

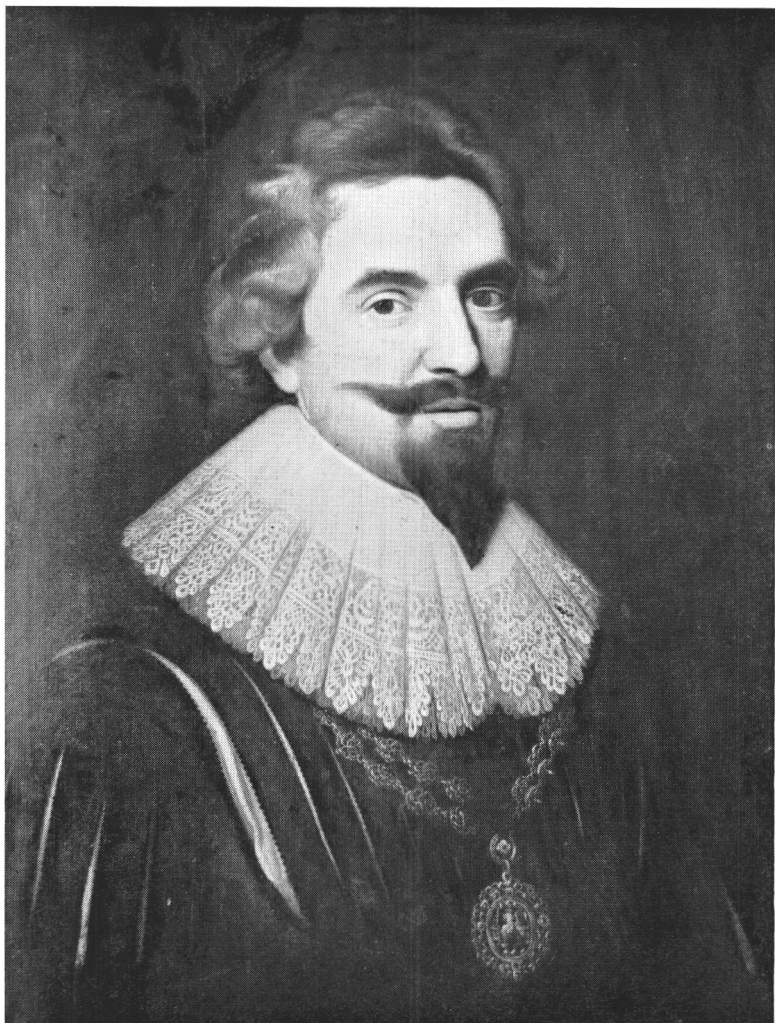
SIR CORNELIUS VERMUYDEN AND THE DOVEGANG LEAD MINE.

By F. N. FISHER, T.D., A.R.Hist.S.

I

TOWARDS the close of the 16th century, in a small town on the isle of Tholen in Zeeland, was born a child who, in the country of his adoption, England, was destined to become a man of great stature in the field of civil engineering. He was Cornelius Vermuyden, undoubtedly the greatest drainage expert of his day but around whom much controversy was to rage. This controversy was fierce during his lifetime and has lingered on to the present, but now, thanks to modern research, his position as a great engineer is secure. He was the lodestone of such animosity that this has tended to overshadow his achievements, and his many mistakes laid him open to attack by other drainage experts with lesser reputations at stake. Nevertheless, his enterprise and skill commanded respect and his fame to-day rests chiefly on his success in draining some 307,000 acres of the Fen district, where the situation is very much as he left it some 300 years ago. A noble monument indeed, but he had other achievements to his credit including his soughing in the lead mines near Wirksworth which is of particular local interest.

He came of a family which had settled in Tholen as early as the beginning of the 14th century and was by the 16th century of some local eminence. One Bartel Vermuyden was an alderman of St. Maartensdijk in 1570 and burgomaster in 1609. A Gillis Vermuyden was high sheriff of the same town in 1591. Gillis married Sarah, daughter of Cornelius Werckendet, a well known drainage engineer, and this couple were the parents of Cornelius. The date of Cornelius' birth is not known



SIR CORNELIUS VERMUYDEN

Reproduced from a portrait by Michiel Van Miereveld (1567-1641),
by kind permission of Mr. L. E. Harris.

with any certainty, the *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek* (N.N.B.W.) says about 1590 and the *Dictionary of National Biography* (D.N.B.) gives the date as 1595. Neither work cites any authority for its statement but somewhere in the range of 1590-1595 will not be far off the mark. With the other children of Gillis and Sarah we are not really concerned, but we know that a daughter, Cornelia, married Joachim Liens who, in 1618, was Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of St. James'.¹

We know, as we shall see later, that by February, 1622, a scheme was in being for draining the Fens, and as Vermuyden himself says in his book²: "When King James of blessed memory, undertook the draining (of the Fens) as aforesaid at that time I was come over into England, invited to that work", the year 1621 may be taken as the latest date when Vermuyden left his native Holland for England.

Cornelius was married at Rotherhithe parish church on November 6th, 1623, to Katherine Laps, and on the same day one Jacob Struys married Anne Laps, presumably a sister of Katherine.^{2a} Katherine's father is credited with the unusual Christian name of Allsaints in the *Visitations of London* by Sir Henry St. George, Richmond Herald, printed by the Harleian Society, 1883. The *D.N.B.* and *N.N.B.W.* and Korthals-Altes follow suit. However, from a transcript of the registers of the Dutch Reformed Church³ recording the marriage of Katherine's parents, the name is given as "Toussain". The entry reads as follows: "Ist January 1594 Toussain Lap v. Brugghe met Catherine Houwe v. Cassel." Two further marriages of Vermuyden's mother-in-law are recorded in the same register:

23rd June 1607 Hans Swart v. Lubecq met Catherine Hauwe, we Toussain Laps.

13th September 1614 Joos Croppenburg v. bij Gulick, met Catherine Hauwe we Hans Swart.

¹ Korthals-Altes., J., *Sir Cornelius Vermuyden*, 1925.

² *Discourse Touching the Draining of the Great Fens*, 1642.

^{2a} The rector, Canon A. P. Daniels kindly extracted these details from the registers.

³ In the Library of the Society of Genealogists.

The word "toussaint" is the French equivalent of "all saints", and I rather suspect that Vermuyden himself effected this translation on giving the herald his personal details when he was knighted on January 6th, 1628-9.⁴

On April 6th, 1619, at St. Andrew Undershaft, London, a marriage took place that has quite a bearing on our story. It was a marriage between Joas Croppenburie (Croppenburgh) and Mary Werven (Vermuyden).⁵ It seems at least a possibility that this Joas was the son of Joos Croppenburgh who had married Cornelius' mother-in-law in 1614. Now Mary Croppenburgh by her will dated July 28th, 1652, and proved August 30th the same year, by then a widow living at Stapleford, Leics., bequeathed £10 "to John Vermuden my brother."⁶ John, the son of Bartel Vermuyden, an elder brother of Cornelius, came to England with his uncle where he married his cousin Maria (? Susanna) Liens who was the daughter of Cornelia Vermuyden and Joachim Liens. Korthals-Altes states that John was a cousin and not a nephew of Cornelius and the confusion may have originated because the Dutch word *neef* may mean either a nephew or a cousin. John was born at St. Maartensdijk in 1595 so that he was very near to the age of his uncle. On the death of Maria he married again, this time on May 26th, 1636, at Tholen to Clasina Dalles. It was he who built the house labelled "T'HUIS VERMUYDEN" which is still standing on Kettingdijk near Tholen. The fact that Cornelius had a son John has caused some confusion in the task of unravelling the Vermuyden story, and there is still another John who comes into the picture. This is Johan Willem who was a town councillor of Rotterdam in 1678⁷, although, of course, he and Cornelius' nephew may well turn out to be one and the same person.

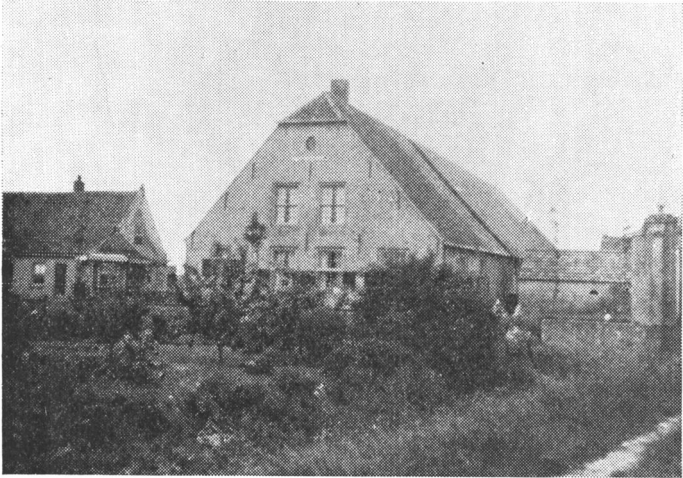
⁴ The Vermuyden arms, as given in the *Encyclopædia of Heraldry or General Armory*, Burke, 1861, were:— Az. a pile in chief between 3 estoiles or. Korthals-Altes (*op. cit.*) however substitutes a chevron for the pile which were the arms of the family in Holland. On July 10th, 1629, Sir Cornelius was granted by Sir John Brough, Norroy, an honorary addition to his arms which were now:— 1 and 4, Az. a pile between 3 estoiles or, 2 and 3, Az. a ram rampant arg. collared or. Crest, a demi-ram arg. collared or. (*Harl. Soc. Visitation Series*).

⁵ Lib. Soc. of Genealogists.

⁶ *Papers of the P.C.C.*, Somerset House.

⁷ *N.N.B.W.*

John had a son by his first wife, Bartel, who died on August 4th, 1650, aged about 33, and is buried in Tholen church where there is a slab to his memory. He also had a daughter Maria by his second wife, and a grave-stone in Tholen records that she died May 6th, 1675, aged 25. Bartel, named after his grandfather, married Catherine Ketting and, as we shall see, if the *N.N.B.W.* and *D.N.B.* are to be relied upon was also in England and served as an officer in the Parliament Army.⁸



T'HUIS VERMUYDEN.

Cornelius and Katherine were blessed with a large family and I have been able to gather some details of six sons and seven daughters.

1. Sarah. She was undoubtedly the eldest and was born at the latest by early 1625 although the exact date and place remain unknown. In the registers of St. Dionis Backchurch, London, there is recorded the burial of "Sarah — of Sir C.V. Kt.", with the date as January 17th, 1630-1.⁹ Why a blank was left after the name we shall never know and we can only speculate upon the

⁸ Mr. L. E. Harris has kindly given me this information about John, nephew of Cornelius, which he derived from, (1) an article "Het Huis Vermuyden," by A. Hollestelle, 1903, and, (2) "Geschied en Waterstaatkundige Beschrijving . . . en het Eiland Tholen", by A. Hollestelle, 1919.

⁹ *Harl. Soc. (Register Series)*, Vol. III.

relationship to Sir Cornelius. It may be a sister or even his mother or it may refer to his daughter. Again, if another daughter had been born later she too might have been given the same name. This was not at all an uncommon event in those and in even more recent times. I am of the opinion, however, that this entry does not refer to Cornelius' first-born who, when she was made administratrix of her brother Cornelius' estate on July 10th, 1694, would undoubtedly be the eldest surviving child of Vermuyden. She was succeeded as administratrix on May 21st, 1706, by her sister Adriana¹⁰ who was baptised in January 1632-3. This fact and the knowledge that Gyles was baptised in September, 1631, makes it highly improbable that a second Sarah could be older than Adriana.

Sarah was twice married, first to John Blake and secondly to Andrew Ruel.¹¹ She died sometime prior to May 21st, 1706.

2. Catherine. She was baptised in the Dutch Reformed Church, Austin Friars, on January 22nd, 1626.¹² From this and other references it appears that the Dutch were using the New Style calendar whereby the new year began on January 1st, whereas in England the Old Style calendar was of course still in use. Catherine's godparents were Joannes Liens, Sarah Werckendet and Anna Struys, all relatives or relatives by marriage.¹³ Among the burials from the registers of St. Dionis Backchurch we read "1636 December 20th Kataren Wermven, i.e. Vermuyden."¹⁴ Whether this is Cornelius' daughter is not clear. We know that a Catherine, daughter of Cornelius married Thomas Babington of Somersham, Huntingdonshire,¹⁵ but whether this is the original Catherine or a younger daughter of the same name is debatable. It is possible, of course, that the burial may refer to Vermuyden's wife but if this is so, it seems odd

¹⁰ *Court of Delegates and P.C.C.*, Ad. Act. Bk. fo. 106, Somerset House.

¹¹ Chancery suit, Lediard v. Vermuyden, dated February 22nd, 1693-4, amended July 16th, 1694 and November 17th, 1694. P.R.O. *The Glencross MSS.* in the Lib. of the Soc. of Genealogists gives Blake's christian name as Thomas.

¹² Lib. Soc. of Genealogists.

¹³ Korthals-Altes, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ *Harl. Soc. (Register Series)*, Vol. III.

¹⁵ *Glencross MSS.*

that no indication of her rank is mentioned in the registers. Again it may refer to a daughter of John Vermuyden, Cornelius' nephew.

3. Cornelius. Vermuyden's eldest son was baptised March 19th, 1626-7, at St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, London.¹⁶ This tallies with the statement in the *Visitation of London*, 1633, when he was stated to be aged about seven in that year.¹⁷ Again, in a suit in the Duchy of Lancaster Court he is mentioned as "coming of the age of 21 years in or about April 1648".¹⁸ As we shall see later, he was intimately bound up with his father's interest in the Wirksworth lead mines but prior to this much uncertainty exists about his activities. The *D.N.B.* and Korthals-Altes imply that he was an officer in the Parliamentary Army. We know that a Captain Vermuyden was serving in Derbyshire in 1642¹⁹, and that a Colonel Vermuyden was at Marston Moor (1644). It is presumably this colonel who, on August 15th, 1650, handed over to Col. Nath. Lisle the sum of £11,000 "which he received of the treasurers in the army of the Earl of Manchester".²⁰ I feel that Cornelius II was of too tender an age to be identified as this officer and it may be that the *N.N.B.W.* is right when it describes Bartel Vermuyden as a probable nephew of Sir Cornelius.²¹ This officer, it goes on to say, was a quartermaster-general in Manchester's army and this seems to fit in with the statement in the *D.N.B.*, that his christian name began with "B". Personally I am of the opinion that the identity of this mysterious colonel rests between Bartel and his father.

Cornelius II was admitted to Gray's Inn December 31st, 1650, when he was living at East Greenwich.²² He was proposed as a candidate for the Royal Society on April 1st, 1661, and was admitted the following June. He was one of the Fellows whose election was confirmed on May 20th, 1663, after the incorporation of the Society

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Harl. Soc.*

¹⁸ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/387, P.R.O.

¹⁹ *D.A.J.* III, 170.

²⁰ *Col. Comm.* for Advance of Money.

²¹ Actually, of course a great-nephew.

²² *Glencross MSS.*

by Royal Charter. His signature is not, however, in the Charter Book, but his name appears in the list of Fellows for 1663 but not in the list for 1675.²³ Like his father he was seemingly always in financial difficulties and it may be that he failed to pay his subscription.

Lead mining seems to have been his chief occupation, but in 1684 we read of another activity, namely, that he had prepared a scheme to supply the town and garrison of Portsmouth with fresh water.²⁴ But that is another story. He married Anne, eldest daughter of Sir Compton Reade, Bart., of Barton, Berks., who died in 1681.²⁵

4. Thomas. He was baptised in St. Dionis Backchurch on June 15th, 1628.²⁶ In the registers there are two burials of a Thomas Vermuyden, one in 1628 and the other May 1st, 1635. Both may refer to Sir Cornelius' sons. The first having died in infancy, and another son born later may have been given the same name. This second Thomas could quite easily have been born between John, baptised October 8th, 1629, and Gyles, baptised September 30th, 1631. If this is so, it would seem this second Thomas also died in infancy, as in the pedigree in the *Visitations* of 1633, 1634 and 1635 he is not mentioned.²⁷ If only one, Thomas is Sir Cornelius' son, the other might possibly be nephew John's son.

5. John. He was baptised at St. Dionis Backchurch on October 8th, 1629.²⁸ Of his early life we have no details, but in the 1650's he was actively engaged in lead mining at Wirksworth. The *N.N.B.W.* records that in September, 1653, a John Vermuyden, perhaps the son of Sir Cornelius, took a proposal from Cromwell to the Dutch authorities for an alliance against the countries maintaining the Inquisition. It is not relevant to this paper to pursue this matter further, except that I should state that I do not consider that it is Sir Cornelius' son John who is referred to, as he would be by then but 24 years of age, and as we shall see later he was at this time much

²³ Letter from the Royal Society to the writer.

²⁴ *Cal. State Papers, Dom.*

²⁵ Burke, *Peerage and Baronetage*, 1949.

²⁶ *Harl. Soc. (Register Series)*, Vol. III.

²⁷ *Harl. Soc.*

²⁸ *Harl. Soc. (Register Series)*, Vol. III.

involved in the litigation concerning the Wirksworth lead mines.

6. Gyles. He was baptised at Great Abington September 30th, 1631.²⁹ He died in infancy, being buried at St. Dionis Backchurch February 21st, 1631-2.³⁰

7. Adriana. Her baptism on January 18th, 1632-3, is recorded in the registers of St. Dionis Backchurch.³¹ She was still living, unmarried, in 1706 when she became administratrix of the estate of her brother Cornelius.³²

8. Bartholomew. He was baptised August 21st, 1634, in the Dutch Reformed Church, Austin Friars, his godparents being Jacob Struys and Sarah Werckendet.³³ He was still living in 1693, when he inherited part of the estate of his eldest brother Cornelius.³⁴

9. Anna. Anna was baptised July 26th in the Dutch Reformed Church, her godparents being Jacob Struys and Catherine Croppenburgh, her grandmother.³⁵

10. Mary. She was baptised July 21st, 1636, in St. Dionis Backchurch.³⁶

11. Charles. He was baptised December 22nd, 1637, in St. Dionis Backchurch,³⁷ and not in Christ Church, London, as stated in the *N.N.B.W.* He was admitted a student to Gray's Inn May 8th, 1657, and after entering Christ Church graduated B.A. (Oxon) in 1661 and became a Licentiate of the College of Physicians December 22nd, 1662.³⁸ He was married December 20th, 1667, in the parish church or chapel of Gray's Inn to Mary, the seventeen-year-old daughter of Ambrose Upton of Hendon.³⁹ He died in 1673⁴⁰ and his widow became the fourth wife of Sir John Maynard, serjeant-at-law, who died in 1690.⁴¹ She married again on November 22nd,

²⁹ Ex. inf. Mr. L. E. Harris.

³⁰ *Harl. Soc. (Register Series)*, Vol. III.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *P.C.C.*, Ad. Act Bk. fo. 106, Somerset House.

³³ Korthals-Altes, *op. cit.*

³⁴ Chancery suit, Lediard v. Vermuyden dated February 22nd, 1693-4, amended July 16th, 1694 and November 17th, 1694, P.R.O.

³⁵ Korthals-Altes, *op. cit.*

³⁶ *Harl. Soc. (Register Series)*, Vol. III.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Glencross MSS.*

³⁹ Allegations for Marriage Licenses issued by the Dean and Chapter. Westminster, *Harl. Soc.*

⁴⁰ Ex. inf. Mr. L. E. Harris.

⁴¹ *Glencross MSS.*

1691, and became the second wife of Henry, 5th earl of Suffolk, and died January 1720-1.⁴²

12. Susanna. She was baptised December 28th, 1638, in St. Dionis Backchurch.⁴³ She was married at either St. Bride's or St. Peter's, Pauls Wharf, on June 2nd, 1663, to George, son of Sir Francis Liddell of Red Hugh, Co. Durham, and her age is recorded as 20.⁴⁴ The latter is clearly a mis-statement unless it is another instance of a younger daughter being given the same name as an elder one who pre-deceased her.

13. Deborah. Date and place of birth unknown. This daughter may be the child referred to in a letter dated February 12th, 1646 (? N.S.), from Sir Cornelius to the authorities of the Dutch Reformed Church. Having apparently been chided for failing to have her baptised in the Dutch Reformed Church, he replied in an interesting letter: "As the matter of the large fens was dealt with to-day I was unable to appear before the consistory but as to the baptism of my child, I regard the baptism of children as an ordinance of God. Nor did I scruple to present it to the Dutch community but as my wife (though otherwise sound on this point) requested some delay, I consented as she felt inclined to have our child baptised in the English Church, this being a common custom . . ."⁴⁵ This would point to Deborah being born in 1645 or even earlier. The *N.N.B.W.* states that Lady Vermuyden resigned from the Dutch Church about 1640 and Sir Cornelius about 1641. It certainly seems odd that he should write thus to the authorities of a church in 1646 when he had not been a member for some five years, but of course he may have re-entered the fold.

Deborah married in 1666 Francis Bickley who later (1681) succeeded as the third holder to the baronetcy con-

⁴² Burke, *Peerage and Baronetage*, 1949, p. 1938. Herein Charles is referred to as M.D. and his father-in-law as canon of Christ Church, Oxford.

⁴³ *Harl. Soc. (Register Series)*, Vol. III. Sir Cornelius was still living in the parish of St. Dionis Backchurch in a house for which he paid £60 p.a., *N.N.B.W.*

⁴⁴ Allegations for Marriage Licenses, issued by Bishop of London 1611-1829. *Harl. Soc.*

⁴⁵ Korthals-Altes, *op. cit.*

ferred on his grandfather in 1661. She died March 6th, 1669.⁴⁶

The *D.N.B.* mentions Deborah and goes on to state that Vermuyden had another daughter, Elizabeth, who married Sir Thomas Peneystone. This now brings to a head a rather curious case of mistaken identity. The *D.N.B.* states that Sir Cornelius was naturalised by the Scots Parliament as Sir Cornelius Pharmedo and conjectures that he died in 1683 on evidence from an entry in the registers of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields recording the burial of Cornelius Fairmeadow. But the fact is that there was a Sir Cornelius Fairmeadow who married Dionysia, daughter of Sir William Stonehouse, first baronet,⁴⁷ and it was their daughter Elizabeth who married Sir Thomas Peneystone. Further confusion has been caused by the *D.N.B.*'s statement that Dionysia was Vermuyden's second wife. This is incorrect since she is referred to as Fairmeadow's relict on April 20th, 1638,⁴⁸ and was still a widow after the Civil War when she figured in the proceedings of the Committee for the Advance of Money.

An interesting link in this rather complicated story is that Elizabeth Reade, sister of Anne the wife of Cornelius II, married Sir Fairmeadow Penyston (*sic*) 4th baronet,⁴⁹ undoubtedly a descendant of Sir Thomas.

In conclusion, I must emphasise that Mr. Harris definitely states on evidence in the registers that Sir Cornelius Fairmeadow was buried in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields in 1638. (Note the transposition of '83 to '38).

Mr. Harris's further researches have now finally established the fact that Sir Cornelius Vermuyden, Kt., was buried in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on October 15th, 1677.

His children seem to have married into good families and three of his sons at least made their mark in the world. Two of them, Cornelius II and John, were associated with him in the Wirksworth lead mines which were no doubt lucrative as lead was in great demand.

⁴⁶ Ex. inf. Mr. L. E. Harris.

⁴⁷ Burke, *op. cit.*, p. 1911.

⁴⁸ *P.C.C.*, Somerset House.

⁴⁹ Burke, *op. cit.*

The lead roofs of churches and other buildings were stripped in the Civil War to make bullets and their replacement in more tranquil times meant a measure of prosperity for lead mine owners.

However, it is as a drainage engineer that Sir Cornelius is known and his earliest endeavours in that field are worthy of note. The fact that he was a foreigner employing foreign labour in itself inspired much ill-feeling, but he added to these difficulties by the arrogance and ruthlessness of his treatment of his own countrymen. In fact, had he been of a milder disposition, lived within his means and curbed his yearning for litigation we should indeed know little about him.

II

The Romans, during the occupation of Britain, possibly drained certain flooded areas of the Fen country, and in the time of Edward III we hear of commissioners appointed to repair flood damage, but it was not until Elizabeth's reign that concerted action for large scale drainage was first mooted. Little was done however, and it is to James I that credit must be given for appreciating the great advantages that would accrue if the vast areas of the Cambridgeshire Fens and other districts were drained.

The Dutch have a saying, "God made the sea and we made the shore." There is more than a modicum of truth in this for so much of Holland is reclaimed land, made by building barriers against the sea, and the skill of her engineers has become legendary. It seems common sense to us now that James I should wish to employ Dutch drainage experts in his projects. The draining of the Fen district was considered at least as early as 1621, for by February, 1622, matters had reached such a pitch that the Lord Treasurer, the Earl Marshal and others were agreed that it was a feasible proposition to drain 360,000 acres. Cornelius Liens and Cornelius Vermuyden were named as undertakers.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ It seems a probability that Cornelius Liens was brother to the Joachim Liens who had married Vermuyden's sister Cornelia.

Although Vermuyden had undoubtedly built up a local reputation in his native country, the draining of the Fens was an immensely greater undertaking and no doubt some influence was needed to secure the job for him. His brother-in-law, Joachim Liens, was probably the "friend at court".

Local opposition was too strong however, and James had perforce to abandon the scheme for the time being and it was in fact nearly a decade later before a start was made.

It was in the Thames estuary that we first read of Vermuyden being employed on a drainage scheme. Canvey Island and lands in Erith, Kent, were drained by Joos Croppenburgh with assistance from Vermuyden.⁵¹ The contracts were signed in 1622 and it was in the same year that a breach of the Thames banks had occurred and Vermuyden was employed on the repairs and the reclamation of "surrounded groundes in that county of Essex called Havering and Dagenham Marshes."⁵²

The Dagenham scheme was but a few months old when we get the first hint that Vermuyden's career in England was not to be one of tranquility. In December, 1622, his workmen complained that they had not been paid their wages and he begged some payment from the county as he had expended £3,600.⁵³ The Commissioners of Sewers of Essex on February 1st, 1623, reported to the Council of State that Vermuyden "has accomplished little hitherto, but for his delays and the want of durability in the work he has accomplished, the land is in worse condition than it was before. On this account the county refused to pay Vermuyden; he urges for payment, and his work people clamour for wages, while landholders complain of the danger to their property from the state of the level." Settlement had not been reached by the following June, when the Commissioners stated they had not been able to mediate and that they found Vermuyden's demands unreasonable.⁵⁴

However, despite what the Essex people thought and

⁵¹ *Chancery Proceedings*, C.2. Chas. I, F44/45.

⁵² *Acts of the Privy Council*.

⁵³ *Cal. State Papers*, Dom.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

said about Vermuyden, James was evidently satisfied with his work and commissioned him to drain Windsor Great Park. By now James had ideas about draining some Crown property in Hatfield Chase and the Isle of Axeholme situated in South Yorkshire and North Nottinghamshire, but before any scheme was formulated he died on March 27th, 1625. Charles I was sympathetic to the undertaking and on May 24th, 1626, he signed a contract with Vermuyden authorizing the draining of some 73,515 acres. The agreement, a lengthy document, is not relevant to this paper, but among its many clauses is one by which Vermuyden was to get one-third of the reclaimed land together with the manor of East Greenwich in full and free possession as a reward for his labours.⁵⁵

The cost of financing this scheme was obviously large and beyond Vermuyden's resources, so he obtained financial backing from "adventurers" who would receive rewards of land in proportion to the money they had advanced. It is not known whether he first sought this backing in England but he actually obtained it from his fellow-countrymen. On the very day the contract was signed he was granted a pass by the Privy Council to proceed "into the Lowe Countries and to take with him his wife, two children, two men-servants and two maide servants and such necessary provision, not prohibited, as they shall have occasion to use."⁵⁶ From his *entourage* it seems by now he was a man of some substance.

With this backing ensured, Vermuyden returned to Hatfield and began operations. In the long list of fellow adventurers, or participants as they were later called, appear such names as: Sir Philibert Vernatti: Abraham Vernatti: Lucas or Lucious, Mathew and Marcus Vanvolkenburg: Leonard Cats: Sir James Cats: Marcellus Vandurne: Jan Corselis: Abraham and Jacob Strys or Struys.⁵⁷

Vermuyden's scheme of draining this area is set out in detail in Korthals-Altes' book, and it is here sufficient to say that the basic principle he adopted was to divert the water from meandering rivers into new straight canals

⁵⁵ Korthals-Altes, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ *Acts of the Privy Council.*

⁵⁷ *Yorks. Arch. Journal*, part 147, p. 389-390.

which emptied themselves into the Trent, before it joined the Humber.

This big project required a large labour force mostly recruited from Holland but reinforced by a contingent of Huguenots.

During the early part of the work there is evidence that Vermuyden lived at Sandtoft and the house, now a farmhouse, "Crowtrees", is still standing. How long he lived there is not known but a limit of 1628 may be set, as on June 15th that year his son Thomas was baptised at St. Dionis Backchurch. We also read that John Molanus was agent to the participants in 1628⁵⁸ so it may be that he, Vermuyden, left affairs much in his hands as he later did in the Wirksworth lead mines.

The work proceeded and was so far advanced by 1627 that Commissioners were appointed to allot the reclaimed land.

Vermuyden was by now in a flourishing state, for on June 13th, 1628, we find a grant to him and his children, Cornelius, Sarah and Catherine, for their lives, of 2,600 acres of waste and "surrounded" lands in Misson, Notts.⁵⁹ A month later a warrant was issued to strike a tally purporting a loan of £10,000 by Vermuyden to the king, and in return he was granted the manors of Hatfield, Fishlake, Thorpe, Stainforth and Dowesthorpe, Yorks., at a rent of £150 per annum.

Shortly afterwards there was some amendment to this grant and Vermuyden was granted the lordship of Hatfield at a rental of £195. 3s. 5½d. and a red rose, to be increased to £495 as from Christmas, 1630. He was also granted lands in Wroot, Lincs., at an annual rent of £8. 6s. 8d. and a pair of gloves or fourpence, with an improved rent of £60 as from Christmas, 1630. These rents were ordered by the king to be vested in the estate of his favourite, the duke of Buckingham, who was assassinated in 1628.^{59a}

From then onwards we read of trouble between Vermuyden and the commoners who resented the intrusion,

⁵⁸ *Cal. State Papers, Dom.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

^{59a} *Ibid.*

and between Vermuyden and his fellow participants. There is no doubt that the local inhabitants did not take too kindly to the Dutchmen, and in August, 1628, there were riots in which a man was killed by an armed workman. A month later one Francis Thornhill wrote to Vermuyden that at Axeholme 300 people had assembled and cast down the new banks built in connection with the river Idle. Matters were evidently very serious and the Attorney-General was ordered to prepare a proclamation forbidding the inhabitants of the Isle of Axeholme to oppose the drainage work. This royal proclamation, made by a serjeant-at-arms, accompanied by the sheriff and other officials and 50 horsemen, "with threats of fire and vengeance" evidently had the desired effect, and the commoners henceforth gave freely of their assistance to complete the work.^{59b}

This harmony, however, was not to last for long. There were more riots and because of them, Sir Cornelius (he had been knighted January 6th, 1629) fell foul of the powerful Lord President of the Council of the North, Thomas, Viscount Wentworth.

Despite these troubles, Vermuyden still enjoyed the confidence of the king and his Council. In the summer of 1630 he wished to visit the scenes of his activities and he was ordered to be provided with five post-horses and a guide for his journey from London to Boston and Hatfield and back again. A rather amusing contretemps occurred at Royston on the outward journey. Sir Cornelius' servant, George Johnson, stated that the constable there, Edward Whitehead, in the absence of the postmaster, refused to provide them with horses, and, on being told that he would have to answer for this neglect of duty, he replied "Tush, do your worst, you shall have none of my horses in spite of your teeth."⁶⁰ What dental deformity poor Johnson had we shall never know.

There seems to be some justification, that is if law-breaking can ever be justified, for much of the rioting, because, although a large area was cleared of water and rendered productive, it was at the expense of flooding land

^{59b} *State Papers, Dom.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

which had not previously been inundated. This was the result of imperfections in Vermuyden's plans particularly regarding his treatment of the river Don which originally divided into a northern and an eastern arm near Thorne. Vermuyden blocked up the eastern arm and calculated that the northern arm was sufficient to carry away the waters. This channel, however, was not large enough and much flooding occurred. As a result of a lawsuit he was directed to cut a new river from Turnbridge on this northern arm to the Ouse near Goole. This new cut, still known as Dutch river, added such further financial strain on the participants that they felt it was a burden they could not bear. Vermuyden refused to contribute his share and was imprisoned. The situation is explained in a letter from Francis, Lord Cottington, to Secretary Coke dated June 4th, 1633: "Vermuyden is yet a prisoner by commandant of the Lords for having refused to contribute to the new works the proportion which their Lordships have ordained."⁶¹

Whilst he was in prison he was in no way complacent about matters and even adopted a defiant attitude. This we gather from an affidavit made on 31st July, 1633, by Isaac Van Payne and John Corselis, who averred that one Hugh Speyring, when he asked Vermuyden how the proceedings in the Chancery Court between him and his fellow participants were going, Sir Cornelius "scoffingly answered that it would be time enough in seven years time to answer that question, and further that the Lords of the Council were ashamed of the orders which they had made concerning his imprisonment, and did not know how with credit to get off from what they had done."⁶²

However, he languished many more months in gaol but on February 25th, 1633-4, he petitioned the king for redress. He was interviewed by Lord Cottington, Sir John Coke and the Attorney-General who gave their opinion that he was wrongfully imprisoned and that he had in fact overpaid in scots to the extent of £216. 8s. Vermuyden pleaded the extreme malice of his adversaries and because of the overpayment of scots, his long

⁶¹ *Cowper MSS.*, H.M.C.

⁶² *Cal. State Papers*, Dom.

imprisonment, his expenses in re-surveying the works and "the many disgraces he has endured", he prayed that the king "would refer his cause to some of the Council to give order for his reparation for his charges and trouble."⁶³ What time elapsed before his release we do not know.

In the June following, Francis Trimingham and William Ibbotson, on behalf of themselves and other inhabitants of Fishlake and Sikehouses, entered a suit against Vermuyden and others for the damage they had incurred as a result of the flooding.⁶⁴ At the hearing the defendants failed to put in an appearance, whereupon Trimingham and his associates requested that Vermuyden and sixteen others, including Sir Philibert Vernatti, Sir Jas. Campbell and Sir John Ogle, be taken to York under escort to make their answer.

Nothing apparently materialised from this request and Vermuyden and his fellow participants had judgment entered against them in default. From a petition in the next year, 1635, we read: "Since the order made for Sir Cornelius Vermuyden and his partners to compensate petitioners for damages sustained by their works, their lands had been thirty times inundated, so that they had sustained at least £10,000 damages." The petition goes on to mention that "the Dutchmen long since began a river which in May last might have been finished in one month." Sir Philibert Vernatti had offered to be bound in £30,000 to have it finished before the last winter (? 1634), but as it was not completed damages were claimed. It is not clear when this new river, Dutch river, was finished and what part Vermuyden played in its construction.

His debts were causing him and his fellow participants much concern. He was obliged to sell his share of the drained lands to John Gibbons in May, 1635. His other possessions in the locality were also sold, but from a petition by Sir Philibert Vernatti, Sir John Ogle, John Gibbons, Katherine Bishop, Philip Jackson and Marcellus

⁶³ *Cal. State Papers*, Dom.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Vandurne in December, 1637, we may infer that Vermuyden managed to drive a hard bargain, as they stated that they had "purchased their lands long since from Sir Cornelius Vermuyden at a very dear rate."⁶⁵

The story is now one of lawsuits between the participants themselves and between them and the freeholders which in the end spelled ruin to Vermuyden and his associates. The tale of ruin is epitomised in an appeal by Vermuyden and his partners for some relief in the expenses they had incurred. It is dated December 8th, 1637, and in it are some details of the cost of the scheme. Vermuyden, it is stated, "set on workmen and spent many thousand pounds, but by reason of the opposition of the commoners he has been hindered perfecting the work, and has ever since been kept in suits for titles. And, further, during the work, in the night and in times of floods, the banks have been cut whereby £60,000 loss has been sustained and £150,000 has been spent in law and in the work, which is twice the value of the lands allotted. Petitioners, nevertheless, stand charged to pay to the king arrears of rent ever since 1633, and also rent for time to come for lands which they have not in possession, and for lands which fall short in quantity, and for other lands which belong to the manor of Hatfield."⁶⁶

The tale of ruin is not quite so complete when we consider the fact that land around Haxey Carr before the drainage was let at about sixpence per acre, whereas after Vermuyden's labours it fetched ten shillings.⁶⁷

Here we leave the story of Vermuydens travails in Hatfield Chase and dwell awhile on his other activities. In 1630 he had purchased Malvern Chase from the king for £5,000⁶⁸ and in the same year he paid £12,000 for 4,000 acres of Sedgemoor. In 1631 he joined forces with Sir Robert Heath, the Attorney-General, to exploit the Dovegang lead mines, the story of which will be dealt with in some detail. But it is as the drainage engineer of the Fens that he is mainly known. Despite all the animosity

⁶⁵ *Cal. State Papers, Dom.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Korthals-Altes, *op. cit.*

⁶⁸ Sometime prior to November 28th, 1636, he sold out to Sir Robert Heath. *Cal. State Papers, Dom.*

he had attracted he was selected, in 1630, to supervise the vast undertaking to drain some 300,000 acres, which makes the Hatfield Chase scheme appear small beer indeed. He came up against much the same opposition from the commoners and made errors of judgment, but in the main his efforts conferred great benefits on the district. There is no need in this paper to give any account of Vermuyden's work in the Fens as it has been dealt with at length elsewhere.⁶⁹

III

The story of the Wirksworth lead mines is long and interesting. They were worked by the Romans and were yielding in the Mercian era, but it is of the 17th century with which we are concerned, when Sir Cornelius and his sons were engaged in the locality. These relatively few years saw great developments. Water is and always has been the great enemy of the miners, and as a result of Sir Cornelius' genius a large, according to 17th century standards, sough was made which drained the mines to a great depth enabling almost unheard of quantities of ore to be produced.

The Dovegang vein, the scene of Vermuyden's activities, runs in an east to west direction from near the Black Rocks, Cromford, to Middleton-by-Wirksworth, and to get the proper perspective to our story it is necessary to hark a few years before his advent in the district.

About 1615 one George Sayers, realising the potentialities of the mine if it were rendered dry, called a meeting of the miners and made an agreement with them whereby he undertook to drain the mine in return for one half of the yield. Unable alone to finance the scheme he took as partners Sir Abraham Dawes, Sir Robt. Sharpie and Thomas Wright. They contended, in a subsequent suit in the Duchy of Lancaster Court, that they sank an engine shaft 40 fathoms deep and laid the mine dry, spending

⁶⁹ H. C. Darby, "The Draining of the Fens", *C.U.P.*, See also L. E. Harris, "Sir Cornelius Vermuyden and the Great Level of the Fens. A New Judgement". *Proc. Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, XLV, pp. 17-27. In his forthcoming book "Vermuyden and the Fens" Mr. Harris deals exhaustively with Sir Cornelius' *magnum opus*.

some £3,000 on doing so. Owing to further flooding and other casualties they failed to produce sufficient ore to cover expenses. About 1628 or 1629 the partners engaged a skilled engineer, John Bartholemewe, servant of the earl of Dover to drain the mine, the latter providing the money. They claimed that after much expense they were in hopes of success when they were dispossessed by Sir Robert Heath and his agents. Heath took possession of four meers, two at each end of the rake, a sixth part of a meer called Lums grove, a fourth part of Presses grove, a third part of Nications (Nications) grove, and a third part of Bownsall (Bonsall) Gate grove, belonging to the earl of Dover. John Curzon, created baronet in 1636, claimed he was deprived of a fourth part of Overdove Nest and other groves, and Sir Robt. Sharpie, Geo. Drywood, Thomas Wright, Bridget and Nathaniel Sayer(s) alleged they lost Engine Pit meer and other groves. The total added up to over 300 groves or meers.⁷⁰

Heath, on October 12th, 1631, took Vermuyden into partnership giving him two-thirds of the profits in return for his skill in draining the mine of water,⁷¹ and in the suit brought by Dover against Heath to recover the mines Sir Cornelius is named as a co-defendant. Heath and Vermuyden eventually won the day in February, 1637-8, by proving that Dover and his allies had neglected to work the mine for over a year when Heath took possession. In the suit it transpired that they had obtained a lease of the Dovegang from the Crown for 31 years at £1,000 per annum.⁷²

Besides his partnership with Heath, Sir Cornelius had other interests in the locality. As we shall see later, he bought many other meers on his own account but he still had the Hatfield Chase affairs to contend with. So much so that on September 5th, 1633, Sir Robert Heath, by

⁷⁰ *D. of L. Decrees and Orders*, D.L. 5/32. Miss Nellie Kirkham informs me that she considers there is some confusion here between "meer" and "grove". She points out that on p. 106 it is expressly stated that there were 31 or 32 meers in Dovegang and this tallies with her measurements made on the 25" O.S. The word "grove" embraces much and it is possible there may have been 300 shafts.

⁷¹ Doc. Collection. Lib. Soc. of Genealogists.

⁷² *D. of L. Decrees and Orders*, D.L. 5/32.

now Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, wrote to Sir John Coke, Secretary of State, complaining that "Sir Cornelius Vermuyden has been pursued by his adversary at the Council Board, his restraint hath fallen out unreasonably for our mines in Derbyshire where he should have been long since."⁷³ This "restraint" or imprisonment was, as previously noted, due to his refusal to contribute to the cost of Dutch River, and had begun at least as early as the previous June.

The sougning was no doubt an expensive undertaking but the pot was kept boiling in the interim. We realise this when we read that one Adam Flint, a labourer of Wirksworth, was charged in April, 1634, of stealing lead ore valued at sixpence from a coe belonging to Sir Robert Heath and Sir Cornelius Vermuyden.⁷⁴

On November 27th, 1637, John Parker, who had been made lessee of the lot and cope of the Wirksworth mines for 31 years on Lady Day, 1623, at a rent of £72 and £1. 6s. 8d. for the office of barmaster, assigned the unexpired portion of his lease to Thomas Coke, second son of Sir John Coke, Secretary of State. Coke immediately separated the Dovegang from the rest and granted the lot and cope and office of barmaster to Sir Cornelius at an annual rent of £200.⁷⁵ This shrewd bit of business shewed that the mine must by now be yielding good profits.

It is idle to speculate what time Vermuyden spent in and around Wirksworth, for we do not know if at this time lead-mining was his main means of livelihood. It is known, however, that his residence was in the ward of Langbourne and parish of St. Dionis Backchurch, London. On December 23rd of that year Christopher Clitheroe, Lord Mayor, ordered to make a return of aliens, certified that "Sir Cornelius Vermuyden born in — Zealand. He hath seven children, all born in the parish."⁷⁶ In my opinion, the probability is that he kept an eye on matters and gave general directives on periodical visits, leaving the day to day management to an agent.

⁷³ *Cowper MSS.*, H.M.C.

⁷⁴ Cox, *Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals*, II, 78.

⁷⁵ *Cal. Comm. Comp.*

⁷⁶ *Cal. State Papers*, Dom.

He had done much the same thing at Hatfield where John Molanus, another Dutchman, acted for him in this capacity. As we shall see later, Molanus was very much involved with Vermuyden's affairs here and in documents relating to the innumerable lawsuits he is referred to as Vermuyden's agent. He is mentioned as resident in Middleton by 1633,⁷⁷ but he had certainly been living hereabouts for some time before this.⁷⁸

Besides the lead mines Heath and Vermuyden had another project in the neighbourhood. This was concerned with making the river Derwent navigable, and from a letter to Secretary Sir John Coke, dated February 6th, 1636-7, Heath requested the permission of the king to start the work: "This Lent will be a fit time to execute the commission, and the summer a fit time to perfect the work. We hope it will incline others to agree thereto, in hope of ease by water carriage."⁷⁹ Whether this work was started in 1637 is not known, but if so it undoubtedly turned out to be a bigger task than Heath's letter implied. This interesting letter, dated April 6th, 1638, from Charles to the Corporation of Derby, merits quoting in full: "The king understanding that the Bailiffs and Burgesses of Derby with the rest of the Corporation are owners of a house near the town on the Darwent side desires that they will make choice to be their tenant of Sir Cornelius Vermuyden, who with his partners had undertaken a work very acceptable to the king about the lead works at Wirksworth and to make the river of Darwent to be navigable till fall into Trent." Indorsed by Sir John Coke, "Wm. Bates house."⁸⁰

I have been unable to locate this house or to determine whether the Corporation acceded to the king's request, but in a letter dated June 28th, 1634, from Mary Curzon, countess of Dorset, to Sir John Coke, we learn that at that time the Corporation had another purpose in view for the house. Bate had married Mary's cousin and he

⁷⁷ *Cal. State Papers, Dom.*

⁷⁸ His son John was baptised at Wirksworth, February 10th, 1632; *Wirksworth Parish Register*. Molanus, Johannes Couradus Molanus, served with distinction in the Civil War under Sir John Gell.

⁷⁹ *Cowper MSS., H.M.C.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

and his father before him had long been tenants of the house which the Corporation now wished to turn into a poor-house. The countess supplicated Sir John's aid to prevent the eviction of Bate "who hath a great many children, and great loss it will be to him and discredit to be put out after so long enjoying it."⁸¹ Apparently Sir John interceded successfully.

To revert to the Derwent navigation, nothing came of it and as is well known it was not until 1720 that such a scheme was carried out.

Vermuyden was nothing if not ambitious and was always ready to extend his field of activity to make money in a new adventure in order to pay off debts incurred in previous undertakings. He had purchased the manor of Awthorp, Lincs., in May, 1629, from Robert Richter for £4,000 of which he had paid £3,360,⁸² and in May, 1631, he undertook to drain Sutton Salt Marshes in the same county⁸³ and both these transactions involved him in litigation which lasted some years. The Hatfield Chase drainage scheme, as we have seen, was financially disastrous, both to Sir Cornelius and his fellow-countrymen, and we find that one debt incurred in that period was to cause him some concern. As early as 1630 he was indebted to Jacob Droogbroot of Middleburgh, Zeeland, for a large sum. This we learn from a lawsuit of February, 1636, when John Lamott who was employed to collect the debt, recited the facts that Vermuyden, owning manors in Lincolnshire, combined with his wife Katherine, Jacob Struys, Marcellus Vandurne and others to make them into estates and that judgment had been obtained against Vermuyden's goods. When the sheriff's officers entered his residence to distrain they had been confronted with a deed by which Sir Cornelius had conveyed to his mother-in-law, Katherine, widow of Joos Croppenburgh, all his goods, plate, etc., for £400.⁸⁴

What other subterfuges Vermuyden employed we can only hazard, but they were evidently effective as he

⁸¹ *Cowper MSS.*, H.M.C.

⁸² *Chancery Proceedings*, C.2. Chas. I, H 66/22.

⁸³ *Chancery Proceedings*, C.2. Chas. I. U 3/66, U 5/59, U 58/49 etc.

⁸⁴ *Chancery Proceedings*, C.2. Chas. I. L 11/40.

staved off the efforts of Lamott to get his dues for a further three years, when on June 27th, 1639, we find him writing to the elders of the Dutch Reformed Church: "You all know that I do owe a large sum of money to Mr. Lamote. Lately I have frequently spoken to him and Mr. Droogbroot about it, and there is now a plan of assigning a third of my shares in the large lead mines as security for this money. Mr. Lamote felt inclined to accept my offer; Mr. Droogbroot⁸⁵ insists on the larger share which I cannot give.

"The latter knows the value and that it is sufficient and in order to satisfy everybody. I offered him yesterday £100 per week, which he himself demanded from me ten or fourteen days ago.

"There was some talk of giving him some land for his money, but as Mr. Gibbons⁸⁶ has to consent to this agreement, the matter must await until we hear from him.

"While all these discussions took place, I was arrested by other persons, and also by Mr. Lamotte, besides an execution, which might have been in a more gentle way . . .

"I desire to pay every one in full, but cannot do so at present, though I hope to do so before long . . .

"Hence I should like to come to some agreement with Mr. Lamotte, which you, or some of you, could formulate, as this business might result in greater loss to him and prejudice to me while it inconveniences me."⁸⁷

From the first paragraph of the letter it seems that although Sir Cornelius was willing to assign one-third of his share in the Dovegang as security, Droogbroot may have wanted two-thirds or even the whole. The latter demand, however, was impossible, for as we shall see, Vermuyden had already mortgaged one-third to Marcellus Vandurne.

As previously mentioned, Marcellus Vandurne was one of the participants in the Hatfield drainage scheme and

⁸⁵ Droogbroot was evidently the son of Jacob Droogbroot who was deceased by 1635. *Stovin MSS., Trans. East Riding Antiquarian Soc., XIII, Pt. II, p. 214.*

⁸⁶ John Gibbons by 1635 owned 4,554 a. in Hatfield Chase formerly belonging to Vermuyden, *Trans. East Riding Antiquarian Soc., XIII, Pt. II, p. 213.*

⁸⁷ J. Korthals-Altes, *op. cit.* The letter is reproduced on p. 96.

he became associated with Vermuyden in the lead mines in early 1632. Some interesting facts regarding their association are obtained from a plethora of litigation in the Duchy of Lancaster Court. Vermuyden's son, Cornelius II, in February, 1651-2, brought an action against Vandurne to recover the Dovegang which he claimed his father "did out of natural love and affection for Orator (i.e., Cornelius II), then an infant of very tender years, assure and convey the same to one Marcellus Vandurne, then of London, Merchant, and his heirs, in Trust for Orator and his heirs. By reason whereof the said Marcellus Vandurne became seised thereof in Trust whereof as aforesaid." The date of this conveyance is March 8th, 1632. Cornelius II asserted that when he became of age "in or about April, 1648", he requested Vandurne to re-convey the mine to him and his heirs according to the trust agreement. Vandurne however refused to hand the mines over or to acknowledge any trust until he had been repaid various large sums owing to him.⁸⁸

From Cornelius II's plea and Vandurne's answer to it we learn much of the detail of these debts. Vandurne asserted that Sir Cornelius had prevailed on him to advance money for the sougning of the Dovegang, and by 1637 he was owed £2,200. He had also stood as surety for various large sums advanced by Henry Lee, Abraham Vandecanter and others.⁸⁹ On November 22nd of that year Sir Cornelius conveyed to Vandurne one-third of his share in the Dovegang for a term of 21 years at a rent of a peppercorn with the proviso that if a debt of £2,400 owing to Vandurne and the sums owing to Lee and Vandecanter be paid the grant was to be void. The £2,400 was to be paid in instalments "at the Ensurance House upon the Royal Exchange", but Vermuyden, true to form, defaulted and in fact he became further indebted to Vandurne. In a new agreement made December 2nd, 1643, Sir Cornelius acknowledged that Vandurne had "furnished him with £726 more which he had employed in the sougning and laying dry the

⁸⁸ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/387.

⁸⁹ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/388.

lead mine called the Dovegang, and promised that same with interest should be paid out of the first profits of the said mine." Vandurne had also lent him £55 in December, 1643, and a further £20 on January 30th, 1645.⁹⁰

Once again Vermuyden defaulted, and by a deed dated January 16th, 1645, he acknowledged the debts of £2,400 and £801 and agreed that "Marcellus Vandurne shall and may from henceforth take from time to time such quantity of lead ore of the other two-thirds parts belonging to him the said Sir Cornelius Vermuyden as before in these presents expressed as shall accrue and be gotten out of the said Dovegang and the mines rakes and veines thereupon . . . To keep the same to his own use at such rates and prices as lead ore of the like (? goodness) shall be sold at in these parts, until the said sum of £801 with interest for the same after the rate of £8 % be fully satisfied."⁹¹

Vandurne alleged that once again Vermuyden failed to honour an agreement and had kept all the profits of the mine for his own benefit. In November, 1646, he entered a suit in the barmote court against Sir Cornelius and John Molanus to enforce the agreement of January 16th, 1645. He got the verdict by default and began to work the Dovegang "according to the custom of the mines." In 1648 the sums of £2,400 and £801 were still outstanding, but £300 profits had been made which went towards paying the interest.⁹²

From these suits it becomes clear that Sir Cornelius had bought other meers in 1632 which, by an agreement dated August 11th, 1648, he conveyed to Vandurne. This agreement itemises these possessions: The Ginn Pitt, the Forefield, the Nether Dovenest, Anthony Wood's grove, the Upper Dovenest, the Lume (? Lum) grove, Presses grove, John Ferne's grove, Jonas grove, Bonsall gate grove, the meane grove, the Maidens grove, Buntings grove, Fritchleys grove, Niciatious grove, Mr. Allsopp's grove, Stone grove, Anthony Greatorax's grove,

⁹⁰ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/388.

⁹¹ Soc. of Genealogists Lib. Doc. Coll.

⁹² *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/388.

Mr. Ferne's grove, Richard Wingfield's grove, Mr. Wingfield's west grove, Raventors grove, "Three gre and nooke grove" (*sic*), Anthony Ferne's three groves, Denen (?) groves or meers in Milken botham on the west side of Dovegang, and all groves in Sliding Pitt Rake and others in the Wapentake belonging to Sir Cornelius and his son.⁹³

A further tripartite agreement between the Vermuydens and Vandurne was entered into some three days later on August 14th, 1648. This recapitulated the clauses of the former deeds of March 8th, 1632, and August 11th, 1648, and made it manifest that Vandurne was to have one moiety of the profits until the debts of £2,400 and £801, with £8 % interest less £300, and a further debt due to the widow of John Morice (? Monice) were paid.⁹⁴

Cornelius II claimed that Vandurne broke this agreement by retaining the whole of the profits for the period August 11th, 1648, to July 14th, 1651, although they had shared them equally after July. He asserted that these profits were sufficient to have cleared the debt, but if not he was willing to pay the difference provided Vandurne conveyed the mine to him according to the trust agreement of March 8th, 1632.⁹⁵ He went on to accuse Vandurne that he had "neglected to work the same groves in the Forefield with Stoes (stowes) and Timber in sight, on purpose and to the end that others might come and take possession thereof, so that they might be lost to Orator (Cornelius II), and that others might get them to Marcellus Vandurne's use . . . All which tends to damage your orator £4,000 at least."⁹⁶ He also stated that at his instigation John Lamott had advanced sums of £600 during 1648, 1649 and 1650, and Anthony Terence of London £100 in 1650.

Vandurne's answer to these charges put a somewhat different complexion on matters. Far from taking profits between 1648 and 1651 he had in fact expended large sums over and above any profit, in sougning. He and

⁹³ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/388. Many of these groves are mentioned in the suit brought by the earl of Dover, and it seems apparent that Sir Cornelius must have bought out Sir Robt. Heath's interest in them.

⁹⁴ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/388.

⁹⁵ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/387.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Cornelius II had appointed Sarah Vandewall, at a salary of five shillings a week, to keep the accounts and to disburse the money received from Vandurne as wages to the workmen employed in the soughing. These payments were to be the first charge against any ore produced. From August 11th, 1648, to June 20th, 1650, there was an excess expenditure of £47. 10s. 7d. which Cornelius II agreed should be repaid to Vandurne together with profits up to December 25th, 1650, of £51. 13s. Vandurne denied he had received £600 from Lamott, he had in fact received £307. 14s. 11d. on June 20th, 1650, and a further £50 later on which "he received by the hands of Anthony Wood." Lamott refused further aid, but Vandurne succeeded in borrowing £75 from Andrew Tyrance (Terance) and £17 from Anthony Wood in September, 1650. The sum of £319. 4s. 11d. was realised by the sale of ore up to December 25th, 1650, but £276. 16s. was disbursed to widow Vandewall to pay wages for soughing. The difference, £42. 18s. 11d., Vandurne contended should go towards the sum of £51. 13s. owing to him. The ore sold during the period December 25th, 1650, to July 14th, 1651, fetched £253. 15s. 6d. which, however, included a meer worked by Vandurne on his own account. The outgoings were £188. 12s. 10d. for soughing and £3. 6s. 11d. paid to John Vermuyden. The balance, after deducting £9. 4s. 1d. which he said represented the profit of his own meer, Vandurne contended belonged to him. From July 14th onwards the profits were equally divided and Vandurne received as his moiety £1,604. 7s. 7d., and Henry Lee received £100 in part satisfaction of his debt.⁹⁷ This large jump in profits is no doubt explained by the fact that the main soughing operations had been completed by the construction of the Long, or Longhead, sough.

Vandurne ended his depositions by a vigorous denial that he had been negligent in working the mines, and further alleged that Cornelius II had acted unscrupulously over the matter, but nevertheless he was willing to hand

⁹⁷ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/388.

over the mines when he had been repaid the money owing to him.

There is some discrepancy in the amounts John Lamott had advanced, so that it may be as well to hear his version of the dealings. Lamott, who had been the cause of Sir Cornelius' second spell of imprisonment, claimed he had advanced large sums of money to Sir Cornelius, Cornelius II, Vandurne and John Molanus "or other of them towards perfecting the sough of the Lead mynne or rake of the Lead Oare called Dovegang Rake in Wirksworth, Co. Derby, for which the said John Lamott was to receive several quantities of lead ore." An agreement, dated January 16th, 1651, was entered into reciting these conditions, but the Vermuydens, true to form, failed to meet their obligations and soon the arrears amounted to £233. 2s. A new agreement was drawn up by which Lamott was to receive 273 loads of ore, each of 9 dishes, at the rate of 25 loads a week and Sir Cornelius and his son were "to use their utmost endeavours to drive the sough forward and perfect the works so as there might be drawn out of the Dovegang Rake 200 loads a week." Cornelius II entered into a bond of £460 with Lamott as proof that he intended to hasten the construction of the sough.⁹⁸ Although the Longhead sough was completed in 1651 Lamott had not been re-imbursed by the time he died sometime prior to November, 1655, in fact his executors, Maurice Abbots and James Houblon, stated that Sir Cornelius and his son were now indebted to the tune of £3,000.⁹⁹

At this time Vandurne was in trouble, serious trouble. Information had been laid against him that he had assisted Newcastle's army in 1643-5 with arms and lent money and horses. On January 23rd, 1652, Cornelius II was ordered not to pay £2,000 due in twenty days, and Vandurne was ordered to show cause why the money should not be forfeited because of his delinquency.¹⁰⁰

How Vandurne answered this is not known, but he must have explained matters satisfactorily as there is no evidence to hand that the money was forfeited.

⁹⁸ *Chanc. Proc.*, C.2. Chas. I. U 13/45.

⁹⁹ *Chanc. Proc.*, C.2. Chas. I. U 12/44.

¹⁰⁰ *Cal. Comm.* for Advance of Money.

To counter Vermuyden's action of February, 1651-2, Vandurne brought an action on May 25th, 1652, in which he accused him of obstructing the work in Dovegang and also of "poaching" on his own meers.¹⁰¹ There is much repetition of the matter contained in his answer to Vermuyden's suit and many new material facts emerge.

Vandurne stated that it was by his endeavours that the sough to drain the Dovegang was completed. He had engaged Edward Wheatcroft, "a good substantiall skillfull Engineere", to instal engines and pumps with the result that the mine was rendered dry by 1651. As a consequence large quantities of ore were raised and the state benefited to the extent of £1,000 in that year by tribute of lot and cope. In the spring of 1652, however, Vandurne alleged that Sir Cornelius and Cornelius II interfered with Wheatcroft and threatened to remove his pumps and engines and had also illegally worked mines belonging to him (Vandurne), and had mined many hundred loads of ore for their own use. He pleaded for action to determine exactly the amount of ore raised and the payment he felt he should receive.

A great effort was made to settle these cross-suits in the Duchy Court and a suit pending in the High Court of Chancery, by the Chancellor of the Duchy Court. Two referees, acceptable to both parties, were chosen: William Ellis of Gray's Inn and Fenton Parsons of Lincoln's Inn, and as a result of their deliberations an agreement was drawn up and ratified by the Chancellor as a decree of the court which was to be binding on both parties. This was on July 12th, 1652, and the main articles of the agreement may be thus summarised:—

1. It was agreed that Sir Cornelius and Cornelius II owed Vandurne £3,800.
2. That in order to recover this amount Vandurne was to be left in possession of the moiety of the Dovegang and other meers as granted by the agreements of August 11th and 14th, 1648, until December 25th, 1652.

¹⁰¹ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/388.

3. That Vandurne was to have half the profits of these mines up to December 25th, 1652, towards discharging the debt of £3,800. Cornelius II was to receive the other half of the profits.
4. Strict accounts were to be kept of the ore produced, etc., "to prevent further ambiguities."
5. If the half-profits were less than £3,800 by December 25th then Cornelius II was to pay the difference by that date; if more, then Vandurne was to refund to Vermuyden the difference.
6. The monies advanced to the Vermuydens by Messrs. Lee and Vandecanter and Mrs. Mourice (?) for which Vandurne stood surety were to be paid by Cornelius II by December 25th or, alternatively, Vandurne was to be relieved of any onus in the matter.

If, however, Cornelius II failed to settle these debts by that date then Vandurne was to remain in possession of the mines and retain half the profits until the debts were liquidated.

7. Cornelius II was to be bound to Vandurne in a bond of £6,000 as security on his part to abide by these articles.
8. As soon as Vandurne had received his £3,800 and Cornelius II had complied with the agreement then the mines were to be re-conveyed in "full and peaceful possession" to Vermuyden.¹⁰²

Despite this decree it was soon evident that each party was ever ready to steal a march on the other. In the Duchy Court on November 10th, 1652, Cornelius II claimed that there had been over £5,000 profits since July 12th and that he had not received his half share. At a sitting of the court nine days later, Vandurne stated that he was willing to produce the accounts and make payment to Cornelius II, but claimed that the latter had not authorised any person to receive such monies. The court ordered that Vermuyden was to nominate some person to receive the money on his account.¹⁰³

¹⁰² *D. of L. Entry Book of Decrees and Orders, 1650-57, D.L. 5/35.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

Cornelius II apparently was again remiss and Vandurne brought a further action against him, alleging contempt in disregarding the decree of the court of July 12th and an order of December 4th, 1652, regarding his failure to seal the bond of £6,000. George Hopkinson of Ible deposed that on August 23rd, 1652, when he served Cornelius II with the decree and requested his seal to it he refused until he had consulted his lawyers. William Hopkinson of Ible, aged 17, and probably a son of George, testified that he was present on the occasion, and later, in London on December 9th, he served Cornelius II with the order of December 4th. The latter walked away into Gray's Inn Lane and entered a coach. William followed him and again requested him to seal the deed, but Vermuyden commanded the coachman to drive on.¹⁰⁴

Vandurne's next move was to get a warrant from the sheriff for Vermuyden's arrest. Edward Wheatcroft executed this warrant, dated December 27th, 1652, two days later on the premises of the Dovegang, and it appears there was quite a lively scene in which the tempers of both Wheatcroft and Cornelius II were frayed. The latter was alleged to have said, "Take this Wheatcroft away from me and I will bear thee out whatsoever it cost me." This was denied by Vermuyden who then asserted that on asking Wheatcroft for permission to get his horse, which was nearby, he was told that he would have "to goe along with him to Derby on foot", which was ten long miles. There were lurid stories of a fracas when Philip Holditch, Wm. Heyward, Edward Hopps (alias Peate), Mary wife of Thos. Haukesworth, Mary wife of Thos. Asher, Elizabeth wife of Raphe Spencer, and others, attempted to rescue Cornelius II from Wheatcroft. Reason eventually prevailed and the two rode to Derby, and Vermuyden entered into a bond with the under-sheriff for his appearance before the Duchy Court.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ *D. of L. Depositions*, D.L. 4/103/30. Another witness, Philip Holditch, stated that he was present on August 23rd when Geo. Hopkinson interviewed Cornelius II at his house, Middleton Hall. There is no trace left of this house which stood at the top of the village. There is a field there known as "hall field".

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

When he appeared before the court on January 25th and February 9th, 1652-3, he pleaded that he did not remember Hopkinson showing him the bond and was full of excuses for his failure to comply with the court's orders. He was indignant at being arrested on the mine by Wheatcroft and produced many witnesses who stated the the barmaster alone had this right.¹⁰⁶

A little time prior to this, namely, on December 23rd, 1652, many witnesses were examined in Derby, evidently with the main purpose of determining which meers or groves were included in the Dovegang and which were not.¹⁰⁷

The first witness was Johannus Couradus Molanus of Wirksworth, aged 53. He testified that Sir Cornelius and Cornelius II had some 31 or 32 meers in Dovegang, east of certain ash trees, which were conveyed to Marcellus Vandurne in trust in 1648. He also affirmed that Forefield coe, lying to the east of the "gang house", and four meers to the east of Forefield coe were likewise conveyed. He stated these four meers were in the Dovegang and had heard a jury confirm this. A further four meers in Sliding Pitt rake were also conveyed in trust to Vandurne in 1648. Molanus further deposed that Vandurne and his partners had wrought several thousand loads of ore out of all these meers which sold at prices varying from 16/- to 22/6d. per load.

Richard Hilton of Wirksworth, aged 48, a miner, gave similar evidence and described the course of the sough as running from the gang house to Deane wood and thence "to the place where it breaks out in Cromford." Edward Lyon of Middleton, aged 81, and described as a servant of Sir Cornelius, assessed the yield of ore at 7,500 loads, and William Heyward of Youlgrave at 7,800. John Vermuyden, described as resident in Middleton, deposed that, since May 8th, 8,036 loads were raised and sold for £7,000 which was shared by Vandurne, himself and others.

The depositions of Edward Hopps (alias Peate), aged 50, the barmaster, are interesting. He assessed the yield

¹⁰⁶ *D. of L. Deposition*, D.L. 4/103/30.

¹⁰⁷ *D. of L. Deposition*, D.L. 4/103/18.

at 4,000-5,000 loads, but could not be sure to within four or five hundred loads without reference to his books "because he cannot write nor cast up figures exactly." He believed that Vandurne and Cornelius II shared equally the output of the Dovegang, Sliding Pitt rake and the sough until a Mr. Allinson recovered a third share of the Dovegang from Cornelius II and John Vermuyden.¹⁰⁸ John, it seems, was by now taking a larger share of the management of the family affairs for reasons best known to Sir Cornelius and Cornelius II. Maybe his reputation locally was not so sullied.

The evidence of John Wright, a miner of Youlgrave, aged 40, emphasised that Vandurne and John, acting on behalf of his brother, had shared equally in the expenses and profits of the Dovegang and the other meers. This sharing lasted, he stated, until a Mr. Heath recovered a third share. Heath is Edward, son of Sir Robert, and Allinson was no doubt his agent, and the one-third share was recovered at a barmote court held about July 27th, 1652.

Witnesses examined on behalf of Vandurne put matters in quite a different light. Martin Thompson of Wirksworth, aged 50, stated that the groves in Doveston Leas, known as the first, second and third taker meers, and the third meer were reputed to be in a new vein, discovered by Godbehere and his partners about Lady Day or May Day, 1652. Edward Ragg, ironmonger, of Wirksworth, aged 47, deposed that Godbehere's vein was measured and staked, two meers being set out for the finders and two half meers for the farmers according to custom. He added that the third meer was forty yards from the Dovegang house.

Edward Wheatcroft was the next witness and he was described as a carpenter aged 37. He stated that from May 5th to July 29th, 1652, Vandurne and Cornelius II each paid half the wages of the workers of the Dovegang west of Forefield coe to Thomas Spendlove, from whom he, Wheatcroft, drew the pay of the pumpers. He gave the date of the barmote court when Allinson recovered the third share of the Dovegang as about July 29th, and

¹⁰⁸ *D. of L. Deposition*, D.L. 4/103/18.

stated that Cornelius II refused to draw his sixth share of ore "until it had been arrested several times by the workmen for wages." After this John Vermuyden, acting on behalf of his brother, drew the sixth share of ore and paid the sixth part of the wages.

William Allen, a miner of Wirksworth, aged 40, was emphatic that the meers in Doveston Leas were taker meers in Godbehere's vein and not part of Dovegang, and had been set out by Henry Mason for the use of Vandurne and Wheatcroft and their grove-fellows. Three pairs of stowes were set up and Mason was requested by one of the owners to set up three pairs of yokings. Wright added that Godbehere's vein was five or six meers away from the Forefield coe and lay some sixty yards or more distant from the Dovegang to the south.

Now, on the very day that these depositions were taken at Derby, viz.: December 23rd, 1652, John Vermuyden, acting on behalf of his father and brother, brought a case against Wheatcroft before a small barmote court of the Dovegang. He accused Wheatcroft and his grove-fellows of trespassing and illegally working "one grove or meere of ground in a Certeyne Close called Dovestonn Layes in Crumford within this soake and wapentake of Wirksworth in a Certeyne Rake or Vayne there called the Dovegange Rake or vayne being the Third meare from the forefield Coe towards Crumford moore and Comonly knowne by the name of the meane worke And that the said Defendts have gotten 2,000 Loads of ye Plentifes Lead oare within the grove or meere of ground to the plts damage of £2,000." The defendants, Edward Wheatcroft, Marcellus Vandurne, Ralph Brunt, Mrs. Vandewall, Robert Sage, Francis Archadine, John Ferne and Henry Deareham appeared and pleaded not guilty. The jury of twelve, comprising Thomas Waterfall, James Winckfield, Edward Morte, Richard Coates, John Spencer, Edward Spencer, George Adams, Anthony Greenesmyth, John Boden, Wm. Buckley, Wm. Tomlinson and Mathew Latham confirmed Vermuyden and his grove-fellows in possession of the said mere and fined defendants twopence each and ordered them to pay for the jurymen's dinner — four shillings.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Soc. of Gen. Lib. Doc. Coll.

At the same court on the same day a similar accusation was made concerning another meer in Doveston Leas known as the Third meer, and the defendants in this case were Wheatcroft, Vandurne, Mrs. Vandewall, Sage, Archadine and Ralph Gell. The verdict and the penalties were the same.

Still another accusation was made, this time concerning a meer known as the Fourth meer, against the same defendants. Verdict and penalties likewise. The jury must have had a good feast.

On February 4th following, Wheatcroft, as a result of these verdicts, brought an action in the Duchy Court against John Vermuyden accusing him in no uncertain terms of conspiring with his father and brother, and others, to defraud himself and his associates. He recounted the discovery in April, 1652, of the new rake, Godbehere's, on Cromford Moor, and described how two meers were set out according to the custom of the mines for the benefit of himself, Vandurne, Sarah Vandewall and their partners, and a third meer for the farmer of the mine. This third meer comprised two half meers, one at either end of the two meers. On April 27th following, Wheatcroft and his partners took possession of and set stowes for three other meers westwards of one of the farmer's half meers, part of which lay in Doveston Leas. The tribute of the first dishes were paid to Hopps, the barmaster. In June another rake was found in Doveston Leas partly crossing Godbehere's rake within the length of "ye said first of the three Taker Meeres in Godbehere's Rake." The partners set up stowes and had it staked out and measured and delivered to them by the barmaster. The cross-rake became known as Wheatcroft rake. Soon afterwards John Vermuyden sank one or two shafts in or near these meers and found ore which he claimed as a new rake, paying the usual two dishes of ore to the barmaster. There was, of course, trouble and the matter was referred to a barmote court, and on June 18th, 1652, the jury of 24 decided that Vandurne and partners and John Vermuyden and his grove-fellows should share equally the yield of these meers.

If there was any harmonius working in this arrangement it did not last for long. According to Wheatcroft the Vermuydens behaved in a most unscrupulous manner. John and Cornelius II conspired with Sir Cornelius and John Molanus and others to claim Godbehere's as part of the Dovegang rake. Bribes of shares in the spoils were offered to their confederates, some of whom were witnesses and others who were in the jury at the barmote court. It was further alleged that John arranged for this court to be held at Wirksworth on December 23rd, 1652, whilst Wheatcroft and his witnesses were giving their depositions in the case opened in Derby on the same day¹¹⁰ (p. 106).

John Vermuyden's answer to this was given to a commission appointed February 24th, 1652-3, to examine witnesses in one of the many cases pending in the Duchy Court listed *Vandurne v. Vermuyden*. He claimed that when he took possession of certain of the meers in question they were quite open, with no stowes or yokings visible. He alleged that as Vandurne and Sarah Vandewall were born "beyond the seas under the power and within the commands of the Lords of the United Provinces, now enemies unto this Commonwealth", they had therefore no right to any of the meers. He, of course, denied any conspiracy in the barmote court of December 24th, 1652, and stated that as far as he knew it was not necessary for Vandurne to be present at either the barmote court or at the sitting of the commission in Derby on the same day. In fact, he said, Wheatcroft was present at the court and George Hopkinson, "well versed in the Custome of the Mines", acted as counsel for Wheatcroft and his grove-fellows as well as for Vandurne.¹¹¹

The case was before the Duchy Court at intervals of a week or so right up to July without any settlement being reached, each side bringing objections in turn. Tempers were getting frayed, and on June 29th Mr. Bateman, counsel for Sir Cornelius, John his son, Molanus and

¹¹⁰ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/Bundle 391.

¹¹¹ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/392.

many others alleged that Wheatcroft and others "at unreasonable times and Contrary to the Custome, fired their works in several places, thereby endangering workmen's lives, and frequently commit forces and outrages and use threats."¹¹² Two local J.P.s were ordered to investigate, but the result of their findings have not been handed down to us.

John Vermuyden, so we learn from later evidence, was declared the rightful owner of the groves which no doubt incensed Wheatcroft. Whilst a barmote court was sitting there was disturbance of the peace by Wheatcroft and others; the court was disturbed and a man killed. Thereupon the Council of State, on October 20th, 1653, wrote to the sheriff urging him to use all power to maintain order and, if necessary, to call upon a troop of levies stationed nearby to help him.¹¹³

In the previous May yet another case listed Vermuyden v. Vandurne comes on to the files of the Duchy Court. This was brought by Cornelius II who declared that he had employed Vandurne, Phillip Vandewall and Sarah his wife, Edward Wheatcroft and Francis Archadine for about seven years in the management of his mines. According to an ancient custom, if any servants find any meers or mines and work them then any ore raised shall be for the benefit of their masters. Cornelius II claimed that during their employment they had possessed themselves of and raised large quantities of ore from several meers, including ten in Cromford which they refused to hand over. The court ordered an inquiry but information is lacking regarding the findings.¹¹⁴

In the meantime, on August 11th, 1653, John Vermuyden was accused before the barmote court by Vandurne and his associates of sinking a sump and driving a drift to unwater his mines to the detriment and danger of the other mines. The jury of 24 were requested "to goe downe the shaft in the forefield Coe and so goe along downe the Hill untill you come to Shores Sumpe and so go down to the depth of that sumpe and there

¹¹² *D. of L. Decrees and Orders*, D.L. 5/35.

¹¹³ *Cal. State Papers*, Dom.

¹¹⁴ *D. of L. Pleadings*, D.L. 1/392.

to question Mr. John Vermuydens servants or workmen, why they drive that drift up the Hill westwards towards the forefield Coe and likewise why they sink a sumpe in the long drift between the forefield shaft and Shores rake, which the said are doubtful least the syd Mr. Vermuydens workmen should drive the said drift and throw their water into the gang rake to the utter ruining of the said Dovegang, and to deliver your opinions in writing according to custome."¹¹⁵

The jurors duly made their tour of inspection and reported their findings. They stated that when they came to the sump in Shore's grove "there was a trap door upon it fast locked with a horselock and we desired Mr. Vermuydens servants to open and unlock it but they said that they had noe key, for they thought that the key was at Middleton, and further sayd that the sayd sumpe was sunk to the water. Also we came to the sumpe in the long drift and Mr. John Vermuydens workman was working in the sayd sumpe, and he told us that he intended to sinck the said sumpe to the water, and so drive a drift betwixt that sumpe and shores sumpe, and so make a watergate that way, which if they doe so, it will be in great danger to spoill and destroy the Dovegang rake."

John's answer to these findings and what action was taken is not apparent and there is likewise a break in the Duchy Court records of the various suits between the Vermuyden's and Vandurne. The Duchy Court was closed down and was not opened again until early 1656 as the result of a petition by army officers dated November 21st, 1655, and another by four signatories, including Cornelius II, dated December 5th, 1655.¹¹⁶

The interminable disputations between Vandurne and the Vermuydens have tended to overshadow other episodes in the history of the Dovegang mine. We have already seen that Thomas Coke had granted the lot and cope and barmaster's office to Sir Cornelius. In the Civil War Coke remained loyal to Charles and consequently he was

¹¹⁵ Soc. of Gen. Lib. Doc. Coll.

¹¹⁶ *State Papers*, Dom. Interregnum. S.P. 18/102, pp. 337, 338, 339. (Nos. 16 and 16¹).

heavily penalised. On August 12th, 1648, Parliament fined him £500 for "deserting" to the king at Oxford. The fine, to be spread over five years beginning Lady Day, 1649, was to come from the lead mines at Wirksworth, excluding of course Dovegang, which in all yielded him £300 per annum, being the whole of his real and personal estate. He had, however, concealed various assets which fact came to the notice of the authorities who dealt with him more drastically. On September 17th, 1650, he was fined £2,200, and on January 21st, 1651, a further £500. On May 19th following, as he had only paid half of the first fine and nothing of the second, his estates were ordered to be sequestered. On the next day he was charged with high treason and committed to the Tower, and although he managed to escape his freedom was short-lived, for in the following September we find him a prisoner in the Tower.¹¹⁷

Among the estates confiscated were the lead mines, i.e., the lot and cope of Wirksworth, except the Dovegang, but Sir John Gell and John Milward proved that they had paid Coke £1,000 for them in 1648 and their claim was upheld and seizure was ordered to be discharged.

The affairs of the Dovegang were, however, implicated with Coke's delinquency. On April 23rd, 1651, Cornelius II petitioned the Committee for Compounding to recognise and confirm his entitlement to the lot and cope which his father had assigned him. He said that "divers suits having arisen between him and Cooke (*sic*)" agreements had been reached on the basis that Coke should receive half of the lot and all of the cope instead of the rent of £200 for the lot and cope which Sir Cornelius had agreed to pay in 1637 and which had been sequestered because of Coke's delinquency.¹¹⁸

On June 19th Cornelius II was confirmed in the possession of the lot and cope and barmaster's office of the Dovegang on security of £5,000 against any part that might subsequently be judged to belong to the Commonwealth. The £200 rent was ordered to be paid to the State as from the time of Coke's defection and also from

¹¹⁷ *Cal. Comm. Comp.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

the time of the grant of the mine to Sir Cornelius whilst the mine was worked, unless Cornelius II could prove that payment had already been made. Evidence was also to be produced as to how long the mine had been productive.¹¹⁹

Cornelius II, on July 19th, requested the Committee for Compounding to implement the decision of June 19th who ordered the County Committee for Sequestration to see that it was carried out. There were delays however and a major point of dispute apparently being the exact period the Dovegang had been wrought. Two witnesses swore that the mine was not worked at all from 1638 to 1642, nor from 1645 to 1651, the only ore raised being from the cross rakes, by rakes and stelches near the mine. The County Committee, on September 25th, 1651, were ordered to ascertain if the sole of the mine had been worked and to discover what profits were made from the lot and cope since 1638. On October 21st, 1651, as a result of these investigations, the Committee for Compounding, on the motion of the County Committee and with Vermuyden's consent, ordered that the profits of the barmaster's office, half the lot and all the cope within the Dovegang, and the plot of the Dovegang should belong to the State. The County Committee were empowered to appoint the barmaster and steward and to repay Cornelius II a moiety of the money received for the lot, £130, and to confirm him in the possession of the other half.¹²⁰

There was, however, some delay in settling these matters, and on September 24th, 1652, the Committee for Compounding, on complaint of Cornelius II, ordered the County Committee to state their reasons why the order of October 21st, 1651, had not been implemented. The County Committee replied that they were not satisfied as to the extent of Vermuyden's claim. They argued that "the word plot only carried the by-rakes and cross-rakes, which are so intermingled with the Dovegang mine that it is difficult to distinguish them", and that Vermuyden had made claims to the mine only. They

¹¹⁹ *Cal. Comm. Comp.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

were directed to make further inquiries and to examine witnesses regarding Vermuyden's right to the plot. These inquiries lasted some time, and on January 12th, 1654, the Committee for Compounding, finding Vermuyden's claim not entirely substantiated, ordered Thomas Coke to appear before them with the counterpart of the grant of the mine. Coke, however, failed to appear, and on July 4th following, Fowle, solicitor to the Committee for Compounding, was ordered to interrogate him upon oath.¹²¹ Unfortunately, the results of these interrogations, if they occurred, are as yet not forthcoming.

We must now consider how matters went between Sir Cornelius and his partner, Sir Robert Heath. From lack of evidence to the contrary, it seems strange that their relationship was not dominated by lawsuits. With the Civil War there came, however, the parting of the ways. Heath threw in his lot with the king and was, of course, judged a delinquent. He fled to France and died in Calais on August 30th, 1649.¹²²

In 1650 Thomas Levingston brought a case against Sir Cornelius, alleging that he, i.e., Vermuyden, and Heath had made an agreement to pay him (Levingston) an annuity of £200 per annum. Vermuyden denied this and won his case, and the annuity was ordered to be paid out of Heath's share.¹²³

On June 13th, 1651, the Committee for Advance of Money were informed that Heath had died possessed of a lead mine, Dovegang, and had concealed his 31-year lease from the Crown, and that £1,000 of rent and some £15,000 or £16,000 profits had been concealed by Sir Cornelius. On December 11th following, the Committee ordered Thomas Turner of the Temple and one Denton of Lincoln's Inn to appear before them to certify a debt owed by Vermuyden to Heath. It is not, of course, surprising that such a debt existed, but the amount and how retribution was effected has eluded me.

Heath's son and heir, Edward, on July 22nd, 1652, complained that, following his father's death, Sir

¹²¹ *Cal. Comm. Comp.*

¹²² D.N.B.

¹²³ *D. of L., Entry Book of Decrees and Orders*, D.L. 5/35.

Cornelius had entered into negotiations with him to purchase the third share of the Dovegang he had inherited. Whilst the negotiations were in progress Vermuyden had "swept the whole profits into his purse, and both at the Committee for Removing Obstructions in the sale of the late king's lands, and in the Duchy (of Lancaster) Court, cast blemishes on petitioners title, and labours to destroy it, engrossing the whole mine to himself."¹²⁴ Heath further asserted that the mine had been dry for some two years, but, as we have seen, Longhead sough was not completed until 1651 (p. 103) .

We have already noted that the County Committee were empowered to nominate the barmaster and steward of the Dovegang, and it was to these appointments, or at least to those of the deputy barmaster and steward, that Heath took exception and he petitioned the Committee for Compounding for the restoration of Ralph Poyser as deputy barmaster and George Hopkinson as steward. He alleged that they had been removed by the County Committee with the connivance of Sir Cornelius. Failing their restoration he urged fresh appointments to these offices by the Committee for Compounding.

Whilst the Committee for Compounding was deliberating, unfortunately inconclusively, these matters, Edward Heath, as we have seen already, recovered his third share of the Dovegang at a barmote court held on or about July 7th, 1652.

On the re-opening of the Duchy Court in 1656 it was at once flooded with suits and cross-suits between the Vermuydens and Vandurne and between the Vermuydens and Edward Heath. They were, of course, merely a continuation of the old cases, and the familiar accusations and delaying tactics were to the fore and a final settlement of the actions seemed far off. One interesting little fact emerges in a suit by Heath against Cornelius II is that in February, 1656-7, the latter's debts were causing him some embarrassment and he was lodged in the Fleet prison, but for how long we do not know.¹²⁵

Besides his lead mining troubles, Sir Cornelius was

¹²⁴ *Cal. Comm. Comp.*

¹²⁵ *D. of L., Decrees and Orders*, D.L. 5/35.

finding that the Hatfield Chase troubles were still with him and that his activities in the Fens were hardly trouble-free. Indeed we learn that in 1655, described as a merchant, he was made bankrupt for debts of £30,000 owing to John Gibbon, Robert Lee and John Noles of Hatfield, and others.¹²⁶

Marcellus Vandurne died sometime prior to June, 1657, for on the 26th of that month the Exchequer set up a Special Commission to inquire into:—

1. Whether £1,100 or what other sums were due to Vandurne, described as late of Wirksworth, lately deceased, by Sir Cornelius and his eldest son and in whose hands this money now was.
2. Whether the Vermuydens had conveyed various groves, etc., as security to Vandurne or to Edward Manlove and Edward Ragg and Henry Hickford, since deceased, in trust for Vandurne, and when this was done. Also, if by his will dated September 23rd, 1658, Vandurne conveyed the profits of these groves to Jacob Vandurne of Amsterdam.
3. Whether Jacob or others who inherited were aliens or had aided the king's enemies and whether the sums due should be forfeited to the crown or placed at its disposal.¹²⁷

Much search has failed to find any further reference to this matter and thus seemingly we are at the end of the wrangles between the parties. It appears probable that a settlement was reached for we learn that about September, 1673, Cornelius II recovered the Dovegang from Manlove and immediately set to work on repairs and soughing. He spent some £400 or £500 but found that he could get no great yield unless he could take advantage of a sough that was deeper than the Longhead. He had apparently played no part in the construction of this new sough, but he agreed to pay £700 per annum to use it. The "soughmasters" alleged that he paid only £100 of this charge although he had wrought £9,000 worth of ore.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ *Chanc. Proc.* before 1714, Bridges, C.5. 26/78.

¹²⁷ Exchequer Special Commissions, E. 178/6194.

¹²⁸ Soc. of Gen. Lib. Doc. Coll., Wirksworth.

As Sir Cornelius died in 1677 we are now at the end of our story. It may, however, be added that when Cornelius II died in 1693, greatly in debt, he was still in possession of two-thirds of the Dovegang.¹²⁹

We have seen that Sir Cornelius in his dealings with his fellow-men was in many cases ruthless and some of his actions reprehensible to the point of being unscrupulous, but in fairness to him it must be agreed that he encountered much the same treatment from others. The 17th century is not particularly noted for its high moral code, business or otherwise, so perhaps we ought not to judge him too harshly. He certainly did not lack courage or ability, and wherever he laboured he achieved much, and when he died, full of years, he could claim with justification that he had conferred great benefits on the country of his adoption.

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¹²⁹ Chancery suit, *Lediard v. Vermuyden*, dated February 22nd, 1693-4, amended July 16th, 1694 and November 12th, 1694. P.R.O.