

THE ANGLO-HUGUENOT ALLIANCE, 1562-1593

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## PREFACE

Even a cursory examination of the French Wars of Religion will indicate that efforts to procure English aid played a major role in shaping Huguenot strategy. The expectation of English succour drove Louis Condé into the disastrous Battle of Dreux in 1562 and led Henry of Navarre west to his great victory at Arques in 1589 and to his fruitless siege of Rouen in 1591-1592. Huguenot dependence on England raises such questions as: why did Elizabeth aid the protestants?; how effective was her aid in sustaining Henry of Navarre and the protestants?; did the Queen accomplish her purpose assisting the Huguenots? The last two questions have never been answered satisfactorily in either the monographs or general histories of the period; indeed there is not one study of the Anglo-Huguenot Alliance from its beginning in 1562 until its end in 1593. This thesis attempts in some measure to bridge this gap.

The chief English primary source is the Calendar of State Papers (Foreign Series). The main French sources for the period prior to Henry of Navarre's ascendancy are Hector de la Ferriere's Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siecle et les Valois and the Memoires of Michel de Castelnau, Francois la Noue, and Francois Vieilleville. Particularly valuable for the study of the Alliance after the rise of Henry is Berger de Xivrey's

collection of Henry's Lettres missives which is supplemented by Pierre de l'Estoile's Journal pour le règne de Henri IV.

Despite the absence of monographic material on the Anglo-Huguenot Alliance, there are many excellent secondary accounts which facilitated this study. For an understanding of English policy from 1562-1593 the present writer consulted James A. Froude's History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada, E. P. Cheyney's History of England, from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth, John E. Neale's biography of Elizabeth, and Conyers Read's biographies of her principal advisers, William Cecil and Sir Francis Walsingham.

In analyzing the significance of the Alliance to the Huguenots, the Guises, and the French crown, the following works were especially useful: E. Armstrong's The French Wars of Religion, James W. Thompson's Wars of Religion in France, 1559-1576, Martha W. Freer's History of the Reign of Henry IV, Arthur J. Grant's The French Monarchy, and Quentin Hurst's biography of Henry IV.

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## CHAPTER I

### GENESIS OF THE ANGLO-HUGUENOT ALLIANCE, 1562-1577

#### Background of the French Religious Wars

When Henry II of France died on July 10, 1559, the ascendancy of his weak, young son Francis II touched off a series of fratricidal wars which lasted more than forty years. During this struggle, France's most powerful noble families contended for control of the throne. The Guise family emerged victorious, and drove its rivals--the Montmorency and Chatillon--from court. Defeated, the latter turned to the radical Huguenot movement, which was opposed to the Catholic Guises and which sought political reform as well as religious toleration.<sup>1</sup>

The Huguenots not only provided the vanquished nobles with the support of a vigorous new element in French society, but also gave them a military organization built personally by John Calvin and Theodore Beza to resist Henry II's attempts to stamp out heresy. As more nobles joined the Huguenot conventicles, the latter became military cadres by which the local nobility protected armed mobs

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<sup>1</sup> James W. Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France (Chicago, 1909), p. 9.

which raided Catholic churches. By 1560 this alliance of Huguenots and nobles had become strong enough to defy the crown itself. The Calvinist assemblies in Rouen numbered 20,000, and when the royal commander there erected gibbets to punish heresy, they were pulled down with impunity, although 5,000 royal troops were garrisoned in the city.<sup>2</sup>

Recognizing the revolutionary character of the new movement, the government sought to suppress it by persecution. To meet this threat, the congregations realistically relied more heavily on their noble protector than on their Geneva-appointed preachers (much to Calvin's chagrin). The movement needed only a leader to become completely nationalistic, and he was found in Louis Bourbon, the first Prince of Condé, who took the title of Protector-General. With Condé's elevation, Calvin's international organization became a French revolutionary movement. Its preachers might look to Geneva for spiritual inspiration, but its secular hopes, aims, and energies were concentrated in France.<sup>3</sup>

After the death of Francis II in 1560, the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, became regent, since Charles

<sup>2</sup> H. G. Koeningsberger, "Organization of Revolutionary Parties in France and the Netherlands during the Sixteenth Century," Journal of Modern History, XXVII (December, 1955), 335-337.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

IX was a minor. She was far from being a dogmatic in religious matters as the Guise faction, and, with high regard for the welfare of the monarchy, she tried to reconcile the feuding factions. Francis, Duke of Guise, however, nullified her efforts at mediation by massacring about six hundred protestants at Vassy on March 1, 1562.

#### Mutual Benefits of an Alliance

Although the Huguenots had gained remarkably in strength in the 1560's, they still were no match for the government and the Guises. They needed men, munitions, and especially money. Conde provided for the needs of the moment by seizing the church wealth at Bourges, but the future looked grim.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the royalist cause was deluged with generous offers of help from Catholic rulers. The Swiss Diet offered 6,000 infantry and the Duke of Savoy 10,000 foot and 600 horse, while Pope Pius IV promised 50,000 crowns a month. The Huguenots received no such offers, but Condé did have two possible sources of assistance: German protestant princes and England. Of the two, the latter seemed much the stronger, since Queen Elizabeth was the leading protestant ruler of Europe, and for this reason the Huguenots turned first to her.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, p. 152.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 144.



The Huguenot appeal to England, however, was not based solely upon similarity of religion. The Huguenot leaders, Conde' and Gaspard de Coligny, were forced to deal with Elizabeth because royalist forces were strong in the Northwest, just across the channel from England, and Huguenot forces in this area were insufficient to defend the important ports of Le Havre and Rouen. The danger was real in the minds of the rebels that besieged Rouen would fall if help were not immediately forthcoming.<sup>6</sup>

Elizabeth, no less than Conde', did not desire to see Rouen in the hands of the Guise-royalist forces. The Guises were uncles of Mary, Queen of Scotland, who also was a claimant of the English throne. The Scottish Queen had taken the English coat-of-arms as her own; and her husband, Francis II, in support of her claim, had ratified the Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis in 1559 with the signature: "Francis, by the grace of God King of Scotland, England and Ireland, Dauphin of France."<sup>7</sup> Now Francis was dead, but the Guises were not, and they showed every indication of pressing Mary's claim to Elizabeth's throne. The French

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<sup>6</sup> Jules Delaborde, Gaspard de Coligny, Amiral de France (Paris, 1881), I, 150-151.

<sup>7</sup> Hector de la Ferriere-Percy, Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siecle et les Valois (Paris, 1879), p. 21.

Crown, moreover, had not forgotten that Elizabeth had driven the French from Scotland.

Elizabeth therefore had reason enough to fear France, and it was a logical step to help the enemies of Guise and the French crown, thereby keeping their energies too occupied to be a threat to her. Finally, the Queen hoped that by helping establish a balance of power within France she also might redeem the humiliating loss of Calais sanctioned by the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis.<sup>8</sup>

But if it seemed politic to intervene in the French domestic dispute, it was equally expedient for Elizabeth to avoid an all-out war. Though she had made a good start by expelling the French from Scotland, Elizabeth had not effaced the unpleasant memory of Mary Tudor, and many English remained skeptical of female sovereigns. War with France would not enhance her popularity. More important, England's finances could ill afford a costly war. Elizabeth had inherited a £ 200,000 debt from Mary which the war in Scotland (1559-1560) had increased.<sup>9</sup> If Elizabeth wanted to build a solvent economy, she would have to avoid any all-out war effort in Europe. The Guise designs upon

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<sup>8</sup> J. E. Neale, Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1559-1581 (London, 1953), p. 85.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 295.

England were primarily responsible for inducing Elizabeth to send help to the Huguenots throughout most of the religious wars, but her perennial financial embarrassment forced her to give just enough to keep France involved with internal problems, at least until 1589.<sup>10</sup>

#### Building the Alliance

When civil war broke out in France in the spring of 1562, Coligny and Conde had immediately contacted Elizabeth. Although the English Sovereign could ill-afford a full-scale war in France, her own security required that she send substantial aid to the Huguenots. In mid-April Jean de Ferriers, Vidame de Chartres, and later the Duke of Aumale were sent to negotiate with England. Although their mission was secret, it was soon discovered by the French royal ambassador, Paul de Foix, who reported the negotiations to Catherine de Medici. She, in turn, dispatched Vieilleville in an attempt to dissuade Elizabeth from forming an alliance with the French heretics.<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth finally got rid of Vieilleville by promising that she would send neither men nor money to the Huguenots, and, upon his request, she even put this vow in a royal writ.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ferrière-Percy, Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et les Valois, pp.46-47.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>12</sup> Mémoires de Vieilleville, Book I of Nouvelle collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France depuis le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, ed. M. Michaud (Paris, 1854), pp. 318, 319.

After Viéilléville's departure, however, negotiations with the Huguenots continued, though slowly, for Elizabeth never hurried when an expenditure of money was involved. It appeared, moreover, that if she waited a while the Huguenots might become desperate enough to yield Calais. Her ambassador to Paris, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, suggested on July 12, 1562, that she might take Le Havre as collateral until Calais were recaptured, but on July 23, he urged her not to lose time, since the Huguenot cause had become desperate.<sup>13</sup>

Throckmorton's appraisal of the situation was all too true. In the absence of any foreign assistance, the Huguenot position steadily deteriorated in the summer of 1562. Coligny and Condé had hoped to avoid a cession of French territory in return for English help, but now such a measure seemed inevitable. The Huguenots finally agreed by the Treaty of Hampton Court, signed in early September, 1562, to cede Le Havre to the English until Calais could be captured and exchanged for it. The Queen for her part promised to send 70,000 crowns to Germany for reiters, and to dispatch 6,000 English soldiers to defend Rouen and Dieppe.<sup>14</sup> Another provision of the alliance stipulated

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<sup>13</sup> Ferrière-Percy, Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et les Valois, p. 72 and Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, p. 164.

<sup>14</sup> Ferrière-Percy, Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et les Valois, p. 74.

that England would neither conclude a separate peace with the royalists nor accept Calais from Catherine de Medici without the consent of Condé and Coligny.<sup>15</sup>

English protestant opinion had been aroused by Guise's massacre of innocent Huguenots. In an effort to obtain popular approval of her foreign policy, Elizabeth issued three proclamations justifying the Treaty of Hampton Court. First, she declared that the English expedition was being sent for the sole purpose of rescuing Charles IX from the clutches of the Duke of Guise. Next, she alleged that the chief reason for occupying French territory was that England would be threatened if the Northwestern French ports fell into enemy hands. Finally, the Queen asserted that she wanted to insure liberty of conscience in France.<sup>16</sup> It was, she stated, "not a war on France but only one for religion."<sup>17</sup>

#### English Aid to Coligny and Condé

While proclaiming half-truths at home, Elizabeth was no less deceptive in her relations with the warring factions in France. Even after Le Havre was occupied by

<sup>15</sup>J. M. Stone, "Queen Elizabeth and the Revolution; Her Intrigues with the Huguenots, 1558-1563," Dublin Review, CXIII (July, 1893), 599-625.

<sup>16</sup>Albert F. Pollard, The History of England from the Accession of Edward VI to the Death of Elizabeth, 1547-1603, Vol. VI of The Political History of England, edited by William Hunt and Reginald Poole, 12 vols. (New York, 1910), p. 248.

<sup>17</sup>A. M. F. Robinson, "Queen Elizabeth and the Valois Princes," English Historical Review, XX (1887), 40-77.

English troops, Sir Thomas Smith remained in Paris as Elizabeth's ambassador. In order to establish a liaison with her new allies she contrived to have Throckmorton "captured" by the Huguenots and taken to their stronghold at Orleans.<sup>18</sup> The raison d'etre of Elizabeth's intrigues was, of course, her desire to avoid a full-scale war with France. Only in the Northwest were her interests really affected, and she wished to confine the operations of the English army to this area. It was a tight rope that she walked, aiding the enemies of the French crown, but she walked it well until her own allies cut it.

The treatment of the royalist diplomat, Michel de Castelnau, by the Earl of Warwick, English commander at Le Havre, illustrates how Elizabeth attempted to keep the good will of Charles IX. Warwick offered Castelnau his freedom if he would tell the King that the English had no purpose other than that of helping his Majesty bring peace to his war-torn realm. Castelnau agreed to take the message, but, as he cynically remarked in his mémoires, only because it offered him a means of escape.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Mémoires de Castelnau, Book II of Nouvelle Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France depuis le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, edited by M. Michaud (Paris, 1854), pp. 318, 319.

<sup>19</sup> E. Armstrong, The French Wars of Religion (London, 1892), p. 27.

In promising Calais to England and giving Le Havre as an hostage city, Condé and Coligny had gone too far. The French national conscience was shocked that a part of France should be given to her traditional foe. The Huguenot leaders knew, of course, that their concession would be unpopular, but there is evidence that they expected that the promised aid, so desperately needed, would give them the upper hand in the war; once victory was achieved, they hoped to prevent a permanent cession of French territory. If this were, indeed, their reasoning, they miscalculated, for, as stated above, Elizabeth did not plan to give them the liberal aid they expected.<sup>20</sup>

The Huguenots soon were disillusioned. Although Elizabeth sent Warwick with her fleet quickly enough, he made no serious attempt to relieve Rouen or Dieppe in accordance with the Treaty of Hampton Court. Not long after the English troops had taken Le Havre, the Vidame de Chartres wrote William Cecil, Elizabeth's first secretary, of his disappointment that the Queen allegedly had no intention of relieving Rouen, and he begged the royal treasurer to convince her that the need for sending aid to Dieppe was

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<sup>20</sup> Ferrière-Percy, Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et les Valois, p. 78.

great. He closed with the gloomy prediction that Normandy probably would fall, since England had failed the Huguenots.<sup>21</sup>

As winter approached, Condé and Coligny were being tempted to abandon their parsimonious ally. Since strategic considerations demanded that he take Rouen before Le Havre, Guise sought to avoid a long and costly siege by treating with the Huguenots. Elizabeth's representative in the Huguenots' camp, Throckmorton, warned the queen that her selfishness would have dire consequences. She would not listen, and Condé, though he made no deal with Guise, began to perceive that Elizabeth was not really interested in the Huguenot cause.

The Huguenots, however, persisted in the belief that the English would help them in Normandy. The English commander at Le Havre fostered this belief by sending a force of over 900 troops up the Seine to Rouen. The venture was unfortunate: the expedition of six ships was attacked in route, and 280 men were massacred, eighty after they had been taken prisoner. Only 600 men reached Rouen; the rest were forced to return to Le Havre. After this misadventure, there was no further English attempt to relieve Rouen, and it fell on

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<sup>21</sup> James A. Froude, History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada (London, 1870), p. 582.



October 26, 1562. None of the English who had fought their way into the besieged city were spared.<sup>22</sup>

After the fall of Rouen, it became increasingly obvious to the Huguenots that they would have to submit to the superior strength of Guise and the crown. Condé and Coligny implored Elizabeth for more help, but she continued to delay. With the onset of winter, the situation of the rebels worsened. Condé's troops, unpaid and ill-equipped to sit out the winter in Normandy became mutinous. Finally, on December 9, 1562, Condé, who had been near Paris, marched his ragged troops west in a desperate effort to join the English at Le Havre. Approaching the village of Dreux, he found the way blocked by the forces of Guise which numbered 16,000 to his 7,000.<sup>23</sup> In the face of these odds, it seemed foolish to engage Guise in battle, but Condé was desperate. Against the advice of Coligny, he tried on December 19 to cut through Guise's army.

Condé's first charge almost swept the field, but Guise's troops rallied and turned apparent defeat into victory.<sup>24</sup> It was a bloody affray; some eyewitnesses estimated that 9,000 died. Condé himself was captured, and Coligny lost most of his baggage, escaping with a decimated army of mutinous reiters.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, p. 167.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 177-188.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>25</sup>Mémoires de Castelnau, pp. 476-480.

The Battle of Dreux sounded the death knell for the first Anglo-Huguenot alliance. On January 24, 1563, Coligny, who commanded the Huguenot forces after the capture of Condé, warned Elizabeth that he must have money to pay his German troops. Since Throckmorton had intimated that England had intended its treaty with the Huguenots to apply only to Normandy and not to the general war effort, a reconciliation between the two French factions was now a possibility.<sup>26</sup> The reiters demanded their back pay, and Coligny feared they would murder him if he did not immediately pay them. Understanding Coligny's predicament, Elizabeth made a belated effort in February to regain the good will of the Huguenots by sending £ 8,000 to Coligny who was at Caen in western Normandy.<sup>27</sup>

It was a case of "too little, too late," for the amount hardly was enough to solve the financial and manpower problems of the Huguenots. At best it could serve as a temporary reprieve from imminent disaster. Coligny continued to press for substantial aid, sending another mission to England. When he pled with Warwick for 2,000 men, the English commander promised only five or six hundred and 4,000 pounds of powder. With a view to

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<sup>26</sup> Ferrière-Percy, Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et les Valois, pp. 99-101.

<sup>27</sup> Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, p. 188.

besieging Caen, Coligny called for more munitions and two or three hundred lances, which he claimed were rusting uselessly in the magazine at Havre.<sup>28</sup> Warwick, however, hesitated to disobey his instructions which forbade him to spread his forces; moreover, the brutal slaughter of the English prisoners taken at Rouen, made him reluctant to accede to Coligny's request.

#### The Peace of Amboise, 1563

It was under these straitened circumstances that the Huguenots began negotiations with the French crown for a cessation of hostilities. It may be asked why the royal forces were willing to negotiate at all. After the fall of Rouen and the victory at Dreux, could they not have crushed the Huguenots? The most important reason for wanting peace was to get the English out of France, before they could obtain a solid foothold. This objective was far more important to Catherine's mind than the religious feud which was threatening to split the realm. Also, although the King had received more aid from abroad than had the Huguenots, his army was far from living in comfort. Money was scarce, and both sides were tired of fighting.<sup>29</sup> The

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<sup>28</sup> Ferrière-Percy, Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et les Valois, pp. 104. 105.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

imprisoned Condé began negotiations with Catherine, and by mid-March, a magnanimous peace had been concluded by which the crown allowed the Huguenots to worship in one town in each bailliage in exchange for their help in driving the English from Le Havre.

On May 5, 1563, an English agent informed Cecil that Condé was planning to justify himself before Elizabeth by denying that he ever had agreed to permit England to occupy Le Havre until the restitution of Calais. Cecil's informant correctly attributed this scheme to Catherine. It was planned that after the Vidame de Chartres had delivered Condé's note and had left England, the latter would announce he had known nothing of the infamous article that allegedly promised Calais to the English. On the other hand, if the Vidame de Chartres refused to take part in this deceitful scheme, Condé was prepared to throw all the blame upon him.

In mid-May, Elizabeth threatened to publish the treaty in its entirety if the Huguenots made common cause with the royalists in a march on Le Havre. Condé, however, knew that England would not dare publish the treaty which would reveal

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Charles Marchand, "Le traité des Huguenots avec les Anglais en 1562," Révue des questions historiques, LXXVII (1905), 191-200.

her conspiracy, and cancel her right to reclaim Calais under terms of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis.<sup>31</sup>

When informed that the Treaty of Amboise had been concluded between Condé and Catherine, Elizabeth berated the Huguenot prince for not notifying her of the pending peace agreement in accordance with the Treaty of Hampton Court.<sup>32</sup>

Too late Elizabeth learned that the Huguenots would follow political expediency if she pursued the national interest.

Condé blamed the Huguenot ministers for interpolating the Calais clause into the Treaty of Hampton Court. These ministers, Condé piously insisted, had no authority to make such a concession. Coligny even asserted that he did not learn of the interpolation until later, since he had needed money so badly at the time that he and his whole council had signed the treaty without reading it.<sup>33</sup> The Huguenot leader's explanation, regardless of its merits, paved the way for a reconciliation of the royalists and Huguenots. On July 22, 1563, the siege of Le Havre began. Viéville, Marshal de France, warned Warwick that no

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth to Condé, March 26, 1562, in Ferrière-Percy, Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et les Valois, pp. 115, 116.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 135. Some French historians have accepted this statement at face value; yet it is difficult to believe that a statesman of Coligny's stature would have committed such a blunder.

Englishman would be spared if the city had to be stormed.<sup>34</sup>  
In view of the previous slaughters of English prisoners by the French, Warwick's courage in refusing to surrender was remarkable.

But where threats failed, siege guns, illness, and lack of support from home succeeded. During the siege, which lasted but twelve days, the French lost only forty men. Filthy conditions within Le Havre had caused the plague to spread so rapidly that by July 30 Warwick estimated that he was losing five hundred men a week. Despite these heavy losses, it is doubtful that the English would have surrendered so soon had they been reinforced. Although Elizabeth dispatched a fleet under Admiral Clinton, it arrived too late. Even as it appeared before Le Havre, the city capitulated.<sup>35</sup> Marshal Viëlleville, however, did not carry out his bloody threat, but permitted the remnant of the English army to sail home.

English intervention in the French war of 1562-63 demonstrated that the French Huguenots would honor their obligations toward Elizabeth only so long as it was politically expedient. It also was apparent that Elizabeth's aid to the Huguenots could not be decisive, even had she desired

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<sup>34</sup> Mémoires de Viëlleville, p. 350.

<sup>35</sup> Ferrière-Percy, Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et les Valois, p. 151.

their victory, because England could not compete with the wealthier Catholic powers. Spain, for example, contributed much more than Elizabeth in the first religious war.<sup>36</sup> This realization prompted Elizabeth's future policy of giving just enough help to the Huguenots to keep the rebellion smouldering, thereby diverting the attention of the anti-English factions in France. Another result of the English fiasco was a future reluctance on the part of the Queen to follow the advice of the radicals in her council who advocated vigorous support of the Huguenots. This war had been Robert Dudley's and that of his partisans (his brother Ambrose and his brother-in-law Sir Henry Sidney).<sup>37</sup> In the future the Queen would listen, but in the final analysis she relied upon her own practical good sense.

Elizabeth never forgot the lesson in economy she learned from her first French venture, and it was twenty-six years before she again contributed substantially to the Huguenot cause. Her annual revenue amounted to only £ 200,000; yet, she had spent £ 750,000 on military expenses alone from 1558 to 1563 (two thirds of her regular income for those years).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Armstrong, The French Wars of Religion, p. 27.

<sup>37</sup> Conyers, Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth (New York, 1955), p. 260.

<sup>38</sup> Neale, Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1559-1581, pp. 85, 86.

Elizabeth was forced to liquidate her debt by reducing court expenses and selling some of the crown estates. At the end of 1563, she dispatched Thomas Smith to France to secure repayment of the 100,000 crowns loaned to the Huguenots. Coligny promised that the debt would be repaid, since the French Crown had assumed the debts he had incurred in the recent war.<sup>39</sup>

Despite English losses in the war, both in men and money, Elizabeth, at least, won the respect of the French Queen Regent, a factor which became increasingly important in preventing Franco-Spanish collaboration against England. Catherine was impressed by the energy and strength Elizabeth had shown in outraging the champions of Mary Stuart in 1558 and 1562. Such a strong monarch would make a useful ally, Catherine thought, and in February, 1565, she proposed that Elizabeth marry Charles IX. Elizabeth, while she did not consider the match seriously because of religious and age differences, saw in this negotiation a way back to good relations with France.<sup>40</sup>

The war formally came to an end in the latter part of 1564 when a treaty was signed which returned to Elizabeth

<sup>39</sup>  
Ferrière-Percy, Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et les Valois,  
p. 168.

<sup>40</sup>  
Robinson, "Queen Elizabeth and the Valois Princes,"  
pp. 40-77.



the 120,000 crowns lost in the French venture in exchange for England's relinquishing her claim to Calais. When, at the beginning of negotiations, Elizabeth demanded 500,000 crowns, her old ally Condé, who had been restored to the royal council, advocated active war.<sup>41</sup>

The Edict of Amboise, which reunited France was based upon a mutual Huguenot and royalist desire to rid France of the English. Had the King carried out the Treaty's liberal provisions with sincerity, it is likely that war would not have resumed. Unfortunately, the two factions had not settled fundamental grievances. At Bayonne in 1565, Catherine conferred with the Duke of Alva, Spanish governor in the Netherlands, and immediately was suspected by the French protestants of conspiring with Catholic Spain against their welfare. The Queen Mother's change in policy toward the Huguenots confirmed this opinion in protestant minds, though modern historians have disproved the existence of any conspiracy. Catherine's new policy was developed quite apart from the Bayonne Conference. She had hoped after Amboise that a benevolent policy would slow the protestant movement; instead, it had caused the Huguenots to flourish. In order to stem the growing friction between Catholics and protestants over the Peace of Amboise, Catherine desperately turned to

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<sup>41</sup>Ferrière-Percy, Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et les Valois, p. 174.

more stringent methods of dealing with the Huguenots, and in so doing, she disregarded the tolerant provisions of the Treaty.<sup>42</sup>

The Huguenots reacted to Catherine's disregard of the Edict by taking up arms; however, this second war lasted only a few months. The Huguenots depended chiefly upon the Calvinist Duke Casimir of the Palatinate, who, unlike Elizabeth, believed the French civil strife had a purely religious basis, and he intended to assure victory for protestantism in France. The Palatine Prince invaded France with 6,000 reiters which did little harm save to the countryside.<sup>43</sup>

The protestants were defeated decisively at St. Denis on November 10, 1567, but they won the peace when the crown promised by the Peace of Longjumeau of February 23, 1568, to respect the Edict of Amboise. The Peace of Longjumeau was considered only a truce by both sides, however, and the schism remained unhealed. War broke out again after the weak government, yielding to Catholic pressure, formally revoked the Edict of Amboise in September, 1568.

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Louis Batiffol, The Century of the Renaissance, translated by Elsie F. Buckley (New York, 1927), pp. 213-218.

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Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, p. 335.

Elizabeth was interested in the French civil strife of 1568-69, because Mary, Queen of Scots, who was her prisoner, had an heir, and the French still hoped to place either Mary or her son on the English throne. Under these foreboding circumstances, Elizabeth forgot Condé's betrayal at Amboise, and the two concluded an agreement on December 6, 1568, by which she consented to give aid in return for salt, wool, and all the precious metals obtained from sacked churches and monasteries.<sup>44</sup>

Although Huguenot merchants at La Rochelle exchanged salt and wine for gunpowder, and Huguenot privateers were permitted to use Plymouth as a market for their spoils, most of the English aid was more covert, for Elizabeth wanted to stay on good terms with France.<sup>45</sup> While Sir Henry Norris, English ambassador to Paris, protested English innocence at the French Court, and the Queen herself insisted that England had no interest in French affairs, privateers thronged the channel, Huguenot refugees were welcomed to England, English "volunteers" were landed at La Rochelle and in Brittany, and English vessels brought gunpowder, shoes, and arms.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>J. M. Stone, "Queen Elizabeth and the Revolution; the Preparation for Saint Bartholomew," Dublin Review, CXV (October, 1894), 358-382.

<sup>45</sup>Read, Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth, pp. 420, 421.

<sup>46</sup>Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, p. 373.

But with her money, Elizabeth was less free. In July, 1569, Elizabeth advanced £ 20,000 to the Huguenots, taking as security jewels, worth many times the amount advanced. The help of English corsairs, which fell in with Huguenot privateers in Spanish waters, was even more effective than Elizabeth's loan, for the French protestants may have seized as much as 300,000 livres from Philip II's ships.<sup>47</sup>

Elizabeth's support saved the Huguenots in 1568-69. Charles IX controlled most of the towns and river passages, and his plan to bring about a Huguenot collapse from sheer exhaustion of men, money, and munitions might have succeeded had it not been for Elizabeth's discreet succour.<sup>48</sup> Even though beaten at the Battle of Moncontour in October, 1569, the Huguenots still had the strength to continue fighting, thanks to Elizabeth's intervention. It was the French Crown which finally was forced to sue for peace. Having almost no tax revenue with which to raise and pay troops, Charles IX in the Peace of St. Germain (August 8, 1570), was forced to accede to all the protestants' demands: full religious freedom, eligibility to hold all public offices, and general amnesty.

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<sup>47</sup> Delaborde, Gaspard de Coligny, Amiral de France, III, 81, 82.

<sup>48</sup> Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, pp. 373, 379.

The Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day:  
August 24, 1572

Although the French kingdom was financially exhausted and still faction-ridden after the Peace of St. Germain, Catherine de Medici had been strengthened by the first four religious wars in one respect: one by one her noble rivals had been exterminated. By 1570, Anthony of Navarre, Francis of Guise, the Constable Montmorency, and Louis Condé, all had died in battle or at an assassin's hand. They had left their sons, but the new generation's time was not yet.<sup>49</sup> There remained, however, one of the "old guard," Coligny, who was more of a threat to Catherine than all those who had vanished from the scene.

Coligny's power following the Peace of St. Germain increased remarkably. The impressionable, young Charles IX greatly admired the old Huguenot's great dignity and wide experience, and there developed a close friendship between the curiously dissimilar pair. Charles expressed his friendship for Coligny by making him Admiral of France, and in this capacity, the latter was able to inaugurate his controversial anti-Spanish policy in the Netherlands where the protestants were in rebellion against Spain. Coligny felt that a national war on her traditional enemy would weld France's factions together, and he contended that such a

war would be a good way for the French to regain some of their old provinces, now under Spanish rule.

The old Admiral had reason to count upon help in the war he wished to inaugurate, for, by 1572, Elizabeth was demonstrating a strong desire to build better relations with France, and she was using an old technique to achieve them: marriage negotiations with the Duke d'Alençon, Charles IX's young brother. Elizabeth hoped the marriage negotiations would serve two purposes. First, her alleged effort to marry would de-emphasize the danger of her overthrow, an issue raised by the recent Ridolphi plot, and show Parliament that she was making an effort to provide an heir, thus diminishing Mary's importance. Secondly, Elizabeth hoped that better relations with France would discourage Spain from going to war with England over the perennial religious issue, English seizures of Philip's treasure, the imprisonment of Mary, Queen of Scots, and England's interference in the Netherlands.<sup>50</sup>

The marriage talks were Elizabeth's preliminary to an alliance with France. Although Charles IX had opposed an Anglo-French alliance, the revolution in the Low Countries and Admiral Coligny's persuasive powers had persuaded him to favor such a liaison. On April 19, 1572,

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<sup>50</sup> Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, pp. 432, 433.

England and France concluded the Treaty of Blois by which each nation vowed to come to the other's aid if either were attacked because of religion. After the treaty was signed Elizabeth discontinued negotiations with Alençon. If enforced, the treaty stood to profit the Huguenots as much as the French Crown since it would divert the attention and energy of the King from the domestic religious question.<sup>51</sup>

Elizabeth also pledged herself to contribute to the French offensive in the Netherlands, since she saw the possibility of keeping Spain occupied and, at the same time, turning Philip II against France. The Treaty of Blois meant a triumph for Coligny and his anti-Spanish policy over the dissent of Catherine and the Guises. Catherine had no love for Spain or Philip II, but she had a real fear of Spanish power and particularly disliked the idea of allowing French success in a war with Spain to depend on English support. The possessive Catherine, moreover, was so jealous of Coligny's increasing influence over her son, Charles IX, that she began to intrigue against the Admiral.<sup>52</sup>

Coligny's war began auspiciously enough. French troops invaded the Low Countries and captured Mons on May 24, 1572.

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<sup>51</sup>  
Ibid., p. 445.

<sup>52</sup>  
Robinson, "Queen Elizabeth and the Valois Princes," pp. 40-77.

The Spanish Commander, Alva, was in trouble, but the French ranks were so thin that they could not follow up their initial successes without reinforcements. Coligny naturally looked to England, but Elizabeth had been frightened by the French successes (she had counted on the two nations fighting to a stand-off), for French hegemony in the Low Countries seemed even more injurious to England's commercial interests than Spanish control had been. She, therefore, repudiated the alliance she had just concluded, thereby forcing Charles IX to abandon the Netherlands expedition.<sup>53</sup>

Elizabeth's decision not to honor her agreement to intervene in the Netherlands meant Coligny's ruin; for, since his war had turned into an expensive failure, his anti-Spanish policy crumbled. When the Admiral pressed for a continuation of the war in the royal council, it immediately became obvious that Catherine's star had eclipsed his own. When the council voted unanimously against Coligny, the old man lost his temper, turning in a rage upon Catherine with a threat: "Madame," he shouted, "this war the king renounced. God grant he may not find himself involved in another less easy to renounce."<sup>54</sup>

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Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, pp. 445-447.

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Ibid.



Coligny was not a man to make idle threats, and Catherine apparently interpreted his warning as a hint that another civil war might be forthcoming. Regarding internal peace as absolutely necessary for the recovery of France, Coligny's death seemed to her essential to its preservation. It is an irony that Catherine's plotting touched off the war she was trying to avoid.

The Queen Mother's chance to remove this political thorn came in August, 1572. A crowd of Huguenots, including Coligny, arrived to witness the marriage of young Henry of Navarre to Marguerite de Valois, Catherine's daughter, on August 18. A retainer of Henry, Duke of Guise, attempted to assassinate the Admiral four days later. The latter received only an arm wound. Huguenot gentlemen reacted with noisy threats outside the Guise residence. The Duke of Guise and Catherine panicked, fearing lest their complicity be revealed, and it was in this crazed atmosphere that the infamous massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day was spawned. Catherine persuaded the weak Charles IX that a Huguenot plot was afoot and that the only way for them to save themselves was to kill the Huguenot leaders. The King finally acquiesced, but only on condition that all Huguenot nobles be put to the sword. The tocsin sounded in the early morning of August 24, and the massacre began. It was not halted until Coligny and about 2,000 of his co-religionists had been slain. During

the next five days, similar massacres followed all over France, in Meaux, Troyes, Rouen, Lyon, Toulouse, Bordeaux, and other cities. According to the Duke of Sully, the total number of Huguenots murdered throughout France reached 70,000. The peace which had begun so favorably was now shattered.<sup>55</sup>

La Rochelle was the storm center of this fourth civil war, though there was fighting in the center and south of France. The Crown's assault against the western port city lagged for lack of funds with which to hire mercenaries necessary to storm this Huguenot fortress.

The Rochellais turned to England for deliverance, and Elizabeth, continuing her policy of fomenting the troubled political waters of France for her own ends, responded. In England Comte de Montgomery was allowed to loan an expedition for the relief of La Rochelle. He arrived off the coast of France in April, 1573, with seventy ships; however, he was repulsed when Henry, Duke of Anjou, reinforced the French fleet in the bay. Montgomery retired from the harbor to Belle-Isle which was made a protestant naval base.<sup>56</sup> Despite Montgomery's failure to relieve the city, La Rochelle staunchly repelled every attempt to take it.

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<sup>55</sup> Batiffol, The Century of the Renaissance, pp. 230-234.

<sup>56</sup> Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, p. 458.

Elizabeth, did not want to drive France into a Spanish alliance; therefore, during the siege of La Rochelle, she continued friendly relations with the French Court while secretly aiding the Rochellais. Although she showed expected coolness immediately after the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day, the English Sovereign now accepted Catherine's proposal that she be the god-mother of Charles IX's daughter, and she also allowed the Alençon suit to be revived. She refused, however, to receive the Duke until the French King had made peace with La Rochelle.<sup>57</sup> Unable to make headway against the Huguenot city, the King readily acceded to her demand, concluding peace in July, 1573.<sup>58</sup>

Charles IX never forgot his part in the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day, and his constant brooding about that bloody day so affected his health that he contracted consumption and died May 30, 1574. His brother Henry of Anjou, the ablest of Catherine's sons, became Henry III.

The new King had to face a new coalition of rebels: the Huguenots and the Politiques. Both Henry de Montmorency and the great general, François La Noue were leaders of the latter group of moderates who saw the religious wars

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<sup>57</sup>J. E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth I (London, 1934), pp. 236, 237.

<sup>58</sup>Robinson, "Queen Elizabeth and the Valois Princes," pp. 40-77.

as mere factional conflicts which threatened to destroy France. Their desire to regain lost feudal powers may be seen in their insistence upon local autonomy in religious matters and in their demand for tax reforms and reorganization of the military and judicial systems. Since the King opposed the encroachment of the Politiques upon his authority, the peace of the mid-1570's was precarious.

Elizabeth, though hardly one to support a reform party, continued to aid the Huguenots. The security of England demanded the continuation of civil strife in France as a means of preventing her intervention in the Netherlands. The old fear that the French might attempt to put Mary on the English throne was also revived when Henry III boasted that such was his intention.<sup>59</sup>

Elizabeth's representatives negotiated in Germany with the young Prince of Condé, a Huguenot leader since his escape from Henry III's Court. She tried to deceive Henry III by renewing the Treaty of Blois, but her efforts were in vain. Growing suspicious, Henry sent a German Colonel, Schomberg, to spy on Condé's activities. The latter correctly reported that there was an alliance between Elizabeth, several German princes, and the King's enemies at home.<sup>60</sup> In May, 1575, Elizabeth sent John Wilkes to

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<sup>59</sup>Armstrong, The French Wars of Religion, p. 106.

<sup>60</sup>Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, p. 504.

negotiate with Frederick III, Elector of the Palatinate, who requested 150,000 crowns as the price of undertaking an expedition in France, but settled (temporarily) for only 50,000.<sup>61</sup>

Backed by Elizabeth and the German princes, the Huguenot-Politique coalition rose in arms against the French Crown, which sought by means of harsh edicts to stamp out political and religious heresy. Much of southern France fell into Montmorency's hands, and the Huguenots also were strong in Normandy, where they were secretly supported by England. The rebels, moreover, threatened Paris, which frantically prepared for siege in the spring of 1576. The King was beaten and bankrupt. There was no recourse save that of accepting the Huguenot terms, which he did on May 2, 1576. By the Peace of Monsieur, the Huguenots gained several provinces as well as many political rights.<sup>62</sup> Froude's criticism that the protestants would have taken Paris if more English had been sent seems unjust, for the Huguenots obtained all they wanted without such a costly siege. Moreover, Elizabeth was contributing to Dutch resistance in the

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<sup>61</sup> Conyers Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth (Oxford, 1925), I, 289-290.

<sup>62</sup> Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, p. 516.

Netherlands, and the consequent strain on her finances prevented her from giving more liberally.<sup>63</sup>

The peace could not last, for some of the new Huguenot provinces were largely Catholic, a situation which produced a strong reaction against the Peace of Monsieur. In 1577, the Duke of Guise, and his newly formed Catholic League forced the King to resume the war against the protestants. By late spring, 1577, Elizabeth had decided to assist Henry of Navarre, the new leader of the Huguenots, and his kinsman the Prince of Condé in the imminent civil war. La Personne, the Huguenot envoy to England, impressed upon the Queen the need for £ 20,000 to finance an army of German and Swiss troops, reasoning that "it is better to make one good effort than do things by installments."<sup>64</sup> In reply to these urgent overtures, Elizabeth dispatched Daniel Rogers in July to Germany to negotiate with Casimir of the Palatinate. Rogers was empowered to grant £ 20,000 after the following conditions were met: (1), he must ascertain how anxious Casimir was to invade France since there must be no delay;

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<sup>63</sup>Froude, History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada, X, 378-379.

<sup>64</sup>La Personne's Negotiations, July, 1577, A. J. Butler, ed., Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1577-1578 (London, 1901)(hereafter cited as C. S. E.), p. 52. Henry of Navarre, who had been imprisoned with Condé, escaped a few weeks after the Duke had stolen from court.

(2) Elizabeth's part was absolutely to be kept secret; (3) the Duke's troops were to remain in France until her Britannic Majesty gave permission for their departure; and (4), there must be no peace negotiations on the part of the Huguenots until Elizabeth had given her consent in writing.<sup>65</sup> Elizabeth apparently wished to avoid another Amboise. Condé and Henry of Navarre solemnly swore that they would not conclude a peace without her consent, and Casimir also promised compliance with her conditions.<sup>66</sup> That the Elector was not invading France purely for the cause of religion, however, was demonstrated by his insistence upon Metz, Toul, and Verdun for his trouble. He generously suggested that Elizabeth take Calais for her part. When agreement on the loan appeared certain, Casimir increased his demand to £ 60,000, thus prolonging negotiations.<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, the foundation for a real peace was laid in France.

#### The Peace of Bergerac

The Peace of Bergerac, which modified the Peace of Monsieur without seriously offending the protestants, was signed on September 17, 1577. Again Elizabeth had been betrayed.

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<sup>65</sup> Dransfyld to Rogers, July 30, 1577, *ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>66</sup> La Personne's Negotiations, July, 1577, *ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>67</sup> Rogers to Walsingham, August 24, 1577, *ibid.*, pp. 102, 103.

She had heard of this reconciliation only a week before it had been completed. The English Sovereign understandably was furious at this second deception of the protestants. The Huguenots, moreover, were not the only ones who had taken advantage of the Queen's alleged benevolence. Duke Casimir, her other "partner," was reluctant to repay the 50,000 crowns advanced during his previous negotiations with Elizabeth. On October 31, 1577, Sir Francis Walsingham, the English Secretary of State, informed Rogers that her Majesty "marvelled" that she had heard nothing from the Duke about his plans for repaying the money.<sup>68</sup>

It is difficult to assess the value of Elizabeth's aid to the Huguenots during this first stage of the religious wars. Her material aid was decisive in 1568-69, and her diplomatic maneuvering was no less effective in securing a favorable peace in 1573. The value of her inconsistent succour was largely cancelled, however, by her failures to help at critical times. The Huguenot defeat at Dreux, for example, can be attributed to their desperate effort to reach overdue English ships, and the Queen's failure to fulfill treaty obligations was partially responsible for the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

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## CHAPTER II

### ELIZABETH I AND THE HUGUENOTS: 1577-1593

#### Her Reasons for Continuing the Alliance

Although angered by the Peace of Bergerac, Elizabeth was no more permanently alienated from the Huguenots in 1577 than she had been in 1563. She still needed them to so embroil France that that nation would be too weak to interfere in England's affairs. For this reason Walsingham told Rogers that the Queen would still help the Huguenots "if . . . they shall with better judgement hereafter 'list themselves.'"<sup>1</sup>

The Peace of Bergerac temporarily removed Elizabeth's means of fomenting civil strife in France, but it did not diminish the threats to England from abroad. Indeed, peace sharply increased the menaces from both Spain and France. Philip II desired to conclude a peace pact with Henry III in order to prevent French intervention in the Low Countries. Elizabeth learned in January, 1578, that the two Catholic monarchs had begun negotiations. Philip requested French aid in suppressing the Dutch and Flemish revolt and offered in exchange the hand of his daughter, Isabella, who was heiress

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<sup>1</sup> Walsingham to Rogers, October 31, 1577, edited by A. J. Butler, *C. S. E.*, 1577-1578, p. 294.

of the Netherlands, to the Duke of Alençon, Elizabeth's old suitor. The tentative plan was that Alençon would join forces with Don Juan of Austria for an invasion of the insurgent provinces. In addition to potential Franco-Spanish rapprochement, Don Juan had begun an intrigue with Mary, Queen of Scots.

Elizabeth had won Alençon once, and she now set about doing it again, though at her age (forty-five) it was doubtful that the Queen seriously considered marriage. Nature and fortune were on her side. Don Juan died of fever in the Netherlands, and Alençon, yielding once again to the temptation of sharing Elizabeth's kingdom, became betrothed to her. The English Sovereign demonstrated her love in a most peculiar manner, however, for she hired Duke Casimir to keep Alençon out of the Netherlands even as she offered her hand to him.<sup>3</sup>

Elizabeth's tactics and Don Juan's death relieved the situation in Europe as far as England was concerned. The French Crown veered away from a rapprochement with Spain, thereby averting for Elizabeth the awful prospect of facing both France and Spain in a full-scale war in the Netherlands. Yet the threat to England was by no means abolished, for by 1580, it was rumored that Philip II was preparing

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<sup>3</sup> E. Armstrong, The French Wars of Religion, p. 106.

a great "Enterprize" against England in order to re-establish the Catholic Church there and put Mary on the thrones of England and Scotland. On January 7, 1580, an agent in Spain reported that the king was preparing an expedition to invade England.<sup>4</sup> Similar intelligence came in the summer of that year, and Elizabeth was so convinced of their truth that she remonstrated with Bernadino de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, about Spain's aggressive intentions.<sup>5</sup>

The increased arrivals of Jesuit missionaries in 1580, apparently confirmed the Queen's suspicion of Catholic designs upon England. These missionaries were pledged to the peaceful propagation of the old faith, but even their legitimate task had as its end the overthrow of Elizabeth, and it was not long before these papal emissaries were at the center of the plots built around Mary.<sup>6</sup>

While Elizabeth kept a wary eye on Spain and the Jesuits, domestic peace continued in France, Nevertheless, Henry of Navarre, the Huguenot leader, was convinced that it was not a lasting peace. Already grave problems had arisen because of the Catholics' reluctance to surrender certain towns in

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<sup>4</sup> An Extract out of a Spanish letter, dated at Madrid, January 7, 1579, A. J. Butler, ed., C. S. F., 1579-80 (London, 1904), p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> "The heads of certain speeches delivered by her Majesty unto the Ambassador of Spain," July 10, 1580, ibid., p. 350.

<sup>6</sup> John E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth I (London, 1934), pp. 257-258.

accordance with the Bergerac compromise. Expecting civil war to resume, Henry wished the way to Elizabeth's purse kept open. He shrewdly attempted to accomplish this purpose (at the same time regaining his ancestral land of Navarre from Spain) by playing on the Queen's distrust of Spain's intentions. He explained to Elizabeth that the best way to discourage Philip's "Enterprize" was to keep him occupied at home. As Navarre's agent, Du Plessis-Mornay, put it to Walsingham, if Elizabeth would send money, Henry would "keep Hannibal amused at Carthage in such sort that he will be quite glad to leave his neighbors in peace." According to Du Plessis, "twelve thousand crowns a month will light a fire in Spain which all their waters will not be able to put out."<sup>7</sup> Walsingham approved the scheme, but Elizabeth was not moved by Du Plessis' prose. She refused to negotiate further on the subject.<sup>8</sup>

The Queen did not want to become involved in any scheme which might be both dangerous and costly. In the fall of 1582, when Catherine de Medici approached Elizabeth with an offer of alliance directed against Spain, the Queen refused to make a definite commitment, though she hinted that she would be interested in such an alliance if Spain attempted

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<sup>7</sup>Du Plessis-Mornay to Walsingham, September 9, 1581, A. J. Butler, editor, *C. S. F.*, January, 1581-April 1582 (London, 1907), pp. 314, 315.

<sup>8</sup>Read, Walsingham, II, 85, 86.

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 anything against England. At the time, a general balance of power existed, and there was no need for Elizabeth to become involved in any plot that might upset it.

Since peace, albeit troubled, continued in France during 1582-1583, the Guises were free to intrigue in Scotland and with Mary. Elizabeth attempted to thwart the Guise machinations by encouraging Henry to break the peace in France. In May, 1582, she sent her ambassador, Sir Henry Cobham, to assure the King of Navarre of her sympathy with the Huguenots. In April of the next year, Walsingham requested a full report on Huguenot unity and war potential.<sup>10</sup>

#### The Queen's Torturous Policy: 1585-1589

Elizabeth's policy of maintaining a balance of power led her to pursue a torturous policy which frustrated her advisers. She desired to keep the friendship of Catherine, in case Spanish aggression necessitated an Anglo-French alliance, yet she simultaneously planned to undermine the Guise intrigues by aggravating the domestic situation in France. The result was a policy similar to that of 1562. Elizabeth

<sup>9</sup> Walsingham to Cobham, October 18, 1582, A. J. Butler, editor, C. S. F., May-December, 1582 (London, 1909), p. 397.

<sup>10</sup> Cobham to Walsingham, May 14, 1582, ibid., p. 29 and Walsingham to Cobham, April 4, 1583, A. J. Butler and Sophie Lomas, editors, ibid., January-June, 1583 (London, 1913), p. 238.

instructed Sir Edward Stafford, her new ambassador to France, to assure Henry III that England would do nothing to hurt his kingdom; yet, in the same instructions, she told Stafford that, if he found any Huguenot agents at court, he was to declare her readiness to help them.<sup>11</sup>

When Alençon died in 1584, Henry of Navarre became heir to the throne, thereby casting a shadow over the peace in France, since the radical Catholics could never submit to rule by a protestant. In January, 1585, the powerful Duke of Guise acting for the Catholic League signed a treaty with Spain which excluded Henry of Navarre from the succession in favor of his uncle, Cardinal Bourbon. Henry III wished to solve the problem by converting Navarre to Catholicism; however, he was powerless to resist the newly revived Catholic League, since he lacked popular support.

Elizabeth was apprehensive of the new developments in France, and attempted to avert the danger to England by setting off another civil war in France. In May, 1585, she admonished Henry III to rise up in arms against the Spanish-Guise ogre, promising faithful assistance if he was not false with her.<sup>12</sup> When the Seigneur de Clervant

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<sup>11</sup> Instructions for Sir Edward Stafford, September (?), 1583, Sophie Lomas, ed., *ibid.*, July, 1583-July, 1584, p. 116.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth to the French King, May, 1585, *ibid.*, August, 1584-August, 1585, pp. 514, 515.

and Ségur-Pardeilhau, the Huguenot envoys, sought to get a definite commitment in May and June, Elizabeth equivocated and would make none, apparently thinking that Henry III intended to take her advice and resist Guise efforts to enforce religious conformity in France.<sup>13</sup> Walsingham, however, knew that Henry III was hopelessly subordinated to Guise, and the First Secretary continued to urge the Queen to help Henry of Navarre. Finally Elizabeth relented and agreed to lend £ 20,000 to the Huguenots, but only on the condition that the troops raised must be ready to march into the Low Countries, where the death of William the Silent had left the Dutch rebels leaderless.<sup>14</sup>

Even as Ségur-Pardeilhau happily reported the Queen's commitment to Henry of Navarre, Elizabeth decided not to shoulder the cost alone, and soon informed the Huguenot envoy of a "string" she had forgotten to mention before. The loan would be made only if the King of Denmark and other Scandinavian princes joined her in a league to help the French protestants. Such a league had been considered previously by both Elizabeth and the Huguenots, but the northern princes had shown in the past little interest in French affairs which did not affect them. Elizabeth began

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<sup>13</sup> Walsingham to Duke Casimir, May 23, 1585, *ibid.*, p. 494.

<sup>14</sup> Ségur-Pardeilhau to Walsingham, July 2, 1585, *ibid.*, pp. 577, 578.

negotiations with the King of Denmark in May, 1585, but she did not receive word until July of the Danish Sovereign's final refusal to take part in such a hazardous and unpromising enterprise.<sup>15</sup> Satisfied by late summer that she could get no help from Scandinavia, Elizabeth agreed to loan only £ 10,000 to the French protestants. The Huguenot envoys were furious, regarding Elizabeth's delayed condition as a betrayal. Ségur-Pardeilhac angrily left England and went to Germany, hoping for better luck.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, in July, 1585, Henry III signed the Treaty of Nemours which obliged him to implement the Guise anti-protestant policy, thereby provoking the most famous of the religious wars: The War of the Three Henries. This pact declared Catholicism the only legal religion in France and gave protestants six months to conform or leave the country. Walsingham feared the Treaty of Nemours was the precursor of a Franco-Spanish alliance directed against England. When the wavering monarch, Henry III, recalled his pro-English ambassador, Mauvissière, and replaced him with a Guisard, the Baron de Chateaufort, it appeared that the First Secretary had reason for his anxiety. Supporting Walsingham's

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The Elector of Saxony to the King of Denmark, July 31, 1585, *ibid.*, pp. 636-639.

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Walsingham to Stafford, July 20, 1585, *ibid.*, p. 618.



prediction of a foreign combination was Mary's clandestine correspondence with France and Spain. English merchants, moreover, reported on December 10, 1585, that Spain was preparing an armada, but Elizabeth persisted in her "wait-and-see" attitude.<sup>17</sup>

Following Elizabeth's policy toward the Huguenots in 1585 is like attempting to penetrate a labyrinth; however, there was one constant factor: her effort to avoid expense to England which had not yet become a great creditor nation. The Queen's permanent revenue was pitifully small (£ 200,000 during the first twelve years of her reign and £ 300,000 during the last decade of it), and she had to fight with Parliament for supplementary appropriations. To make matters worse, there was no national debt nor long term loans; therefore, Elizabeth was dependent upon a parsimonious Parliament. Her decision to reduce her original commitment to the Huguenots coincided with a loan of £ 126,000 a year to the Dutch Netherlands, where England's interests were more immediate than in France. It was a question of having insufficient resources to support both causes simultaneously.<sup>18</sup> After the death of William the Silent, the Queen knew she had no better friend in Europe

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<sup>17</sup> Read, Walsingham, III, 193.

<sup>18</sup> Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, pp. 294-298.

than Henry of Navarre, and she had no intention of letting him or his party be destroyed. Her impecunious condition, however, reduced Elizabeth to cold calculation; she gambled that Navarre could not be conquered in a single season whether helped or not, whereas the Dutch rebels might fall momentarily.<sup>19</sup>

During the last months of 1585, Walsingham, Leicester, and even the more conservative Burghley, urged Elizabeth to do more for the French protestants. These advisers thought an aggressive policy both in France and the Netherlands was the best way to thwart a Franco-Spanish combination, but Elizabeth disagreed. She insisted that England should conserve its strength, in case Philip II made his threatened attack.<sup>20</sup>

To explain Elizabeth's parsimony simply by poverty, however, would be doing an injustice to the political sagacity of her councillors. Walsingham and Burghley, the Treasurer, knew about the state of the Queen's finances; yet they advocated vigorous support of the Huguenots. These men saw that, since the Treaty of Nemours, Henry III was controlled by the Duke of Guise and the Holy League. Elizabeth did not understand the extent of Henry's

<sup>19</sup> James A. Froude, History of England, XI, 568.

<sup>20</sup> Read, Walsingham, III, 218.

subordination to Guise and demonstrated her naiveté in March and April of 1586, when she ordered Sir Edward Stafford to intercede with Henry III for Navarre. She assumed, over Walsingham's emphatic advice to the contrary, that the French King was still a free agent.<sup>21</sup>

Walsingham continued to impress upon Elizabeth the danger which her care for finances had obscured. The First Secretary and the Sieur de Buzanval, whom Segur-Pardeilhac had left in England to plead Navarre's case, finally persuaded her to send £ 10,000 to the protestants for the levy of German mercenaries.<sup>22</sup>

#### Elizabeth and the Guise-Spanish Alliance

Events in England and France soon aided the Huguenot cause. Mary's plotting had long been observed by Walsingham's efficient secret service, and Elizabeth repeatedly had warned her cousin to cease her conspiracies. Parliament and popular opinion already were clamoring for the Scottish Queen's head, but Elizabeth had been resolute, perhaps to the point of imprudence, in protecting the headstrong Mary. The increasing rumors of a Spanish Enterprize against England, and William the Silent's assassination in 1584, however, made the English Sovereign increasingly aware

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<sup>21</sup>  
Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>22</sup>  
Ibid., p. 199.

of the threat posed by Mary. In June, 1586, Walsingham finally obtained irrefutable evidence of Mary's implication in a plot to overthrow and assassinate Elizabeth. This time the passionate Scotch Queen was executed--an event which strained England's relations with the Guise-controlled French Crown.<sup>23</sup>

Even as Mary sealed her own doom, Elizabeth moved to help Henry of Navarre, whose war efforts thus far had been unsuccessful. She sent Horatio Pallavicino to Frankfort to raise an army of German troops on behalf of the Huguenots.<sup>24</sup> In January, 1587, Pallavicino delivered £ 20,000 to friends of the Huguenots in Germany. It appeared that Elizabeth now would give Navarre substantial aid, but, when Henry's agents in Germany requested more money in February, she not only ignored their pleas, but also refused to receive La Huguerye, Huguenot envoy. Walsingham bitterly protested the Queen's latest change of policy, for he saw no logic in it: "If to offend all the world be a good course of government then we cannot do amiss."<sup>25</sup>

Elizabeth thought she saw a cheaper means of obtaining security than by feeding the Huguenot maw. She even

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<sup>23</sup>Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, pp. 279-281.

<sup>24</sup>Foreign Advertisements, June, 1586, Sophie Lomas, editor, C. S. F., September, 1585-May, 1586, p. 666.

<sup>25</sup>Head, Walsingham, III, 206, 207.

considered a Spanish alliance to counter an alleged French menace to England. Just as negotiations with Spain were about to begin, Elizabeth--much to Walsingham's dismay--wrote a sharp letter to the King of France as a preliminary to breaking relations. Her idea of allying with Spain was not realistic in view of Spanish hostility and preparations for aggression; France, moreover, as a consequence of the War of the Three Henries, was in no condition to threaten anyone. Realizing that such a policy was impolitique, the Queen appears to have abandoned it before negotiations were initiated.

Sir Edward Stafford probably suggested a Spanish alliance. Strongly opposed to an anti-Spanish, pro-Huguenot policy, he exerted more influence than anyone in formulating Elizabeth's attitude toward the Huguenots, and he was a traitor, in the pay of both Guise and Philip II. For a total of £ 540, Stafford revealed to Spain every detail of Sir Francis Drake's preparations for an expedition against Spain in 1587, betrayed the movements of the Drake-Howard fleets, and sold every detail of Elizabeth's 1588 negotiations with Henry III for an alliance against Spain. Not only did Stafford influence Elizabeth (who never knew of his treachery) against Henry of Navarre, whom he hated, but he

also embezzled some of the money which Elizabeth sent the Huguenots. Of the £ 20,000 sent in January, 1587, Stafford took £ 2,400 for himself.<sup>27</sup>

By early September, 1587, Elizabeth had resolved upon a more reasonable plan than that of allying with Spain. She decided to convince Henry III that his best course in combatting the Guise faction was to ally with Henry of Navarre against the Spanish-supported Holy League. Such an alliance would stabilize the domestic situation in France without English gold and entail an additional drain upon the resources of Spain. The further weakening of Spanish finances seemed to Elizabeth an excellent way of forcing Philip to postpone his long-awaited "Enterprize" against England.

It was a good scheme. Elizabeth's offer of alliance was relayed to Henry III who answered favorably, for he hated and feared the Guisards. He attached only two strings to his acceptance: Elizabeth must persuade Navarre to accept a peace which did not grant religious toleration, and she must urge him to become a Catholic. Henry III offered the only terms which his overwhelmingly Catholic subjects would accept as a basis for a treaty with the protestants. The Holy League had so stirred up Catholic opinion in France, it

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Conyers Read, "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford," American Historical Review, XX (January, 1915), 292-313.

would have been disastrous for the King, already unpopular, to give concessions to the Huguenots.

Burghley recommended that the Queen meet Henry III's conditions. It appeared to be only a matter of time until Navarre would be forced to change his religion anyway, and, according to her Treasurer, it would be worth some religious concessions to establish a balance of power in Europe. Walsingham disagreed with Burghley, for religion never had been divorced in his mind from European politics. Strangely, Elizabeth, whom religious considerations heretofore had not affected in her negotiations with the Huguenots, agreed with Walsingham, indignantly refusing Henry III's conditions.<sup>28</sup>

England's rejection of Henry III's offer not only resulted in the loss of a defensive and offensive alliance against the Guisards and Spain, but it also meant the defection of Henry III to Spain since he was too weak to stand alone. The formal act of Union linking the two monarchs was signed on July 2, 1588. Elizabeth's plan to ally with France against Spain had failed. The Act of Union meant that every port from Brittany to the Low Countries would be at the Armada's disposal, and the armies of Guise left free to co-operate with the "Great Enterprize."<sup>29</sup> Just one month

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<sup>28</sup> Read, Walsingham, III, 210-215.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

after the Act of Union was signed, the famous Armada sailed. Its failure was due more to Spanish mistakes and ill-luck than to any clear-cut superiority of the English fleet.

Elizabeth's motivations in refusing Henry III's conditions remain a mystery: either she did not trust the weak French monarch, or she was motivated by genuine religious convictions. Although the latter viewpoint is contrary to the traditional contention that Elizabeth never was motivated by religious sentiment, it is compatible with Rowse's interpretation which portrays Elizabeth as a sincere, if undogmatic, protestant.<sup>30</sup>

#### English Aid to Henry of Navarre: 1588-1593

After the narrow escape from the Armada in August, 1588, Elizabeth leaned increasingly upon Henry of Navarre and the Huguenots, but it was not until Navarre became the chief contender for the throne on the death of Henry III in 1589, that Elizabeth really loosened her purse strings.

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Writing of Henry's conversion, which occurred in 1593, Rowse asserts: "Elizabeth--who took these things more sincerely than some people who made more fuss--was much upset. She wrote Henry argumentative letters, sorrowful rather than indignant; she searched the Scriptures and the Fathers; she had long conversations with her Archbishop and finally consoled herself with translating Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy. She had received a shock: we see that she was, what many have denied, a genuine Protestant of an undogmatic kind." A. L. Rowse, The Expansion of Elizabethan England (New York, 1955), II, 397; also, see Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, pp. 320-321.



From 1570 until the mid-1580's, she had loaned only £ 12,000, for which she had taken as collateral jewels worth five times that amount.<sup>31</sup> Her policy from 1585 until 1588 was more liberal, but by no means extravagant (in 1587 she loaned £ 30,000). In 1589, however, Elizabeth clearly saw that it was the Guise-Spain-Holy League combination versus Henry of Navarre and his relatively small band of Huguenot-Politique followers. She could ill-afford to see Henry collapse. On the contrary, if he succeeded in his struggle against Guise and Spain with her aid, not only would Elizabeth have an old friend on the French throne, but Guise would be beaten, and Philip would be unable to undertake another "Enterprize" against England.

By 1589, the Queen had begun to give the most substantial assistance of the religious wars.<sup>32</sup> There was some delay while

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Froude, History of England, XI, 388; Only after a prolonged negotiation did Henry IV secure the return of his jewels from Elizabeth, who claimed they were collateral for a loan of £ 60,000 rather than the £ 12,000 which he actually had received; Segur-Pardeilhant to Burghley, October 1, 1583, Sophie Lomas, editor, C. S. F., July, 1583-July, 1584, pp. 122, 123.

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The Queen's help was not limited to France's boundary, for she sometimes helped them internationally, even to her own disadvantage. For example, in the interval between the death of Henry III and the accession of Henry IV, there were two French ambassadors to Turkey; one was supported by the Holy League, and the other by Henry IV. Elizabeth instructed her ambassador, Edward Barton, to lend his support to Henry's representative, Brèves. The latter triumphed over his rival to the detriment of English interests in the Levant, where

Elizabeth quibbled again over Calais, but when it became obvious that Henry could not be bluffed into making the same mistake that had almost ruined Coligny and the elder Condé, she threw her resources wholeheartedly into the Huguenot campaign. In September, 1589, she sent £ 20,000, and £ 15,000 followed during the next month. Also in September, 1589, Elizabeth commissioned the first English expedition since 1562. Command of this force fell to Lord Peregrine Willoughby.<sup>33</sup>

Although 4,000 troops were levied, the Hampshire and Sussex regiments were ill-chosen and badly armed, reminiscent of Sir John Falstaff's unfortunates in Shakespeare's Henry V. The troops from Kent and London were in better condition, however, and drilling much improved all of the levies. The expedition distinguished itself in France, though the campaign was brief. Elizabeth provided pay and provisions for only one month, insisting that Henry IV sustain the troops after that period. But Henry was unable to bear the

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Elizabeth was duelling with France for commercial hegemony. Brèves promptly won several nations away from England's control! Arthur L. Horniker, "Anglo-French Rivalry in the Levant from 1583 to 1612," Journal of Modern History, XVIII (December, 1946), 289-305.

financial burden imposed by such a large force; consequently, it returned to England in the winter.<sup>34</sup>

Following up the September and October loans, Elizabeth sent two shiploads of sorely needed gunpowder and other necessities. In October, 1590, she sent £ 10,000 and induced English merchants to send another £ 15,000. Thus, in the year between September, 1589, and October, 1590, England had loaned £ 60,000 to Henry IV and had sent an army.<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth's fear of Spanish designs on France overcame her parsimony. Although England had mastered an armada which had sailed hundreds of miles to reach her, how she would fare against a Spanish fleet based just across the Channel was a question which the Queen preferred to remain hypothetical.

Throughout 1590, Henry IV. requested Elizabeth to send another army, but the situation in France being almost stable that year, she chose to catch her breath, financially. Save for a few volunteers, there were no English fighting in France in 1590. Since Henry's requests did not diminish, Elizabeth sent him, as a token of her friendship, a scarf which she herself had knitted.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> E. P. Cheyney, A History of England, from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth (New York, 1926), I, 217-225.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

By August, 1590, ten months had passed since Elizabeth had sent the generous gifts of the previous fall. Henry's position suddenly became more critical after the League strengthened its union with Spain by a new alliance which pledged Spain to send an army of 16,000 foot and 3500 horse, supported by an initial loan of £ 100,000 plus £ 4,000 a month while the war lasted.<sup>37</sup> The Spanish immediately showed they meant business, for in August, Alexander Farnese, the Duke of Parma, descended into France, and another Spanish army landed in Brittany. Elizabeth was shocked into action. In mid-January, 1591, she ordered a levy of 3,000 troops and encouraged Henry IV to stand his ground. Even now, the Queen did not lose her bargaining sense. Henry had long since exhausted all his resources in waging his fight for the throne, and had been unable to repay the previous loans of Elizabeth. As security for repayment, therefore, she insisted on Brest for an anchorage and shipping port. Henry assured her he would repay his debts, but he wisely refused to cede a part of France, even temporarily.<sup>38</sup>

Elizabeth was not in a good bargaining position; the situation was so critical that she agreed to dispatch the 3,000 troops without security. Since Henry preferred battle veterans, and since the only place to get them was in the Netherlands, Elizabeth ordered Sir John Norris, a veteran

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<sup>37</sup>  
Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>38</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 242-243.

of the earlier Portugal expedition, to withdraw 3,000 troops from the Low Countries for service in northwestern France. Norris, however, ran into opposition from the Dutch rebels when he tried to withdraw and succeeded in removing only 1500 men after promising to replace them with new recruits. The remainder of the expedition consisted of recruits from England.<sup>39</sup>

A few more troops followed in 1592, but Elizabeth was angered by Henry's failure to sustain her forces. In August, 1592, she threatened to bring them home, but the situation in France was too critical to allow her to carry out her threat. Indeed, even as she threatened Norris's recall, Elizabeth consented to another expedition. Yielding to the pleas of Burghley, Henry IV, and her latest favorite, the Earl of Essex, she ordered a levy of 3,400 men who were led to France by the court dandy, Essex. It was the best equipped but least productive of all her expeditions. Upon landing, this magnificently attired army sat at Arques and did nothing, while its bejewelled general spent his time in frivolous activities having nothing to do with his mission.<sup>40</sup> Although the army of Essex was intended to help Henry take Rouen, the professional and dreary

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<sup>39</sup>  
Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>40</sup>  
Ibid., p. 255.

work of besieging a city was too distasteful to the dashing Essex who preferred more heroic acts like offering to settle the siege by duelling with the commander of the city (the latter refused to oblige him).<sup>41</sup>

Elizabeth was furious at the asininity of her courtier and bemoaned the enormous drain that the fruitless expeditions imposed upon her treasury. In all she had some 12,000 men stretched along 400 miles of coastline. To make matters worse, her assistance was wasted; she was getting far less punch per pound than anticipated.

Elizabeth recalled Essex in January, 1592, but she could not repair the damage he had done. The finely arrayed English army had been reduced to a hollow shell of its former self. Despite the arrival of reinforcements (638 men) from the Netherlands in December, 1591, the English army at that time consisted of only 198 officers and 1,089 men. No wonder Elizabeth angrily rejected Henry's appeals for 5,000 new troops in December. Later she relented when she realized that Henry desperately needed aid if he were to defeat Parma who was marching to the relief of Rouen. On March 27, 1592, the Queen dispatched 1,600 troops to Rouen, but again it was a case of "too little, too late;" Parma, with 12,000 foot and 4,000 horse, outmaneuvered Henry and lifted the long siege on April 10.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 337.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 274-278, 337; Cheyney, A History of England, I, 270-274.

After the unsuccessful siege of Rouen, English troops in France dwindled to about 800 men. Although Elizabeth preferred to end her gifts to Henry altogether, Spain gave her no choice. Philip continued his efforts to legalize the puppet French monarch, Charles X. Since the only way the Spanish King could accomplish this aim was by eliminating Henry of Navarre, the rightful heir, his most Catholic Majesty continued to help the League, an action which compelled Elizabeth to counter with another expedition on behalf of Henry IV.

A new difficulty now arose in recruiting troops. No longer was it considered glamorous and adventurous to go to France. Burghley took note of that fact, and the privy council also admitted that the nation was murmuring more and more against sending men to France to be slaughtered. England was beginning to feel the impact of her great losses in France and in the Netherlands. Out of three armies sent to the Guise and Dutch battlefields, only a few thousand sick and wounded soldiers had returned. No longer did men respond enthusiastically to the call. Although there were 30,000 unemployed in London, hundreds hid out in Blackfriars, Whitefriars and other sections of the city to avoid the draft.<sup>43</sup> Even the modest order for 4,000 men could not be filled; Norris finally sailed with 1,200 troops, and

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<sup>43</sup>  
Ibid., p. 287.

this small force was more than offset by the arrival of 2,000 Spaniards in France.<sup>44</sup> By 1593, the English army in France had been increased to 2,000 men.

### Conclusion

The four expeditions to France had wrecked English finances. In the period from 1589-1593, Elizabeth spent £ 300,000 on behalf of Henry IV, and £ 500,000 in the Netherlands. During the same period, additional revenues were devoted to the Irish wars, to naval construction, and to maintenance. Hard pressed to pay for her military ventures, the Queen was forced to sacrifice large tracts of crown land and resort to the sale of monopolies and benevolences.<sup>45</sup>

In return for these expenditures on behalf of her allies, England had avoided the combined menace of Guise and Spain; however, Elizabeth probably was relieved when Henry ascended the throne of France in 1593; though she would have preferred that he remain protestant. Although there was no reason to hope that Henry's ascendancy had marked the end of an interminable drain upon Elizabeth's treasury, the Queen soon was disappointed, for the Franco-Spanish war continued another five years, and when Spanish

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 282-290.

<sup>45</sup> Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 337.



troops threatened Brittany early in 1594, she was forced to send another 4,000 troops to help the French king, lest Spain gain the West of France. Henry IV repaid his old collaborator for this final assistance by making a separate peace with Spain. It was a fitting end to a relationship marked from the beginning by guile of both sides.

## CHAPTER III

### ELIZABETH AND THE ASCENDANCY OF

### HENRY IV: 1577-1593

#### The Huguenot-Politique Merger

Henry of Navarre inherited the charm of his father, Anthony, and the religion of his mother, Jeanne d'Albret. Fortunately, he inherited neither the laziness of the former nor the dogmatism of the latter.

Henry had saved his life at the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day by turning Catholic, but, since he and the young Prince of Condé were the logical leaders of the Huguenot movement, they were kept in custody by Charles IX and his successor Henry III. Condé, however, escaped from court in 1575, and he was followed by Henry of Navarre who renounced his former "conversion" in 1576.

After the fourth war, which followed the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, there had occurred a merger of the Huguenots with the Politiques, a group of nobles who sought more liberty, political power, and government reforms. Although some of the Politiques were Catholic, they joined the Huguenots, because they, like the protestants, were objects of Henry III's oppression, and neither faction was strong enough to stand alone against the government. The Politique element diluted the religious emphasis of the Huguenots, and by 1575, the old party of religion had died.

Despite the continued presence of individual zealots, the organization was no longer Calvin's, but that of the political Huguenots. The party now was dedicated to reform, demanding both civil and religious liberty.<sup>1</sup>

Henry of Navarre built his party during the years following the Peace of Bergerac (1577). Not only was Navarre the highest ranking protestant noble in France, but he also was next to Henry III's younger brother, Alençon, in succession to the throne. In May, 1584, Alençon lay dying of fever in the Netherlands; consequently, Navarre's importance increased enormously. Even before Elizabeth's former suitor died, many nobles declared allegiance to Henry of Navarre in preference to his aged uncle Charles of Bourbon, whom the Guisards hoped to crown in the event of Henry III's death.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Rise of the Holy League

After Alençon's death in June, 1584, a popular Catholic movement arose to meet the Huguenot menace, since Henry III was too weak to deal effectively with it. The idea was not new, for radical Catholics had formed a league

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<sup>1</sup>Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, p. 499.

<sup>2</sup>Le Brumen to Walsingham, May 29, 1584, Sophie Lomas, editor, C. S. F., July, 1583-July, 1584, p. 519.

in reaction to the over-generous Peace of Monsieur in 1576. Although built around the Catholic nobility and headed by the Duke of Guise, it had not been as revolutionary as the Holy League of 1585. The purpose of the former was simply the eradication of heresy in France, while the latter, with the same aim, joined with Spain against the French monarchy. Just as the Anglo-Huguenot Alliance had almost proved fatal in 1562, so the alliance with Spain eventually brought about the downfall of the Holy League.<sup>3</sup>

If the League of 1576 had not been as radical as its successor, its leader, the Duke of Guise, did hold revolutionary ideas. He wanted power, and, to gain it, he was willing even to oppose the King. His ambition led him to seek support outside France, and in 1577, he made his first attempt to obtain assistance from Philip II and to interest the Spanish monarch in restoring Mary to the Scottish throne as a preliminary to stamping out protestantism in that country. Philip, who was a devout Catholic, was receptive to Guise's scheme; no less than the Duke, he desired the restoration of Mary in Scotland and also her ascendancy in England. Finally, freeing France from heresy seemed a noble cause. On the more mundane side he wanted Guise's

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<sup>3</sup> Koenigsburger, "Organization of Revolutionary Parties," pp. 335-351.

help against the Dutch. Although the negotiations augured well for their future relations, Guise and Philip could not strike an agreement. His Most Catholic Majesty did order a detailed cost estimate of the Duke's proposed Scottish expedition, but he never went beyond the planning stage. Philip was not ready for an alliance with Guise in 1577, fearing that such a momentous step might provoke Elizabeth into sending a large force to the Netherlands; moreover, he distrusted the Duke.<sup>4</sup>

After the failure of his bid for a Spanish alliance in 1577, Guise bided his time until the formation of the Holy League in 1585. Although not officially sanctioned by the Church, the League grew rapidly drawing its support chiefly from artisans, guilds, and public officials. Backed by this powerful Catholic movement, Guise soon became strong enough to remove moderate royalist officials and replace them with Catholic zealots. His movement continued to gain strength, until, on the Day of the Barricades, May 12, 1588, the Duke drove the King of France from Paris.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> P. O. de Torne, "Philippe II et Henri de Guise, le début de leurs relations, 1578," Révue historique (1671) pp. 323-335.

<sup>5</sup> Koenigsburger, "Organization of Revolutionary Parties," (July, 1931), pp. 347-348.

## Henry of Navarre's Negotiations with Henry III

While Henry of Guise became increasingly rebellious, Henry of Navarre sought to legalize his cause by linking it to that of the King. Although religious differences presented an obstacle, both Navarre and Henry III nursed common antipathy toward Spain. The King had inherited the Valois fear of Hapsburg encirclement, and Henry of Navarre wanted to regain his ancestral lands from Spain. In 1582, the Huguenot leader initiated negotiations with his Most Christian Majesty in an attempt to persuade him to break openly with Spain. Henry III, however, had too much respect for Spanish might, and, though he promised vaguely to "annoy" Philip II, he promptly forgot his pledge.<sup>6</sup>

Henry of Navarre again sought an anti-Spanish alliance with the Crown in 1583, and sent Du Plessis-Mornay to the King with a warning about Philip's intervention in France and a proposal that they combine forces to drive the Spaniard from French soil (including of course, Navarre).<sup>7</sup> While expressing sympathy with Navarre's cause, Henry III still was reluctant to defy openly Guise and Spain,

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<sup>6</sup>Cobham to Walsingham, November 4, 1582, A. J. Butler, editor, C. S. F., May-December, 1582 (London, 1909), p. 435.

<sup>7</sup>Henry of Navarre to Henry III, towards the end of the year, 1583, Jules Berger de Xivrey, editor, Henri IV, recueil des lettres missives (Paris, 1843-1876), I, 618, 619.

particularly after the conclusion of a treaty between Henry of Guise and Philip II early in 1585. The King expressed to Navarre that he was powerless to stop Guise, who was bent on exterminating the Huguenots, and consequently could not predict what would be his policy toward the protestants. This confession served only to emphasize how thoroughly he had become the bondsman of Guise.<sup>8</sup>

#### The Treaty of Nemours, 1585

Realizing that the King was being dragged into the Guise-Spanish camp, Henry of Navarre wrote several desperate letters to him in an effort to dissuade him. Since the two greatest obstacles to a royalist-Huguenot alliance were religion and Guise's proximity to the court, Navarre stressed the secular nature of the Huguenot movement and suggested that he would move his own camp closer to Paris to counter-balance the force which threatened the King.<sup>9</sup> Other appeals followed, but Henry III, though he preferred Henry of Navarre to Guise, did not have the courage to ally with the former. He may well have been influenced by the fact that Navarre had little support at this time from Elizabeth, who, as noted previously, refused Henry's requests for aid in 1585, because she believed Henry III would ally with the Huguenot leader. Despite Navarre's assurances that he was strong

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<sup>8</sup>  
Ibid., April 13, 1585, II, 38.

<sup>9</sup>  
Ibid.

enough to defeat Guise without foreign help, Henry III submitted to the demands of Guise and Catherine, and signed the Treaty of Nemours which deprived the Huguenots of all toleration. Henry of Navarre did not accept this treaty as definitive, for he understood the King's vacillating nature and thought he might yet return to the side of his preference. Navarre continued to argue with irrefutable logic that the last Valois had joined France's enemies.<sup>10</sup>

#### War of the Three Henriess: 1585-1589

The Treaty of Nemours gave the Huguenots no recourse save arms. But to fight they needed foreign help; therefore, Navarre worked hard to win the support of Elizabeth and Duke Casimir. Segur-Pardeilhan begged Elizabeth to finance a German army and to send an English fleet, implying that she was Navarre's sole hope. Simultaneously, Henry plied Duke Casimir with similar requests and compliments. He mentioned that he had sent an agent to England to negotiate with Elizabeth but assured the Duke that his principal reliance was on him, who had helped the Huguenots more than anyone else.<sup>11</sup>

After his disappointing mission to England ended in July, 1585, Ségur-Pardeilhan was sent to Germany to levy

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., July 21, 1585, pp. 95-97.

<sup>11</sup> Henry of Navarre to Duke Casimir, May 10, 1585, ibid., pp. 58-59.



troops for Henry. Navarre preferred more cavalry than infantry, and, among the latter, a higher proportion of Swiss than Landknechts. Since experienced commanders were desirable, he requested Casimir to lead the army in person.<sup>12</sup> The Huguenot agent began negotiations in Germany in the fall of 1585, but when the Germans learned of Navarre's peace negotiations with Henry III, he could make no progress. The Huguenot Prince hastened to assure Casimir that his negotiations with the King were not serious, but merely a means of gaining time until German help could arrive.<sup>13</sup>

Distrust of Navarre was not the only reason Casimir delayed; he wanted Elizabeth to finance the venture and the Queen was reluctant to oblige him. The result was an impasse; Navarre's reassurances and requests for prompt action met with a dilatory attitude, forcing him in turn to use delaying tactics in his war against Guise and the King. Throughout the winter and spring of 1586 Navarre admonished Ségur-Pardeilhan to speed up negotiations, since the Huguenots could not remain on the defensive indefinitely; however, Casimir would not be hurried.<sup>14</sup> By fall, 1586, Henry of Navarre was desperate. Although he had managed to hold his

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<sup>12</sup> Henry of Navarre to Ségur-Pardeilhan, August 19, 1585, ibid., pp. 119, 120.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., August 30, 1585, p. 127.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., towards the end of January, 1586, p. 188.

own against the three fresh, well-paid armies of the League, he had to take the offensive soon or be defeated. Since he could not attack without reinforcements, he ordered Ségur to obtain it at once.<sup>15</sup>

Fortunately for Ségur-Pardeilhaut and the Huguenots, Elizabeth, in the summer of 1586, was persuaded to help Navarre as a security measure. Realizing that the Huguenots were in danger of being defeated, she gave just enough money to prime Casimir into action. Through her agent, Horace Pallevicino, her original offer of £ 10,000 was doubled in January, 1587. For their part, the Huguenots agreed to furnish £ 6,000.<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth added another £ 10,000 before the year's end, making the total sum £ 36,000. With this money Navarre levied 8,000 cavalry and 4,000 foot which, in addition to 16,000 Swiss already hired by the Huguenots, gave the protestants 28,000 additional troops.<sup>17</sup> So expensive was the upkeep of an army, however, that the £ 36,000 provided only for the initial cost. When Henry wrote the Queen in May, 1587, of his impending march northward to join forces with these German mercenaries, he again asked for funds to to pay them.<sup>18</sup> But Elizabeth, because of her activity in

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., September 20, 1586, pp. 238-239.

<sup>16</sup>Alphonse de Ruble, editor, Mémoires inédits de Michel de Huguerye (Paris, 1877-1880), II, 380.

<sup>17</sup>Notes by Burghley, June 13, 1589, Richard B. Wernham, editor, C. S. F., January-July, 1589 (London, 1950), p. 321.

<sup>18</sup>Henry of Navarre to Elizabeth, May 8, 1587, Xivrey, editor, Lettres missives, II, pp. 305-306.

the Netherlands, concluded that she had spent as much on Henry as she could afford, and she refused to deal with Henry's envoy, the Sieur de Buzenval. Not understanding Elizabeth's position, Henry laid the blame on Buzenval, whom he accused of lacking diligence.<sup>19</sup>

#### The Battle of Coutras, 1587

On October 20, 1587, while Henry was enroute to meet his Germans (without the money to pay them), he encountered near Coutras a League army commanded by the young General Joyeuse. A vicious struggle ensued in which Joyeuse was killed and the larger League force put to flight, giving Henry his first great victory--without the aid either of Elizabeth or the Germans. Just as he did later at Arques and Ivry Henry won because he was the better general and because his ragged troops were hardened, disciplined soldiers. So fearsome did Henry's reputation become that at the siege of Paris in 1589, 60,000 fighting men of the League allowed Paris to starve rather than engage him and his 15,000.<sup>20</sup>

Navarre's failure to follow up his victory, Henry of Guise's defeat of the long-awaited German army at Vimroy, and the Prince of Condé's death partially eclipsed the

<sup>19</sup> Henry of Navarre to Buzenval, July 20, 1587, ibid., p. 298.

<sup>20</sup> Armstrong, The French Wars of Religion, p. 117.

Huguenot success at Coutras. Henry of Navarre was astonished at the ease of Guise's victory and confessed to Ségur-Pardeilhan that he probably had depended too much on German troops. But Henry could not be particular, since German mercenaries were, at the time, the only foreign troops available to him, and with misgivings, he ordered Ségur-Pardeilhan to resume efforts to raise more of them.<sup>21</sup>

Henry spent the remainder of 1587 and 1588 preparing for an expected League offensive. Using La Rochelle as the main commercial depot, he sent to England for arms, powder and grain.<sup>22</sup>

Fortunately for Henry of Navarre, Henry III, fearing that Henry of Guise planned to assassinate him, did not stay long in the Guise-Spanish camp. Friction continued between the two until the King attempted to defy his more powerful noble and was driven from Paris on May 12, 1588. Henry III fled to Blois, where he desperately sought a way to curtail the ascendancy of Guise. He decided to have the popular Duke murdered, and guards carried out the deed, after Guise had been summoned to Blois, presumably to negotiate. Henry III's assassination of Guise threw the King into open opposition to the League, and, anticipating the struggle to

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<sup>21</sup> Henry to Ségur-Pardeilhan, towards mid-November, 1587, Xivrey, editor, Lettres missives, II, 316-318.

<sup>22</sup> Henry of Navarre to Burghley, January 15, 1588, ibid., pp. 333-334.

come, he allied with Henry of Navarre in April, 1589.

Since opposition to Spain was the primary condition for Elizabeth's aid, she was as willing after the union of Henry III and Navarre to help the former as she had been the latter. By June, 1589, she was prepared to render substantial help to the new Royalist-Huguenot coalition.<sup>23</sup> Before Elizabeth could send aid, however, and just as the new allies laid siege to Paris, Jacques Clément, a religious fanatic, murdered Henry III on August 2, 1589.

After Henry III's death, Henry of Navarre was King by right, but he had yet to win the approbation of the Catholic majority of his subjects. Most of the dead King's army refused to serve Navarre after the death of its master. The Duke of Epernon acted typically when he defected with his 4,000 men. Thus weakened, Henry had to lift the siege which had begun under such favorable circumstances.<sup>24</sup>

The new uncrowned King had three choices after lifting the siege of Paris: he could recross the Loire and move south, abandoning the North to the League; he could advance east along the Marne in the hope of obtaining assistance from the Swiss and Germans; or he could march to Normandy,

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Estimate of the cost of a German levy for Henry III, June 13, 1589, Richard B. Wernham, editor, C. S. F., January-July, 1589 (London, 1950), p. 321.

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Martha W. Freer, History of the Reign of Henry IV, King of France and Navarre (London, 1860), I, 26, 27.

there assuring himself of cities not yet committed to the League, gathering taxes, and receiving the assistance that England had promised. The last possibility was the most attractive to Henry, and he moved west.<sup>25</sup>

As most of Normandy fell to the King, he settled down there to await Elizabeth's aid, basing his hope on the one common interest he had with Elizabeth: that of opposing Spain at every point.<sup>26</sup> If he won his fight for the throne, Elizabeth would be assured that Spain no longer controlled the government of France. In the French King she would have a firm and permanent ally. On the other hand, should Henry fail, Spain would control France and exercise an overwhelming influence in European politics. Elizabeth had no choice.<sup>27</sup>

#### The Battle of Arques, 1589

In early September, 1589, Henry negotiated with Elizabeth from Dieppe, but made little progress because of the Queen's insistence on Calais as the price of her support. Since Henry refused to cede the coastal city, which was not even in his hands at the time, her Britannic Majesty reluctantly agreed to send aid with only Navarre's oft-broken

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<sup>25</sup>Hardouin de Beaumont de Préfixé, Historic Mémoires of Henri IV, King of France, Written at the Command of Louis XIV by His Court Historian (Boston, 1899), p. 127.

<sup>26</sup>Pierre de L'Estoile, Journal pour le règne de Henri IV, Louis-Raymond Lefevre, editor (Paris, 1948), p. 18.

<sup>27</sup>Cheyney, A History of England, I, 215.

word as collateral. It arrived too late, however, to assist Henry in his second great battle of the war near the little town of Arques. As at Coutras the King depended upon his old followers, and they did not fail him.<sup>28</sup>

While Henry IV had negotiated with the English Sovereign, the Duke of Mayenne, Henry of Guise's brother and successor as head of the League's army, marched in pursuit of his new King with an army of 25,000 men. Soon it was rumored in Paris that the Duke had cornered Henry and was certain to capture the King if he did not flee to England or La Rochelle. Some Parisians were so sure of Henry's capture that they reserved the best vantage points along the road on which Henry would be drawn, bound and garrotted into the city.<sup>29</sup>

But Mayenne's army did not fare well in Normandy. On September 13, 1589, the Duke received a sample of what was in store for him when he encountered a small Huguenot reconnaissance force under Francois de Coligny (the old Admiral's son) and Marshal Biron. The larger League army should have routed the Huguenots; however, it showed little fighting spirit or discipline, and was repulsed at every point with heavy losses.<sup>30</sup>

On September 21, Mayenne came upon Henry's main force near Arques. The King had only 500 horse, 1200 French foot

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<sup>28</sup> Quentin Hurst, Henry of Navarre (New York, 1938), p. 68.

<sup>29</sup> L'Estoile, Journal, p. 24.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25.

soldiers, and 2500 Swiss, 4200 in all, but he chose his position carefully, and the ponderous Mayenne struggled futilely to subdue a force one sixth his strength. Forced to attack on a four-hundred yard front, Mayenne lost the effect of his numerical advantage; however, the issue remained in doubt until Coligny, who was a few miles away, on his own initiative rushed to Henry's aid. Their combined force, aided by a strategically placed battery of artillery, forced Mayenne to withdraw.<sup>31</sup>

It was all done without English aid, though Elizabeth had ordered the Willoughby expedition to sail before the Battle of Arques was fought. On September 23, two days after the battle, thirteen English ships laden with ammunition and presents arrived at Dieppe. Their cargo consisted of £ 20,000, 70,000 pounds of powder, 3,000 cannon balls, 700 sacks of flour, casks of wine and beer, cloth, house-slippers, and many other provisions.<sup>32</sup> Even more welcomed than these supplies were Willoughby's 4,000 troops and the 1,200 Scottish soldiers sent by James VI.<sup>33</sup>

English succour proved helpful almost immediately. News of Willoughby's arrival caused consternation in Mayenne's

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>32</sup> Freer, History of the Reign of Henry IV, I, 62-63.

<sup>33</sup> Hurst, Henry of Navarre, p. 91.



battered ranks, further damaging morale which already was low. A more tangible result of Elizabeth's help was the failure of Mayenne's attempt on September 27 to outflank Henry and take Dieppe. The Duke succeeded in avoiding Henry's troops, but as he approached Dieppe, he encountered a hail of English shot, projected from the city's walls by English powder. His own cannonade proved ineffectual in the face of this unexpected reply, and the League army was forced to withdraw.<sup>34</sup>

#### The Siege of Paris, 1589

After defeating Mayenne and receiving English reinforcements, Henry decided that he was strong enough to take Paris. Marching eastward, he began the siege with a patchwork army on October 30, 1589. Generals La Noue and Coligny commanded ten regiments of French infantry and one regiment each of Germans and Swiss; Marshal Aumont, four regiments of French infantry, two regiments of Swiss, and four companies of "adventurers;" and Marshal Biron, two regiments of French infantry, one of Swiss, and Willoughby's 4,000 English.<sup>35</sup>

Although Henry surrounded Paris, he lacked the artillery with which to breach its walls. He tried, therefore,

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<sup>34</sup>Freer, History of the Reign of Henry IV, I, 63-64.

<sup>35</sup>L'Estoile, Journal, p. 647; the English invested the faubourgs Saint Victor and Saint Marceau.

to goad the Duke of Mayenne into battle, but memories of Arques still burned in his mind, and he refused to give battle.<sup>36</sup> Frustrated in his efforts to capture the capital, Henry returned to Normandy, hoping to get more assistance from Elizabeth and to capture the towns there which remained loyal to the League. As he moved west, the King had remarkable success. Not only were many of the western League cities afraid of the "diabie d'Arques," but also they were reluctant to fight against their rightful king--even if he were protestant. In early December, Le Mans fell almost at the first cannon shot, though it was well prepared for a siege. Nineteen days later Vicennes surrendered. On December 23, Henry attacked Alencon, which fell in a few days. Many lesser cities followed these examples.<sup>37</sup>

Elizabeth's troops acquitted themselves well in Henry's western migration, and, when they returned home in early 1590, Henry commended them for their contribution. He also expressed his gratitude to the Queen, praising the valor of her troops and especially that of their valiant leader

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 30-31.

Willoughby.<sup>38</sup> Impressed by Henry's good opinion of her troops, Elizabeth honored her general on his return. To Henry she expressed her satisfaction that English troops had been instrumental in recovering important cities.<sup>39</sup>

#### The Battle of Ivry, 1590

Despite Willoughby's return to England, Henry continued his successful campaign in Normandy. Mayenne, weakened by desertions, still feared to attack him until reinforced by Philip II. After receiving Spanish aid, Mayenne pursued Henry, and in early March, 1590, the King was compelled to lift a siege of Dreux to face the advancing League Army. In the mistaken belief that Henry was in retreat, Mayenne advanced and suddenly met Henry face to face at Ivry on March 14, 1590. Once again Mayenne enjoyed numerical superiority (12,000 foot and 4,000 horse to Henry's 8,000 foot and 3,000 horse), but the King had the better army. Intensely loyal and French to the core, its battle cry was "death to the foreigners."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Henry IV to Elizabeth, about November 5, 1589, Xivrey, ed., Lettres missives, III, 67; Henry was not always so complimentary to Willoughby himself. One of the gentlemen of the King's chamber complained that some of Willoughby's soldiers had lodged themselves in his house at Beauvron and had sacked it. In a curt letter to Willoughby, Henry ordered him to remove his soldiers at once (Henry to Willoughby, January 14, 1590, ibid., pp. 118).

<sup>39</sup>Elizabeth to Henry IV, December, 1589, ibid., pp. 131-132.

<sup>40</sup>Hurst, Henry of Navarre, pp. 94-95.

The Battle of Ivry began as an artillery duel, but Henry won it with his favorite arm--the cavalry. Mayenne's first charge of reiters caused the Huguenot lines to waver momentarily, but Henry rallied his men with the famous admonition to gather round his white plume if their standards fell, for they would always find it on the road to victory and honor.<sup>41</sup> The flanking fire of Huguenot arquebusiers soon threw reiters into confusion; in falling back they blocked the advance of the League lancers of the center. Henry saw his chance. Following the white plume of Bourbon, his horsemen charged with such élan that they cut through Mayenne's army, then turned to attack it again from the rear. The army of the League was virtually destroyed with losses of 4,000 dead to Henry's casualties of only 500. A majority of Mayenne's infantry had thrown down their weapons before they were committed. As at Coutras and Arques there had been no English troops to help; nevertheless, English supplies had played a large part in the victory. On the day after the battle, Henry thanked Elizabeth profusely for her aid which he placed next in importance to Divine intervention.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> A. J. Grant, The French Monarchy, 1483-1789 (Cambridge, 1931), pp. 155-156.

<sup>42</sup> Henry IV to Elizabeth, March 15, 1590, Xivrey, editor, Lettres missives, III, 164-166.

Once more the road to Paris was open, but Henry did not travel it for more than a month. During April he invested a petty fortress in Champagne. The King, it appears, was not nearly so able a strategist as a tactician and cavalry captain. But he was willing to learn. Belatedly, Henry besieged the capital on May 1.

Unlike the western cities, Paris, the center of Holy League activities, determined to resist a protestant king until the end. The city held magnificently, even after food was gone. After three months, Alexander Farnese, the Duke of Parma, arrived to lift the siege.

But for the timely appearance of the Spaniard, Paris probably would have fallen, for the proud city already was reduced to cannibalism. Had Paris surrendered, Henry could have removed the League's leaders and made himself King of France in fact as well as name. His failure meant that his conversion to Catholicism was imminent, for Catholic France would not receive her protestant King.<sup>43</sup> Henry probably recognized this attitude, but he did not feel at this time that the League, which was inextricably linked to Spain, would accept his conversion. Such a move, moreover, might cost him much of his Huguenot support. His only recourse, therefore, appeared to be a continuation of war. Throughout

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<sup>43</sup> Hurst, Henry of Navarre, pp. 97-100.

most of 1591 a stalemate existed between the faction-ridden League and Henry, who continued to depend on foreign aid. Elizabeth sent Norris's expedition, but it seldom met the enemy and could boast of no more than the capture of a few unimportant towns.<sup>44</sup>

Following the Norris expedition, Essex arrived in France in the autumn of 1591 with 3,000 troops, which Henry left to be entertained by subordinates, while he rode east to meet a force of 5,500 cavalry and 11,000 infantry sent by Casimir.<sup>45</sup> The Essex army was used in Henry's siege of Rouen, which Elizabeth insisted upon as a means of nullifying a Spanish threat to the Northwest, but difficulties soon arose over the support of the English army. Elizabeth had paid the initial cost of the Essex expedition; Henry assumed its support thereafter. Since the King was notorious among the ranks for his inability to pay, one English soldier, Sir Thomas Coningsby, expressed the sentiments of his comrades when he confessed to his diary: "This day beginneth the pay of the king; but much more contented would we be in the pay of our blessed queen!"<sup>46</sup>

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Cheyney, A History of England, I, 245.

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L'Estoile, Journal, p. 123.

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Sir Thomas Coningsby, Journal of the Siege of Rouen in 1591, John Gough Nichols, editor (Camden Society, 1847), pp. 30-31.

Henry bore out Coningsby's misgivings, paying very little money to the English troops. Many of the English nobles were forced to support their own contingents. A typical case was that of Robert Cary who supported five houses of troops and "one little ambling nag" at a cost of thirty pounds a week.<sup>47</sup>

Despite Henry's failure to support them, the English troops, like their predecessors of two years before, distinguished themselves, showing great courage in the face of extreme hardships. Decimated by disease and battle, most of them never saw England again; yet, when it was rumored that the Queen was about to recall the expedition because of Essex's behavior, the army was downcast.<sup>48</sup> Even after their pay had become in arrears and most of their comrades had fallen, the English at Rouen displayed considerable bravado. On December 14, 1591, they boasted to League sentinels that Villars, the League commander, had better attack immediately if he expected to succeed, because the English, who expected the arrival of 2,000 English veterans from the Low Countries, would be too strong by the next day. (As previously noted, only 638 actually came.)<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Robert Cary, Earl of Monmouth, Memoirs (Edinburgh, 1808), p. 21.

<sup>48</sup>Coningsby, The Siege of Rouen, p. 24.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

Villars did attack the besieging army while Henry was away trying to intercept the Duke of Parma, the master strategist of the age, who was on his way to relieve Rouen. The Rouen commander defeated the weakened Huguenot-English coalition, and the siege was almost broken. Belatedly, Elizabeth sent reinforcements to the broken army, but to no avail, for Parma outmaneuvered Henry and lifted the siege on April 10, 1592.

Following Henry's failure to take Rouen, only a few English remained in France. One of these was Roger Williams, whose regiment helped the King to retain Dieppe. So valuable did Henry consider William's service that he told the Queen she could consider the victory hers, though the profit was his.<sup>50</sup> Elizabeth sent another expedition in 1592, but it was of little aid to Henry, who realized that the time had come for other tactics.

#### Breaking the Stalemate

As early as 1590, when he failed to win Paris, Henry had perceived that arms alone would not put the crown on his head. Since Paris had refused to turn protestant, Henry, who was no lover of dogmatism, prepared to go to Mass, at least for the sake of appearance. By 1593, his followers consisted of as many rebel Catholics (who opposed the League's

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<sup>50</sup> Henry IV to Elizabeth, June 13, 1591, Lettres missives, III, 399, 400.



alliance with Spain), as protestants; therefore, there was no longer a question of offending his supporters.<sup>51</sup> Early in the year Henry opened secret negotiations with Pope Clement VIII. In keeping with the duplicity which had long characterized his dealings with Elizabeth, Henry simultaneously assured the English Sovereign that his religious convictions were immutable.<sup>52</sup>

While the Pope was reluctant to accept the opportunistic Henry, the French Church was not, and after a period of "instruction," received the King into the Church on July 25, 1593. In this simple manner the way to Paris was opened after eight years of costly fighting had failed.

France received the news of Henry's conversion joyfully, for it meant peace to the exhausted nation. The small number of Henry's followers which had remained more Huguenot than Politique sharply protested Henry's so-called betrayal, and they refused to help their old leader in the last stages of war with Spain. It took the Edict of Nantes (April 15, 1598) to conciliate this faction that had once been so loyal to him.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Armstrong, The French Wars of Religion, pp. 115-116.

<sup>52</sup> Hurst, Henry of Navarre, p. 113.

<sup>53</sup> J. H. M. Salmon, "Henri of Navarre; the Conclusion of the French Wars of Religion," History Today, VI (June, 1956), 387-394.

Elizabeth was shocked by the King's conversion. Henry had deceived her concerning his intentions so that she would leave her troops in France until after he had made this big step. Henry's tactics were so successful that, in the same month that he announced his conversion, 1500 English under Roger Williams took part in the King's last siege of Paris, and Elizabeth had promised reinforcements. On hearing of Henry's alleged apostasy she immediately ordered the recall of her troops from Paris and cancelled the planned additional aid.

It now appeared that English aid to Henry IV was at an end, but this was not the case. The Queen had never been interested in France's internal quarrels except as a means of undermining the Guise-Spanish threat to England (and possibly regaining Calais). Since Philip continued his struggle for hegemony in France, Elizabeth did not carry out her order to withdraw her troops, though she did recall Williams and continually threatened to bring back her army.<sup>54</sup>

Although Henry had gained the throne by other than military means, English forces were valuable in sustaining him until he was able to take advantage of a rising French national spirit to gain Catholic support. Elizabeth's troops had been faithful despite Henry's duplicity, and, while other

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Ibid., pp. 290-292.

foreign troops were despised by the French, the English generally won the admiration of their former enemies. Henry's great minister, the Duke of Sully, later expressed this attitude in his Memoirs:

If we except a small number of French Protestants, whose fidelity was unquestionable, and most of the English troops, who seemed to act sincerely with us, all the rest of the King's army served him without affection, often unwillingly, and wished perhaps that he might suffer some considerable loss. 55

It was quite a compliment for the inexperienced English recruits, whose courage and valor had compensated for their lack of military skill and had proved them superior to Henry's professional Germans and Swiss. They took no part in Navarre's great battles, nor was their siegework at Rouen and Paris fruitful, but without their presence and that of Elizabeth's other aid it is likely that Henry never would have come to the throne of France.

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Quoted in Grant, The French Monarch, I, 156.

## CHAPTER IV

### EPILOGUE

#### The End of the Franco-Spanish War: 1598

By his public abjuration of protestantism on July 25, 1593, Henry made himself acceptable to the great majority of French Catholics, but the Holy League, with Spanish aid and encouragement, continued its struggle to bar from the throne the one person who could unite France.

Following a policy of bribery and conciliation, Henry succeeded in winning over many members of the League after his conversion. By spring, 1594, Paris, the center of League strength in France, had recognized Henry of Bourbon as king. The League, however, remained strong in the North, maintaining its hold on Laon, Amiens, Soissons, Noyon, Reims, Rocroi, Rethel, and other cities. Brittany, too, belonged to the League, as did Marseille, Toulouse, and much of Languedoc in the South.<sup>1</sup>

On January 17, 1595, Henry IV formally declared war on Spain. While this action did not alter the relations of the two countries (they had been at war since 1589), it did emphasize the anti-national character of the Spanish-subsidized Holy League. Henry increased his war effort, but lacked the

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<sup>1</sup>Grant, The French Monarchy, I, 167.

resources to crush the League's strongholds, and, as so often in the past, he looked to England for help.

Elizabeth had left troops at Paris after Henry's conversion for fear that Spain might yet defeat him and turn upon England. Early in 1594, when the Spanish threatened Brittany, she reinforced this contingent, but by the end of 1595, she had withdrawn it. Henry now proposed that England and the United Provinces join France in a crusade against the Hapsburg menace to Europe. Elizabeth, who viewed with apprehension the tightening Spanish hold on northern and western France, agreed to Henry's proposal as did the Dutch Netherlands, and in May, 1596, the three nations concluded a triple alliance by which all promised not to make a separate peace with Philip.

By spring, 1597, Henry began the siege of Amiens, In contrast to his veteran Huguenot armies which had won at Chartres, Arques, and Ivry, the besieging force included 4,000 English, 2,000 Dutch, several thousand French Catholics, and not one Huguenot.<sup>2</sup> In spite of a lack of Huguenot support, his polyglot army fought well and forced the Spanish garrison to capitulate on September 25. Still, though the fall of Amiens was a serious defeat for Spain, her arms were victorious elsewhere, thus precluding an early end to the war.

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<sup>2</sup>  
Hurst, Henry of Navarre, p. 138.

After thirty-five years of civil war, France was tired of fighting, and her resources were exhausted. Spain's condition was no better; hence, it is not surprising that Philip and Henry began peace negotiations in February, 1598, at Vernins. When Elizabeth learned that they were near an accord, she was furious, for she feared that a Franco-Spanish peace would mean another Spanish attack on England. The English Sovereign hurriedly dispatched Robert Cecil, Burghley's son, to France to dissuade Henry. England and the Netherlands, who shared Elizabeth's fear of Spanish aggression, even offered Henry 10,000 infantry and 1,000 horse if he would recall his plenipotentiaries and continue the war. Henry blandly replied that his nation was too exhausted to continue the fight with or without aid. Since France had accepted him as her king and Spain had offered to restore all French cities garrisoned by Spanish troops, there was no longer any cause for hostility between the two nations.<sup>3</sup> In vain Cecil stormed about Henry's treaty obligations, and on May 2, 1598, Spain and France signed the Treaty of Vervins. Upon receiving this news Elizabeth denounced the French King as "the Antichrist of ingratitude."<sup>4</sup> Fortunately for England, Spain, whose King died only four months after concluding the Treaty of Vervins, was no longer the power she

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<sup>3</sup> Freer, History of the Reign of Henry IV, I, 333.

<sup>4</sup> Neale, Queen Elizabeth I, p. 361.

had been in 1588. Although she landed an army in Ireland in 1601, it was beaten within two months.

#### The Value of English Aid to the Huguenots

The Huguenots consistently benefitted from their alliance with England. Although they continually begged Elizabeth for more substantial help, it is difficult to see, had they obtained it, how more could have been accomplished. Since the total Huguenot population in France probably never exceeded one million, all that the protestants wanted before 1589, when they became identified with the Crown, was a measure of toleration, and this they achieved. While losing most of the early wars, the Huguenots consistently won extensive concessions at the peace table. The Peace of Amboise, 1563, gave them extensive religious liberties, which the Peace of Longjumeau reaffirmed in 1568. The Peace of St. Germain, 1570, expanded these liberties, and protestant liberty of conscience and civil rights were guaranteed by the Treaty of La Rochelle in 1573. The Peace of Monsieur, 1576, extended to the protestants the most liberal concessions of the wars. Although the Peace of Bergerac modified the 1576 provision, it nonetheless protected Huguenot rights won in the previous treaties.

English diplomatic as well as material assistance was largely responsible for the fact that the French protestants usually won the peace after losing the war. English supplies

to Coligny in 1568-1569 forced the exhausted and weak Charles IX to grant favorable terms. In 1573 the English Queen's insistence on a liberal peace for the Huguenots as a prerequisite to her consideration of a marriage to Alencon persuaded the crown to make concessions. Three years later her assistance again enabled the Huguenots to continue fighting until the bankrupt King was compelled to agree to their terms in the Peace of Monsieur, which was the basis for the more moderate Peace of Bergerac, 1577.

After Henry of Navarre's ascendancy, the value of Elizabeth's aid lay chiefly in its sustaining power. Without England's help it is doubtful that Navarre could have maintained his cause against the combined forces of Spain and the Holy League until he gained Catholic support by abjuring protestantism in 1593. While taking no part in Henry's more spectacular successes, English soldiers served the King faithfully by improving Huguenot morale while that of the League declined. Without Elizabeth's munitions and other supplies, Navarre could not have taken the offensive against the League, a measure which he deemed necessary for survival.

#### The Value of the Alliance to England

While the benefits of English aid to the Huguenots are easily demonstrated, the value of the Anglo-Huguenot Alliance to England is more difficult to ascertain. Considered separately, Elizabeth's efforts in France often appear as



expensive failures. Her initial treaty with the Huguenots in 1562 resulted in the loss of the majority of her expeditionary force to Le Havre and in uniting France in a war against England. English hopes of prolonging the war in 1577 were frustrated when Henry of Navarre concluded the Peace of Bergerac, leaving Guise free to negotiate with Philip II. The Queen's torturous diplomacy in 1587-1588, which forced Henry III into an alliance with Guise and Spain, led to the launching of the Spanish Armada. The heavy losses suffered by her expeditions from 1589 to 1594 produced a popular reaction in England, and Henry's betrayal at Vervins in 1598 seemed to defeat Elizabeth's purpose for entering the Triple Alliance in 1596: namely, to involve Spain too deeply in France to attempt another invasion of England.

While all of these events were individual defeats for English diplomacy and arms, when put together they do not spell the failure of Elizabeth's policy of aiding the Huguenots and Henry IV. Her aid, though meager at times, did sustain the Huguenots and enable them, a small majority, to threaten repeatedly the Guise faction and Spain. Although she probably would have given more aid had she been able, her Britannic Majesty did not want to strengthen the Huguenots before 1589. to the extent that they could gain a decisive victory. Rather, by her intervention, she sought to create a balance of power between the Huguenots,

Guise, and Spain in order that the latter two would be kept away from England.

It is not difficult to find fault with Elizabeth's Huguenot policy between 1562 and 1593 (especially in 1588); however, the final test of its success is this: did it accomplish its purpose? The answer is found in the fact that during this period no Guise or Spanish force succeeded in touching upon English soil.

## APPENDIX

Massacre of Vassy, March 1, 1562  
Treaty of Hampton Court, September 10, 1562  
Battle of Dreux, December 19, 1562  
Peace of Amboise, March, 1563  
Battle of St. Denis, November 10, 1567  
Peace of Longjumeau, February 23, 1568  
Battle of Moncontour, October, 1569  
Peace of St. Germain, August 8, 1570  
Treaty of Blois, April 19, 1572  
Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1572  
Peace of La Rochelle, July, 1573  
Peace of Monsieur, May 2, 1576  
Peace of Bergerac, September 17, 1577  
Treaty of Nemours, July, 1585  
Mary Queen of Scots's execution, February 8, 1587  
Battle of Coutras, October 20, 1587  
Act of Union, July 2, 1588  
Assassination of Henry III, August 2, 1589  
The Battle of Arques, September 21, 1589  
The Willoughby Expedition, 1589  
The Battle of Ivry, March 14, 1590  
The Norris Expedition, 1591  
The Essex Expedition, 1592  
Henry IV's Conversion, July 25, 1593  
Triple Alliance, May, 1596  
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