The Electress Sophia and the Hanoverian Succession

IN the history of the transactions which ended in the establishment of the house of Hanover upon the throne of these islands, much to this day remains obscure, even with regard to the designs and proceedings of English politicians and parties. Yet it is from this point of view that the crisis of 1714 and the schemes and manœuvres which preceded it have been preferentially treated by English historical writers. Beyond doubt the Hanoverian succession was as a matter of fact due in the first instance to the state of affairs and parties in England, and only in a less degree to the conduct of the electoral family. Not a little, however, at different times, depended upon the action of the latter or upon its inaction. Though it was out of the power of the Hanoverian court and government to make success certain, they were not without opportunities for rendering it less difficult; and full as the path was of pitfalls, it was throughout of the utmost importance that they should avoid a false step. Above all, a real interest attaches to the conduct in the latter part of her life of the electress Sophia, who during those years was the personage most directly concerned in the question of the succession, and who died less than two months before Queen Anne. Neither the husband of the electress so long as he lived, nor her eldest son, was desirous of thrusting himself forward on this question. Duke Ernest Augustus had nothing to hope for himself outside of Germany, and even at home the project of obtaining the electoral dignity proved a more arduous task than he lived to accomplish in full. But the youngest and most pertinacious of the four sons of Duke George of Lüneburg had achieved much before he died in 1698, and among the qualities praised by Leibniz in the tribute which he paid to his patron's memory,[1] that of foresight was justly singled out for special encomium. A brave soldier, a splendid prince, and a capable ruler, Ernest Augustus consistently pursued a policy aiming at a restoration of the power of the house of Guelph to a position in the empire such as it had

[1] Leibnitii *Opera*, ed. Dutens, iv. 211–34.

not held since the days of Henry the Lion. In matters of European policy he not less steadily went his own way; and in the critical years 1688 and 1689 he managed his political game with so much coolness and skill that the price paid in 1692 for his complete adhesion to the emperor was his investiture with the electoral dignity. This was the stake for which he had played; had it been the English succession which he had principally at heart, he would not have followed the advice of Platen and Grote, and delayed till October 1688 the assurance of support to William of Orange which the latter had received at Berlin, Cassel, and Wolfenbüttel, and even at Celle. His wife in the following year described Ernest Augustus as standing like Zeus in Lucian with folded arms, waiting to see in what quarter the smoke of sacrifice might arise for his benefit. But his purposes and policy had slight reference to the chances of her succession in England. As for his son George Lewis, not only were his interests bound up with his mother's, but he was, like herself, animated by what may fairly be called a strong sense of duty towards the interests of their dynasty; so that there is no reason to suppose the mother to have after her husband's death taken any step in the matter of the succession without the assent of her eldest son. Conversely, it is equally certain that the elector George Lewis in this question never either acted independently of the dowager electress, or desired to do so. He had other affairs enough to manage: it was not till 1708 that he gained the coveted admission to the electoral college which his father had never been able to achieve, and he served the cause of the empire and of the grand alliance in a series of campaigns. There is every reason to credit in his case the common view that he had no longing for a throne round which the parliamentary factions raged as they did round that of Queen Anne. Such indeed was his mood even in the interval which elapsed between his mother's death and the queen's. 'As for the leading actor,' wrote Schulenburg early in August 1714, 'he is very indifferent as to what will come out of the matter in question, and I should not mind risking a guess that, if it were to come to a head to-day, he would be in despair at having to quit his present place of abode.'

But in any case Ernest Augustus could only have profited by the English succession *through* his wife; while in the event of her surviving Queen Anne, the turn of George Lewis could only have come *after* his mother's. Furthermore, if as a direct descendant of the Stuarts Sophia was the member of the Hanoverian family most nearly interested in the English succession, she was likewise as a Stuart closely connected with those who on the ground of birth had the best right to the English throne; and whatever might be her personal and dynastic ambition, she could hardly but shrink at times from becoming the instrument for inflicting a great hardship

upon those of her own blood. The elements of a moral conflict were thus given; and in a nature high-spirited and courageous, yet on the other hand strongly influenced by the pride of birth which almost everything in her life had tended to foster, such a conflict was almost certain occasionally to reveal itself. It is therefore not wonderful that her conduct with regard to a problem in which she was so important a factor should both in its several stages and as a whole have been most diversely interpreted. Thus Coxe,[1] after stating that her desire to visit England increased in eagerness with age, goes on to assert that 'she even frequently declared that she should die content if she could only live to have inscribed on her tomb, "Sophia, queen of Great Britain." At all events, she considered herself as entitled to a pension sufficiently ample to give consequence to her rank and position.' On the other hand, Dr. Onno Klopp must have been cheered in the composition of his elaborate work on the 'Fall of the House of Stuart,' of which the twelfth volume is just to hand, by his evident belief that he would succeed in proving Sophia and the whole house of Guelph in her day to have been as unwilling to profit by the misfortunes of their kinsfolk, as another royal house has in more recent days been willing to profit by the misfortunes of the house of Guelph. I am inclined to take a less decided view of the electress Sophia's conduct in the succession question, but one which better accords with the evidence of materials which have only of late years become generally accessible. The most important of these will be found in her 'Correspondence with Leibniz,' published with full introductions by Klopp in 1874.[2] Dr. Onno Klopp is a man of strong principles and many paradoxes, who has in his day enjoyed much illustrious patronage and made many powerful enemies. I think, however, that it is possible to make use of his indefatigable researches without either partisanship or prejudice. Several other historical scholars have made use of the treasures accumulated in the Hanover archives; among them a former director of those archives, the late Dr. Schaumann, in a very suggestive but strangely inaccurate monograph,[3] Dr. O. Meinardus,[4] and the late Professor Pauli.[5] These and other writers will be laid under contribution in the following pages; but the basis of the account which I propose

[1] *Life of Marlborough*, ch. lix.

[2] *Correspondance de Leibniz avec l'électrice Sophie de Brunswick-Lunebourg*, d'après les papiers de Leibniz conservés à la bibliothèque royale de Hanovre, publ. par Onno Klopp. 3 vols. Hanover, 1874.

[3] A. F. H. Schaumann, *Geschichte der Erwerbung der Krone Grossbritanniens von Seiten des Hauses Hannover*. *Ib.* 1878.

[4] O. Meinardus, *Die Succession des Hauses Hannover in England und Leibniz*: ein Beitrag zur Kritik des Dr. Onno Klopp. *Ib.* 1878.

[5] In two of his *Aufsätze zur englischen Geschichte*, neue (3.) Folge. Leipzig, 1883.

to attempt is the correspondence of the electress Sophia with Leibniz.

Leibniz was the valued correspondent of several princesses distinguished both by their intelligence and their accomplishments: the quick-witted and brave-hearted Elisabeth Charlotte, duchess of Orleans; the brilliant and sarcastic Sophia Charlotte, for a few years queen of Prussia; and Charlotte of Ansbach, the youngest but perhaps the wisest of the triad that looked up to the electress Sophia with a pious reverence which was not in all things the most distinctive feature of their characters. But their regard for Leibniz was in the first instance only the result of the confidence reposed in him by Sophia herself, to whom he was loyally attached from the time he had passed into her and her husband's service out of that of their brother Duke John Frederick of Hanover, down to the day of her death. Under John Frederick, Leibniz had nominally filled the office of librarian. Ernest Augustus appointed him a councillor, nor were his wishes to be advanced to a higher position and a larger income gratified by George Lewis, who indeed seems to have had but a slight appreciation of the merits of his mother's most confidential servant, objected to the long leaves of absence which the great man was in the habit of taking, and grumbled at the slow progress of his 'History of the House of Brunswick.'[1] Both as her husband's and afterwards her son's councillor, and as her own constant private correspondent, Leibniz had every opportunity of giving her information and advice, which he invariably conveyed in a form judiciously mingling the serenity of the philosopher with the urbanity of the courtier. Their correspondence contains the record of some of the loftiest among the many lofty schemes which occupied his mind, and above all of his project for the reunion of Christendom. Part of the history of this scheme has some bearing upon the biography of the electress Sophia, and upon her relations to the question of the protestant succession. The correspondence between Leibniz and Bossuet in the years 1691–5, and again after a pause in 1699, was brought about through the mediation of the electress Sophia, and of her sister, the genial abbess of Maubuisson, called in the world Louisa Hollandina. Mixed up in this correspondence was Madame de Brinon, whose feminine impatience rendered it impossible for her to emulate the imperturbable calm of Bossuet, and who made repeated attempts to bring back the electress of Hanover into the true fold, *en attendant* its enlargement by the reunion. But Sophia was not fluttered by these endeavours. She trusted, so she told Madame de Brinon, in the goodness of God, who could not have created her in order that she should be lost; for the rest,

[1] See R. Doebner, *Leibnizens Briefwechsel mit dem Minister v. Bernstorff &c.* Hanover, 1882.

she added, she could not reconcile herself to the persecutions of the protestants in France.[1] There was in truth not the slightest prospect of her following the example of one of her sisters and at least one of her brothers, and becoming a convert to the church of Rome. Though at times she spoke of such Roman catholic doctrines as the intercession of saints with nothing more than contemptuous indifference,[2] she occasionally assumed an attitude of direct hostility to a creed which as a child she had been taught to hate. Of all religions, she told Lord Strafford, there was none she abhorred so much as the popish; for there was none so contrary to Christianity.[3] Further passages to the same effect might be cited; nor is it possible to attach any weight in any contrary direction to the assertion made by the French diplomatist Gourville, a person of excessive self-confidence, that the duchess Sophia would in 1687 have been glad to see her husband accept the envoy's ingenious proposal of a conversion of the whole Hanoverian family to Rome in order to secure the electoral dignity and the next (catholic) reversion of the Osnabrück bishopric.[4] Gourville, by the way, speaks of her as a professed Calvinist, a statement in perfect accordance with what is known from other sources as to the creed professed by her.[5] For the rest she expressed a confident hope that

[1] *Correspondance*, ii. 93–7. [2] *Ib.* i. 131.

[3] Macpherson's *Original Papers*, ii. 500.

[4] *Mémoires de J. H. de Gourville* (Coll. Petitot), 499–502.

[5] In her *Memoirs* she says that as a child she was taught the Heidelberg Catechism; and when she married the Lutheran Ernest Augustus it was arranged that though she was to take no Calvinist clergyman with her to Hanover, a minister of that confession should come there three or four times in each year so as to enable her to communicate (Havemann, *Gesch. von Braunschweig und Lüneburg*, iii. 246). The fact that she remained a Calvinist though her husband was a Lutheran is also expressly mentioned by Toland in the account of his visit to the electoral court which will be referred to below. It is worth adding that she was much annoyed by the pressure put upon the princess Caroline of Ansbach to change her religion from Calvinism to Lutheranism in order to make it possible for her to marry the electoral prince (*Correspondance*, iii. 107). Yet so competent an authority as Meinardus (p. 53 note) declares that Sophia's religion was that of the church of England. He has obviously mistaken the meaning of a passage in a letter quoted by him from Sophia to Burnet about the year 1689. After observing that her unlucky son Maximilian, had he been willing to change his religion, would have risen higher in the emperor's service than he did, she continues: 'But he has in him too much of his uncle Prince Rupert not to be firm in his religion. It is true that this religion bears the name of Luther; but our Hanover clergy say that it agrees with the religion of the church of England, and would readily have administered the holy sacrament to me, although I have my own faith (*dans la croyance où je suis*). But I did not wish to give any offence to the followers of my religion, and I think that this will meet with your reverence's approval.' The faith (*croyance*) to which she here refers can be no other than the Calvinist. No doubt she was perfectly ready in the event of her ascending the English throne to do what was expected of her. (See *Correspondance*, iii. 394.) She had sufficient confidence in herself to shrink from no step approving itself both to her reason and her conscience. Moreover, there are certainly indications that she by no means regarded the church of her maternal ancestors with coldness. The circumstance related by her in her *Memoirs* that as a young girl at the Hague she was in the habit of attending common

in the end Madame de Brinon would meet again in that future abode where there are many mansions, and where, in the absence of all religious disputes, she had no fear but that they would agree perfectly well.

As a matter of course, Leibniz, who, besides enjoying the confidence of his electress, was a welcome guest at several courts, including the imperial, exercised a sensible influence upon the politics of the house of Hanover, in so far as they were under her control. I see no sign that he was consulted in matters of general German politics by either Ernest Augustus or George Lewis; but his learned and acute pen was employed, not merely on the historiographical labours which were to redound to the honour of the dynasty, but also in divers disputes as to rights and privileges in which its dignity was supposed to be involved. The question of the English succession was for a long time treated at Hanover as one more or less personal to the electress Sophia, and it is clear that the exhortations of Leibniz helped to induce her to take such steps as she took in connexion with it, both before and after the act of settlement of 1701, while his own correspondence in England and elsewhere contributed to keep alive the remembrance of the Hanoverian claims, and to prepare their ultimate successful assertion. Thus it is quite possible that his position at the electoral court was occasionally mistaken at the time, as it has been mistaken since. For he was never even the electress's political secretary; he was only her trusted personal adviser, whose influence upon the course of affairs in which she was interested varied considerably at different times. After 1701, when the electress Sophia's name had been by statute inserted in the English succession, she appointed as her confidential agent in England a diplomatic adventurer of the name of Falaiseau, who had come to Hanover in Lord Macclesfield's suite, and his reports seem to have usually passed through the hands of Leibniz. But when in 1705, on the union of Hanover and Celle,

prayer with her cousin 'King Charles II' need not count for much. But it will be seen further on how readily she took part in the service held at Hanover by Lord Macclesfield's chaplain in 1701. Moreover, Leibniz would hardly have proposed to Hutton that the English establishment which he desired for the electress should include an English chapel, had he apprehended any objection on her part; and in 1703 she is found expressing a wish that Queen Anne would carry her ecclesiastical zeal as far as Hanover and contribute to the completion of the Calvinist church there, 'in which event we would call it the English church, and read the Book of Common Prayer in both tongues' (Klopp, *Fall d. Hauses Stuart*, x. 240). I will venture further to prolong this note by referring to a curious incident in the relations between Anne and Sophia previously passed by, but noticed by Schaumann. In the beginning of 1712 Queen Anne imposed upon Sophia the disagreeable task of seeking to persuade King Augustus II of Poland (whom the electress thoroughly disliked) not to force his son to follow him into the church of Rome. The king actually promised Queen Anne to send his son to England; but the latter had meanwhile been received at Bologna by Cardinal Cusani. For the details of this affair see Böttiger-Flathe, *Geschichte Sachsens*, ii. 359–60.

Bernstorff and with him Robethon, for neither of whom Leibniz seems to have had much liking, passed into the service of the elector, a more regular system of diplomatic representation was set on foot. The credentials of the Hanoverian envoys in London were made out in the joint names of the elector and of the electress dowager, and all the official letters sent to England after this date in the name of either were drafted by Robethon. The assertion of Schaumann, that in the management of the question of the English succession Leibniz was the chief consultative personage, can therefore only be accepted with considerable modifications. Nor, though the universality of his genius enabled him to penetrate into the essence and to appreciate the various aspects of every important political problem to which he gave his attention, was he born to be a successful politician. From the days when his grand Egyptian scheme was laid contemptuously on the shelf,[1] to those when the act of settlement became a reality without the elaborate machinery devised by him for the purpose, he exhibited that not uncommon defect of academical politicians, the defect of excess, which includes the mistake of never letting well alone.

Not the less was Leibniz the truest friend of the electress Sophia, whose active mind derived from him constant stimulus and refreshment, while his mild wisdom helped to fortify a character which but for such an influence might very easily have been mastered by the element of frivolity inborn in most of the queen of Bohemia's children. Before reviewing her conduct in the main stages of the most important political transaction in which during her lifetime she was called upon to play a part, the opportunity may be taken of attempting some estimate of her powers and capacities in her later years. During nearly the whole of this period the most painful experiences of her married life and motherhood, to which it is unnecessary now to refer, lay behind her. The thankless and faithless husband who had found in her so loyal a helpmate died in 1698, four years after the catastrophe of their eldest son's married life, the disgrace of which must have been bitterly felt by the electress Sophia, however cold was the bearing of George Lewis towards his mother.[2] Her younger sons, sufferers by the declaration of primogeniture which had seemed necessary for consolidating the strength of the dynasty, were actually or virtually exiles, and two of them died in the wars; but the fears of former days, when Prince Maximilian was thrown into prison on a charge of treason, had long been exchanged for anxieties about his

[1] See Guhrauer, *Biographie von Leibnitz*, i.; and cf. Klopp, *Fall d. Hauses Stuart*, i. 281.

[2] I cannot here notice the theory (to my mind unsupported by evidence and in itself quite improbable) that the electress Sophia herself took an active part in bringing about the ruin of her daughter-in-law, the unhappy Sophia Dorothea.

debts and regret at his conversion to the church of Rome. Her daughter Sophia Charlotte, though taken away from her side by marriage, and needing all the imperturbable good sense which she had inherited to tolerate the conditions of her own married life, remained her mother's truest joy till her premature death in 1705. Thus, on the whole, life flowed more easily for the electress Sophia in her later years; and though the joyousness of her girlhood, which she so graphically depicts in her 'Memoirs,' was as much a thing of the past as were the grotesque experiences of her earlier and the painful sensations of her later married days, the deepest agitations of her life were at an end.

The time has passed for panegyrics on the mind and character of the electress Sophia like that devoted to her by the Hanoverian historian Spittler, an extremely discerning judge when an unconstrained one. He speaks, without lending himself easily to translation, of the *Teutschgründliche überfürstliche Aufklärung*, which made her the friend of Leibniz. Undoubtedly she was distinguished by a great intellectual curiosity, which her linguistic attainments (she was mistress of half a dozen languages) furnished her with abundant opportunities of satisfying. Yet I doubt whether she was really a great reader of any kind of books. She had a *penchant* for novels, for she asks Leibniz to send her a list of all he has read, having herself come to an end with 'Don Quixote' and 'Don Guzman d'Alfarache,' of which she prefers the former. There are few signs of her having cared for historical reading on its own account; though Leibniz reports her taking pleasure in Clarendon, he adds the reason: 'because she was acquainted with many persons of whom he speaks.' She certainly had a liking for moral theology or philosophy: she had read Boëthius, and was asked by Leibniz to read the Jesuit Spee, the author of the 'Trutznachtigal,' for whom he had so great an admiration. Though notwithstanding her latitudinarian tendencies, which fell in with the tolerant principles prevalent at Hanover, and ably represented there by the abbé Molanus, she was a staunch protestant, dogmatic theology had few charms for her. Bishop Burnet's book on the thirty-nine articles she thought *bon à feuilleter, mais non pas à lire*, adding that its good *binding* would make it an ornament to the library. She was assuredly not strong in metaphysics; *Serenissima nostra*, pathetically writes the good Molanus, *quæ, quod nosti, a paradoxis sibi temperare nunquam potest*; she shared her eldest son's rather crude notions on the origin of ideas, and would not, or could not, understand Leibniz's argument about units.[1] As for the mathematical and physical sciences, though she took that occasional interest in quasi-scientific questions in which most intelligent persons are prone to indulge, Leibniz distinctly states that books entering into

[1] *Correspondance*, ii. 163 *seqq.*; ii. 313 *et al.*

detail on physical and mathematical subjects are not among those which the electress is fond of reading. When the czar Peter came to Hanover in the last year but one of her life, he talked mathematics to her, and she 'held her tongue.' [1]

And yet, though neither a great philosopher nor a blue-stocking, the electress Sophia can have been no commonplace woman. If her conversation at all resembled her writing, the one must have had a charm corresponding to the *stile bien esloigné de l'aigreur*, which Mdme. de Brinon, to whom she told many home truths, discovered in the other. She was witty too on occasion, as when she described this very lady as *une religieuse qui passe pour bel esprit*, and her eloquence as extraordinary, *car elle parle toujours* ; or when she declared it to be a sign of prudence in Toland, who had characteristically been whitewashing the cannibals, that all Christendom being against him he had provided himself with protectors. And often her frankness did duty for wit. Her sallies spared neither Leibniz, nor the house of Hanover, nor *le bon lord Winchilsea*, whom she found so heavy in hand. Gourville, who possibly had qualities as a butt which remained a secret to himself, suspected her of a natural inclination to comment on those of her fellow-creatures who found themselves in her presence, but allowed that the person bantered by her was sure to be the first to laugh.[2] She was a good hater, and could even hate at second-hand, as in the case of Mdme. de Maintenon, the bugbear of her faithful niece and correspondent the duchess of Orleans. But I doubt whether she was sarcastic *au fond*. The geniality of her nature seems to show itself in her affability, which was the same to both great and small, and enabled her to discourse as readily with ministers of state as with country ladies on domestic thoughts intent.[3] She never seems to have indulged herself in fits of temper or in moods of discontent, though she allows that her vexation about the vagaries of her son Maximilian proved to her that her philosophy was only skin-deep.[4]

Her tastes were simple. When left alone at Herrenhausen in 1700, as she had often enough been left in the early days of her married life, she could amuse herself with her ducks and swans and their new lodgings in the gardens ; and her love of walking never left her to the very hour of her death. She was very active with her needle ; the chairs of the presence-chamber at Hanover and the altar coverings in the electoral chapel were all embroidered by her own hands.

[1] *Ib.* iii. 389 (Sophia to Leibniz). Many years before, in return for some very disagreeable details sent her concerning this potentate, she expressed an opinion that he was as to manners *le plus brutal de sa nation*. *Ib.* ii. 308.

[2] *Mémoires de J. H. de Gourville*, 501.

[3] *Correspondance*, ii. 143.

[4] *Ib.* ii. 307.

But what really distinguished her was a reasonableness proceeding in nearly equal measure from enlightenment and from the kindly disposition without which philanthropy is a contradiction in terms. '*Madame l'Électrice*,' writes Leibniz about the year 1701, '*est entièrement pour la raison, et par conséquent toutes les mesures qui pourront servir à faire que les rois et les peuples suivent la raison, seront à son goût.*' A rationalist in the more limited sense of the word she can hardly be called; though her free way of expressing herself on all subjects easily lends itself to be interpreted as a want of reverence towards many. She was irritated by Toland's restless tongue; and Anthony Collins's plea for 'Freethinking' seemed to her absurdly superfluous. Did not every one, she asked, as it was show readiness enough to think for himself, more especially in England, where factions so greatly abounded? All men, she allowed, might like to think as they chose; but in a well-governed state all men should not be free to publish their opinions. Herein her consciousness as a German princess no doubt counted for something; thus, when it was sought to obtain her aid for inducing the East Frisian government to proceed against the contagious oddities of the pïetists, she upheld the rights of authority: 'Lutheran princes are the popes of our church and must be obeyed.'[1] For herself, she had a thorough dislike of anything mystical or *schwärmerisch*, and would not hear of shoemakers turning prophets instead of sticking to their lasts. But of the religious conviction which was in her she was not in the least ashamed. Leibniz told Toland in 1709 'that she was accustomed to quote and praise particularly that passage of scripture which demands whether it is consistent with reason that the Author of the eye should not see, and the Author of the ear should not hear.'[2] Her latitudinarianism was at the same time perfectly candid. She certainly (in 1702) encouraged the fancy of the king of Prussia to introduce the English liturgy into his Calvinistic services, telling him that he might then call himself Defender of the Faith.[3] On the other hand, she laughed at an English clergyman who would not put his foot in a Calvinist temple,[4] and seriously blamed the early attempts, as she interpreted them, of Queen Anne to force the presbyterians into conformity both in Scotland and in England.[5] Moreover, as Toland notes, she built a 'pretty church' in the new town of Hanover for the French Huguenot refugees, to which in his day William III liberally contributed; and she seems at least to have intended to build a church for the German members of the same confession; 'for you must know,' she writes to Leibniz, 'that I am *une dame fort zélée*.'[6] It was probably

[1] *Correspondance*, iii. 125–132.
[2] Kemble, *State Papers and Correspondence*, 469.
[3] *Correspondance*, ii. 406–7.
[4] *Correspondance*, ii. 403
[5] Macpherson, *Original Papers*, ii. 493.
[6] *Ib.* ii. 384.

no idle commonplace (for the pietists were then only beginning in Germany to spread the idea of missions to the heathen) when, in 1700, she pronounced it 'a fine undertaking' to send out missionaries to India: 'It seems to me that the first thing ought to be, make good Christians at home in Germany, without going to so great a distance to manufacture them.'[1] In a word, I believe her to have had genuine religious feeling, though she was not inclined to demonstrativeness on this more than on any other subject.

Thus we may imagine to ourselves this spirited and sensible lady, at any time in the last twenty years or so of her long life, exemplifying the old saw of *mens sana in corpore sano*. Certain apoplectical tendencies apart,[2] she had excellent health; and Leibniz's description of the day of her arrival at her daughter's *château* of Lützenburg is certainly astonishing for a lady of seventy-four. It included, in accordance with her habits, two hours of walking exercise and two hours of supper.[3] Erect and handsome, with her mother's aquiline nose and abundant hair, she was, if not a Gloriana as imagined by poets, a woman worthy to mount a royal throne; or at least, if placed there, certain not to be made giddy by her elevation.

I.

The history of the relations of the duchess, afterwards electress, Sophia to the question of the English succession naturally divides itself into two periods—before and after the act of settlement of 1702. In the earlier of these periods, the years 1688 and 1696 mark the beginnings of what may be termed new stages.

When on her marriage with Duke Ernest Augustus in 1658, Sophia had renounced her eventual rights of succession to the palatinate,[4] she had not simultaneously renounced any claims she might in the future acquire to the English throne. Nor was there then, or during the reign of Charles II and James II, any prospect of such claims being ever set up.

Like most of her family Sophia continued to take a warm interest in English affairs; and we have her own statement that in Charles II's time she expressed a wish that her brother Prince Rupert might be made a peer, so that he might attend in parliament and keep her informed of the progress of affairs. Schaumann, from whom this citation is taken, adds that of the thousands of

[1] *Correspondance*, ii. 189.

[2] To my mind the delicacy is touching with which Leibniz (*u.s.* ii. 261) warns her against the danger of over-eating.

[3] She began the day with a cup of chocolate, for she drank this beverage and not coffee, disliking the notion of *une balle dans le cerveau que Mylord Woodstock nous a conté avoir esté trouvée dans la teste d'un mort de café*. *Correspondance*, iii. 24.

[4] A. Köcher, *Geschichte von Hannover u. Braunschweig*, i. 387.

autograph letters of Sophia in the Hanover archives, more than 500 have reference to her English connexions and interests.[1] She was frequently in correspondence with Charles II and his successor, as continues to be shown by letters which from time to time find their way into print.[2] It is well known that in 1681 she sent her eldest son to England with the design of securing for him the hand of the princess Anne, a design favoured, and perhaps even suggested, by William of Orange, whose own marriage with Anne's elder sister had remained childless. When it is remembered that in 1680 the exclusion bill agitation had already assumed a definite shape, it becomes obvious how near the success of this project would have brought the house of Hanover to the English throne. When in 1688 the crisis came, it would have been quite natural had the sympathies of Sophia been on the side of her first cousin James II. Duke Ernest Augustus maintained an attitude of neutrality as long as he could, while all the protestant princes around him, including his own brother at Celle, were co-operating with William of Orange.[3] Nor is there any reason to suppose that she felt aught but good-will towards the king of England, with whom she was in frequent communication through Lord Craven, the faithful friend of her family;[4] while she certainly never shared in those suspicions against him to which even his daughters were unable to shut their ears. At no time would she suffer any doubt to be raised as to the birth of the prince of Wales. She forwarded to the emperor Leopold I. a letter in which King James had repeated to her the substance of the refutation offered by him to his privy council, and in 1704 she administered a gentle reproof to Leibniz for insinuating doubts on the subject.[5] Though Meinardus shows the statement of Klopp to be unwarranted, that she supported King James's request to the emperor for his mediation;[6] yet after her cousin's dethronement she did not cease to give him her sympathy. This is clear not only from the continuance of their occasional correspondence up to the year 1692,[7] but also from the joint attempt made by herself and her niece, the duchess of Orleans, to bring about a better understanding between him and his daughter Queen Mary.[8] In 1697

[1] *Geschichte der Erwerbung &c.* 5.

[2] See e.g. those in *Lettres et Mémoires de Marie Reine d'Angleterre*, published by Countess Bentinck at the Hague in 1880, and more especially those appended to the *Memoirs of Mary Queen of England* recently edited by Dr. Doebner of Berlin.

[3] James II to Sophia *ap.* Countess Bentinck, 2–3, where the letter is misdated 1687 (it should be 1688).

[4] Id. eid. *ap.* Doebner, 69.

[5] *Correspondance*, iii. 102. As late as 1713, when the question of the English succession had become a burning one for herself, she took occasion to obtain from the physician Chamberlayne (a whig) who had arrived at St. James's an hour after the birth, a statement in corroboration of its genuineness. (The statement is printed in Dalrymple, but without date; see Klopp, *Fall d. Hauses Stuart*, iv. 43 note.)

[6] *Die Succession &c.* 45. [7] Doebner, 85, 90. [8] *Fall d. Hauses Stuart*, v. 156–7.

Mdme. de Brinon effusively transmits the praises which King James and his consort had bestowed upon the electress Sophia during a visit to her sister at Maubuisson;[1] and in 1698, when Sophia had lost her husband, they wrote letters of condolence, James avowing his gratitude for 'all the marks of esteem and kindness' she had so often shown to him.[2]

On the other hand, these sentiments in no way unsteadied her attitude towards the prince of Orange at and after the critical time of the revolution of 1688. Burnet,[3] *more suo*, claims for himself the credit of having before the sailing of the expedition, and while Sophia's husband was still engaged with France, suggested to her how greatly it would be to her own advantage, and to that of her posterity, if she could induce the duke to change sides. He says that she was well inclined to take the hint, but that her husband hesitated; and it may be surmised that what actually passed was of the most purely 'academical' kind of conversation. When the expedition had actually sailed, she, as was natural, showed much curiosity and interest concerning it; but I cannot with Meinardus perceive in her letter to Leibniz, dated 25 October 1688, any proof that she had fears of William's enterprise ending in failure.[4] The letter in which she comments to the same correspondent on the success of the expedition likewise reaches only a very moderate degree of temperature, and is indeed far from serious in tone: 'The prince of Orange has had wonderful influences to help him in the accomplishment of his design; but this is not astonishing, for it was long since predicted in holy writ, according to . . . Pastor Löning.' And he goes on to express a hope that Père la Chaise and the other jesuits have consoled 'the good king of England.'[5] Even in her letter of congratulation to King William, cordial as it is and seasoned with a true-blue reference to the Blatant Beast, she dees not conceal her sympathy for James II.[6] In return the new king bluntly expressed his hope of finding good allies in the whole house of Lüneburg, pointing out that she was materially concerned in the welfare of the three kingdoms, inasmuch as according to appearances one of her sons would one day reign there.[7] Sophia, in repeating this message to Leibniz, goes so far as to express an opinion implying that King James had brought his fate on himself, and to jest, with the want of refinement usual in her day, about

[1] *Correspondance*, ii. 13.

[2] Kemble, 221–2.

[3] *Own Time*, iii. 266–7 (ed. 1833).

[4] *Correspondance*, i. 58; cf. Meinardus, 37–8.

[5] *Correspondance*, i. 68–9.

[6] *Ib.* i. 74.

[7] Doebner, 72. This must be the letter which according to Schaumann and Meinardus contains a request to Sophia to take steps for the assertion of her claims in parliament, and promises to support them. But of such a clause I find no trace. Manifestly too Sophia's undated letter in *Correspondance*, i. 73, was not written in reply to this letter from William, as Meinardus supposes, but preceded it.

the dependence of her prospects on the infant mortality in the family of the Princess Anne.[1]

Sophia was not slow to take the hint given by King William; and thus on this the first occasion connected with the succession question when she could usefully come forward in her own interest, she is found doing so without any hesitation. According to Schaumann, it was by the advice of Leibniz that she wrote to several English politicians of her acquaintance, requesting their aid in bringing about her being named in the succession. But, though in the matter of the succession she always trusted him, I see no proof that he specially advised her at this particular time, when moreover he was absent in Vienna and in Italy, busying himself with the reunion project and with the antiquities of the houses of Modena and Brunswick. In any case, her applications were not ineffectual, though, as is known from Burnet, the amendment to the bill of rights including the duchess of Hanover and her posterity in the succession which he had proposed by the king's desire and carried without opposition through the house of lords, was opposed in the commons, and found no place in the bill as ultimately passed in the autumn session of 1689, or in the Scottish claim of rights. The duke of Gloucester had been born in the meantime. Lord Craven was sent to Hanover to explain, and King William himself pointed out to Sophia, in a letter dated 10 December, that she might well be satisfied with things as they stood, although she had not been designated by name in the bill.[2] Its distinct exclusion of all who were papists, or who should marry papists, left her heiress presumptive in default of issue of William and Mary, or of Anne, or of William by another wife. Sophia's answer[3] to this letter, in which she cordially thanks the king for his exertions on her behalf, closes the episode. She trusts that the expectation as to successors implied in the bill may prove correct; as for herself, her life will be at an end before the matter is decided. On calmly reviewing her conduct in the eventful years 1688 and 1689, I am at a loss to see either that she took a single step unbecoming to her as a princess, a Stuart, or a woman of already advanced age (fifty-nine years), or, on the other hand, that she showed any indifference concerning the succession. No display either of zeal or of temper would have brought her an inch nearer to it. Meinardus is at pains to confute Klopp's contention that her sympathy for her Stuart relatives helped to make her 'lukewarm' about the succession; but this aspect of the question is hardly worth discussing at so early a stage. In the interests of her house, she *accepted* the English revolution when it was an accomplished fact; she was quite willing, if King William desired it, to send her second son (Frederick Augustus) to pay his respects in England; she did what was requisite to secure the legislative opportunity which the

[1] *Correspondance*, i. 73. [2] Doebner, 76. [3] *Correspondance*, i. 75.

year 1689 seemed to offer; and when the opportunity had passed she easily resigned herself to waiting, though well aware that personally she would probably have to wait in vain.

After this the succession question was necessarily in abeyance for some years, though Schaumann would have us to suppose Sophia to have continued sleeplessly intent upon the advancement of her interests. Even had William III not been by nature as tenacious of his purposes as he was, he would have persisted in cultivating the goodwill of the house of Hanover. After his good offices had been given in the struggle for the electoral dignity, Hanover was permanently won over to the side of the grand alliance (1692). In 1693 the electoral family was gratified by the appointment of a resident English diplomatic agent. But little or nothing could be done in influencing English politics by the Hanoverian court, which moreover was soon afterwards (1694) distracted by the terrible catastrophe of Sophia Dorothea. Before long the elector Ernest Augustus was gradually sinking into the mental incapacity from which he did not recover, previously to his death in 1698. It was therefore doubly necessary for Sophia, with the aid of Leibniz, to provide against any reasonable and legitimate opportunity for advancing her claims being neglected. Thus advantage was in all probability taken of Lord Lexington's passing through Hanover, about 1694, on his way to his ambassadorial post at Vienna.[1] And in March 1695 Leibniz is already found corresponding with Stepney at Berlin, who afterwards possessed much of William III's confidence, and suggesting the extension of the disability imposed by the bill of rights upon papists and upon persons married to papists, to children, whether themselves protestants or not, born of papistical parents. Stepney answered very guardedly, but Schaumann magnifies this shrewd hint, which obviously had in view both the descendants of James II and those of the duchess of Savoy, into a policy pursued by Hanover till shortly after 1695.[2] The only Hanoverian policy in this matter between 1689 and 1696 was that of patient waiting; neither the death of Queen Mary in 1694 nor the indignation excited by the assassination plot in 1696 made any real change in the situation. I see no reason for accepting Klopp's suggestion that Stepney's caution may have been due to certain favourable intentions on the part of William III towards the house of Savoy-Carignan, or that there may have been some truth in the boast afterwards made by Duke Victor Amadeus, that his wife and son would be placed in the English succession, if he would only consent to send the latter to England and have him brought up in the faith of the English church. Klopp seems half inclined to think that William wished to punish the apathy of the

[1] *Correspondance*, i. 300.

[2] *Gesch. d. Erwerbung &c.* 13 *seqq.*; cf. *Correspondance*, i. 320.

house of Hanover by coquetting with the house of Savoy; it is more probable that so long as Victor Amadeus adhered to the grand alliance, the Savoy claims were treated with respect; their chances were at an end after he had deserted the allies in 1696.[1]

It was at all events not long after this that King William's interest in the contingent claims of the house of Hanover revived. Klopp, no doubt, makes too much of the fact that in October 1696, just about the time when George William of Celle, the elder brother of Ernest Augustus, had returned from a long visit to the Loo, Leibniz attempted, though without success, to induce the electress Sophia to take up the succession question.[2] In the autumn of 1698, however (not 1697, as Schaumann seems to think), a very important meeting took place on the occasion of a visit of King William to his genial old friend at Celle. The electress dowager (for Ernest Augustus had died in the beginning of the year) was at the king's particular request invited to meet him; and her son, the new elector George Lewis, likewise offered his respects during the hunting at the Göhrde (the hunting-box near Lüneburg). Strangely enough, the personage who on this occasion took upon herself to urge King William to adopt a decisive course of action on behalf of the house of Hanover was no other than the duchess Eleonora of Celle, the mother of Sophia Dorothea, and formerly an object of so much odium to the Hanoverian court. Leibniz takes credit to himself for having given her the first hint about speaking to the king; her motive for assenting *may* have been a hope that her good services might benefit her unfortunate daughter, or it may have been a mere general desire to make things pleasant. In any case she boldly, and as if speaking by inspiration from Hanover, requested the king, now that the Savoy obstacle was removed, to promote the placing of the electress Sophia and her descendants in the English succession; and when he replied favourably, she even threw out a hint that her granddaughter the princess Sophia Dorothea of Hanover (then eleven years of age) would be a suitable match for the duke of Gloucester. The conversation bore its fruit, for on his return to Celle the king spoke to the electress Sophia on the subject of the succession, and indicated to her what he thought the preferable method for assuring it to her line.[3] It was substantially the same as the very doubtful plan which Leibniz had three years previously proposed to Stepney, viz. the extension of the exclusion clause of the bill of rights to all who had been born or brought up as Roman catholics. Notwithstanding Klopp's surmises, there is absolutely no proof that Sophia failed to acquiesce in this proposal, although she may have taken

[1] *Fall d. Hauses Stuart*, vii. 74–5. [2] *Correspondance*, ii. 11 *seqq.*

[3] *Fall d. Hauses Stuart*, viii. 234, 245–8; cf. *Correspondance*, ii. 106–8. As to the intervention of the duchess Eleonora, see also Vicomte H. de Beaucaire, *Une Mésalliance dans la Maison de Brunswick* (1884), pp. 167–8.

no steps to influence members of parliament in its favour. Neither can she be shown to have viewed with displeasure the activity of Leibniz, who about this time corresponded with London as much as possible, and encouraged the propaganda carried on by Hakemann, who had been attached to the Hanoverian envoy in London nominally for the purpose of researches into the antiquities of the house of Guelph.[1] The opportunity was favourable, for the king had certainly made up his mind that something must be done, and as late as June 1699 wrote to Sophia that he had used his best endeavours to bring the business to a conclusion satisfactory to her, and felt assured of success within a very short space of time.[2] But even before this letter was written he had begun to engage in schemes for the partition of the Spanish monarchy, and soon his relations with the house of commons were such as to close all prospect of his being able to carry through parliament any new arrangement with regard to the succession. Into the secret designs of the European policy of William III the electress Sophia and the house of Hanover were certainly not initiated; and as late as 24 July 1700 she is found wondering what interest England and the United Provinces could have in seeking to cement the power of the king of France.[3]

A few days, however, after this letter was written (7 August), the frail thread of the duke of Gloucester's life was snapped, and the life of the princess Anne alone stood between the electress Sophia and the expectancy of the English throne. Her monitor, Leibniz, in sending her the news, at once expressed his opinion that it was now more than ever time to think of the English succession, and his hope that if the duke of Celle were going to the Loo, the opportunity would not be lost. She took the news of the 'decamping,' as she cynically called it, of the princess Anne's only surviving son very coolly, but was not blind to its importance. If she were younger, she wrote, she might fairly look forward to a crown; as it was, *had she the choice*, she would rather see her years increase than her grandeur.[4] But she knew that she had no choice. Before the autumn was out Sophia herself paid a visit to King William at the Loo; and Burnet tells us that now 'the eyes of all the protestants of the nation turned towards the electoress of Brunswick.' She was accompanied on this visit by her daughter and by her grandson the young electoral prince of Brandenburg (afterwards King Frederick William I of Prussia), a lad of much sense and promise; and it was on this occasion that the idea seems to have crossed King William's mind of placing the heir of the Hohenzollerns in the position left vacant by the duke of Gloucester. Bothmar complained to Ilten that the Berlin ministry was preparing for the prince the plurality

[1] *Correspondance*, ii. 122.
[2] Schaumann, 25.
[3] *Correspondance*, ii. 201.
[4] *Ib.* ii. 206.

of king of Prussia, stadtholder, and king of England. Count Platen had heard it suggested that the Calvinism of Berlin might suit King William better than the Lutheranism of Hanover; but it must at the same time be allowed that he would hardly have entertained the scheme even in passing had he been strongly impressed with an eagerness on the part of the house of Hanover to accept the future in store for it.[1] But Klopp goes much farther than this, and endeavours to show that on this occasion the electress Sophia at least virtually rejected the overtures of the king. While on her way to the Loo she had received at Aachen a very remarkable letter from Stepney, in which that skilful diplomatist gives an easy but lucid *exposé* of the whole situation, and while excusing himself from offering a decided opinion of his own on the subject of the genuineness of the prince of Wales, assures the electress Sophia that the English are not republican at heart, and have among them no nobleman great enough to be captain-general. The letter concludes with a request for a line expressing the wishes of the electress from Leibniz or some other member of her court. Her answer is the famous 'Jacobite letter' of the electress Sophia, which though already known[2] cannot be left unquoted here in its salient passages:

. . . *Si j'estois trente années plus jeune, j'aurois assez bonne opinion de mon sang et de ma religion pour croire qu'on penseroit à moy en Angleterre. Mais comme il y a peu d'apparence que je survive à deux personnes beaucoup plus jeunes quoyque plus maladives que moy, il est à craindre qu'après ma mort, on regardera mes fils comme des estrangers, et dont l'ainé est beaucoup plus accoutumé à trancher en souverain que le pauvre prince de Galles, qui est trop jeune pour profiter de l'exemple du roy de France, et qui seroit apparemment si aisé de recouvrir ce que le roy son père a si inconsidérement perdu, qu'on feroit avec luy tout ce qu'on voudroit.* . . .

After adding that she hopes shortly to see King William in Holland, she concludes:—

Je ne suis pas si philosophe ou si étourdie comme vous pouvez croire que je n'aime entendre parler d'une couronne, et que je ne fasse reflexion sur ce jugement solide que vous faites sur ce sujet. Il me semble qu'en

[1] As to this curious episode, which I have no space for pursuing further here, see E. Bodemann, *J. H. von Ilten* (1879), 133–4; cf. *Fall d. Hauses Stuart*, viii. 570–2, and appendix pp. 636–7 on Droysen's comments in *Geschichte der preussischen Politik*, iv. 1, 234 note. In connexion with the suggestion as to the conflict between Calvinism and Lutheranism, it will be remembered that since 1698 Leibniz, without relinquishing his schemes for a reunion of catholics and protestants, had taken up the less comprehensive but equally visionary idea, which recalls the dream of Oliver Cromwell, of a religious union among all the non-catholic states of Europe.

[2] It was printed already in the Hardwicke *State Papers*, ii. 442–4, but was there erroneously ascribed to the year 1701. Already Lord Stanhope (*Reign of Queen Anne*, 19 note) pointed out that the letter was written in 1700; but he mistook in saying that it was written 'from Pyrmont,' and 'in the anteroom;' for Stepney's letter is dated London, 21 September.

Angleterre il y a tant de factions qu'on ne puisse estre assurée de rien. Cela n'empesche pas que je ne dois pas estre fort obligée, &c. &c. &c.

I am quite at a loss how with Klopp to find in this letter an announcement of unwillingness to move in the matter of the succession, or the 'Jacobite' tendency which already Lord Hardwicke thought perceptible in it. At the most it seems to me to show that while deferring further discussion till her meeting with the king at the Loo, Sophia wished to apprise him through his medium (supposing Stepney to have been such) that she was quite alive to the dangers as well as to the opportunities of the situation, and that among the former the possibility of the conversion of the prince of Wales to catholicism was not the least. I agree with Meinardus that no importance can be attached to the fact that the writer allows the 'prince of Wales' his title; while it seems impossible to perceive in this letter an acknowledgment, actual or implied, of the future pretender's rights.[1] Nor is anything proved by the amusing account written soon afterwards by the duchess of Orleans of the tender sentiments of King James II towards the electress, and of his exclamations: '*O o o pou pour cela eh eh eh Elle me m'a tou toujours aimé?*' Finally, I can perceive no reason for affirming that the declarations made by the electress to King William at the Loo (of which nothing is known) went beyond the doubts and difficulties avowed by her in the letter from Aachen. And I therefore conclude that Klopp's attempt to prove that the electress Sophia on three occasions, viz. in the years 1696, 1698, and 1700, declined to meet the wishes of William III with regard to the succession, breaks down in each instance.

Whatever had been said or settled at the Loo in 1700, by the end of the year the time had come when it was no longer possible to hesitate. The publication of the will of Charles II of Spain had rendered the second partition treaty futile; a new parliament was to meet in the following February, and the war of the grand alliance against France was on the point of breaking out. In January 1701 the electress Sophia was informed by the Hanoverian resident in London that there was little or no doubt of an act of succession being proposed to parliament by the crown, in which she and her descendants would be designated by name; and early in the same month a conference took place at Celle between her and Duke George William, the elector George Lewis being, significantly or otherwise, absent. Immediately afterwards Leibniz was instructed to draw up for the use of Mr. Cresset (then at Celle) a confidential memorandum on the rights of the house of Brunswick and on the course of conduct which it seemed advisable to pursue. Though the electress

[1] See Klopp's argument, *Fall des Hauses Stuart*, viii. 568–9.

herself seems soon to have written, with the assent of the family, to King William, expressing her readiness to follow his counsel, Leibniz could not refrain from showing some impatience at her coolness. But she had done what was necessary; and on 1 May 1701 we find Stepney, an excellent judge, stating to Leibniz (who had offered to go to London in person if called upon) that the English nation was in his opinion so well disposed to the Hanoverian succession that there was no need of pamphlets or of men of talent to push the affair. The speech from the throne and an address echoing its recommendations were followed by the debates on the act of settlement, in which the electress Sophia duchess dowager of Hanover and her issue were named in the succession after Anne, her issue and that of William. If there had been any fear of an attempt to include the prince of Denmark,[1] or of any sinister ambitious project on the part of Marlborough, it had come to nothing; on the other hand the electress had not mixed herself up in the intrigue to which some of the whigs were probably not disinclined for excluding the princess Anne. Sophia's conduct appears to me to have been throughout thoroughly judicious, and perhaps more so than it would have been had she allowed Leibniz altogether to direct it. But while Klopp's view is quite untenable, that she withstood as long as possible the unwelcome necessity of securing the inheritance of a throne to which she believed her kinsman James Edward to have a just claim, Meinardus surely goes too far in the contrary direction. He regards her as having energetically defended her rights up to the time when policy and the conditions of things in England imposed upon her a certain reserve till at last she enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing both king and parliament sue for her assent.[2]

On 14 August 1701 the earl of Macclesfield arrived in Hanover, in order formally to notify to the electress Sophia the nomination of herself and her descendants in the act of settlement, of which he presented her with a splendidly illuminated copy, still to be seen and admired in the Hanover archives. Macclesfield, himself one of the peers whom she had asked to support her claims in the critical days of the English revolution, was accompanied by three other whig lords, Say and Sele, Mohun, and Tunbridge, the second-named taking care, as we are expressly informed, to be on his very best behaviour. In the suite was the ingenious Mr. Toland, with his eyes wide open, and in his pocket, according to Luttrell, 'a treatise lately wrote in relation to the succession, intituled, "Anglia Libera," or the limitation and succession of the crown explained and asserted,'

[1] *Correspondance*, ii. 246.

[2] I agree with Meinardus that the memorial by Fraiser translated by Leibniz (*Corresp.* ii.) has but a very slight connexion with the succession question, and I have therefore made no reference to it. See his excursus, pp. 97 *seqq.*

for presentation to the electress. With them was also 'Mr. King the herald,' who brought the garter for the elector, and Dr. Sandys, the ambassador's chaplain, who read the common prayers of the Church of England before the electress in her antechamber.

She made the Responses, and performed the Ceremonys as punctually as if she had been us'd to it all her Life; for she ever had our Liturgy by her, tho I believe this was the first time that it was publicly read at Hanover, for which reason many assisted there who understood not a little of it. Her Royal Highness approves it highly, tho she has not set it up in her own Chappel (as some uneasy Spirits wou'd have her) lest she shou'd seem to intimat, as she said, that she was before of a different Religion, when 'tis but the National Establishment of England.

These and other details may be read in Toland's 'Account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover,' which he published after his return. He had a special purpose in recounting the honours which he had enjoyed at Hanover and Herrenhausen, including conversations with the electress, in one of which she had declared that 'she was afraid the Nation had already repented their Choice of an old Woman, but that she hop'd none of her Posterity wou'd give them any Reasons to grow weary of their Dominion.' For there was a cruel report abroad that he had not contrived to give unmixed satisfaction at the Hanoverian court, and that in point of fact he had been sent away from it. This he indignantly denied; but it is not the less certain that though the electress had been amused by his vivacious talk, his wish to pose as the literary champion of the protestant succession had met with scant encouragement. Perhaps Leibniz was, for so great a man, just a little jealous of Toland; but in truth the house of Hanover now stood in no need of any such championship, and least of all from a person so much detested by whole classes of Englishmen as the author of 'Christianity not Mysterious.' Hardly had Toland returned to England, when (early in 1702) he published a treatise arguing in favour of the electress dowager and the electoral prince being invited over to England—a very superfluous piece of service, inasmuch as the king had already promised to send such an invitation. The electress was much annoyed by this publication, and when in 1702 Toland, for urgent reasons of his own, again left England for Germany, he did not honour the court of Hanover with a visit. (He contrived, however, to reappear there in 1707.) Free in speech and conversation as the electress was, it was by no means only consideration for high church feelings in England which disinclined her to see him again at her court. She was well pleased to hear that a bridle had been put upon his paradoxes at Berlin; his tongue, she told Leibniz, made him hated everywhere: *je ne voy ny morale ny politique à parler comme il fait.*[1] His account of the court of Hanover is,

[1] *Correspondance*, ii. 381.

however, valuable as giving an interesting though no doubt rather rose-coloured picture of the electress Sophia and her surroundings at a time which may be described as that of the climax of her fortunes.

II.

After, in 1701, the pledge of the royal word and the national will had been placed in the hands of the electress Sophia, thirteen long years of expectancy awaited her which might well have made a less stout heart grow faint; or perhaps it would be more correct to say that a nature less happily balanced, and less inured by experience both inherited and personal to the necessity of patience and resignation, might have fallen into mistake upon mistake, and thus have courted failure. Sophia, prudently following prudent counsels, did nothing to affront the approach of success. To suppose, however, that either her policy or that of her house after it had been included in the succession was one of masterly inactivity, would be almost as contrary to fact as the converse assumption that she was either before or after 1701 possessed by an absorbing desire to find herself seated on the English throne. The former supposition is confuted by the single circumstance, noted by Pauli,[1] that by way of furnishing the necessary means in the event of a sudden crisis a sum of not less than 300,000 dollars was placed in the hands of the Hanoverian resident in London, and that this sum was taken from the Calenberg exchequer by a process so silent that the committee of the estates contrived to keep the secret of the purpose of this expenditure for not less than seventy years.[2] The other assumption will, I am convinced, seem untenable to any one who has carefully studied Sophia's political biography.

The festivities at Hanover, where medals were supererogatively distributed recalling the descent of Sophia from Matilda daughter of King Henry II and wife of Henry the Lion, were hardly at an end, when William III had a meeting at the Loo with his old friend George William of Celle. The duke was accompanied by his grandson, the electoral prince of Hanover, whom, according to Toland, the king received like a son. William III here promised that he would in the coming spring invite the electress dowager and the electoral prince over to England, and use his influence to obtain an annual income for her from parliament. It was a verbal promise only, but she seems to have trusted in its fulfilment not only during the remainder of William's reign, but for a few months

[1] *U. s.* 345.

[2] The uses and dangers of such committees may be studied in the German political history of the 18th century, notably in the case of the duchy of Würtemberg.

afterwards. But the events which filled the few months left to him allowed no time for executing it. The object of William's visit to Holland had been the conclusion of the grand alliance. Nine days after it had become an accomplished fact James II died, and by recognising his son as king of England Lewis XIV identified himself with the Stuart cause. A clause in the instrument of the alliance bound the contracting powers not to conclude peace with France till the king of England should have received satisfaction for the grave insult involved in the recognition of the pretender; in other words, the war of the Spanish succession had been constituted a war of the English succession also. Inasmuch as the first public suggestion of such a clause had been made, in January 1702, by Edward Seymour, a prominent tory M.P., it is difficult to suppose the inspiration to have come from Hanover, though certainly Leibniz had expressed a wish for such a stipulation in a letter to the electress written as early as 19 November 1701.[1] The recognition of the pretender had had a more immediate effect in his attainder and in the abjuration act; the former measure had been feared beforehand by Sophia, who had expressed her feelings in a letter [2] which it would be easy to call 'Jacobite;' but why should she have refused her sympathy to her unlucky kinsman, or why should she have afterwards denied herself a woman's privilege of laughing at the logical conclusion that James Edward had made himself guilty of high treason by assuming the arms and style of king of England?

By the death of William III and the accession of Queen Anne the prospects of the house of Hanover, which the act of settlement seemed to have assured, were once more clouded over. Queen Anne indeed at once sent to the electress, by Schütz, an assurance that her sentiments towards the house of Hanover were the same as those of her predecessor, and a few days afterwards repeated the message in writing. Orders were given to the archbishop of Canterbury to insert the name of the princess Sophia in the liturgy. Before long Lord Winchilsea was sent to Hanover [3] to return the compliments brought thence by Count Platen. But the electress, long accustomed to disappointment, was very far from sanguine, and Leibniz soon fell into despondency. She told her favourite niece, the Raugravine Louisa, that, notwithstanding the compliments which had passed, whether she was still wanted in England time would show (*zal de tyd leeren*). Nor was her instinct incorrect. Neither she nor any of the members of her house had been on unfriendly terms with Anne, and there is no reason to suppose that the latter imputed to them any share in the wild scheme for ousting

[1] *Correspondance*, ii. 311.

[2] *Ib.* 289.

[3] '*Le bel esprit*' Mr. Addison, who came in Lord Winchilsea's company, rather disappointed the electress by his silent manner. As a rule she liked her lions to roar.

her from the succession. Nor is it probable that the queen, at this time at all events, had in mind the interests of her half-brother, the pretender. But her nature was narrow, and therefore full of jealousies and suspicions, and the favourites who directed her counsels had no present interest in furthering the chances of the house of Hanover. Accordingly, while Queen Anne from the first professed to favour the succession of that house, her goodwill towards it was shown both fitfully and grudgingly; and above all she would never hear of fulfilling the promise of William III, and inviting to England the electress dowager and the electoral prince. This plan, as Klopp rightly says, became a stumbling-block for Anne's government; for while it was a constant irritant to the queen, its existence was useful to the house of Hanover, which could at any time apply this test when desirous of estimating the value of friendly professions. As to the revenue formerly promised to Sophia, any expectations on that score were soon set at rest when the queen patriotically pleased herself by consecrating the surplus of the large revenues settled upon her to the public needs. Not even the title of hereditary princess of Great Britain which the electress had thought she might assume was allowed her; for the rest, it certainly was not an English title. Other signs showed how uncertain the weather had become at the English court. Cresset watched the electress in a suspicious manner, which she notices with her usual cool *insouciance*; and Stepney soon left off corresponding with Herrenhausen in order not to give offence at Windsor. The Hanoverian court was, however, full of Englishmen—and Scotchmen—anxious to offer advice and to urge forward the fortunes of the electoral house, or at all events their own; and the electress had to emphasise her readiness to trust to the queen. Things continued very much in this stagnant and unsatisfactory state for the first three years, or thereabouts, of the new reign. But even in this period it is clear that the electress, though, according to her wont, abstaining from restless manœuvring, was not unmindful of the future. On 4 June 1703 she signed three powers for Schütz, the Hanoverian minister in London, authorising him in the event of the queen's death to claim the throne in her name; and she kept up a correspondence with friends in England, both directly and through Leibniz. Leibniz himself was as indefatigable as ever. But the great schemes which (like Bacon) he loved to launch anonymously upon the world were not always of a nature to commend themselves to Queen Anne and her great general. Indeed, I venture to doubt whether Leibniz had any accurate knowledge of English affairs; thus about this very time the electress is found contradicting his news as to a proposal about marrying the electoral prince to one of Marlborough's daughters by reminding him that the great man had no more daughters in the market. Marlborough

had, however, gained the goodwill of the elector by commending the services of the Hanoverian troops at Blenheim and elsewhere, and on a visit to Hanover had completely won the heart of the electress by his manners, which she thought more polite than those of Lord Strafford (then Lord Raby), in whom she afterwards placed so much confidence. *Je n'ay jamais veu un homme plus aisé, plus civil, ny plus obligeant, estant aussi bon courtisan que bon capitaine.*

The year 1705 marks an epoch in the history of the English succession question, as it does in the personal life of the electress Sophia. Early in the year she experienced so terrible a shock from the news of the death of her beloved daughter the queen of Prussia, that serious fears were entertained for her own life; and it is quite possible that the affliction brought upon her by this event made her more indifferent to the dim prospect before her. Later in 1705 the old duke of Celle's days came to an end, and at last the cherished hope of Ernest Augustus was fulfilled, and all the possessions of the Brunswick-Lüneburg line were united under the rule of a single prince. About the same time a long-standing quarrel with the elder (Wolfenbüttel) branch of the house of Brunswick was brought to a close; and the house of Hanover stood stronger than ever before the world. No time could have been more favourable for taking up the question of the English succession with renewed vigour. Such a course was, moreover, facilitated by the circumstance that the late duke of Celle's prime minister, Bernstorff, a statesman of proved ability, now passed into the Hanoverian service, bringing with him Robethon, a French refugee who had formerly been private secretary to William III, and whose influence over Bernstorff was afterwards said to be unbounded. By him, as already observed, were drafted all, or virtually all, the letters sent to England by the electoral family, from the time of his entrance into their service till that of the arrival of George I in England.[1] All the more important documents also passed through the hands of Bothmar, who represented the Hanoverian government at the Hague, the real centre of the diplomatic life of Europe, till 1710, when he was moved to London. These arrangements might seem to imply that from 1705 the conduct of the succession question was more and more taken out of Sophia's hands. Yet, strangely enough, at no previous time had her name been bandied about between the factions in England as it was now and during the remainder of her life. To the close of the year 1705 belongs that strange episode in the party history of Queen Anne's reign, the

[1] As to Robethon see Pauli, *u. s.*, 349 note; cf. *Memoirs of Ker of Kersland*, i. 95; Macpherson's *Original Papers*, i. 618–9; Klopp's Introduction to *Correspondance*, iii. 48. Schulenburg called him '*un méchant coquin.*' George I made him a baronet. Sophia appears to have disliked Bernstorff.

attempt of a section among the tories to bring the electress Sophia over to England.

Hitherto the electress and her family in general had wisely refrained from identifying their interests with either of the two great English factions. No doubt it was the whigs who had most warmly supported the insertion of her name in the act of settlement; the embassy which had brought a copy of that act to Hanover had been composed of whigs; and writing to Leibniz at the end of 1701, seemingly with reference to the approaching English elections, Sophia lets slip the phrase: *le parti des whigs qui est le nostre.*[1] But already in the next year, when much vexed by the assiduities of Toland and that other *grand fâcheux*, Sir Peter Fraiser, she confided to her favourite correspondent her resolution not to mix herself up with the manœuvres of the presbyterians and whigs, adding: *aussi, les whigs que j'ay veus icy, ne m'ont guère charmée.* And again in 1703 she forbade Baron Brauns from answering one of Toland's long diatribes against the tories by more than a simple acknowledgment. In this certainly *not* 'Jacobite' letter she maintained that there was no fear of the tories supporting the pretender: *Les gens qui ont du bien ne rappelleront jamais le prince de Galles. Il n'y a que des Catholiques et des pauvres qui veulent faire fortune qui sont pour luy. Je trouve autant d'honnêtes gens parmy les tories qu'autre part.*[2] While, then, she had adhered to the principle of giving herself into the hands of neither party, there was no reason why the tories should not think her as likely to listen to their charming—if she saw her interest in doing so—as to that of their opponents. Indeed, when at the end of 1704 it had become known through Marlborough that the electress would be pleased to be invited to the court in London, the notion seems to have been seized upon by both parties; the whigs, however, thinking rather of the electoral prince, and the tories of the electress.[3] Partly to ingratiate themselves with her, partly to spite the queen, Rochester and the malcontent high-flyers resolved to force the hands of both. Hence Lord Haversham's motion for an address urging that the electress should as heiress to the crown be invited to take up her residence in England. The whig leaders, who were obliged to oppose the motion, astutely perceived that advantage might be taken of the queen's annoyance with the tories to obtain her assent to certain measures which would furnish real safeguards for the protestant succession. After, therefore, Haversham's motion had been thrown out in the lords, while in the commons a letter of the tory Sir

[1] *Correspondance*, ii. 294. [2] *Ib.* iii. 25-6.

[3] I pass by as untrustworthy Burnet's explanation of the letter written about this time by Sophia to the archbishop of Canterbury (*Own Time*, v. 239). Burnet was naturally highly indignant at the attempt of the tories to 'dish' the whigs.

Rowland Gwynne, really written by Leibniz, supporting the scheme, had been voted libellous, the regency and naturalisation bills were passed; whereupon the whig leader, Halifax, proceeded to Hanover in solemn embassy to present them to the electress Sophia, now the first subject of the English crown. He was also the bearer of a garter for the electoral prince, on whom, moreover, Queen Anne now bestowed the title of duke of Cambridge. Not long afterwards (18 June) the electress, in accordance with one of the provisions of the act of regency, named several persons to act together with the great officers of state as lords justices in the event of the demise of the sovereign during the absence from England of her destined successor.[1] This satisfactory result must largely be attributed to the discretion of the conduct of the electress herself, who, according to Leibniz, had remained perfectly neutral towards Haversham's proposal, but had written to the archbishop of Canterbury to express her perfect confidence in the judgment of the queen. On the rejection of the motion she informed Burnet with much dignity that, should it prove to be in the interest of state and religion, she would come to England if summoned, provided she were created princess of Wales, but at the same time expressed to Marlborough and Sunderland her conviction that her intentions had been so misrepresented to the queen that her coming to England now would be superfluous. Leibniz had acted on his own responsibility, and without her knowledge, in writing the letter, which was condemned by the house of commons and which she disavowed.[2] She showed not the least disposition to encourage the whigs, and though she made Halifax a handsome present of gold plate, was not at all overcome by the honour of his embassy. Sophia, who was never to mount a royal throne, displayed far more capacity for constitutional sovereignty than Queen Anne, and contrived to remain on fair terms with the whigs without expressing a disapproval of the action of the tories, which at this time was probably far from her sentiments. Overtures from politicians so unsafe as Buckingham, who about this time wrote to the electress in the hope of engaging her in intrigues with a faction among the tories, she could with impunity neglect.

At present the real difficulty lay in Queen Anne herself. More especially after the publication of Sir Rowland Gwynne's letter she thought that explanations were due to her from the electress, who in

[1] Schaumann mentions a tradition that when after the death of Sophia her son the elector had to substitute his nominations for hers, and the original document was accordingly asked for in London, it was found to have been *broken open*. It was also said that after much disputing with her ministers Queen Anne, in order to cut the matter short, took the blame upon herself. Sophia's nominations had included the name of Marlborough, which, as is well known, was, much to the duke's chagrin, omitted by the elector from his list.

[2] See Macpherson, *Original Papers*, ii. 30.

truth had none to give. Marlborough, who had been entrusted with a letter from the queen to the electress written in this sense, was wise enough to venture not to deliver it, holding instead conciliatory language at Hanover, and advising Sophia and George Lewis to declare themselves absolute strangers to the obnoxious manifesto. But the electress was on her side becoming much annoyed by the cold and suspicious conduct of Queen Anne in everything relating to the succession. She complained repeatedly that from England nothing came but titles and compliments, and vowed that she would not be made to pay for more special envoys from the court of St. James's; for transmitting honours that cost nothing, Mr. Howe, the resident English minister, was the very man.[1] When Leibniz sent her news as to the prospects of the union between England and Scotland, she rather sharply replied that she had no wish to discuss the affairs of either: *comme je n'en tire rien, je n'y suis point intéressée*. But she may not have felt altogether as indifferent as she pretended to be; for a clause in the act definitively settled the Scottish succession upon her and her descendants.[2] Rather she feared a secret sympathy on Queen Anne's part with the pretender; for we have the statement of the duchess of Orleans to the effect that her aunt 'believed that the queen secretly desired the accession to the throne of her brother, and would some day bestow the crown upon him.' It does not follow from this that the electress Sophia herself wished that this might be the end. Klopp's story that in 1714 King George I requested the duchess of Orleans to destroy all her letters from the electress in which mention was made of the house of Stuart may be true, and his surmise that Elizabeth Charlotte acted on this advice correct. And he has succeeded in discovering a letter from Sophia, dated 21 March 1708, in which, after mentioning that 'the prince of Wales' was at Dunkirk, she exclaims: *Qui sait si Dieu n'élèvera celui qui souffre si innocemment?* But George I was a prince who had a strong dislike to the preservation of superfluous writing; and his mother was not a woman ruled by sentiment. Though at this period she certainly returned Queen Anne coolness for coolness, and though at times

[1] Mr. Howe died 22 Sept. 1709. His wife was an illegitimate daughter of Prince Rupert, and hence by blood a niece of the electress Sophia. He was at this time placed in a most awkward position by the refusal of the elector, whose temper was worse than his mother's, to allow the electoral prince to give a public audience for receiving the announcement of his new ducal title.

[2] The earlier history of the Scottish succession question in Queen Anne's reign is curious, but cannot be discussed here. The party in Scotland favourable to the Hanoverian succession maintained an agent of their own in the Netherlands named Ridpath, who in 1712 or early in 1713 was anxious to start a national association in Scotland for keeping off the Stuart and insuring the Hanoverian succession, and this Robethon warmly approved. But as a pupil of William III he could not assent to Ridpath's other proposal—a repeal of the union. See Pauli's account, *u.s.* 382, taken from Robethon's private correspondence.

she may almost have seemed to herself indifferent as to a future which she could not control, she took no false step, and neither by her conduct to the queen, nor by that to the great English parties, jeopardised the ultimate success of her claims. The supposed apathy of her whole house is, moreover, not easily reconcilable with the fact mentioned by Schaumann, that a draft still exists at Hanover of a treaty by which the states-general were to guarantee the Hanoverian succession (as they afterwards actually did in the barrier treaty). When in 1708 the whigs were fully established in power, and when the death of Prince George of Denmark and Queen Anne's refusal to remarry had removed the last chance of issue from the reigning sovereign, the Hanoverian prospects as it were naturally grew bright again.

Yet, after the great crisis of 1710 was over, and the wheel of fortune had once more brought the tories uppermost, neither the electress nor Leibniz regarded the change with fear or even with disfavour. Leibniz, whose political influence at home had certainly not increased of late, and whose prolonged absence at Vienna had annoyed the elector, was gratified by the marked politeness of his correspondent Dr. Hutton, an adherent of the now mighty Harley. In the autumn, a more significant proof was given both of the degree in which Queen Anne had the interests of her tory friends at heart, and of her disposition to keep on friendly terms with the Hanoverian family now that she was at last beginning to have her own way at home. In the autumn of 1710 Earl Rivers appeared in Hanover, charged by the queen with the task of explaining whatever might seem to need explanation in connexion with the recent change of ministry. He gave great satisfaction, even to the elector. True, the London rumour, that he was instructed to offer to George Lewis the chief command after it had been taken away from Marlborough, proved delusive, and Robethon had wasted his gifts of style in drafting a letter of refusal. Still, Rivers brought assurances that the war would be vigorously carried on; and there was, therefore, no reason why the house of Hanover should turn a deaf ear to the blandishments of the polite and reasonable tories. Leibniz was delighted to be able to prove, what with a little trouble it is usually possible to prove in politics, the perfect consistency of the course pursued by the house he served. But the real conduct of affairs was in different hands. In January 1711 H. C. von Bothmar arrived as envoy extraordinary at the court of St. James's, a politician whose ability is proved by the evidence of his own despatches to have been of an uncommon order, and perhaps not second to that of Bernstorff himself, who co-operated with him from the other end of the line. He steered with remarkable skill between the dangerous attractions of the two parties in a time of violent excitement, when neither was willing to give a point to the other,

and both were accordingly sedulous in assuring him of their goodwill to the Hanoverian succession. His efforts on behalf of a vigorous prosecution of the war must be passed by here; they involved an advocacy of Marlborough, who was politically *in extremis*.[1] Among his troubles was a renewal of the proposal to invite over the electress and the electoral prince, if not the elector himself, which would, as he foresaw, only have the effect of uniting the followers of Harley with the extreme wing of the tory party in resisting a measure so distasteful to the queen. As the elector himself was determined not to consent to such a step unless assured of her approval, and as on the representations of Bothmar, Somers, Sunderland, and Godolphin agreed not to move in the matter without the elector's assent, a blunder was avoided which might have been even more disastrous to the prospects of the Hanoverian succession than that actually committed a few years later. In 1710 and 1711 the air was full of floating devices for making possible, at the eleventh hour, the succession of the pretender, and of rumours as to a gradual transformation of the ministry into a Jacobite committee. Though Leibniz was no doubt right in saying that the question of inviting over to England, or granting an income to, one or more members of the electoral family, was the touchstone of the real intentions of the English government, and though this may, as he asserts, have also been the opinion of the elector, yet it would have been utter indiscretion for George Lewis and his mother to make this known in England. Thus, when in the autumn of 1711 Lord Rivers appeared at Hanover for the second time, the letter which he brought from Queen Anne, and his assurances of her care for the interests of the electoral family, were received by Sophia with adequate expressions of gratitude. It is true that Rivers was unsuccessful in the principal object of his mission, which was to obtain the elector's approval of the English overtures of peace to France. George Lewis, surely much to his credit, firmly took his stand upon the principles of the grand alliance, at the risk of his conduct being interpreted in England as dictated by a desire to please the whigs. Such seems to have been the case; and early in 1712 we find Strafford in his correspondence with the electress Sophia blaming her for taking up the whigs when the tories were her true friends.[2] That, on the other hand, the whigs were not slow to seize the opportunity of identifying their party with the electoral family, is clear from the act of precedence, which gave the new duke of Cambridge precedence over all other peers, and

[1] According to Schaumann, Marlborough (at some unspecified date, perhaps on his conciliatory visit in 1705) proffered at Hanover a loan of 20,000*l.* in return for a blank commission which was signed by the electress Sophia, and which conferred on him the supreme command of the military and naval forces of Great Britain after the death of Queen Anne.

[2] Macpherson, *Original Papers*, ii. 348.

which was moved by the duke of Devonshire. Meanwhile the court of Hanover had wisely determined, while maintaining its own principles, to look after its own interests in the peace negotiations, and its ablest diplomatist, Bothmar, was sent back to the Netherlands for the purpose. In December 1712 privy councillor Thomas von Grote, a member of a family distinguished in the Hanoverian service, arrived in London, nominally to return thanks for the act of precedence.[1] His instructions, drawn up by Robethon in the name of the electress Sophia, illustrate the last stage but one of the history of the succession question in which she plays a part. He was to be polite to all, and though he might privately take counsel with the old friends of the house of Hanover, Marlborough, Halifax, Townshend, &c., yet he was not to consult them openly or frequently, and was to avoid visiting Sunderland. He was to give no umbrage to the queen's ministers, and above all to the queen herself, whom he was to assure that she was at Hanover regarded as the firmest support of the protestant succession. He was to make friends with the clergy, to reassure their minds, and to point out to *ces messieurs* (possibly, the Calvinist Robethon enjoyed this instruction) that the ecclesiastical system of the German protestants was virtually an episcopal one.[2] As to the delicate question of the removal of the electress or a member of her family, he was to treat it as if this event might any day come to pass, and press for a promise on the part of the queen that an establishment—perhaps Somerset house—with the necessary revenue should be as soon as convenient (not necessarily at once) proposed to parliament for the purpose. At Hanover and elsewhere, however, some ardent spirits were not content with so cautious a method of procedure. The peace negotiations at Utrecht, where Bothmar was, with Strafford's aid, obtaining a real security for the Hanoverian succession, were not yet over; and in September 1712 the indefatigable Leibniz is found submitting to the electress a scheme concocted by some busybodies in London (the Hanoverian agent Brandhagen and Roger Acherley, an English lawyer) for making the demand for an establishment in England a condition of the peace of Utrecht. In answer Sophia reminds Leibniz of the former efforts of the tories to bring her over to England, and their frustration; but declares the project mentioned by him to be impracticable, for the tories would not now take her into their confidence, and they even made difficulties about the states-general guaranteeing the English succession.[3] *Aussi je suis si vieille que je parle* von Gespenstern *comme vous dites.*

[1] He died in London in the following February.

[2] Pauli, *u.s.*, 381. For the rest of these instructions see Schaumann, 70–72.

[3] By the second barrier treaty the states-general were only bound to maintain the succession when called upon by the queen to do so. Grote in vain protested against this modification of the first barrier treaty.

But while she objects to the methods proposed, she is in good heart about the matter at issue. *Si j'estois plus jeune*, she adds, *le royaume d'Angleterre ne me manqueroit pas.*[1] And though the idea of pressing a 'real establishment for the protestant succession' in the negotiations at Utrecht was left aside, a considerable correspondence had taken place on the subject, and Thomas Harley was, on one of his visits to Hanover, requested by the electress herself to represent to the English ministry how desirable such an establishment would be.

The peace of Utrecht, when at last concluded, contained a recognition of the Hanoverian succession in Great Britain. Bothmar's efforts had secured a most important gain; for the succession was now guaranteed by the European powers at large. Yet the tone which prevailed at court and in government circles in London ill agreed with this result. Grote found himself coolly received by ministers and their friends, who were evidently anxious to avoid the topic of the succession whenever he tried to approach it. In a lengthy despatch[2] which he sent home in February 1713—shortly before his death—he drew a darker picture of the political prospect than had as yet reached Hanover. He considered that, in spite of the generalities in which he shrouded himself towards the electoral government, Oxford had gradually gone over to the Jacobites in order to please the queen, while Bolingbroke he regarded as an open Jacobite himself. He thought that as to the pretender there was reason for fearing the worst, and had heard that the queen had expressed a wish to see the pretender in England after the conclusion of the peace, while the question of inviting over a member of the electoral family had been indefinitely postponed. And yet the queen and the lord treasurer continued their assurances of friendship and goodwill at Hanover; when on 17 March Thomas Harley presented a memorandum declaring her majesty to be prepared to favour everything relating to the Hanoverian succession. It was hereupon determined at Hanover to formulate certain demands to be presented to the queen's government by Schütz (the younger), Grote's successor. In these it was asked that the expulsion of the pretender from France should be formally demanded by Great Britain, that some considerable arrears due for services of the Hanoverian troops should be paid up; and that the removal of a member of the electoral family to England should be actually brought about, and a residence and revenues there be assigned to the electress dowager as heiress to the crown.[3] The motive which induced the electoral government at last to speak so clearly was no doubt the fears to which the attitude of Queen Anne had at last begun to give rise. While formerly it had seemed unwise to irritate her, a policy of inaction might now throw everything into the hands of the counsellors by whom she was sur-

[1] *Correspondance*, iii. 360. [2] See Schaumann, 75. [3] *Ib.* 78–9.

rounded, and lead to a belief that the house of Hanover was abandoning its own cause.

When in April 1713 Queen Anne opened the prorogued parliament, the amicable phrases of her speech evoked no very warm gratitude at Hanover. Sophia indeed wrote to Strafford begging him to thank the queen, and adding that as she had no expectation of ever ascending the throne herself, she hoped that her majesty would entertain no aversion to her on that score. But on the whole Leibniz's epigram not inaptly summed up the situation—

> 'Hannoverana domus magnâ me gaudet amicâ,'
> Anna refert; tacita est Hannoverana domus.

And in point of fact the speech with which in the following July, on the eve of a general election, Anne closed the session, omitted the usual announcement of the queen's readiness to support the protestant succession. While the fertile imagination of Leibniz was still devising new schemes for insuring the desired end, the elector, who had now taken up his position, maintained it in defiance of the queen's manifest invitation, declaring himself unsatisfied with the guarantees hitherto received, protesting that he would pay nothing for elections, pamphlets, or newspapers, and would not allow the electoral prince to proceed to England. Yet, to the amusement of Sophia, her court continued to attract not a few Englishmen desirous of being found at the decisive moment in the quarter of the rising sun. But she thought that they were reckoning without their host in hoping to strew palms before her on her entrance into London, for she feared that she could not contrive to live as long as Queen Anne, so as to prove to them her gratitude. And yet when in the last days of the year the queen's illness raised the prevailing agitation to a still higher pitch, it seemed as if, notwithstanding what Sophia called her 'incurable malady' of having passed her eighty-fourth year, her prophecy would prove wrong. Strafford, who was always attempting to persuade her that the tories were her friends, and that there was not a Jacobite left among them, assured her that what he had observed during the queen's illness had convinced him of the strength of popular opinion in favour of the protestant succession.[1] And Steinghens, the elector palatine's minister in London, who was on a footing of intimacy with Oxford, declared to his correspondent General Schulenburg, that had Queen Anne died the princess Sophia would have been proclaimed on the same day.[2] Assurances of devotion poured in from all sides: in February, Secretary Bromley laid himself at her feet; and Archbishop Dawes entreated attention to his own humble endeavours and the faith-

[1] Macpherson, *Original Papers*, ii. 568–9.

[2] The interesting correspondence between Schulenburg and Steinghens is printed by Klopp as an appendix to the third volume of the *Correspondance*.

fulness and zeal of the whole body of the clergy.[1] Yet even now there was no disposition at Hanover to do anything rash. The electress, it must be remembered, was by this time very aged; and we may well believe not only that she had lost faith in English political parties (she had grown, she told Strafford, to dislike the very names whig and tory), but that she was indisposed, as most people at the age of eighty-four are, to run great personal risks. She gave Schulenburg to understand that she would never go to England without her son the elector; and he was unlikely to take his departure thither prematurely. Yet their conduct was far removed from a listless indifference; and the very last letter to Leibniz preserved from her hand, and dated 20 May, 1714, shows the electress taking a step which Queen Anne chose to treat as presumptuous.

In April 1714, Thomas Harley had arrived at Hanover, about the time when his kinsman Oxford was professing not only his own devotion, but that of Lady Masham, to the Hanoverian succession, and declaring himself convinced that the queen was for it, but deprecating the establishment of a second court in England.[2] Thomas Harley's special commission was, as we learn from Sophia herself in the above-mentioned letter, to offer her an annuity (*pension*) on the part of the queen; but this she politely declined, saying that the revenue she wished for was one granted to her as heiress-presumptive by the queen and parliament, in accordance with the precedent of the allowance granted to the princess of Denmark herself under William III. Either before or after she gave this answer, she and the elector (on 7 May) signed a memorandum declaring that the succession could only be held to be really guaranteed if an allowance of this description were made to her, and if a member of the electoral family (the electoral prince was now alone thought of) were called upon to reside in England. In the same letter of 20 May she informed Leibniz that she had instructed Schütz to inquire from the lord chancellor (Harcourt) whether the electoral prince as duke of Cambridge ought not to have a writ to enable him to attend parliament; whereupon Harcourt had replied that the writ was quite ready, but that it was not customary for peers to demand their writs except when on the spot; he would, however, speak on the subject to the queen. Though, she continues, the queen and her council were frightened, in the end she bade the lord chancellor act according to the law, and he therefore sent the writ to Schütz. Yet afterwards the queen forbade Schütz the court, and he returned to Hanover, at a loss to know in what he had done wrong; while about the same time Thomas Harley left Hanover with his whole *posse* of Englishmen.[3]

[1] Ellis's *Original Letters*, 2nd series, iv. 268, 271–2.
[2] See his letter to Baron Wassenaar-Duyvenworke, *ib.* 269–70.
[3] *Correspondance*, iii. 446–7.

The question is still debated as to who was really responsible for the demand of the writ, which (according to the expression of a contemporary[1]) was as bad as a bomb thrown amongst the queen and her ministers. Klopp argues that there is no proof whatever of Schütz having been ordered by the electress to do more than make an inquiry; and he adds that the memoranda of Hoffman, the imperial resident in London, make it extremely probable that the intention was not actually to demand the writ till the meeting of the next parliament. He therefore conjectures that Schütz had shown the letter of the electress to some of the whigs, and that it was their instigation which made him actually demand the writ. Schulenburg had heard an income of 40,000*l.* talked of for the electoral prince when in England, and thought that this prospect might have impelled Schütz to immediate action.[2] But neither is it explicable why he should have dared to go so far beyond his instructions, nor is it easy to believe that the electress had been thinking only of the next parliament when the present was only three months old. On the other hand, it is clear that Schütz acted with precipitation. The elector declined to see him on his return to Hanover, and told Thomas Harley at his farewell audience that Schütz had never been instructed to demand the writ, and that he (the elector) had never intended to send his son to England without the queen's knowledge. But how far he was from being cowed by the incident is shown by the fact that on the same occasion he gave to Harley the outspoken memorandum of 7 May. As for the electress, the tone of her letter to Leibniz is perfectly cool, and as usual she expresses a belief that Queen Anne, in spite of her illnesses, will outlive her heiress-presumptive, for *krakende Wagens gân lang*. Unfortunately Sophia's answer to Strafford's letter entreating her to signify her disapproval of Schütz's proceedings[3] seems to be lost, though Hoffman reports its contents, which are substantially the same as those of the elector's parting declaration to Thomas Harley.[4] The situation may have seemed terrific in London, where the queen's wrath was visibly ablaze, while the commons had deferred to vote the payment of the arrears due to the Hanoverian troops, and it was thought that an invitation to the pretender would follow if the electoral prince were actually sent over. But at Hanover there was no intention of taking this critical step without the queen's approval.

From what has been said it will appear how much exaggeration there is in the tradition attributing the death of the electress Sophia, which took place 8 June 1714, to the agitation caused by

[1] Roger Acherley. See Kemble, 519, where it is suggested that Acherley was really the first person who advised the demand of the writ.

[2] *Correspondance*, iii. 481. [3] Macpherson, *Original Papers*, ii. 600 *seqq.*

[4] *Correspondance*, iii., *Introduction*, 71.

a letter addressed to her by Queen Anne in connexion with the affair of the writ. Undeniably this letter,[1] though not taking so severe a form of reprimand as the companion missive to the electoral prince, is offensive and even insolent, considering that Queen Anne, who had received neither the electress nor her descendants into the royal family, possessed no formal authority over them. Nor was the effect of these missives likely to be assuaged by the honeyed protestations of Oxford in a letter to the elector which arrived in the same despatch bag. It was not he, but Bolingbroke, whom the electoral princess Caroline, a very sharp-witted woman, suspected of the authorship of the queen's letters.[2] The old electress cannot but have shared this suspicion, which was of a nature to make her stand firm against a blow delivered by an all but professed adversary. Yet there can be no doubt that the death of the electress was very generally connected with, if not directly attributed to, the queen's letters. The very straightforward account sent to Marlborough by Molyneux, then on a confidential mission to Hanover,[3] shows the electress to have been much agitated on the evening of the day (Wednesday, 6 June) on which they had been delivered to her about noon at Herrenhausen. On the following day, though he was told she was not well, she ordered him to send copies of the letters to Marlborough; on Friday, 8 June, she seemed well, but was still occupied with the subject and ordering fresh copies of the letters; she dined with the elector, and in the evening was walking in the gardens when rain suddenly fell, and as she quickened her speed in order to find shelter she dropped down and rapidly passed away. The letter of the countess of Bückeburg to the electress's niece, the Raugravine Louisa,[4] corroborates this account, and adds one or two significant touches. On the Wednesday the electress said to the writer: *Cette affaire me rendra asseurement malade—j'y succombrai. Mais*, she added, *je feray imprimer cette gracieuse lettre, pour faire voir à tout le monde que ce n'a pas été par ma faute, si mes enfans perdent les trois couronnes.* And on the Friday, though apparently in her usual strength, she continued to talk of English affairs with the electoral princess. And as Caroline herself informed Leibniz on 7 June[5] that the electress and the electoral prince intended to send the queen's letters to England, it may be concluded that this hazardous design still further excited the old lady.[6] Though by the outward world she seems nearly to

[1] It is printed in Boyer's *Reign of Queen Anne* and elsewhere. Schaumann blunders astoundingly about the three letters to the electress, the elector, and the electoral prince.

[2] *Correspondance*, iii. 452. [3] See Coxe's *Life of Marlborough*.

[4] Fortunately discovered by Klopp in the Degenfeld-Schönburg archives, and printed in *Correspondance*, iii. 457 *seqq*.

[5] *Ib.* 453.

[6] I agree with Klopp that the execution of this design, which gave so much offence,

the last to have been considered as vigorous as ever, she had begun to take thought of her health, and was probably aware of the tendency towards apoplexy which her faithful friend Leibniz had observed in her thirteen years before. On the whole the natural conclusion appears to be that the agitation produced in her by the queen's letters, and her own resolution not to sit still under the affront, proved too much for a frame enfeebled by old age. Yet her epitaph seems to speak the truth when, in full agreement with the countess of Bückeburg's letter (*Jamais il ne s'est vue une mort plus douce, ny plus heureuse*), it describes the death of the electress Sophia as having been not less peaceful than sudden. Her character lies almost open to us in her private letters, and she had, as she told Leibniz in April 1713, made it a principle to keep her mind tranquil, and not to allow it to be affected by either public or private troubles. As to her death, she had written to him a little later,[1] it would be a finer affair if, according to his wishes, her remains were interred at Westminster; 'but the truth is that my mind, which hitherto has contrived to rule my body, at present suggests no such sad thoughts to me, and that the talk about the succession annoys me.' Read in the way in which so many of her letters should be read, as half-ironical, this passage attests the self-control and self-possession which were on the whole the most noteworthy features in the character of this remarkable woman. But neither this passage nor anything that remains from her hand, so far as I can see, gives the lie to the belief that she was from first to last equal to the responsibilities of her position, and not less ready, if called upon, than worthy to reign as a queen.

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was probably due to the Marlboroughs. The elector wisely suppressed the queen's letter to himself which is in Macpherson, ii. 621.

[1] *Correspondance*, iii. 429.