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The Saying of John Late Duke of Northumberland upon the Scaffold, 1553

W. K. Jordan and M. R. Gleason

PERHAPS THE SINGULAR VIRTUE of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, was that he failed to employ immediately on Edward VI's death the military power which he and his fellow Councillors could muster. He seemed paralyzed in will and completely wanting in that rash confidence which had usually marked the character of this, the foremost professional soldier in the realm. More accurately perhaps, it may be said that the Duke, when the test of conspiracy — of treason — came, was unwilling to plunge the realm into what might have been a bloody and dreadful civil war in which religion would have been the animating issue. This much of grace and civic virtue may be claimed for this usually harsh and ruthless man. And this is, indeed, saying a great deal, for the fabric of Tudor society might well have been torn apart.

This essay is an attempt to make perhaps a little clearer the reasons and purposes which lie obscurely about the actions and the thinking of the Duke in the last and critical days of his life. Above all, of course, we are concerned with his still amazing renunciation of the Protestant faith in which he had publicly stood — especially perplexing because Northumberland had lent his immense power to the direct support of evangelical Protestantism, now gaining strength apace and threatening to engulf the centrist leadership of men like Cranmer and Somerset. All this he renounced in the confessional and in the last baring of his tortured soul in his speech from the block — and even more, for he was impelled to declare in effect that he had remained a secret Catholic through all these tumultuous years.

An effort will also be made to trace out the amazingly rapid dissemination of the "Confession," which exultantly proclaimed the Duke's return to the Roman Catholic faith. We shall see that edition after edition, each derived from the official English version, was quickly prepared and printed all over Western Europe within a few weeks after

the execution of the Duke. Nonetheless, it can be said that this great propaganda effort failed, largely because the Marian government scarcely knew how to use it and, quite as importantly, remained uncertain whether it dared embrace the reputation of one who had long been accurately regarded as the prime enemy of the ancient faith in England.

I. The Web of Treason

The political philosophy of the Duke of Northumberland, if he really had one, may be described as enigmatically muddled, while the true structure of his religious faith, if he ever lent it ordered consideration, can only be regarded as confusedly erratic. In earlier works we have discussed these matters in some detail for the childhood years of Edward VI when Dudley, then Earl of Warwick, was conspiring to set aside Somerset, the King's uncle and the Lord Protector, and for the later years of the reign when his powers lay largely unchecked by either the King or the Privy Council. We have suggested as well that towards the close of the reign the King was beginning to grasp the substance of his regality, certainly with the encouragement of his most powerful minister, and that it was the King who forced on Northumberland and the Council a strange and surely illegal alteration of the ordered succession that, if not altered, would have brought Mary Tudor to the throne.¹

This really fanatical determination of Edward, near death from tuberculosis, sprang solely from his quite correct conviction that Mary

¹ W. K. Jordan, *Edward VI: The Young King; The Protectorship of the Duke of Somerset* (London: Allen & Unwin; and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968); *Edward VI: The Threshold of Power; The Dominance of the Duke of Northumberland* (London: Allen & Unwin; and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970). These works will be cited as Jordan, *Edward VI*, vols. I and II, respectively.

The following abbreviations have been used in footnotes:

Cal.S.P.For.: *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Edward VI, 1547-1553 . . . , and . . . of the Reign of Mary, 1553-1558 . . .*, ed. William B. Turnbull, London, 1861.

Cal.S.P.Span.: *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain . . .*, XI (1553), ed. Royall Tyler, London, 1916.

HMC: Historical Manuscripts Commission publications.

OED: *Oxford English Dictionary*.

S.P.Dom., Edw.VI: Public Record Office: State Papers Domestic.

would employ every effort to destroy the Reformation which their father had begun in somewhat reluctant and eccentric stages and which Edward had so rapidly and steadily advanced, as he sought to plant Christ's Church in the realm. So deep and sincere was Edward's faith that he was willing to risk a grave constitutional crisis in a desperate effort to save the Protestant Establishment in England. In support of this policy, steadily and skilfully pursued by the King, Northumberland had from the outset been a warm and consistent advocate of the evangelical — the ultra-Protestant — party in the Church of England, which was not content with the more cautious, tolerant, and centrist sentiments of Somerset, Cranmer, and Ridley, among others who were, quite correctly, fearful of the divisive power of evangelical Protestantism. The most committed and fervent of the supporters of the evangelical party, led by men like Hooper, Latimer, Lever, and Knox, was the Duke of Northumberland, animated one would suppose by his own religious convictions and seeking to further the advancement of the spiritual wishes of his King.

We have to search the character and policy of the Duke for some reasonable explanation of the fact that the whole content of his policy was solemnly repudiated by him in the last hours of his life and then again publicly renounced moments before his execution took place. It is this staggering set of facts with which we have now to deal, this amazing apostasy that we have now to consider. In order to do so we should first comment on Northumberland's religious policy during his tenure of power and then lend close examination to such facts as can be established and to such speculations as may be ventured regarding his final "Confession." Our quest for explanation is somewhat hampered by the fact that Northumberland was ill-educated and really not much more than semi-literate, which doubtless accounts for the paucity of his personal papers, and that he tended to express himself abruptly, and usually angrily, in most of the conversations with others which have been credibly reported.

It is to be remembered that Dudley, in weaving the net of conspiracy about Somerset, had given some measure of assurance to the remaining Romanists who were near the seats of power. Wriothesley and Arundel were restored to the Council, while such known Catholics as Southwell and Sir Thomas Arundell basked in Warwick's momentary favor. It was widely believed that both Gardiner and Bonner were about to be released, while Hooper was gravely disturbed

by the countenance now being afforded to Roman Catholics, fearing indeed a violent alteration in religion. These momentary Romanist flirtations were abruptly ended when Warwick revealed his true policy in very explicit terms in a statement issued in the King's name to all the bishops, reminding all men that the Book of Common Prayer was the usage of the Church of England as ordained by act of Parliament and was to be used by all persons within the realm.² Within a few weeks, therefore, the hopes of the Catholics had been dashed, the conservative crown officials had been dismissed, and Northumberland, his power quickly established, veered towards the overt support of evangelical Protestantism, from which almost to the end of the reign he never again deviated.

Symbolically, as well as actually, Northumberland's most decisive intervention in the interests of the evangelical party within the Church was the resolve taken in May 1550 to appoint the great Hooper to the see of Gloucester. Hooper was the spiritual leader of the party, was sustained by an immense fortitude of body and spirit, possessed strong personal links with the Continental Reformation, and was completely honest in his appraisal of himself and the needs of England. His courage and his intensity of purpose are both suggested by the unseemly controversy which threatened to divide the Church because of Hooper's scruples on the language of episcopal ordination and by his bitter attack on the validity of the vestments which he was required to wear. This damaging brawl was settled only after the King, Northumberland, and the Council, at various stages, simply imposed a compromise solution which was a moral victory for this formidable reformer.

In all aspects of ecclesiastical policy Northumberland's favor was steadily bestowed upon the evangelical group within the Church. John Bale, perhaps the greatest of the propagandists for the Reformation, gained the Duke's favor and was advanced to a bishopric in Ireland, though both Cranmer and Somerset had withheld patronage because Bale was as fanatical as he was pugnacious. So, too, John Ponet, who had embraced the extreme Protestant position of which Hooper was the moral leader, was advanced rapidly by Northumberland until, on Gardiner's deprivation, he was translated from Rochester to the great see of Winchester. Even less comprehensibly, John Knox, violently anti-Romanist and absolutely uncompromising in his Calvinism, en-

² S.P.Dom., Edw.VI, ix, 57; Stow MS.142, f. 16.

joyed Northumberland's complete favor until the fearless Scot, now doubtful of the Duke's sincerity, laid him under scathing indictment. These are but instances of the Duke's policy and of the powerful aid he steadily lent to the evangelical party within the Church, all betokening, one would have supposed, his warm and sturdy Protestantism.

So too, in larger matters of policy Northumberland's strength was always thrown to the support of the evangelical group, so successfully and continuously that almost surely, had another three or four years been granted him, the Church of England would have possessed a structure and a spiritual tone indistinguishable from the Puritanism which very nearly triumphed just a generation later. It was Northumberland who by his pressure compelled a reluctant Cranmer to complete and to issue the stalwartly Protestant second Book of Common Prayer and to accept Knox's arrogant Rubric. It was Northumberland, too, who brought steady pressure to bear on the bishops to mend their policy and who in his assault on Tunstall seemed to be striking at the root of episcopacy itself. And it was the Duke who inspired the expropriation of all surplus church goods of value, one believes quite as much for the sake of the reform of faith as for the not very considerable yield to the coffers of the state. These, then, were the actions of the man, and surely it is by actions (works) that faith itself must be tested.

But in the last months of the reign it was clear that Northumberland had over-reached himself and that even the more extreme of the evangelical party were coming to fear the reckless secularism of his policy and, more importantly, to doubt the sincerity of his steady support of the true Church of Christ. There are many evidences of this change of mood, this erosion of confidence, among such great spokesmen for the evangelical party as Hooper, Ponet, Grindal, Latimer, Bradford, Knox, and Horne. For such men perhaps the most frightening of Northumberland's actions was his brutal assault on Tunstall and the great see of Durham. Tunstall was a humanist, a moderate man, a faithful servant of the Crown over many years, and he was at the seat of his faith an Henrician Catholic. The charge of misprision of treason levelled against him by Northumberland appears to have had little substance beyond the fact that the Bishop had been a friend and admirer of Somerset. The evidence adduced was too flimsy to support a trial, with the consequence that in late March 1552 Northumberland's

tactics were changed, and a bill was introduced in the House of Lords to deprive the ancient Bishop by Act of Parliament. It is significant that in the debates Cranmer lent courageous defence to Tunstall, though the measure was in the end driven through the Lords with only Cranmer and Stourton dissenting. But such pressure was unavailing in the Commons, which demanded that both Tunstall and his accusers be brought before them before they would proceed. This Northumberland admittedly feared to do, with the consequence that Tunstall was at last deprived by a commission comprised of the Chief Justice of the King's Bench (Cholmley) and six other lawyers, remaining in light imprisonment until the accession of Mary.³

This frightening exhibition of the employment of persistent and brutal power against a bishop who was greatly respected, even though moderately Catholic in sympathy, found no defenders amongst the leaders of the evangelical Anglicans. Even more shattering to the uncritical adulation and support which they had lent to Northumberland was his immediate attempt to divide the great diocese into two new bishoprics (Durham with 2,000 marks *p.a.* and Newcastle with 1,000 marks *p.a.*), while absorbing to the Crown the palatine power of the Bishop of Durham. As a sop to the evangelical party, Northumberland further proposed that Dean Horne, a vigorous critic of Tunstall on religious grounds, be given Durham, while Knox would receive Rochester, where he would serve as "a whetstone, to quicken and sharp the Bishop of Canterbury." But what the Duke could neither understand nor believe was that these were honest and rigidly disciplined men of faith, who were aghast at his policy and his most recent exhibition of ruthlessness. On 7 December 1552, Northumberland wrote to Cecil, groggily reporting that Knox had flatly refused episcopal appointment and that he possessed no trust in the Duke, having even questioned the sincerity of his Protestantism. Northumberland had in fact crumpled before the molten heat of Knox's strictures, for the great reformer had made it abundantly clear that he was persuaded that Northumberland possessed no real concern for the Church, save as he planned its further spoliation. He had been roughly handled by Knox, and the letter to Cecil tells us a great deal about the personality and character of the Duke. It is evident that he would collapse under severe pressure and righteous scorn.

³ The case is discussed at some length in Jordan, *Edward VI*, II, 381-385.

And righteous and scornful Knox had been, for Northumberland declared that he wished no more of the Scot: "I do return him again, because I love not to have to do with men which be neither grateful nor pleasurable. I assure you I mind to have no more to do with him but to wish him well." Almost pathetically bruised in spirit, Northumberland confided that Knox had said that he "cannot tell whether I am a dissembler in religion or not." All this, Northumberland continued, despite the fact that "I have for twenty years . . . [stood] to one kind of religion, in the same which I do now profess; and have, I thank the Lord, past no small dangers for it." All the hurting things that Knox had said left him in despair and made him think of the fate of his own father, "who, after his master was gone, suffered death for doing his master's commandments . . . and yet could not his commandment be my father's charge after he was departed this life."⁴ And then, to compound the Duke's tribulations, Horne had refused Durham with an insulting vehemence, while adding that he thought the King's chief minister to be a dissembler. Of Horne, too, Northumberland wished to hear no more, for the Dean had now become, in his view, a peevish man, a greedy and malicious man, "loose of his tongue and [one who] letteth not to talk upon his ale bench." He now wished for a "soberer man," who would not condemn "every man's doing and conscience but his own."⁵ The Duke of Northumberland possessed no further trust in the evangelical party of the Church; their trust in him, once so naively held, was shattered beyond repair.

These are documents of great importance to our consideration. They are intimately, almost pathetically, honest in their texture and language, for Northumberland was confiding to a young colleague in whom he imposed singular trust: "I have entered into the bottom of my care."⁶ There could have been no reason why he should have been deliberately untruthful regarding his faith when he tells us categorically that the charge of dissembling wounded him, particularly because, at no small danger to himself, for twenty years past he had stood as a witness to Protestantism. If true, this means that he had been a very early convert to Protestantism, for he places the date well before the passage in Parliament of the first great statute of Reformation, the Act of Suprem-

⁴ S.P.Dom., Edw.VI, xv, 66 (7 Dec. 1552), as quoted in P. F. Tytler, *England under the Reigns of Edward VI. and Mary* . . . (2 vols., London, 1839), II, 148-150.

⁵ S.P.Dom., Edw.VI, xv, 62 (3 Dec. 1552).

⁶ *Ibid.*, xviii, 2 (3 Jan. 1553); in Tytler, *England* (note 4 above), II, 154-156.

acy. Yet we know of no evidence which would suggest that John Dudley had found himself in any danger because of faith in the reign of Henry VIII, even during the months when the Six Articles were spasmodically enforced. It is possible, however, that he, with most of the realm, moved in his thinking, and in his faith, with the drift of events and with his royal sovereign's erratic swings of policy and faith — that he was in fact an Henrician politique without any very deeply imbedded doctrinal concerns, and that he may have thought himself in some measure of danger during the reactionary periods of his master's moods. All this is at once speculative and tenuous and seduces us not a little from the clear and unequivocal statement of the Duke to his confidant — and this Cecil most assuredly was — in early 1553. But his memory of his spiritual pilgrimage was to be very different indeed just seven months later, again under circumstances which in their nature provoke almost complete honesty of statement. We are compelled by the evidence to say that on one occasion or the other he was guilty of a gigantic and a still puzzling falsehood.

The sudden shift of evangelical opinion regarding Northumberland and his religious policy had, as we have seen, wounded and frightened the Duke. During the last six months of the King's life, too, he was under the steady fire of anonymous libels which accused him of aiming at the throne or which denounced his dissembling in religion.⁷ It seems certain, too, that he remained confident of the King's recovery until some not precisely ascertainable date, but very probably in February or March 1553. He remained loyal to the King; there is no evidence of any preparation for an alteration of the succession, and he lent warm encouragement to the King's widening concern with political and financial affairs.

Whether induced by the pressure and violent hatreds that bore increasingly against him or by his own physical deterioration, there is persuasive evidence that the Duke was rapidly losing his grasp on normal administration and that he was at least considering laying down his burdens of state. In 1553 Northumberland was just past fifty years of age and his health and vigor were surely giving way. A black mood of depression gripped him at about the time of the death of his favorite daughter-in-law, the wife of Ambrose Dudley, who "merry as any child could be in the evening" lay dead within a day from a seizure of

⁷ See Jordan, *Edward VI*, II, 428-434, for discussion of a sampling of these slanderous tracts.

"a great sweat."⁸ On his return from a perfunctory tour of the northern Borders, Northumberland retired to his "little house at Chelsea" where he was inaccessible, while delegating to others power to manage a "weighty and secret affair," probably meaning the study being made of the deflationary effect of two recent proclamations on the "fall of money." He excluded himself from this important consideration as one "who neither hath understanding nor wit meet for" the duty at hand, "nor body apt to render his duty, as the will and heart desireth."⁹

This black mood of melancholy, this paralysis of the springs of action, settling in during the summer of 1552, deepened as the King's illness developed and as the attacks by the leaders of the evangelical Protestants grew more strident and fearless. From this depression of spirit and action, Northumberland was never really to recover. From his "hide-a-way" in Chelsea he sought to explain to Cecil why he absented himself from Court and Council. It was ill health that accounted for his continuing absence.¹⁰ Indeed, the time had come to seek relief from his burdens, to escape "the multitude of cravers . . . that hangeth now daily at my gate for money" and favors. He found no comfort at the end of his life, after long travail in which he had served faithfully when health permitted.¹¹ And, while this mood still gripped him, he professed to his young friend, Cecil, his absolute loyalty to the King, which "I trust I can confirm myself as humbly as any subject upon the earth."¹²

During the last months, then, Northumberland was sick, very tired, and almost completely disillusioned. There was no evidence of thrusting ambition; rather there is compelling evidence that he wished to lay his burdens down. He lent full encouragement to the King to assume increasing responsibilities, while in these months he must have been further thrust into melancholia because of his sovereign's warm support of the evangelical party in the realm. There was no treason, no hint of vaulting ambition, no clinging to the substance of power during those tortured later months when the serious nature of Edward's illness

⁸ S.P.Dom., Edw.VI, xiv, 37 (1 June 1552) and 38 (2 June 1552).

⁹ HMC, *Salisbury MSS.*, I, 101-102 (23 Nov. 1552).

¹⁰ We have reckoned that during the last full year of the King's life Northumberland was at Court for not quite a third of the time (Jordan, *Edward VI*, II, 496).

¹¹ S.P.Dom., Edw.VI, xviii, 2 (3 Jan. 1553); in Tytler, *England* (note 4 above), II, 155.

¹² S.P.Dom., Edw.VI, xviii, 9 (23 Jan. 1553).

became only too evident. The imperious tone and language were gone. Northumberland, probably "fully sensing that he had ruled badly and was hated by most men of the realm, wished in his heart to lay down those sovereign tasks to which he had once aspired, but which were now his sore burdens."¹²

But these "sore burdens" Northumberland was never able to lay down, while to the steadily failing health of the King there was now added the crushing burden of treason as the Duke lent his full support, whether reluctantly or not, to Edward's determination so to alter the succession as to exclude Mary Tudor from the throne. The succession was in law established in the order of Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth, subject to such restrictions as Henry VIII might by will or letters patent place on it. Henry's will had confirmed the order and extended it in such wise as to cover what must have seemed the wildest of improbabilities: to the three Grey sisters by seniority, and then to their cousin, Margaret Clifford. Edward, so far as we know without taking legal or conciliar advice, was convinced that the Henrician precedent enabled a reigning monarch to devise the crown by will, quite ignoring the fact that Henry's own powers were specifically vested in him by Act of Parliament, that as a minor he could not draw a valid will, and that it was treason to change the order of succession so carefully set out in his father's will.

At an uncertain date, but possibly as early as January or February 1553, Edward had drafted in his own hand a *Devise* of the crown, setting aside the claims of his two sisters, because of his fanatical determination to bar the Roman Catholic Mary from the throne. This draft of the *Devise* therefore ordered the succession in his own male heir, and then in the non-existent heirs male of five collateral descendants of Henry VIII: Frances, Duchess of Suffolk; her three daughters, Jane, Catherine, and Mary; and Margaret Clifford. Then, some weeks later, when it was clear that his death was not far off, his determination was accomplished by a single insertion in the document of the phrase, "to the Lady Jane and her heirs male." Thus the crown was left to Jane Grey.

We find no evidence that the fateful marriage of the Lady Jane Grey to Guildford Dudley had been arranged by Northumberland in order to gain assistance for a contemplated assault on the law of

¹² Jordan, *Edward VI*, II, 498.

the succession. This was to be a matter which was in the mind of the King. Dudley was rather seeking, in the sixteenth-century tradition, to provide more solid bases for the wealth and position of his family. Thus, one of his sons had been married to Somerset's daughter in 1550 despite the deepening animosity between the two fathers. In 1552 Northumberland had sought Margaret Clifford as a bride for his remaining unmarried son, Guildford, though the Earl of Cumberland refused his consent despite the intervention of the King and Privy Council on the Dudley behalf. His personal alliance with the Duke of Suffolk was greatly strengthened by the marriage arranged between Suffolk's daughter, the Lady Jane Grey, and Guildford Dudley, while his daughter Catherine was to be wedded to Lord Hastings. And, finally, to knit more firmly the family alliances in the Privy Council, Catherine Grey was to be joined with Pembroke's son, Lord Herbert. While the preliminary discussion and wrangling had been begun some weeks before, with the full knowledge and approbation of the King, these tortuous negotiations were brought to conclusion in a triple marriage on 21 May 1553. With this interlocking network of marriages the *arriviste* Northumberland had completed the high placing of his family; no more than that, we may with some confidence believe, was for the time-being intended.¹⁴

Then, about three weeks before his now imminent death, the King commanded the presence of the Chief Justice and the law officers before him, handing them the altered *Devise* with instructions to draft it as his formal will. When Montague and his colleagues protested that this would be to draw them into treason, it was the King himself who applied inexorable pressure on them to obey, and in sixteenth-century England the subject did not defy the direct command of his sovereign. The judges did as they were bidden, Montague confessing that, "being in great fear as ever I was in my life before, seeing the King so earnest," he resolved to obey but to have no part in the execution of the document.¹⁵ Then it was that the reluctant Cranmer, the Lord Chancellor, the Privy Council, twenty-two peers of the realm, the Lord Mayor of London and the aldermen, leading London merchants, and all other notables who could be found were dragooned by the King to endorse the document, promising "by our oaths and honours to observe, fully

¹⁴ See *ibid.*, II, 511-516, where we have discussed the evidence and the chronology more fully.

¹⁵ HMC, MSS. of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, pp. 4-5.

perform, and keep" the ordering of the succession as commanded by a dying and hysterical monarch, who was resolved that the Princess Mary should be barred from the throne.¹⁰

We can never know with certainty — too much evidence was destroyed, too little recorded in these tumultuous days when the King was dying — but the sources which we do have suggest most strongly that the decision to alter the succession was the King's and that Northumberland found himself overwhelmed by a "gigantic treason" and facing predictable disaster when he undertook to carry out the King's implacable resolution. The Duke had kept Mary apprised of the progress of the King's illness and seems to the very end to have assumed that the succession would follow the prescription of Henry VIII. Northumberland organized no conspiracy, for which he had always demonstrated lively talents; he did not undertake to marshal the armed forces; he knew that the sympathy and support of a majority of the Council could not be counted on; and he was quite untouched by the religious preoccupation which made his sovereign so overwhelmingly resolute during the closing days of his life. Rather he sought to do the King's will and in so doing mired himself in an awful treason.¹⁷

The end, so often already bruited about in London, came for Edward on 6 July when, supported in Henry Sidney's arms, he uttered his last words: "I am faint. Lord have mercy upon me, and take my spirit." The public announcement was delayed for two days so the Council could make its dispositions and if possible apprehend Mary, who "warned by a friend" had on 3 July fled from her seat at Hunsdon (Herts) to Kenninghall (Norfolk) where she could rely on the sup-

¹⁰ John Gough Nichols, *Literary Remains of King Edward the Sixth* (Roxburghe Club, 2 vols., London, 1857; reprint, New York, [1964]), II, 572-573. Cecil, who had been mysteriously ill for some time, was commanded to attend and lent his reluctant signature. With characteristic prudence he assembled a memorandum in twenty-two heads, excusing his behavior, suggesting that while lending nominal support to Northumberland he was actively engaged in raising strength for the Princess Mary. He had revealed to Arundel, Petre, and Darcy his intention to flee, having been reminded by Cheke that Socrates, "being in prison, was offered to escape and flee and yet he would not. I read the dialogue, whose reasons indeed did stay me." Cecil's conferences and machinations may certainly be dated just before and just after Northumberland's departure for East Anglia on 14 July (Lansdowne MS.104, I, 1). See also *Nuntiatuiberichte aus Deutschland, 1533-1559* . . . , XIII (ed. Heinrich Lutz, Tübingen, 1959), 314-315: Dandino to Monte, Brussels, 15 July 1553.

¹⁷ Here we follow Jordan, *Edward VI*, II, 514-517.

port of powerful gentlemen and, as importantly, be near the coast if she were compelled to take refuge abroad. In London on 8 July the Council commanded the sheriffs and justices of the nearby counties to assemble their forces in order to "preserve the realm from the tyranny of foreign wars" and to "stand fast" in defence of the late King's ordering of the succession.¹⁸ Two days later the Lady Jane, almost against her own will, was taken from Syon House by river to the Tower, where in the presence of Northumberland, Pembroke, Northampton, Huntingdon, and Arundel she was formally told of the change in the succession. The household troops were immediately sworn to her, the imperial ambassador was informed, and this shy, though precocious, girl was hastily proclaimed as Queen, with, apparently, little visible sympathy in London.¹⁹

Late in the same fateful day (10 July) news reached London that Mary had safely arrived in East Anglia and that she had already proclaimed herself Queen, called on the nobility for their support, and informed the Emperor of her need of his assistance and protection. This the Council countered on the next day by a sharply worded letter informing her of Jane's succession as commanded by the late King's will, and as endorsed by the Council and most of the nobility of the realm. Lest her actions and presence stir the "baser sort of people," she was further warned that Northumberland and Northampton would shortly proceed "with a convenient force unto the parts of Norfolk" to secure obedience.²⁰ But late on the same day Northumberland must have been sorely disturbed by the news from his sons, Warwick and

¹⁸ HMC, *Seventh Report*, App., p. 609 (Molyneux MSS.), this copy being addressed to Surrey.

¹⁹ John Stow, *The Annales, or Generall Chronicle of England . . .* (London, 1565, 1615), p. 610; Leonhard Eppen, "Der hansische Syndikus Heinrich Sudermann aus Köln," *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, VI (1876), 45-46; Estienne Perlin, *Description des royaumes d'Angleterre et d'Ecosse* (Paris, 1558; reprinted by Bowyer and Nichols, London, 1775; English translation in *Antiquarian Repertory*, ed. F. Grose and T. Aske, IV [London, 1809], 502-514), pp. 14-16. Perlin, a young ecclesiastic and physician, was visiting in London during these critical days. He noted that the proclamation of Queen Jane was made almost covertly. The people "neither made any great feasts, nor expressed any great enthusiasm, nor was one bonfire made" in London. Perlin was critical too of the amazing lassitude of Northumberland, whose only chance of prevailing was to dispense coin to the people and then to move immediately against Mary. Instead, the Duke allowed himself to be taken in a craven fashion, and as a result found himself in the hands of the hangman.

²⁰ Cotton MSS., Galba, xii, f. 250.

Sir Robert, who had been sent forward with a small force of light horse to intercept Mary, that on their first contact with troops moving to Mary's defence, their own band had suffered heavy desertions and had been compelled to withdraw in the face of superior power.²¹

The Council was severely shaken, too, by advices received on 12 and 13 July that the great gentle families of Norfolk and Suffolk had declared for Mary and that forces were gathering in her name, and under powerful gentry and peers, in scattered parts of England. Particularly ominous was the report that Sir Edward Hastings was raising Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire for the Princess and that the lusty Sir Peter Carew had proclaimed her in Devonshire. The fact was, as the Council now sensed, that a quite spontaneous, and rapidly spreading, movement was under way to lend armed support, not so much out of loyalty to Mary as to the ordered succession as ordained by Henry VIII with the approbation of Parliament. Legitimism was about to triumph in England.

Just a week after the King's death it was evident to Northumberland and the Council that any hope for the peaceful succession of the Lady Jane was gone. On that day too it was the Duke's assessment that in and near London there was sufficient force under command, composed mostly of the professional bands of the conciliar nobility, to defeat the undisciplined and lightly armed forces as yet at Mary's disposal. But Northumberland knew full well that the Council was deeply divided on policy, that several of its members were untrustworthy, and that the three Councillors most experienced in command (Bedford, Pembroke, and Shrewsbury) had all expressed their opposition to the alteration of the succession. The fact is that there was no one amongst his colleagues on the Council whom he quite dared despatch with the force available, while he understood full well the risk of betrayal should he take the field command as all of the Council consistently urged.

There was, indeed, no other recourse, and once Northumberland's mind was made up, on 13 July, he acted with his accustomed vigor. His retinue assembled at Durham Place, the wagons and arms were broken out, and Newmarket was designated as the assembling point for troops to be sent forward by his colleagues in the Council.²² While his

²¹ Robert Dudley's force numbered 300 to 400 horse.

²² Stow, *Annales* (note 19 above), p. 610; *The Diary of Henry Machyn . . . from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, ed. J. G. Nichols (Camden Soc. XLII, London, 1848),

force was gathering, Northumberland held his last meeting with the Council, reminding them that he left his family and his fortune in their care. He trusted their honor. He exhorted them, we are told, that it was in God's cause and from "fear of the papistry's re-entrance" that they were driven to arms. The Lords once more assured him of their fidelity, to which he replied with that grim humor for which he was known, "I pray God it be so . . . let us go to dinner." That night the forces were mustered, and on the 14th the Duke set out from London with about 600 men, Gates following him closely with 500 in his command, and the artillery and supply train in motion a little later.²³

In all, it seems sure, Northumberland set out with a force not exceeding 2,000 horse, and with not more than 1,000 foot in train, to which another 1,000 foot was added on the march, while the scouting party so ill commanded by his sons had shrunk in number to about 300 men. In total, then, his striking force amounted to not much more than 4,300 troops, many, as it proved, of dubious loyalty. On this strange venture into treason, brilliant field general that he was, Northumberland must have known that his striking force was woefully inadequate.²⁴

Moving rapidly along the Great North Road, Northumberland reached Ware late in the evening and paused there most of a day, waiting for his train to come up and also, and quite vainly, for the first of the county levies to join him. Instead, he had the alarming report that Hastings was moving out of Buckinghamshire with a powerful

p. 30; *The Chronicle of Queen Jane and of Two Years of Queen Mary . . .*, ed. J. G. Nichols (Camden Soc. XLVIII, London, 1850), pp. 5-6.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8; Stow, *Annales* (note 19 above), p. 611; Machyn, *Diary* (note 22 above), p. 36.

²⁴ The estimates of the size of Northumberland's army vary wildly, as is usually the case with sixteenth-century statistics. The imperial ambassador in London, whose intelligence was reliable, on 19 July placed his estimate at 1,000 horse and 3,000 foot. He thought Mary's followers to be more numerous (*Cat.S.P.Span.*, XI, 93-96). A Hanseatic agent placed the number at 5,000 horse and 10,000 to 12,000 foot, noting that in his baggage the Duke carried two "Karren mit struppen" in order to hang those who lent support to Mary (Ennen, "Der hansische Syndikus" [note 19 above], pp. 45-46). Burnet places the total number in the Duke's command at 2,000 horse and 6,000 foot (Gilbert Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, ed. Nicholas Pocock [7 vols., Oxford, 1865], II, 383), while Commendone, an Italian papal agent in London, thought the Duke had taken 2,500 horse and 8,000 foot when he set out from London (Giovanni Francesco Commendone, *Successi delle attioni del regno d'Inghilterra . . .*, in C. V. Malfatti, *The Accession . . . of Mary Tudor . . .* [Barcelona, 1956], p. 14).

force of 4,000, which was now to hang on the rear of Northumberland's army. Protestant Coventry and Gloucester had declared for Mary, while even Bishop Hooper, the moral leader of the evangelical party, had despatched men to Mary's aid. Even more ominous, indeed decisive, was the news that Norwich had declared for Mary, followed almost immediately by the unsettling intelligence that six warships lying off Yarmouth to forestall any attempt at flight by Mary had declared for her, providing heavy ordnance and a thousand men to Mary's cause.²⁵ Northumberland nonetheless pressed on to Cambridge which he reached on Sunday, 16 July. There he asked for the prayers of the University and there, at his request, Vice-Chancellor Sandys preached in support of the alteration in the succession. On the day following, Northumberland made an irresolute march on Bury St. Edmunds, but could press no farther since his force was shaken by the quite false rumors that in Mary's battle camp there were already 30,000 men with more thousands on their way. With his own tiny army now deserting in considerable numbers, the Duke fell back on Cambridge and his ruin.²⁶

During this brief period of Northumberland's feeble effort and growing paralysis of strength, the Council in London was, if possible, even more undecided: it was from the moment of Northumberland's departure from London faction-ridden and faithless. Of all its members, only poor Suffolk, who was left in command of the Tower, remained in his confused way loyal to the alteration of the succession which the late King, and now the Duke, sought to impose on the Council and the realm. He had risked much: the life and fortune

²⁵ *The Victoria History of the County of Buckingham*, ed. William Page (4 vols., London, 1905-1927), IV, 527; Stow, *Annales* (note 19 above), p. 611; *Chronicle of Queen Jane* (note 22 above), pp. 8-9; *Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London*, ed. J. G. Nichols (Camden Soc. LIII, London, 1852), p. 80, suggests (erroneously) that the halt at Ware was for four or five days.

²⁶ Stow, *Annales* (note 19 above), p. 611; *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 91-92, 94. According to a later (early 1555) recapitulation of events, Mary had been proclaimed at Bury at least as early as 12 July; news of "what hurly-burly" Northumberland had made in Smithfield reached Lincolnshire while he was still en route to Cambridge, and orders to muster forces for his support were flouted. And Mary was reported to have sent the Duke a message that she "would give him his breakfast, dinner, and supper. And if that would not serve, her grace had a *talbete* to bite him by the back"—presumably a reference to Shrewsbury, who had opposed the alteration to the succession. (Frederic Madden, "Petition of Richard Troughton . . . relating to the Share Taken by Him in the Duke of Northumberland's Plot," *Archaeologia*, XXIII [1831], 18-46.)

of his daughter, the Lady Jane, and his own person in what now seemed to be a truly desperate gamble. The prime movers in the deliberate betrayal of Northumberland were Pembroke, who commanded great personal and military power, and the Earl of Arundel, who had been steadily humiliated and badgered by the Duke. Both men had signed the alteration without known protest, but Northumberland had scarcely cleared the City limits before the two earls secured their release from Suffolk's control of the Tower, making their way to Pembroke's London house, Baynard's Castle, where the conciliar intrigues were hereafter centered.

When news reached London that Northumberland had failed completely in the field and that the Earl of Oxford had now joined Mary with his force, Arundel found courage to denounce (and renounce) the Duke in a hastily assembled gathering of the Council at Pembroke's house. He submitted that they all, whether from fear or choice, had fallen into a great error. Though Northumberland had imprisoned him and had really sought his life, he nonetheless now felt required to speak for "the safety of the commonwealth and liberty of this kingdom." Northumberland, he submitted, cared nothing either for the kingdom or for true religion. Mary, as they all knew, possessed the just and lawful title to the throne, whereas Northumberland was moved by no other motive than a thirst for power. They of the Council were wrongly persuaded to attempt an alteration in the succession. To rectify the mistake into which they had been drawn would not prove difficult, even though "the Duke be now in arms," for these arms "be at our commandment, if we trust ourselves." This was all the more so because "the greater part of his army has forsaken him." They must rectify their own mistake and sin by lending their loyalty to Mary, for otherwise the country will be plunged into a bloody civil war which will in turn bring foreign intervention into English affairs.²⁷

In this eloquent plea Arundel enjoyed the full and vehement support of Pembroke, as well as the approval of such Councillors present at the meeting as Shrewsbury, Bedford, Cheyney, Paget, Mason, and Petre. Furthermore, the Lord Mayor, the sheriffs, and such aldermen of London as could be gathered on an hour's notice lent their support to the proposal that Mary be proclaimed in London on that very day,

²⁷ Royal MS.17.A.19, as quoted by J. G. Nichols, "The Life of Henry Fitzallen, Last Earle of Arundell . . .," *Gentleman's Magazine*, CIII:2 (1833), 119-120; Malfatti, *Accession* (note 24 above), pp. 14-17.

19 July. The proclamation was accordingly drafted, and the Council, with the Mayor and his brethren attending, rode at once to the Cheap where, while it was being read, the noise of the assembled crowd was so great that the words could not be heard. In the evening of this memorable day Arundel and Paget, accompanied by thirty horse, set out to inform Mary of what had happened, while the Council and the Lord Mayor, with his brethren, moved to St. Paul's where a *Te Deum* was sung.²⁸

The tension was broken, the mounting crisis had been suddenly relaxed, and all men sensed that England had averted the awful danger of a civil war animated by religious causes. When news of the Council's action reached the streets there was what can only be described as a spontaneous explosion of joy and a celebration that rocked the City throughout the night.

In the City of glad London, proclaimed most joyfully
Where caps and silver plenteously about the streets did fly;
The greatest joy and most gladness that in this realm might be . . .
Such cheer was made in every street as no man can express,
In setting forth wine and plenty of meat and fires of much gladness.²⁹

Joy, we are informed by many sources, knew no bounds and for this fleeting moment Protestant found himself separated not at all from Catholic:

The number of caps that were thrown up . . . were not to be told. The Earl of Pembroke threw away his cap full of angelots.³⁰ I saw myself money was thrown out at windows for joy. The bonfires were without number, and what with shouting and crying of the people, and ringing of the bells, there could no one hear almost what another said, besides banquetings and singing in the streets for joy.

Even the discreet Hanseatic agent felt it appropriate and diplomatically safe to break out two casks of wine, while a clerk in the Venetian embassy tells us that in the streets "men ran hither and thither, bonnets

²⁸ Stow, *Annales* (note 19 above), pp. 611-612; *A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors . . . by Charles Wriothesley . . .*, ed. W. D. Hamilton, II (Camden Soc. n.s. XX, London, 1877), 88-89; *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 95-96. Parsons tells us that both Arundel and Paget urged upon Mary the view that Northumberland should not be pardoned ("The Memoirs of Father Robert Persons," ed. J. H. Pollen, Catholic Record Society: *Miscellanea*, II [London, 1906], 54-56).

²⁹ *An Invective against Treason* (1553); printed in Hyder E. Rollins, *Old English Ballads, 1553-1625 . . .* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), p. 6.

³⁰ An "English piece coined at Paris by Henry VI" (OED).

flew into the air, shouts rose higher than the stars, fires were lit on all sides, and all the bells were set a-pealing, and from a distance the earth . . . looked like a Mongibello [*sic*]" (i.e., Mt. Etna).³¹

Meanwhile Northumberland, in Cambridge, his force already greatly reduced, was receiving discouraged notes from the Council, climaxed at about 5 p.m. on 20 July by the catastrophic intelligence that Queen Mary had been proclaimed in London by his colleagues. Within an hour, too, orders were received in Cambridge, addressed to the mayor and other officials, that they make the proclamation for Mary immediately, while in a separate message the Council sought to explain to Northumberland the compelling reasons for this *volte face* and required him to conform his own conduct to their own. After a hurried consultation with his closest companions in the field, including Huntingdon, Clinton, and Lord Grey, the Duke indicated that he had determined to offer no resistance to the command of his conciliar brethren. Rather, the proclamation of Queen Mary was read in Northumberland's presence, while his son (Warwick) and son-in-law (Sir Henry Sidney) were dispatched post-haste to Queen Mary in order to pledge his submission and allegiance. During the night it seems certain that Northumberland at least contemplated flight, for when some of the King's guard on their own authority arrested Sir John Gates, later to die with the Duke, they saw Northumberland fully accoutered and ready for the road.³²

But Northumberland, possibly steadied by Edwin Sandys, determined neither to offer resistance to arrest nor to flee the realm. Sandys had, indeed, been his most sensible and fearless confidant during the few days that had elapsed since he had delivered his sermon in support of the alteration in the succession. It was thought important to have

³¹ Harl. MS. 353, #44, f. 139, as quoted in *Chronicle of Queen Jane* (note 22 above), pp. 11-12; Machyn, *Diary* (note 22 above), p. 37, from Cotton MSS., Vitellius, F, v, f. 19; Royal MS. 17.B.xxviii; *Two London Chronicles from the Collections of John Stow*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (Camden Miscellany XII, London, 1910), p. 27; P[etrus] V[incentius], *Narratio historica* . . . ([Wittenberg, 1553]), reprinted in Simon Schard, *Historicum opus* . . . (4 vols. in 3, Basel, [1574]), II, 1883-1889 [1901-1907]; another ed., *Schardius redivivus sive Rerum Germanicarum scriptores varii* . . . (4 vols. in 3, Giessen, 1673), II, 631-635; *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 108; *Nuntiaturberichte* (note 16 above), XIII, 322-323, 324-325.

³² *Chronicle of Queen Jane* (note 22 above), pp. 9-10; *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 112-113; Wriothesley, *Chronicle* (note 28 above), II, 90; Hastings Robinson, ed., *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation* . . . (2 vols., Cambridge, 1846-1847), I, 367; Julius Terentianus to ab Ulmis, Strassburg, 30 Nov. 1553; Malfatti, *Accession* (note 24 above), pp. 20-23.

the sermon printed in London immediately as a propaganda piece. Thomas Lever stood by booted for the journey when one of the beadles entered with the news that Mary had been proclaimed. When arrested, Sandys attempted no defence of himself save to point out that he had "instructions warranted by the subscription of sixteen counsellors" and the assurance that he had founded his sermon squarely on the Word of God. Thereupon he resigned his office, surrendered his accounts and keys, and stood ready for the journey to London. Sandys's dignity and fearlessness stood, indeed, in marked contrast to Northumberland's somewhat whining submission when Arundel arrived on 21 July, directly from the Queen, with orders for his arrest. We are told that Northumberland fell down on his knees before the Earl and "desired him to be good to him, for the love of God." He begged Arundel too to remember that he had "done nothing but by the consents of you and all the whole Council," to which the Earl replied that he had been sent by the Queen, "and in her name I do arrest you." To the Duke's plea for mercy, he could only say, "My Lord . . . ye should have sought for mercy sooner. I must do according to my commandment." He then permitted Northumberland two hours in which to pace up and down in his "utter chamber," while steeling himself for the ignominious journey to London and the Tower.³³

Arundel, his command being rapidly reinforced on the journey, left Cambridge for London on 24 July, with Northumberland, three of his sons, Hastings, Sandys, Sir John Gates, Sir Thomas Palmer, and a few of the Duke's lesser followers as prisoners of state. Arundel stopped at Ware for the night, and then entered London on the afternoon of the next day, now leading a massive guard of 3,000 to 4,000 men, mostly light horse and spear-men. The entrance to the City was made through Bishopsgate, where the Duke was commanded to take off his cap and his crimson robe as a mark of respect for the citizens and to avoid altercations with them. From Bishopsgate to the Tower Wharf men were standing in full harness before every door, to keep in order "all the streets full of people, which cursed him and [were] calling him traitor without measure." A foreign observer tells us that Northumberland was subjected to ridicule and curses along the whole way, especially from women, bearing aloft pictures of the late King,

³³ Edwin Sandys, *The Sermons . . .*, ed. John Ayre (Cambridge, 1842), pp. ii-v; *Chronicle of Queen Jane* (note 22 above), pp. 10-11; *Grey Friars Chronicle* (note 25 above), pp. 80-81.

done in linen, who abused and reviled him for the imagined crime of having poisoned Edward VI. Indeed, one Hanseatic observer felt sure the Duke would have been clubbed or stoned to death had it not been for the determined vigilance of his guard. All men sensed the irony of events. Northumberland and his followers only a few days earlier had left London:

. . . like men they were, most fearful to behold;
Of force and cke of puissant power they seemed very strong;

while now London witnessed the complete ruin of the great Duke who stood before them as a traitor, whom

The people would in pieces tear, if they might have election;
The same for whom before they prayed, reviled was and cursed,
And he that long the swing hath swayed was now most vile and worst.⁸⁴

II. The Trial

Within a week after Northumberland entered the Tower, the government had without difficulty arrested or detained a total of no more than thirty-one persons who were suspected of some share in the Duke's clear and overt treason. Of these, nine were peers of the realm, one other, Bedford, having been briefly held and questioned.⁸⁵ In addition, Lady Jane Grey and the Duchess of Northumberland were detained, as were three of the bishops and the two principal law officers (Montague and Cholmley) who had yielded to Edward's command in the attempt to alter the succession. Three of Northumberland's sons and a son-in-law were all imprisoned. Such personal henchmen of the Duke as Sir John and Sir Henry Gates had been taken, as well as Sir Thomas and Sir Henry Palmer, and the charming but utterly irresponsible Sir John York. All the rest were civil servants like Cheke or gentry of dubious loyalty. In addition, a considerable

⁸⁴ *An Invective* (note 29 above), pp. 5-7; Wriothesley, *Chronicle* (note 28 above), II, 90-91; *Grey Friars Chronicle* (note 25 above), pp. 80-81; Machyn, *Diary* (note 22 above), p. 38; *Two London Chronicles* (note 31 above), p. 28; *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 120 (27 July 1553); Ennen, "Der hansische Syndikus" (note 19 above), p. 47; Theodor Hirsch, "Herr George Klefelt und seine Zeit," *Neue preussische Provinzial-Blätter*, II (1846), 170-171 (Klefelt had been sent to London earlier in the year as a Hanse representative).

⁸⁵ They were: Northumberland, Suffolk, Northampton, Huntingdon, Warwick, Ferrers, Clinton, Cobham, and Darcy. Hastings had been released by Arundel before entering the Tower.

number of lesser figures who had followed Northumberland in the field were released after questioning and were sent home with instructions to observe house arrest until further notice.³⁶

In fact, Queen Mary proceeded at the outset of her reign with great clemency. In a matter of days releases from prison were begun after rather sketchy examinations, while on 31 July Suffolk was given his release, as were all of Northumberland's sons save for Guildford, the husband of Lady Jane Grey. It was now becoming clear that amongst the peers only Northumberland and Northampton were to be brought to trial under charges of treason, while amongst the field officers only the Duke's henchmen — Sir John Gates and the irrepressible, and dangerous, Sir Thomas Palmer — stood in grave peril. Some days later, on 16 August, the Queen, in a private audience with Renard, the senior imperial ambassador in London, made it clear that she had no intention of bringing the Lady Jane to the block, since it was now established that hers was not a true marriage because of pre-contract with another and since she was not a willing party to the succession plot. Renard remarked most favorably on the Queen's great clemency, but urged that Northampton be tried as "one of the guiltiest" after the Duke and that the trials and punishments determined on be carried out promptly. In reply, the Queen mused that the Emperor might even wish her to spare Northumberland's life in order to establish her regime on the foundations of clemency.³⁷

To Renard's considerable annoyance, the Queen was in these days also skilfully advised by a papal agent, Giovanni Francesco Commendone, later to be elevated to a cardinalate. A Venetian, educated at Padua in civil law and rhetoric, Commendone secured an appointment to the papal household in 1551. He was shortly sent as a junior colleague of Cardinal Dandino to the Imperial Court, just as the crisis in the English succession gathered. When news of Edward's death came, he was sent on to England by Dandino, with the full approval of the

³⁶ Thus sixteen of Robert Dudley's followers at Lynn were released, and a number of lesser gentry were simply sent home with a warning to observe the peace; Darcy was quickly released. For instances, see *A Collection of State Papers . . . Left by William Cecill Lord Burghley . . .*, I (1542 to 1570), ed. Samuel Haynes (London, 1740), 162; *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, new ser., ed. J. R. Dasent (32 vols., London, 1890-1907), IV (1552-1554), 302, 305, 307, 312.

³⁷ *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 168 (16 Aug. 1553). We know of no basis for the suggested pre-contract. Already, it is clear, the Queen was depending principally on Renard as her most intimate adviser.



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De L'Isle, VC, KG, from his collection
at Penshurst Place, Kent, England*

PLATE I

JOHN DUDLEY, DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND

(This portrait cannot be substantiated; its provenance is unknown.)



YOW THAT THESE BE AS TS DO WEL BEHOLD AND SE
 MAY DEME WITHE EASE WHERE FOR HERE I MADE THEY BE
 WITHE BORDERS LIKE WHERE IN
 I BROFFERS NAIES WHOLST TO SERCE THE CROWN

*Reproduced by permission of the Society of
 Antiquaries of London from Archaeologia,
 XIII, 2nd ed. (1807), pl. III, facing p. 69*

PLATE II

INSCRIPTION ON A WALL OF BEAUCHAMP'S TOWER, IN THE TOWER OF LONDON,
 PRESUMABLY CARVED BY JOHN DUDLEY DURING HIS IMPRISONMENT

Pope and of Cardinal Pole. His instructions were necessarily vague, though he was to seek out Mary secretly, to lend her advice, and to inform the papacy of developments. Commendone left immediately, proceeding from Brussels to Gravelines and thence to London, being accompanied by two "valets" with a command of English and French. He quickly arranged secret contact directly with the Queen with the assistance of John Leigh, who had been a Roman Catholic refugee in Rome under Edward VI and who had previously been known to the papal agent. In later meetings, Queen Mary wished the agent to carry a private letter to the Pope with all speed, urging that Cardinal Pole should be sent to her. At the same time she suggested that Commendone delay his departure from London slightly until Northumberland's execution should occur, as it did three days later, providing testimony, incidentally, that the thought of clemency for the Duke was not in Mary's mind.³⁸

The immense weight of imperial counsel, as interpreted to her by that most brilliant of mid-sixteenth-century diplomatists, Simon Renard, was well established by the date of Northumberland's entrance into the Tower. Thus Renard on 24 July was strongly advising her not to employ the Roman service in the burial of the late King. Her sentiments, though holy, must be tempered by the fact that heresy is well and strongly established in her realm. She must not now precipitate difficulties in matters of faith, but must proceed with great caution, as indeed the Emperor has been obliged to do in Germany. When the time comes in England for a consideration of ecclesiastical matters, all stages must be met by parliamentary legislation in consultation with theologians, prelates, and churchmen.³⁹ This chastening advice was warmly endorsed by the Emperor himself, who warned that a hasty effort to restore the ancient faith would probably offend most of the Privy Council, alienate many of those who had supported her in the crisis of the succession, and surely lead to a violent reaction in London.⁴⁰

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 306; *Cal.S.P.For.*, 1553-1558, p. 14; Malfatti, *Accession* (note 24 above), pp. 14-17; Esprit Fléchier, *Œuvres complètes*, I, pt. 2 (Nîmes, 1782), "La Vie du Cardinal Jean-François Commendon," translated from the Latin of Graziani, pp. 29-30; E. H. Harbison, "French Intrigue at the Court of Queen Mary," *American Historical Review*, XLV:2 (April 1940), 542-543; and see Chapter V of this article for an account of Northumberland's "Confession" attributed to Commendon.

³⁹ *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 119.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 123 (29 July 1553).

Some days later Renard met with the Queen in private audience, simply advising her once more to proceed with great caution in all matters of religion and to win the hearts of her subjects by being a good Englishwoman. In reply, Mary reminded Renard that she had made it clear to the Edwardian government that she would never change her faith. "She wished to force no one to go to mass, but meant to see that those who wished to go should be free to do so." Her Council, she thought, would offer no serious objections, particularly since it was so intricately and strangely divided. She was amazed at these divisions in the Council, "whose members were accusing one another, trying to disculpate themselves, chopping and changing in such a manner that she was unable to get at the truth of what had happened with regard to the will of the King . . . or the plots that had been woven to her hurt."⁴¹

The Queen now felt securely enough seated in power and in the affection of her people to make a royal entrance into London, having for a fortnight remained at Framlingham and then at New Hall, her seat in Essex. On 2 August, Pembroke, Shrewsbury, and Winchester waited on the Queen there to crave pardon for their offences as Councillors and were permitted to kiss her hand and to join the force assembling to accompany her into her capital on the day following.⁴² Accompanied by 180 ladies and gentlemen, 740 guards in velvet coats, and a large armed force as guards, the great procession, with Arundel riding next her and bearing the sword of state while Sir Anthony Browne bore her train, and followed by the Princess Elizabeth and Edward Courtenay's mother, the entering company was met at Whitechapel by the Lord Mayor and his brethren. At St. Botolph's scaffolding had been erected on which stood one hundred poor children from Christ's Hospital, dressed in blue with red hats; one of them addressed the Queen to petition that they be taken within her care. The Queen was dressed in purple velvet, her skirts and sleeves embroidered in gold, her face being "more than middling fair, [and] her equipage was regal." Thence, with all church bells ringing and with

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 131: imperial ambassadors to Emperor, 2 Aug. 1553.

⁴² Four days later she admitted Pembroke and Winchester to her Privy Council, in order to learn the secrets of state and "to sweep away evil influences in this the beginning of her reign and win them over to her side as good vassals and subjects" (*ibid.*, p. 151).

the Tower ordnance thundering, Queen Mary was conducted to the Tower, where she was to reside for some time to come.⁴³

On the very day of Mary's triumphant entry into London, Renard advised that Northumberland should be brought immediately to trial and that all the facts pertaining to the late King's illness and death should be ferreted out. Even more importantly, he urged that it must be determined when Edward's will had been written, who had signed it, and under what circumstances. So important was it to ascertain the facts of this treason that, to be doubly sure, the *Devise* should probably be repealed by act of Parliament.⁴⁴ Just three days later the imperial ambassador reported with evident satisfaction that the charges against Northumberland were being drafted with all possible speed, while on 8 August he exultantly reported that the articles against the Duke had been employed in a private examination of him, when he "confessed generally most of the indictments against him," though he had "not yet declared who was the author and instigator of his practices."⁴⁵

The Emperor, who possessed an astonishing knowledge of English events, commended his ambassadors' handling of the Queen's affairs, and urged Renard to supply him with every detail of the proceedings against Northumberland. He wished to know as well of any diplomatic commitments from France which the Duke had enjoyed at the moment of the succession crisis, and more explicitly how the populace had reacted to Edward's funeral and the Queen's taking of the mass.⁴⁶ Renard now found it more difficult to gain private audience with the Queen, since the Tower was under constant public scrutiny, and he hoped that Mary might soon retire to Richmond for a season. When

⁴³ There are many accounts of this event. We have drawn principally on Wriothesley, *Chronicle* (note 28 above), II, 93-95; *Grey Friars Chronicle* (note 25 above), pp. 81-82; *Chronicle of Queen Jane* (note 22 above), p. 14; Perlin, *Description* (note 19 above), p. 19 (a student eye-witness); *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 151; Société d'Émulation pour l'Histoire et les Antiquités de la Flandre Occidentale [i.e., Société d'Émulation de Bruges]: *Annales*, ser. 1, III (1841-42), 248-255 (also an eye-witness account); P[etrus] V[incentius], *Narratio* (note 31 above), pp. 1887-1889 [1905-1907]; *Nuntiatursberichte* (note 16 above), XIII, 338: Dandino to Julius III; Malfatti, *Accession* (note 24 above), p. 24.

⁴⁴ *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 135: memoir attached by Renard to an outgoing despatch (2 Aug. 1553).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 152 and 157 (6 and 8 Aug. 1553).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 163: Emperor to imperial ambassadors, 14 Aug. 1553.

on 16 August he did secure a private audience, he was able once more to advise the Queen to limit punishment to the ringleaders and to "spare the multitude." He urged again that Northampton was after Northumberland one of the guiltiest of all. He could assure her, too, that the Emperor had never doubted the necessity of Northumberland's punishment, but had simply been concerned that she might wreak too heavy a vengeance on the Duke's followers. He reminded the Queen as well that he was unconvinced that the Lady Jane should stand free and doubted as well whether Elizabeth, known to be "clever and sly," could be left free as a gathering center for plots, factions, and Protestant machinations.⁴⁷

Despite Renard's pressure and advice, the government was proceeding slowly and certainly carefully with its examination of the principal political prisoners. And it was proceeding slowly as well in religious policy, the early official pronouncements having declared that the Queen wished to force no man's conscience. But this mood was shattered when on Sunday, 13 August, a really dangerous riot occurred at St. Paul's when Dr. Gilbert Bourne, preaching by the appointment of the Queen, prayed for the souls of men departed and bitterly denounced the imprisonment which Bishop Bonner had suffered. Despite the efforts of the Lord Mayor and aldermen, as well as of John Bradford, a stalwart Protestant preacher who was present, the tumult was for a short season uncontrolled, a thrown dagger narrowly missing Bourne's head and Bonner, present to hear himself extolled, barely escaping from a now angry mob. This riot, in the end brought under control by Bradford's pleas, severely shook the Marian government, particularly since it was now discovered that some of her own guard had "cursed and slandered" Bishop Gardiner, accusing him of being responsible for the appearance of the mass in London churches.⁴⁸ The extreme nervousness of the government likewise had the effect of hastening the legal processes against Northumberland and his supporters, even against some who were subsequently to be pardoned. Northumberland was to be brought to trial in a matter of five days. To strengthen Queen Mary the more, 700 to 800 horse were added to the royal guard and 200 foot were quietly armed for her service.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169 (16 Aug. 1553).

⁴⁸ Wriothesley, *Chronicle* (note 28 above), II, 97-98; *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 169-170.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

Several indictments had been gathered against the major figures accused of treason: Northumberland, Northampton, and Warwick. At Ware an indictment had been found on 14 August against the three for "machinating and compassing to depose the Queen from her crown and dignity . . . with arms and artillery," and for levying war against her there. A similar indictment, with the addition of the name of the Earl of Huntingdon, had been found at Bury where war had been levied against Queen Mary and where the title of Lady Jane to the crown was asserted. And finally, an indictment from Cambridge recited the treasonable offences, with the further allegation that the defendants had moved from Cambridge towards Framlingham, where the Queen then resided, "with the intention of depriving her of her royal state and dignity, and killing her there."⁵⁰ These indictments were on 17 August ordered to be delivered to the High Court on the following day, when the arraignments were made and the cases of Northumberland, Northampton, and Warwick tried and concluded.

The trials of these accused noblemen were conducted with all due gravity by the Duke of Norfolk, himself released from his long imprisonment and restored in title only a fortnight before. The attendance of the peers on this solemn duty was smaller than the government must have desired, only twenty-six (Norfolk included) of the fifty-six nobles in the realm answering to their names when the proceedings were begun. Five peers, the defendants included, were themselves in prison or under trial before the Court, while the remainder of those absent were either minors, or aged and ill, or, more commonly, simply avoiding an appearance at Westminster in these days of crisis.⁵¹ It is likewise noteworthy that very nearly half (eleven) of the peers present had been members of the Edwardian Privy Council or had held high administrative or military posts during Northumberland's recent regime. These were men who had quickly and skilfully made their peace with Mary, several with such adroitness that they had been appointed to the Queen's Council even at this early date.

On 18 August Northumberland and his co-defendants were arraigned on their indictments before Norfolk, sitting as High Steward. The Duke evidenced great reverence towards his judges and im-

⁵⁰ Deputy Keeper of Public Records, *Fourth Report*, App. II, pp. 232-234: "Baga de Secretis," Pouch xxi.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 234. We are assuming that Lord "Borowe" on the official list was William Lord Burgh.

mediately protested his faith and his allegiance to the Queen, whom he had admittedly grievously offended. Nor would he offer any "defence of himself." He only requested the opinion of the Court on two questions. The first was whether "a man doing an act by the authority of the Prince and Council, and by warrant of the Great Seal of England . . . may be charged for treason for any thing which he might do by warrant thereof." And, secondly, he enquired whether any such persons as were equally culpable in that crime, and "those, by whose letters and commandments he was directed in all his doings, might be his judges, or pass upon his trial at his death."⁵²

To the first of these questions it was answered that the Great Seal which he pleaded was not that of the lawful Queen of the realm, but of a usurper (Lady Jane), and hence was no defence. With respect to the second enquiry, it was held that even if others were as deeply touched as himself, "yet as long as no attainder were of record against them, they were nevertheless persons able in the law to pass upon any trial, and not to be challenged therefor, but at the Prince's pleasure."⁵³ The Duke spoke but few words more, seeing that "uttering any reasonable matter would little prevail," save to express once again his earnest repentance and to request Norfolk to seek mercy for him from the Queen. He then pleaded guilty to the indictments, as did the other prisoners arraigned with him. Thereupon, judgment of guilt of high treason was given by the Court. Northumberland then spoke again, begging his judges to solicit the mercy of the Queen and to grant him these requests: that he might have the death (by beheading) which noblemen had, "and not the other" (hanging), and that his sons might be spared, considering that they took the field at the command of their father. He petitioned too that he might consult with "some learned divine for the settling of his conscience" and, finally, that the Queen would send unto him "four of her Council for the discovery of some things which might concern the state." It was on this note of quiet courage and really majestic dignity that Northumberland accepted, at

⁵² Harl. MS. 2194, #11, f. 21; printed in Stow, *Annales* (note 19 above), p. 614, with some variants, among which "as his peers" for "at his death." We have noted that eleven such men were amongst his judges. Noailles, the French ambassador, thought these telling points, taken seriously by his judges and strongly rebutted (*Ambassades de messieurs de Noailles en Angleterre*, ed. M. l'Abbé [René Aubert] de Vertot [5 vols., Leyden, 1763], I, 237).

⁵³ An argument which Northumberland had himself rejected in the trial of Somerset.

least for the moment, his fate before his peers. One could wish that these had been the last words ever uttered by him.⁵⁴

Intertwined as their cases were with that of Northumberland, the other peers charged (Northampton and Warwick), having confessed, could really marshal no very effective defence. Northampton contended that he had borne no counsel and had exercised no public office "after the beginning of these tumults." He had instead given himself to hunting and other sports, and had attempted to stand clear of any involvement in the succession crisis. But he had been compelled by a direct order from the Council under the Great Seal to follow Northumberland, lest he commit the "self-same crime and offence of which he was now accused." Nor was he present when Edward's will was signed by the Council, though he did admittedly sign it after the King's death. These defences the peers rejected outright, on the ground that Northampton was known to be a follower of the Duke, and he was now sentenced in the same way. His defence was, however, effective at least with the Queen, for some weeks after his trial the sentence of death was reprieved and he was released from the Tower.⁵⁵ So too, the young Earl of Warwick, married by Northumberland to Somerset's daughter, stated his case with dignity and with no cringing. He did not advance the obvious plea of his youth or the fact that he had followed his father's orders, but requested only that the Queen pay his just debts from his confiscated properties. But he, too, received the Queen's clemency; he was released from the Tower after a few months, but died from unknown natural causes just ten days later.⁵⁶

The trial of the other defendants — Sir John Gates, Sir Henry Gates, Sir Andrew Dudley, and Sir Thomas Palmer — was conducted and concluded on 19 August. They had pleaded guilty to indictments,

⁵⁴ We principally follow Harl.MS.2194, #11, ff. 21-23, as did Stow (*Annales* [note 19 above], p. 614), who sets the number of Councillors requested by the Duke at two; see also Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles* . . . (2 vols., London, 1577; ed. Henry Ellis, 6 vols., London, 1807-1808), IV, 3-4. The hand for Harl.MS.2194, #11, and likewise #10, appears to be somewhat later than 1553. For other accounts, see Machyn, *Diary* (note 22 above), p. 41; Antonio de Guaras, *The Accession of Queen Mary* . . . , ed. R. Garnett (London, 1892), pp. 102-103; *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 184, for an interesting account which seems to have been written by an eye-witness.

⁵⁵ Harl.MS.2194, #11, f. 21^v; *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 184-185.

⁵⁶ Harl.MS.2194, #11, f. 21^v, also quoted in *Chronicle of Queen Jane* (note 22 above), p. 121.

presented from Ware, Bury, Cambridge, and London, for levying war on the Queen and for having proclaimed the Lady Jane in sundry places. The trial was far less solemn and time-consuming than that of the peers on the preceding day. All were asked whether in court they maintained their earlier confessions and admissions, and the reply being yes, all were sentenced to death for high treason. Only the irrepressible and fearless Palmer sought to plead, contending harshly but justly that those of the Court who were members of Jane's Council were quite as guilty as he, that they deserved equal punishment, and that his trial had been conducted in a fashion unknown to English law. Palmer also protested that he had borne no arms against the Queen, but had to confess that he had been present on such occasions, which the judges declared made him culpable. This rough and dangerous man conducted himself with staunch and amazing heroism to the very end of his life a few days later.⁵⁷

III. Confessions and Executions

The condemned men were immediately returned to the Tower to await their execution, save for a royal reprieve, which, as we have seen, was in fact extended to four of the seven who had been sentenced to death.⁵⁸ For Northumberland there could have been no real hope, though he sought to the very end to enlist help from anyone who might lay his personal plea before the Queen. Two Councillors, not four as he had requested during his trial, were sent to him to receive any privy information he might be able to give on affairs of state.

Gardiner himself, whom the Duke had treated savagely during his tenure of power, was the principal visitor; the identity of the other Councillor present is unknown. So far as our knowledge extends, at this conference, held almost certainly on 19 August, most of the conversation dealt with Northumberland's request for the Bishop's intervention with the Queen on his behalf. Gardiner, it appears, was in fact deeply moved by this anguished cry for mercy, though he felt obliged to warn the Duke that nothing could be done and that he must prepare himself for death. Northumberland conquered his own ner-

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18; *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 185.

⁵⁸ *I.e.*, to Northampton, Warwick, Sir Henry Gates, and Sir Andrew Dudley (Deputy Keeper of Public Records, *Fourth Report*, App. II, pp. 235-236; Stow, *Annales* [note 19 above], p. 614).

vousness and fear sufficiently to express his wonder that the Bishop, "in a peaceful profession," could have faced death fearlessly so many times, whilst he, a soldier who was "supposed to scoff at every danger and have done so often, lose my courage when my condemnation is announced" and could not reconcile himself to the fact of death. He wished that he might do "some penance the rest of his days for his sins past," and live on "a little longer, though it be but in a mouse-hole." To this Gardiner could only reply that "it was most likely he must die." The Duke, now calmer, assured Gardiner that he would dispose himself, and requested the comfort and guidance of a learned priest, while assuring Gardiner that he would die in the Catholic faith, "for I never was of any other indeed, nor ever so foolish as to believe any of that which we had set up in King Edward's days; but only to use the same for my own purpose of ambition: for which God forgive me."⁵⁹

At his trial Northumberland had also requested that a spiritual adviser, a learned man, be appointed to lend him solace as he prepared for death. Already, in fact, the Queen had herself been concerned regarding this need, having expressed her apprehension lest the Duke fall into despair in his close confinement, and announcing her determination that a priest should be sent to lend him comfort.⁶⁰ It was almost certainly on 18 August that Nicholas Heath, deprived from Worcester and then imprisoned in 1551, was appointed as spiritual adviser to the Duke. A learned and a most kindly man, who had accepted the first Book of Common Prayer and who throughout his life was gently moderate in his religious views, no prelate of Catholic or Protestant persuasion could have been more admirably fitted for this unhappy spiritual task than the Bishop of Worcester, as he was soon once more to be.⁶¹ It was Heath who was to prepare Northum-

⁵⁹ John Strype, *Memorials of . . . Thomas Cranmer . . .* (2 vols., Oxford, 1840), I, 452-454; Bibliothèque Nationale MS.15888 (formerly Fonds St. Germain, 740), f. 207: "Relation de l'accusation et mort du Duc de Somerset," cited in Friedrich von Raumer, *Briefe aus Paris . . .* (2 pts., Leipzig, 1831), pt. 2, pp. 72-74; Burnet, *Reformation* (note 24 above), III, 388; Henry Soames, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, IV (London, 1828), 41. It should be noted that the evidence for much of this paragraph is at once thin and frail. Strype was following *A Temperate Ward-Word . . . by N. D.* (1599), pp. 43-44, i.e., Fr. Robert Parsons, who quotes no helpful sources.

⁶⁰ *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 156 (8 Aug. 1553).

⁶¹ For further comments on this most admirable and saintly man, see Jordan, *Edward VI*, I, 130, 309, 315-319, and *ibid.*, II, 246-247.

berland for his public and his private confession, and it was Heath who ministered to him on the scaffold itself.

It was on Sunday (20 August) that Northumberland was informed by the Lieutenant of the Tower that he must prepare himself for his execution, just set for the next day following. Though the carrying out of the sentence was actually postponed for a day, almost surely in order to lend Heath more time to prepare and guide the Duke through the private and public confessions which he would soon make, the delay likewise lent an opportunity to the evidently distracted Northumberland to lodge with Arundel an almost hysterical appeal to gain his reprieve from the ignominious fate now so close at hand.

Northumberland had, so he wrote to the Earl, just received word that he must now prepare himself "to receive my deadly stroke," yet he wonders if "my crime [is] so heinous as no redemption but my blood can wash away the spots thereof." He hopes the Queen will spare his life so that he may serve her as he had her brother and her father. Surely she will gain nothing from his death, but would be honored by posterity for sparing the life of "so miserable and penitent an object." He begs for Arundel's help: "Spare not, I pray, your bended knees for me." If his life is to be saved it can only be through the intercession of Arundel and Gardiner, to whom he has also appealed. He prays that Arundel's heart may be moved to lay his case before the tender mercy of the Queen, and then if no mercy or remedy "can be found, either by imprisonment, confiscation, banishment, and the like, I can say no more but God grant me patience to endure and a heart to forgive the whole world."⁶² The whole tone and temper of this amazing letter suggests, indeed, that Heath's spiritual ministrations notwithstanding, Northumberland stood in cringing terror of his fate.

He did, however, understand at last that his life would not be spared, and it was then that the skilled and tender ministrations of Bishop Heath guided him on to the confession of faith which he was about to make. Heath, to his great credit, seems never to have spoken of these hours late on 20 August, nor did he, so far as we can determine, ever mention it in his writings. When it became evident that the Duke

⁶² Harl.MS.787, #60, f. 61b, from William Dell's Collection of State Papers. This letter is a copy of a source which is lost, but it may be regarded as reliable. John Bayley (*The History and Antiquities of the Tower of London* . . . [London, 1821], pp. 422-423) provides a printed text, and Nichols quotes an excerpt in his *Life of Arundel*.

was on the point of renouncing the Protestant faith, it was realized that some additional time was required, not only for the fate of the soul of the condemned man but also to render more effective the immense propaganda possibilities inherent in the Duke's confession. Mary was concerned with the spiritual merits of a slight postponement of what was about to occur; Gardiner, Arundel, and Paget with its political implications.⁶³

At some uncertain time in the course of the night, therefore, it was determined to postpone the executions for a single day. But state executions in Tudor England were normally carried out very early in the morning and there was not time to make any public announcement of the delay, with the amazing result that an estimated ten thousand people were assembled on Tower Hill by eight o'clock on the morning of the 21st. The scaffold was made ready, sand and straw were spread on the floor, and the Tower guards and the sheriff's officers were disposed, when orders to dismiss the crowd came from the Tower with the statement that the executions would be carried out on the day following. Order seems to have been well maintained in the vast crowd at hand, many of whom must have supposed that a royal reprieve was about to be issued, just as it had been already for Northampton, Warwick, Sir Andrew Dudley, and Sir Henry Gates.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, in an attempt to begin the exploitation of the propaganda value in this amazing *volte face*, the Tower Chapel was arranged for the singing of the mass for the souls of the condemned, while by direct commandment of the Queen some fifty of the merchants and Common Council of the City were summoned to witness Northumberland's confession and recantation. Some forty of those summoned did promptly assemble and the mass was sung by Dr. Boreman in the Tower Chapel.⁶⁵ Northumberland, with Northampton, Sir Andrew Dudley, Sir Henry Gates, and possibly Sir Thomas Palmer, were led into the Chapel, where they knelt, heard the mass, participated in the

⁶³ Burnet, *Reformation* (note 24 above), II, 391; Nicolas Sanders, *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, trans. David Lewis (London, 1877), pp. 220-221; Charles H. and Thompson Cooper, *Athenae Cantabrigiensis* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1858-1861), I, 404.

⁶⁴ *Chronicle of Queen Jane* (note 22 above), p. 18; Bayley, *Tower of London* (note 62 above), p. 83; Machyn, *Diary* (note 22 above), p. 42; *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 185.

⁶⁵ We have been unable further to identify "Dr. Boreman"; he is not, we believe, Dr. Gilbert Bourne, whose stout preaching had just stirred a riot in London (see above, text and note 48).

sacrament, and each said the *Confiteor*. Then they came before the altar and confessed to Heath "that they were the same men in the faith according as they had confessed to him before, and that they all would die in the Catholic faith." Northumberland spoke briefly to all present, saying, "Truly, good people, I profess here before you all that I have received the sacrament according to the true Catholic faith; and the plague that is upon this realm, and upon us now, is that we have erred from the faith these sixteen years. And this I protest unto you all from the bottom of my heart."⁶⁶ He continued in the same vein, confessing that he had been a "great setter forth of the ill doctrine now reigning, which he sore lamented," and warned his hearers to beware of the false doctrine which had prevailed for the sixteen years past. This he declared to be the cause of the plagues and vengeance visited on the whole realm and "now likewise worthily fallen upon me and others here present." And finally he called forward two of Somerset's sons who had been summoned by the Queen's letter, to ask their pardon for the injury he had done their father, confirming what so many had long suspected, that he had "wrongly and falsely" procured the Protector's death.⁶⁷

Northumberland's memories of his spiritual pilgrimage were strangely jumbled indeed. We have seen that in 1552, in an intensely personal letter to Cecil, he protested vehemently against the charges being made by the evangelical leaders that he was a hypocrite, a dissembler. He reminded Cecil that he had for twenty years stood "to one kind of religion, in the same way which I do now profess; and have, I thank the Lord, past no small dangers for it."⁶⁸ Now, in an hour evoking, one must assume, a complete honesty, he described as false and ill all the doctrines that had prevailed in religion for the sixteen years just past, perhaps meaning, somewhat inexactlly, since

⁶⁶ Harl.MS.284, #81, f. 128v.

⁶⁷ Bayley, *Tower of London* (note 62 above), p. 83, quoting Harl.MS.116, in which we do not find the account; von Raumer, *Briefe aus Paris* (note 59 above), pt. 2, p. 73; Wriothesley, *Chronicle* (note 28 above), II, 100, says that Northumberland had erred for fifteen years past; *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 185-186, reports Northumberland as confessing that he had led England in heresy and error for "three or four years"; *Chronicle of Queen Jane* (note 22 above), pp. 18-19, quoting a letter in Harl.MS.353 of William Dalby, a Londoner of Protestant sympathies, who declares that of the London witnesses summoned only fourteen or fifteen, several of whom were friends of his in Cheapside, in fact attended this strange event. One would be more comfortable if Stow made any mention of this extraordinary mass, but the narrative presented seems thoroughly substantiated, Stow's silence notwithstanding.

⁶⁸ See above, text and note 4.

the passage of the Act of Supremacy, and declared himself a "great setter forth of the ill doctrine now reigning," which he now greatly lamented. Yet the historical reality is that Northumberland had made no contribution whatsoever to religious thought, policy, or administration during the whole reign of Henry VIII and precious little during the Protectorship of the Duke of Somerset. It was in fact not until he had gathered power in his own hands that his religious concerns became fully formed, and they were those of evangelical Protestantism. Nor should it be forgotten that it was the preservation of the Protestant faith which, little more than a month previously, he had urged as the premier reason for levying war on Mary Tudor, as he took leave of the Privy Council which he had dominated for three years and more.

No surviving account informs us, but we may well suppose that the Tower precincts were once more filled with officials, guards, and the London curious on Tuesday morning, 22 August. The prisoners were again conducted to the Tower Chapel where once more they heard the mass and took the sacrament. It was then that Sir John Gates confessed that "we have been out of the way a long time, and therefore we are worthily punished; and, being sorry therefor, I ask God's forgiveness therefore most humbly; and this is the true religion." As he concluded, the priest (Dr. Boreman) said, "What shall I say? I trust to God it shall be to you a short passage (though somewhat sharp), out of innumerable miseries into a most pleasant rest." Then Palmer was first brought out to the Lieutenant's garden where he talked at some length with Thomas Watson, Bonner's chaplain, while asking various persons who passed to pray for him. Gates followed in due course, stopping at the Lieutenant's gate, while Northumberland was led to the point where Gates stood. "Sir John," the Duke said, may "God have mercy upon us for this day shall end both our lives. And I pray you forgive me whatsoever I have offended; and I forgive you with all my heart, although you and your counsel was a great occasion thereof." To this Gates, long a henchman of the Duke, rather testily replied, "I forgive you as I would be forgiven; and yet you and your authority was the only original cause of it altogether." Then both men bowed to each other, and to Somerset's sons standing nearby, while Bishop Heath came forward to lead the Duke of Northumberland to the scaffold.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Harl.MS.2194, #11, f. 22; *Chronicle of Queen Jane* (note 22 above), pp. 20-21; Stow, *Annales* (note 19 above), p. 614.

On coming to the block, Northumberland took off his "crane-coloured"⁷⁰ damask gown and, gaining permission to speak to the people, moved forward to the east rail of the scaffold, and then launched into his astonishing, and still very puzzling, confession of the Catholic faith. In part what he said to the assembled thousands repeated much of the confession which shortly before he had made to the small company in the Tower Chapel. But there was now much more of spiritual content, while the soliloquy of faith which he voiced is a moving and revealing document, with its architecture clearly derived from his more rambling and intensely personal Tower Chapel confession. The speech from the block could not possibly have been written by Dudley himself, the evidence strongly suggesting that Heath had composed it for him, adjusting it with great care and pity to what the Duke had himself confessed privately. When he came to speak of his faith, the Duke declared: "I take witness of my Lord of Worcester here, mine old friend and ghostly father, that he found me in this mind and opinion when he came to me."⁷¹ Then, when he had finished his remarkable analysis of himself, of his policy, and of his faith, he put off his doublet and jerkin and knelt for his private devotions. We are told that he first recited the psalms of *Miserere* and *De Profundis*, said his *Pater Noster*, and then spoke the first verses of the psalm, *In te Domine speravi*, ending with, "Into thy hands O Lord I commend my spirit." Then he forgave the executioner, made the sign of the cross, kissed the crucifix, took the kerchief handed him by the executioner, and laid his head upon the block.⁷² We shall lend detailed attention to Northumberland's amazing declaration of faith

⁷⁰ OED: "ashy-gray"; one account renders it "grain-coloured."

⁷¹ Another version of the speech (Harl.MS.284, #78, ff. 127-128^v) puts it more informally: "This good man, the Bishop of Worcester, shall be my witness, and the Bishop said 'Yea'. And I beseech you all to bear me witness that I die therein."

⁷² Among the numerous accounts of the actual execution are: *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 186; Harl.MS.2194, #11, f. 22; *Ambassades de . . . Noailles* (note 52 above), I, 237, and *ibid.*, II, 117-118; *Nuntiatursberichte* (note 16 above), XIII, 363-364; Dandino to Monte, 27 Aug. 1553; the report of the Hanseatic agents to the city of Cologne (MS. Hanse A 23, ff. 39^r-43^v) provides no details (cal. in *Inventare Hansischer Archive des seckszehnten Jahrhunderts*, vol. I: *Kölner Inventar . . . 1531-1571*, ed. K. Höhlbaum [Leipzig, 1896], p. 60); Perlin (*Description* [note 19 above], p. 17) supplies the gory details: "The lame executioner wore a white apron like a butcher's." Northumberland made grand lamentations, at the end throwing himself on his knees and praying, "Lord God, my father, pray for us poor sinners, now and in the hour of our death." After the execution Perlin saw little children sopping up the blood which had dripped through the slats of the scaffold.

and policy after we have dealt with the "confessions" and deaths of his friends and henchmen, Sir John Gates and Sir Thomas Palmer.

Sir John Gates was inextricably involved in all of Northumberland's political actions and had been a field commander in the ill-fated expedition against the Princess Mary. A servant of the Crown and a courtier in the days of Henry VIII, he had for years been known as a follower and confidant of the Duke. Shortly after Northumberland came to power, he was created Sheriff of Essex, and in April 1551 was made Vice-Chamberlain and was entrusted with the sensitive security post of Captain of the Guards. Not long afterward he was made Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and was greatly enriched by grants or purchases of crown lands, mostly from Somerset's estates. Needless to say, he was deeply involved in Northumberland's conspiracy against Somerset. He managed, somehow, to gain the ill-will of all parties and the hatred of most.

After Northumberland, Gates was next brought to the scaffold, where he was nearly as taciturn as was his wont, though the few words which he spoke were not without pathos and eloquence. We are told that he said:

My coming hither this day, good people, is to die; whereof I assure you all I am well worthy, for I have lived as viciously and wickedly all the days of my life as any man hath done in the world. I was the greatest reader of Scripture that might be, of a man of my degree; and a worse follower thereof was not living, for I did not read to the intent to be edified thereby, nor to aid the glory of God, but contrariwise arrogantly to be seditious and to dispute thereof, and privately to interpret it after my own liking and affection. Wherefore, good people, I exhort you all to beware how and after what sort you come to read God his holy word, for it is no trifle or playing game to meddle with God his holy mysteries. Stand not too much in your own conceits, for like as the bee off one flower doth gather honey, and the spider poison off the same, even so you [also,] except you humbly submit yourselves to God, and charitably read the same to the intent to be edified thereby, it is unto you as poison and worse; and better it is to let it alone.

Then, after he had publicly begged the Queen's forgiveness, and that of all the world, he asked all those present to pray for the remission of his sins. Refusing the kerchief for his eyes, Gates then laid down his head which the bumbling executioner could not sever until three blows had been struck. There was in Gates's statement no intimation whatever that he had renounced his Protestantism, no apology for his

own public actions. 'The dour courage of the man somehow diminishes the very real sins of his public life.'⁷³

Sir Thomas Palmer, the last to die, in considerable measure redeemed a violent and vicious life by the gallantry and, one can almost say, the gaiety of his conduct on the scaffold. Of a Sussex gentle family, Palmer when very young became a professional soldier, of impressive ability in junior commands and renowned as savagely reckless in battle. Early in Edward's reign he enjoyed numerous favors from Somerset, who spoke warmly of his valor and was greatly impressed by Palmer's relief of Haddington in the Scottish war. As the siege wore on, Lord Grey, with some hesitation, entrusted a mounted command of considerable strength to Palmer and Bowes, with instructions to act as a diversionary force in order to lift the pressure on Haddington and to spoil and burn the countryside. But there were also specific instructions not to engage the strong French cavalry in the area. Instead, and on his own responsibility, Palmer swung directly at a large French force which in a bloody action drove the English back a distance of eight miles before the battle was halted. Somerset was in a black rage when the news reached him, and he severely chastised Palmer for his incompetence and his violation of written orders. Palmer should, in fact, have been relieved and cashiered. By his denouncement Somerset had gained a mortal enemy who at once transferred his personal allegiance to Warwick, who became his intimate and who extended to him the whole of his favor. Some months later, when Northumberland drew the tentacles of conspiracy around Somerset, it was Palmer who supplied the crucial evidence which was false and perjured in every important particular. Thereafter the two men were forever joined together in their common fate. At the end, as we have seen, Northumberland confessed that the charges against the Protector had been false. Palmer, for his part, cleared his conscience as well, stating that the written accusations which he had laid against Somerset were of Northumberland's contriving and that he had upheld them at the Duke's request.⁷⁴

The ghastly incompetence of Gates's executioner seemed not to

⁷³ We follow Harl.MS.284, #79, ff. 127^v-128^r, to be found with slight variations in Stow, *Annales* (note 19 above), p. 615, and in Bayley, *Tower of London* (note 62 above), App. p. xlix; Strype, *Cranmer* (note 59 above), I, 451-452, prints a short version of Gates's speech without specifying his source.

⁷⁴ *Cal.S.P.Span.*, XI, 187; "R  lation de l'accusation . . ." (note 59 above), f. 206^v.

daunt Palmer at all, who almost jauntily doffed his cap as he crossed the scaffold to the east rail to speak to those assembled. He shook hands as well with all near his path, and then bowing to all those present he said loudly, "God give you all good morrow," to which many shouted, "Good morrow," in reply. With an almost saucy *Galgenhumor*, Palmer continued his remarks by saying, "I do not doubt but that I have a good morrow, and shall have I trust a better good even." Those courageous preliminaries completed, Palmer turned to the "confession" which the sixteenth century expected of those who were to be done to death.⁷⁵

My masters (quoth he) God save you all: it is not unknown unto you wherefore I come hither, which I have worthily well deserved at God's hands, for I know it to be his divine ordinance, by this means to call me to his mercy, and to teach me to know myself, what I am, and whereunto we are all subject: I thank his merciful goodness, for he hath caused me to learn more in one little dark corner in yonder Tower, than ever I learned by any travel in so many places as I have been, for there (I say) I have seen God, what he is, and how unsearchable his wondrous works are, and how infinite his mercies be; I have seen there myself thoroughly, and what I am, nothing but a lump of sin, earth, dust, and of all vileness most vilest; I have seen there and know what the world is, how vain, deceitful, transitory, and short it is, how wicked and loathsome the works thereof are in the sight of God's majesty, how he neither regardeth the menaces of the proud men and mighty ones, neither despiseth the humbleness of the poor and lowly which are in the same world. Finally, I have seen there what death is, how near hanging over every man's head, and yet how uncertain the time, and how unknown to all men, and how little it is to be feared; and should I fear death? or be sad therefore? have I not seen two die before mine eyes? Yea, and within the hearing of mine ears? No, neither the sprinkling of the blood, or the shedding thereof, nor the bloody axe itself shall make me afraid; and now taking my leave to the same, I pray you all to pray for me: come on good fellow (quoth he) are thou he that must do the deed? I forgive thee with all my heart, and then kneeling down, laying his head on the block, said, I will see how meet the block is for my neck, I pray thee strike not yet, for I have a few prayers to say, and that done, strike on God's name, good leave have thou, his prayers ended, and desiring each man to pray for

⁷⁵ There are three somewhat differing versions of Palmer's speech. We here follow Stow (*Annales* [note 19 above], pp. 615-616); his source seems to have been Harl.MS.194, which was contemporaneous and was also printed, with very few alterations, by Nichols (*Chronicle of Queen Jane* [note 22 above], pp. 23-24). Nichols also prints (*ibid.*, pp. 22-23, note 3) an account from Harl.MS.353 (Starkey's transcripts); also in Bayley, *Tower of London* (note 62 above), pp. 424-425. We also submit Harl.MS.284, ff. 128-128^v, which differs considerably from the other manuscripts under study.

him, he laid down his head again, and so the executioner took it from him at one stroke.⁷⁸

This brave and appealing speech of a minor conspirator in the great plot of the succession was to be long remembered, and must in many ways have moved men more than did the overly contrived oration which Northumberland had made. Palmer made it abundantly clear that he died a Protestant, and that assurance of salvation had come to him in his own dark room in the Tower and not through the intercession of any priest. Nothing that the scaffold could threaten shook his resolution or the faith which he had gained after so much of travail. It is no wonder that Beza seized upon Palmer's stout heroism when he sought to fling out a counter-offensive against the harm that Northumberland had done to the Protestant cause in England. The craven fear of the Duke is set in effective relief, as Beza adroitly drew the contrast with the heroic death of Palmer. Here then was a quiet, an almost joyous, trust in the reformed faith in which he had so bravely

⁷⁸ Harl.MS.194 adds: "Their corpses, with the heads, were buried in the chapel in the Tower; the Duke at the high altar, and the other two at the nether end of the church. You must understand that Sir Thomas Palmer had much longer talk on the scaffold, but that afore rehearsed was in manner the sum thereof." — *Chronicle of Queen Jane* (note 22 above), p. 24.

The text in Harl.MS.284, #80, ff. 128-128v, with its interesting variations, follows: "First with a smiling countenance he said, good morn to you all good people, ye come hither to see me die, and moreover ye come to see what news I have: marry, I will tell you. I have seen more in yonder terrible place (pointing toward the Tower) than ever I saw before throughout all the realms that ever I wandered, for there I have seen God. I have seen the world, and I have seen myself. And when I beheld myself, I saw nothing else but a piece of vile slime and clay full of corruption and iniquity. I saw the world nothing else but vanity and all the pleasures and treasons thereof naught worthy. I saw God omnipotent his power infinite, his mercy incomprehensible. And when I saw this, I most humbly submitted myself unto him, beseeching him of mercy and pardon for mine offence and I trust he hath forgiven me: for he called me once ere this before but I would not listen to him: but even now by this sharp deed of death he hath called me unto him. I trust the wings of his mercy shall spread over me and save me. And I do here openly confess before you all, Christ to be the very son of God the Father, born of the Virgin Mary who came into the world to fulfill the law for us, and to bear our offence upon his back and suffered his passion for our redemption, by the which I trust to be saved. And many more words he spake to the like effect; and then he desired the people to pray that he might steadfastly stand in his belief, that the ii dead before him, nor the block which there lay, might not make him afraid to suffer. This after he had asked the Queen's forgiveness upon his knees and all the people's. He read the psalm of *Miserere* and certain other prayers. He did meekly suffer execution."

died. The two men are set in dramatic contrast: the man who dissembled the Gospel and the once sinful man who at his end loved and cherished the Gospel of Christ.⁷⁷

(To be concluded)

⁷⁷ *Response a la confession du feu Duc Jean de Northumberlande, n'agueres decapité en Angleterre* ([Geneva], 1554; facsimile ed. with introduction by Mme. A.-H. Chaubard, [Lyon], 1959), p. 33. This anonymous work, which may certainly be attributed to Theodore Beza, has become very rare, only four copies being known to us: two in the British Museum, and one each in the Bordeaux Bibliothèque Municipale and the Paris library of the Ministère de la Défense. Mme. Chaubard has done the world of learning a great service by presenting this facsimile reproduction, with her own valuable introduction. When Professor Pollard wrote that Palmer's speech "was published at Geneva as some set-off against the duke's," he undoubtedly had Beza's *Response* in mind (A. F. Pollard, *The History of England* . . . (1547-1603) [London, 1911], p. 98).

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