

WELCOME, GUILDENSTERN, TO CASTLE HEDINGHAM

P R E F A C E

to Ruth Loyd Miller's following article

[This page is synthesized from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition,
and is background for the article which follows]

The question may be asked whether we are mixing apples and oranges in accepting the name of the Swedish Chancellor as compatible with the names of the Danes of *Hamlet*. We point out that while Shakespeare **was** writing of Denmark, the fact is that in **that** time, Denmark and Sweden were apples in one basket.

The history of Scandinavia involves five independent nations — Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. For more than a thousand years these nations were bound to each other in political unions of various combinations. At times they have been separated singularly, paired in varying combinations, or grouped in alliances by strategic, economic, and political interests. Wars and conflicts occurred, but yet their common ties outweighed their differences. Each would frequently have its own King — and recognize one another's sovereignty — or a King of one of the five would grow strong enough to dominate another — as in 1559 the King of Sweden's son was Duke of Finland. Sweden's dominion over Finland extended from the 13th century to the beginning of the 19th.

In the mid-10th century Danish rule briefly extended to England under Sweyn Forkbeard and his grandson Canute. From 1397 to 1523 Denmark, Norway and Sweden comprised the Kalmar Union. The Scandinavian Union was the only important power in northern Europe. Even when the union started to crumble, due in some measure to changes in religion, the land holdings of the nobility — crossing national boundaries — held the countries together in loose alliances. The real issue that eventually tore the Union apart was the mastery of the Baltic Sea — this mastery, which might have remained and should have remained an internal Scandinavian problem became a concern of all European powers — foreign powers wanted a divided but evenly balanced north.

Up until 1560 there was peace in Scandinavia — in spite of individual autonomy Denmark, Sweden and Norway were a community held together by a number of common interests — marriages, family alliances, and ownership of properties by families in two or more of these countries.

Control of the Baltic was at the center of the Nordic Seven years War (1563-1570) — which no one really won and all lost. As the Scandinavian Union the five were a power to be feared and left alone. As separate nations, vying for pieces of each other's territory — and vying for control of the Baltic Sound — they had little clout among world-class power players.

Ruth Loyd Miller

Welcome, Guildenstern, To Castle Hedingham

by Ruth Loyd Miller

It has long been known that much of the descriptive matters of Denmark and Elsinore in *Hamlet* was derived from reports made by Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, of two missions to Denmark on which he was sent by Queen Elizabeth I; the first mission in 1582, the second in 1585. Seldom, if ever, has it been mentioned that Peregrine was Lord Oxford's brother-in-law. Had he been the Stratford man's brother-in-law, volumes would have been written on that subject.

The account of Peregrine's first mission of 1582 is told in numerous letters and reports, many in the italic holograph of Lord Willoughby, some in Latin, titled *A Relation of my Lord Willoughby's embassy into Denmark, in his own hand*, preserved among the Cotton Manuscripts at the British Library.¹

At this point a quick perusal of the parallel histories of religion and politics in Denmark and England will be useful.

Frederick I had ruled Denmark from 1523-1533. The closing years of his reign corresponded with the years when Henry VIII was casting aside his Catholic wife Catherine and stripping the Roman Catholic Church in England of power and property. During this same period Frederick I had invited Lutheran preachers to Denmark and had expanded royal power at the expense of the Catholic Church. Martin Luther had nailed his ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenberg on 31 October 1517.

Christian II, son of Frederick I, ruled Denmark from 1534 to 1559. Thus he had ascended his throne before the Princess Elizabeth of England was a year old. He died as she was completing her first regnal year as Queen. Though Christian's wife was a Catholic, Spanish Princess (Isabella of Austria, sister of Charles V), during his reign Christian had confiscated church property and laid the foundation for Danish absolutism. Meanwhile in England, Catholic and Protestant power see-sawed with the changes in its monarchs: the Protestant heritage left by Henry VIII survived and expanded during the reign of Edward VI; Catholic dominance returned during the five years of Mary I; and Protestantism returned with the ascension of Elizabeth.

Frederick II, son of Christian II, ascended in 1559, during the first regnal year of Queen Elizabeth. They reigned as contemporaries. Frederick ruled for twenty-nine years, dying in 1588, during Elizabeth's 29th regnal year. While Frederick II was a thoroughly Protestant monarch ruling a thoroughly Protestant country, for her first twenty-two years Elizabeth had been benignly tolerant of her Catholic subjects. Not until 1580, when her cousin Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, revealed the plots against her life being laid by covert Catholics — namely Henry Howard (Oxford's first cousin, and second cousin of the Queen), Charles Arundel, and Paget — did she instigate stringent measures to suppress Catholicism.

The political and economic aspects of Willoughby's first mission can be briefly summarized. By means of sea power in the Baltic, Denmark under Frederick II had risen to be one of the great powers in the Baltic. The main revenue of the crown was derived from Danish control of the Baltic Sound by which control Denmark was able to impose heavy duty on all shipping sailing the Sound. There was also the delicate matter of piracy on the Sound — each Sovereign denying, of course, that he or she granted protection to his or her pirate ships.

The imposed duty had been and was a severe financial burden on the English Muscovy Company which had passed through the Sound since 1553 in its trade with Russia. The English merchants, never at a loss of ingenious ways out of difficulties, mitigated the drastic effects of the duty by altering their course to Russia, going by way of the White Sea and the North Cape. This alteration of route by the English resulted in loss of revenue to Frederick. Angry and unhappy, in 1575 Frederick protested to Elizabeth against the English use of the northern route. He cited old treaties which bound English ships to trade with Russia via the Baltic.² But diplomacy failed to resolve the Baltic problem to either's satisfaction.

Elizabeth's decision in 1582 to send Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, to Elsinore, was a diplomatic manoeuvre on behalf of English merchants. First Willoughby was to invest the Danish King with the Order of the Garter. This investiture was to be a prelude to the discussion of the maritime business.

This brings us to the question why Elizabeth would entrust these important negotiations to Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, an untried youth of 27 years, when there were more seasoned and experienced diplomats available. I suggest the answer is found in the mutuality of religious background of Frederick II and Willoughby. Peregrine not only was thoroughly Protestant himself, in a larger sense, he and his parents were the "icons" and symbols in England and abroad of the entire Protestant reformation. Later in life Peregrine would be celebrated for his military achievements in song and story as "the brave Lord Willoughby," but in 1582 he was recognized as part of the legend of parents celebrated for their bravery and faith — a thoroughly Protestant Englishman to match the thoroughly Protestant Danish King — Peregrine, the Protestant-Puritan.

Peregrine was the third but only surviving son of the best known and most distinguished noble lady of the Tudor age, Katherine, Baroness Willoughby in her own right, and Duchess of Suffolk as the second (or third, depending on who is counting) wife and widow of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk (brother-in-law of Henry VIII, and hero of cloak and dagger romances). Katherine became the step-mother of two viable heirs to the throne, Eleanor and Frances Brandon, daughters of the deceased Mary Tudor, "the French Queen" (granddaughter of Henry VII and sister of Henry VIII).

Katherine's second husband — Peregrine's father — was Richard Bertie. Though a commoner and much below the widowed Duchess in social status, Richard Bertie was an accomplished gentleman, versed in the Latin, French and Italian languages; bold and shrewd in discourse; and quick at repartee. He had proceeded B.A. in 1537 at Corpus Christi College, Oxford; and was in Queen Elizabeth's retinue on Progress to Cambridge in 1564 when he along with the 14 year old Edward de Vere (Earl of Oxford), William Cecil (later to be Lord Burghley), and Robert Dudley (later to be Earl of Leicester) and others were created honorary Masters of Arts by Cambridge.³

During the reign of Catholic Mary Tudor, Katherine and Richard Bertie earned their enduring titles as standard bearers for the Protestant - Puritan faith. Forced by Mary's Catholic Bishops and agents to flee England, the Berties escaped to the continent at great risk. Reaching Wesel, Germany, on a cold, stormy night in October 1555, unable to find shelter, Richard and the very pregnant Katherine took refuge on the porch of a church. The legend is that the sexton, mistaking them for vagabonds, tried to turn them away, and that Richard seized the keys to the church and admitted his wife. It is fact, not legend, that Katherine was in a German church when she was delivered of a baby boy.

So far as is known, this child was the first English child to receive the pilgrim name of Peregrine — from the Latin *peregrinus*, a wanderer or pilgrim. But even on the continent the Berties were not safe. Throughout the Marian years they were vigorously pursued as heretics by Mary's agents. Continental Protestants gave them asylum, yet the Berties were forced to shift ground and move from place to place and town to town as warnings came that Catholic agents were on their heels. Eventually they were given permanent sanctuary and security by the King of Poland. The death of Mary and Elizabeth's ascension cleared the way for the Berties to return home to England.

Renowned over the continent of Europe for their courage, for endurance of hardship, and for never wavering in their Protestant faith, the Berties were welcomed home with all honor. The name they had given their son — "Peregrine" — became synonymous with steadfastness, honor and courage. Edmund Spenser named one of his sons Peregrine. The first baby born in the new world was named Peregrine — Peregrine White. The motto written at the top of the best known portrait of Peregrine Bertie is

Hic domi ubique peregrinus

("Here I am at home, everywhere a pilgrim")

(sometimes shortened to "here and everywhere" — *Hic et ubique*)⁴

In swearing Marcellus and Horatio to secrecy regarding Hamlet's father's ghost [Act I, Scene 5], Hamlet quotes this motto with all its imagery of the Berties' Marian years: "heretic" - hunted, persecuted, fleeing constantly remove by remove, everywhere a pilgrim. Shakespeare's Hamlet accurately and succinctly summarized the Bertie legend in

Hamlet: *Hic et ubique?* then we'll shift our ground . . . Once more remove, good friends.

Hamlet I, v, 156 et seq

On Willoughby's 1582 mission to Denmark, he arrived at Elsinore on July 22nd. He returned to England on September 27th. Interestingly, this two month period of Willoughby's stay in Denmark corresponds exactly with the two month period that Horatio had been in Denmark, having come for the funeral of Hamlet's father. Hamlet bitterly recounted that his mother had remarried within two months of his father's death.⁵

To Denmark Willoughby carried the necessary regalia for investing King Frederick with the Order of the Garter. The Garter ceremony was to break the ice for discussions on the frigid matter of the Baltic Sound. It worked out however that Frederick was not to be bought with flattery. In matters of negotiation and delaying actions, this Dane proved himself as true a master of dilatory tactics as Queen Elizabeth: he delayed an audience with Willoughby, who had arrived July 22nd, until August 19th; he had other engagements that had to be kept; he raised objections to the ceremonies accompanying the investiture; he demanded explanations and documents. Willoughby's first letter in the *Relations* manuscripts is a detailed chronological summary of the delays, the objections, and how he, Willoughby, responded to each.

Frederick initially expressed misgivings that the investiture ceremony which required his being robed in the apparel and insignia of a foreign sovereign might be degrading to himself. Wouldn't this be a derogation of his honor? Also, might words be used that he was receiving the honor in "the name of the father, the sonne, and the holy ghost?" Or, perhaps the robes and apparel being furnished were not fine enough for his Kingly status. Willoughby satisfied the King point by point: the Order of the Garter was an honorable institution, acceptable to a number of emperors, kings, and princes; the robes, insignia and apparel were "beseeming and comly," befitting Frederick's royal status. In *Relations* Willoughby recorded that finally the King consented to the investiture:

. . . the King, very royally prepared, received the robes with his own hands, and with great contentment accepted and wore the Garter, the Collar, and the George . . . This being done we royally feasted, and the King [had] all the ordnance of the Castle given us. [That is to say, the King ordered the artillery of the fortress of Elsinore to fire during the feast in Willoughby's honor.] And we, demanding again the oath and protestation to be answerable to that favor and honour he had received from Her Majesty, he promised this instrument [i.e. diplomatic document] which we have delivered, accompanied with many affectionate and loving speeches to Her Majesty and all of the Order. All of which [was] performed after a whole volley of all the great shot of the Castle

discharged, a royal feast, and a most artificial and cunning fireworks.

Willoughby's account of the Danish King's order to fire salutes of artillery during the royal celebration is expressed with brilliant effect in *Hamlet* as King Claudius announces,

No jocund health that Denmark drinks today,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder.

Hamlet I, ii.

In *Relations* Willoughby noted the heavy drinking of the Danes. Undoubtedly on his return to England Willoughby related more fully to the Queen, her Privy Council and his family and friends just how customary and heavy drinking was among the nobles of the Danish court. Not only did Danish "custom" require one to drink to a state of prostration, literally passing out, but also that for one to "relieve oneself during the evening was a terrible violation of etiquette." There was no rising or leaving the table or feast. One drank and held — is this the origin of the phrase "holding one's liquor"? King Frederick died in 1588 in his fifty-fourth year. Andrea Sorensen Vedel, Royal Historiographer with whom Willoughby also became a life time friend, said in the funeral oration that "if his Grace could have kept from that injurious drink which is much too prevalent all over the world among princes, and nobles, and common people, then it would seem to human eyes he might have lived for many years to come."⁶

Willoughby's observation on Danish drinking and drunkenness closely matches the mini-lecture on drunkenness in *Hamlet*. While Hamlet and Horatio are awaiting the reappearance of the Ghost on the battlements of the Castle, "a flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off" interrupt their conversation:

The king doth wake tonight and takes his 'rouse,
Keeps wassail and the swagg'ring upspring reels:
And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

HORATIO: Is it a custom?

HAMLET: Ay, marry is't.

But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honoured in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations.
They clepe us drunkards and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition

Hamlet I, iv.

Traditionalists claim the author of *Hamlet* acquired his knowledge of the customs peculiar to the royal court of Denmark by "talking to returned travelers." We cannot disagree with that — indeed, the dramatist [whoever he was] must have talked with a returned traveler — one named Peregrine, perhaps? In the traditional explanation there is not a single shred of evidence that William of Stratford ever had a meeting with Willoughby, nor with any person capable of imparting detailed knowledge of the Danish court,⁷ nor any circumstances of his life which provided an opportunity for such discourse.

On the other hand, the non-traditional "Oxfordian" view-point of the authorship of *Hamlet* leaves virtually nothing to conjecture: Edward deVere, 17th Earl of Oxford, had the opportunities to hear from Willoughby himself. Furthermore Oxford had an excellent reason for his interest in Danish history and folklore: authoritative sources assure us that the family of Vere, Earls of Oxford, were originally Danes who pushed southward in early medieval forays of the Northmen and settled in Normandy in France, from where they entered England — all well attested by William the Conqueror's grants of Saxon-held lands to Aubrey deVere (Domesday Book).

In 1576 when Peregrine Bertie first sought to marry Mary deVere, sister of Edward, Earl of Oxford, the Earl had opposed the match and withheld his consent. Katherine, Duchess of Suffolk corresponded with William Cecil, Lord Burghley, concerning Oxford's opposition. No stated reason for Oxford's initial opposition to the marriage is gleaned from their correspondence, but a series of events in Oxford's life from 1575 to 1580 provide explanations. It appeared to have been a matter of religion.

In mid-1576 Oxford had returned from his sixteen month tour on the continent as a covert convert to the Roman Church; Peregrine Bertie and his parents were militant Protestant-Puritans. That religion was the reason Oxford withheld his consent is the only reasonable conclusion: first, a marriage alliance between a Vere daughter and Bertie was entirely suitable; and second, for Mary, now in her mid-twenties and a spinster for that day and age, time to get a good husband was at hand. Oxford finally gave his consent and the marriage took place in 1578 with festivities at court, including, perhaps, performances of *Taming of the Shrew*. If persons at Court saw the bride and groom in the comedy as a parody of the sharp-tongued Mary Vere and the genial Peregrine Bertie, so be it.

In December 1580, when Oxford found that his fellow covert Catholics (led by Henry Howard, his and the Queen's mutual cousin) were plotting to kill Queen Elizabeth, Oxford denounced them and renounced Catholicism. This action seemed to remove the existing barrier to friendship between Peregrine Bertie and Oxford. We find the brothers-in-law thereafter to be congenial and loyal friends.

In March 1582, less than three months before Willoughby departed on his first mission to Denmark, Oxford was dining with Mary and Peregrine at Willoughby House in the Barbican. This was that fateful night that marked the beginning of the famous series of street brawls between the relatives of Thomas Kne[y]vet and retainers of the Earl of Oxford that grew out of Oxford's ill-starred love affair with Anne Vavasour, Knyvet's niece.⁸ Among many depositions later taken about these street "brawls," is the *Declaration of Evidence* given by Roger Townshend of June 18, 1582.⁹

Townshend states he was dining with Knyvet at Arundel House when somebody brought word that "the Earl of Oxford should have attempted somewhat against Master Tho. Knevet." Arundel House was the residence of Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel (who was cousin to both Oxford and the Queen, as well as a nephew of Lord Henry Howard). Henry Howard was one of, if not the chief of the Catholic conspirators on whom Oxford had "blown the whistle." It seems consistent that bruit and gossip would find a clearing house at Lord Arundel's residence. According to Townshend, the word brought was that Oxford and his brother-in-law Willoughby were planning to waylay Knyvet and do him injury.

In the deposition, Townshend states that to learn the truth he personally went to Willoughby House at the Barbican. To his relief he found the two lords taking a quiet after-dinner stroll in Willoughby's gardens. The two greeted Townshend amicably. Neither was armed. Neither appeared in a war-faring mood. Townshend concluded "there was nothing intent" to harm anyone.

But later that evening Willoughby had to take a firm stand and send away Knyvet and his swashbucklers who "came braying hard by the door."¹⁰ Willoughby's statement regarding this incident (*State Papers Domestic*) aptly expresses Willoughby's support of his brother-in-law in this crisis. Later that evening as Oxford left the Willoughby's, the blood vendetta erupted between Oxford's followers and Anne Vavasour's relatives.¹¹ But more of that at another time. Within the scope of this abstract on "Sources of *Hamlet*" this footnote of history establishes the close relationship of Oxford and Willoughby just prior to Willoughby's departure for his 1582 mission to Denmark.

Now to return to Willoughby's *Relations* of his experiences in Denmark. Recently published in the *Shakespeare-Oxford Society Newsletter* (Winter, 1993) was a facsimile of a list of guests at one of the two state dinners given for Willoughby at the Danish court. On this list, styled

Nobilismi ad Generosi, Regni Daniae. Inclyti et Senatores,

several names appear that should be of special interest to readers of *Hamlet*:

Petrius Guldenstern, de Tbim, Regi Marcsciliius
Georgius Rosenkrants, de Rosenholm
Axellius Guldenstern, de Lingby

Of "Marcsciliius," more anon. Obviously "Rosenkrants" and "Guldenstern" are known to students of *Hamlet*, but "stay passenger." In addition to these just mentioned names, the list includes others that direct us to two names also significant in the study of *Hamlet* though no persons of these names actually appear in the play: — "Stenno Brahe" and "Henricus Brahe," brother and cousin respectively of the great Danish scientist and astronomer Tycho Brahe. Tycho is of considerable importance in a study of *Hamlet*.

Before he was out of his teens Tycho Brahe had mastered the sciences of antiquity. By 1576 from his own observations of the sky and stars he had confirmed the validity of Copernicus's discoveries and assisted in the demise of Aristotle's. He also had begun to lay the foundation for discoveries to come by J. Kepler. King Frederick had recognized the genius of Tycho Brahe. In order to keep Tycho in Denmark, the King had granted Tycho an entire island on which to build a home and observatory, and provided him with funds for his livelihood and work. The island was the Island of Hveen (Island of Heaven) located along the coast of the Sound, fourteen miles north of Copenhagen and nine miles south of Elsinore.

Tycho Brahe's home and observatory had been completed by the time of Willoughby's 1582 mission. Tycho's work was attracting scientists, students and scholars. Hveen became a mecca for scientists and for people of all walks of life. Most significant is that in Brahe's autobiographical notes, written from time to time, Brahe specifically recorded — with obvious pride — the 1582 visit to Hveen of Lord Willoughby of d'Eresby, and that he and the young English Lord became life-time friends and correspondents.¹² In 1585 on his second mission to Denmark, Willoughby again visited with Brahe.

In 1841 J. O. Halliwell (who later co-joined his mother's name of Phillips to Halliwell with a hyphen as Halliwell-Phillips) edited and published a collection of letters illustrative of the progress of science in England. In this collection was a letter of Tycho Brahe to Thomas Savile (Savelle), English scholar and antiquary.¹³

In his 1937 book *I William Shakespeare*¹⁴ Dr Leslie Hotson credited copies of a Brahe portrait that Brahe enclosed with the letter to Savile as the dramatist's source for the names of "Rosencrantz & Guildenstern." Dr. Hotson wrote that:

. . . in the letter Brahe desires to be remembered to Dr. John Dees and to 'the most noble and most learned mathematician Thomas Digges,' [father of Leonard, author of one of the prefatory poems in the *First Folio*] to whom he heartily wishes well . . . and to Daniel Rogers [clerk of the Privy Council, who had been born and educated at Wittenberg, and who had, like many Danish scholars, studied under the famous Philip Melanchton]

Brahe enclosed a book with the letter, and requested that Savile show this latest book of his to Dees and Digges, that "they may freely give their opinion of its contents." Then in a postscript Brahe stated he was enclosing four copies of a recently engraved portrait of himself. Withal he betrays a wish that some of the excellent English poets might compose a witty epigram in praise of it and of his works. Perhaps the "most learned Daniel Rogers" might be kind enough to find time to do it? Brahe was descended from a long line of prominent noble families of Denmark and Sweden. That Brahe took pride

in his lineage is amply demonstrated, for on the background of the portrait Brahe the names of some of Brahe's illustrious ancestors were engraved, two of whom were "Rosenkrants and Guldenstern."

This discovery gave a blast-off to Dr. Hotson's imagination. He flew "around the world to cross the street" — searching to establish a connection, be it ever so far-fetched, between William of Stratford and those names engraved on the portrait of Tycho Brahe.

"Undoubtedly" Savile kept one of the copies of the portrait for himself. But to whom did Savile deliver the other three? That is not known, though Rogers, Dees and Thomas Digges were probably the recipients. To Thomas Digges Hotson assuredly assigned a copy, so states Hotson.

Hotson made much ado of the fact that in 1590 Thomas Digges had a house in London in the Parish of St Mary Aldermanbury, the same locality in which John Hemmings, the actor, later had a house. Now Hotson claims Hemmings "certainly" knew Leonard Digges, so "undoubtedly" the author of *Hamlet* saw it on visits to Leonard's. The dramatist's eye "would have caught the names of that immortal pair of Danes," so said Hotson. Hotson lightly skipped over the facts that Leonard was only two years old in 1590 when the letter and copy of the engraving reached Savile, and that the father, Thomas, died five years later in 1595 leaving his widow and children to face considerable turmoil. Not the least of the turmoil was occasioned by the wealthy widow Digges' propensity for falling for smooth-talking fortune hunters who separated her and her children from considerable money and property. Many years passed before Leonard Digges and Hemmings would meet, if they ever did meet. No gaps of fact and reason, time and probability, were too great for Hotson to bridge.

In keeping with Hotson's well established precedent to make assumptions, we shall make an assumption of our own. Based on information in Dreyer's biography of Tycho Brahe, that Brahe sent copies of his portrait to numerous friends, it stands to reason that in addition to sending these extra copies of the portrait for Savile to deliver to others, Brahe himself would have sent a copy of the portrait directly to the closest — and most illustrious — of his English friends, Lord Willoughby of Eresby.¹⁵ It would have been "breach of courtesy" otherwise. Hotson took no notice whatsoever of Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, or Lord Willoughby's two missions to Denmark.

Let us briefly review the purpose of Willoughby's second mission of 1585. Queen Elizabeth had now thrown the Protestant gauntlet at the feet of the Holy Roman Empire and of Philip II, Willoughby's second mission was to petition King Frederick "for succor, either in men or money, in behalf of Henry of Navarre, and to induce him to aid England in the Netherlands against Spain" (*DNB*). As previously stated, on this second mission Willoughby again visited Brahe at the Island of Hveen, spending considerable time with the great astronomer. There is much more of Brahe's work related in *Hamlet*, but it forms too large a corpus to include herein. For now, put Thcyo, Peregrine and Lord Oxfords' relationship with Peregrine `on Hold.'

Let us roll back the calendar from the 1580s to 1559. Let us travel northeast from London to Essex to the seat of the deVeres at Castle Hedingham. There we find John deVere, 16th Earl of Oxford, his second wife Margery Golding, his daughter Mary, and his son, Edward, Lord Bolebec (Bulbeck). Edward is 9 years old, precocious and being tutored by his uncle Author Golding and by a neighbor, the great diplomat, scholar, doctor of law from Padua University, and Cambridge's first Regius Professor of Civil Law, Sir Thomas Smyth.¹⁶

In 1559, Elizabeth had been on the throne less than a full year — she was still within her first regnal year. Proposals to her for marriage were being made fast and furiously. In April 1559 the King of Sweden proposed a marriage between Elizabeth and his son, the Crown Prince Eric. On September 20, 1559, the Queen summoned her courtiers and noblemen to attend her on the occasion of receiving the Duke of Finland, second son of the King of Sweden. The Duke was coming to negotiate a marriage between the Queen and his elder brother, Crown Prince Eric of Sweden. To John deVere (16th E of Oxford) at Castle Hedingham, special orders were sent: the Earl is commanded to meet the Duke's ship and entourage at Harwich; to escort the Duke to Castle Hedingham, and there to entertain him (and his retinue) for a week. Earl John will later in the week be joined by Lord Robert Dudley and a party of nobles to escort the Duke and his entourage to London. All went smashingly well.

Duke John of Finland arrived at Castle Hedingham with a large retinue of noblemen, servants, and horses. Retainers and servants wore red velvet livery, the coats bearing devices of hearts pierced by a javelin to symbolize Prince Eric's (of Sweden) consuming passion for the Queen whom he had never seen. During the day the royal visitor was entertained with hawking and hunting; at night with plays by the Earl's actors — probably the plays written by John Bale (playwright of the New Learning) for the 15th Earl of Oxford's actors. In the Calendars of *State Papers, Foreign 1559-1560*, are these accounts of the Duke's visit to Castle Hedingham:

Oct 1, 1559, "The [16th] Earl of Oxford to the Council":

This morning he received [the Duke of Finland] and appointed [Sir] Thomas Smith to talk with him by the way touching the proclamation, of which a copy in Latin was shown to him at Colchester. If they who have been deceived by the false money [this "false money" involved some counterfeit coins — a matter soon straightened out by the Duke and the Queen's representative] will bring it to him in London, he is willing to pay them, so that they shall be no losers. He has this night come to Colchester with eleven carts and forty-four horses, and of his own horse about thirty. The Writer [Oxford] must lay out money for them this night; seeing the proclamation is now known abroad [the local people] will take none of his [the Duke's] coin. The Duke likes the country very well. The Earl has prepared for him and his uncle handsome ambling geldings, and will do so for his journey. Does not doubt to bring him to London on Wednesday at night betimes,—Colchester, 1 Oct. 1559.

Oct 1, 1559, "Sir Thomas Smyth to Cecil":

Item 1. If the Duke were never so great a Prince he may be well content with his entertainment here. Likes him better every day, because he begins more and more to learn our manners, and (as we call it merrily in England) to be a good fellow; "I mean, to leave off his high looks and pontificality." In everything that is moved touching the matters mentioned in the letters from the Council he answered gently and wisely. Our country he likes but too well. My Lord [Oxford] here omits nothing that should be needful or meet for him. [Smyth] Assures him [the Duke] that no man in England could do so much and so readily as the Earl [Oxford], with the love that the gentlemen and the whole country bear to him [Oxford], whether for the antiquity of his ancestry, or his own gentleness, or the dexterity of those that are about, or rather all these. [It is submitted that Smyth's purely gratuitous description of the love John deVere's neighbors and friends bear for him (Oxford) bears close comparison with Hamlet's remembrance of his own father.]

Item 2. For the dalers, seeing they are bullion, it must needs come hither to-morrow. Cecil has not written to tell them what value the true daler is esteemed at the Mint. The Duke likes his conduction so well that he will now go and tarry even as my Lord [Oxford] wills, but his halberdeers and guard follow him. He has with him eight footmen arrayed in black velvet jerkins after the manner of England, "as I perceive some of his hath seen about London, and rideth a faster pace than he was wont to go on hawking. The most care that he hath is for his great horse; and yet I do not doubt we shall learn them to go these small journeys well enough." — Colchester, 1 Oct. 1559.

To borrow words and phrases from the Stratfordian lexicon: "undoubtedly" Little Lord Bolebec (age 9½) "must have been" filled with amazement over these exciting guests; "surely" the lad was all eyes and ears — and "would have caught" the name of the highest ranking member of the Duke's delegation, the Chancellor of Sweden: **Nicholas Guildenstern**.

Remember, the year of Guildenstern's visit to Castle Hedingham — 1559. This was twenty-three and twenty-six years before Lord Willoughby's missions to Denmark; five years before Guillemus Shaksper was born in Stratford-on-Avon; and thirty-one years before Brahe's letter to Savile with copies of an original portrait bearing the names of Brahe's distinguished kinsmen.

It is notable that in letters abstracted in the Calendar of *State Papers, Foreign*, where Nicholas Guildenstern himself signs his name, he usually spells it "Guildenstern" — with an "i", as spelled in *Hamlet*. However, there are variations and one would have to examine the original letters in the Public Record Office to determine if variants occur only when others write of him, or abstract his name. On the list of guests in *Relations* (which list is not in Willoughby's holograph) the name is spelled "Guldenstern" — no "i". As more than two decades have elapsed between Guildenstern's visit, and Willoughby's missions, it would seem the dramatist was drawing on his memory of old documents for the "i" spelling.

The visit of the Duke of Finland to Castle Hedingham was entirely social — recreation, hospitality and festivity. This is the hospitable atmosphere that prevails in the initial exchange between Hamlet and his two visitors in *Hamlet*:

Hamlet: "What makes you to Elsinore?"

Guildenstern: "To visit with you, My Lord. No other occasion."

"Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony."

Hamlet, II, ii.

At the end of the visit to Castle Hedingham, the Duke, Guildenstern and the Swedish delegation were grandly escorted into London by Earl John and Lord Robert Dudley. The Duke scattered money profusely to the crowds that lined his entry into the city. The initial problem of the Duke having been victimized by the counterfeiting of his Swedish coins had been satisfactorily solved. ["Counterfeiting" as used in *Hamlet* provides a richer ore to mine in the study of the sources of *Hamlet*.]

In 1559 Elizabeth was 26 years old — marriageable and lovely — certainly the queen to be captured on the World's Chess Board. Elizabeth and Cecil's handling of the Duke, the Chancellor Guildenstern, and the Swedish marriage proposal affords a preview of the marriage-negotiation scenario Elizabeth was to enact time and again throughout her reign. Chancellor Guildenstern had the distinction to be among the first of a long line of Chancellors, Ambassadors, and negotiators to cool their heels at Cecil House on the Strand, or at the door of the presence chamber, as Elizabeth created and perfected the title role she was to make uniquely her own — the Queen in "The Marriage Game."

At Court the Duke of Finland and Chancellor Guildenstern were graciously received, but given little satisfaction for their time, expense and trouble. The Duke returned home, and in 1561 the Prince of Sweden came to England in his own behalf only to be sent bootless home. Guildenstern remained at the English court some three years.

In 1562 a thoroughly frustrated Guildenstern returned to Sweden, sadder, wiser, and poorer. In his attempts to accomplish his mission he had crossed many palms with silver, or pounds, including the palm of Cecil, as appears in documents in the Public Record Office:

. . . [Guildenstern] wishes to know whether Cecil was not against the marriage . . . and desired him not to take an evil part.

State Papers, Foreign, Feb. 20, 1561

. . . If Cecil will assist him, he promises him the perpetual favour of the King, and the most ample honours and wealth . . .

State Papers, Foreign, April 21, 1561

. . . The Ambassador of Sweden says that his master will come this year much wiser than the last, for *he will not lose £6,000 in bribing unto the Secretary [Cecil]*. . .

State Papers, Foreign, June 28, 1561

It does seem that the more one learns of William Cecil and Polonius, the more the two become indistinguishable. Cecil took enormous pride in the fact known to his wards and associates, that he was born when the Diet of Worms was in session.

Guildenstern returned to Sweden without promise of the Queen's hand, but not entirely empty-handed. The value of guilt basons, ewers, potts, flagons, bolls and covers, cups, salts with covers "given by her Majestie . . . to Master Nicholas Guildensterne, Ambassador Legier from the King of Swethland, at his departure" totaled 913¾ dim. oz. [Nichols, *Progresses of Elizabeth*, Vol. I.]

With the abandonment of Eric's suit for the hand of Queen Elizabeth, communications between Guildenstern and English officials gradually tapered off — except for futile efforts of English merchants to collect on Guildenstern's unpaid bills.

In the mid-1580s, Elizabeth failed in her efforts to enlist the Protestant-Lutheran Northmen as her allies in aiding the Dutch Provinces in their bloody wars to free themselves of Spanish-Catholic rule. Following Willoughby's second mission to Denmark, Willoughby continued on to the Low Countries to Command the English forces which were to hazard so much and perform so brilliantly for the Dutch Protestant cause. In fine blunt morbid words Shake-speare summarized Willoughby's report of his second mission to Denmark — the cold fact that the English Queen could not count on military or monetary aid from the Protestant-Lutheran Northmen:

"Rosencranz and Guildenstern are dead"?

ENDNOTES

1. Bertie Manuscripts.
2. To be furnished.
3. To be furnished.
4. To be furnished.
5. To be furnished.
6. To be furnished.

7. Re Rutland & Serp?
8. To be furnished.
9. B.R., Lansdowne Mss 154:13.
10. To be furnished.
11. To be furnished.
12. To be furnished.
13. Brahe p. 394-5.
14. To be furnished.
15. To be furnished.
16. We will find that long before the two missions to Denmark of his brother-in-law, Lord Oxford had had opportunities to learn names of Scandinavian nobility.