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# The Duke of Buckingham, harbinger of disaster

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# THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, HARBINGER OF DISASTER

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# FOREWORD

This study is an attempt to trace the influence of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, on the early Stuarts. The effects of the influence of Buckingham may be found in the general revulsion of the English people against favorites. This revulsion has its beginning in the story of Robert Carr and the murder of Overbury. The failure of the government, comprised of men who held office by virtue of the Duke's favor, demonstrated to the leaders of the House of Commons the incompetence of Stuart rule. While Buckingham lived, the blame for one defeat after another was placed at his door. Charles' defense of his friend against the combined opposition of the majority of his people opened a gulf between the King and his subjects too great to be bridged and led to his ultimate downfall.

The writer wishes to take this opportunity to express his appreciation to Dr. A. Stanley Trickett for his interest, guidance and constructive criticism. Any errors or omissions that may be found are due to the writer's limitations.

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# CHAPTER I

## TUDOR RECONSTRUCTION OF ENGLISH GOVERNMENT

The long period of Tudor rule produced a partial reconstruction of English civilization. To understand the history of England under the early Stuarts one must first understand something of the changes, in all facets of English life, that prepared the seedbed for the future troubles of the Stuarts with Parliaments and Puritans, that were to culminate in civil war.

### I. THE ADMINISTRATIVE REVOLUTION

King Henry VII ascended the throne of a medieval kingdom. Elizabeth passed on to James I a modern administrative state. The administrative government of Henry VII was a government by the King's household, a personal government which managed the kingdom as the King's estate.[1]

The development of modern administrative government, with specialized departments staffed by trained civil servants which provide continuity of governmental functions, has its beginning with Henry VIII. Under Thomas Cromwell, in the 1530's, changes in all areas of administration were

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[1]G. R. Elton, The Tudor Revolution In Government (Cambridge: The University Press, 1953), p. 4.

effected and sweeping reforms undertaken. Later changes consisted of refinements and further subdivisions of departments.[1]

During this period the King's council underwent a complete change. It was divided into two parts, the Privy Council and the Court of Star Chamber. The Privy Council was an executive council of leading officers of the state, who traveled with the King and met almost daily.[2] The Court of Star Chamber, remained in London and exercised the King's personal justice. It held open meetings in the Star Chamber from which it derived its name. Special courts of the King's prerogative justice began to develop as special commissions absorbed parts of the juridical functions of the King's council. These included: The court of requests, the court of augmentations, a modernized court of wards, and the court of high commission.[3]

National finances were placed on a sounder basis by the introduction of reforms and the elimination of duplication of functions. The collection, disbursement and audit of government funds was placed on a more uniform and orderly

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[1]Elton, op. cit., p. 8

[2]Ibid., pp. 320-325

[3]Ibid., pp. 211 & 221.

basis.[1]

The office of King's Secretary became increasingly important. Thomas Cromwell made this the most important post in the King's council during his tenure of office.[2] It was from this position that the office of Secretary of State developed. Its importance varied with the ability of the incumbent and the extent to which the King personally directed the government.

Government was much strengthened and the administration of justice improved by the care which the Tudors exercised in the appointment of sheriffs and justices of the peace and the increased power given to these officials. To insure the competent execution of their duties, circuit judges inquired into the performance of duty and levied fines for negligence.[3]

## II. ECONOMIC CHANGE

The sequestration of church and monastic lands under Henry VIII marks the beginning of a new phase of an economic revolution. Whatever was lost to England in the destruction of the monasteries with their skilled artisans was more than

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[1] Ibid., pp. 118-119.

[2] Elton, op. cit., p. 97.

[3] Ibid., pp. 135-38.

compensated for by the growth of industry in the towns.[1]

The discovery of the new lands in the Americas and trade routes around the Cape of Good Hope shifted trade from the Mediterranean and across Europe by the water routes of Germany. It spelled the doom of Genoa and Venice and the trading centers in Southern Germany. The center of trade shifted to the English Channel. The English and the Dutch, due in large part to the more enlightened policies of their governments, became the great trading nations. The flood of silver and gold from the new world had the effect of increasing prices and stimulating trade. The industry, imagination and vigor which characterized Elizabethan England, brought that country to the fore as a nation of traders. The English were further aided by the capture of rich prizes, of which Drake's raids on the Spanish treasure route offer the best examples.[2]

England offered a haven for refugees from the religious wars in Europe. French, Dutch and German artisans brought with them their skills in weaving, manufacturing and mining, all of which helped to establish England as a

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[1]J. R. Tanner, English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century, 1603-1689 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1928), p. 2.

[2]A. L. Rowse, The England of Elizabeth (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), pp. 108-11.

rising commercial nation. England was transformed under the Tudors from a primitive to a highly advanced economy.[1]

Under Elizabeth mining went forward at an accelerated pace. The mining of saltpetre and the manufacturing of sulphur laid the basis for the gunpowder industry. Zinc and copper mines laid the basis for brass making. While tin mining fell off there was a great increase in lead mining, due in part to improved methods of drainage. Coal mining made fantastic growths during the Elizabethan period. A. L. Rowse estimates that on the eve of the Civil War, England was producing three to four times as much coal as all of continental Europe.[2] The introduction of the blast furnace from Europe expanded the iron industry in England and provided further use for coal. The method of working glass by coal revitalized the glass industry.[3] The salt industry and the development of the Newfoundland fishing grounds also occur during this period.[4]

The clothing trade made great gains during this period, due in part to the flood of emigrants from France and the Low Countries. These refugees brought with them new

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[1] Ibid., pp. 113-18.

[2] Rowse, op. cit., pp. 126-34.

[3] Ibid., p. 134.

[4] Ibid., pp. 138-39

methods in weaving and helped to establish English supremacy in manufacture of all kinds of cloth. Other new industries of this time include glass engraving, silk-weaving, manufacture of sailcloth, glove making and the manufacture of gold and silver lace.[1]

Mention must be made of the device of the joint-stock ventures which made possible commercial expansion and laid the basis for colonizing North America. Without this device which made possible mass participation without the danger of ruinous loss for any single individual the great growth of England as a commercial nation must have been much delayed.[2]

## III. THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

The Church of England. The Church of England was firmly established by the end of Elizabeth's reign. The short reign of Mary served to create a disagreeable interlude in the development of the church. Possibly it cemented the church more firmly together. The English did not take kindly to the persecutions of Mary's reign.[3] Elizabeth, with her fine instinct for the feelings of her people,

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[1] Ibid., pp. 142-48.

[2] Rowse, op. cit., pp. 151-55.

[3] Ibid., p. 389.

pursued a moderate course and appointed Bishops who were, on the whole, moderate men. The Elizabethan settlement provided the greatest religious freedom possible for the people of England. Liberty of thought was preserved. What was insisted on, was an outward appearance of observance of the discipline of the national church. As in other departments of her government, Elizabeth left to her Archbishops the blame for any unpopular measures which she felt were necessary. While she supported Parker and Whitgift, such support, when it involved unpopular measures of repression, was always behind the scenes. England could not afford the disunity inherent in the position of an unpopular queen.[1]

The Catholics. The position of the Catholics in England was rendered difficult by the Bull, Regnans in Exclsis, in 1570. It declared Elizabeth excommunicate and deposed, a heretic and a bastard. Her subjects were absolved from their allegiance and encouraged to rebel. It placed Popes Pius V and Gregory XIII in the unenviable position of approving the assassination plots engineered by the Duke of Guise. For the Catholics it was an impossible position, they were either traitors to the state or disobedient to the church.[2] No amount of argument can depreciate the

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[1]Rowse, op. cit., p. 403.

[2]Ibid., pp. 442-43.

very real threat to Elizabeth's life. One has only to remember that William the Silent, the Dutch Stadtholder, and Henry III of France, and Henry IV of France, were assassinated during this period. With the Spanish threatening an armada of naval ships against England and with constant plots against the Queen, it was to be expected that repressive measures would of necessity be taken. With England in danger, there could be no compromise on the question of allegiance. By one regrettable act of political ineptitude the Bull placed a stigma of suspicion on a group of loyal Englishmen, that was to carry over into later centuries and place the Catholic in the position of a second-class citizen politically until 1829.[1]

The Puritans. It is difficult to discuss the Puritans, for the reason that it is almost impossible to give an all inclusive definition of who the Puritans were. It is even uncertain what their numbers were or how much support they had in England, although it is certain that they had a large number of supporters in the House of Commons.[2] Puritans might be described as those who took an active part in

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[1]Howse, op. cit., p. 443.

[2]Ibid., p. 464.

The Puritans objected to the hierarchical order of the national church. They constantly demanded greater reform. The Puritans were intolerant of opinions other than their own. It is fair to say, that given the opportunity, the Puritans would have hounded the Catholics in the same manner as the Inquisition hounded Protestants. They constantly complained throughout the late years of Elizabeth's reign that the laws against recusants were not strictly enforced. The rigid discipline of the Puritans tended to magnify their strength. In addition, they possessed the sympathy of large groups, who were not Puritans themselves, but contrasted the seeming mildness toward Catholics, with the severity shown at times toward the Puritans. The basic clash between the Puritans and the Crown arose out of a desire to overthrow the Queen's authority in ecclesiastical matters and place the authority in the congregation.[1]

## IV. NATIONAL DEFENSE

The end of Elizabeth's reign saw England in a very strong position with regard to the defense of the British Islands. Drake's raid on Cadiz in the spring of 1587,

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[1]A. F. Pollard, The History of England, 1547-1603, (Vol. VI of The Political History of England, eds. William Hunt and Reginald Poole. 12 vols.: London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1934), p. 364.

which resulted in the destruction of thirty-three ships and the capture of four others, followed by the decisive defeat of the Armada in 1588, opened a European war that pitted England, France and the Netherlands against Spain. The sea fighting that followed, while not decisive, sapped the strength of the Spanish Kingdom and left it a hollow shell. The success of the Dutch placed the Netherlands, along the North Sea, in friendly hands. The subjugation of Ireland, completed in 1603, removed Ireland from the list of possible bases from which an attack might be mounted against England. The sole remaining base from which an attack could be launched was Scotland. When James VI of Scotland ascended the throne of England, as James I, the danger of invasion from the North was ended and England's defensive position was stronger than in any period since the days of Henry VIII.[1]

## V. THE SPIRIT OF REVOLT IN PARLIAMENT

The long rule of the Tudors had witnessed the increasing use of the Parliament and its consequent growth in power. Parliament tended to be less of the "rubber stamp" variety. Mary was constantly in trouble with Parliament.[2]

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[1]Pollard, op. cit., p. 438. Tanner, op. cit., p. 3.

[2]Pollard, op. cit., pp. 117-120.

Both the Lords and the Commons had their own minds and did not hesitate to defeat bills sponsored by the government.[1] Elizabeth had her fair share of rebellion in her Parliament, particularly over the Court of High Commission. Two things operated in her favor and tended to keep the opposition at a minimum. The first was her extraordinary ability in dealing with political opposition and the fact that she enjoyed the trust of the majority of her people. Elizabeth had the trust of her people, because she was English to her fingertips, and possessed an unequaled political understanding of her people and the ground swell of public opinion. The people trusted her because she trusted them. They knew that Elizabeth spoke from her heart when she said at one of the last sessions of Parliament during her reign:

> "I have ever used to set the last Judgement Day before mine eyes, and so to rule as I shall be judged to answer before a Higher Judge. To whose judgement seat I do appeal that never thought was cherished in my heart that tended not to my peoples good."[2]

Another point that operated in her favour was the constant danger to England and to the reformed religion that existed during much of her reign. Her people and her Parliament needed Elizabeth and her political skill to survive.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Rowse, op. cit., p. 267.

Trusting to that skill, Parliament was less inclined to oppose the Queen at a time when England was in danger. When the Spanish Armada was defeated in 1588, opposition became more pronounced.

A. L. Rowse sees the turning point in parliaments in the Reformation Parliament of Henry VIII, which the King kept in session to share responsibility for his dispersal of church lands and reduction of the church. In this period Parliament developed a sense of continuity and a claim in legislation, plus participation in national policy. He feels that the reformation in the short run strengthened the monarchy but in the long run the tendency was to the Crown's disadvantage. The constitution and Parliament were strengthened at the expense of the Crown, in favor of the rights and liberties of the people.[1]

Rowse's opinion that Elizabeth was in conflict with almost everyone of her Parliaments is amply borne out by Professor Neale in his Elizabeth and Her Parliaments.[2] Rowse lists the issues as "her marriage and succession, reform of the Church, Parliamentary privilege, especially that of free speech, Mary of Scotland, and monopolies."[3]

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[1]Rowse, op. cit., p. 263.

[2]J. E. Neale, Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1559-1581, (London: Johathan Cape, 1953), p. 200 ff.

[3]Ibid., p. 293.

He considers her management of the relationship between the Crown and Parliament as a most remarkable achievement. The conclusion is inescapable, by the end of Elizabeth's reign Parliament, more particularly the House of Commons, was beginning to realize its slowly developing power. Like a runaway horse, Parliament had the bit in its teeth and was ready to bolt on the least encouragement.

# CHAPTER II

## JAMES STUART, THE ROYAL SCHOLAR

### I. CHILDHOOD OF FEAR

James Stuart, later James VI of Scotland and James I of England, was born on June 19, 1566. Mary, Queen of Scots was his mother. His father was Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, whose sole asset seems to have been that he was a tall, handsome youth.[1] Darnley was a libertine and a drunkard, weak, obstinate and quarrelsome.[2] When, by reason of his outrageous behavior, Mary became estranged from Darnley, he accused her of adultery with her Italian secretary Rizzio. He entered a conspiracy with the Protestant party to murder Rizzio and restore the exiled Lords, Maitland, Moray and others, to power. Three months before James was born, Darnley headed a band that burst in on the Queen as she sat at supper with Lady Argyll and Rizzio. Dirks flashed before the Queen's eyes. Rizzio, begging the Queen to save him, was dragged into the next room and slain with fifty-six dagger strokes. Mary persuaded her husband to desert his

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[1] Andrew Lang, A History of Scotland, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1902), II, 154-57.

[2] J. E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1934), p. 131. Lang, op. cit., II, 161.

fellow-plotters and made good her escape.[1] The following February, Darnley was murdered in Kirk-of-Field at the instigation of the Earl of Bothwell.[2] Suspicion was widespread that Mary had ordered the murder, and her ambassador to France wrote her to that effect.[3] When Mary failed to prosecute Bothwell and shortly afterwards married him, all Scotland, except the Hamiltons, turned against her. Deserted by her followers, she was brought to Edinburgh a captive. She was forced to abdicate the throne in favour of her son and to appoint Murray, Regent.[4]

On July 29, 1567, the infant of thirteen months was crowned James VI. The effect of the endless conspiracies and contempt for human life on the part of the unbelievably belligerent Scots on the development of James' personality can hardly be overestimated. He was a pawn in the turbulent political life of Scotland. The first regent, Moray, was assassinated before James was four years old.[5] The next, Lennox, was murdered after fifteen months in office.[6]

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[1]Neale, op. cit., p. 142. Lang, op. cit., II, 159.

[2]Neale, op. cit., p. 155. Lang, op. cit., II, 175.

[3]Neale, op. cit., p. 155.

[4]Lang, op. cit., II, 191.

[5]Ibid., II, 225.

[6]Ibid., II, 238.

James had to be guarded by armed men, his windows barred to keep out possible assassins or kidnapers. He was taught that his paternity was doubtful, that his mother was a woman of questionable morals, who plotted his destruction from captivity.[1]

The boy king was never physically strong. His lack of physical prowess must have impelled him to prove his superiority as a scholar. His education was placed under George Buchanan, assisted by Peter Young. He received an excellent education in languages and theology. At the age of eight, he demonstrated his fluency in three languages.[2] He did, however, become an excellent horseman and learned to love hawking and hunting. These sports remained his favourites until his death.[3]

When he was twelve years old, Morton was driven from the regency, and for the next five years, James was a puppet in the hands of party leaders. In 1582, he was kidnapped in the Ruthven raid.[4] The following year, after he

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[1]Lang, op. cit., II, 233.

[2]Clara and Hardy Steeholm, James I of England, The Wisest Fool in Christendom (New York: Covici-Friede, 1938), p. 53.

[3]Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (eds.), Dictionary of National Biography (London: Oxford University Press, 1921-22), hereafter referred to as D.N.B. X, 598.

[4]Lang, op. cit., II, 285.

outsmarted his captors, he escaped to begin his personal rule in Scotland.[1]

## II. RULE OF THE DOUR SCOTS

There were two chief obstacles to rule in Scotland. The one was the national church, the other, the constantly warring nobles. James was forced to balance one against the other. Every minister was certain, when he spoke from the pulpit, that his voice was the inspired voice of God. They were in the habit of proclaiming the sins of the King from the pulpit. James felt that he should be admonished privately.[2] His queen was compared to Salome, and three ministers were sent to the Queen to point out that she and her ladies were too fond of dancing.[3] When he questioned the authority of ministers to meet without a warrant from himself, the result was a scene that James never forgot or forgave. Andrew Melville, the moderator of the church, caught James by his sleeve and called him, "God's silly vassal." He was told that the ministers were the deputies of Christ and he must obey them and not his lay

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[1] Ibid., II, 292.

[2] Lang, op. cit., II, 404.

[3] Ibid., II, 406

advisers.[1] In December 1596, after a riot in Edinburgh, James broke the power of the Kirk by removing the Court from the city. The ministers were forced to come to terms and never regained their old power during James' lifetime.[2]

In his efforts to subdue the nobles, James was something less than successful, although he did restore a measure of stability to the government.[3] At best he was able to restore an uneasy peace to Scotland. Attempts to capture the King continued to be made almost to the year that he became King of England.[4] In November 1595, James denounced the carrying of pistols, demanded a list of all horners (outlaws) and announced that he would be obeyed and reverenced as a king. He would allow no more blood feuds to run their course. Lang says, "he might as well have tried, like Canute, to make the waves reverence and obey him."[5] It was no small tribute to his skill as a politician that he was able to maintain himself as a king and restore some sort

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[1]Samuel R. Gardiner, The History of England, 1603-1642 (New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1895), hereafter cited as Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., I, 54. Lang, op. cit., II, 411.

[2]Lang, op. cit., II, 419-23.

[3]Lang, op. cit., II, 467.

[4]Ibid., II, 368.

[5]Ibid., II, 398.

of order among his unruly subjects.[1]

## III. JAMES AND ELIZABETH

The relationship between James and Elizabeth has the somewhat comic appearance of an impoverished nephew and a rich, autocratic, old maid aunt. She constantly reminded him of her great experience and success. She did not hesitate to hand out advice or to censor his actions, always with an assumption of her own infallibility and rectitude. James put up with a good deal as the inheritance of the throne of England was worth a great deal of patience. Still, he must have found the time of waiting to fill an old woman's shoes wearisome. It all added up to an education in kingship. Elizabeth was concerned with the success of the Prince who would one day take the reins of government from her firm hands. She warned him of any circuitous dealings with herself. She had her own system of spies that overlooked no information.[2]

She continually advised James to stand up for his rights against the rebellious Scottish nobles. She warned him against the ministers of the Scottish church, who would undermine his authority. She suggested a few hangings as

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[1] D.N.B., X, 599.

[2] Rowse, op. cit., pp. 268-69.

a cure for rebels against authority, and that the ministers first learn to obey before they attempt the task of teaching a king.[1]

There can be little doubt that she intended for James to succeed her. When the Armada was off the coast of Scotland she advised him to refrain from giving help to the Spaniards. Refusing aid to Spain would do much to win English hearts.[2]

The execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, left the relations between the two sovereigns in a delicate condition. James was concerned with finding some subterfuge that would avoid a break with Elizabeth and would still look well in the eyes of the world. He had no intention of jeopardizing his chances for the throne of England but he could not appear to the world as acquiescing in the execution of his mother. In Scotland only the clergy remained hostile to Mary. They refused to offer prayers for her safety.[3] The rank and file of the Scots, who when Mary was a prisoner in their midst, had shouted at her; "Burn the whore! Burn her, she is not worthy to live, kill her, drown her!"[4] now

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[1] Ibid., p. 269.

[2] Ibid., p. 270.

[3] D.N.B., X, 601.

[4] Neale, op. cit., p. 157.

expected James to lead an army into England to avenge the death of his mother. Elizabeth made a scapegoat of William Davison, second secretary. He was tried in Court of Star Chamber, fined £10,000 and imprisoned at the Queen's pleasure in the Tower.[1]

James, always in need of money, had in 1583 asked for a grant of £10,000 and an annuity of £5,000. He received a pension which he thought too small.[2] In 1586 the agreement of 1585 was expanded into a defensive alliance by which Elizabeth guaranteed James £4,000 a year with the hope of more.[3] Elizabeth was notoriously tight-fisted with money. In any event, her troubles with Philip II and the subjugation of Ireland left her little money to throw to the improvident James, to assure his friendship. It may be that she doubted the effacy of such purchases.

Much has been written of the last minute decision by Elizabeth as to a successor. Pollard discounts all these stories. James' succession had been her policy for almost twenty years. Cecil was in secret correspondence with James for more than a year before the Queen's death.[4] The

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[1]Pollard, op. cit., p. 400.

[2]D.N.B., X, 600.

[3]Pollard, op. cit., pp. 382-84.

[4]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., I, 83.

Council had made their arrangements beforehand. The people of England were in no mood for a war of succession, and there can be no doubt that James was certain of the Crown when he condoned his mother's execution.[1] All that remained was word from the messenger riding north at a record pace to bring the word of his inheritance.

## IV. JAMES I AND THE PROMISED LAND

James began his rule under great advantages. The people of England were relieved that there would be no war over the succession. James quickly demonstrated how little he knew of English customs, when early in his progress toward London, he ordered a cut-purse executed without a trial.[2] As a portent of things to come it was not a happy one.

In the eyes of James, used to the poverty of Scotland, England appeared as an inexhaustible storehouse of wealth. Where Elizabeth had pinched pennies, and, in true Tudor fashion, never paid for services if she could get them for nothing, James poured out money and honors with a prodigal hand.[3] The Court and London were invaded by a

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[1]Pollard, op. cit., p. 478.

[2]D.N.B., X, 605.

[3]Godfrey Davies, The Early Stuarts, 1603-1660 (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 1. D.N.B., X, 605.

swarm of Scotsmen who followed the Stuart King like a plague of locusts, eager to gather in the plunder. The Court which Elizabeth had maintained in such splendour in the early days of her reign, had declined in her last years. The Court of James, with its greedy Scots speaking in a foreign tongue, was hardly a mirror of the national life. Frances Osborne, Master of Horse to Pembroke, has left us an account of English feelings on the subject:

> Now by this time the nation grew feeble and overprest with impositions, monopolies, aydes, privy-seales, concealments, pretermitted customes, etc., besides all forfeitures upon penal statures, with a multitude of tricks more to cheat the English subject (the most, if not all, unheard of in Queene Elizabeth's dayes), which was spent upon the Scots; By whom nothing was unasked, and to whom nothing was denied; who for want of honester traffique did extract gold out of the faults of the English, whose pardons they beg'd and sold at intolerable rates, murder itself not being exempted. Nay I dare boldly say one man might with more safety have killed another than a raskell-deare; but if a stagge had been known to have miscarried and the author fled, a proclamation with a description of the party had been presently penned by the attorney-general, and the penalty of his majestie's high displeasure (by which was understood the Star-Chamber) threatened against all that did abet, comfort or relieve him.[1]

Both the Puritans and the Catholics expected much of James. The Catholics expected a relaxation of the laws against recusancy. It is quite possible that James, from

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[1]Sir Philip Gibbs, The Reckless Duke (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), p. 11.

inclination, would have favoured such relaxation. Two things interfered. The majority of the people were still afraid of a return of the Church of Rome and opposed leniency for Catholics, and James, always short of money, could not bring himself to forego the funds the fines brought into the treasury.[1]

Whatever hope the Puritans had for more favourable consideration was speedily dispelled. James favoured a church system such as already existed in England, with the King as the supreme governor. His experiences with the Church of Scotland had soured him on a church which claimed to be over the King, and he wanted none of this in England. At the Hampton Court conference, Dr. Reynolds, Dean of Lincoln, aroused his ire by a mention of Presbyters. He told the conference that: "A Scottish Presbytery agreeth as well with a Monarchy as God and the Devil."[2] While the abashed Puritans sat in silence he asked sharply if they had anything more to say, and receiving no answer he gave way to his feelings with another sharp blast: "If this be all they have to say I shall make them conform themselves, or I will harry them out of the land, or else do worse."[3] As Gardiner

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[1]Tanner, op. cit., p. 14.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., I, 156.

[3]Ibid., I, 157.

says: "in two minutes he had sealed his own fate and the fate of England for ever."[1]

## V. DIVINE RIGHT, PARLIAMENT, AND THE COMMON LAW

James was at logger-heads with Parliament almost at once. With the decline in leadership under James, Parliament came forward as a critic of the government. The roots of the controversies between the early Stuarts and their Parliaments are to be found in the two great questions of taxation and religion.[2] James was constantly in debt. The fault was not all his own. Currency had greatly depreciated with the influx of bullion from the new world. The King's income for the expenses of the government remained much the same. Elizabeth had been constantly short of funds, despite her penny pinching. James was a spendthrift. His openhanded generosity with his favourites, plus bad financial administration, kept him on the verge of bankruptcy. Tanner points out that the poverty of James I and Charles I established a vicious circle. The King had to call frequent Parliaments to secure money. The greater frequency of Parliaments gave opportunity for better organization and establishment of precedents. Church grievances were brought

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[1] Ibid., I, 157.

[2] Tanner, op. cit., p. 7.

forward for redress before supplies were voted. To avoid parliamentary criticism the King resorted to extra-legal methods to secure funds. This in turn made for fresh grievances and for further deterioration of the relationship between the Crown and Parliament.[1]

Many of the difficulties of the Stuarts lay in the political philosophy of the Divine Right of Kings. Divine Right provided a form under which the Reformation could fight the Papal claims of sovereignty. The Tudors were content to act on the theory and say nothing about their right. With a complete lack of political acumen, James loved to expound on his favourite subject of the "Divine Right of Kings". Kings were God's lieutenants on earth and were called Gods by God himself:

> "For if you will consider the attributes to a God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a king. God hath power to create or destroy, make or unmake at his pleasure, to give life or send death, to judge all and to be judged nor accountable to none. Kings make and unmake their subjects; they have the power of raising and casting down; of life and of death...and make of their subjects like at chess; a pawn to take a Bishop or a Knight, and to cry up or down any of their subjects as they do their money.."[2]

Such a philosophy sat ill with English ideas on the liberty of the subject. It brought on the clash with Sir

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[1] Ibid., p. 8.

[2] Catherine Drinker Bowen, The Lion and the Throne (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1956), p. 312.

Edward Coke on appeals from the King's courts of prerogative justice. Coke, with his consuming passion for the Common Law, was closer than any of his contemporaries with the feeling of the English people "that the liberty of the subject was something precious, an inalienable possession of the Englishman."[1] In a decision against the Court of High Commission Coke struck at the hated Ex Officio oath:

> The ecclesiastical Judge cannot examine any man upon his oath, upon the intention and thought of his heart, No man may be punished for his thoughts. For it has been said in the Proverb. "Thought is free."[2]

In his support of the supremacy of the Common Law, Coke did not hesitate to rule that it took precedence over acts of Parliament: "For when an act of Parliament is against common right and reason, or repugnant, or impossible to be performed, the Common Law will control it and adjudge such Act to be void."[3] In defiance of the King's declaration that it was "presumption and high contempt to dispute what a King can do" Coke said in a decision: "The King cannot change any part of the Common Law, nor create any offense by his proclamation, without Parliament, which was

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[1]Rowse, op. cit., p. 382.

[2]Bowen, op. cit., p. 310.

[3]Ibid., p. 315.

[4]Ibid., p. 374.

not an offense before."[1] The heart of the conflict may be found in Coke's contention that the King was under the law and protected by the law, to which James angrily retorted that the King was above the law and protected the law.[2] A dispute over the right of the King to intervene in cases in which he felt he had an interest brought matters to a head. Coke stood his ground against James, saying that when a case arose he would decide it on its merits. James now took a step which none of the Tudors had dared, he dismissed the Chief Justice and in doing so lowered the moral tone of the Common Law courts.[3]

## VI. THE CHARACTER OF JAMES I

The Tudors were great monarchs. They ruled England in a grand manner. They understood that pomp and ceremony had much to do with effective government. There was a dignified splendor about the Tudor courts. None of the Tudors excelled Elizabeth in maintaining a magnificent presence.

A comparison of the Tudors with James I must have been painful to Englishmen. Few monarchs in history looked less the part of a king than James I. He had weak, rickety

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[1] Ibid., p. 321.

[2] Bowen, op. cit., pp. 374-75.

[3] D.N.B., X, 611.

legs and normally clung to one of his favourites as he walked. His life among the belligerent Scots had made him fearful of assassination and he wore bulky clothes as protection against an assassin's knife. His health was never good. He suffered from hemorrhoids, diarrhea and gallstones. His ailments were further complicated by his disgusting habits of personal hygiene. He disliked water and merely cleaned his fingertips with a damp cloth. He overate and drank small amounts of weak wine all day long. It does not seem that he was ever drunk. He had a most unkingly habit of lolling about with his arms about a favourite's neck and slobbering over them.[1]

The rigid court etiquette of Elizabeth offered another contrast to the shameful drunkenness and shocking bad taste of James' court.[2] The tone was set by James' unfortunate weakness for favourites. In J. R. Tanner's words, the King had "a partiality to worthless Scotsmen, if only they were sprightly and active."[3] Sir John Oglander left his first hand impression of James in his Commonplace Book saying that James liked young men:

"better than women, loving them beyond the love of

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[1]Philip Lindsay, For King or Parliament (London: Evans Brothers, Ltd., 1949), p. 11.

[2]Gardiner, op. cit., I, 148-50.

[3]Tanner, op. cit., p. 18.

men to women. I never yet saw any fond husband make so much or so great dalliance over his beautiful spouse as I have seen King James over his favourites."[1]

James holds a unique place among English Kings as the author of a considerable number of books. His Trew Law of Free Monarchies was a fair exposition of the Divine Right theory. James was well educated and intellectually the equal of any king of his time. He was a scholar who loved books and manuscripts and under different conditions might have graced the staff of a university.[2]

With all his faults, James tried to do what was right, to maintain justice for all and in a spirit of toleration unusual in an intolerant age, he tried to keep religion from being used to cover bitter intolerance and hatred.[3] He wished to be known as the peacemaker of Europe and its unfair-to-ascribe-to cowardice his one steadfast policy, that at least kept England at peace for 22 years and enabled her to grow strong while Europe was racked by constant warfare. He had too little tact and too much confidence in his ability to be a successful ruler. He lacked the vigor and resolution necessary to overcome the obstacles in the way of his government. He was too lazy for the daily grind

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[1]Lindsay, op. cit., p. 11.

[2]Tanner, op. cit., p. 17.

[3]Ibid., p. 14.

of details in government administration. It was easier to leave them to his favourites, whose selection depended on their physical attractiveness rather than their mental qualifications for successful administrators. He lacked the keenness of insight which enabled Elizabeth to keep in touch with the feelings of the English people. Gardiner's succinct appraisal of his reign seem a fair one: "Henry VII, by his mingled vigour and prudence, laid the foundation of the strong monarchy of the Tudors; James sowed the seeds of revolution and disaster."[1]

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 316.

# CHAPTER III

## ROBERT CARR, THE BONNIE SCOT

### I. THE STATESMAN AND THE PRINCE

There were two stabilizing influences in the early reign of James. The first of these was Robert Cecil, created Earl of Salisbury by James, secretary and lord treasurer. Trained from childhood by his father, Elizabeth's great statesman, Lord Burghley, he won the undying gratitude of the King by early support of his claim to the throne of England. He possessed the qualities necessary for a first-rate administrator. He had the industry needed to deal with endless details of day to day government. As secretary he conducted the whole civil administration of the kingdom, kept his eye on the endless plots and conspiracies, carried on through ambassadors' negotiations with the important States of Europe, and when Parliament was in session directed the government policy in a manner acceptable to the House of Commons. In the last years of his life, he took on the added burden of the Treasurer's office and attempted to restore the nation's disordered finances to solvency.[1]

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[1]G. M. Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts (Vol. V of A History of England, ed. Sir Charles Oman. 7 vols.; London: Methun and Company, Ltd., 1930), p. 110.

While he lived James avoided the alliance with Catholic states which proved the undoing of the Stuarts. Gardiner, who considered him one of England's greatest statesmen, said of him: "He was one of those who never willingly wounded the feelings of any man, and who never treated great or small with insolence."[1]

The other restraining influence was James' son, Prince Henry. The young Prince was the hope of Englishmen who were opposed to the Spanish match, so dear to the heart of James. With common sense, rare in a Stuart, he grasped the objections to James' marriage plans and declared "he was resolved that two religions should not lie in his bed."[2] He was idolized by the nation, which credited him with talents which he may or may not have possessed. His death in 1612, along with that of Cecil, removed the last restraints from James. From this point on the Privy Council was confined to details of administration. James settled matters of high policy in consultation with the current favourite, chosen not for wisdom or experience in matters of state, but for beauty of face and ability to flatter the King. In words of G. M. Trevelyan:

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., I, 92.

[2]Ibid., II, 156-58. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 117.

> The common subjects of the land lost that respect for the "Lords of the Council" and for the whole system of monarchial administration, which no mere difference with religious or foreign policy of their sovereign had ever shaken under the virile rule of the Tudors.[1]

## II. THE KING'S FAVOURITE

Robert Carr was a younger son of the Kers of Fernie-hurst. As a boy he had served James as a page in Scotland. After James' accession to the throne of England, he had sought his fortune in France. Unsuccessful in France, he returned to England and entered the service of Lord Hay. While in a tilting match which the King attended he had the good fortune to break his leg. The grace of his person and his hurt attracted the King's attention. He was knighted in 1607 and within a year, overshadowed all the rest of the King's favourites.[2] James looking about for a suitable estate for his new favourite decided on Sherborne, the estate which Raleigh had received from Elizabeth. Lady Raleigh, taking her young son with her, threw herself at the King's feet and begged for mercy for her ruined family. James' answer was "I maun have the land, I maun have it for Carr."[3] Raleigh begged Carr not to build his fortune on

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[1]Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 113.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 43.

[3]Ibid., II, 45-46.

the ruin of an innocent man.[1] On January 9, 1609, Carr received the grant of Sherborne.[2]

In 1611, Carr was created Vicount Rochester and was the first Scot to take his seat in the House of Lords.[3] This occurred at a time when James was under attack in Commons over the lavish hand with which he bestowed his favour on the Scots. While he asked Parliament for more money he granted to six of his favourites £34,000.[4] Upon the death of Cecil, Rochester was raised to the new dignity of Privy Councillor and was employed by James to conduct his correspondence, although without the title of Secretary.[5]

## III. THE COUNTESS OF ESSEX

Rochester, who could have married almost anyone he chose, set his heart on Lady Essex, formerly Lady Frances Howard. The Countess was as unprincipled as she was beautiful. Her intrigue with Carr was interrupted by the return from the continent of her husband. Essex, after three years

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[1] Ibid., II, 46.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 46.

[3] Ibid., II, 111.

[4] Ibid., II, 109-11. D.N.B., op. cit., X, 610.

[5] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 148. Davies, op. cit., p. 15.

of bickering with his wife, agreed not to contest a divorce on grounds that he was incapable of being a husband to Frances but that there was nothing to prevent him from marrying another.[1] James, delighted by the prospect of a marriage between a member of the powerful Howard family and Rochester, appointed a commission, headed by Archbishop Abbot, and composed of Bishops and distinguished civilians to try the case.[2] When it became apparent that Abbot suspected collusion, and that the commission was equally divided, James added Bishops Bilson and Buckeridge to the commission.[3] The vote was now seven to five for the divorce, with Abbot and four others protesting vehemently against the farce.[4] To prevent these protests from being heard, James ordered the commissioners to remain silent with regard to the reasons which influenced their voting.[5]

The constant meddling of the King and his courtiers, and the effrontery of the Countess aroused the distaste of Englishmen. Gardiner was of the opinion that James' conduct in this case did more to widen the breach between

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 170.

[2]Ibid., II, 170.

[3]Ibid., II, 171.

[4]Ibid., II, 172.

[5]Ibid., II, 173. Davies, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

himself and the English people than any of his difficulties with Parliament.[1]

The divorce cleared the way for the alliance between Rochester and the Howards. James created Carr, Earl of Somerset so that Frances Howard might not lose her title of Countess.[2] The marriage was celebrated with costly presents and the pomp suitable to royalty. Bacon prepared a masque which cost him more than £2,000.[3] James sent for the Mayor of London and told him that it was expected that he should provide a suitable entertainment for Lord and Lady Somerset. When the Mayor protested that his house was too small, he was told by James that the city halls were large enough for the purpose. The Aldermen of London took over the responsibility and the great celebration took place in Merchant Taylor's Hall, with a great procession from Westminster to the city.[4] Only Archbishop Abbot, who considered the marriage adulterous, refused to take part in the round of festivities.[5]

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[1] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 174.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 210.

[3] Ibid., II, 210.

[4] Ibid., II, 210.

[5] Ibid., II, 210.

Somerset was now at the height of his power. He exercised the power of a Secretary without the name and shared all the plans of the King. No petition could be presented to the King without first making payment to Carr. He never accepted a bribe without first informing James and securing his approval. It was estimated that he spent £90,000 in a year.[1]

## IV. THE DOWNFALL OF SOMERSET

The alliance with the Howards had much to do with the fall of Somerset. The rivals of the Howards disliked him not only as an upstart Scot, but as a man who influenced the King in favor of the Howards.[2] But Somerset did more than any of his enemies to bring about his own downfall. Aware that his enemies were bringing George Villiers, future Duke of Buckingham, forward he treated the younger man with contempt. He went out of his way to offend the King. He accused James of allying himself with his enemies and used abusive language to the King.[3] James wrote Somerset a letter in which he protested his affection for the Earl. He reminded him that he had raised him to his high position

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 212.

[2]Ibid., II, 317.

[3]Ibid., II, 319. Davies, op. cit., p. 18.

and required him to cease abusing his patron and treat him as a friend and nothing he desired would be denied him.[1] To secure new friends, the Earl now formed a secret alliance with the Spanish Ambassador Sarmiento to promote the Spanish alliance.

Whatever Somerset's enemies may have known of his dealings with the Ambassador they were aware of his favouring an alliance with Spain.[2] They now prevailed upon Archbishop Abbot to use his influence with the Queen. Abbot not only disliked the Earl for his connection with the divorce but as a strong supporter of Protestantism he regarded Somerset's support of the Howards as treason to the Protestant cause.[3] The Queen was not in favour of the plan for supplanting Somerset. She warned Abbot that he was preparing a rod for his own back. The King would teach any favourite to ride rough-shod over those by whose assistance he came to power. The Queen finally withdrew her objections and urged James to promote Villiers to the office of Gentleman of the Bedchamber.[4]

Despite the rise of Villiers, Somerset still remained

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[1] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 320.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 322.

[3] Ibid., II, 322.

[4] Ibid., II, 322-23.

high in the King's favour. James directed the Chancellor to draw up a pardon to cover the greatest possible number of offences. This pardon was supposed to protect the Earl from the malice of his enemies. Cotton refused to seal it without first being given a pardon from James for doing so.[1] The pardon was delayed by reason of James leaving on a royal progress. Before it could be accomplished the storm broke.[2]

The first information concerning the murder of Overbury was given James shortly after his return from the progress.[3] James appointed Sir Edward Coke to investigate the murder.[4] Lady Somerset was soon implicated, and Coke asked James for persons of higher rank than himself to join with him in conducting the investigation. James then appointed the Duke of Lennox, the Chancellor and Lord Zouch.[5]

Somerset took the position that the investigation was a factious attempt to ruin him and threatened the King with the loss of support of the entire family of the Howards.[6]

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[1] Ibid., II, 329-30.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 330.

[3] Ibid., II, 332.

[4] Ibid., II, 332-33.

[5] Ibid., II, 334.

[6] Ibid., II, 336.

James answered that to suffer a murder to be suppressed or concealed would mean the destruction of his soul and reputation. If he must lose the support of the Howards by allowing a fair trial he could in justice adopt no other course.[1]

The undisputed facts of the murder case that rocked England, were that Sir Thomas Overbury had attached himself to Somerset early in his career. He had helped Somerset in his intrigue with Lady Essex, but was violently opposed to the marriage.[2] The reason for his opposition is not known. It may be that he feared an alliance between Somerset and the Howards. It was certain that he possessed information that would have rendered the divorce impossible.[3] A bit of court gossip reached James' ears to the effect that Rochester ruled the King and Overbury ruled Rochester. Overbury was offered a diplomatic appointment on the continent and asked his patron to save him from banishment.[4] The Earl encouraged him to resist the appointment and when Overbury, relying on Somerset's support, refused a formal offer, he was sent to the Tower by the Council.[5] The Lieutenant of the

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[1] Ibid., II, 336-37.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 175-76.

[3] Ibid., II, 175-77.

[4] Ibid., II, 177.

[5] Ibid., II, 178.

Tower was accused of carelessness and replaced by Sir Gervase Helwys to insure that communications of the prisoner could be closely supervised.[1]

Lady Essex had already decided that Overbury must die. She had attempted to hire a bravo to assassinate him.[2] She induced Richard Weston to poison Overbury and used her influence with Sir Thomas Monson to have Weston employed as a keeper in charge of Overbury.[3] Helwys intercepted a bottle of poison but refrained from notifying authorities for fear of the influence of the Howards.[4] Overbury's imprisonment continued for five months, until at the instigation of Lady Essex, an apothecary's assistant gave him poison by injection.[5]

Four persons implicated in the crime, including Helwys and Weston, were executed.[6] The Monsons were imprisoned for a time and then released with a complete vindication.[7] Lady Somerset pleaded guilty and received a death

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[1] Ibid., II, 179.

[2] Ibid., II, 180.

[3] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 180.

[4] Ibid., II, 181.

[5] Ibid., II, 182-86.

[6] Ibid., II, 344.

[7] Ibid., II, 363.

sentence, then returned to the Tower to await the King's decision.[1] Somerset refused to plead guilty. No conclusive proof was offered against him. He admitted that he consented to the imprisonment of Overbury in order that he might not hinder the divorce and marriage. He disclaimed all knowledge of the crime. Since he could not prove his innocence he was pronounced guilty.[2] There can be no doubt that Lady Somerset was the principal instigator of the murder. She received a pardon, but imprisonment in the Tower, was not remitted until 1622.[3] It is doubtful that James believed in the guilt of Somerset. He refused to allow his arms to be removed from among those of the Knights of the Garter in St. George's chapel at Windsor.[4] Someone had proposed that Villiers should receive the estate of Sherborne, which had been the property of Raleigh. Gardiner was of the opinion that Somerset could have received an immediate pardon if he had been willing to ask Villiers to intercede for him and give Villiers the manor of Sherborne.[5] Somerset

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[1] Ibid., II, 352-53.

[2] Ibid., II, 354-60. Davies, op. cit., p. 19.

[3] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 361.

[4] Ibid., II, 361.

[5] Ibid., II, 363.

refused to give up Sherborne and continued to protest his innocence. He was finally released in 1622 and received a full pardon from James just before the latter's death.[1]

The effect of the trial on the English people and especially the Puritans was to further arouse their disgust with the government of James. One of the hated Scots had connived at the imprisonment of his friend to secure a divorce for a high born woman of questionable character. The Lady had procured the murder of the imprisoned man by poison. These were the people the King had honored above all others while persecuting the Puritans for nonconformity. Nor had they failed to note that the whole court had united to do Somerset honor and fawn upon him before his arrest and turned upon him afterwards. The confidence of the people never quite recovered from this revelation of court life.[2]

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[1] Ibid., II, 363.

[2] Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 114.

# CHAPTER IV

## GEORGE VILLIERS, THE SPLENDID DUKE

### I. THE IMPOVERISHED YOUNGER SON

George Villiers was born at Brooksby in Leicestershire, on August 28, 1592. He was the third son of Sir George Villiers, Knight, by his second wife, Mary Beaumont. The Villiers family was of old Norman stock, coming over with William the Conqueror. They had lived in comfortable obscurity as country Knights for over four hundred years.[1]

Young George attended the village school of Billesdon, near his home at Brooksby.[2] An indifferent scholar, he excelled in the social graces. He was the best dancer in the neighborhood. To the unusual beauty of person he added a winning personality. He was his mother's favourite and the close bond between them continued to the end.[3] At the age of eighteen, he was sent to the continent to complete his education by travel as was the custom for young gentlemen of that day. There are reports that he met John Eliot during his travels. His path and that of the man who was to become one of Parliament's greatest orators were to

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 317. Gibbs, op. cit., p. 18.

[2]Rowse, op. cit., p. 18. Gibbs, op. cit., p. 20.

[3]Lindsay, op. cit., p. 10. Gibbs, op. cit., p. 20.

cross continually. Sir John Eliot would become his good friend and then his bitterest enemy, leading the House of Commons in their attack on Villiers, hurling his bitter philippics against the splendid figure of the all powerful Duke and finally dying of consumption in the Tower, a martyr to Parliamentary freedom of speech.[1]

Returning home at the age of 21, Villiers was at loose ends. A young man with expensive tastes, fifty pounds a year, and a wish for the advancement to which he felt his undeniable charm entitled him. Under the circumstances it was inevitable that he should seek out the court, for James was known to have an eye for handsome young men.[2]

## II. THE ROAD TO POWER

The future Duke first appeared at the court in August 1614. He was dressed in a shabby black suit.[3] It was an opportune time for the impoverished young fortune hunter. The enemies of Somerset had long sought a rival for the King's fancy. Not only was the arrogance of Somerset galling to the old nobility, but they regarded with alarm his

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[1]Harold Hulme, The Life of Sir John Eliot (New York: New York University Press, 1957), p. 26.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 318. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 10. Gibbs, op. cit., p. 21.

[3]Lindsay, op. cit., p. 11.

friendship with the powerful Howard family. To the enemies of Somerset, the youth in a rusty black suit must have seemed their best chance. He possessed all the attributes calculated to win the King's attention. An excellent dancer and fencer, graceful, endowed with personal vigor, readiness of speech and great personal charm, he was called by a contemporary, Sir John Oglander, "one of the handsomest men in the whole world."[1] The Herberts, Seymours and Russells were among his earliest supporters. They bought him expensive clothes to set off his fine figure. Sir Thomas Lake purchased the Cupbearer's office for him.[2] Villiers was now a member of the King's household and the better able to attract attention.

James was beginning to take offense at Somerset's behavior. The Earl appeared to look upon the King as a necessary evil to be endured for the sake of the benefits to be obtained through the King's favour.[3] The first real indication of the growing position of Villiers occurred when one of the Earl's enemies threw mud and filth on a painting of Somerset displayed by an art shop. In retaliation, one of the Earl's supporters spilled a plate of soup over

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[1]Rowse, op. cit., p. 227.

[2]Lindsay, op. cit., p. 11.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., II, 319.

Villiers' suit at the King's table. Always hotheaded, Villiers leaped to his feet and felled the offender with a blow of his fist. The penalty for a blow struck in the King's presence was to have the offending hand struck off by the executioner. Somerset was quick to point this out, but James ruled that Villiers had ample justification for his action and ordered the matter dropped.[1]

From then on, Villiers' promotion was rapid. On April 23, 1615, with the connivance of the Queen, he was knighted by the King and made a Gentleman of the Bedchamber. He was given an income of £1,000 a year from the Court of Wards. This was over the strenuous objections of Carr. The Earl was warned through an intermediary of James, that the King expected him to become reconciled to Villiers and Villiers was sent to Somerset to offer his friendship to the powerful favourite. The Earl refused the overtures of Villiers with the words: "I will have none of your service and you shall have none of my favour. I will if I can, break your neck, and of that be certain."[2] The downfall of Somerset in the Fall of 1615 ensured Villiers' place as undisputed favourite. In January 1616, he was promoted to Master of Horse, and in April he was made a knight of the Garter.[3] On August 27th,

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[1]Gibbs, op. cit., p. 28.

[2]Lindsay, op. cit., p. 15.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 27.

he was made Viscount Villiers and Baron Whaddon. James gave him lands valued at £80,000.[1] In the short space of two years he had gone from an unknown, impoverished country gentleman to one of the richest noblemen in England.

## III. THE KING'S FAVOURITE

One of Villiers early supporters was Francis Bacon, who gave the favourite some good advice. He suggested that he use care to recommend none but men of ability to office.[2] The advice fell on barren soil. On January 5, 1617, James made Villiers the Earl of Buckingham.[3] The King soon let it be known that no office should be bestowed without the approval of the Earl.[4] From then on the sale of offices and honors became commonplace. Buckingham made it a point of honor that no one should advance unless he was subservient to the favourite.[5] Chancellor Brackley's son had to pay £20,000 for the Earldom of Bridgewater.[6] In the case of Yelverton, Buckingham suffered one of his few defeats in

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[1] Ibid., III, 30-31.

[2] Ibid., III, 31.

[3] Ibid., III, 58.

[4] Ibid., III, 75.

[5] Ibid., III, 76.

[6] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 78.

patronage and bribes. Yelverton had made no attempt to secure the support of Buckingham. He was easily the best qualified choice for the office of Attorney General. Buckingham, who had been offered £15,000 for the office, opposed the appointment even after James had confirmed it. In an interview with Yelverton, he supported his objection on the grounds that the appointment of a man who did not owe his advancement to himself, would be a blow to his prestige. In this case James overruled Buckingham.[1]

The control of offices was not limited to those of the national government. When the office of Recordership of London became vacant, Buckingham suggested one of his creatures, Shute, for the position. When the Council refused, it was summoned to the King's presence to explain the rejection. The Council explained that they based their objection on the fact that Shute was an outlawed man. Buckingham broke in to say that a man should not be penalized for a single youthful indiscretion, to which the Council replied that Shute had been outlawed fifteen times. Buckingham then held a whispered consultation with James, who then suggested another of the Earl's creatures, Heath, to the Council. The Council protested the ancient right of the

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[1] Ibid., III, 80.

city to elect its own officials. James insisted that he had no intention of interfering with the Council's liberty of choice, but they must elect Heath.[1]

Buckingham made it increasingly clear that anyone who expected promotion must give him something for his recommendation. Around the Earl there grew up a crowd of parasites who served as brokers of their patron's favour and grew rich in the process.[2] The danger to the state lay in the fact that no man could retain his independence after he purchased an office from Buckingham. He must become the Earl's tool and change like a weather vane with his master's caprice.[3] Men of the ability and integrity necessary to carry on a capable administration simply could not accept the badge of slavery that accompanied office under Buckingham. Meanwhile James continued to shower honors and favours on the Earl. On January 1, 1618, he was made Marquis of Buckingham[4] and a short time later given the lease of the Irish Customs, worth from £2,000 to £3,000 a year.[5] On January 19, 1619, James made Buckingham Lord High Admiral of

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 218.

[2]Ibid., III, 218.

[3]Ibid., III, 211.

[4]Ibid., III, 102.

[5]Ibid., III, 186.

England.[1] The Navy was in a sorry state at the time. Graft was rampant everywhere. The aged Nottingham was too old and ineffectual to properly supervise the Navy. James hoped that Buckingham would not only save money for the Crown but place the fleet on a more efficient footing. While some improvements were made, the fatal weakness of placing Buckingham's creatures in responsible positions was soon to embarrass the English people.

## IV. THE RAPACIOUS COUNTESS

Mary Beaumont, the mother of Buckingham, was a woman of somewhat obscure origin. Lindsay insists that she was a penniless kitchen maid when she married Sir George Villiers.[2] Gibbs described her as an impoverished gentlewoman living on the bounty of a relative.[3] In any event, she appears to have been a woman of great beauty, with a great love for money and a strong sense of family responsibility. She arrived at court soon after her son began his meteoric rise. First she was created Lady Compton and later Countess of Buckingham. Her first thought was to provide for her family. Seeking a heiress for her son, John, she decided that

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 206.

[2]Lindsay, op. cit., p. 10.

[3]Gibbs, op. cit., p. 20.

Sir Edward Coke's daughter, Frances, would provide a large enough dowry. She first approached Lady Coke, who refused to consider the match. Then she went to Sir Edward with a demand for a £10,000 dowry as a price for an alliance with the favourite.[1] Coke, hoping to be restored to the King's favour after being dismissed from his position as Chief Justice, finally agreed to the match. What followed does no credit to any of the participants. Coke removed his daughter by force from her mother's custody. Lady Coke swore out a warrant, charging him with housebreaking and kidnapping. Francis Bacon was drawn into the affair and incurred the displeasure of both James and Buckingham by taking the part of Lady Coke.[2] Buckingham accused Bacon of showing the same ingratitude to him as to Somerset.[3] Bacon was restored to favour only after making abject apologies to James and Buckingham. The marriage had scarcely taken place than Lady Coke was offered a peerage if she would make over Corfe Castle to Sir John Villiers. Coke's wife was quite as tight-fisted as her husband. Not even a threat to make Sir Edward a Baron to spite her could make her give up her property.[4]

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 88.

[2]Ibid., III, 94.

[3]Ibid., III, 96.

[4]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 96.

Cranfield, the able and efficient surveyor general of customs, was recently widowed. He was informed that he could expect no further promotions unless he married a cousin of the Countess. Cranfield held out for only a short time.[1] One other case might be mentioned. In looking for a rich wife for her son, Christopher, the Countess decided on the fourteen year old daughter of Lord Mayor Sir Sebastian Harvey. The Lord Mayor possessed an estate valued at £100,000. When he declined the honor of an alliance with the Villiers family, she enlisted the aid of James, who sent letter after letter to the Mayor. The old man was in ill health and could not be moved by either the flattery or the threats of a person so important even as the King of England.[2] There was much more. The Countess had a large number of impoverished relatives to be provided for, and marrying a kinswoman of Buckingham became "an indispensable qualification for office."[3]

Buckingham's mother was not content with the mere provision for her relatives. As the mother of the dispenser of all patronage in England, she was the recipient of numerous bribes, including one of £15,000.[4] A strong willed

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[1] Ibid., III, 213.

[2] Ibid., III, 297.

[3] Ibid., III, 213.

[4] Ibid., III, 188.

woman, she had a tendency to get out of hand and was once told by the King that her activities were harmful to her son. He warned her to stop meddling in affairs of the State and to stay away from the Court.[1] The banishment was only temporary.

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 208.

# CHAPTER V

## THE SPANISH MARRIAGE

### I. GONDOMAR, THE MASTER DIPLOMAT

Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuna, best known by his later title, Count of Gondomar, was one of Spain's ablest diplomats. He was sent to England as Ambassador in 1613 and continued in that office, with one short break, until 1622. His knowledge of Latin helped ingratiate him with the King, whom he flattered by admiration of his scholarly talents and bullied in matters of relations with Spain. Next to Buckingham, he had the most influence with the King and was the director of the long period of Spanish influence in James' reign.[1]

James had set his heart on a marriage between Charles and the Spanish Infanta. He hoped that such an alliance would serve to bring peace to Europe but the great attraction was the £600,000 dowry the bride would bring to England. Such an amount would enable James to pay off most of his debts and remove the necessity for calling more

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[1] F. C. Montague, The History of England, 1603-1660 (Vol. VII of The Political History of England, ed. William Hunt and Reginald Poole. 12 vols.; London: Longmans, Green and Company Ltd. 1929), p. 63. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 118. Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 249.

Parliaments.[1]

On one point Gondomar and the House of Commons were in complete agreement. Both were certain that a Spanish marriage would, in the long run, insure the supremacy of the Catholic religion.[2] The Pope's conditions as sent to Philip, included: The conversion of Charles,[3] repeal of all acts against the Catholics, a large church in London open to all worshipers, severe punishment for any Englishman who in any way interfered with or insulted worshipers, and priests to be allowed to wear ecclesiastical dress in London. All this to be confirmed by an act of Parliament and to be strictly observed for three years before the marriage could take place.[4] The conditions as forwarded to James, through Gondomar, included the repeal of all laws against the Catholics. The following should be secured if at all possible: The conversion of Prince Charles, public liberty of worship, freedom of the Catholics to erect churches where they pleased, and Catholic Professors to teach in the Universities in England. All concessions were to be confirmed by an act of Parliament.[5]

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 106.

[2]Ibid., III, 61. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 116.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 37.

[4]Ibid., III, 38-39.

[5]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 103.

Neither James nor Gondomar had any real understanding of the English people or of Parliament. At a time when Catholic powers were carrying everything before them on the continent, policies affecting religion aroused the fears of most Englishmen. Neither Parliament nor the people were ever told of the concessions asked by Spain or those which James was willing to grant. Suspicions were rife and quite near to the mark. Such suspicion did much to destroy James' support in Parliament and among the people.[1]

Under such conditions, Gondomar would not have been popular with the English people, whatever his personality. His actions, and those of his suite, aroused the active resentment of the people, who hated him for his arrogance, and feared him for his influence with the King.[2] An apprentice, who insulted Gondomar, was flogged to death after James threatened to revoke the Charter of London and place a garrison in the city.[3] When a member of Gondomar's suite rode down a child, he provoked a riot and narrowly escaped with his life. James forced the Mayor of London to personally apologize to Gondomar and took personal charge of the prosecution of the rioters.[4] As the result of such

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[1] Ibid., III, 348, IV, 34-35 & 110.

[2] Ibid., IV, 35. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 118.

[3] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 119.

[4] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 136.

acts the people of London, combined their long established hatred of Spain with a hatred of James.

## II. SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Raleigh had been confined to the Tower under a sentence of death, supposedly for committing treason by plotting with the Spaniards against James, since 1604. In 1616, with the help of Buckingham, he was released from the Tower. Raleigh claimed to have occupied Guiana in 1595 and to have found a rich gold mine. James, in hopes of securing gold to restore his nearly bankrupt treasury to solvency, comissioned Raleigh to sail to South America or other places, to discover profitable commodities, which they might keep after reserving one fifth to the Crown.[1]

Gondomar insisted that the purpose of the voyage was to make war on Spanish colonies. James assured the Ambassador that if Raleigh attacked the Spaniards he would send him to Madrid to be hanged in the great square. Further, he disclosed to Gondomar, all that he had learned in confidence from Raleigh, the location of the supposed mine, the number of men and ships in the expedition and the armament carried.[2] With such information in the hands of the

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[1] Ibid., III, 112.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 118.

Spaniards, it was scarcely to be marveled at that the expedition should prove a failure. Raleigh's son, George, was killed. His second in command, Keymis, committed suicide. When Raleigh returned empty handed, his doom was sealed.[1]

Gondomar, speaking before James and the Council, demanded the immediate execution of Raleigh. His imperious tone aroused the anger and distaste of the Council, and his demand was rejected.[2] A technical difficulty arose in that Raleigh, who had never been pardoned from the conviction of treason, was legally presumed dead and could not be tried, since he had no legal existence. The old charge of treason was renewed. James refused Raleigh counsel.[2] He was examined in private and the old sentence of 1604 was reaffirmed with an order for immediate execution. On October 22, 1618 he was beheaded in the Palace yard. The execution aroused a storm of protest in England. The last of the great Elizabethan adventurers was never so popular in life as in death. So strong was the feeling that a declaration was issued to justify the execution. Francis Bacon was supposed to have had a major part in its preparation. Like most declarations of the sort it convinced no one who was not already on the side of the King.[3]

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[1] Ibid., III, 127.

[2] Ibid., III, 132-33.

[3] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 152.

## III. BUCKINGHAM IN ALLIANCE WITH GONDOMAR

Buckingham had at first supported the party which favoured war with Spain. It was impossible for him to maintain any course for long. He suddenly deserted the war party to ally himself with Gondomar.[1] He told the Spanish Ambassador that his dearest wish was to see the Spanish marriage accomplished and that he wished to build his fortunes on the Spanish alliance.[2]

As proof of his devotion to his new friends, Buckingham now proposed to Gondomar, an alliance between England and Spain, against the Dutch. The fact that the Dutch had long been allies of England, were Protestants, and that many Englishmen were fighting in their armies seemed to count for nothing.[3] James, who considered the Dutch to be in rebellion against their lawful King,[4] was drawn into the hairbrained scheme and made his own contribution. He suggested to Gondomar that he would send secret orders to Englishmen, serving with the Dutch, to rise up and attack their comrades. The Spaniards should launch an attack timed with the uprising.[5] It does not seem to have occurred to James

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[1] Ibid., III, 354.

[2] Ibid., III, 37.

[3] Ibid., III, 359.

[4] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., I, 103.

[5] Ibid., III, 360.

that Englishmen, who had fought for years against Spaniards and other Catholic powers, might refuse to dishonor themselves and their race by such base treachery. Or that scattered as they were through the Dutch army, 8,000 Englishmen might find it difficult to turn on their comrades if they were so inclined.[1] One explanation for the proposed treachery against the Dutch, seems to be that James and Buckingham needed some way of convincing Gondomar of their sincerity in the Spanish match. That such conduct would be as unappetizing to English stomachs as concessions to the Catholics seems to have occurred to neither.[2] The facts are that James never understood the English people and was never close to public opinion.[3]

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[1] Ibid., III, 360.

[2] Ibid., III, 360.

[3] Tanner, op. cit., pp. 7 & 18.

# CHAPTER VI

## FREDERICK AND THE THIRTY YEARS WAR

### I. DISASTER IN BOHEMIA AND THE PALATINATE

James' son-in-law, Frederick, Elector Palatine, an incompetent with visions of grandeur,[1] had accepted the throne of Bohemia from the feudal nobles. He acted against the advice of his mother, advisers, and most of the German princes of the Protestant Union. His action was opposed by his father-in-law, who was convinced that he had no right to the throne.[2] The Elector of Saxony became the ally of Maximilian of Bavaria and Emperor Ferdinand. The battle of White Mountain on October 29, 1620 crushed the forces of Frederick and ruined his cause in Bohemia. Gondomar had become convinced that James would offer no effective help to Frederick and so informed his master. Spinola then led an army of 24,000 Spanish troops from the Netherlands to attack the undefended Palatinate.[3]

James would take no action to defend Frederick in Bohemia but he did not intend to stand by while his

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 210.

[2]C. V. Wedgewood, The Thirty Years War (London: Jonathan Cape, 1947), p. 98.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., III, 376-78. Trevelyan, op. cit., pp. 119-21. Montague, op. cit., pp. 89-94.

son-in-law lost his hereditary dominions. He summoned a Parliament in hopes of securing funds to support Frederick in the Palatinate. The Parliament which met in January, 1621, was well disposed toward James. They were concerned about the victories of the Catholics on the continent but were lacking information about the actual state of affairs.[1] Bacon advised James to speak freely to both Houses and outline a proposed course of action. But James had never learned that the way to get along with Parliament was to take them into his confidence.[2] The King felt that his declaration of good intentions should suffice.[3] Parliament would have been even more on edge if they had known that while refusing his confidence to them, he was holding conversations with Gondomar in which he expressed his desire to live and die in friendship with Philip. He condemned the Puritans as enemies to Philip and himself and talked about a reconciliation with Rome. He would be willing to recognize the headship of the Pope in matters spiritual. He further proposed that Frederick should withdraw his claims to the Crown of Bohemia and that Philip should withdraw his

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 35. D.N.B., op. cit., X, 613.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 36.

[3]Ibid., IV, 110.

troops from the Palatinate.[1]

Parliament was disturbed by not knowing what course James meant to pursue or what use he meant to make of the proposed supplies.[2] An uproar was created by the knowledge that 100 of the highly prized English cannon had been sold to Spain. Refusing to accept Gondomar's explanation that the guns were to be used in Portugal against the pirates, the Commons preferred to consider that they would be used against the German Protestants.[3] The House of Lords were hostile to James because of his creation of Earls at a price of £10,000 and the favouritism shown to the Scots.[4] The King's action in placing the Earl of Oxford under arrest for speaking against Popery and the Spanish match, served to widen the breach.[5] James further estranged Parliament by sending orders that no one should speak of the proposed

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[1]Sir. G. W. Prothero, Sir. A. W. Ward, Sir Stanley Leathers, (ed.). The Cambridge Modern History (London: Cambridge University Press Warehouse, 1907), References to Vol. III are from the chapter by S. R. Gardiner, Britain and James I and from Vol. IV. are from the chapter by G. W. Prothero, Charles and the Constitutional Crises. Hereafter cited as C.M.H., III, 575-76. Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 27-28.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 32. C.M.H., III, 569.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 33.

[4]Ibid., IV, 39.

[5]Ibid., IV, 134.

marriage of Charles and claiming his right to punish any man's misdemeanors in Parliament.[1] Parliament was alarmed by the prospect of a Spanish marriage at a time when the Palatinate was overrun by Spanish troops.[2]

Meanwhile, things were going from bad to worse for Frederick. His refusal to renounce the Throne of Bohemia, when there was no possible hope of retaining it, alienated most of the Protestant powers.[3] He lost the confidence of his people in the upper Palatinate by the excesses of his soldiers under Mansfield. These troops lived off the land. Their pillage, rape, and slaughter made Mansfield's name a byword throughout Europe.[4]

Buckingham was doing his best to defeat the cause of Frederick by giving Gondomar letters of Frederick and his wife Elizabeth, and assuring the Ambassador that not a penny of funds voted by Parliament would be sent to the Palatinate.[5] James, who still had visions of being the supreme arbiter of Europe, wrote to ask the Emperor to restore the Palatinate to Frederick.[6] Buckingham, in line with his new

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 250. C.M.H., III, 569.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 251-52.

[3]Ibid., IV, 210. D.N.B., X, 613.

[4]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 217.

[5]Ibid., IV, 228.

[6]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 229.

found devotion to Spain, was attacking the incompetence of Frederick and hounding James for a declaration of war on the Dutch.[1] Word of his intrigues must have reached the Dutch for rumors were rife at the Hague, that Buckingham was secretly a Catholic and a traitor to England.[2]

## II. MONOPOLIES AND BUCKINGHAM'S KINSMEN

The Parliament of 1621 almost immediately turned its attention to the matter of monopolies. The abuses of this system had caused trouble late in Elizabeth's reign. The worst abuses were to be found in the patents for the manufacture of gold and silver thread and for the licensing of inn-keepers. Buckingham's half brother, Sir Edward Villiers, another brother, and a kinsman, Sir Giles Mompesson, were involved in the monopoly on gold and silver thread.[3] Mompesson was one of three who had been granted the patent for issuing licenses to alehouses.[4] Commons investigated the monopolies, sitting as a committee of the whole House. It was shown that licenses had been granted to houses of ill repute, money had been extorted from honest innkeepers, and

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[1] Ibid., IV, 228.

[2] Ibid., IV, 228.

[3] Ibid., IV, 11. C.M.H., III, 569.

[4] Ibid., Hist. of Eng., IV, 4.

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With the dissolution of Parliament, James was left without money to assist Frederick. He announced that he would send 8,000 foot soldiers and 1,600 horse to support his son-in-law. As a method of raising funds he resorted to benevolences.[1] The attempt ended in a complete failure. Tilly's Bavarian Troops, acting in concert with the Spanish troops of Philip, took first Heidelberg and then Mannheim.[2] James turned once more to the idea of the Spanish marriage as a solution to his difficulties.

Digby was created Earl of Bristol and sent to Madrid. Gondomar was recalled to Spain. The King of Spain, playing for time to consolidate the Catholic position on the continent, promised aid to Frederick.[3] Buckingham continued his support for the marriage and Spain. His wife had returned to the Catholic faith and his mother was converted.[4] He wrote to Gondomar that all Catholics were out of prison and that no man should be allowed to speak against the Pope.[5] King Philip and his minister scaled the Pope's demands down.

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[1] Ibid., IV, 295.

[2] Ibid., IV, 365.

[3] Ibid., IV, 384.

[4] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., IV, 279-81.

[5] Ibid., IV, 354.

The education of her children was to be left to the Princess until the age of nine. James and Charles were to promise in a separate letter to refrain from persecution of Catholics and to allow them free exercise of religion in their homes. The amended articles were signed by Charles and James, and along with the letter required by Philip returned to Digby.[1] The stage was now set for the great escapade of Buckingham and Charles, which will be treated in the next chapter.

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[1] Ibid., IV, 396. Davies, op. cit., p. 52.

# CHAPTER VII

## CHARLES, BUCKINGHAM AND THE SPANISH ADVENTURE

### I. TWO DEAR ADVENTUROUS KNIGHTS

Buckingham now proposed to James that Buckingham and Charles should journey across France to Madrid in disguise. James asked Cottingham for his opinion and when Charles' secretary said that he did not think much of the idea, James fell upon his bed crying out that he should lose both Buckingham and Baby Charles. By accusing James of breaking his pledged word, the pair finally succeeded in browbeating James into agreeing to the proposal.[1]

The arrival of the Prince in Madrid on March 7, 1623, was considered by King Philip and his minister, Olivares, as absolute proof that Charles had decided to change his religion. They could conceive of no other reason for the heir to the Throne of England to make the trip to Spain.[2] At his first meeting with Charles, Olivares proposed that the conversion take place at once. Buckingham told Olivares that Charles had no intention of changing his religion. Rumors of the conversion reached the point that Bristol

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[1] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 1-5. C.M.H., III, 576.

[2] Ibid., V, 11.

sought out Charles to discover the truth. He urged Charles to speak out plainly and thus avoid further misunderstanding.[1] The Papal Nuncio, De Massimi, proposed that some fortified town be made over to the English Catholics, as Rochelle was held by Huguenots, as a guarantee of performance of concessions granted to the Catholics. Buckingham, who was beginning to lose his wild enthusiasm for the Spanish match, flatly refused.[2]

Much to the surprise of Philip and Olivares, the dispensation arrived from Rome. It was not to be delivered until Charles had given security for his promises and Philip had agreed to see that the promises were carried out, even if it meant going to war.[3] The Infanta must remain in Spain for a year after her marriage. The freedom granted to Catholics must be publicly proclaimed. James, Charles, and the Privy Council must guarantee that it would never be revoked. Parliament must agree to the settlement. Buckingham quarreled violently with Olivares over the articles.[4] Olivares and the Spanish theologians now went to work on Charles. It was proposed that the marriage might take place

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[1] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 14.

[2] Ibid., V, 23.

[3] Ibid., V, 37.

[4] Ibid., V, 38. D.N.B., IV, 69.

at once but Charles must agree to see that Parliament rescinded all penal laws. Offices of trust must be filled by Catholics after which it was supposed that the King would be powerless and either compelled to change his religion or abdicate.[1]

## II. BUCKINGHAM AS A DIPLOMAT

Buckingham, who had been created a Duke by James, quarreled with Olivares and succeeded in arousing the hatred of the Spanish Court.[2] Judged by Spanish standards of etiquette his manners, at their best, were offensive. He lounged about Charles' apartment in a state of undress, went covered in the presence of the Prince and was unduly familiar with the Spanish ladies of the Court of Philip. The Spanish noblemen declared that they would rather throw the Infanta down a well than trust her to the influence of the Duke.[3] Bristol, alarmed by the increasing animosity shown the Duke, wrote to James as follows:

> "For the truth is, that this King and his ministers are grown to have so high a dislike against my Lord Duke of Buckingham, and, on the one side judge him to have so much power with your Majesty and the Prince, and, on the other side, to be so ill affected to them,

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[1] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 41.

[2] Davies, op. cit., p. 56. D.N.B., XX, 331.

[3] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 94.

> and their affairs, that if your Majesty shall not be pleased in your wisdom either to find some means of reconciliation, or else to let them see and be assured that it shall no way be in my Lord Duke of Buckingham's power to make the Infanta's life less happy unto her, or in any way to cross and embroil affairs betwixt your Majesties and your kingdoms, I am afraid your Majesty will see the effects which you have just cause to expect from this alliance to follow but slowly, and all the great businesses now in treaty prosper but ill. For I must, for the discharge of my conscience and duty, without descending to particulars, let your Majesty truly know that suspicions and distastes betwixt them all here and my Lord of Buckingham cannot be at a greater height."[1]

James, after his initial fright, had pictured his two boys as "dear adventurous knights" faring forth on a great romance. This in spite of the alarmed Council, who had declared Buckingham guilty of High Treason in taking Charles out of the kingdom.[2] As the months passed he was consumed with a longing to see the two persons whom he loved best. As G. M. Trevelyan puts it: "The romanse rivaled Amadis de Gaul for tediousness and Don Quixote for realism; the presence of the Fairy Prince had failed to release the lady, and the Magician was quarreling with the Dragons."[3]

Charles was finally awakened from his dreams by the fact that the King of Spain would not promise to effect the restoration of the Palatinate to Frederick. He declared

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 95.

[2]Ibid., V, 9.

[3]Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 129.

privately, that he did not wish to purchase his happiness with his sister's tears.[1] Charles had made concessions to the Spaniards which he must have known Parliament would never approve. He had secured James' agreement to the marriage treaty. But Charles had lost his ardor for the marriage and was concerned with getting out of Spain.[2] Leaving his proxy and instructions to withhold it with Bristol, Charles sailed for England in September, 1623.[3] Once safe in England, Charles and Buckingham were quite as opposed to the match as they had previously favoured it. James wrote to Bristol that the marriage was not to take place until the return of the Palatinate to Frederick had been settled.[4] Next a demand was made that the dowry must be paid in cash, an impossibility for the nearly bankrupt Philip. Three days before the ceremony was to take place, November 26, 1623, Bristol received orders from James to postpone the marriage indefinitely. Philip halted all preparations and negotiations ended.[5]

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 118.

[2]Ibid., V, 127. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 30.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 142. D.N.B., IV, 70.

[4]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 151. C.M.H., III, 575-76.

[5]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 153.

## III. THE WAR PARTY

Charles and Buckingham had received a riotous welcome on their return to England. Bells were rung, bonfires lit, prisoners released and their carriage almost mobbed by cheering crowds. The Spaniards had won the Duke's enmity and what he now proposed was war with Spain. Charles, impelled partly by pique, as was the Duke, and partly by concern for his sister, supported him.[1] James, tired and in ill health, gave way to his son and the Duke. From now until the end of his reign, James left the conduct of the government to Buckingham, and he became ruler of England in all but name.[2] First the Duke tried for a declaration of war by the Council. The Lord Treasurer, Middlesex, incurred the hatred of Buckingham, by leading the opposition to war. The Duke openly raged at the Council when it refused to approve a war with Spain.[3]

The one man who might have told James the truth about the Duke was Bristol, and it soon became common knowledge that Buckingham intended to ruin Bristol.[4] In January, 1624, Bristol was recalled from Spain to give an account of

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[1] C.M.H., III, 576. D.N.B., IV, 70.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 160. Davies, op. cit., p. 57.

[3] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 177. D.N.B., XX, 331.

[4] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 164.

his conduct.[1] A grand plan of war against the House of Hapsburg and Spain now occupied the Duke and Charles. It was proposed to form an alliance with the Dutch, Denmark, Sweden, the princes of North Germany, the Duke of Savoy and the Republic of Venice against the Emperor. Viscount Kensington was sent to Paris, as Ambassador. His mission was to negotiate a marriage treaty between Charles and Henrietta Maria and to secure a military alliance against Spain.[2] It did not occur to James or the Duke, that while France would be happy to have England at war with Spain, it was not to France's interest to see the Palatinate returned to Frederick.[3]

Since Parliament had consistently opposed Spain, the Duke and Charles persuaded James to call another Parliament, which met on February 19, 1624. Buckingham spoke to Parliament on the adventure in Spain. He went to great lengths to explain the deceit of the Spaniards. Philip had never meant to keep his promise to help restore Frederick to the Palatinate. For once, the Duke was popular with Parliament.[4] To prepare for war funds would be needed. James received a

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[1] Ibid., V, 174.

[2] Ibid., V, 217.

[3] Ibid., V, 220.

[4] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 185.

deputation from both Houses. Far from wanting a war with Spain, he wished to avoid such a war and to concentrate on the recovery of the Palatinate.[1] James asked for £780,000 for this purpose. Parliament was in no mood for a war to restore Frederick. A war with Spain held out a promise of plunder. It required all the skill of the Duke and Charles to patch up differences. Parliament finally voted £300,000 with the understanding that it was to be used for a war with Spain.[2]

Philip, as eager to avoid war as the Duke was to promote it, sent a new Ambassador, Lafuente, with documents to prove charges against Buckingham. He was robbed, presumably by agents of the Duke, while traveling across France and arrived in England without his documents.[3] In a meeting with James, with Buckingham present, the Ambassador complained of the Duke's overbearing attitude and the violation of the rules of common decency.[4] After some difficulty the Ambassador managed a private meeting with James, at which he charged the Duke with plotting to depose James.[5] Since

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[1] Ibid., V, 194.

[2] Ibid., V, 200.

[3] Ibid., V, 204.

[4] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 208.

[5] Ibid., V, 227.

all his papers had been stolen, Lafuente had no way of substantiating his charges before the investigating commission.

Bristol returned from Spain determined to defend his honor against the charges made by Buckingham. The Duke was equally determined to keep him from seeing James and tried to have him sent to the Tower. James ordered him confined to his own house. Bristol promptly demanded a trial by the House of Lords.[1] A committee investigated the charges against Bristol and exonerated him of all charges, but the Duke prevented him from seeing James.[2]

Philip, in a last attempt to avoid war, sent Gondomar back to England, but the man who had so strongly influenced James in the past, and who might have brought about the downfall of the Duke, died on the way to England.[3]

Buckingham now resolved to ruin Middlesex, who had opposed a war with Spain. Buckingham, who considered any opposition as a personal insult, encouraged the impeachment proceedings against the Lord Treasurer. James, with more common sense than his son or favourite, told the Duke: "You are a fool, you are making a rod with which you will be scourged yourself." In equally prophetic language he

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[1] Ibid., V, 232.

[2] Ibid., V, 236.

[3] Ibid., V, 268-69.

told Charles: "You will live to have your bellyfull of impeachments."[1] In the first impeachment since 1450, Middlesex was fined £50,000, imprisoned at the King's pleasure and to be forever incapable of holding office under the Crown, excluded from Parliament and the Court. The fine and prison sentence were remitted but he was banished from public life.[2]

## IV. THE MANSFELD FIASCO

James was growing tired of the requests of Parliament for war with Spain, so he prorogued Parliament. Meanwhile the old trouble, of the status of English Catholics, arose to plague the negotiations for a French marriage. James and Charles had promised Parliament that no marriage treaty should affect the laws concerning English Catholics. Richelieu, after much haggling, secured from James a letter promising that the Catholics should enjoy all the liberties which had been promised them under the Spanish marriage articles. Buckingham was once more working for the Catholics and pressuring James.[3] Charles was later to justify his signing the letter on the grounds that he did not intend

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[1] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 231.

[2] Ibid., V, 244. D.N.B., X, 617. XX, 331.

[3] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 261. C.M.H., III, 577. IV, 257. D.N.B., IV, 70.

to keep the agreement and that the King of France wanted it to deceive the Pope.[1]

Count Mansfeld, whose name had become an anathema to Protestants and Catholics alike, because of the ravages of his troops, now came to England in search of employment. Although thoroughly discredited at Frederick's Court,[2] he was received in England as a Protestant hero and James undertook to raise an army for him. Since no volunteers could be found, the levies were impressed men. They were the dregs of England, who were mustered at Dover just before Christmas. They lacked food, clothing, and arms, and no ships had been provided for them.[3] Louis had no intention of letting an army under Mansfeld march across France, although that had been the plan of the English. Without food or money the troops were finally embarked on ships in late January, 1625, and sailed for Flushing. They were disembarked in the dead of winter, without provision having been made for food, shelter, or military supplies. The men sickened and died at the rate of forty to fifty a day. Of the 12,000 men who sailed from Dover less than three thousand were left by the

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[1] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 278.

[2] Ibid., V, 272.

[3] Ibid., V, 282-83.

end of March.[1]

The Huguenots rose in revolt, with Rochelle the center of the rebellion. The King of France asked for help and Buckingham promised to lend him English ships.[2] To add to the difficulties over the French marriage, the Pope now demanded a public instrument, guaranteeing freedom of worship which should be signed by James and Charles. Louis promised that if the Pope did not furnish the dispensation without such conditions in thirty days, the marriage should be solemnized without it.[3] Before this period was up, James, worn out from his many ailments, died on March 27, 1625.[4]

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 288-90. C.M.H., III, 578. D.N.B., IV, 71, XX, 332.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 306.

[3]Ibid., V, 307.

[4]Ibid., V, 316.

# CHAPTER VIII

## CHARLES AND THE FRENCH ALLIANCE

### I. BUCKINGHAM'S DIPLOMACY AT THE FRENCH COURT

The new King of England, Charles I, had many admirable qualities. In appearance he was graceful, dignified, and modest in dress. He was an excellent horseman and excelled at hunting, tennis and tilting. In an age when Courts were notorious for their laxity of morals, the fidelity which he was later to show for his Queen set a rare example of royal conduct. He accepted without question the doctrine of Divine Right of Kings, which he had been taught by his father. He could not believe that a man of honor and integrity could honestly hold an opinion that differed from his own. He had the common Stuart failing of selecting advisers, who were as incompetent as they were charming. His worst fault was his insincerity. Pressed into a corner he would promise anything, with mental reservations to save him from keeping his word. Party leaders discovered that they could make no binding agreement with him. Charles could then become indignant at their refusal to accept his word as his bond.[1]

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[1]Montague, op. cit., pp. 126-27. Trevelyan, op, cit., p. 133. Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 366-67.

With the death of James, Charles was desperately in need of funds. He would not call a Parliament until his marriage had been solemnized for fear of opposition to the alliance. Charles was obligated by a treaty with the Dutch to maintain 6,000 English troops in the States-General at an annual cost of £100,000. Mansfield's expedition was costing £20,000 a month, and Charles had obligated himself to pay the King of Denmark £30,000 a month.[1]

Buckingham was sent to France to escort the Queen home and to make the best bargain possible with Louis. The Duke impressed the French with his magnificence. His suit, heavily sewn with diamonds and other precious stones, cost £80,000.[2] Louis refused to join in an attack on the Spanish Netherlands. He offered to pay £100,000 of the King of Denmark's expenses, to furnish 2,000 horse to Mansfield and pay his expenses for seven months. Buckingham expected a great deal more, and, with his undeniable talent for doing the wrong thing, managed to quarrel with the French King.[3] He paid public court to the French Queen, Anne of Austria. Whether his actions resulted from a desire to offend Louis

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 336. Davies, op. cit., p. 58.

[2]Lindsay, op. cit., p. 41.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 331.

or from a genuine attraction for the Queen is a matter of dispute. Lindsay insists that the Duke was playacting the lover for revenge on Louis.[1] In any event, for the whim of the moment, he was willing to endanger the benefits of the French alliance.

The first Parliament of Charles met while an outbreak of the plague in London was at its height. In a single week 165 people died.[2] The King's speech amounted to little more than a request for supplies. No member of the Council explained what the King meant to do or how much money the King needed or for what purposes.[3] Left to themselves, the Commons went into a committee on religion. Concerned with the danger to Protestants they petitioned for strict observance of the recusancy laws and for aid to advance the preachings of Protestantism.[4] They voted one subsidy and one fifteenth or about £100,000.[5] Due to the prevalence of the plague the King adjourned Parliament to Oxford.

Fresh trouble now arose over the promise of the Duke

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[1]Lindsay, op. cit., p. 41. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 136.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 337.

[3]Ibid., V, 343.

[4]Ibid., V, 339.

[5]Ibid., V, 345.

to furnish English ships to France. The English sea captains refused to fight against the French Protestants.[1] Since the ships were in French ports, the French threatened to take possession of the ships and to place the sailors under military law.[2] Buckingham ordered the fleet to be sailed to Dieppe and there to be disposed of, as the King felt good.[3] The captains were being sent official letters to turn the ships over to the French. Meanwhile subterfuge and secret letters were employed to prevent delivery of the ships.[4] After two months, Richelieu got one empty ship.[5]

Louis had other reasons for dissatisfaction. The day after Henrietta Maria landed at Dover as Queen of England, Charles violated the promise of toleration made to Louis and gave orders for the enforcement of the recusancy laws.[6] In this he was supported by Buckingham, who hoped to gain the support of Parliament by action against the Catholics.[7]

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 379.

[2]Ibid., V, 382.

[3]Ibid., V, 384.

[4]Hilaire Belloc, Richelieu (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1929), p. 250.

[5]Ibid., p. 252.

[6]Ibid., p. 248. Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 377.

[7]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 358.

Parliament re-assembled at Oxford on August 1, 1625. It at once returned to the subject of religion. Complaints came from all sides against Catholics and the defense of Arminian position by Charles' Chaplain, Richard Montagu.[1] Charles made a personal appeal for consideration of his need for money. The Commons were in no mood to accede to the King's wishes. The suspicions of the leaders were aroused by the policy that had resulted in the debacle of Mansfield's army dying like flies in Holland.[2] There was a growing distrust of, not only the Duke's capacity but his integrity as well.[3] Buckingham now attempted to regain his former popularity by a personal appearance in defense of his policy. He put forward his grand schemes for the restoration of Frederick and a sea war against Spain.[4] Buckingham's defense made little impression on Commons. When they met again, Phelips, Seymour, and Wentworth took turns in attacking Charles' advisers and expressing their distrust, especially of Buckingham.[5] In a few short months the Duke had added to the opposition of Commons, that of the Catholics

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[1] Ibid., V, 400-402.

[2] Ibid., V, 408.

[3] Ibid., V, 408. D.N.B., IV, 71.

[4] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 418.

[5] Ibid., V, 421.

at home and the French abroad.[1] The increasing boldness of pirates, who preyed upon English shipping and the English coast, gave further cause for alarm to Parliament.[2] Charles was angered by the attack on the Duke. In spite of the protests of loyalty and a declared willingness to vote supplies, he dissolved Parliament on August 12th, before any bills for supplies had been voted.[3]

## II. THE CADIZ EXPEDITION

Charles and Buckingham had learned nothing of the difficulties of conducting war without funds from the fiasco in Holland. They now decided to attack Spain by sea. It was supposed that the empty treasury could be filled by looting Spanish cities and capturing the plate fleet.[4] The command of the fleet and soldiers was given to Sir Edward Cecil. To secure an army, the old method of impressment was resorted to. No barracks were available for the troops, who were quartered on the people. Without pay and without food the men were forced to rob to stay alive.[5] Cecil complained

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 423.

[2]Ibid., V, 429.

[3]Ibid., V, 435.

[4]Ibid., VI, 9.

[5]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 10.

to Charles of the complete lack of training and discipline on the part of the common soldiers and the incompetence of the officers appointed by Buckingham.[1] The complaints brought no results. Neither the Duke nor the King seemed to realize that mere numbers do not make an army or navy.[2] Judged by numbers of men and ships, the expedition was a formidable one. It consisted of nine ships of the Royal navy and seventy-three merchantmen, which were pressed into service, aided by twenty Dutch men-of-war, and carried 10,000 soldiers.[3] The early fighting went in favour of the English, as the Spanish fleet fled into the inner harbor. Cecil now tried a joint attack. He disembarked the soldiers for an overland attack on the city while the navy was to press the attack on the inner harbor by sea. Never was lack of training and incompetence more clearly demonstrated. No food was sent ashore for the troops. After a day without food, the men found a wine cellar and in a short time most of them were drunk. The men refused to obey their officers and commenced fighting among themselves. It was with difficulty that they were withdrawn to the fleet next morning. They left behind more than 100, who were too drunk

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[1] Ibid., VI, 11.

[2] Ibid., VI, 14.

[3] Ibid., VI, 14.

to follow, to the mercies of the Spanish troops.[1]

The attack on the inner harbor had failed. Cecil re-embarked his troops and sailed off to search for the plate fleet, which he narrowly missed. Many of his ships were proving to be unseaworthy. Some of the sails and gear had been furnished for the fight against the Armada. The food spoiled, the water was foul, and the beer bad. Sickness and pestilence swept the fleet.[2] After three weeks of fruitless watch, it was resolved to sail for home. The fleet was scattered by fall storms and had to make their way home separately. By the time Cecil's flagship had returned home 130 corpses had been thrown overboard. More than that number were sick. Sailors dropped dead in the streets of Plymouth.[3] The blame for the disaster could only be placed at Buckingham's door. For eight years he had been Lord High Admiral. All positions in the navy had been filled with his creatures. All officers in the fleet were his appointments. To cover the incompetence of his administration, the Government called the failure due to accidents and misfortune.[4]

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 20-21. Davies, op. cit., p. 34. C.M.H., IV, 262.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 21.

[3]Ibid., VI, 22.

[4]Ibid., VI, 22-23.

Not content with such disaster, Buckingham was busily engaged in throwing away the advantages which might have been gained from the French alliance. Charles was having difficulty with his fifteen year old bride. He suspected the Queen's French attendants of encouraging her to disobey his wishes. He sent the Duke to the Queen to threaten and flatter her by turns. Charles demanded that the Queen admit the Duke's wife, sister, and niece as Ladies of the Bed Chamber.[1] The Duke was clearly stirring up trouble between the young couple. He asked Charles, 'How can you expect to be obeyed by your Parliament if you cannot secure the obedience of your wife?'[2] Charles asked Louis to recall the French Ambassador on the grounds that he was stirring up trouble between the Queen and himself.[3]

To secure funds for carrying on the war, Buckingham was sent to Holland to negotiate a loan on the security of the royal plate and the crown jewels.[4] The choice was not a happy one. The Duke, wearing a suit encrusted with diamonds and other precious jewels did not make a good impression on the frugal Dutch. The money lenders refused to

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 4.

[2]Ibid., VI, 56-57.

[3]Ibid., VI, 57.

[4]Ibid., VI, 8.

make a loan on the crown jewels and plate.[1] As a diplomatic mission nothing was accomplished. Buckingham again bound Charles to pay the King of Denmark £30,000 a month as the English subsidy. The Duke now proposed to go to Paris to mediate between Louis and the Huguenots. Louis refused to allow him to enter France until the conditions of the marriage contract, with regard to English Catholics, had been fulfilled.[2] Louis would not consider either the Duke or Charles as an intermediary between himself and the Huguenots. The Duke was told that if Charles was so solicitous for religious freedom, he should begin with his own Catholic subjects.[3]

Upon the return of the Duke, Richelieu had made peace with the Huguenots. He now promised to give aid to the King of Denmark and to jointly support an army in Germany. Charles refused. He insisted that the terms with the Huguenots were unsatisfactory and demanded that France must enter the war on his terms.[4]

## III. CHARLES' SECOND PARLIAMENT

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[1] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 36. D.N.B., 333.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 25.

[3] Ibid., VI, 29.

[4] Ibid., VI, 53-55. C.M.H., IV, 263.

Williams, the Lord Keeper, now incurred the hatred of Buckingham by his open opposition to the extravagance of the Duke and was dismissed from the Council. This action removed the last member of the Council possessed of common sense in dealing with Parliament or the people.[1] Since Charles was in greater need of money than ever, he now called a new Parliament. First he took the precaution of appointing Coke, Wentworth, and other leaders of the last Parliament as Sheriffs to disqualify them for re-election.[2]

The removal of the old leaders brought to the fore Sir John Eliot. As Vice-Admiral of Devon he had seen the expedition to Cadiz return to Plymouth. He was personally acquainted with the leaky ships and rotten food. He had seen sick sailors starving and dying in the streets of Plymouth, while hungry soldiers looted, robbed, and murdered through the countryside.[3] He felt that the Duke was to blame for all the troubles of England and wanted an inquiry into the Cadiz expedition before supplies were voted.[4]

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 30-31.

[2]Ibid., VI, 38. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 136. Davies, op. cit., p. 34. Tanner, op. cit., p. 56.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 61-63. Hulme, op. cit., p. 99-101.

[4]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 65-68. Hulme, op. cit., p. 101-102.

Dr. Turner opened the attack in Parliament by a speech against "That great man, the Duke of Buckingham." He blamed Buckingham for the pirates that infested English waters and cited cases of how they attacked English towns, sailed up English rivers and laid waste to whole districts, robbing, burning, and carrying off men and women to be sold into slavery. He charged that the failure at Cadiz was due to the Duke's appointment of unworthy officers. The Duke had engrossed Crown land, sold places in the judicature and titles of honor. He cited the fact that the Duke's wife, mother, and father-in-law were recusants. Finally he went over the long list of offices held by the Duke and charged that most of those offices would be a full-time job, requiring all the time and energy of a capable officer. No one man could do justice to them when so grouped together.[1] Turner was followed by Clem Coke, the son of Sir Edward. If he possessed no other of his father's talents, he did have his talent for vituperation. His attack on the Duke added nothing new, except for violence of language.[2]

Charles now sent a message to Commons demanding that the House should punish Turner and Coke.[3] The House

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 77. D.N.B., XX, 334.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 77.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 77.

returned the unsatisfactory reply that it would ask Coke and Turner to explain their remarks. They further claimed their right to inquire into the reasons for the distress of the Crown.[1] Charles then summoned the House to appear before him. He warned them not to question any of his servants, much less Buckingham. What the Duke had done, was done by the order of the King. The House must punish any of its members who questioned the commands of the King.[2]

Another demand was made for supply by the King's supporters. Eliot insisted on the right of Commons to examine the conduct of the King's ministers. He suggested that the House should declare its willingness to furnish needed supplies, but to delay the bill until the King had satisfied their grievances.[3] On March 29th, the House was again summoned before the King. Lord Keeper, Coventry, reprimanded them for their failure to censure Coke and Turner. The House had assailed the honor of the King and of his father. They had refused to trust Charles to reform abuses. In the future they must be satisfied with calling his attention to matters requiring reform and trust to the King's wisdom and

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[1] Ibid., VI, 78.

[2] Ibid., VI, 79.

[3] Ibid., VI, 80-81.

justice for redress of grievances.[1] Charles added his comment that Parliaments were completely in his power, to be called and dissolved as he saw fit, according to their accomplishments.[2] Next, Buckingham, at a conference between both houses attempted to soothe the feelings of Parliament by explaining policy and justifying the actions of the King and himself. His sole success was to give away secrets of their devious negotiations and double dealings.[3]

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 82-83. Hulme, op. cit., p. 121-22.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 83. Hulme, op. cit., p. 122.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 84. C.M.H., IV, 263. Hulme, op. cit., p. 123-24.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE IMPEACHMENT OF BUCKINGHAM

### I. BUCKINGHAM, BRISTOL AND THE HOUSE OF LORDS

A wiser king than Charles might have attempted to gain support for his government by seeking closer relations with the House of Lords, when he faced such determined opposition in Commons. Charles managed instead to alienate the Lords and lose whatever support he might have received from them. Charles had sent the Earl of Arundel to the Tower on the grounds that his eldest son had married Elizabeth Stuart, who was of the royal blood. The real reason was that Arundel had opposed Buckingham. The Lords considered that his imprisonment was a breach of privilege of their House and demanded his release.[1]

The Earl of Bristol had been cleared of the charges of acting against the best interests of England by a commission but the influence of Buckingham had kept him out of the Court and out of London.[2] Bristol had been sent orders by Charles not to appear in the House of Lords during Charles'

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 92. Tanner, op. cit., p. 58.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., V, 232 & 236.

first Parliament. He petitioned the Lords to intercede with the King either to bring him to trial before the Lords or to permit him to exercise his rights as a Peer and assume his seat.[1] Buckingham informed the Lords that Charles would grant the writ. The writ was sent with an accompanying letter, which ordered Bristol not to use it.[2] Bristol took the position that the writ bearing the seal had precedence over the letter and came to London. He asked the Lords to hear him in his own defense and to hear his charges against the Duke.[3]

Charles and Buckingham were determined that Bristol should have no chance to tell the truth concerning their trip to Madrid and thus have the whole story of their concessions and mistakes exposed to a hostile Parliament. Charles promptly accused Bristol of High Treason.[4] Buckingham tried to press the case. The Lords resented these attempts to silence one of their members. In addition, they had very little sympathy for the overbearing Duke.[5] Bristol charged that the accusation of treason had been brought

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 93-94.

[2]Ibid., VI, 94.

[3]Ibid., VI, 94.

[4]Ibid., VI, 94. C.M.H., IV, 264.

[5]Davies, op. cit., p. 29.

against him to invalidate his testimony against Buckingham.[1]

The King then tried to silence Bristol by declaring, that from personal knowledge, he could swear to the untruth of the Earl's charges.[2] Failing in this, Charles denied that the Earl had a right to counsel but was overruled by the Lords.[3] The Lords then ordered the Attorney-General to direct the prosecution of Bristol's charges against Buckingham. Before the Lords could take further action, their proceedings were interrupted by the action of the Commons to impeach Buckingham.[4]

## II. THE IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS

On May 8, 1626, Sir Dudley Digges opened the proceedings for Commons before the House of Lords. The articles of impeachment charged many offenses. The chief of which were: Incompetence in performance of his duties as Lord High Admiral and failure to protect England against the pirates; embezzling money of the Crown; buying and selling offices; accumulating many offices which he could not

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 95. Tanner, op. cit., p. 46.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 97.

[3]Ibid., VI, 97.

[4]Ibid., VI, 98. D.N.B., IV, 72, XX, 334.

properly discharge; and lending ships to Louis to be used against the Protestants of Rochelle. The most important thing about Digges' opening speech was that he advanced the theory of responsibility of ministers: 'The laws of England have taught us that kings cannot command ill or unlawful things. And whatsoever ill events succeed, the executioners of such designs must answer for them.'[1]

The impeachment articles produced no evidence of anything other than incompetence in the government.[2] Buckingham did not improve his case by the contempt which he exhibited toward the charges and the speaker. Digges, goaded by his attitude, lashed out in a bitter verbal attack:

> "My Lord, do you jeer? I can show you when a man of greater blood than your Lordship, as high as you in place and power, and as deep in the favour of the King, hath been hanged for as small a crime as the least of these articles contain."[3]

Sir John Eliot summed up the case against Buckingham. On the position of ministerial responsibility, he took the same position as Digges, that the minister must not enforce action ordered by the King if such action were contrary to the welfare of the state. He aroused the anger of Charles by his fierce denunciation of Buckingham. Listing all the

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 99-100.

[2]Ibid., VI, 101-102. Hulme, op. cit., p. 133.

[3]Lindsay, op. cit., p. 46.

faults of the Duke; the assumption of almost regal dignity, his vanity and self confidence, his incompetence, the vast wealth he had heaped up while the exchequer was empty. He compared the Duke to Sejanus and accused him of using the power of the government for his own ends and of bribery.[1]

Charles acted promptly. He sent both Eliot and Digges to the Tower. In selfprotection, Commons refused to conduct any business.[2] Sir Dudley Carleton attempted to move the Commons by a speech in which he pointed to the disappearance of Parliaments on the continent and expressed the fear that opposition to the King would bring about the same result in England.[3] Far from being impressed, the Commons suspended their settings. Charles released Eliot and Digges, and when the Commons remained obdurate, Arundel from the Tower.[4] To demonstrate his confidence in Buckingham, he used pressure to secure for the Duke the office of Chancellor of Cambridge.[5]

With Parliament again in session, Charles sent an

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 107. C.M.H., IV, 265. D.N.B., IV, 72. Hulme, op. cit., pp. 135-37.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 109. Tanner, op. cit., p. 59.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 110.

[4]Ibid., VI, 113-15.

[5]Ibid., VI, 115, Hulme, op. cit., p. 146.

urgent request for the immediate passage of a subsidy bill. After a debate, the Commons gave priority to the grievances of Parliament. They now drew up a remonstrance, the pertinent part of which follows:

> "For we protest before your Majesty and the whole world, that until this great person be removed from intermeddling with the great affairs of State, we are out of hope of any good success; and do fear that any money we shall or can give will, through his misemployment, be turned rather to the hurt and prejudice of this your kingdom than otherwise, as by lamentable experience we have found in those large supplies formerly and lately given."[1]

The Commons had made their position clear. No supplies would be voted until the Duke had been removed from public office. Buckingham was under the double threat of impeachment and the suspended investigation into Bristol's charges. Commons were striking at the very base of Charles' idea of government. Charles demanded that he be the sole judge of the fitness of his own actions and those of his ministers. The nation must follow where he choose to lead. On June 15, 1626, Charles dissolved the Parliament.[2]

With Parliament dissolved, the King sent Bristol to the Tower and ordered Arundel into house confinement.[3] The

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 119. C.M.H., IV, 265.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 121. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 137.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 123.

managers of the impeachment proceedings were notified to present their charges before the Star Chamber. This was refused on the grounds that they could not proceed without instructions from Commons. The charges were then tried in Star Chamber without the managers and a sentence given in favour of Buckingham.[1]

## III. FREE GIFTS AND FORCED LOANS

Without a subsidy from Parliament, Charles now attempted to finance the government by non-parliamentary means. First, leaders of the opposition who were Justices of the Peace, including Wentworth, Digges and Eliot were dismissed from office.[2] The Council then sent out letters to all Justices suggesting that they should levy a free gift in the amount they would have paid if a subsidy bill had passed. The attempt proved a failure. The English people expressed their willingness to pay proper taxes but insisted that they be levied by an Act of Parliament.[3] An attempt was made to secure a loan from the City of London with the Crown jewels as security but the city refused.[4] Buckingham

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[1] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 122-24.

[2] Ibid., VI, 125-26.

[3] Ibid., VI, 131.

[4] Ibid., VI, 123-24.

supported a proposal to debase the currency but this measure met the opposition of the King.[1] Charles now attempted forced loans to the amount of five subsidies.[2] Peers who refused to pay the loan were committed to prison. Commoners were impressed for service in the fleet.[3] Chief Justice Crew refused to admit the legality of the loan and was supported by the other judges. Charles then dismissed the Chief Justice. Hyde was appointed Chief Justice of the King's Bench and Richardson, who had married a kinswoman of Buckingham, was appointed Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.[4] The attempt at forced loans continued, and met with partial success, but at a cost of increased bitterness among the people. Hampden, Eliot and Wentworth were placed in confinement as far as possible from their homes, as an example to the country.[5]

## IV. DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS WITH FRANCE

Things were going from bad to worse for Charles in Europe. The Protestant forces in Germany, headed by

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[1] Ibid., VI, 138.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 145.

[3] Ibid., VI, 148-49.

[4] Ibid., Tanner, op. cit., 60.

[5] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 157-58.

Mansfeld and King Christian, were defeated at Lutter in August, 1626, by Tilly and Wallenstein.[1] English troops in Germany had not been paid and were deserting in droves.[2]

Not satisfied with these troubles at home and abroad the King and Buckingham continued to pursue a course that could only lead to war with France. French ships were seized.[3] Charles gave orders that no English Catholics should be permitted to celebrate Mass in the French Ambassador's chapel. Attempts to arrest celebrants led to a riot.[4] Charles' difficulties with his Queen continued, with Buckingham adding fuel to the fire. Finally the Queen's French attendants were set home by Charles.[5] Buckingham gave orders to the Court that the French Ambassador, Bassompierre, was to be treated with studied rudeness.[6] The English continued to seize French ships, and the French in retaliation seized the entire wine fleet of English and Scotch ships.[7] Buckingham now proposed that he would go to Paris

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[1] Ibid., VI, 139.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 186.

[3] Ibid., VI, 65.

[4] Ibid., VI, 70.

[5] Ibid., VI, 137. Belloc, op. cit., p. 252. C.M.H., IV, 266. Davies, op. cit., p. 63.

[6] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 141-42.

[7] Ibid., VI, 145-47. C.M.H., IV, 266.

as Charles' Ambassador, to negotiate a new treaty. The French Ambassador was forced to inform the Duke that Louis would not permit him to enter France.[1] Louis insisted that the terms of the marriage contract be carried out with only minor revisions.[2] Buckingham then sent word to Richelieu that Charles considered himself free of all obligations.[3]

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 145-47.

[2]Ibid., VI, 152.

[3]Ibid., VI, 152.

# CHAPTER X

## THE WAR WITH FRANCE

### I. THE ISLE OF RE' EXPEDITION

The uneasy truce between Louis and the Huguenots was about to break into open warfare once more. Charles now took the position that he was the natural protector of the Huguenots against the King of France. He asserted that the failure to dismantle Fort Louis, outside Rochelle, was a matter concerning his honor.[1] In March 1627, orders were issued to capture French shipping, wherever it might be found. As a result French ships were swept from the seas.[2]

There was no formal declaration of war. The troops left from the Cadiz expedition were reinforced by further levies of pressed men. Supply was as disorganized as ever. Food, clothing, medicine and weapons were lacking in quantity and quality.[3] Buckingham, hoping to gain popular support as champion of the Protestants, commanded the expedition. More than 100 ships carrying 6,000 foot and a small body of horse sailed from Stokes Bay down the Channel.[4] Two weeks

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[1]Belloc, op. cit., p. 253-54.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 162.

[3]Ibid., VI, 164.

[4]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 172.

later, July 10, 1627, they appeared off the Isle of Re'. After initial difficulties in landing, in which Buckingham demonstrated his personal bravery and his troops, their lack of training and discipline, the seige of St. Martin began.[1]

Buckingham conducted his operation with energy but he lacked military skill. The close bond which should exist between a Commander and his officers was lacking.[2] An attempt to carry St. Martin by storm failed. The town was then invested by land and blockaded by sea. To hasten the surrender, all Catholics on the island were driven into the town.[3] The Duke's hopes for assistance from the Huguenots were doomed to disappointment. Most of them were content to remain behind the walls of Rochelle.[4] Supplies and reinforcements were delayed in England by lack of funds and inefficient administration. Recruits deserted at every opportunity.[5] Ships were driven back to England by storms in the English Channel. The English army was in desperate straits. They were short of food and lacked clothing and

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[1] Ibid., VI, 174. C.M.H., IV, 267. Davies, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 174.

[3] Ibid., VI, 176.

[4] Ibid., VI, 177.

[5] Ibid., VI, 191.

blankets to protect them from the weather.[1]

Richelieu had taken personal command of the defense. Reinforcements were brought up, a fleet collected, and food, supplies, and reinforcements were finally sent in through the blockade.[2] Late in October, Buckingham held a council with his principal officers. Despite their advice to break off the seige and return to England, he decided on one last assault on the town.[3] On October 27th, the attack was launched. The scaling ladders carried by troops were too short to reach the top of the wall. The assault ended in a bloody failure.[4] Two days later the army, marching to the beach to re-embark for England, was attacked by the French and in the ensuing disorder lost more than 1,000 men.[5]

Buckingham returned to England thoroughly discredited. He had started a war with France without the support of the English people or Parliament. He had lost more than half his army.[6] What was left of his army was in rags, half starved and unpaid. The soldiers were billeted upon the

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 195.

[2]Belloc, op. cit., pp. 258-63.

[3]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 195.

[4]Ibid., VI, 197.

[5]Ibid., VI, 198.

[6]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 198.

English people. They robbed and looted to stay alive. To maintain some sort of order, Martial Law was enforced, not only against the soldiers but against their victims as well.[1] The Duke would not demobilize the troops, for he was planning an attack on Calais.[2] Richelieu, still intent on peace with England, sent back the prisoners taken on the Isle of Re'. Buckingham and Charles refused to consider peace except on their own terms. Those terms included the right of Charles to intercede on behalf of the Huguenots, in the internal affairs of France.[3] Faced with growing bitterness at home, Buckingham now proposed that Charles maintain himself on the throne and enforce his wishes by the employment of an army of 12,000 mercenaries, but the plan was rejected by Charles.[4] Such thoughts were in sorry contrast to the words of Elizabeth forty years earlier:

> "I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear. I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects."[5]

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[1] Ibid., VI, 218-19.

[2] Ibid., VI, 201-203.

[3] Ibid., VI, 220-21.

[4] Ibid., VI, 223.

[5] Neale, op. cit., p. 296.

## II. THE PETITION OF RIGHT PARLIAMENT

All the measures of Charles to raise sufficient revenue to carry on the war had failed. Forced to choose between making peace or calling a new Parliament, he chose the latter. He ordered Bristol, Lincoln and Arundel, and Archbishop Abbot and Bishop Williams not to take their places in the House of Lords.[1] When Parliament met in March, he stirred the antagonism of the Commons by a speech in which he demanded that the House supply his wants. If they did not, he would use the means God had placed in his hands. He closed this speech, which was chiefly remarkable for its lack of tact, with an admonition not to consider his speech as a threat, 'for I scorn to threaten any but equals.'[2]

The Lords promptly inquired into the reason why some of their members were absent and the King was forced to restore them. The Commons were even less inclined to bow to the will of the King than previous Parliaments. Many of them had gone to prison rather than pay the forced loan. Among these strong willed men, opposition to arbitrary rule was rapidly crystalizing. Eliot began the session with an

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[1] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 226-28.

[2] Ibid., VI, 231.

attack on the forced loan, misgovernment and innovation in religion.[1] Wentworth followed with an attack on the forced loan, billeting, the excesses of soldiers, and Martial Law.[2] When the Attorney-General Shilton tried to defend the position of the King, Sir Edward Coke exposed the ignorance of the Attorney-General by tearing his arguments to shreds and lecturing him like a school boy.[3] Sir Walter Erle, speaking for Dorsetshire, spoke of the reign of terror as follows:

> "In my county, under colour, of placing a soldier, there came twenty in a troop to take sheep. They disturb markets and fairs, rob men on the highway, ravish women, breaking houses in the night and enforcing men to ransom themselves, killing men that have assisted the constables to keep the peace."[4]

The Commons then drew up the Petition of Right. This document, regarded as one of the great bulwarks of liberty, dealt with four points; billeting, martial law, arbitrary law, and arbitrary imprisonment.[5] In a conference with the Lords, a proposal was made to modify the petition. Buckingham led the opposition to the petition.[6] When Coke

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 233-34. Hulme, op. cit., pp. 187-89.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 235.

[3]Ibid., VI, 240.

[4]Ibid., VI, 253.

[5]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 265. Davies, op. cit., p. 39.

[6]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 298.

complained that the modification would rob the petition of its meaning, it was adopted as drafted and sent to the King, together with a bill providing five subsidies. Charles sent it back with a meaningless answer.[1] Eliot then gave vent to the discontent of the Commons in a speech condemning the conduct of the war, and the mismanagement and incompetence of the government. He proposed that the Commons send a Remonstrance to the King.[2] When the Speaker announced a message from the King forbidding them to speak out against the government or any of its ministers, the members of Commons suffered an emotional breakdown. Members attempted to speak and broke into tears.[3]

Then up rose Sir Edward Coke, to make his last recorded speech on the liberty of Englishmen. The great Elizabethan lawyer was seventy-six years old. He and Selden were the architects of the Petition of Right. The man who would not bow to the will of James, would not be silent at the order of his son. He cited precedent after precedent where men had spoken out, even if it meant going to the Tower.

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[1] Ibid., VI, 299.

[2] Ibid., VI, 300. Hulme, op. cit., pp. 243-45.

[3] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 304. Hulme, op. cit., p. 248.

> "Now when there is such a downfall of the state, shall we hold our tongues? How shall we answer duties to God and men? Why may we not name those that are the cause of all our evils? In the fourth year of Henry III and the twenty seventh of Edward III and in the thirteenth of Richard II, the Parliament moderated the King's prerogative. Nothing grows to abuse but this house hath power to treat of it. What shall we do? Let us palliate no longer! If we do, God will not prosper us. And therefore, not knowing if I shall ever speak in this House again, I shall now speak freely. I think the Duke of Buckingham is the cause of all our miseries. And till the King be informed thereof, we shall never go out with honour or sit with honour here. That man is the grievance of grievances! Let us set down the causes of all our disasters and they will all reflect on him. Our liberties are now impeached, we are deeply concerned. As for going to the Lords, that is not Via Regia, for the Lords are not participant with our liberties. It is not the King but the Duke that saith, 'we require you not to meddle with state government or the Ministers thereof.'. . ."[1]

The speech threw the Commons into an uproar as the entire House joined in condemnation of Buckingham. Selden proposed that the impeachment charges be renewed. Speaker Finch returned with a message from Charles ordering both Houses to adjourn. Both Houses refused. Bristol, in a speech opposing adjournment, declared that the whole Christian world was an enemy to England. The Lords must lay before the King the true state of the Kingdom.[2] A conference of both Houses then sent a joint deputation to ask Charles

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 305. C.M.H., IV, 270. D.N.B., XX, 335. Tanner, op. cit., p. 64.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 306.

for a satisfactory answer to the Petition of Right.[1] Faced with the opposition of a united Parliament and his need of the five subsidies to stave off bankruptcy, Charles made the Petition a statute of the English law. The signing of the Petition into law was the occasion for wild rejoicing throughout England. A rumor spread that he had sent Buckingham to the Tower. The people of England understood their King as little as he understood them.[2]

With the Petition of Right, the Law of England, Commons turned once more to the matter of Buckingham's rule over the nation. Four days after Charles signed the Petition of Right, they prepared a Remonstrance against Buckingham. It listed in detail the failures of the Duke, complained of his many offices, and attacked his excessive power.[3] The King prorogued Parliament and ordered the copies of the offensive Remonstrance destroyed.[4]

## III. THE RELIEF OF ROCHELLE

During the session of Parliament, an expedition for

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[1] Ibid., VI, 308. Hulme, op. cit., p. 255.

[2] Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 145.

[3] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 317. Hulme, op. cit., pp. 257-63.

[4] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 325.

the relief of Rochelle under Denbigh had resulted in another failure.[1] Charles was eager to push the war on all fronts.[2] Buckingham suggested that now was the time to make peace with Spain, with the idea that Spain might form an alliance against France. Charles, falling in with the suggestion, wrote to the Hague that he proposed to open negotiations with Spain and that the pacification of the Netherlands would be included. The Hague refused to accept such high-handed settlement of their affairs.[3] Buckingham, as a concession to public opinion, now gave up the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports. This action, which might have gained him credit earlier, was now accepted as proof of the charges of too many offices.[4] The Duke was moved to action by tales of the terrible suffering of the people of Rochelle. The population was attempting to ward off starvation with a diet of rats and grass.[5] There could be no satisfactory solution to the struggle in which Charles and the Duke were involved. Loss of Rochelle would be a defeat for England. If the Huguenots won, there would be civil war in France with no

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[1] Ibid., VI, 292.

[2] Ibid., VI, 332.

[3] Ibid., VI, 333-34.

[4] Ibid., VI, 342.

[5] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 343.

hope for joint action against Spain and Austria.[1]

Sir John Coke sent discouraging reports on the condition of the fleet. Food supplies were spoiling faster than they were accumulated. Ships were in bad condition, with leaky bottoms and rotten sails. Sailors and soldiers deserted at every opportunity.[2] The Venetian Ambassador, hoping for a united front against Austria, conferred with the Duke on the possibility of peace with France.[3]

On his way to Portsmouth to take command of the fleet, Buckingham's carriage was surrounded by a mob of 300 sailors clamoring for their pay. One sailor attempted to drag the Duke from his carriage but was captured and sentenced to be hanged by a court martial. His comrades attempted to rescue him on the way to the gallows and were dispersed when charged by the Duke with mounted men.[4]

## IV. THE ASSASSINATION OF BUCKINGHAM

Lt. John Felton had served with the army at the Isle of Re', where he had lost the use of his right arm. He had been denied a promotion that had gone to an officer with

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[1] Ibid., VI, 344.

[2] Ibid., VI, 345.

[3] Ibid., VI, 347.

[4] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 348. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 51.

political connections. His pay was between £70 and £80 in arrears. He had appealed to the Duke for assistance in securing his back pay and had been told by the Duke to go hang himself. A morose, embittered man, he had weeks before talked to a friend of showing such resolution, that all England would be surprised. Among his effects were found; a copy of the Remonstrance which blamed Buckingham for all the grievances of the kingdom; Dr. Eglesham's book, which accused Buckingham of poisoning King James and the Marquis of Hamilton; and the Golden Epistle, which declared that all things done for the good, profit, and benefit of the Commonwealth should be accounted lawful.

Felton had brooded over his wrongs and his well thumbed books until he decided to do a service for England by killing the Duke. He had made his way to Portsmouth by walking and catching rides with supply wagons. Fearful lest his reason for the murder would be lost if he should be killed on the spot, he had written his explanation on two slips of paper and put one in his hat and the other in his coat pocket. On the morning of August 23, 1628, he was among the crowd of men in the hall of Mason's house, where the Duke and his wife had spent the night.[1]

Buckingham and Sir John Coke were to meet with

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[1]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 352.

Charles that day to discuss the relief of Rochelle. As the Duke, on his way to breakfast, bent his tall frame to hear the remarks of a Huguenot officer, Felton reached over his shoulder and stabbed him dead with a single blow.[1]

There was widespread rejoicing in England. Felton had something of a triumphal progress on his way to London to his trial and execution. Women held up their children for a glimpse of the hero. People hailed him as the deliverer of England and prayed for him as he passed. Men drank to his health in the streets of London. Songs were composed and sung in his honor.[2] Alexander Gill, the son of the Headmaster of St. Paul's School, was the author of a tract that declared the Duke and the late King were in hell together and that Charles was unfit to rule.[3]

Many people thought that the death of Buckingham would bring the King closer to his people.[4] It had quite the opposite effect. Charles would think of his dead friend as a martyr.[5] The opinion of Trevelyan which sums up the thoughts of many writers on the subject, was as follows:

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[1] Ibid., VI, 349-50. Davies, op. cit., p. 41.

[2] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 353-56.

[3] Ibid., VI, 356.

[4] Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 353.

[5] Ibid., VI, 351. Lindsay, op. cit., p. 54.

> The echo of these brutal rejoicings penetrated to the Palace, where the King was struggling with the greatest sorrow of his life. With that dignity wherein his real virtue lay, he dissembled the violence of his grief and rage; but it cannot be that he ever forgave or forgot the joy of his people at the murder of his friend. After Buckingham he never loved any man; he had many good servants, but never again one that was dear to him.[1]

Such was the temper of the mob, that the Duke was buried secretly in Westminster Abbey. A false funeral was held next day with the city train bands protecting an empty hearse.[2]

With the death of Buckingham, the fleet sailed for Rochelle under the command of Lindsay. The pressed merchantmen refused to follow the King's ships in the attack on the defenses of the harbor. The last expedition for the relief of the Huguenots ended in another failure.[3] Montague was appointed to treat with Richelieu. The great Cardinal told Montague that it was not to Charles' interest to encourage rebellion. The Huguenots must surrender to Louis. He promised that there would be no religious persecution. If Charles would accept these terms, Louis would attack Spain in Italy. Charles demanded that Louis give up the seige of Rochelle.[4] When Rochelle surrendered a short time later,

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[1]Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 146.

[2]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 356.

[3]Ibid., VI, 364.

[4]Gardiner, Hist. of Eng., VI, 367-68.

the walls were razed and the government of the city placed under the King's officers. French Protestants were guaranteed freedom of worship in all places where they had enjoyed it before the insurrection.[1] The French King's declaration of tolerance was an announcement to the world, that the war in which Charles and Buckingham had involved England had been a blunder from its beginning.

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[1] Ibid., VI, 370.

# CHAPTER XI

# CONCLUSION

## I. APPRAISAL OF BUCKINGHAM

The Duke of Buckingham owed his advancement to his good looks, great personal charm and winning manners. Whatever his abilities may have been, and they were greater than some of his detractors will admit, he rose to power so fast that he failed to have a proper conception of the difficulties inherent in the many projects he undertook. He had none of the patience and industry necessary for the daily drudgery of dealing with the endless details of administration, the mastery of which are among the first requirements of an able statesman. His requirement that all of his subordinates must change like a weathervane with his every whim, and his habit of treating honest opposition to his grandiose plans as a personal insult, made it impossible for men of ability and integrity to accept positions of responsibility under him. For the last twelve years of his life, few men were appointed to even minor positions in the national government without his approval. The caliber of these appointments was such that Elizabeth must have turned over in her grave at the thought of England in such hands. As a statesman, he must rank among the most incompetent in

in all the history of England. He cannot be said to be false to his political convictions, for he had none. He would adopt in turn, and with equal enthusiasm, each side of a question, as his whim of the moment dictated. With the sublime faith of a small child, he thought that eminence in war or peace could be carried by one wild assault. Despite failure piled on failure, it never occurred to him that the fault lay in his own method of operation. He thought it a small matter to incur the ill will of the Kings of France and Spain, and carried England into war with Spain, Austria, and France, at a time when he had wantonly flouted public opinion at home, and alienated both the House of Commons and the Peers of England.

By his close friendship with Charles I, he helped shape his opinions during his formative years. He encouraged Charles in his delusions of Divine Right, and helped plant his feet firmly on the path that led to his destruction. He was at the center of every hairbrained plan that brought disgrace to a proud people, grown used to success in the long Tudor period. When he was struck down by Felton's knife he had become the most hated man in England. In death he left a heritage of hatred and bitterness that would help to bring on Civil War in England.

## II. BUCKINGHAM'S EFFECT UPON CHARLES I

During his last years, the hatred of all classes was concentrated on Buckingham. Men as far apart as Pym and Wentworth united in a common opposition to one whom they believed incompetent to direct the destinies of England. Recognition was not given to the fact that Charles had his share in all the mischief of the past. It was easier to profess loyalty to Charles and attribute all the evils of the Kingdom to Buckingham. With the Duke in his grave there was no one left to take the blame for the mistakes of the King. Charles was obstinate in refusing to abandon a course on which he had decided. His method was to require prompt obedience to his commands, in spite of a growing ill will. Charles had been trained in absolutism by James I and Buckingham. To the end of his days he would refuse to look facts in the face or to recognize that opinions which differed from his own had a right to exist. When he finally made peace in Europe and questions of government and legislation, of Church doctrine and discipline came to the fore he was no more able to resolve them than to conduct foreign policy. G. M. Trevelyan says that he tried situations on the sole basis of his own honor:

> This honour, as he conceived, lay not in the strict observation of his faith as a man, still less in the fulfillment of his duties as a King, but in the exaction of all to which, as King or as man, he felt himself entitled. Faithful and just only to the very few who won his personal affection, he pursued through the long years this ideal of a selfish honour, utterly regardless

> of the rights, the wishes or the resisting force of those with whom he dealt; till at the end of his life, surprised and indignant to the last, he was brought face to face with the failure that is almost invariably the lot of one who judges others solely by their relation to himself.[1]

With the death of Buckingham, Charles relied more and more upon Henrietta Maria and came under the influence of Laud, both of whom encouraged him in arbitrary rule and led him down the path on which his friend had long ago set his feet.

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[1]Trevelyan, op. cit., pp. 137-38.

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# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A.

### LIST OF IMPORTANT PERSONS

Abbot, George. (1562-1633) Archbishop of Canterbury. Opponent of Laud and of the Howard family.

Acuna, Diego Sarmiento de. (1567-1626) Count of Gondomar. Spanish soldier chiefly noted for his skill as a diplomat at the Court of James I.

Bacon, Francis. (1561-1626) Statesman, philosopher, author. Lord Chancellor, Jan. 7, 1618. Baron Verulam, July 12, 1618.

Bothwell, Earl of. see Hepburn, James.

Bristol, First Earl of. see Digby, George.

Buchanan, George. (1506-1582) Author, scholar. Member of the Scottish Parliament, Keeper of the Privy Seal.

Buckingham, Earl of, Duke of. see Villiers, George.

Carr, Robert. (?-1645) Viscount Rochester, March 25, 1611. Earl of Somerset, Nov. 3, 1613.

Cecil, Robert. (1563?-1612) Member of the Privy Council, 1591. Secretary of State, 1596. Baron Cecil of Essendine, Rutland, May 13, 1603. Viscount Cranbourne, Aug. 20, 1604. Earl of Salisbury, May 4, 1605.

Coke, Sir Edward. (1552-1634) Speaker of the House of Commons, 1592-93. Attorney General, 1593-94. Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, 1606. Chief Justice of the King's Bench, 1613. One of the Leaders of the House of Commons.

Cranfield, Lionel. (1575-1645) Surveyor General of Customs, July 26, 1613. Master of the Court of Wards, 1619. Chief Commissioner of the Navy, 1619. Member of the Privy Council, 1620. Baron Cranfield of Cranfield, 1622. Treasurer, 1622. Earl of Middlesex, 1622.

Cranbourne, Viscount. see Cecil, Robert.

Cromwell, Thomas. (1485-1540) Chancellor of Exchequer, 1533. King's Secretary, 1534. Baron Cromwell, 1536. Lord Chamberlain, 1539.

Darnley, Lord. see Stuart, Henry.

Davidson, William. (1541-1608) Assistant to Walsingham. Directed Elizabeth's personal correspondence.

Digby, George. (1580-1653) Longtime ambassador to Madrid. Earl of Bristol, 1622.

Digges, Sir Dudley. (1583-1639) Leader in the House of Commons.

Eliot, Sir John. (1592-1632) Vice Admiral of Devon. One of the great orators and leaders of the House of Commons.

Felton, John. (1595-1628) Assassin of the Duke of Buckingham.

Frederick, Elector Palatine. (1596-1632) Called the Winter King for his short rule as King of Bohemia.

Gondomar, Count of. see Acuna, Diego.

Guise, 3rd Duke of. see Henry of Lorraine.

Guzman, Gaspar De. (1587-1645) Count of Olivares, Duke of San Lucar, Chief Minister of Philip IV and director of Spanish policy for 22 years.

Henry III, (1551-1589) King of France. Third son of Henry II and Catherine De Medici. Stabbed to death by the Monk, Jacques Clement on Aug. 1, 1589.

Henry IV, (1553-1610) King of France. Called Henry the Great. King of Navarre and Leader of the Huguenots. Became King of France after the assassination of Henry III. Assassinated by Ravillac on May 14, 1610.

Henry of Lorraine, (1550-1588) 3rd Duke of Guise. Chief of the Catholic Party. One of the principals in the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew. Leader in the fighting against the Huguenots. Assassinated by direction of Henry III.

Hepburn, James. (1536-1578) Fourth Earl of Bothwell, Lord High Admiral of Scotland.

Howard, Charles. (1536-1624) First Earl of Nottingham, (In the Howard line) Lord High Admiral. Commanded the English fleet against the Spanish Armada.

Mansfeld, Ernst. (1580-1626) Graf Von. Leader of the Protestant army in the thirty years war. Notorious for the ravages of his troops.

Melville, Andrew. (1545-1622) Moderator of the Scottish Presbyterian Church.

Middlesex, Earl of. see Cranfield, Lionel.

Monson, Sir Thomas. (1563-1641) Master of the Armory of the Tower. Chancellor to Anne of Denmark.

Nottingham, Earl of. see Howard, Charles.

Olivares, Count of. see Guzman, Gaspar.

Overbury, Sir Thomas. (1581-1613) English poet and essayist.

Phelips, Sir Robert. (1586-1638) One of the leaders of the House of Commons.

Rochester, Viscount. see Carr, Robert.

Salisbury, Earl of. see Cecil, Robert.

Somerset, Earl of. see Carr, Robert.

Selden, John. (1584-1654) One of the great parliamentary lawyers. Leader in the House of Commons.

Spinola, Ambrose. (1569-1650) Spanish General. Commander-in-Chief in Flanders.

Stewart, Henry. (1545-1567) Lord Darnley, Earl of Ross. Duke of Albany. Great Grandson of Henry VII.

Turner, Samuel. (?-1647) M.D. University of Padua. Opened first attack on the Duke of Buckingham.

Villiers, George. (1592-1628) Viscount Villiers. Baron Whaddon. Earl of Buckingham. Duke of Buckingham.

Williams, John. (1582-1650) Bishop of Lincoln. Lord Keeper. Archbishop of York.

Wentworth, Thomas. (1593-1641) Earl of Strafford. Leader of the House of Commons for a short period.

William the Silent. (1533-1581) Count of Nassau. Prince of Orange. Stadtholder of Netherlands. Assassinated by Balthazar Gerard on July 9, 1581.

Yelverton, Sir Henry. (1566-1629) Attorney General, 1617.