

# The Fall of the Godolphin Ministry\*

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Much has been written about the fall of Robert Harley in 1708, little about the fall of the Godolphin ministry in 1710.<sup>1</sup> Yet a comparison of the two events casts a flood of light upon the nature of politics in the reign of Queen Anne. This is especially true if the historian asks the question: why did Robert Harley succeed in 1710 where he failed in 1708? For succeed he assuredly did in 1710 and fail he certainly did in 1708. On the first occasion he suffered loss of office and humiliation; two years later he drove Godolphin and the Whigs from office bag and baggage.

The cumulative scholarship of Godfrey Davies, Geoffrey Holmes, William Speck, and Henry Snyder has done much to illuminate the darker corners of the obscure events surrounding Robert Harley's resignation as Secretary of State in 1708. Godfrey Davies showed that Harley had not acted treacherously towards the Earl of Godolphin and the Duke of Marlborough in the Almanza debates and that those debates were "the occasion rather than the cause" of Harley's fall from power.<sup>2</sup> Godfrey Davies did not elaborate upon the true causes of Harley's fall, an omission that Geoffrey Holmes and William Speck repaired in 1965. They showed that Godolphin and Marlborough demanded the removal of Harley because the Secretary was negotiating secretly with Tory politicians for a new scheme of administration, a scheme that meant Godolphin's removal as Lord Treasurer, though not Marlborough's as Captain-General of the army.<sup>3</sup> Henry Snyder tells much the same story, but adds that Harley was prepared "to implement his scheme" without Marlborough, should the duke resign.<sup>4</sup> All these authors concur that Harley failed in his endeavors, not for want of the queen's support, but for want of support in the cabinet and parliament.

What is now needed is a similar comprehensive and systematic account of Harley's success in 1710, an account which will search out the causes of the fall of the Godolphin ministry, delineate the major issues that arose out of its collapse, and attempt to solve those knotty problems that invariably emerge out of such an historical investigation. It is the pur-

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\*I am grateful to Professor Henry Snyder for his helpful criticisms of this article.

<sup>1</sup> For the fall of Robert Harley see Godfrey Davies, "The Fall of Harley in 1708," *English Historical Review*, LXVI (1951), pp. 246-54; G.S. Holmes and W.A. Speck, "The Fall of Harley in 1708 Reconsidered," *English Historical Review*, LXX (1965), pp. 673-98; and Henry Snyder, "Godolphin and Harley: A Study of Their Partnership in Politics," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, XXX (1967), pp. 241-71. There are no similar studies of the fall of the Godolphin ministry.

<sup>2</sup> Davies, "Fall of Harley," *E.H.R.*, LXVI, pp. 250-51, 253.

<sup>3</sup> Holmes and Speck, "Fall of Harley Reconsidered," *E.H.R.*, LXXX, 685-98.

<sup>4</sup> Snyder, "Godolphin and Harley," *H.L.Q.*, XXX, 263-71.

pose of this article to make a beginning towards the accomplishment of these tasks.

Of all the historical errors surrounding the fall of the Godolphin ministry the most pervasive is the belief that it was solely or principally a palace revolution. Geoffrey Holmes has argued that the fall of Godolphin "is attributable in origin to a breakdown" in Godolphin's "special personal relationship with the Queen." And he maintains that "it was the royal closet and to a lesser degree the Cabinet room, and not the Lords' or Commons' house, which held the real keys to the outcome."<sup>5</sup> More recently G. V. Bennett has urged that "it was not so much the great Sacheverell passion which toppled Godolphin as a carefully contrived palace revolution."<sup>6</sup> Most historians have taken a similar view, beginning their accounts of the fall of the ministry either with the nomination of Lord Rivers as Lieutenant of the Tower in January 1710 or the appointment of Shrewsbury as Lord Chamberlain in April or the dismissal of Sunderland as Secretary of State in June.<sup>7</sup> That a palace revolution occurred in 1710 is undeniably true, but the first step in the fall of the Godolphin ministry was not the nomination of Lord Rivers or the appointment of Shrewsbury or the dismissal of Sunderland; it was Harley's alliance with the Tories and his seduction of the Court Whigs.

Harley's failure in 1708 offers a clue to his choice of strategies in the following years. He resolved to ally with the Tories and to win over the Court Whigs because the want of their support had caused his "new scheme" to fail in 1708. It was not for want of the queen's support that the scheme failed, for the queen, weeping and expostulating, stood by Harley to the bitter end. Nor was it Marlborough's indispensability as commander that caused Harley's scheme to fail, for the queen was prepared to allow the duke to resign. Neither was it for want of support in the cabinet that Harley failed, since on February 8 he carried on business there even though Somers and Pembroke walked out. It was not until three days later that Harley resigned—two days after the House of Commons had tabled the Supply Bill and the House of Lords had nominated a committee of seven Whig lords to investigate Harley's complicity in

<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (London, 1967), pp. 201, 209.

<sup>6</sup> G. V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State 1688-1730*, (Oxford 1975), 121. H. T. Dickinson (*Bolingbroke* [London, 1970], p. 70) is even more explicit: "the ministerial revolution of 1710 was achieved neither in parliament nor in the country at large, but at Court and through secret negotiations."

<sup>7</sup> Keith Feiling, in *A History of the Tory Party* (Oxford, 1924), p. 413, and Sir Tresham Lever, in *Godolphin: His Life and Times* (London, 1952), p. 221, regard Rivers's appointment as Harley's first step to power: G. N. Clark, in *The Later Stuarts* (Oxford, 1934), p. 217, and G. M. Trevelyan, in *England Under Queen Anne*, Vol. III (London, 1934), p. 62, view Shrewsbury's appointment as the first step in the disintegration of the ministry; J. R. Jones, in *Country and Court: England 1658-1714* (London, 1978), p. 338, and J. H. Plumb, in *Sir Robert Walpole: the Making of a Statesman* (London, 1956), pp. 155-56, view Sunderland's dismissal as the first decisive blow.

William Greg's treason. Harley failed in February 1708 because he lacked support in parliament for his new scheme of administration. In parliament the fault lay and in parliament the fault must be mended.<sup>8</sup>

No sooner had Harley fallen from office than he voted with the Tories to censure the government for having too few men at the Battle of Almanza. Then in August he entered into negotiations with William Bromley, the steadfast champion of the Tory cause. Harley promised to act in concert with Bromley; Bromley resolved, notwithstanding Harley's "past mistakes," to join with him. A plan to elect Bromley to the Speaker's Chair cemented their alliance.<sup>9</sup> With Bromley's help Harley reconciled himself with the Earl of Rochester, the queen's uncle and a high Tory, though not with the Earl of Nottingham, likewise a high Tory, who remained suspicious of Harley's designs.<sup>10</sup> Nottingham had good reason to be suspicious, for Harley, who had begun his political career as a Whig, and continued it as a *politique*, was unwilling to commit himself wholeheartedly to the Tory party. He had two strings to his bow, and the second was an alliance with those Court Whigs who were disenchanted with the militancy of the junto Whigs. Preeminent among these Court Whigs was the Duke of Shrewsbury, cautious, charming, beloved by all, whom Harley won over by a sedulous, artful courtship. By the same means he gradually won over the Duke of Newcastle, a powerful electoral magnate from the north, whom Harley had made Lord Privy Seal in 1705. By flattering him with the prospect of leading a new ministry, Harley won over the Duke of Somerset, a pompous, self-important politician. Hope of a Garter sufficed to win over the Duke of Argyll. These Whig courtiers soon came to be known as the "juntilla."<sup>11</sup>

Historians as diverse as G.M. Trevelyan, Tresham Lever, and Henry Horwitz have concluded that the queen's naming Richard Lord Rivers as Lieutenant of the Tower and granting a regiment of dragoons to Colonel John Hill in January 1710 launched the offensive that ultimately divid-

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<sup>8</sup> Holmes and Speck, "Fall of Harley Reconsidered," *E.H.R.*, LXXX, 695-97; Snyder, "Godolphin and Harley," *H.L.Q.*, XXX, 270 (where Henry Snyder shows that Harley was prepared to replace Marlborough as commander with the Elector of Hanover).

<sup>9</sup> Stratford to Harley, 8 Aug. and 8 Oct. 1708, B.L. Loan 29/158/7; Harley to Stratford, 20 Aug. and 10 Oct. 1708, B.L. Loan 29/158/7; Bromley to Harley, 12 Oct 1708, B.L. Loan 29/127.

<sup>10</sup> William Coxe, *Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough* (London, 1893), II, 291; Nottingham to Bromley, 15 Nov. 1708, Finch MSS, Box 4950, Bundle 23, Leicestershire Record Office.

<sup>11</sup> H.M.C., *Bath*, I, 191, 195, 196; Harley to Newcastle, 22 Oct. 1708, Holles MSS Pw 2/95, Univ. of Nottingham Library; Sarah Duchess of Marlborough, *Private Correspondence* (London, 1838), I, 206-08, 393; H.M.C. *Portland*, IV, 538. Angus McInnes (*Robert Harley: Puritan Politician* [London, 1970], pp. 112-20.) has written an excellent account of Harley's winning over the Tories and Court Whigs. Alexander Cunningham (*History of Great Britain* [London, 1787], II, 281) states that Harley also won over the Duke of Ormond, a Tory, and the Duke of Hamilton, a Scottish peer.

ed, demoralized, and dismantled the Godolphin ministry.<sup>12</sup> In retrospect, these actions certainly proved to be the first step in the palace revolution of 1710, but it is doubtful that Robert Harley intended them to be so. In December 1709 the Whigs were in the ascendant, the Tories were few and discouraged, and Harley was unwilling to come up to London merely to “witness what a Whig majority would do in Parliament.”<sup>13</sup> That Harley, on the Earl of Essex’s death on January 10, advised the queen to name Rivers, a renegade Whig, to replace Essex as Constable of the Tower, and to give Essex’s regiment to Colonel Hill, Abigail Masham’s brother, is most likely, but the intent was less to bring down Godolphin than to please the queen by recapturing for her control of patronage in the army. In 1709, the queen had taken two hesitant steps in this direction: she had refused Peter Wentworth leave to sell his regiment until he had spoken with her, and she had refused to name General MacCartney to any employment whatever.<sup>14</sup> She now took a bolder step.

Marlborough saw at once that the central issue was control of patronage in the army, only he believed that the threat to his control of that patronage came from Abigail Masham, not the queen. He deserved better, he wrote to Lord Chancellor Cowper, than “to be made a sacrifice to the unreasonable passion of a bedchamber woman.”<sup>15</sup> He therefore remonstrated with the queen against both appointments, enlisted the Whigs in his cause, fled in anger to Windsor Lodge, and there drafted a letter to the queen demanding that she dismiss either Abigail or himself.<sup>16</sup> The central issue now became the removal of Abigail from court, and towards this end two strategies emerged. Marlborough favored a personal remonstrance to the queen demanding Abigail’s dismissal, a remonstrance buttressed by a threat to resign should the queen not dismiss her. The second strategy, advocated by the Earl of Sunderland, Secretary of State and a vehement Whig, provided for a parliamentary

<sup>12</sup> Trevelyan, *England Under Anne*, III, 43; Lever, *Godolphin*, p. 220; Henry Horwitz, *Revolution Politicks. The Career of Daniel Finch Second Earl of Nottingham, 1647-1730* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 218.

<sup>13</sup> Duchess of Marlborough, *Private Correspondence*, I, 158; Harley to Dr. Stratford, 2 Dec. 1709, B.L. Loan 29/121/3. Though no contemporary source names Harley as the author of this advice, he was in London by January 10 and two later sources name him as the author of this advice (Jonathan Swift, “Memoirs Relating to That Change Which Happened in the Queen’s Ministry in the Year 1710,” in Herbert Davis and Irving Ehrenpreis, eds., *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift* [Oxford, 1953], VIII, 117, and Lord Coningsby, “History of Parties,” *Archaeologia*, XXXVIII, 9.)

<sup>14</sup> Edward Gregg, *Queen Anne* (London, 1980), p. 300. Peter Wentworth wrote on January 27 (B.L. Add. MSS 31,143, f. 447), “Tis said the Queen has taken up the resolution to tell both Lord T—— and Lord M—— that all places as they fall she will have them filled by persons that shall own the obligation to her and not to them....”

<sup>15</sup> Henry Snyder, ed., *The Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence* (Oxford, 1975), III, 1413. Johann Hoffmann, the Imperial Resident, wrote (Onno Klopp, *Der Fall Des Hauses Stuart* [Wien, 1887], XIII, 376), “By promoting Colonel Hill the Queen makes public that a chambermaid has as much credit and influence in military matters as her Captain-General.”

<sup>16</sup> Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1412.

address demanding the removal of Mrs. Masham.<sup>17</sup> Both strategies failed.

Marlborough failed because he could not enlist his fellow ministers to join with him. The duke fled to Windsor Lodge on Sunday, January 14; on Monday the Whigs met at the Duke of Devonshire's house to consider the crisis, but could only come to a general resolution to support the duke in his refusal to comply with Hill's appointment. This allowed Godolphin, Cowper, Lord President Somers, and Secretary Boyle to work for a compromise: the queen should not insist upon Hill's having the regiment, the duke should not insist upon Abigail's dismissal. By Friday they had persuaded the queen not to insist upon Hill's appointment.<sup>18</sup> The next night the Whigs met again at Devonshire's house, where one of the more radical Whigs proposed that all the great officers should resign along with the duke, but few present were willing to do so, and Somers and Godolphin spoke against it. The assembled Whigs finally resolved that the queen's concession should satisfy Marlborough. Deserted by Godolphin and the Whigs, Marlborough deleted from his letter to the queen his threat to resign.<sup>19</sup>

The Earl of Sunderland's strategy met with no more success than Marlborough's, and for a like reason: men found it offensive to tell the queen whom she might employ as a chambermaid. "It was," wrote Lord Coningsby, Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, "impossible for any man of sense, honour, or honesty to come into an address to remove a dresser from the Queen."<sup>20</sup> The queen herself immediately began to canvass members of parliament against such an address, believing that they would not deprive her of the liberty to choose her own domestic servants, a liberty allowed the meanest housekeeper in the land.<sup>21</sup> The queen's canvassing proved so successful that on Monday, January 23, the day intended for the introduction of the address, the House was packed with members. Forseeing defeat, the promoters of the address declined to introduce it.<sup>22</sup> Sunderland failed to see what Godolphin and Somers saw clearly, that

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<sup>17</sup> Edward Gregg asserts (*Queen Anne*, p. 302) that Somers (as well as Sunderland) favored a parliamentary address for Abigail's removal, but neither of the sources he cites (Klopp, *Der Fall Des Hauses Stuart*, XIII, 378 and Thomas Lediard, *The Life of John Duke of Marlborough* [London, 1737], III, 21) supports his assertion. In fact, Somers opposed the address as disrespectful and unconstitutional (Coxe, *Marlborough*, III, 19; Cunningham, *History of Great Britain*, II, 279-80.)

<sup>18</sup> Coxe, *Marlborough*, III, 9-17; Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1408-19.

<sup>19</sup> James J. Cartwright, ed., *The Wentworth Papers* (London, 1883), p. 104. Though Marlborough deleted the threat to resign from his letter, he came to London to support Sunderland's strategy of a parliamentary address. See Henry Snyder, "The Duke of Marlborough's Request of his Captain-Generality for Life: A Re-Examination," *Society for Army Historical Research, Journal*, Vol. 45 (1967), pp. 78-81.

<sup>20</sup> Coningsby, *Archaeologia*, XXXVIII, 11.

<sup>21</sup> George Lockhart, *The Lockhart Papers* (London, 1817), p. 317.

<sup>22</sup> Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, p. 103.

such an address was out of harmony with parliamentary opinion and the constitution.

Somers and Godolphin were no doubt timid, but they were also realistic. They saw, in Godolphin's words, that "the interest of the Whigs will get the better of everything here, and will certainly be extended as far as Lord Marlborough would have it . . ." <sup>23</sup> Even Robert Harley believed this, for he became alarmed at what parliament might do if the queen insisted on giving the regiment to Hill, and so he advised her to yield on this point. <sup>24</sup> An inability to persuade parliament to vote an address against a mere chambermaid defeated Sunderland's plan; fear of the address parliament might vote if Marlborough resigned defeated Harley's. Godolphin and Somers, who read parliamentary opinion correctly, were the victors. They gained from the queen a concession that preserved Marlborough's control of patronage in the army.

The first deliberate, premeditated step in the palace revolution of 1710 occurred on April 14, when the queen, on the advice of Harley and Somerset, took the white staff of Lord Chamberlain from the Marquis of Kent and gave it to the Duke of Shrewsbury. The timing of this step was consummate. A tentative scheme of administration had been devised. <sup>25</sup> The queen had prorogued parliament, so there could be no angry addresses. Godolphin, who was kept in ignorance had gone to Newmarket. A reluctant Shrewsbury had finally agreed to enter the ministry alone. <sup>26</sup> Most important of all, the repercussions of the Sacheverell trial had revealed to the queen that the political nation was now quite prepared to support her in an effort to remove the Whigs from office. She need no longer fear a repetition of the humiliation she had suffered in 1708. The pulpits, the press, and the mob cried out for the Tory doctor and his cause; in the House of Lords the Court Whigs publicly supported the doctor; and in a by-election in Oxfordshire the Tories defeated by 200 votes a candidate set up by Marlborough and the Whigs. <sup>27</sup>

The naming of Shrewsbury as Lord Chamberlain mortified the Lord Treasurer and angered the Whigs. Godolphin addressed a fierce letter to the queen, but neither he nor the Whigs resigned or threatened to resign, either collectively or individually. In part they were paralyzed by the fact that they could hardly oppose the appointment of a friend of Marlborough's and a Whig. But principally they were paralyzed by the fear that so dramatic an act might cause the queen to dissolve parlia-

<sup>23</sup> Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1409.

<sup>24</sup> Coningsby, *Archaeologia*, XXXVIII, 10; [Nathaniel Hooke], *Account of the Conduct of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough* (London, 1742), pp. 230-31.

<sup>25</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, IV, 535-37. Henry St. John promptly complained to Harley that his place in the scheme—as Secretary at War—was no higher than the office in which he had previously served (*Ibid.*, p. 536).

<sup>26</sup> For Shrewsbury's reluctance see his letter to Somerset of April 9th printed in Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1463n.

<sup>27</sup> Geoffrey Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell* (London, 1973), pp. 224-39; Dyer's N.L., B.L. Loan 29/321, 2 Febr. 1710.

ment. "Everybody saw that the Queen was fully determined to dismiss all [who] should desire it," wrote Sir John Cropley, a Country Whig, and added that such an affront would probably lead to a dissolution, which "by reason of the fruitless trial of the Dog Doctor" would bring ruin on the Whigs.<sup>28</sup> The Earl of Sunderland fully agreed. "I think," he wrote to the Duchess of Marlborough, that "the Lord Treasurer is perfectly in the right, that we must endeavour to weather it as well as we can, in order to prevent the Parliament from being dissolved."<sup>29</sup>

The next step in the fall of the Godolphin ministry—the dismissal of the Earl of Sunderland on June 14—raises two questions that perplexed politicians then and have baffled historians ever since: what were Robert Harley's ultimate designs and why did not the Whig ministers resign collectively upon Sunderland's dismissal?

Robert Harley's ultimate designs are difficult to fathom since he had many irons in the fire. He courted politicians of all sorts, filled them with hope, promised them what they desired, and spared no pains to draw them into his measures. Thus, though James Brydges, Paymaster-General, might refer to "the new scheme of administration,"<sup>30</sup> there were in actuality four different schemes, a Tory scheme, Somerset's scheme, the queen's, and Harley's.

The Tories had no doubts what a new scheme of administration should comprehend: the dismissal of the old ministers, the nomination of Tory ministers, the dissolution of parliament, and the election of members dedicated to hereditary right and true religion. To this end the counties of England and Wales flooded the queen with loyal addresses, urging the dissolution of parliament. Robert Harley presented the address from Radnor, Sir Thomas Hanmer that from Suffolk.<sup>31</sup> But as April gave way to May and May to June, the addresses appeared to have no effect. William Bromley complained that he did not love to live on conjecturals and Henry St. John, in a rage, talked of fleeing to the country.<sup>32</sup>

The Duke of Somerset, who saw himself at the center of affairs, had his own scheme of administration in mind. He sought the removal of Marlborough, of Marlborough's friend Godolphin, and of Marlborough's son-in-law, Sunderland, but otherwise he would have everything con-

<sup>28</sup> Cropley to Stanhope, 23 April 1710, Stanhope MSS 34/16, Kent R.O.

<sup>29</sup> Sarah Churchill, *Private Correspondence*, I, 301-02.

<sup>30</sup> James Brydges to John Drummond, 20 May 1710, Huntington Library Stowe MSS 57, Vol. 3.

<sup>31</sup> [White Kennet], *The Wisdom of Looking Backward* (London, 1715), p. 31; Dyer's News Letter, 2 May 1710, B.L. Loan 29/321.

<sup>32</sup> William Bromley to James Graham, 22 April and 13 May, Leven MSS, Kendall R.O.; Duchess of Marlborough, *Private Correspondence*, I, 314. In June Peter Wentworth observed (*Wentworth Papers*, p. 117), "The talk continues of changes at Court, though now it dwindles only to removal of Sunderland...and among other reasons that are given that there is not a more thorough rout, is that Harley and Rochester are not agreed who shall fill the vacancies."

tinue on a Whig footing.<sup>33</sup> Towards this end he drove on the attack against Sunderland with more malice and inveteracy than anyone.<sup>34</sup> He won the battle on June 14th when the queen dismissed Sunderland from office, but in the ensuing months he lost the war to retain the Whigs in office.

The queen's scheme likewise provided for the reduction of the power of the Marlborough family. Jonathan Swift shrewdly observed that the first motive for these changes did not arise from the queen's belief that the Church was in danger, but from a desire to escape the dominion of those who kept her in tutelage.<sup>35</sup> On April 6, after a long, tense interview with the Duchess of Marlborough, Anne brought to an irrevocable end the last vestiges of her tutelage to the duchess. The queen fought equally fiercely to escape the tyranny of the Whigs, and the hyphen which joined the Whigs to the Marlboroughs was the Earl of Sunderland, an avid Whig and the Marlboroughs' son-in-law. In May and June Anne pressed for the dismissal of Sunderland with a vehemence that cast Godolphin into gloom. This did not mean, however, that she was ready to throw herself into the hands of the Tories. She wished to humble the Whigs, not break them. If they and Godolphin would break from the duchess and promise not to attack Abigail, she could live easily with them.<sup>36</sup> She was, she told Somers, entirely for moderation, and she proved this by bringing the Whig Speaker, Sir Richard Onslow, into the Privy Council at the same time that she appointed the Tory Lord Dartmouth to succeed Sunderland as Secretary of State.<sup>37</sup>

The person at the center of this web of intrigue was Robert Harley, and the crucial question is what scheme did he have in mind. J.P. Kenyon argues that he wished to form a moderate, bipartisan ministry, based on the present parliament, with Shrewsbury as a figurehead. Geoffrey Holmes differs, observing that Harley in May told the queen that she must "Govern by one party or the other but not by both," and spent the next four months persuading her to give up the idea of a mixed ministry.<sup>38</sup> Holmes, however fails to quote the next line in Harley's memorandum, which reads, "Tell the reason of that saying . . .," which suggests it was not Harley's dictum.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the alleged advice to govern by one party contradicts all of Harley's endeavors to rescue the queen from the tyranny of party. The truth about Harley's ultimate

<sup>33</sup> Godfrey Davies and Clara Buck, "Letters on Godolphin's Dismissal in 1710," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, III, 240.

<sup>34</sup> Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1497, 1509, 1512.

<sup>35</sup> Jonathan Swift, "Some Considerations," *Prose Works*, VIII, 103.

<sup>36</sup> Philip Roberts, ed., *The Diary of Sir David Hamilton 1709-1714* (Oxford, 1975), p. 9; Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1492, 1497.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1527; Hamilton, *Diary*, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> J.P. Kenyon, *Stuart England* (Penguin Books, 1978), p. 325; Geoffrey Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 379.

<sup>39</sup> B.L. Loan 29/10/20. Harley's phrase, "Tell the reason of that saying" is, of course, open to the interpretation that Holmes gives it; but such an interpretation contradicts Harley's conduct and other remarks.



design probably lies between the formulations of Kenyon and Holmes, and is best summed up by Harley's memorandum of May 30, "Graft the Whigs on the bulk of the Church party."<sup>40</sup>

This design can be seen in the struggle over Sunderland's successor as Secretary of State. Robert Harley first proposed his close friend, John Lord Poulett, a moderate Tory; but Lord Poulett refused the Seals, ostensibly because Lord Godolphin opposed his accepting them, more likely because the changes at court were not more universal. Harley then proposed the Earl of Anglesey, who was too High Tory for the Whigs, even for the lords of the "juntilla." The Duke of Newcastle protested vehemently against his appointment, causing Harley to back down.<sup>41</sup> Lord Poulett then protested equally vehemently against this retreat, writing to Harley,<sup>42</sup>

Is not the division to be among the Whigs of consequence, must not the Tories be united in order to that, must not the Queen for her own security do something substantial to engage them so as to be depended upon, and must not that appear to be obtained by your credit? Did not you with Earl Rivers at your own house name Anglesey in case I refused?

Harley responded by offering the Seals to an inoffensive Tory, Lord Dartmouth, who was the son-in-law of the Earl of Nottingham and who had attended Westminster school with the Duke of Devonshire. Dartmouth was acceptable both to the Tories and to the "juntilla." Though the path was labyrinthine, Harley had successfully grafted part of the Whigs onto the Church party.<sup>43</sup>

The dismissal of Sunderland in June differed signally from the retention of Mrs. Masham in January. Sunderland was a minister of state, administering the affairs of the realm, not a chambermaid, bringing the queen her gloves. Now, if ever, was the time for his colleagues to resign in protest. Yet they did not. Why they did not is a question that has received various answers. Professor Plumb, for one, has argued,<sup>44</sup>

Men in politics in this period obeyed their monarch's command

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<sup>40</sup> B.L. Loan 29/10/19.

<sup>41</sup> Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1512-13, 1515-16; L'Hermitage, B.L. Add. MSS 17, 677 DDD, f. 524. Anglesey was also unacceptable to part of the Tory party; the Duke of Leeds and the Duke of Buckingham opposed his having the Seals (Bromley to Graham, 28 June 1710, Leven MSS, Kendal R.O.). Peter Wentworth reported (B.L. Add. MSS 31, 143, f. 505) that "Anglesea was pitch[ed] upon, but disappoint[ed] by some disagreement among the Tories themselves."

<sup>42</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, IV, 543.

<sup>43</sup> Dartmouth's note to Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, VI, 7; H.M.C., *Rutland*, II, 190.

<sup>44</sup> J.H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England* (London, 1967), p. 154.

to serve. If offered an office they accepted it, and stayed until dismissed. They did not resign, or very, very rarely, and then, as with the Duke of Shrewsbury, usually on grounds of chronic illness. The convention was to obey the summons and stay. The force of this can be seen by the fact that when Sunderland was dismissed in 1710, nobody resigned with him; the suggestion that his Whig colleagues should resign in protest was regarded as outrageous.

The facts of political life in the reigns of William and Anne, however, belie this picture. In 1690 Shrewsbury resigned because William turned to the Tories. In 1693 Lord Cornwallis and Sir Richard Onslow left the Admiralty Board because the command of the fleet was entrusted to Tory admirals, and Edward Russell resigned as admiral rather than take orders from Nottingham. In 1694 Sir John Lowther resigned as Vice-Chamberlain because William turned to the Whigs; in 1697 Sir William Trumbull resigned because he had no say in the disposal of patronage; in 1699 Edward Russell, now Lord Oxford, resigned because Admiral Rooke continued at the Admiralty Board; and in 1701 Godolphin himself resigned from the Treasury because William dissolved parliament. It was the same under Queen Anne. The Earl of Rochester left a ministry he could not dominate and the Earl of Nottingham invited dismissal by refusing to serve with Devonshire and Somerset. But most deeply etched in the minds of men in 1710 were the resignations of Henry St. John, Simon Harcourt, and Thomas Mansell in 1708, when the queen dismissed Harley. Far from seeming outrageous, resignation in 1710 was seen to be honorable.<sup>45</sup>

Archdeacon Coxe, whose life of Marlborough contains a lengthy account of Sunderland's dismissal, attributes Harley's success to the timidity of the treasurer, divisions among the Whigs, and jealousies between the Whigs and the ministers.<sup>46</sup> The problem with this explanation is that, "the false brethren" aside (Shaftesbury's name for Somerset, Rivers, and Newcastle),<sup>47</sup> the Whigs were never more united and never less jealous of the Duumvirs, as Godolphin and Marlborough were called. On May 17 Godolphin met with the junto lords and promised to act in concert with them. Marlborough wrote Walpole that he would not take any step but such as his friends might judge right. In early May the Duumvirs and the Whigs agreed that their only hope lay in trusting Shrewsbury; then in early June they agreed that he could not be trusted.

<sup>45</sup> Henry Horwitz, *Parliament, Policy, and Politics in the Reign of William III* (Manchester, 1977), pp. 59, 109, 128, 257, 297; Trevelyan, *England Under Anne*, I, 274, 335, II, 328. James Brydges wrote Godolphin (28 May 1710), H.L. Stowe MSS 57, vol. 3), "as I owe the progress I have made in business and the improvement of my estate to your joint [Marlborough's and Godolphin's] goodness, so in case of those changes at Court, which are talked of, when your service calls for it, I shall lay down my employments with as much cheerfulness as I first came into it . . . ."

<sup>46</sup> Coxe, *Marlborough*, III, 77, 78, 88, 91, 111-12.

<sup>47</sup> T. Forster, *Original Letters of Locke, Algernon Sidney, and Anthony Lord Shaftesbury* (London, 1830), p. 261.

They thereupon decided that the best policy was to represent to the queen the fatal consequence of removing Sunderland, since his removal would mortify Marlborough, encourage the French to continue the war, and persuade the Dutch to accept a peace treaty injurious to the Allies. When the argument based on the fatal consequence of dismissing Sunderland failed to move the queen, they agreed, in a meeting at Devonshire's house, that the Duke of Marlborough should not resign.<sup>48</sup>

What handcuffed the ministers and prevented their collective resignation upon Sunderland's dismissal was not reverence for the crown or division among the Whigs; it was the belief that their collective resignation would precipitate the dissolution of parliament. Early in June the most considerable ministers in the House of Commons prepared to resign the minute Sunderland went out,<sup>49</sup> but they soon changed their minds. Johann Hoffmann, the Imperial Resident, saw why: "If the Junto and Whig party act from a sense of solidarity they will contribute to a complete change, to the advantage of the Tories, but if they do not resign their places they will retain the upper hand and gain time, upon which, given the crisis in foreign affairs, all depends."<sup>50</sup> Sir John Cropley drew the same conclusion:<sup>51</sup>

The other day my Lord Treasurer discovered the Secretary's Seals were offering to Lord Pawlett and that the Scheme was to be put in execution to the full of the project. The view of this new Cabinet was that on Lord Sunderland's dismissal Lord Treasurer, Duke of Marlborough, and every Whig would lay down and that from the disposition of the times a Parliament would be chose that would vote all they meant as to peace abroad and Church at home. With great difficulty this [Sunderland's dismissal] was delayed, but last week ... Walpole ... told me he expected this desperate stroke in a very few days ... all we hope for, and I fear in vain, is but to delay the Scheme till my Lord Duke makes peace . . . .

Fear of a new parliament was endemic among the Whigs. "The chiefest care now," wrote Marlborough, "should be that Parliament be preserved," and the duchess concluded that "as long as the Whigs fear an ill Parliament nothing can be done..."<sup>52</sup> The Whig ministers rightly

<sup>48</sup> Duchess of Marlborough, *Private Correspondence*, I, 315; William Coxe, *Memoir of Sir Robert Walpole* (London, 1798) II, 26-27; Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1467, 1479, 1509, 1512-13, 1514-15, 1516, 1520-21, 1528; H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 210-11.

<sup>49</sup> James Brydges to George Brydges, 2 June 1710, H.L. Stowe MSS 57, vol. 4.

<sup>50</sup> Klopp, *Der Fall Des Hauses Stuart*, XIII, 433, 438.

<sup>51</sup> Sir John Cropley to Stanhope, 17 June 1710, Stanhope MSS 34/16, Kent R.O. Professor Plumb (*Walpole*, I, 156n) takes the antecedent for "this desperate stroke" to be the ministers' resignation; I find it more likely that it refers to Sunderland's dismissal.

<sup>52</sup> Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1471; Duchess of Marlborough, *Private Correspondence*, I, 324.

feared a new parliament, since the ferment in the nation augured a Tory one. "I will be bold to foresee," wrote James Craggs to the duchess, "as the common people are now set, they [the Tories] will get at least three to one."<sup>53</sup> It is therefore little wonder that the ministers did not resign and that on June 14 they met at Devonshire's house to write a letter to Marlborough urging him not to resign. Your continuance at the head of the army, they wrote, "we look upon as the most necessary step that can be taken to prevent the dissolution of this Parliament."<sup>54</sup>

During the next six weeks Marlborough and Godolphin strove more earnestly than ever to preserve the present parliament. "Our all," wrote Marlborough to the Whig lords, depends on the continuance of parliament. The dissolution of parliament, Godolphin told the queen, meant "present ruin." To Shrewsbury especially they developed their argument: a change in the ministry and a dissolution of parliament would sink credit, hearten the king of France, and drive the Allies to make a separate peace.<sup>55</sup> To support their tottering authority at court Marlborough and Godolphin even enlisted the interposition of the Dutch and the emperor. At Godolphin's suggestion, the States, through their envoy, Martinus van Vrijberghen, presented the queen a memorial that urged her to make no further alterations in her ministry and to continue the present parliament. A month later, Count Gallas, the imperial envoy, delivered a letter to the queen from the emperor, imploring her not to dissolve parliament and to continue to consult the present ministry.<sup>56</sup>

Marlborough and Godolphin likewise enlisted the Whig party in their efforts to prevent a dissolution. The duke urged the Whigs to take such measures with Shrewsbury as would preserve the parliament; and the Lord Treasurer was even willing to countenance Lord Halifax's intrigues with Harley because Halifax had given "his word and honour he will be entirely firm to Parliament."<sup>57</sup> The Whigs hardly needed any encouragement to join with Marlborough and Godolphin, since they saw as clearly as any that the chief source of their power lay in their majority in parliament.<sup>58</sup> To protect this source of power they utilized a second, the vaunted Whig money power in the City. Upon Sunderland's fall, the governor and three directors of the Bank petitioned the queen to make no further

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 318.

<sup>54</sup> [Hooke], *Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough*, p. 259.

<sup>55</sup> Coxe, *Marlborough*, III, 93; Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1532, 1534-5, 1541, 1542, 1545, 1549.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 1532, 1534, 1548, 1595; W. Jessop to Newcastle, 4 July 1710, Holles MSS, Pw/138, University of Nottingham Library; Dyer's N.L., 4 July 1710, B.L. Loan 20/321; Coxe, *Marlborough*, III, 100; H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 212-213. The Elector of Hanover also protested against the dissolution of parliament (Winston Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times* [London, 1947], Book Two, p. 738).

<sup>57</sup> Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1543, 1553; Cox, *Walpole*, II, 31.

<sup>58</sup> W.A. Speck estimates (*Tory and Whig* [London, 1970], p. 113) that the Whig majority in the 1708 Parliament was 69.

changes, since the public credit could not be supported if further changes were made. The Whigs then propagated the belief that the credit of the nation depended wholly upon the probity, integrity, experience, and ability of the Lord Treasurer and upon the continuance of a parliament which had voted such large sums in the past. In August the directors of the Bank even went so far as to inform the queen that they would make no further loans unless she assured them there would be no more changes in the ministry and that parliament would not be dissolved.<sup>59</sup>

The Tories were as avid for a new parliament as the Whigs were fearful of it. "We think your proceedings too slow," William Stratford, the Tory Canon of Christ Church, wrote Edward Harley, "and are afraid you are terrified by the Bank. But should the power of the Bank come down to Kensington, we must call up Dr. Sacheverell and his posse to encounter them."<sup>60</sup> If the Tories gain a dissolution, wrote Hoffmann, they "will become masters of the ministry."<sup>61</sup> And Abel Boyer, the publicist, reported that the Tories fully recognized the need for a new parliament to support a new ministry. "For in our Political Constitution," he wrote, summarizing the Tory view, "if the Ministerial Part of the Government and the Parliament be not of a-piece, nothing can be expected from them but continual Jars and Misunderstandings, each contending to put the other in the Wrong, and obstructing what the other moves for the public Good."<sup>62</sup> The veteran Tory politician, Sir Thomas Hanmer, summed it up this way,<sup>63</sup>

The conclusion, therefore, the dullest of us may draw, that without that step [a dissolution] nothing can go on, for a new ministry with an old Parliament will be worse than the Gospel absurdity of a piece of new cloth in an old garment, or new wine in old bottles.

Despite Hanmer's castigation of this gospel absurdity, Harley continued to put off the dissolution of parliament. It was his pursuit of a mixed ministry that caused him to do so, a ministry composed (in Defoe's words) of the "disinterested, honestest men of both sides, without respect to Whig or Tory."<sup>64</sup> To this end he met with Lords Halifax, Cowper, and Somers in early July. By the 14th rumor reported that they had reached a compromise: parliament was not to be dissolved, Godolphin should con-

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<sup>59</sup> Abel Boyer, *History of Queen Anne* (London, 1735), p. 473; Davies and Buck, "Letters on Godolphin's Dismissal," *H.L.Q.*, III, 228. Brian Hill has written a judicious, thorough account of these events; see "The Change of Government and the Loss of the City," *The Economic History Review*, 2nd Ser., XXIV, No. 3, pp. 395-402.

<sup>60</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, VII, 1.

<sup>61</sup> Klopp, *Der Fall Des Hauses Stuart*, XIII, 438.

<sup>62</sup> Abel Boyer, *The History of the Reign of Queen Anne, digested into Annals*, IX (London, 1711), 235.

<sup>63</sup> H.M.C., *Bath*, III, 437.

<sup>64</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Secret History of the October Club, Part I* (London, 1711), p. 26.

tinue as Lord Treasurer, but the under-officers in the Treasury, including Godolphin's son, were to be removed to make room for others.<sup>65</sup> But rumor reported falsely, for the two sides had not reached an agreement. Harley blamed the failure on the refusal of Lords Cowper and Halifax to descend to particulars and to show how the continuance of parliament was practicable. There is no doubt much truth in this explanation of the failure, but the negotiations also failed because the Whigs would not sacrifice Lord Godolphin, a fact that Harley implied when he wrote Newcastle, "Perhaps when Lord Godolphin is out, that [the dissolution of Parliament] will be more treatable."<sup>66</sup>

Harley was, in fact, determined to remove Godolphin, for (in addition to pardonable desire for revenge for 1708) he saw that though a mixed ministry is possible a mixed management is not. In *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, Geoffrey Holmes has convincingly set forth the importance of the manager in British politics, "the keystone of the political structure."<sup>67</sup> But it is of the nature of management that it cannot be divided; Robert Harley might succeed Godolphin and Marlborough as manager, he could not share management with them. Harley understood this as well as any person, telling the queen on July 3, "You must preserve your character and spirit and speak to Lord Treasurer. Get quit of him"<sup>68</sup> In fact the management of patronage had already fallen to Harley, to the deep mortification of the Treasurer. Without consulting Godolphin, the queen named Lord Portmore as commander in Portugal, sent James Cresset (rather than Godolphin's nephew) to Hanover, refused to name Lord Raby to the Board of Trade (as Godolphin had suggested), and dismissed Lord Coningsby (Godolphin's friend and supporter) as Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, giving the post to the Earl of Anglesey.<sup>69</sup> Harley had gained power, but he soon discovered that managing from behind the curtain was awkward. The problem, however, was to persuade the queen to dismiss an old and loyal servant to this end. Harley wrote out a long memorandum on court favorites, showing that wise princes had always dismissed favorites who had grown wanton and exorbitant.<sup>70</sup> Gradually he won the queen over. By July 22 Shrewsbury had declined Harley's suggestion that he be Lord Treasurer and had urged Harley himself to head a Treasury commission. By August 5 a

<sup>65</sup> W. Jessop to Newcastle, 18 July 1710, Holles MSS Pw 2/139, University of Nottingham Library; H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 211-12; Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, VI, 11.

<sup>66</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 213. Halifax wrote Marlborough (Cox, *Marlborough*, III, 298), "I took great pains and went great lengths to prevent it [Godolphin's dismissal], but found at last that was the only obstacle to an accommodation that might not have been overcome. I thought nothing else worth contending for without it."

<sup>67</sup> Holmes, *British Politics*, pp. 192-93.

<sup>68</sup> B.L. Loan 29/10/19.

<sup>69</sup> Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1520, 1540, 1547, 1563, 1568, 1575.

<sup>70</sup> B.L. Loan 29/10/20.

Treasury commission of five had been perfected and presented to the queen, with Lord Poulett at the head and Harley in second place. On August 8 the queen dismissed her Lord Treasurer.<sup>71</sup> Godolphin's increasing rudeness to the queen, his continued friendship for the duchess, and the Bank's ultimatum of August 3 may have contributed to his fall, but the root cause was the impossibility of governing England with a mixed management.

By advising the queen to dismiss Godolphin, Robert Harley called his opponents' bluff. The Whigs had repeatedly declared that only Godolphin could find the money needed to pay the forces in Flanders, but Harley found a consortium of businessmen who were willing to remit £ 350,000 to the forces there.<sup>72</sup> Marlborough and Godolphin had repeatedly warned that the war could not be carried on if further alterations were made, but the Allies did not make a separate peace and Marlborough did not resign. By acting bravely and boldly, Harley had demonstrated that the Bank and the Allies were frail reeds upon which to support a ministry.

The dismissal of Godolphin persuaded most Englishmen that an entire change in the ministry and a dissolution of parliament would follow quickly.<sup>73</sup> Yet six weeks elapsed before the queen removed her Whig ministers and dissolved parliament. What caused the delay?

In part it arose from Robert Harley's absorption in the task of finding the money to pay the army in Flanders, in part it arose from his desire not to sink the public credit deeper by making further changes in the ministry, but chiefly it arose from his endeavors to create a coalition of the most moderate men of both parties. To this end he offered places on the new Treasury commission to Richard Hampden and John Smith, both Whigs, and when they refused brought in Henry Paget to please Newcastle and Robert Benson to please Argyle.<sup>74</sup> To this end he had the queen make Lord Cowper Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, an act William Bromley found wholly unaccountable.<sup>75</sup> And to this end he wrote frequently to the Duke of Newcastle, courted the Earl of Shaftesbury, a redoubtable Country Whig, and even began a dialogue with the Dissenters through Dr. Daniel Williams.<sup>76</sup>

During August Harley strove as resolutely as ever to free the queen from the tyranny of party, whether the Whig or Tory party, but his tactics differed from those he had pursued in July. In July he had attended several conferences with Charles Lord Halifax and other Whig lords,

<sup>71</sup> H.M.C., *Bath*, I, 198; H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 213-14.

<sup>72</sup> Hill, "Change of Government," *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd Ser. XXIV, 403.

<sup>73</sup> Among others James Lowther (to Gilpin, 8 August 1710, Lonsdale MSS, Carlisle R.O.), James Brydges (H.L. Stowe MSS 57, vol 4, fols. 112-13), William Bromley (to Graham, 13 Aug., Leven MSS, Kendal R.O.), and the Earl of Sunderland (Coxe, *Marlborough*, III, 306).

<sup>74</sup> Lowther to Gilpin, 10 August 1710, Lonsdale MSS, Carlisle R.O.; H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 213; Bromley to Graham, 1 Sept. 1710, Leven MSS, Kendal R.O.

<sup>75</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, IV, 563.

<sup>76</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 214, 215, 217, 218, 219; Cropley to Shaftesbury, P.R.O. 30/24/21; B.L. Loan 29/160/8.

with the purpose of discovering whether the present parliament would support a mixed ministry. Now, despite the pleas of Newcastle, he refused to resume those conferences or to believe that the present parliament was practicable.<sup>77</sup> Instead he sought to persuade individual Whig ministers, among them Newcastle, Devonshire, Somers, Cowper, Boyle, and Walpole, to remain in the government even though the queen dissolved parliament. He now sought to give reality to the policy he had formulated in May: "Graft the Whigs on the bulk of the Church party."<sup>78</sup>

Harley's bold scheme for grafting the Whigs on to the Church party soon foundered on the intransigence and unity of the Whigs. The very evening of the day upon which the queen dismissed Godolphin they met at Secretary Boyle's house and resolved to stand aloof from the new managers, to watch the public credit sink, to await the descent of the queen's affairs into inextricable difficulties, and then to return to her service on their own terms.<sup>79</sup> They did not resign, but neither did they agree to a dissolution. Richard Hampden, for instance, boldly told the queen that he could not accept a place on the Treasury commission unless she assured him that the present parliament would continue.<sup>80</sup> Lord Somers wrote Newcastle that if there were a new parliament and the elections went ill, which he believed they would, "we are utterly undone." And he refused to make those "small submissions" which might keep him in office.<sup>81</sup> Lord Cowper was the minister whom Harley most wanted to win over to the new scheme, but the utmost importunity could not bring Cowper out of his reserve.<sup>82</sup> Early in September, Godolphin and the Whig lords—Cowper, Somers, Sunderland, Wharton, Devonshire, and Orford—met once again to consider a course of action. Their decision was to resign should parliament be dissolved.<sup>83</sup> "It is incredible," Henry St. John wrote, "to what a degree 353 [the Whigs] are united in opposition." They strive, wrote Harley, "to drive us into a party."<sup>84</sup>

<sup>77</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 214, 215, 217, 219, IV, 571.

<sup>78</sup> B.L. Loan 29/160/8.

<sup>79</sup> James Ralph, *The Other Side of the Question* (London, 1742), pp. 445-46. Ralph's account of Whig tactics in August finds some confirmation in Edward Harley's more polemical account (H.M.C., *Portland*, V, 650), and even more in James Lowther's remark to William Gilpin (12 August 1710, Lonsdale MSS, Carlisle R.O.), "These new Managers will be hard set to keep up the Public Credit or hold the Staff long."

<sup>80</sup> Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, pp. 135, 138.

<sup>81</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 217; B.L. Loan 29/238, f. 364. On 22 August Somers wrote to the Duke of Montrose (Auchmar MSS GD 220/5, Edinburgh R.O.), "I am sorry to find Your Grace's opinion to concur with our other friends as to the little prospect there is of any success in endeavouring at a good election of Parliament...."

<sup>82</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 218, 219, 220. J.H. Plumb suggests (*Walpole*, I, 167) that Harley was so desperate to keep Lord Cowper as Lord Chancellor that he threatened suicide unless Cowper promised to stay. But a careful reading of page 45 of Cowper's *Diary*, which he cites, merely shows that Robert Monckton said that Newcastle might commit suicide if Cowper did not promise to stay.

<sup>83</sup> Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1632.

<sup>84</sup> St. John to Charles, Earl of Orrery, Bodleian MS. e. 180, f. 9; H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 215.



Had Harley agreed not to dissolve parliament, he might have won over some Whig ministers, but this would have meant in autumn meeting a parliament with a Whig majority.<sup>85</sup> And the Whigs would not, and probably could not, give him the security he asked that past heats be laid aside and the public business be supported. As Harley finally admitted to Newcastle, "it is impossible to carry on Parliament without intolerable heats, and even the party itself will not be governed by their rules, as they profess to several others that they will go their own way if they meet again."<sup>86</sup> Other observers of the political scene had reached this conclusion much earlier. "The Queen," wrote Hoffmann in June, "after the steps which she has taken can no longer make any use of a Parliament in which the Whigs are a majority."<sup>87</sup> And James Brydges observed in July that the new ministers "will hardly think themselves safe in a House of Commons where the majority is against them and where by a dissolution they think they shall have as considerable one on their side."<sup>88</sup> The Duke of Marlborough, probably wrongly, believed that Robert Harley was reading his correspondence. Had this been true, Harley would have found confirmation for all his fears in a letter the duke wrote to his duchess, "and if Parliament continues," he declared, "we will make some of their hearts ache."<sup>89</sup>

It was not only the intransigence of the Whigs that persuaded Harley that he could no longer run with the fox and ride with the hounds. It was also the impertunity of the Tories. They insisted that he choose between Whig and Tory. William Bromley complained of his dilatory proceedings, Dr. Stratford expressed astonishment that he should name Whigs to office, and Thomas Foley urged him to make further changes.<sup>90</sup> Finally, either in late August or early September, the Tories sent Dr. Francis Atterbury to Harley to tell him how uneasy they were that parliament was not dissolved, that Whigs were not turned out, and that they were kept in the dark as to his measures.<sup>91</sup> The Earl of Rochester was even blunter in an interview he had with the queen in September. He told her,<sup>92</sup>

that the plan to form a government independent of the parties was unworkable. Neither he, nor any other member of the High Church Party was inclined to serve with men who did not agree

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<sup>85</sup> Though Harley skillfully detached the juntilla lords from the junto, the juntilla lords had few adherents in the Commons. As Count Gallas observed of the new ministers on August 11 (Klopp, *Der Fall Des Hauses Stuart*, XIII, 476), "They have no real party behind them, but support themselves upon the favor of the Queen."

<sup>86</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 219.

<sup>87</sup> Klopp, *Der Fall Des Hauses Stuart*, XIII, 438.

<sup>88</sup> Davies and Buck, "Godolphin's Dismissal," *H.L.Q.*, III, 230-31.

<sup>89</sup> Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1544.

<sup>90</sup> B.L. Loan 29/196, f. 84; H.M.C., *Portland*, VII, 11; Foley to Harley, 23 August 1710, B.L. Loan 29/136.

<sup>91</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, V, 650-51.

<sup>92</sup> Klopp, *Der Fall Des Hauses Stuart*, XIII, 586.

with them in principle. On the other hand, if the Queen trusted the High Church Party, it would serve her as one body.

Harley was enraged and the queen annoyed by this blunt talk, but they had no choice but to yield to Tory demands. They must meet a parliament that autumn and they must find support there for their new scheme of administration. Otherwise Rochester's jest that before the winter was over Shrewsbury would go sick into the country and Harley flee to France in a cockboat might prove true.<sup>93</sup>

The decisive turn to a Tory scheme came on the first day of September. During the last week of August many Englishmen were confident—and others alarmed—that a coalition was nearing completion: the queen had met with Cowper, Harley had visited Halifax, and Rochester was displeased.<sup>94</sup> Then the scene changed abruptly. On September 1 the queen named Rochester Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall in the place of Godolphin and the same day Bromley wrote that he had received "assurances that no Interest will be considered but the Church's," that parliament will be dissolved, and that "Thoroughers will be taken care of." He also reported that Rochester meets and confers with the Duke of Shrewsbury and Robert Harley.<sup>95</sup> By September 12 Harley had drawn up his scheme of administration, a wholly Tory scheme: Rochester was to be Lord President, Buckingham Lord Steward, St. John Secretary of State, Harcourt Attorney General, Grenville Secretary at War or Comptroller, and Aislabie and Drake Commissioners of the Admiralty.<sup>96</sup> News of victories in Spain and a rise in Bank stock made the time propitious to embark on the new scheme. On Wednesday morning, the 20th, the queen dismissed Somers and Devonshire and allowed Secretary Boyle to resign. On Thursday in council the queen, permitting no debate, declared the parliament dissolved. On Friday, the Earl of Orford resigned as First Lord of the Admiralty and the Earl of Wharton as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. On Saturday Lord Cowper finally persuaded the queen to take back the Great Seal. Never in the memory of men had there been so entire a change in the ministry, and the churchmen in many parishes rang the bells for joy.<sup>97</sup>

Though Harley capitulated to the demands of the Church party, his heart was still committed to moderation. "As soon as the Queen has shewn strength and ability to give law to both sides," he wrote

<sup>93</sup> Cartwright, *Wentworth Papers*, pp. 135-36.

<sup>94</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 218, IV, 584, VII, 16; Walter Graham, ed., *The Letters of Joseph Addison* (Oxford, 1941), p. 234.

<sup>95</sup> L'Hermitage, B.L. Add. MSS 17,677 DDD, f. 590v; Bromley to Graham, *Leven MSS*, Kendal R.O.

<sup>96</sup> "12 Sept: 1710," B.L. Loan 29/10/19.

<sup>97</sup> Rochester replaced Somers, Buckingham Devonshire, and St. John John Boyle. The Admiralty and Great Seal were put into commission; Ormond replaced Wharton in Ireland. In order to prepare the proclamation for the dissolution, Harcourt had replaced Montague on September 16 as attorney-general.

Newcastle, "then will moderation be truly shewn in the exercise of power without regard to parties only."<sup>98</sup> Indeed he pursued moderation even amidst the September massacre, giving a teller's place to John Smith, maintaining over thirty Whigs in subaltern offices, and balancing the Tories William Drake and John Aislabie at the Admiralty Board with the Whigs Sir John Leake and Sir George Bynge.<sup>99</sup> He even pleaded with Lord Cowper to continue as Lord Chancellor, arguing that "a Whig game intended at bottom," but Lord Cowper declined, declaring that "things were plainly put into Tory hands; a Whig game, either in whole or part, impracticable; that to keep in, when all my friends were out, would be infamous."<sup>100</sup>

The dissolution of parliament placed the fate of the new ministry in the hands of the electorate. As Lord Wharton bluntly told Lord Dartmouth, "If you have the majority we are undone, if we have the majority, you are broke."<sup>101</sup> There followed in October a general election of unprecedented fury, in which more constituencies, 130 of them, were contested than ever before in the queen's reign. The final result gave the Tories a majority of 151 seats, which they promptly used to elect William Bromley their Speaker.<sup>102</sup>

This Tory victory raises a question of central importance: could a monarch in the early eighteenth century choose ministers of his or her choice and then secure a parliament to support them? Put more particularly, did the court in October 1710 manage the elections so as to secure a Tory majority?

The answer appears to be that the court in 1710 contributed little to the Tory triumph at the polls. The government did not alter the commissions of peace, did not change the Lord Lieutenants, did not remove the revenue officers, did not continue the changes at court, even though Tories everywhere cried out for such changes.<sup>103</sup> "A great majority of the Church Party was returned," wrote Jonathan Swift, "without the least Assistance from the Court."<sup>104</sup> Swift exaggerated, for the queen did

<sup>98</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 219.

<sup>99</sup> Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 380. James Craggs wrote to Sir Thomas Erle on September 23 (Erle MSS 2/12, f. 34, Churchill College), "The changes go on merrily but I find both Whigs and Tories out of Humour and Moderation is again set up in Mixture of both kinds. Mr. Smith and Russell Roberts are made Tellers, and they say William Drake and Mr. Aislaby are to be added to Sir George Bing and Sir John Lake [Leake] for the Admiralty."

<sup>100</sup> *The Private Diary of William First Earl Cowper* (Eton, 1833), pp. 43-44.

<sup>101</sup> H.M.C., *Portland*, II, 219.

<sup>102</sup> Speck, *Tory and Whig*, p. 113; for a fuller analysis of the 1710 election, see Speck, *Ibid.*, pp. 85-94.

<sup>103</sup> See particularly the complaints of Viscount Dupplin (H.M.C., *Portland*, IV, 558-59, 564, Sir Robert Davers (*Ibid.*, 590), the Earl of Orrery (*Ibid.*, 600), Dr. Stratford (*Ibid.*, VII, 20), Elizabeth Duchess of Hamilton (B.L. Loan 29/133/9, 7 October 1710), the Duke of Beaufort (H.M.C., *Portland*, IV, 611); Thomas Coke (*Ibid.*, IV, 612), and the Scottish Tories (George Lockhart, *Lockhart Papers*, I, 319).

<sup>104</sup> Swift, "Enquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's last Ministry," *Works*, VIII, 143.

remove Whigs from the London Lieutenancy and did name Rochester Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall, Beaufort Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, John Webb Governor of the the Isle of Wight, and Lord Berkeley of Stratton as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. But that was all she did. The publication of *Faults on Both Sides*, a pamphlet written by Simon Clement at Harley's direction, soon made manifest why the court held back. Harley did not wish to see the election of a Tory majority that would lay down the law to the queen. He wished—as did Godolphin and Marlborough in 1705—to see a parliament elected in which there would be a balance of parties and in which the court would hold the balance. Such a parliament would offer solid support to a coalition of the honestest men of both sides.<sup>105</sup>

Unfortunately for Robert Harley, the passions unleashed by Sacheverell's impeachment and the growing desire for peace swept the Tories into parliament. Seeing themselves attacked through the sides of Dr. Sacheverell, the clergy everywhere preached inflammatory sermons, cried out that the church was in danger, wrote pamphlets in favor of church and monarchy, went house to house pressing people to vote, and connived at the open violence of the mob. In Coventry eight hundred rude persons drove the Earl of Sunderland from the city; in Westminster the mob knocked down and wounded those who dared to vote for the two Whig candidates.<sup>106</sup> The Whigs cried "No Popery, No Pretender"; the Tories cried out, "Queen and Church." The Tories likewise promised "a safe, honourable, and speedy peace."<sup>107</sup> The combined appeal of Church, Prerogative, and Peace carried all before it. The ferment became so great that voters even ignored their obligations to patrons and benefactors.<sup>108</sup> To attempt to oppose the wave of High Church feeling, one contemporary observed, was as sensible as trying to stop the Thames at London Bridge with one's thumb.<sup>109</sup> The Duchess of Marlborough's friend, Dr. Hare, made the most judicious comment of all. He remarked that the spirit of the gentry is Toryism, that it lay dormant for some years, but that the Sacheverell affair roused it to such a degree "that at this juncture all the weight of the Court could hardly have stood against it, much less can one

<sup>105</sup> *Faults on Both Sides*, in *Somers Tracts*, XII, 695-96, 700; *The Observer* for 11-14 October (IX, No. 78) summarized the arguments of *Faults on both Sides* for its readers. Abel Boyer (*Annals*, IX, 248) also believed that the court "designed to carry things fair and even between both Parties, and therefore wished only for such a Majority of the High Church in the House of Commons as might countenance the New Scheme."

<sup>106</sup> Holmes, *Sacheverell*, pp. 248-55; Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, VI, 13-14; Alexander Cunningham, *The History of Great Britain* (London, 1787), II, 305; Abel Boyer, *Annals*, IX, 248-49; Dyer's N.L. for 7 October, B.L. Loan 29/321; James Craggs to Stanhope, 13 October 1710, Stanhope MSS 73/18, Kent R.O.

<sup>107</sup> Boyer, *Annals*, IX, 249; George Granville to the Gentlemen of Cornwall, 29 September 1710, Buller MSS BO/23/63, Cornwall R.O.

<sup>108</sup> Boyer, *Annals*, IX, 249.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in Mary Ransome, "The General Election of 1710" (University of London M.A. thesis, 1938), p. 128.

expect they would not carry it, when the Court go entirely in them."<sup>110</sup>

The general election of October 1710 marked the final demise of the Godolphin ministry; there was now no hope of using parliament to recover office. It also marked the final demise of Harley's plan for a coalition of the moderate men of both parties. "The elections go entirely one way," observed James Craggs, "so that they [the Tories] will have it in their power to do just what they please." A judgment with which James Brydges agreed. "When a Majority in Parliament is powerful and warm," he wrote in November, "'tis not in the power of the Ministry to do always as they once intended."<sup>111</sup> Robert Harley did not agree, and used all the arts of management during the next four years to resist the importunities of the Tories. But again and again he yielded to their demands, thereby illustrating the conclusion reached by the anonymous author of *The Secret History of Arlus and Odolphus*,<sup>112</sup>

But 'tis certain this fermented folly [the distinction of parties] is so prevalent, that now no statesmen can propose to support themselves, that are not openly at the Head of a Party, in defence of whose principles they must declare themselves resolved to stand or fall.

Though Robert Harley had failed to establish a ministry of the moderate men of both parties, he had succeeded in toppling the Godolphin ministry. And so the question can usefully be addressed once again: why did Robert Harley succeed in 1710 where he had failed in 1708? Clearly it was not because he now enjoyed the favor of the queen, as G.V. Bennett, Geoffrey Holmes, Sir Ivor Jennings, David Lindsay Keir, H.T. Dickinson, J.R. Jones, and Robert Walcott imply,<sup>113</sup> since he had enjoyed her full and unstinted support in 1708. Nor was it because the pursuit of peace had made Godolphin and Marlborough no longer indispensable, as Edward Gregg and J.H. Plumb suggest,<sup>114</sup> for Robert

<sup>110</sup> Duchess of Marlborough, *Private Correspondence*, I, 402. Both Mary Ransom ("General Election of 1710," p. 128) and W.A. Speck (*Tory and Whig*, pp. 85-87) agree that public opinion swamped court influence. W.A. Speck adds that though the court won every election but that of December 1701 during these years, "it was only because it went with public opinion."

<sup>111</sup> Craggs to Erle, 14 October 1710, Erle MSS 2/12, f. 35, Churchill College; Brydges to Leigh, H.L. Stowe 57, IV, 201.

<sup>112</sup> Anonymous, *The Secret History of Arlus and Odolphus* (London, 1710), p. 6. George Lockhart (*Lockhart Papers*, I, 320) observed: "When the Parliament was assembled, in November 1710, it soon appeared that there was a great majority of Tories; and all the former little subdivisions of the two grand parties were united and made two opposites, viz. Whigs and Tories."

<sup>113</sup> Bennett, *Tory Crisis*, pp. 121-22; Holmes, *British Politics*, pp. 205-09; Jennings, *Party Politics* (Cambridge, England, 1961), II, 31; Keir, *The Constitutional History of Modern Britain Since 1485* (Princeton, N.J., 1960), pp. 281-82, 287; Dickinson, *Bolingbroke* (London, 1970), p. 70; Jones, *Country and Court* (London, 1978), pp. 337-38; Walcott, *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), p. 153.

<sup>114</sup> Gregg, *Queen Anne*, pp. 300, 315; Plumb, *Walpole*, I, 157.

Harley in 1708 as well in 1710 sought Godolphin's removal and was prepared to replace Marlborough with the Elector of Hanover.<sup>115</sup> Nor was it because the Whigs were divided in 1710, as Archdeacon Coxe, Winston Churchill, G.M. Trevelyan, and Angus McInnes suggest,<sup>116</sup> for (the juntilla lords excepted) the Whigs and Duumvirs were never more united. They met together for consultation at every crisis and they agreed promptly on the tactics to be adopted. What paralyzed them on each occasion was the fear that a collective resignation would precipitate the dissolution of parliament, their only stay of support.

In the final analysis, Robert Harley succeeded in 1710 because a revolution in opinion in the constituencies, caused by war weariness and the impeachment of Sacheverell, had made a Tory parliament likely, if not certain. Throughout the year 1710 a consciousness of what the existing parliament or a future parliament might do shaped the actions of politicians. During the January crisis the probability that parliament would defeat an address to remove Mrs. Masham deterred the friends of the Earl of Sunderland from introducing such an address into the House of Commons, and fear what parliament might do if Essex's regiment were given to Colonel Hill led Harley to advise the queen not to insist upon it. In April Godolphin and the Whigs acquiesced in Shrewsbury's appointment in order to prevent the dissolution of parliament, the chief buttress of their ministry. Fear of a dissolution of parliament paralyzed the Whigs again in June, when the queen dismissed the Earl of Sunderland, and they clung to office like limpets to a rock.

In the ensuing months the Whigs hoped that Marlborough's indispensability abroad and Godolphin's indispensability at home would check any further changes, but Harley called their bluff, dismissed Godolphin, maintained the credit, and continued the war. It was not the Bank or the Allies that supported the present ministry, but a Whig majority in parliament. The moment Robert Harley determined that the existing parliament would not support his new scheme of administration, he resolved upon a dissolution, though he still hoped to graft important Whigs, such as Boyle and Cowper, on to the new ministry. When it became evident that no Whigs of importance would support him, he turned to the Earl of Rochester, embraced a Tory scheme, dismissed the leading Whigs, and had the queen dissolve parliament. Even then he still pursued moderation, hoping to secure a balance of parties in the new parliament by denying the Tories the full support of the court in the elections. But the anger of the gentry at paying four shillings in the pound for an endless war and the passions unleashed by the impeachment of Sacheverell swept everything before it. The gentlemen of England returned a Tory parlia-

<sup>115</sup> Snyder, *Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, 1580 n. 4, 1598.

<sup>116</sup> Coxe, *Marlborough*, III, 77, 78, 88, 91, 111-12; Churchill, *Marlborough*, II, 746; Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, 39; McInnes, *Robert Harley*, pp. 115-16.

ment that demanded a Tory government. It was not the court that dictated the outcome, but the electors of England. Because a political revolution preceded, accompanied, and made possible a palace revolution, Robert Harley succeeded in toppling the Godolphin ministry in 1710.

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