CHAPTER I

LORD WRIOTHESLEY'S INFANCY[1]

HENRY, LORD WRIOTHESLEY, second of the Christian name and third of the title, came as the Son of Consolation to his parents on the 6th of October, 1573. His father, the second Earl of Southampton, a noted recusant, had suffered much discomfort and a very severe illness through his imprisonment in the Tower for the matter of the Duke of Norfolk. His mother Mary, daughter of Sir Anthony Browne, first Viscount Montague, had suffered nearly as much, through her intense sympathy, constant anxiety, and never-resting efforts on his behalf to move the Queen to mercy. At last the tide turned in his favour. On the 1st of May, 1573, Southampton was allowed to go forth from the Tower to the comparatively comfortable house of Sir William More in Loseley, where he had previously been detained. There he still fretted against captivity, and his petitions were strengthened by Sir William More, who found the office of jailor incompatible with his other public duties. In July the disconsolate Earl was suddenly permitted to rejoin his wife and friends, under the hospitable roof of his father-in-law, where he was subject to no further supervision than that of Lord Montague, and was permitted even to go and see his building operations at Dogmarsfield[2], if he made sure he never spent more than one night out of Cowdray. The kindness of Lady More to the captive had roused the gratitude of Lady Southampton, and the relations of Sir William More to his charge had always been friendly. Thus it was first to Loseley that the great news went forth post, on the 6th of October, "Yt has so hapned by the sudden seizing of my wife today, we could not by possibility have your wife present, as we desired. Yet have I thought goode to imparte unto you such comforte as God hath sente me after all my longe troubles, which is that this present morning at three of the clock, my wife was delivered of a goodly boy (God bless him.)...Yf your wife will take the paynes to visit her, we shall be mighty glad of her company. From Cowdray this present Tuesday

[1] As to ancestral matters, see also *Addenda*. [2] *Loseley Papers*, IV. 16.

1573. Your assured frend H. Southampton."[1] Thus was the only son[2] of the second Earl of Southampton born, not at Titchfield, but at Cowdray, the house of his mother's people. This "goodly boy" was the first grandson born to the Viscount Montague, and it is certain that he had as much attention and care as was good for him. Besides all that the loving care of his mother could shower upon him, there was the experience of her stepmother, the Viscountess Montague[3], a notable authority in the bringing up of children. It is strange that there has been preserved no record of his baptism. He must have been "made a Christian" in a much more modest way than his father was, who had a King and a Queen as sponsors; but there appears to be no later allusion to the godparents of the young Lord. It must be taken for granted that the ceremony was performed after the ritual of the Catholic church, and that his sponsors were chosen from among his father's friends, rather for his spiritual strengthening than his worldly advancement. The Registers of Titchfield for that period are not extant. We know very little about the young Lord's childhood; but the first event that could have at all affected him was the visit of his parents to London. Whether the Earl of Southampton had been summoned to Court to be admonished and finally forgiven, or whether he had received permission to visit his mother, the Lady Jane, we know not. But we know that he went, and meant to make it a happy pilgrimage by inviting his father-in-law and his brother-in-law to accompany him, probably leaving the child, at that early age, under the kind supervision of the Viscountess Montague. He wrote to Sir William More, "Although I have lately divers wayes pestered your howse yet sins your request is so, I mynd, God willing, with my wife, to be with you in our journey towards London on Tuesday even sennight and my brother Anthony Browne and his wiffe in my company. My Lord Montague upon this occasion is not coming, 1st November, 1573."[4] The young people would go to London together, but would probably separate at London Bridge, the

[1] *Loseley Papers*, IV. 18.
[2] It has always been said he was "the second son," but there is no authority for that. The error must have begun in confusing the second with the first Henry.
[3] See her *Life* by the Rev. Richard Smith.
[4] *Loseley Papers*, IV. 21 and X. 51.

Brownes going to their town house, St Mary Overies, the Wriothesleys to Southampton House in Holborn.

Anthony Browne was the eldest son and heir-apparent of Cowdray by Viscount Montague's first marriage to Jane, daughter of Robert, Earl of Sussex, and he was the only full-brother of the Lady Mary, Countess of Southampton. The Southamptons seem to have returned and spent some time longer at Cowdray, where, four months afterwards, another grandson came to the Viscount. Anthony Browne had married, the year before, Mary, the daughter of Sir William Dormer, and lived in Riverbank House, a dwelling which had been built for their use in Cowdray Park. There was born in March 1574 Anthony Maria Browne—afterwards heir. We may imagine the meeting of the two babes, when the new-comer at Riverbank was first brought over to his inheritance at Cowdray, their staring at each other with dim sub-conscious intelligence. The Wriothesley interloper had the advantage of four months, a period long enough to instil into the infant's mind a sense of possession and a scorn of new-comers smaller than himself. Four months gives a great precedence in the first year of life.

I have been able to find only two MS. references to the Wriothesley baby during his whole childhood. The first is in the will of his grandmother, the Lady Jane, 26th July, 1574[1]. By it she left various bequests "to my Son's son, Harrye, Lord Wriothesley." That gives us at least the clue to his baby-name, and a reference to his baby "expectations." We know nothing, except by its results, of the child's education up to a certain date, save that it must have been equal to his rank and conducted on strictly Catholic lines.

The other allusion to the child is made in relation to a painful episode in the family history. The Earl of Southampton was taken into favour again and was given certain county offices to perform, which, with his own interests in house-building and farming, seem to have placidly filled his time. He and his wife seem to have continued on affectionate terms until about 1577, and then some misunderstanding arose, fostered by constant mischief-making through the Earl's gentleman servants, the chief of whom was Thomas Dymock. The Earl secluded himself more and more among his followers and estranged himself from his wife; he would

[1] Martyn, 43.

have no communication with her, except verbally through the servants who had been the cause of the continuance, if not of the initiation, of the Earl's bad feeling. The friends of the Countess became anxious; her father wrote her a long letter asking her to explain fully her position and confess to what degree she was to blame. Unfortunately that letter has disappeared. But the full and frank reply of the poor wife has been preserved, which must be read in full to be understood in so far as she was concerned. The postscript mentions the child[1]. "That yowr Lordship shalbe witnes of my desier to wyn my Lorde by all such meanes as resteth in me, I have sent yowe *what I sent him by my little boye*. Butt his harte was too greate to bestowe the reading of it, coming from me. Yett will I do my parte so longe as I am with him, but good my Lorde, procure so soone as conveniently yowe may, some end to my miserie for I am tyred with this life." It is to be regretted that the enclosed letter has not been preserved.

By later correspondence we learn that she never saw her boy again during the life-time of his father, who kept him with himself and his servants.

This letter forces the reader to sympathise with the Countess, to long to hear how the Earl could explain his conduct, and to wonder if he could possibly put himself in the right. He leaves nothing further than his will, and that only puts him still further in the wrong. It is dated the 24th of June, 1581, and is very long[2].

In it he describes himself as in "health and perfect memory," though its contents belie this statement, for they shew him to have disregarded time, place, circumstances, and the amount available to be distributed. The uses of the money are limited by an indenture made on 10th May, 1568, between the testator and the Viscount Montague and others deceased, "until the issue male of the testator should come to the age of 21 years."

One thousand pounds were to be devoted to monuments, one of his father and mother and the other of himself. His funeral was not to cost more than another thousand. A liberal allowance to the poor was to be paid as promptly as possible, that they might pray for his soul and the souls of his ancestors. He left a ring to the Queen;

[1] Cotton MS., Titus, bk. II. art. 174, f. 366.
[2] Rowe, 45.

"beseeching her to be good to my little infants, whom I hope to be good servants and subjects of her Majesty and of the State."[1] He left liberal allowances to servants and friends, and to his daughter Mary £2000, if she obeys his executors *and does not live in the same house as her mother.*

As an afterthought, he remembered the father-in-law to whom he owed so much, by leaving him a George and a Garter, which could not have been his own, as he never had been made Knight of the Order, and it could not have been his father's, as the first Earl left his to Sir William Pembroke. He left as executors Charles Paget, brother to Lord Paget, Edward Gage of Bartley Co. Sussex, Gilberd Wells of Brainebridge Co. Southampton, Ralph Hare, bencher of the Inner Temple, and "lastly my good and faithful servant Thomas Dymock, Gent." For "overseers" he appointed "Henry Earl Northumberland, my Lord Thomas Paget and my loving brother Thomas Cornwallis."

Of course, the bulk of the property was to come to his son Henry. The will also gives information as to his relatives on his father's side—his sister Katharine, Lady Cornwallis, his sister Mabel Sandys, his aunts Lawrence, Pound, and Clerke, his cousin John Savage, son of Sir John Savage, and others.

From a fulsome panegyric on the Earl of Southampton by John Phillipps, called an "Epitaph,"[2] we learn that both of his children were with him at the last, that he lovingly blessed them, and that they wept and wailed at his death. The account was evidently intended to pass by the wife, though "In wedlock hee observed the vow that hee had made."

The Earl of Southampton died at Itchell, a house of his not far from Titchfield, on 4th October, 1581, when his son and heir was two days short of completing his eighth year. He was buried on 30th November in Titchfield Church beside his mother Jane, the first Countess of Southampton of that creation.

Little public notice was taken of his departure. Camden even mistakes the year in which he died; Dugdale says, "His well wishes towards the marriage of the Duke of Norfolk and Mary Queen of Scots, to whom and to whose religion he stood not a little affected, occasioned him no little trouble." Once he is mentioned

[1] *Addenda.* [2] *Huth Ballads*, 58.

with flattery in literature. In that strange book[1] *Honour in its perfection* the notice of the third Earl is prefaced by an account of the first Earl, his grandfather. "After this noble Prince succeeded his sonne Henry Earle of Southampton, a man of no lesse vertue, promesse and wisedom, ever beloved and favoured of his Prince, highly reverenced and favoured of all that were in his own ranke, and bravely attended and served by the best gentlemen of those countries wherein he lived; his muster roll never consisted of foure lackeys and a coachman, but of a whole troupe of at least a hundred well-mounted gentlemen and yeomen. He was not known in the streets by guarded liveries, but by gold chains, not by painted butterflies ever runing as if some monster pursued them, but by tall goodly fellowes that kept a constant pace, both to guard his person, and to admit any man to their Lord which had serious business. This Prince could not steale or drop into an ignoble place, neither might doe anythinge unworthy of his great calling, for he ever had a world of testimonies about him. When it pleased the divine goodnesse to take to his mercy this great Earle he left behinde to succeede him Henry Earle of Southampton his sonne, being then a child."[2]

[1] By Gervase Markham.

[2] The Earl of Southampton was summoned to repair the roads in St Andrew's, Holborn, near his own house in 1578 (Coram Rege Roll, Hilary 20 Eliz. f. 119) and 1580. The summons was repeated again and again to his heir (Controlment Rolls, Trin. 22–23 Eliz. f. 94, et seq.).

A later reference should be given here to throw some light upon the beginning of Lady Southampton's troubles. A Catholic in Brussels, writing to a friend, warns him against Charles Paget, who is still "tampering in broils and practices between friend and friend, man and wife, Prince and Prince . . . I will overpass his youthful crimes, as the unquietness he caused betwixt the late Earl of Southampton and his wife, yet living." (D.S.S.P. Eliz. CCLXXI. 74, July 4–14, 1599, et seq.).

THE SOUTHAMPTON MONUMENT, TITCHFIELD CHURCH

CHAPTER II

THE BOYHOOD OF THE EARL

It is never an easy thing to step into a great estate, and in the sixteenth century the difficulties were much increased for those under age. Henry Wriothesley, the third Earl of Southampton, would become in due order a Royal Ward; but the Queen would either sell his Wardship and Marriage, or bestow it as a gift on some of her favourites. It was probably as such that she bestowed it on Lord Charles Howard, Lord High Admiral.

Then began arithmetical calculations of an abstruse nature, dull enough for readers even after the details have been mastered, but still necessary to consider, as they have a direct bearing on the future career of the minor.

It is a little difficult to estimate the true character of the Thomas Dymock who had so bewitched his master that he was practically left, at the Earl's death, "the man in possession." He might have been a man of good intentions, confused only by a blind devotion to his master and obedience to his wishes, instead of the evil spirit that Lady Southampton and others described. Whatever he really was, he took the first step towards settlement. Without consulting his fellow executors, Lord Montague the next of kin, or Lord Paget the "overseer," he set off alone to prove the will in which he was so much personally concerned. It might be that he innocently needed ready money to keep the house going, to prepare for the funeral, and to pay at once for the volumes of prayers necessary to free his master's soul, as soon as possible, from purgatorial fires. It might have been, on the other side, a feverish haste to get his own affairs and those of his favourites settled, for he knew well there would not be sufficient assets to cover all, for years to come.

It was a good lesson for him, and a great advantage for the other legatees, that the Registrar in Chief then refused to allow him to prove the will.

The widowed lady whom he had so deeply wronged had at last bestirred herself in earnest. She was no longer held back from publicity by the lingering ties of old affection, no longer afraid to befoul her own nest, to help her own children. She had no fear of fighting the "dead hand" which tried to dominate and humiliate her.

She had many personal friends; so had her father. With her acute intelligence the Countess saw that nothing could be done now for herself, but that a very great deal could yet be done for her children. This could only be done by or through the Queen herself. The Crown had a right to protect the person of the heir and to superintend the settlement of his property, and in face of such a flagrant defiance of justice and precedent as the late Earl's will the Crown, and the Crown alone, could ignore in certain points the wishes of the testator. But the Crown had to be dealt with warily. In spite of his own offensive marriage, and of the Queen's French suitors, the Earl of Leicester was still the man best able to do this successfully. He could carry the Council with him; he was doubly related to Lady Southampton's family, he had helped her husband before, at her request, and he had offered again to help her if need be now; so he would be sure to do the best he could for her. She made up her mind to write first to the Earl of Leicester[1]. He liked to be consulted first, Burleigh could bide his time.

She wrote, accordingly[2], as early as she could reasonably have done so, only ten days after the death of her husband.

[1] The knowledge of how she did so came into my hands in this way. Searching as I did for everything concerning the name, I found in the *Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission* a reference to letters written by the Countess of Southampton to the Earl of Leicester in 1592. Knowing that she could not have written them then, or at least that he could not have received them, I applied to the owner of the letters, Capt. Charles Cottrell-Dormer of Rousham, to let me see them, and was kindly allowed to go down and copy them for myself. I cannot understand how these letters got to Rousham; neither does the present possessor. The Countess of Southampton's brother Anthony had married Mary, daughter of Sir William Dormer; her step-sister Elizabeth married Sir Robert Dormer, afterwards Baron Dormer of Wing. The Dormer family were also related to Lord Leicester, but it is difficult to account for these special letters travelling from the Earl of Leicester's study to the possession of the Dormers.

[2] I found, as I expected, that the secretary had committed an error in date. Apparently the first of the Countess's letters dated "14th October," and *endorsed* "1582," *must* have been written in 1581.