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A thing doubly inscrutable : a woman and a queen : Elizabethan foreign policy: 1558-1584

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"A THING DOUBLY INSCRUTABLE: A WOMAN AND A QUEEN"

ELIZABETHAN FOREIGN POLICY: 1558 - 1584

BY

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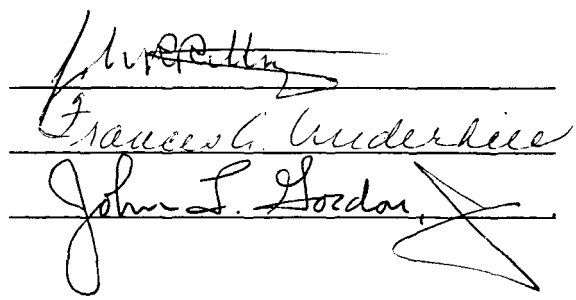

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INTRODUCTION

THE ROCKS AND SHOALS.

> Will she shun the rocks and shoals upon which her sister made shipwreck and perished? Or will her firm hand and strong will lead on in safety the rich argosy with which the nation is about to entrust her, until with a spreading sail it reaches the mid ocean of its prosperity?[1]

On November 17, 1558 it appeared that the argosy of England had in fact been shipwrecked and the "rocks and shoals" surrounding her greatly reduced the possibility that she would ever spread her sails again. At war with France, she was both militarily weak and financially exhausted. Ravaged by recent years of religious persecution she faced the prospect of a rejuvenated Catholic church on the continent and Calvinist impatience at home. She was threatened by France in Scotland and by the impending loss of her only ally in Europe, as France and Spain negotiated a marriage agreement. Finally, to captain the argosy, she now had a monarch of questionable legitimacy and a woman. The situation appeared grim indeed. Yet with skillful navigation and the aid of a proficient crew, the argosy did emerge, after a voyage

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[1] Joseph Stevenson, ed., Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, Vol. I (Washington: Microcard Editions, 1964), p. lxxv.

of some twenty years, into that "mid ocean of its prosperity," and a strong and stable Elizabethan England prepared to spread its sails and enter its most glorious age.

* * *

On ascending the throne, Elizabeth inherited many problems, the most pressing of which was a war between France and Spain in which Mary, as the wife of the Spanish king, had become involved. From the beginning of the reign, therefore, the French were considered England's major adversary, and relations between these two nations played a dominant role in the formation of Elizabethan foreign policy.

Traditionally, England had maintained strong ties with the Hapsburg powers, and Mary's marriage to Philip II had reduced her almost to the realm of a Spanish dependency. Despite a so called "diplomatic revolution" in 1572 which saw England and France allied in the Treaty of Blois, throughout most of the period from 1558 - 1584 there was a marked preference for the Spanish alliance and France remained suspect.

There were good reasons for this. Apart from the strong trade connections which bound England to Spain, the situation in France and her policy during the early years of the reign did little to encourage English friendship. In 1558 Henry II was king, but his death the

following year left France a victim of intrigue and strife characterized by religious wars which plagued the country for the rest of the century. Three factions competed for political ascendancy while Catherine de Medici, determined to hold the strings of power for her ineffective sons, vacillated. Anglo-French relations, therefore, were extremely complicated, since they depended upon which of these factions was predominant at the French court. They also made manifest a marked distrust of France in general, since it was well known that even with the pro-English faction supporting an alliance, its opponents were always waiting in the wings intriguing with her enemies.

The most powerful faction at the beginning of this period was led by the Duke of Guise. Ultra-Catholic, it was the foremost champion of the Counter Reformation[2] and schemed constantly with the Pope and Philip II for the extermination of heresy. The Duke's sister, Mary of Lorraine, had married James V of Scotland[3] giving the Guise family a personal interest in Scottish affairs as well as a concern for the well-being of their niece, Mary Stuart. The Guises were involved in most of the plots in her favour and recognized her as the rightful Queen of England. They

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[2]G. R. Elton, England Under the Tudors (London: Methuen and Company, 1971), p. 278.

[3]Appendix A.

favoured alliance with Spain and aggressive policy against Elizabeth[4] who was therfore always watchful of them. Their strength was an influential element in determining her policy.

At the other end of the French political spectrum were the Huguenots. Zealous Protestants they were led initially by Condé and Coligny and ultimately by Henry of Navarre.[5] They aimed to convert France to Protestantism and could usually be depended upon to exert their influence in favour of England at the French court.[6] Although opposed to Spain and advocating support for the Dutch rebels against Philip, they were sufficiently nationalistic that they would unite with the Catholics to expel a foreign threat. This was clearly shown during the religious war of 1562 when Catherine de Medici managed to bring about a coalition to expel the English. Elizabeth, who had entered the war reluctantly at the request of the Huguenots, never forgot their defection, and remained wary of their appeals for aid in the future.

Between these two extremes was a group of moderate Catholics represented by the Montmorencis, which aimed at a policy of compromise and mutual toleration in France. These politiques, as they came to be called,

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[4]Conyers Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth, Vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 87.

[5]Ibid., p. 85.

[6]Ibid., p. 86.

wanted peace at home but were not averse to diverting their more turbulent elements into foreign wars against the Hapsburgs.[7]

Attempting to balance these factions was Catherine de Medici. The widow of Henry II she had four sons and was determined to preserve and dominate their rule. She was the central figure in French politics from 1560 - 1589. Angered at Guise domination of Francis II she was prepared to discredit their pro-Spanish foreign policy and move toward an English alliance in the early 1570's. Forced to strengthen the Huguenots to accomplish this, however, she soon became alarmed at their increasing influence over Charles IX and engineered the atrocities of St. Bartholomew's Massacre.

French friendship, therefore, was a thing to be treated with caution. Its major value to Elizabeth was as a lever against Spain, but she never fully trusted it, and her policy did not depend on it. Even though continual civil war rendered France almost impotent in the international arena, as Elizabeth turned to solve the problems of her reign, her acts were always carried out with a watchful eye toward her ancient enemy.

In 1558, although her situation seemed desperate, Elizabeth did have one friend on whom she could depend. The old Burgundian alliance had firm roots in trade

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[7] Ibid., p. 88.

connections, and despite Elizabeth's questionable claim to the throne and suspected Protestantism Philip was still prepared to protect her. Although apparent Franco-Spanish friendship at the Cateau-Cambrésis negotiations might have made it seem otherwise, given a choice of England under Elizabeth or under Mary Stuart Philip had no doubts as to whom was preferable. A union of France, England and Scotland would have been disastrous to Spain, especially in the Netherlands.[8] Philip was determined to prevent such a catastrophe and Elizabeth was reasonably certain that she could rely on his support. Eager to disentangle herself from an intolerable situation, she was careful not to alienate Philip through any immediate anti-Catholic religious commitment.[9] Gradually, as she gained in strength, however, she needed to rely less and less on her Spanish patron. Throughout the years until the 1580's a slow deterioration of this friendship can be traced. By manipulating the age-old Hapsburg-Valois rivalry Elizabeth was eventually able to pursue an independent course based on neither French nor Spanish amity but on England's national interest.[10]

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[8]Conyers Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), pp. 164-165.

[9]C.S.P. Foreign Series, Vol. II, p. xxii.

[10]R. B. Wernham, Before the Armada, the Growth of English Foreign Policy: 1485-1588 (London: The Trinity Press, 1966), p. 241.

The demise of Anglo-Spanish friendship and the consequent increase in English independence was certainly succoured by the religious situation. The mid-sixteenth century saw Europe divided into two antagonistic and irreconcilable camps. Calvinism had appeared in the forefront of militant Protestantism with an international character never acquired by Lutheranism.[11] The Catholics, meanwhile, emerged from the Council of Trent equally inflexible and determined to launch an assault on their religious enemies.[12] Each group, fearing a league or conspiracy from the other, resolved to work through secular powers wherever possible to thwart its adversary.

Under these circumstances Elizabeth's position was extremely awkward. Hailed as their champion by Protestants and considered an enemy and usurper by Catholics she was forced to tread very carefully. While the negotiations were still in progress at Cateau-Cambrésis she was not anxious to disclose her religious policy for fear of alienating Philip. His impending marriage to Elizabeth of Valois had reinforced the fears of a Catholic league[13] and Elizabeth was compelled to

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[11] Ibid., p. 242.

[12] R. B. Wernham, ed., The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, Vol. III of New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), p. 156.

[13] Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 33.

restrain impatient Puritans in her parliament. The treaty concluded, however, and her seat on the throne of England ever more secure, she gradually allowed her religious settlement to unfold.

Even before her course was officially determined exiles from the Marian persecution had flowed back into England.[14] From the beginning, therefore, she was faced with a strong Puritan element in parliament which was determined to place her firmly in the Protestant camp.[15] Not eager to precipitate a Catholic crusade from Europe or alienate loyal English Catholics Elizabeth remained cautious, and her religious policy normally depended upon the international situation.

By 1559 she was prepared to yield to the Commons allowing passage of the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity. Although not as radical as some would have liked, these laws asserted England's independence of Rome and restored the Edwardian Prayer Book of 1552.[16] Apart from a watchful observation of English Catholics, however, she was not willing to initiate any form of persecution in the hope that her settlement would be broad enough to encourage their compliance. In international affairs Elizabeth was continually subjected to appeals for aid

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[14] Garrett Mattingly, Renaissance Diplomacy (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, Inc., 1964), p. 166.

[15] Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 266.

[16] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 246.

from Huguenots in France and Protestants in Scotland and the Netherlands. But despite pressure from her council, she was loathe to repeat the errors of her French campaign and, after 1564, confined herself to underhand efforts to maintain the Protestant cause in these areas. She was determined not to commit herself to any official interference which might encourage an anti-English crusade by Catholics.[17]

By 1570 it appeared that her policy had been largely successful and that most Englishmen were by now Anglicans. Elizabeth was reasonably certain that a foreign invasion would be necessary to restore Catholicism, and the lack of adequate support for the Northern Rebellion convinced her that most remaining English Catholics were too nationalistic to support one.[18] Since both France and Spain were by now hampered by insurrection it was also unlikely that they could mount such an invasion.

Her moderation, however, was destined to destruction by fanaticism from both sides. In 1570 Pope Pius V issued his Bull of excommunication tantamount to a declaration of war against Elizabeth.[19] The Papacy now embarked on

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[17] Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 273.

[18] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 337.

[19] Ibid., p. 339.

a campaign aimed to oust the heretic. Making use of anarchy in Ireland, unrest in Scotland, Mary Stuart's imprisonment, and any other available opportunities, a series of plots was launched designed to restore Catholicism in England. In addition, after the founding of Douai in 1568[20] a flood of Jesuit missionaries poured into the country to re-awaken the English Catholics and recruit them for this cause.

The listless Catholics, ignored for so long by international forces, were now faced with a decision. Absolved from their obedience to their monarch they could no longer slumber behind the facade of nationalism. Suspicion of their involvement in the various plots against Elizabeth had sparked a new wave of Puritan agitation in the Commons. Elizabeth was forced eventually to give in. Faced with the threat of revived Catholicism she could not afford to alienate her Protestant allies.[21] Fines for recusants were increased in 1571 and again in the 1580's.[22] Although she still preferred a milder policy toward Catholics at home, those entering from the continent were often apprehended as traitors.[23]

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[20]Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 305.

[21]Conyers Read, The Tudors: Personalities and Practical Politics in Sixteenth Century England (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), p. 195.

[22]Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 286.

[23]Ibid., p. 272.

Catholic plots from abroad were invariably supported by the Guise faction in France and often by Philip's governors in the Netherlands. Philip, himself, normally maintained a passive role. As more and more Catholics were executed in England, however, his hostility increased, and Elizabeth's assurances that they were condemned for purely political reasons did not convince him.[24] With Mendoza's expulsion in 1584 Anglo-Spanish relations were severed. Religion had served to estrange natural allies,[25] and as Elizabeth became more openly involved in the Netherlands, a total breach was imminent.

By the 1580's the economic foundations of the Anglo-Spanish alliance had also been eroded. The basis of this friendship had always been trade and English foreign policy was normally concerned with fostering and preserving this traffic.[26] Traditionally, most of England's export trade was conducted through Antwerp in the Spanish Netherlands and was therefore dependent upon Spanish goodwill. During the 1560's, however, when rebellion in the Netherlands brought continued instability to this area, English merchants were forced to expand their field of commerce.

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[24]Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 307.

[25]Wernham, ed., The Counter-Reformation, p. 159.

[26]Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 281.

For the next two decades trade was extended into the Baltic and Mediterranean areas while John Hawkins embarked on buccaneering ventures. The use of English ships was also increased, and they were transporting almost all products by the end of Elizabeth's reign.[27] No longer dependent, therefore, upon Antwerp as a market for her exports, nor on Hanse merchants to provide much needed naval stores from the Baltic, Elizabeth's foreign policy need not necessarily be channelled toward the Spanish alliance. Furthermore, Hawkins' intrusions into the Spanish slave trade[28] and England's contacts with the hated Turks in the Mediterranean[29] provided little comfort for Philip's growing anxieties about Elizabeth's independent policies.

As English merchants ventured farther afield in English ships Elizabeth reaped a dual benefit. Added to increased economic independence was a much-needed amelioration of English sea power.[30] The military forces which Elizabeth inherited from her sister were enfeebled from years of neglect.[31] Faced with heavy debts which were increased by her Scottish campaign of 1559 - 1560

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[27] Read, The Tudors, p. 239.

[28] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 287.

[29] Ibid., p. 347.

[30] Ibid., p. 348.

[31] Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 276.

and French expedition of 1562,[32] Elizabeth was unable to establish any consistent program of improvement at the outset of her reign. Through peace abroad and economy at home, however, she was able to restore her financial credit[33] and, in the 1570's, was ready to refurbish her forces.

In 1569 Hawkins had become Cecil's professional advisor and together they tackled the task of reconstructing the navy.[34] By improving the design of new ships and modifying the older ones, their quality and fighting power was greatly enhanced. New ships were longer and narrower allowing more manoeuvrability at sea. They were also more heavily gunned to create a formidable fighting force.[35] Although the actual number of ships did not increase greatly[36] the small nucleus of the Royal Navy was supplemented by the formation of the

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[32]According to Sir John Neale in Elizabeth I: A Biography, Elizabeth's debts amounted to about £650,000 by 1564. In addition, he estimates that the Northern Rebellion would cost her £93,000 and the Irish rebellions of the 1570's about £500,000.

[33]Neale places the total annual income of the crown at approximately £250,000. Wernham explains that by reducing expenditures Elizabeth was able to liquidate her debts by 1575 while still keeping taxation low. By 1584 a £300,000 reserve had been accrued.

[34]Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 355.

[35]Wernham, Before the Armada, pp. 342-343.

[36]Wernham places the actual number of Royal ships at twenty-two in 1578 and twenty-five in 1587.

Royal Naval Reserve. The widening field of English commerce had trained a new breed of seamen on voyages to distant lands and merchant ships and private vessels comprised the bulk of England's navy.[37]

There was much domestic opposition toward any large scale organization of land forces and their training and recruitment remained the responsibility of the counties.[38] English military forces had traditionally been "sparingly used at critical points and crucial moments."[39] It was the navy, therefore, that was Elizabeth's first line of defence. With its increased efficiency under Hawkins, who was promoted to treasurer in 1578, it had become a force capable of defending England from invasion, cutting Spanish communications with the Netherlands, and harrying Spain's Atlantic fleet.[40] When war eventually came, it was able to take on and defeat the greatest power of the day.[41]

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> Whether queen or minister was responsible for the great successes of the reign is not at present a question we can answer, those who should know come to different conclusions,.... As a team they

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[37] Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 353.

[38] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 341.

[39] Ibid., p. 24.

[40] Ibid., p. 343.

[41] Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 295.

> were superb, matching caution for caution, diplomatic finesse for administrative ability, and a marvellous capacity for keeping six balls in the air at once for an equal skill in keeping a dozen strings from getting entangled.[42]

Three days after Elizabeth's accession Cecil was appointed her principal secretary and one of history's most remarkable partnerships was thus established. Elevated to Lord Burghley in 1571, he remained her chief advisor until his death in 1598. Despite many differences, Cecil and Elizabeth complemented each other in a way exactly suited to the exploitation of many difficult situations which had resulted from several years of bad government.[43]

Elizabeth's position naturally made her more hesitant. She was the judge while Cecil was the advocate.[44] Yet Cecil was consistently judicial in presenting his policy, always stating the case from both sides. In August, 1559, in a memorandum on the Scottish situation, even though he favoured aiding the Scots, he presented the case against it: to aid rebels was against God's law; it was dangerous; and could possibly unite Spain, France, Rome and the Emperor against England and Scotland.[45]

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[42] Ibid., p. 263.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Sir John Neale, Queen Elizabeth I: A Biography (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Ltd., 1934), p. 94.

[45] Read, Cecil, p. 149.

Cecil was decisive in his policy and never wavered from his purpose, but was always flexible in his methods of attaining it.[46] Elizabeth, by contrast, was persistently dilatory, to everyone's exasperation, and changed her mind frequently.[47] She preferred to rely on her skill in secret diplomacy while preserving an impression of good behaviour so as not to violate any treaties.[48] Indeed she had ample reason to follow this course, for her genius had been abundantly tested during her sister's reign and she had every right to be confident in her ability.

Cecil, however, showed no lack of equal ability in convincing Elizabeth. By attempting to tone down religious zeal in Scotland and the Netherlands he presented issues in the realm of secular politics. By using representatives abroad methodically to inform Elizabeth of every hostile act, especially the French use of her arms and style which was a particularly sensitive matter,[49] he was usually able to influence her more than anyone else.

Indeed, Elizabeth did not lack able ministers, and the debates which issued forth from the Privy Council

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[46] Ibid., p. 192.

[47] Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 262.

[48] Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 89.

[49] Wallace MacCaffrey, The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime (Princeton: University Press, 1968), p. 75.

throughout her reign are evidence that policies were often keenly contested. The final decisions, however, rested with the Queen. Fluent in several languages she was able to communicate with ambassadors and her knowledge of foreign affairs was extensive.[50] Despite consistent pressure from Walsingham, who became her secretary in 1571, Elizabeth did not become embroiled in any major Protestant crusade. Although her councillors and Parliament continually tried to arrange her marriage, she emerged unwed and free from entangling alliances.

> The promptitude with which she assumed the government of the realm when its fortunes were most critical, the firmness with which she overcame the difficulties of her position, the skill with which she held her course, through the tangled and conflicting interests of European diplomacy, all show her to have been possessed, even at the commencement of her reign, of a rare capacity and an undaunted courage.[51]

The keystone of Elizabeth's success has been described as her policy of "making fires in her neighbours' houses."[52]

> Covert interference in the affairs of foreign states for the purpose of exciting internal disturbances.... a state, agitated and hampered at home, would have neither the power nor the inclination to be troublesome to its neighbours.[53]

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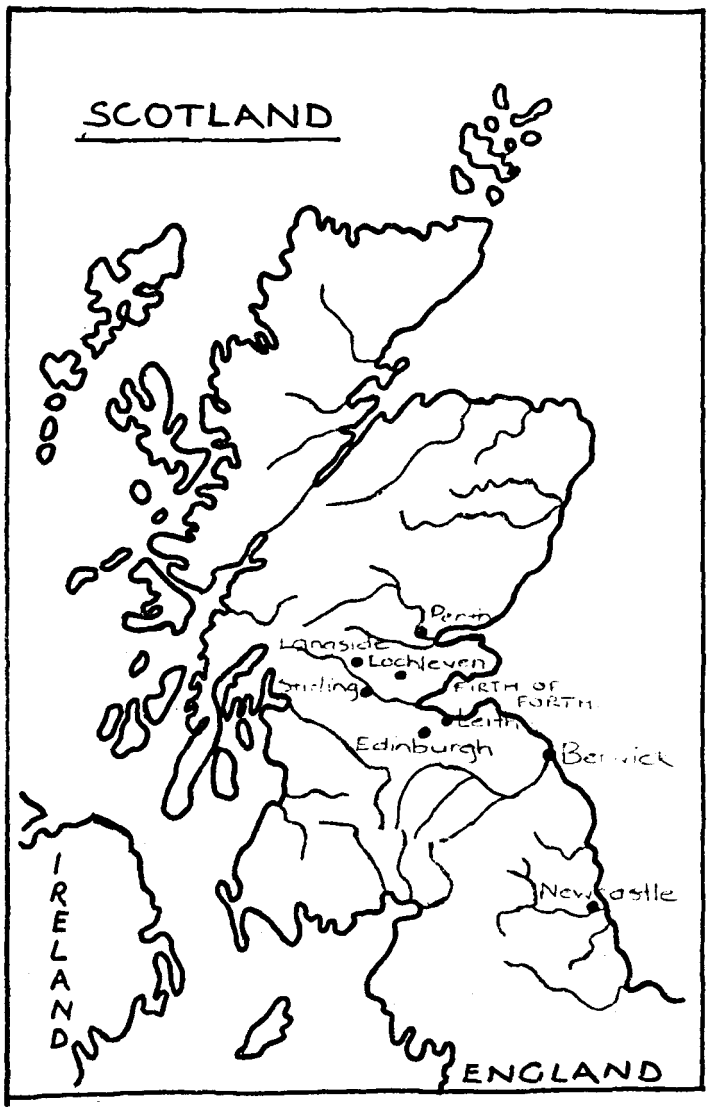
[50] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 236.

[51] C.S.P. Foreign Series, Vol. I, p. viii.

[52] Read, Cecil, p. 152.

[53] C.S.P. Foreign Series, Vol. IV, p. vii.

Elizabeth needed peace at home in order to cure domestic ills. To achieve this she needed to ensure that neither of her potential European antagonists be given the opportunity to interfere. France appeared to offer the major threat and she concentrated on thwarting French designs. Apart from allowing unofficial aid to the Huguenots in France, she focused on two main areas. She was determined that France should not exploit England's back door through Scotland and she was equally resolved that they should not increase their strength through annexation of the Netherlands. The revolt in the Netherlands, however, could also be utilized to divert hostile Catholic elements and prevent their assault on England. Her skillful manipulation of events in these two areas enabled her to maintain the peace necessary for England's rehabilitation.


SCOTLAND
Perth
Lochleven
Stirling
FIRTH OF FORTH
Leith
Edinburgh
Berwick
Newcastle
IRELAND
ENGLAND

CHAPTER ONE

BEING MADE ONE BY AMITY.

> Let the two nations, marked out for union by Providence, language, and geography, come together as equals under the old indifferent name of Britons, 'in one empire of Great Britain. Then the Scots and the English, being made one by amity,... having the sea for a wall, mutual love for garrison, and God for defence, should make so noble and well-agreeing a monarchy that neither in peace we may be ashamed nor in war afraid of any worldly or foreign power.'[1]

Somerset's proclamation to the Scottish people made little impression in the light of his and his predecessor's policy toward them. Although Henry VIII had realized that control of Scotland was crucial for England's security, the bullying tactics he had used toward the Scots had served only to alienate them. Henry's efforts to create an alliance by marrying Mary, infant Queen of Scots after her father's death in 1542, to his son, Edward, had met with disaster. After England's unpopular invasion and occupation of Scotland in the 1540's Mary had been hurried off to France where she would subsequently be married to the Dauphin, Francis.

By 1558, therefore, England's security was certainly threatened. Scotland could link the discontents of the north with those of Ireland, while

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[1]Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 172.

leaving England open to invasion.[2] On November 17, 1558, Cecil wrote the following memorandum of important matters to be considered at Elizabeth's accession:

> To make a stay of passages to all the ports until a certain day, and to consider the safety of all places dangerous in this realm towards France and Scotland, especially in this change.[3]

Since England and France were already at war he suspected that Henry II might be preparing to take advantage of this back door, and his position seemed ominously strong. The Catholic sovereign of England had died and her "illegitimate" half-sister had claimed the throne. By a coincidence showing remarkable forethought, France not only had custody of the "rightful heir" but had also succeeded in arranging her marriage to the Dauphin. Scotland was practically a French province and surely the "most Catholic king of Spain" would not prevent a French invasion from Scotland in order to replace one of questionable faith and birth with the rightful heir to the English throne, one of the true religion, Mary Stuart.

These were the complicating factors which plagued the negotiations at Cateau Cambrésis, darkening them with a shadow of mutual distrust, rancour and unfulfilled hopes.[4] Peace discussions had begun between

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[2] Ibid., p. 149.

[3] C.S.P. Foreign Series, Vol. I, p. 1.

[4] J. B. Black, The Reign of Elizabeth: 1558-1603 (2nd ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 38.

France and Spain in August 1558 and England had joined in September. For Spain, a solid French domain consisting of France, England, Scotland and Ireland would have been disastrous to communications with the Netherlands, and Philip hoped that the new Queen would continue to follow his lead in the negotiations.[5] The French set about trying to split England and Spain, using the Pope's influence in an attempt to assure the Catholic succession.[6] The beginning of Elizabeth's reign had coincided with Mary's marriage to Francis and the ascendancy of the Guise faction in France, leading to renewed efforts to solidify their control over Scotland with the hope of claiming her throne.

On 18th November 1558, the English commissioners at the peace negotiations wrote to the Privy Council emphasizing the French threat to "annoy England by Scotland which now is ruled much by France."[7] It was feared that if France attained peace she would concentrate her efforts on Scotland and her intentions with the Scottish marriage were well-known. England, however, could hardly afford to continue fighting, especially since it appeared that France and Spain were rapidly solving their differences and if this

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[5] Read, Cecil, p. 124.

[6] Black, The Reign of Elizabeth, p. 38.

[7] C.S.P. Foreign Series, Vol. I, p. 3.

could be achieved the Anglo-Spanish alliance might cease.

On 20th November 1558, Sir John Mason, a statesman and diplomat experienced in Anglo-French relations, wrote to Cecil recommending conclusion of a peace, "neither by such agreement as we desire, yet by ..., such as we can get."[8] Elizabeth, however, preferred to gamble on traditional rivalries. As long as she dared she played France and Spain against one another hoping to lengthen the negotiations in order to gain the maximum benefit, or minimum disgrace for England. On 23rd November new instructions were sent to the commissioners. They were commanded to stand firm on Calais at all costs but could use their discretion on other matters. They were also encouraged to keep Philip informed and elicit his support over Calais.[9] The same day an embassy was sent to Spain to remind Philip of the importance of Calais to his communications with the Netherlands.[10]

At the end of November a two-month ceasefire was agreed upon while the conference adjourned until January. With its resumption the English commissioners had the following instructions: to conclude peace if possible; to maintain the amity between England and the Burgundians; to try to ascertain the final purpose of France; to keep Philip informed as expedient; and to hold

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[8] Ibid., p. 6.

[9] Ibid., p. 10.

[10] Ibid., p. 11.

out for Calais. Should the French prove stubborn in the last point they were to stall negotiations for further consultation with the Queen.[11] English intelligence meanwhile reported French efforts to recruit German mercenaries which, it was presumed, were to be used in an invasion of England from Scotland. Alarmed at this news the ministers advised confirmation of England's earlier treaties with Spain for greater security.[12]

It is clearly seen that the conference at Cateau Cambrésis although ostensibly to make peace between France and Spain, had become a theatre in which the connection between France and Scotland and its potential danger to England played a key role. The success or failure of this role revolved, for the time being, on a piece of territory controlling the southern bank of the Straits of Dover, vital to Spanish, French and English policy. From the English point of view, they had controlled Calais for two hundred years with much pride and national sentiment.[13] It had been a common practice in peace treaties to return land captured in the war and since the French could show no reasonable cause why this should not continue, Calais should be restored. This was especially true since it was not Elizabeth who

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[11] Ibid., p. 109. [12] Ibid., pp. 83-84.

[13] Black, The Reign of Elizabeth, p. 35.

had lost it, nor even she who had begun the war.[14] To the French, however, Calais was part of the ancient patrimony of France which had been removed by force and she had simply taken it back by force in a legitimate war and with the support of the French Estates.[15]

It was obvious to Cecil, and surely to Elizabeth, that restoration of Calais was not only unlikely, but impractical.[16] The deadlock, however, was successful in prolonging the negotiations and enabled Elizabeth to prove that she held the national honour in high esteem, thus enhancing her popularity at home.[17] Reluctantly resigning herself to a compromise over Calais, she eventually moved on to more pertinent matters, encouraging her commissioners next to have Scotland included in the peace treaty.[18] The Scots had been making overtures to England for peace negotiations and if these could be included in the Treaty of Cateau Cambrésis, any attempted invasion by France via Scotland would be a violation of that treaty, binding not only England and Scotland but also France and Spain.

On 2nd April 1559 the treaties between England

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[14] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. I, p. 126.

[15] Ibid., p. 127.

[16] MacCaffrey, The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime, p. 86.

[17] Black, The Reign of Elizabeth, p. 36.

[18] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. I, p. 150.

and Scotland, and England and France became final. There was to be peace amidst these three countries, none of whom was to invade the territory or assist the enemies of another. Calais was to be ceded to France for eight years after which it would be either restored to England or compensated for with a forfeit. For the duration of this period, France, England and Scotland were pledged to make no hostile acts against one another.[19]

The loss of Calais closed England's door to the continent and left France free to pursue her Scottish ambitions.[20] However, Elizabeth could reasonably assume that Henry II would not immediately risk a new conflict with Spain by attacking England. Although Elizabeth had avoided total dependency on either France or Spain, Philip was not likely to forget that the alternative to an independent Elizabeth was a French Mary Stuart.[21] The conflict was still far from over. The treaty had left France surrounded by Hapsburg territory making her Scottish ties all the more important,[22] and had increased belief in the possibility of a Catholic crusade. The Guise family, the Hapsburgs and the Pope were the chief

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[19]Ibid., pp. 195-196.

[20]Great Britain, Privy Council, Acts of the Privy Council of England: 1542-1628, Vol. VI (London: 1890-1946, West Salem, Wisconsin: Microcard Editions, 1966), p. x.

[21]Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 246.

[22]Ibid., p. 249.

suspects in English eyes.

Although the treaty had officially confirmed recognition of Elizabeth as England's Queen the barely latent fears were soon apparent. On 10th July, 1559, at a tournament celebrating the new peace, Henry II was killed. The young Dauphin became Francis II, a flexible instrument in the hands of the Guise faction. Applying pressure through their sister, the Scottish Queen Mother, and their niece, the Queen of Scots, the Guises forced Francis to pursue a policy aimed at restoring and extending French influence in Scotland. Francis and Mary began openly to flaunt the arms and style of the English monarch.

Ten years earlier Henry II had boasted, "France and Scotland are now one country."[23] This indeed seemed true in 1559, however Scotland had begun to question events which, since the formal transference of the regency to Mary Guise in 1554, had established French officials in all important government positions. It was feared that Mary Stuart would remain in France and govern Scotland as a French province. In religious matters the growing number of Protestants feared that extermination would be their ultimate fate.[24] Mary Tudor's rule in

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[23] Ibid., p. 173.

[24] William Croft Dickenson, Scotland from the Earliest Times to 1603 (London: Robert Cunningham and Sons, Ltd., 1961), p. 322.

England had driven many Protestants northwards and during the early days of her regency Mary Guise had attempted to maintain their allegiance through compromise.[25] To further the alliance between France and Scotland, however, was now her major aim, and as the reformers became more and more numerous and demanding, her policy veered from its middle course. With Elizabeth's accession she decided that the days of toleration were over. In Scotland, resentment against foreign domination had again aligned itself with religion. Just as in 1550 the old alliance and old faith had identified themselves with national independence against England, so in 1559 the reformers were able to make Protestantism a national movement against French imperialism.[26]

By 1558 Scottish national leaders were ready for action against France. Thus Elizabeth's accession, coinciding with more vigorous French policy was of tremendous importance to the Scottish Protestants who now felt that they could rely on English support to oust the French. Indeed it was in England's national interest to eliminate French rule in Scotland, as Cecil and Elizabeth were well aware.[27]

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[25]P. Hume Brown, History of Scotland to the Present Time, Vol. II (Cambridge: University Press, 1911),p. 37.

[26]Dickenson, Scotland from the Earliest Times to 1603, pp. 319 - 322.

[27]Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 88.

After the treaty of Cateau Cambrésis the regent received instructions to crush the reform movement. A riot broke out in Perth and the armies of the regent and the congregation faced each other. The rebellion of the Scottish reformation had begun.

The few months since Elizabeth's accession had not been spent idly. Cecil had realized the necessity of strengthening the defences of England against Scotland and France and had set to work immediately to equip the channel squadron and continued the fortification of Berwick.[28] While favouring peace with France he was also encouraging attempts to kindle religious controversies there and in Scotland,[29] and was improving the financial situation and military supplies in England with the aid of Thomas Gresham, the royal agent in Antwerp. Although Cecil favoured aiding the Scots, his cautious sovereign was loathe to become involved. By the treaty of Cateau Cambrésis England had pledged not to make war against France. England was still in no position to make war, and Elizabeth, still somewhat insecure on her throne, did not wish to encourage dissidents in her own realm by aiding rebels in another.[30] There was yet another reason for her

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[28] Acts of the Privy Council, Vol. VII, p. 4.

[29] C.S.P. Foreign Series, Vol. I, p. 19.

[30] Dickenson, Scotland from the Earliest Times to 1603, p. 328.

holding back. Earlier she had made it possible for John Knox to return to Scotland via England assuming that he would further inspire the reformers, making her aid unnecessary. Elizabeth had little time for Knox, in fact Cecil had to attempt to exclude him altogether in his negotiations with the Scots for fear that Elizabeth's anger toward him would cause her to halt even indirect aid. And yet one must wonder if she was not perhaps enjoying the irony of the author of the "First Blast of the Trumpet" begging for help from a woman ruler, and wishing to savour it to the full.

Cecil had to content himself for the time being with espionage and harassment of the French in Scotland. He encouraged those who annoyed the French and advised holding those captured for questioning "to learne somewhat that may advaunce the servyce of the Quenes Majestie."[31] There were rumours from the north of a possible French invasion against Scotland at Berwick or somewhere in England.[32]

In Scotland, meanwhile, the Protestants had conducted a successful campaign and captured Edinburgh, forcing the regent and her French forces to retire to Leith by September 1559. A month later they deposed Mary Guise transferring the government to the Hamilton's

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[31] Acts of the Privy Council, Vol. VII, p. 32.

[32] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. I, p. 62.

and the Lords of the Congregation. The Duke of Chatelherault and his son the Earl of Arran had joined the Protestant ranks and, being the next heirs to the throne after Mary Stuart, had added some legitimacy to the Protestant cause. But the Scots had reached the peak of their military success. Their army, a band of ill-trained, undisciplined, country folk, who had come to battle filled with religious zeal but few more practical supplies,[33] proved a poor match for the highly trained and experienced French forces. It became apparent that they could not hold out long if aid was not forthcoming.

The Scots had been making overtures to the English earlier in the year, and in December 1559, Maitland, a skilful diplomat, was sent by the Scots to seek open aid from the English. Elizabeth had been providing money for the Scots since August described as "private loans" from Sir Ralph Sadler, one of her chief advisors on Scottish affairs. By the end of the year, however, news of French military preparations alarmed Cecil who began bringing extreme pressure to bear on the Queen. Through a weblike network of collaborators, Cecil fell back on what was to prove his favourite device for cajolling action out of his reluctant mistress. Using her representatives abroad, Sadler and Randolph in the north, Throckmorton in Paris, and Chaloner in Brussels,

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[33] Brown, History of Scotland to the Present Time, Vol. II, p. 51.

he made Elizabeth aware of every possible suggestion of hostility on behalf of the French.[34] He drafted an appeal for the Lords of the Congregation to send to Elizabeth. Couched in terms that would appeal to her, it stressed their loyalty to their true sovereign, but sought Elizabeth's protection against the French.[35]

In November 1559 two events occurred to aid Cecil in his tactics. Throckmorton returned from Paris with news of French religious problems, and the Protestants suffered a defeat in Scotland. The pressure had worked and Elizabeth laid the problem before her council. Kept largely in the dark until now, the council was far from agreeing with Cecil's bold policy. Their objections were not aimed at secret subsidies or "strange events at sea,"[36] both of which could be denied, but invasion by land was a blatantly hostile act, and they doubted even Elizabeth's ability to deny any involvement in such policy. The newer councillors were willing to follow Cecil, but older members preferred to fall back on the safer Hapsburg alliance.[37]

The main opposition in the council was voiced by Nicholas Bacon on the following grounds: England

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[34]Read, Cecil, p. 155.

[35]Ibid., p. 158.

[36]Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 251.

[37]MacCaffrey, the Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime, pp. 87 - 88.

lacked the men and money and the Scots were too weak to expel the French alone; England was disunited; assisting rebels against their rightful sovereign was unjust; France was four times as strong as England; little help could be hoped for from Spain and only active opposition from Rome; and it was better to be defensive, than ill-prepared and offensive. He advised continuance of secret aid since the problem was not as imminent as it appeared, and in a year's time England would be better prepared to attack the French.[38] About the middle of December Admiral Winter was instructed to sail for Scotland with a fleet of fourteen ships and supplies. He was to intercept reinforcements from France to Scotland and to pick a quarrel with the French fleet if possible.[39] If questioned, however, he was to say that he acted on his own initiative.

By 24th December, Cecil's victory in the council had been won and it was resolved to intervene.[40] Norfolk, who had criticised Cecil earlier, was won over with a colourful role as the Queen's Lieutenant in the

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[38] Read, Cecil, p. 159.

[39] Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series... 1547-1625, Vol. VI (Washington: Microcard Editions, 1964), p. 144.

[40] Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 93.

North.[41] He was instructed to proceed with the utmost care and invade only when it was clear that the regent would not negotiate.[42] Toward the end of December he moved to Newcastle to take charge of the forces there. On 27th December, Admiral Winter sailed for the Firth of Forth. The next day Elizabeth turned down the council's proposals. She may have shared Bacon's views and was aware of the clash in the council. She was also cautious over the cost of invasion, and preferred to gamble on her genius for secret diplomacy. In matters of war where there was no unanimity, Elizabeth preferred indecision.[43] She also hated aiding rebels, especially those whose religious inclinations were so strong. She was aware of the desirability of destroying French influence in Scotland, but reluctant to help.

The Scots and the English did not entirely agree on the aims of the war. The Scots wanted to depose the regent, evacuate the French and set up their own administrative committee. The English wanted security for England. Only Mary Guise's stubborn refusal to negotiate or recognize the Anglo-Scottish alliance united the two into a common cause, to expel the French.[44] In January,

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[41]MacCaffrey, The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime, p. 91.

[42]Black, The Reign of Elizabeth, p. 43.

[43]Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 94.

[44]Black, The Reign of Elizabeth, p. 46.

Winter's fleet successfully harassed the French ships in the Firth of Forth, and Providence seemed now to have sided with the English. A French fleet dispatched with reinforcements for Leith was caught in a storm and the ships that survived were forced back to the continent. In February, Elizabeth reluctantly gave Norfolk instructions to conclude with the Scottish nobles and on the 27th February a treaty of mutual defence was signed at Berwick. English aid now became a reality and Elizabeth became the protector of Scottish civil and religious liberties for the duration of the marriage of Mary and Francis and one year thereafter.[45] England was to send an army to Scotland to help expel the French, to be reciprocated should the French invade England.[46] Finally, the Scots testified to their loyalty to their Queen provided she did not oppress the "just and ancient liberties of the kingdom."[47]

The Privy Council was now encouraging intervention. In an address to the Queen on 23rd March 1560, Mary and the Guises were described as mortal enemies and the councillors claimed that it was "just and honourable for her to aid the Scots to expel the French forces from that kingdom."[48] Similar communications continued through May. In April, the English and Scottish forces

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[45] Ibid., p. 44.

[46] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 255.

[47] Dickenson, Scotland from the Earliest Times, p. 329.

[48] C.S.P. Domestic Series, Vol. XI, p. 151.

joined, arriving at Leith on 8th of May. Their siege was poorly prepared and they lacked adequate equipment. The garrison, however, received no support from France and was ultimately forced to surrender.[49]

Meanwhile elaborate diplomatic manoeuvres were taking place between England, Scotland, Spain and the Netherlands. Philip II had offered to mediate in the conflict, but this suggestion was brought by a Spanish envoy, Glajon, from the Netherlands, where commercial interests were pro-English and anti-Spanish. Philip's offer was for Elizabeth to withdraw, he would then dispatch a Spanish force to punish the Scottish rebels with the help of France. Should France then attempt to invade England, he would protect Elizabeth.[50] Cecil used this opportunity to alarm the merchants, both in the Netherlands and England, creating tensions between the pro-Spanish de Quadra and pro-English Glajon. Gresham, too, was uttering suggestions that Spanish ships headed for the Netherlands might possibly be diverted to England instead.[51]

Encouraged, Elizabeth told Norfolk to push forward and embarked on her own double game, urging secret negotiations with the regent while applying pressure

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[49] Black, The Reign of Elizabeth, p. 47.

[50] Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 96.

[51] Read, Cecil, p. 167.

through her invading army.[52] In France, too, Throckmorton had held discussions with the Cardinal of Lorraine and, finding these unpromising, advised continuance of the invasion. A new French ambassador to England sent in February had confirmed the French determination to assert the pretentions of Mary Stuart.[53] Philip's attempts to mediate were met with news that the invasion was already underway.

The French finally succumbed after two serious setbacks. The Tumult of Amboise brought their religious problems to the fore, and in Scotland, the regent died in Edinburgh Castle, on 10th June. All three parties were now ready to negotiate.

The main object of Mary's regency had been to promote French ambition in Scotland, and in her determination to achieve this she was doomed to the same failure experienced by the English a decade earlier. Although forceful in her role and not easily defied, she never fully understood the realm she sought to oppress under foreign officials. Her actions transformed the traditional Scots' suspicion of the English into a dread of France. With her appointment to the regency the peak of French power in Scotland was achieved. Her demise symbolized the failure of their aims and the ultimate

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[52] Ibid., p. 169.

[53] Ibid., p. 162.

success of the Anglo-Scottich alliance.

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> What shall follow of my going towards Scotland, I know not, but I fear the success quia the Q's majesty is so evil disposed to the matter, which troubleth us all.[54]

It was not only Cecil who had misgivings about leaving the court. Many wondered who could possibly handle Elizabeth in his absence, but there was also general consensus that if anyone could negotiate a successful peace, he could.[55] The discussions were aided by further events which served to improve the English cause. A disaster to Phiip's forces at Tripoli made Spanish mediation, or interference, improbable, and domestic problems increased in France.

Cecil and Wotton were to handle the negotiations with Randan and Valence, the two French representatives. The Scots were not included since the French refused to treat with the rebels, however the English demands were largely for the benefit of Scotland as well as England, and the Scots were satisfied with the promise of a future treaty with France.

The preliminary instructions were drafted by Cecil. Mary and Francis were to abandon the use of the

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[54] Ibid., p. 172.

[55] Ibid., p. 173.

arms and style of England, and recognize Elizabeth's title. All French troops were to be evacuated, although here the commissioners were given the right to allow residual forces to remain after consultation with the Scots.[56] French fortifications were to be demolished and the alliance between Elizabeth and the Scottish Lords was to be recognized. The elimination of French officials in the Scottish government was to be negotiated between France and Scotland. It was also suggested that the opportunity might be used to gain restoration of Calais.[57] The question of religion was deliberately ignored by Cecil except for a vague clause concerning freedom of conscience. He also wanted confirmation of the treaty of Cateau Cambrésis.[58] Cecil wished for a close association, if not a union between England and Scotland.

At the preliminary negotiations in Newcastle it was agreed to transfer the conference to Edinburgh, and an armistice came into effect on 17th June. The next day serious negotiations began. The first item to be discussed was the usurpation of the arms and style of England[59] and on this point Cecil and Wotton were successful. Using the threat of Norfolk's army to "persuade" the French to be

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[56] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. III, p. 112.

[57] Read, Cecil, p. 174.

[58] C.S.P. Foreign Series, Vol. III, p. 173

[59] Ibid., p. 129.

more honest, most of the articles were agreed upon by 23rd June. The matter of Calais, although the French were at first reluctant to discuss it, was to be referred to a new treaty, and the Scots and French were to begin negotiations about withdrawal of troops and demolition of French fortifications.

On 6th July, 1560, the Treaty of Edinburgh was signed. Cecil had essentially gained all England's demands. Conventions in London were to be held to consider compensation for the French use of the arms and style of England. The Scottish government was to be controlled by a council of twelve, to be selected by the Queen of Scots and the Lords, thus ousting French officeholders. Only on the matter of the Anglo-Scottish league was Cecil forced to accept an ambiguous statement, and the Scots would have preferred a more definite religious policy.[60]

The treaty was completed just in time, for three days later a letter arrived from Elizabeth demanding that negotiations cease unless Calais be returned and an indemnity paid. Fortunately this letter was to be effective only if negotiations were not already completed.

The Treaty of Edinburgh was undoubtedly one of the greatest achievements of Elizabeth's reign. The Franco-Scottish tie was replaced with an Anglo-Scottish alliance.

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60 Ibid., p. 173.

Elizabeth had become the protector of a newly Protestant Scotland, and she could feel safe from French attack from the north. French troops were to be withdrawn and she was to be recognized as the sovereign of England. The treaty offset the disaster of Calais and strengthened hopes for Elizabeth's reign.[61] The eventual success of the Reformation was now assured in Scotland despite the fact that religious policy decided upon by the Scottish Estates was to be submitted to Mary and Francis for approval. The treaty was a triumph of prestige and honour, and England's reputation rose both nationally and internationally.[62]

In Scotland, the political victory over the French was soon transformed into a religious one. The Estates, meeting after the treaty, abolished papal authority, outlawed the mass, and approved the Protestant Confession of Faith framed by Knox and his followers.[63] Thus the religious settlement which confronted Mary on her return to Scotland in 1561, after the death of her husband, must have been far from pleasing to the new Queen. Despite her apparent acceptance of the situation as she found it, there was little doubt that her long range policy would include an attempt to

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[61] MacCaffrey, The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime, p. 89.

[62] Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 99.

[63] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 257.

salvage the wreck of the old church and the French alliance.[64]

Suspicion of these intentions was not eased by Mary's stubborn refusal to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh. The treaty had called for renunciation of the English arms and style flaunted by Mary and Francis since Elizabeth's accession.[65] In ratifying the treaty, therefore, Mary would be relinquishing her claim to the throne of England. Attempts were made to delay her return to Scotland by refusing to grant a safe conduct unless she complied in this matter.[66] Meanwhile support in Scotland was rallying around the new Queen. Young and attractive, she no longer personified the hated Guise connection and even the Protestant Anglophile party in Scotland began to plead for her recognition at least as Elizabeth's successor.[67]

Mary's claim might have been harmless had it not been for religious complications. Backed by the Pope, Philip II and France she offered a potentially dangerous alternative to Elizabeth who was in no mood to establish her claim and encourage possible conspiracies around her.[68] With warnings to the Scots that Mary

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[64] Ibid., p. 262.

[65] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. III, p. 129.

[66] Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 177.

[67] Wernham, ed., The Counter Reformation and Price Revolution, p. 217.

[68] Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 87.

"will alter many things in Scotland, especially the progress of religion and the devotion of many towards herself,"[69] Elizabeth stood her ground. Mary, denied the safe conduct, was forced to travel direct to Scotland landing at Leith in August 1561.

> The year which followed Mary's return to Scotland was marked by a definite effort on her part to get on with her Protestant subjects and to find a modus vivendi with her southern neighbour.[70]

On condition that Mary recognized the authority of Murray[71] and Maitland she was allowed to continue the private practice of her religion. Accordingly, when choosing her councillors in September 1561 she included those nobles already in power.[72] Apart from a brief and unsuccessful rebellion by the Huntlys in September 1562, the first few years after her return were comparatively tranquil and much time was spent trying to further her claims to the English succession. Mary's moderate policies, however, once more opened the rift between Catholics and Protestants. No longer afraid of French domination, Catholics rallied to the Queen and the fortunes of the

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[69] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. IV, pp. 165-166.

[70] Read, Cecil, p. 228.

[71] Murray was Mary's half-brother, Lord James Stuart, the illegitimate son of James V. He was created Earl of Mar in February 1561 and later Earl of Murray or Moray. He dominated Scottish politics until his assassination in 1570.

[72] Brown, History of Scotland to the Present Time, Vol. II, p. 66.

Protestant Lords came to depend on their success or failure in the succession question.[73]

Soon after Mary's arrival, therefore, Maitland was dispatched to London to resume negotiations. He pursued several courses in an effort to accomplish Mary's recognition. The Scots offered a compromise: formal acknowledgement of Elizabeth's title if she would accept Mary as heir presumptive. Despite Elizabeth's assurances that she preferred Mary's claim to all others,[74] it was indeed debatable whether or not Parliament could have been induced to co-operate. Mary was very unpopular in England, especially with Parliament, where she was considered to be French, Guise, and Catholic.[75]

Thus thwarted, Maitland turned to an alternative scheme. Convinced that a suitable marriage for Mary would, in time, bring recognition, he concentrated his efforts in this area. For some time there had been talk of a proposed marriage to Don Carlos, son of Philip II and Maitland held talks with de Quadra, the Spanish ambassador, presumably to this end. By 1563, however, Mary's chance was all but gone. Renewed Anglo-French amity after the Treaty of Troyes denied Mary French

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[73] Wernham, Before the Armada, pp. 262-263.

[74] Read, Cecil, p. 230.

[75] Antonia Fraser, Mary Queen of Scots (New York: Delacorte Press, 1970), p. 163.

support for her suit, and Philip II announced that his son's madness made the marriage impossible.[76]

Attempts to arrange a meeting between the two Queens met with no success and in the autumn of 1563 Elizabeth instructed Randolph, her representative in Scotland, to explain her position to Mary. Privately Elizabeth thought Mary's claim the strongest and had prevented Parliament from barring her succession altogether in 1562.[77] Mary's acceptance of Protestantism as the established religion in England would be essential if she hoped to become Queen. A French, Spanish, or Austrian marriage would make her claim impossible, however, a suitable match might allow further examination of her case.[78]

It was in this last point that Mary saw her greatest opportunity, and two possible suitors appeared to be offered by Elizabeth. In March 1564 Randolph was authorized to suggest Lord Robert Dudley,[79] soon to be created Earl of Leicester, and in September, the Earl of Lennox was allowed to return to Scotland followed by his

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[76] Brown, History of Scotland to the Present Time, Vol. II, p. 75.

[77] Alarmed by Elizabeth's attack of smallpox, Parliament had attempted to exclude Mary from the succession but was unable to agree on an alternative.

[78] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 268.

[79] Fraser, Mary Queen of Scots, p. 213.

son, Henry Lord Darnley.[80] It has been suggested that Elizabeth's intention was to confuse Mary, keeping her unwed and thus allowing continued excuses for postponing her recognition.[81] Mary, however, was tiring of Elizabeth's procrastination and resolved to pursue her own course. In July 1565 with her marriage to Darnley she achieved what has been described as her "one great stroke of policy."[82]

> She triumphed in Scotland; she frightened Elizabeth; and she became once more an important personage in the eyes of continental potentates.[83]

By her marriage, Mary had merged two claims to the English succession,[84] and Darnley's English birth would enable him to inherit the crown. What a pity that for all Mary's apparent political genius this "master stroke" would be transformed into a tragedy which would in the end cost her her kingdom. The price which she must pay for her defiance was high. She was saddled with an arrogant, despicable husband whose family was already embroiled in the clan feuds of Scotland.

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[80] Brown, History of Scotland to the Present Time, Vol. II, p. 78.

[81] Fraser, Mary Queen of Scots, p. 220.

[82] Brown, History of Scotland to the Present Time, Vol. II, p. 79.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Appendix A.

Within a month of the marriage Murray had been outlawed and the Scottish Lords had risen in rebellion.

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In April 1565 Murray had withdrawn from the court joining Argyll and Chatelherault in August. The Lords' abortive rebellion, known as the Chaseabout Raid, lacked any substantial support and by October its leaders were exiles in England and Mary appeared triumphant. It was only natural that renewed instability in Scotland would invite the interest of foreign powers and especially close scrutiny from Elizabeth.

The year 1565 showed signs of amity between the Pope, Philip II and Charles IX all of whom were pledged to exterminate heresy and restore the unity of Christendom.[85] It appeared that Mary, by ousting her Protestant advisors, was about to lead the way in their crusade. Encouraged by rumours of a Catholic league she appealed to France and Spain for help, while Murray turned to Elizabeth.

Although undoubtedly it was a major factor in sixteenth century politics, Elizabeth was convinced that religion was not all-important in shaping the foreign policy of her neighbours.[86] Threatened with rebellion in the Netherlands and suspicious of French

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[85]The final session of the Council of Trent had closed with the appearance of a united front among the Catholic powers pledged to overthrow Protestantism.

[86]Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 35.

designs there, Philip, although a fanatical Catholic, had no desire to increase French influence in Scotland. France, constantly facing a Huguenot threat at home, was troubled by the progress of Alva's troops along the eastern French frontier toward the Netherlands. Fear of a conspiracy arising out of a meeting between Catherine de Medici and Alva at Bayonne resulted in a Huguenot call to arms, plunging France into her second religious war in 1567.[87] Since Spain and France, therefore, were too suspicious to co-operate and afraid to act alone they confined themselves to a warning that they would help only if Elizabeth declared war on Mary.[88]

Mary's disastrous policies, however, made it unnecessary for Elizabeth to intervene. By her promotion of Catholics and aliens, leading to the murder of Rizzio in March 1566, she managed to bring about a reconciliation between Protestant and Catholic lords.[89] Her suspected involvement in Darnley's murder and subsequent marriage to Bothwell denied her of what little support remained. By July 1567 Mary was a prisoner at Lochleven and the

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[87] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 294.

[88] Wernham, ed., The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, p. 225.

[89] The Protestant Lords Murray, Glencairn and Argyll, some of whom were implicated in the plot against Rizzio, were reconciled with the Catholics Bothwell, Huntly and Atholl who had helped Mary escape after Rizzio's murder. In April 1566 all six were members of Mary's Privy Council.

Protestant Lords were in control with wide popular support. She had been forced to abdicate in favour of her thirteen-month-old son, James VI, who was a much more acceptable candidate for the English succession.[90]

It appeared that Elizabeth had once again succeeded through inactivity. Her triumph, however, would not long be savoured. Early in May 1568 Mary escaped from her gaolers, joined the Hamilton's, and attempted to regain her throne. She was soundly defeated at Langside and fled southward, arriving in England "a fugitive and a suppliant in the kingdom which a few years before she had so proudly claimed as her own."[91]

Elizabeth faced a dilemma from which the international situation robbed her of any easy solution. Deeply committed to the theory of divine right Elizabeth had spent the past year attempting to mediate between the Scottish Lords and their rightful Queen. It is possible that with this in mind Mary had thrown herself upon Elizabeth's mercy genuinely hoping that she would be restored. However, for the Protestant Queen of England to take up arms to restore her Catholic cousin would have ruined the English party in Scotland whom Elizabeth had no wish to alienate.

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[90] Wernham, ed., The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, p. 229.

[91] Brown, History of Scotland to the Present Time, Vol. II, p. 91.

The old spectre of a Catholic conspiracy loomed large. The Pope was anxious to restore Mary as the protector of Roman Catholicism in Scotland and England, but his forces were limited.[92] Philip II was angered by Elizabeth's seizure of the Spanish pay ships and relations with Spain were deteriorating.[93] Yet the greatest threat appeared to come from France where religious war might lead to increased Guise influence at court. Lack of their traditional Burgundian alliance and loss of Calais from which to dominate the channel placed England in a particularly precarious position.[94] It was perhaps, therefore, to prevent any French interference that Elizabeth persisted in her bid for Mary's restoration while allowing her "trial" to drag on, thus avoiding any commitment which would have been opposed by the Scottish Lords.

Although Elizabeth was successful in preventing any foreign intervention at this stage, her policy was to have serious consequences in the future. Deserted by her allies, Mary would remain in England, a prisoner in various castles, for the rest of her life. She would become the centre of a series of conspiracies to oust Elizabeth and restore Catholicism in England. By

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[92] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II p. 119.

[93] Below pp. 77-78.

[94] Read, Cecil, p. 398.

refraining from a definite verdict regarding Mary's guilt or innocence,[95] just enough doubt remained to keep the Marian faction alive in Scotland where it continued to plague the Protestant Lords.[96]

With Murray's recognition as Regent in July 1567, the factious Scottish nobles split once more. Murray, representing the English alliance, Protestantism and recognition of James, was opposed by a Marian faction refusing to recognize James or the Regent. While negotiations for Mary's restoration continued, her supporters took to arms launching a civil war which would continue for the next five years. The Perth Convention, assembled in July 1569 to discuss the problem of Mary, did nothing to mitigate her straits, and her attentions turned toward foreign and Catholic supported plots to aid her friends in Scotland and place her on the English throne.

In Scotland, meanwhile, Murray's assassination in January 1570, followed by Marian raids into northern England induced Elizabeth to send troops to retaliate and infused Charles IX with renewed suspicions concerning her designs. Despite his initial indignation, however, relations between France and England were fairly friendly

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[95]After examining the evidence presented at the Conferences of York and Westminster the commissioners alleged that nothing had been proved against either Mary or Murray.

[96]Wernham, ed., The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, p. 231.

and Mary's negotiations with Spain, about which Elizabeth took care to see that Charles was informed,[97] weakened her cause at the French court. After considering an offer by the Guises to aid Mary at their own expense, Charles resolved instead to reach an agreement with England on how the Scottish problem should be settled.

Walsingham at this time was in France to negotiate an Anglo-French league and inevitably affairs in Scotland entered into the discussions. Walsingham suggested that Charles was afraid to oppose Mary entirely for fear that she might triumph, gain the throne of England, and unite with Scotland and Spain against France.[98] Charles protested against Elizabeth's intention to send troops warning that he would be forced to help the Marians if she did. He also sent an envoy, Du Croc, Guisan in sympathy, to England, with vague instructions to deal with the matter of Scotland. Ultimately, however, the Scottish settlement in the Treaty of Blois, concluded 19 April 1572, omitted any mention of Mary's welfare and made provision for Anglo-French co-operation to bring peace to Scotland.[99]

Commissioners from both countries proceeded to Scotland and managed to arrange an Abstinence in August 1572 which was extended to the end of the year.

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[97]Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 188.

[98]Ibid., p. 184. [99]Ibid., p. 194.

The Massacre of St. Bartholomew's, however, crushed the last hopes of the Marians and prodded Elizabeth into a more severe course of action. After failing to negotiate for Mary's execution by the Scots[100] in March 1573 she dispatched a force under Drury to besiege Edinburgh Castle, the last Marian stronghold. The surrender of the castle in May marked the end of the Marians in Scotland and henceforth the Scottish problem would revolve not around the question of Mary's restoration but of controlling James.[101]

> If Mary had been of a less sanguine and more patient nature, if she had ruminated on the lessons of the past, if instead of being an inveterate plotter and fluent liar she had been content with one string to her bow at a time, if, in short, she had been honest over these negotiations - then there is scarcely a doubt that Elizabeth would have restored her, a crippled Queen maybe, but free and a Queen.[102]

After July 1567 the main theme running through all Elizabeth's negotiations with the Scots was a request for Mary's restoration. The terms were to be stringent, demanding Mary's ratification of the Treaty of Edinburgh and delivery of James as a hostage to be brought up in England. As late as February 1571 Elizabeth was still refusing to recognize James VI as King of Scotland, [103]

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[100] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. X, pp. 523-524.

[101] Conyers Read, Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), p. 108.

[102] Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 198.

[103] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 309.

despite much persuasion from the Regent Lennox. What was it then which caused her change of heart?

While the Marian faction in Scotland had rebelled against Murray in 1569 Elizabeth had faced a crisis at home. Resentment against her policies and Cecil's growing influence crystallized around a plot to marry Mary to Norfolk, bring about her restoration and re-establish Catholicism in England. The plot revealed, Norfolk was arrested and in November the northern Lords Northumberland and Westmorland rose in rebellion. Lacking anticipated support from Scotland or Spain the revolt failed and Marian raids against loyal nobles in the north provided Elizabeth with an excuse to proceed against Edinburgh. The collapse of the insurrection also revealed that most English Catholics were loyal subjects, demonstrating the basic stability of Elizabeth's regime,[104] and diminishing her constant dread of an English Catholic uprising in favour of Mary Stuart.

Fear of a foreign conspiracy remained, however, and the events which followed the Northern Rebellion would reinforce it. Norfolk, released from the Tower in August 1570, immediately became embroiled in a second plot much more dangerous than the first. His servants were intercepted carrying money to the Marians and the Ridolfi Plot was revealed. This conspiracy called for Alva to send troops, money and arms from the Netherlands

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[104] Read, The Tudors, p. 178.

to aid a revolt in England led by Norfolk and his followers. Elizabeth was to be siezed, Catholicism restored, and Mary and Norfolk would rule England and Scotland.[105] Investigations showed that de Spes, the Spanish ambassador, was heavily implicated and he was expelled in December 1571. Norfolk's arrest and execution followed, and with the occurrence of St. Bartholomew's Massacre in France in August, the threat of a Catholic crusade against England seemed imminent.

In February 1570 Pius V had issued his Bull Regnans in Excelsis excommunicating Elizabeth and absolving her subjects from obedience. Despite apparent annoyance on the part of Philip II and Charles IX[106] it was difficult for Elizabeth to believe that the Bull had been published without their consent.[107] It was a well known fact that France, especially the Guise faction, had been sending aid and encouragement to the Marians at Edinburgh. The complicity of the French King was uncertain but there was little doubt that once he had subdued the Huguenots he would intervene vigourously in Scotland.[108] It was therefore expedient that Elizabeth take advantage of French impotence and destroy Mary's cause.[109]

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[105] Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 200.

[106] Ibid., p. 195. [107] Read, Burghley, p. 24.

[108] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 128.

[109] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 326.

Despite French ambassador Fenelon's protests, Charles was unable to take any action against Elizabeth. He was far more concerned about preventing her assistance to the Huguenots in the religious war which raged in France as a result of the massacre.[110] With the fall of Edinburgh Castle Mary's cause and that of Catholicism died in Scotland. The Regent, Morton, was strongly Protestant and pro-England. With Mary's party destroyed as a fighting force the danger of foreign intervention was diminished.[111]

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For the next five years Scotland remained comparatively calm and during this period relations with England revolved mainly around the question of pensions. Since his appointment as Regent in 1572, Morton had been asking Elizabeth to enter into a defensive league with Scotland and to secure support for England by "judicious distribution of pensions."[112] This policy, although supported by most of her councillors, was not acceptable to the thrifty Elizabeth. By April 1575, Walsingham was warning of increasing French activity,[113] possibly in an effort to persuade his reluctant mistress,

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[110] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 130.

[111] Ibid. [112] Ibid., p. 131.

[113] C. S. P. Domestic Series, Vol. I, p. 496.

but it appears that Catherine de Medici had managed to nourish a French party[114] whose influence came eventually to be expressed in opposition to Morton.

By autumn Henry Killigrew, one of Elizabeth's ambassadors in Scotland, was observing the development of a faction of nobles antagonistic to Morton and pleas for pensions to maintain his influence continued. Elizabeth, at this stage, preferred to mediate between the groups and it was not until June 1578, on receiving news of the Dutch defeat at Gembloux, that she was prepared to open negotiations for a defensive league.[115] It was already too late, however, for in March James VI, persuaded by Morton's opponents, had assumed the government in his own hands and called for Morton's resignation. Although Mar was able to claim the guardianship of James and restore Morton by May, his days were numbered. The coalition which opposed Morton was powerful indeed and his pleas for aid to Elizabeth fell on cautious ears. It was clear that the two parties in Scotland were now evenly matched and Elizabeth was loathe to provide the French with an excuse to become involved by taking sides herself.[116] She resolved therefore, to mediate the dispute thus attempting to maintain the goodwill of both factions.

Some appearance of harmony had been established

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[114] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 132f.

[115] Ibid., p. 144.

[116] Ibid., p. 153.

by the end of the year and it seemed that James's ambition to succeed Elizabeth would be a potent factor in maintaining his co-operation.[117] A dispute over the Lennox title and land, however, provided an avenue for further French intrigue. The Sieur d'Aubigny, French claimant to the estates, arrived in Scotland during the summer of 1579. He was Catholic, an emissary of the Guises, and suspected of working in the interests of Mary Stuart. He was also handsome, an accomplished courtier and an adroit schemer.[118] He represented the French alliance and break from England and within a month he had become a force to be considered in Scottish politics.

In October 1579, Errington, an agent sent to Scotland to discover the effect of D'Aubigny's coming, reported that he was high in favour with James.[119] This became apparent the following May when he received large land grants and the Lennox Earldom (elevated to a Dukedom in 1581). Allied with Captain James Stewart (created Earl of Arran in 1581) he would form the focal point for Guise and Catholic schemes in Scotland for the next three years. Walsingham had already begun to "smell in the air some scent of the Guisan and Spanish plots

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[117] Ibid., p. 154.

[118] Ibid., p. 155.

[119] Ibid.

against England which were ... developing in Paris."[120] D'Aubigny's ultimate task was to restore Mary Stuart and Catholicism, his immediate purpose was to discredit Morton.

With the aid of French gold he quickly rallied the discontented elements and by the end of 1580 was ready to make his move. Summoned to appear before the council, Morton was charged with complicity in the Darnley murder, convicted,and executed the following June. It would seem that D'Aubigny, now in supreme control, could advance his major policy. Early in 1580 rumours abounded of a Guise plot to restore Mary in Scotland and send James to France.[121] The following year Walsingham was warning of a scheme to invade Scotland supported by the Pope and Philip II.[122] While in France trying to negotiate an Anglo-French alliance he wrote:

> The Duke of Guise is of late crept into very inward credit with the King, which ought to move her Majesty to be more careful of the matters of Scotland, for that there are daily consultations in the Duke's house, especially since advertisements are come hither out of Scotland that the King doth submit himself to any such direction as his mother shall give him, even so far forth as the yielding up of the government to her if she shall think it meet.[123]

It appeared certain that English interests were seriously threatened, but D'Aubigny's victory was

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[120] Ibid., p. 159.

[121] Brown, History of Scotland to the Present Time, Vol. II, p. 139.

[122] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 373.

[123] Ibid., p. 174.

not complete. The scheme to transport James to France not only aimed to restore Catholicism in Scotland but also at his conversion.[124] This prospect, together with increased Jesuit activity in Scotland, alarmed Arran who began to build a party among the Protestant Lords. It appeared, too, that James's seeming acquiescence in his mother's schemes was designed chiefly to gain her support for his recognition as Elizabeth's successor.[125]

Several possibilities were thus presented to Elizabeth. In an attempt to strengthen the Protestant party she aimed to widen the breach between D'Aubigny and Arran. When evidence of a disagreement appeared between D'Aubigny and Mary, Elizabeth chose to play James's favourite against his mother.[126] Negotiations were reopened with Mary suggesting increased liberty for her return for her co-operation against D'Aubigny. It was possible that these were designed also to deceive the French, as suggested by the Spanish ambassador.[127] Finally, Elizabeth never forgot James's major ambition, to be her successor to the crown of England. She seldom missed an opportunity to warn him that co-operation with D'Aubigny and the French would jeopardize his chances.

While the Jesuits unfolded their plans to restore

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[124] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 363.

[125] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 175.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Read, Burghley, p. 284.

Scotland to the Catholic fold, Elizabeth was intriguing with the Earl of Angus to overthrow D'Aubigny. Their designs culminated in the Raid of Ruthven in August 1582,[128] which placed James in the possession of the English party. Co-operating with the raiders, James declared himself a free agent and D'Aubigny was ordered to leave. Friendly relations with England were restored.

France was not yet ready to concede the victory. Toward the end of the year two ambassadors were dispatched to Scotland, Fenelon via England and Maineville direct. Fenelon was detained in London to await D'Aubigny's departure. He proceeded to Scotland accompanied by William Davison in January 1583. His instructions were to free James from his captors, but he arrived to find James co-operating and the mission appeared fruitless. However Maineville, who was backed by the Guises, did manage to restore some French influence thereby laying the groundwork for James's escape in June.[129]

Since 1580 the Guises had been promoting a scheme to invade England and Scotland with the support of Philip II and the Pope.[130] It was to this end that the Jesuits had been used as messengers from the various parties to D'Aubigny in Scotland. The plan called for Spanish and

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[128] Brown, History of Scotland to the Present Time, Vol. II, pp. 146-147.

[129] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 192.

[130] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. XVI, p. xxxii.

Papal troops aiding D'Aubigny to restore Catholicism in Scotland as a preliminary to an invasion of England. Thwarted by uncertainty on Philip's behalf and delayed by the Ruthven Raid, these schemes were held in abeyance until mid-1583 when James's escape activated them once more. It was in this phase that Francis Throckmorton became involved and his capture and subsequent confessions put an end to the plot.

It was reasonably clear that this scheme had been devised without the compliance of Henry III[131] and, apart from the Guise involvement, belongs more in the realm of Anglo-Spanish than of Anglo-French relations. Encouraged by his increased strength since acquiring Portugal, and angered by Elizabeth's involvement in the Netherlands revolt, it seemed that Philip was merely biding his time awaiting a suitable excuse to attack England. With the dismissal of Mendoza, for his part in the Throckmorton Plot, relations between England and Spain appeared doomed. Threatened by Jesuit advances in England, revolution in Ireland and open hostility from Spain, Elizabeth turned in desperation to a renewal of the French marriage negotiations. Her greatest fear, however, was that James was now ready for an association with the Guises,[132] thus opening, once more, her postern

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[131] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 375.

[132] Fraser, Mary Queen of Scots, p. 458f.

gate to foreign invasion.

Three courses were explored by Elizabeth during the coming months to prevent this misfortune. First, James's growing independence offered the possibility of a humane solution to the problem of his mother. Believing in Mary's influence over James, Elizabeth once more broached the subject of her liberty. This was to be granted if James promised to maintain the English alliance and with suitable guarantees from France.[133] It soon became apparent, however, that James cared little for his mother's fate and her persistent scheming made any settlement along these lines impossible.

Elizabeth therefore contemplated an alternative plan, to foment rebellion among the Scottish nobles, some of whom were alarmed at the stand James appeared to be taking on religion.[134] An attempt to remove James from Arran's influence by capturing Stirling Castle in April 1584 was easily reversed, and Arran emerged as the supreme arbiter of Scottish policy for the following year.

Elizabeth's third possibility was one which had been contemplated for some time, known as the "by-course". This amounted to an effort to win Arran

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[133] Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 269.

[134] The Scottish ministers were attempting to remove the King's right to interfere in spiritual affairs by abolishing the office of Bishop. James continued to insist on his right to appoint Bishops and the "Black Acts" passed in May 1584 strengthened his authority to their exasperation.

over to the English cause and use him to detach James from Guise influence. Arran seemed prepared to co-operate in order to gain Elizabeth's favour and negotiations took place in August 1584.

Due to the machinations of Patrick, Master of Gray, relations between England and Scotland were eventually stabilized. Originally sent to Scotland by the Guises, Gray was commissioned by James and Arran in October 1584 to negotiate with England.[135] Won over by Walsingham he became somewhat of a triple agent serving Arran, Mary and Elizabeth.[136] Within a short space of time it became clear that Mary's influence in Scotland need no longer be feared and by the end of 1585 Arran had been ousted. James, no longer a mere plaything in the hands of his councillors, was willing to negotiate a league.

By July 1586, James was an English pensioner bound to assist Elizabeth if she were attacked and pledged to give no succour to her enemies.[137] It was fortunate, for Walsingham was warning that events (did) "plainly show that Spain and France run one course against us both in this and in all other actions."[138] and with Alençon gone, Elizabeth was forced finally to play her hand in that other theatre, the Netherlands.

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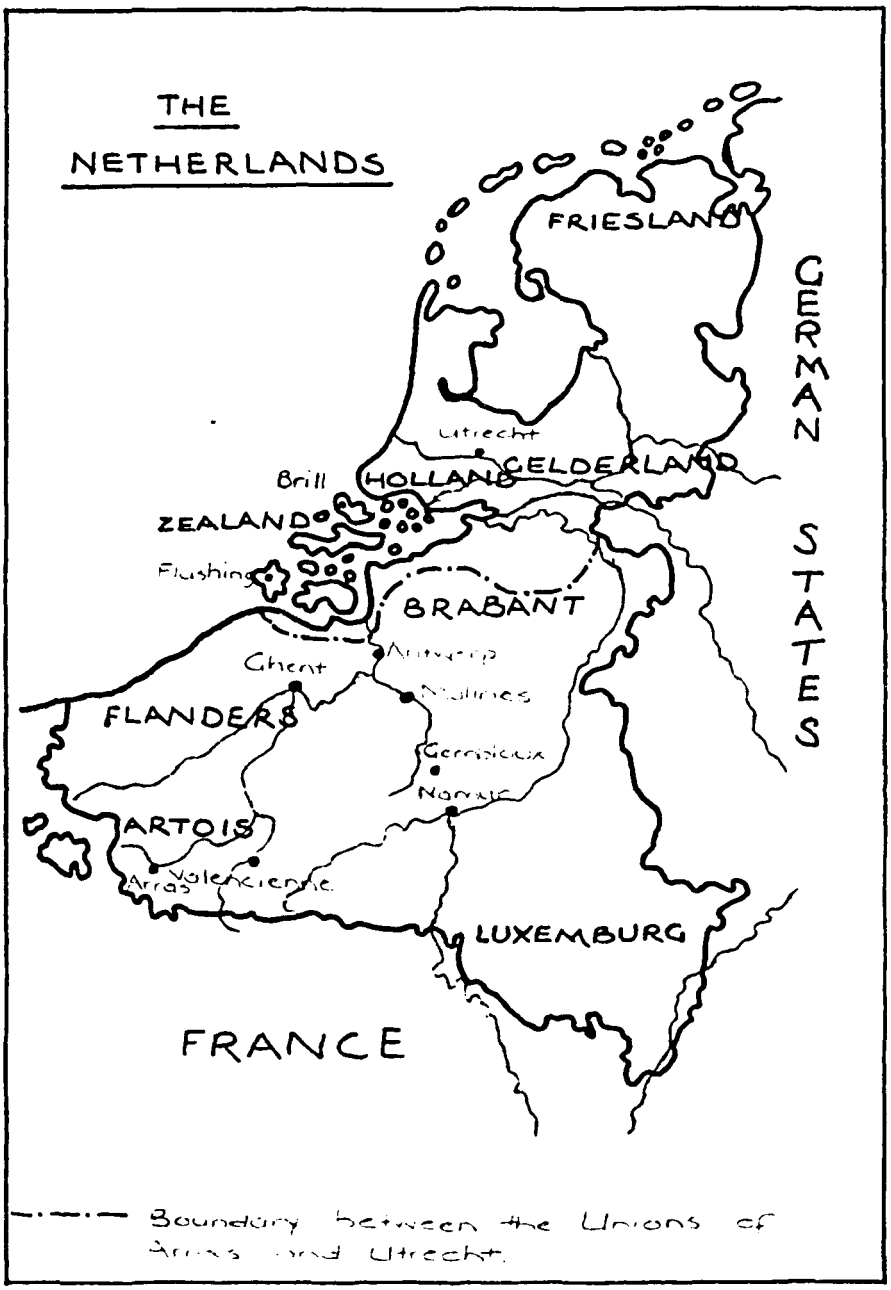
[135] Brown, History of Scotland to the Present Time, Vol. II, p. 156.

[136] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 237.

[137] Ibid., p. 256.

[138] Ibid., p. 252.


THE
NETHERLANDS
FRIESLAND
GERMAN
STATES
Utrecht
GELDERLAND
Brill
HOLLAND
ZEALAND
Flushing
BRABANT
Antwerp
Ghent
Malines
FLANDERS
Cernicieux
Namur
ARTOIS
Arras
Valenciennes
LUXEMBURG
FRANCE
Boundary between the Unions of
Arras and Utrecht.

CHAPTER TWO

NO SEMBLANCE OF UNITY.

> A land with no semblance of unity in which the nobility had been quarrelling with the merchants, the burghers with the artisans, the cities with the countryside, and the trades with each other for as long as anyone could remember.[1]

The seventeen provinces known as the Spanish Netherlands, ancient heritage of the Dukes of Burgundy, were part of the vast empire inherited by Charles V and bequeathed by him to his son, Philip II. They comprised a confusing tangle of political chaos, where counties, duchies, or cities jealously guarded their ancient privileges under a recalcitrant native nobility. Their divisive character was further emphasized by the absence of any linguistic unity and nurtured by an intense trade rivalry between the cities.

Traditionally the sovereign had exercised only limited power in the Netherlands and any centralizing tendencies had been rigourously opposed. Thus when the area was added in 1555 to the realm of the fanatical political introvert, Philip II, it was inevitable that these irreconcilable forces would eventually clash.

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[1] Cicely V. Wedgwood, William the Silent: William of Nassau, Prince of Orange: 1533-1584 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 36.

Philip made little effort to appear as anything other than a foreigner to the Netherlands. He was involved in a war with France which was unpopular with his subjects, and his repeated demands for subsidies made it look as if Netherlands' funds were being used to enhance Spanish power in Europe.[2] His request to the States General in 1556 was countered with a demand for removal of Spanish troops and respect for the ancient liberties and privileges of the Netherlands.

Determined to have his way, Philip embarked on a policy aimed at eroding these native sources of power. His Regent, Margaret of Parma, was instructed to consult only with a three-man inner council, appointed by Philip and directly under his control. The nobles thus became a hollow voice, their advice and pleas unheeded by an alien absentee ruler.

It was Philip's fanatical Catholicism, however, which radicalized the opposition and increased the apprehensions of his subjects. The persecution in England under his wife, Mary Tudor, had been observed with grave foreboding from across the channel where it was commonly suspected that they were next in line.[3]

The established church had sunk to a low level in the Netherlands during the first half of the sixteenth century and reform was long overdue. Charles V, in

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[2] Ibid., p. 37.

[3] Ibid., p. 24.

attempting to arrest the decay, had introduced the Inquisition as a mechanism to carry out his proclamations. The Netherlands, however, with its many commercial contacts, could not be isolated from the influences of the Reformation. Despite a prohibition on Calvin's works issued in 1550, the end of the war against France had reopened traffic between the two areas and brought with it a new flood of Calvinist influence.[4] Thus Philip's determination to strengthen his ecclesiastical authority, illustrated in his plan to reorganize the Netherlands bishoprics, crystallized political and religious opposition into a national movement.

The revolt which followed found initial expression in a demand for the withdrawal of Cardinal Granvelle and restoration of the power of the nobility. Spearheaded by the Calvinist mob, however, it was ultimately transformed into a religious struggle which rent the national movement asunder. Given the character of the Netherlands, with its regional jealousies and endless competition, one must question whether a purely political rebellion would have been any more effective. There is little doubt that religious persecution fanned the smouldering embers of political dissent. The violent

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[4] P. Geyl, The Revolt of the Netherlands: 1555-1609 (London: Williams and Norgate, Ltd., 1932), p. 36.

tactics of the Calvinists, however, alienated many who had no intention of replacing Catholic tyranny with Puritan incendiarism. The end result was far from William of Orange's ideal of an independent United Netherlands where freedom of conscience prevailed for all. Instead the Netherlands, divided along religious lines, became a theatre for civil war and foreign intrigue for almost a century, evolving ultimately into the separate political entities of Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg.

The revolt in the Netherlands opened a new arena to Elizabethan intrigue, but the stage was cluttered with many complicating factors. By the mid-sixteenth century English exports were chiefly in the form of cloth carried by the Merchant Adventurers and distributed through Antwerp.[5] Trade was always a major consideration to Elizabeth and Cecil, and when trouble seemed imminent they took steps to locate new markets,[6] but in 1563, when Margaret closed Netherlands ports to English ships and traders, it appeared that their prosperity was seriously threatened. Granvelle, the author of this policy, was convinced that English merchants were spreading Protestant ideas, and his convictions were supported by Elizabeth's involvement in the French religious war.[7]

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[5]Read, Cecil, p. 289. [6]Ibid., p. 167.

[7]Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 282.

The ban resulted in retaliation from Elizabeth and in 1564 the Merchant Adventurers carried their cloth to Emden. Although the market was less lucrative than Antwerp, the embargo proved more serious for Spain than for England, and the following year terms were accepted to resume normal trade. Although economic relations remained in a state of flux for another decade, there was sufficient commerce to ensure that it was a factor to be considered in Netherlands policy. No matter how much she was tempted to keep Philip occupied with trouble in the Netherlands, Elizabeth was loathe to allow total chaos to break out and jeopardize her prosperity.

The revolt also provided Elizabeth with an opportunity to play on the ancient Hapsburg - Valois rivalry. The Treaty of Cateau Cambrésis had closed with an aura of friendship around Spain and France cemented by the marriage of Philip to Elizabeth of Valois and leaving England confronted by a formidable alignment of power on the continent. By taking sides with one or the other in the Netherlands, however, and adding to suspicion about their aims there, she was able to prevent any joint action against herself.

Elizabeth's policy in the Netherlands often appeared inconsistent and frequently drove her councillors to near distraction. She hated supporting rebels against their rightful monarch and feared that her involvement

might advance Mary Stuart's cause at home. She also despised being the champion of fanatical Calvinists even though they provided a buffer for Counter-Reformation forces yearning for a chance to strike at her.

In the final analysis, however, it was a fear of France which coerced her into action. Elizabeth was always suspicious that France intended to annex the Netherlands and she was determined to forestall them. Although she was prepared to suggest joint action, subsidize French Huguenots and even Alençon to aid the rebels, at the least indication that France might be gaining ground she would side with Philip to prevent a French takeover. A French Netherlands would have been disastrous to England. Geographically adjacent to one another as they were, Elizabeth would be unable to disrupt communications as she could between the Netherlands and Spain. If an independent Netherlands, allied to England through religion and commercial interests, was to be denied her, there was no doubt that Elizabeth considered a Spanish Netherlands the lesser of the two alternative evils.

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In 1559 Philip expounded his plan to reorganize the bishoprics in the Netherlands. Promulgated by Papal Bull in 1561 it aimed to reform a corrupt church and

strengthen the fight against heresy,[8] by creating new bishoprics and ensuring that rights of appointment reverted to the crown.[9] It was greeted with a storm of protest in the Netherlands. Abbots and nobles saw in it an attempt to decrease their income and influence.[10] The plan, which had been developed without consulting the nobility, was being imposed by a foreign King and it aroused much hatred which came to be directed against its executors.

Already opposition to Cardinal Granvelle had stirred in the political sphere due to his dominant position on Philip's hated council. Thus, in 1561, when as Archbishop of Malines and primate of the Netherlands church he became responsible for carrying out the King's religious reforms, frustration over these policies gathered against him.

The opposing forces, however, were plagued with internal dissentions. The leading nobles who objected to infringement of their privileges were William of Orange and the Counts of Egmont and Hoorn. There were those, however, such as Aerschot, who remained loyal to Philip thus providing him with an excuse for intrigue.

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[8] H. G. Koenigsberger and G. L. Moss, Europe in the Sixteenth Century (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), p. 256.

[9] Wedgwood, William the Silent, p. 48.

[10] Wernham, ed. The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, p. 266.

Supporting one or other faction were several members of the greater or lesser nobility representing every shade of opinion from radical Calvinist to loyal Catholic.[11] It was therefore impossible to achieve any consistent policy or maintain a united front against Philip.

Embassies dispatched to Madrid in the early 1560's failed to convince Philip to alter his policies. In November 1565, the Segovia letters brought his reply. Sterner repression was to be applied. It was obvious that Philip intended to ignore advice and persist in his hated course in the face of all opposition. The nobles who had attempted to work within the government now withdrew, joining the more radical lower nobility in a league to protest Philip's policies.

Calling for abolition of the Inquisition and moderation of the edicts against heretics the league drew up a position to be presented to Margaret. Although it appeared that national consciousness was finally breaking through the shell of noble rivalries,[12] it was not a truly united nobility which confronted the Regent. Nevertheless, a moderation of religious policy suspended the hated edicts and an Accord was reached with Margaret pending a reply from Philip.

There was confusion, however, as to exactly

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[11] Wedgwood, William the Silent, p. 52.

[12] Geyl, The Revolt of the Netherlands, p. 89.

what had been granted by the Accord. Protestant refugees, considering the edicts abolished, returned from exile and public preaching started.[13] Incidents of image-breaking and mob violence occurred, originating in Antwerp and spreading elsewhere, throughout 1566. Frightened by this fierce emergence of Calvinism, Catholics and moderates rallied to support Margaret, who now emerged as protectress of church and society.[14]

William of Orange still hoped to steer a middle course and therefore ignored the pleas for help from the Calvinists. Instead he assisted Margaret in her efforts to keep the peace.[15] After her siege of Valenciennes in December and annihilation of rebel forces, Margaret was charged with having broken the Accord. The rift among the nobles was by now clearly visible. Egmont and Hoorn joined the court party to carry out Margaret's policies. Others took to arms with the rebels. William, denounced as a traitor, withdrew to Dillenburg where he hoped to muster aid from Germany to pursue his moderate aims. In August 1567 Philip's reply arrived. Spanish troops had been dispatched under the Duke of Alva. Their mission was to carry out vengeance on the Netherlands.[16]

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[13] Ibid., p. 90.

[14] Ibid., p. 95.

[15] Wedgwood, William the Silent, p. 84.

[16] Geyl, The Revolt of the Netherlands, p. 99.

> Alva came not only to visit the evil-doers with merciless retribution and wipe out the last vestiges of sedition and heresy, but to destroy the ancient privileges of the country, the root of all the evil, and to raise up on the site thus cleared and levelled the straight, symmetrical edifice of absolutism, the ideal of the new age.[17]

Following the abortive revolt of 1567 most of the leaders of the opposition to Philip had left the Netherlands and those remaining showed much readiness to accept his new representative.[18] Egmont and Hoorn, together with Aerschot and other loyal Catholics, had taken the new oath of loyalty required by Margaret in February. Alva, however, was determined that there should be no misconception about his task. Immediately on his arrival he arrested Egmont, Hoorn, and all others suspected of complicity in the uprising. Establishing the Council of Blood[19] to condemn wrongdoers he embarked on a campaign of terror which so cowed the people of the Netherlands that no town dared rise to aid their liberator when William invaded in 1568.[20]

"Never was nation subjected to a reign of terror with more calculated deliberation or more systematic persistence."[21] Within a short period Alva's authority

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[17] Ibid., p. 100.

[18] Ibid., p. 99.

[19] The Council of Troubles, called the Council of Blood by the Netherlanders, consisted of three members, all Spaniards, under Alva's chairmanship. It became the highest organ of government after its establishment in 1567.

[20] Wernham, ed., The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, p. 271.

[21] Geyl, The Revolt of the Netherlands, p. 104.

was firmly established and the fate of the Netherlands appeared to be sealed. William's invasion was afflicted from the start with many problems. Although mercenaries were plentiful he had been unable to coax any substantial aid out of the German Lutherans. With the Netherlands successfully intimidated few of his countrymen dared contribute to his campaign.

Despite initial successes by his brother, Louis of Nassau,[22] William was unable to pursue his advantage and mount a major campaign. He was subjected to a waiting game by Alva who chose to observe rather than engage the rebels. William's limited funds were finally exhausted and his bands of unpaid mercenaries were unleashed upon the countryside. The "liberators" began to appear little better than the Spaniards. William, fleeing from his own army, joined forces with the Huguenots who were about to embark on their third religious war in France.[23]

Disaster for William, however, did not immediately mean triumph for Alva. Ironically the Spanish commander would soon be faced with the same problem of how to pay his troops. Since he lacked the machinery with which to raise taxes he was forced either to summon the States General or rely on funds from Spain. Shipments from Spain were subject to the uncertainties of passage through the

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[22]Louis had invaded from East Friesland in April 1568 and defeated the Spanish at Heiligerlee.

[23]Geyl, The Revolt of the Netherlands, p. 107.

channel where pirates abounded and the weather was treacherous. In November 1568, therefore, when a combination of these dangers scared a fleet of Spanish ships into Plymouth and Southampton, "divine Providence" and the Queen of England united to strike a serious blow.

For some time relations between Spain and England had been deteriorating. Basic differences in religion and economic rivalry led inevitably to disputes[24] but Elizabeth's fear of France had curbed her hostility and forced her to maintain a pretence of Anglo-Spanish friendship. By 1568, however, she was less apprehensive. The continual problem of religious war in France had reduced her activity in international affairs. Also, in June 1568 a suggestion had been made to bring about a match between the Duke of Anjou, brother of the French King, and Elizabeth. This offered an alternative to the Hapsburg match with the Archduke Charles, for which negotiations had recently been discontinued.[25] In the anticipation, therefore, of an Anglo-French alliance Elizabeth was prepared to follow a bolder policy toward Spain.

In December she impounded the Spanish pay fleet and made arrangements with the Genoese bankers to have their £85,000 loan destined for Alva's army, transferred

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[24] Black, The Reign of Elizabeth, p. 119.

[25] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 295.

to her.[26] Seizure of property and reprisals followed, suspending trade between England and the Netherlands once more, but it soon became obvious that Elizabeth was getting the best of the situation. The Merchant Adventurers had been reorganized under a new charter in 1567[27] and were able to sell their cloth at Hamburg. The trade stoppage was ruinous to Netherlands and Spanish merchants, however, and by March 1569 Alva had no alternative but to impose taxes in order to pay his army.[28] The States General was summoned to approve his Tenth Penny Tax.[29] Angry over the loss of English trade and reluctant to finance their own demise the States refused his request for the tax but agreed to a grant instead. Alva's tax was shelved until 1572 allowing the rebels time to consolidate their forces. Although the revolt, for the moment, was confined to the piratical escapades of the Sea Beggars, Alva's financial policy had served to stimulate a significant opposition element in the Netherlands.

Commissioned by William to sail for the Principality of Orange, the unpredictable gang known as the Sea Beggars had, with Louis of Nassau's aid, established its headquarters at La Rochelle.[30] From this base it ravaged channel shipping,

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[26] Ibid., p. 297.

[27] Ibid., p. 284.

[28] Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 185.

[29] Geyl, The Revolt of the Netherlands, p. 108.

[30] Ibid., p. 114.

especially Spanish, with the support of the French Huguenots and connivance of England.[31] The stubborn persistence of this unruly band would eventually contribute much to the success of the revolt. For the present time, however, it roamed the channel, plundering ships and coastal towns indiscriminately, its major contribution being in the form of booty to bolster William's treasury.[32]

William and Louis, meanwhile, encouraged by the signs of resistance to Alva's tax, turned their attention to recruiting outside aid. Although William never altogether relinquished his hope of getting help from the German Protestant States, their efforts now focused on England and France.

The arrival of Alva in the Netherlands with the main Spanish army was alarming to both France and England. Elizabeth had been frightened by Spanish involvement in the Northern Rebellion and their new ambassador, de Spes, did little to calm her fears.[33] Elizabeth's council had begun to urge English intervention in the Netherlands.[34] The outbreak of religious war in France made French interference impossible and augmented the pressure on England.

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[31] Acts of the Privy Council, Vol VIII, p. viii.

[32] Wedgwood, William the Silent, p. 116.

[33] de Spes was advising Spain to pursue an aggressive anti-English policy including seizure of ships and goods.

[34] Wernham, ed., The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, p. 232.

After the Peace of St. Germaine in August 1570, however, the Huguenot party, led by Coligny, was increasing in favour at the French court. It was at this stage that a scheme for joint Anglo-French action was first considered. The plan called for an alliance of France, German Protestants, and England, together with the Dutch rebels, against Spain. Having driven the Spaniards out, the Netherlands would be apportioned among the participants. Flanders and Artois would go to France, Holland and Zeeland to England, and Brabant, Guelders and Luxemburg to become German States ruled by William of Orange.[35]

Although the French council approved of the idea it advised Charles to be sure of English and French co-operation before taking any action. Elizabeth, as always, remained cautious, declining to commit herself to an invasion with a partner whose goodwill was normally suspect. In spite of the fact that Walsingham was negotiating to bring about a defensive alliance and relations between England and France were ostensibly friendly, Elizabeth could not ignore the unsettled domestic state of France. Even when Huguenot influence was ascendant, encouraging policies pleasing to England, there was always the realization that the Guises lurked in the background. With the Northern Rebellion and Ridolfi Plot fresh in their memories, few Englishmen could doubt what policy would be pursued should the

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[35]Read, Burghley, p. 59.

domestic pendulum of France swing once more.

Elizabeth was not inclined to support France in her suspected ambition of gaining a foothold as a preliminary to taking over the Netherlands. She therefore gave only evasive answers to Charles IX and the invasion scheme foundered. Efforts to continue the revolt in the Netherlands reverted back to local forces. In February 1572, however, the reluctant Queen unwittingly precipitated its next phase. As part of a campaign being waged against channel piracy she warned de la Marck, captain of the Sea Beggars at that time sheltering in English ports, to make preparations to withdraw. On March 1 a proclamation was issued ordering "all freebooters of any nation to depart on penalty of confiscation and imprisonment."[36] On leaving England the Sea Beggars proceeded to the Netherlands where they seized Brill and Flushing and raised the standard of revolt on dry land.

It has been suggested that Elizabeth, despite her impending alliance with France was still not anxious for a complete rupture with Spain and was therefore willing to expel the Spanish rebels from her ports.[37] It was one of the paradoxes of Elizabethan foreign policy that such actions, while camouflaged with good intentions, often accomplished something other than their

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[36] Ibid., p. 72.

[37] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. X, p. xxix.

stated purpose, while leaving Elizabeth absolved from all blame.

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The seizure of Brill and Flushing sparked another invasion of the Netherlands by William and his followers in mid-1572. This campaign relied heavily on aid from the Huguenots and fell victim with them to the St. Bartholomew's massacre in August. Coligny's favour at the French court had come to depend on the success of his expedition to the Netherlands. Catherine de Medici distrusted his policy since she had no desire to tackle Spain alone. When the expedition met with disaster at Mons the fate of the French invasion was sealed along with that of its instigator.[38] While France once more fell victim to religious strife William was left to continue the struggle against Spain. Despite continued negotiations with Catherine de Medici who showed some willingness to aid the rebels, France remained a shackled ally in the face of domestic disturbances.

In England, France was still considered an unpredictable threat in spite of her fetters, and most of Elizabeth's involvement in the Netherlands was designed to undermine French influence. Only one month after France and England were joined in a defensive alliance under the Treaty of Blois a band of English

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[38] Ibid., p. 153.

volunteers, under Sir Humphrey Gilbert, had been dispatched to the Netherlands. Their instructions clearly illustrate Elizabeth's attitude. Anxious lest the Huguenot expedition prove too successful she told him to bring Englishmen in the Netherlands under stricter discipline and keep the French out of Flushing.[39]

> If it appear that the Duke is not able to defend his master's countries from the French and that the French begin to possess any part of them, and especially the maritime parts, then it is like that the French, increasing their dominance, may be too potent neighbours for us and therefore (it) may be good for us to use all the means that may conveniently be, to stay that course.[40]

Burghley's memorial written in June 1572 exemplifies England's priorities. Despite pleas from Walsingham and others for open intervention Elizabeth's policy was evident. She did not object to English volunteers[41] going over to help the rebels but she would not risk open war with Spain. In her eyes it was imperative for England's safety that Spain be maintained as a counterpoise to France. She hoped that the Netherlands would manage to regain their ancient liberties alone, but if aid became essential, and France looked too successful, she would help Philip defend his inheritance.[42]

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[39] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 321.

[40] Read, Burghley, p. 74.

[41] The French ambassador estimated that there were from four to five thousand English volunteers in the Netherlands in May 1572.

[42] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 320.

The St. Bartholomew's Massacre confirmed Elizabeth's worst fears about France and almost immediately she began to pave the way for a reconciliation with Spain. The Treaty of Blois had made provision for the transfer of the English cloth trade, which had been disrupted since Elizabeth's seizure of the Spanish loan, to France. The idea was never very popular with English merchants who felt that French instability precluded any permanent trade relations.[43] In June 1572, therefore, when Alva suggested negotiations to settle differences, Elizabeth was receptive, and the next few years showed a marked improvement in Anglo-Spanish friendship.

A preliminary accord was reached in March 1573 when the Convention of Nymwegen re-established commercial relations between England and the Spanish Netherlands. Further negotiations culminated in the Convention of Bristol the following year. These agreements settled accounts about the seizures and counter-seizures of 1568-1569 and led to promises that neither party would harbour rebels against the other. They also advocated stricter measures against privateering in the channel.[44]

Trade, no sooner restored with Spain, was disrupted again, this time by the Dutch. With the aid of the Sea Beggars and taking advantage of mutinies in the

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[43]Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 193.

[44]Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 327.

Spanish army, William had been able to consolidate his position in the north sustaining the revolt in Holland and Zeeland from whence he controlled traffic to and from Antwerp. Frustrated by Elizabeth's refusal to help his cause he began to restrict English shipping. Negotiations with the Merchant Adventurers led to continued trade in return for a war loan to William, but Elizabeth was infuriated and ordered seizure of Dutch ships in England.[45] Thus angered by the rebels, Elizabeth now confined her official policy to efforts at mediation between Philip and his subjects. In 1574, therefore, when events in France once more entered into consideration, Elizabeth was on friendly terms with Spain but almost in a state of war with the Dutch.

In May Charles IX died and Henry III became King of France. Elizabeth suspected that this would lead to promotion of the Guises and she took care to maintain contacts with the opposition forces. The situation in France offered new opportunities to Elizabeth and her policies at this stage foreshadow those to be used in the Netherlands for some years to come.

At the death of Charles IX and accession of his brother Henry, Francis, Duke of Alençon became heir presumptive to the French throne.[46] Fearing Alençon's

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[45] Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 330.

[46] At this time Francis also received the title of Duke of Anjou, however he will continue to be referred to as Alençon for the remainder of this paper.

close ties with the Huguenots, Catherine de Medici kept him virtually a prisoner at the French court. Henry's unfriendly attitude,[47] meanwhile, emphasized the Guise threat and Elizabeth began to explore various means to foster the discontent in France. While toying with the idea of freeing Alençon to join the Huguenots, she was also negotiating with Count Palatine to raise money in Germany for their cause.

Catherine de Medici saw the Netherlands as a useful outlet for the militant activities of the Huguenots.[48] When Alençon escaped in September 1575 this prospect became even more attractive offering the possibility of removing the King's troublesome brother by establishing him as their protector following William's suggestion. Since this policy would undoubtedly worsen her relations with Spain, Catherine was reluctant to allow a breach with England to develop. The Treaty of Blois was therefore renewed re-establishing Anglo-French cordiality on the surface.[49]

Elizabeth was not averse to a show of French friendship. Alva had been replaced in 1573 by a new governor in the Netherlands, Don Luis de Requesens.

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[47] English merchants were hampered in France, and the question of Mary Stuart was reopened by the French ambassador in London. This normally indicated that Anglo-French relations were somewhat strained.

[48] Wedgwood, William the Silent, p. 150.

[49] Read, Burghley, p. 154.

At last Spain appeared to be making progress. Requesens lifted the hated taxes and abolished the Council of Blood thus managing to undermine William's efforts to win support from within the Netherlands. In the spring of 1575 he opened negotiations with Holland and Zeeland while making one last desperate effort to crush the revolt.[50] His success apparently assured, Philip was no longer interested in Elizabeth's offers of mediation and her envoy, Henry Cobham, who had been sent to Spain for this purpose, returned in January 1576 complaining of a cool reception.[51] If Elizabeth were to force Requesens into accepting her offer, she would have to make a show of Anglo-French solidarity.

William, meanwhile, was desperately trying to persuade one or other of these possible allies to come to his aid, but by now he was convinced that he could hope for more from France than from England. Negotiations had been carried on somewhat erratically with Alençon ever since 1573.[52] Robert Beale, who was sent to discuss the trade dispute with the Netherlands in 1576, reported that William had turned toward France and paid no account to England.[53] Elizabeth warned William that

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[50]Geyl, The Revolt of the Netherlands, p. 141.

[51]Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 315.

[52]The Wars of Religion, Vol. III of The Cambridge Modern History, ed. by A. W. Ward, G. W. Prothero, and Stanley Leathes (London: MacMillan Company, 1909), p. 22.

[53]Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 329.

she would side with Spain if he persisted in his pro-French course. At the same time, however, she managed to confuse an envoy from Requesens enough to convince him that she would aid the rebels if Philip refused to come to terms with them.[54] All along Elizabeth was actually investigating a third possibility. Realizing that Henry III was in no rush to launch an invasion into the Netherlands led by his intractable younger brother, Elizabeth began to see Alençon as a possible escape from her perplexities.[55] The old courtship which had been shelved for a while was revived and in February 1576 Thomas Randolph was dispatched to France. His mission was two-fold: to convince Henry that any project of his against the Netherlands would force her to ally with Philip; and to tell Alençon that she might lend him aid if he proceeded, under Elizabeth's guidance, against Spain in the Netherlands.[56] Although this mission came to nothing, it showed clearly the course which Elizabeth's future policy was to follow.

Events in the Netherlands forestalled any immediate action. In March Requesens died leaving an unpaid and mutinous Spanish army roaming the countryside and terrorizing the people of the Netherlands. Where a truce with Spain had previously seemed possible,

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[54] Ibid., p. 320.

[55] Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 244.

[56] Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 295.

the provinces now looked toward Holland and Zeeland for leadership, and negotiations were opened to bring about a union.[57] In the face of disagreements from both sides the "Spanish Fury" at Antwerp served to convince the delegates who decided to pool their resources to expel the rapacious troops.[58] In November the Pacification of Ghent was signed uniting Holland and Zeeland with the other provinces. Thus when the new governor, Don John, arrived, he was confronted with an entirely new situation.

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The apparent unity which faced Don John as he approached the Netherlands was not as solid as it seemed. The Pacification had been hastily formed in the face of a common danger, and the only definite policy to which the union was committed was expulsion of the Spanish troops.[59] Peace was established between Holland and Zeeland and the other provinces and William was restored to the Stadholderships he had occupied prior to Alva's arrival, but disputed matters were to be referred to an assembly of the Estates of all the provinces.[60] Many points, therefore, were left unresolved,

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[57]Wernham, ed., The Counter-Reformation, p. 103.

[58]Wedgwood, William the Silent, p. 166.

[59]Wernham, ed., The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, p. 103.

[60]Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 337.

notably the question of religion.

Although the Pacification continued to acknowledge Philip as sovereign, it refused to admit Don John unless confirmed by him. Arriving with neither troops nor money Don John had little choice but to negotiate.[61] In February 1577, in the Perpetual Edict, he ratified the Pacification and promised to dismiss the Spanish troops. The States General, however, in accepting this agreement, omitted to refer it to William. Since it included a clause to maintain Catholicism in the Netherlands it was evident that he could not acquiesce. The very fact that the States were even in a position to bargain with Don John was due largely to the Calvinists whose tenacity in Holland and Zeeland had enabled William to succeed there. It was impossible for him to accept a settlement that did not guarantee their faith. The religious issue would continue to plague the Netherlands until their ultimate division in 1579 into the Unions of Arras and Utrecht, but for the moment a facade of conciliation was maintained in the face of renewed hostility.

While the nobles wrangled over the Perpetual Edict Don John, impatient at the obstruction of his greater purpose,[62] amassed the remains of the Spanish

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[61] Geyl, The Revolt of the Netherlands, p. 150.

[62] Below p. 94.

army and seized Namur.[63] By his action he hoped to lure away William's shaky Catholic support but the effect was the opposite. Instead it greatly increased William's credibility and enhanced his popular following while the disparaged Catholic nobles were plunged into confusion.

Faced once more with the prospect of war with Spain William, struggling to keep his forces together at home, embarked again on his quest for foreign aid. In seeking a protector for the Netherlands two possible candidates were being considered. William was still convinced that France offered the greatest hope and negotiations were reopened with Alençon. This policy, however, was unpopular in the Netherlands where it was commonly suspected that France had greater ambitions and that the Guises were intriguing with Don John who had retreated to Luxemburg.[64] The Catholic party in the States, now known as the Malcontents and led by Aerschot, entered instead into an agreement with Matthias, the brother of the Emperor.[65]

Matthias was declared Governor of the Netherlands in December 1577. The agreement placed the main authority of the government in a council to be chosen by the States

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[63] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. XII, p. 36.

[64] Wedgwood, William the Silent, p. 185.

[65] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. XII, p. xvi.

and was designed to diminish William's influence.[66] Dissention continued, however, and he was able to circumvent their aims by reducing Matthias to a mere figurehead who yielded to William's guidance in all matters.[67]

Philip, meanwhile, regarding the appointment of Matthias as an act of rebellion, sent the Spanish army back to the Netherlands under Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma.[68] Matthias's arrival coincided with a severe defeat of the Netherlands forces at Gembloux as Don John began a systematic reconquest of the rebellious provinces.

William's hope that Matthias would bring aid from his brother, Emperor Rudolph, proved false, and the States, now in a desperate position, were persuaded to treat once more with Alençon.[69] The terms of the agreement reached in August 1578 illustrated the deep distrust that was still felt towards him. He was accepted only as an ally with no share in the government and no guarantees of sovereignty. He could conquer lands east of the Meuse where his campaign against Spain was

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[66] Wedgwood, William the Silent, p. 181.

[67] Ibid., p. 186.

[68] Wernham, Before the Armada, pp. 331-332.

[69] Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 386.

to be confined.[70] To further emphasize the suspicion, yet another possible protector was being considered. The Calvinists, who were especially powerful at Ghent, had been intriguing with Duke John Casimir as an alternative to Alençon.[71] By October, when Don John died and was succeeded by Parma, a state of civil war existed among the rebels.

The problem of religion which had complicated the revolt from the beginning, now surfaced and irreparably altered the character of the rebellion. The Netherlands as a whole was still predominantly Catholic but Calvinism was strong in the north and powerful among the working class in the south especially in the cities.[72] Although William had tried valiantly to nullify the religious issue and keep the dispute within the realm of politics, he had been forced to rely more and more on the Calvinists and his idea of liberty of conscience for all was far ahead of its time. Efforts to reach a religious peace were sabotaged on both sides and by the beginning of 1579 the provinces were divided into the Catholic and Protestant Unions of Arras and Utrecht.[73] With the reconciliation of the former with Philip and

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[70] Ibid., p. 400.

[71] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 10.

[72] Wedgwood, William the Silent, p. 127.

[73] Map p. 65.

Parma in June the revolt was henceforth confined to the northern provinces. In 1581 they renounced their allegiance in the Act of Abjuration.[74] The rebellion was now definitely anti-Catholic.

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Don John's arrival in the Netherlands in 1576 was to have been prefatory to a much more ambitious project known as the "Enterprise of England." His plan, having pacified the Netherlands, was to invade England and release and marry Mary Stuart so that they might restore Catholicism there together.[75] It was in Elizabeth's interests, therefore, that the Netherlands should not be too easily subdued. She was well aware of his schemes and began to feel that her involvement might be essential, but the divisions among the rebel leaders made it difficult for her to decide exactly where to lend her support.

She was uncertain as to the extent of Alençon's support in France and her first instinct was to warn Don John that therein lay his greatest danger. Advising him to make peace with the States she stressed that she would tolerate neither Spanish oppression nor French involvement in the Netherlands.[76] She assured him of

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[74] Koenigsberger and Moss, Europe in the Sixteenth Century, p. 263.

[75] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 330.

[76] Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 344.

her goodwill toward Philip but explained that she could not ignore affairs of the channel seaboard especially if it appeared that France might triumph through her apathy.[77]

With the Perpetual Edict concluded and in the expectation of peace in France Elizabeth became more receptive to pleas for aid from William and the States. A loan had been sent in December 1576 and more had been promised[78] but the squabbling States seemed a poor investment to a parsimonious Queen and she preferred to subsidize Casimir's exploits as an alternative to Alençon.[79] It seemed that she was already too late, however, for Alençon was already involved in negotiations with the States which would culminate in the treaty of August 1578, naming him defender of their liberties.

Always able to see an alternative when faced with apparent calamity, Elizabeth was not at a loss. She had been assured by Alençon that he was entirely at her disposal in the Netherlands. In May 1578 she therefore dispatched Cobham to France to renew the marriage negotiations. In June, he and Walsingham proceeded on an embassy to the Netherlands.[80]

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[77] Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 322.

[78] Read, Burghley, p. 178.

[79] Ibid., p. 188.

[80] Ibid., p. 192.

The Alençon marriage negotiations and Walsingham-Cobham embassy are two episodes which serve to demonstrate the vacillations of Elizabethan foreign policy which caused such exasperation to her councillors and frustrated her friends and enemies alike. Yet in the end Elizabeth usually accomplished her purpose.

> Elizabeth never revealed her very considerable diplomatic talents to greater advantage than in her most amorous discourses.... in that very form of diplomacy in which she was most at home, not only her neighbours, but even her intimate and trusted advisers were most at sea.[81]

Whether Elizabeth was ever serious about marriage is still a matter of conjecture. It obviously was to her councillors, too, as Walsingham observes:

> I do conceive that it was really intended by the FRENCH, and by the chief of the ENGLISH Councel, except Leicester... but for her own Mind, what that really was, I must leave, as a thing doubly inscrutable, both as she was a Woman and a Queen.[82]

The negotiations for the Alençon marriage, which had originated when Walsingham was trying to bring about the Treaty of Blois, were still going on a decade later when he was again in Paris attempting to conclude another league. Hampered by vague and often contradictory instructions and constant fluctuations in his mistress's apparent policy, he complained:

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[81] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 4.

[82] Sir Dudley Digges, Knight, The Compleat Ambassador: or Two Treaties of the Intended Marriage of Qu: Elizabeth of Glorious Memory (London: Tho: Newcomb, 1655), preface.

> ... when her Majesty is pressed to marry, thus she seemeth to affect a league, and when a league is yielded to, then she liketh better of a marriage. And when thereupon she is moved to assent to marriage, then hath she recourse to the league; when the motion for the league, or any request is made for money, then her Majesty returneth to the marriage.[83]

Elizabeth's policy between 1578 - 1584 is confusing in retrospect and must have driven those expected to give advice and carry it out to near distraction. Certain clearly defined threads do emerge, however, through the intricate warp and weft of its fabric.

As always, the consideration which took precedence over all others was to avoid French annexation of the Netherlands. Thus we see Walsingham and Cobham, at the outset of their mission, instructed to find out what the French were planning and use personal persuasion to stop their schemes.[84] In an effort to discredit Alençon, of whose fidelity Elizabeth was never quite certain, they were to warn the States to limit the force he was to bring and make sure he would not be powerful enough to rule them.[85]

As Alençon's agreement with the States in 1578 became an accomplished fact, and as she grew more certain that he acted without the backing of the

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[83] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. XV, p. xxvi.

[84] Ibid., Vol. XIII, pp. 11-13.

[85] Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 382.

French crown, Elizabeth became more and more convinced that through the marriage negotiations she might influence him to become her instrument in the Netherlands. Pleas from her ambassadors to aid the States before the French moved in now brought forth rebukes from their mistress,[86] leaving Walsingham and Cobham bewildered while Elizabeth resorted to her favourite game of courtship.

By 1580 Elizabeth's policy toward France had shifted slightly. Faced with the increasing power of Spain after Philip's acquisition of Portugal, she appeared now to favour joint Anglo-French intervention in the Netherlands and Walsingham was again dispatched to France to seek an alliance.[87] At this stage it would seem that she was trying to create a picture of Anglo-French solidarity in order to prevent any action against herself from Philip. Elizabeth was now prepared to countenance and even elicit Henry III's support of his brother in the Netherlands.[88] This prospect had been dreaded by her two years earlier. Although dual involvement was advocated, it was suspected by those who had been dealing with Elizabeth for many years, that she would not be averse to emphasizing

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[86] Ibid., p. 393.

[87] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 361.

[88] Ibid.

Alençon's role as being French and thus precipitate a war between her two rivals. Catherine de Medici much preferred to marry Alençon to Elizabeth, thus transferring him and the responsibility for his escapades to England.[89] Unable, therefore, to outwit the French Elizabeth resigned herself to subsidizing Alençon enough to make him a nuisance to Philip but not to ensure his success or bring her into war with Spain.[90]

Since the idea of French annexation of the Netherlands was so abhorrent to Elizabeth it appears that she would, as a last resort, have helped Philip regain control had this seemed inevitable. She preferred, however, a retention of Spanish sovereignty limited by recognition of the ancient privileges of the Netherlands. Thus Walsingham and Cobham were to urge Don John to accept the terms of the Pacification of Ghent which guaranteed these rights.[91]

Eager to remain on good terms with Philip, Elizabeth was careful to disguise her involvement in the Netherlands as an effort to help protect his inheritance from France.[92] At the same time, however,

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[89] Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 244.

[90] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 3.

[91] C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. XIII, p. 151.

[92] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

she did not hesitate to show fresh ardour in the marriage negotiations and threaten alliance with France if Philip appeared to be contemplating involvement in any of the numerous anti-English activities being instigated by the Guises and the Pope.[93] She also threatened to side with the States if Don John proved unreasonable or sought aid from the Guises.[94]

In attempting to unravel this web of perplexity, Walsingham and Cobham had additional problems with which to contend. It was established from past experience that Elizabeth hated helping rebels and the Dutch were particularly loathsome to her. Their incessant bickering annoyed her and she despised being heralded as the Protestant champion of a Calvinist mob. Annoyed over William's trade embargo and his determination to seek aid in France she was irascible when confronted with pleas for funds.[95] She also saw no reason why she should lend money without excellent guarantees for repayment, when she considered the Netherlands well able to finance a much greater portion of their own revolt.[96]

The attitude of the French throughout this

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[93]Read, Burghley, p. 229.

[94]Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 330.

[95]Read, Burghley, p. 201.

[96]Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 111.

period is fairly straightforward. Plagued with domestic unrest in which Alençon was taking part, they were eager to get rid of him by encouraging his involvement in the Netherlands. They wanted him married to Elizabeth so that responsibility for his anti-Spanish activities would be transferred to her.[97] They were not keen for his campaign to be too successful since this might enhance the position of the Huguenots in France[98] and they determined not to aid him openly for fear of war with Spain.

But what of Alençon? For six years he had become the shuttle which would weave this fabric on the loom of European politics. Whose was the controlling hand and whose the grand design?

Elizabeth, despite her very considerable ability to shape events, was never entirely certain that she had control. Although Alençon had assured her that he was entirely at her devotion, she always suspected that he, too, was using the marriage negotiations to further his own aims. Walsingham was instructed to find out "the very secret of his mind and disposition in these affairs."[99]

As usual, her suspicions were correct. What

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97 Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 361.

98 C. S. P. Foreign Series, Vol. XIII, p. ix.

99 Read, Walsingham, Vol. I, p. 395.

Alençon lacked in ability was more than compensated by his very considerable personal ambition. It was obvious that he intended to be no-one's tool in the Netherlands.[100] As their plight became more desperate he pressed for more concessions from the rebels. Negotiating first with the States and later with William after 1579, by the Treaty of Plessis le Tours signed in September 1580 he was finally recognized as sovereign, albeit with certain restrictions against his absolute power.[101]

Realizing that the prospect of his marrying Elizabeth would greatly enhance his position, he was prepared to play her game. At the same time, however, he was bargaining with his brother to try to obtain the financial support necessary for a successful campaign. Offering his services to end the latest of France's interminable religious wars, he managed to extract a promise of aid from Henry for his Netherlands ventures in return.[102]

Alençon was not above plotting with Parma and even Philip[103] and when all else failed he launched an abortive coup against the States in an effort to gain

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[100] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 107.

[101] Wedgwood, William the Silent, p. 215.

[102] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 44.

[103] Wedgwood, William the Silent, p. 240.

control of the major cities as a preliminary to taking over the whole country.[104] The "Folly of Antwerp" in January 1583 sealed his fate in the Netherlands and he retired to France where he died the following year. With the assassination of William of Orange on July 10th 1584 Elizabeth's policy of fighting Philip by proxy in the Netherlands came to an end. She must now commit herself or be faced with "the triumphant power of Spain."[105]

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[104] Read, Walsingham, Vol. II, p. 107.

[105] Ibid., p. 117.

CONCLUSION

HER HAND FIRM AND STRONG.

It was a strange circumstance that by pursuing policies basically designed to obstruct France, Elizabeth would ultimately find herself at war with Spain. After twenty years of peace she was finally forced, in December 1585, to dispatch an expedition under Leicester to the Netherlands. Despite the failure of this expedition open hostility between Spain and England was now an established fact and it would intensify until its culmination in the Spanish Armada of 1588.

With the death of Alençon in 1584 a new chapter had opened in Anglo-French relations. As long as Henry III remained childless, which seemed likely, Henry of Navarre was now heir to the throne.[1] The prospect of a Huguenot succession was unacceptable to the Guise faction who set about trying to establish a Catholic succession instead.[2] They were supported in this effort by Philip who was afraid that Henry might accept an offer of sovereignty from the Netherlands. Philip and the Guises entered into the secret Treaty of Joinville

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[1] Appendix B.

[2] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 368.

in December 1584 which aimed to prevent the Navarre succession.[3]

Many of the points at issue between England and France had by now lost their significance. Scotland was committed to the English alliance, Mary Stuart had turned to Spain and ceased to be of interest to the French crown,[4] and in refusing their offer of sovereignty in February 1585, Henry no longer presented a threat in the Netherlands. As France plunged into a war over the succession in which Philip was deeply involved, it became obvious that Spain was now the one to be feared. If he and the Guises were successful in France Philip would achieve Spanish domination of Europe which would seriously threaten England.

The acquisition of Portugal in 1581 had resulted in an alarming increase of Spanish strength.[5] Attempts to engineer joint Anglo-French aid for Don Antonio had never materialized and the addition of the Portuguese navy to the Spanish fleet made Philip's strength most formidable. A pro-Spanish succession in France would have cemented his control on the continent and enabled Parma, now showing increasing success in the Netherlands, to

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[3] J. H. Elliott, Europe Divided: 1559 - 1598 (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., Ltd., 1968), p. 308.

[4] Read, The Tudors, p. 181.

[5] Wernham, Before the Armada, p. 356.

invade England.[6] The combined Spanish - Guise designs for plots against Elizabeth were well known and she could no longer rely on unofficial interference to prevent disaster.

In August 1585, therefore, by the Treaty of Nonsuch, Elizabeth took the Dutch under her protection. England's years of peace thus came to an end. It was fortunate that Elizabeth's preparation for this day had been thorough. She had secured her postern gate by alliance with James which considerably reduced the threat of foreign invasion from Scotland. She had strengthened her forces and restored her economy and was no longer dependent upon foreign allies. She had nourished Hapsburg - Valois rivalry and neutralized the possibility of a Franco-Spanish crusade against England. Finally, by fostering discontent against both monarchs she had thwarted their individual designs against her.

As political, economic and ideological differences finally merged into one general struggle between Spain and England[7] it was certain that Elizabeth had indeed shunned the rocks and shoals. She had achieved her independence, and guided the argosy of England to a new position of predominance on the waters of the world.

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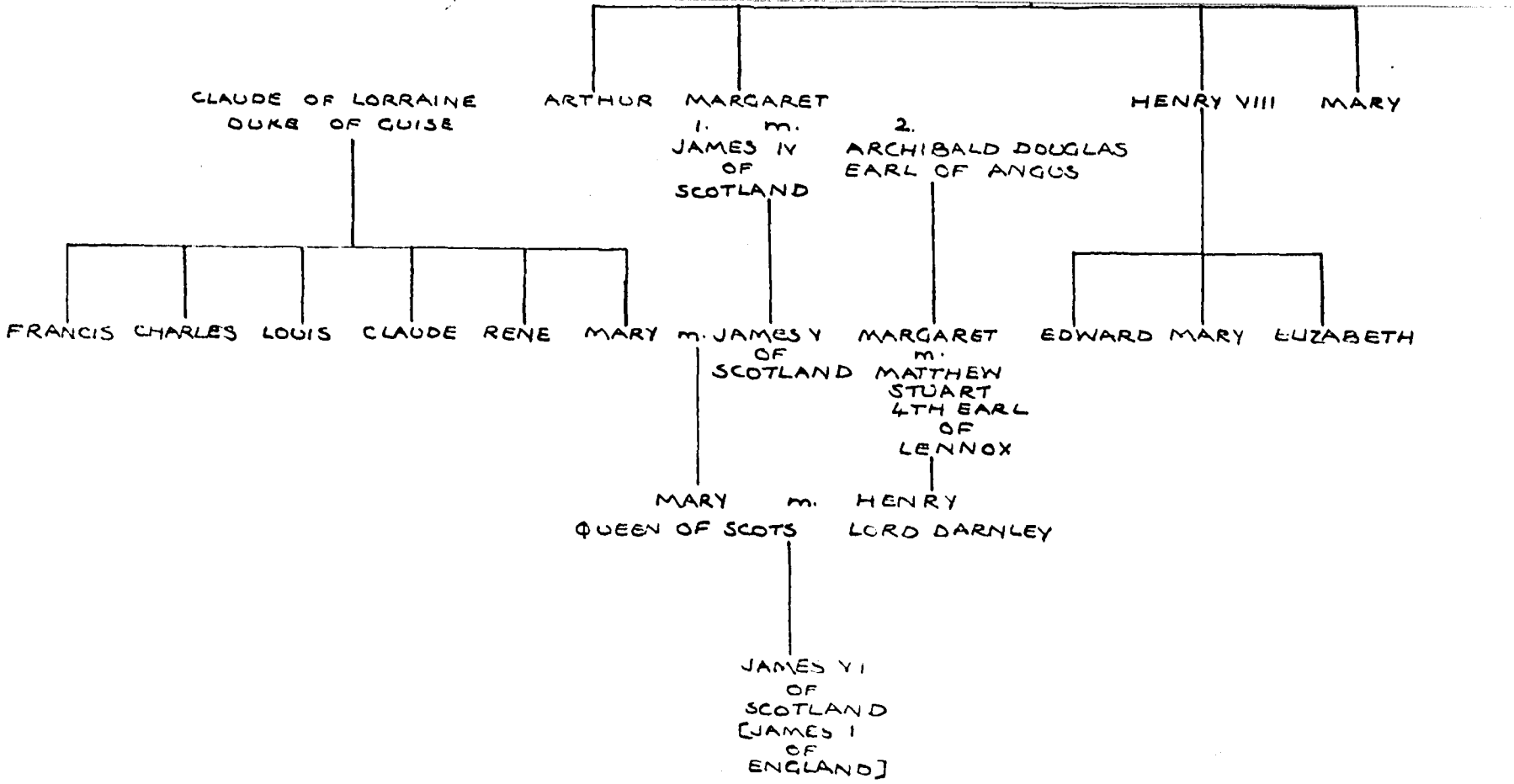
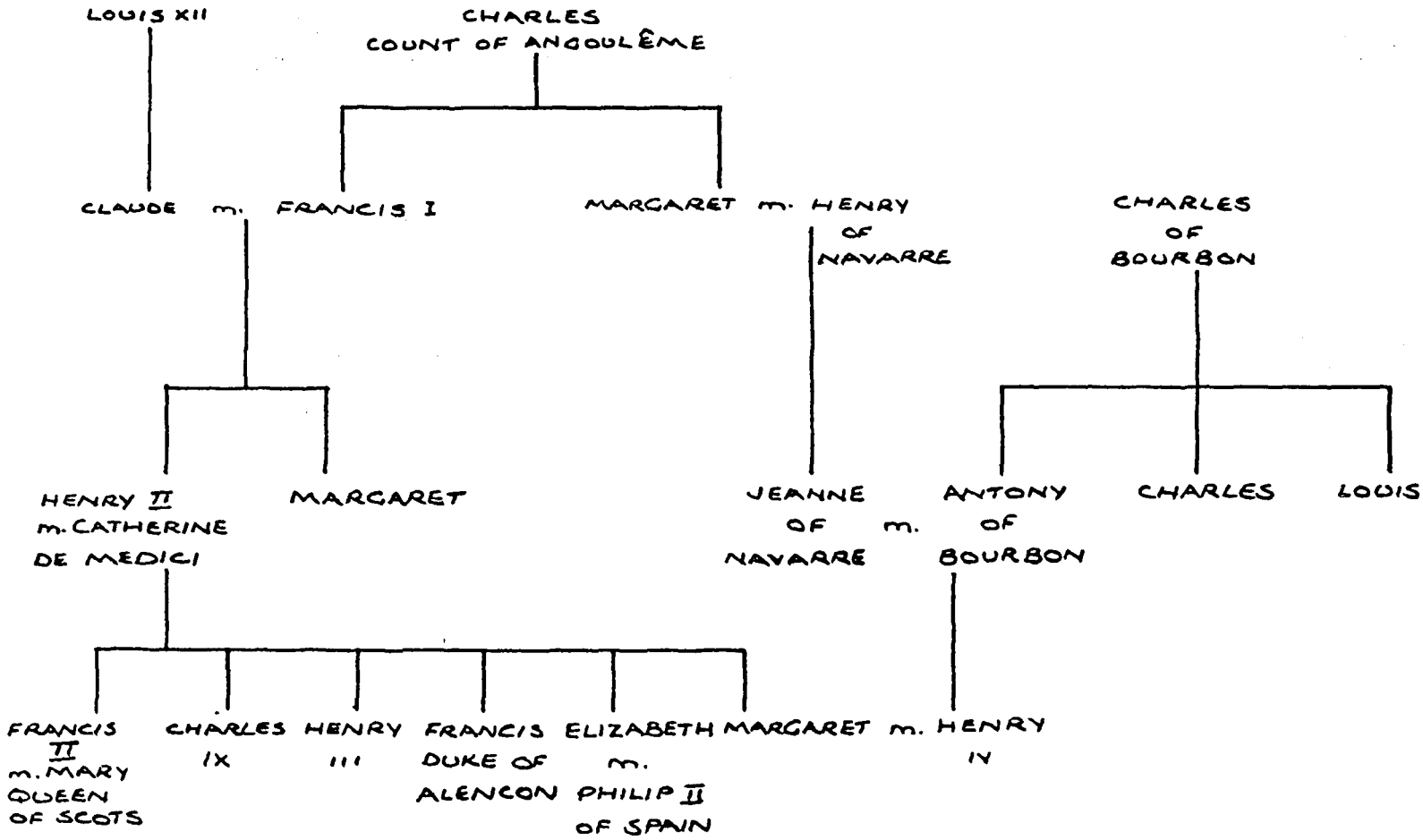
[6] Elliott, Europe Divided, pp. 310 - 311.

[7] Mattingly, Renaissance Diplomacy, p. 167.



THE STUART - GUISE CONNECTION AND STUART - LENNOX CLAIM TO THE THRONE

APPENDIX B



THE FRENCH SUCCESSION

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VITA

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Having taught at the elementary level in Rhodesia and in England she came to the United States in 1969 where she enrolled at Westhampton College, University of Richmond. In 1971 she received a Bachelor's Degree majoring in history. In 1973 she enrolled in the University of Richmond Graduate School to begin work on a Master of Arts degree in history. Since her graduation in 1971 she had been teaching at the Junior High level and continued to teach while completing her graduate studies.