

Extracts from **The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron**

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As soon as the Earl of Essex left the Court, Queen Elizabeth began her arrangements for her summer progress. She went vid Sir William Moore's hose at Loseley to Guildford, and there she sent a messenger after Essex into France. Southampton [who had wanted to follow Essex to France] would now be occupied at Court, for during this progress the Queen had arranged at last to visit Cowdray and Titchfield, and he probably would be interested in plans to give her a fit reception in both places.

In August 1591 Simon Bowyer and his fellows were allowed payment for preparing [a number of houses including] "for making ready my Lord Montague's house at Cowdray for her Majestie, 6 days in August 1591; to the same for making readye the Priorye House at my Lord Montague's; for making ready a Lodge in the North Park, for her Majestie to rest as she came to Cowdray; for making ready three standings for her Majestie at the Lord Montague's".

The Queen arrived on 15<sup>th</sup> August at Cowdray at 8 o'clock "after her rest in North Park". At the gate of Cowdray the porter, [presented] the key to the Queen as "the wisest, fairest, and most fortunate of creatures". At the entrance of the house, the Queen embraced the Lady Montague and the Lady Dormer her daughter; the Mistress of the House (as it were weeping in her bosom) said "O happie Time! O joyful daie!"

The next day was Sunday [no mention of religious service but] there was a substantial breakfast of three oxen and a hundred and forty geese with et ceteras, which would occupy some time. Probably the Queen would inspect the Picture Gallery, containing so many portraits of people she had known, from her father to her young brother. There was enough to interest a resting day in the house.

Monday was devoted to hunting, which was ordered by Henry Browne, Lord Montague's third son, Ranger of Windsor Forest. It may be noted that there were three standings made ready for the Queen in Cowdray Park. [A standing was a vantage point past which the deer would be driven.]

The Queen killed three deer, one at each standing, and Mabel, Countess of Kildare, sister of the host, the only lady who had the courage to try, killed one. It is said that the Queen was displeased at her audacity and did not ask her afterwards to sit at her own table. But the Royal Huntress carried away the honours of the day, and the bow with which she killed the deer was hung up in the Buck Hall of Cowdray. After the hunt there were masques, and nymphs in sweet arbours sang harmonious songs of the Queen's glory.

On Tuesday the Queen "went to dinner in the Priory, where my Lord kept house." Masques of the pilgrims, of the anglers, and of the wild man gave the Queen sufficient flattery, even for her accustomed ear. On the last day of her visit the Queen knighted some young gentlemen, among them Sir George Browne, Lord Montague's second son and Sir Robert Dormer, his son-in-law, afterwards Lord Dormer. Montague's eldest son, who had led the family horsemen to the famous gathering at Tilbury Fort, was not knighted. Perhaps the Queen thought he did not need it, as he would be Viscount some day. Perhaps he was, even then, too ill to appear.