

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

By John Arthur Gibbs - 1922

## CHAPTER VII 1801-5 — CADIZ, EXETER, AND COWLEY

At the end of November 1801 Antony and Henry started from Lisbon, travelling overland by terrible roads to Ayamonte, and thence in an open boat to Cadiz, where they arrived in an evening after the gates were shut, so that they had to spend a second night in the boat. They had left Branscombe, James Townsend the apprentice, and Betty the cook to follow in a merchant ship, in which were loaded all the cloth goods which Antony had in store in Lisbon. The Lisbon establishment was thus completely broken up and transferred to Cadiz, where, in January 18 Antony set himself up with a house, office, and warehouse. Branscombe (now getting £200 a year from Antony), whose wife and her sister were to join him in March, took a separate house. Henry was now keeping the cash, and his father was exceedingly well satisfied with him. About May William Mardon, a nephew of Samuel Banfill, joined Antony as an apprentice, paying no premium (as Dorothea Gibbs thought he ought to have done), but without salary. He was of a class very different from Townsend's (whose duties were more those of a servant) and he became, as will be seen, very useful to Antony.

Very soon Antony found that he had been rash in concluding that Cadiz was now safe from the fever; it had returned to Seville last summer; no one thought Cadiz safe; and he learned that newcomers by sea were specially liable to catch it. So the long devised plan of the family living abroad with him came to an end, and subsequent events prevented its revival.

No sooner was Antony settled in Cadiz than his sales, well satisfied as he had been with the amount of them in Lisbon, began to increase in a manner far beyond his expectations. There is a letter from George Gibbs to him of 28 March: "Did you mean that your neat profit of which you have one half is at least 30 per cent. on the gross you have sold to the extent of £20,000?" but Antony's letters to George which would throw light on the question are not available. In May Antony had £20,000 worth of goods on hand from one of his business friends. His profits for the year 1802 came to over £5,000 after deducting all Cadiz expenses and the cost of the journey to and from home mentioned below. There are no other particulars to help us, but it will be seen that it is not impossible that the answer to George would have been in the affirmative. George's statement of his question seems to imply that Antony was engaged in a large speculation, but this was not necessarily so, for during the Spanish war he had arranged with Granger & Banfill that he was to have half their profit on any sales he might make after the war was over of goods for the Spanish market which the war had forced them to keep back; he may have had similar arrangements with other manufacturers too. At the same time it would not be inconsistent with what we know of his later business that, even at this date, he should have joined in such large

speculations in goods, and it is in favour of this view that we find George Gibbs and others giving him anxious warnings (which he elected to follow though contrary to his own opinion) that the peace with France would not last long.

The plan for the future which Antony set before himself (April 1802), if his affairs continued to prosper, was to retire altogether from residence in Spain in 1804, and to live in or near Exeter,

making such arrangements with my respectable partner at Malaga and with Branscombe whom I shall leave in Cadiz as that I may have a nice establishment for myself and boys in England, keeping up at the same time my interest in the establishment in Malaga as well as in Cadiz by which I shall have something handsome to look forward to for William as well as Henry.

In a few years he hoped to leave the active part of the business to Henry. The project of establishing himself in business in or near London no longer, it seems, entered into his calculations ; it was only after the wars had again driven him out of Spain and almost ruined him that he was to be forced to make a new beginning and to work for the rest of his life in London in order to attain his aim of leaving to his sons a well-established business. It will be remembered that the business of the Malaga establishment of Juan Pomar, Gibbs, & Co. was entirely suspended by the outbreak of the war between Spain and England in 1796. "The only subsequent reference to it is contained in the above extract, which shows that it was resumed when Antony returned to Cadiz. For how long the partnership with Juan Pomar continued is not recorded, but it seems certain that it no longer persisted after the renewal of the Spanish war at the end of 1804, and it is very probable that the reopening of the war between England and France in 1803 was its death blow.

As to the life in Cadiz, Henry on his arrival wrote a striking picture of the contrast to Lisbon; the latter the dirtiest, and the former the cleanest of places; Lisbon all bustle, and gay with carriages and bright dresses, Cadiz quite silent, and all the women dressed in black. He and his father saw few people apart from business. Card playing, in which Antony said he never indulged, was a necessary part of evening visits, so that these were not possible for them. Besides, the British merchants (mostly Irish who had been allowed to remain in spite of the war) were so jealous of his success that they all fought shy of him, and William Gordon (the nephew of James Duff, the Consul, who was absent) was almost the only one with whom Antony and his son associated at this time, but they made great friends with Colonel Lord Blayney, who was some months there with them, and who when he left about March 1802 took a letter of recommendation from Antony to Dorothea. Friends of Antony's travelling home via Falmouth not infrequently went to see Dorothea.

In August 1802 Antony and his son Henry were at home again, Branscombe being left in charge in Cadiz. The little temporary house on St. David's Hill, Exeter, was now given up, another more commodious one on St. David's Hill being taken instead and furnished for under £300.

Antony had now decided to remove his second son William (only 12 years old) from the Tiverton school in order to train him to his business. He had written to his wife in March:-

I shall certainly have employment enough for him, and I think the circumstance of being able early to shape his tender mind to habits of business on a liberal scale has more real consequence in it than all the

objections that can be opposed. What I see of Henry leads me to think that in my former intention of grounding him and his brother more thoroughly in the Latin I was too much influenced by the accomplishment of the thing: it has great utility likewise; but for young men destined to mercantile pursuits I rather think that the necessary sacrifices and the risks of imbibing habits inimical to those pursuits are of more weight than the possible advantages to be reaped from a long continuance of Grammar school.

Antony and his two sons started on 5 September 1802 to travel to Spain overland in a carriage which he had bought for the purpose. They drove through Axminster, Dorchester, and Ringwood, to Southampton, and, sailing on the 7th, arrived next day at Havre de Grâce, and went on to Honfleur in a packet; "I must tell thee," Antony wrote to his wife, "how very pleasant I feel this journey in comparison with the numberless solitary ones I made before." From Honfleur they drove with four horses through Pont Eveque, Lisieux, St. Aubin, and Falaise; reached Alençon on the 12th, Tours 13th, Bordeaux 17th, and Bayonne 21st. There they engaged muleteers and six mules to take them on in their carriage to Madrid in ten days for 53 doblones, and, leaving on the 22nd via Vittoria and Burgos, they arrived there on 1 October. So far this was the same journey, but the reverse way, that Antony made in 1792 with his wife and family. From Madrid, after seeing the O'Connors and transacting some business, they drove on and arrived at Cadiz 9 October. The journey had taken longer than they had expected owing to the abominable state of some of the roads, and to the breaking of their carriage springs.

Antony was as well satisfied with Branscombe's conduct of the business in his absence as he had been when he left him to manage it alone in Lisbon, and he found it very flourishing "notwithstanding the injury which the trade of Cadiz has suffered by the indirect expeditions which have been permitted to Spanish America." This is the first allusion in the letters to the weakening of the monopoly system under which nearly all the legitimate trade of the Spanish Colonies both outward and inward was conducted through Cadiz.

In January 1803 Antony wrote to his wife:

I am very sure and thankful that we had never the chance we now have of my living at home and of my leaving here a most excellent establishment for Henry and his brother besides: my affairs go on remarkably well, and so they ought, for no man in the world ever paid more attention to his affairs than I do to mine. This is the price I pay, and it is not too much for having paid too little attention to them in the earlier part of my life. Next year I should like to make a purchase of some comfortable house with some fields about it. Between ourselves this year I shall employ some thousands of pounds in paying debts; God be praised that I have them to employ.

The debts referred to were those which he and his father owed when they failed in 1789, and some which his father had apparently contracted in consequence; also it seems the debt which he considered he owed to Vicary for the share which the latter had since taken in supporting their parents and unmarried sisters, all of which debts Antony had set himself the duty of paying in full. Some of them (the amount is not stated) he now paid, but Vicary wrote to him in October of the same year:

I rejoice at the state of your affairs compared with some years back and am only apprehensive that it may induce you from the generosity of your disposition to go further than that prudence which every man owes to those dependent on him will justify.... What you have done in relief of some of our father's

creditors is very honourable to you and I would have no consideration which regards me prevent you from extending it in the same degree to your own if this be prudent in other respects.

Meanwhile Dorothea's style of living in Exeter remained unchanged. She looked forward to the time when her husband might be able to leave Spain altogether with £4,000 or £5,000 realised and they could have a small farm and he conduct his business from home. An idea of the expenses of the family at home (apart from Antony's expenses abroad and his travelling) is given by records in the letters that in 1800 they were £600 ("over £100 more than they had ever spent before"), and in 1801 £435 ("not counting Antony's and Henry's clothes"). George Gibbs, as Antony's banker, was supplying Dorothea with funds while Antony's profits were locked up in his business. (In February 1803 Antony sent him £1,000 worth of olive oil as a remittance on account.)

Dorothea had found her new house on St. David's Hill unhealthy; it was pervaded by a nauseous smell; one of the servants had again been seized with a "putrid fever," making it necessary for them all to go for some weeks to stay with their relations in Exeter and Exwick. She was looking for another house, and consulted Antony about taking Duryard farm near Cowley at £120 a year," which could be reduced to £50 by letting some of the land and selling the cider," but she lost the opportunity by the delay. Antony then authorised her to spend £2,000 at once in buying a house where they might settle for the rest of their life, and he also sent Henry home to help her in her difficulties. Henry arrived after a long rough passage of 31 days in a merchantman on 2 April 1803. In the Channel he had met a fisherman who had undertaken to put him ashore in Torbay, and he had spent a day and a night in the boat with only bread and water to sustain him before he landed. He found his mother and sisters in lodgings at Topsham which they had taken to escape from their house. Besides old associations, for Topsham is only a mile from Clyst St. George, the inducement to them to go there was doubtless the fact that there had settled the family of Antony's cousin Captain William Gibbs, the eldest surviving son of Captain John Gibbs of Topsham, with whom, as the letters and diaries show, they were on intimate terms.

Capt. William had married at Topsham in 1790 Susanna (Susan), daughter of Rev. Thomas Ley, rector of Doddiscombe Leigh, near Exeter. Those of their children who grew up were:-

William Henry	1791–1859, who never married.
John Ley	1793–1837
Frances	1797-1847, who never married.
Mary Matilda	1801-1877, do.
Charles	1808–1857

There were also Lyle, born in 1799, and Abraham, born in 1805, who both died in childhood. Just before his marriage Capt. William had returned to Bristol from a voyage to America. His two eldest children having been born at Bristol in 1791 and 1793, it is likely that he continued in that trade during those years, his wife probably living in Bristol. The next thing recorded of him is that he was at Leghorn and met his brother Lyle there at some time before 1795. After being there he was made a prisoner in France, but in October 1795 he was at Topsham, having escaped

from captivity. A letter to him from his brother Lyle, dated Genoa 10 October 1795, which refers to that incident, is addressed to him "at Mrs. Ley's, Topsham," Mrs. Ley being presumably his wife's mother. The letter says: "Your wife tells me she lives in the same house as we did [as boys] in Shapter Street. I presume the one on the right hand going up, for if you recollect we habited many years the one opposite." Which it was, and whether the house referred to was Mrs. Ley's or Captain William's, is not recorded, but, since the five youngest children were all born at Topsham, it is very likely that the family was regularly established in that place from 1795, as they certainly were in 1803 and onwards till Captain William's death in 1830. The letter shows that Lyle was trying in 1795 to get Captain William employment in the Mediterranean through the influence of Samuel Banfill, who was one of the managers of the associated Exeter shippers to Genoa. The letter also promised him financial help on behalf of himself and their brother Abraham, help which Lyle himself at least did most generously afford to Captain William and his family during at least fifty years. In 1796 Captain William returned from Malaga in a neutral ship.

The next record is not till December 1802, when we read that he had been leading an idle life for many years, and that a ship had just been bought for him on joint account between George Gibbs' Bristol firm, "Gautier's House in London," and himself, in which he was sailing from Penzance to Naples with a cargo of pilchards. In July 1803 he arrived in London, and "all his men except the mate ran away for fear of being pressed." Then for at least five years he was trading between England and the West Indies in the ship *Hope*.

To return to Antony. He had been unable to accompany Henry home because, till the summer, when the demand nearly always ceased, there would be too much for Branscombe to do alone, and he "must stay if only for the boys who are to follow me in the business"; and "fortune is doing something for us now, and if we neglect her favours we ought to be always poor." Besides he had in mind the possibility of the fresh rupture and had been guarding himself by making as rapid sales as possible.

When he received news of the King's message to Parliament of 8 March, and of the subsequent warlike preparations in England, it became certain that the renewal of the war between France and England was imminent. In consequence he sent off some portion of the goods which he held in Cadiz to Seville and Malaga, placing them in the hands of Spanish friends, as they would not otherwise be safe in the expected event of Spain joining with France in the war against England. He rightly judged nevertheless that some little time must elapse before Spain would be involved "as she must always affect for a while to be independent" of the domination of France. During March he remitted no less than £13,500 to manufacturers for proceeds of sales; in April he was still "making immense sales, and though we should have ten years' war I have realised enough for us to breathe on during that time, and have laid the grounds besides for a noble establishment for our boys, who must take their sisters into partnership"; in May, "I never in my life knew what it was to be employed before now." But the proceeds of these last sales had not been yet remitted home, and as will appear below the falling exchange was to reduce very considerably the profit which Antony thought he had made.

The selling season being over, Antony set out at the end of May 1803 with his son William to Seville to travel overland to Lisbon, where they arrived on 4 June, and on the 19th they reached Exeter. On this journey they must have heard of the King's declaration to Parliament of 18 May

that the war with France had actually begun. George had counselled Antony that in these circumstances he should not yet settle, as he had intended to do, another of their father's debts (amount not stated), namely one to Captain William Gibbs of Topsham, nor should he contribute to their mother's expenses, nor buy a house. It is probable nevertheless that he did pay Captain William at this time. At any rate the debt was not outstanding when Antony died. As to the house, his wife having waited his return to find one, they now set themselves to hire one. After looking at houses at Alphington, and Ide, and "Wear House" (possibly "Weir Cliff" between Cowley and Exwick), they decided to take Cowley Cottage, near the bridge over the Exe above Exeter, from William Jackson of Cowley Place at £30 per annum; Cowley, a hamlet of Brampford Speke, being a mile above Exwick along the right bank of the Exe, and two miles above Exeter Cathedral along the left bank. This house was to be a well-loved home to them for the remaining years of their residence in Devonshire. They took up their residence in it in October, Dorothea's mother Mrs. Hucks accompanying them as usual. They soon rented in addition a small farm with some fields from John Merivale of Barton Place at about £20 a year, and kept two horses, cows, and other livestock.

Mrs. Hucks, who also always contributed to the housekeeping expenses, had her carriage there, so that they had the means both of riding and driving. In Dorothea's diary (August 1804) we read: "I went to church behind Mr. Gibbs," no doubt to their parish church at Brampford Speke. Another instance of her riding double is in the same diary (April 1806): "Went into Exeter with Lady Northcote, came home double on Mr. Granger's horse."

Antony and his son Henry had gone in July 1803 to visit Dr. Remmett at Plymouth and George Gibbs at Bristol, and then on to Rochdale and Wakefield to see their manufacturing friends there. They returned to Cowley on the 23rd.

Antony's mother died on 11 August 1803. She was buried at Clyst St. George with her husband. Her death is recorded in the diaries, but there are no letters on the subject. During Antony's last trip abroad we read that she was "speaking incessantly of him and reading and re-reading his letters." Her house in Palace Yard, Exeter, which had for so long been a centre for the family, was given up, her two unmarried daughters, Sibella and Catherine, who had lived with her, taking a house for themselves on St. David's Hill, Exeter. One or other of the sisters frequently went to stay at Cowley Cottage, and Sibella especially, who was a guest most welcome with all the family, often paid long visits to her brother George at Bristol and some times to her sister Mary Crawley at Stowe. Catherine after a few years left her sister and lived elsewhere, as will be related later on.

The nearest neighbours to the family at Cowley, besides the Banfills at Exwick, were their landlord William Jackson and his wife at Cowley Place, Sir Stafford and Lady Northcote of Pynes in Upton Pyne, a mile off, and John Merivale and his wife at Barton Place just across the river Exe, with all of whom, and particularly with the latter, they were great friends. A visit paid by Sir Thomas and Lady Crawley (Boevey) to Exeter in the summer is mentioned; later Richard Carne of Falmouth came to stay at Cowley Cottage, and "our dear friend" Miss Holt (daughter of one of the Holts of the Rochdale firm for whom Antony was agent) for all the winter.

Henry was sent out to Cadiz alone at the end of September 1803. There is no actual record of the reasons for this step, but it has already been seen that Antony had planned to take but one more trip abroad himself; he had used such exertions in Cadiz and made, as he thought,

such a profit as to give him the right to rest for a while, and, though a great part of his gains was locked up in goods still unsold and in remittances still to come forward, yet no doubt he believed that Branscombe and Henry were capable of dealing with all the business that remained, and of closing the Cadiz establishment before Spain should become involved in the war. We may believe that Antony also wished to give Henry the experience of travelling and living abroad without him, and perhaps of taking greater responsibility in the business under Branscombe than was possible if his father were with him. The death of his mother and his interest in his new home at Cowley may have afforded Antony other reasons for remaining at home.

Henry arrived at Lisbon on 5 October in eight days from Falmouth. His ship was chased once by a man-of-war and three times by smaller vessels; "nothing but the shocking weather at the bar (Lisbon) saved us, for here are upwards of ten privateers cruising off the coast in wait for the packets." He found Lisbon in a panic expecting that Spain and Portugal would at once be dragged into the war, but Antony had reason to think otherwise so that in October he actually despatched a new supply of goods to Cadiz from Liverpool.

Before Henry's departure from England Antony had arranged a set of cypher names for use in letters as a protection during the war, and we find these constantly employed. Henry stayed in Lisbon with Charles Lyne, but arranged that his letters from Cadiz home, and vice versa, should be transmitted during the war through John James Stephens of Lisbon.

After getting passports from our Ambassador Lord Robert Stephen Fitzgerald, and from the Spanish Ambassador, Henry travelled from Lisbon overland to Ayamonte, and thence by boat to St. Lucar. There he was arrested on suspicion of having come from Malaga, where yellow fever was raging, but being released in a few hours he went on overland to Port St. Mary, and then by boat to Cadiz, where he joined Branscombe and Mardon on 21 October. Severe precautions taken by the authorities in Cadiz had prevented the fever from coming there that year, and, as the winter was approaching, there was no longer any danger, but in Malaga the deaths from the fever this year were officially said to number 13,000 (though this was commonly thought to be an over-statement). Henry's letters also describe the earthquake of January 1804 which greatly damaged Malaga, split the Cathedral of Granada, and caused enormous disturbance in the sea at Cadiz and across to Morocco. Though Spain had not yet joined in the war, she was already committing breaches of neutrality and helping France in various ways. Cadiz was full of Frenchmen. Henry wrote in January that a French warship had been there since July and that two English ships cruised outside to catch her. Few merchant ships were passing between Cadiz and England. Letters went overland via Lisbon or by warship when possible; those of great importance could be sent by "express" in three days to Lisbon, or in five to six days by messenger on foot.

Soon after his arrival at Cadiz Henry gave up his father's house there, thereby saving him £300 or £400 a year, sent home James Townsend, and lived himself in rooms in the house of the Portuguese Consul.

Meanwhile Antony was looking forward with such confidence to the early winding up of his present business that he was led, in November 1803, into making arrangements with three of the manufacturers for whom he held goods in Cadiz and Seville which were to cause him great trouble. These three were John and Robert Holt of Rochdale, John and Jeremiah Naylor & Co. of Wakefield, of whom we now hear for the first time, and Granger & Banfill. With these he

entered into agreements to take over on his own account the whole of their stocks at fixed prices, and to pay for them, in part at least, at fixed dates. The agreement with Granger and Banfill was "of another sort to the other two, but seems likewise to have involved engagement as to payment for their goods. This firm was rather in difficulties, and it appears that the arrangement with them may have been dictated partly by Antony's generous nature; he soon found that he stood to make a loss by it of about £300, but it "will not amount to one-fifth of the profit on the agreements with Holt & Naylor"; and on 31 December 1803 he wrote: "I still think that tomorrow will begin the first year in which I have had large sums of my own to dispose of." One inducement to make these agreements, besides the apparent profit in them, was to reduce the clerical labour of account sales in Cadiz and so to hasten the winding up. Branscombe and Henry approved of them as having this effect, but otherwise were but half-hearted towards them, while Antony's brothers viewed them with considerable misgiving. Subsequently Antony made an agreement of some kind with George Gibbs' approval with a fourth manufacturer from whom he held goods, his old friend Benjamin Smith of Rochdale. This man had had large stocks in Lisbon, when Antony was living there, in the hands of Charles Lyne, and it is very probable that some of these had been transferred to Antony's hands at Cadiz. Smith's traveller had died in October 1800. Besides the goods of these four we hear of goods held on owners' account belonging to Collins Tothill & Co. of Exeter and others, but these must have been of small amount and soon sold off.

Hardly were the first three agreements concluded when Antony was plunged in the deepest anxiety with regard to the first payments required under them, amounting to £18,000. Branscombe, seeing exchange falling, had refrained from remitting large sums which had been collected as the proceeds of Antony's sales. Antony's position became serious; his credit was threatened, and he had to face a heavy loss. In March 1804 he wrote: "I had made up my mind to going abroad only once more, but there is no serious misfortune in being obliged to go on with the thing some years longer if we only contrive that I return to my labour with credit, but we are here involving all my best friends in difficulties"; and, "though the entire sum which I have realised during the last three years were to be swept away even this would be better than the disgraceful situation to which I now am exposed"; but he excused Branscombe and Henry, writing: "The sales have been better managed than those of any other house, but we were quite new in the object of the exchange because we had never been with such immense sums in the same situation before nor were you early enough made acquainted with my situation and that of my friends. Another month's delay would have rendered inevitable the failure of more than one." By the end of April 1804 he had received more than the sum required and the situation was saved. Most of the remittances were made in bills, but a small part in hard dollars, "which are as current in England as English coin."

Meanwhile sales of Antony's remaining goods had become more and more difficult owing to the prolonged political crisis. In May 1804 Henry valued the stock as follows:- In Cadiz £9,600; with Manuel Baños Gonzalez, Seville, £700; Romero's goods £600; with Billeri & Co., Malaga, £3,800; with J. Kiddell, Seville, £5,400. Total, £20,100. There was besides £7,300 in promissory notes, cash, and money owing. He also stated that the amount of the invoices received since Antony opened in Cadiz two years ago was £110,000, and calculated that the profit during that time should be £9,000 gross, that is, without deducting expenses.

Henry left Cadiz in May in a merchant ship, and arrived back at Exeter at the beginning of July, after spending some time in quarantine at Portsmouth. Branscombe left soon after him, ill and afraid of the yellow fever returning this summer. Before leaving he put all the stock of goods in Cadiz into the hands and name of Antonio Vallarino of Cadiz in order to make them safe from embargo or confiscation in the event of war with Spain. Antony had intended that they should be entrusted to one Da Costa and was much displeased with Branscombe's choice of Vallarino, who it seems had at one time made improper use of some of Antony's promissory notes, but the appointment had to be maintained and in consequence we hear much of Vallarino during the coming war. Antony had reason also to complain bitterly of Branscombe for neglect in his book-keeping, but without waiting for him he set off for Lisbon on 23 August with his son William. Henry started a week later, riding to Falmouth, and till his ship was ready was entertained there by the Carne family.

On parting from Antony and her sons Dorothea wrote to Sibella Gibbs: "I have had more than my share of such trials, but though I sometimes repine I never do it without considering how few people enjoy such real blessings in so kind a husband and such real good children."

Dorothea's visits to London had been so rare for many years that it may be mentioned that in April she and Antony had spent a fortnight away, part of the time with H. Townley Ward in London, part with Vicary Gibbs at his house at Hayes.

From August to November Dorothea's young cousin Sarah Warner came to stay with her at Cowley, and was very much liked. She and her two brothers and sister were the children of Maria Warner (born Harding), and they seem to have been either living with or under the care of their great-aunt Mrs. William Hucks of Dulwich, with whom, as well as with the Warners, Dorothea and her family were afterwards very intimate.

Branscombe reached home in September and went to Bristol to explain his conduct of Antony's affairs to George Gibbs. It seems that he had taken Vallarino because he was the cheaper agent, but Antony wrote of him later: "His judgment miserably misled him in the conduct of my business though he has been a faithful servant and has always I believe had my interest at heart. His neglect of the books holds up such a ruinous example to Henry and William that I would rather give him an annuity than ever employ him again," and, Dorothea wrote to Antony: "His conduct has been a great misfortune to you, but I think his head not his heart was the cause." At the same time Antony acknowledged that "I have for the last twelve months risked too much but hope soon to set all right and never will I risk so much again." At any rate the war was just coming, and to continue to employ Branscombe was impossible, but it will be seen that at the end of our war with Spain in 1808 Antony took him back. Branscombe's wife, who had remained in Cadiz, caught but recovered from the fever there, and he went out later to bring her home.

The fever was raging in Cadiz when Antony and his sons reached Lisbon, so he had to stay there and content himself with writing instructions to Mardon, whom he still had in Cadiz, but in November he went overland as far as Seville, leaving his sons in Lisbon to follow if the fever abated and the war did not break out, and meanwhile to attend to his correspondence which came to Lisbon by sea from Cadiz and England. At Seville Antony had his friend and agent Juan Kiddell, and there he was in closer touch with Mardon and could get news through his friend James Duff the Consul at Cadiz. Acts of war both on the part of Spain and England had

been already taking place, Antony dared not write on business matters, and reference to his business was carefully excluded from letters to him, so there is very little record of his doings. Mardon caught the fever at this time, and when he was happily over it Antony arranged with him to stay on in Cadiz as Vallarino's clerk to look after his interests during the war. It seems that Mardon could claim to be an Irishman, and was allowed to remain for this reason. Mrs. Branscombe, in whose house he lived in Cadiz, wrote of him that he was "very young to be his own master, obstinate and expensive in dress, but he would not exceed his allowance; he has other virtues and good sense." He served Antony well as will appear below.

The Spanish Declaration of war against England was made on 12 December 1804, and the English Declaration on 24 January following. An embargo was put on all English goods in Spain; Antony's furniture and clothes in Cadiz were embargoed, "but they were much disappointed at finding nothing else," the nominal transfer of his goods to Vallarino proving an efficient protection to them. English subjects were not yet ordered away.

There had been no demand in the ordinary way for Antony's goods this season owing to the expectation of war, to a corn famine produced by the complete failure of the 1804 crops in Spain, and to the fever; but he had been working hard to dispose of the whole of his stock in one lump, and in December 1804 the sale of it was on the point of being concluded to Antonio Vallarino. Though an immediate transaction fell through, the negotiations were not dropped and were to lead, as will appear below, to a successful sale of the greater part. But at least Antony was satisfied that "by great exertions" he had now made arrangements by which he would "avoid ruin and would not have to return for a long time," and he considered that he had certainly made his own situation much better than that of others who were in a similar case. Cadiz was free of fever in January 1805, but Antony did not go there for fear of prejudicing his position; he went instead with an escort of soldiers to meet Vallarino at Utrera. In February he was waiting at Seville "till the Spanish Court orders his leaving."

By the middle of March he had rejoined his sons at Lisbon, and "I have nothing to complain of them during my absence." He states that 'his work in Seville had been very unpleasant, no one but himself could have done it, and the danger would have been increased if his sons had been with him.' He sent Henry and William home in April with "young O'Ryan" (who is mentioned again). They arrived 14 May. He himself remained in Lisbon, living with the Stephens family, to be in closer touch with Andalusia (whence he was still expecting, and apparently received, between £3,000 and £4,000 of remittances), and to complete his scheme for a large sale.

Now that his Cadiz establishment was practically closed, and that he had done all he could to set his affairs in order for the war with Spain, he reviewed his position in letters to his wife and brothers. His expenses for the last twelve months, which had been a dead loss, had come to £1,975, of which £550 were those of the family at home. Cadiz expenses were now only running at the rate of £80 per annum, and he was making plans for economies in his home expenses. He had kept up his life insurance. All that he had besides wherewith to face inaction during the war was £1,500, and a legacy of £1,000 left to Dorothea by her father's first cousin Miss Martha Clay in 1803 but not yet available. (He had a year or so ago in anticipation of this money lent John Hucks £500, who had been left money under the same will. The legacies were paid in July 1805 through Townley Ward.) The prime cost of his stock of merchandise remaining in Spain

was £25,000, and it was on the honesty of his agents, on the safeguarding of that stock from the Spanish Government, and on its ultimate sale that his solvency (let alone his profits which were for the most part locked up in it) depended, for out of the proceeds he would have to pay what was still owing to the four manufacturers from whom he had bought, and on their forbearance he was equally dependent. He was able to say that though his available funds were so little his "credit was never so good as now," and in June Henry wrote to his uncle John Hucks that though his father "is almost afraid to come to England and face his creditors who are all loudly calling for money - and God knows there is none to give them - most of his friends think he is in better circumstances than he really is, which is in his favour." At the same time Henry wrote to his father that "if he is obliged to change his manner of living his children will contentedly live in whatever situation of life it might be necessary to adopt."

The break-up of his Cadiz establishment, the constant wars, and the epidemics of yellow fever in Andalusia, had by this time turned Antony's thoughts to finding a sphere of business other than Cadiz in which he might eventually establish his sons, and we find that the idea of making a business in London had now seriously entered his mind. It had been suggested to him by his friends in Spain, who promised to support him in the undertaking by sending him consignments to sell. Before his sons left Lisbon he had been discussing the possibility of this business being managed by Henry, but concluded that he was too young (he would be 20 in August 1805) to be alone in London in sole charge. But it will be seen from his letter to George Gibbs at the end of this chapter that his ideas on the subject had since developed to the point that he suggested that if the plan were carried out he himself should conduct the business in London.

At the same time he was afraid of the scheme on the ground that his capital would be so small and his knowledge of London business ways too limited. His Lisbon friend Charles Lyne was now established as a merchant in London under the style of Lyne Hathorne and Roberts, and his example may well have served to promote the scheme in Antony's mind.

Meanwhile Antony had been working out a scheme, with a view to profitable employment while the war should last, to establish, in conjunction with a French friend, Hipolito Lafarque, depots for goods in Portugal on the Spanish frontier in the north and at Castromarin (near Ayamonte) in the south. The former was to be managed by Lafarque and the latter by Henry, while Antony himself would remain in England to deal with the manufacturers, who would send their goods to these depots, where they would be sold to the Spanish smugglers, to all of whom in the south Antony was well known. The probability of Portugal being dragged into the war prevented this plan from being carried out, so that Antony had to face the war time without any prospect of doing business during its continuance other than that connected with the sale of his stocks in Spain.

At this time (July 1805) it was suggested that Antony's son William should join the office of Lyne Hathorne & Robert London, who seem to have become for a time the London agents of George Gibbs' firm (styled Gibbs Richards & Gibbs since 1802), but he was considered too young to live alone. In January 1806 he was given a holiday of four weeks to stay with his uncle John Hucks at Foxdown, and at the end of the month he was sent to Bristol to be a clerk in his uncle George Gibbs' office. He lived at Stapleton with George Gibbs junior, who had become a

partner in the Bristol firm in 1802 after the death of Samuel Munckley (in July 1801), and later in the same year had married his first wife Salvina daughter of Henry Hendy of Barbadoes.

During the first seven months of William's residence in Bristol Captain William Gibbs of Topsham (whose ship the Hope was there repairing) and his wife Susan were there, and he enjoyed paying almost daily visits to them. Captain William was still in the West India trade. Two years later, in November 1808, we read that on his return from one of his voyages he was then visiting his house at Topsham for the first time for three years. This was perhaps his last trading voyage. We find him at Topsham in February and May 1809, and in May 1810 we read that he was out of employment.

Antony arrived home on 2 September 1805. His mother-in law's diary records an event of his journey in the following words:-

*[Cowley] 1 September.* Heard this evening that Mr. Gibbs was taken by a Spanish privateer.  
*2 September.* I have experienced the most joyful surprise: when I thought him at Vigo he was retaken by an English ship before the enemy could reach it and arrived from Falmouth this afternoon 15 hours after we had the dreadful intelligence. He is gone to Dawlish,

where his wife was making a short stay.

Later in the same year died childless Mrs. (Sarah) Jackson, half-sister of Dorothea's father William Hucks, widow of Charles Jackson, Bishop of Kildare. Mrs. Hucks states in her diary (16 December) that she left a fortune estimated at £45,000, and laments that she bequeathed none of it to Dorothea or to John Hucks, her only niece and nephew, nor to any other of the Hucks family. Mention has already been made of the quarrel between Mrs. Jackson and her half-brother. Mrs. Ward in her lifetime had tried to re-establish friendly relations with her and with some success, and Joseph Hucks when he was alive used to call upon her, but there is no actual evidence in the letters that Dorothea knew her, though Mrs. William Hucks of Dulwich, who was intimate with her, had tried to prepossess her in Dorothea's favour. It is needless to point out how convenient to Dorothea it would have been to have a share of her aunt's fortune. In 1799 Dorothea's first cousin Nathaniel Sharpe had died intestate after telling Mrs. Ward that he meant to leave Dorothea £900, but she was not one to repine over such mis-chances. Her only hope of an inheritance (for Robert Hucks' properties can hardly have entered into her calculations) had been from her mother, but the latter had told her in 1802 that she intended to leave John Hucks nearly all that remained of her money, a preference which Dorothea privately confessed to Antony that she thought scarcely fair though she would never let her opinion disturb her affectionate relations with her mother. Her letter to him (April 1802) was as follows:-

I have all my life loved and respected my mother as much as any child ever loved a parent and I cannot now bear to think that she has acted unkindly by me, but also I feel that she has, but still wish every other person to be blind and I should never forgive any [want of] respect to her or her memory. She has had a difficult task since my father's death in bringing up two boys, and her fears lest one should act wrong has made her double, whenever there was room, every virtue he had, and now she knows that he [John] is in bad circumstances owing to the dishonesty of others and therefore persuades herself that she is only doing justice in putting him into as comfortable a situation as she can; she knows that I have a good and kind husband whose abilities will keep me above want: if I was to be left in distress during her

life she would I am sure then consider me in the same light as she now does John and make no difference between us.