

XXIX. *An Account of the Confinement of Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, by Order of Queen Elizabeth, in 1570, first at the house of Alderman Becher, in London, and then at Loseley in Surrey, the seat of Wm. More, Esq. (afterwards Sir Wm.) taken from Original Papers there preserved, and now in the possession of James More Molyneux, Esq. the representative of that Family (1819.) Communicated by Wm. BRAY, Esq. Treasurer.*

Read 11th Nov. 1819.

MR. CAMDEN, in his History of Queen Elizabeth, says that on the 7th Sept. 1571, the Duke of Norfolk was sent to the Tower (from whence he had been released a year before) on account of some practices with the Queen of Scots; and says, “Afterwards Banister who was the Duke’s Counsellor of Law, the Earls of Arundell and *Southampton*, the Lord Lumley, the Lord Cobham and Thomas his brother, Henry Percy, Lowder, Powell, Goodyer, and others, were committed to prison, who *every one of them*, in hopes of pardon, confessed what they knew.”

This account, with respect to the Earl of Southampton,^a is certainly a mistake. In 1569 the Duke of Norfolk had been sent to the Tower, but in 1570 had been released; there is no mention of the Earl of Southampton having been committed on this occasion, and that he was not so on the Duke’s being again sent to the Tower in Sept. 1571 is proved by authentic documents in the possession of James More Molyneux, Esq. at Loseley, which shall be stated here.

^a Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield, married Mary daughter of Sir Anthony Browne, viscount Mountague, by whom he had a son Henry, born at Cowdray, in 1573, as will be after mentioned. The Earl was a Roman Catholic.

The Earl lay under suspicion of being concerned with the Duke in the matters for which the latter had been the first time sent to the Tower, or had by some means incurred the Queen's displeasure, for before the Duke was again imprisoned the Earl was committed to the custody of Mr. Becher, one of the Sheriffs of London and an Alderman of that city, by a warrant from the Privy Council, dated Hampton Court, 16th June 1570; from thence he was removed, by a like warrant dated 15th July following, to the house of Wm. More, Esq. at Loseley before mentioned, where he continued till July 1573, and was then suffered to go to the house of the Lord Viscount Mountague (whose daughter he had married) at Cowdray in Sussex.

It is therefore quite clear that the Earl was not sent to the Tower at the time mentioned by Camden, and it is nowhere said that he had been committed with the Duke the first time.

The warrant for his commitment to the custody of the Alderman states, "that the Queen having just cause given her to conceive some displeasure towards this Earl, had thought good to commit him to his charge and custody until it should like her otherwise to determine;" and the Alderman was required to receive him and cause him to be lodged in some convenient place in his house, where he should remain without having conference with any, and only to have one man of his own, such as he should choose to attend upon him till her Majesty's further pleasure should be known.^a

Some verbal directions were given, as the Alderman wrote to Mr. More, when his lordship was delivered to the custody of the latter, viz. that the Earl should neither write nor receive any letter without its being seen by the Alderman; and that when strangers were out of the house, the Earl might walk in the garden, the Alderman or a trusty servant being with him.

The Plague was at this time in London, and the Alderman seems to have taken advantage of that circumstance to get rid of such a

^a A Copy of this warrant signed W. Howard, H. Knowllys, Will. Cecille, was sent by the Alderman to Mr. More.

guest by alarming the Earl, on whose representation to the Council an order was made for removing him into the country, to Mr. More's house at Loseley. This order is dated at Otelands, 15 July 1570, addressed to Wm. Moore, Esq. and stating the commitment to the custody of the Alderman, that the Queen was not yet resolved on the Earl's full liberty, but understanding that the Plague was somewhat near the Alderman's house, that the Earl was not in good health, of which she was careful, had graciously accorded that the Earl should be removed, and should remain with Mr. More under his charge; the Council therefore require Mr. More to repair to the Alderman's house in London, receive the Earl and convey him to Mr. More's house by Guildford, there to remain under his charge till her Majesty shall determine for his further liberty; in the mean time to be kept as at Mr. Becher's, except that here he might have one or two servants to attend on him in his chamber, without conference with any other, and further as Mr. More should learn from Mr. Becher.

A Postscript is added that the expenses of the Earl were to be at his own charges.*

At the same time the Council signed an order to Mr. Becher to deliver the Earl to Mr. More, informing him of the order in which he had been appointed to keep the Earl.

The Alderman lost no time in applying to More to relieve him from his charge; the next day (being Sunday) he sent a copy of the order which he had received, to deliver the Earl to him; the application for the Earl's removal had been on account of the Plague being near the Alderman's house, but he writes on this occasion to Mr. More that God be thanked his parish was clear, and any near adjoining, but that the deaths in London had increased by twenty-four in the last week, which made my lord very desirous to be out of the city, and he hopes that Mr. More will come the next day, to be gone on Tuesday; that he should set his horses at Lambeth, where the Earl's were, ready.

* From the original warrant signed R. Leycester, E. Clynton, W. Howard, F. Knollys, James Croft, W. Cecill.

His lordship sent his servant to Mr. More, with the Council's order, and a letter from himself, in which he says, "you shall perceive that
 " I am appointed to continue with you for a time ; I assure you your
 " guest cometh with no very good will, as having rather to be at my
 " own house, if it had pleased them, but since it is their pleasure :
 " otherwise I am glad they have placed me with so honest a gentle-
 " man and my friend," and desires him to come on the morrow.

It does not appear on what day the Earl went to Loseley, but by a letter from the lord Viscount Montague to Mr. More, dated 24 July 1570, we find that he was there at that time. The Viscount encloses a letter to the Earl, which Mr. More will deliver or stop as saw fit.

Mr. More soon began to be tired of his guest, as Mr. Becher had been, and on 8th Aug. (1570) he wrote to Lord Wm. Howard, Lord Chamberlain to the Queen, a friend of his, representing the inconvenience he was put to and the restraint on his liberty, that he could neither visit his lordship nor travel in the execution of a public commission, in which he had been joined with Mr. Onslow and Mr. Browne ; that he had gone to the Court at Osterley to pray the Lords of the Council to discharge him, and intreating his lordship's assistance.

Lord William answered this letter the next day, saying that when the matter was first moved at the Council Board he had spoken in his behalf, but prevailed not ; that for his good will to visit him, he most heartily thanked him, and accepted the good will as much as if he had taken that travail. As to the Commission, although Mr. More's presence might further it, yet having such an occasion he may be very well spared, the rather for that there are others sufficient to perform the Queen's expectation in that behalf ; that as to the continual keeping his house, as well to avoid all conference with the Earl out of his hearing, as to see the letters which the Earl received or sent, he (Mr. More) did very well therein, for in those two points consisted the greatest part of his charge.

It seems that Mr. More had remonstrated with Mr. Becher on his having represented to the Council, in order to get the Earl removed,

that the Plague was coming near his house, and yet writing to Mr. More that he might come with safety to fetch him, as the distemper was not in his parish, or in other places very near adjoining; for on the 14th Aug. (1570) the Alderman writes to Mr. More, endeavouring to reconcile this contradiction.

There are several letters from Lord Montague to Mr. More, making anxious inquiries after the Earl's release. In one of 5th Sept. 1570 he thanks Mr. More for having applied to the Earl of Leycester on his behalf, and requesting his further assistance, says that Lord Southampton and himself shall always remember his kindness. In another, dated the last of October, he says that he hears a Pursuivant was at Loseley with letters touching the Earl, whether for good or no he knew not, more than that by his (the Earl's) message, his wife had cause to hope the best; if there did not appear to Mr. More any likelihood of his discharge, he prays him to send word what he thinks, that his (the Earl's) wife may for discharge of her duty make suit as she may.

The errand of the Pursuivant mentioned in the preceding letter, was to bring a letter from the Privy Council to Mr. More, dated 23d Oct. 1570, requiring him to signify to them whether the Earl of Southampton comes to Common Prayer or not, and in case he has not so done, they require Mr. More, as of himself, to move and persuade him thereunto, and to advertise them of what he hath done, or shall do, and his answer thereupon.^a

The applications to Lord Wm. Howard and the Earl of Leycester were fruitless, but Mr. More persevered and wrote to Mr. Secretary Cecill, with what effect cannot be ascertained, as, in the copy kept by Mr. More, the date is omitted, but it seems it had no effect, as the Earl remained at Loseley till July 1573.

The next document we find is a letter from the Privy Council to Mr. More, dated 5th May 1573, in which they signify the Queen's

^a From the original letter, signed W. North, F. Bedford, R. Leycester, W. Howard, F. Knollys, James Croft, W. Cecill, Wa. Mildmay.

pleasure that the Earl should be set at more liberty, that his wife, other friends and servants should have access to him; that he should be suffered to go abroad with them sometimes for taking the air, Mr. More being with him; that he might now and then go to a house of his in Hampshire which he was then building, Mr. More going with him, and they returning to Loseley at night. They say that Mr. More was not to be charged in any respect with his diets, or otherwise, but that the Earl either should bear them himself or see Mr. More well satisfied and contented, as to his estate and in right appertaineth.^a

This was soon followed by a permission for the Earl to go to his father in law, the Viscount Montague, at Cowdray, dated 14th July 1573, in which he has leave to repair to the house he was building, as he did when at Mr. More's, but by reason of the distance from Cowdray, he had leave to stay one night at a time.^b

Irksome and burthensome as this confinement must have been to Mr. More, the conduct of both parties was such as to establish a mutual esteem and friendship. This appears by several letters from the Earl and his wife. One from the Countess to Mrs. More inquires after her little Mall (probably one of Mr. More's daughters) pressing for her coming to Cowdray, adding, "I send your good husband and you ten thousand commendations with no less thanks for all the great courtesy which for my part I acknowledge myself to have received at your hand, for the which I rest your debtor, ready in good will to requyte it when any occasion shall be offered. Farewell good Mrs. More with all my heart: good Mrs. Polsted I must not forget. I wish me with you every day an hour or two."

The Earl himself writes from Cowdray; "after my hearty commendations to you and your good wife, tho' it is so happened by

^a From the original, signed W. Burghley, E. Lyncoln, T. Sussex, R. Leycester, T. Smith, R. Sadleir, Wa. Mildmay.

^b From the copy given to Mr. More by the Earl, signed W. Burghley, T. Sussex, F. Bedford, R. Leycester, F. Knollys, F. Smyth.

“ the sudden taking of my wife that we could not have her present as
“ we desired, yet have I thought good to imparte unto you such
“ comfort as God hath sent us after all my long troubles, which is,
“ that this present morning at 3 o’clock, my wife was delivered of a
“ goodly boy (God bless him) the which although it was not without
“ great peril to both, yet they are, I thank God, in a good state. If
“ your wife will take the pains to visit her, we shall be right glad of
“ her company. And so with my hearty commendations to your son
“ Polsted and his wife and to good Mr. T if he be with you, I
“ end for this time, bidding you heartily farewell. From Cowdray,
“ this present Tuesday, 1573.” (The month omitted.)

He died 4th Oct. 1581, leaving the son mentioned in the above letter his heir.