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SIR THOMAS MEAUTYS,

Secretary to Lord Bacon,

AND HIS FRIENDS.

BY

A. Alice CHAMBERS BUNTEN.

ILLUSTRATED WITH PORTRAITS.

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1. Friendship with Lord Bacon.
2. Friendship with Jane, Lady Bacon.
3. Friendship with Charles I.

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FOREWORD.

MY thanks are due to the Earl of Verulam and Lady Sibyl Fraser, for kind permission to use photographs of pictures from The Gorhambury Picture Gallery. I also feel most grateful to many friends for help, and to those clergymen who have been good enough to search the registers of old churches for me.

I only wish more information had been forthcoming about the subject of my sketch.

A. CHAMBERS BUNTEN.

London, January, 1918.

DEDICATED

TO

LIEUT. THOMAS A. MEAUTYS

OF

BURGESS HILL, SUSSEX,

WHOSE KIND HELP ENGOURAGED

THE RESEARCH WORK.

PREFACE.

ALL those, and they are many, who are interested in the name of Sir Francis Bacon—to speak of him by the title by which he will always be best known—owe a debt of gratitude to the authoress of this sketch of Thomas Meautys, who was so closely associated with the Great Chancellor, and of whom nothing, up to the present, was known.

This book, indeed, throws further light on the character of Bacon himself. "No man," it has been said, "is a hero to his valet." The saying is not universally true, but it is certain that Bacon must have been possessed of many amiable qualities to have inspired such lasting esteem and attachment in his Secretary.

The esteem and regard, indeed, seem to have been mutual. Bacon himself alludes to Meautys, in a letter to Buckingham, as part of his riches in adversity—a good servant; and the subsequent disposition of his property proves that these feelings continued till the end.

It is refreshing to find that in the tainted atmosphere of a Court, where the virtues of Gratitude and Fidelity are too often so conspicuously wanting, the faithful servant kept "his loyalty, his love, his zeal" towards his fallen patron, and that neither "numbers nor example with him wrought to change his constant mind."

The temptation to transfer his allegiance to some new patron, whose rising fortunes promised a more successful future, might well have overcome a man of less sterling qualities. But such temptations in vain assailed that loyal heart. In the darkest hour of shame, as formerly in the brightest sunlight of honour, Thomas Meautys so acted as to have deserved the splendid eulogy that James Spedding has pronounced on him. Nor did time efface the sentiments

of friendship and admiration. He proudly recorded on the monument which years later he raised over Bacon's tomb, that he had cultivated the society of so great a man in life, and cherished his memory when he had passed away.

It is to be regretted that even in a trivial matter Meautys should, by a misunderstanding, have been thought wanting in proper feeling for the memory of his friend. The matter is probably capable of a simple explanation. Lady Bacon, Meautys' constant correspondent, had apparently, in some lost note, expressed a desire that his letters should be short and to the point. The reply Meautys sent, which has given rise to this charge of callousness, is a playful example of a letter written in the style her ladyship prefers. Her brother's departure for the Low Countries, her sister-in-law's address, the death of Bacon, the three pieces of information he had to give, are put down in as many lines, very unlike his usual style. The context supplies the explanation, and a poor attempt at jocularity has been mistaken for want of feeling.

After the death of Bacon in 1626, the further fortunes of Meautys will not present so much interest to the general public, for he died before the revival of the drama in England. Had he attained the allotted span, he might perhaps, in the changed atmosphere of the Restoration, have thrown light on some of the problems which perplex the world to-day, for it is almost impossible to suppose that he was not in possession of the fullest information on all that Bacon did and wrote.

But here the region of unprofitable conjecture is reached. Thomas Meautys will be remembered as having had the privilege of the intimate friendship of the greatest man of a century that produced many great men, and as having left an example of what a gentleman's faithful and loyal service to a friend should be.

THOMAS A. MEAUTYS.

B.E.F., France.
6th January, 1918.

DATES.

CHIEF events in the life of Sir Thomas Meautys, K.B., Secretary to Lord Bacon, and Clerk of the Privy Council to James I. and Charles I.

He was the youngest son of Thomas Meautys, of West Ham, Essex, who married Elizabeth Conyngsby. Date of his birth unknown, but probably about 1592. His eldest brother was born in 1585. He was admitted into the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, London, on April 25th, 1608. He became Secretary to Lord Bacon apparently in 1616.

He was a distant cousin of Lord Bacon's.

Made Clerk to His Majesty's Council, March 5th, 1619. He was messenger between Bacon and the King, and the Duke of Buckingham. He entered Parliament and sat for Cambridge Borough, January 10th, 1621, also in 1625, and in 1626, 1628 and 1640—all new Parliaments.

Bacon was degraded 1621.

In 1622 Meautys tried to get the reversion of a Clerkship in the Star Chamber.

February, 1626, Charles I. was crowned.

April 9th, 1626, Lord Bacon died, leaving Gorhambury estate under trustees for the use of Thomas Meautys.

April, 1626. Letter from Thomas Meautys to Jane, Lady Bacon, saying, "My lo: St. Alban is dead and buried." (He never mentions Gorhambury in any letter extant.)

May, 1626, Meautys elected on the "New Council of War."

May, 1626. Secured the office in the Chamber of "Writs and Processes."

The letters extant from Meautys to Jane, Lady Cornwallis, cover a period from January, 1626, to April, 1630. The rest are lost, apparently.

On June 14th, 1626, Meautys was admitted a member of Grays Inn, and took possession of Bacon's chambers there.

In 1633 his brother, Henry Meautys, sold the site of Stratford Abbey in Essex to Sir John Nutts.

March 26th, 1635, Thos. Meautys was elected to the post of Muster Master-General of England.

December, 1638. He was appointed Life Treasurer of the Company of Starchmakers of London.

On April 21st, 1639, Mr. Meautys was ordered to adminster the oath to the Lords present at York. Lords Say and Brook refused to take it. On April 24th he was ordered to enter a declaration to the Lords' satisfaction.

He had to draw up articles for the Claims of Vintners and Coopers, also for the tobacco trade. He took his seat in the Parliament of 1640.

In 1639 he started with Charles I. on his expedition to Scotland, but took ill in York and probably went no further, but returned to London.

In 1639 or 1640 he married Miss Anne Bacon, of Culford and Broome Hall, daughter of Sir Nathaniel Bacon and Jane, Lady Cornwallis or Bacon.

It was probably after his marriage that he erected the monument to Lord Bacon in St. Michael's Church, St. Albans, Hertfordshire.

He was knighted (Knight Bachelor) February 16th, 1641, by Charles I.

His only child, Jane, was baptised April 13th, 1641.

This child died, and was buried April 7th, 1652.

In 1645 the office Meautys held of Clerk to His Majesty's Council Extraordinary became extinct.

Sir Thomas Meautys died October, 1649, nine months after his King was beheaded, and he was buried in St. Michael's Church, St. Albans, in Lord Bacon's vault there, below the altar.

In documents he is described as "Sir Thomas Meautys, of Gorhambury."

On the death of Sir Thomas Meautys, Gorhambury estate was inherited by his daughter Jane, who died in April,

1652; it then passed to his eldest brother, Henry **Meautys.**

Shortly after Sir Thomas **Meautys** died, his widow married Sir Harbottle Grimston.

Sir Harbottle Grimston bought **Gorhambury** estate back from Henry **Meautys**, and resided in it with his wife. His son George lived in the smaller house on the estate called Verulam House, which was afterwards pulled down.

Kinship between Thomas Meautys and Lord Bacon.

THOMAS MEAUTYS the younger (died **1649**) was Secretary to Lord Bacon and Clerk to the King's Privy Council.

His Father was THOMAS MEAUTYS, of West Ham, who married Elizabeth Conyngsby.

His Grandfather was HENRY MEAUTYS, of West Ham, Essex, who married Anne Jerney, of Brightwell, Suffolk.

This last HENRY MEAUTYS had a brother called HERCULES MEAUTYS, who died **1588.**

This HERCULES MEAUTYS married Philippe Cooke, who was a daughter of SIR RICHARD COOKE, of Gidea Hall, Essex.

This SIR RICHARD COOKE (died **1579**), was a son of SIR ANTHONY COOKE, Preceptor of King Edward VI.

This SIR ANTHONY COOKE (died **1576**), had also a daughter, ANNE COOKE, who married SIR NICHOLAS BACON, Lord Keeper to Queen Elizabeth.

ANNE COOKE and SIR NICHOLAS BACON had a son, FRANCIS, who is called LORD BACON.

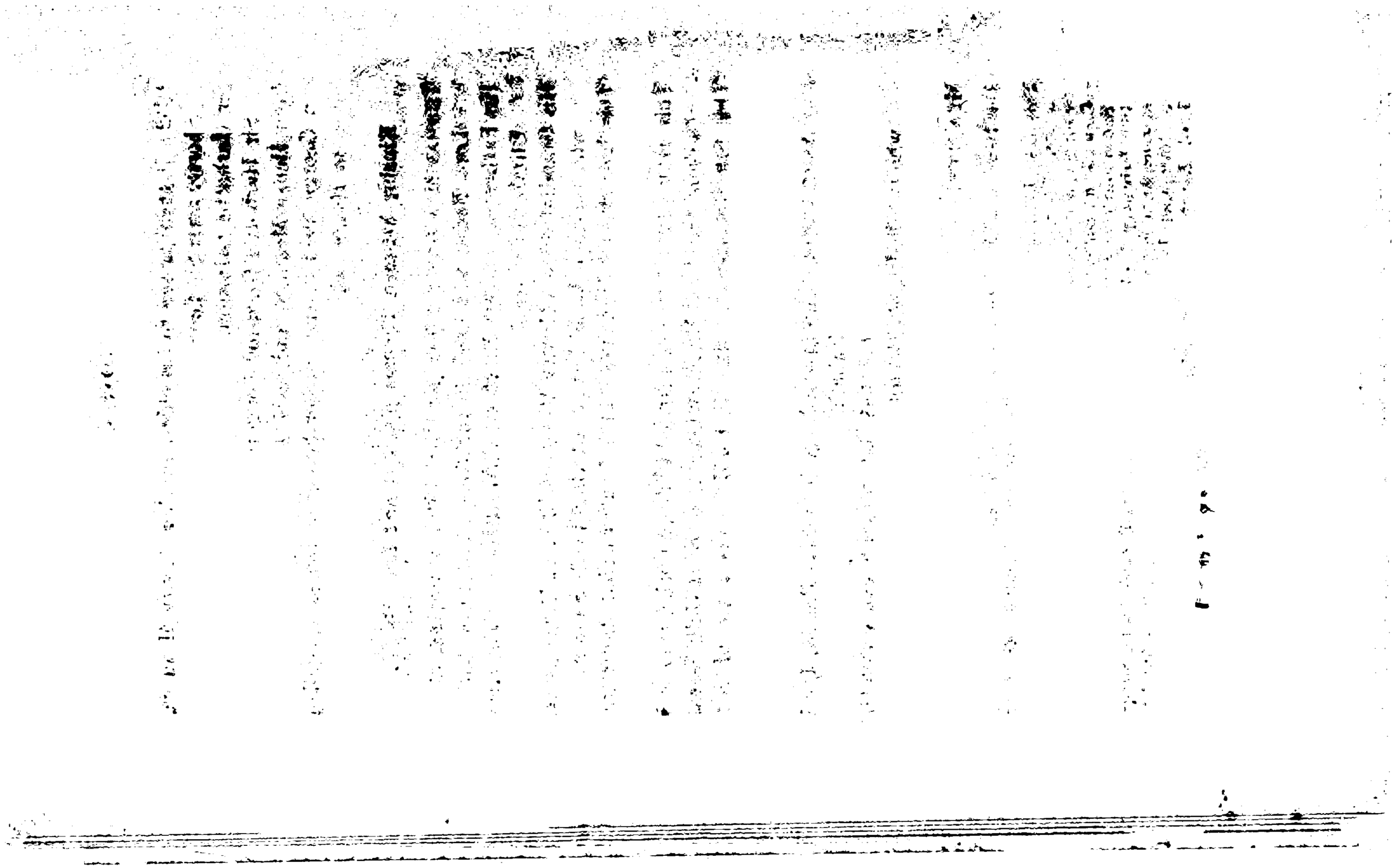
Of the two brothers HENRY MEAUTYS and HERCULES MEAUTYS:

This Henry was father to Thomas Meautys of West Ham.

This last Thomas Meautys had a son, Thomas Meautys the younger, who was Clerk of the Council and Secretary to Lord Bacon and who was knighted 16th February, 1641, and who married Anne Bacon, daughter of Nathaniel Bacon, son of Lord Bacon's half brother, Nicholas.

This Hercules was father to Sir Thomas Meautys the elder (knighted February 8th, 1610) and was also father to Jane, who married, first, Sir William Cornwallis, and secondly, Nathaniel Bacon, youngest son of Lord Bacon's half brother Nicholas Bacon of Redgrave.

Sir Thomas Meautys the elder married Anne Burnebye of Warwickshire in 1625.



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SIR THOMAS MEAUTYS
in Hunting Dress.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS

— OF —

THOMAS MEAUTYS,

Secretary to Sir Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam, Viscount St. Alban.

PART I.

THOMAS MEAUTYS, whose name is occasionally spelt Mewtas, Mewtys, or Meawtas, occupies an important position in the life history of Sir Francis Bacon, popularly known as "Lord Bacon" (1562 to 1626), and he appears to have been his most intimate messenger, friend and kinsman, as well as his heir who finally inherited his property.

There was a strong bond of sympathy between these two, and Meautys supported Lord Bacon with affection and consideration all through the last troublesome years of his life.

In most biographies of our philosopher, the name "Tho^{s} Meautys" appears with far more frequency than that of Dr. William Rawley, the Chaplain.

Lord Bacon, who was his distant cousin through the female branch, made a deed in his favour, and selected him as one of his executors also. In this way most of the papers and MSS. left by Bacon in 1626 would fall into his hands.

We gather in various ways that Meautys was a good horseman and very active. He also showed plenty of moral and physical courage at different times in his life, both before and after Bacon's death, with a fund of commonsense, which carried him through difficult and trying times.

The picture of him, said to be by Van Somer, which visitors see in Gorhambury House, shows a tall, fair-haired man, in the elaborate hunting dress of the day—steel embossed breastplate, feathered cap, leather buskins with spurs, and a rich lace scarf across his shoulders; a sword at his side, and a boar spear in his right hand. A long string attached to the hat, prevents it flying off.

He is wearing in this picture a collar of Charles I. period, and we therefore presume that this was the full ceremonial dress worn as "Master of the Hunt." We have no picture of him in the uniform he would wear as Muster Master of the Troops, to which position he attained on March 26th, 1635. He seems to have risen by his own exertions, and to have received no monetary help from his father or brothers.

His life was a busy one, much occupied with endeavours to assist other people, and he seems to have had but little thought for his own welfare, for he gave away his money unselfishly.

The fair, smiling face shows no indication of the steadfastness of heart, and faithfulness in friendship, which were his great characteristics, and which endeared him to so many of his relatives.

Gratitude he also had, and a strong memory for those he had once known, and loved.

We see that his good qualities were appreciated by the women he came in contact with, but he did not marry till late on in life, and it is much to be regretted that so few of his letters have come down to us, and none from, or to, Anne Bacon, his wife. Any letters still to be found, reveal his warm heart and give us a glimpse of his feelings, especially on the sad occasion of the death of his "sister Glover"; we feel sure that the man who felt such emotion on the death of a sister is certain to have given expression of grief on the loss he sustained when Lord Bacon died, and we hope more letters may still turn up.

On considering the multifarious duties and posts to which Thomas Meautys was appointed, we see also that he must have been a man of extraordinary ability and power of organisation,

which were just the talents to endear him to Lord Bacon, who required a confidential Secretary, not only to help him with his correspondence, but to act as messenger and spokesman with communications for the King and Court, when he (Bacon) occupied the position of Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Lord Chancellor, etc.

Thomas Meautys was most successful in carrying out these delicate duties, and had he written the life of Lord Bacon we should know more of the private doings of our great Englishman; but his own heavy responsibilities in his various appointments evidently prevented him having time to write a biographical sketch of the man he looked up to with such love and veneration, and Dr. Rawley, the Chaplain, was delegated to do this work, which the present generation consider was very inadequately performed.

We cannot do better than quote a paragraph from James Spedding here; a sentence which becomes an epitaph that everyone would be proud to have written over a relative:

"Thomas Meautys—one of the noblest of the noble order of loyal servants—loyal to the full extent of his means and abilities, in adversity as in prosperity, in disgrace as in honour—loyal through life, and beyond it, the creditor who never ceased to be a friend, he well deserves to be introduced in person to those who take any interest in Bacon."

The character of such a man is well worth looking into, and it becomes a pleasure to follow his career, though there is but scanty information accorded to him, and a good deal of search among old documents and papers has been necessary. Before going further it must be stated that his actions have often been confused with those of his second cousin, Sir Thomas Meautys (son of Hercules Meautys, of West Ham, who had married Philippe, daughter of Sir Richard Cooke, of Gidea Hall). This elder Thomas Meautys was knighted in 1610 by King James, and he was much older than Lord Bacon's Secretary, who did not receive his knighthood from Charles I. till February 16th, 1641. The cousins bearing the same name remained close friends and correspondents from boyhood to their death, and it has been difficult to

separate the two lives occasionally; but the confusion is lessened by the fact that the Secretary was not "Sir" Thomas during his patron's lifetime, and he is the subject of the present sketch.

It is only by studying the life of Lord Bacon that we find out what work Thomas Meautys was engaged in, during his earlier years, and the two lives are inextricably mixed.

Bacon's Secretary was the youngest son of Thomas Meautys of West Ham, Essex, by Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Henry Conyngsby, of North Mimms, Hertfordshire, having a grandfather of good Norman stock, Sir Peter Mentis, who was enriched by the spoils of the Church of Stratford Abbey in Essex, and who had been sent as Ambassador to France by Henry VIII., and afterwards knighted by that monarch in 1544.

We learn that a Thomas Conyngsby at one time owned "North Mimms Place," which is a large house built in the form of the letter H, similar to Hatfield House; and that in the North Mimms Church of St. Mary, which is very old, having been founded in 1330, the Conyngsbys reserve to themselves a burying place in the Chapel, and there is a large monument there, without an inscription, belonging to them. During Charles I.'s time, that monarch commanded Thomas Conyngsby to "array the county in the King's service." So the family were occupying a good position in their home county. The old house is now inhabited by a branch of the Burns family.

John Meautas came from Normandy to England with Henry VII., and had a house at Greengate, by Leadenhall, London. He had also a residence in Chelsea, for in 1519 he was appointed Commissioner to search for suspected persons in Chelsea and the neighbourhood, and he certified that at Chelsea nobody lodged there but two servants of my Lord Steward's (Lord Shrewsbury), sent to clean the place, and in a barn, a beggar and his wife. At Knightsbridge was an old man at the sign of "The Rose."

This Meautys is described as "Secretary in the French tongue" to the English Monarch.

His son seems to have been Philip Meautas, who married

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"As to the Abbey itself, King Henry VIII. in 1538 gave the house and site of this Monastery with the Church, Belfry and Churchyard, to Peter Meautis, Esq., and Joane, his wife, and their heirs male."

To continue the family tree, this Sir Peter Meautys, of Stratford Abbey, was grandfather to Thomas Meautys, who was knighted at Whitehall on February 8th, 1610, and who married Anne, daughter of Sir Richard Burnebye, of Warwick. And Sir Peter also stood in the relationship of great-grandfather to Thomas Meautys (Lord Bacon's Secretary), who was knighted at Whitehall by Charles I., February 16th, 1641, and who married Anne, daughter of Nathaniel Bacon. This last inherited Gorhambury estate in Hertfordshire from Lord Bacon, Viscount St. Alban. The parents of Bacon's Secretary had five sons and two daughters.

Henry Meautys, their eldest son, married Elizabeth Glover. The youngest son, Thomas, about 1616 became Secretary to Sir Francis Bacon (as he then was), and a Clerk of the Privy Council, and besides being a member of several Parliaments, as well as holding the office of Clerk of the Writs and Processes in the Star Chamber, he rose to the dignity of "Muster Master of the Troops."

Morant's History says: "It was either this last Henry or his father who sold the site of Stratford Abbey with its appurtenances to Sir John Nutts, who sold it to Peter Knight, and then to Norman Knight."

The arms of Meautys are: Azure, a unicorn rampant, or spotted ermine, with the motto "Par baen servyer."

So we see by this history of the family, that Thomas Meautys was following the traditions of his forefathers in becoming "Clerk to His Majesty's Council Extraordinary," as John Meautys had occupied that position to Henry VII., and Philip, his son, had taken up the same duties under Henry VIII., and for generations the sons had worked well in the interests of England and her rulers.

They were liberally rewarded for their services by their English Kings, and this branch of the French family took root in Britain and became important British subjects,

mingling with the best in the land and making good marriages among the English aristocracy.

As no register notes Thomas Meautys' baptism, we can only presume he was born about 1592, at West Ham, Essex, and the first time his name is mentioned is when he entered Lincoln's Inn, London, and commenced his law studies there.

The record runs as follows: "Admissions: Tho^{s} Mewtys, son of Tho' Mewtys, of St. Jermyns, Herts: arm: special admission 1608, April 25th." A member of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn has kindly sent further particulars in a letter:

"There is no record of Meautys ever being called to the Bar. A good number of men at that time became members of an Inn of Court mainly for the sake of getting Chambers there, and not with the idea of practising. Meautys took a fourth story set in the 'Long Gallery,' with a 'cock-loft' over it, in 1609, for which he paid £35 entrance money or fine. This was in the range of buildings running from the South side of the Gatehouse in Chancery Lane to the South end of the Old Hall."

So Meautys had τὸπος as well as work at Lincoln's Inn!

The county of Essex would probably be well known to him. In a letter he speaks with great familiarity of "Newhall," in Essex. This was one of the homes of his cousin Frances Meautys, who married Robert Radclyffe, Earl of Sussex.

The Earl of Sussex afterwards parted with this property to the Marquess of Buckingham (favourite of James I.), in July, 1622; and Meautys, when he had to interview Buckingham there to ask a favour a month or two after the transaction, laughingly says: "Newhall will be heard to speak for me."

He also knew Suffolk as a happy hunting ground, for Jane, Lady Cornwallis, sister to the Countess of Sussex, had two properties in that county: Brome Hall and Culford.

With Lady Cornwallis he must have spent many days of his early years, and there learned to love and admire her with unending devotion. Of his own parents we hear nothing

save that his mother was buried at Kensington on August 29th, 1641, and in the register there she is described as "Mrs. Elizabeth Mewtes, mother to Lady Thorowgood." This last mentioned lady was the eldest sister of Thomas Meautys, and her husband, Sir John Thorowgood, is styled "pensioner in Ordinary to King Charles I." They lived in Kensington, and probably Mrs. Elizabeth Mewtes resided with her daughter there, as she was buried in the parish.

Kensington seems to have been a favourite district with the family of Meautys, for they are frequently mentioned in the histories of that suburb. The John Meautas who received a general pardon from Edward V. in 1483 for all crimes he had committed or might afterwards commit, is said to have lived in Kensington.

Thomas may have spent some years in France to learn the language, and of course he had relatives living there. He also knew something of the law when he first took service under Lord Bacon, though he may not have been called to the Bar. From 1616 to 1649 it is certain that Meautys spent his life in intimate connection with the King and Court of England.

He must have become Sir Francis Bacon's private Secretary, or "servant" as the contemporary name was, while still a young man, as we find some of Bacon's letters docketed in Meautys' writing early in the year 1616. In a letter to Bacon he speaks of "having grown up under your Lordship." He was an accomplished penman. We come across some letters of secrecy in the Lambeth Palace Library in which he has used Greek characters instead of English script lettering, which give a cypher appearance, though the English spelling is not changed. Most likely all the Lord Chancellor's correspondence in French was conducted by Mr. Meautys. As shorthand was then well known, it would not be surprising if Meautys also used this form of transcribing from dictation.

About this time Sir Francis Bacon had been sworn at Greenwich of the Privy Council (June 9th, 1616), and in this position was able, later on, to help his dexterous kinsman to

the post of one of the clerks of "His Majesty's Council Extraordinary," to which he attained on March 5th, 1619, and these duties he performed till August, 1645, when the office became virtually extinct. This would give him an income, and what pay he received from Bacon there is no paper to show us.

But we must go back to 1616 when Meautys found that Mr. Attorney General's time was greatly taken up with the affairs of King James' new favourite, Sir George Villiers, whose rise at the age of twenty-four was so phenomenal, as he had been made Master of the Horse in January, Knight of the Garter in April, and in July was to be raised to the peerage by his doting sovereign.

All these honours had to pass through Bacon's hand, so Meautys was kept busy copying letters, drawing up documents for the Patent of Creation, and hastening the business, as the King would brook no delay.

As for Bacon, he must have felt it an anomaly to be the medium to raise the unknown and untried youth Villiers to the chief places of honour and power in the Kingdom, over his own head, and also over the long tried work of many other officers of the Crown; and through whose inexperienced hands every affair of law and court would have to pass for sanction.

And how little did Bacon foresee that in the future days of his misery, this young nobleman would be his lord and master to whom he would have to sue and plead for mercy, for Bacon at the age of fifty-six found himself placed in a subordinate position to George Villiers, whom he had thus been forced to raise to such giddy heights by the King's desire. In 1616 all this heraldic work had to be done cheerfully with some show of willingness on Bacon's part, and Thomas Meautys then also made the acquaintance of the King's favourite whom he was to see so frequently all through his life; and from now he acted as personal messenger between Bacon, who was steadily rising to the Lord Chancellorship of England, and the King's favourite, the Marquis of Buckingham, who had to be consulted on every occasion. It seems surprising also in our present day to see what attention King James gave to the

workings of the Court of Law, and how his influence was made to be felt in the trials of great personages. In fact, everything was referred to the King's pleasure, and his directions were apparently carried out, and trials were postponed, or hastened on, according to his suggestions.

Soon after Thomas Meautys first appears as a copyist of Sir Francis Bacon's letters, the young Marquis of Buckingham celebrated the New Year with great festivities, and on that occasion Bacon was made "Lord Keeper of the Seal" and entered into the heavy duties that position entailed. He wrote a letter of gratitude to the Marquis to whose friendship he considered he partly owed the step.

Meautys no doubt felt proud to transcribe the following lines, and put as much flourish and as many capitals as he could into the heading:

> (*Endorsed*): MY LORD KEEPER TO MY LORD OF BUCKINGHAM UPON HIS BEING CHOSEN LORD KEEPER:
>
> MY DEAREST LORD,
>
> It is both in cares and kindness that small ones float up to the tongue, and in great ones sink down into the heart with silence. Therefore I could speak little to your Lordship to-day, neither had I fit time: but I must profess this much, that in this day's work you are the truest and perfectest mirror and example of firm and generous friendship that ever was in court.
>
> And I shall count every day lost, wherein I shall not, either study your well doing in thought, or do your name honour in speech, or perform you service in deed. Good my Lord account and accept me,
>
> Your most bounden and devoted friend and servant of all men living,
>
> FR. BACON, C.S.
>
> March 7th, 1616-17.

Bacon added another title to the many which Villiers had received from him, when he called him "The perfectest mirror of friendship."

We now see the society Meautys found himself in, for when the King went to Scotland he deputed Bacon "to take charge of England," and in this way his kinsman met the highest in the land and helped in the working of the Kingdom. The secretarial duties then needed more assistance, so Mr. Edward Sherburn was selected to be writer and copyist, and the colleagues' work grew more and more arduous as Bacon rose in importance.

Villiers on his return from Scotland was in a gracious mood, and it was about this time that he visited the new country house in Hertfordshire which Bacon had built for himself near his father's old house of Gorhambury, called Verulam House, and which was afterwards inherited by Meautys. It was well described by Aubrey as "the most ingenuously contrived little pile that ever I saw." A very good idea of the plan of this house, and its wonderful fish ponds, can be gathered from the Hon. Charlotte Grimston's "History of Gorhambury." Lord Bacon had a passion for houses, new and old, and the acquiring of them helped to drain his purse, and finally bought him to poverty.

It is unfortunate that we have no letters from Thomas Meautys which refer to any of his work with Bacon at this time. Besides being made Clerk to His Majesty's Council on March 5th, 1619, it was through Lord Keeper Bacon's influence that Meautys entered Parliament, for he was elected for the Cambridge Borough on January 10th, 1621; his relation, whom we take to be his eldest brother, Henry, sat for the St. Albans' Borough the same year. So they had a good deal of influence in the home county and added strength to their circle.

At this period Thomas Meautys must have thought that his future and his worldly prospects were settled, and looked favourable.

He had work that was congenial to his energies, he mixed in the highest aristocratic society, and also the learned society which the philosopher gathered round him.

He was in the position of Secretary and kinsman to one of the greatest and most learned men in England, whose wealth

was increasing daily, and whose position under the King's friendship looked most fair. As a member of Parliament he had also something to say in the government of the country. So Meautys had merely to sit and steer in his small barque, and follow Bacon's stately vessel as it sailed onwards.

Lord Bacon was at the zenith of his power when he became Lord Chancellor, for besides his official greatness, he had attained the wish of his life, and secured York House, Whitehall (close to the King's Palace), his father's former residence in London, and furnished it sumptuously himself, with added ornaments also given by friends and admirers. He received the lease from the Archbishop of York, who was father to Bacon's bosom friend, Toby Matthew. The transaction as usual had to come through Buckingham's hands, who seemed in a good humour at that time, though he afterwards took such an envious desire for this mansion, that it was the cause of disastrous trouble to the fallen Lord Chancellor who found that the King's favourite was too strong for a subject to deny him anything, or to thwart his desires.

Bacon must have entered into possession of York House in May or June, 1617, and immediately proceeded to embellish it with a lavish hand. "His reparations," he says in a letter, "amounting to 1,000 marks at least, which is more than hath been laid out by all the tenants that have been in it since my remembrance." He desired to have a life rent of it, but had to consent to take it on a twenty-one years' lease.

Here he was installed as Viscount St. Alban, surrounded by an army of retainers (there is a list of over a hundred). "Our Lord Keeper exceeds all his predecessors in the bravery and multitude of his servants," writes Mr. Gerrard, "with horses, coaches, and everything to make a grand show." We read that Mr. Oates and Mr. Lewes acted as his chaplains (Dr. William Rawley's name does not appear), and Mr. Thomas Meautys assisted by Mr. Edward Sherburn, and other clerks, were his secretaries, who came daily to their duties; and an elder brother, Mr. Edmund Meautys, was "Gentleman of the Horse," and Mr. Bushell was "Gentleman Usher." Among the "Gentlemen in Waiting" was a Mr. Underhill and

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Mr. Nicolas Bacon (the latter was most likely a nephew). The multitude of Bacon's household servants and the freedom with which they were allowed to handle and spend his money, was partly the cause of the Lord Chancellor's downfall, for he allowed his hirelings to run his household and pay current expenses, which were very heavy. When he required large sums he found his money had dribbled away in some mysterious fashion, but he was too good-natured and too busy to put a check on the outgoings, or keep his money under lock and key. We read with surprise what handsome vail he gave to any messenger who brought him a gift of a buck, or some fruit, etc.

The year 1620 was a busy one for Meautys, especially in the Autumn, and many are the papers and letters he had to make copies of, which are to be seen among the Gibson papers in Lambeth Library. In October the Lord Chancellor Bacon had sent the King a copy of his new work, the "Novum Organum," and received a most gracious letter of thanks. He then had to help the King to issue a proclamation that Parliament should meet on January 16th, 1621. But before that could take place money was urgently required to enable the King to send out troops to assist his son-in-law, Frederic, to defend his Palatinate, and letters were issued asking the nobility of England voluntarily to contribute funds. These papers were all Bacon's compositions, written out by Meautys, and besides many Councils of War it appears that the King consulted the Lord Chancellor as to selecting the best men to put into Parliament, who could be depended on to assist in carrying out the particular work to be done. A selection was necessary, and names were submitted.

It was only natural that Bacon should want the support of his own kith and kin, whom he could depend on and direct, and his Secretary, Thomas Meautys, and Henry Meautys, brother to the latter, were elected; the former for the Cambridge Borough and Henry for the St. Alban Borough.

King James opened this Parliament of 1621 with a strong speech, prepared by Bacon, and copied out by Meautys, and the Lord Chancellor Bacon followed immediately after-

wards with an explanation of the proper functions and duties of the House. The labour of preparing himself and the King for this important crisis of affairs must have been very arduous, and the Lord Chancellor was rewarded by being raised to the peerage, and created Viscount St. Alban, on February 3rd, 1621.

A letter of thanks for this honour was sent off to his sovereign, and a draft of this glowing document can be read in the handwriting of Meautys at Lambeth Library.

But the year 1621 was Bacon's unlucky year, for just when everything looked most promising, he was accused, on March 14th, of having taken bribes of money and presents from rich suitors for the better dispatch of their law business, and notwithstanding all his efforts he was degraded from his high office of Lord Chancellor, and forced to retire into private life.

Both his biographers, James Spedding and Hepworth Dixon, argue that, had he chosen to do so, he could have cleared his character, but that the King interfered, and influenced Bacon to keep silent for some mysterious reason.

Perhaps Thomas Meautys may have been the first to hear the ugly rumours, and in his confidential position he would warn Bacon ; others did the same, but warnings were in vain and quickly forgotten, till the storm burst over the Lord Chancellor's head, to his utter bewilderment.

When the prospect of ruin really had to be contemplated, his anxiety of mind caused his health to break down, and he became seriously ill.

Thomas Meautys must have received a great shock on hearing of the proceedings about to be taken against his patron, and to see that great spirit humbled suddenly, with not a chance of escape. He lost no time in trying to help him in every way, and he quickly drew up " arguments " for the defence of the Lord Chancellor Bacon, and worked with a will, going frequently from his own home in the Strand to York House, where Bacon lived, and cheering him with all the means in his power ; and Meautys was directed to quote from similar offences to that which the Lord Chancellor had been accused of. The rough drafts of them can be seen in

the Gibson Papers (Vol. viii., p. 259), and Bacon tried to gauge by them what his punishment would be. There is also a draft in Meautys' writing of an argument Bacon intended to use on his first access to the King after his fall, which is sad reading, but still sadder was the time when the King had to sequester the seal, and the Lords of State had to receive it from Viscount St. Alban, and take charge of it; to whom when, finding Bacon very sick they "wished it had been better with him," he answered, "The worse the better. By the King's great favour I received the seal; by my own fault I have lost it."

Bacon was now excluded from the Court, and from London and his residences there, to his great grief and annoyance, and his health suffered seriously under the strain. He also found that all his salary, pensions from the King, and income, had suddenly stopped, and that he had no money coming in to pay current expenses or defray debts which had to be cleared. Bacon, on finding himself cast from the highest to the lowest depths, had to bethink him who were the friends who could help him in his dire need. His eyes naturally turned to the most powerful minister in the kingdom—the Lord Marquis of Buckingham, the favourite of the King, whose rise had been so marvellously rapid, and whose many titles had all passed through Bacon's hands and seal.

So he entrusted a letter to his chief confidant and messenger, Thomas Meautys, addressed to the Marquis of Buckingham (with many instructions to Thomas to watch for signs of leniency), begging for access to the King on Bacon's behalf.

Meautys seems to have acted with great discretion, and to have impressed Buckingham so favourably that the latter took him to kiss the King's hand and receive instructions from Royalty itself.

This act greatly cheered the fallen Chancellor and he writes a grateful letter:

TO THE MARQUIS OF BUCKINGHAM:

MY VERY GOOD LORD,

I humbly thank your Lordship for the grace and favour you did, both to the message and messenger, in

bringing Mr. Meautys to kiss his Majesty's hand and to receive his pleasure from himself. My riches in my adversity have been, that I have had a good master, a good friend, and a good servant.

I perceive by Mr. Meautys his Majesty's inclinations that I should go first to Gorhambury: and his Majesty's inclinations have ever been with me instead of directions. Wherefore I purpose, God willing, to go thither forthwith, humbly thanking his Majesty nevertheless, that he meant to have put my desire in my petition contained, into a way if I had insisted upon it; . . . the world is a prison if I may not approach his Majesty, finding my heart as I do. God preserve and prosper his Majesty and your Lordship.

Your Lordship's faithful and bounden servant,

22nd June, 1621 FR. ST. ALBAN.

At this time Buckingham was in a friendly or a pitying frame of mind towards Bacon, but enemies gradually undermined this feeling, and Meautys has to report an unpleasant incident, which we hear of in a letter to the Marquis of Buckingham from Bacon (Gibson Papers).

MY VERY GOOD LORD,

I perceive by some speech that passed between your Lordship and Mr. Meautys that some wretched detractor hath told you that it were strange I should be in debt; for that I could not but have received an hundred thousand pounds in gifts since I had the seal; which is an abominable falsehood. Such tales as these made St. James say that the tongue is a fire, and itself fired from hell, whither when these tongues shall return, they will beg a drop of cold water to cool them. . . . As for my debts, I showed them to your Lordship when you saw the little house (Verulam) and the Gallery; besides a little wood or desert, which you saw not."

It was probably the necessity of paying off the debt that the building of Verulam House had incurred, which was pressing most heavily upon Bacon at this time, as the sum mentioned is about £10,000.

Thomas Meautys had a further negotiation to transact between his patron and the favourite of the King, for Buckingham had cast an envious eye on the stately York House in Whitehall, which was Bacon's principal London residence. He had decorated it in a gorgeous manner with tapestries and paintings, and it contained some valuable furniture and ornaments. Buckingham offered to buy it as it stood.

Meautys had to frame some sort of an excuse and refusal and show that Bacon was most unwilling to part with it, and the haughty favourite seemed surprised that Lord St. Alban in his present fallen position should have the temerity to insist upon retaining it, especially as Buckingham had urged the King to sign Bacon's pardon lately, and on the signing so much depended. The sale of York House would have enabled some of Bacon's debts to be paid, Buckingham thought, and that he was doing him a good turn. But it is certain that York House lay nearer to Bacon's heart than any other he possessed, chiefly because it had been his father's residence; also as Bacon was born there, he had a romantic attachment to it, and could not bear to part from it so soon after securing it into his own possession; so Buckingham's offer was refused, and Meautys had to be very diplomatic in smoothing over the refusal.

And now Bacon's whole desire in life was that his pardon should be confirmed and "pass the seal"—and yet the months passed without it. Every morning he expected it, and at night he lay down in despair at its non-arrival. Could nothing be done? Secretary Meautys was despatched to the all-powerful Marquis of Buckingham time after time to use his best powers of persuasion and diplomacy in urging the necessity of getting the full pardon, which had been promised so long. We have no doubt he did his best. This was towards the end of 1621, but in a formal letter from the new Lord Keeper, Dean Williams, Bacon was informed that as Parliament was just about to assemble again, this same Parliament that had drawn up Bacon's punishments could not be asked so soon to rescind its verdict, and grant a free pardon, and it was best diplomacy to delay the request. As

Dean Williams was Buckingham's nominee, Bacon sees the favourite's refusal in this letter, and fears he is indeed lost if that all-powerful nobleman befriend him not. Broken in health and spirits, he writes the following letter of despair, fearing he has lost honour, power, and above all a friend and helper, and sends it once more by Meautys:

TO THE MARQUIS OF BUCKINGHAM:

MY VERY GOOD LORD,

It is in vain to cure the accidents of a disease except the cause be found and removed. I know adversity is apprehensive, but I fear it is too true I have lost honour, power, profit and liberty. I have in the end lost that which to me was more dear than all the rest, which is my friend. A change there is, apparent and great: and nothing is more sure than that nothing hath proceeded from me since my troubles either towards your Lordship or towards the world, which hath made me unworthy of your undeserved favours or undeserved promises. Good my Lord, deal so nobly with me, as to let me know whether I stand upright in your favour, that either I may enjoy my wonted comfort, or see my griefs together that I may the better order them, though if your Lordship should never think more of me yet your former favours bind me to be

Your Lordship's most obliged and faithful servant,
FR. ST. ALBAN.

The report of the abuses Bacon was guilty of was sent up by the House of Commons to the House of Lords, who had to weigh the evidence and give sentence, and it was to this Parliament Bacon had to beg for leniency, almost on his knees. It seems a strange irony of fate that Meautys, his personal Secretary, and Henry Meautys were both members of the Lower House in this Parliament, and they must have felt themselves in an awkward position when first made aware of the Lord Chancellor's threatened fall; though on the other hand, it gave them a chance of protecting their patron and working for him by explaining to their fellow members any justification that could be argued in Bacon's favour.

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When this contingent appeared in its true light, something had to be done, and Bacon and Meautys must have consulted long over the business.

The question most likely was this: "Should Gorhambury House and estate in Hertfordshire be offered to Buckingham as a palliative instead of York House, which Bacon wished to retain? But Gorhambury House was the family seat which had been built by Bacon's father, and which would naturally descend to Bacon's heir. But Meautys was always ready, and in fact more than willing, to give up all his own benefits for the sake of the man he worshipped and admired so earnestly, and so, as a sacrifice was positively necessary at this juncture to save Bacon's *amour propre*, and to propitiate Buckingham, Gorhambury was offered to the Marquis, who refused it. Still Bacon found his pardon was delayed, and he sees the sacrifice has not been sufficient on his part, nor the humbling of his pride completed on their part. What can Meautys suggest? It is evident that York House alone and no other will satisfy the powers that be. Buckingham, when he found York House was not to be his, had taken Wallingford House, but he still seemed determined that Bacon, as part of his punishment, must not be allowed to retain such a choice mansion, and pressure is gradually but surely brought to bear on the fallen minister, and the truth dawns on him that he will attain no pardon or liberty till he consents to part with the possession he clung to so ardently and held so dear.

After Bacon's fall, and at the time he was ordered to remain a semi-prisoner in his own house in the county of Hertfordshire, during the King's pleasure, his wife was still occupying York House in London.

Lady St. Alban was being urged by friends to beg for an interview with Lady Buckingham, and also with the Lady Marquis of Buckingham, that she might pray for their kind intervention with the King, for the restoring of some of Bacon's salary and pensions. Thomas Meautys, who was with Bacon at Gorhambury, mounts his horse and is the messenger who has to deliver Bacon's letters of directions to Lady St.

Alban in York House, London, and who has also to write back from there to his patron in Gorhambury giving the news, and as to the means taken to accomplish their ends. One or two letters from Meautys here will further serve to show his style, and there are some notable expressions in them, though the whole of the letter may not interest us. They are from the Gibson Papers in Lambeth Library. Letter from Thomas Meautys to Viscount St. Alban :

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LORDSHIP,

As soon as I came to London, I repaired to Sir Edward Sackville, whom I find very zealous to do you service, in any particular you shall command him with my Lord Marquis, and he imparted to me what advice he had given to my Lady this afternoon upon his visiting her at York House, where Mr. Packer also was come to see my Lady, and seemed to concur with Sir Edward Sackville in the same ways : which were, for my Lady to become a suitor to my Lady Buckingham and my Lady Marquis to work my Lord Marquis for obtaining from the King some bounty towards your Lordship ; and in particular that of the £1,000 a year for Small Writs.

If I may speak my opinion to your Lordship, it is not amiss to begin any way, or with any particular though but small game at first, only to set a rusty clock agoing, and then happily it may go right for a time, enough to bring on the rest of your Lordship's requests.

Yet because your Lordship directed me to wish my Lady from you by no means to act anything until she should receive your further directions, it became not me to be too forward in putting it on too fast with Sir Edward, and my Lady was pleased to tell me since, that she hath written to your Lordship at large. . . .

Your Lordship's for ever to honour and serve,

T. MEAUTYS.

January 3rd, 1622.

The next letter tells of Lady St. Alban's pleading interview with the all-powerful Marquis of Buckingham, and Meautys is in attendance on her Ladyship :

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LORDSHIP,

This afternoon my Lady found access to my Lord Marquis, procured for her by my Lord of Montgomery and Sir Edward Sackville, who seemed to contend which of them should show most patience on waiting (which they did a whole afternoon) the opportunity to bring my Lord to his chamber where my Lady attended him.

But when he was come she found time enough to speak at large: and though my Lord spake so loud that what passed was no secret to me and some others that were within hearing, yet because my Lady told me she purposeth to write to your Lordship, it becomes not me to anticipate by these any part of her Ladyship's relation. . . . Mr. Murray tells me the King hath given your book to my Lord Brooke, and informed him to read it, commending it much to him; and then my Lord Brooke is to return it to your Lordship, and so it may go to the press when your Lordship please, with such amendments as the King hath made, which I have seen, and are very few, and those rather words as "epidemic," and "mild" instead of "debounaire." Only that "persons attained, enabled to serve in Parliament by a bare reversal of their attainder without issuing any new writ," the King by all means will have left out. . . .

I beg leave to kiss your Lordship's hands in all humbleness to honour and serve,

T. MEAUTYS.

The book mentioned in this last letter was "Henry VII.," which had occupied Bacon since his fall and had kept his mind from dwelling too much on his reverses. It most likely appeared in print early in 1622; and to those literary students who conclude on strong evidence that Bacon was author or part author of Shakespeare's plays, we may recall to their mind that the celebrated "Folio" of thirty-six plays appeared the following year, 1623.

We can only conclude that if Bacon was at work arranging

the plays for the press in that form, Thomas Meautys must have assisted him, and been in the secret, and we like to think that he had read the plays and had seen "Macbeth" and "Othello" acted before King James.

In the next letter from Meautys we see how much he feels the distrust with which men receive him when he comes to urge some entreaty from Bacon, in fact he must have gone through many unpleasant interviews with former friends of Bacon's who now gave the cold shoulder to the fallen Chancellor and his faithful messenger. No doubt he often did not repeat to his patron the disagreeable expressions he had heard, for he was too loyal to distress a man who was down. Sir Arthur Ingram evidently showed some irritation that Bacon had not acknowledged his services in getting a kind letter from the Marquis of Buckingham.

Meautys had been sent from Gorhambury to London with a letter to Toby Matthews, who was a friend ever ready to help him with all the means in his power. As Matthews was absent from town Meautys let him know the fact, and relates his interview with Sir Arthur Ingram :—

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LORDSHIP,

Remembering that the letter your Lordship put yesterday into my hand was locked up under two or three seals, it ran in my head that it might be business of importance and require haste. Not finding Mr. Matthews in town, or any certainty of his return till Monday, I thought it became me to let your Lordship know it. . . . My Lord, I saw Sir Arthur Ingram, who let fall somewhat, as if he could have been content to have received a letter by me from your Lordship, with something in it like an acknowledgement to my Lord Treasurer, that by his means you had received a kind letter from my Lord Marquis.

But in the close he came about, and fell rather to excuse what was left out of the letter, than to please himself much with what was in it.

Only indeed he looked upon me as if he did a little distrust my good meaning in it. But that is all one to

me; for I have been used to it of late from others as well as from him; but persons apt to be suspicious may well be borne with, for certainly they trouble themselves most, and lose most by it; for of such it is a hard question, whether those be fewest whom they trust, or those who trust them. But for him and some others, I will end in a wish that, as to your Lordship's service, they might prove but half so much honester, as they think themselves wiser than other men. I humbly rest, your Lordship's for ever truly, to honour and serve you,

T. MEAUTYS.

March 3rd, 1622.

The next letter from Meautys to Bacon shows how grateful the former is for the "noble care of me" which he considers his elderly kinsman has shown, and how anxious he is to do any little service he can in return. In fact he boldly declares his unwillingness to seek for advancement which would take him away from Bacon's side, and ends the beautiful letter by begging to be believed when he says that he only seeks gain so as to be of more service to his beloved kinsman.

The whole letter breathes affection, and must surely have cheered Bacon's heart with the knowledge that in sickness or in health, in poverty or prosperity, there was one faithful friend on whom he could depend, young as that friend was. Bacon desired some favour to be asked of Buckingham, and Meautys had gone to Newhall on purpose to catch him. The expression, "Newhall will be heard to speak for me," shows that Meautys had some influential friends there, whom he had known when his cousin the Countess of Sussex had owned this beautiful seat.

The estate of Newhall was one of the most interesting spots in Essex. At one time it belonged to Anne Boleyn's father, and Henry VIII. had lived there, and his daughter, Queen Mary, had shown a preference for the place. It had been presented by Queen Elizabeth to Thomas Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex, and a Robert, Earl of Sussex (who had married Frances Meautys, widow of John or Robert Shute), inherited

it, and he finally parted with his historic property to the Duke of Buckingham for £30,000.

Letter from Thomas Meautys to Lord Bacon acknowledging his obligations (Gibson Papers, Lambeth Library) :

MY MOST HONOURED LORD,

I come in these, to your Lordship with the voice of thanksgiving for the continuance of your accustomed noble care of me, and my good, which overtakes me I find whither so ever I go. But for the news itself (whereof your Lordship writes), whether or not it be better than that I was wont to bring your Lordship, the end only can prove ; for I have as yet not more to show for it than good words, of which many times I brought your Lordship good store. But because *modice fideans* were not made to thrive in Court, I mean to lose no time from assaying my Lord Marquess, for which purpose I am now hovering about Newhall, where his Lordship is expected (but not the King) this day or to-morrow ; which place, as your Lordship adviseth, may not be ill chosen for my business.

For if his Lordship be not very thick of hearing, sure Newhall will be heard to speak for me.

And now, my good Lord, if anything make me diffident, or indeed almost indifferent how it succeeds, it is this : that my sole ambition having ever been, and still being, to grow up only under your Lordship ; it is become preposterous even to my nature and habit to think of prospering, receiving any growth either without or besides your Lordship. And therefore let me claim of your Lordship to do me this right as to believe that which my heart says, or rather swears, for me ; namely—that what addition soever (by God's good providence) come at any time to my life or fortune, it is in my account, but to enable me the more to serve your Lordship in both ; at whose feet I shall ever humbly lay down all that I have or am, never to rise from thence other than

Your Lordship's in all duty and reverent affection,

September 11th, 1622. Ts. MEAUTYS.

Very probably the favour Meautys is going to ask Buckingham in this last letter is in connection with his securing the reversion of a clerkship in the Star Chamber of the Writs and Processes, which later on also occupied his attention, as we shall see.

Bacon, as time went on, got so impatient at the delay and non-delivery of his "pardon," that he was at his wits' end in what way to secure this all-important favour from those in high places.

At last there was nothing for it, but to part with York House, as hints had been conveyed through mysterious channels that only by humbling himself in this way would he ever regain any Court favour. In the same mysterious way he is allowed to understand that the person to receive this coveted possession has been chosen, and it turns out to be Sir Lionel Cranfield, Lord Buckingham's friend. Sir Edward Sackville writes urging Bacon to agree to the sacrifice, adding that it is the only chance he has of being restored to freedom and favour. So York House has to go, which must have caused both Bacon and Meautys many a heart pang.

The letter which Meautys had to make a draft of for Bacon "upon his first access to His Majesty after his troubles," begins as follows :

> That howsoever it goeth with me, I think myself infinitely bound to His Majesty for admitting me to touch the hem of his garment.
>
> That I ought also humbly to thank His Majesty for that speech of so great maturity, wherein the elements are so well mingled, by kindling of affection, by washing away aspersion, by establishing of opinion, and yet giving way to opinion, I do find some passages which I construe to my advantage.
>
> In the next place I am to make an oblation of myself into His Majesty's hands : that I am as clay in his hands, His Majesty may make a vessel of honour or dishonour of me, as I find favour in his eyes, and I submit myself wholly to his grace and mercy."

In this way did Bacon humble himself while his body was suffering serious pain and his mind was distracted by anxiety

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back at Wallingford House, and then he would tell Sir Edward more of his mind; with whom I have had newly conference at large and traced out to him some particulars of that which they call a treaty with my Lord Treasurer about York House, which Sir Edward Sackville knows how to put together, and make a smoother tale of it for your Lordship. And this night I shall know all from him, and to-morrow by dinner I shall not fail to attend your Lordship; till then and ever, I humbly rest,

Your Lordship's in all truth to honour and serve you,

T. MEAUTYS.

Probably written in March, 1622.

The continued weakness, and serious illnesses Bacon endured, undermined his constitution, though he was not a very old man; but his spirit carried him along for a year or two, till he caught a severe chill, which developed into bronchitis, during a spell of cold, snowy weather in March, 1626.

This illness was supposed to have been brought on by Bacon's imprudence in trying a novel experiment in stuffing a dead fowl with snow to see if this process would preserve its flesh for any length of time, and the effects of this chill forced him suddenly to stop at the Earl of Arundel's house in Highgate on his way home from a drive, where he was put to bed. The house was only in the care of servants at the time, as Lord Arundel was a prisoner in the Tower They no doubt did their best for the sick visitor, but all to no purpose, for the friend of Thomas Meautys, who had been his patron and protector for so long, and whose renown as a writer and philosopher was to grow as the centuries passed, quietly slipped away in the early morning of Easter Sunday before the bells could ring for early service. This date of April 9th, 1626, proved a sad day for Meautys, and the present generation must acknowledge that no one mourned Bacon more sincerely than the man who had been a son to him, and the name of Meautys gained celebrity then by its close friendship with one of the greatest Englishmen we can boast of, whose fame the whole world now acknowledges.

Fuller says that when Bacon lay dying in the Earl of Arundel's house at Highgate, that Sir Julius Cæsar, who was a neighbour, was sent for and that he supported his dying relative in his arms. His house alluded to was probably "Mattysons, Muswell Hall, Clerkenwell."

It is nearly certain that when Lord St. Alban was *in extremis*, there being no children of the house, that Thomas Meautys would be sent for, as the man most intimately connected with him, to hear his last wishes, and take his final directions.

His grief was great, we know, all the greater because his patron died almost in obscurity—passed over and forgotten, after being raised to such high positions in the government of the country.* He had never lost his place in the affections of Thomas Meautys, who later on showed his continued veneration by erecting a handsome monument and statue over Lord St. Alban's sepulchre in St. Michael's Church, St. Albans; and this tomb still continues to be a shrine of pilgrimage.

The obsequies were evidently carried out very quietly, for no notices of the death and burial are now to be found among any papers, and very few private letters mention the death of the man who once held the highest position England can offer to a subject. His half brothers seem to have neglected him entirely.

Did Meautys write to any of Lord St. Alban's friends describing his last illness, or conveying a dying message from him to Sir Toby Matthews, or his duty to the King?

In what manner did he apprise the Duke of Buckingham of Bacon's death?

Did he pen a letter in Latin to the Cambridge University to announce the death of her son of whom she was so proud?

To these questions, we have no answer. And how can we unravel the intricacies of Bacon's wills in our efforts to find the reason why Meautys was mentioned as heir to Gorhambury?

*In one of Bacon's wills, he says, "my body to be buried obscurely."

We have come across a letter in the British Museum which may be inserted here, as it is one of the few which allude to Lord Bacon's death, though we cannot guarantee its authenticity or date.

James Howell was one of the Clerks of the Privy Council to Charles I., and he writes to Dr. Prichard as follows :—

SIR,

My Lord Chancellor Bacon is lately dead of a languishing weakness ; he died poor, that he scarce left money to bury him, which, though he had a great wit, did argue no great wisdom, it being one of the essential properties of a wise man to provide for the main chance. I have read that it hath been the fortune of all poets commonly to die beggars, but for an Orator, a Lawyer, and Philosopher, as he was, to die so, is rare.

It seems the same fate befel him that attended Demosthenes, Seneca, and Cicero (all great men), of whom the two first fell by corruption.

The fairest diamond may have a flaw in it, but I believe he died poor out of contempt of the pelf of fortune, as also out of an excess of generosity, which appeared as in divers other passages. So once when the King had sent him a stag, he sent up for the underkeeper, and having drunk the King's health unto him in a great silver bowl, he gave it him for his fee. He wrote a pitiful letter to King James not long before his death, and concludes : " Help me, dear Sovereign, Lord and Master, and pity me so far that I, who have been born to a bag, be not now in my age forced in effect to bear a wallet, nor that I, who desire to live to study, may be driven to study to live."

Which words, in my opinion, argueth a little abjection of spirit. I write not this to derogate from the noble worth of the Lord Viscount Verulam, who was so rare a man ; and I think the eloquentist that was born in this Isle.

I was late at Gray's Inn with Sir Eubule, and he desired me to remember him unto you.

Yours most affectionately, while

J.H.

The executors of our Philosopher evidently tried to carry out his wishes in making arrangements that his burial should be conducted in a very unostentatious manner. The house in which he died was only a few miles from his final resting place in the vault of St. Michael's Church, and his innumerable relatives would have to be asked to attend the funeral, whether they had been on friendly terms or not with him. His literary friends on the Continent, with whom he had kept up a correspondence, would require an intimation of his death, and no doubt grieved for the loss of so distinguished a confrere. In fact the Philosopher Bacon would have more congenial friends and admirers than the Statesman had, at the time of his death.

Even his best biographer, James Spedding, fails to put the heritage of Gorhambury Estate in quite a clear light.

The last will is missing which he would have to make after disinheriting his wife, which he did a few months before his end. She was to have inherited Gorhambury, and most of its furniture and treasures, as we see by Bacon's will of December, 1625, but Bacon revoked these bequests as far as his power lay on account evidently of misconduct on her part.

As Gorhambury estate and the lands in Hertfordshire were certainly possessed by Thomas Meautys later on, the question naturally arises as to how he inherited it, as we can find no will actually conveying it.

It is John Aubrey who says that "Gorhambury was conveyed to trustees for the use of Sir Thomas Meautys, who had married the only surviving daughter of Bacon's half brother Nathaniel,* and after his death it was purchased by Sir Harbottle Grimston, who married the widow."

* Aubrey here makes a mistake, for the wife of Meautys was Miss Ann Bacon, daughter of Sir Nathaniel Bacon, who was the youngest son of Sir Nicholas Bacon (Lord Bacon's half brother) of Redgrave, in Suffolk.

There is no document extant actually conveying the land to trustees for Thomas Meautys, who really did not become the husband of Ann Bacon till fourteen years after Bacon died.

The Hon. Charlotte Grimston, in her History of Gorhambury, repeats that this estate was conveyed to trustees for Thomas Meautys, and as an actual descendant she is the best authority we can find.

To show that the public mind was exercised as to who were Viscount St. Alban's heirs to Gorhambury and Verulam House, we can quote from a comic brochure that was written about this time, though not published till 1658.

It is a verse from " The Honest Ghost, or a Voice from the Vault " :

" Now Verulam, good man, is in his grave,
I muse who shall his house and titles have ;
That spatious, spacious, precious refectorie
Which cost a world of wealth (so saith the story) ;
Those pebble paved brookes, empaled lakes,
Thick clad with countless sholes of ducks and drakes."

Verulam House and grounds were evidently famous ; and " pebble paved brookes " were not then very often " clad with sholes of ducks and drakes " of various foreign breeds, though nowadays one has only to go to the Serpentine in Hyde Park to see the local children feeding these " raræ aves." That the house was inconvenient is evident; and after some years Verulam was razed to the ground, and its pond inhabitants allowed to die or be scattered.

But to go back, Bacon's executors now had the melancholy duty of seeing that his wishes were carried out, and that his body was laid in the vault of St. Michael's Church of St. Albans, Hertfordshire, near his mother's remains. After which, Meautys had to devote his time and energies in trying to disentangle the mesh of debts which Bacon had left, and to gather what little money could be secured to carry on the properties which were to come to him.

A short time before Bacon's demise, his wife, of whom we hear very little, had committed some *faux pas*, which

separated her from her husband, and offended him so greatly that he altered his will and in a codicil cut her out of her inheritance as much as possible. The only reference to this was in Bacon's will, which is now lost, and we have no letters or papers at this time to help us. Bacon must have destroyed every trace of them.

So the Viscountess was not in residence with Bacon at his death, and it is to be gathered that she lived in the parish of St. Martin's in London, as she was subject there as a rate-payer to keep the roads in repair. She is said to have married her Gentleman Usher immediately after Bacon's death—Sir John Underhill.* The Hon. Charlotte Grimston in her "History of Gorhambury," says:

"Lord St. Albans conveyed Gorhambury to Sir John Constable and Sir Thomas Crewe as trustees, by whom it was, after his death, conveyed to Sir Francis Leigh and others in trust for the sole use of Thomas Meautys (afterwards knighted), his relative and friend."

So Meautys later on inherited Gorhambury, and its neighbouring house of Verulam, also the Manor of Redburn; York House had been sold, but there was still Grays Inn Chambers which descended to him, and which Bacon appraised as worth £300. Twickenham Park had long since passed out of Bacon's hands.

In Bacon's second will, published the nineteenth day of December, 1625, he does not forget his faithful Secretary:

> "I give to Mr. Thomas Meautes some jewel, to be bought for him, of the value of fifty pounds, and my footcloth horse,"

and in a codicil to this will a further mention which shows to what extent he had been helped:

"I desire my executors to have special care to discharge a debt by bond (now made in my sickness to Mr. Thomas Meautys), he discharging me fully towards Sir Robert Douglas, and to procure Sir Robert Douglas his patent to be delivered to him.—FR. ST. ALBAN."

* Aubrey calls him Sir *Thomas* Underhill.

When Lord St. Alban's estate came to be estimated after his death, it was found that the debts amounted to £22,371, while the assets represented about £7,000 all told. So his executors had a difficult task before them to satisfy everyone.

Nowadays there is an eager demand to know what became of the mass of writings and notes and references left behind by Bacon. Who got them? Where did they go? Were they published?

To all these questions we must refer the reader to the published biographies of Bacon, for Thomas Meautys does not seem to have had time or inclination to read the voluminous MSS. that he inherited with Sir John Constable and Mr. Bosville. Dr. Rawley took charge of some of them and published many later on, but those that fell into Isaac Gruter's hands have disappeared. Bacon's Chambers at Gray's Inn must have afforded a decided insight into his private writings and recreations, and we ardently wish we could have accompanied Meautys when on June 14th, 1626, he was "admitted a Member of Gray's Inn" and took possession of Bacon's chambers there and overhauled his papers. It may well be asked, what manuscripts did he find? But no details have descended to satisfy our curiosity.

END OF PART I.

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JANE LADY CORNWALLIS.

PART II.

From 1625 to 1628.

AND now let us see Thomas Meautys in another light. We have found him a faithful and hard-working friend to a fallen man, who sank to his grave with worry and humiliation. Let us now look at him as a young friend to a rich and influential lady, who seems to have thrown a protecting wing over him, and who in return received his life-long, whole-hearted devotion; a devotion he extended to her brother, son, daughter, and circle.

The lady was his second cousin, Jane Meautys, born at West Ham, who first married Sir William Cornwallis, and on being left a widow early in her wedded life, bestowed her hand and large fortune upon Nathaniel Bacon, youngest son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, of Redgrave, in Suffolk. This marriage took place in May, 1614, at Brome. Nathaniel Bacon was a half-nephew of Sir Francis Bacon, Viscount St. Alban, and he and Jane Lady Cornwallis, were no doubt well acquainted with our philosopher, especially as the ardent Thomas Meautys had the praise of Lady Jane for ever on his lips.

In the "Private Correspondence of Jane, Lady Cornwallis, 1615-1644," which was printed from the family archives at Brome* and Culford, by Lord Braybrooke, we find about thirty letters from Thomas Meautys to his cousin, Lady Cornwallis, and a description must be given of this important personage, who proved a lady bountiful to so many of her connections, and kept such open house for her young relatives. Her parents, who came from the same stock as Bacon's Secretary, were Hercules Meautys, and Philippe, a daughter of Sir Richard Cooke, of Gidea Hall, Essex (son of Sir Anthony Cooke, Bacon's grandfather).

* Often spelt Broome in the correspondence.

The founder of the family, as before mentioned, was John Meautys, of Greengate by Leadenhall in London, Henry VII.'s Secretary, who had been brought to England by that monarch; and Lady Cornwallis' grandfather, Sir Peter Meautys, had acted as Ambassador to France, and had received a grant of the Manor of West Ham in Essex for his services.

This mixture of French and English blood gave a vivacious strain to the character of its descendants, and their knowledge of the French tongue served them in good stead as Secretaries to four English monarchs.

Lady Cornwallis' portrait at Audley End shows her as having fair hair and a complexion more English than French. Her dress of the time of James I. is elaborate black and white slashed satin.

It is probable that Jane Meautys first met Sir William Cornwallis, of Brome, in Suffolk, while she was Lady-in-Waiting to the celebrated Lucy, Countess of Bedford. She also had been appointed Lady-in-Waiting to Ann of Denmark, on the Queen's arrival in England. The good-looking Jane must have had many admirers, and some good offers of marriage; and she it is who is alluded to in a letter from John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, dated February 21st, 1609 (the year she married).

> "The Lord Mordaunt died here last week, and Deering, the Lord Treasurer's gentleman-usher, fell mad for the love of Mistress Meautys, that waits on the Lady of Bedford, and hath bestowed herself, they say, on young Gerrard, your lady's kinsman."

So Lady Cornwallis was well known to the Queen, who sent kind messages to her through Lady Bedford, and the latter kept up a continual correspondence with her former companion. Sir William Cornwallis died in November, 1611, leaving his second wife, a rich young widow, with one child, Frederick, who had a most honourable career.

Lady Cornwallis managed her Suffolk estates with energy and discretion, deriving considerable revenue from her

Manors of Brome, Oakley, Stuston, Thrandeston, and Palgrave. She also had a beautiful seat in Yorkshire, called Wilton.

Her son, Frederick Cornwallis, was heir to most of these properties, and as guardian to the heir she exercised a firm control over him, under which he often grew restive, as he reached man's estate, though there is every indication that he esteemed his mother with great affection.

When Nathaniel Bacon became Jane's suitor in marriage, his parents, favouring him beyond his elder brothers, settled the estate of Culford,* in Suffolk, and £1,000 a year upon him, that he might not be dependent upon his rich wife, and there, three children, Ann, Jane and Nicholas, were born to them.

Lady Cornwallis was most generous, as well as charitable, and gave away large sums of money in supporting her numerous relatives; and yet for all this munificence, her stern character caused her to be more feared than loved by many, and her anger often had to be smoothed away with diplomacy.

Lady Cornwallis was always a strictly religious woman, with a strong sense of rectitude and duty, and her austere character comes out strongly in some events in her life. That she suffers in her own person for this rigidity is apparent, for she frightens her friends, and this leads to them acting in an almost underhand way, occasionally for her own benefit, but in much trembling of spirit. Thomas Meautys gets many a scolding from her, which tries him much, as we see in his letters, and her son, Frederick Cornwallis, stood in such awe of her that when he fell in love with a lady who had no "dot" (she was a maid of honour to the Queen), he married her in secret, and for long afterwards was entirely cast off from his mother, by her severe displeasure.

Meautys bears her anger, though it takes him by surprise now and then, and he can hardly understand how his words or actions can have annoyed her, seeing that he is continually

* Henry VIII. granted this Manor to Sir Nicholas Bacon, grandfather of Sir Nathaniel Bacon.

expressing his love and devotion for his "ever best Lady and Cousin."

It is necessary to give further explanations of Lady Cornwallis' near relatives, as her brother was the Sir Thomas Meautys, soldier and commander, both in Ireland and the Low Countries, during the reigns of James I. and Charles I., whose history has constantly been confused with that of his second cousin, Thomas Meautys, Secretary to Lord Bacon, and Clerk of the Privy Council, who was not knighted till 1641.

This officer seemed to have received his pay in a very irregular manner, and he constantly had to appeal to his sister Jane for monetary help, but on his marriage with Miss Anne Burnebye in 1625, his eldest sister, Frances, wife of Robert Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, generously promised £200 a year to their support.

The friendships of the cousins with the same name was lifelong and firm, and they both took an interest in each other's movements and welfare.

Going back once more to the history of Bacon's Secretary, a visit to Brome was one of the chief events in Thomas Meautys' life, for he looked upon his cousin, "Lady Jane Bacon," as she was now called in distinction to several other Lady Bacons, as his best friend, who was interested in his welfare, and whose purse opened readily with loans to help him to higher posts by which he could rise in the world.

Her daughter Anne was his heart's treasure, and she returned his affection, and later on, when grown up, she became his wife. Miss Anne Bacon seems to have had a very kind nature, well endowed with religious sentiments, and was as charitable in her married life as her mother had been. There is no doubt she made her first husband, Thomas Meautys, very happy, as well as proving a very good helpmate to her second, Sir Harbottle Grimston, a man well known in London as Master of the Rolls and Speaker of the House of Commons.

This then was the family circle which Thomas joined in January, just before the Coronation of Charles I., and to whom

his letters, which reveal his character so well, were addressed.

But before giving details of his correspondence and friendship with Lady Bacon, let us trace what position in the affairs of men was held by Thomas Meautys in February and March, 1626, a few weeks before the death of his patron, Viscount St. Alban. He had then just taken his seat in the new Parliament for the Cambridge Borough, which had elected him twice before, so he was an old Parliamentary hand; he was one of the Clerks in the King's Council Chamber, which also brought him in connection with high circles; and he was looking forward to a lucrative post in the Star Chamber, as Clerk of the Writs and Processes.

Lord Bacon at this time had no need for a business Secretary, as his ill-health and reduced circumstances kept him at home in Gray's Inn or Gorhambury House during the spring months, and Meautys of course lived in London at a house in the Strand* occupied with his close duties about the Council Chamber.

His holidays coming round would give him a week or two, which he evidently took advantage of, to ride down to Brome Hall, in Suffolk, to pay his respects to Lady Bacon, and it would take him a few days to cover the eighty-five miles or so from London.

He must have enjoyed a noisy welcome from her children, Frederick Cornwallis, and the three little Bacons—Anne, Jane, and Nicholas, with whom he played and romped.

He seems to have been on very friendly terms also with his artistic cousin, Nathaniel Bacon, who was his host at Culford and Brome, and they had all much to talk about, viz., the bridal Queen, Henrietta Maria, who was brought over from France by the Duke of Buckingham; the new King, Charles, and the gentlemen whom he had selected for honours at his coronation, some to be knighted, while others were to be raised to the peerage. Also the work the New Parliament would have on its hands regarding more troops for the Palatinate; and with serious faces, the group of friends would

* One of his letters dates from his house in *Angel Court, near Charing Cross.*

discuss the ravages of the terrible plague which was cutting down thousands of the population at that time.

"Tell us the news! Tell us the news!" was the cry, and Meautys had plenty to tell, and had also to promise to write about all the new events to his friends in Suffolk on his return to London, and send letters by the weekly carrier to Bury St. Edmunds, which is only four miles distant from Culford, though quite twenty from Brome Hall. This, then, is the gossipy letter which Thomas Meautys sends to her Ladyship after his visit to her in January, 1626:

MY EVER BEST LADY AND COSIN,

Rather than send away this messenger empty, I scribble you such news as I have picked up by the highway, and that the Coronation boulds, both of King and Queen, on Candlemass Day, with as little noyse and ceremony as possibly may bee; the ladies, as is sayed, being spared the charge of roabes, and required only to wear their coronets.

My Lord of Holdernes is alive again.

The syde saddle is a making, and we talked of nothing last night but that, and bathing*, which I sweate to hear. My Lord of Essex they say is at Court, and no speach of any quarrell thear. All this I present to you as I reseaved it last night from our Knight of the Bath, and Nedde Ellenhead, who mett us last night at Pukeridge from London; but theyr intelligence and relations were soe ill putt to gether as did little to edify me, eyther in belief or knowledge.

I take leave to kisse your hands, and to have my love and service cordially recommended to your best beloved; whose presence and conversacions are more acceptable and agreeable to mee than any I can meete with till I meete them again. I am so newly weaned that I have much adoe not to bee forward, and to cry: Mamm, Dadde, Dub, Deare, if anybody anger mee.

Yours Ladyshipp's, etc.,

February 1st, 1626. T.M.

* The ceremony of making Knights of the Bath.

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resolution to avoid yt,* but my Lord Marshall was unsatisfied, assuring me of honor to descend to you from hence, and not the contrary, and preferring this order farr beyond the baronetts as being the most ancient of this land. Uppon his comands, with the persuasion of my other friends, I have embarqued myself in it; God send me good shipping! It being already a greater trouble to me than fitts with my disposition; but I must now go through, which performed, I shall not be long absent from you. In the mean tyme I desier your assurance of my true affection, who am,

Only yours,

January, 1625-6. NATH BACON.

To his best respected friend the La. Cornwalleys at Broome, give these.

Two or three weeks after his visit to Brome, Thomas finds that he is favoured with very few letters from his late hostess, and he grows impatient, and taking advantage of a messenger to these parts, he sends an entreaty for "news from Brome."

In the letter from London he mentions Sir Nathaniel's poor health, and his own "fitt of short breathings," and we remember that Sir Nathaniel was in London for the coronation of Charles I., which took place on the 2nd February, 1626, and it is conjectured he stayed in Meautys' house during his visit.

The cold weather, and the responsibilities of his trying work during the preparations for the great ceremony, seem to have weakened the health of the Secretary, and he also suffered from chest troubles for some months.

In fact Meautys must have been ill in April at the date of Lord Bacon's death, as his letters after that event show, and his friend, Lord Wentworth, carried him off to Toddington, in Bedfordshire, about the time of that sad event, for change of air and relaxation, as we shall see further on.

* To be made a Knight of the Bath.

This February and March of 1626 must have brought a great deal of business of one kind and another for Meautys to manage and give his attention to, for it was imperative he should occupy his seat in the Commons early in February during the first Parliament of King Charles. Of course he was in continual attendance as Clerk of the Privy Council, which caused much writing to be accomplished. The marriage and coronation of Charles and Henrietta Maria were solemnised, and elaborate arrangements made for the new Queen's reception.

The patents for a whole batch of peers were being drawn up by the Privy Council, and many other Government papers would pass through Meautys' busy hands.

But with all this public business, his thoughts turned often to his near and dear private friends, and he never forgot those he loved and honoured. This is apparent all through his busy life, and it is a pleasure to note this.

MY EVER BEST LADY AND COUSIN,

In my last to your Ladyship last weeke by the Berry* carrier I did, in a sort, resolve not to write again until I had been repayd with a lyne or two from your hand, for some three or four letters your Ladyship is in arriere to me; but to show that all occasions offered of doing you service winne ground upon me, against my resolucyons whatsoever to the contrary, I could not possibly omitt the oportunity offered me by this bearer, of scribbling to you, rather than not at all.

Our Parliament falls not as yett upon the mayne business, it being but early days with us and many members absent. Onely Sir Edward Coke's election hath been debated, and is likely to be determined against him within ten dayes; and if he and the rest of his fellow sherriffs be excluded as it is conceaved they will be, we shall have a tame house, and the King will master his own ends without much adoe.

My cosin's health did prophesy of this cold weather some few days ago, for his cough beganne to trouble

* Bury St. Edmunds.

him, and makes him wish himselfe at Broome. Myne is after the olde rate, now and then a fitt of short breathinge.

God in Heaven maintaine you in health and all yours.

Your Ladyshipp's all ever,

February 16th, 1626. T. M.

When April arrived it brought cold winds with snow, and this inclement weather proved disastrous for the health of Viscount St. Alban, who continued to be always one of Meautys' most intimate friends, besides being his kinsman; and as already stated, one day during a drive, Lord St. Alban was taken with a seizure of illness, and had to be hastily conveyed to the nearest house, which happened to be the mansion of Lord Arundel in Highgate, which was empty except for a few servants. The owner at that time was a close prisoner in the Tower of London, having incurred King Charles' anger by countenancing the private marriage of his son, Lord Maltravers, to Lady Elizabeth Stuart.

Here, after a week's illness, Bacon, the man who is still spoken of as England's greatest philosopher, died (9th April). His half brothers made no mention of his death. No historian or biographer gives any details of the death of the author of the "Essays," "Novum Organum," "De Augmentis Scientiarum," and to our grief, the letters from his private Secretary, Thomas Meautys, of this date, are missing, or are lying hidden in private collections, neglected. Is it too much to hope that some letters may still emerge from their long hiding places?

When the contents of Bacon's "will" became known, his nearest of kin would feel aggrieved that they were not to inherit his estate in Hertfordshire, and that it was securely tied up for the use of Thomas Meautys. Old Sir Nicholas Bacon's sons and daughters who still survived, and their children, were all in affluent circumstances, however, much more so than the Meautys connection. The latter had always worked

for their living in some way, even though their paths had led them among exalted circles in England. Thomas' eldest brother, Henry, had sold the site of Stratford Abbey in Essex, which he received through his grandfather, Sir Peter Meautys, and we do not hear that his other six brothers and sisters inherited anything. Their grandfather, Sir Henry Conyngsby, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Boteler, of Watton Woodhall, Hertfordshire, was of some importance in North Mimms, for he owned a large house there, and the family had a private burial place in the ancient Church of St. Mary.

We have said that another letter or two in February, 1626, passed between Lady Bacon and Thomas Meautys after his return from Brome Hall, but these important epistles which could have told us so much that we want to know, are unfortunately lost.

We would especially have liked to see the short note, brief and to the point, which Meautys had sent to her Ladyship, who approves of it so much that she desires him to write in that style instead of the usual complimentry enquiries when addressing her.

And now we come to the important letter in which he mentions the death of Viscount St. Alban, his patron and kinsman. And yet, though it is the most interesting, we are sadly disappointed at its cold tone and callous briefness, for we would have thought that his long intimacy and close friendship with the celebrated man would have called forth a word of grief from the heart.

We can only conjecture there was some cause for his curt mention of the death to Lady Bacon, and we can imagine that St. Alban's character had suffered severely in the austere lady's good opinion, when he was degraded from high office. Her husband also seemed to have no interest in his celebrated uncle. Meautys of course knew this and thought it best in writing to his Lady Jane to preserve a silence on the doings of the patron with whom he was in such constant communication. In no other way can his silence about Bacon be accounted for in these letters.

Here is his letter, which was written at the end of April about three weeks after Bacon's death :

MY EVER BEST LADY AND COUSIN,

I am righte gladde that I have found out at last (which I understand by yours received last night) the way and style to make my letters acceptable, which I perceive is by being short and making profession of my desire and happiness to contribute anything towards your health and welfare, which I doe as cordially effect now, as then, and shall ever doe the same while I am

April, 1626. T. MEAUTYS.

P.S.—Your brother* went for the Low Countries yesterday, with hope to retourne some six weekes hence. His lady remaynes with my Lady Sussex.

My Lo. St. Alban is dead and buried.

No doubt readers of letters between correspondents of James L's day have remarked that the death of a friend is frequently only mentioned in the postcript of the letter.

This is especially the case where one of the male sex is writing to a lady, for it is evidently "etiquette" that the body of the letter shows an interest in the health and doings of the recipient, while any sad news, such as the death of an important person, is kept back for the postscript.

At the end of April, still in the year 1626, during Easter, Meautys went with Lord Wentworth (eldest son of the Earl of Cleveland) into the country and wrote to Lady Bacon from the Earl's seat called Toddington Hall, Bedfordshire.

This letter shows there has been some request refused in a previous letter, which is lost to us, and to which Lady Jane has turned a cold shoulder, and advised her young friend to have patience. There has been a good deal of speculation as to the object of the request—as it was not money ; and it has been suggested that he had begged for an invitation to Brome to see, and become engaged to, the young girl, Anne Bacon, whom he was later on lucky enough to win as his wife.

* Sir Thomas Meautys.

If this was the case the mother most likely would point out that her daughter was still a schoolgirl and must not be disturbed in her studies by thoughts of marriage, at the age of twelve.

If the letter is read in this light, it becomes intelligible:

MY EVER BEST LADY AND COUSIN,

I received your Ladyship's by the carrier of Berry, by whome I send thease; it came to my hands some minutes before my going into the country, which makes me retourne thease in more scribbling wise than otherwise I should. And although I perceive by yours that you cannot find in your heart, or at leaste in your pen to invite me to Broome, though I did in a sorte begge it of you in my last; and that the proverbe which sayeth "He is an ill dogge that's not worth whistling for," makes me conceave that you think little lesse of me, that think me not worth the inviting; yett, to show you that I cannot find in my heart to take anything in ill part at your hands longer than needes be, I will endeavour to obtaine for myself and my occasions to waite on you sometime this somer, yf I may understand from you, by your next how you dispose of your owne residence this vacacion, for by this day fortnight I shall retourne for London with my Lord Wentworth, who is then to goe for France, and I will then hope to meete with a lyne or two from you here, that may assure me of your health.

And for the rest that concernes myself, *since it comes so dryly and cautiously* from you, I shal arm myself with as much patience as I may, and as you may expect from your Ladyship's all and ever to love and serve you,

T. MEAUTYS.

April, 1626.

There is no mention of Bacon's "will" having left him better off in this world's goods either with money or land, and Gorhambury is never alluded to in his correspondence with Lady Bacon.

Shortly after Bacon's death, Thomas Meautys, mourning as he was, found he had a great amount of business of various kinds on his hands, for not only had he to settle Bacon's money affairs, but for some time he had been struggling to secure the Clerkship in the Writs and Processes of the Star Chamber Office.

The reversion of this office had to be purchased from Thomas Cotton, and the money put down at once, but on looking round, Meautys found his exchequer empty, and with Viscount St. Alban's debts to a certain extent hanging round his neck. He never seems to have received any money from his father or brothers. In his trouble he turns to his rich and ever-liberal friend and cousin, Jane Lady Bacon, and was not disappointed. It may be well to give his letter here, dated a Friday in May, 1626, which was very shortly after he had buried Lord Bacon, and he takes the opportunity to send her a letter by hand.

This £600 which he wished to borrow from Lady Bacon seems to us a pretty large sum, but she was quite willing to "pleasure him," as we shall see, and evidently had perfect confidence in his integrity, desiring no security from him. But he insists on giving a bond of some sort, and thanks her profusely, and the letter contrasts favourably with any young gentleman's letter of the present day which might be written under the same circumstances.

Though the date is barely a month after Bacon's death, no further mention is made of that event. Apparently the important transactions he found himself surrounded by have caused him only to think of business. This letter is dated from his "house in the Strand."

Letter relating to the business of buying the reversion in the office of the Chamber of Writs and Processes:

MY VERY BEST LADY AND COUSIN,

I received yours by Mr. Proud, the minister, and purpose to write to you again by him. In the meantime I take the freedom to tell you that if upon the death of Mr. Cotton, of whose office in our Chamber I had a second reversion, I proceed, as I am in treaty to buy

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advancing so readily the necessary money which enabled him to secure the reversion.

In 1624 it appears that he had a second reversion of it in his hands, which he sold to Cotton for £450. The Duke of Buckingham urged him to repay this money, and says the money need not come out of his own pocket, if he can find a suitable man who wishes to secure the title of baronet, so Meautys put up Frederick Cornwallis, who received the title on May 4th, 1627.

Thus for some years Thomas Meautys had been keeping in view the acquiring of the Clerkship in the Star Chamber of Writs and Processes. (The Star Chamber is described by Bacon as an "Institution that hath two uses; the one as a Supreme Court of Judicature; the other as an Open Council.")

The case drags on till Meautys writes the following letter to the Duke, begging that the name of his brother may be added to his own in the reversion of the clerkship.

Letter from Thomas Meautys to Buckingham, May, 1626, copied from the Record Office:

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

I presume in all humbleness to make this address to your favour for perfecting of a worke of your goodness towards me, the foundation whereof was laid by your owne Noble hand some five or six years past. About that time my good Lord it pleased his late Majesty (of blessed memory) upon my humble peticion, presented by yor Grace, to give warrant to his then Attorney, now Lord Keeper for the drawing up of a Grant of an office in Starrchamber to be passed to me in reversion for two lyves—vidzt, my owne and a brother of myne, and to commence after the expiration of two former patents of the said office then in being for the several lives of one Cotton, and one French successively.

The said Graunt to me was accordingly drawne up by Mr. Attorney and presented to his Majesty for his royall signature; but the truth is his Majesty then looking backe upon those two lives already in being,

thought it not fitt to clogg the said office with two lyves more in reversion, and therefore was only pleased to pass the Graunt to me for term of my life only, leaving out my brother.

Now, soe it may please your Grace, that Cotton, one of the former patentees is newly dead, from whence ariseth the first part of my humble suite, which is that through your Grace's mediation on my behalf to his Majesty I may have my brother's lyfe now added.

The next part of this, my humble request, which is a matter almost of course, is, that whereas French, the other surviving Patentee, and now in possession of the said office, is readie to surrender up his interest to me upon valuable consideration agreed on between us, and wherewith wee have already acquainted my Lord Keeper and received his Lordship's approbation.

That therefore his Majesty would be graciously pleased to give way to his surrender, and for a graunt to be passed to such other person in his place as I shall nominate. Both parts of which, my humble suite I have comprised in a short petition to his Majesty which I presume to offer to your Grace herewithall.

The affecting whereof I beseech your Grace to apprehend as that which doth not a little concern me in my poor meanes and fortune (being alreadie out of purse about a thousand poundes about this office) which support of my fortunes what so ever it hath been or may bee, I must ever acknowledge it to bee for the most part derived from your goodness towards mee; soe I hope your Grace is well persuaded that it is not cast away upon an ungrateful man, but upon your Grace's noe less devoted than infinitely obliged servant,

May, 1626. T. MEAUTYS.

Letter of thanks to Lady Bacon for the loan of £600 to secure the Patent Office in the Writs and Processes:

MY SINGULAR GOOD AND NOBLE LADY,

I cannot acknowledge enough your readiness to

pleasure me with the sum you wrote of, nor cannot take thought enough to find myself good for nothing wherein to pleasure you in return.

Only this I have to offer up to you, and yet it is no more than you had long since, namely what so ever I am or may be, to be at your disposing. For security however you are pleased in confidence of me, and favour to me, to decline it, yet I must take leave to deal as safely for you as you have done lovingly and surely with me. And upon receipt of the moneys I am resolved to send you sealed, a bond from my eldest brother and myself to such person as you shall nominate to have the bond made. And this with as little noise or notice of the favour done me as you shall direct or wish.

For the moneys the sooner they come the welcomer. But because I could not collect from your letter whether they might be with most conveniency sent up by some servant of mine to receive them here, I am somewhat at a stand until I may find by your next what course you will propound on that behalf.

Thus with a heart as full of affection to serve you, as a head full of pain and aching, being scarcely out of a sharpe fit of Tertian ague which hath held me all this morning, I rest your ladyship's in sickness and health, living and dying, all and ever,

T. MEAUTYS.

This Friday, May 19th, from my house in the Strand, 1626.

This last letter of May 19th is important in one particular, viz., that in offering security for the loan of £600, he makes no mention of the estate of Gorhambury which it is known Viscount St. Alban had left in the hands of trustees for the use of Meautys, and which would surely have counted as security had it been his at that time.

With Lady Jane's monetary help Meautys secured the office in the Chamber of the "Writs and Processes," and he

continued to rise, and get a thorough hold in the Government of the day.

This is all the more astonishing as he had so very little money of his own, but he had good family connections and strong influential friends to back him with good will, and he was evidently a favourite at Court, and well thought of as a business man.

The settling up of Bacon's many involvements took years to arrange, and Meautys and his trustees must have found it difficult to get money enough to keep Gorhambury House and Verulam Lodge in repair from the very first. As before mentioned, on July 18th, 1627, "Letters of Administration were granted to two of Bacon's creditors—Sir Robert Rich and Thomas Meautys,"* and they proceeded to arrange with Bacon's creditors, and endeavoured to pay an instalment of the debts.

So from now Meautys had to manage the estates and lands in Hertfordshire formerly belonging to Viscount St. Alban, and clear off the debts—which amounted to over £22,000. That he had no money of his own is very evident, as we saw in the letter from Meautys to Lady Jane Bacon, where he begs her to lend him £600 to purchase the reversion of the office in the Writs and Processes.

In the next letter we see he is sending a messenger to receive the money from Lady Jane and convey it to him in London.

MY BEST LADY AND COUSIN,

I received both yours by the carrier, and in answer to the first, which is so careful and solicitous about my health, I can but just thank you in as much earnest as you are pleased to express on my behalf, and then to let you know that I am, God be thanked, much better now than when I fell sick. This ague having apparently evacuated much of the humour wherewith my lungs were wont to labour.

I am sorry to find both by your letter and the

*This document is at Somerset House.

messenger that my cousin's* health is no better, but I comfort myself in that observation he makes of the time, as hoping that I shall hear by the next that we are twins as well in recovery together as falling sick, otherwise he will but bind me over in good manners to undergo a relapse ; for I shall take the less comfort in my recovery that it hath gotten the start of his.

As for the moneys I will send sometime this next week by an immediate messenger from hence.

Our Parliament was this day adjourned till Thursday next. The Upper House is not satisfied with the reasons of the King detaining my Lord of Arundel from them, and are resolved to press it further. The King withdraws not his countenance and protection one jot from the Duke of Buckingham.

God send us all the light of His countenance, and then all will be well.

Yours Ladyship's all and ever,

T. MEAUTYS.

Strand, June 2nd, 1626.

My sister Ann (Glover) desires to be excused for not writing by this passage, which she confesses she both ought to, but that she was called away, etc.

Thomas Meautys suffered much from what he calls Tertian ague, and this makes him sympathise with his cousin, Sir Nathaniel Bacon, whose health was failing so rapidly, though he was still a youngish man of forty-one.

We have no knowledge whether Lady Bacon consulted her husband when consenting to lend Thomas Meautys £600 or not, but from a remark in his letter—"I am resolved to send you sealed, a bond from my eldest brother and myself, to such persons as you shall nominate to have the bond made ; and this with as little noise of the favour done me as you shall direct"—it seems as if she had a desire not to trouble Nathaniel Bacon, who was in bad health at the time, and whose death occurred shortly afterwards.

*Sir Nathaniel Bacon.

Lady Jane is offered the use of Meautys' house in the Strand on the occasion of her visiting London, and he says he will wish his house on fire if she does not accept its shelter. He also begs her to ask her steward, Mr. Morse, for the exact day of Mr. Cotton's death, as a certain sum of money is owing to him according to the date of death.

The letter ends with a chat about the Duke's impeachment, and the good news that the Earl of Arundel was restored from prison to the House of Parliament.

The next letter is also one of thanks to Lady Jane Bacon, for she has sent him the £600 he asked for, "the horse load of favours," by his man Knight, and she holds out hopes of visiting London soon.

He tells her the Parliamentary news of the day, that the Duke of Buckingham has sent his answer to the thirteen articles of impeachment; "*an ingenious answer to indifferent ears*"; and that the Duke has been made Chancellor of Cambridge, which the House of Commons considers as an affront to itself, but the King has commanded the House to forbear questioning the honour. Lord Arundel also at last has been released from the Tower of London.

MY EVER BEST AND DEAREST LADY AND COUSIN,

I received yours by my man Knight, accompanied with that horse load of favours and friendly courtesy which you pleased to mention in your former letter, which seasonable piece of friendship expressed by your Ladyship towards me, and my occasion although I can never acknowledge, yet gives me leave to reckon of it but as a *treasure in silver*, in comparison of that other *in gold* which was the hopes you gave me of kissing your hands ere long. Wherein however you have somewhat failed, for though methinks with me, who number days and hours till I see you, it is already a great while since I drank in these hopes, yet I will hope on still, and leave you thus far without excuse as to tell you that there are two houses in the Strand (London) at your devotion, my own and Sir Thos. Wilson's, who lieth with his family at Whitehall, though I must confess

I shall wish my own house on fire every time I see you pass by it to sleep in the other.

Therefore as you tender my rest and happiness, sweet madame, think not I beseech you of resting yourself under any other roof and be pleased *to let me see you than hear from you again.*

And now let me presume to put a new piece of trouble upon you, which is to cause your servant to learn certainly the day of Mr. Cotton's* death, and to let me understand it by the next, for ever since that day the profits of the office belong to me, and are to be accounted to me by his deputy and clerks, and the difference of a few days may be in or out of my way half a hundred pounds. Mr. Morse§ was much conversant with him as I have heard him say, and can satisfy this question.

The Duke of Buckingham hath this day made his answer to our charge against him; an ingenuous and cleare answer and very satisfactory, as is conceaved to all *indifferent ears.*

My Lord of Arundel was this day restored to the House; it appeares not as yett whether he be in favour or not, against the Duke.

We talk much of great forces both by sea and land in readiness to come from Spaine. We have thirty sayle of good shippes shortly to putt to sea. Our House quarrells with the election of the Duke to be Chancellor of Cambridge, as an affront done to the house; the King hath sent messages to our House to forbeare questioning it.

The King hath sent the University a letter of thanks for electing him (the Duke) and so do I you for continuing mee in your good favour and affections, who am,

All your own,

T. M.

June 8th, 1626.

*Lady Bacon's stepfather was a Mr. Cotton.

§Lady Bacon's Steward.

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In a later letter to Lady Jane Bacon dated April 16th, 1628, Meautys shows that two years have not sufficed to satisfy Bacon's creditors. It was in June, 1626, that Meautys was admitted a member of Gray's Inn, and took possession of Bacon's chambers. The papers found there he probably had no time to read, and he made no list of them. Some were published by Dr. William Rawley, others by Isaac Greene, and many were afterwards collected by Bishop Tenison, who left them to Lambeth Palace Library.

The next letter we print is interesting, as we see by it that Meautys has taken advantage of the offer the Duke of Buckingham made to him some years since, that he could retain the money he owed to Cotton on his putting forward some suitable man to be made a baronet, the fees thereof of course covering the sum. Frederick Cornwallis, the son of his dear friend, Lady Bacon, by her first marriage with Sir William Cornwallis, was just seventeen at this date. He was a rich landowner and occupied an important position in Suffolk, and therefore he was a perfectly suitable man for the title, but knowing Lady Bacon's love of retirement and dislike of Court honours, he does not dare to tell her of her son's rise in honour until it is *un fait accompli* and cannot be undone by her stern ladyship.

So he risks a scolding, which he certainly gets, and over which Frederick and Thomas must have smiled. Young Frederick's baronetage takes precedence of other candidates, and is the first in the county for Suffolk.

On reading some of the letters which Meautys wrote to Lady Bacon in May, 1627, we gather that this honour and other events have taken place, among friends dear to the circle at Culford and Brome, and it is rather amusing to observe with what care Meautys manages that Frederick Cornwallis shall be safely baronetted before his mother can put her veto on the ceremony. He evidently knew she would not allow her son, over whom she has a wardship, and who was only seventeen at that date, to be raised so high, heir though he was to the large estates in Suffolk—Brome, Oakley, Stuston, etc.,

as well as Wilton, in Yorkshire. So her permission is not asked, but Thomas must have felt when he wrote to tell her about it, that he was risking her displeasure, and it is annoying that her indignant answer is not to hand, to give us an insight to her feelings, and the way she expressed them. Meautys was determined his "Cosin Frederick" should not only be a baronet, but should take precedence over the other men of Suffolk who received the honour at that time. We can also see by the following letter how genuinely anxious he was about Lady Bacon's health:

MY EVER BEST LADY AND COSIN,

I begged of you in my last by Nutte, the carriere, that I mought partake of the happy tidings of your recovery soe soone as it should please God to send it you, but not having received any lyne from you sinse, I am not a little perplexed what to think of your health.

I do hope I shall heare that you are in way of recoverie —till then I shall be in a cold fitt of feare and expectation touching the event of your sickness. Next, lett me impart to you, and aske your pardon, that without your privity and direction I have presumed to apply the favour meant me long since by the Duke, for making a baronett, to the servise I hope of my cosin Frederick.

Quarrell me you may, as you use to doe, for my forwardness to affect and serve you and yours, for other offence toward you I was never guilty of; but for this it is too late to intreat it,* if, peradventure in disfavour of me you had a mind to it, for it hath already passed the Signet, and Privy Seale, and will be to-morrow by noone passed the Great Seale.

That which prevented me from acquainting you with it soe seasonably as other ways I had done was that I was surprised myself in this resolution to make use of the Duke's promise in that kinde on my cosin's behalfe, for, hearing that Sir Robert Crane, young Wingfield, Drue Drurie's nephew, and some others of

*Withdraw it.

Suffolk were laboring for that dignity to be conferred upon them, I concluded that no time must be lost, point of precedency being noe indifferent thing; I have handled it that he shall be first of that county, in this last edition of baronetts.

I am not so precipitate, or indifferent in that which concernes you in point of interest, as not first to have been advised and satisfied without question by those who know best, and particularly by Mr. Attorney Generall, and Mr. Attorney of the Court of Wards that there is nothing of prejudice, that can thereby ensue to you touching his wardship, either of body or lands.

By the next I purpose to send you the Patent under the Great Seale, and hearwith send you, under the Privy Seale of my heart the most entire and sincere affection to serve you and yours, of your ladyship all and ever to dispose of

T. MEAUTYS.

May 4th, 1627.

To the information conveyed in his letter to Lady Bacon that her son is now a baronet, Thomas Meautys receives no reply, which must have been rather galling when one hears of the eagerness other aspirants showed to attain such an honourable title, and their gratitude to the donor. He feels that his efforts to keep up or raise the family dignity has made him almost lose a friend, whose regard he holds so dear that every slight quarrel distresses him greatly.

He was prepared for a scolding, but not for being ignored; so he writes to her stern ladyship to show her that "precedency is a principall verbe":

MY EVER BEST LADY AND COUSIN,

Your not vouchsafing, eyther by letter or messenger, to take knowledge of the contents of my last to you touching my cosin Fred, reprooves mee sufficiently of being an officious foole, and although Madam, I shall take it for a warning yett, when I reflect upon the affection and singleness of heart whearwith I did it,

as also upon the motives which confined mee in point of time from acquainting you first thearwith, I plead not guilty of having deserved to have my well meaning herein to be soe passed by, as not worthy of a lyne or a message.

I was not ignorant that "time" in these cases though it seeme a circumstans, yett is indeed substance; precedency being a principali verbe which my cosin Fred's patent hath, both of Drue and Wingfield, and of Sir Robert Crane, which in my poore discretion, considering they are all of a county, was somewhat; and which had been lost if I had stayed to send and hear from you first.

And now, my dearest friend, lady, and cosin, I come to that which both affects and perplexes me more than any other thing in this world, which can come crosse upon mee, namely, the ill tidings of your want of health, and the apprehensions I have of your growing worse; agaynst which I have no refuge but to Almighty God with my dayly and instant prayers, which I shall as earnestly doe as for my own soule; and being obtained, give Him thanks as for the greatest temporall blessing to mee upon earth.

Your Ladyship's all, and ever to love and serve you,

T. MEAUTYS.

May 10th, 1627.

In the midst of domestic news, we must not forget the Parliamentary proceedings of 1627 in which Meautys was a partaker, and June was an important month, as some little concessions had been gained from King Charles, and both the Houses had dared to complain of the excessive abuse of power displayed by the King's favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, who ruled the King and Parliament with a very high hand.

Meautys had been asked to let her Ladyship know the news:

MY EVER BEST LADY AND COSIN,

This bearer some weekes since having delivered me a letter from your Ladyship, and calling upon mee this day to know whether I would returne an answer, thereby gave mee an opportunity.

And because it is not unworthy your knowing what we have done and are doing in Parliament, thease take leave to tell you that on Saturday last the King gave a full and satisfactory answer to our petition concerning the liberty of the subject, and propriety and exemption of his person and estates from any illegal courses, which caused such expression of joy in general, as, whear tongue left off bells and bonfires began; and the proceedings with the subsidies, which wear at a stand, followed the next day in Parliament, and are ready to be passed entirely within two or three days.

Nevertheless wee goe on with a remonstrance containing the general grievance of the realme which wee have reduced to thease heads, namely—

Fear of innovation of religion.

The ill-successes of our late forrain enterprises.

The ill state of our forts and castles.

The general want of powder and all other sorts of ammunition requisite for the defence of the realm.

The decay of trade.

The great losse and decay of shipping of the realme.

The ill-guarding of the narrow seas.*

And ended in these very tearmes; that the excessive power of the Duke of Buckingham, and the abuse of that power is the chief cause of these evils and daungers to the King and kingdome.

This was the worke of this day and held us without stirring out of the House from eight this morning till this hower, being now seven at night: soe that it being now high tyme to goe to dynner I end the more abruptly, and rest

Your Ladyship's all and ever to serve you,

T. MEAUTYS.

* The Channel.

> I heard speech of your purpose to come to towne; if such part of my house as is empty may pleasure you, you may command it.
>
> June 11th, 1627.

While searching for the name of Thomas Meautys in old documents we came across a "Catalogue of Pamphlets from the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, London," and find that a member of that Inn had dedicated some of his writings to "Thomas Mewtys," with a most laudatory preface, in which he is praised as a very good man, and that being such a good man he has been chosen as patron of the book. We have only space for the title here: "The Attornies' Almanacke, by Thomas Powell, London, 1627: Provided and desired for the general ease and daily use of all such as shall have occasion to remove any person, cause or record from an inferiour Court to any of the Higher Courts at Westminster. Dedicated to Thomas Mewtys, Clerk of the Privy Council."

A year after the death of the great philosopher Bacon, Thomas Meautys had to make up his mind that his much appreciated cousin, Sir Nathaniel Bacon, K.B., would not be with them very long, for it was apparent to all that this gifted artist would soon lay down his palette and brushes for ever. The winter journey up to London which he had gone through, and the fatigue consequent on the ceremony of being made a Knight Commander of the Bath, with the excitement of the coronation, and its late hours, undermined his frail health.

We find Sir Nathaniel was in London again in June, 1626, probably with a view to consult a physician as to the weakness of his lungs—for his brother Edmund was alarmed at his state, and begged him to "have a care."

On his way back to Suffolk he was detained by spitting blood, which much distressed the household at Brome.

The Clerk of the Council writes to Brome constantly, and longs to be of service to the lady who is wife and sick nurse:

> I am not a little troubled to hear of my cosin Bacon's ill health, and that I am good for nothing that may conduce to his recovery, only my prayers for him shall

bee in as good earnest as for the dearest friend and brother I have. I have here sent some of that syroph of Ela Campagne of my sister's making, which I have myself and some other of my friends found so much good of. And by cause I saw my cosen was allowed to take tobacco sometimes I have had some sent me from a friend for special good, have likewise sent him some porcion of it, and if my cosen like it, will send him more.

I recommend you to the protection of God Almighty and rest,

Your Ladyship's all and ever to love and serve you,

T. MEAUTYS.

June 22nd, 1627.

It is to be feared that poor Nathaniel never enjoyed his present of tobacco, for in June, 1627, he died, much to the grief of all who knew him. By all accounts he must have had a charming personality, combining good looks with a loving true heart and a wonderful artistic perception, which causes the pictures he painted still to be admired. His age was just forty-two when he departed this life.

His widow did all she could to perpetuate his memory, and the beautiful bust of Nathaniel in Culford Church shows his refined features, in marble, and his funeral certificate says that "he was endued with many excellent virtues, besides his endowments of nature."

Lady Jane's brother, Sir Thomas Meautys, writes to her with true religious sentiment, what he means to be a consolatory letter, but his own desperate straits for want of money (he had pawned his silver plate) makes the ending appear a little selfish, for he begs her to lend him some money to enable him to leave his wife provided for, till he returns to the Low Countries where £400 is due to him.

It runs as follows :—

DEERE SISTER,

I am very sorry to understand by your letter of the death of my brother, your husband, yet again in the same letter you did send me a consolation ever to bee

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She had a very tender heart for children and never could refuse them house room, being continually surrounded by her small relatives at Brome, viz., her brother's children, her son's children, her cousin's offspring, and her own four belongings, and she was continually sending money to pay the nurse and the board of her brother's eldest boy. Her marble monument shows six of the "children" belonging to her in one relationship or another—a "mother" to all.

We must now return to Secretary Meautys' own immediate business in Parliament, and the following letter gives one a good idea of the political situation :

MY BEST LADY AND COSIN,

I have found minutes enough between the Parliament Howse and the Consell Chamber, to scribble these confused lines, and to tell you what passed in Parliament, viz., almost a month, for *only time and not business* hath passed.

To-morrow Sir Ed. Coke's election will be determined of and it is taken for granted he will be excluded, and another chosen in his room.

The Counsell of Warre, as well as such of them as are of the Upper House are to-morrow to appear in the Lower House to answer such questions as shall be asked touching the issuing and expending of the late subsidies.

The Lower Howse hath busied themselves in examining the "stay" of a French Shipp here, laden with merchandise of the value of £400,000—which "stay" hath caused an arrest of all our merchants goods in Fraunce. A message was sent to the Lord Admiral to demand his reason of that stay with a purpose in case he gives us not the better satisfaction to present it up to the King as a public grievance. The issue can proove nothing but the loozing of our breath, and showing our good wills to the Duke, for he will easily answer it to the King though we be deaf to him.

To serve you ever,

T. MEAUTYS.

The Earl of Devonsheare is dead.

June 21st, 1628.

Pray direct your letters to Kelletts, the apothecary, on Ludgate Hill.

If Lady Bacon received some marriage proposals after her second widowhood in 1627, we have no documents which show them. Her devoted and earnest admirer and cousin who is the subject of this sketch writes to her more freely of his own love for her, from henceforth, but we cannot quite decide that he proposed marriage to her, though he evidently wished to be on very friendly relations with her. His letters are singularly silent about her daughter whom he married ten or twelve years later.

Lady Jane must have been forty-six in 1627, and Thomas Meautys is supposed to have been quite ten or more years younger than that. In 1628 he writes begging her to come up to London, though his attendance on the King at Hampton Court will prevent him seeing much of her, and the letter begins in his usual amorous style :

MY EVER BEST AND DEAREST LADY,

As there is nothing more naturall with me than to be best pleased when I am doing you service soe be pleased to believe that thear hath nothing, since I saw you, occurred oftener to my thoughts and wishes, than the hope of seeing you and serving you ere long. I write these from Hampton Court, where the King and Queen intend to stay till Alhollandtide, and whear I am afraid I shall be for the most part attending. If that part of my house which is at my own disposing and is sequestered entirely from that part my Lord of Cleveland hath, may pleasure you—you may command it wholly furnished as it is ; and when I return again I shall love every room the better, wherein I shall conceave you have either trodde or breathed.

All this without courtshippe, as is and shall be for

ever, whatsoever else lyeth within the power which may be acceptable unto you of

Your Ladyship's all to ever love and serve you,

Oct. 2nd, 1628. T. MEAUTYS.

Pray Madame kisse Mrs. Randolph for me and enjoyne her to do the like for me to all my cosins except Sir Frederick.

After this comes a gap in the correspondence that we have no means of filling, and it is most unfortunate that Lady Jane's answers are lost, for the next letter extant from Thomas shows that his ardour had got the better of him, and that his continuous importunity had caused a quarrel, and some coldness on the lady's part.

That he almost worshipped her is evident all through the letters we have, and at no time did his love cool, whether she was wife or widow. Had she given him an inch, he was ready to bound the length of an ell, and it was one of his characteristics that he never forgot, and never grew weary of, those he loved. He was always ready to serve them, and be an enthusiastic friend. Any coldness on Lady Jane's part distressed him greatly, as we can see, and the following letter breathes love in every line:

MY NOBLE LADY AND COSIN,

If it weare as easy for me to pass through Suffolk without asking leave to salute you as it is for you to deny me leave, I had peradventure forborne to put upon you at this time the trouble of reading these; but be you what you please towards me, I can be no other in my heart towards you than what, upon best understandings formerly between us as friends we have formerly professed; you may please to pardon me if upon that foundation, which on my part was layed too deep to be shaken with every tempest of unkindness, I take leave to build again some lower roomes for myself in your accustomed friendly and much desired affections.

And yf I may be soe happy as to perceave upon the retourne of this bearer, that the porter at Broome hath not in charge to shutte the gates against me when

I come thither, I shall peradventure sett apart one hower before I retourne to London to waite on you and kisse your hands, then which nothing, since I had the favour to doe it last, hath occurred more acceptable, or is more longed for by

Your Ladyship's for ever to love and serve you,

T. MEAUTYS.

Norfolk, Armingland, May 25th, 1629.

Towards the end of the year 1630 Lady Jane's son, Sir Frederick Cornwallis, was the cause of distressing his mother. and going contrary to all her desires.

About this time we see by the correspondence that her ladyship was casting round among her friends for news of any heiress who was old enough to marry, that she might enter negotiations to make a good match for her son.

But in these days, as in our own, young men like to choose a wife for themselves, and Lady Jane suddenly heard that Sir Frederick had married in London. This seems to have given her a great shock, which she did not get over for a long time, and nothing seemed to appease her wrath and indignation at her judgment being slighted and her desires thwarted.

Yet the young lady was desirable in all points save having no "dot."

Sir Frederick, who was Equerry to the King, had fallen in love with one of the Court ladies who held the position of Maid of Honour to Queen Henrietta, and who later on was raised to Woman of the Bedchamber.

She was Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Ashburnham, and the King and Queen displayed a lively interest in the young couple, attended their marriage, and promised to give the young lady a marriage portion of £3,000.

We see that the marriage was hastily arranged, and Lady Jane felt disappointed that the young lady she had in her eye for her son, and whom Mistress Dorothy Randolph describes in a letter as "soe conveniently handsome that I wished her my cosin's wife," had not been chosen. This was a Miss Courteen, whose father was a Dutch merchant.

It seems to have been the general opinion that the pictures at Redgrave Hall were to come to the market after Sir Nicholas Bacon's death.

Charles I., as Prince and King, had set the fashion of collecting works of the best masters, and rich aristocrats were eagerly buying up portraits from Holbein's brush, and other pictures. Amongst the enthusiasts might be mentioned Lord Arundel, Lord Dorset, Lucy Lady Bedford, and Sir Nicholas Bacon, who had spent considerable sums in this way, and adorned their mansions with picture galleries.

Lady Bedford had entreated Sir Nathaniel Bacon, who was considered such an expert, to secure for her one of the pictures at Redgrave by Holbein, before Lord Arundel could seize on it.

But the picture remained still in the family, for a few years, and its merits were discussed and its possession envied. Lord Dorset came forward and begged Thomas Meautys to intercede with the Bacon family that he might be the purchaser, but Thomas remembering that Sir Nathaniel had promised Lady Bedford that she should have the first refusal, wrote to Lady Jane to ask her into whose hands the picture had fallen, and to let the family know that Lord Dorset was anxious to become the possessor of it.

MY EVER BEST AND DEAREST LADY,

I reseaved yours in answer to myne about the picture, and having no better way to satisfy Lord Dorsett I shewed him so much of your letter as related thereto.

One passage he was willing to lay hold of as giving him some hopes that the picture mought be procured from those hands it was left to by your noble husband. And therefore if you please to lett me know to whose hands it is come, and that I may likewise understand what is meant by your words " I think they will not part with it upon terms would be pleasing to you."

It would enable me to give full satisfaction to Lord D., whether it be to be had on any terms or no.

Your Ladyship's all and ever,

Good Friday, 1628. T. MEAUTYS

We see by the next letter that Meautys is still a bachelor, and that he experienced a great shock upon the death of his favourite sister, Anne, who lived in his house, and who had married the second son of Sir William Glover, Knt. After returning to London from an enjoyable visit to Lady Jane Bacon at Brome Hall (probably having her daughter with her), she had caught small pox, which ended fatally in her case, though her daughter recovered from the dread disease. She must have been a widow at the time of her death, April, 1628, as Thomas and his eldest brother Henry were elected trustees to the children who had only £100 a year. His eldest brother Henry had married Elizabeth, a daughter of the above-mentioned knight, Sir William Glover, so there was a double connection with that family. Here is an extract from the very long letter Thomas sends his cousin :

MY EVER DEAREST LADY AND COSIN,

In my last to you, which it seems had miscarried, I expressed that My Lord of Dorsett was the Lord that affected the picture ; and did like wise in that letter bemoane the sickness, and desire your prayers for the recovery of my deare sister Glover, who was then very sick of the small pox, whereof, with eyes fraught with teares of grieffe, I must in the first place acquaint you, she departed this life on this day fortnight, and yett tell you withall with eyes noe less filled with teares of joye and comfort, that she hath assuredly changed this life for a better, and that now she is a saynt in Heaven. . . . .

She died at Kellett's, the apothecarie's, neare Paule's, whear her daughter Anne at this present lyeth ill of the same disease but is, God be thanked, past all danger and almost able to goe abroad.

If your ladyship can find in your harte to ease me somewhat, without charge to you at all, of the care of breeding that little harmless one which was dear to her, and is no less soe to me because she hath in favour [face] been said to resemble you, I shall be at some harte's ease, which of this time I have need of, being

like one that hath lost a wife as well as a deare sister, finding the difference now for a month between solitude and the conversation and comfort of a matchless friend; and were it not for the relief I have found by the neighbourhood and noble favours of my Lord and Lady Cleveland, I should have resolved to become as weary of this part of the world *as some friends alive, nearest and dearest to me*, have shown of late to be of me.

I received letters this morning from Sir Thomas Meautys dated 25th of March; he and his lady are both well and hath invited me to come over* and christen her childe; whereof I can yett retourne noe direct answer untell I have settled some tearme business concerning my Lord St. Albane's creditors, and taken order for the disposing of some of my sister's children, and seeing to their maintenance, which is £100 amongst them, left in trust with me and my eldest brother for their educacyon.

And now my best and dearest friend, I take leave to kisse your pretious hands, and to wish from the bottom of my soul all true happiness and bliss both in this life, and a better to you and yours, whom I doe most sincerely and entirely love; resolving in what part of the world soever it shall please God to dispose me, to live and dye,

All and ever your Ladyship's,

April 16th, 1628. T. MEAUTYS.

The Lords of the Upper House are in serious debate, whether they shall joyne with us in that part of the petition for the restrayning of the King's powers of commitment without showing cause of commitment. If they joyne all will be well, otherwise we will break within very few days.

One or two points in this last affectionate letter to Lady Jane are worth noting; one being that he is still trying, two years after Lord Bacon's death, "to settle up with Lord St. Alban's creditors." We may remember that Letters of

* To Holland.

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howers by the neighbourhood and noble favours of my Lord and Lady Cleveland, of whose family I reckon myself, and have done all this while, thear being nothing but solitude under my own roofe, I should by this time have resolved to become as weary of this part of the world, as some friends alive, nearest and dearest unto me, have shewed of late to be of me."

So we take it for granted that his intimate friends had been the Clevelands, but it is evident that when this letter was written in 1631 he had not seen them for a considerable time, as they had probably remained in Bedfordshire.

We notice that the expression "noble favours" occurs in connection with the name of Lord Cleveland in the letter to Lady Bacon, and also in the letter of 1631 which we supposed is addressed to his lordship, though it may have miscarried and finally been brought back to Meautys by a faulty carrier.

The Earl of Cleveland was twice married, first to Anne, daughter of Sir John Crofts, of Saxham, in Suffolk, and secondly to Catherine, daughter of Sir John Wentworth, Knt., of Gosfield, Essex, and had a large family, who are evidently alluded to in the final paragraph of farewell, when he begs to be remembered to "my most honoured Lord and Lady, and all my noble ladies and especial friends."

MY ALL-HONOURED LORD,

Upon the first reading of your Lordship's received this day, I had almost putte penne to paper to ask your pardon for having (as I supposed) so rudely broken open a letter intended for another, some more deserving friend or servant of your Lordship's (for by the infinite disproportion between the noble favours there in expressed, and my disability anyway to merit, I could not other wise conjecture), but upon second cogitation, remembering it to be incident to Heroique Nature and Spiritts to measure out and confer their graces, and favours according to the latitude and dimensions of their own noble and capacious hearts, and not according to the narrower span and scantling of other's merritts, and calling to minde that this is not the first time by many that your

Lordship hath pointed mee out as an instance thereof by your singular accumulate favours, I come now instead of asking pardon for a supposed error of my own, to render unto your Lordship all humble acknowledgement for a wilfull, or rather willing error of yours in overprizing the poore endeavours of your unprofitable servant. Next I take leave to say somewhat of what hear arising as well from abroad as at home, viz., that upon later and more certaine advertisement out of Germany, it is found the blow given to the Imperialists was farre greater both for numbers, being at least 20,000 and for quality of the persons than was first reported. Tilly himself being mortally wounded and escaping to a town called Holverstat some miles distant, was persued by the King of Sweden upon being advertised that hee was dead, and that his body was newly taken hence to be convoyed by the guard of 1,500 horse to the Duke of Bavier's Court, instantly went after them, and in a few howers overtook them, defeated the whole troupes, and brought back the corpse to Holverstat, where it remains in the town house, a spectacle of the Divine revenge and justice for the bloody execution at Markdeburgh.

On Sunday at Hampton Court the States Ambassador here resident at a solemn and publique audience in the presence, sung us in effect an auld song to a new tune, for his errand was only a formal relation of the passages of that achievement and defeat in the Low Countries (where by the way I heard not any mention at all of my Lord Craven's powers) though some say he expected a roome in the next Gazette.

The Ambassador, in magnifying of the victory, when he said as we thought enough, concluded with that which was more than all hee had said before, namely in resembling it, both for the extent of the design, the greatest and expense of the preparation, and manner of the deliverance, to that of the invasion in '88.

Att home we say Mr. Attorney General is past hope

of being Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, for he is assured of it, by the like reason my Lord Richardson is past all feare of being removed to the King's Bench.

The Attorney's place is now in competition only between Noye and Banks, for Sir John Fince is out at all, and Banks is the likest to carry it.

Sir George was less beholden this year than ever either to the Lords of the Order, or to the other Lords, there being only present those in the margin.

So praying your Lordship to believe that I have more room in my heart than in my paper for my devotion and service to your Lordship my most honoured Lord and Lady, and all my noble ladies, and especial friends, I rest,

Your Lordship's to serve you,

T.M.

October 11th.

Your commands to Mr. Maxwell I performed at Windsor on Monday was seven nights. Pardon this scribble for my candle winks upon me to hasten to an end, and my maid, Mary, is a-bed, and in her first sleep, and very wayward if she be waked.

Lord Chamberlain	Lord Treasurer.
Lord Marshall	Lord Lindsey
Lord Salisbury	Lord Rosborough
Lord Holland	Lord Monmouth
Lord Dorsett	Lord Goring
Lord Andover	Lord Doncaster

Lord Dunluce.

Indorsed, for your noblest self, my most honoured Lord.

ALICE BARNHAM.
Wife of Sir Francis Bacon (formerly erroneously engraved as Anne Cooke, *mother* of Sir Francis Bacon).

PART III.

Friendship with Charles I., Lady Sussex, and others.

IN Part I. we mentioned how unfortunate it was that the deed of 1626 is no longer to be found, which Viscount St. Alban, Earl Verulam, drew up in law language, leaving Gorhambury Mansion and Verulam House, Hertfordshire, in the hands of trustees after his death, for the use of his favourite kinsman and Secretary, Thomas Meautys, Clerk of the Privy Council.

There seems to have been a good deal of confusion in the public mind even then, as to who the heirs were to the property, and who should succeed to the titles, and the matter is not quite clear yet.

The widowed Viscountess may have had an interest in the family mansions, as marriage dowry, which she would lose on contracting a second marriage, and the Earl's eldest half-brother and half-nephew may have had claims to the title, and did not take them up, as there was no money to support them with.

It is well known that Bacon shortly before his death made every effort to prevent his wife inheriting more than he was obliged to leave to her.

The cause of this quarrel is supposed to have been the rather too warm friendship existing between the Viscountess and her Gentleman Usher, who is variously named by different writers, and whom she is said to have married a month after her husband's death.

When the disagreeable facts of his wife's conduct bec ıme known to him, the shock to his pride must have been great, and he at once tried to cut her off from all enjoyments of his estate where possible. He foresaw she might marry again on his demise and determined that if she did so she should not live in Gorhambury nor be able to raise money on it.

But to whom should he leave it ?

He seems to have been on cold terms with his half brothers, and their children who were his next of kin, and he had no desire they should benefit. And so his thoughts naturally turned to his faithful secretary and distant kinsman, Thomas Meautys, and he left Gorhambury under trustees for his use. His wife's second marriage would certainly put her out of Court for that estate.

In an old Burke's Peerage the gentleman the Viscountess favoured is called Sir John Underhill, but Aubrey alludes to him as Sir Thomas Underhill. We find a Mr. Underhill among the list of "Gentlemen in Waiting" on Sir Francis Bacon, Kt., Lord Chancellor of England, but no other information is vouchsafed to us.

The confusion is increased in "Foss's Judges," for that work announces that the Viscountess bestowed her hand upon Mr. Walter Doble, of Sussex. Whether she took a second husband or not, we see by the register of the ancient parish church of Eyeworth, in Bedfordshire, that she was buried under the name of "The Widow Dowager to Francis, Viscount St. Alban, 9th June, 1650." The fact that Gorhambury belonged to Meautys during the *lifetime* of the Viscountess St. Alban is confirmed by the "Verney Letters," lately published in two handsome volumes by Lady Verney, who has kindly allowed us to quote from them ; but there was little to inherit, as the Lord Chancellor after his fall had sold all the property except the Park and Mansions, remarking that he would "top the branches to save the trunk."

Had this deed of conveyance not been drawn up, the property might have been seized by creditors to pay the heavy debts left by his lordship, but Meautys must have found that he had a house on his hands which was simply an encumbrance to a bachelor of no means, for that he was impecunious is shown by his borrowing money immediately after his patron's death to enable him to purchase the reversion of the office of Clerk of the Writs and Processes in the Star Chamber in May 1626. We have already shown that the lady he borrowed from was his cousin Jane, Lady Bacon, wife of Lord St. Alban's

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Probably the right wing contained the suite of apartments once or twice consigned to Queen Elizabeth and her attendants on her visits to her Lord Keeper, and these were sumptuously furnished, for we read of velvet curtains and tapestry hangings, besides Turkey carpets, etc. The four-post beds were an important item, and often cost £150 and upwards. Families used to lend their relatives " the black, or mourning bed," when the head of the house died, for the widow to use and appear in, with much ceremony, while receiving visits of condolence from relatives and friends.

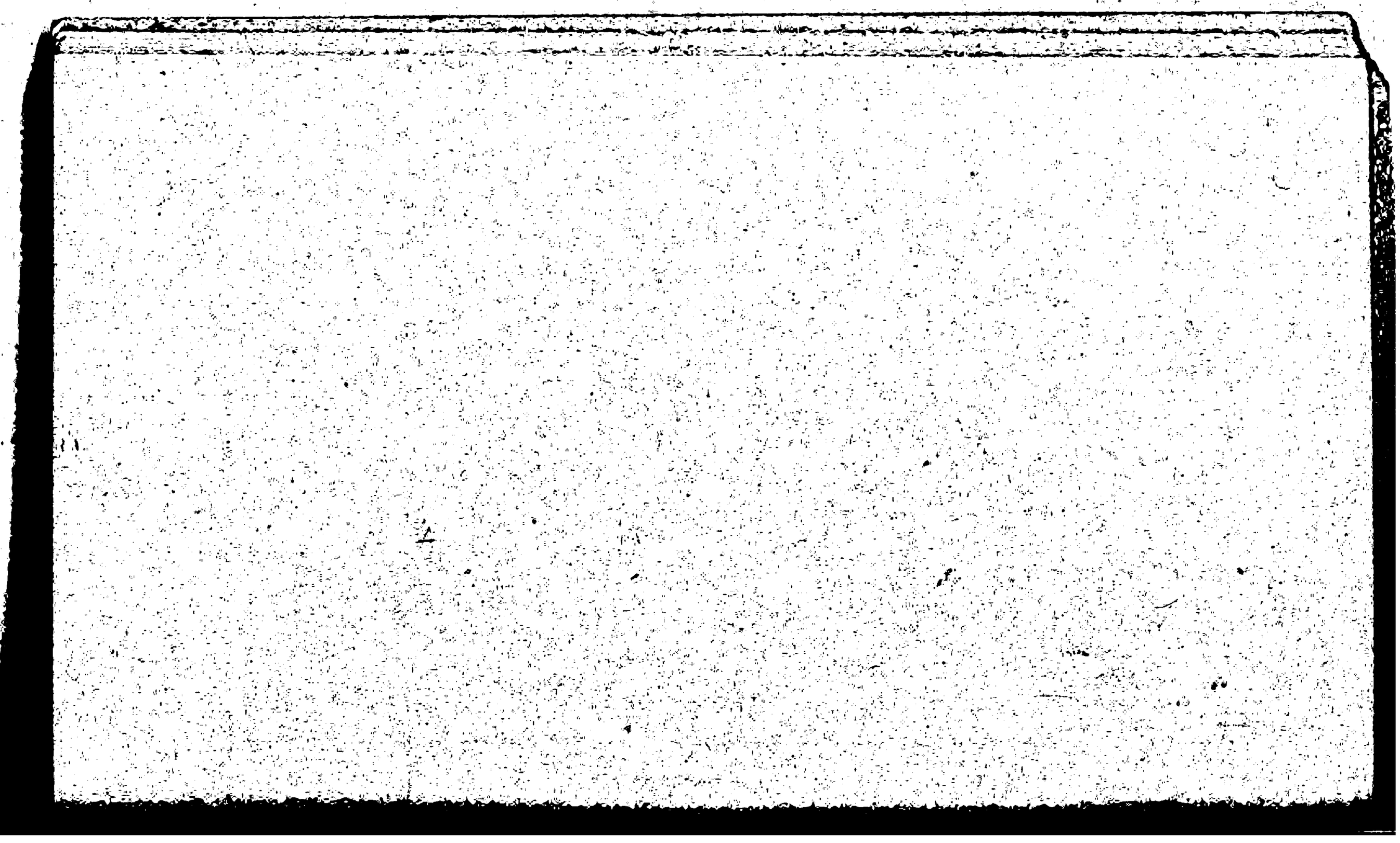
At that time, as each room led into another without what we now call " passages," the chief bedroom was in the middle of the house. It is only in modern times that passages have been added to old houses.

In describing Gorhambury Mansion we must not forget the adjoining Verulam House, which Lord Bacon had taken such pleasure n building near the Pondyards on the estate; the reason given for a second mansion being the difficulty in getting water in Gorhambury.

The building expenses of what Aubrey calls " this ingenious little pile," helped to ruin Lord St. Alban's finances, and no sooner was it finished than he found he could neither use it nor keep it up. He had indulged all his ingenuity in building a new shape of house, with every contrivance for warming it, airing it, and adorning it in unique style, including some arrangements to surprise visitors when they reached the top of the house to see the view. The cost of the building is said to have been £10,000, and it may well have been described as " Bacon's folly," as it seems to have given its successive inhabitants a good deal of trouble in one way and another, till it was finally razed to the ground.

The trustees at last managed to let the Gorhambury mansion in 1638 to George Redcliffe, sixth Earl of Sussex, and his lady, née Miss Eleanor Wortley, of Yorkshire, and the new tenants remained in residence there for a good many years.

From letters which passed between the Countess of Sussex and her two trustees, Sir Edward Verney and his son Ralph, we learn many particulars of the place during the disturbed



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GORHAMBURY.

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their belongings to another house. She writes as follows, and it may be noticed in how many different ways the name Meautys is spelt.

SWETE MR. VERNEY,

I am now in great dell of trouble for my sister Crofts sendes me worde she met with Mr. Muties and he told her he was selling this house and that he must give me warninge at Micellmas. I confess it will trouble me much to leve this plas, but since there is no remedy for it i must be contended and let me intrate you to inquier what hoses you can hear of that is to be let, you and your father be my best friendes, and if you helpe me not, i shall bie in a great dell of fexashon.

The answer to this was as follows :

Ralph Verney to Lady Sussex, July 23rd, 1639:

SWETE MADDAME,

I confess before I went to Mr. Huits, I heard that Mr. Mewtus told my Lady Crofts he was selling Gorhambury, and therefore must give you warning at Michelmas, and I intended to have sent you word of it, but I love not to bee the messenger of ill newes, but Maddame, I doe not find that the bargain is absolutely concluded ; it may breake off, and I hope it will, and then you are secure for three years more, for if he doe not sell it, I am confident he will not give you warninge. But if there is no remedy I hope to finde you another that shall please you as well (though I know it is a very hard matter).

Again :

SWEET MR. VERNEY,

I think you will never be free from my employments, for the wisdome you gave me makes me still have confidence to trouble you again for my occasions. I hope my stuff will come safe, and that i shall employ it *hear* for improving my house. I must not think of a London

> house. I do not believe my landlord will make use of this house himselfe in haste, but I should be glad of any other.

These letters are given here for the express purpose of showing that Thomas Meautys owned Gorhambury and had power to sell the estate when he chose.

For some years after 1629 there is but slight information as to the movements of the subject of our sketch, and his only letters to be found are those already quoted.

His work in the Privy Council still went on; as his holidays came round, he no doubt spent them with friends, such as Lord and Lady Cleveland at Toddington, Bedfordshire, or in Suffolk with the Bacon family.

Perhaps he may even have got over to Holland, having been invited to visit the cousins he was so attached to, Sir Thomas and Lady Meautys, whose children had been looked after and housed in England by their beloved Aunt Jane, at Brome or Culford.

Nine years after the death of Lord Bacon, Meautys gained his most important post, which he must have been preparing for, that of "Muster Master General of the Forces," and the responsibilities attached to the office were great and trying—as future events showed. In granting him the position he is described as Clerk of the Privy Council, so it was Bacon's Secretary who was elected, and not his cousin, as some writers suggest.

Meautys must have shown considerable ability and fitness for this post, for which he was a candidate in 1635. His talent for figures and official correctness evidently stood him in good stead, but over and above his capacity for business it is apparent that he was a favourite with his Royal Master, who had confidence in his long-tried trustworthiness, and was ready to advance his interests. On March 16th, 1635, "Suggested Grant to Thomas Meautys one of the Clerks of the Council, of the office of Muster Master General of England, as the said office was formerly granted to Sir William Wade, Lieutenant of the Tower of London, deceased, or to William Trumbull, late also one of the Clerks of the Council."

The post was granted and confirmed in the same month :

" March 26th.—Grant to Thomas Meautys, of the Office of *Muster Master General of England*, as William Trumbull deceased, lately held the same office "—and from henceforth Meautys occupied an important position, and was in communication with the officers and commanders of the King's army, and all lists of the rank and file were sent to him.

The King at this time had commenced the long series of troubles and differences with his Parliament and people that ended so fatally to himself, and the epitaph " so good a man, and so bad a ruler " was being shown in all his actions. He felt it necessary to know the number and position of the troops, and to be prepared to use them in his own cause if necessary, and on November 25th, 1637, comes the further order in Council :

" Mr. Meautys is to prepare against Tuesday next a list of all the trained bands in England and Wales, expressing the number of horse and foot, and how many pikes and how many musketeers.

" Sir W. Becher is to warn the ' Committee of Trade ' to meet on Tuesday next, and the Earl of Newport and the Lieutenant, and the rest of the officers of Ordnance are then to attend."

The meeting on this Tuesday was an important one, and the King was able to calculate some of the resources on which he could depend.

The new powers were extensive, as we read of a " certificate of Thomas Meautys, having according to order of Secretary Windebank, opened the trunks taken from an Irishman, a Popish priest, who was apprehended at Plymouth. He finds that the books therein are breviaries and divinity lectures, etc."

It was also in this year of 1636 that another order is recorded :

" January 31st.—The King, to the Clerks of the Council, Commission authorising them to compound with persons willing to be incorporated for using the art and mystery of

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We see by this that the Crown was to receive a handsome percentage for the accommodation, and that a fine was levied on corporate bodies to assist in the repairs necessary in keeping the old St. Paul's Church in fit state for a congregation.

Starch was not the only trade in which Meautys was interested, and in his capacity of Clerk to the Privy Council he had many opportunities of becoming an important person in the eyes of company promoters, and corporations who had to get licences from the Crown and Parliament.

The wine trade desired him to draw up articles showing the claims of the vintners, merchants and coopers; and another claimant, William Price, had to bring a petition before the Privy Council concerning his rights to his new building in Holborn in 1636.

There are also transactions over the tobacco business to be gone through, though the quantity coming to this country must have been comparatively small in Charles I.'s reign.

Meautys was a smoker, and a connoisseur of good tobacco, for when his cousin Sir Nathaniel Bacon lies so ill at Brome, he sends him some of a very good brand, in hopes it will help to comfort the dying man.

The next reference occurs on March 16th, 1638: "Sir Dudley Carlton and Mr. Meautys wait upon the King when he goes to York," and in February, 1638, we know that Charles started on his expedition to Scotland after the dissolution of the "Short Parliament," and it was in this year that Lord North signed a petition to the Crown with seventeen other peers, praying that a Parliament might be summoned with all speed.

The answer to this petition was the calling together of the "Long Parliament," which started on its career in November, 1640, and in which Meautys had a seat. The King carried Thomas Meautys along with him on his expedition to the Scotch capital, and the Court rested at various towns, but on getting to York it appears that the Clerk of the Council took ill, probably with anxiety of mind over the delay of his approaching marriage and over work, and two officers of the Crown, Sir John Brown, and Sir Edward Powell, were obliged to

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ANNE BACON, LADY MEAUTYS.

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We can imagine that his warm heart was bound up in the family with whom he was on such intimate terms, and who appreciated his virtues, though they may have been aware of his failings. What letters he wrote to his fiancée before their marriage have not been discovered up to the present; the upheaval of Charles I.'s war and death upon the scaffold, probably caused no letters to be kept, as loyal subjects were constantly on the move, and their papers were liable to be seized.

The date of the wedding is not to be found in any register in Suffolk, but the probability is that the marriage took place in the summer of 1640 from one of the family seats, either Brome or Culford, presided over by Lady Bacon and her son Sir Frederick Cornwallis.

It may even have taken place in London after Meautys recovered from his illness, when of course his mother, now an old lady, who lived in Kensington would be present, and he would have the support of his brothers and nephews, and probably his sister, Lady Thorowgood, would grace the ceremony with her presence; but this is only conjecture, for he was connected with so many families and had such a large circle of relatives that they could not all have been entertained at once. But as we have said, the marriage most likely was celebrated in Suffolk, when he got a short holiday in the midst of his strenuous work for his Sovereign and country.

The bride's family was well known to the King, for her half-brother, Sir Frederick Cornwallis, Bart., had been a Royal Equerry for ten years, and his wife had been Lady-in-Waiting to the late Queen.

Miss Anne Bacon's own brother, Nicholas (son of the artistic Nathaniel) devoted his life and energies to the royal family and was a trusted adherent all his days.

There must have been great disparity between the ages of bride and bridegroom. She had attained her twenty-fourth year,* while Meautys must have been between forty and fifty, and he was not in robust health at that time, as we gather from letters.

*Anne Bacon was baptised at Brome, April 6th, 1615.

Their first and only child was baptised on April 13th, 1641, and called Jane, after the beloved grandmother who was so devoted to children; but unfortunately the little heiress to her father and mother's estates died in childhood, and was buried at Culford on April 7th, 1652, which was about three years after her father's death.

The uniting of the estates and fortunes in this marriage formed a happy union, and though Gorhambury and Verulam House certainly belonged to Thomas Meautys, there are various indications that the estate in Hertfordshire owed some of its upkeep to Lady Bacon's bountiful purse, as she is said to have "by prudence and good management rescued the two ancient and distinguished families with which she was connected, from absolute ruin, in times of the greatest difficulty."

This sentence probably alludes to the Civil War which ruined so many aristocratic families; she and her relative remained loyal to their King and nothing shook their devotion.

We have no idea what Meautys' income and earnings were from the various posts he held, but they ought to have enabled him to marry and settle down long before 1640.

Considering the devotion of the family to the Royal cause, King Charles could do no less than show his appreciation of it by knighting Thomas Meautys, who filled so many posts at his side, and the ceremony took place on the 16th February, 1641, at Whitehall, when he was made "Knight Bachelor," and became the second Sir Thomas Meautys in the family, his cousin of the same name having been knighted in 1610 by King James.

Dark clouds were lowering over King and country just then, and on reading the history of that time one makes out that Meautys in his political and parliamentary life must have known some of the principal characters whose names are still quoted so often, such as Strafford, Hampden, Pym, but our space does not allow us to do more than describe Meautys and his immediate surroundings as far as they are to be discovered.

A year after Thomas Meautys was knighted at Whitehall the King left that palace for ever, till he was brought back there to die.

After his marriage and knighthood it appears that Sir Thomas, as he now was entitled to be called, was still suffering from his recent illness, and required nursing and attention.

We are not told what the illness was, but while recovering he fancied the fresh air of St. Albans might help his health, and he proposed to take up residence in his own house of Gorhambury, if he could induce the Earl and Countess of Sussex to quit. But Lady Sussex pleads her old husband's inability to move his residence, and suggests that her landlord and his wife should pay them a visit instead, and of course she writes to Sir Ralph Verney about this arrangement, saying: "I believe they will stay this fortnight. Pore man, he lokes miserably; he hath a beliefe that this air will recover him, so i could but in sifility [civility] disier ther [their] stay as long as they plesede." And in this way clever Lady Sussex continued her hold on Sir Thomas Meautys' house for a good many more years.

Was it on the occasion of this visit to St. Albans that the beautiful monument* to his old patron and relative, which we gaze on to-day with so much reverence, was finished and erected? We can imagine Sir Thomas and Lady Meautys discussing the statue while standing near the altar in St. Michael's Church, above the family vault, where the remains of Lord Bacon and his mother lay. Years before he had thought out and started the scheme of a monument to Sir Francis Bacon, philosopher and poet, and Lord Chancellor of England. What form should it take? The most familiar picture of the great man which rose to mind was Bacon deep in contemplation, sitting in the canopied armchair which he himself had designed, a chair in which he could be sheltered while resting in the open air, bringing his mind to bear on past triumphs and future benefits for the human race.

Yes, that would show the man and his character; and the idea was explained to a sculptor capable of carrying out the design.

As we already explained, the monument was probably

* Wats mentions this tomb at the end of the "Manes" in the 1640 "Advancement of Learning."

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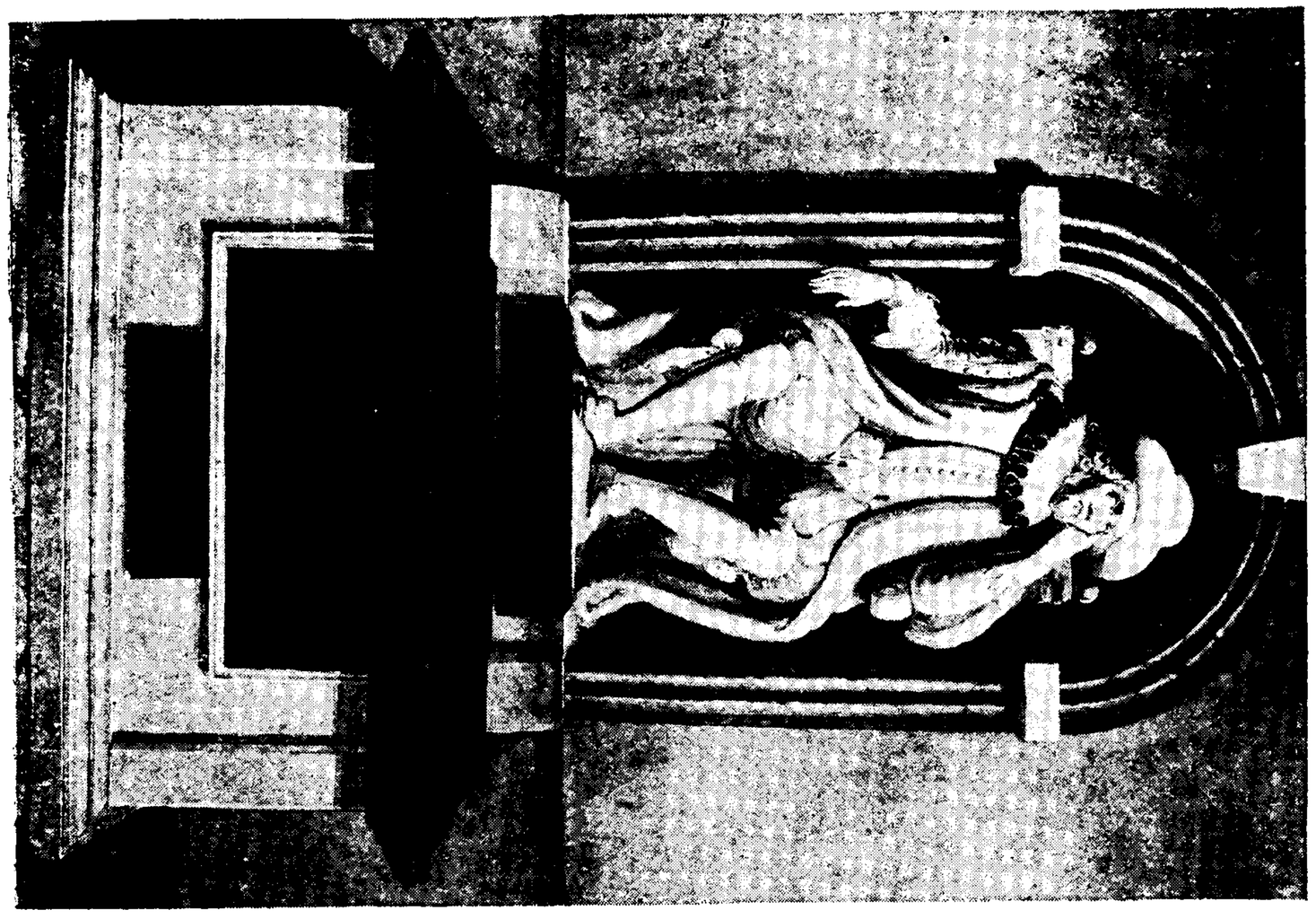

intrusted to Thomas Stanton, of St. Andrew's, Holborn, free-mason, who later on carved out the beautiful erection over the tomb of Jane Lady Bacon and her children in Culford Church, Suffolk, which is so much admired.

Thomas Meautys was now in a position to indulge his desire to honour his old master, and it must have been a great pleasure to him to do so, while placing the monument in St. Michael's Church. When first erected, this monument was in a good position, as it could be seen from all parts of the church, but while the edifice was being restored during the course of time, the Bacon statue was moved back into the wall and raised up.

This makes the face difficult to view or get at, and no photograph is able to catch the light on the features. Fortunately the British Museum possesses a good water colour sketch* of the tomb, made by Thos. Trotter, which brings out the best points of the erection, and we have pleasure in including this picture in the present volume.

The inscription, which was composed by Sir Henry Wotton, is in Latin as follows :—

Franciscvs Bacon Baro De Vervla Sta Albni Vicms
sev notoribvs titvlis
Scientiarvm Lvmen Facvndlæ Lex
sic sedebat.

———

Qvi postqvam omnia natvralis sapientiæ
et civilis arcana evolvisset
natvræ decretvm explevit
Composita Solvantvr
Ano Dni MDCXXVI
ætat LXVI.

———

Tanta viri
mem.
Thomas Meavtys.
Svperstitis Cvltor.
Defuncto Admirator
H.P.

* Add. MS. 32351.

(Translation.)
Francis Bacon
Baron of Verulam, Viscount St. Albans
or, by more conspicuous titles,
Of Science the Light, of Eloquence the Law,
sat thus.

Who after all Natural Wisdom
And Secrets of Civil Life he had unfolded,
Nature's Law fulfilled—
Let Compounds be Dissolved!
in the year of our Lord 1626, aged 66.

Of such a man, that the memory might remain,
Thomas Meautys
living his Attendant, dead his Admirer
placed this Monument.

In this epitaph there is no mention of Bacon as poet or dramatist, but we must remember that the writer of plays which were only intended to be performed at Court or by noblemen's "servants," were simply considered as the amusement indulged in during leisure hours, and there is every reason to believe that the middle class masses had never seen or read any of the classic plays generally called "Shakespeare's" at that time. Shortly after the folio of the plays was published, the civil war began, and men's thoughts were devoted to fighting or to protecting their homes, while the Puritan party forbade the performance of any kind of stage play, calling it the work of the devil.

To have mentioned stage plays as being the work of a Lord Chancellor of England was unheard of, and would have been a *faux pas*. If Meautys knew that Bacon had written for the stage he would have considered the work so trifling as not to be worth recalling, nor of any importance.

Nowadays there is a feeling that the many-sided Lord Bacon would have been better represented in a standing posture, as the eloquent expounder of the Law, in the splendid

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summoned his adherents in Parliament to join him there and unite themselves in an Oxford Parliament.

The battle of Marston Moor was fought in 1644, and the battle of Naseby in the year following.

As Sir Thomas Meautys was Muster Master General he would have lists of the troops in each county, and their commanders or lieutenants. In the battle of Naseby the royal troops were commanded by the King himself, but Charles was obliged to quit the field and leave victory to his enemy, and he once more had to entrench himself at Oxford.

On the rise of Cromwell things grew worse for the Royalists, and at the beginning of 1647 the King was a prisoner, and later on went through his trial for treason in levying war against his Parliament. · On January 30th, 1649, he laid his head on the scaffold of Whitehall.

Meautys must have been near him in most of his battles, and could have written his history, but nothing seems to have come down to us in the way of a diary or letters.

Perhaps Meautys acted as diplomatic messenger between the Royalist troops and Cromwell's Ironsides.

We gather from the "Verney Letters" that Lady Sussex was in great anxiety lest the Roundheads should make a descent on Gorhambury House, and she was obliged "to get somebody to buy six caribens for me, and some twenty pondes of poder. I hope that will be enofe to defence us hear."

This was in 1642. The following year, her husband, the Earl of Sussex, died. Her grief was great, nevertheless within three years she took a third husband in Lord Warwick, and prepared to go to her bridegroom's home. Her daughter, Miss Nan, in a letter to Lady Verney, expresses sadness at the contemplated change and adds: "So pore Gorhambury will be left, which troubles me much." The date of this letter is 1646, and when Gorhambury became vacant perhaps Sir Thomas Meautys and his wife took up their residence there, though it seems more likely that Lady Meautys resided at Culford with her mother while her husband was attending King Charles, and carrying out his trying duties as Muster Master General of England.

No letters addressed to Lady Meautys have turned up, but she was mentioned in Sir Edmund Bacon's will, 1648: "I give to my niece, Lady Meutice, daughter to my brother, Sir Nathaniel Bacon, the box with pearls sealed up, with the name of my sister Waldegrave upon it."

Perhaps these are the pearls which we see in the portrait of that lady which hangs on the wall in the family mansion to-day.

The trials by road and water which the Muster Master endured for duty's sake when following the King in his northern flights must have been great, and his wife must have spent many long, lonely hours wondering where her husband was at the moment. His family motto was *Par baen Servyer* ("By well serving"), and coming from a Royalist house, Meautys continued loyal to the King, his master, as his ancestors had done before him. His motto through life might have been "Loyal je serais," to add to his forefather's phrase, and he stuck to his royal duties, however trying, through thick and thin. That was his character through all his life. We can only wonder whether the tricky manœuvres Charles I. played on his subjects were approved of by his Clerk of the Council, who must have held many a secret in his hands, and gone through many severe trials to his moral rectitude. If he dared to advise his headstrong Monarch for his good, he found that though the advice was received willingly, the exact opposite would probably be the line taken. No one could save Charles, who was his own enemy, and went headlong to his doom.

It is strange to think that Thomas Meautys saw the degradation of the two men with whose lives he was most closely associated—Lord Bacon and Charles I.

These trials to his mind and body and the anxieties he went through must have told on his health, for nine months after the death of his royal master he died, but how and where, we know not. He was buried in St. Michael's Church, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, on the last day of October, 1649, according to the register there, for unfortunately all but his name has been erased in the course of years from the large

slab which covers the entrance to the vault where he was laid beside the kinsman whom he loved and commemorated, Francis, Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Alban.

On looking for his will at Somerset House it was disappointing only to find a few lines in Latin to the effect that Sir Thomas Meautys, of Gorhambury, in Herts, was a creditor to John Matthews.

Does this mean that Meautys died poor after all his work, and the ability he had shown in his various important posts? Yet he owned Gorhambury! At the burial of his remains in St. Michael's vault, a rather strange scene occurred, for a certain Dr. John King, of St. Albans, who may have been in attendance on Sir Thomas Meautys in his last illness, created an unpleasant diversion by picking up the skull of Lord Bacon which had become detached from the body, and "made ridicule of it."

We learn this from Fuller and others, and the remark passed when writing of the incident afterwards was that "he who made a laughing-stock of the skull, is now a laughing stock himself."

In "Fuller's Worthies" we read the following: "Viscount St. Alban died anno Domini 1626, in the house of the Earl of Arundel at Highgate, and was buried in St. Michael's Church, St. Albans, Master Mutes his grateful servant erecting a monument for him, since when I have read that his grave being opened, his scull (the relique of civil veneration) was by one King, a doctor of physick, made an object of scorn and contempt, but he who then derided the dead is since become the laughing stock of the living."

How he disported himself is not described, but he may have repeated the words of Hamlet, while he held in his hand the skull of the author of that marvellous play.

In the grave digging scene Hamlet says:

"Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quiblets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery?"

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it is the entrance to the vault, it has been handled roughly in the effort to move its great weight.

Meautys would have but little time for Rosicrucian mysteries in his busy life, and we shall never know what secrets were entrusted to him by the two men he worked for most. That he was loyal and trustworthy goes without saying. A good friend and a true one! The general regret is that the lettering upon his tombstone which must have described his virtues, now only records the name of

SIR THOMAS MEAUTYS, KNT.

After the death of Sir Thomas Meautys his estates would be inherited by his only child Jane, who had but a fragile hold on life. Her mother, who came of a rich family, had no lack of money, and was probably a much sought after widow, according to the prevalent idea then of widows being more attractive than spinsters.

Before two years were out, Lady Meautys became engaged to marry Sir Harbottle Grimston, a well-known gentleman widower, with several children, and who evidently had made great friends with his future little step daughter Jane. In a letter extant to her fiance, Lady Meautys writes from Culford, her mother's house:

April 3rd.

My mother continues her resolution of meeting you in London this next week. We shall be at my lodgings in Covent Garden, where I am promised very good accommodation of room. Little Janey presents her humble love to her dear Sir Harreley, and says the wedding gown shall be ready.

Alas, little Janey faded out of life in the next year.

The sweet and kindly nature of Ann, Lady Meautys, has received due recognition from Burnet in his "History of his Own Times," but he writes of her only after she had taken a second husband in Sir Harbottle Grimston, who was the patron of Burnet. Unfortunately for us, he was unacquainted with Thomas Meautys. He writes as follows:

"I lived many years under the protection of Sir Harbottle Grimston, Master of the Rolls, who continued steady in his favour to me, though the King sent Secretary Williamson to desire him to dismiss me. I continued ten years in the post. Sir Harbottle descending from a long-lived family, for his great grandfather lived till he was ninety-eight, his grandfather to eighty-eight, and his father to seventy-eight, and himself to eighty-two.

"Both his family and his wife's were zealous for the interests of their country.

"He was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons that called home King Charles II. and he was soon after made Master of the Rolls. He gave great sums in charity, discharging many prisoners by paying their debts. His second wife, whom I knew, was a niece* of the great Sir Francis Bacon, and she was the last heir of that family. She had all the high notions for the Church and the Crown, in which she had been bred, but was the humblest, the devoutest, and best tempered person I ever knew of that sort.

"It was really pleasant to hear her talk of religion. She did it with so much elevation and force. She was always very plain in her clothes and went oft to jails to consider the wants of prisoners, and relieve or discharge them, and by the meanness of her dress she passed but for a servant, trusted with the charities of others.

"When she was travelling in the country, where she drew near a village, she often ordered her coach to stay behind till she had walked about it, giving orders for the instruction of the children, and leaving liberally for that end.

"With two such persons I spent several of my years very happily."

Burnet in this gives us a very clear impression of the kindly unselfish nature of Lady Grimston, who was continually working for the benefit of others, and it also shows us that the conditions of the country children needed supervision.

The state of the jails at that period, we know, was most

* She was the granddaughter of Sir Francis Bacon's half brother Sir Nicholas Bacon, Bart.

insanitary and crowded, and that a delicately nurtured lady should show so much care for her fellow creatures, as to relieve and discharge them from their unpleasant surroundings, is a very pleasant memorial to her name.

On the death of Sir Thomas and his daughter, his brother, Henry Meautys, or his son, inherited his estate of Gorhambury, and it appears that Sir Harbottle Grimston had to buy it, from the heir, so as to settle the estate on himself and his heirs, Lady Meautys the widow having no power over that property.

And so we come to an end of writing about good people who played their part in the world three hundred years ago, and who were loyal and faithful to their King and country through many trials and vicissitudes.

Perhaps more letters and diaries may turn up, when we shall have much pleasure in adding to the history of Sir Thomas Meautys, who worked heart and soul for his friends, and whose motto was :

" Par baen Servyer."

FINIS.

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April, 1626, in a letter from Thomas Meautys (Bacon's secretary) to Lady Cornwallis, who now calls herself Jane, Lady Bacon, he says that her brother, Sir Thomas Meautys, has sailed for the Low Countries, and that his wife remains with Lady Sussex for the time being.

At the end of April, 1626, Sir Thomas Meautys is again in London.

We hear in a letter of June, 1627, that "Sir Thomas Meautys is the father of a brave boy" (Hercules).

In July, 1627, Sir Thomas Meautys is in England and is in very much need of money, so he begs Lady Bacon to lend him £100, saying that there is £400 owing to him in the Low Countries, which he cannot get till he returns there. At the end of July he is at The Hage, and has had an interview with the Queen of Bohemia, who graciously accepted a present sent to her from Jane, Lady Bacon, returning her Majesty's thanks for it, and saying "that the old love between them both must not be forgotten."

In a letter from Thomas Meautys to Lady Bacon dated April 16th, 1628, he mentions having heard from her brother, Sir Thomas Meautys, and his wife (who are evidently in the Low Countries then) and that they have invited him to come over to be present at the christening of the new baby. (We understand that their eldest boy had been left in care of Lady Burnebye, and afterwards Lady Bacon takes charge of him and pays a nurse for his maintenance.)

In 1629 Lady Bacon has to advance her brother, Sir Thomas Meautys, several sums of money with which to redeem his silver plate, etc.

In 1629 Sir Richard Burnebye (father of Lady Meautys) died.

In a letter dated December, 1632, from Sir Thomas Meautys to his sister, Jane, Lady Bacon, he says the Queen of Bohemia is in great grief over the death of her husband, and that Lady Bacon should offer to comfort her, considering the Queen's high opinion of her. The Queen asked if his son was with Lady Bacon, and he said he was, and the Queen added, "Your sister is one of the best dispositions in the world, and in every

way I doe love her very well, better than any lady in England that I knowe." In this letter Sir Thomas speaks most affectionately of his two little girls, whom "he loves very well."

In April, 1633, Lady Meautys in London is on her way again to the Low Countries, and begs some monetary help from Lady Bacon, her sister-in-law.

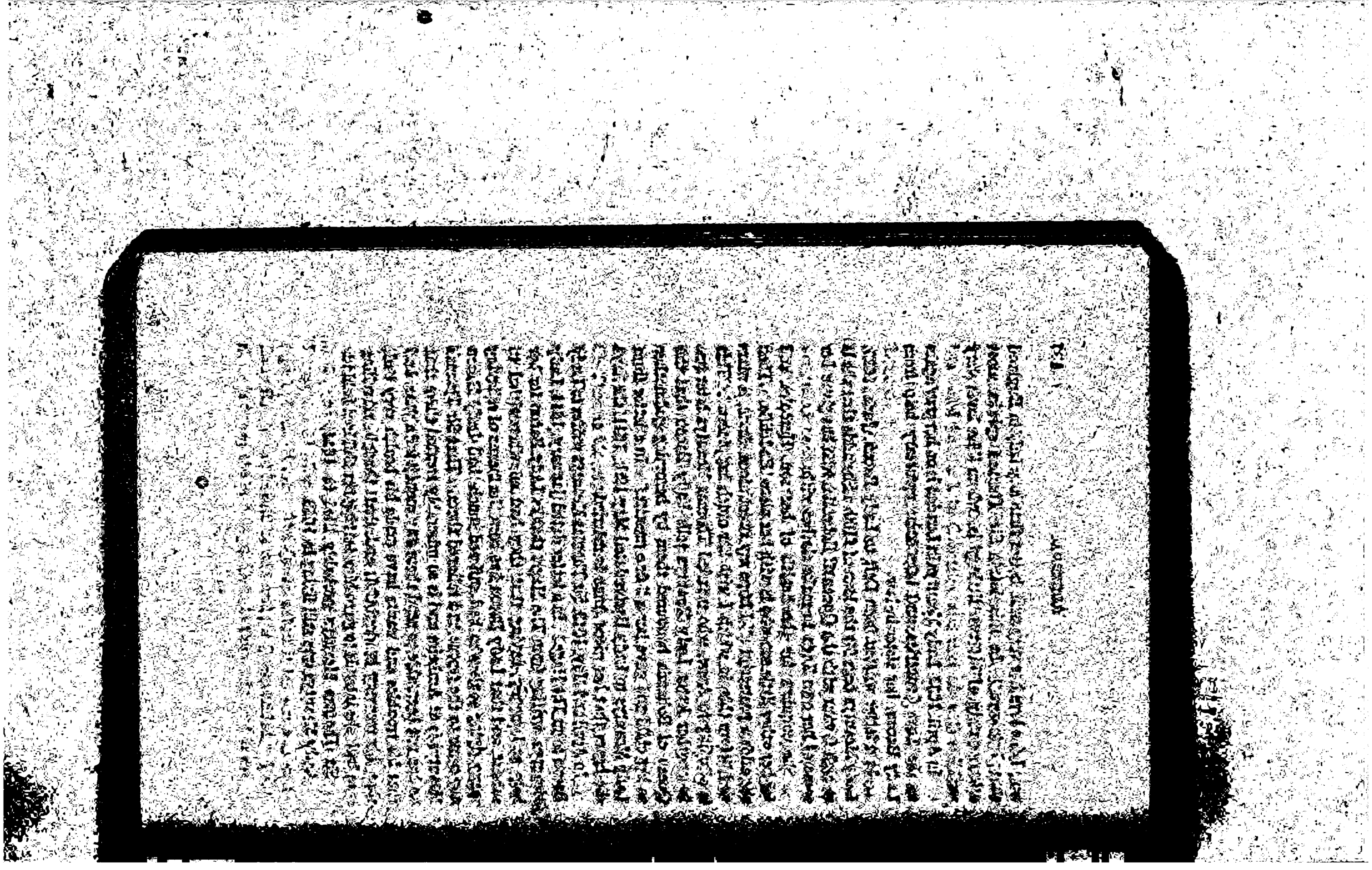
In a letter written from Deft to Lady Bacon, June, 1635, Lady Meautys begs for the loan of £100. She adds that she is in high favour with the Queen of Bohemia, who has given her some of her own linen to make clothes with.

She enquires for the health of her son, Hercules, and for her other little son who is with her niece, Radcliffe. Then she adds a postscript: "I hope my sweet niece, Anne, is married before this, in which I wish her much happiness." This is alluding to Anne, who married Thomas Meautys later on. In another letter Lady Meautys tells Lady Bacon that the Queen of Bohemia honoured them by becoming godmother to her child and gave her a "fine present." In a letter from Lady Meautys to Lady Bacon dated May 19th, 1641, she says she hears that her niece Anne is married.

In April and May, 1642, Sir Thomas Meautys writes to Lady Bacon from The Hage. In a letter dated January, 1644, Lady Meautys, writing from The Hage, thanks Lady Bacon for her help and money, saying that they had no wherewithal to subsist, and that Lady Bacon has been the means of relieving many dying souls who had suffered much, had Lady Bacon not come to the rescue and relieved them. That Sir Thomas Meautys is at Arnheim and is so miserably treated there that he has not been able to send them any money for a year, and that his troubles and wants have made his health very bad, that his recovery is doubtful, and that though travelling is so bad, she intends to go to him, leaving her children behind.

Sir Thomas Meautys probably died in 1644.

Lady Meautys was still living in 1658.



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