

Sir John Harington and Thomas Sutton: New Letters from Charterhouse

Robert C. Evans

Sir John Harington is remembered today mainly as a translator of Ariosto, a writer of witty epigrams, the clever godson of Elizabeth I, and the author of perhaps the most famous work of literature ever devoted to toilets. But Harington, like many of the best poets of his day, was never a professional writer; he was a hard-nosed man of practical affairs, a courtier intent on promoting his interests and image, a propertied gentleman for whom literature could be only a sideline to more pressing pursuits.¹ He knew, and corresponded with, many of the kingdom's most powerful figures; he sought and won official appointments; but he also felt his share of thwarted ambition. New evidence of Harington's practical side has now come to light in the form of a number of previously unpublished letters found among the records of London's Charterhouse hospital, a charitable institution endowed by Thomas Sutton. Most of the new letters are addressed to Sutton, an enormously wealthy commoner who made his fortune from coal leases and then multiplied it many times as one of London's best-known money-lenders. Harington's curious and complicated involvement with Sutton has long been a matter of record, but the newly discovered letters throw fresh light on their tangled relations. At the very least, the new data reveal that Harington's connection with Sutton began much earlier than has previously been assumed.

Moreover, other evidence from the Charterhouse records indicates that the standard scholarly edition of Harington's correspondence is, to a significant degree, inaccurate and incomplete because of omissions, mistranscriptions, and other similar problems. The fault lies not with Harington's editor, N. E. McClure, but rather with the flawed versions of some previously published letters he reprinted in his collection. The new evidence from Charterhouse provides superior versions (in most

cases holograph) of the letters in question. The Charterhouse data thus not only supply a large body of new Harington letters but also offer correctives to a number of the letters presently in print. In addition, they provide opportunities to offer fuller annotations of some of the letters McClure previously edited. Taken together, the Charterhouse evidence provides scholars with additional information about Harington's character, activities, and milieu, and it helps sketch a fuller picture of two of the most important incidents in his life—his intricate financial dealings with Sutton and with Sir John Skinner, and his failed scheme to win the King's favor by persuading Sutton to make Prince Charles the heir to his massive estate.

The newly found letters are among hundreds of documents from the Charterhouse that have now been transferred to the Greater London Record Office. Sutton was a meticulous man, and his papers provide an extraordinarily comprehensive picture of his dealings with people from all levels of society, from mighty magnates to the lowliest supplicants and suitors. Sutton's wealth attracted great interest (in both senses of the term), and his advanced age in the early years of James's reign led to widespread speculation about the eventual fate of his fortune. Many contemporaries believed that Ben Jonson modeled Volpone on Sutton, and certainly the old man attracted his share of legacy-hunters, Harington among them. Sutton seems to have been annoyed from time to time by Harington's ministrations, but their relationship continued for many years. Although H. R. Trevor-Roper, one of Sutton's most reliable biographers, asserts that Harington "came in contact" with the old man in 1607, an unpublished letter from the Charterhouse files reveals that they were already involved with one another as early as 1602.²

Their dealings then, as later, were complicated. During the first years of the new century, Harington was attempting to stave off the financial ruin of his elderly uncle, Thomas Markham. In a deposition given in 1609, Harington explained that, many years before, he had acted as guarantor of a loan Markham had taken from Sir Edward Brabson, "which money he lent to sir John Skinner," Markham's son-in-law, "to buy the chamberlainshippe of Barwicke of sir John Cary. . . . Upon the loan herof sir John Skinner promist to enter into a statute to Master Markham himselfe of 10,000 l. for conveying over Camps to him for his security."³ Castle Camps, an estate in Essex and Cambridgeshire, belonged to Sir Griffin Markham, Thomas's son; it would be the object of many complex negotiations over the next few years, passing in turn from Griffin Markham to Harington, from Harington to Skinner, and then from Skinner to Sutton.⁴

A hitherto unpublished letter to Sutton from Harington, dated 19 November 1602, reflects the complicated state of Harington's—and his uncle's—financial affairs. The letter thanks Sutton for his leniency in dealing with a debt Harington owed him, but it also betrays some annoyance with the old man for encouraging Harington to assume that debt. It also attempts to persuade Sutton to purchase Kirkby Bellars, a manor belonging to the Markham family.⁵

—NEW LETTER 25A: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[19 November 1602]

Mr Sutton since my laste being with yow, J have stirred but little abroad ellse J wold have come vnto yow. But that yow may know J mean both Justly and frendly vnto yow: fyrst J thanke yow that yow have hetherto delt so ~~Justly~~ and frendly with mee as yow have done in not prosecuting extremities agaynst mee, though to say the troth yf J had not been fully p[er]swaded partly by yowr own words y^t yow entended to lend 8000^{li} on the Morgage of Camps J had never been bownd vnto yow for 200^{li}.

Secondly J hartely request yow to be contented to buy the Mannor and howse of Kerkby and the Parsonage at some reasonable rate that my vnckle bee not vtterly vndonne in his old age, or yf yow will not buy yt at least to geve vs some respite and not seeke to encomber yt with yo^r laste statute and bargaen. It ys not want of Chapmen that makes mee so desyrows yow shoulde deal in yt but yt ys trewly, becawse yf yow buy yt J shoulde suddenly bee disburdend of a wayght that lyes as heavy as a milston, on a mynde that till thease troubles of my vnfortunat vnkle was free from all sewts of this kynde.

J ame told yt ys worth 600^{li} de claro that 33^{li}. thearof ys vnimproved that yt ys 2800. acres of grownd, and J doe know that yt ys as fyne a howse and as fayr a garden Orchard walks and Ponds as any ys in that shyre Yf a ritch man sold yt he wold not make vnder 13000^{li} of yt. J wish yow a peny worth in yt and Joy of yt and so J remit yow to god this 19 of November. 1602.

Yo^r very loving ffrend
John Harynton.⁶

In less than a year, Harington was in a debtor's prison, where he wrote indignantly on 21 May 1603 to Sir Robert Cecil, King James's principal secretary and a relative of the Markhams, complaining that

I that never committed cryme in my lyfe (let all my enemyes object what they can) am betrayd by my kin into a det of 4000^{li} and thinking to prop up a howse not contemtible, and allyed to yow, beying to weake a prop yt is falln on mee, and so must lye heer. While John Skinner floryshes at Barwyke and flyes with my fethers, old Markham dotes at home, and his honest sonne Sir Griffin yowr kinsman, lyke an Eneas that would cary his father owt of the flames, ys lyke to burn yn yt with him, the lubber is so heavy to ly on his maymed sonnes showlders.⁷

Three years later, matters had not greatly changed. Harington, although long since out of prison, still found himself entangled financially with Skinner and Sutton, and once more Castle Camps was a central concern. Once again Harington corresponded with Sutton about a loan of 200 pounds, apparently offering as security the bonds of two friends. Sutton seems by this time to have entered into negotiations with Sir John Skinner for the sale of Camps, with Harington acting as intermediary:

—NEW LETTER 43A: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[4 June 1606]

Sr. yf yow will doe mee that frendly kindenes to let mee have 200^{li} vppon my frends bonds J offerd yow viz: Sr Thomas Holcraft and Mr William Stubbs for vj months J trust ovr securty shall bee suffycient, and J hope yow shall bee payd owt of the Mannor of Camps; / they are to go owt of ye town shortly and thearfore J crave to bee able to resolve them ear theyr going, and so exspecting yr. frendly awnswer J remit yow to the allmighty this 4th of June, 1606

yo^r very ffrend
John Haryngton.⁸

A year later, matters were still unsettled. Sometime in June, 1607, Harington wrote another letter to Sutton. In it he refers to a special

parliamentary bill that was drawn up and was designed to clear away any legal difficulties preventing the sale of Castle Camps. In Harington's words, the bill "provided against all the incombrances of Skinner and Markham. . . ." The only exception was an encumbrance "of Wines"—apparently referring to the "Master Wynne" mentioned in another document connected with the case.⁹

However, the text of Harington's June 1607 letter that is printed in McClure's edition is, in several respects, inaccurate. For instance, the last word in the McClure text is "undersolde," whereas the word Harington actually wrote is "vnderfoote."¹⁰ More seriously, the McClure text is also incomplete; the transcription by James Peller Malcolm on which McClure relied ceases with the first paragraph, whereas the holograph letter contained in the Charterhouse records continues for another twelve lines. The full and accurate text of the letter is as follows:

—OLD LETTER 48: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[June 1607]

Mr Sutton, I ame more ashamed then affrayed to come to yow being in yo^r det 200^{li} for my selfe and 50^{li} for S^r Jo Skinner and able to pay yow neyther till Camps be sold With moche suyt and no lytle Charge I procured the act of Parlement to Passe, and that in so good fashyon as Mr Moore and Mr Hyde and other of Cownsell wth yt and of the Committee for yt wear of opynion that all encumbrances wear wypte of cleer saving Wines (w^{ch} ys excepted). My hope was then that yow shold buy yt who I was sewr wold deal Justly and pay trewly, and not wysch to buy yt vnderfoote Synce yow left yt and that I herd some other had purpose to deal for yt wth whome I had no mynde to deal I have been halfe owt of hart; yet did I never cease to vse all the skill I cowlde to turn them from yt and bring yt to yow agayn: and now yf yt will hold and that yow wold take vs in owr good Mood yow may have yt agayn yf yow will say the word I will come to yow; yf not I pray yow bear with mee for the 200^{li} w^{ch} I ever told yow yow must have owt of Camps or ellse I ame not able to pay yt so I rest yo^r yet vnfortunat but
June. 1607.

yo^r very trew ffrend
John Haryngton.¹¹

Another new letter from Harington to Sutton found among the Charterhouse records is rather more obscure. Written in the latter part of July, 1607, it alludes to the involvement of Sir Edward Coke, the Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, in the negotiations over the sale of Camps. Apparently Coke had expressed some interest in buying the estate and had made a specific offer, but Harington (as an even later letter makes clear) preferred that Sutton make the purchase. Harington's deposition of 1609 sheds some light on Coke's involvement, reporting that

My lord Cooke being to buy the land, and examining everie thing very strictlie, hearing [that a complicating statute] was cancelld and vacated, and seeing the act of parliament, was very well satisfied thereof, and never made further question. Upon which, Master Sutton, by my perswasion, bought the mannor *bona fide* most justlie and honestlie, and gave in present monie more than 500 l. than my lord Cooke should have given, to the great relief of sir John Skinner and all his, who is much to blame to shew himself so unthankful for yt.¹²

As often in his correspondence with Sutton, Harington is careful in the following letter to emphasize his abiding concern for the old man's interests:

—NEW LETTER 48A: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[22 July 1607]

Sr. I refer mee as I did before to the bearers report how well I wysh to yo^r proceeding in this busynes, and how handsomly I got the Copy of the booke drawn for my Lord Cooke, and p[er]vsd by him selfe and corrected with his own hand and after engrossed to his vse, till my refusall of the offer he made mee, gave that story to the busynes yt had.

I must tell yow farther that the honest man Hull (that lookes each honor to bee layd in the Cownter) labors all hee can to stay yt for the Judge still; alleaging what great pleasures he may do Sr John Skinner in broken suyts, soch as Hull hath allways drawn him into./

But the present pay, and some hope my La Skinner hath of yo^r goodnes to her, makes them constant in

they^r resolucion for yow. /
 This ys all J can say for my part so J take my
 frendly leave this
 22th of July. 1607.

Yowr assewrd ffrend
 John Harynton.¹³

A little more than a week after writing this letter to Sutton, Harington wrote to Sir William Smith, who was at Camps, and who was another party to the negotiations over the estate. From the evidence of the following letter, Smith seems to have been related to Skinner; another letter suggests that he may have been expected to serve in some official legal capacity in finalizing the deal. His seal was apparently needed to consummate the negotiations (see Letter 48C). Perhaps he was the William Smith who had been involved in complex dealings twelve years earlier with Sir Michael Hickes, also mentioned in this letter. Hickes (or Hicks) was a money-lender and close associate of Sir Robert Cecil, the most powerful courtier in the early years of James's reign.¹⁴ Here as in other of Harington's letters, the tone is at once cordial and mildly critical; apparently Smith had failed to keep a promise to rendezvous with Harington and Sutton, and Harington seems to have wondered if Smith would prove similarly unreliable in other matters as well.

—NEW LETTER 48B: TO SIR WILLIAM SMITH—

[31 July 1607]

Sr Willim Smith J have according to yo^r last l[ett]re, gotten the lytle
 l[re]lease
 seald by Sr John Skinner and my selfe and sent yt yow to see, that Sr
 l[Michell] Hix allso may see yt after.
 J ame sory yow came not vp according to yo^r day appoynted,
 l[con]sidering yt
 good old man hath taken this paynes to come; J have sent yow allso
 l[the] copy of
 the decree, w^{ch} though yt was wyde and short of my expectacion,
 l[yet] J
 doe content my selfe wth yt, and honor the Lo^s that had so noble
 l[re]spect of a fynall
 conclusyon, of so troblesome a busynes.
 It ys falln ow^t very fortunatly that M^r Sutton ys willing to geve 300li
 l[more]

then my Lo. Chiefe Justyce was to geve, and pays all present; / seing
 [thearefore
 hee ys so redy yt wear good not to put him of;
 yow wear content of my Lo. Chiefe Justice to accept 3100^{li}. / and
 [some day for
 2100^{li} of yt. in wch yow profest to vse yo^r brother Skinner kyndely,
 [I hope
 yow have no cawse to allter yo^r conceyt toward him since yo^r
 [partinge; and]
 that was then his profest adversary will now be redy to doe him any
 good offyce for help of his children.
 Yow wear a fe[o]ffee in trust for both, when yow had Haverell park by
 my consent yow both promist before S^r Mc Hix, to vse yt but for yo^r
 securty, and to lend no more mony till the cawse wear ended, now yt
 ys ended to all ovr contents, yt wold bee very hard for yow to draw
 [backe from that yow had consented vnto—
 [*verbum sapienti*.
 the bearer shall tell yow the rest. /
 ffrom Hackney this last of July
 1607.

Yo^r assewred loving ffreind
 John Haryngton./¹⁵

Harington's letter to Smith provides a helpful context for the following letter to Sutton. This one is dated only "July 1607" on the outside, and the matters mentioned clearly suggest that it was written during the same general period as the others just quoted. Its composition may in fact have preceded the composition of the note to Smith. Signed both by Harington and by Skinner and annotated by Smith, the letter may in fact have been penned by Skinner; the handwriting and spelling are significantly different from those in the letters already quoted. Whoever was responsible for actually writing the letter, the sentiments it expresses seem to represent the shared opinions of both Harington and Skinner as they contemplated the conclusion of their deal with Sutton. They express gratitude to Sir Thomas Egerton (the Lord Chancellor) and to Sir Edward Bruce (Lord Kinloss, a Scottish baron who in 1603 had succeeded Egerton as Master of the Rolls). Egerton and Bruce had apparently played some part in facilitating the sale. Harington and Skinner use the letter to outline the details of the deal, especially the encumbrances involved, including the stipulation that Sutton must pay a small annuity

to Emmanuel College, Cambridge. The letter inadvertently reminds us that during much of these negotiations, the unfortunate Skinner was imprisoned for debt.

—NEW LETTER 48C: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[July 1607]

Sr, This great cawse being ended and all freindships made through ye Ho:ble paynes and traveyle of ye L. Ch:or L. kinloss and other noble and woorthy per:sonadges assistawnt: Wee vnderstanding yt you are pleased to bwy ye manno^r of Camps are as desyrous yt you should haue it And therefore wee send vnto you to pray yo to send to yo^r cownsell to dispatch yo^r assurawnce for ye finishing of w^{ch} wee haue likewise sent vnto Sr W: Smyth to come vp instantly. The prise wee set is 11000^{li} wherof wee are told yo^u haue offered but 10800^{li}. Wee do hoap yo^u will not stand wth vs for 200^{li} in so good a bargaine considering how absolutely yo^u shall now haue yo^r assuraunce. The condic[i]ons for incumbrances yo^u are to be tyed vnto being a patent of Stewardship wth 10^{li} fee XXXXXX XXX an annuity of 8^{li} by year to Emanuell Colledge a lytle petle of land gyven away for ye leveling of grownds for a garden and Cowrt yt yo^u do not enter vppo[n] p[r]o^fytts till mich: and yt yo^u do bwy ye mooveables reasonably prysed and corn yo^u shall likewise if yo^u please and all p[r]o^visions for husbandry those Sr John Skykker by himself p[r]ticulareth y^m wth yo^u abowt. Order must be sent instantly for 1000^{li} to free Sr Jo: Skykker owt of pryson vppo[n] Sr W: Smythes eyther com[m]ing or sending to yo^u yt he will seale accordingly. But in ye mean tyme Sr Jo: Skykker must needs haue on 100^{li}. So wishing yo^u all good and prosperity wth it and yo^r present awnsweare if yo^u will refuse it wee com[m]ytt yo^u to god resting yo^r very assured loving

freinds John Skykker
John Haryngton./

J do assewr yow Sr Michel Hicks wold have sygned this l[ett]re but that the bearers hast cold not bear yt./

[WRITTEN VERTICALLY IN LEFT MARGIN:]

If m^r Sutton please to let S^r Jo. Skyn^r Saue 100 angels
 for ye p^rsent, if he buy not Camps, J will se him
 repayed ye mony by My[c]hilmas Terme if god p[er]mit

W: Smithe¹⁶

It is something of a shock to turn from this letter, with its tone of friendly if somewhat legalistic reconciliation, to the following letter by Harington to Sutton, written in early September. Apparently all had not proceeded as planned. Skinner's hope of being freed from jail had been disappointed, and he soon wrote to Egerton, the Lord Chancellor,

explaining that he had sold Thomas Sutton lands for 3100. The remainder he was to have received. The deeds upon the agreement were sealed, containing an acquittance for the whole sum, of which Sutton paid but a small part, and left London. Skinner therefore prayed for satisfaction.

[Egerton] then wrote Sutton a severe letter informing him that the case has been laid before the King, and that his Majesty has referred it to him, Lord Bruce, and others, commanding them to satisfy the creditors, to have Skinner freed from imprisonment, and to provide for his wife and children.¹⁷

Egerton's letter was dated 17 August 1607. On 3 September Sutton replied, explaining that he had "forborne as yett to deliver all the money out of my hands to sir John Skinner" because of an "extent," or legal writ, issued against the property of Camps in the name of "Master Wynne"—presumably the encumbrance of "Wines" mentioned in Letter 48 as being the only one that had not yet been "wypte of." Sutton expressed the hope "that some good course may yet be verie shortly taken herin by those Doctors whom your lordship hath assigned to examine that business, that beinge the greatest present matter of trouble and incumbrance to me and to the land." He promised that once this difficulty had been disposed of, "and some reasonable and indifferent course taken with sir John, for the quallifying of the rest of the momentarye business and wherewith the land is chargable, I will most willingly pay unto him all the money yet behinde."¹⁸

These facts provide a helpful context for Harington's next letter to Sutton, dated 7 September 1607. From the evidence of this letter, Egerton's attitude toward Sutton seems to have softened considerably in the weeks since he had sent the old man his menacing note of 17 August. Harington's letter, addressed to Sutton at his home at Hackney, once again shows Harington playing the roles of intermediary and peace-maker.

—NEW LETTER 48D: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[7 September 1607]

Mr Sutton, God rayses ffrends and the devill stirrs vp
 Enemyes. I found my Lo: Chawncellor at some leysure
 this Morning and had moche talke of yo^r busynes -
 Hee showed mee a petition of Skinners agaynst yow
 so full of gall as cowlde be cowtched in so few lynes
 and soche, as my Lo: hath this worthy respect of yow,
 as he sayd hee wold not let yow see yt because yt
 showld not greeve yow, moche lesse show yt the king. /
 I did assewr my Lo. that yow did dayly supply
 him wth mony that this matter being ended for
 [him] litle ellse remaynd in dowbt
 I told him allso of a matter that yow never spake
 of, how thear ys in S^r William Stowes hands
 20000li
 2 statutes of my Lo. of Oxfords for Camps and
 Statute.
 Lanam w^{ch} my Lo. sayth vppon mocion may
 bee ordered for yo^r qwyet agaynst my L. of
 Oxfords heys, and the land may hap have need
 of them.
 Yf I cold have come to yow I wold, but I have now
 busynes into the west. I send this knave that I
 fynde loves yow, and can tell yow more then I
 have full leysure to wryte.
 I conclude, I wold have yow cheer yo^r own hart and
 know yow have ffrends, and I (thowgh one of the
 meanest of them) yet willing to do yow kyndenes
 wth towng and pen. only remember y^r promis to
 reed over my litle sheet of paper I gave yow
 once or twyce more for my sake. So fare yow well
 till Michelmas terme.
 7th of September. 1607

Yo^r trew ffrend
 J. Harington

WRITTEN VERTICALLY IN LEFT MARGIN:]

when yow end wth Skinner take a releasse of him of all
 accions quarrells suyts demawnds damages pretenses to
 be had by yow from the beginning of the World to
 this day etc. /¹⁹

Harington's next preserved letter to Sutton deals not with the negotiations with Skinner but with two of Harington's other projects involving the old man—his plan to persuade Sutton to name Prince Charles as his heir, and his hope of convincing Sutton to contribute to the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Bath.²⁰ The "two long l[ett]res" Harington mentions apparently have not survived, but the text of the following letter has already been published, from Malcolm's slightly inaccurate transcription, in McClure's edition. Since the holograph version exists among the Charterhouse records, and since this letter provides a helpful context for a previously unpublished message that followed it, there may be some value in offering a more accurate transcription of it here.

—OLD LETTER 49: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[November 6, 1607]

Mr Sutton. thear ys an old verse: *Ter pulsare licat si non
 aperitur abito*. J have formerly written two long l[ett]res vnto yow
 (yet J wyshe yow shold not think them to long). In them J
 recomended two most Comendable matters vnto yow. *Devotion
 and honor*. wch have been somtyme lawfully maryed together
 though now some mayntayn an opinion that they are divorced.
 J have yet receavd no dyrect awnswer of them, but only a
 summons to Come speedly vp wch J obayd before J receavd yt.
 J know both in yo^r kyndenes and good manners yow will thinke
 fit to awnswer so many lynes so frendly written to yow, vnder my
 hand, wth a few vnder yowrs. /

J need not amplyfy vnto yow, or repeat the worthynes of the
 thinges J perswade: Only J protest to yow on my salvation
 the wysest men J have spoken wth, the godlyest and learnedest
 dyvynes J do meet with, approve my mocion in bothe, and will
 eyther by conference or wryting confyrm as moche to yow.

J only wyshe yow not vndervallew yo^r selfe, pluck vp yo^r
 speryts. Linger not in good purposes, reiecte not frendly
 advyses. *Hilarem Datorem diligit Deus*, God loveth a
 Cheerfull geve: and gods deputyes on earth, participat

of that, among other dyvyne qualytyes, namely in bowntifull
geving favors, and in gratefull accepting good actions and
sometyme good Intentions. and so wysching yow as to my selfe
good successe in yo^r good desyres J remit yow to god from
my lodging this fowl fryday morning
vjth of November. 1607.

yo^r assewred trew ffrend
John Haryngton.²⁰

It soon became clear, however, that Harington's scheme to win favor and reward by persuading the old man to leave his fortune to the Prince pleased everyone but Sutton, who promptly wrote a long and indignant letter to Egerton (the Lord Chancellor) and to Cecil (the Lord Treasurer and Earl of Salisbury) disavowing the plan and rebuking Harington for "often tampering with me to that purpose." Sutton declared that he had grown "into utter dislike with [Harington] for such idle Speeche,"²² and from the evidence of the following letter, previously unpublished, he wasted no time in expressing his anger to Sir John. Harington's reply is interesting not only because it provides independent confirmation of the length of his relationship with Sutton but also because it indicates that the most powerful figures at court took a personal interest in dealing with the proposal he had raised. The letter implies that at this point Harington still had not given up hopes of implementing his plan.

—NEW LETTER 50A: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[13 November 1607]

Mr Sutton, J wold bee lothe to loose in seavn dayes the good
conceyt
that hath been breeding in yow toward mee thease seavn yeers.
J pray yow marke well the enclosed, dictated by a king, penned
by an Erl, signed by a Lord Chauncelor.
Let mee advyse with yow of an awnswer, and J pray yow re-
gard well the last clawse, w^{ch} at my reading pler]haps yow
did not observe wth yo^r Impacience./
J began this busynes, and wth good grace will end it Jn trew
[kyndnes
to yow. The Rote and all the brawanches wear honest
from the beginning frute must be awnswerable
Confer wth some frend, Dyvine, Lawyer, Kinsman only set
asyde passyon [&] selfe conceyt, J pray god hartely yow
may resolve the best for his glory yo^r sowls comfort in

this world [&] the next. and keep safe the enclosd till
 J see yow, and as J trust yow.
 13th of Novemb^r. 1607.

Yo^r poor trew ffrend
 John Haryngton.²³

Harington's plan never did succeed, but apparently his persistence continued well into the new year. Only by the early summer of 1608 does he seem finally to have abandoned any hope that he could persuade Sutton to relent. He seems to have realized, by that point, that continued lobbying might altogether jeopardize his relationship with the old man. An unpublished letter from the Charterhouse records provides further evidence of Sutton's frustration. However, on a happier note, the letter also indicates that the long and complicated negotiations over the sale of Castle Camps had at last come to a close.

—NEW LETTER 50B: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[4 June 1608]

Mr Sutton J send yow by the bearer the litle deed that
 vndid Thomas Markham and his sonnes and specially mee
 that ame yet 2000.^{li} owt for them and a better peny.
 Yowr message by my man and yo^r greeting to my selfe, saying
 J have vndone yow, makes me sory, being pryvy to my selfe
 of all good meaning to yow.
 J have done yow no wrong nor harme with the king nor
 any elise, and whatsoever J have sayd, yow are free at yo^r
 own choyse. And J dare Justify that whosoever tells
 yow otherwyse, loves yow not so well as J doe.
 Yow told mee once yow wysht mee and myne well. J have
 done nothing to deserve the Contrary, whearfore J pray
 yow to continew yt, and geve this bearer good Cownsell
 and that shall bee the greatest token J will aske of yo^r
 love. so J bid yow farewell.
 this 4th of June, 1608.

Yowr very ffrend to his powr
 John Haryngton./²⁴

A little more than a week later, we find Harington writing to Sutton again, and once again he protests his good intentions and expresses indignant surprise that Sutton has so badly misinterpreted his designs or their effects. Harington by this point seems more concerned to smooth

Sutton's ruffled feathers than to push his plan any further, although he does continue to urge the old man to contribute to the repair of the church at Bath. He also offers to help promote a proposal Sutton intends to make to the king—almost certainly Sutton's long-anticipated plan to endow a charitable hospital. This letter, although already published in McClure's edition, is printed from a highly inaccurate eighteenth-century transcription by Philip Bearcroft; the version found among the Charterhouse papers is fuller, although the peculiar nature of the handwriting, and the fact that the letter is unsigned, raise the possibility that the Charterhouse version has been recopied by another hand.

—OLD LETTER 51: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[13 June 1608]

Sir.

Yo^r straung message first by my Man, after by my sonne, now
 seconded with yo^r speech to my
 selfe, did greatlie trouble me. That J haue vndone yow, overthrown
 [yo^r estate, disturbed
 your designes, that no man now dare buy anie land of you, be your
 lfeofee nor take anie
 trust from yow. so as yt w^{ch} yow had ordaind to good vses, and to
 [redeeme yo^r sinns, was now
 so incombred as yow were skant Maister of your own, and all by
 lmeanes of a Brute amonge
 your frends raisd (as yow suppose) by mee, yt yow haue made
 [Duke Charles your heire, and ye
 king your Executor. /
 ffar bee it from me to abuse or misreport, either so princelie and
 lpious an intention, as J know
 his Ma.^{tie} hath to further all good works, or so godlie a purpose as
 lyow pretend, to do some, but god
 cannot be mocked though we maie dissemble with men. /
 The letter is yet extant, w^{ch} was my warrant, J haue spoken nothing
 lbut wth in compass of that
 and that verie sparinglie, to your private frends. Jn w^{ch} letter, seeing
 lyour selfe, would needes
 in your sence, read a Caveat to refuse honor because of your age,
 lw^{ch} in my construction, was an
 Incouragement to take the honor dew to yo^r abillitie and yeares, J
 lhaue bene since and wilbee
 scilent in yt. /

ffor the suite yow would make to his Ma.tie wch J will not so much
 [as guesse at, J will saie
 what J thinke, yow will make noe suite but such as will finde favour
 [and expedition, and
 seeing yow suppose J wrongd yow before; J would be glad to make
 yow amends now by any
 [endeavor of mine.

Onlie my old suite, yow maie not forget, to bee a Benefactor in
 [your life time to Bathe
 Church; for alms in ones life, is like a light borne before one,
 [whereas alms after death ys
 like a Candle caryed behinde one. /
 Do somewhat for this church, yow promist to haue seene yt ere
 [this, whensoever yow will goe
 to Bathe my Lodging shalbe at your commaundement, the Bathes
 [would strengthen your
 sinewes, ye alms would comfort your soule.

The tower, ye Quyer and two Jles are allreadie finisht by m^r Billet,
 [executor of the

worthie Lord Treasurer Burleigh. /

The walls are vp, readie for covering.

The Leadd is promised to yt by our bountifull bishop.

Timber is promised, by the Earle of Shrewsburie, the Earle of
 [Hartford, the Lord Say, m^r Robert Hopton and others.

There lacks but money for workmanship which if yow would give
 [yow should haue manie

good prayers in the church now in your life, when ~~yow~~ they maie
 [indeed doe yow good, and when

the time is to make frends of ye *Mammon of iniquitie*; as *Christe*
 [bids vs, that we may bee

receavd into everlasting Tabernacles. to wch god send vs, to
 [whose protection I leave

yow.

ffrom Greenwich this

13. of June. 1608.

yof assewred ffredn²⁵

Harington's next known letter to Sutton, written from Bath and dated 5 September 1608, is much warmer in tone; apparently the scheme to make the Prince the old man's heir had by this time been shelved,

although Harington still persists in his hopes of persuading Sutton to visit Bath. He also refers to Sutton's plan to acquire a mortmain, or perpetual and inalienable title, for the property intended for his projected hospital.²⁶ Once again we see how Harington could be of service to Sutton as an intermediary and as a source of information about events and personalities at court. McClure's published version of this letter is based on a transcription (more accurate than usual) by Malcolm, who explains the supposed reference to "yeer fraws" (meaning "German women") as alluding to the dowry of Princess Elizabeth, the intended bride of the Elector of Hanover.²⁷

—OLD LETTER 53: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[5 September 1608]

Mr Sutton. I long to heer how yow doe, and long more to see yow hear, whear I keep my lodging for yow according to my promis and [will

whyle thear ys any hope of yo^r cominge.

I sent yow word I had not forgotten the charge yow gave mee now I say to yow the mocyon ys made to the king allredy (I mean for yo^r Mortmayn) and hee hath promist yt. and funder being told that p[er]haps my Lo: Tresorer wold bee agaynst yt, his Matie made awnswer, that yf yt concernd the Crown land, or land in his possessyon or of his ffee, yt might bee hee wold shew reason agaynst yt, but in this, to so godly an entent hee shold not crosse yt. /

Let me heer of yow; and think not that I love yow as those that wold gayn by yow, but I wold gayn yow and my selfe both to god. / I have, for all my losses, more left than I ame worthy of, and thowsands more worthy want yt, and as the yeer fraws are lyke to want. /

Yow ritch men shold open yo^r barns geve, lend, distribute to the Poore, and lay vp Thresore in heavn. ffayth ys good hope ys good but Charyty ys the Cheefe. *Maior horum Charitas.*

Heer are laywers at Bathe Justice Willims, an honest and stowt Judge, heer ys Sr Henry Montacu Recorder. Mr ffraunces Moore. heer bee dvyines, heer bee phisycians, and heer ys Saynt Billet, the benefactor of this Church, and founder of the new hospitall for lame pilgrims. / Heer ys the yowng Lord Norrys, whome sycknes hath allmost made old. and heer

bee lame old men whome the Bathe hath allmoste made yownge
 Beleeve mee J think yt wold do yow moch good, and becawse
 J wish yow moch good J wysch yow here J can let yow
 have honest roome and cost mee never a peny, so fareyowwell
 ffrom Bath, this .5th of September
 1608.

Yo^r trew ffrend
 John Haryngton²⁸

More than two months after this letter was written, Harington wrote another note to Sutton, once again urging him to visit Bath and indicating as well his continued involvement in seeking the mortmain Sutton desired. The letter also suggests that conflict with Skinner and his family had still not completely died away; apparently Skinner's wife shared her husband's contempt for Harington and Sutton. Malcolm's transcript of this letter, reprinted by McClure, omits various words and phrases.

More significant, however, is the issue of the letter's date. Although the date Harington clearly wrote at the bottom of his note was "21 December 1608," various references in the letter just as clearly indicate that it must have been written in 1609—which is indeed the date given, without explanation, in McClure's edition. However, since the 1609 date so clearly conflicts with the plain evidence of the autograph manuscript, some justification may be in order. The most telling piece of evidence in favor of the December 1609 date is the reference to the expected convening of Parliament in the following February. Parliament did indeed meet in February 1610, and Sutton's bill was indeed read and passed during the 1610 session. More significantly, no meeting of Parliament occurred in 1609, so that although the letter is dated "1608" in Harington's own hand, this is almost certainly a slip, and the emended date of 1609 printed by McClure is far more plausible.²⁹

—OLD LETTER 56: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[21 December 1608]

M^r Sutton. J was booted and spurd to have gon owt of
 of London on satirday, but vnderstanding yo^r interrogatoryes ~~are~~
 [wear
 not then in J tooke occasyon to put of my going down till
 this day w^{ch} being the latest J cowld possyibly stay J hope
 yow will have mee excused, and the rather becawse indeed J
 can say Just nothing of the matter, w^{ch} J think ys the cawse

my Lady Skinner forbeareth to serve proces on mee thowgh
shee sayd she wold.

J heer now that my Lady Arbella ys falln sicke of the
small pox and that my Lady Skinner attendeth her and ta-
keth great paynes abowt her.

Yf yow think yt import yow so moche as yt be worth
my coming vp J will bee thear what day yow will appoint
yf god permitte: Otherwyse J will stay till the parlament
begin w^{ch} J heer will hold the 18 of ffebruary or theara-
bowt. Agaynst w^{ch} tyme make redy yo^r bill for yo^r mort-
mayn and J can assewr yow yt shall passe yf yow will
bee as good as yowr word, and so J ame bidden to tell
yow.

Jn the mean tyme J will provyde yo^r lodging at Bath
warm and Clenly, good dry wood for yo^r fyre. The town
hath ever good beefe [&] good bredde. And when yow see the
place and fynde (as J wysh) that god geve yow helth thear
then let god work wth yow for the good of the Church [&]
poor thear by whose prayer yo^r lyfe and helth may bee
continewd yet seavn yeer at least, so yow wold bee cheer-
full and not vex yo^r selfe wth the paltry dealings of
soch as S^r John Skinner, and so J will end wth this
distich that my father tawght mee above 40 yeer since

*In doing good vse no delay
for tyme ys swift and slydes away.*

21. December

1608

Yo^r trew loving ffrend
John Haryngton.³⁰

Ironically, the last of Harington's known letters to Sutton brings at least one chapter of their long relationship to a close: it reports the death of Sir John Skinner, their shared antagonist. The reference to Skinner's death helps corroborate the justification offered above of the dating of Old Letter 56, and it also helps solidify the dating of the present letter as well. As with Letter 56, the date of Letter 57 in the autograph version seems at first confusing, but in this instance the explanation is quite simple. Harington has dated Letter 57 the fifth of February 1609, but the reference to the opening of Parliament makes it clear that this must refer

to February 1610; in this case Harington is simply following a convention of the time which placed the start of the new year in March. The reason that the reference to Skinner's death is important is that other evidence suggests that Skinner was still alive as late as December 1609;³¹ thus the allusion to his death in Letter 57 supports the view that Letter 57 was actually written in what we would call February 1610. And since Letter 57 is so obviously closely linked with Letter 56, any fact that helps determine more certainly the date of one letter helps pin down the date of the other. All the evidence clearly suggests, then, that McClure's edition was correct in reporting (although without explanation) that Letter 56 was written in December 1609 and that Letter 57 was written in February 1610.

Aside from any questions of its date, Letter 57 is an extremely interesting document. Harington's apparent suggestion that Skinner had used the stage to ridicule Sutton is especially intriguing considering the widespread rumors that Sutton was the model for Ben Jonson's Volpone; unfortunately, however, Harington's remarks are too brief and cryptic to be interpreted with any confidence. It would be fascinating to know just what "particuler" concerning Sutton Harington wished to relay in person. McClure's transcription of this letter, from an autograph draft, differs from the version found in the Charterhouse files in several minor matters but also in one major respect: in the final paragraph the McClure transcription has "a special bill of Parliament" where the Charterhouse version (the letter actually received by Sutton) has "respit till the Parliament." The handwriting in the draft version is especially unclear at this point, but close scrutiny suggests that McClure did indeed misread the phrase and that the Charterhouse version is more accurate.³²

—OLD LETTER 57: TO THOMAS SUTTON—

[5 February 1609]

Sr: Yt is not one of the least signes of Gods favor vnto yow, yt hee hath taken out of this world the man that above all others without cause or desert did seeke yo: disturbance [&] defamation.

But that hee should dye in such miserie as ys reported, vnder arrest of the Sheriffs balies, and that in his life tyme hee should bee playd vppon the stage soe extreame scornfully (wch I suppose of all the rest did most breake his hart,) this ys to my thoughts a fearfull example of gods judgments, yt: even in this world somtimes punnisheth men in the same kynd and

measure they offend. One particuler of which concerninge
[yoʔ:

selfe J will reserve till J meete yow. and soe of him now no
more, but wish yow to forgive him as J doe, and to bee good
to his wife who had no fault but beeing too good for him,
and though J knowe how litle shee loves mee, and how much
shee hath wronged both yow and mee heertofore, yet J
[suppose

the man beeinge gonne the mynd will alter, and shee will
[proove

like her selfe and her owne nature.

But the speciall cause of my wrytinge to yow ys to remember
yow now the Parliament drawes nigh of your Mortmaine
yow appoynted to bee a suitor for, w^{ch} (as yow know) J did
by yoʔ: appoyntment mocion on yoʔ: behalfe, and after by yoʔ:
like request crave respite till the Parliament, w^{ch} now beeinge
come J ame calld vppon to know yoʔ: resolution thearin, yt: yt
may bee accordingly proceeded in. / This is all at this tyme
J will write to yow meaninge shortly to visit yow. /

Jvy bridge this vth of ffebruarie

1609

Yours verie assured to his power.

John Haryngton³³

Despite Harington's closing promise to write once more to Sutton, this letter is the last one presently known to survive from their correspondence. Within a few years both men were dead. Other letters may yet turn up, but the new evidence from Charterhouse provides a fuller picture than was previously available of the nature and development of their relations and of Harington's character, motives, and milieu. Although it has been common to depict Harington, in his relation with Sutton, as a man on the make, as a would-be manipulator intent on courting a rich old man, the letters suggest a more complex connection. The tone of Harington's letters is often surprisingly bold and self-assertive; the uniform courtesy and deference we might have expected often gives way to impatience and annoyance, to a sense of injured merit and defensive self-regard. Harington often seems forthright, demanding, almost domineering in his approach. Certainly he was persistent, and he was not shy about moralizing in order to intimidate Sutton and achieve his ends—ends which were, after all, not entirely selfish. His enthusiasm

for repairing the church at Bath, for instance, seems to have been genuine and unflagging. Of course, Harington's own wealth and social status gave him a kind of freedom in his dealings with Sutton that he might not otherwise have had, and he must also have realized that a strong sense of self-respect could be a useful tool in winning the respect of Sutton and of others. Sutton seems often to have been annoyed at Harington's attentions, but in spite of everything he seems to have found his connection with Harington useful and worth sustaining. The fact that he employed Harington as an intermediary in securing the rights to establish his charity—a project dear to his heart—says much about his regard for Harington's political skills and about the real influence Harington seems to have exercised. The writer's connections with such powerful figures as Cecil must have seemed especially advantageous to a man as reclusive as Sutton. Harington's letters to Sutton provide further insight into the minds and actions of two of the more curious figures of the Tudor-Stuart period. Moreover, the letters—composed equally of pragmatic shrewdness, moral idealism, studied deference, and insouciant self-assertion—have much to suggest about the larger mentality of that period itself.

Auburn University at Montgomery

Notes

I am grateful to the American Philosophical Society and to the National Endowment for the Humanities for fellowships in support of my research. I wish to thank Mrs. Susan Palmer of the Greater London Record Office for much kind assistance. Also, thanks are due the Registrar and Governors of Charterhouse for permission to publish documents from the papers of Thomas Sutton.

¹ On Harington's life, see the introduction by Norman Egbert McClure, ed., *The Letters and Epigrams of John Harington, Together with The Prayse of Private Life* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1930). I shall hereafter cite this work as "McClure." See also D. H. Craig, *Sir John Harington* (Boston: Twayne, 1985), and Ian Grimble, *The Harington Family* (New York: St. Martin's Press, n.d.).

² H. R. Trevor-Roper, "Thomas Sutton," *Carthusiana* 20, No. 1 (October, 1948), 2-8; for the quoted phrase, see p. 6. Also extremely useful is Neal R. Shipley, "Thomas Sutton: Tudor-Stuart Moneylender," *Business History Review* 50 (1976), 456-76. A standard (but dated and sometimes unreliable) source is Gerald S. Davies, *Charterhouse in London: Monastery, Mansion, Hospital, School* (London: John Murray, 1921). I discuss the possibility that Sutton was the model for Volpone in an article published in *Philological Quarterly* 68 (1989), 295-314.

³ For the text of Harington's deposition, see McClure, pp. 406-07. I am greatly indebted to McClure's biographical introduction and to his notes for an abundance of information.

⁴ McClure, p. 405.

⁵ On Kirkby Bellars, see Shipley, p. 466.

⁶ In citing the letters by Harington found among the Charterhouse records presently held at the Greater London Record Office, I shall cite in each case the GLRO catalog number; for instance, the

catalog number of this letter is ACC / 1876 / F3 / 145. To help preserve a clear sense of chronology, in devising numbers for the letters printed in this article, I have improvised on the number system used by McClure. Thus letter 25A, a new letter, comes after McClure's Letter 25 but before his Letter 26. If 25B existed, it would come after 25A but before 26, and so on.

In transcribing and editing the letters, I have tried to stay as close to the originals as possible; I have not altered the spelling or punctuation, and I have preserved the line breaks found in the originals. When a passage in one of the letters is scored through, I have reproduced this effect when the phrase underneath is legible. When a passage is heavily inked over and the phrase underneath is illegible, I have used "XXX" marks to reproduce this heavy blurring. The italicized phrases in my transcriptions do not represent underlinings in Harington's text; instead, they represent Harington's printed italics. Any insertions or emendations of mine, including insertions of line numbers, are set off with [] marks. In some cases I have inserted "[]" in the left margin of a line to indicate when words have spilled over from a preceding line.

Unless otherwise indicated, the letters are holographs; for a discussion of Harington's handwriting and a convenient sample of it, see Anthony G. Petti, *English Literary Hands from Chaucer to Dryden* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), p. 81.

⁷ McClure, p. 101.

⁸ ACC / 1876 / F3 / 146. Line 3: A letter in 1608 from Robert Cecil "to Sir Thos. Holcroft and Sir Roger Aston, of Chester" reproved them "for omitting to appoint collectors of the fifteenths granted last Parliament." See the *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic . . . 1603-1610*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Longman, 1857), p. 443. The precise identity of William Stubs is unclear.

⁹ McClure, pp. 406-07. On "Master Wynne," see note 16 below.

¹⁰ The OED gives the following as its third definition of "underfoot": "Below the real or current value. Obs."

¹¹ ACC / 1876 / F3 / 147. "M^r Moore," mentioned in line 5, was probably Sir Francis Moore, affiliated with the Middle Temple; he is mentioned in Letter 53; see note 26 below. "M^r Hyde," mentioned in line 6, may have been Lawrence Hyde, who had a prominent role in several early Jacobean parliaments; see Wallace Notestein, *The House of Commons 1604-1610* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 64 and *passim*.

¹² McClure, p. 407.

¹³ ACC / 1876 / F3 / 149. For the word "engrossed" in line 5, the first definition offered in the OED reads as follows: "To write in large letters; chiefly, and now almost exclusively, to write in a peculiar character appropriate to legal documents; hence, to write out or express in legal form." The first OED definition of "book" may also be relevant to this letter: "A writing; a written document; esp. a charter or deed by which land (hence called *bocland*) was conveyed. Obs." In line 8, the precise identity of "Hull" is uncertain. In line 10, a number of different definitions of "Colunter," all suggesting mercenary motives, seem relevant. In line 14, "La[dy] Skinner" seems to refer to the wife of Sir John Skinner; she was apparently a good friend of the famous Arabella Stuart and is mentioned in several later letters.

¹⁴ See Alan G. R. Smith, *Servant of the Cecils: The Life of Sir Michael Hickes* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1977). On the possible connections between Smith and Hickes, see pp. 78-80.

¹⁵ ACC / 1876 / F3 / 150. The "good old man" mentioned in line 5 is apparently Sutton. This letter was written from Hackney, where Sutton had a home. The "Lo[rd] Chiefe Justyce" mentioned in line 10 is apparently Sir Edward Coke. In line 17, "Haverell park" apparently refers to property once owned by Harington. In line 21, "*verbum sapieti*" is perhaps an abbreviated form of the proverb "*verbum sapieti sat (est)*"—a word to the wise is sufficient.

¹⁶ ACC / 1876 / F3 / 148. "This great cawse," mentioned in line 1, seems to refer to the protracted negotiations over the sale of Castle Camps. Sir William Smith, mentioned here in line 7, is addressed in Letter 48B. The precise meaning of "petle" in line 15 is unclear. The OED defines "pattle" or "pettle" as "A tool like a small spade with a long handle, used chiefly to remove the earth adhering to a plough. . . ." Perhaps Harington thus means that the amount of land would seem almost as "lytle" as that which could be dislodged by a pettle. The reference to "mich" in line 17 seems to be to Michaelmas, "The feast of St. Michael, 29 Sept., one of the four quarterdays of the English business year" (OED). Michaelmas term is a period of the legal year that begins shortly thereafter (see line 19).

The words in brackets in line 20 are extremely difficult to decipher. The reading I have suggested seems to me most likely given the syntax and context of the sentence. The first word is clear until the end; it seems that the suffix "eth" has been added to "particular" to make a verb; the OED does

record "particular" as a transitive verb (meaning "to mention particularly, to particularize") during the time Harington wrote. The reading "ym" (or "them") is less certain, because the letter over the "y" is indistinct, but such a reading seems to follow logically from the verb. Nonetheless I have inserted these readings in brackets to emphasize their uncertainty. In line 24, the word written as "on" may have been intended to be "an"; in the context, the latter word makes better sense. The "angels" mentioned in line 33 were a type of gold coin bearing the likeness of the archangel Michael. This letter's first postscript seems to be in Harington's handwriting.

¹⁷ McClure, p. 406.

¹⁸ All the information and quotes in this paragraph are from McClure, p. 406.

¹⁹ ACC / 1876 / F3 / 317. The "Lo[r]d Chancellor" mentioned in line 2 was Sir Thomas Egerton. The word "[him]" in line 13 is an uncertain reading; the word in question might possibly be "Now," although that is also unclear. I have been unable to identify any further Sir William Stowe, mentioned in line 13. The Earl of Oxford in 1607 (line 14) was probably the young Henry de Vere (1593-1625), although it is possible that Harington is referring to Henry's recently deceased father, Edward de Vere (1550-1604). "Lanam" (line 16) apparently refers to Lannam Park, Suffolk, which is mentioned in connection with the Skinner family in a document dated 1616; see *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic . . . 1611-1618*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Longman, 1858), p. 351. The "little sheet of paper" mentioned in line 27 perhaps dealt with Harington's proposal concerning Prince Charles; subsequent letters suggest this possibility.

²⁰ McClure, p. 407.

²¹ ACC / 1876 / F3 / 152. The Latin "verse" cited in lines 1-2 means (roughly), "one may knock three times, but if it is not opened, depart." Harington himself immediately provides a translation of the Latin quoted in line 19.

²² McClure, pp. 407-08.

²³ ACC / 1876 / F3 / 153. The "Earl" mentioned in line 4 is probably Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury and the King's chief minister.

²⁴ ACC / 1876 / F3 / 151.

²⁵ ACC / 1876 / F3 / 154. In line 5, "Brute" = "bruit," a rumor. Lines 26-27: Thomas Billet or Bellot had been the steward of William Cecil, Lord Burleigh (Elizabeth's Lord Treasurer and the father of Robert Cecil); see Smith, p. 135. In the McClure edition of Harington's letters, the name of the bishop mentioned in line 29 is wrongly given as part of the text of this letter. James Montague (1568?-1618) had only recently been consecrated Bishop of Bath and Wells, on 17 April 1608; on his commitment to restoring "the nave of the abbey-church at Bath," see the article in the DNB, which also suggests that Harington helped motivate Montague's interest in the project. Lines 30-31: Gilbert Talbot, seventh Earl of Shrewsbury (1553-1616); Sir Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford (1539?-1621); Richard Fiennes, Lord Say and Sele (d. 1613). For evidence of Robert Hopton's later involvement in church matters, see Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells* (London: HMSO, 1914), 2: 368, 371. The Biblical reference in line 34 is to Luke 16:9.

²⁶ Samuel Herne, one of Sutton's earliest biographers, explains the legal situation as follows: "The blind Devotion of former Ages had so abused the ends and designs of Charitable Works, that King Edward the First (as well as Theodosius the Emperour) made a Law of Mortmain; whereby it is made unlawful for any man to bestow Land of such value to any Religious or Charitable use without license from the King, of Mortmain in Parliament." See his *Domus Carthusiana: or an Account of the Most Noble Foundation of the Charter-House* (London, 1677), p. 68.

²⁷ McClure, p. 409. I am not confident of this transcription; see note 28.

²⁸ ACC / 1876 / F3 / 155. The phrase in line 16 which is printed as "yeer fraues" in McClure's version of this letter, and which Malcolm McClure's source, glosses as meaning "German women," could in fact be transcribed as "yeer frames"—with "frames" having the neutral sense of "progresses" (see OED, "frame," v., 2). Thus the phrase would read, "as the yeer frames [or progresses]." However, since I am not confident of this emendation, I have decided to let McClure's version remain almost unchanged (except that I have altered "u"—which definitely does not seem present in the original—to the more plausible "w").

Lines 19-20 allude, of course, to 1 Corinthians 13:13. The "Justice" mentioned in line 21 is probably Sir David Williams (1536?-1613); in 1604 he had been appointed a justice of the court of king's bench. Lines 22-26: Sir Henry Montagu (1563?-1642) had been elected recorder of London in 1603. Sir Francis Moore (1558-1621) was a law reporter and member of parliament; interestingly enough, he "is supposed to have drawn the well-known statute of Charitable Uses which was

passed in 1601" (DNB). "Saynt Billet" is probably Thomas Billot or Bellot; see note 23. The illness of Francis Norris, Earl of Berkshire (1579-1623), is alluded to in a letter of 30 August 1608 by Sir Walter Cope to Dudley Carleton; see *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic . . . 1603-1610*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Longman, 1857), p. 454.

²⁹ On the meeting of Parliament, see Elizabeth Read Foster, ed., *Proceedings in Parliament 1610*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), 1: xii and 3; on the progress of Sutton's bill, see 1: 134; 138-39; 146; 2: 381.

³⁰ ACC/1876/F3/156. The reference to "interrogatoryes" in line 2 is unclear; the OED records the following first definition: "An interrogation, a question; spec., in Law: A question formally put, or drawn up in writing to be put, to an accused person or a witness. (In 16-17 c. freq. in phr. to *examine upon interrogatories*). For the meaning of "serve process" (line 7), see OED, def. 7b of "process": "The formal commencement of any action at law; the mandate, summons, or writ by which a person or thing is brought into court for litigation." Lines 9-10: for more on the connection between Lady Skinner (described as "a great Papist") and Lady Arabella Stuart (1575-1615), see the letter from J. Beaulieu to William Trumbull in *Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Downshire* (London: HMSO, 1936), 2: 211. Another letter, from Sir Thomas Edmondes to Trumbull, also reports suspicions that Arabella had been "corrupted in her religion by the Lady Skinner" (ibid). Neither letter mentions Arabella's smallpox, but Beaulieu refers to her "melancholy humour," and Edmondes reports speculation that she may have been "somewhat tainted in her brains" (ibid). Taken together, the two letters indicate that Arabella's association with Lady Skinner was a topic of gossip in late December 1609; this helps corroborate the suggested date of December 1609 for Harington's letter.

³¹ See *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic . . . 1603-1610*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green, p. 574.

³² The autograph draft exists in the British Library, in Additional MS 27632 (f. 31). I am grateful to Mr. J. Conway and his colleagues at the British Library for their assistance in deciphering the draft letter's version of the relevant phrase.

³³ ACC/1876/F3/157. The handwriting of this letter differs in some respects from that found in other letters more definitely in Harington's autograph. Perhaps the Charterhouse version of this letter is a formal copy of the draft found in the British Library.

The text of this letter printed by McClure inserts the words "me" in line 20, and the sense of the line does seem to demand such a reading. The affected phrase would thus read: "yow appoynted [me] to bee a suitor. . . ."