

The History of Antony and Dorothea Gibbs & of the early years of Antony Gibbs and Sons

By John Arthur Gibbs - 1922

CHAPTER V 1792-96 - MALAGA AND EXETER

ANTONY gave himself less than three months in England. Most of his time was occupied in making arrangements on behalf of his proposed Malaga firm for the sale of cargoes of Spanish produce, and in visiting manufacturers. Besides London, some of the places mentioned in which he transacted business were Norwich, Birmingham, Leeds, Rochdale, Lichfield, Newcastle, Manchester, Southampton, Bristol, and lastly Exeter. He was well received by his manufacturing friends, and was able to renew his agreements with them satisfactorily. Granger and Banfill spoke most flatteringly of what he had done for them, and would admit of no reduction in the terms of their arrangement with him on the score that his Malaga business would take him so much from Spain.

Two short extracts from Antony's letters to his wife may be introduced here to show his affectionate ways with her in his correspondence:-

Manchester, 26 Sep. 1792. - That expression of thine (if I have not quite forgotten thee) still rests upon my mind. My dearest Dolly knows that I love and esteem her more than all the world and am never angry with her without being afterwards angry with myself but my wife has still a little coquetry which now and then shows itself in a comical expression even to her husband, who, tho' I say it, has the most unfeigned attachment to her that ever warmed an honest breast: you say nothing to me of your going on in point of health and this I know is a punishment to me... but before you receive this letter 'tis ten to one you will think I was right and if not when we meet you shall convince me that I was wrong for I wish to be of the same opinion with thee in everything.

Seville, - undated - 1792. - This shall not be one of those scraps to which you have such a dislike and which I am as sorry to send you as to receive for I certainly have no pleasure so great in the midst of my disappointments as that of opening my mind to my dearest and truest friend.

Parting from his family in Exeter on 1 November 1792 Antony travelled to Falmouth to take the Government Packet ship to Lisbon. This was in future his regular route to and from the Peninsula. Letters for him at Falmouth were addressed to Fox and Sons there, friends of his brother George, who were probably at that time the agents for the Packets. He had dealings with them certainly up to the end of 1808, when they were Geo. C. Fox and Sons. But on his next trip (September 1794) he speaks for the first time of Richard Carne and Son, Falmouth, and with them he seems to have had much more to do in business than with Messrs. Fox, and Richard Carne and his family became his close personal friends.

Before leaving Exeter Antony had settled his family into Mrs. Hucks' house in Alphington Street, St. Thomas'. The following letter which he wrote to Dorothea from Falmouth refers to his parting with her, and to the somewhat difficult situation in which he feared she might find herself in Exeter.

I have received my dearest Dolly's most affectionate letter and tho' I have no right from my own feelings to take upon me much of the Philosopher I must still think that she gives too much indulgence to gloomy and painful sensations. Don't you think a moment of the neglect you will experience from most of my former friends at Exeter, but behave, my dearest love, on all occasions in a manner suitable to the conscious innocence of thy own character. I am constantly uneasy at ye idea of my dearest Dolly being subject in her present situation to what the world calls mortifications, and then again I chide myself for supposing that she will not be superior to them. I am sure she will, and I am a blockhead to think one moment about such nonsense.

With reference to the same matter he wrote to his wife from Lisbon:-

There is no idea of our taking up anything like a settlement at Exeter, for if it were not for my dearest father I would have you leave the place at once tho' we were to spend £200 a year more near London. ... The pleasing side of the question is first of all the enjoyment and comfort of my father which not only reflects back on ourselves during the short remainder of his life but will be the greatest source of comfort to us after his death; for me it will soften the poignancy of that remorse which will have an end only with my own.

But, a little later (January 1793), he was seriously thinking of making a home for his family near London, as the most important part of his business in England would take him to the northern counties. When he came home each year he would still pay a long visit to his parents, while Dorothea would visit them when he was in Spain. This is of interest as showing how early the idea of making London the centre of his business had entered his mind, but fifteen years were still to elapse before circumstances were really to make a move to London desirable.

George Abraham Gibbs, in bidding his son Antony farewell, wrote to him (from Bristol, 30 October) to explain his view of the attitude which Antony ought to take up with regard to the repayment of the losses which he and others had suffered at his hands in 1789. Antony should not let considerations of justice to others exclude those

of another and tenderer nature. We have always felt what is due to your excellent wife,... whose virtues entitle her to the esteem and affection which we all entertain for her..., and your dear little children, and think that making a decent and comfortable provision for them ought to go hand in hand with any other object that you may have in view. The prospect too of an exemption for yourself from the drudgery you have endured (and must still endure) when you shall be in circumstances to take a reputable situation in your own country and be able to choose your own company; these things, if it please God to give you health and success, some of your family may live to see realized; for your dear Mother and myself it is enough that we are happy in the idea and probability of them.

Antony, as he often did, suffered severely from sea-sickness in his long passage of thirteen days to Lisbon, where he arrived on 19 November. After receiving from his friend Francis James

Jackson, then Secretary to the British Legation in Madrid, his passport for Spain he went on to Madrid at the end of December.

This Mr. Jackson, a son of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Jackson, canon of St. Paul's, was a young diplomatist who was to distinguish himself in after life. It is probable that he was already in Madrid while Antony and Dorothea were there, and that their acquaintance with him, which developed into a close friendship, dated from that time.

The prospects for Antony's business now seemed most favourable. "More falls into my hands than I am able to manage, so much so that the civilities of my friends here [Madrid] are quite a plague to me and I affront people without intending it. . . I only wish there were forty-eight hours in the day." Branscombe was to have joined the Malaga office, but Antony could not spare him yet. Antony took £20,000 worth of orders in Lisbon. With the reduction of expenses, due to his family living in Exeter, he saw his way to saving £1,000 a year, so that the payment of the debt incurred for setting up in Spain and of the capital required of him by the Malaga firm was within sight, and in a very few years he believed that he would begin the repayment of old creditors. "I am not now building castles in the air but calculating upon good substantial grounds warranted by my past and present profits." In January 1793 he made his first payment of £200 to his father, remitting the money through his brother George of Bristol, who from this time was his banker in England right on to 1809.

But a lamentable break in his prosperity then occurred. In January 1793 he went to Seville, and, leaving for Xeres on 1 February, met with a terrible accident, related in the following extracts from the diary of Mr. John Head," who was his companion on this journey.

28 December 1792. Madrid. Dined at home with several other gentle men at a dinner given by Mr. Gibbs. *3 Jan. 1793.* 20 years old this day. Mr. Gibbs dined with me. *8 January.* Went to see Mr. Gibbs' carriage. *14 January.* Took leave of Mr. O'Connor and Mr. Merry; sent a card to Mr. Merry the ambassador. Set off with Mr. Anthony Gibbs of Exeter in his carriage for Seville. *19 January.* Set off from Ecija and arrived in Seville. Went with Mr. Gibbs to Mr. Wiseman's. *1 February.* At 5 a.m. set off from Seville in company with Mr. Gibbs. Obligated to wait 4 hours at Los Dos Hermanos for horses. Arrived at Romarica about ½ past 8 p.m. About a quarter of a league beyond the "Posada" of Romarica, and between that place and Xeres, the horses took head, the postilion leapt off immediately, and left us in the carriage at the mercy of the horses, who were then going full gallop upon a descent. Mr. Gibbs' servant who was with the postilion leapt off also, but not clearing his leap the wheel went over his right foot, hip, and groin. We (Mr. Gibbs, and self) immediately opened the door, which being a French "Silla" was in front, and sat back to back, both with the intention of leaping out. At that instant, as I was turning round to take off my cape, I saw Mr. Gibbs jump and fall. Being then the only person left in the carriage, and finding I could not leap from where I then was, and clear the hind wheel, from its astonishing rapidity, I crawled to the Postilion's place, with the intent to leap from thence and have the greater distance from the wheel. At the instant I was going to jump, the off Horse fell into a ditch by the side of the road, the Carriage passed over him, and turned over, which set me without any exertion whatever with my feet upon the ground. I immediately held the horses heads, when my servant who was on horseback, came galloping up and asked if I was hurt. I replied no, but where is Mr. Gibbs? The servant said "O Dieu! j'ai vue un homme mort, j'ai peur qu'il soit Monsieur Gibbs." The postilion at that instant came up, took his horses, and I ran as fast as I could to the assistance of Mr. Gibbs. When I came up my servant had raised him up all covered with gore, his own servant with the pains and fright he was in fainted away, so did my own, thinking Mr. Gibbs was dead. In this situation I took my servant from off Mr. Gibbs (for he had fallen

across him) put my hat under Mr. Gibbs' head, and as Providence would have it, in this helpless distressing state, the horse my servant rode stood still. I immediately without hat or cloak mounted him, and galloped back to the Post house, and desired them to bring a "Birlacha." "I got a bottle of vinegar and a lanthorn and galloped back again. With this I brought the servants in some measure to themselves, and made Mr. Gibbs swallow some. In about 2 hours (for the Spaniards will not stir a step faster to save a hundred lives) the "Birlacha" arrived, during which time I was seated on the ground without hat or cloak supporting Mr. Gibbs, my servant (who by this time had entirely got the better of his fainting) and myself lifted him into the carriage, and thinking it better to drive to Xeres (where I thought we might have immediate advice, than to return to a naked, cold, poverty stricken "Posada") we drove on to Xeres, but not before all the fellows with whom we had to do, had made their bargain for money, inhuman Brutes! Mr. Gibbs' servant went to the "Posada," and came to Xeres next morning with our battered carriage. My servant and myself, with some difficulty and much trouble and not in less than 3 hours from the badness of the roads, arrived at Xeres about 3 a.m. Not one person in the house knew where a surgeon or physician lived, and they said even if they did not one would stir till his usual hour of rising to save any one's life. In this distressing situation we laid Mr. Gibbs in bed, and with much impatience waited for daylight when we got a surgeon and "sangrador." *2 February*. Got Mr. Gibbs' wounds dressed, which were all in the forehead and nose, laid open to the skull; sent to Mr. Gordon, who was gone to Cadiz but expected back in the p.m. As fortune would have it a young Spanish surgeon, educated at Edinburgh, came to Xeres to dinner with Mr. Gordon, who immediately came to the "Posada" together. He probed and dressed Mr. Gibbs' wounds in such a skilful manner as to convince me the first knew very little about the matter. Mr. Gatro sent off express for Mr. Sullivan, the best Cadiz surgeon. In the evening went with Mr. Gordon and the surgeon to the "Corregidor," and laid my information against the postilion. Spent the remainder of the evening at Mr. Gordon's. *3 February*. Had a consultation of physicians and surgeons who declared Mr. Gibbs in great danger. Mr. Gibbs bled 6 times in the foot in the course of 48 hours: Dined at Mr. Gordon's. *4 February*. Mr. Gibbs better. *8 February*. Sent express to Cadiz for Mr. Courant, Mr. Gibbs' friend, as he was not expected to live out the day. *9 February*. Went over Mr. Gordon's vaults. The Cadiz surgeon came and declared there were no hopes for Mr. Gibbs. *10 March*. Mr. Gibbs removed to Cadiz to the house of Courant and Bridel his friends.

We do not know when Dorothea heard of the accident. Head and Fisher sent news at different times, and no doubt Branscombe, Courant, and other friends. The first letter in the collection after the accident is one from Antony's father to Head, dated Exeter 3 May, as follows:-

My dear Sir, You will allow me to call you dear, though I have not the honour of being known to you, for what could more endear you to me and our whole family than that generous and kindly assistance, to which (with the blessing of Divine Providence) my Son may be indebted for the preservation of his life. I will not trouble you with many words, which would be useless on the present occasion, for no words can express how much I feel myself obliged, and yet I could not help indulging myself in making this acknowledgment, the only return in my power. But you will enjoy a much better return from the reflections of your own mind, from the consciousness of having so worthily exerted yourself in the cause of humanity, and contributed to relieve from the deepest stress a most amiable woman, Mrs Antony Gibbs, together with my own numerous family, and many persons who are affectionately interested in my Son's welfare. I am, my dear Sir with great esteem Your most obliged and obedient servant, G. A. Gibbs.

On 8 May George Abraham Gibbs wrote to Dorothea to dissuade her from going to Cadiz on the grounds of her own delicate health, of the reported improvement in Antony's condition, and

of the possibility that he would be ordered home; and he excused himself for intervening by saying; "If you do not think that I love you as one of my own family my behaviour to you has been a very bad interpreter of my heart. I have never seen any reason for giving you advice because my opinion of your own prudence and discretion has satisfied me that you do not want it. If you allow your good sense to govern and dictate to your affections you will be sure to have nothing to reproach yourself with." She then decided not to go, but it was not till 8 June that news came from Mr. Head that Antony was out of danger. She wrote to Sibella Gibbs at that time: "Oh my God what a time that was when none of my friends would allow me to indulge the smallest hope and when every ring of the door bell put me into the most violent agitation as I was always dreading to hear our fears confirmed!" She had still not heard from Antony himself, but had been receiving letters dictated by him to Branscombe. His first letter was written on 25 May. His right arm had been badly hurt, and his handwriting is unrecognisable. He heard in June of her intention to join him,"which absolutely overpowered me, for there is nothing in the world that can possibly give me more pleasure or pain than the thought of seeing thee at this time, upon the whole I pray God that you may not come for I can see nothing but trouble and inconvenience for yourself and without any benefit to me from the beginning." In the middle of July he was allowed out of doors for the first time, but he could still only write "by stealth," as the doctors forbade him to use his hand. However, through Branscombe, he had been able to attend to a good deal of business, and, he wrote, "the Malaga connection has taken place." His doctors ordered him to go home before resuming his regular work, and he was to travel via Lisbon and Falmouth. He seems to have rejoined his wife (who had been staying at Bath for her own health) late in August or early in September.

On 29 September Mr. Head visited Exeter, and his diary records as follows: "Called on Mr. Granger; went in the evening to Exwick to Mr. Banfill's to see Mr. & Mrs. [Antony] Gibbs. Saw Mr. Gibbs, who was wonderfully recovered. Mrs. Gibbs a delightfully pretty woman. Also Miss Nancy Gibbs there [Antony's sister Anne] - supped and walked home - 30th. Dined at old Mr. Gibbs' [Antony's father]- Octr. 3 — Dined at old Mr. Gibbs'; himself and Mrs. G. too ill to appear. Mrs. Hucks and her 2 sons there; supped and took leave."

We must suppose, in the absence of letters, that Antony spent some months quietly with his family regaining his strength. During this time he sent his son Henry to school, which was a Mr. Lloyd's in Exeter, and next year he was promising William that he should go there too so soon as he could read his Bible well.

Antony, after a visit to Plymouth, set off towards the end of March 1794 on his travels for business and visited Taunton, Bristol, Bath, Gloucester, Worcester, Birmingham, Manchester, Lichfield, Shrewsbury, Liverpool, Leeds, Rochdale, Halifax, York, Hull, Wakefield, Bradford, Norwich, and London.

At Bristol he stayed of course with his brother George, and he saw Vicary there too. We find that Branscombe had come home from Spain (probably he had accompanied Antony), and now he joined him in Bristol to go with him on his journeys. In Birmingham Antony was staying with old Madrid friends, two brothers Purden, of Ravell Muntz & Purden, a rich firm of that town. "We had much talk about our old parties in Madrid and Purden's habit of always drinking Joseph (Purden]'s health after supper in order to get a glass upon us." He had intended to extend his trip to Scotland and Ireland, but found that there were objections to such a long tour, and that in England alone he could make up orders for 7 cargoes from Malaga, which was the number at which he had aimed. At Leeds he was joined by John Hucks, who had at last made up his mind to embark in business, and had come for that purpose. Antony had been getting stronger as he went on, but his arm was still weak and he used a mechanical exerciser. To test himself he went on foot with John Hucks from Leeds to Knaresborough, and the next day walked thence to York (about 20 miles each day). The object of his visit to Knaresborough was to see Dorothea's old home and some of her friends. "I must absolutely see the place which gave birth to my greatest enjoyment" he wrote to her, and it seems to have been his first visit there.

John Hucks first tried to arrange to join business with his cousin Nathaniel Sharpe, but this fell through, and he then proposed to join the distillery of a Mr. Tetley of Leeds, who, Antony wrote, was a sedate man with a good business of whose solidity everyone spoke well. Mrs. Hucks was to invest £2,000 in the business with the right to take the money out at any time after 4 years if John did not continue in it. The agreement was concluded in December on these lines, but was in the end to prove disastrous.

Meanwhile on 30 October John Hucks married Matilda, a daughter of Dr. Gifford of Exeter, and in November went with her and his mother to stay with his sister Eleanor Ward, who had not seen him for 5 years.

His brother Joseph took his B.A. degree at Cambridge this year (1794) and became a Fellow of Catherine Hall there. It was in the summer of this year that Joseph made a tour on foot in Wales in company with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was just of his age (both were born in 1772). Mrs. Hucks' diary records (4 August 1794): "Joseph arrived from his tour through Wales, walked 700 miles." Joseph published in 1795 a volume entitled *A Pedestrian Tour through North*

Wales, descriptive of his holiday. Coleridge himself wrote an account of it, in which there is mention made of "Hucks," which appears in Chap. II of the "Supplement" at the end of his *Biographia Literaria*. Joseph was also a friend of Robert Southey, and, as befitted his association with those two men, was himself of a poetical turn of mind, and published a volume of Poems in 1798, one of which is headed "Lines addressed to S. T. Coleridge."

Before Antony returned to Exeter Mrs. Hucks gave up her house in St. Thomas' (June 1794), where Dorothea and the children had been living with her, and went with her son John to Bath for two months, and to stay with James and Elizabeth Richards at Abbots Leigh. Dorothea meanwhile took a house called Cowick from a Mr. Waymouth, a friend of the Gibbs family. Antony rejoined her in June, and on 7 July his son Francis was born, who was only to live 9 months. They seem to have left Cowick in October, and in November this year, and again in February 1795, we find letters addressed to Dorothea "Town Walls Exeter," which must have been their new place of abode. Whether it was hers or Mrs. Hucks' does not appear, but at any rate she and Mrs. Hucks seem to have continued to live together,

1794 and 1795 were eventful years in Vicary Gibbs' career. In February 1794 he had become Recorder of Bristol in succession to Richard Burke, a post which he retained till 1817. In the autumn of that year he assisted Thomas Erskine when he was counsel for the defence in the celebrated trials for high treason of Thomas Hardy and Horne Tooke. "His masterly performance at once raised Mr. Gibbs to the front rank of his profession." His speeches in these two trials were published separately in 1795. It is related of him that when invited to a public banquet by some of Tooke's admirers he declined in the following terms: "Gentlemen, I espoused your cause but not your principles." Following on his success he was made a K.C., and in 1795 Solicitor-general to the Prince of Wales. He kept this post till he became Attorney-general to the Prince 1799-1804.

At the end of August 1794 Antony set off again for Spain, leaving his wife, in a very weak condition, to the care of Sibella Gibbs, who had come from Bristol to stay with her for a few months. Joseph Hucks accompanied him to Falmouth and returned to Exeter by sea, Antony proceeding in the packet to Lisbon.

From the time of her stay in Madrid Dorothea had been troubled with a tiresome complaint, which sometimes weakened her very much, and continued to be liable to recur for the rest of her life. In 1791 Eleanor Ward consulted Dr. Walter Farquhar of London on her behalf. The Exeter physician on whom Dorothea most relied, and consulted on special occasions both for herself and her children, was Dr. Hugh Downman, the poet already mentioned. A surgeon called Cutcliffe also attended the family in Exeter in the 'nineties, and afterwards a man called Gator.

Antony reached Malaga, after visiting Madrid, early in October. Branscombe had started from England before him in a direct ship, but, as he did not arrive, it was concluded that his ship had been captured (England and Spain being now at war with France).

By the end of the month, Juan Pomar Gibbs & Co. having despatched all their cargoes to England, Antony visited Seville, Xeres, and Cadiz.

Before his accident he often travelled on horseback, but he could no longer ride long distances. Since his return to Spain he had taken to driving in one-horse "calesas," a mode of travelling which, though extremely uncomfortable, had the merit of economy, but in winter it would, he said, be necessary to hire coaches. However, in Xeres he found his own carriage,"

and he thus describes humorously to his wife the plan on which he had hit to save expense. "Now if you please I am a gentleman who keeps his own carriage." He engaged a coachman for £5 a year, and, though "without livery, you will agree with me that there is an uncommon degree of splendour in my contrivance; it may be said against me that one of my horses is a very fine mule, but this takes nothing from ye grandeur of ye thing." When he went to England the man was to use the beasts on his own account and meet him with them on his return. If he were to steal them (which he did) Antony would lose nothing as their cost was only what the hire of carriages would have been. If he proved honest he would save £50 a year by the plan.

Antony had no recollection whatever of the 5 weeks after his accident, but in Xeres he tried to find the Frenchman who kept the "Posada" where he had lain, but learned that all Frenchmen had left Xeres by order of the Government.

Driving one day in his "calesa" he met a man who said he had been robbed of a jackass loaded with all his worldly goods, and he offered him half a "duro" by way of lessening his misfortune; thereupon the man "started and refused to take it, but at last clearing up his countenance he darted upon me and said he had found the rogue and that I must go to a Justice of the Peace. I honestly assure you that with the 'calesoso' on my side I had ye greatest difficulty in persuading ye fellow that I had not stolen his ass, and as I saw that it was from the honesty of ye poor fellow that he wished to hang me I still gave him ye half duro."

Though, as we have seen, Antony had recovered from his accident so well physically as to be able to walk long distances, yet, he wrote, "I cannot despatch business anything like so quick as I could." Still he had reason to be more than satisfied with his earnings. If he did not recover his powers completely the records of his work to the end of his life show at least that he was not materially affected, but it may here be noticed that the stroke of paralysis which ended his life was considered by the physicians as very possibly attributable to the accident, and we learn from a letter of his son Henry written after his death that he had for some years shown a certain irritability of temper which was traced to the same cause, though in general no man was more good-natured.

Antony was back in Malaga in December, and then heard that his father had died on 10 November. George Abraham Gibbs had been failing in health for some time and his death cannot but have been expected. The only actual reference to it preserved in the letters is in a short letter from Antony to Dorothea of 30 December. His fine character has, it is hoped, been sufficiently illustrated in the course of this history. He was buried at Clyst St. George. There is a stained glass window in the church there dedicated to his memory (dated 1860). By his will which was made in 1764, with codicil of 1775, he left everything except certain small legacies to his "most dearly beloved and excellent wife" (whom he made sole executrix and trustee for their children), including all his lands in Clyst St. George and Clyst St. Mary "with any other lands that I am at present or may hereafter be possessed of." But we have seen that he had had to part with Pytte and all his landed property before his death.

In the spring of 1795 all the Crawleys of Stowe were staying with his widow in Exeter.

Soon after his father's death Antony went from Malaga to Madrid, and thence made a trip to Valencia and Barcelona, returning to Madrid in May 1795.

So far the letters contain only very slight allusions to the wars which had followed on the French Revolution. The first had been that of Austria and Prussia with France, but the execution

of Louis XVI. inevitably brought in England (1 February 1793) and Spain (4 March 1793). With England came in Holland, and with Spain Portugal, all arrayed against France. The war of France with Spain and Portugal, as conducted by land, was limited to narrow spheres on either side of the Pyrenees. By the end of 1794 the Spanish and Portuguese armies, which had with considerable success invaded France, had been driven back, and the French had established themselves both in Guipuzcoa and Catalonia, and early in 1795 were threatening Madrid and Barcelona.

This was the state of affairs when Antony was in Barcelona in April 1795, and, as he had some time on his hands there, and would "probably never have an opportunity again of seeing an army on actual service," he went to Gerona, where the Spanish army was, accompanied by Alex. Guillommo, Secretary to the Danish Embassy in Spain, an old friend of his and of Dorothea, and Mr. Ewart, his Barcelona agent. The roads being too bad for wheels, Antony, being unable to ride, had to walk all the way, nearly 100 miles. They had the "best possible recommendations" to the Commander-in-Chief, to his A.D.C. Colonel Blake, said to be "much more commander than the General," and to others, but, finding them all out when they called, they amused themselves "in going to the fortifications and looking at the troops." In the evening they were arrested by order of the Governor of the town, and kept close prisoners all night, "gardés de vue," on the pretext that they had not called on him, and the next morning were marched out of the town for 5 miles under guard, and then left to find their way back to Barcelona. Soon afterwards Spain, being afraid to continue the war, made the disgraceful peace with France which was signed at Basle on 22 July, Portugal being left by her in the lurch, and Godoy, Duke of Alcudia (who had succeeded Aranda as Prime Minister in Spain), receiving for his services in bringing the peace about the title of "Principe de la paz."

In 1795 Antony's business developed so well that, in spite of the English-French war interfering sadly with the Malaga branch of it, he expected to make that year not less than £2,000. In February he sent £1,000 to his brother George for various purposes and wrote that he was now in credit with him instead of being many hundreds in his debit not long ago. He wished to take full advantage of the present favourable conditions and not to go home till February in the next year. But he heard in May of the death of his child Francis at Exwick, and probably it was on this account, and possibly because after all his Malaga business required a visit to England, that he went home in July 1795. He had besides proposed to bring his family again to Madrid in the next year (to take furnished rooms in the house of one Juan Pesado, a tailor, where he himself lodged), but subsequent political events prevented this plan also from maturing.

His brother George married 23 July 1795 his second wife, Anne, daughter of William Aleyne of Bristol, by Phæbe, born Whitehead, and thereafter their sister Sibella gave up the care of George's children, returning to live with their mother and their other unmarried sisters, Anne and Catherine, in Palace Yard, Exeter. George's second wife was, from soon after her marriage, rather an invalid, and never very congenial to his relations, so that visits to him at Bristol were somewhat less pleasant than formerly.

About this time Antony and his family seem to have changed house in Exeter, taking one on St. David's Hill.

After his usual visit to the northern counties Antony set off to return to Lisbon, but was delayed a long time at Falmouth. He had Branscombe with him, who had obtained his liberty and come home through France. Antony arrived in October, but was not able to proceed to Madrid till December, and these losses of time, coupled with a bad debt, made such inroads into his gains that he had to ask his brother Vicary to supply his mother in 1796 with the allowance of £200 which he had hoped to continue to her after his father's death, and which he had indeed duly paid in 1795 with £30 for each of his 3 unmarried sisters added.

From Madrid he returned to Lisbon, and then went on to Malaga, and, leaving Malaga again, he travelled to Cadiz and Seville, and at the end of March 1796 was back at Lisbon, preparing to set out again for home, where he arrived on 25 April.

"The Lord be praised," wrote one of his friends, "that you have made one journey without misfortunes or overturning. I think henceforth you will be a lucky man. Had you never got on the plan of riding in a coach of your own you could have been so years ago, but you have always been a man of vanity."

A few days before Antony arrived at Exeter his sister Anne's marriage with Samuel Banfill had taken place (19 April). They had become engaged in February, and Antony was well pleased with the match. He had sent £100 to his sister, and wrote to his wife: "Never did Banfill do a thing which raised him so high in my opinion, nor do I know a person in the world so well calculated as my dear Nanny to improve his disposition, which I always thought good at bottom. Excepting my own connection with your ladyship the one in question gives me more pleasure than any I ever heard of. We shall enjoy again all the little comforts of Exwick by seeing them in ye hands of so dear a friend." Others had shown somewhat less enthusiasm, though no disapproval. Vicary Gibbs wrote: "They have both very good sense, and very good nature, though Nanny's understanding, from her having mixed with better or more various company, is more corrected and set off to better advantage than his." According to George Gibbs, Banfill "has peculiarities but a good heart and good intentions," and was worth as much as £4,000; and, he wrote to Antony, "the profits of Granger & Banfill are in a great measure owing to your instrumentality by the exertions you have made for them in Spain." Joseph Hucks in a letter to Dorothea said: "I sincerely think with you that he will be happy with her, and also that he fully deserves to be so. He has faults as everybody, but perhaps his are more conspicuous and therefore less blameable. I believe he has an excellent heart, is a sincere friend, and a man of much discernment, and more than common abilities though in a particular line."

After a visit with his wife to Bristol in May Antony started on his annual tour in England, and extended it this time, beyond Lancashire and Yorkshire, to Edinburgh and Glasgow, and got back to his family on 14 July. He met with considerable success, but the shadow of the coming war between England and Spain was already affecting his business, and all his carefully prepared plans for sending home cargoes of produce from Malaga were afterwards, as will be shown, frustrated by the treaty of 19 August by which Spain engaged to join France in her war with England, and by the war actually breaking out in October.

Meanwhile Dorothea had returned to Exeter, and in June had moved, with her children, her mother, and Joseph Hucks, into a new house which she had taken called Lower Cleave, for the furnishing of which Antony had sent her £150. It was in the country, near Exwick, and was rented from Thomas Northmore of Cleave (or Cleve) house. He proved a good neighbour to

them, constantly visiting them and lending Dorothea his chaise. Joseph Hucks, in a letter to Antony in June, mentions the garden and describes the place as "a very pretty spot and such as you could look for for a long time." In July and August the Crawleys were at Clyst St. George (probably for the last time before they sold Pytte) and visits between them and the Exwick and Lower Cleave families were frequent. In August George Gibbs and his family were staying at Lower Cleave.

Antony left Exeter for Falmouth, on his way again to Lisbon, on 9 September 1796, but did not sail till the 22nd. He arrived at Lisbon on 2 October, only 4 days before the new war was declared in Madrid, and, in consequence of an order of the Spanish Government, excluding all British subjects (other than Irish) from Spain, he was unable to proceed, and a great number of his English friends driven out of Spain by the war joined him at Lisbon. He was at first able to do some business there, and he was encouraged to hold on by a letter from Francis J. Jackson from Madrid, who confidently looked for a general peace in 1797; but all his Spanish business was cut short. War soon pursued him even there, for Portugal, abandoned by Spain when the latter made terms with France in 1795, had remained nominally at war with France, who, regarding her as a mere province of England, against whom she wished her to close her ports, had now actually made a convention with Spain for the partition of her territory. England was preparing troops to help her (December 1796), and their Commander, General Sir Charles Stuart (who brought a letter of introduction to Antony), arrived at Lisbon January 1797. Though no actual hostilities had occurred, Spanish troops were on the frontier, and the situation brought to an end the possibility of Antony making enough money in Lisbon to cover the extra expense of living there rather than at home.

For the year December 1795 to December 1796, outlined above, a packet of letters to Antony on business has been preserved, and it will be of interest to take advantage of this circumstance to obtain a better view of his business and friends than we have been able to get from the Aldenham letters for any previous period.

We see him engaged in his two chief lines of business; the first as agent traveller for manufacturers; the second for account of his Malaga firm Juan Pomar Gibbs & Co. in the export of Spanish produce to England.

In the first capacity he went from town to town in Spain collecting orders to send to his principals, visiting their buyers, obtaining reports on goods received, keeping his principals formed as to the stability of buyers, and assisting in the recovery of money due from them. When in England he had to pay visits to the manufacturers themselves in order to report to them more minutely, and to advise them regarding their business in the Peninsula.

Granger and Banfill of Exwick, and Benjamin Smith of Rochdale, now had other travelling agents in Spain, whom they had probably established in 1793 in consequence of Antony being incapacitated by his accident, but he still had relations of some kind with them, and, when war between Spain and England became imminent, both (in common with other manufacturers) appealed to him to assist in getting their money in. The most profitable year that Granger & Banfill had ever had was 1795, and in March 1796 they held in hand orders for their goods for Spain and Italy to the extent of £20,000.

There was some correspondence in this period between Antony and the firm of John & Robert Holt of Rochdale, but as yet he had not obtained their agency, which afterwards was an important one for him.

The agency of Amadé Duscher et Gendre Ainé of Schmiedeberg had developed into the most important of those which he now held. He received from them a commission on all orders (1% on some, 2% on others) which they got for Spain and Portugal, whether through his instrumentality or not. This firm was involved in 1796 in the failure of their Cadiz agents, Courant Bridel & Co., already mentioned, who owed them a large sum. It devolved upon Antony to arrange a settlement of Duscher's claim, and since Jacques Courant, who was in England, was apparently the only one of the partners with independent means, it was with him that he had to deal, a delicate matter for him considering his ties of friendship with him. One of the other partners was Felipe Molenier, who at this time and in later years is often mentioned in the letters.

The English manufacturers for whom Antony was acting were John Barnard Angier and Barnard of Norwich, Dubois & Sons of London, and his old friends Alex. Turner & Co. of Leeds, Vaughan Baugh & Co. of Bristol, and Henry Wansey of Salisbury.

To some extent Antony also imported woollen goods on his own account, and he had a stock in Madrid on joint account with Pablo Archinard, whom he seems to have established as his agent there, when he left that place in 1792, to look after goods sent him there for sale on consignment and to attend to all his concerns there.

Even before the declaration of war by Spain on England the influence on business of the political events of the time is well illustrated by the letters to Antony, which make constant reference to the progress of the French war with England and Austria.

As soon as Spain declared war (6 October 1796) she decreed all debts due to English subjects to be embargoed. A friend wrote to Antony from Cadiz: "I suppose you know the rigour used here even before the declaration of war to find out under oath what is owed to the English. I had ten days examination of conscience before the Governor." Granger & Banfill wrote to Antony Gibbs that, to counteract these measures, "a delegation from all the manufacturing houses has met in London on the subject of the Spanish confiscations and agreed when peace is restored that such Spaniards as have detained British debts shall not be trusted again by any British House." The severity of the Spanish measures was soon relaxed, at least to the extent of paying embargoed debts in Government paper. We do not hear of any of Antony's friends having debts embargoed, but some of their debtors took advantage of the Government's order to refuse payment till peace should be made. Many, however, evaded it and paid by remitting to Hamburg or Lisbon, and opportunities were made for them by manufacturers drawing on them through Hamburg firms or by drawing bills in England dated as before the outbreak of the war.

On the outbreak of the war A. Turner & Co. of Leeds and Granger & Banfill were each loading a cargo of their goods on a Spanish ship for Spain and both were embargoed.

Some of Antony's special friends at this time who were writing to him on business may be mentioned. With Juan Kiddell of Seville he had much to do for many years to come. James Wiseman, of the firm of James & Patrick Wiseman of Seville, was the father of Cardinal Wiseman, and retired to England in 1799 on a fortune made in 20 years' work in Spain. Antony in writing to his wife reminds her that they met him in Birmingham ; "we were going to bed when

he arrived and we took off our nightcaps and spent a very agreeable evening with him." James O'Connor and his family, the old friends of Antony and Dorothea, still lived in Madrid. James Duff (one of Antony's oldest friends in Andalusia) was British Consul in Cadiz, with whom Antony lived at this period whenever he went there; and William Gordon, Duff's nephew, was also a friend. Another good friend was Charles Lyne, whose brother Joseph was of the firm of Joseph Lyne & Co. (formerly Horn Sill Lynes & Wilson, to which both brothers had belonged), a wealthy importing firm of Lisbon, to whose care letters for Antony at Lisbon were for several years addressed. Charles Lyne subsequently opened a house in London, with which also, as will be seen later on, Antony had some dealing. Lewis Stephens, of the firm of Lewis Stephens & Co. Lisbon (mentioned in the last chapter), died towards the end of 1795 leaving, so Antony wrote, £30,000 to the Lynes. He had quarrelled with the latter, and it was commonly believed in Lisbon that it was his intention to substitute Antony Gibbs for them in his will, but he died suddenly. His brother John James Stephens, whose flourishing glass factory at Marinha, north of Lisbon, will be referred to in the next chapter, was also always a loyal friend to Antony. There was also Jean Louis, Baron de Schwartz, Bishop of Bosnia, with whom Antony and Dorothea had made friends in Madrid; he had lately lost heavily in a speculation in French Assignats, and retired to Cadiz, where Antony saw him again on his deathbed in 1801.

Antony had a great capacity of making friends and of inspiring confidence, and it must have been due in great measure to these characteristics, added to his activity, his power of work, and his cheerful optimism, that, whenever the condition of politics afforded him an opening, he was ready and able to take advantage of it.

Turning now to the Malaga export business of Juan Pomar Gibbs & Co. Pomar attended to the buying and shipping in Malaga, while Antony, as we have seen, obtained the orders in England. As assistant Pomar had in 1796 William Branscombe, Antony's former apprentice, whom he found honourable, willing, diligent in work, and doing it well. The produce dealt in by the firm was raisins, cork, grapes in jars, oranges, lemons, chestnuts, Barcelona nuts, almonds, shumach, figs, capers, wine, and, when its export was permitted, olive oil. With this produce whole cargoes were loaded by Pomar in ships chartered by the firm or by the English importers who ordered the cargoes.

The firm's first year was profitable, but the second (1795) not so, partly owing to interference with the trade by the number of French privateers in the Straits, partly to unlucky speculations by the firm. An account sales is in existence of a cargo consigned by the firm to Richard Carne & Co. of Falmouth, and on joint account with them, in a ship chartered for them by Granger & Banfill of Exwick, which arrived at St. Ives November 1794 (probably in distress), was discharged there, and the cargo sold partly there, partly in Falmouth, Plymouth, and Exeter. It produced £2,200 gross, but the charges were so heavy that the firm made nothing out of the venture. Other cargoes had been sent by the firm in 1795 to Hull, Exeter, Gloucester, Worcester, and Bristol, and one of those sent to the latter place was rejected by the buyer and handed over to George Gibbs to sell for the Malaga firm.

It will be remembered that the terms of the Malaga partnership were arranged in 1792 and that the firm began its existence in 1793, but the war between England and France had just then broken out, and it appears from a letter written by Pomar to Antony in March 1796 that it was agreed that the firm should not be "consolidated" till general peace should be made. This seems

to have meant that each partner should be free to engage in other business on his own account. (Thus, in 1796, we find Pomar buying for himself a cargo of wine and cork for St. Petersburg, and also buying an English ship and cargo brought into Malaga as a prize by French privateers.) Antony had evidently suggested in 1796 that the firm should be dissolved, but Pomar, in the letter mentioned above, stated that their experience showed that the business could be a very lucrative one, and gave his opinion that it would be a pity to stop it after they had taken so much trouble to organize it. He also argued: "Ultimately you will live in England both to rest and to be united with your family and the business which you ought therefore chiefly to cultivate is that of Malaga since that can remain to you permanently when you leave your present laborious mode of life for then you can with little trouble still obtain your orders for produce." Antony agreed; and during his journey in England in 1796 obtained orders for about eight cargoes to be shipped at Malaga in the autumn and winter for importers in Worcester, Leeds, Hull, York, Glasgow, Bristol, Gloucester, and for wine for Granger & Prowse, wine merchants of Exeter (of which firm Edmund Granger's brother Thomas was the head). Three of the ships chartered were of 30, 70, and 86 tons respectively, and another, of which the charter party exists, 107 tons.

All these arrangements were made in vain owing to the breaking out of the war between Spain and England (as already told). Even while it was only threatening the Spanish had prohibited the shipment of produce from Malaga, and one of the firm's chartered ships was embargoed at San Lucar. The fate of the others is not shown, but the firm lost nothing by the cancelment of their engagements, except the cost of Antony's travelling. After the war was declared various devices were discussed for continuing the business, such as by shipping in Spanish bottoms and transhipping to neutral ships in neutral ports, or transhipping in Guernsey, where the English law, forbidding the importation of goods from the enemy's country, did not apply, but Antony, after consulting his brother Vicary, decided that the spirit of the law must not be evaded. So the firm's business remained in abeyance till this Spanish war ended at the close of 1801.