

Lord Burghley's Correspondence at Hatfield House.

THANKS to the energies of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the mass of material for the history of Elizabethan England, hidden away amongst the Cecil papers at Hatfield House, is gradually being brought to light. The Marquis of Salisbury, too, is entitled to the gratitude of the historical student for the assistance which he gives in making accessible the correspondence and papers of his illustrious ancestor, Lord Burghley. The Calendar, which the Commission has just issued to the Cecil Manuscripts, covers the period from 1573 to 1582, and follows one, published a few years back, which dealt with the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign, and included such earlier records as are preserved at Hatfield.

The present volume is in no way inferior to the last in historic or social interest. When it opens we find Elizabeth's secretary busy, in reference to the trial of the Duke of Norfolk for his complicity with the rebels of the north. Of his guilt there was no doubt, but so strong was his position as chief of the nobility of England, and as presumed head of the English Roman Catholic party, that Burghley hesitated to arrest him, till those were secured who could give evidence that would place his complicity beyond doubt. The Duke himself seems to have been fully conscious of his position, and to have sheltered behind it. His final submission is as abject as his previous conduct had been haughty and self-reliant. He refers to himself as the Queen's "sorrowful and dead servant, Tho: Howard," and begs Burghley to be guardian to his "poor orphans." He is grateful when he hears the Queen will show some favour towards these "poore brates." In his final confession he asserts he has ever been a Protestant, though his conduct may have given a just suspicion that he was "a favourer of Papists."

We hear, too, a good deal about some other conspiracies against the Queen and government—notably one revealed to Elizabeth in 1577 by Baptista de Trento, who was "induced to divulge his secret in consequence of having listened to a sermon on Dives and Lazarus, in which were eloquently described the future torments of the wicked." The author of the conspiracy was the Earl of Leicester. The most interesting part of the story is that which describes Leicester's ambition to be King of England, and the steps he took to make such an event possible. Amy Robsart was slain by his

command by some of his satellites, who pretended she had "died suddenly;" but the local authorities deemed her death suspicious, and when she was exhumed they saw "there was no stain of blood upon her, and she was beautiful both in face and person," but on stripping the covering from her head, "they found in it five nails, six inches long, daubed with pitch." Had Leicester used poison as a means of ridding himself of her, he knew that "small red spots, both in her face and person," would have appeared and attracted suspicion.

Elizabeth's policy in Ireland, as illustrated in the Cecil papers, will be considered with peculiar interest at the present time. We have Burghley's memorandum relating to the number and cost of the Irish garrisons under successive holders of the office of Lord deputy. In 1558 there were but 500 soldiers in Ireland. In 1574 the garrison consisted of 2,362 men, at a monthly cost of more than £1 a man. Over the whole island matters were in a most unsettled state; tales of strife and bloodshed are told from every part; but the chief seat of disorder was Munster, whither the Earl of Ormonde had gone as Lord-General. He does not seem to have worked entirely in accord with the Lord Deputy. "The little service done in Munster," says the latter, "I cannot altogether excuse;" and then, in words painfully suggestive, he continues:—"For my part, without it be of some importance, I take no delight to advertize of every common person's head that is taken off, otherwise I could have certified of a hundred or two of their lives ended, since my coming into these parts." In 1581 the Queen herself expressed strong dissatisfaction at the little work done in Munster, and the money spent there. Ormonde, however, puts down his ill success to "lack of victuals, money, and munitions of war." In one of his letters to Burghley, the Lord Deputy warns him that the soldiers sent out to Ireland are badly chosen, and begs for fresh men if the place is to be maintained in a better state. The peril, he considers, lies mostly in foreign raids from the north, and the disquiet and danger will grow daily more and more unless speedily looked to. The rebels love the inland parts of Ireland, and our efforts should be to drive them to the coast. He does not much believe in the methods adopted to obtain the pacification of the rebels, "because the Irish are so addicted to treachery and breach of fidelity" that they respect "neither affinity nor duty." Of one of the local chieftains he says:—"Tulough Lennough is bound only by his oath, which is in his religion to be dispensed withal by any of his Romish priests, as soon as he spieth an opportunity to break [it] for advantage."

But the difficulties in Ireland were not wholly due to the manner in which the government was carried on over there. The dissensions amongst the members of the Council in England, had a good deal to do with it; their irresolution is touched upon—in words which may well be marked by politicians of to-day—by a writer in 1581, who was evidently admitted to the secrets of the Council chamber. Speaking of Ireland, he says:—"Our division here at home in Council about the causes of that country, some inclining to reformation, others to a toleration of that nation to enjoy their Irish customs, and to serve to no other purpose, but to consume the treasure of England, is the principal and chief cause why matters go no better there." The Lord Deputy was heartily sick of his office before he resigned it, but he waited on whilst he thought his presence was needed. As we have seen he was not one to encourage indiscriminate decapitation of Irish rebels, though he was very thankful when an accident took from the world some specially tiresome one, thus on news reaching him that "Rossy McLaghyn" had been killed in jumping from his prison window, the Lord Deputy piously exclaimed *Nunc dimittis servum tuum Domine in pace!*—but he did not leave Ireland for some years after.

Turning now to Elizabeth's domestic affairs, we find in the Cecil correspondence, materials for a history of her famous matrimonial negotiations with the two Anjou Princes, such as has never before been presented to the student, including as it does a lengthy correspondence between the Queen and Francis of Anjou and the successive envoys—notably Simier—sent to England to arrange the match. About the negotiations with respect to the elder of the two brothers, who aspired to Elizabeth's hand—Henry of Anjou, we do not find so much amongst the documents at Hatfield. The Huguenot party in France, urged the Queen to overlook the disparity of age between herself and Henry—he was 20, she 37—and marriage articles were drawn up and brought to England in April, 1571. Even Burghley, though realizing the obvious drawbacks, saw in the alliance—provided sufficient guarantees as to religion were obtained—a means of clearing the political horizon, and therefore promoted it. But Henry himself, though he wrote to Elizabeth that in his eyes she "was the most perfect beauty that God had made during the last five hundred years," does not seem to have been very keen on the match, and finally it was terminated "on the score of religion;" this was in the early spring of 1572. Before autumn, marriage negotiations were opened in respect to Henry's younger brother Francis; it is of this courtship that we find so much in the Cecil Papers. A strange story

it is, that these old letters reveal to us, and if we could believe that Francis was seriously attached to Elizabeth, his senior by 19 years, we could not withhold our sympathy with him for the way the Queen treated his suit—to-day smiling, to-morrow frowning upon it.

It would be tedious here to enter into the different phases of the suit, and, besides, the period covered by the Calendar did not witness its conclusion; but an extract here and there from the correspondence between the Queen and her juvenile suitor is worthy of quotation. The correspondence is in French, and Elizabeth's scholarly style of writing the language is in strange contrast with the blunders which Francis makes in almost every letter. He was conscious of his own defects, which he says are due to the troubles that through his short life have ever crossed his path and left him no leisure, "*daprandre afayre les belles parolles.*" After a fruitless visit to England in the autumn of 1579, he writes to Elizabeth, on embarking to cross the Channel on his return to France, that he knows well he is "not himself," being "continually occupied in wiping away the abundant tears which flow from my eyes without intermission." "My affection will remain unchanged, for I am the most faithful and affectionate slave that can be on earth. As such, on the shore of this troublous sea, I kiss your feet."

In the spring of 1581, Francis sent the Queen a bunch of flowers,—"I thank you" she wrote "very humbly for the sweet flowers gathered by the hand with the small white fingers which I bless a million times, and declare to you that never was present better carried, for the bloom remains on them as fresh as if they had been gathered this moment, and represents very vividly your verdant affection towards me. I trust I shall never give any just cause for it to fade."

Of Francis's personal appearance we have the following description in a letter to Burghley—"For his personage me thinketh the portrature doeth expresse hym very well, and when I sawe hym at my last audience he seemed to me to growe dayly more hansom than other. The treat of hys visage may be gathered likewise by hys pictur, but not hys couleur which ys not naturally red *sed neque pallidus nec niger nec candidus neque tamen omnino fuscus.* The pock-holes ar no great disfigurement in the rest of hys face, bycause they ar rather thick than deepe or greate." As to his behaviour he was "the most moderat yn all the Court."

Whilst on his expedition to relieve Cambray, Francis wrote many letters to Elizabeth, which are interesting, as something more than amorous effusions, since they often give us a vivid picture of the

scenes which the Duke saw around him. So soon as the Duke of Parma retreated from the town, Francis hastened to inform the Queen of the good success, which had attended his expedition. The standards he has captured he hopes soon to lay at her feet, where he "would fain consecrate all his trophies," and he attributes his triumph largely to his possession of one of her Majesty's garters! We may judge of the amount of pecuniary aid which England furnished towards this expedition, from the numerous and grateful acknowledgments which Francis gives of money received.

Besides these principal features, the Report on the Cecil Papers contains a vast store of material for the history of social life in Elizabethan England, and we obtain from Lord Burghley's correspondence some curious peeps at the inner life of men and women of the period, whose names now figure conspicuously in the pages of history, so that, taken in conjunction with the fact that, as we have said, additional light is thrown on events of admitted historic importance—the present is certainly one of the most valuable reports that the Historical Manuscripts Commission has yet presented to the public.

W. J. HARDY.

