

dirt and dust of indignity and disgrace... Wherefore I would beseech you to be another patron to me instead of your father... Meantime I send a couple of Worcestershire cheeses...<sup>3</sup> Sir Samuel Bagenall apologised for forgetting his patron, promised to make amends, and sent him two dogs—adding, in a charming postscript, ‘This great white dog is the most furiosest beast that ever I saw.’<sup>4</sup> The borough corporation of Colchester sent him £10 in gold, expressed joy ‘in their happy election of Cecil for their patron’ and craved ‘the perpetuity of his protection’.<sup>5</sup> Gifts showered in: ‘an ambling gelding’, a ‘summer’ nag and other horses, ‘pyony water, good against all affections of the... heart’, a barrel of conserves, a ‘syve’ of cherries and a basket of ‘apricocks and plums’, hawks, partridges, pheasants, stags, bucks, and so on.<sup>6</sup>

These were gifts unaccompanied by suits for patronage. They were just marks of respect for their patron and reminders that Cecil’s clients lived in hope. Reminders were important. Sir John Harington sent Cecil ‘a homely present, and though the metal therein be neither gold nor silver, yet... it will be worth gold and silver to your house. In my idle discourse on this subject... I valued this device for my own poor house to be worth £100 and... [for yours] worth a thousand. But, seriously, you shall find... the use of it commodious and necessary, and above all, in time of infection most wholesome.’ What was his gift? Harington had designed a flush-lavatory.<sup>7</sup> Lord Burghley once advised his son, Robert, that clients should send gifts which would be constant reminders to their patron. Surely this gift would serve!<sup>8</sup>

Some gifts were accompanied by petitions. Others were material thanks for services rendered. There was nothing inherently corrupt in such dealings. Cecil’s patronage secretary, Michael Hikes, could write openly to a suitor that his services ‘I know are as welcome and acceptable to you as twenty fair angels laid in the hands of us poor bribers here in Court’.<sup>9</sup> Gifts should not be extravagant. So Cecil informed Lord Cromwell that he would ‘be pleased to accept one of the two horses’ offered to him, but he added that ‘it would be unreasonable to accept them both unless he saw some imminent opportunity to requite him’.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless services required gratuities, a universally accepted fact. Indeed in 1595 a case in the Court of Requests concerned Richard Putto, who took action against one, William Smith. The latter had acted as an intermediary in delicate negotiations, which had secured Putto the escheatorship of Kent. Putto had passed Smith £20, for Michael Hikes, Burghley’s patronage secretary, with £5 for himself. However, Smith paid Hikes only £15 and kept another £5. The result was a lawsuit and the significant point is that a court of law was prepared to act in order to enforce the payment of a gratuity.<sup>11</sup>