicions of a Jacobite restoration, Oxford had persuaded the French to force James to leave Paris and to take up residence in Lorraine. H. N. Fieldhouse, "Oxford, Bolingbroke and the Pretender's Place of Residence, 1710-1714," The English Historical Review, LII (April, 1937), 290-291.

brought to an end the seemingly interminable War of the Spanish Succession. In July, 1713, Strafford, still in Europe, wrote to the Electress, "I believe it is pretty plain now we peacemakers shant be hanged at our return as we were threatened. For daily our countrymen grow more and more pleased with the peace."<sup>70</sup> And in his memoir Edward Harley noted, "The Peace being concluded at Utrecht for which both Houses of Parliament and most of the Corporations and Countrees of England returned their Solemn thanks to Her Majesty."<sup>71</sup>

The Treaty of Utrecht brought peace to England and to Europe. The coming of peace also marked the beginning of the end of Oxford's control of the Tory party. A desire for peace had been the last force uniting the Lord Treasurer and many of the Tories. After the peace was achieved, there was little to unite the Tory party behind the Earl of Oxford.

As Feiling indicates, at the beginning of the April-July parliamentary session in 1713, Oxford had not yet lost general Tory support.<sup>72</sup> During the session, though, the split between Oxford and Bolingbroke became final and irreparable, and several factions in the Tory party went into

<sup>70</sup>Strafford to the Electress Sophia, July 24, 1713, Percy M. Thornton, editor, "The Hanover Papers," The English Historical Review, I (October, 1886), 765.

<sup>71</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 84.

<sup>72</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, p. 450.

active opposition against the Lord Treasurer. The Tory country squires were irritated by the constant prorogations during the session, and they invited Sacheverell to address them on Restoration Day in a move which boded ill for Oxford's hopes for moderation. Their irritation at the ministry, or more especially at Oxford, caused them to apply the Malt Tax to Scotland as well as England, a violation of both the letter and the spirit of the Union. This vote, which Oxford opposed, broke the calm which had characterized Anglo-Scotch relations since March, 1712. The vote caused much grumbling and discontent in Scotland and was a blow to the Lord Treasurer's power.<sup>73</sup> In the 1713 session Anglo-Scotch relations grew so strained that Oxford had to use every parliamentary device at his command to defeat in the Lords a motion to dissolve the Union. He did so by only four votes.<sup>74</sup> Oxford's strength in Parliament was again tested in 1713 in the vote over Bolingbroke's commercial treaty with France. Oxford opposed the treaty but was able to defeat it by only a small majority.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup>Duke of Atholl to Oxford, July 1, 1713, H. M. C., Portland MSS., V, 302.

<sup>74</sup>Lewis to Swift, June 2, 1713, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, II, 41.

<sup>75</sup>Robert Walcott, Jr., "Division-lists of the House of Commons, 1689-1715," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XIV (June, 1936), 36.

Early in 1713 there was some speculation that after the peace treaty was signed, Oxford might go over to the Whigs.<sup>76</sup> The Lord Treasurer did dine several times with Halifax, but the Whigs could give him no definite indication as to what his position might be in a Whig coalition.<sup>77</sup> The possibility that Oxford seriously considered going over to the Whigs is remote indeed. Nevertheless, his flirtation with them was enough to convince many Tories of his treachery.

Especially convinced of Oxford's treachery were the "Anglesey Tories." Arthur Annesley, Lord Anglesey, Vice-Treasurer of Ireland and Privy Councilor, like Oxford, had a Puritan background. He had worked with Oxford since 1708 and desperately wanted to be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. When Oxford made Shrewsbury Lord Lieutenant, Anglesey and his supporters went into opposition. The Anglesey Tories were joined in opposition by the followers of Argyll, Islay, and Orrey.<sup>78</sup>

The most important group opposing Oxford was composed of Bolingbroke, Harcourt, and Francis Atterbury, the High Church Bishop of Rochester. These Tories ". . . fell into a strict Alliance and endeavoured to raise a great Prejudice in the Church Party against the Treasurer upbraiding him for

---

<sup>76</sup>Swift to King, March 28, 1713, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, II, 15.

<sup>77</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, p. 452.

<sup>78</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, pp. 448-449.

not being a hearty Churchman . . . ."<sup>79</sup> Bolingbroke informed Edward Harley that the latter's brother must put himself resolutely at the head of the High Church party or suffer the consequences. When told of this, Oxford replied,

I have prevailed with the Queen to make Mr. Bromley [Speaker of the House of Commons, staunch supporter of Oxford, and official head of the High Church Party] her Secretary [of State to replace Dartmouth] w<sup>ch</sup> is the greatest instance I can give of my Sincerity to that Party, but you will find that this will be so far from satisfying these gentlemen who have other views, that it will only tend to increase their rage.<sup>80</sup>

Oxford was correct in predicting that Bromley's appointment would not satisfy the radical Tories. During the summer of 1713 the Lord Treasurer was forced to appoint several of Bolingbroke's followers to high positions, and as a result of the election of August, 1713, Bolingbroke's following in the Commons was strengthened. As the new Parliament convened, the tired and ill Lord Treasurer realized that he could no longer hope to unite the Tory party behind a course of moderation. The Great Tory Ministry was not over, but the moderate Oxford no longer presided supreme over its destinies.

---

<sup>79</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 84.

<sup>80</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, pp. 84-85.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PURSUIT OF MODERATION: THE PERSONALITY OF OXFORD AND HIS PLACE IN HISTORY

The political actions of Robert Harley, first Earl of Oxford, can perhaps be best understood by studying them in the light of his complex personality and the involved political party structure of the reign of Queen Anne. Such a study, however, proves to be quite difficult. Although many letters written to Oxford have been preserved, very few letters written by the Lord Treasurer have survived. His love of secrecy and intrigue led him to destroy much of his correspondence, and he seldom committed his thoughts or political plans to paper. For these reasons the materials for a thorough study of Oxford's personality and political philosophy are limited. Despite these handicaps many observations can be made about the personality and political philosophy of the Earl of Oxford, and several general conclusions may be drawn from these observations.

The evaluations of Oxford's character and personality range from the exaggerated praise of Pope and Swift<sup>1</sup> to

---

<sup>1</sup>Boynton, editor, Pope, pp. 116-119. Swift, Enquiry, p. 10.

Arthur Hassall's statement that Oxford was ". . . a man wanting as a rule in decision of character, deficient in any fixed principles of conduct or policy, timid, fond of procrastination."<sup>2</sup> Almost all writers agree, though, that the Earl of Oxford was an enigma. Kathleen Campbell sums this up when she states, "It was difficult to tell exactly what he was feeling, so cold and impassive he seemed, so enigmatic."<sup>3</sup>

The Earl of Oxford was not a warm man in his public life, but in his private life he possessed a good nature and a good humor. According to Roscoe and Turberville, the Lord Treasurer possessed a power to attach men to him by ties of personal affection.<sup>4</sup> These men included such men of letters as Swift and Prior and such politicians as Dartmouth and Trevor. Oxford even inspired a considerable amount of affection in the Duke of Marlborough. The Duke appealed to Oxford for aid when he feared for his life in 1712, and Marlborough was so hurt by the Lords' decision to impeach Oxford that he "wept like a child" and had to be led from the House of Lords

---

<sup>2</sup>Hassall, Bolingbroke, p. 73. The best short discussion of Oxford is George Fisher Russell Barker's "Robert Harley," Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. VIII (London, 1921-1922), 1283-1290. The article, although basically fair, tends to underestimate the importance of Oxford's political position.

<sup>3</sup>Campbell, Sarah, p. 150.

<sup>4</sup>Roscoe, Harley, p. 110; Turberville, Lords, p. 125.



by the Duchess.<sup>5</sup> Oxford also possessed qualities that made him the confidant of many. In discussing this aspect of Oxford's personality Kronenberger states, "If he had almost no principles, he had almost no prejudices . . . , and the fact that no one ought to have trusted him never prevented his enjoying almost everyone's confidence."<sup>6</sup>

Oxford's friendship was not always dependable. Defoe was never sure where he stood with the Lord Treasurer, and their relationship had a degrading effect on Defoe.<sup>7</sup> Swift was usually on better terms with Oxford than was Defoe, but even the satirist sometimes became furious with Oxford. Swift once reported to Harcourt,

My Lord Treasurer uses me barbarously; appoints to carry me to Kensington, and makes me walk four miles at midnight. He laughs when I mention a thousand pounds which he owes me; though a thousand pounds is a very serious thing . . . .<sup>8</sup>

Others were also often displeased with Oxford, especially when he refused to secure jobs or positions for them.

Robert Molesworth, an ardent Whig and Ambassador to Denmark, in 1712 reported to his wife,

<sup>5</sup>Lord John Somerset to Lady Anne Coventry, July 2, 1717, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the Duke of Beaufort, K. G., the Earl of Donoughmore, and Others (London, 1891), p. 97.

<sup>6</sup>Kronenberger, Duchess, p. 95.

<sup>7</sup>Bateson, "Relations of Defoe and Harley," p. 242.

<sup>8</sup>Swift to Harcourt, May 23, 1713, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, II, 32.

I went on Wednesday last to my Lord Harley's levée to make a last effort. He gave me all the kind promises imaginable but, alas, I have had them so often and he is so used to break them with everybody that there is no relying upon them . . . .<sup>9</sup>

Oxford was a man of few passions: a desire for moderation and order permeated his private as well as his political life. He was neither consumed by a desire for personal glory nor dominated by a yearning for power. Charles Kenneth Eves correctly states that if Oxford did have a ruling passion, it was his love for his family.<sup>10</sup> In 1685 Oxford married Elizabeth Foley, the daughter of Thomas Foley. When his first wife died in 1694, Oxford married Sarah Middleton, the daughter of Simon Middleton, a wealthy London merchant. Some of Oxford's best political efforts were expended in providing suitable marriages for his children. The Lord Treasurer was determined that he would leave his children well-provided for if he did nothing else during his life. In this endeavor he was most successful. His son, Edward, married the Lady Henrietta Cavendish Halles, the daughter of the Duke of Newcastle. The richest heiress in England, Lady Henrietta had a dowry of £500,000. Oxford's daughter Elizabeth married

---

<sup>9</sup>Robert Molesworth to Mrs. Molesworth, May 3, 1712, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections: The Manuscripts of the Hon. Frederick Lindley Wood; M. S. S. Clements, Esq.; and S. Philip Unwin, Esq. (London, 1914), p. 257.

<sup>10</sup>Eves, Prior, p. 234.

Peregrine Hyde Osborne, third Duke of Leeds, and his daughter Abigail married George Henry Hay, seventh Earl of Kinnoull.

Oxford's devotion to his family and his attempts to further the interests of his children were often criticized by his contemporaries. Bolingbroke once stated of Oxford, "Whether this man ever had any determined view besides that of raising his family is, I believe, a problematical question in the world."<sup>11</sup> The Whigs also often charged Oxford with nepotism. Steele wrote sarcastically, ". . . We are to breake through all our Friendships, Engagements, and familiarities to adorn our Wives with Jewels, bestow our Daughters into Great estates, and make our sons shine in Equipage and Luxury."<sup>12</sup> The Earl of Oxford lived in an age when family connection was the principal means of securing positions and favors from the Crown. Most of the criticism against Oxford's providing for his children may be dismissed as the petty complaints of those who were unable to provide for their families so well as did Oxford.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Oxford remained faithful to his wife. Indeed, in most respects, the Lord Treasurer's private life was beyond reproach. He did not share Bolingbroke's fondness for gambling, and in an age when political corruption was a way of life, Oxford did not

---

<sup>11</sup>St. John, "Letter to Windham," p. 121.

<sup>12</sup>Moore, "Unassigned Tract," p. 416.

use his position to line his own pockets. The Lord Treasurer did have one habit which some writers have considered a grave fault: he drank a great deal. On the other hand, Kronenberger's picture of Oxford escaping from every unpleasant situation by drinking is greatly exaggerated.<sup>13</sup>

The Earl of Oxford was an educated man. He attended school at Shilton in Oxfordshire with Harcourt and Trevor, and he entered the Inns of Court although he was never admitted to the bar. Swift reports that Oxford mastered the learned languages and that he was especially skilled in theology.<sup>14</sup> His one great diversion was his magnificent library. Oxford at times neglected matters of state in order to peruse a new acquisition or to plan new additions to his collection. Like Godolphin's horses, Oxford's books provided an escape from the strain of political office. Although he was the friend of many intellectuals, the Lord Treasurer did not possess an extraordinary intellect. One writer correctly points out that Oxford was ". . . too practical, sensible, and moderate ever to become intellectually vivid . . ." <sup>15</sup>

Oxford was a strongly religious man, and he always had family prayers in his home (except, as Campbell points out,

---

<sup>13</sup>Kronenberger, Duchess, p. 233.

<sup>14</sup>Swift, Enquiry, p. 11.

<sup>15</sup>Kronenberger, Duchess, p. 95.

when he was too drunk to do so).<sup>16</sup> Although he was the leader of the Tory party, the Lord Treasurer had been raised as a Dissenter and had strong connections with such men as William Penn. Trevelyan calls Oxford "the would-be Tory patron of Dissent."<sup>17</sup> His Dissenter background was one of the principal reasons for his strained relations with many of the High Church Tories. Oxford opposed the passage of an Occasional Conformity Act early in the reign of Anne, and Nottingham's alliance with the Whigs in 1711 saved him from having to choose again whether to oppose or support a Tory Occasional Conformity Act.

In 1714 Bolingbroke used Oxford's sympathy for the Dissenters to hasten the Lord Treasurer's downfall. In May, 1714, the Secretary of State introduced in Parliament the Schism Bill<sup>18</sup> to close the Dissenters' academies, where most of the Dissenting ministers were educated, since they were excluded by law from Oxford and Cambridge. Although he hated the bill ". . . from every personal and public point of view," Oxford knew that he could not oppose the bill, since the Queen and the majority of the Tories strongly favored it.<sup>19</sup> He knew that the bill was largely meant to

<sup>16</sup>Campbell, Sarah, p. 150.

<sup>17</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 280.

<sup>18</sup>Browning, Historical Documents, VIII, 409-410.

<sup>19</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 283.

further embarrass him, and he sat through the debates in the Lords ". . . dumb and swelling with a discontent that visibly spoke his affections to the bill."<sup>20</sup> The bill was passed in June but had little effect because it did not become law until August 1, 1714; on that day Queen Anne died, and the Whigs returned to power.

It is frequently overlooked by historians that for much of the four years he was in power the Lord Treasurer was ill.<sup>21</sup> Oxford seems to have been highly susceptible to colds and influenza, and during the last two years of his ministry he was plagued with failing eyesight. The infections and complications arising from the assassination attempt also weakened his health. Illness sometimes kept him from attending important meetings, and his absence from Parliament after the assassination attempt allowed St. John to consolidate his strength in the House of Commons.

The Earl of Oxford's political career was most noticeably marked by a desire for moderation and conciliation. He had an inborn dislike for extremes of any kind. Eves

<sup>20</sup>Daniel Defoe, History of the White Staff (London, 1714), p. 33, cited in Trevelyan, Peace, p. 283.

<sup>21</sup>Many passages in the Portland Manuscripts refer to Oxford's ill health. Oxford to Newcastle, April 19, 1711, Duchess of Newcastle to Oxford, October 29, 1711, H. M. C., Portland MSS., II, 226, 233; William Stratford to Edward Harley, October 23, 1711, November 12, 1711, July 15, 1713, H. M. C., Portland MSS., VII, 63, 71, 152; St. John to Oxford, June, 1712, July, 1713, Earl of Orrey to Oxford, October 7, 1712, H. M. C., Portland MSS., V, 195, 232, 299.

contends that Oxford favored moderation because it suited "his secret, cautious, devious ways."<sup>22</sup> It is true that Oxford was often secretive and overcautious and that at times he was even devious, but Trevelyan probably more correctly and fairly judges the Lord Treasurer when he states that Oxford was ". . . a man of moderation who saw the nation's interest as a whole."<sup>23</sup> Oxford refused to turn out all Whig officeholders even though this lost him the support of many Tories. By refusing to make wholesale dismissals Oxford did much to strengthen the non-political nature of the English Civil Service. This is not the least of his contributions to the English political system.<sup>24</sup>

Oxford also disliked to make irrevocable decisions, and he seldom made a decision until he was aware of as many facts in the situation as possible. At least one writer considers this trait a fault,<sup>25</sup> but this characteristic sometimes stood Oxford in good stead. This was especially true in the Jacobite intrigue of the last years of the reign of Anne. From 1710 to 1714 an intrigue to place the Pretender on the throne of England took shape. Oxford did not squelch the

---

<sup>22</sup>Eves, Prior, p. 234.

<sup>23</sup>Trevelyan, Peace, p. 283.

<sup>24</sup>Harkness, Bolingbroke, p. 62.

<sup>25</sup>Turberville, Lords, p. 128.

intrigue nor did he actively support it. As many Englishmen had done before 1660, he merely insured himself ". . . against a restoration which he did nothing effective to promote, and in the meantime . . . [assured] himself of Jacobite support in Parliament."<sup>26</sup> The Lord Treasurer may have personally favored a Jacobite restoration, but he was wise enough to let events take their own course.

To call Oxford an opportunist is not necessarily to condemn him. Many of the Tories could have profited from his example and not become so deeply involved in the Jacobite intrigue. Oxford once told Swift, ". . . wisdom in public affairs . . . [is] not, what is commonly believed, the forming of schemes with remote views; but the making use of such incidents as happen."<sup>27</sup> This very practical political philosophy was very well suited to Oxford's two biggest problems: mediating between the Whigs and the radical Tories and ending the war with France. It was not well suited to the dream of a Jacobite restoration. Bolingbroke could scheme and dream if he wished; Oxford would not. William B. Willecox perhaps best sums up this facet of Oxford's personality when he states, "Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, was an enigmatic

---

<sup>26</sup>Fieldhouse, "Jacobite Intrigue," p. 448.

<sup>27</sup>Swift to King, July 12, 1711, Ball, editor, Swift Correspondence, I, 266.



and skillful politician, who wanted to wait on events in the hope of profiting from whatever came."<sup>28</sup>

Oxford was also a man of high personal courage. During the attempt on his life in 1711 he alone remained calm, and unlike Bolingbroke he did not flee England to escape the Whig reaction in 1715. In 1714 Oxford was aware of the threat to his life. He told his brother,

I fore see that the Malice of those who have so often sought my life will with the utmost Rage pursue my Blood upon this, That which is called common Prudence might prompt one to avoid the storm that I see is falling, but I have thoroughly considered this matter, and not being Conscious to my self of doing any one thing that is Contrary to the Interest of my Country, I am come to an absolute Resolution to resign myself entirely to the Providence of the Almighty and not either by flight or any other way sully the Honour of my Royal Mistress, tho' now in her Grave, nor Stain my own Innocence even for an hour . . . . There are but two ways for a Man to Die with real Honour, the one is by suffering Martyrdom for his Religion, and the other is by Dying for his Country.<sup>29</sup>

Oxford's courageous defense at his trial gained him much public sympathy and support. Indeed, as he left the Lords after they had found him not guilty, he was applauded by such a crowd that George I was interrupted at dinner. When

---

<sup>28</sup>William B. Willcox, The Age of Aristocracy, 1688-1830, Vol. III of A History of England, edited by Lacey Baldwin Smith, 4 vols. (Boston, 1966), p. 26.

<sup>29</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, pp. 90-91.

he was told what the commotion was about, he inquired,  
 ". . . is this the Man that has no friends?"<sup>30</sup>

Oxford's political philosophy of moderation and conciliation made of him a very effective parliamentary leader. Feiling contends that Oxford's principal strength was his knowledge of parliamentary procedure and the working of the parliamentary system. But he also points out that the age of complete parliamentary government had not yet come in 1714 and that Oxford fell by unparliamentary means, just as he had risen by unparliamentary means.<sup>31</sup> Roscoe also stresses Oxford's ability as a parliamentary leader and points out that the Lord Treasurer possessed "an almost wearisome knowledge of parliamentary forms and history."<sup>32</sup> Oxford was not a dynamic public speaker. Swift reports that he spoke "rather with Art than Eloquence,"<sup>33</sup> and Percy M. Thornton points out that one has only to read Oxford's letters in order to understand that the Lord Treasurer ". . . was by no means powerful as a speaker."<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 96. See also J. H. Plumb, Sir Robert Walpole: The Making of a Statesman (London, 1956), pp. 207, 255-256. The feeling for Oxford was real enough, but it was compounded by the satisfaction of the Walpolean Whigs with their victory over the Stanhope ministry in helping to procure the vote that found Oxford not guilty.

<sup>31</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, p. 474.

<sup>32</sup>Roscoe, Harley, pp. 4-5.      <sup>33</sup>Swift, Enquiry, p. 11.

<sup>34</sup>Thornton, "Hanover Papers," p. 762.

Oxford was quite adept at influencing votes in the House of Commons while he served as Speaker. He utilized professional, regional, and family contacts to influence the votes of members of the House.<sup>35</sup> This method worked for him in the House of Lords as well as in the House of Commons and was the basis for his reputation as a parliamentary leader.

The Earl of Oxford was a party leader as well as a parliamentary leader. The party structure of the reign of Queen Anne has been studied rather intensively recently. In English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century Robert Walcott has attempted to apply Namier's thesis about political parties in the reign of George III to the reign of Queen Anne.<sup>36</sup> Namier states that the modern names "Whig" and "Tory" cannot be used to apply to political parties in the mid-eighteenth century; Walcott states that the same is true of the reign of Queen Anne, which has traditionally been called the "heroic age of party faction."<sup>37</sup> Instead, Walcott contends, political parties during the reign of Anne amounted to ten or twelve more or less equal family connections who united with

---

<sup>35</sup>Patricia M. Ansell, "Harley's Parliamentary Management," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XXXIV (May, 1961), 92.

<sup>36</sup>An excellent refutation of Walcott's thesis may be found in Christopher Hill, A Century of Revolution, 1603-1714, Vol. V of A History of England, edited by Christopher Brooke and Denis Mack Smith, 8 vols. (Edinburgh, 1961), pp. 283-285.

<sup>37</sup>Bennett, White Kennett, p. xi.

or against each other as it was politically expedient to do so. As far as it goes, Walcott's evidence is convincing, but he selects his facts very carefully to support his thesis. In his discussion of parliamentary elections he fails to mention either the election of 1710 or 1713, both of which were fought along Whig-Tory party lines. More important than this omission, though, is Walcott's failure to note that the terms "Whig" and "Tory" are not the invention of nineteenth and twentieth century historians. The terms abound in the political literature of the reign of Anne, and the two opposing political parties are always called Whig and Tory. One such early reference is found in Burnet's history:

. . . the high party, whom for distinction's sake I will hereafter call Tories, and the other Whigs--terms that I have much spoken against, and have even hated: but, to avoid making always a longer description, I must use them, they being now as common as if they had been words of our language.<sup>38</sup>

Swift often spoke of Whigs and Tories, and in the Review Defoe deprecated the nation's "fatal National Division of Whig and Tory . . . ." <sup>39</sup> Defoe went so far as to define a Whig and a Tory in terms that indicate the depth of animosity and party feeling that the two words could evoke.

A Tory is a Plunderer of his Country, a persecutor for Religion, a Bloody Destroyer without Law, a Betrayer of Liberties, and one that will give up his Nation to Popery and Arbitrary Power, under the pretence of Passive

<sup>38</sup>Burnet, History, II, 4.

<sup>39</sup>[Defoe], Review, VIII, 69.

Obedience and Non-Resistance. A Whig is one That Blesses God from the bottom of his Heart, for the Legal Provisions made against Popery, in a Parliamentary Succession; That Vigorously withstood Popery and Arbitrary Power at the Revolution, when his lawful King was setting both up, and will manifest equal zeal against them, when ever any future Kings or Queens shall Mediate their Return . . . .<sup>40</sup>

In his history of the state of political parties in 1714 Earl Cowper also stresses the contention between parties, not between individuals or small groups.<sup>41</sup> Thus, to question the existence of political parties during the reign of Anne is to question the testimony of many contemporary observers of the political scene.

In general terms, open of course to both personal and geographical exceptions, the Tory party from 1688 to 1714 represented prerogative government, the landed interest, and, most important of all, the Church. The Whigs represented parliamentary supremacy, the towns, the monied interest, and the Dissenters.

It was in this political structure that the Earl of Oxford functioned. The Lord Treasurer possessed several qualities that, when he chose to exercise them, made him quite an effective party leader. One of the most important of these was his ability to prevent his opponents' organizing against him. Although he had many enemies, he prevented their union until his failing health forced him to remain in

---

<sup>40</sup> [Defoe], Review, VII, 297-298.

<sup>41</sup> Cowper, "Impartial History," p. 921.

bed most of the time.<sup>42</sup> Oxford's abilities as a party leader impressed Prince Eugene in 1712. Comparing him to Richelieu and Mazarin, Eugene wrote, "The Earl of Oxford is an indefatigable man in business, of a lively and aspiring spirit, and manages the caballing parties with that dexterity that he keeps in with both."<sup>43</sup>

Oxford was often very secretive about his political plans and was reproached for this by some of the members of the Tory party. The Lord Treasurer once told Swift that the reason he was so secretive was that every time he had revealed a secret to anyone he had ". . . been deceived by the Vanity, Treachery or Indiscretion of those he discovered it to."<sup>44</sup> And once when the Bishop of Rochester scolded Oxford for being so secretive, the Lord Treasurer became very angry and retorted that

. . . if they Expected he should communicate all the Measures he thought were absolutely necessary for conducting the Queen's business . . . , He would let Her Majesty know that it was impossible for him to be any further Serviceable, and therefore w<sup>d</sup> ask her leave to retire into the Country, and if any of them could play y<sup>e</sup> Game better, let them take up the Cards.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup>Churchill, Marlborough, VI, 309.

<sup>43</sup>"The Characters of the principal heads of the present prevailing faction in England as Prince Eugene represented to the Court of Vienna," April 15, 1712, H. M. C., Portland MSS., V, 156.

<sup>44</sup>Swift, Enquiry, p. 13.

<sup>45</sup>Harley, "Memoirs," Brit. Mus., Lansdowne MS. 885, p. 40.

According to Clark, Oxford was "a reconciler and a maker of combinations."<sup>46</sup> Oxford apparently took some advice given to him in 1710; he was advised to follow the example of Burghley, who "never suffered one party to be superior to the other and thereby rendered them both subservient to his mistress" and of Cecil, who "constantly balanced one party by the other."<sup>47</sup> His career from 1710 to 1714 was dominated by his efforts to reconcile the radical Tories, the moderate Tories, and the Whigs.

Oxford's efforts to reconcile the Whigs and the Tories point up his rather anomalous position in the political party structure in the reign of Anne. Oxford's family had traditionally been Whigs. Morgan contends, probably incorrectly, that Oxford switched his political allegiance simply because he thought he would be promoted faster in the Tory party since the Tories did not have as many active leaders in the 1690's as did the Whigs. Morgan is probably correct, though, in stating that Oxford remained a conservative Whig in principle throughout his career.<sup>48</sup> Roscoe agrees with Morgan that Oxford was probably more of a Whig than a Tory and comes nearer than Morgan to the reason why Oxford became a Tory. Roscoe states that Oxford became a Tory because the

---

<sup>46</sup>Clark, Later Stuarts, p. 216.

<sup>47</sup>R. Monckton to Harley, August 26, 1710, H. M. C., Portland MSS., IV, 576.

<sup>48</sup>Morgan, Political Parties, p. 48.

Tory party was opposed to the European war.<sup>49</sup> Oxford regarded England as a colonial and naval power and did not favor becoming involved in European affairs unless England's interests were directly affected. Oxford's ideas of empire and warfare bear a similarity to Pitt's plan for winning a continental war with France not on the continent but principally on the high seas and in North America.

Had it not been for the war, Oxford could not have remained head of the Tory party for as long as he did. Bolingbroke contends, probably with a great deal of truth, that during the peace negotiations Oxford kept many of the Tories on his side by asking them to have patience until the peace was signed. When this happened, the "millenary year of toryism should begin."<sup>50</sup> As long as the war continued, Oxford retained control of the party, but with the coming of peace his anomalous position became increasingly obvious. When the Succession became the paramount political issue, he could no longer hold the Tory party on a course of moderation.

The principal historians of the later Stuart period of English history have all dealt with the Earl of Oxford and his place in history. In the most thorough study of the reign of Anne, Trevelyan deals rather harshly at times with the Lord Treasurer. He especially condemns Oxford for

---

<sup>49</sup>Roscoe, Harley, p. 205.

<sup>50</sup>St. John, "Letter to Windham," p. 123.



allowing Bolingbroke to assume control of the peace negotiations, and he fails at times to give Oxford any credit for the constructive aspects of Oxford's ministry, such as the preservation of the Scottish Union. When compared with the condemnations reserved for Bolingbroke, however, most of Trevelyan's remarks about Oxford are surprisingly kind.

More than any other writer, G. N. Clark seems to appreciate Oxford's efforts at conciliation and moderation. Clark's description of the Lord Treasurer is much more dispassionate than Trevelyan's, and it is generally a deeper, more accurate, and more sympathetic analysis of Oxford. Like Trevelyan, though, Clark sometimes neglects Oxford's central position in the Tory ministry from 1710 to 1713, especially in domestic affairs.

The best description of Oxford as a parliamentary and party leader is to be found in Feiling's history of the first Tory party. Largely because of the nature of his work, Feiling completely neglects Oxford as a man; consequently, his portrait of the Lord Treasurer is somewhat distorted. Feiling also disagrees with Trevelyan's intimation that Oxford was deeply implicated in the Jacobite plot of 1714.

Because of his many family connections and his ability to use them in Parliament, Oxford fits very well into Walcott's ideas about the political party structure of the reign of Anne. Therefore, Walcott discusses Oxford at length. His discussion, though, is slanted toward proving

his thesis, and he erroneously pictures Oxford as only an unprincipled political manipulator.

Roscoe, Oxford's biographer, devotes an entire book to dealing superficially with Oxford. Whereas most of the other writers of the period neglect Oxford's personality and his connections with the men of letters, Roscoe spends too much time on these aspects of his subject, and he fails to deal adequately with Oxford as a party and parliamentary leader. Roscoe also becomes an apologist for the Lord Treasurer and often is too effusive in his praise of Oxford.

The Earl of Oxford made a very definite and quite important contribution to English history. He understood and supported a constitution based upon a legal, limited, hereditary monarchy. According to Feiling, these "old Whig" principles were the special contribution of the Earl of Oxford to the development of the Tory party.<sup>51</sup> His contribution to English history lies principally in the moderating influence that he exerted on the radical Tories from 1710 to 1714. Largely because of Oxford the Dissenters did not come in for wholesale persecution under the Tory regime, the Scottish Union was preserved, and the Treaty of Utrecht was spared the profound Jacobite implications that it might have had if Bolingbroke had been completely unrestrained.

---

<sup>51</sup>Feiling, Tory Party, p. 482.

The Protestant Succession at the death of Queen Anne on August 1, 1714, was surprisingly smooth and peaceful. Most of the credit for this peaceful change has traditionally been given to the well-laid plans of the great Whig Lords. The peaceful nature of the succession of George I, however, was also largely due to the failure of the radical elements of the Tory party to gain complete control of the Tory party between 1710 and 1714 in order to adequately prepare for a Jacobite restoration. This fortunate failure was principally due to the moderating influence of Robert Harley, the first Earl of Oxford.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

#### Manuscripts

British Museum, London, Additional MSS. 17, 677 EEE; 17, 677 FFF.

British Museum, London, Lansdowne MSS. 885; 1236.

#### Pamphlets and Contemporary Works

##### Printed Before 1760

Boyer, Abel, History of the Reign of Queen Anne Digested into Annals (11 volumes), London, Margaret Coggin, 1703-1713.

Burnet, Gilbert, History of His Own Time (2 volumes), London, Joseph Downing and Henry Woodfall, 1734.

Churchill, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, An Account of the Conduct of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, From Her First Coming to Court, To the Year 1710, London, James Bettenham, 1742.

Colbert, Jean Baptiste, Marquis de Torcy, Memoirs of the Marquis of Torcy, Secretary of State to Lewis XIV. Containing the History of the Negotiations from the Treaty of Ryswic to the Peace of Utrecht (2 volumes) London, P. Vaillant, 1757.

Examiner, August 3, 1710-July 26, 1714.

A List of the Lords who Protested against some Proceedings, in Relation to the Case of Dr. Henry Sacheverell, in the House of Lords; with their Lordships Reasons for Entering their Protestations, London, House of Lords, 1710.

Timberland, Ebenezer, The History and Proceedings of the House of Lords from the Restoration in 1660, to the Present Time, London, Ebenezer Timberland, 1742.

[Wake, William and Charles Trimmell], The Bishop of Lincoln's and the Bishop of Norwich's Speeches in the House of Lords, March 17th, at the Opening of the Second Article of the Impeachment against Dr. Sacheverell, London, John Morphew, 1710.

#### Printed Sources

Ball, F. Elrington, editor, The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D. (6 volumes), London, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1914.

Blanchard, Rae, editor, The Correspondence of Richard Steele, London, Oxford University Press, 1941.

\_\_\_\_\_, editor, Tracts and Pamphlets by Richard Steele, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1944.

Boynton, Henry W., editor, Pope: Complete Poetical Works, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1903.

Browning, Andrew, editor, English Historical Documents, 1660-1714, Vol. VIII of English Historical Documents, edited by David C. Douglas (13 volumes), New York, Oxford University Press, 1953.

Cobbett, William, The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803 (36 volumes), London, T. C. Hansard and others, 1806-1820.

Cowper, William, Earl Cowper, "An Impartial History of Parties, 1714," Complaint and Reform in England, 1436-1714, edited by William Huse Dunham and Stanley Pargellis, New York, Oxford University Press, 1938.

Davies, Godfrey and Clara Buck, editors, "Letters on Godolphin's Dismissal in 1710," The Huntington Library Quarterly, III (January, 1940), 225-242.

Davies, Godfrey and Marion Trilling, editors, "Correspondence of James Brydges and Robert Harley," The Huntington Library Quarterly, I (July, 1938), 457-472.

\_\_\_\_\_, editors, "Letters of Henry St. John to James Brydges," The Huntington Library Bulletin, Number 8 (October, 1935), 153-170.

[Defoe, Daniel], A Review of the State of the British Nation, edited by A. W. Secord (9 volumes), New York, Columbia University Press, 1938.

- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath preserved at Longleat, Wiltshire (3 volumes), London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1904-1908.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of J. Eliot-Hodgkin, Esq., F. S. A., London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1897.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of J. J. Hope Johnstone, Esq. of Annandale, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1897.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of Sir William Fitzherbert, Bart., and Others, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1893.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the Duke of Beaufort, K. G., the Earl of Donoughmore, and Others, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1891.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the Duke of Portland, preserved at Welbeck Abbey (10 volumes), London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1931.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the Earl Cowper, K. G. (3 volumes), London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1889.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth (2 volumes), London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont, Diary of the First Earl of Egmont (Viscount Percival) (3 volumes), London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1923.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, New Series (8 volumes), London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1923.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections: The Manuscripts of the Hon. Frederick Lindley Wood, M. S. S. Clements, Esq.; and S. Philip Unwin, Esq., London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1914.

- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Laing Manuscripts, preserved in the University of Edinburgh (2 volumes), London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1914.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Ancaster, preserved at Grimthorpe, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1907.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont (2 volumes), London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1909.
- Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Mar and Kellie, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930.
- Great Britain, Journals of the House of Commons, XVII, 1711-1714.
- Great Britain, Public Records Office, Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies, 1710-1711, Vaduz, Kraus Reprint, 1964.
- Great Britain, Public Records Office, Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Queen Anne, 1703-1704, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1924.
- The Harleian Miscellany, edited by William Oldys and Thomas Park (10 volumes), London, John White and John Murray, 1808-1813.
- Healey, George Harris, editor, The Letters of Daniel Defoe, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1955.
- Legg, L. G. Wickham, "Extracts from Jacobite Correspondence," The English Historical Review, XXX (July, 1915), 501-518.
- Merriman, R. D., editor, Queen Anne's Navy: Documents Concerning the Administration of the Navy of Queen Anne, 1702-1714, London, Spottiswoode, Ballantyne and Co., 1961.
- St. John, Henry, Viscount Bolingbroke, Letters and Correspondence Public and Private of the Right Honourable Henry St. John, During the Time He Was Secretary of State to Queen Anne (2 volumes), London, G. G. and J. Robinson, 1798.

- \_\_\_\_\_, The Works of Lord Bolingbroke (4 volumes), Philadelphia, Carey and Hart, 1841.
- Swift, Jonathan, An Enquiry Into the Behavior of the Queen's last Ministry, with Relation to their Quarrels among themselves, and the Design charged upon them of altering the Succession of the Crown, edited by Irvin Ehrenpreis, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1956.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The "Examiner" and Other Prose Pieces Written in 1710-1711, edited by Herbert Davis, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1957.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Journal to Stella, edited by Harold Williams (2 volumes), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1948.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Political Tracts, 1713-1719, edited by Herbert Davis and Irvin Ehrenpreis, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1953.
- Thornton, Percy M., editor, "The Hanover Papers," The English Historical Review, I (October, 1886), 756-777.
- Trevelyan, George Macaulay, "The Ministerial Jacobite Intrigue, as Revealed in the French Foreign Office Archives," The English Historical Review, XLIX (January, 1934), 99-106.

### Secondary Works

#### Books

- Aitken, George A., The Life of Richard Steele (2 volumes), London, W. Isbister, Ltd., 1889.
- Bennett, G. V., White Kennett, 1660-1728: Bishop of Peterborough, London, S. P. C. K., 1957.
- Campbell, Kathleen, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, Boston, Little, Brown, and Company, 1932.
- Carpenter, Edward, The Protestant Bishop: Being the Life of Henry Compton, 1632-1713, Bishop of London, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1956.
- Churchill, Winston S., Marlborough: His Life and Times (6 volumes), New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938.



- Clark, G. N., The Later Stuarts, 1660-1714, Vol. X of The Oxford History of England, edited by G. N. Clark (15 volumes), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1934.
- Coxe, William, Memoirs of Horatio Lord Walpole, Selected from His Correspondence and Papers, and Connected With the History of the Times, from 1678 to 1757 (2 volumes), London, Longmans, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1820.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough (3 volumes), London, Henry G. Bohn, 1848.
- Creighton, Louise, Life of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, New York, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904.
- Eves, Charles Kenneth, Matthew Prior: Poet and Diplomatist, New York, Columbia University Press, 1939.
- Feiling, Keith, A History of the Tory Party, 1640-1714, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924.
- Harkness, Douglas, Bolingbroke, the Man and His Career, London, Staples Press, Ltd., 1957.
- Hassall, Arthur, Life of Viscount Bolingbroke, Oxford, B. H. Blackwell, 1915.
- Hill, Christopher, A Century of Revolution, 1603-1714, Vol. V of A History of England, edited by Christopher Brooke and Denis Mack Smith (8 volumes), Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1961.
- James, F. G., "The Bishops in Politics, 1688-1714," Conflict in Stuart England: Essays in honour of Wallace Notestein, edited by William Appleton Aiken and Basil Duke Henning, New York, New York University Press, 1960.
- Klopp, Onno, Der Fall des Hauses Stuart und die Succession des Hauses Hannover in Gross-Britannien und Ireland (14 volumes), Wien, W. Braumueller, 1875-1888.
- Kronenberger, Louis, Marlborough's Duchess: A Study in Worldliness, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1958.
- LaPrade, W. T., Public Opinion and Politics in Eighteenth Century England, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1936.
- Lecky, W. E. H., A History of England in the Eighteenth Century (8 volumes), London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1878-1890.

- Legg, L. G. Wickham, Matthew Prior: A Study of His Public Career and Correspondence, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1921.
- Legrelle, Arsène, La diplomatie française et la succession d'Espagne (4 volumes), Gand, F. L. Dulle-Plue, 1888-1892.
- Morgan, William T., English Political Parties and Leaders in the Reign of Queen Anne, 1702-1710, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1920.
- Plumb, J. H., Sir Robert Walpole: The Making of a Statesman, London, The Cresset Press, 1955.
- Riley, P. W. J., The English Ministers and Scotland, 1707-1727, London, The Athlone Press, 1964.
- Roscoe, E. S., Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902.
- Rose, J. Holland, A. P. Newton, and E. A. Benians, editors, The Cambridge History of the British Empire (8 volumes), New York, The Macmillan Company, 1929-1936.
- Ross, John F., Swift and Defoe: A Study in Relationship, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1941.
- Sykes, Norman, Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1934.
- Trevelyan, George Macaulay, The Peace and the Protestant Succession, Vol. III of England Under Queen Anne (3 volumes), London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1934.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Families and the Union With Scotland, Vol. II of England Under Queen Anne (3 volumes), London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1934.
- Turberville, A. S., The House of Lords in the Eighteenth Century, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1927.
- Walcott, Robert, Jr., English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century, Vol. XXVIII of Harvard Historical Monographs, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1956.
- Willcox, William B., The Age of Aristocracy, 1688-1830, Vol. III of A History of England, edited by Lacey Baldwin Smith (4 volumes), Boston, D. C. Heath and Company, 1966.

## Articles

- Ansell, Patricia M., "Harley's Parliamentary Management," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XXXIV (May, 1961), 92-97.
- Barker, George Fisher Russell, "Robert Harley," Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. VIII, London, Oxford University Press, 1921-1922.
- Bateson, Thomas, "The Relations of Defoe and Harley," The English Historical Review, XV (April, 1900), 238-250.
- Blanchard, Rae, "Steele, Charles King, and the Dunkirk Pamphlets," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XIV (August, 1951), 423-429.
- Clark, J. Kent, "Swift and the Dutch," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XVII (August, 1954), 345-356.
- Cook, Richard I., "'Mr. Examiner' and 'Mr. Review': The Tory Apologetics of Swift and Defoe," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XXIX (February, 1966), 127-146.
- Davies, Godfrey, "The Fall of Harley in 1708," The English Historical Review, LXVI (April, 1951), 246-254.
- Dickinson, H. T., "The Attempt to Assassinate Harley, 1711," History Today, XV (November, 1965), 788-795.
- Fieldhouse, H. N., "Bolingbroke's Share in the Jacobite Intrigue of 1710-1714," The English Historical Review, LII (July, 1937), 443-459.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Oxford, Bolingbroke and the Pretender's Place of Residence, 1710-1714," The English Historical Review, LII (April, 1937), 289-296.
- Firth, Charles H., "Dean Swift and Ecclesiastical Preferment," The Review of English Studies, II (January, 1926), 1-17.
- Holmes, G. S., "The Commons Division on 'No Peace Without Spain,' 7 December, 1711," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XXXIII (November, 1960), 223-234.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "The Hamilton Affair of 1711-1712," The English Historical Review, LXXVII (April, 1962), 257-282.

Holmes, G. S. and W. A. Speck, "The Fall of Harley in 1708 Reconsidered," The English Historical Review, LXXX (October, 1965), 673-698.

Loftis, John, "Richard Steele, Drury Lane, and the Tories," Modern Language Quarterly, X (1949), 72-80.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Richard Steele's Censorium," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XIV (November, 1950), 43-66.

"Lord Harley's Patent in 1711," Notes and Queries (1st Series), II (September 7, 1850), 235.

Moore, John Robert, "Defoe, Steele, and the Demolition of Dunkirk," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XIII (May, 1950), 279-302.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Defoe's Political Propaganda in The Dumb Philosopher," The Huntington Library Quarterly, IV (October, 1940), 107-118.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Steele's Unassigned Tract Against the Earl of Oxford," Philological Quarterly, XXVIII (July, 1949), 413-418.

Morgan, William T., "The Ministerial Revolution of 1710 in England," Political Science Quarterly, XXXVI (March, 1921), 184-210.

Poston, Lawrence III, "Defoe and the Peace Campaign, 1710-1713: A Reconsideration," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XXVII (November, 1963), 1-20.

Ransome, Mary, "Church and Dissent in the Election of 1710," The English Historical Review, LVI (January, 1941), 76-89.

Snyder, Henry L., "Daniel Defoe, the Duchess of Marlborough, and the Advice to the Electors of Great Britain," The Huntington Library Quarterly, XXIX (November, 1965), 53-62.

Somerville, Dorothy H., "Shrewsbury and the Peace of Utrecht," The English Historical Review, XLVII (October, 1932), 646-647.

Stephen, Leslie, "Henry St. John," Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XVII, London, Oxford University Press, 1921-1922.

- Sykes, Norman, "Queen Anne and the Episcopate," The English Historical Review, L (July, 1935), 433-465.
- Walcott, Robert, Jr., "Division-lists of the House of Commons, 1689-1715," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XIV (June, 1936), 25-36.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "The Later Stuarts (1660-1714): Significant Work of the Last Twenty Years (1939-1959)," The American Historical Review, LXVII (January, 1962), 352-370.
- Ward, A. W., "The Electress Sophia and the Hanoverian Succession," The English Historical Review, I (July, 1886), 470-506.
- Winton, Calhoun, "Steele and the Fall of Harley in 1714," Philological Quarterly, XXXVII (October, 1958), 440-447.