

THE RISE OF EDWARD COLMAN*

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ABSTRACT. *This article establishes for the first time the identity of Edward Colman, the Catholic courtier executed for treason in 1678. Discoveries about his background are used to show how he made his way into court circles in the 1660s, at an earlier date than has usually been assumed. It is suggested that his cousin, Richard Colman, may have been the person who introduced him to the duke of York. Another relative, William Battie, also had connections at court, but he and Colman later quarrelled over the issue of religious toleration. Thereafter, Bishop Compton acted as Battie's patron to further the campaign by himself and the earl of Danby against Colman and the other court Catholics.*

The fall of Edward Colman could hardly have been more sensational. The claim by Titus Oates that there was a conspiracy to kill the king, the discovery of Colman's secret correspondence with members of the French court, and the murder of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey all combined in late 1678 to produce the most serious political crisis of the reign of Charles II. By naming him as one of the alleged conspirators, Oates prompted the search of Colman's house which uncovered the papers which incriminated him. These letters, with their incautious comments about a reconversion of England, came to be regarded as the clinching proof that there had indeed been some sort of Catholic conspiracy. The death of Godfrey (the magistrate who had taken Oates's statements) seemed to confirm that the conspiracy was indeed as lurid as Oates claimed. Colman could not and did not deny that he had been in touch with French officials to seek aid for the Catholic cause in England. What he did deny was plotting the death of the king. Unfounded though it was, that allegation was backed up by the testimony of Oates, who, at this stage, still seemed a public hero and a credible witness. Colman's conviction on the charge of conspiring to place the duke of York on the English throne was a foregone conclusion. What the trial failed to do was to answer the question everyone most wanted to know – how far had his master and mistress, the duke and duchess of York themselves, been implicated in his treason. Colman had thus ensured for himself a starring role in the bizarre amalgam of fact and fiction which formed the instant legend of the Popish Plot, and, when he went to his traitor's death in December 1678, he had some claim to be the most hated man in England.

* Most members of his family, including Edward, wrote their surname as 'Colman' and so that is the spelling which has been adopted here. I wish to thank John Adamson, Dorian Gerhold, Lionel Glassey, Mark Knights, Alan Marshall, John Miller, John Morrill, and Alison Wright for their advice and encouragement in the preparation of this article. Unless otherwise stated, place of publication of works printed before 1700 is London.

The infamy which Colman achieved in the final weeks of his life contrasts with his obscurity in the years before then. Despite efforts by such distinguished historians as John Kenyon and John Miller, almost nothing is known of Colman's family background or of his early career.¹ We are left to wonder why it was that he was able to become the *éminence grise* within the household of the heir presumptive to the throne. In a large part, the mystery surrounding him has been due to the nature of the evidence available. The obvious sources provide few leads. As John Miller showed in his important 1978 article on the subject, the correspondence seized in 1678 does make possible a detailed reconstruction of Colman's secret negotiations between 1674 and 1676, and there is little to add to what Professor Miller has already written on the subject of Colman's clumsy attempts at diplomacy.² Unfortunately, there are only a few stray personal details in these letters.³ The same is true of the documents surviving from the investigations into Oates's allegations and from Colman's trial.⁴ Taken together these documents do supply the names of a number of Colman's relatives, friends, and servants, but these names have understandably meant little to those historians who have considered the problem of Colman's origins. More immediately useful leads are provided by the numerous thumbnail sketches of Colman in contemporary diaries, memoirs, and histories. These usually confined themselves to repeating variations on the same three basic facts – that Colman was a convert to Catholicism, that his father was a clergyman, and that he was from Suffolk. Some of them also confirm that he was the student who had attended Trinity College, Cambridge, between 1651 and 1659.⁵ Limited though these pieces of information are, they would, of themselves, be sufficient to allow us to proceed.⁶ As it is, one further source – Roger North's *Examen* – contains an even more precise lead, which has,

¹ J. Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (London, 1972), p. 34; J. Miller, 'The correspondence of Edward Coleman, 1674–78', *Recusant History*, 11 (1978), pp. 262–3. See also J. Gillow, *Bibliographical dictionary of the English Catholics* (5 vols., London and New York, 1885), I, pp. 532–6; *DNB*, 'Edward Coleman'.

² Miller, 'Correspondence', pp. 261–75.

³ G. Treby, ed., *A collection of letters and other writings* (1681); G. Treby, ed., *The second part of the collection* (1681); *Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) 13th rep.* app. vi, pp. 49–113; *HMC 10th rep.* app. iv, pp. 35–44.

⁴ *HMC 11th rep.* app. II, pp. 1–17; *HMC 13th rep.* app. vi, pp. 113–59; British Library (BL), Add. MS 38015 (Southwell correspondence), fos. 278–85; Sir Robert Southwell to Thomas Henshaw, 22 Nov. 1682 and 9 Jan. 1683; D. G. Greene, ed., *Diaries of the Popish Plot* (New York, 1977); T. B. Howell, ed., *A complete collection of state trials* (34 vols., London, 1809–28), VII, cols. 1–78.

⁵ *HMC Ormonde*, n.s. IV, p. 482; G. Burnet, *History of his own time* (6 vols., Oxford, 1833), II, p. 43; J. Warner, *The history of English persecution*, ed. T. A. Birrell and J. Bligh (Catholic Rec. Soc. XLVII–XLVIII, 1953), pt. I, p. 69; A. Clark, ed., *The life and times of Anthony Wood* (5 vols., Oxford, 1891–1900), II, p. 419n; [H. Care], *The history of the damnable Popish Plot* (1680), p. 135; C. Dodd, *Church history of England* (3 vols., Brussels, 1737–42), III, p. 254; A. and J. Churchill, eds., *A collection of voyages and travels* (8 vols., London, 1704–52), VI, p. 384; J. Venn and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (4 vols., Cambridge, 1922–7), I, p. 369; W. W. Rouse Ball and J. A. Venn, eds., *Admissions to Trinity College, Cambridge* (5 vols., London, 1911–16), II, p. 419; *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 7 (1929–30), p. 122.

⁶ The only Colman, apart from Edward's father, who was a Suffolk clergyman in this period was Nicholas Colman, the rector of Preston (see below) and there is no evidence that he ever married.

somewhat surprisingly, always been overlooked. North explicitly states that Colman was from Brent Eleigh in Suffolk and, as we shall see, North had good reason to be well informed.⁷

What can now be revealed is that the family archive of the Colmans of Brent Eleigh survives.⁸ From this starting-point several entirely unforeseen lines of investigation open up. It is thus possible, for the first time, to understand Colman in the context of his family background. Kinship connections were perhaps the most important way in this period in which links were maintained between the court and the provinces. For Colman, two of his relatives, his cousin, Richard Colman, and Richard's brother-in-law, William Battie, were of crucial importance, and, through Battie, his rise and fall had local repercussions which have hitherto gone unnoticed. In this particular case, the Catholic advances at court and the increasing militancy of some of the Anglican clergy in the localities as the 1670s progressed can be shown to have been intimately linked.

I

Brent Eleigh is, in the words of Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'a very ordinary agricultural village' in the south-west corner of Suffolk.⁹ Situated two miles downstream from Lavenham on a tributary of the River Stour, it lies in that part of Suffolk which, in the early seventeenth century, had long been famous for its cloth production and, more recently, for the vigour and purity of its Protestantism. Like most of the major families in the area, the Colmans had originally made their money from cloth. During the middle decades of the sixteenth century, Colman's great-grandfather and exact namesake, Edward Colman of Great Waldingfield, had established himself as one of the wealthiest of the clothiers in Lavenham.¹⁰ As is well known, the arrival of the new draperies soon sent Lavenham into terminal decline and it can perhaps be claimed that Edward Colman senior was the last in the long line of men who made quick fortunes in this, the most celebrated of all late-medieval English boom towns. Predictably, the family invested his fortune in land and in 1607 his younger son, Samuel, bought the manors of Brent Eleigh and Fennhall from Sir Robert Jermyn of Rushbrooke.¹¹ Although they were never quite the equals of

⁷ R. North, *Examen* (London, 1740), p. 133.

⁸ [Suffolk RO (Bury St Edmunds)], Acc. 1754 (Brent Eleigh Hall estate papers).

⁹ D. MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors* (Oxford, 1986), p. 296.

¹⁰ A. Betterton and D. Dymond, *Lavenham: industrial town* (Lavenham, 1989), p. 50; Public Record Office (PRO), PROB 11/92 (prerogative court of Canterbury wills), fos. 233v–5: will of Edward Coleman, 27 Oct. 1596. The most detailed pedigree of the family is in BL, Harl. MS 1560 (Mundy heraldic notes), fos. 262v–3v. There was a cadet branch in Hampshire. G. D. Squibb, ed., *The visitation of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight 1636* (Harl. Soc., n.s., x, 1991), pp. 173–4.

¹¹ Acc. 1754/1/14: bargain and sale, 6 June 1607; Acc. 1754/1/15: acquittance, 24 Oct. 1608; Acc. 1754/1/16: exemplification, 13 Feb. 1609; E. F., 'Wells Hall, Milden', *East Anglian Miscellany* (1918), pp. 34–5; W. A. Copinger, *The manors of Suffolk* (7 vols., London, 1905–11), 1, pp. 40–1, 240; J. A. Smith, 'Brent Eleigh Hall, Suffolk', *Country Life* (30 Mar. 1989), pp. 108–11.

some of their neighbours, such as the Springs, the D'Eweses or the Winthrop, the Colmans of Brent Eleigh had, within a couple of generations, risen to a respectable rank among the Suffolk gentry.

Colman's father, Thomas, was Samuel Colman's second son.¹² On completing his university education at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1625, Thomas Colman was ordained as a clergyman and later that year his father presented him to the vicarage of Brent Eleigh.¹³ At about the same time, he also granted Thomas some land of his own. This reflected Samuel Colman's clear desire to make provision for this younger son during his own lifetime, and the net effect of a series of further deals between them in the years following Thomas's marriage was almost certainly to increase Thomas's total land holdings.¹⁴ Other lands were gained through his marriage in 1632 to Margaret Wilson, whose late father, Philip Wilson, had been a younger son of the Essex gentry family, the Wilsons of Bocking.¹⁵ The first two children of the Colmans' marriage were daughters, Mary and Margaret. Then, on 17 May 1636, there was born their only son. Edward was baptized in the local church (presumably by his father) five days later.¹⁶ Two further daughters, Elizabeth and Jane, followed within the next four years and the family was completed in 1650 with the belated arrival of a fifth daughter, Thomasina.¹⁷ By the time Thomasina was born, Thomas Colman and his family had moved to Thorpe Morieux, a village four miles to the north of Brent Eleigh, for in November 1641 Thomas had accepted the offer by the patron and local landowner, John Risby, to become the rector there. The advantage in this move was that the rectory of Thorpe Morieux was worth over £18 per annum, more than twice the value of

¹² For the offspring of Samuel Colman, see BL, Harl. MS 1560, fos. 262v–3v; *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica (MGH)*, 2nd series, 1 (1886), p. 349; W. H. Rylands, ed., *A visitation of the county of Suffolk* (Harl. Soc., LXI, 1910), p. 156; N. Evans, ed., *Wills of the archdeaconry of Sudbury 1636–1638* (Suff. Rec. Soc., xxxv, 1993), pp. 167–8. Extracts from the parish registers of Brent Eleigh and the monumental inscriptions in the local church for the Colmans and related families are printed in *MGH*, 2nd series, 1 (1886), pp. 348–51, 373–6; 2 (1888), pp. 2–6.

¹³ Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 1, p. 370; R. F. Bullen, 'Catalogue of beneficed clergy of Suffolk, 1551–1631', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology (PSIA)*, 22 (1936), p. 299.

¹⁴ Acc. 1754/1/24: bargain and sale, 6 July 1632; Acc. 1754/1/111: bargain and sale, 24 Aug. 1632; Acc. 1754/1/112: quit claim, 14 Oct. 1632; Acc. 1754/1/262: bargain and sale, 28 Feb. 1639.

¹⁵ Acc. 1754/2/1: marriage settlement, 7 July 1632; Greater London RO (GLRO), M/93/208 (manor of Stepney): indenture, 31 July 1643; PRO, PROB 11/136, fo. 70: will of Philip Wilson, 27 June 1620; H. F. Waters, ed., *Genealogical gleanings in England* (2 vols., Boston, 1901), II, pp. 1112–16; W. C. Metcalfe, ed., *The visitations of Essex 1552, 1558, 1570, 1612 and 1634* (Harl. Soc., XIII, 1878), p. 525; PRO, PROB 11/207, fos. 282–3v: will of Simon Jackson, 14 Mar. 1649. Among the parties to the 1632 marriage settlement was Andrew Hawes, the fishmonger who was one of the leading suppliers of Suffolk cheese in London. Hawes was married to Philip Wilson's cousin, Elizabeth Hogg, and he had probably assisted in Margaret Wilson's upbringing. PRO, PROB 11/136, fo. 70; PROB 11/150, fo. 202: will of Thomas Hogge, 21 Sept. 1626; J. J. Howard and J. L. Chester, eds., *The visitation of London 1633, 1634 and 1635* (Harl. Soc., xv, 1880), p. 368; PRO, PROB 11/189, fos. 220v–1: will of Andrew Hawes, 23 Apr. 1642; R. Brenner, *Merchants and revolution* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 169 and n.

¹⁶ *MGH*, 2nd series, 1 (1886), p. 350.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Suff. RO (Bury), FL637/4/1 (Thorpe Morieux par. reg.), unfol. (3/7 Apr. 1650).

the living at Brent Eleigh.¹⁸ In 1642 Thomas Colman was able to expand his estates by spending £260 to buy lands at Thorpe Morieux adjacent to the rectory.¹⁹

It says something about Thomas Colman's religious beliefs that, despite the upheavals of the 1640s and the 1650s, he continued as rector of Thorpe Morieux until his death in 1661. The only other evidence which may add to this – his role in the protracted presentation dispute in the neighbouring parish of Preston – may, however, hint at a rather more complicated picture. In 1621 Robert Ryece (who is now remembered mainly as the first Suffolk antiquarian of any note) had created a trust to administer the living at Preston, with the instruction that on his death the right of presentation should pass to Emmanuel College, Cambridge. After Ryece's death in September 1638, the college nominated Nicholas Colman, a cousin once removed to Thomas. The problem was that one of Ryece's cousins, William Hobart, then challenged his will and claimed for himself the right of presentation.²⁰ As both sides prepared to resort to the courts, Thomas Colman wrote to Ryece's nephew, Isaac Appleton of Little Waldingfield, forwarding pedigrees which had been compiled by Ryece and which he hoped would undermine Hobart's case.²¹ What may make Thomas Colman's support for his cousin significant is that Nicholas Colman was probably regarded as the pro-Laudian candidate and it was certainly on those grounds that Nicholas Colman was ejected from the living at Preston in July 1644.²² Perhaps too much should not be read into this. It seems just as likely that Thomas Colman supported his cousin for other reasons, such as family loyalty or a desire to honour Ryece's wishes, and so, despite this possible

¹⁸ PRO, IND 1/17002 (institution books, series A, III), fos. 251, 254v; *Valor beneficiorum* (1695), pp. 294–5; J. Ecton, *Liber valorum & decimarum* (London, 1711), p. 279. See also Suff. RO (Bury), Acc. 806/1/25 (archdeaconry of Sudbury glebe terriers): Brent Eleigh, *temp.* Charles I; E14/4/2 Thorpe Morieux: glebe terrier, Thorpe Morieux, 28 Apr. 1635; V. B. Redstone, ed., *The ship-money returns for the county of Suffolk, 1639–40* (Suff. Inst. of Arch., 1904), pp. 15, 198. For the Risbys, see J. J. Muskett, *Suffolk manorial families* (3 vols., Exeter, 1900–10), I, pp. 66–73; *East Anglian Miscellany* (1909), pp. 23, 28, 30–1, 37–8, 43–4.

¹⁹ Suff. RO (Ipswich), HD11/52/1/24 (Redstone deeds): indenture, 9 Nov. 1642.

²⁰ This dispute is too complicated to discuss here in detail. The major sources are *HMC 3rd rep.* app. pp. 24–5; PRO, PROB 6/16 (prerogative court of Canterbury administrations), fo. 224; *Wills of the archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1636–1638*, pp. 222–4; PRO, PROB 11/179, fos. 270v–2: will of Robert Rice, 7 Feb. 1638; Bodleian Library, Oxford (Bodl.), MS Tanner 69, fo. 43: William Colman to Isaac Appleton, 30 Nov. 1638; MS Tanner 138, fos. 85–6: Henry Smyth to Isaac Appleton, 6 Dec. 1638; fo. 93: answer of Robert Stansby, n.d.; MS Tanner 290, fo. 101: William Bedall to Samuel Ward, 30 May 1639. See also C. G. Harlow, 'Robert Ryece of Preston, 1555–1638', *PSIA*, 32 (1970–2), pp. 43–70. The letters to Appleton are printed in W. S. Appleton, ed., *Family letters from the Bodleian Library* (Cambridge, 1902), pp. 16–22. For Nicholas Colman's descent, see BL, Harl. MS 1560, fos. 262v–3v; Rylands, *Visitation*, p. 203; Bodl., MS Tanner 138, fo. 85v.

²¹ Bodl., MS Tanner 69, fo. 55: Thomas Colman to Isaac Appleton, 9 Feb. 1639; Appleton, *Family letters*, pp. 23–4.

²² C. Holmes, ed., *The Suffolk committees for scandalous ministers, 1644–1646* (Suff. Rec. Soc., XIII, 1970), pp. 55–6.

counter-indication, it seems probable that the young Edward Colman received a strict Protestant, even Presbyterian, upbringing.²³ That assumption is strengthened by Thomas Colman's decision to send his son to Cambridge in the 1650s. Edward's tutor at his father's old college was John Beverley, a young theologian with Congregationalist sympathies.²⁴

In 1661, two years after Edward came down from Cambridge, Thomas Colman died.²⁵ Although no hostility was implied, the terms of his father's will may initially have disappointed Edward. The lands at Thorpe Morieux, Brent Eleigh, Lavenham, and Stowmarket were left as a life interest to his mother, while Edward received only Boycrofts House at Brent Eleigh and his father's book collection.²⁶ Colman's mother, however, immediately consented to a revision of these arrangements. In February 1662, following a collusive action in the court of common pleas, Colman and his mother appointed Benjamin Knappe of Thorpe Morieux and John Cattaway of Brettenham as trustees of their lands in the Brent Eleigh area to the use of Edward and his heirs.²⁷ This is the same John Cattaway who, in 1678, was said to be in daily contact with Colman and who therefore came under suspicion as a possible conspirator.²⁸ As over 230 acres of land were involved, this deal, rather than the actual bequest in his father's will, was probably the basis of the later statement by Sir Robert Southwell that Colman had inherited an income of £140 per annum from his father.²⁹ On gaining effective control of the estates, Colman lost no time in adding to them, for in April 1662 he spent £850 buying other lands at Brent Eleigh from a relative, Robert Colman of Horsley Cross, Essex. Edward then sold some of these properties on to the vicar of Brent Eleigh, his cousin, William Gilbert.³⁰ Transactions of these sort were not in any way unusual, but Thomas

²³ Thomas Colman did not, however, sign the June 1646 petition to parliament from the clergy of Suffolk and Essex, which called for the speedy completion of a church settlement to prevent the spread of heresy. *The humble petition of the ministers of the counties of Suffolke and Essex, concerning church-government* (1646).

²⁴ *Admissions to Trinity College*, II, p. 419. Two parts of Beverley's incomplete theological work, *Unio reformatium*, were published posthumously in 1659 in editions supervised by John Stalham.

²⁵ Thomas Colman must have died between January 1661 and February 1662. Freeman Bullen states that he died on 4 October 1661, aged sixty. Suff. RO (Ipswich), open shelf, S283 (box containing notes of R. F. Bullen): list of Suff. clergymen, 1631–1800, p. 50.

²⁶ PRO, PROB 11/314, fos. 220v–1: will of Thomas Colman, 12 Jan. 1661; Acc. 1754/3/14: will of Thomas Colman, 12 Jan. 1661 (copy). For the land purchases by Thomas Colman from his nephew, Richard Colman (grandson and heir of Samuel), which are mentioned in his will, see Acc. 1754/1/241: grant, 14 Feb. 1660; Acc. 1754/1/121: quit claim, 14 Feb. 1660; Acc. 1754/1/263: quit claim, 14 Feb. 1660.

²⁷ Acc. 1754/2/4: two parts of fine, 9 Feb. 1662; Acc. 1754/1/151: indenture, 20 Feb. 1662; Acc. 1754/2/5: indenture, 20 Feb. 1662; Acc. 1754/2/6: indenture, 20 Feb. 1662.

²⁸ *HMC 11th rep.* app. II, pp. 8–9; *Journals of the House of Lords (LJ)*, XIII, p. 346.

²⁹ *HMC Ormonde*, n.s., IV, p. 482. In 1670 Boycrofts Farm had an annual rent of £60, but that probably included lands which had been left to his mother. Acc. 1754/1/122: bargain and sale, 28 Apr. 1670.

³⁰ Acc. 1754/1/243: release of title, 23 Mar. 1664; Acc. 1754/1/152: bundle on sale to William Gilbert, 3 Apr. 1662–8 Mar. 1664. For Gilbert, see S. P. Thompson, 'The family and arms of Gilbert of Colchester', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, n.s., 9 (1906), app. 1 (Gilbert

Colman's decision to leave the bulk of the estates, in the first instance, to his widow does prompt the thought that Edward might already have converted and that his father hoped to protect the estates from a future recusancy prosecution. In January 1661, when Thomas Colman had prepared his will, the status of the various anti-popery statutes was still uncertain. Postponing Edward's inheritance, in the hope that he would repent, would have been the only sure way in which the strict provisions of the dormant penal laws could have been circumvented. If that was the fear, his mother was evidently more accommodating, for that protection was given up in the arrangement with Knappe and Cattaway. Edward may have calculated (correctly as it happens) that it was unlikely that a prosecution would be brought against him.³¹

As it is, no new direct evidence has come to light about either the circumstances of Colman's conversion or its date. Just about all that can be said is that it probably occurred during the early 1660s and, if he had experienced a spiritual crisis during his time at Cambridge, that had not prevented him completing his MA. Gilbert Burnet's comment that 'he was early caught by the Jesuits, and bred many years among them' is still perhaps the only real lead.³² It may be relevant that Colman is known to have spent some time abroad, for, in the spring of 1663, a group of English tourists (who included Philip Skippon, the son of the Civil War general, and John Ray, the botanist) encountered him at Antwerp.³³

What is clear is that Colman soon earned a reputation as an effective proselytiser for his new faith. One measure of that success was the number of converts gained by him among members of his own family. At least one of his sisters followed him into the Catholic church. In 1666 his third sister, Elizabeth, married Richard Mytton, a London mercer.³⁴ It was in Mytton's house in Aldermanbury in the City that Colman's mother lived until her death in September 1680 and this house was to be Colman's first stop when he went into hiding on 28 September 1678.³⁵ Soon after his arrest, the secretaries of state received an anonymous letter which claimed that the missing parts of Colman's

pedigree), pp. 210–11; Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, II, p. 215; PRO, PROB 11/358, fos. 273–4: will of William Gilbert, 8 Nov. 1675.

³¹ His name does not appear in the incomplete series of recusant rolls. PRO, E 377/65–8; E 376/51; E 377/70–3; J. Gillow and J. S. Hansom, eds., 'A list of convicted recusants in the reign of King Charles II', *Miscellanea V* (Catholic Rec. Soc., VI, 1909), pp. 75–326; Suff. RO (Ipswich), B104/2/16 (Suff. quarter sessions): presentments of recusants, 16, 17, and 31 Chas. II.

³² Burnet, *History*, II, p. 43. See also, Care, *History of the damnable Popish Plot*, p. 135.

³³ Churchill, *Collection of voyages and travels*, VI, p. 384.

³⁴ *Calendar of marriage licences issued by the faculty office, 1632–1714* (British Rec. Soc., XXXIII, 1905), p. 40; *London visitation pedigrees, 1664*, pp. 13–14; Acc. 1754/1/114: bargain and sale, 22 Jan. 1675; Longleat, marquess of Bath, Coventry papers XI, fo. 246v: Mary Colman to Edward Colman, 1 Jan. 1677.

³⁵ *The little London directory of 1677* (London, 1863), sig. [M5]; W. B. Bannerman, ed., *The registers of St Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, London II* (Harl. Soc., LXII, 1932), pp. 187, 192, 193, 197, 202, 203, 207, 212, 217, 219, 228; *HMC 11th rep.* II, pp. 8–10.

correspondence had been entrusted to Mrs Mytton. Regardless of whether that claim is to be believed, there seems no reason to doubt this informant when he or she stated that, while Mytton was ‘a very honest man’, his wife was ‘a strong papist’.³⁶ Another possible Catholic among Colman’s relatives was the unnamed teenage nephew who, in the autumn of 1678, entered the service of the duchess of York’s Jesuit preacher – and the foremost proponent of the cult of the Sacred Heart – Claude de la Colombière.³⁷ This nephew may well have been Richard Playford, who told the committee for examinations into the Popish Plot that he had sometimes posted letters for his uncle and who was the son of Colman’s eldest sister, Mary.³⁸ A less reliable claim was the rumour that one of Colman’s unmarried sisters was among a party of Catholics who were trying to land at Dover in late 1678.³⁹ It was, moreover, in one of his cousins that Colman found both another convert and a wife.

Mary Orme was the daughter of Colman’s late aunt, Jane Colman, by her first husband, Simon Orme. Orme had died in 1641 (after only two years of marriage) and four years later his widow married the wealthy Putney landowner, William Wymondesold.⁴⁰ The marriage between Colman and Mary Orme must have taken place about twenty years later, some time between her stepfather’s death in April 1664 and a case in the court of exchequer involving the two of them in June 1667.⁴¹ Although the legal case centred on claims that one of the administrators of Orme’s estate had abused his position, Mary Orme’s inheritance may well have been at least as great as Colman’s own. As her parent’s only surviving child, she had inherited what was left of the Orme assets, which seem mainly to have comprised some lands at Goldhanger in Essex. Southwell’s information was that she brought with her an income of £150 per annum and a dowry of £3,000.⁴² (The most striking claim about Mrs Colman – that she committed suicide several years after her husband was executed – appears to be true.)⁴³ In the early days of the marriage

³⁶ Longleat, Coventry papers xi, fo. 263.

³⁷ *LJ*, xiii, p. 367; *HMC 11th rep.* ii, p. 11; M. Yeo, *Claude de la Colombière* (London, 1940), pp. 180–231.

³⁸ *HMC 11th rep.* ii, p. 9. Mary Colman had married Richard Playford at Thorpe Morieux on 17 July 1660. Suff. RO (Bury), FL637/4/1 (Thorpe Morieux par. reg.), unfol. This nephew was too old to have been a son of the Myttons. *State trials*, vii, cols. 27–8.

³⁹ *Calendar of state papers domestic (CSPD)*, 1678, p. 535.

⁴⁰ *MGH*, 2nd series i (1886), p. 350; G. J. Armytage, ed., *A visitation of the county of Surrey, 1662–1668* (Harl. Soc., LX, 1910), p. 127; PRO, E 126/9 (entry book of decrees of the king’s remembrancer), fos. 252, 254v, 301, 412–13.

⁴¹ PRO, PROB 11/314, fos. 321–2Av: will of William Wymondesold, 16 Mar. 1663; W. B. Bannerman, ed., *The parish register of Putney* (Surrey Rec. Soc., xi–xiii, 1913–16), i., p. 127; PRO, E 126/9, fos. 251v, 252, 254v, 281v, 282v, 294, 300v, 301, 412–13.

⁴² *HMC Ormonde*, n.s., iv, pp. 482–3. Wymondesold had left her a token bequest of £5. PRO, PROB 11/314, fo. 322Av. John Oldmixon mentions in passing that the Colmans had children (*History of England* (London, 1730), p. 618), but that statement alone cannot be taken as proof that they did.

⁴³ BL, Add. MS 10118 (notes on James II), fo. 58; Burnet, *History*, ii, p. 95; D. Jones, *The secret history of White-Hall* (1697), sig. [5A6v].

the couple probably lived at Putney in the household of Wymondesold's grandson and heir, Dawes Wymondesold, for in late 1668 Colman was dividing his time between Putney and London.⁴⁴

There was one important way in which this period spent at Putney was to affect later events. Among the other residents of Putney at this time was the knight marshal of the household, Sir William Throckmorton. For some, Throckmorton was a model of royalist virtue. During the 1640s he had served with distinction in the king's army in the north, losing an arm in the process, and had then spent the 1650s in exile with Charles II.⁴⁵ The grant of his court office was recognition for this loyalty.⁴⁶ In the years between his return to England at the Restoration and his death in 1667, Sir William settled in Surrey, acquiring a house at Putney and an estate at Charlwood.⁴⁷ It was thus hardly surprising that Colman came to know Throckmorton's only son, Sir William junior, who in time was to become his main contact at the French court. By 1671 Colman was able to tell the Abbé Rizzini that Sir William junior was his 'close friend'.⁴⁸ By then, Colman, with the assistance of the prolific Catholic controversialist, John Sergeant, had already been able to convert Sir William, and it was at about that time that Sir William's wife was persuaded by them to take the same step.⁴⁹ Colman later claimed that in about 1672 he and Throckmorton had had 'a perticular intimacy'.⁵⁰ The sale of the estate at

⁴⁴ PRO, SP 29/250 (state papers domestic, Charles II), fo. 90: Edward Colman to Joseph Williamson, 11 Dec. 1668. The signature on this letter matches confirmed examples of Colman's signature, such as that on Acc. 1754/1/151. The same hand appears in Acc. 1754/4/8: Edward Colman to Richard Colman, 19 Apr. 1670, and in Derbyshire RO, D239M/o 1583-98 (Fitzherbert papers): draft letters by Colman, 1674-5. The seal (which does not show up on the SP 29 microfilms) displays the armorial bearings of the Colmans of Brent Eleigh (Az. on a pale radiant rayonny Or, a lion ramp. Gu.). Dawes Wymondesold, who was knighted in 1672, had gone up to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1651, six months before Colman.

⁴⁵ See sources cited in P. R. Newman, *Royalist officers in England and Wales* (New York and London, 1981), pp. 371-2. See also BL, Harl. MS 6008 (treatise on the art of war), fos. 1-2; Harl. MS 4602 (military observations on Caesar's *Commentaries*), fos. 1-3; Eger. MS 2536 (Nicholas papers), fos. 222-3; Sir William Throckmorton to Sir Edward Nicholas, 10 June 1658. The most detailed Throckmorton pedigree in print, in A. Fea, *The loyal Wentworths* (London, 1928), genealogical table II, contains several major errors.

⁴⁶ BL, Eger. MS 2542 (Nicholas papers), fo. 252: warrant, 20 Oct. 1657; *CSPD*, 1660, p. 137.

⁴⁷ GLRO, P95/MRY1/413 (churchwardens' accounts, St Mary's, Putney), p. 315; *HMC 11th rep.* app. v, p. 10; PRO, E 179/257/29 (subsidy rolls), fo. 21; *Parish register of Putney*, I, pp. 52, 125; W. Ward, ed., *The registers of St Margaret's, Westminster III* (Harl. Soc., LXXXIX, 1977), p. 7; PRO, PROB 4/13776 (probate inventories): inventory of estate of Sir William Throckmorton, 13 May 1667; PROB 6/42, fo. 60. The subsidy rolls reference was kindly supplied to me by Dorian Gerhold.

⁴⁸ Marquise Campana de Cavelli, ed., *Les derniers Stuarts à Saint-Germain en Laye* (2 vols., Paris, 1871), I, p. 135.

⁴⁹ St John's College, Cambridge, MS 394 (literary life of John Sergeant), pp. 72-8; [J. Sergeant], *The method to arrive at satisfaction in religion* [1671], sig. A2 (dedication to Lady T. E. (i.e. Elizabeth, Lady Throckmorton)); Burnet, *History*, II, p. 95. For Sergeant's friendship with the Colmans, see H. Sidney, *Diary of the times of Charles the Second*, ed. R. W. Blencowe (2 vols., London, 1843), I, pp. 82-3, 165; M. V. Hay, *The Jesuits and the Popish Plot* (London, 1934), pp. 130-5, 153-4.

⁵⁰ *HMC 10th rep.* app. IV, p. 36.

Charlwood in 1670 hints at financial difficulties which may have helped persuade Throckmorton to remain abroad after his posting with the French army came to an end.⁵¹ The letters which Throckmorton wrote to Colman from Paris can now be seen to have interspersed high politics with comments on the latest gossip from Putney.⁵²

II

Colman had meanwhile begun to establish himself at court. Contrary to what has been supposed hitherto, he had in fact entered royal service long before the duke and duchess of York began employing him as a secretary in the 1670s. As early as June 1661 he had been sworn in as a member of the band of gentlemen pensioners. As was usual, this nomination was made by the captain, the earl of Cleveland.⁵³ Colman's duties would have required him to act as a guard in the king's presence chamber for three months in every year and to attend on the king as one of his ceremonial bodyguards on the great festival days of the court. In no sense would someone of Colman's background have been demeaned by accepting such a place and, although the salary of £90 (later increased to £100) and the great honour satisfied many, hopes of further advancement would not have been unrealistic. Colman retained this position until April 1673, when he resigned from it to avoid conforming to the newly passed Test Act.⁵⁴ Rather disappointingly, he was not 'Mr Coleman', the gentleman pensioner whom Pepys became convinced was having an affair with his wife in 1667.⁵⁵

Appointment as a gentleman pensioner is not the only indication of Colman's association with the court during the 1660s. It can be shown that on 8 July 1666

⁵¹ PRO, C 54/4365 (close rolls), mm. 19–20: indenture, 10 Mar. 1670; C 54/4382, mm. 34–6: indenture: 16 Dec. 1673; Surrey RO (Kingston-upon-Thames), MS 61/5/7–8 (M'Clintock Greenwell papers): particulars of Charlwood sale, [?1670].

⁵² *HMC 13th rep.* app. vi, esp. pp. 51, 57, 59, 71.

⁵³ Badminton, Beaufort archives, Fm H2/4/1 (record book of the band of gentlemen pensioners), fos. 13, 22v, 51. I wish to thank the duke of Beaufort for granting me permission to consult this manuscript. See also BL, Add. MS 63057B (draft of Burnet's *History*), fo. 25v; PRO, E 407/1/50–60; E 407/2/61, 64–5 (gentlemen pensioners' rolls); H. Kearsley, *His Majesty's bodyguard of the honourable corps of gentlemen-at-arms* (London, 1937), p. 89; *Calendar of treasury books, 1669–1672*, p. 854; E. Chamberlayne, *Present state of England* (7th edn, 1673), pt i, p. 211. Burnet's draft was drawn to my attention by Lionel Glassey.

⁵⁴ Badminton, Fm H2/4/1, fo. 24. His name appears in Chamberlayne's lists from 1674, 1676, and 1677, but only because they had not been updated. Chamberlayne, *Angliae notitia* (8th edn, 1674), pt i, p. 209 (9th edn, 1676), pt i, p. 183 (10th edn, 1677), pt i, p. 183.

⁵⁵ R. Latham and W. Matthews, eds., *The diary of Samuel Pepys* (11 vols., London, 1970–83), viii, pp. 286, 298, 305, 372–3, 588, ix, p. 20. 'Mr Coleman' can be positively identified as Roger Colman, a gentleman pensioner from 1661 to 1671, who was the stepbrother of one of the Pepys's Huntingdonshire neighbours, John Bigg of Grafham. Badminton, Fm H2/4/1, fo. 22; PRO, PROB 11/397, fos. 105–6: will of Roger Colman, 8 June 1689; J. Bedells, ed., *The visitation of the county of Huntingdon 1684* (Harl. Soc., n.s., xiii, 1994), pp. 31, 40, 78; B. D. Henning, *The history of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1660–1690* (3 vols., London, 1983), i, p. 651.

he forwarded to the under-secretary of state, Joseph Williamson, some unspecified documents which Williamson had requested. The surviving covering letter explains that he would have sent them earlier had he not been 'extremely ill' with 'a scurvy distemper'.⁵⁶ It would therefore seem that Colman was already known to Williamson and an ambitious Catholic convert was precisely the sort of contact Williamson would have taken care to cultivate. At first sight, it is tempting to link this letter to another, written two days later by one of Colman's relatives and which also survives among Williamson's papers. The dates, however, do not quite fit, but this second letter is just as revealing about Colman, and its sender, William Battie, formed another link between him and Williamson.

Originally from Tunstall in Lancashire, William Battie was roughly the same age as Colman and the two of them had been contemporaries at Cambridge.⁵⁷ Battie had come to live in Suffolk in 1659 when the patron, Thomas Bacon of Friston, had nominated him as rector of Alderton, a parish just along the coast from Felixstowe.⁵⁸ His kinship with Colman dated from January 1661, when he married one of Colman's cousins, Katherine Colman of Brent Eleigh.⁵⁹ The village immediately to the south of Alderton was Bawdsey and in October 1662 the crown presented Battie to the vicarage of that parish.⁶⁰ Also located on the coast, Bawdsey overlooks Sole Bay and it was the opportunities this gave him to keep watch over the western sector of the North Sea which was to make Battie especially useful to the government. The first person to realize this seems to have been Prince Rupert, for he appointed Battie as one of his chaplains in May 1664, at a time when it was widely assumed that war against the Dutch was imminent.⁶¹ The spiritual guidance which Battie might provide is unlikely to have been uppermost in Rupert's mind. What Rupert wanted was intelligence and once war finally broke out Battie was soon able to prove his worth. In the summer of 1666, in the aftermath of the Dutch victory in the Four Days' Fight, Battie took care to monitor the movements of both fleets. At the beginning of July 1666 the lord lieutenant, the earl of Suffolk,

⁵⁶ PRO, SP 29/162, fo. 13; Edward Colman to Joseph Williamson, 8 July 1666. The signature, handwriting, and seal match those in SP 29/250, fo. 90.

⁵⁷ Society of Antiquaries, London, MS 667 (notes on Suffolk arms), p. 374; Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 1, p. 109; J. Peile, *Biographical register of Christ's College, 1505-1905* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1910-13), 1, p. 534; W. H. Chippendall, *A history of the parish of Tunstall* (Chetham Soc., n.s., CIV, 1940), pp. 30, 71-2, 77, 102-5.

⁵⁸ J. Houston, *Catalogue of ecclesiastical records of the commonwealth, 1643-1660, in the Lambeth Palace Library* (Farnborough, 1968), p. 15. Battie, along with Bacon, was one of the signatories of the petition for a free parliament which the Suffolk gentry submitted to Monck in January 1660. A. Everitt, ed., *Suffolk and the great rebellion, 1640-1660* (Suff. Rec. Soc., III, 1960), pp. 127-9.

⁵⁹ MGH, 2nd series 1 (1886) 350; Acc. 1754/2/7: release, 29 May 1665; Acc. 1754/2/9: release, 2 Apr. 1669.

⁶⁰ *Forty-sixth report of the deputy keeper of the public records* (London, 1885-6), p. 24; PRO, IND 1/17006 (institution books, series B, II), fo. 207.

⁶¹ Lambeth Palace Library, FV/1/I (register of noblemen's chaplains), fo. 89: certificate of appointment, 18 May 1664.

visited him at Bawdsey in order to find out what the Dutch fleet was doing. Then, when a Dutch ship returning captured English sailors landed at Bawdsey, Battie recognized the nonconformist minister, Joseph Hill, masquerading as one of the prisoners. Hill had been a fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, before going into exile at Leiden in 1662. On recognizing him, Battie concluded that he was up to no good and had him arrested as a Dutch spy.⁶² Writing three days later (on 10 July) to his brother-in-law, another Edward Colman (who was a lawyer at Furnival's Inn in London), Battie added the observation that he assumed Hill would be well known to 'my Cosen Ed: Colman'. Even more intriguing is his comment later in the letter when he suggested that 'my Cosen Colman would do A good to have the Hoy he [Hill] came in narrowly inquired into for Papers'. Just why Colman would have been able to do that was not indicated. The letter ends with Battie asking his brother-in-law if he knew where their cousin was then staying.⁶³ Doubtless it was because of the information about Hill and because it contained all that Battie knew about the location of the fleets that his brother-in-law passed this letter on to Williamson.

That Williamson was acquainted with Colman is confirmed by a second letter Colman wrote to him two years later. From this it would appear that Colman had met Williamson on 7 December 1668 and that he had reminded Williamson of his wish to go abroad, before inquiring about the plans to send an ambassador to Venice. Later that week he expanded on this hint by writing to Williamson to ask if he could be appointed as the secretary to the ambassador on this embassy. Displaying an awareness of what was considered in some quarters to be the appropriate etiquette, Colman offered him 'a hundred pieces or any other summe w[hi]ch y[o]u shall judge gratefull and handsome'.⁶⁴ With or without Williamson's support, this request came to nothing. When Viscount Fauconberg finally set out for Venice as the ambassador in late 1669, his secretary was not Colman but John Dodington, the candidate who had been recommended by Arlington.⁶⁵ A couple of letters to Williamson did not of course mean that someone was a major informant. What Colman was up to in 1666 might be of as much interest to us as it was to

⁶² PRO, SP 29/162, fo. 66: William Battie to Edward Colman, 10 July 1666.

⁶³ Ibid. The papers which Battie had seized from Hill and which are now bound with this letter (fos. 68–75) cannot be the papers mentioned in Colman's letter of 8 July 1666. This Edward Colman was the cousin who was given permission to visit Colman in prison before his execution. *State trials*, vii, col. 78. It is unclear whether he was also the Edward Colman who became the principal of Furnival's Inn in about 1690. *The records of the honourable society of Lincoln's Inn (black books)*, (5 vols., [London], 1897–1968), iii, pp. 94, 170–1, 251; *HMC 11th rep.* app. ii, p. 103; PRO, PROB 11/451, fos. 31–3: will of Edward Colman, 15 July 1698; E. Farrer, *Portraits in Suffolk houses (west)* (London, 1908), pp. 44–5.

⁶⁴ PRO, SP 29/250, fos. 89–90. Alan Marshall has reminded me that the attempted bribe would not have influenced Williamson.

⁶⁵ G. M. Bell, *A handlist of British diplomatic representatives, 1509–1688* (London, 1990), pp. 293–4; P. Aubrey, *Mr Secretary Thurloe* (London, 1990), pp. 206–7; Campana de Cavelli, *Les derniers Stuarts*, I, p. 137.

Williamson; but it is likely that, as yet, he was of little importance as a covert political player. The same was not true of William Battie.

Joseph Williamson knew a good source when one presented itself to him and, having been impressed by Battie's effective activity in 1666, he seems to have encouraged him to remain in touch. That encouragement soon paid off. In the nervous weeks which followed the humiliating attack by the Dutch on the English fleet in the Medway in June 1667, the government had every reason to welcome any intelligence Battie could supply. On 22 July, when neither he nor the king's ministers in London knew that the Dutch had already accepted the English peace terms, Battie warned Arlington that the Dutch fleet was massing off the Suffolk coast and that they appeared to be heading towards the Thames estuary. He continued to report to Williamson until the completion of the peace negotiations became public.⁶⁶ His reward was not slow in coming. Within weeks the process began for the crown to nominate him as the rector of Hitcham, a village only three miles to the south-east of Thorpe Morieux. A royal dispensation was granted to allow him to hold this in plurality with the living at Bawdsey, with Archbishop Sheldon giving his permission because Battie was 'well knowne to His Grace by some eminent peice of service he had done against the Dutch in their Late Invasion'.⁶⁷

The advantage in allowing Battie to become a pluralist was that it made sure that the gift of a living close to his in-laws at Brent Eleigh need not interfere with his surveillance work. The resumption of hostilities with the Dutch in 1672 confirmed the usefulness of this arrangement. Williamson heard from Battie as soon as the Dutch appeared off Bawdsey in May 1672 and, when the English fleet assembled in Sole Bay a week later, the duke of York received him on board his flagship. This was probably not their first meeting. As Battie proudly told Williamson in his report written the next day, York had flattered him by remarking that his arrival 'fulfill'd the Dukes p[re]diction in it, for overnight he told his attendants that now he was so near the shore he expected shortly to see an honest parson that used to give him true intelligence in the last Dutch war'. At their meeting York outlined to him in detail his assessment of the situation and Battie duly passed this on to Williamson. As a postscript to this letter, Battie asked Williamson to give his regards to 'my Cosen Colman' when he next saw him.⁶⁸ Two days after the subsequent inconclusive clash between the two fleets, Battie wrote to London to confirm the news that the Dutch were returning home.⁶⁹ These efforts continued to be rewarded. Although the date

⁶⁶ PRO, SP 29/210, fo. 107: William Battie to [Arlington], 22 July 1667; fo. 108: William Battie to Arlington, 22 July 1667; fo. 121: William Battie to Joseph Williamson, 23 July 1667; SP 29/212, fo. 48: William Battie to Joseph Williamson, 3 Aug. 1667.

⁶⁷ *CSPD, 1667*, pp. 446, 479; Lambeth Palace Library, VB1/2 (act books of the archbishop of Canterbury), p. 94: dispensation to William Battie, 13 Sept. 1667; PRO, C 66/3092 (patent rolls), m. 3: patent to William Batty, 3 Oct. 1667; IND 1/17006, fo. 230.

⁶⁸ PRO, SP 29/309, fo. 16: William Battie to Sir Joseph Williamson, 18 May 1672; fo. 147: William Battie to Sir Joseph Williamson, 24 May 1672.

⁶⁹ PRO, SP 29/310, fo. 163: William Battie to Sir Joseph Williamson, 1 June 1672.

of his appointment is uncertain, Battie was selected to become a chaplain to Charles II.⁷⁰ His friends at court may also have played a part in the admission of his son, Edward, to Eton in 1675 as a king's scholar.⁷¹

Battie was in the meantime satisfied to concentrate on what he considered to be the pernicious influence of nonconformity on his parishioners. In August 1672 he can have left Williamson in no doubt that he thought the king's declaration of indulgence to be a mistake. His letter on the subject complained that the local JPs were ignoring his requests that they suppress unlicensed conventicles and he asked that, as a favour to him, no licences be issued to conventicles at Hitcham or Bawdsey. That favour appears to have been granted.⁷² Battie's apparent obsession with nonconformists enlarged what seems to have been his record as a frequent litigant and, seizing on the opportunities provided by the cancellation of the 1672 declaration, he launched a series of what were to be lengthy legal actions to ensure that the laws against dissent were properly enforced within Suffolk.⁷³ The inevitable result was that he quickly gained many enemies. Before 1672, however, this particular fixation had yet to become fully manifest and it is significant that, at that stage, Battie could count on the respect of several very important courtiers, not the least of whom was the duke of York. Battie's name had the potential to open many of the right doors for Colman and it is in no way implausible to assume that this assisted Colman's advancement at court.

It should not need to be pointed out that few newcomers to the Restoration court rose without patrons and there is no reason to suppose that Colman was an exception. However advantageous his relationship with Battie is likely to have been, it surely cannot be described as that between a patron and a client. Whoever it was who preceded the duke of York in the role of Colman's patron must have had a more direct connection with the court. Only now that something is known about Colman's background does it become practical to begin speculating as to who his early patron might have been. Sir William Throckmorton senior is one obvious possibility, but he had been dead since 1667. For a time, Burnet thought he knew the answer to this question. On

⁷⁰ W. Battie, *A sermon preached before the right honourable Sir Francis Chaplin* (1678), titlepage; Lambeth Palace Library, VB1/4, p. 124. His appointment as a royal chaplain should have been recorded in the lord chamberlain's warrant books (PRO, LC 5/139–142), but there are gaps in that series.

⁷¹ W. Sterry, ed., *The Eton College register, 1441–1698* (Eton, 1943), p. 26.
⁷² PRO, SP 29/314, fo. 161: William Battie to Sir Joseph Williamson, 31 Aug. 1672. The licensed meeting houses in Suffolk are listed in G. L. Turner, ed., *Original records of early nonconformity under persecution and indulgence* (3 vols., London, 1911–14), II, pp. 903–22. Licences were issued to three of the parishes adjacent to Hitcham – Battsford, Buxhall, and Rattlesden.

⁷³ PRO, SP 29/436, fos. 60–1: information of William Battie, 6 Feb. 1684; J. Besse, *A collection of the sufferings of the people called Quakers* (2 vols., London, 1753), I, p. 678. For other cases involving Battie, see J. Keble, *Reports in the courts of King's Bench* (3 vols., 1685), I, p. 721; PRO, C 5/446/78 (chancery pleadings, Brydges division): bill of complaint of William Battie against Laurence Womack, 20 Mar. 1675; C 5/447/125: answers of Laurence Womack and Edward Sheppard, 17 May 1675; C 5/446/63: bill of complaint of William Battie against John Smith and others, 29 Nov. 1675.

hearing of Colman's appointment to York's household, he initially detected the hand of Lord Belasyse, the most politically active of the Catholic peers, who had been captain of the gentlemen pensioners since 1667. Belasyse firmly denied this, even claiming that he had been unaware of Colman's Catholicism before his attempt (to Belasyse's fury) to convert York's latest prospective bride, Belasyse's stepdaughter and former daughter-in-law, Lady Susan Belasyse.⁷⁴ There was, in any case, a far stronger candidate who could have effected any introduction.

Richard Colman was one of Edward's cousins and, on the death of their grandfather in 1653, he had inherited Samuel Colman's estates at Brent Eleigh.⁷⁵ By the 1660s Richard and his best friend, Francis North (the future Lord Keeper Guilford), had come to be recognized as the rising stars of the new generation of young barristers. North's younger brother, the aforementioned Roger North, later recalled that Richard Colman had had 'a very comely aspect and a very voluble tongue' and that, when on circuit together, Colman and Francis North were 'ingenuous good lawyers, ready speakers, candid gentlemen, and who in pursuit of their own improved each other's interest'.⁷⁶ Richard Colman's professional potential was so promising that, until his early death in October 1672, he was spoken of as a future solicitor-general.⁷⁷ Yet that potential was not entirely due to his brilliant abilities, for it also owed something to an astute marriage. His wife, whom he had married in 1661, was Anne Hyde, whose father, the late Dr Edward Hyde, had been a first cousin of the lord chancellor.⁷⁸ This made Edward Colman a first cousin to the husband of a second cousin to the duke of York's first wife. Stated in that way, the connection sounds especially convoluted, but Richard Colman's association with the Hydes quickly developed beyond this tenuous link. In 1663 Clarendon, as the high steward, secured for Richard Colman the recordership of Salisbury, and two years later the support of the Hyde interest ensured that he succeeded Clarendon's third son as one of the town's MPs. The plan was probably that Richard Colman should become one of Clarendon's men of business in the Commons; and, once elected, he clearly aligned himself with the Hyde–Yorkist faction in parliament. He made a number of important procedural interventions in the debates on Clarendon's impeachment, which were intended to

⁷⁴ BL, Add. MS 63057B, fo. 25v; Burnet, *History*, II, p. 16. Belasyse's purported ignorance about Colman is all the more surprising as his second wife had been a daughter and co-heiress of the late Sir Robert Crane of Chilton, a near neighbour of the Colmans of Brent Eleigh.

⁷⁵ The entry on Richard Colman in Henning, *History of Parliament*, II, pp. 108–9, summarizes most of the known facts.

⁷⁶ R. North, *The lives of the Norths*, ed. A. Jessopp (3 vols., London, 1890), I, p. 61; R. North, *The life of the Lord Keeper North*, ed. M. Chan (Studies in British History, XL1, 1995), p. 34. The Norths' brother-in-law, George Wenyewe of Brettenham, was a neighbour of the Colmans at Thorpe Morieux, and in 1660 Thomas Colman had witnessed Wenyewe's agreement to a land sale. Suff. RO (Bury), Acc. 326/46: indenture, 19 Apr. 1660. Richard Colman was the lawyer appointed by the court to mediate between the parties in the 1667 exchequer case. PRO, E 126/9, fo. 254v.

⁷⁷ North, *Lives*, I, p. 61; North, *Life of the Lord Keeper North*, p. 34.

⁷⁸ Acc. 1754/1/33: marriage settlement, 25 June 1661; Acc. 1754/1/34: fine, 30 June 1661.

impede the passage of the impeachment articles, and in the autumn of 1669 Sir Thomas Osborne included him on a list of the associates of the duke of York. In March 1670, as might be expected, he opposed the Roos divorce bill.⁷⁹ Here was someone whose recommendations York would have taken seriously.

Edward Colman's initial admission into York's circle thus seems perfectly explicable. Plain good fortune had presented him with just the sort of connections he needed to match his sizeable ambitions. Of course, connections alone were rarely enough. Never was this more true than in this case. The influence Colman came to exercise over York owed almost everything to their shared Catholicism, and it was probably that which, above all else, recommended him in the first place. The crucial point about Colman was that he had both the entrée and the personal qualities needed to exploit it.

III

The result was that by the early 1670s Colman was known to be working on York's behalf.⁸⁰ So little is known about how exactly he was being employed by York at this time that the nature of his employment has frequently been the subject of some confusion. Ever since the moment of his arrest, the usual assumption has been that in 1678 he was the secretary to the duchess of York, having been secretary to the duke until various indiscretions had led to a well-publicized dismissal in 1676.⁸¹ Careful examination of the best-informed sources, including York's own memoirs, shows that assumption to be incorrect. Colman's appointment as the duchess's secretary dated from about the time of her arrival in England in November 1673, and it was from that position that he was removed in 1676.⁸² His status before late 1673 is more mysterious. It could not have been as the official secretary to the duke, for that position was occupied first by Matthew Wren and then by Sir John Werden.

⁷⁹ *The proceedings in the House of Commons touching the impeachment of Edward, late earl of Clarendon* ([London], 1700), pp. 28, 34–5, 92–3; A. Grey, *Debates of the House of Commons* (10 vols., London, 1763), I, pp. 19, 21, 34, 43, 255, 259–60, 345; A. Browning, *Thomas Osborne earl of Danby and duke of Leeds* (3 vols., Glasgow, 1951), III, p. 38. Other references to him in the parliamentary diaries are C. Robbins, ed., *The diary of John Milward* (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 60, 194–6; Grey, *Debates*, I, pp. 90, 124, 165, 184, 207, 210, 266, 329, 341, 345, 346, 350, 373, 382–3, 389, 402, 438, 443, 464–5.

⁸⁰ Campana de Cavelli, *Les derniers Stuarts*, I, pp. 135–7; D. Jones, *The secret history of White-Hall* (1697), sig. 2B2v; Miller, 'Correspondence', pp. 262–3.

⁸¹ *HMC Ormonde*, n.s., IV, p. 242; A. Browning, ed., *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby* (Glasgow, 1936), p. 153; Warner, *History*, pt I, p. 69; N. Luttrell, *A brief historical relation of state affairs* (6 vols., Oxford, 1857), I, p. 4; Care, *History of the damnable Popish Plot*, p. 135; L. Echard, *The history of England* (3 vols., London, 1707–18), III, p. 365; S. Lomas, ed., 'The memoirs of Sir George Courthop', *Camden Miscellany XI* (Camden Soc., 3rd series XIII, 1907), pp. 152–3; W. E. Buckley, ed., *Memoirs of Thomas, earl of Ailesbury* (2 vols., Roxburghe Club, 1890), I, p. 27; M. F. Bond, ed., *The diaries and papers of Sir Edward Dering* (HMSO, 1976), p. 126; Dodd, *Church history*, III, p. 254.

⁸² J. S. Clarke, ed., *The life of James the Second* (2 vols., London, 1816), I, p. 534; PRO, PRO 31/3/131 (Baschet transcripts), fo. 54v: marquis de Ruvigny to Louis XIV, 18 June 1674 [new style]; E. Chamberlayne, *Angliae notitia* (1674), pt I, p. 235; Treby, *Collection*, pp. 31, 34, 35, 42, 43, 70; *HMC 4th rep.* app., p. 233; North, *Examen*, pp. 133–4; Burnet, *History*, II, pp. 43, 91.

Nearly all the Colman's Suffolk links had by now been cut. In April 1670 he raised £1,200 by selling most of the lands at Brent Eleigh to Richard Colman.⁸³ He then used some of this money to purchase 450 acres in and around Goldhanger to extended the estates which his wife had inherited there.⁸⁴ He had also apparently been trying to cash in on the building boom within the City following the Great Fire. Thus, it so happened that it was also in April 1670 that Colman, together with William Gawen and William Colgrave, brought a case in chancery against a London builder, Anthony Baskerville. Their claim was that Baskerville had misled them when selling two houses to them in the parish of St Sepulchre for £700.⁸⁵ There was, however, more to this sale than first appears. The counsel representing Colman and his two partners was Richard Langhorne, the Inner Temple barrister who handled the legal affairs of the English Jesuits.⁸⁶ Moreover, Gawen was probably the person who, together with Colman, was named as one of the beneficiaries in the 1677 will made by William Petre, a Jesuit candidate for the priesthood who was the youngest brother of Father Edward Petre. It also seems likely that he was related to John Gawen (or Gaven), the Jesuit priest who was to be another of Oates's victims.⁸⁷ Langhorne later admitted to having used Colman and Gawen as his frontmen when buying land on behalf of the Jesuits, making it almost certain that it was the Jesuits who were the real purchasers of these properties.⁸⁸ It is clear that Colman himself was not using either of the houses, for the documents associated with this case and with the sale to Richard Colman confirm that he was then living in Westminster. Some time later he moved to live in fashionable Pall Mall.⁸⁹ Even discounting the two houses in the City, the acquisition of the lands at Goldhanger imply that Colman had not had to sell the lands at Brent Eleigh out of necessity. If anything, he probably appeared more prosperous than ever. He still, however, had no great fortune

⁸³ Acc. 1754/4/8: Edward Colman to Richard Colman, 19 Apr. 1670; Acc. 1754/1/122: bargain and sale, 28 Apr. 1670; Acc. 1754/1/123: grant, 29 Apr. 1670; Acc. 1754/1/124: two parts of fine, 13 May 1670; Acc. 1754/1/125: receipt, 20 May 1670; Acc. 1754/1/127: lease and release, 8 May 1671; Acc. 1754/1/128: quit claim, 8 May 1671. Edward and his mother disposed of a much smaller plot of land at Brent Eleigh in 1675 in a sale to Richard's younger brother, Edward, the Furnival's Inn lawyer. Acc. 1754/1/114: bargain and sale, 22 Jan. 1675.

⁸⁴ Essex RO (Chelmsford), MS D/Dvo. 21–2 (manors of Purleigh and Bradwell-juxta-Mare): counterpart final concords, Trinity term 1670.

⁸⁵ PRO, C 8/322/25 (chancery pleadings, Mitford's division): bill of complaint of Edward Colman, William Gawen and William Colgrave, 27 Apr. 1670; C 5/463/69: answer of Anthony Baskerville, 28 Apr. 1670.

⁸⁶ PRO, C 8/322/25. Baskerville's lawyer was the future Catholic convert, Christopher Milton.

⁸⁷ *HMC 13th rep.* app. vi, p. 116; H. Foley, *Records of the English province of the Society of Jesus* (7 vols., London, 1877–83), vii, pt i, pp. 290–1, 596; G. Holt, ed., *The English Jesuits, 1650–1829* (Catholic Rec. Soc., LXX, 1984), p. 193. William Petre lived on until 1722.

⁸⁸ T. M. McCoog, 'Richard Langhorne and the Popish Plot', *Recusant History*, 19 (1989), pp. 505, 507n, 508n. For another land transaction involving Langhorne and Gawen, see Cambridge County RO, R.55.31.1.22–5 (Baumgartner collection): indentures and memo., 2 Sept. 1676.

⁸⁹ *Collection of autograph letters and historical documents formed by Alfred Morrison (second series)* (7 vols., [London], 1893–7), ii, p. 247; Acc. 1754/1/114.

and several contemporaries report that he soon acquired the classic vice of a courtier, the habit of living beyond his means.⁹⁰

With his appointment as secretary to James's second wife, Colman's story begins to converge with the familiar tale of his undoing and, in the light of what is now known, it is possible to appreciate that this convergence went beyond simple chronology. In the spring of 1674, less than six months after the arrival of the new duchess of York, Colman (at York's behest) instigated his efforts to persuade sympathetic foreign governments to bankroll Charles II. To this end, Colman first approached the papal nuncio at Brussels, Cardinal Falconieri, in the hope of gaining the required funds from the pope. Even before it became apparent that no money would be forthcoming from Clement X, Colman was trying to make contact with the other possible source of a subsidy – the French court. Over the next two years, approaches were made, in turn, to Louis XIV's confessor, Jean Ferrier; to the secretary for foreign affairs, the marquis de Pomponne; to Ferrier's successor as royal confessor, François de la Chaise; and finally to the duchess of York's disgraced Jesuit chaplain, Pierre de Saint-Germain. Nothing came of any of these overtures.⁹¹ For the time being, however, these negotiations remained secret and it was Colman's other activities which first attracted adverse attention.

In the summer of 1676 newly printed copies of an English edition of the Mass were uncovered during a raid on a London bookseller. This discovery was swiftly seized on by the Anglican allies of Lord Treasurer Danby as a convenient means of embarrassing the Catholic servants in the queen's household. The attack was led by Henry Compton, who, as bishop of London, was officially responsible for regulating the publication of all religious works and for policing the authorized Catholic services at court. When challenged, the bookseller had been able to produce a licence for the printing of this Mass book from Francisco de Mello, who was both the Portuguese ambassador and the lord chamberlain to Queen Catherine. While de Mello was able to claim diplomatic immunity, his secretary and one of his chaplains were placed under arrest.⁹² Compton pressed home the attack by proceeding to accuse Colman of having published a book in defence of the papacy. York was less submissive than his sister-in-law to such complaints against a member of his own household and angrily dismissed the matter out of hand.⁹³

Compton refused to leave things there, and before long he had managed to

⁹⁰ Both Southwell and Burnet comment on Colman's profligacy. *HMC Ormonde*, n.s., iv, pp. 482–3; Burnet, *History*, ii, p. 44.

⁹¹ Miller, 'Correspondence', pp. 263–9.

⁹² PRO, PC 2/65 (privy council register), pp. 295, 333–4, 336–7; SP 29/383, fo. 240: order-in-council, 21 July 1676; E. M. Thompson, ed., *Correspondence of the family of Hatton* (2 vols., Camden Soc., n.s., xxii–xxiii, 1878), i, pp. 137–8; Burnet, *History*, ii, p. 91.

⁹³ *Hatton correspondence*, i, p. 138. The book allegedly by Colman remains unidentified, and it may be that Compton's complaint instead referred to Colman's interventions in the debate organized by Lady Tyrwhitt the previous April. On that occasion Colman had indeed defended papal authority. However, those remarks had only been made public when Burnet's account of the debate was published in June 1676, complete with episcopal imprimatur. [G. Burnet], *A relation of a conference, held about religion, at London, the third of April, 1676* (1676), pp. 11–27.

add to York's annoyance. According to Charles Hatton (in a letter of 3 August 1676 to his brother, Lord Hatton), the latest development in this dispute had come in the form of an unnamed Norfolk clergyman who had 'when the Duke was at sea, sent him a present, w[hi]ch the Duke tooke soe kindly th[a]t he procured him a very good living; after w[hi]ch, the parson did very violently persecute the fanaticke Nonconformists'.⁹⁴ Although Hatton had garbled the story slightly, substituting Norfolk for Suffolk, this clergyman is all-too-recognizable as William Battie. It would appear that Battie had recently come up to London and paid a visit to his cousin. On meeting,

Collman rebuked him and told him the D[uke] was very much offended w[i]th him, and he, pleading th[a]t he only prosecuted the fanaticks, Mr. Collman told him th[a]t the D[uke] was very much troubled th[a]t any persons shou'd be troubled for serving God [because of] that [which] was w[i]thin their conscience they thought they ought to doe.⁹⁵

Battie, however, still had other powerful friends and so was able to go off to tell Bishop Compton about what had happened. There were several reasons why he might have chosen Compton for this purpose. If, by then, he was a royal chaplain, Battie would have known Compton as dean of the chapel royal, while he may already have been acquainted with William Sancroft, the Suffolk-born dean of St Paul's. He may also have realized that Compton would gladly use this incident as another weapon against Colman. The bishop responded by arranging for Battie to have an audience with the king, so that the king could hear of Colman's impudence. If Hatton was reliably informed, the king then advised his brother to dismiss Colman.⁹⁶ York again stood by Colman.

The high point in this campaign by Compton to restrict the influence of the Catholics at court came on 3 October 1676 when a proclamation was issued against unauthorized attendance at Mass. Catholics were reminded that only the queen's servants were allowed to attend services in her chapel.⁹⁷ The very next day Colman made the mistake of bringing out the latest instalment of the illicit newsletter which he had been producing since April the previous year and which had probably already been attracting complaints.⁹⁸ Among the items reported in this edition of the newsletter were details of the fleet to be sent to curb the Algerian corsairs. One recipient of the letter brought this to the attention of Sir John Narborough, the admiral who had been appointed to command the expedition, and Narborough then complained to Sir Joseph Williamson. Once it had been established that it was Colman who was to blame for the leak, his arrest was ordered.⁹⁹ This time the king insisted on his

⁹⁴ *Hatton correspondence*, I, p. 138.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ PRO, PC 2/65, pp. 349–50.

⁹⁸ *Collection of autograph letters*, II, pp. 246–8; *The Bulstrode papers* ([London], 1897), pp. 282–326, esp. p. 313; Miller, 'Correspondence', pp. 269–70, 275n; North, *Examen*, pp. 133–4; North, *Life of Lord Keeper North*, pp. 73–4; J. Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* (3 vols., London and Edinburgh, 1771–88), II (1), p. 199.

⁹⁹ PRO, SP 29/385, fos. 329–32: copies of Colman's newsletter, 4 Oct. 1676; SP 29/386, fo. 27: notes by Williamson, [Oct. 1676]; *CSPD, 1676–1677*, pp. 360, 372.

dismissal. By the end of the year York had obeyed and, on the king's orders, the post office began opening all Colman's mail. In the closing days of December 1676 Colman fled to the continent.¹⁰⁰ Officially, he was never restored to his place as the duchess's secretary. York, however, resented this and made no secret of his wish to reappoint him. In the weeks following Colman's dismissal, York blocked a move by his wife to fill the vacancy (the duchess probably had Jerome Nipho in mind for the position) and the secretaryship was left unfilled.¹⁰¹ Before long Colman was back in London and, on his return, York readmitted him to his favour. Colman's recently acquired house at Westminster, between Dean's Yard and Stable Yard, remained a centre of intrigue and he continued to scheme on York's behalf.¹⁰² As Professor Miller has observed, his political importance during these final years was probably greater than ever.¹⁰³

The most remarkable feature of Colman's continuing influence with York was that he and his master arguably succeeded in revenging themselves on Bishop Compton. In the seven weeks following the death of Gilbert Sheldon in early November 1677, Compton was the clear favourite to become the new archbishop of Canterbury. From York's point of view, the possible appointment of Compton, given the bishop's record of firm action against him and his fellow Catholics, was clearly undesirable. He and Colman therefore lost no time in energetically pressing the cases of less forceful candidates, such as William Sancroft or the bishop of Oxford, John Fell. One who observed this process at first hand was the archdeacon of Exeter, Edward Lake, who was the tutor to York's younger daughter. Significantly, the account in Lake's diary implies that it was Compton's actions in hounding Colman out of office which York was using in late November 1677 as the main reason for arguing that Compton's anti-Catholic campaign had gone too far.¹⁰⁴ Lake also heard of how Colman had told one of York's Protestant servants 'that the Bishop of London must not expect to be the man, because of his forwardness in persecuting the Roman Catholics, particularly the Portugall ambassador and himself'.¹⁰⁵ That, in the event, Compton was passed over in favour of Sancroft does suggest

¹⁰⁰ Longleat, Coventry papers xi, fo. 168: Charles II to Henry Coventry, [7] Dec. 1676; fo. 170: Henry Coventry to Roger Whitley, 11 Dec. 1676; fos. 244–8: notes on Colman's intercepted correspondence, Dec. 1676 – Jan. 1677; Clarke, *Life*, i, p. 534; G. P. Elliott, ed., *Diary of Dr Edward Lake* (Camden Soc., xxxix, 1847), p. 12; Dalrymple, *Memoirs*, ii (1), p. 199; Burnet, *History*, ii, p. 91; A. Marshall, *Intelligence and espionage in the reign of Charles II, 1660–1685* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 82–3.

¹⁰¹ Longleat, Coventry papers xi, fos. 247–8. York's household establishment from 1677 (BL, Add. MS 18958) makes no mention of a secretary for the duchess of York. Nipho had become her secretary by 1679. Chamberlayne, *Angliae notitia* (1679), pt i, p. 206.

¹⁰² Jones, *Secret history*, sig. [5A5v–5A6]. For the location of the house, see also Treby, *Collection*, pp. 31, 34, 35, 42, 43; Westminster Archives Centre, E189 (accounts of overseers of the poor, St Margaret's, Westm.), p. 21; E190, unfol.; E295 (poor rate accounts, St Margaret's, Westm.), p. 73.

¹⁰³ Miller, 'Correspondence', pp. 269–71.

¹⁰⁴ Lake, *Diary*, pp. 11–12. See also A. Clark, ed., *Memoirs of Nathaniel, Lord Crewe*, pp. 16–17, in *Camden Miscellany IX* (Camden Soc., n.s., LIII, 1893).

¹⁰⁵ Lake, *Diary*, p. 19.

that such talk may not have been overstated. York and Colman had certainly been the most vocal of Compton's opponents.

It is with this in mind that consideration must be given to the sermon which, quite by chance, William Battie delivered while speculation about the Canterbury succession was at its height. His audience was nothing less than the lord mayor and corporation of the City of London.¹⁰⁶ His theme was the obligation on all subjects to submit to the authority of magistrates and this he used to justify the laws against all forms of religious nonconformity. Although, characteristically, his main targets were probably the Protestant dissenters he loathed so much, it is unlikely to be a coincidence that the sermon was a thoroughgoing defence of precisely the sort of policy Compton supported, and for which York and Colman were then busy denouncing him. There were others, apart from York and Colman, who did not like what Battie had to say. Some of the aldermen, sensitive to the charge that they were soft on nonconformity, objected to one passage in which Battie appeared to imply that they were not enforcing the penal laws against dissenters. Battie was forced to print the sermon with a preface playing down the significance of that particular remark.¹⁰⁷ For the time being, this incident did him no harm and less than a year later, in September 1678, Compton honoured him by appointing him to be one of the thirty prebendaries of St Paul's Cathedral.¹⁰⁸ Three days after Battie joined the chapter of St Paul's, Titus Oates met Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey to swear the first of his statements detailing the plot to kill the king. The countdown to Colman's destruction had begun.

On the face of it, Battie had acted with considerable foresight. He had taken the risk of falling out with Colman at a time when his cousin had gained the ear of the king's brother and now, with the situation transformed, he saw Colman's enemies prosper. Yet it was at this point that his luck also ran out, for, in a far less dramatic way, he was to be another victim of the anti-popish hysteria which swept the country. It was not just that his political usefulness vanished as soon as Colman had been executed. His problem was as much that he was now too easy a target for his many other enemies. It was surely more than mere chance that a long-running dispute between him and the corporation of Ipswich over the latter's unwillingness to act against conventicles should have revived exactly at this time. The corporation proceeded to indict him for slander.¹⁰⁹ Battie's own elevation by the king to the Suffolk commission of the

¹⁰⁶ W. Battie, *A sermon preached before the right honourable Sir Francis Chaplin, lord mayor of London* (1678). Sir Francis Chaplin, whose family was from Suffolk, probably owned land near Hitcham, which helps explain why Battie had been asked to preach this sermon. Muskett, *Suffolk manorial families*, III, pp. 118, 120. The sermon was delivered on 18 November, the day after the anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and may have been intended to commemorate that event.

¹⁰⁷ Battie, *Sermon* (1678), esp. sig. A3–[A4], p. 15.

¹⁰⁸ R. Newcourt, *Repertorium ecclesiasticum parochiale Londinense* (2 vols., London, 1708–10), I, p. 201 and n; J. M. Horn, ed., *Fasti ecclesiae Anglicanae: 1. St Paul's, London* (London, 1969), p. 53.

¹⁰⁹ PRO, SP 29/436, fo. 61; W. Battie, *A sermon preached at Sudbury* (1680), sig. [A4]. The rebuttal by the Ipswich corporation to Battie's allegations of inactivity – that a meeting of the sessions of the peace had been held on 10 July 1678 – was true. That, however, had been the only meeting

peace in September 1678 (on his appointment as a prebendary) only encouraged both sides to pursue their nuisance allegations against each other.¹¹⁰ However strained his relations with Colman had in fact become, the claim that Battie was friendly with papists was now too obvious for his enemies to eschew. In 1679 he was forced to hit back at these slurs by setting up a lectureship at Sudbury with the expressed purpose of countering popery. The inaugural sermon gave Battie his public platform from which to deliver a timely denunciation of the doctrines of the Catholic church.¹¹¹ This, however, proved to be counter-productive. If the claims later made by him to Archbishop Sancroft are to be believed, some of the servants of the duke of York started a whispering campaign against him and among the accusations spread about was the false assertion that he had used the sermon to praise Oates and Bedloe.¹¹² The attacks from both sides left him with few friends. Between May and November 1679, as well as facing further actions in the courts, he was removed from the commission of the peace and failed to get re-elected to Convocation.¹¹³ In December of that year the opposition newspaper, the *Domestick Intelligence*, took delight in his predicament and he had then to place a statement in the *London Gazette* threatening yet more litigation.¹¹⁴ The following month he published the text of the Sudbury sermon to show exactly what it was that he had said.¹¹⁵ Its preface showed little desire for conciliation. Battie used it to admit that he was every bit as concerned to defend the Church of England against its Protestant opponents and, in a sly dig at his critics, he reminded his readers that it had been a certain recently executed Catholic who had claimed to want religious toleration.¹¹⁶ He at least still had a friend in Archbishop Sancroft, who even granted him a Lambeth DD in November 1680, but the archbishop's patience was probably wearing thin.¹¹⁷ When Battie wrote to him to complain that everyone was out to get him, Sancroft may well have concluded that he was becoming a nuisance whose problems had largely been created by his own tactlessness.¹¹⁸ The doctorate notwithstanding,

convened between August 1677 and February 1679. Suff. RO (Ipswich), C8/4/8 (Ipswich sessions book), pp. 266–70.

¹¹⁰ PRO, SP 29/187, fo. 96: memo. for Williamson, [1678]; C 231/7 (crown office docquet book), p. 549; Suff. RO (Ipswich), B105/2/8 (Suff. quarter sessions minute book), fos. 103, 106, 109v, 111, 115, 121, 124; Besse, *Sufferings*, I, pp. 679–81.

¹¹¹ Battie, *Sermon* (1680); Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fo. 138: William Battie to William Sancroft, [?aft. Nov. 1680].

¹¹² Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fo. 138.

¹¹³ Battie, *Sermon* (1680), sig. [A4]; *Domestick Intelligence*, no. 44 (5 Dec. 1679); Suff. RO (Ipswich), B105/2/8, fo. 124; S. N., *A catalogue of the names of all His Majesties justices of the peace* (1680), p. 19; *HMC 11th rep.* app. II, p. 189.

¹¹⁴ *Domestick Intelligence*, nos. 44, 48 (19 Dec. 1679); *London Gazette*, no. 1468 (11–15 Dec. 1679).

¹¹⁵ Battie, *Sermon* (1680); E. Arber, ed., *The term catalogues, 1668–1709* (3 vols., London, 1903–6), I, p. 381; *Suffolk parochial libraries* (London, 1977), p. 11.

¹¹⁶ Battie, *Sermon* (1680), sig. A2. For Colman's comments about toleration to which Battie alluded, see *State trials*, VII, cols. 75–6.

¹¹⁷ Lambeth Palace Library, VB1/4, p. 124.

¹¹⁸ Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fo. 138.

Sancroft probably showed as little sympathy to these complaints as he did to Battie's request in 1683 to be appointed as the new archdeacon of Suffolk.¹¹⁹ If Sancroft did snub Battie, it was an action all the more pointed given that Battie was just the sort of aggressively Anglican cleric Sancroft and Compton were then making a policy of promoting.¹²⁰ What probably counted against him was that the accumulated consequences of recent events meant that he had become more trouble than he was worth. Battie was to gain no more services from Sancroft or any other patron. He lived on until 1706 but, in contrast to his good fortune before 1678, further promotion eluded him. For the rest of his life he had to console himself with his prebend's stall and his two existing Suffolk livings.

During a comparatively short period, William Battie, Richard Colman, and Edward Colman had gained favour by the three time-honoured routes open to the ambitious young man – the church, the law, and the court. Enough evidence survives to make it reasonable for us to conclude that, to varying degrees, the career of each was affected by their associations with the others. Richard Colman, with his own links to the Hydes, may seem to have had the least to gain, but the obvious conclusion for him to have reached from the late 1660s onwards was that he seemed to have everything to gain from encouraging both his brother-in-law and his cousin. As has been seen, the relationship between Battie and Edward Colman was more complicated. The source of those complications – their passionate support for the Church of England and for the Church of Rome – may not have been much of a problem in the 1660s, when the established church appeared to have less to fear from Colman's fellow Catholic courtiers than from a revival of the recently suppressed Protestant dissenters. The conversion of the duke of York changed all that. Yet briefly, in adversity, Battie and Colman gained as never before from the fact of their kinship. The patronage of Compton offered to Battie the prospect of promotion out of his obscure parishes in rural Suffolk, which, once that prospect had vanished, only made his later years all the more disappointing. Conversely, when Battie lent what support he could to Compton's attacks, the stubborn York became all the more determined to retain Colman. By 1678 the Anglican hard-liners were clearly out to get Colman and, with the inadvertent assistance of the hapless Oates, the earl of Danby, in his final success as lord treasurer, achieved that aim. Whatever the complexities of the connections which had made possible his rise to prominence, Colman's fall was due, above all, to his connection with the duke of York, his last and most enthusiastic patron.

¹¹⁹ Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fo. 137: William Battie to William Sancroft, 18 Sept. [1683]; fo. 144: William Sancroft to William Battie, 22 Sept. 1683.

¹²⁰ R. A. Beddard, 'The commission for ecclesiastical promotions, 1681–84', *Historical Journal*, 10 (1967), pp. 11–40.