

alive in Denmark; while his present master, Mr. Foster, of Crowe West, in Surrey, had told him that 'her majesty did say she would gladly hear whether her brother King Edward were dead or alive.' Notwithstanding the wild improbability of this story, Lillie thought the matter of sufficient consequence to be reported to the chancellor of the university, Lord Buckhurst, high treasurer of England. He added, however, 'the man is a very simple person, a common wanderer against the law, and little better than a natural,' and asked what should be done with him. Lord Buckhurst scribbled on the back of the letter a memorandum—'Oxford matters. To speak with Mr. Vicechan. of Oxon. or write to him,' and there the affair ends. History seems to be silent as to the fate of Thomas Vaughan, and his romantic story of 'the late king' appears to have died with him.

MARGARET E. CORNFORD.

Thomas Cobham and the Capture of the 'St. Katherine.'

A story is told by Froude of the way in which Thomas Cobham dealt with the crew of one of the Spanish ships which he captured in or about 1563. 'Young Cobham,' he says, '... boarding when all resistance had ceased, sewed up the captain himself and the survivors of the crew in their own sails and flung them overboard: '1 and he gives this as evidence of 'the deadly hate which was growing between the rivals for the sovereignty of the ocean.' His authority is a letter written by a Spaniard, Louis Romano, to Cardinal Granvelle, in which it is further stated that the bodies of eighteen of the victims in one of the sails were washed up on the shore of Spain—'cruelty without example, of which but to hear was enough to break the heart.'² Froude's liking for a dramatic story seems to have led him astray, and to have induced him to attribute to Cobham an act of gratuitous cruelty of which he was not guilty. The capture of the 'St. Katherine' and the subsequent trial of Cobham for piracy are well-established facts, but the story of the sail and its ghastly contents, not very probable on the face of it, is seemingly a Spanish invention. The truth is likely to be found in a record³ of the proceedings which were taken in England against Cobham for the piracy at the instance of Guzman de Silva, the Spanish ambassador, with Queen Elizabeth's full knowledge. Thomas Cobham was highly connected and a brother of Lord Cobham, warden of the Ports; it is clear that Philip, perhaps for this reason, intended to make an example of him, and it is improbable that the sail story, if true, would not have come

¹ *History of England*, cabinet ed., vol. viii. p. 80.

² Brit. Mus., Add. MS. 26056A, 20 February 1564.

³ *Adm. Court*, Oyer and Term. 44, 7, 12, 18 July 1565.

out at the trial. But in the depositions of the witnesses, which are extant, there is not a word about it; it was not even suggested to them in cross-examination. Froude cannot be charged with having neglected this record, for it has only recently become accessible; but it is strong evidence that no Spaniard, except perhaps a dead one, was sewn up in a sail.

Cobham himself was examined, and was asked what became of the people on board the 'St. Katherine:' he answers that some went ashore of their own will at Belle Isle. Another witness was one of the Spanish crew (for some of them were certainly brought to Ireland); he says nothing and is asked nothing about the sail. Other witnesses were Jean Baptista de Sambitores and Antonio de Guarras, both prominent Spaniards, resident in England. De Sambitores says that he had talked with one of the Spanish crew, and was told by him that Cobham had kept them all below hatches for seven days, where they were so badly treated that some died. De Guarras, apparently, had heard nothing about the sail, for he says nothing about it. That the captain, Martin Santa de Chaves (or Chavres), was not sewn up is clear from the deposition of William Thackwell, an official of the admiralty court, who was sent over to Ireland to see him; Thackwell swears that the captain 'lay sick at Baltimore, where his ship then was.' Romano was evidently wrong as to the captain and all the survivors being in the sail, and upon the balance of evidence it is probable that he was wrong as to any living Spaniards being sewn up at all. If Froude had seen the English record he probably would not have written that 'this fierce deed of young Cobham was no dream of Spanish slander.' The rest of the story as told by him is true, except for one or two inaccuracies in trifling matters. Martin Frobisher had a hand in the capture of the 'St. Katherine,' and his share in the affair has already been dealt with in these pages.⁴ The capture of a Spanish ship in time of peace with Spain under colour of a commission against French ships, the stiff fight, the trial of Cobham, his refusal to plead, and sentence of *peine forte et dure*, and his survival notwithstanding are historical. The *State Papers, Spanish*, and *State Papers, Foreign*, contain many further particulars of the case. It is there stated⁵ that Cobham was acquitted, for which perverse verdict the jurymen were fined by Elizabeth. There is also a queer statement⁶ by De Silva to Philip that the reason why Cobham was not condemned to death was that he was an ecclesiastic, and by the law of England an ecclesiastic could not be condemned. All this is from Spanish sources, and clearly there is some confusion, but it looks as if Cobham eventually pleaded and escaped by claiming benefit of clergy.

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⁴ *Annals*, vol. xxi. p. 588. ⁵ *Cal. of S.P., Spain* (1565), p. 449. ⁶ *Ibid.* p. 478.