THE MARIAN EXILE
IN THE LIGHT OF NEW DOCUMENTS

I

‘MIGRATION’ OR ‘FLIGHT’?

Nearly four hundred years have passed since the English refugees to Germany in the reign of Mary first told the story of their exile (1554–9) in their own way. In all that time the accuracy of their version of it has never once been seriously questioned: they were protestants, forced solely for the sake of their religion to take refuge abroad from the persecution of a bigoted and cruel queen. So the record has stood.

As a mine of information for the life of John Knox, the period has been well exploited. But as an episode having dramatic unity in itself, and an historic significance out of all proportion to its duration in time, the Marian Exile has had no historian. Not since 1574, when William Whittingham¹ first published at Zurich his polemical pamphlet under the suggestive title of The Troubles begun at Frankfort,² has anyone cared to penetrate below the surface of the ingenious legend with which the fugitives cloaked the real purpose of their enterprise. For if the facts, after being arranged in their chronological sequence, are then impartially examined, there can be little doubt that the so-called ‘flight’ of 1554 was not a flight but a migration, and, as such, one of the most astute manoeuvres that has ever carried a defeated political party to ultimate power.

¹ For the ascription now generally accepted, see Dr McCrie’s argument incorporated in the Introduction (pp. v–ix) to Petheram’s reprint (1846) of the 1575 edition of the Troubles. See also Prof. Pollard’s article on Whittingham in the D.N.B. But we venture to think that it was not Whitehead, as McCrie suggests, but Thomas Cole, “late deane of Sarum”, who continued the narrative after Whittingham’s departure from Frankfort (Troubles, p. 39 and Thomas Cole’, Census).
² Short Title Catalogue, no. 25442.
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When the body of Edwardian clergy and ‘students’, who formed a majority of the first migration, left England, they had suffered no persecution.¹ Their party had gone out of office; and they were being called upon, in their turn, to accept changes in administrative personnel, for which Edward’s reign had established a precedent having less canonical justification than Mary’s. A few, certainly, had been imprisoned, but for flagrant acts of sedition, not for heresy. And with unexampled clemency, the greater number of even these political offenders were soon released. Perhaps no words more aptly describe the nature of the protestant exodus at its inception, than those used by Laurence Humphrey to describe the flight of his friends from Magdalen: it was a ‘voluntarium in Germania exilium’.²

Mary was proclaimed queen in London on 19 July 1553. If certain occurrences during the first months of her reign are carefully correlated³ and placed in sequence, they show that a general emigration of protestants was being preached as early as August 1553; that definite steps to carry the plan into execution were taken during September; and that the movement was actually in progress during January before any coercive religious measures, even of deprivation, had been enforced by the Marian government. Mindful of Calvin’s fervid exhortation, ‘Sorts hors du pais de ta nativité, quant nous sommes là contrainctes de faire contre nostre conscience…’,⁴ those reformers whom Simon Renard wisely distinguished from their fellows as ‘the hardened followers of that sect’,⁵

¹ Of the five Edwardian bishops who took refuge abroad (1553–4), Bale of Ossory seems to have ‘shoke the dust’ of his diocese ‘of [his] fete’ almost as soon as the news of Mary’s accession reached Kilkenny on 25 July. By about the middle of September 1553 he was gone (R. L. Poole’s Preface to Bale’s Index, p. xix). Coverdale of Exeter, Ponet of Winchester and Scory of Chichester had to surrender their sees to those whom they themselves had dispossessed, that is, John Voysey, Stephen Gardiner and George Day. Scory had also been an open adherent of Lady Jane, and was always a firebrand. Barlow ‘resigned’ his bishopric of Bath and Wells in 1553, but no licence to fill the vacancy was issued until 13 March 1554 (Le Neve, t, 144; for his ‘resignation’ vs. ‘deprivation’ see W. H. Frere, The Marian Reaction, etc. (1896), pp. 21–2 and p. 21, n. 4; cf. also Dixon, History of the Church of England, iv, 46–7 and notes).³
² Cf. below, pp. 45–6.
³ Vita Juelli, p. 73.
⁴ J. Bonnet, Lettres de Jean Calvin, i, 97.
⁵ Span. Cal. 1553, p. 217.
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determined, as a party, and at the outset of the reign, to make no accommodation with idolatry. There were too few of them.

Accordingly, it was in January 1554 that the great movement to Germany began.¹ In February it had reached flood-tide. It was not till March² and the close of Wyatt’s rebellion, that Stephen Gardiner, ‘nowe sumwhat hette with thiese treasons’,³ instituted the first proceedings against married priests.⁴

It is true that in the previous December, at the close of the parliamentary session in which the Edwardian statutes permitting clerical marriage had been repealed,⁵ a proclamation⁶ was issued (15 December 1553) to the effect that after 20 December ‘no prest that has a wyff shall not menyster nor saye masse…’? But nearly three months were allowed to elapse between that decree and any concerted effort to enforce obedience to it. For this delay the explanation usually given, or implied, is that the government’s hands were too fully occupied with Wyatt’s insurrection⁸ to issue the necessary injunctions. Yet, even so, six weeks had passed between 15 December and the outbreak of that rebellion on 25 January.⁹ And during that time, though individual cases

¹ See below, pp. 8–10.
² On this question Dixon (iv, 155–6 and note; cf. Frere, op. cit. pp. 46, 63–4) gives without citation two contradictory statements of Foxe. That one which assigns the first deprivations in London to the week of 25 February I have so far been unable to find, while the second (Foxe, vi, 426) gives the date of Bonner’s commission correctly as 4 March. Wriothesley asserts (ii, 113) that ‘The first daye of Marche, the parsons and curates of the Cittie of London that were wedded were cited to appeare in the Consistorie in Paules afore the Bishop of Londons Commissioners, and there depired from their benefices.’ Was Foxe, in his zeal, perhaps confusing Bonner’s ‘Monition’ to his clergy re confession, dated 24 February (Foxe, vi, 426), with his proceedings against the married clergy?
³ Gardiner to Petre, 28 January 1554, J. A. Muller, Letters of Gardiner (1933), p. 459; Chron. of Q. Jane, p. 184. The latter gives the date as 27 January, which Muller corrects.
⁴ Burnet, History of the Reformation, vol. v (ed. Pocock), Collections, pp. 381 ff., nos. x, xi, xii. Nos. xi–xii, dated 13 and 15 March; no. x, only March, but Foxe (vi, 426) supplies the date as 4 March.
⁵ Journals H. of C. i, 29; passed 7 November 1553.
⁶ Steele, Tudor and Stuart Proclamations, i, nos. 434, 435.
⁷ Machyn’s Diary, p. 50; Strype, Mem. iii, i, 79; Foxe, vi, 542.
⁸ Burnet, ii, ii, 439; Dixon, iv, 132.
⁹ The date of Wyatt’s manifesto to Maidstone.
of sedition and unlicensed preaching had been punished, those married clergy who had not already fled continued apparently without molestation to hold their livings and exercise their functions.¹

Fanciful as it may at first seem, we believe that another and truer explanation of that respite is to be found in the policy of tact and clemency which Gardiner adopted in dealing with the protestant problem. For this we have his own words,² to be quoted later; and in support of his words, a multitude of corroborative instances of their application which cannot be ignored.³

Upon such a theory, the proclamation of 15 December would have been in the nature of a warning of the queen’s intention to re-establish ecclesiastical discipline.⁴ Ample time was then allowed to such of the clergy as preferred withdrawal from England to the surrender of their wives to profit by it. And many of them did profit by it, but far fewer for the cause of marriage alone than has generally been supposed.⁵

¹ Strype, Cranmer, pp. 471-2.
² See below, p. 11 and note.
³ Ibid.
⁴ That the measures were intended to be disciplinary rather than punitive (even though the word ‘punish’ is once used) is made clear by the moderation of the articles themselves. More clemency, for example, was to be used with those ‘whose wives be dead’ (Burnet, v, 383-4). Those who would put away their wives and do penance were under certain conditions to be admitted ‘again to their former administration’ (ibid.; cf. Bonner’s certificate in regard to Scory, ibid. 389, no. xvi, and Mr Geoffrey Baskerville’s conclusion in his ‘Married Clergy and Pensioned Religious in Norwich Diocese, 1555’, E.H.R. xlvi. 45, ‘that nearly all the clergy whose names are in the “Deprivation Book” were almost immediately instituted to other livings . . . ’); while those who had been ordained ‘after the new sort and fashion’ were to be retained in the ministry at the bishop’s discretion, after ‘that thing which wanted in them before’ was supplied (ibid. 385; for the interpretation of these words, see Dixon, iv, 134 n. and Frere, op. cit. pp. 117-26). It is odd to reflect that had Mary wished to justify far severer courses than these, she could have done no better than appeal to Théodore de Bèze’s work De haereticis a civili magistratu puniendis, published in this same year (1554), in justification of the burning of Seretus. Bèze’s definition of a heretic as one who ‘rompt la paix et consentement de l’Eglise, en ayant une fausse doctrine et en persistant à la propager’ could hardly have been better worded to fit her needs (French translation of 1559), cf. Lavisée, Histoire de France (ed. 1911), v, pt ii, p. 207.
⁵ Cf. Gardiner’s statement (History of the English Church, iv, 391), that ‘Hosts of married clergy also migrated to the Continent . . . ’, with the evidence from Norwich (below, p. 5).
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The chancellor’s apparent absorption in other matters than the enforcement of clerical celibacy came only as an unexpected and persuasive stimulus to a movement already begun. In the majority of cases it will be found that resignation and flight preceded official deprivation, often by weeks, sometimes by months. And though it is probably true that the actual enforcement of the order did determine a few to take refuge abroad,¹ it is also clear that flight was by no means an invariable, or even a usual sequel to deprivation. On this point the episcopal registers, when compared with my list of exiles, speak plainly. From the diocese of Norwich, for example, where ‘the total deprivations for marriage’ have been estimated at the surprising figure of ‘something over 360’,² only four of those deprived can be said with certainty to have fled to the continent, while at most the number was but seven.³ Again, in the diocese of Bath and Wells not one of the twenty whom Bishop Bourne dispossessed in April and May (1554) is to be found on the roll of exile.⁴ Apparently they all remained in England, and it is worthy of note that only one of them suffered martyrdom⁵ for his temerity.⁶ Altogether sixty-nine deprivations (or ‘resignations’) are recorded in the same register between 30 April of that year and 31 March 1556, but among them all Theodore Newton, rector of ‘Bagworth’,⁷ appears to have

¹ As for example the archbishop’s brother, Edmund Cranmer (see Census).
² Baskerville, op. cit. pp. 45, 49–64. I can, however, count only 339 names in Mr Baskerville’s list, of which seven at least are repetitions. Even if we add to these the fifteen deprived whose names do not appear in the Deprivation Book (p. 45, notes 1 and 3) that total is but 347.
³ These four were Gilbert Bartley (or Berkeley), William Johnson, John Matchett (or Machet), and Henry Raynold (or Reynold). The three doubtful ones are John Fisher, possibly brother to Fisher, parson of Amersham, John Browne, and Richard Davies. See Census.
⁵ John Tayler, alias Cardmaker, late chancellor of Wells, burnt at Smithfield 30 May 1555. He had twice attempted to escape, under suspicious circumstances, with Bishop Barlow (P.C.A. 1554–6, p. 20: 10 May 1554 and Machyn, p. 75: between 14 and 18 November 1554).
⁶ Cf. with the above list S. R. Maitland’s list of martyrs, Essays (1899), pp. 449–55.
⁷ Badgeworth in Surrey, see Census. It is interesting to find that this same Newton was refused a canonry of Canterbury in 1560 because he was not a priest (Strype’s Parker, i, 144).
been the only fugitive. Of him it is recorded that he ‘resigned’;¹ and as we know that he was first ordained deacon by Bishop Grindal in 1560,² his misdemeanour was obviously not that of marriage (or marriage alone) but of having ‘under colour of priestly orders...unlawfully mingled [himself] in ecclesiastical rights’.³ Among the refugees will be found many of those self-constituted clerics who passed henceforth under the name of ‘students’.

Much the same situation is revealed in the case of the 110 priests and deacons ordained under the new English ordinal.⁴ So far as we have record, only 19 of them in all went abroad; and of these, 8 alone were priests,⁵ while the other 11 had been admitted deacons only.⁶ Of the priests, a certain Richard Grason (or Gresham) is the single instance of one, who apparently being deprived solely on the score of marriage, fled in consequence. Yet of the remaining 92 all but three⁷ would seem to have lived on in England unmolested.⁸ It comes very much as a surprise to find how few of those who received orders according to the new English rite found their way to Germany. Even if the Marian Acts of March 1554 be regarded in the light of persecution, they can hardly upon such evidence as this be held responsible for the inception of the withdrawal to the Continent.

That emigration, whatever the springs which fed it later, was inaugurated, we believe, as a voluntary movement, and directed to the fulfilment of a clearly conceived purpose. Yet, as a policy, it so happily met the needs of the Marian

¹ Bourne’s Register, Dixon, iv, 153 n.
³ Bourne’s commission to his vicar-general, Strype, Mem. iii, i, 352.
⁴ Frere, op. cit. p. 105. The full list is given ibid. Append. XII, pp. 181–219. Including bishops, there had been 116. Of the bishops Hooper alone was burned. The other five, who fled, are accounted for above, p. 2, n. 1.
⁵ These were Thomas Lever, Robert Crowley, John Fynch, Richard Grason, John Pullain, Edmund Thompson, William Turner, and Thomas Warter (or Walter). See Census. John Veron, being French and thus omitted from the list of exiles, is also omitted from this list. He was ordained deacon and priest, August 1551, and fled to the Continent.
⁷ Ibid. p. 110.
⁸ That is, remaining of the total of 116 Edwardine bishops and clergy combined, of whom 24 fled.
government, that in its early stages (to the late autumn, probably, of 1554) William Cecil and Stephen Gardiner actually appear as collaborators in the same religious enterprise. A fortuitous but fateful partnership. Were they aware of each other’s immediate purposes? For to both alike a protestant withdrawal to the continent at this juncture seemed to offer the only practical solution of the religious problem: to Cecil it meant the survival of protestantism; to Gardiner, the survival of England. Gardiner we suspect of having been cognizant of what was afoot from the beginning, and of welcoming Cecil’s design as a godsend. It cannot have been Renard alone who knew in September that there were ‘plottings, discontent, and secret communings between the hardened followers of that sect; . . . .’ \(^1\) But whether or not he successfully deceived Cecil by his subsequent violence of manner and show of obstruction, who can say? Perhaps not even Cecil to himself. Yet in this Gardiner was only the opportunist looking to rid the realm of a seditious element which threatened its stability; and in a few months’ time the exodus he facilitated was to become a boomerang destructive of his purpose. Cecil, on the other hand, shows himself the statesman, building by the same means for a greater future. His project was in effect the movement of a potential commonwealth, whose machinery of transit was by mid-January already set in motion.

The very word ‘machinery’ used in connection with the Marian Exile would seem to be an anachronism. Still more unexpected is the modern part played by London bankers in its operation. From the beginning the project was heavily backed by English merchants,\(^2\) men no doubt honest in their protestantism, but probably not uninfluenced by hopes of a secular future in which trade would be untrammelled. Possibly as early as December 1553 a committee of Ways and Means had been organized in London, consisting of twenty-six persons of wealth and influence, both men and women, who were known as the ‘Sustainers’.\(^3\) Five of them were merchants

\(^1\) Span. Cal. 1553, p. 217: Renard etc. to the Emperor, 9 September 1553.

\(^2\) Forty went into exile themselves. See Census.

\(^3\) Strype, Mem. iii, i, 224
who already had commercial affiliations with the cities of the Empire, especially with Strasbourg. These five, together with a certain Richard Chambers, possibly a gentleman of Northamptonshire and certainly a man of wealth, agreed to finance one of the cardinal purposes of the exodus—the education abroad, in an atmosphere unpolluted by idolatry, of a body of students of divinity who, it was intended, should one day become the clergy of a reformed Anglican Communion. On 24 February 1554 Peter Martyr wrote from Strasbourg to Bullinger, ‘English youths have come over to us in great numbers within these few days, partly from Oxford, and partly from Cambridge; whom many godly merchants are bringing up to learning, that, should it please God to restore religion to its former state in that kingdom, they may be of some benefit to the church of England.’

Under what condition these youths crossed the Channel, whether singly or in groups, we have no trustworthy evidence to say, but we do know that, once abroad, they are found organized into companies which show every evidence of preliminary planning. Each company travels, for example, under a leader and is inevitably preceded by a courier sent ahead to make provision for it at its destination. A case in point is that of the English colony at Zurich. Whether this was the first settlement to be thus organized we cannot say. Possibly Emden preceded it. But it is certainly the first for which we have an authentic date. On 5 April (1554) Henry Bullinger notes in his diary that a party of ten Englishmen, ‘exules studiosi Angli’, made their appearance in the city and,
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immediately as it would seem, established themselves in a house belonging to Froschauer the printer,¹ where they lived henceforth as if ‘in collegio’.² Their coming had not been unexpected. On the previous 10 March,³ Thomas Lever, late Master of St John’s College, Cambridge,⁴ had arrived with a letter of introduction to Bullinger from John Burcher, an English merchant then living at Strasbourg.⁵ And having in his two weeks’ stay secured for them a house and a servant,⁶ Lever then went on to Geneva.⁷ The precise dates given by Bullinger are extremely valuable as an indication of the time when the party must have left England. Ordinarily the journey to Switzerland was a matter of a month to six weeks according to the time of year and the number of travellers. A man alone might do it in a month;⁸ a group seldom if ever accomplished the trip in less than six weeks.⁹ Thus to arrive on 5 April the ‘students’ can hardly have left London later than the first of March, while Lever, even granting his ability to travel faster, must have started by the first week in February, or even more probably, upon the evidence of Peter Martyr’s letter quoted above,¹⁰ as early as January. In either case it is obvious that the movement to Germany had begun not only before the deprivations of March, but even well
dwell together [i.e. in Froschauer’s house], the rest remaine here and there with good men’. Neither Beaumont nor Carvell appears in the official list (Orig. Let. ii, 752).

¹ This was situated ‘zu der hinteren Linden, hinder der Trüw und vorderen Linden’ (Diarium, p. 46). It is now Stüssihofstatt 13 (Th. Vetter, Relations between England and Zürich, etc. (1904), p. 54).  
² Diarium, p. 46.  
³ Ibid.  
⁴ In November 1551: Strype, Mem. ii, ii, 267.  
⁵ Dated 3 March 1554, Orig. Let. ii, 685.  
⁶ The exiles’ consideration for this housekeeper of theirs, who was the widow of a preacher, is one of the pleasanter episodes of the exile; cf. Orig. Let. i, 126 and Zur. Let. i, 136; ii, 108–9.  
⁸ Cf. ibid. p. 154.  
¹⁰ Lever had certainly reached Strasbourg before 3 March (see above), and he was very likely leader of the party of students from Cambridge whose arrival Martyr notes on 24 February.
before the proclamation against foreigners of 17 February. And this fact lends additional confirmation to the belief that the withdrawal took place in accordance with some definite plan of action adopted earlier still. The character of the group itself supports the conjecture. For it was no heterogeneous company that came to Zurich, such as the accidents of flight might have brought together, but one which had manifestly been carefully selected. All of them were men of learning, representing the two Universities.\(^1\) And at their head was a leader of some eminence, Robert Horne, late dean of Durham, to whom Bullinger gives the title of ‘senior’;\(^2\) Associated with Horne, not only now but throughout the entire period of exile, we find the wealthy layman, Richard Chambers, called by Bullinger ‘oeconomus et pater’;\(^3\) It was Chambers, always in company with Horne, who ‘bore the bag’, that is, acted as treasurer of the common funds for all the English communities until their return to England. And such was the authority evidently attached to his office, that at Frankfort it was feared that he and Horne, ‘they 2 together [might come to] exercise...a moste vnworthie lordshipp ouer the poore, and by them all other...’;\(^4\) a dictatorial power most detrimental to the autonomy enjoyed by each separate colony.\(^5\)

So much for the English community at Zurich. Full six months before the first martyr suffered at the stake,\(^6\) five other colonies established in much the same manner,\(^7\) and further organized as religious congregations upon the Genevan model, had come into existence in Germany. The presumption is strong that they were not isolated settlements due to chance, but units in one carefully devised system.

Thus the character of the exodus would in itself seem to

\(^1\) Thomas Lever, as we have said, had been Master of St John’s College, Cambridge; James Pillington, a Fellow of the same College. Thomas Bentham, Laurence Humphrey, John Mullins, Michael Renninger and Thomas Spencer, were all ex-Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford; while William Cole, a former Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, was later to become its first married president. For further details see the Census.

\(^2\) *Diarium*, p. 46.  \(^3\) *Ibid.*  \(^4\) *Troubles*, p. 167.

\(^5\) At the close of formal letters from the English ‘Students’ to the magistrates of Zurich the signatures of Horne and Chambers usually appear together and alone.

\(^6\) John Rogers, on 4 February 1555.  \(^7\) See below, pp. 47–9.