

JOHN LOCKE, WILLIAM PENN, AND THE QUESTION OF LOCKE'S PARDON

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Shortly after Locke's death, Jean Le Clerc began collecting materials for the short biography he was planning to publish in the periodical he edited, the *Bibliothèque Choisie*. He had known Locke in Holland but had very little knowledge of his earlier career in England, and he sought information from some of his English friends. One of these was Lady Masham, who sent a long letter detailing what she knew or had been able to find out from some of Locke's other friends. One of the things she mentioned was that Locke had once received, but had turned down, the offer of a pardon:

After the Death of *King Charles*, *Mr. Penn* (with whom *Mr. Locke* had been long before acquainted in the Universitie, and than whom no man did ever more generously make use of Court Favour for the Service of others) undertook to procure a Pardon for *Mr. Locke* of *King James* and (as I am told) it was actually offer'd him, but he would not accept of it as not owning that he needed it.¹

Le Clerc was deeply appreciative for information of this kind, and in his biography, published a few months later, he repeated Lady Masham's account almost word for word:

Après la mort du Roi Charles II, qui arriva le 16. de Fevrier 1685. *Mr. Penn*, que *Mr. Locke* avoit connu dans l'Université, & qui employa avec beaucoup de générosité le credit, qu'il avoit alors auprès du Roi Jaques, enterprit d'en obtenir un pardon pour lui, & l'auroit en effet obtenu; si *Mr. Locke* n'avoit

¹ Masham to Le Clerc, 12 Jan. 1705, Jean Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, ed. Maria Grazia and Mario Sina (4 vols., Florence, 1987–97), ii. 507.

répondu qu'il n'avoit que faire de pardon, puis qu'il n'avoit commis aucun crime.²

Le Clerc's account was quickly translated into English and was published the following year.³ During the remainder of the eighteenth century many further short biographies of Locke were published, but these contained nothing new, in most cases being simply paraphrases or abridgements of Le Clerc's account.⁴ It was not until 1829, when Lord King published *The Life and Letters of John Locke*, that any new material came to light. King accepted Le Clerc's account of Penn's efforts on Locke's behalf, but he added that Locke had also received similar help from the Earl of Pembroke. In support of this he published, from Locke's papers, a letter from Pembroke, written in August 1685, which, though it did not specifically mention a pardon, certainly did show that Pembroke had spoken to James II on Locke's behalf and had received assurances from him.⁵ King also printed a letter from another of Locke's friends, David Thomas, which mentioned that James Tyrrell had told him that 'Will. Penn hath moved the King for a pardon for you, which was as readily granted'.⁶ This letter was dated November 1687, but King did not explain how the pardon Locke had now been granted related to the one he had supposedly turned down two years previously.⁷

² 'Eloge du Feu Mr. Locke', *Bibliothèque choisie*, 6 (1705), 371–2.

³ *The Life and Character of Mr. John Locke* (London, 1706).

⁴ See, for example, *Biographia Britannica: Or, the Lives of the Most Eminent Persons who have Flourished in Great Britain and Ireland* (6 vols., London, 1747–66), v. 2997. For a discussion of these earlier accounts, see Mark Goldie, 'The Early Lives of John Locke', *Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 3 (2007), 57–87.

⁵ Pembroke to Locke, 20 Aug. 1685, *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. E. S. de Beer (9 vols., Oxford, 1976–), ii. 729.

⁶ Thomas to Locke, 29 Nov. 1687, *Correspondence*, iii. 307.

⁷ Lord King, *The Life and Letters of John Locke* (London, 1829), 157–9.

Fox Bourne had no access to Locke's papers and was forced to rely on King's transcripts. He also quoted from Thomas's letter but dismissed King's date as clearly incorrect: 'Lady Masham, in the letter to Le Clerc which has been so often quoted, confirms the report of Penn's having procured the offer of a pardon for Locke, but assigns it to the beginning of James's reign'.⁸ He was wrong about this—Thomas's letter was undoubtedly written in 1687—but he did have a valid point: if Locke had been offered a pardon early in James's reign and had turned it down, what was Penn doing trying to obtain another one in the autumn of 1687?

Maurice Cranston's account was brief and not entirely satisfactory. He did not even mention Thomas's letter, let alone discuss its date or content. He was, however, able to make use of Benjamin Rand's edition of Locke's correspondence with Edward Clarke, and he quoted from this a letter, written in March 1688, which mentioned Locke's surprise at hearing 'that W. P. had procured your cousin a pardon'. Cranston correctly identified 'W. P.' as Penn and the 'cousin' as Locke himself, and he added that 'the pardon was one from James II which Locke did not want'. A footnote cited Lady Masham's account. Cranston also mentioned another letter to Clarke, which requested that Tyrrell should 'unsay' to Penn what he had previously told him about this pardon. Unfortunately Cranston did not pursue the matter any further, and he made no mention of any of the other references to this business in Locke's correspondence with Clarke.⁹

Richard Ashcraft was able to make use of de Beer's edition of Locke's correspondence, and his account was much more thorough. His verdict was straightforward and wholly negative. In his view the historical evidence shows that no pardon was ever offered to Locke, that he did not refuse to accept one, and that he never applied for

⁸ H. R. Fox Bourne, *The Life of John Locke* (2 vols., London, 1876), ii. 23n.

⁹ Maurice Cranston, *John Locke: A Biography* (London, 1957), 298. The letters are Locke to Clarke, 9/19 Mar., 11/21 May 1688, *Correspondence*, iii. 406, 455.

one or requested any of his friends to apply for one on his behalf. The entire story of Locke's pardon was simply a myth, which 'like the myth of his political innocence, deserves a decent and long-overdue burial'.¹⁰

In his recently published biography Roger Woolhouse was not quite so dismissive, but he came to broadly similar conclusions. Like Ashcraft, he rejected Lady Masham's account and concluded that she had either misremembered or was misinformed. Locke did not receive the offer of a pardon, and would not have wanted one if it had been offered.¹¹

Penn has been the subject of many biographies, mostly unscholarly, but these have not shed any new light on the matter. There is no mention of Locke or his pardon in Joseph Besse's biography, published in 1726, only eight years after Penn's death.¹² Later biographers have followed Le Clerc, usually without acknowledgement and often with imaginative embellishments. A particularly striking example was provided by Mason Locke Weems, better known as the originator of the story of George Washington and the cherry tree:

Finding the King in such good humour, Penn put in a word for his friend the celebrated John Locke, who it is known was almost if not altogether *a quaker*, and who had recently been deprived of his place and salary in the University of Oxford. 'Well, William,' replied the King, in the same gracious manner, '*for thy sake I do pardon John Locke, and thou mayest so tell him from me.*'¹³

¹⁰ Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton, 1986), 513.

¹¹ Roger Woolhouse, *Locke: A Biography* (Cambridge, 2007), 258–60.

¹² *A Collection of the Works of William Penn*, (2 vols., London, 1726), i. 1–238.

¹³ Mason Locke Weems, *The Life of William Penn: The Settler of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1836), 180–1.

Similar, if rather more sober, accounts can be found in most other biographies of Penn, including several quite recent ones.¹⁴ The editors of Penn's papers have also accepted a version of the story, stating that 'in 1686, while living in exile in the Netherlands, he [Locke] had snubbed WP's efforts to obtain a pardon for him from James II'.¹⁵

The aim of this article is to see what, if anything, lies behind these various accounts, Lady Masham's especially. Although it is clear that no pardon was ever granted Locke, it is equally clear that some of his contemporaries believed that one had been granted, or at least offered, to him. It is also evident from Locke's correspondence with John Freke that Freke was in some way involved in mysterious transactions with Penn, the nature of which Locke wished to conceal. It is therefore well worth having a closer look at the available evidence, not all of which has been examined by earlier writers, to try to ascertain, in so far as this is possible, whether Locke did ever seek a pardon, whether he was ever offered one, and whether Penn was in any way involved.

I

¹⁴ Thomas Clarkson, *Memoirs of the Private and Public Life of William Penn* (2 vols., London, 1813), i. 436; William Hepworth Dixon, *William Penn: An Historical Biography* (London, 1851), 292; Samuel M. Janney, *The Life of William Penn*, 2nd edn. (Philadelphia, 1852), 270; John Fiske, *The Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America* (2 vols., London, 1899), ii. 303; John W. Graham, *William Penn, Founder of Pennsylvania* (London, 1917), 174–5; William C. Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism* (London, 1919), 167; C. E. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660–1688* (London, 1931), 181; C. E. Vulliamy, *William Penn* (London, 1933), 211; Bonamy Dobrée, *William Penn, Quaker and Pioneer* (London, 1932), 257; William I. Hull, *William Penn, A Topical Biography* (Oxford, 1937), 246; William I. Hull, *Benjamin Furly and Quakerism in Rotterdam* (Swarthmore, Pa., 1941), 96; Vincent Buranelli, *The King and the Quaker: A Study of William Penn and James II* (Philadelphia, 1962), 84, 185; Joseph E. Illick, *William Penn the Politician: His Relations with the English Government* (Ithaca, NY, 1965), 137.

¹⁵ *The Papers of William Penn*, ed. Richard S. Dunn, Mary Maples Dunn, et al. (5 vols., Pennsylvania, 1981–7), iii. 471n.

It is not at all easy to say just how well Locke and Penn knew one another. Several of Penn's biographers have seen, or at least imagined, a close friendship. One has described Locke as one of Penn's 'most intimate friends', and others have referred to the 'lifelong friendship' between them or described them as 'always friends'.¹⁶ This would appear to be a considerable exaggeration. Penn and Locke did have some friends in common, notably John Freke, who was a cousin of Penn's, Benjamin Furly, the Quaker merchant, and William Popple, the translator of the *Epistola de Tolerantia*, and though they were never close they do seem to have known one another.

Most probably they first met at Oxford. Lady Masham described them as 'acquainted in the Universitie'. Penn went up to Christ Church as a gentleman commoner in the autumn of 1660.¹⁷ Although Locke was quite heavily involved in undergraduate teaching, he was not Penn's tutor, and none of Penn's exercises are preserved in his herbarium.¹⁸ There was also a considerable difference in age: Penn was twelve years younger and had only just turned sixteen. It is unlikely they would have found much in common. Locke had come from a puritan background, as had Penn, but he had welcomed the Restoration and had written in defence of the imposition of Anglican ceremonial. Penn already took a different view, and he was sent down, apparently in the autumn of

¹⁶ Augustus C. Buell, *William Penn as Founder of Two Commonwealths* (New York, 1904), 99; Mabel Richmond Brailsford, *The Making of William Penn* (London, 1930), 95; Graham, *William Penn*, 142.

¹⁷ He matriculated on 26 October, Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses* (2 vols., London, 1891–2), ii. 1141.

¹⁸ P. Long, 'The Mellon Donation of Additional Manuscripts of John Locke from the Lovelace Collection', *Bodleian Library Record*, 7 (1962–7), 190–3. For Locke's pupils, see J. R. Milton, 'Locke's Pupils', *Locke Newsletter*, 26 (1995), 95–118.

1661, for refusal to conform. In November Pepys, who knew his father well, described him as ‘lately come from Oxford’.¹⁹

In the years that followed, Penn moved still further away from the religious mainstream. At the end of 1667 Pepys heard that he had recently returned from Ireland and ‘is a Quaker again, or some very melancholy thing’.²⁰ Locke did not look upon Quakers any more favourably. Back in the 1650s he had told his father that they were well advised to remain bareheaded, ‘the keepinge of the head to hott being dangerous for mad folks’.²¹ By 1667 he had become convinced of the need for religious toleration, but he evidently had some doubts about extending this to Quakers, whom he seems to have looked upon as irrational enthusiasts.²²

One interest Locke and Penn did have in common was American colonization. In 1669–70 Locke played an important part in drafting the *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*, and he was further involved in extensive revisions during the summer of 1682.²³ He

¹⁹ The Diary of Samuel Pepys, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (11 vols., London, 1970–83), ii. 206 (1 Nov. 1661). In a later entry Pepys described Penn as ‘much perverted in his opinion’ by John Owen, *ibid.* iii. 73 (28 Apr. 1662).

²⁰ *Ibid.* viii. 595 (29 Dec. 1667).

²¹ Locke to John Locke sen. 25 Oct. 1656, *Correspondence*, i. 41–2. See also the contemptuous remarks about James Nayler in his letter of 15 Nov. 1656, *ibid.* 43–4.

²² *An Essay Concerning Toleration, and Other Writings on Law and Politics, 1667–1683*, ed. J. R. Milton and Philip Milton (Oxford, 2006), 286. These remarks appear in the First Draft (*ibid.* 306) and in Locke’s autograph but were deleted in a later copy, MS Locke c. 28, fo. 29^f. For other negative comments on Quakers, see *Drafts for the Essay Concerning Human Understanding and Other Philosophical Writings*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch and G. A. J. Rogers (Oxford, 1990), i. 71 (Draft A § 42), and also the remark in *Philanthropy*, a work of uncertain date and authorship, where they were described as ‘a great instance, how little truth & reason operates upon mankind’, *An Essay Concerning Toleration*, 402.

²³ The 1669 draft, NA, PRO 30/24/47/3, printed in *The Thirty Third Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records* (London, 1872), Appendix III, 258–69. For a discussion of this manuscript, most of which is not in Locke’s hand, see J. R. Milton, ‘John Locke and the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina’, *Locke Newsletter*, 21 (1990), 111–33. For Locke’s part in the 1682 revisions, see David Armitage, ‘John Locke,

was, however, working on behalf of Shaftesbury and the other Lords Proprietors, and these revisions should not automatically be taken as representing his personal views. In the case of Penn-sylvania, Penn, being governor and sole proprietor, had a much freer hand. He was granted the charter at the beginning of March 1681, and during the year that followed he busied himself with devising a suitable constitution for the new colony.²⁴ One of the friends he consulted was Algernon Sidney, whose disparaging remarks clearly upset him.²⁵ According to one of his biographers, he also ‘looked for help to his old friend, John Locke, lately engaged on a similar task’.²⁶ No evidence is cited for this, and it sounds highly unlikely. It is not possible to say whether Penn paid any attention to the *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*, but he certainly did not use them as a model.

If we are to believe some of Penn’s biographers, Locke eventually came to think Penn’s constitution was superior to the one he had helped draft for Carolina. As with a number of stories about their dealings, this appears to have originated with Thomas Clarkson, the campaigner against the slave trade and a great admirer of Penn. In his biography, first published in 1813, he described how

It happened that he [Locke] and William Penn, and Mr. (afterwards Sir Isaac) Newton, and others, were in company, and that the conversation turned upon the comparative excellence of the new American Governments, but particularly those of Carolina and Pennsylvania. The matter was at length

Carolina, and the *Two Treatises of Government*’, *Political Theory*, 32 (2004), 614–15.

²⁴ Successive drafts are printed in *Papers of William Penn*, ii. 141–211. The final version was published in 1682 as *The Frame of the Government of the Province of Pennsylvania in America: Together with certain Laws Agreed upon in England by the Governour and Divers Free-Men of the aforesaid Province*.

²⁵ Sidney to Penn, 13 Aug. 1681, *Papers of William Penn*, ii. 124–5.

²⁶ Brailsford, *The Making of William Penn*, 348.

argued in the presence of the two legislators, when Locke ingenuously yielded the palm to Penn on that occasion.²⁷

This is another story for which no evidence is cited. It sounds exceedingly unlikely, even apart from the supposed presence of Newton, a most unclubbable man. Locke was normally very touchy about criticism of his own work, and we know from the comments he made in November 1686 that he had no high opinion of Penn's *Frame of Government*.²⁸

II

Penn went to America at the end of August 1682 and did not return to England until October 1684. Locke left England a year later, at the end of August 1683. Although it is very unlikely that he was involved in the Rye House Plot, he was acquainted with some of those who were, and his known association with Shaftesbury was in itself enough to have made him an object of suspicion.²⁹ He settled in Amsterdam and spent most of his first year there quietly working, if his own testimony is to be believed, on the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.³⁰ There is no sign during this period that the English government was paying him any attention. This happy state of affairs was to change abruptly in November 1684, when he was accused by Thomas Chudleigh, the envoy at The Hague, of writing

²⁷ Clarkson, *Memoirs of Penn*, ii. 409n. This story is repeated in Graham, *William Penn*, 144; Brailsford, *The Making of William Penn*, 349.

²⁸ These are in Locke's journal, MS Locke f. 9, pp. 33–41; some extracts are printed in Cranston, *John Locke*, 261–2.

²⁹ For a discussion of the evidence, see Philip Milton, 'John Locke and the Rye House Plot', *Historical Journal*, 43 (2000), 647–68.

³⁰ Locke to Clarke, 22 Dec. 1684/1 Jan. 1685, *Correspondence*, ii. 671.

two libellous pamphlets and of keeping bad company.³¹ The first of these accusations was certainly false and the second probably exaggerated (though Locke did have dealings with a number of suspected persons) but from then onwards he was a marked man.

The same month saw Locke's expulsion from Christ Church, apparently on the direct orders of Charles II.³² When he first received the summons from Christ Church Locke began making plans to return, though these were rapidly overtaken by the news that he had been expelled.³³ He did, however, receive what must have been a very welcome letter from Pembroke which assured him that 'nothing shall hinder me from haserding all I am worth when it may be advantageous to such a friend'.³⁴ Armed with this, Locke sought reinstatement, though he was determined to proceed cautiously. A month after the news came he told Edward Clarke, his closest and most trusted friend, that when the time was ripe he would write at length to Pembroke, but in the meantime he asked Clarke to 'manage his [Pembroke's] forward kindnesse soe as dexterously to put it off from stiring in it till a fiter season'.³⁵ Locke remained very concerned that a premature move would spoil everything. A few weeks later he wrote again to Clarke, insisting that 'noething be donne of any kinde in that businesse till I have throughly considered the steps wherein you must proceed and sent you at large my

³¹ Chudleigh to Middleton, 11/21 Nov. 1684, British Library [BL], Add. MS 41810, fos. 187^v-8^v.

³² Sunderland to Fell, 6, 11 Nov. 1684, National Archives [NA], SP 44/56, pp. 141-2. The puzzling thing, for which there is no simple explanation, is that the first of these letters was sent five days before Chudleigh's letter was written, and the second some days before it can have been received. There are no references to Locke in Chudleigh's earlier correspondence, but the government may well have received accusations from another source.

³³ The letters informing him of this have not survived, but are mentioned in Locke to Pembroke, 28 Nov./8 Dec. 1684, *Correspondence*, ii. 662. For his decision to return, see Pembroke to Locke, c. 24 Nov. 1684, *ibid.* 658.

³⁴ Pembroke to Locke, c. 24 Nov. 1684, *ibid.* 658.

³⁵ Locke to Clarke, 22 Dec. 1684/1 Jan. 1685, *ibid.* 673.

thoughts about it', and he asked for 'time to consider before I move in it, for one wrong step in the begining may put me quite out of the way and then farewell my Students place for ever'.³⁶

In seeking reinstatement Locke was not hoping for a pardon. He clearly saw himself as an innocent man who had through false accusations been unjustly deprived of what was rightfully his. His reference to 'his Majesties *great clemency*' suggests that he intended, when things had settled down and suspicions cooled, to petition the King. His plans were, however, overtaken by the unexpected death of Charles II on 6 February 1685. It is not possible to say whether Locke entirely abandoned his plans, but there are no further references to them (or at any rate no overt ones) in his correspondence with Clarke.

It is very hard to say how far, if at all, Locke was involved in the planning of Monmouth's rebellion. Although he has sometimes been suspected of having helped finance Monmouth, the evidence that he did evaporates on closer examination.³⁷ In all probability he kept his distance, but he did have dealings with some of those who were involved, and these were enough to get him into trouble. Bevil Skelton, Chudleigh's successor as envoy at The Hague, certainly suspected him. On 7/17 May 1685 he presented to the States General a memorial requesting the banishment of eighty-four

³⁶ Locke to Clarke, 3/13 Jan. 1685, Somerset Archives and Record Service, Sanford Collection, DD/SF/7/1/66. I should like to thank Mark Goldie for drawing my attention to this letter, which will be appearing in *Correspondence*, vol. ix, and for sending a transcript. These letters hardly support Ashcraft's claim (*Revolutionary Politics*, 512) that Locke 'showed not the slightest interest in regaining his place at Oxford until after William was securely seated on the throne'.

³⁷ The strongest case for his involvement is Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, ch. 9. For a rebuttal, see Philip Milton, 'Locke the Plotter? Ashcraft's *Revolutionary Politics* Reconsidered', *Locke Studies*, 7 (2007), 51–112. See also Helen Pringle, 'Who Gave Money to Monmouth: Rounding up the Suspects', *Locke Newsletter*, 23 (1992), 131–43.

suspected persons, the last of whom was ‘Jean Lock, autrefois Secretaire de Mylord Schafsbury’.³⁸

At the time this happened Locke was in Utrecht, where he had been living for the last six months, but when he heard the news he returned to Amsterdam and spent the summer nervously hiding in the house of Egbertus Veen, father-in-law of his friend Pieter Guenellon.³⁹ All the evidence indicates that he was very worried indeed, far more so than at the time of his expulsion from Christ Church, and not without good reason. Little of his correspondence survives from this period, but one letter that does was from Pembroke, who wrote promising support:

I need not tell you that I have omitted no oppertunety of contradicting all false reports to the King, and (as in so good a cause none can but succeed) I have so satisfied the King that he has assurd me he will never believe any ill reports of you, he bid me write to you to come over, I told him I would then bring you to kiss his hand and he was fully satisfied I should: pray for my sake let me see you before this summer be over, I believe you will not mistrust me I am sure none can the Kings word⁴⁰

Although he did not specifically mention a formal pardon, Pembroke would have been as well placed as anyone to have obtained one. At this time he stood very high in James’s favour, and James, who had recently written to William of Orange pro-

³⁸ *Memoire Presenté par Monsieur Schelton, Envoyé Extraordinaire de Sa Majesté de la Grande Bretagne, à Messeigneurs les Estats Generaux*. Locke possessed a copy, *The Library of John Locke*, eds. John Harrison and Peter Laslett, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1971), item 2659. For Skelton’s decision to add Locke to the list, see Skelton to Middleton, 8/18 May, 26 May/5 June 1685, BL, Add. MS 41812, fos. 58^v, 100^f.

³⁹ Locke returned to Amsterdam on 13/23 May, MS Locke f. 8, p. 273, but after the end of May the entries in his journal became sparse and uninformative, very much as they had in the summer of 1683. The most detailed account was given by Le Clerc, *Bibliothèque Choisie*, 6 (1705), 373; this must have been based on personal knowledge or on information supplied by Limborch, Veen, or Guenellon. See also Limborch to Lady Masham, 2/13 Mar. 1705, quoted in Fox Bourne, *The Life of John Locke*, ii. 22–3.

⁴⁰ Pembroke to Locke, 20 Aug. 1685, *Correspondence*, ii. 729.

posing that Pembroke should take command of the British troops in Dutch service, had recommended him as a ‘stout, ingenious, and industrious man, and one on whom I can entirely rely’ who had ‘really served me eminently well in this last affair, against the Duke of Monmouth’.⁴¹

Early in September Locke emerged from his hiding place in Veen’s and went to Cleves, the nearest place that was outside the territory, and therefore the jurisdiction, of the Dutch Republic. Shortly after his arrival he heard that Pembroke would be coming to the Netherlands to take command of the British forces stationed there.⁴² He immediately wrote to Limborch, in Amsterdam, asking that he should arrange for one of his friends at The Hague to let him know when Pembroke arrived, and he emphasized the importance of learning of this as quickly as possible.⁴³ Limborch promptly went to The Hague to make enquiries and was able to tell Locke that Pembroke was expected to arrive about the beginning of November.⁴⁴ Locke was, however, to be disappointed. Pembroke did not go to the Netherlands, though he had clearly made plans to do so.⁴⁵ Locke did not see him again until after the Revolution.

⁴¹ James II to William, 29 July, 10 Aug. 1685, NA, SP 8/3/147, 151, printed in Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland, from the Dissolution of the last Parliament of Charles II until the Sea-Battle off La Hogue* (2 vols., Edinburgh 1771–3), ii. Appendix II, 137.

⁴² Locke was not imagining this. For a similar report, see Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714* (6 vols., Oxford, 1857), i. 357. Skelton was also expecting Pembroke’s arrival, Skelton to Middleton, 1/11 Sept., 2/12 Oct. 1685, BL, Add. MS 41812, fos. 201^r, 207^r.

⁴³ Locke to Limborch, 23 Sept./3 Oct., 26 Sept./6 Oct. 1685, *Correspondence*, ii. 745, 746.

⁴⁴ Limborch to Locke, 28 Sept./8 Oct., 8/18 Oct. 1685, *ibid.* 752, 754.

⁴⁵ In November Skelton applied (unsuccessfully) for a free pass to have Pembroke’s horses returned to England, Skelton to Middleton, 7/27 Nov. 1685, BL, Add. MS 41812, fo. 258^v.

Although there is no surviving correspondence with Pembroke between August 1685 and November 1687, there are a few references to him elsewhere in Locke's correspondence. In January 1686 Tyrrell, who had not heard from Locke for six months, wrote mentioning that he had written 'a long letter by the command of your right honourable Friend [Pembroke]; and at a time when he had no leisure to write himself, wherein I gave you a full account of the state of your affaires; and what course your Friend then advised you to take.' Unfortunately this letter was not sent, and it is not possible to say whether Pembroke's advice was concerned with Locke's reinstatement at Christ Church, with the possibility of his obtaining a pardon, or with some other matter.⁴⁶

There is a further reference to Pembroke in one of Locke's letters to Clarke, written three months later:

But as to the law suit I mentioned in my last, I conclude upon second thoughts that it is best to let it perfectly alone without meddling at all in it, any farther than E P himself shall of his own accord discourse of his own concerns and give his advice about it, and then it would perhaps be not amiss to enquire and reason with him for your own satisfaction of the grounds he proceeds on.⁴⁷

Unfortunately Locke's previous letter has not survived. He may perhaps have been contemplating a lawsuit about his land in Somerset or similar matters, but there is no other evidence of this and no obvious reason why, if that was what he had in mind, Pembroke should have been consulted. Locke was not a litigious person, and he did not greatly like lawyers. He may have been referring obliquely to negotiations for a pardon or to plans to secure his reinstatement at Christ Church, but it is impossible to be sure.

One reason why Locke may have been seeking advice was that on 10 March James II had issued a general pardon. There were, however, a number of wide-ranging exceptions, including 'all

⁴⁶ Tyrrell to Locke, 20 Jan. 1686, *Correspondence*, ii. 766.

⁴⁷ Locke to Clarke, 24 Apr./4 May 1686, *ibid.* iii. 2.

fugitives and persons fled from Our Justice into parts beyond the Seas ... who shall not return ... before the nine and twentieth day of September next ensuing'. The declaration ended with a list of over a hundred persons exempted specifically by name.⁴⁸ Locke was not on the list, nor were any of his friends. He may, however, have wondered, given that he had been named in Skelton's memorial, whether he might have been looked upon as a fugitive or someone fled from justice.

III

What one cannot find from this period anywhere in Locke's papers or correspondence is any reference to Penn. Arguments from silence are always inconclusive, especially where someone as secretive as Locke is concerned, and a great deal of his correspondence is missing. All the same, it is very hard to see why he should have sought Penn's help or why Penn should have concerned himself with his affairs. The fact, if it is a fact, that they had been briefly acquainted at Christ Church quarter of a century earlier does not provide a sufficient reason.

It may be added that in 1685, the time when he had supposedly intervened on Locke's behalf, Penn does not appear to have enjoyed any special favour with the King. It was not until 9 March 1686, by which time James had been on the throne for over a year, that a warrant was issued ordering that Penn and his family were not to be prosecuted.⁴⁹ James had known Penn for many years and had been a colleague of his father, the admiral, but his decision may not have been prompted entirely by personal friendship. James was hoping to persuade William of Orange, his nephew and the husband of the heir

⁴⁸ *A Proclamation of the Kings Majesties most Gracious and General Pardon* (London, 1686), Robert Steele, *A Bibliography of the Royal Proclamations of the Tudor and Stuart Sovereigns* (2 vols., Oxford, 1910), no. 3328.

⁴⁹ NA, SP 44/336, pp. 385–6, *Papers of William Penn*, iii. 83–4.

presumptive, Princess Mary, to support his plans to repeal the Test Acts and the penal laws. In the summer of 1686 Penn paid a visit to the Netherlands and was privately entrusted with the task of seeing William. He appears to have left England towards the end of May and had returned to London by mid-September at the latest.⁵⁰ According to Gilbert Burnet, who met him at The Hague and unflatteringly described him as a ‘talking vain man’, he had two or three long meetings with William but failed to persuade him to agree to the repeal of the Test Acts.⁵¹ Although Burnet did not give a specific date, he did record that these meetings took place soon after he came to Holland, which was in May.⁵²

According to some of his biographers it was during this visit that Penn offered to procure a pardon for Locke.⁵³ Although this is not impossible, it conflicts with Lady Masham’s account, which placed the offer much earlier, before Locke fell under suspicion of being involved in Monmouth’s rebellion. There is, moreover, no evidence that Penn and Locke even met, despite occasional claims to the contrary.⁵⁴ Ashcraft concluded that they probably met in Amsterdam in August, but he admitted that ‘it is much less certain that such

⁵⁰ Penn to Thomas Lloyd, 21–2 Sept. 1686; Penn to James Harrison, 23 Sept. 1686, *Papers of William Penn*, iii. 116–20, 122–3. Both letters were written from London. A number of historians have incorrectly dated Penn’s visit to November, but he was then in London: Penn to Daniel Fleming, 6 Nov. 1686, *Papers of William Penn*, iii. 127–8; HMC Le Fleming, 201.

⁵¹ *Bishop Burnet’s History of His Own Time* (2 vols., London 1724–34), i. 693–4. Penn’s visit was also mentioned in *Négotiations de Monsieur le Comte d’Avaux en Hollande* (6 vols., Paris, 1752–3), vi. 21–4 (10 Jan. 1687).

⁵² *A Supplement to Burnet’s History of My Own Time*, ed. H. C. Foxcroft (Oxford, 1902), 227. Burnet’s recent arrival at The Hague was mentioned in Skelton to Middleton 18/28 May 1686, BL, Add. MS 41813, fo. 138^v.

⁵³ Hull, *William Penn, A Topical Biography*, 276; Graham, *William Penn*, 174–5; *Papers of William Penn*, iii. 471n.

⁵⁴ For example, John Carswell, *The Descent on England* (London, 1969), 83.

a meeting took place than has commonly been supposed'.⁵⁵ All that can be said is that Penn was in Amsterdam at the beginning of August, though it is not known how long he stayed there.⁵⁶ Locke was also there at least some of the time. During June and July he made a number of brief visits to Haarlem, Rotterdam, and Utrecht, and his journal shows that he returned to Amsterdam on 1/11 July.⁵⁷ After this detailed entries cease but one on 11/21 August records that he sent Mary Clarke some seeds 'by Mrs Dare'.⁵⁸ She was the widow of Thomas Dare, who had acted as Locke's banker between December 1683 and May 1685. He had lived in Amsterdam, and she was presumably still living there. It is not known how long Locke stayed there, but it was probably not that long. Later that month he mentioned that he was away from town (Amsterdam) on his wanderings, though he did not indicate where he was or what he was doing.⁵⁹

There is one other possible link with Penn. According to Cranston, Penn gave Locke a copy of his *Frame of Government* in Holland in 1686.⁶⁰ No evidence was cited, and it would appear that Cranston simply inferred this from the fact that in November Locke

⁵⁵ Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, 517, 518n.

⁵⁶ Penn was there on 5 August NS, Henry Sidney to Penn, 3/13 Aug. 1686, *Papers of William Penn*, iii. 98. Ashcraft found what he took to be a reference to Penn in a letter from a government informer, which mentioned that 'There is come to Amsterdam a Quaker of a considerable Estate in Land in Ireland & there residing these many years', Everard to Skelton, 12/22 Aug. 1686, BL, Add. MS 41813, fo 234^r. Penn did own land in Ireland but had not resided there for many years, and the reference may well be to someone else.

⁵⁷ He was in Amsterdam until 31 May, MS Locke f. 9, p. 7. During the next six weeks he visited Haarlem (31 May–6 June, 26–7 June), Rotterdam (14–23 June), and Utrecht (8–11 July), *ibid.* pp. 7, 13, 17, 18. All these dates are new-style.

⁵⁸ MS Locke f. 9, pp. 19–20; Clarke to Locke, 16 Oct. 1686, *Correspondence*, iii. 52; Locke to Clarke, 21/31 Oct. 1686, *ibid.* 54.

⁵⁹ Locke to Toinard, 26 Aug./5 Sept. 1686, *ibid.* 29.

⁶⁰ Cranston, *John Locke*, 261.

made a number of critical comments on it in his journal.⁶¹ Although one cannot rule out the possibility that he may have been given a copy by Penn, none is listed in his library catalogue.⁶² It is more likely that he was shown one by Benjamin Furly, who had himself made detailed comments some years previously on both the *Fundamentall Constitutions of Pennsylvania*, which Penn had drawn up in 1681, and the *Frame of Government*.⁶³

Although it has been suggested that it was Penn who introduced Locke to Furly, it is much more likely, as de Beer thought, that the introduction was made by John Freke.⁶⁴ Freke was a young lawyer from Dorset with something of a taste for political intrigue. In May 1676 he was committed to the Tower on charges of high treason, though these were dropped when only one witness could be found against him.⁶⁵ In subsequent years he became an active member of the Green Ribbon Club.⁶⁶ He may also have had a minor part in the insurrection conspiracy of 1682. He was probably the Mr Freke mentioned in Lord Grey's confession, and when he was interrogated in July 1683 he admitted knowing Ferguson and some of the other

⁶¹ MS Locke f. 9, pp. 33–41.

⁶² Locke did possess a copy of Penn's *A Further Account of Pennsylvania*, published in London in 1685, *The Library of John Locke*, item 2253.

⁶³ Furly's comments are undated, but since they relate to the published *Frame of Government* they must be after May 1682. They are printed in *Papers of William Penn*, ii. 228–37.

⁶⁴ Robert Voitle, *The Third Earl of Shaftesbury, 1671–1713* (Baton Rouge, La., 1984), 68; *Correspondence*, iii. 40.

⁶⁵ NA, SP 44/28, p. 157 (28 May 1676); Henry Fowler to Joseph Williamson, 11 Sept. 1676, NA, SP 29/385/111; HMC Townshend, 44, 45 (12, 28 May 1676); HMC Le Fleming, 127 (6 June 1676).

⁶⁶ See the list printed in *The Entering Book of Roger Morrice*, ed. Mark Goldie et al. (6 vols., Woodbridge, 2007), i. 535–41. Two of Freke's (and Locke's) West Country friends were members, Sir Walter Yonge and Richard Duke. Edward Clarke was not a member, nor was Locke.

conspirators.⁶⁷ On this occasion he was released without charge. In April 1685, when preparations for Monmouth's invasion were under way, Christopher Battiscombe was dispatched to England and, if we are to believe Lord Grey, was 'ordered to find out Mr Freake as soon as possible, who we knew would be zealous to serve our design'.⁶⁸ The government also suspected him, and in May orders were issued for his arrest, though he was released on bail in June and discharged in November.⁶⁹

In the summer of 1686 Freke accompanied Sir Walter Yonge, Yonge's sister Elizabeth Duke, and her husband Richard on a tour of the Low Countries.⁷⁰ He may already have been acquainted with Locke, but their friendship appears to date from this period. Yonge and the Dukes returned to England in September, but Freke remained in the Netherlands. In late October or early November he spent a week in Utrecht enjoying Locke's 'obliging and agreeable conversation'. After taking his leave he went first to The Hague, where he was 'treated with all imaginable kindness by all I knew there', and then to Rotterdam to stay with Furlly. While he was there he wrote to Locke, and towards the end of his letter he mentioned that

I have met with little worth remark since I saw you onely that the Design I mentioned to you against—is talkt of every where but none can tell what it is and *my Author* tells me that the Lord M: business at your Town has spoild it and either broken or alterd their measures *as he is informed by a Letter last*

⁶⁷ Ford, Lord Grey, *The Secret History of the Rye House Plot and of Monmouth's Rebellion* (London, 1754), 16, 18; NA, SP 29/428/60, p. 7 (9 July 1683), SP 29/428/79 (11 July 1683); Zachary Bourn's information, *State Trials*, eds. T. B. Howell et al. (32 vols., London, 1811–24), ix. 418 (6 July 1683).

⁶⁸ Grey, *Secret History*, 104.

⁶⁹ NA, SP 44/336, pp. 89–91; Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation*, i. 342; *The Entering Book of Roger Morrice*, iii. 10, 65.

⁷⁰ Yonge to Locke, 29 May/8 June 1686, *Correspondence*, iii. 6; Richard Duke to Locke, 19/29 July 1686, *ibid.* 17; Isabella Duke to Locke, 14/24 Aug. 1686, *ibid.* 27.

post.⁷¹

Lord M was Lord Mordaunt, and the business with which he was concerned was described in a newsletter sent from Whitehall to John Ellis in Ireland:

An idle story is raised about the town concerning my Lord Mordaunt. The story was invented by a rogue at Utrecht, and told Mr. Skelton, in hopes to get some little money by it; but my Lord Mordaunt going undisguised to this fellow heard the same repeated to his face, the fellow averring that he knew the lord very well; but my Lord convincing him he was the person, put the rogue in such confusion and shame, that none but a Dutch-English villain could have undergone.⁷²

This seems to have happened in September. Towards the end of the month Skelton wrote from Utrecht mentioning that ‘Mordaunt has been for some dayes in this Citty, and is now at Loo & lodged in the Court’.⁷³ Locke was also there when Skelton wrote, though Skelton was either unaware of the fact or did not bother to mention it in his letters back to England. It would appear that Locke had arrived there quite recently. The previous day he had written to Limborch to let him know that after many days of almost continuous wanderings (he did not say where) he had at last returned to Utrecht. As usual, he did not explain why, though he did mention that lodgings were difficult to obtain in Amsterdam and that ‘many things have drawn me to this city; whether they will keep me here I do not know’.⁷⁴ Most probably he did not arrive until after Mordaunt had left.

De Beer thought that the unnamed person mentioned in Freke’s letter may have been Locke himself. Although this cannot entirely be ruled out, it is quite possible, perhaps even likely, that Freke was

⁷¹ Freke to Locke, 3/13 Nov. 1686, *ibid.* 60, underlined in original.

⁷² 22 Oct. 1686, *The Ellis Correspondence*, ed. George Agar Ellis (2 vols., London, 1829), i. 177–8.

⁷³ Skelton to Middleton, 23 Sept./3 Oct. 1686, BL, Add. MS 41814, fo. 33^r.

⁷⁴ Locke to Limborch, 22 Sept./2 Oct. 1686, *Correspondence*, iii. 34–5.

referring to Robert Ferguson, the most notorious, sought-after (and elusive) of all the fugitives. Skelton had long been hatching plans to have him apprehended and taken to England, and at the end of September he mentioned ‘a designe which I have had in hand for the taking of Ferguson, whereof I have greate hopes’.⁷⁵ In furtherance of this, Captain Solomon Slater, who acted for Skelton in such matters, spoke to the schout of Amsterdam ‘about taking of Ferguson’. He was, however, fobbed off, and ‘the design was betrayed, & soe the Rogue escaped’.⁷⁶ Only a few days later Slater was involved in another unsuccessful attempt, this time on Sir Robert Peyton. Meeting him by chance in the docks at Rotterdam, Slater attempted to bundle him on board the yacht *Henrietta* and have him taken to England. Peyton, however, made such an outcry that the attempt had to be abandoned, much to the subsequent embarrassment of the English government.⁷⁷

What is not clear is whether there was any possibility that Locke himself might be seized. On the whole this seems unlikely. There are no references to him in Skelton’s correspondence at this time and nothing to indicate that the authorities were still paying him any attention. He was, however, very cautious and does seem to have been apprehensive. On 15/25 November he wrote to Clarke, but though his letter has not survived, it seems, judging from Clarke’s reply, to have been concerned with the safe keeping of his books and papers. Clarke wrote back assuring Locke that he would ‘carefully imbrace all opportunityes of performeing every part of your Letter’. The end of his letter was cut away, presumably by Locke, but the last of Locke’s annotations simply reads ‘to

⁷⁵ Skelton to Middleton, 23 Oct./2 Nov. 1685, BL, Add. MS 41812, fo. 210^r; 13/23, 20/30 July 1686, BL, Add. MS 41813, fos. 189^v, 199^r; 29 Sept./9 Oct. 1686, BL, Add. MS 41814, fos. 34^r, 35^v.

⁷⁶ Slater to Middleton, 8/18 Oct. 1686, BL, Add. MS 41814, fo. 46^v.

⁷⁷ Skelton to Middleton, 12/22 Oct. 1686, BL, Add. MS 41814, fo. 48^r; — to Ellis, 22 Oct. 1686, *The Ellis Correspondence*, i. 176–7; Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation*, i. 387; *The Entering Book of Roger Morrice*, iii. 282.

pardon'.⁷⁸ It is hard to see how this could apply to anyone other than Locke himself. Unfortunately his next letter was already in very bad condition when Benjamin Rand read it and the manuscript no longer survives. The parts Rand was able to transcribe contain no mention of any pardon, but the letter ends with a tantalizing reference to Pembroke: 'If my noble friend be in town, do me the favour to present to him my service'⁷⁹

Locke had already decided it would be safest to leave Utrecht. Early in December he wrote to Limborch saying that 'As to what you have heard about expulsion, I neither understand the matter so nor should I wish a word to be said about it, although it will perhaps be convenient for me to join you all once more'. He said he would be arriving shortly and suggested that the question where he might lodge should be discussed with Veen and Guenellon, who had provided him with a hiding-place the previous year, but he asked Limborch to 'take care that nothing is thought or said about expulsion'. On the face of it he seemed fairly relaxed, telling Limborch that 'These things are fortune's sport with us, or rather the ordinary accidents of human life, no more occasions for wonder than wind or rain for wayfarers'.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, he may have been more worried than he let on. Two days later he wrote to Clarke to say that he had altered his will and wished an earlier one in Clarke's possession to be burned, and he concluded by telling Clarke that 'If it please god to take me out of this troublesome life before I see you again I doubt not but you will remember the desires of one that loved you above all other men'.⁸¹

In the meantime Freke had returned to England. Late in December he wrote to tell Locke that 'I have examined the matter I promised you and find the enquiry was made (as I supposed) and the

⁷⁸ Clarke to Locke, 25 Nov. 1686, *Correspondence*, iii. 75.

⁷⁹ Locke to Clarke, 7/17 Dec. 1686, *ibid.* 80.

⁸⁰ Locke to Limborch, 2/12 Dec. 1686, *ibid.* 76–7.

⁸¹ Locke to Clarke, 4/14 Dec. 1686, *ibid.* 77–8.

matter answered, and found as you and I could have desired and much to the honour and advantage of our friend'. Locke made a note 'to informe farther concerning our friend'.⁸² This friend was presumably Locke himself.

Four weeks later Freke wrote again, and was able to assure Locke that 'our Friend had Justice done him soe that his mistress is convinced that she has noe reason in any sort to condemn him or his deportment ... [and] I believe I may adventure to say he stands right in her esteem and could not fail of her good graces if he were here and thought fit to make his applications soe much in vain have been the attempts and callumnys of his enemys'.⁸³ Although Locke's correspondence is full of allusions to mistresses, governesses, valentines and the like, it is much more likely that Freke was referring to Locke's standing with the government. The enemies are not named, but Freke may have been thinking of Skelton.

It would appear that Locke also made enquiries amongst his Dutch friends. Early in March he wrote to Graevius asking him if he had anything to say about 'the matters we discussed together in our friend Sladus's garden'.⁸⁴ In November Graevius wrote back to say that Bentinck and Dijkveld—two of William's most trusted advisers—had written to the authorities in Utrecht telling them that

the person who was then acting as the king's envoy [Skelton] had complained at the palace in the king's name about you and about certain others and had asked to be given powers to arrest those whose names he had given and to send them to England. When this information was received here, they said, your friends began to fear that if the matter were pressed you might not eventually be able to escape the clutches of the man who had such designs on your safety in this place [Utrecht]. For he had further mentioned the cities in which those whom, as he contended, the king wished to be handed over to

⁸² Freke to Locke, 24 Dec. 1686, *ibid.* 89–90. His arrival was mentioned in Clarke to Locke, 14 Dec. 1686, *ibid.* 87.

⁸³ Freke to Locke, 20 Jan. 1687, *ibid.* 113.

⁸⁴ Locke to Graevius, 28 Feb./10 Mar. 1687, *ibid.* 146.

him were living in concealment.⁸⁵

However, Graevius continued, he had himself spoken to Dijkveld on Locke's behalf, 'assuring him that any suspicion of offence that the king might have had had long been removed and cleared away through your friends, and you were fully assured of this on reliable grounds and through trustworthy letters'. Presumably this referred to the correspondence with Pembroke. Dijkveld agreed, but thought it best to wait until the new envoy (Albeville) returned, and that if no further complaints were made then Locke would be free to live where he liked. Locke promptly wrote back asking if Graevius's friend had mentioned the King's name in any way, adding that 'I have good reason for pressing you rather urgently on this point'.⁸⁶ If Graevius replied his letter has not survived.

At the end of Freke's letter of 24 December Locke had made a note 'to resolve which is better Gelonets health poultis or wild Turkeys'. He must have raised the matter again in his letter of 7/17 January, because in his reply Freke mentioned that

To your Quære concerning the Turkeys Heath poultis and Gelinots I know not what to answer but must confess I have a great hankering after those wild Turkeys of America and am not sure I shall be at rest till I have found a way to taste some of them. I attend the return of a great American kinsman of mine to this Town to see whether by his means I may not be enabled to eat of them and till then I adjourn my answer to your Question which of the three is best.⁸⁷

This American kinsman was Penn. There is always a danger of reading more into Locke's correspondence than is really there, and Locke may simply have been making an innocent enquiry about poultry. Perhaps Penn had brought back some wild American turkeys and was offering Freke a taste, though this would hardly

⁸⁵ Graevius to Locke, 4/14 Nov. 1687, *ibid.* 290–1.

⁸⁶ Locke to Graevius, 17/27 Nov. 1687, *ibid.* 299–300.

⁸⁷ Freke to Locke, 20 Jan. 1687, *ibid.* 114.

explain Locke's interest. A gelinot was a wood-hen or a fattened pullet, and there are several other references to them in Locke's correspondence.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, modern readers are not alone in being puzzled. Isabella Duke had already asked him 'why you Sing so constantly the Tune of Gelinots; we that are here can see no reasons for it'.⁸⁹

When Freke was still in Rotterdam he had mentioned his 'American Journey (to which I am extremely inclined)'.⁹⁰ Early in February he told Locke that he would be remaining in London for at least six weeks and would then leave 'but whether into Italy or America I cannot guess (for my Cousin P remains still in the country)'.⁹¹ This Cousin P was Penn, though his precise kinship has not been traced. There is another reference to him, which Locke subsequently attempted to disguise, in Freke's next letter:

my Cousin P [R] and I have met but are not like to accord, for he makes me noe overture but of Land for mony and I shall not turn ~~planter~~ [husbandmen] nor will I ask any thing else of him. if he offer nothing I shall let the matter Dy Nor can I think of any other part of ~~America~~ [Franceshio] through the discouragement occasiond by the News from ~~Carolina~~ [Languedock]⁹²

This was followed by a paragraph of four lines perhaps beginning 'The Lady you mention'. Locke concealed its contents by writing nonsense over it, and the original is now irrecoverable.

Three weeks later Freke mentioned that though he had once been set on visiting America 'my kinsman has offerd me nothing but

⁸⁸ Yonge to Locke, 10 Nov., 31 Dec. 1686, 7 May 1687, *ibid.* 67, 99, 197–8; Isabella Duke to Locke, 19 Jan. 1687, *ibid.* 112.

⁸⁹ Isabella Duke to Locke, 10 Dec. 1686, *ibid.* 84.

⁹⁰ Freke to Locke, 3/13 Nov. 1686, *ibid.* 59.

⁹¹ Freke to Locke, 8 Feb. 1687, *ibid.* 135.

⁹² Freke to Locke, 1 Mar. 1687, *ibid.* 148. In this and the next quotation the words altered by Locke are struck through and his substitutions are placed in square brackets.

Land for money and I tell him I had rather buy in Ireland than Pennsylvania [Carolina]’.⁹³ There are no more letters for nearly two months, but in May Freke mentioned his ‘taking an Ax or mattock in my hand and hewing out my fortune in [word made illegible] a wild country’⁹⁴ This was followed by three lines deleted by Locke.

All this is very mysterious. It is clear from other sources that Freke had plans to go to America or at least to purchase land there. In the autumn of 1685, Nathaniel Wade, who had been captured after Monmouth’s rebellion, provided the authorities with a lengthy confession at the end of which he listed seven people who ‘were to have been concerned in the plantation as proprietors’. Two of those named were John Freke and William Penn.⁹⁵ Freke also sent Furlly a copy of ‘my cousins patent’—i.e. the grant of Pennsylvania to Penn—in June 1687.⁹⁶ He may perhaps have been thinking of going to Pennsylvania, but this hardly explains why Locke should have considered it necessary to conceal the fact. Although Locke was exceedingly secretive and quite often mutilated letters, he normally only did so when he wished to conceal matters relating to himself and his own affairs.⁹⁷ This raises the question of whether Locke was himself thinking of going to America. This may seem exceedingly unlikely, but one of Freke’s later letters does contain what appears to be an allusion to Locke’s going somewhere. ‘Can you’, he wrote, ‘forget with what earnestness I have pressed one that you know to spend a Sommer in a country I am forced to continue in till

⁹³ Freke to Locke, 21 Mar. 1687, *ibid.* 159.

⁹⁴ Freke to Locke, 10 May 1687, *ibid.* 200.

⁹⁵ BL, MS Harl. 6845, fo. 282^r (11 Oct. 1685).

⁹⁶ Freke to Locke, 3 June, 6 Sept., 29 Dec. 1687, *Correspondence*, iii. 210, 265, 325.

⁹⁷ Examples of mutilated letters include Cudworth to Locke, 9 Sept. 1682, *Correspondence*, ii. 545–6; Charleton to Locke, 24 Mar., 21 Apr. 1685, *ibid.* 704–5, 717; Tyrrell to Locke, 6 May, 29 Aug. 1687, *Correspondence*, iii. 191, 257; Limborch to Locke, 31 Aug./10 Sept. 1687, *ibid.* 259; Duke to Locke, 10/20 Aug. 1686, *ibid.* 25–6.

Autumn? And promised after that to accompany my friend to what part of the world that friend should choose?’⁹⁸ This friend must surely have been Locke himself, whom Freke had persistently entreated to return to England.⁹⁹ However, in the same letter Freke mentioned that ‘we are told the King is resolved to take the Government of all the plantations into his own hands even of Pensilvania and New Jersey’.¹⁰⁰ This would most likely have ended any thoughts Locke may have had of going there—at any rate there are no further references to America in Freke’s letters to him.

There are, however, a number of other mysteries. In May Freke mentioned that ‘The Lady that you know is changing her family and furniture and on the brink of matrimony and would feign engage me not onely to be at the wedding but to concern my self in my profession again and assist in drawing the Settlement’.¹⁰¹ Things did not, however, go as Freke hoped. In his next letter he told Locke that ‘for the other wedding in which I was offerd to draw the Settlement I must confess I despair of its being ever celebrated tho my kinsman is still very confident it will take effect’.¹⁰² This kinsman was probably Penn, and there appears to be a further reference to him in Freke’s next letter: ‘I cannot yet tell you whither I shall draw the Settlement you wot of[.] my cousin sollicit the business very hard and keeps me in Town to wayt the Success which when I know I shall communicate to you’.¹⁰³ Success was, however, slow in coming, and in September Freke could only report that the King’s progress had ‘carryd some into the country with whom I have affairs

⁹⁸ Freke to Locke, 28 June 1687, *ibid.* 216.

⁹⁹ Freke to Locke, 20 Jan., 21 Mar., 10 May 1687, *ibid.* 115, 159, 200.

¹⁰⁰ Freke to Locke, 28 June 1687, *ibid.* 217–18.

¹⁰¹ Freke to Locke, 10 May 1687, *ibid.* 200.

¹⁰² Freke to Locke, 3 June 1687, *ibid.* 209.

¹⁰³ Freke to Locke, 28 June 1687, *ibid.* 217.

to dispatch'.¹⁰⁴ Presumably this also refers to Penn. Three months later Freke mentioned that he had remained in London 'as long as I had any hopes' that the marriage would be celebrated, but he found that it was 'either broke off or retarded' because 'the Terms of the Settlement are disliked (though they will not say soe)'.¹⁰⁵ In March he complained that although he had once thought he could have 'contributed something to the happiness of a family I extremely value in making the match and Settlement', he had found that the 'falseness and knavery' he had encountered made him inclined to quit the affair. 'My Cousin', he added, 'blames me for desponding and has written hither to me and tells me that a nearer view of things would make me have a better opinion of them'.¹⁰⁶

Very different interpretations have been placed on all this. De Beer was unsure but he thought that Freke may have been referring to negotiations with Penn about his going to Pennsylvania.¹⁰⁷ Ashcraft also thought the passage was allusive, but in his view the unnamed lady was James II and that Freke was referring to his plans for religious toleration.¹⁰⁸ This is not at all likely. Although Penn was actively involved in James's plans to win over the dissenters, there is no sign that Freke was—indeed Ashcraft later stated that he showed his commitment to the radical cause by *refusing* to participate in James's plans.¹⁰⁹ In any case, these plans were public knowledge, and there was no need for Freke to have referred to them in this fashion.

One possibility that does need to be considered is whether Freke was really describing negotiations about a pardon for Locke. This

¹⁰⁴ Freke to Locke, 6 Sept. 1687, *ibid.* 264–5.

¹⁰⁵ Freke to Locke, 29 Dec. 1687, *ibid.* 324.

¹⁰⁶ Freke to Locke, 19 Mar. 1688, *ibid.* 418.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 200n.

¹⁰⁸ Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, 514.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 537.

would readily explain both Penn's involvement and the need for secrecy, but it faces two very serious objections. One is that Locke's correspondence with Tyrrell and Clarke, discussed below, shows (unless he was quite deliberately deceiving his closest friends) that he had no knowledge of any efforts by Penn to obtain a pardon for him. The other is that when Freke did propose to make use of Penn's influence on Locke's behalf he was firmly rebuffed. At the end of the letter in which he first mentioned the lady who was contemplating matrimony, he described the activities of James's ecclesiastical commission and remarked that 'I suppose had you continued a member of Christ church you would not have been affraid and therefore desire to know what you would give to be restored and whether I shall use my Interest to get you your place again'.¹¹⁰ Although this interest was not specified, Freke must have been referring to Penn. It would appear from Locke's endorsement, 'Q whethe o [i.e. Oxford] will be the quietest place', that he gave the suggestion some consideration, but it is clear from Freke's response that he turned it down. Freke attempted to backtrack, disingenuously claiming that he had been misunderstood, that Oxford was much altered for the worse, and that he had 'intended onely to Droll on that subject'.¹¹¹ The matter was not raised again. Locke's manifest annoyance at what he clearly looked upon as uncalled-for interference in his personal concerns hardly suggests that he had also been employing Freke in the even more delicate matter of obtaining a pardon.

IV

Freke was, however, not the only one of Locke's friends to suggest he should seek reinstatement at Christ Church. In August 1687

¹¹⁰ Freke to Locke, 10 May 1687, *Correspondence*, iii. 200–1.

¹¹¹ Freke to Locke, 3 June 1687, *ibid.* 210.

Tyrrell told Locke that ‘I hope you will never place either religion or good manners: in pulling off of hats or keeping them on. but if you have a mind to be that way inclined your Friend W.P. is a great favourite at Court; and can upon recommendation doe you any kindnesse he pleases’.¹¹² The next sentence was deleted, presumably by Locke. ‘W.P.’ was undoubtedly Penn, whom Tyrrell knew as Deputy Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire.¹¹³ De Beer thought Tyrrell’s description of him as ‘your Friend’ was sarcastic, rather like the reference a few lines later to ‘our old Friend Dr: P. Bishop of oxford’. Perhaps it was, but if so it is hard to see on what basis Tyrrell could have thought that Penn might have been willing to act on Locke’s behalf.

Although Tyrrell did not specify what favour he had in mind, there can be little doubt that he was thinking that Locke should make use of Penn’s influence to obtain reinstatement at Christ Church. There is no reason for thinking that Locke looked any more favourably on this proposal than on Freke’s earlier one. He replied on 15/25 September, but his letter does not appear to have reached Tyrrell.

It would appear, however, that a few months later Tyrrell heard, or thought he heard, that Penn had obtained a pardon for Locke. Late in November David Thomas told Locke that: ‘He [Tyrrell] tells me Will: Pen hath moved the K for pardon for you, which was as readily granted. I sayd if you either wanted or desired it you would move by your N.F. [Pembroke]. I suppose he will enforme you more of it and you may write your own sence of it’.¹¹⁴

Tyrrell himself wrote two weeks later, but his letter did not mention Penn or the pardon supposedly obtained on Locke’s behalf. He did, however, say that he hoped Locke would be returning to England in the summer, and he added that ‘as things stand here you

¹¹² Tyrrell to Locke, 29 Aug. 1687, *ibid.* 257.

¹¹³ NA, SP 44/164, pp. 165, 368 (18 Mar. 1685, 30 Nov. 1686).

¹¹⁴ Thomas to Locke, 29 Nov. 1687, *Correspondence*, iii. 307.

need not doubt of a good reception, and to be restored to your place againe if you thinke it worth while to confine your self any more to a collegiat life'. He also mentioned that he had recently seen Pembroke, 'who speaks very kindly of you, and I wish you were here whilst his interest lasts, for I fear it will not be long, for he has refused to propose the chuseing of such Members as will take off the penall laws and test'.¹¹⁵

It is puzzling that Tyrrell did not mention any pardon in his letter, but it is clear he was not simply imagining things. In December a newsletter reported that 'Pardons are granted to Slingsby Bethell, late sheriff, and Dr. Locke, a physician belonging to the Earl of Shaftesbury'.¹¹⁶ The writer of this seems to have been misinformed: there is no record in the state papers of any pardon being granted to Locke or to Bethell. Nevertheless, a report that Locke had been given a pardon appears also to have reached the Netherlands. In January Locke, who was staying in Amsterdam, wrote to Furly mentioning that 'a certain writer from Rotterdam has set severall a gapeing about a pardon, for 'tis not he alone whom you mention in a former letter, but here are others too that are at a losse, and inquisitive about it, to whom it would be acceptable to receive some further and more particular notice'.¹¹⁷ It is not known who this writer was, and Furly's reply is lost.

At the end of this letter there is an explicit reference to Penn. Locke told Furly that Hendrik Wetstein, the Amsterdam publisher, 'hopes, by your assistance ... to have the intercession of the Governor of Pensylvania to help him out of the briars'. A paper was enclosed, giving details. Wetstein hoped that Furly would write to him and send a letter to his brother, who could deliver the enclosed

¹¹⁵ Tyrrell to Locke, 14 Dec. 1687, *ibid.* 311, 312.

¹¹⁶ HMC Downshire, i. 283.

¹¹⁷ Locke to Furly, 16/26 Jan. 1688, *ibid.* 336.

paper ‘to our friend W. P.’.¹¹⁸ De Beer thought the ‘our friend’ was perhaps sarcastic, but this seems unlikely: Furly had been a good, if sometimes critical, friend of Penn’s for many years.

Early in February Locke wrote assuring Tyrrell of his continued friendship. Much gratified, Tyrrell wrote back with the latest news. Although he did not have anything more to say about Penn or about the pardon he had supposedly obtained, he did mention, not quite accurately, that Pembroke had been dismissed from the Lord Lieutenancy of Wiltshire.¹¹⁹ In fact Pembroke was kept in commission alongside the Earl of Yarmouth, a Catholic, but his effective demotion was indeed a sign that he was falling out of favour.¹²⁰

Shortly after writing this, Tyrrell spoke to Penn about Locke’s supposed pardon. He wrote to David Thomas, who was planning to pay Locke a visit, asking him

if you write to him againe before you goe (for I have writ too lately to write againe) let him know that I found out Will: Pen; and spake to him about that businesse; but he told me; the pardon was not for JL. but one Mat: Lock excepted in the proclamation: so I desired him to meddle in no such thing as to JL. unlesse particularly desired; which he promised: and so much I could have told him [Locke]; if he had writ to me about it; but that I am not worthy to be concerned in any businesse for him; which is all one to me; I have enough of my owne to doe¹²¹

The end of this is very different in tone from the letter Tyrrell had

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 337. Ashcraft (*Revolutionary Politics*, 518n) thought that Penn was the unnamed Irishman and ‘your man of Cork’ mentioned in Locke to Furly, 16/26, 19/29 Dec. 1687, *Correspondence*, iii. 315, 320. This is unlikely. Although Penn possessed property in Ireland and had spent some time there, he was not Irish. Locke’s letters imply that this Irishman, whoever he was, was in the Netherlands.

¹¹⁹ Tyrrell to Locke, 20 Feb. 1688, *Correspondence*, iii. 378–9.

¹²⁰ NA, SP 44/165, p. 20 (20 Feb. 1688). De Beer was wrong in thinking that this did not take place until 2 March. There is another reference to Pembroke’s ‘being verie lately Discharg’d’ in Clarke to Locke, 21 Feb. 1688, *Correspondence*, iii. 380.

¹²¹ Tyrrell to Thomas, 26 Feb. 1688, *Correspondence*, iii. 384.

sent Locke only six days previously. Thomas had bluntly told him that he did not desire his company on the forthcoming visit, and Tyrrell was clearly feeling hard done by. A fortnight later he wrote again to Thomas, wishing him a good voyage. It seems that Locke had written to him inviting him to come as well, but he made his excuses on the grounds that the notice given was too short and the weather too cold. He did, however, tell Thomas that he had ‘great hopes that JL. may returne with you ... for he will have now all the summer before him and he can never have a more favourable time for men in his circumstances then now’. In a postscript he plaintively asked him to ‘tell JL. that if there be any thing in London or any where els I can serve him in I hope he will imploy his old Freinds before new ones’.¹²²

Tyrrell’s anxieties proved well founded. That same day Locke wrote to Edward Clarke to tell him that he

was surprised to hear that W.P. had procured your cousin a pardon. I know not how to understand it, since if there be any truth in your cousin’s professions he knows nothing of it: you will therefore do well to inform yourself as dexterously as you can from Mr. P. by a third and skilful hand what there is in it. For your cousin thinks himself concerned to know; though in a business of the nature it will not become him to appear inquisitive. Adrian [David Thomas] tells me he communicated the same piece of news to you. When you inform me of the truth and particularities of the story you shall have my opinion concerning the case, for as this may be I know not how far this may alter his measures. I think, therefore, it will be of concernment to him, that you without any stir inform yourself particularly of all that has passed in the affair, if there be any such thing.¹²³

This cousin was, of course, Locke himself. Clarke, who was then in London, promptly wrote back promising that he would ‘use all imaginable care and caution to find out the Truth of what was done in that Affayre touching W:P: and my Cosin’. He also mentioned

¹²² Tyrrell to Thomas, 9 Mar. 1688, *ibid.* 409, 410.

¹²³ Locke to Clarke, 9/19 Mar. 1688, *ibid.* 406–7.

that Thomas would be leaving London that day bearing a large parcel of goods for Locke and some letters from Thomas Stringer.¹²⁴ Most probably Thomas also brought the letters Tyrrell had sent him, since these survive among Locke's papers. He arrived at Rotterdam on 19/29 March, stayed until 11/21 April, and returned to London four days later.¹²⁵

It is not known what discussions Locke had with Thomas, but they were not enough to put his mind at rest. A few weeks later he wrote to Clarke to let him know that Thomas

will inform you what has been done in his [Locke's] affairs without his least knowledge or privity. But now it is done I find he is brought into straits by it. For to refuse what is granted is to bid defiance; to blame, or talk of P is to affront and make an enemy of him [several words illegible] And to that I now scarce see a remedy, which Mr. Oakley's imprudent meddling in the case upon his own head has yet made more difficult, so that if great care be not taken I think your cousin will receive all the inconvenience that is possible in this affair and none of the benefit.¹²⁶

Locke thought it best 'to let the matter sleep as much as may be', but he confessed himself 'mightily troubled with this odd business'. The strange thing is that he must already have known, having spoken with Thomas and read the letters he had brought with him, that Tyrrell had been mistaken in thinking that he had been granted a pardon. Why then did he say that 'to refuse what is granted is to bid defiance'? This would only make sense if he thought a pardon had been granted or was likely to be.

On 10 May Thomas, who was then in London, wrote to Locke to let him know that

I have received an answer from Musidore [Tyrrell] who says that WP told

¹²⁴ Clarke to Locke, 16 Mar. 1688, *ibid.* 414.

¹²⁵ MS Locke f. 9, p. 319; Thomas to Locke, 25 Apr. 1688, *ibid.* 436–7.

¹²⁶ Locke to Clarke, 6/16 May 1688, *ibid.* 449–50.

him that it was Josia Locke not JL and that with this Musidore thought I was satisfied and that he will goe to WP and make that apology I writt. I use his owne Words if I thinke it necessary and if it will doe you any service I have by this post May 21 writt to him againe that he told me he desired W P not to move for you and that to say as I writt was very reasonable for a freind¹²⁷

Thomas's syntax is clumsy, but the overall point is reasonably clear. Even here Tyrrell (or Penn) did not get things entirely right. The pardon referred to was presumably the one which had granted in May 1686 to Joshua Lock, son of Nicholas Lock the Anabaptist tobacco merchant who had helped finance Argyll and Monmouth.¹²⁸

Thomas's letter would have taken several days to reach Locke, who was continuing to brood on the matter. On 11/21 May he told Clarke that he had written to Thomas asking him to write to Tyrrell to insist that

It is necessary, and that for fresh reasons, that he [Tyrrell] should unsay to W P and own to him, that it was without the order or privity of the person concernd, and soe take off the suspition of slighting or affront, which cannot but be prejudicial for his freind to lie under with a man of that interest ... If I tell you, what you thought was quite laid by, is now again on foot. you will thinke it necessary, that Mr Oakly should forth with redresse, as much as is possible, what his medleing, without order, in a businesse, he was wholly a stranger to has don.¹²⁹

He also sent an enclosure, which he wished no one to see but Clarke himself, and he emphasized that it should not be mentioned to Tyrrell, 'for he loves to be talkeing'. This enclosure has not

¹²⁷ Thomas to Locke, 11 May 1688, *ibid.* 453–4.

¹²⁸ HMC 12th Report, Appendix, Part VI, 305; NA, SP 44/54, p. 342. For Joshua Lock's activities on Monmouth's behalf, see Robert Cragg's confession, HMC 12th Report, Appendix, Part VI, 399, 401–3. For his denial of having had any part in printing Monmouth's declaration, an offence for which William Disney had been executed, see Joshua Lock to Skelton, 6 Apr. 1686, BL, Add. MS 41818, fos. 291^{r-v}.

¹²⁹ Locke to Clarke, 11/21 May 1688, *Correspondence*, iii. 455.

survived. When Clarke received it he promptly wrote back assuring Locke that he would ‘carefully performe what is therein desired, and Answere it with the first opportunity’.¹³⁰

Tyrrell also wrote to Locke though this letter has not survived. It must, however, have reached Locke, because it was mentioned in his next letter to Clarke, which vividly illustrates his mounting exasperation with Tyrrell’s well-meant but ill-judged interventions:

Since my last I have read a letter from Mr. Oakley whereby I find he has done what Adrian desired of him. But has not been able to forbear what I presume Adrian also desired him. He loves to be a man of business. At any rate it would choke him, if his tongue might not go, whether with rhyme or reason it matters not. The very mention of holding his peace is like a cork that makes perfect bottle beer of it, and yet it must sputter. He tells me himself he has been talking of it to my [Noble] F. If he, when he sees you, takes any notice of it to you, you must tell him that Mr. Oakley meddles in business wherein he has neither commission nor knowledge, and loves to be talking he knows not what. This I think is best to be said to him, for I think not seasonable to discourse to him at large that whole affair, nor to show him how my name has been brought in question without any desire or so much as knowledge of mine.¹³¹

A week later Clarke wrote back to tell Locke that he had spoken with Tyrrell ‘Who tells mee that Hee pursued Adrians Orders with a Blind obedience in that affayre relateing to R:B:, and by Letter hath given you a Particular Account thereof’.¹³² Unfortunately this is yet another of Tyrrell’s letters which has not survived. There are no references to R.B. in Locke’s earlier correspondence with Clarke, and his identity is a mystery. De Beer may well have been right in thinking that he may have been Robert Brent, a Catholic lawyer

¹³⁰ Clarke to Locke, 5 June 1688, *ibid.* 469.

¹³¹ Locke to Clarke, 12/22 June 1688, *ibid.* 472.

¹³² Clarke to Locke, 19 June 1688, *ibid.* 477.

much employed in procuring pardons and similar matters.¹³³ Locke replied on 26 June/6 July, but this letter is lost. At the end of July Clarke came to the Netherlands on a visit and stayed until early September.¹³⁴ Very probably he was able to put Locke's mind at rest, because there are no further references to such matters in their subsequent correspondence.

V

After the Revolution Locke had no need for a pardon, but Penn found himself in danger. He had been an active and conspicuous supporter of James II, and he rapidly and repeatedly fell under suspicion of involvement in Jacobite activity. Macaulay, who was not inclined to give him the benefit of any doubts, described him as a 'zealous and busy Jacobite'.¹³⁵ Penn's numerous defenders have sought to rebut these charges, sometimes successfully, but new evidence suggesting his involvement continues to come to light.¹³⁶ He, of course, denied everything.¹³⁷ As often in these matters it is difficult to reach an entirely conclusive verdict, but there is more and better evidence for Penn's involvement in Jacobite plotting than there is for Locke's involvement in the Rye House Plot or in Monmouth's rebellion.

¹³³ For Brent's career see J. R. Jones, 'James II's Whig Collaborators', *Historical Journal*, 3 (1960), 67–8.

¹³⁴ Locke to Limborch, 20/30 July 1688, *Correspondence*, iii. 494; Clarke to Locke, 16 Sept. 1688, *ibid.* 477, 500.

¹³⁵ T. B. Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James II*, ed. C. H. Firth (6 vols., London, 1913–15), iv. 1836.

¹³⁶ For one recent example, see Mary K. Geiter, 'William Penn and Jacobitism: A Smoking Gun?', *Historical Research*, 73 (2000), 213–18.

¹³⁷ Penn to Shrewsbury, 7 Mar. 1689, *Papers of William Penn*, iii. 236; Penn to Halifax, 28 June 1689, *ibid.* 252; Sidney to William III, 27 Feb. 1691, *ibid.* 293.

What is certain is that Penn was suspected. On 12 December 1688, the day after James II's first flight from London, he was questioned by the peers who were acting as a provisional government, though on this occasion he was released on bail of £5000.¹³⁸ On 27 February 1689 a warrant was issued for his arrest.¹³⁹ In June another warrant was issued for his arrest and he was taken into custody, though he was bailed in October and discharged at the end of November.¹⁴⁰ The following year he fell once again under suspicion. In May the Attorney General was ordered to prosecute him to outlawry for treason, and in July a proclamation was issued ordering his arrest, but once again he was released on bail.¹⁴¹ Rumours circulated as to his whereabouts: one said he had escaped from prison and gone to Scotland, another, more plausibly, that he was at a Quaker schoolmaster's at Hoddesdon.¹⁴² In January 1691 he found himself in even deeper trouble, after two arrested Jacobites, Viscount Preston and Matthew Crone, named him as a conspirator.¹⁴³ Henry Sidney, an old friend who was now Secretary of State, described him as 'as much in the business as anybody'.¹⁴⁴ In May the cabinet council decided that he should be prosecuted to

¹³⁸ Robert Beddard, *A Kingdom without a King: The Journal of the Provisional Government in the Revolution of 1688* (Oxford, 1988), 76–7; *The Entering Book of Roger Morrice*, iv. 384–5; Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, i. 486; *The Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, ed. Andrew Browning (Glasgow, 1936), 536.

¹³⁹ NA, PC 2/73, p. 24.

¹⁴⁰ NA, SP 44/35, p. 96; *The Entering Book of Roger Morrice*, v. 151; Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, i. 553, 595, 610.

¹⁴¹ Newsletter, NA, Adm. 77/3, no. 118; newsletters, 19 July, 18 Aug. 1690, HMC Le Fleming, 280, 285; Steele, *Proclamations*, no. 4043.

¹⁴² W. D. to Mme de Grin, 9 May 1690, HMC Finch ii. 278; Council minutes, 15 July 1690, HMC Finch iii. 383.

¹⁴³ Their statements and letters are in HMC Finch iii. 308–45. See also Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, ii. 162.

¹⁴⁴ Sidney to William III, 20 Jan. 1691, NA, SP 8/8, no. 75.

outlawry, and in July the Attorney General was asked whether it would be better to proceed by indictment, which would have meant bringing a bill before a grand jury.¹⁴⁵

Long before this, Penn had disappeared from public view. According to Besse he narrowly escaped arrest shortly after returning from George Fox's burial on 16 January and 'thought it rather advisable to retire for a Time'.¹⁴⁶ On 5 February a proclamation was issued for his discovery and apprehension, but he managed to remain hidden.¹⁴⁷ It would appear that he was sheltered by one of his (and Locke's) friends, William Popple, who was reported to have 'secured Wm Penn in his house, till he came away'.¹⁴⁸

No contemporary record has been found of Locke's doing anything to help. Most probably he was not even in London. In December he had gone to live at Oates, and after this he returned to London only for brief visits when he had business to transact. He had spent two weeks there in January but had found such difficulty in breathing that he was, he said, 'almost dead'.¹⁴⁹ His only recorded connection with Penn from this period, and it is a very faint one, can be found in his library catalogue. One of the books listed there was Penn's *An addresse to protestants of all perswasions more espetially the Magistracy and Clergie for the promotion of Virtue & Charity*, published 1692 and inscribed as

¹⁴⁵ HMC Finch iii. 383, 397, 401 (22 May, 19 June, 24 July 1691); Nottingham to William III, 26 June 1691, *ibid.* 128.

¹⁴⁶ *A Collection of the Works of William Penn*, i. 140.

¹⁴⁷ Steele, *Proclamations*, no. 4062.

¹⁴⁸ Robert Henley to William Blathwayt, 3 Aug. 1696, BL, Add. MS 9729, fo. 140^r. Henley was listing a number of reasons why Popple should not be employed in government service. It seems that Popple was returning an earlier favour, when Penn had used his influence with James II to get permission from the French government for Popple's family to leave France. For further details see Caroline Robbins, 'Absolute Liberty: The Life and Thought of William Popple, 1638–1708', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 24 (1967), 204–5.

¹⁴⁹ Locke to Furlly, 3 Feb. 1691, *Correspondence*, iv. 196.

‘John Locke Ex dono Authoris’.¹⁵⁰ The favour was not reciprocated, and Penn was not on the distribution lists for any of Locke’s books.¹⁵¹

This absence of evidence has not deterred a number of Penn’s biographers from describing, often in elaborate detail, how Locke tried to obtain a pardon for Penn. I have not been able to say exactly where this story originates, but it can be found as early as Thomas Clarkson’s biography:

His old friend and fellow collegian, John Locke, had come home in the fleet which had brought the Prince of Orange to England. Finding that he had been persecuted in the manner described, he desired to be the instrument of procuring a pardon for him from King William. It may be remembered that William Penn had made a similar offer to Locke when the latter was in banishment at the Hague. It is remarkable that the same answers followed on both occasions. William Penn persisted in declaring that he had never been guilty of the crime against him, and that he could not therefore rest satisfied with a mode of liberation, the very terms of which would be to the world a standing monument of his guilt.¹⁵²

As with the story of Locke’s pardon, this has been repeated by many of Penn’s other biographers.¹⁵³ What none of them have done is to cite any contemporary evidence, and it must be said that the whole story sounds exceedingly unlikely. Even if Locke had wished to help Penn (and there is no evidence of this) he would not have been in a position to do so. Indeed, it would not appear that anyone was. The clearest indication of this comes from November 1691, when

¹⁵⁰ *The Library of John Locke*, item 2251.

¹⁵¹ These are printed in *Correspondence*, viii. 454–8.

¹⁵² Clarkson, *Memoirs of Penn*, ii. 77.

¹⁵³ John Fiske, *The Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America* (2 vols., London, 1899), ii. 303–4; Dixon, *William Penn*, 351; Graham, *William Penn*, 195; Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, 167; Vulliamy, *William Penn*, 232; Dobrée, *William Penn*, 325; Hull, *William Penn, A Topical Biography*, 276; Buranelli, *The King and the Quaker*, 174.

Henry Sidney, an old friend, informed Penn that he had spoken to William III, who had told him, in Sidney's words, that 'you [Penn] have been one of his greatest enemies that you have done him all the harm you could, and he [William] does not see why he should do you any good till he sees you have changed your mind, which can not be done, but by your doing him some service'. This was discouraging indeed, and Sidney concluded by advising Penn to 'consider how you may help your self, for without it you will be in an ill condition, and I am very sorry I can not any more to your satisfaction'.¹⁵⁴ If Sidney, one of the Secretaries of State, was unable to help, it is quite impossible that Locke could have done anything even if he had wanted to.

VI

The incompleteness of the surviving evidence means that the full story of Locke's alleged pardon cannot now be told. Some questions are unanswerable and many others can receive tentative answers at best. There are, however, some matters that are beyond dispute.

The first of these is that no pardon was ever granted to Locke. A story to this effect must have been in existence at the end of 1687, when it was picked up both by Tyrrell and by the newsletter-writer, but it must be regarded as entirely mistaken. If a pardon had been granted to Locke then a record of the fact would have been made in one of the domestic entry books.¹⁵⁵ No such record can be found.

In the second place, it is quite clear that Locke did not seek a pardon from Penn (or anyone else) in 1687–8. When he first

¹⁵⁴ Sidney to Penn, 7 Nov. 1691, *Papers of William Penn*, iii. 332.

¹⁵⁵ Most of the pardons were recorded in NA, SP 44/336. The entries are calendared in the relevant volumes of the *Calendars of State Papers, Domestic*. There is also a list of pardons granted between April 1682 and December 1688 in HMC 12th Report, Appendix, Part VI, 303–8 (House of Lords MSS, 1689–90).

heard that Penn had obtained one on his behalf he was, as his correspondence makes clear, genuinely surprised. His repeated assertions that he knew nothing whatever about it must be taken at face value, and so too must his insistence that he did not want Penn to act on his behalf and was anxious not to affront him by letting him think that he did.

Finally, there is no evidence whatever that Locke attempted to reciprocate Penn's favour by offering to obtain a pardon for him, let alone that he went to see Penn who turned his offer down. The entire story, uncritically accepted and passed on by far too many of Penn's biographers, is far too neat and symmetrical. It certainly should be dismissed as a myth deserving long-overdue burial.

What cannot entirely be ruled out is that Locke did at least contemplate the possibility of trying to obtain a pardon in 1685–6, when he was in greatest danger. Pembroke's letter, one of the very few Locke kept from this period, shows that he had persuaded James II of Locke's innocence, and if Locke ever did think of petitioning for a pardon, then was the obvious time and Pembroke the obvious person to act for him. There is, however, no evidence of Penn's involvement—apart, of course, from Lady Masham's letter. It remains possible that Penn made an offer during his visit to the Netherlands, but there is no evidence of this or even that he met Locke.

It is clear, therefore, that Lady Masham's account cannot be accepted as it stands. No doubt she was writing in good faith, but she must either have misunderstood what someone had told her or (more probably) had been misinformed.¹⁵⁶ To that extent at least, Ashcraft was right in dismissing her story as a myth. She may, however, have been on stronger ground in thinking that Locke would have turned down the offer of a pardon, if one had been

¹⁵⁶ Unfortunately it is not possible to say where she got her story from. She may have been told something by Locke himself, or by Tyrrell, whom she had consulted before writing to Le Clerc (*ibid.* 500). Another possibility is Penn himself. She mentioned meeting him in London in 1687, though it is not clear what, if anything, passed between them, Masham to Locke, 27 Apr. 1687, *Correspondence*, iii. 185.

made, on the grounds that he had done nothing wrong. Ashcraft brusquely dismissed her account on the grounds that she knew ‘virtually nothing’ about Locke’s political activities in Holland and was ‘simply wrong’ about his motives.¹⁵⁷ The latter point is surely mistaken. Although, as she herself admitted, she had little personal knowledge of Locke’s career before 1689, she did have one advantage not possessed by modern scholars: she knew Locke very well. As she herself told Le Clerc,

we have spent so many years almost constantly together that I think no one has had more oportunitie than I of knowing what you desire to be further inform’d of than from your own acquaintance with Mr. Locke, viz concerning *ses manieres et tout ce qui peut faire connoître le Caractere de son Esprit*.¹⁵⁸

She was wrong about Penn, but it is far more likely that she was right about Locke.¹⁵⁹ Locke could be a difficult man, even with his oldest friends. He was somewhat unsure of himself, at least in his earlier years, and he was proud, touchy, and very quick to take offence. He also had a strong sense of his own rectitude. One cannot readily envisage him contritely admitting to crimes he had not committed. If he had been engaged in the conspiratorial activities Ashcraft so readily attributed to him, he would have been very well advised to accept any pardon that was offered, whoever it was procured by. If, however, he was innocent, as he himself always maintained, it is easy to see why he would have behaved as Lady Masham said he did.

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¹⁵⁷ Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, 512–13.

¹⁵⁸ Masham to Le Clerc, 12 Jan. 1705, *Epistolario*, ii. 498.