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Sir George Etherege and His Secretary

Frederick Bracher

Most of the letters of Sir George Etherege have been preserved in three separate, sometimes overlapping manuscript collections. Best known, though incomplete, is the letterbook kept by Hugo Hughes, Etherege's secretary (BM Add Mss 11513), apparently Hughes' private copy, since it is enlivened by a sour description of Sir George's private life at Ratisbon. This manuscript was edited, as *The Letterbook of Sir George Etherege*, by Sybil Rosenfeld in 1927. Since then several hundred holograph letters from Etherege to the Earl of Middleton and to his secretary, Dr. Owen Wynne, have been catalogued in the British Museum.¹ In 1947 and 1949 the Harvard Library purchased two additional manuscript letterbooks (fMS Thr. 11 and fMS Thr. 11.1) which together cover the entire period of Etherege's service as English "Resident" at the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire at Ratisbon.² I am at present working on an edition of the letters based on all three sources.

In an earlier article (HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN, XV:3, July 1967, pp. 238-245) I have presented evidence to show that the Harvard manuscripts are the original, official letterbook, the 17th century equivalent of a file of carbon copies, emended in Etherege's own hand and carried with him to Paris after the Revolution of 1688. The British Museum letterbook, a copy made by Hughes for his private use, was not intended for Etherege's eyes, and it is highly unlikely that he ever saw it. This letterbook must have remained in Ratisbon with the secretary, since he made additional entries in it after Sir George had gone to France. It contains a good many personal letters which are merely calendared in the Harvard manuscripts, and it concludes with four long, scurrilous letters from Hughes to someone

¹ BM Add Mss 41836 and 41837. Cf. Sybil Rosenfeld, "Sir George Etherege in Ratisbon," *RES* X (1939), 177-189.

² Cf. Sybil Rosenfeld, "The Second Letterbook of Sir George Etherege," *RES*, new series III (1952), 19-27. Hereafter I use the abbreviations H₁ and H₂ for these manuscript letterbooks.

addressed only as "Honoured Sir." These are entitled "An Account of Sir G's Life and Manner of Living, Writ in Several Letters from Ratisbon."

Why did Hughes go to the trouble of copying parts of the official letterbook into a letterbook of his own, adding to it a variety of discreditable information about Sir George? A partial answer may be the deep-seated hostility felt by a violently anti-Catholic, puritanical, middle-class civil servant for Sir George's casual immorality and fervent loyalty to the house of Stuart. The venom of Hughes' accusations and the vividness of his account of Sir George's affair with a comedienne from Nürnberg make his letterbook an extraordinarily revealing, though not always reliable, document; but the question remains. If Hughes' purpose was merely to discredit Etherege with someone in England, why did he secretly copy out letter after letter containing only official diplomatic dispatches from Ratisbon?

The answer, I think, is provided by the Harvard manuscripts: Hughes kept his own letterbook to enable Pierre Valkenier, the Dutch resident at Ratisbon, to read Sir George's official dispatches at a time when many Englishmen, at home and abroad, were plotting to put William of Orange on the throne of England. The evidence is circumstantial, but to me convincing.

In the first place, the Harvard letterbooks make it clear that Valkenier *was* reading Etherege's dispatches. On August 19, 1688, Etherege wrote to Dr. Owen Wynne (H₂, pp. 64, 65) complaining "that it lookes a little Strange not to me, onely, but to most of the Ministers here, that ye Hollanders shou'd have intelligence in our Secretary of State's office, and be able to take out Copies of whatever concernes them." He adds that "if anything of this kind shou'd happen once more I must be so plain as to tell you, I shall be oblig'd to take notice of it to my Lord [Middleton]." Etherege supports his charge as follows:

I writ you a letter of the 6/16 of Febr. wch begins: 'while we have no Principall Comissioner here, etc.' and in the following part there is this Paragraphe 'tho' I had no advise from England that the letter printed under Fagell's name was a Libell my own reason told it me, and I have been industrious to hinder the reprinting of it here, wch Valkenier had not fail'd to do in case I had not spoke to him roundly about it.' I was very much surpris'd to see this Paragraphe turn'd into french in the Elector of Brandenburg's Minister's hand, & instead of [speaking to him roundly]³ there was *si je ne l'avois fortement*

³The square brackets are in the original.

menacé. Valkenier chicanes about ye word threatning, and appeales to two ministers, which were by, whether he lett himself be threatned by me. These ministers do not remember that I threatned him, but yt I spoke to him very freely about it. from this the worthy Burgomaster, now we have an other dispute wou'd imply that I write things into England, wch are not true.

In denying that he had let himself be threatened, Valkenier naively revealed that he had seen Etherege's dispatch.

Etherege goes on to say that he calls this to Wynne's attention so that "you may take care whom you trust your letters to and that you may be the better able to find out the man who betrays you." Dr. Wynne must have denied indignantly that there were any leaks in his office, for on September 20, Etherege writes him a conciliatory letter (H₂, p. 77):

By your letter of the 27 of August I find you are a little angry that I tooke the freedome to tell you in one of mine, yt you wou'd doe well to take care to whom you trusted the perusal of your papers[. Y]ou do me wrong if you imagin I ever had the least suspicion of your self[. Y]ou make an unkind interpretation of my meaning. . . . I am a plain dealing man, and without artifice, & therefore cannot but tell you whatever you suppose I never writ or spoke of that business to any body but yourself. I shall say no more than that I am sorry I have given you the Trouble of writing on a matter of so little moment: my first intention being not to reproach you but to intimate kindly to you that somebody might not deserve the confidence you put in him.

There is no further mention of the matter, but the damage was done. Valkenier evidently had had access to Etherege's dispatches since at least February 1688, and probably since March 1687, when Hughes' private letterbook, according to his own note, was "begun." By March 1688, when Hughes discontinued copying dispatches into his own letterbook, the plans for bringing William of Orange to England were so well advanced that official reports from Ratisbon — an unimportant backwater by this time — were no longer of interest to the Dutch.

There is no evidence in the dispatches sent to The Hague by Dutch ambassadors in London to indicate that they had access to Etherege's dispatches. The leak must have been in Etherege's own household, and the somebody who did not deserve the confidence put in him was almost certainly Etherege's own secretary, Hugo Hughes. When Etherege left Ratisbon for Paris in 1689, Hughes took over the post of resident, and in 1693, when he was threatened with recall to

England, he boasted of his long service to the cause of William of Orange:⁴

During the last Raigne [i.e., of James II] I did endeavour to support His present Majestic's interest in the Empire, and particularly at Ratisbonne against the Insolence, and venomous Libells of the French Ambassadour, & his Partisans, who so persecuted me upon that account; that I was often forced to flie to the Count de Windischgratz, to Monsr Valkenier (the Dutch Envoyé) & to other Ministers for their Protection.

The French ambassador, Louis Verjus, Comte de Crécy, was one of Etherege's best friends at Ratisbon, and the men to whom Hughes flew for protection were Etherege's chief enemies, both active supporters of William of Orange. Windischgrätz appears in a comic role in Etherege's letters — a pompous, bumbling ass right out of Restoration comedy. Valkenier, whose bourgeois background as Burgomaster of Amsterdam Etherege made fun of, was a more dangerous opponent.

Valkenier was probably assisted by another Englishman, William Harbord, who comes and goes mysteriously in Ratisbon from 1686 onward. Harbord, along with Lord Cutts, is mentioned by Hughes as having "first recommended me to His Majestie [i.e., William III]."⁵ A fanatical supporter of the Protestant interest, Harbord had achieved some notoriety in England during the reign of Charles II for his attacks in Parliament on the Stuart faction, even though he was at the time taking money from Barillon, the French Ambassador.⁶ His vicious attack on Samuel Pepys, whom he accused of "Piracy, Popery, and Treachery," has been described in detail by Sir Arthur Bryant (*Samuel Pepys: The Years of Peril*, London, 1944). But Harbord was after bigger game. As early as 1679, an entry in the *Diary* of Henry Sidney⁷ for June 15 notes that "Mr. Harbord . . . said the only thing that could be done for the good of this nation was to declare and make the Prince of Orange protector, in case the succession fell into the hands of a Roman Catholic Prince." In 1683 Harbord's name appeared in a list of disaffected people sent to the grand jury, and in the fall his house was searched for weapons.⁸ Captain Edward Saunders reported finding "three cases of pistols well fixed hid in the maid's chamber under hoods, scarves, and foul linen," plus a large barrel of powder and a

⁴ PRO: SP (German States) 81, #166, f. 243.

⁵ PRO: SP 81, #166, f. 244.

⁶ *Savile Correspondence*, ed. Cooper (Camden Society, 1858) p. 181.

⁷ *Diary of the Times of Charles II*, ed. R. W. Blencowe, London, 1843, I, 8.

⁸ *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, July–September 1683*, pp. 232–33, 266, 292.

bag of bullets.⁹ Saunders was convinced that more arms were hidden in the house; and according to an information of John Mendham of Thetford in January of 1684, Harbord and others planned to go well armed to the Parliament at Oxford and force the King to "sign a warrant to take off the Duke of York."¹⁰

When James II came to the throne, Harbord left for the continent, where he continued to work for William of Orange, though he still drew his salary as Surveyor General of England,¹¹ a position he had inherited from his father. According to a report from Van Citters, the Dutch Ambassador in London, King James himself complained of Harbord, along with Bishop Burnet, Gwyn, and Lord Root, as "Rebells in Holl[and] . . . who were in her Royal Highness's service [i.e., Princess Mary]."¹² Another Dutch dispatch from London in February, 1686, notes that William Harbord, "having been abroad for some time past and being suspected of not having behaved as he ought,"¹³ has been ordered to return home within fourteen days.¹⁴ Harbord ignored the order, and a letter forwarded from Holland by Bevil Skelton on February 11, 1686, reports that "one Mr. Herbet son of Sr. Charles Herbet said to be lately a Serveigher Generall in England and of a large estate, is here with one servant and purposeth to continue here and to send for his family over."¹⁵

In the spring of 1686 Harbord served as a volunteer in the Imperial army besieging Buda. The records of this period are confusing because of similarity of names. Harbord's name is variously spelled: Harbord, Harbot, Herbet, Harbert, and even Herbert. Probably in Hungary at the same time was a young Englishman named William Herbert,

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

¹⁰ *CSPD 1683-84*, p. 237.

¹¹ The annual salary was £ 200 (*Calendar of Treasury Books, 1685-89*, VIII, 395), and it was still being paid in October, 1685. When Harbord refused in January 1686, to return to England and appear before the Privy Council, Henry Guy consulted with the Attorney General about "the speediest way of voiding [Harbord's patents]." (*Calendar of Treasury Books, 1685-1689*, VIII, 591). Harbord managed to retain his patent as Surveyor General until June 1688, when he surrendered it in exchange for the withdrawal of the "privy seal commanding [his] immediate return into England" (*Calendar of Treasury Books, 1685-1689*, VIII, 1929), plus "his Majestie's leave to live where he pleases." (BM Add Mss 41823, f. 68.)

¹² BM Add Mss 34512, f. 94.

¹³ BM Add Mss 34508, f. 106.

¹⁴ *Letters Written during the Years 1686, 1687, and 1688 and Addressed to John Ellis*, ed. Lord Dover, 1831, I, 27.

¹⁵ BM Add Mss 40818, f. 238.

also spelled Harbert, the son of the first Marquis of Powis. When Etherege writes on April 18, 1686, that "Will Herbert, Tho: Checks brother in law, with one or two more young Sparks pass'd by this place last weck and are design'd for the Campagne in Hungarie,"¹⁶ he is probably referring to the son of the Marquis of Powis. William Harbord, who like Etherege was about fifty years old, could hardly have been described as a young spark, whereas Will Herbert, then aged 19, was presumably beginning a military career which led to the colonelcy of a regiment of foot in 1687. But when Jacob Richards, an English military engineer, writes to Hughes on April 25 from Vienna that "Here is arrived Mr. Harbot [crossed out in the Ms and 'Harbord' written above in another hand] and Captain Bellamy. We Dine this Day at Comte Taaffes . . .",¹⁷ he probably referred to William Harbord.

All during the summer of 1686 references link the names of Harbord, Bellamy, and Lord George Savile, who was wounded at Buda. On July 24, a report from Buda notes that "The 11/22 Mr. Harbert, my Ld. Geo. Savile, and Mr. Bellamy left the Camp and tooke their way towards Vienna."¹⁸ On August 1 Etherege writes "Will Harbert whose nom de guerre is Monsieur Hatchet left the Camp on the 24 wth my Lo: Geo: Savile who is pretty well recover'd of his Shot thro' the Belly and Mr. Bellamy, apprehending the Sicknes wch begins and is retreating to Vienna."¹⁹ This report is confirmed by a letter from Henry Savile²⁰ to his brother on July 25 (O.S.) 1686: "Sir George Etheridge writes word he has a letter from Will. Harbord, wherein he tells him that he intends to go to Ratisbonne as soon as he has seen my Lord [George Savile] a little better."²¹ It seems probable that Harbord did go to Ratisbon, though there is no actual record of his being there that summer. The *DNB* article says only that he became ill in the fall of 1686 and petitioned the King for permission to return to England — permission which was not granted. Hugo Hughes, Etherege's secretary, was absent from his post in Ratisbon during most

¹⁶ BM Add Mss 41836, f. 79.

¹⁷ BM Add Mss 41842, f. 1.

¹⁸ BM Add Mss 41840, f. 212.

¹⁹ BM Add Mss 41836, ff. 130, 131.

²⁰ *Savile Correspondence*, p. 297.

²¹ See also *Ellis Correspondence*, I, 163, and *The Autobiography of Sir John Bramston*, ed. Braybrooke (Camden Society, 1845), p. 36, for evidence that Harbord was at the siege of Buda.

of August: a letter of September 2, 1686, from Sir Edward Vaudrey begins, "Since you are pleased I should continue the same way of addressing my letters I did whilst Mr. Hughes was in your service . . ." (*Letterbook*, p. 364). No letters are copied into the Harvard letterbook from 24 July to 27 August, though there are calendared entries, some in Sir George's hand. It is possible that Hughes met Harbord, either in Austria or in Ratisbon, during this period. What is certain is that they did meet, and that they got along so well that Harbord recommended Hughes to William of Orange.

The two men must have recognized each other as kindred spirits. Like Harbord, Hughes was a stern anti-Catholic, and he had the same disapproval of gambling and dissipation that had led Harbord, in 1673, to denounce Sir Edward Scymour in Parliament for his immoral life and gambling.²² Before going to Ratisbon, Hughes had worked in the office of Sir Leoline Jenkins, the Secretary of State: a letter of April 14, 1684, from an English spy, Ezekiel Everest, is addressed to "Hugh Hughes at Mr. Secretary Jenkins office in Whitehall."²³ He continued to work in the office after Jenkins had been succeeded by the Earl of Godolphin, and he was still dealing with spies. Three letters from Everest (sometimes signed with his alias, John Elton) were sent in May to Hughes "at Mr. Secretary Godolphin Office in Whitehall."²⁴ It seems likely that he is the "Mr. Hughes" referred to in a Newsletter of August 17, 1680, as "a vigilant prosecutor of the discovery of priests and Jesuits' estates and now particularly that of the late Father Harcourt."²⁵ (Harcourt was a victim of Titus Oates during the hysteria over the supposed Popish Plot.) On November 28, 1681, a "Mr. Hughes" joins with Sir William Smith in a suit for £3000 confiscated from the Jesuits, "in which Mr. Hughes and I as discoverers claim a moiety" because of "our great pains in it for the last three years."²⁶ Some of the pains suffered by informers are suggested in the Newsletter cited above, which goes on to say that "Mr. Hughes . . . last Saturday night was set upon in Drury Lane and grievously assaulted by persons as yet unknown, so that his life is despaired of."

²² *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson, 1673-74*, ed. W. D. Christie (Camden Society, 1874) IX, 54, 70 fn.

²³ BM Add Mss 41810, f. 14.

²⁴ BM Add Mss 41811, ff. 193, 211, 213.

²⁵ *CSPD 1679-1680*, p. 611.

²⁶ *CSPD 1680-1681*, p. 592.

Whether Hughes ever received his moiety of the confiscated money is not known, but he seems to have been rewarded in another way. Writing to Secretary Leoline Jenkins on August 23, 1682, Constant Oates²⁷ understands "that Mr. Hughes has waited on you and that you think well of your servant."²⁸ The passage seems to imply that the Oates brothers were responsible for first bringing Hughes into the Secretary's office. The chief undersecretary during the Earl of Middleton's tenure as Secretary of State was Dr. Owen Wynne, whose family preserved the Middleton Papers now in the British Museum. Frequent references in the Harvard letterbooks to Wynne as "brother" — that is, brother-in-law — indicate that Hughes had a relative in a position to do him favors; and it was through Wynne that Hughes secured the post as secretary to Etherege. In his Latin letter (*Letterbook*, p. 402) Hughes says that "my brother earnestly besought me to visit the said Sir [G] Etherege, and when I found him at the house of a certain French surgeon, Fucadius by name,²⁹ Etherege himself at once promised me not only £60 [per year] but also to keep my footman in victuals as before he had promised my brother, to which I gave answer that I had decided to go to Ratisbon in his company, so that he warned me to be prepared for the journey."

On the way to Ratisbon, Hughes continued his spying and reporting. While Sir George was consorting at The Hague with such notorious gamblers as John Germain (*Letterbook*, p. 53),³⁰ "haunting pitiful and mean houses . . . and . . . caressing every dirty drab that came in his way," (*Letterbook*, pp. 378, 379), Hughes was in Amsterdam observing and reporting on the anti-Catholic Englishmen who met at Mr. Wood's English ordinary in that city. The most violent of these was one Starkey, and Hughes reports in his "Account of what I hear'd and observ'd at Amsterdam," October 24, 1685,³¹ that Starkey "then begun to reflect on his Majestic's Ministers, and particularly nam'd Sir Peter Wyche [envoy at Hamburg] and Sir

²⁷ Brother of Titus Oates and likewise an informer. *CSPD 1682*, pp. 217, 228, 245, 496.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

²⁹ Etherege wrote to a "Mr. Fourcade" on July 23, 1686. *H₁*, p. 29.

³⁰ Germain is mentioned by Theophilus Lucas in his *Memoirs of the Lives of the Most Famous Gamblers*, London, 1714, p. 212. He came to England with William of Orange in 1688.

³¹ *BM Add Mss 41818*, ff. 97-99.

George Etherege, whom Wood had before affirm'd to be Damn'd rank Rom: Cath."

At Ratisbon, when Hughes took it upon himself to report to Sir George the discreditable stories circulating in the town about the behavior of the English resident, he was roundly snubbed for his pains (*Letterbook*, p. 346): "but, finding that he was far from taking it in good part, by asking how I was concerned, if I was sent with him for his governor, etc., I resolved to say nothing, and being left to follow his own course he did all his endeavours to keep things from my hearing." The continuing hostility between Etherege and Hughes may have reached a stage of crisis in August 1688, when Hughes was out of office for a month. Why he left, and why he was reinstated as secretary in September are open questions. But it may be worth noting that Sir George, who knew no German though he was fluent in French, needed an efficient multi-lingual secretary and these could not have been easy to find in Ratisbon. On Hughes' part, there may have been a special purpose in his returning to his post. In November he began to write the four letters to "Honoured Sir" which make up his "Account of Sir G's Life and Manner of Living."

The identity of "Honoured Sir" can only be guessed at, but internal evidence makes it clear that he was an Englishman who had been in Ratisbon until November 23, 1686, when he left on an apparently hazardous mission to England.²² He had sources of information at The Hague, and he had asked Hughes to write him after his departure. The man best fitting these specifications is William Harbord, who had settled at The Hague in February and had announced his intention of going to Ratisbon in the fall of 1686. Since he had petitioned, unsuccessfully, for a general pardon from James II in the fall of 1686 (*DNB* article), it would certainly have been dangerous for Harbord to have been found in England that winter. Very likely he was carry-

²²The quarrel with the Baron de Sensheim occurred, according to Hughes' second letter to Honoured Sir, on Monday, November 15. (*Letterbook*, p. 390) This date must be Old Style, since Etherege's insulting note to Sensheim was written on November 26. (*Letterbook*, p. 119) In his first letter, Hughes refers to the Sensheim attack as happening on "Monday, the second day after your departure" (*Letterbook*, p. 387), and this would date the departure as Saturday, November 23. That Honoured Sir's mission to England was hazardous is indicated by the beginning of Hughes' fourth letter, dated "6 Feb., 87": "According to the liberty you were pleased to grant me, I made bold to send you by the last post what I could not well resolve upon before I heard of your safe arrival in England, the news whereof did very much alleviate my heart." (*Letterbook*, p. 395)

ing communications between the supporters of William of Orange on the continent and those in England.

Also in Ratisbon in the fall of 1686 was Pierre Valkenier, the Burgomaster of Amsterdam, who had been at the Diet for a long time after Etherege's arrival (*Letterbook*, p. 145). He is mentioned in the *Letterbook* on February 13, 1687, as having been recalled "some time since" — that is, about the time Honoured Sir left Ratisbon for England. The chronology suggests that Hughes, Harbord, and Valkenier were all in Ratisbon during the autumn of 1686. Soon after Honoured Sir (Harbord?) left Ratisbon, Hughes began writing the letters about Sir George's scandalous life and neglect of his duty. Did Honoured Sir intend to use this evidence to discredit Etherege and secure the residentship for Hughes? Did Hughes, in recompense, agree to work with Valkenier? No certain answers can be given, though Hughes' past experience in undercover work is suggestive. What is certain, from his own statement, is that during the reign of James II he "did endeavour to support His present Majestie's interest in the empire and particularly at Ratisbonne," and that he was often forced to fly to Valkenier for protection. And it was in the spring of 1687, when Valkenier returned to Ratisbon (*Letterbook*, pp. 159-160, 218), that Hughes began to copy out his own letterbook, which Valkenier was later able "to take copies out of."

It looks very much as though Etherege had been the unwitting victim of a plot among Hughes, Harbord, and Valkenier. All three of these men continued to work for, and were ultimately rewarded by, William of Orange. While Etherege, in the fall of 1688, was trying desperately to warn the Secretary of State of William's intentions, Valkenier, who knew what was going on, became increasingly arrogant. "That impertinent noisic ffool . . . warm'd me extreamly," writes Etherege, "& I had almost resolv'd the next time I mett him to have us'd him as the Rascall deserves, but . . . I was unwilling to expose his Majesty's honor by using violent means. . . . Besides this Citizen of Amsterdam is fitter for the businessse of a shop than those of the State & so poor a spirited wretch, it wou'd be a dishonor to beat him."³³ Brave words, but by the time this was written, November 18, 1688, Valkenier was triumphant: William of Orange had landed in England. With him was William Harbord, who "executed the office

³³ *H*, pp. 114-115.

of Commissary-general of the army."³⁴ In England Harbord was as intransigent as ever. On December 7, 1688, the Earl of Clarendon notes that "Sir John Hotham and William Harbord supped with us."

They discoursed much against the meeting of the Parliament which was summoned, saying, that by their having been so long out of England, attending upon the Prince of Orange, they could not expect to be chosen. . . . Mr. Harbord said, he had drawn his sword against the King; that he had no need of his pardon; but they would bring the King to ask pardon of them, for the wrongs he had done."³⁵

As it turned out, Harbord had no need of a seat in Parliament; he was made Paymaster-General to William's army in Ireland, and later a member of the Privy Council. In 1691 he was appointed special Ambassador to Turkey, but he died in 1692 at Belgrade, on the way to his post. This "unwellcome, sorrowfull news" was lamented by, at least, Hugo Hughes, now established as resident in Ratisbon.³⁶

When Etherege went to Paris in February, 1689, to join James II, Hughes took over his duties, as well as 500 thalers of his expense money which arrived after Etherege's departure, claiming it as unpaid back salary. (*Letterbook*, pp. 396, 404.) In April Hughes was in England, probably on a rapid trip to solicit an official appointment as resident.³⁷ In any case, he was back in Ratisbon on April 25, 1689, when he began making regular reports of events at the Diet,³⁸ and a year later a warrant was recorded granting Hughes, "in the King's employment in Germany, the sum of £300 a year and his extraordinary expenses."³⁹

Hughes did not make a good resident. He squabbled with the other envoys and filled his servile, long-winded dispatches with ominous guesses about spies and plots — his life-long obsession. In particular, he was convinced that Placidus Fleming, Abbot of the Scottish Benedictine monastery in Ratisbon and a good friend of Etherege, was planning to murder William III when the king next returned to Holland. Hughes reported in detail the actions of the Abbot, whom he considered "as dangerous and desperate as any Jesuit in the world,"⁴⁰

³⁴ *The Correspondence of Henry Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and of His Brother Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester*, ed. S. W. Singer, London, 1828, II, 217.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 219.

³⁶ PRO: SP 81, #166, f. 188v.

³⁷ CSPD 1689-90, p. 84.

³⁸ PRO: SP 81, #166, f. 19 et seq.

³⁹ CSPD 1689-90, p. 538.

⁴⁰ PRO: SP 81, #166, f. 29.

and seriously annoyed Fleming with his malicious gossip and intrigues. In a letter to Dom William Leslie at Rome, July 31, 1691,⁴¹ Fleming reveals that he had had trouble with Hughes long before:

This Hughes serves now the prince of Orange here with a good allowance; and he was in the Secretarie Office, in the Late King's tyme, when I had correspondence with the Secretarie of State Coventry and Jenkins, he did then take copies of some of my letters and assuring them here that I gave them in England a more exact accompt of all there affaires and intrigues in Germanie then they had from any Minister abroad.

Nottingham, the Secretary of State, eventually tired of Hughes' windy gossip and ordered him to limit his reports to events at Ratisbon that concerned England.⁴²

In September, 1692, Hughes received a rude shock: a notice of "His Majestie's commands, that I shou'd prepare to leave Ratisbonne as soon as the time necessary for removing my family wou'd permit."⁴³ In a begging letter to Nottingham, Hughes blames his recall on the petty jealousy of some ministers at Ratisbon and complains of the difficulty of travelling in winter with three or four small children, his "wife being Sickly, and within two moneths of her time."⁴⁴ Apparently leaving his family in Ratisbon, Hughes "returned from thence into his Majesty's presence on the 10th of December, 1692." The following summer he petitioned the Queen about the hardship of "removing or supporting his family," and in October a pass was issued for Hughes and his servant to go to Holland.⁴⁵ By December 31, 1693, he was back in Ratisbon preparing a petition to the King. In a letter to Sir John Trenchard,⁴⁶ asking that the petition be recommended to the King, Hughes attributes his recall to misrepresentation of his motives during the frequent visits he made to spy on Abbot Fleming. The petition acknowledges his protection by Valkenier and Windischgrätz, reminds the king of his uncompensated service in Ratisbon after Sir George's departure, and offers to get testimonials from the ministers at the Diet.⁴⁷ Accompanying it is a list of those "who have done me good offices with His Majestic," including William Harbord, Lord

⁴¹ Scottish Catholic Archives, Columba House, Edinburgh.

⁴² PRO: SP 81, #166, f. 108.

⁴³ PRO: SP 81, #166, f. 195.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ CSPD 1693, pp. 24, 315, 355.

⁴⁶ PRO: SP 81, #166, f. 229.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 243.

Cutts, Lord Paget, Lord Pembroke, Lord Devonshire, and Lord Rochester, who "will be ready to give a good word if your Honor desires it." These delaying tactics seem to have worked for another year, but by December 1694 Hughes and his goods and his family had left Ratisbon for England.⁴⁶

In London, on August 2, 1695, when Hughes wrote to Sir William Trumbull, then Secretary of State, complaining that money for his extraordinary expenses was being held up by James Vernon, he gives another, and more convincing, reason for his recall:

Being at Ratisbon with Mr. Harbord,⁴⁷ I innocently discovered to him that Mr. Vernon was about to serve him an ill turn. Mr. Vernon from Ratisbon went to the King in Flanders and prevailed on Mr. Blathwait to speak to the King to have me recalled, saying that the Ministers of the Diet had complained of my contesting for precedence. I was recalled, and Mr. Vernon wrote to a friend crying victory and giving an account of the mischief he had done me.⁴⁸

The wheel had come full circle: Harbord, who had first recommended Hughes to William of Orange, was the inadvertent cause of his recall to England. Hughes, however, did not remain long without a post. A type of the doggedly persistent and unscrupulous meek who, if they do not actually inherit the earth, at least manage to take care of themselves, Hughes had been pulling strings to get an appointment to Berlin or Vienna. That he managed to get something on the Continent is indicated by a note of September 28, 1695: "Passes for . . . Mr. Hugo Hughes and his wife, Mathew Lebroon, his servant, Susanna Dufour, Susanna le Bland and three children, to go to Holland."⁴⁹ Almost nine years later, in May 1704, Sir Hans Sloane received a wheedling, wordy letter from Hugo Hughes in Vienna, recommending to his attention and encouragement the unnamed author of "an elaborate piece, which is as full of wonders as nature is of varieties," who, if encouraged by the Royal Society, would come to England and complete his present business of compiling "the Ephemerides" to the year 2000.⁵⁰ Some thirteen years after Sir George's obscure death in France, his

⁴⁶ CSPD 1695, *Addenda*, p. 39. Cf. also CSPD 1694-95, p. 469.

⁴⁷ This must have been during the winter of 1691-92, when Harbord was on the way to his post in Constantinople, with James Vernon accompanying him as secretary. CSPD 1691-92, pp. 7, 10, 306.

⁴⁸ HMC *Marquis of Downshire*, I, 528.

⁴⁹ CSPD 1695, *Addenda*, p. 72.

⁵⁰ Sloane Ms 4039, f. 303.

former secretary was so comfortably entrenched at Vienna that he felt able to play the role of patron to a virtuoso.

Even if one gives full credit to Hughes' malicious stories about Sir George's conduct, it is clear that, on the whole, Etherege made a good Resident at Ratisbon. Though his early letters complain bitterly of the tedium of life at the Diet, he became more and more interested in the business of diplomacy as he grew more skillful at it. His reports to Middleton are shrewd and realistic, and their witty elegance is in sharp contrast to the wordy pomposity of, for example, Bevil Skelton's dispatches from The Hague and Paris. As a career diplomat, however, Etherege had two serious faults. He was, as he wrote to Dr. Wynnne, "a plain dealing man, and without artifice," and he scorned the elaborate ceremony and double talk that was expected of diplomats on the continent. And it is true that, himself a gentleman, he was apt to assume a gentlemanly generosity in others. But it was naive to expect generosity, or even honorable dealing, from men like Harbord and Hughes. Etherege, like Hamlet, being remiss, most generous, and free from all contriving, did not peruse the foils, and he lost in an encounter in which he did not even know his opponents, if indeed he recognized it as an encounter at all.

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