

# DENUNCIATION OF LORD WILLIAM HOWARD

1616

The Lord William Howard is a known recusant, dwelling in the remote parts of England northward, unto whom the recusants of greatest note do daily resort, viz:

Mr. Ratcliffe of Dilston, Roger Witherington, Randall Fenicke, the lord of Thirleway, with many others more of Northumberland, as also Joseph Huddleston, Joseph Porter, Esquires, Sir Thomas Lamplughe, whose lady is a recusant, himself in religion very backward, Sir Francis Duckett, and his lady and son, all recusants, Mr. Laybourne, Mr. Preston, unto whose daughter and co-heir the Lord William has lately married one of his sons; the said Preston being a man of great power and estate, about £1500 by year. And the number of recusants daily increases in those parts by his Lordship's countenance.

The Lord William does maintain one Skelton of Wetherall in Cumberland as his Lordship's servant and follower, the said Skelton being a Church Papist, coming to church only at Easter, making show to receive the communion, but, when he has taken it, does most profanely spit it out of his mouth, both bread and wine, and the said Skelton is known to be a harbourer of seminary priests, and one that fled into Tyrone's camp in his rebellion in Ireland in the late Queen's time, and after his return home at the King's most happy entrance into this Kingdom, the broken men of England and Scotland being given to spoil the better sort of people, the said Skelton did then rob the minister of his parish, and took from him horse, kin, and corn; and he has committed many several felonies in the country, and is never brought in question in regard of his now dependence of the Lord William.

In Christmas last at Bampton in Westmoreland within the diocese of Carlisle, the tenants and servants of my Lord William, together with others in the parish, did erect a Christmas lord, and did most grossly disturb the minister in time of divine service; the minister himself granting toleration because he does ordinarily dine and sup at the Lord William's table, but never prays with him, and these Christmas misrule men some of them drunk to the minister when he was at prayers, others stepped into the pulpit and called the parishioners to an offering for maintenance of their sport, others of the Lord William's servants came into the church disguised, others shot guns in the church, and brought in flags and banners, others sported themselves with pies and puddings in the church, using them as bowls in the church-allies, others played with dogs, and used them as they used to fear sheep, and all these were done in the church and in time of divine service, and the said Lord does bring the ministers about him in contempt, scorn, and derision.

A minister in London has confidently reported that the said Lord William has £50.000 of the Jesuits' money committed into his hands in trust to be disposed for the benefit of the Jesuits and maintenance of others of that profession, and for the confirmation of this report Mrs. Paine, dwelling in Islington, did tell a gentleman living in Saint Martin's that she had seen a letter written to Doctor Frier, a physician and recusant, from his daughter, now in a monastery beyond the seas, wherein she did entreat her father to give thanks to the Lord William for her quartering, which she received from the Lord William, and she said Mrs. Payne did see the said letter and heard it read by the Doctor.

The Lord William is thought to keep a priest in his house, which upon examination may more plainly be known.

The Lord William oppresses and terrifies all men with suits (against whom he has any show of occasion, though never so trivial) that are not wholly his, and of his faction, in all his juries and other unfit courses, as namely this gentlemen of place and account in the country, viz—Sir James Bellingham, Knight, Sir Henry Curwen, Knight, Henry Dacres, Esquire, Richard Rigge, Esquire, Thomas Salkeld, Esquire, in many several actions, Hugh Salkeld, gentleman, his own tenants of Gillesland.

Generally, if there be any suite in the country, if he be not a principal mover of it, yet he interposes and joins himself with the one side though it do nothing at all concern him, and he so forces it with his great power in Court and country that all turbulent persons are by him protected and set on work. He maintained suites against these, viz—Henry Dacres for hunting, pursued by Edward Harrison by his procurement; Hugh Salkeld by John Milner; Dorothy Brathwaite by Thomas, her son; Sir Edward Musgrave by Winifred Musgrave and Thomas Wharton; John Flemming by Robert Sands; and his interposition betwixt the Earls of Dorset and Cumberland, aiming at the Sherifwick of Westmoreland, as is feared maintains the differences betwixt them.

The Lord William does cross and oppose the proceedings of the justices of peace in Westmoreland (where he has not yet such power as in Cumberland), and forces therein suits for there levies for bridges, inmates, soldiers, etc., to please the people and to become popular, and makes his tenants the presidents to refuse payments, and of late, at the

last Sessions in Westmoreland, the constable within the parish of Bampton being pressed by some of the justices of the peace to present upon oath what recusants were in his parish, where the Lord and his family lived, the constable made oath there was none.

To maintain this his course he plots for a sheriff of his faction for all occurrences that may happen in the country, and he enters bond for him and sends down his patent to engage him.

By these means he makes law, which is the refuge from oppression, his sword of oppression, and yet if the law may have course to convict him as a recusant, the King shall have 2 parts of his lands, and he shall be disabled to serve, which if he be not, all men in those countries for their own safety must and will yield unto him, for some simple men in that country neglecting God for him have given this for a reason, that "there is mercy with God but no mercy with my Lord William."

Mr. Ratcliffe has sent over into a religious house beyond sea two of his daughters, where they yet live.

George Mounsey, a principal dependent of the Lord William and servant to the Countess of Arundel at Graistock in Cumberland, has diverse children which never received public baptism, nor himself ever convented before authority for the same.

*Selections from the Household Books of the Lord William Howard of Naworth Castle (1878):423–425.*