

ABSTRACT

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Mary Tudor and the Return of Catholicism

(Under the direction of DR. BENJAMIN EHLERS)

Ever since John Foxe's labeling of Mary as a bloody tyrant, the label has persisted throughout history even to the present day. Mary, however, was more in touch with her people than Foxe and others would portray her, as a more Catholic form of religion was widely supported. Many people began celebrating the Mass and other Catholic ceremonies even before Mary's ascent to the throne. Upon claiming the throne, Mary relied principally upon the support of the people to help her. She enacted a series of reforms against the more dramatically Protestant elements that her half-brother, King Edward VI, introduced. Most churches met the requirements for the reconstruction of their churches, a feat that was not easy during such difficult economic times. In doing so, the churches relied greatly upon the support of the parishioners, although Mary did try to ease the difficulty of building back Churches by returning various Catholic items. Through pamphlets, Mary and her bishops sought to educate England about Catholicism so that they might understand some of the more fundamental beliefs. Cardinal Pole was instrumental in assisting Mary as well, implementing reforms as well as preaching about Catholicism. However, a good many Protestants were burned as heretics. Despite Mary's intention for prudence, this was one of the low points of Mary's reign from a modern perspective. However, if Mary lived longer and had an heir, England probably would have had a more Catholic religion and would not have noted so strongly the burning of heretics.

INDEX WORDS: Mary Tudor; John Foxe; Cardinal Pole; Catholic Reformation; Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities

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MARY TUDOR AND THE RETURN OF CATHOLICISM

After the break of England from the dominion of the Pope by Henry VIII, England became a legally Protestant nation under the rule of the man whose works previously gained him fame and approval in the Roman Catholic Church, although at first England still retained many Catholic elements. Since eventually Henry VIII embraced more Protestant elements, such as the dissolving of the monasteries, when tracing the history of England, the general consensus viewed the progression of religion in England as one that evolved from this break by Henry VIII into a full fledged Protestant nation, the only glitch being the reign of Mary Tudor. “The sanguinary proscriptions of the merciless Mary ”¹ as documented by Protestant historians, mostly for the burnings of those who dissented from the views of Mary, promoted the image of Mary Tudor as a tyrant who was out of touch with the needs and wants of her subjects. The general view was that Mary imposed her religious views on her people, uncaring or unaware that any changes had occurred since the initial schism from Rome and determined to make the people of England conform to the religion prior to this schism. Some historians also assumed that the people of England had no wish to return to a more Catholic religion, and, because of some of the errors and failings of the Catholic Church, wished to progress to a more Protestant view of Christianity. This would include retaining such elements as the Book of Common Prayer and doing away with the Mass and other such Catholic elements as introduced by Edward VI, a desire that was only interrupted and persecuted during the reign of Mary. Upon examining the sources, however, it is

¹ John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, (London: John Day: 1563).

clear that Mary was not as out of touch with reality as many historians, particularly those Protestants following her reign, portrayed her. More recent studies, particularly by Christopher Haigh and Eamon Duffy, examine religious changes at a more local level, studying diaries, parish documents and other items of a similar nature. They posit through these documents that that majority of English people welcomed the return of these Catholic elements, particularly the traditional Mass and prayers. Indeed, it would seem that part of the reason why Mary became cast in a poor light was because of the Queen Elizabeth who followed her. Elizabeth embraced more Protestant elements, perhaps despite the wishes of her people, and also lived for a long period of time in which many literary works, such as histories, could enjoy her patronage. Therefore, a closer look at the sources during the time of Mary shows that she was more capable a queen than some of her critics claim her to be, and she was more in touch with reality and her subjects than many historians, both Elizabethan and modern, attribute to her.

Catholicism was the long accepted religion of England for as long as most people could remember during the reign of King Henry VIII. While there were many aspects of the Catholic Church that people thought needed revising, such as the use of indulgences and the pluralism that many priests and other religious used, there did not seem to be a clamoring among the people for a schism from the Church or a removal of all Catholic elements. Yet because of his need for a legitimate male heir and the Pope's refusal to allow Henry a divorce to achieve this end, Henry split from the Catholic religion and declared himself the Supreme Head of the new Church of England. While the English Church during the time of Henry VIII at first did not seem radically Protestant in the nature of the Mass and basic methods of prayer, eventually Henry VIII ordered

the removal of lands from many monasteries and other religious orders that had over a long period gained large tracts of land. Henry VIII granted these lands to the nobility, most likely to help garner further support. This removed one of the more Catholic elements of religion from England, seemingly inviting more Protestant elements into England. While Henry may have successfully resisted enacting any more Protestant elements into the Church of England, his son was less inclined to hold onto the old religion. It was during the reign of Edward VI that Protestants gained ground in establishing a Book of Common Prayer and imposed many other more radical forms of Protestantism than during the reign of Henry VIII. Yet the changes that Edward VI and his advisors attempted to establish upon the English people did not have long to take root, for Edward died at an early age during his all too short reign for the Protestant hopefuls. According to Henry VIII's succession decree, Princess Mary, a devout Roman Catholic, was next in line for the throne.

Fearing that their changes would be short-lived, the advisors of Edward VI, particularly Lord Northumberland, had Edward sign before his death a decree that made the Lady Jane Grey next in line for the throne, cutting out both Mary and Elizabeth from the line of succession. Upon the death of Edward VI, Lady Jane Grey had a hasty coronation ceremony and was hence declared Queen of England. Those in power did not have long to wait for the swift response of Mary to this treasonous act meant to deprive her of her rightful place on the throne.

Even before the death of her half-brother, Mary had taken steps to ensure that she would be free to act to claim the throne. The only apparent way to overthrow the Protestant government and Lady Jane Grey was through force. Therefore, according to letters from the

Loseley Correspondence, Mary “suddenly departed [from Hunsdon] with her train and family toward the sea coast of Norfolk... intending.. to resist such ordinances and decrees as the King's majesty hath set forth and established for the succession of the imperial crown.”² Such a move put her effectively out of immediate peril from such advisors as Northumberland and Cranmer, and she began to rally her forces and the English people to her cause. Even in London, people murmured of how Mary should rightfully have the throne. Doubtless there was more than one reason behind wanting Mary back. For one, many people viewed her as the rightful heir to the throne as written in the original succession plan by Henry VIII, thus making Edward's decree invalid. In one account Henry Machyn, a London undertaker, noted the punishment of Gilbert Potter, a drawer, who was “taken at that time for speaking certain words about Queen Mary, that she had the true title... On 11 July, at 8 o'clock in the morning the young man was set on the pillory for speaking this, and both his ears were cut off.”³ In a piece of propaganda later, one “Poor Pratte” commemorated Potter for upholding the honor of Mary “when Jane was published queen (unworthy as she was).”⁴ While it is difficult to determine how many of the people of London supported Mary's cause early on in her campaign for the crown, certainly it was enough to cause the Lady Jane Grey to take up residency in the Tower of London, a place well fortified in case of attack.

As to the question of religion, while many Londoners had begun to more widely accept the Protestant faith, they cannot have been unaware of Mary's preference towards Catholicism.

² Linda Porter, *The First Queen of England*, (New York: St. Martin's Press: 2007), 200.

³ Henry Machyn, *The Coronation of Lady Jane Grey*, 1553, <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/jane1.html>

⁴ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (London: Yale University Press: 1992), 212.

Even during Edward's reign, she persisted in having Mass said. In a journal entry, Edward tells of how “it was declared how long I had suffered her mass, in hope of her reconciliation, and how now, there being no hope as I saw by her letters, unless I saw some speedy amendment I could not bear it. She answered that her soul was God's and her faith she would not change, nor hide her opinion with dissembled doings.”⁵ Such persistence even through the exceedingly Protestant reign of Edward could not be ignored by those in London. Perhaps they thought that Mary would be equally tolerant of both Catholic and Protestant religions, but then why discard an already crowned Protestant queen, under the guidance of those same councilors under Edward? While it is possible that the people felt an exceedingly strong devotion toward the Tudor line and those closer to that line, it seems as though they could have easily accepted the reign of one farther removed from that line and approved by the latest king. Therefore, the question remained why the people did not accept the rule of Lady Jane Grey, a question that could be answered by further examining the manner Mary's entrance into power and her reign.

Mary did not wait long before choosing to march into London, counting on the support of her people to gain the city in her favor, making up for whatever insufficiency of forces she had. Accounts tell of crowds of people cheering her in the streets as she rode into London, accompanied by knights in black armor carrying rosaries.⁶ Indeed as soon as the word began to spread of Mary's intention of claiming the throne, some churches immediately reenacted Catholic practices, such as in “Melton Mowbray the altar stones were put back up immediately, in order to

⁵ King Edward VI, Diary, 1551, <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/ed1.html>.

⁶ Nicholas (ed.), *Machyn's Diary*, p.4-5 in Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993).

sing the Mass and 'Dirge' for the King who had put an end to the Mass and prayer for the dead.⁷ Many churches began practicing the Mass once again, not even awaiting the outcome of Mary's claim. This would indicate that these places must have been fairly certain of Mary's success, and hence the popular support she would receive when she went to claim her throne. Therefore this shows that even in the more outer regions of England as well as the urban regions where Protestants could more readily be found, Mary had a high percentage of support from her people. Without this support, she probably would not have been able to establish her reign, and certainly not with so little bloodshed.

Once Mary was crowned with all the pomp of a Catholic ruler, she set about dealing with those who had opposed her rule. Certainly the conspiracy was widespread amongst the council and the nobles, some more guilty than others. The Lady Jane Grey also posed a problem, since she was the figurehead for the opposition's scheme. Mary dealt very leniently with those who had threatened her, particularly the Lady Jane Grey, who in writing to Mary admitted that her "lack of prudence...for which I [Lady Jane Grey] deserve heavy punishment...[although] it being known that the error imputed to me has not been altogether caused by myself."⁸ Mary pardoned her for a time as well as many others except for those who had been most involved, such as the Duke of Northumberland. While it was often the practice to pardon many who were not as heavily involved in conspiracies against the crown in order not to create a vacuum of power, the act of pardoning many of the members of Parliament and even the figurehead Lady

⁷ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (London: Yale University Press: 1992), 527.

⁸ Lady Jane Grey, *Letter to Queen Mary I*, 1554, <http://www.englishhistory.net/tudor/prijane1.html>.

Jane Grey did show Mary's prudence when beginning her reign. Although Mary did eventually execute Lady Jane Grey and others, this was because of a renewed conspiracy, forcing Mary to remove those who posed a significant threat to her. Hence while it may not have seemed out of the ordinary for her to have pardoned so many, it still showed her practicality in dealing with the nobles, a tactic that would be useful in bringing about the reforms she planned.

Immediately after her coronation, Mary made it plain that she supported the return of Roman Catholicism, specifically more Catholic elements such as the Mass, and eventually reuniting England under the Pope, although she “forbad contention,” even though a good many churches seemed to support Catholicism by their speedy reinstatement of the Mass “not by commandment but of the people's devotion.”⁹ There were also some churches where the congregation seemed to be divided, and a few others which rejected the Mass and other Catholic items altogether. Yet Mary expressed a hope that others would follow her religion, and proceeded to enact legislation to undo many of the radically Protestant legislation that had been passed in Edward's and Henry's reigns. When she met with Parliament in October 1554, among the legislation confirming her legitimate birth was an Act which effectively repealed the Acts previously passed during Edward's reign concerning many matters of Catholic doctrine, such as the use of the Sacrament of the Eucharist and the Mass.¹⁰ Those priests who married were not immediately punished for their violation of celibacy, but instead were asked to quietly separate themselves from their wives in order to be absolved and “after penance effectually done, the

⁹ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993), 206.

¹⁰ Acts of Parliament, *Anno Mariae primo, An Acte for the Repeale of certaine Statutes, made in the time of the raigne of king Edwarde the sixt*, (1554),

bishop, according to his discretion and wisdom, may, upon just consideration, receive and admit them again to their former administration, so be it not in the same place...”¹¹ This clemency of not simply removing those priests who had wives from office, but allowing them the chance to recant their marriage, while indicative of retaining good favor with the people as well as those who ministered to them, had a practical element as well. There was a limited number of priests at that time, just enough to see to the needs of the people. Any reduction in that would cause shortages in those areas where priests violated their vows, which was most prevalent but not limited to more urban areas. While eventually Mary set about establishing seminaries to create more priests, it would take time to generate a large enough number to replace all those priests who had taken wives.

Throughout her reign, Mary through Parliament brought about the restoration of the Catholic Church in England, although it was not in the same format as the Catholic Church prior to Henry VIII. While she did bring about recognizable elements such as the Mass and the configuration of a church that had elements with which a Mass could be performed, Mary also gave ground on some key issues of Catholicism. The most important of these was allowing the nobility to retain the monastic lands given to them under Henry VIII. This essentially removed the monastic orders from England, an element which played a key role in Catholicism, particularly with the new orders being formed that played a role in bringing about the Counter-Reformation. While perhaps Mary would have liked to allow the monastic elements to be brought back into England to some degree, she also realized that she needed the support of

¹¹ Marian Injunctions in ed. Denis Janz, *A Reformation Reader* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press: 1999).

Parliament, many members of which benefited from the redistribution of those lands. To ask these members, whose support she needed to pass acts in Parliament, to give up one of the major sources of their income would have been political suicide. This would have effectively hamstrung her from implementing any further changes she wanted passed in Parliament. Mary also passed laws which set specific requirements of items to be placed in churches. Yet the economic times were not suited to large fundraisings for churches which hindered many churches from bringing about the refurbishment in a speedy manner. Although many churches did manage to keep pace with the large numbers of items needed for churches, Mary also set about recovering items that had once belonged to churches and returning them to help alleviate the cost. This act which showed her sympathy to the financial plight of churches in light of the stripping of monetary funds during the previous reigns. However, Mary also relied on the support of other religious figures to help her implement the revitalization of Catholicism in England, particularly those who wanted to educate the English people about Catholicism as well as convert those who had been most swayed during the previous reigns to Protestantism.

In enacting the revitalization of Catholicism in England, Mary turned to her confessor Cardinal Reginald Pole, who witnessed the religious turmoil from Henry to the reign of Mary. In keeping correspondence with the Pope on a regular basis and attending the first Council of Trent, Pole had a good grasp of both the turmoil that England had experienced, as well as the potential of reforming Catholicism in England into a format better than the original prior to Henry. He also conversed regularly with the Pope and other key reformers of Catholicism. Hence those ideas that he attempted to enact had come from the more recent reform ideas, some of which had

not yet been formulated in the Council of Trent. Since Pole had the queen's ear as Cardinal, Archbishop of Canterbury and her confessor, understanding the policies of Pole may help more fully understand both the nature of the reforms in England and how great an extent these reforms were carried out.

Pole was very vocal in both enacting reforms and educating the English people in the errors of Protestantism, but he particularly focused on the basic doctrine of the Catholic Church. While the Church had previously been a complicated affair of a myriad of saints and chantries, Pole focused more on the basic doctrine of the church, such as transubstantiation and the papacy. Pole often traveled to deliver supposedly well-received sermons, although some of the praise is excessive in stating “Syns the day of whiche sermon, all suche thynges as were amis and out of order here, begin now to cum in rule and square, and occupye their auntyente and accustomed places.”¹² Pole did seem to have a positive effect in revitalizing Catholicism, enacting many progressive reforms which, had they had time to develop, would have significantly furthered Catholicism. Pole enacted, with the support of Mary, a means to redistribute wealth to assist those dioceses struggling to fund their churches and put in the necessary Catholic items and also tried to ensure that no clergyman was paid in excess or too little.¹³ Pole also attempted, with very little success, to bring back the monasteries to England, a task that would be difficult with both the lack of funding and England's distrust of foreigners, such as the Jesuits. The return of monastic lands was impossible, as the lands were in the hands of those in Parliament that Mary

¹² John Elder, *The copie of a letter sent in to Scotlande*, (1555).

¹³ Thomas Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2000), pg. 264, 266.

needed for support. However, given time, Pole and Mary's plans to restore the monastic orders to some extent would most likely have occurred, although never to the extent prior to Henry VIII.

Another element that Mary used to bring about a greater understanding of the Catholic Church to educate both Protestants and Catholics alike was the printing of pamphlets about Catholic practices. Many of these contained writings on the basic functions of the Church and its sacraments, as well as copies of speeches made that promoted the Catholic Church. However, it should be noted that printings during this time were designed to educate rather than persuade and argue about the failings of the Protestants. One of the most famous and perhaps the most thorough of these was Edmund Bonner's *A Profytable and necessary doctryne with certayne homelies adioyned... for the instruction and enformation of the people*. This work contained information about the more fundamental teachings of the Catholic Church, including basic prayers such as the Hail Mary and the belief of transubstantiation. Yet Bonner did take away some ideas from the more Protestant reign before him, relying on explaining things to a greater degree than before, particularly the symbols of the church. This was important in explaining both to Catholics and Protestants the exact nature of the sacraments and other Catholic religious items which had been so despised. It also was meant to, as Duffy states, “[distance] itself.. from the apotropaic understanding of the use of sacramentals,”¹⁴ or the use of sacramentals such as holy water merely as some way to drive off evil supernatural elements, a concept of sacramentals used more in the time prior to Henry VIII. The book itself also was part of the wider scheme to

¹⁴ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (London: Yale University Press: 1992), 533.

educate clergy more fully into the inner workings of Catholic doctrine, a knowledge that they would then pass on to their parishioners. Hence Bonner essentially took a page from the work of the Protestants who wrote before him in explaining in greater detail the things which Protestants tended to mock and exploit because of the poorer education of the priests and laity. Bolstering the elements of Catholicism which the English people had held onto was meant to serve as a firm foundation for which to build a newer, more contemporary Church that took on some elements that would have been unfamiliar to Catholics prior to the schism during Henry VIII. This is of particular importance as Mary draws criticism for not employing more of the mid-century reforms, particularly those from the Council of Trent. However, setting aside the matter that the Council did not conclude until after her reign, Mary also did not have the necessary resources to implement any costly changes. She had her hands full trying to assist churches to fund their restorations. While many churches did keep up and in some cases even exceed her expectations, it was still a costly endeavor. Yet even through some churches had difficulty in keeping up with the repairs, the pamphlets themselves helped enact a change in mindset in allowing for the education of priests and laity about the specifics of Catholicism, using elements of education that even the more Protestant element during the reign of Henry and particularly Edward used. These pamphlets were directed particularly towards the English people, and judging from the response of the marriage of Mary to a foreigner, the influence of any other foreign element to implement reforms, such as Jesuits, probably would not have been well received so early in the rebuilding of the Catholic Church in England. However, this does not mean that Catholics did not embrace these changes, and indeed they seemed enthusiastic in the rebuilding of churches in the Catholic

fashion.

The general response, judging from the registers of churches and reports of inspecting bishops, seemed to be overall favorable to the restoration of the Catholic Church. While some churches quickly reinstated the traditional trappings of a Catholic Church, others had been slower to do so, although not necessarily from any lack of enthusiasm for Catholicism. The items needed for even the most basic of Catholic function could be costly, particularly if the church had not been able to hide the items during the previous reigns. Even the bishops seemed to acknowledge that the immediate restoration in all of the churches that wished to comply would have been an impractical expectation. Despite these setbacks, many parishes immediately set about raising money to fund the restoration of their churches. Some items through Marian law were returned: 'of divers other persons here was received pageants and books, and divers other things concerning our rood loft, like true and faithful Christian people this was restored to this church...' ¹⁵ The parishes seemed to take pains to achieve the necessary items required by law in a timely manner, which was a difficult task as the repairs were expensive and the economy was not one which encouraged frivolous spending. Creating such a large number of religious items was difficult because of the thorough removal of Catholic items by the administration in Edward's reign. Yet some parishes purchased items and decorations for their church that were not yet required by law, going above and beyond what was expected of the churches. According to Haigh, "surviving churchwardens' accounts suggest that perhaps 75

¹⁵ Binney (ed.), *Morebath Accounts*, 185 in Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993), 205.

per cent of churches had an altar before 20 December, 1553; about 45 per cent set up a rood before the order of October 1555, and about 35 per cent had images before the command in Lent 1556.”¹⁶ The members of the parishes funded the refurbishment with a number of fund raisers and donations, such as ales and dinners, enabling even those parishes in great need to be able to provide for the church. “The yield of the 1550 ale had been a paltry £2. 12s. 8d., but it was £18 in 1554, £13 in 1555, and £20 a year in 1556-1558.”¹⁷ If the parishes were truly against the restoration of Catholicism or indeed even the laws requiring certain items in the church, it is unlikely they would have refitted their churches. While some of the churches were not exactly on schedule with renovations, all but a small minority had shown significant progress. It would have been easy for a parish that was not truly dedicated to restoring Catholicism to postpone and in a passively aggressive way resist bringing these Catholic items into the Churches. Therefore it is unlikely that these churches simply complied in order to avoid being reprimanded. Haigh also makes the valid point that the parishioners cared about the quality of the goods that they received for their churches, showing that the Englishmen were doing more than just following the letter of the law.¹⁸ For example, in the Lancashire church the people sent back the rood they had commissioned, saying “the rood we had before was a well-favoured man.. but this that he hath set us up now is the worst favoured thing that you ever set your eyes on, gaping and grinning in such sort that none of the children dare once look him in the face or come near him!”¹⁹

Yet not all of the churches agreed to bring back Catholicism, as a small minority of

¹⁶ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993), 211.

¹⁷ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993), 213.

¹⁸ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993), 211.

¹⁹ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993), 211.

churches either refused or had a minority within a church that would undo whatever Catholic installments were put into the churches. These dissenters were Protestants who held very firmly to their beliefs, centered usually on urban areas in the south east of England. They expressed their beliefs vocally, refusing to comply to holding Masses as well as either refusing or disrupting attempts to fit the churches with Catholic items. However, it should be noted that there are noticeably fewer churches which had this problem. In the Lincoln diocese in 1556, “only five out of 235 churches seem to have lacked an altar, rood, or ornaments, and only St Ives had serious omissions.”²⁰ Even in Canterbury, an area that had a higher degree of Protestants, “only one in ten parishes had been really negligent, with two or more serious deficiencies. Marden had no altar, cross, rood, or image of the patron saint, but there were not other as bad.”²¹ However, it is not surprising that the area where the former Archbishop Cranmer had taken residence would be the one that showed smaller signs of improvement, although the gains made were still significant. It is possible that Cranmer had also been more exacting in removing Catholic items from the churches, and hence the churches had more items for which to raise money. Such overall compliance would indicate an approval in general with the religious policies enacted by Mary, perhaps containing even a slightly euphoric element as churches surged ahead of deadlines and laws in placing icons and other Catholic items within their churches. However, there were other elements of Mary's rule that met with disapproval from even those who welcomed the return of Catholicism.

²⁰ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993), 212.

²¹ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993), 212.

Mary's decisions in other key matters did cause her to lose some popular support, particularly in regards to her marriage and war policies. Despite the protests of many a local Englishmen, both noble and common, Mary married Philip of Spain who, though Catholic, was a foreigner and not very well trusted by Parliament to see to England's best interests. Parliament, some of the members of which had strenuously objected to the marriage of Mary to Philip, exhorted her at great length to marry in England. Mary did not take well to its badgering, saying that she “would conquer her own feelings as the welfare and tranquility of her kingdom... Parliament was not accustomed to use such language to the kings of England, nor was it suitable or respectful that they should do so.”²² While the account of Mary's stance was obviously slanted towards a more pro-Spanish view, Mary's resolve was clear. Yet the general, and perhaps most pressing worry was that Philip would use England to fund his war efforts and as a launching pad for attacks on France, a fear that would prove to be not ill-founded. For eventually Philip did call for England to aid him in attacking the French, a war which did not have any foreseeable gain for England in tough economic times. The result of England's support would strain already tightened resources, as well as the loss of the final foothold for England in France, the English holding of Calais. Mary sensed this grave disappointment from her people, saying “when I am dead and opened you will find Calais lying in my heart.”²³ The combination of these events was enough to cause Wyatt's Rebellion, created mainly by some discontented Protestants who were seeking more widespread support with the unpopular political decisions

²² 17 November 1553, *Calendar of letters, dispatches and state papers relating to the negotiations between England and Spain*, ed. R. Tyler et al. (London 1867-1954) in *The First Queen of England*

²³ *The Oxford Book of Royal Anecdotes*, ed. Elizabeth, Lady Longford (Oxford 1989), pg. 231 in *Early Modern England*

made by Mary, “trust[ing] that the Catholikes for the moste parte, woulde gladle imbrace that quarel agaynst the straungers.”²⁴ However, the rebellion never gained much support and was soon quashed with little fuss, a tribute to the fact that, despite these failings of Mary, the English people were by no means ready to take up arms against her and overthrow her. They had, after all, seated her there in the first place and for the most part were content with other aspects of her rule.

Yet the area which most of her critics focus on is the numerous burnings of heretics which occurred during her reign. While it was not uncommon for a subject to be punished for their religious views and even executed for it, the combination of the larger number of burnings and the subsequent martyrdom of them by John Foxe puts a blot on Mary's religious policy. However, in examining the burnings, it should be noted who exactly was being executed as well as who ordered the execution. To place the blame squarely upon Mary simply because of her own religion would be an error. There is also little evidence of Mary being avid for the wholesale slaughter of those who supported Protestantism, although she did want to remove what Protestants remained, reviving several heresy laws in Parliament in 1555. However, she seemed prudent about the matter, possibly because of her Catholic religious background or a more pragmatic approach of not wanting to alienate the minority of Protestants, particularly noble Protestants, in her realm, stating “Touching the punishment of heretics, me thinketh it ought to be done without rashness, not leaving in the meanwhile to do justice to such as by learning would

²⁴ John Proctor, *The Historie of Wyates Rebellion*, (1555).

seem to deceive the simple.”²⁵ She knew that there were those clusterings in London and Kent and elsewhere that had a fairly dense population of Protestants and that summarily executing them all would not only be impractical but would also not be in line with her policies she set at the beginning of her reign of mercy, teachings which she had employed since that first conspiracy to deprive her of her throne. While some seemed to be singled out because of the more vocal Protestant beliefs, the majority of those executed were commoners. It may be that these figures were meant to intimate the more Protestant minority, but the method backfired on them. Cranmer, who was instrumental to enacting many of the changes toward Protestantism, was an ideal case to be made an example. It was not even his execution that Mary and even Cardinal Pole truly wanted, for “if [he] can be brought to penance/repentance, this would be no small thing.”²⁶ Pole in Foxe's writings especially seemed to garner for Cranmer's conversion, saying “I... would do anything to bring you benefit of salvation, rather than gain greatest benefit to myself... I shall not cease to pray for you.”²⁷ Pole did not limit himself to Cranmer to seek to bring about others condemned to burn at the stake, sending out numerous absolutions for those who had strayed from the Catholic doctrine, particularly those priests taking on a wife. Such an attempt to dissuade Protestants during trial from retaining their beliefs were not restricted just to Cranmer. John Philop “faced thirteen formal examinations and conferences, as well as meetings with Bonner and his chaplains; he was seen by a dozen bishops, three leading theologians, and a

²⁵ Burnet, *History of the Reformation*, p. 440 in Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993).

²⁶ Reginald Pole, ed. Thomas Mayer, *Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, (Burlington: Ashgate Press: 2002), 184.

²⁷ Reginald Pole, ed. Thomas Mayer, *Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, (Burlington: Ashgate Press: 2002), 188-190.

batch of lawyers, peers, and councilors. The legatine synod sent three bishops to offer him his life if he would just acknowledge the real presence [in the Eucharist].²⁸ Clearly the administration in charge did not wish to incite the large numbers of burning which did occur with so many opportunities to recant one's beliefs. Yet there still persisted a large number of burnings, perhaps not very large in comparison with the normal amount of punishments, but still larger than England had witnessed before. It is possible that the bishops were overly zealous in their desire to remove the leaders, choosing those who inspired others not to recant as well, causing a chain reaction in what was already a fairly vocal minority. The influence of Spain may have also caused the Protestants to be pursued perhaps more vigorously than they might have been otherwise, particularly since the revival of the heresy laws took place after the marriage of Philip and Mary. However, it is difficult to judge the influence Philip had on Mary, particularly since he was often absent from court and hence had less time to influence her and her court. This would have been particularly difficult since many Englishmen did not approve of Mary marrying a foreigner, and would probably not cater to him. Yet, Mary could have likely stopped the burnings if she wished, and it will remain a mystery why exactly she let the burnings continue. However, despite some sympathy for the Protestants in the places where the burnings took place, Catholics on the whole did not seem to be affected by the numbers of burnings, nor did they take up arms against the crown, which was an act that Englishmen were not unlikely to do when the occasion suited them. As stated by Haigh, "Protestants were horrified, many committed

²⁸ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993), 231.

Catholics approved; the rest watched curiously as the law took its course.”²⁹

Yet despite this lapse in Mary's rule dealing with religion, on the whole Mary successfully met the needs of the English people's religion, keeping in mind that much had changed in between the period of Henry's schism and her rule. Her methods for reintroducing more Catholic elements into England not only expressed a more Protestant form of education and cut away of some of the trimmings of Catholicism, but also helped retain those elements which the people loved best. On the whole, the English people approved of this change, particularly judging by their quickness to return their churches to a more pro-Catholic state, with some exceptions. Yet Mary also failed in some aspects of her rule, particularly in regards to her marriage despite her best intentions. Philip ultimately was a drain on England's resources and, more importantly, did not provide Mary with an all-crucial heir that was necessary to sustain her reign and the Catholic religion. Even if Mary had a child, if it was a male, there was a high probability that Philip would have taken the child back to Spain, an act which would have most likely alienated the English people from the heir. If Mary had married an Englishman, chances were higher that she would have had an heir since her husband would have been close to her. It would have also most likely prevented the strain on resources and, more importantly, the loss of Calais. After her second “pregnancy,” Mary fell ill and eventually died after her short but significantly influential reign, with Cardinal Pole dying within hours as well. Hence even though Mary was able to restore Catholicism to a people that willingly embraced the return of their religion, ultimately her untimely death and lack of an heir would allow the way for her half-

²⁹ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1993), 234.

sister, Elizabeth, to take the throne. While if Mary had a more Catholic heir or lived longer, is it likely that she would not have been criticized for the burnings of heretics, a tactic that Elizabeth would use as well with far less criticism. Elizabeth's reign would lead to the eventual persecution of Catholics and the removal of state approval from this religion, by fair means or foul, as the Protestant queen claimed the throne of England.

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