

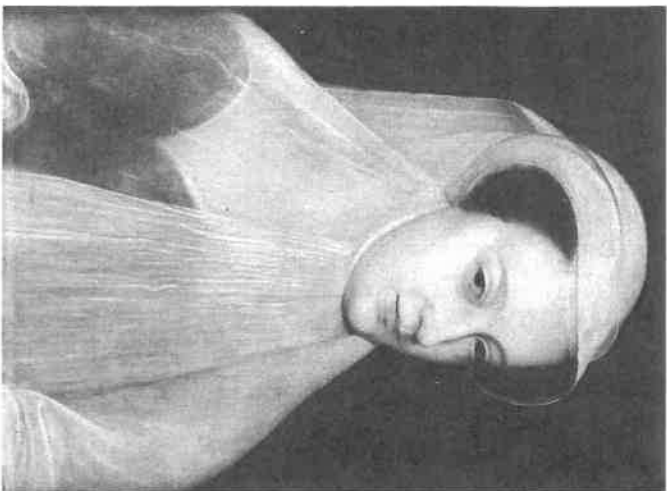


Figure 4. (left) Mary Queen of Scots in "white mourning" by François Clouet (ca. 1559). Mary wears the white clothes and veil associated with mourning in 16th-century France. The occasion of sorrow may have been the death of her father-in-law, Henri II.

Figure 5. (below left) Caricature of Mary Queen of Scots, by an anonymous artist, at the time of her elopement to Bothwell. The mermaid was a familiar symbol for a seductress. The rabbit represents Bothwell.

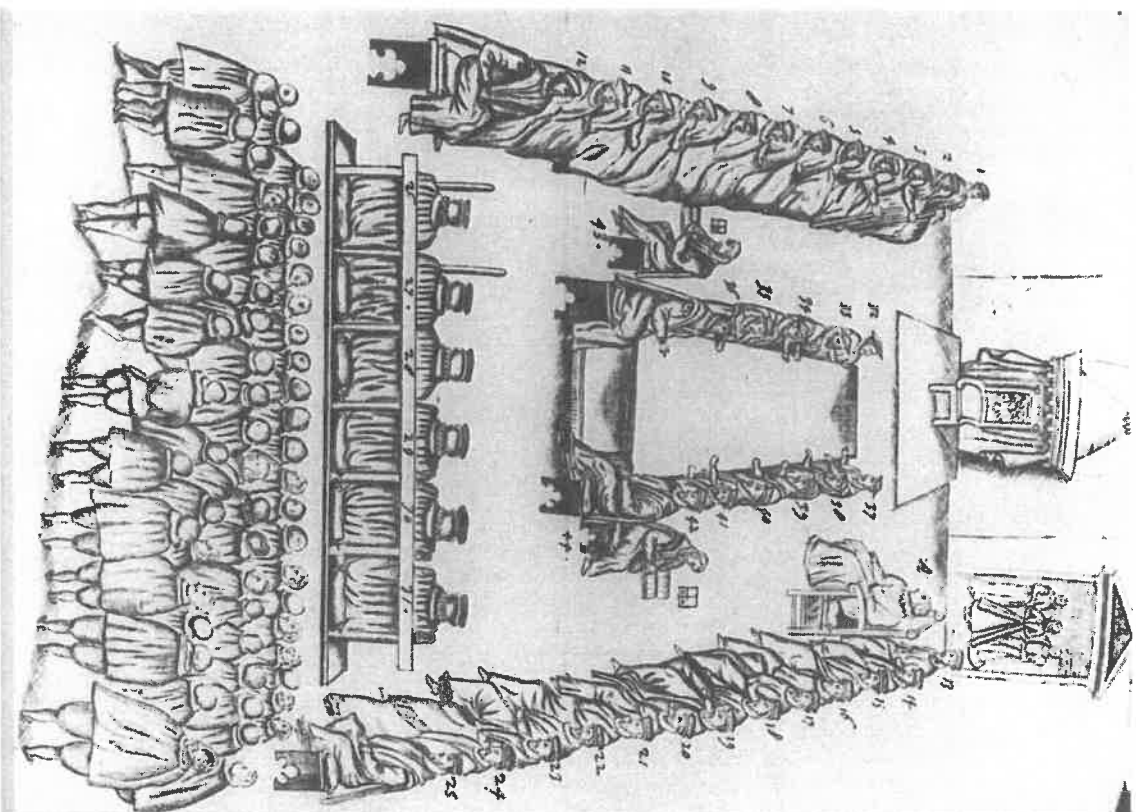
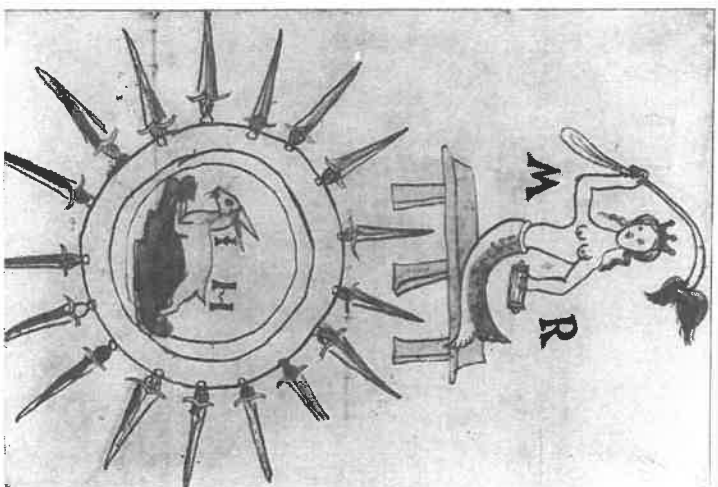


Figure 6. The trial of Mary Queen of Scots, a contemporary engraving. The empty canopied chair at the top represents the absent Queen Elizabeth. At the top right, Mary is being brought in to the trial, but as this scene shows, she is almost excluded from the proceedings.

dom as if I were myself present. I therefore require, charge, and command that you make answer for I have been well informed of your arrogance. Act plainly without reserve, and you will sooner be able to obtain favour of me.

ELIZABETH

[After Elizabeth had signed Mary's proclamation of death—but before she had signed her death warrant—she sent a letter to Mary's son, James VI of Scotland, attempting to explain her actions.]

JANUARY 1587

I find myself so troubled lest sinister tales might delude you, my good brother, that I have willingly found out this messenger, whom I know most sincere to you and a true subject to me, to carry unto you my most sincere meaning toward you, and to request this just desire, that you never doubt my entire goodwill in your behalf, and do protest, that, if you knew, even since the arrival of your Commissioners (which if they liest, they may tell you), the extreme danger my life was in, by an Ambassador's honest silence, if not invention, and such good complices as have themselves, by God's permission, unfolded the whole conspiracy, and have avouched it before his face, though it be the peril of their own lives, yet voluntarily, one of them never being suspected brake it with a Councillor to make me acquainted therewith. You may see whither I keep the serpent that poisons me, when they confess to have reward. By saving of her life they would have had mine. Do I not make myself, trow ye, a goodly prey for every wretch to devour? Transfigure yourself into my state, and suppose what you ought to do, and thereafter weigh my life, and reject the care of murder, and shun all baits that may unite our amities, and let all men know, that Princes know best their own laws, and misjudge not that you know not. For my part, I will not live to wrong the meanest. And so I conclude you with your own words, you will prosecute or mislike as much those that seek my ruin as if they sought your heart blood, and would I had none in mine if I would not do the like: as God knoweth, to Whom I make my humble prayers to inspire you with best desires.

Your most affectionate sister and cousin,
ELIZABETH R.

I am sending you a gentleman forthwith, the other being fallen sick, who I trust shall yield you good reason of my actions.

The Bond of Association

1584

In the fall of 1584, two years before Mary Stuart came to trial for treason, Elizabeth's Privy Council—led by her Secretary of State, Francis Walsingham—drafted the so-called Bond of Association. The document was essentially a written oath that was signed by thousands of (male) English subjects; it quickly passed into law as the Act of Association. Its signatories bound themselves to "love, fear, and obey" their queen; such love, fear, and obedience in turn created the obligation to avenge her against the perpetrator of any "wicked attempt against her most royal person," regardless of whether that perpetrator was of royal blood.

The Bond was composed—and signed—with Elizabeth's most celebrated enemy, Mary Queen of Scots, in mind, and, without naming Mary outright, it specified that anyone who took Elizabeth's life, or even "procured" its taking, could never later succeed to the English throne. As Elizabeth's subjects committed themselves "never to allow, accept or favour any such pretended successor," they gave themselves a role in determining the direction of their own monarchy; they also took an active part in the course of justice.

Besides paving the way to Mary Stuart's trial and punishment, the Bond documents the birth of a collective identity, one formed around a common love object—Elizabeth Tudor—and against a common enemy, Mary Queen of Scots.

Forasmuch as Almighty God hath ordained Kings, Queens, and Princes to have dominion and rule over all their subjects, and to preserve them in the possession and observation of the true Christian religion, according to His holy word and commandment; and in like sort, that all subjects should love, fear, and obey their sovereign princes, being kings or queens, to the utmost of their power, at all times to withstand, pursue, and suppress all manner of persons, that shall by any means intend and attempt any thing dangerous or hurtful to the honour, state, or persons of their sovereigns. Therefore, we whose names are or shall be subscribed to this writing, being natural-born subjects of this realm of England; and having so gracious a lady, our sovereign Elizabeth by the ordinance of God, our

most rightful Queen, reigning over us these many years with great felicity, to our inestimable comfort, and finding lately by divers depositions, confessions, and sundry advertisements out of foreign parts, from credible persons well known to her majesty's council, and to divers others, that for the furtherance and advancement of some pretended title to the crown, it hath been manifested, that the life of our gracious sovereign Queen Elizabeth hath been most dangerously designed against, to the peril of her person, if Almighty God, her perpetual defender, of His mercy had not revealed and withstood the same; by whose life, we, and all other her majesty's true and loyal subjects, do enjoy all inestimable benefit of peace in this land: do for these reasons and causes before alleged, not only acknowledge ourselves most justly bound with our lives and goods for her defence, and in her safety to prosecute, suppress and withstand all such intenders, and all other her enemies, of what nation, condition or degree soever they shall be, or by what counsel or title they shall pretend to be her enemies, or to attempt any harm upon her person; but do further think it our bounden duties, for the great benefit of peace, wealth, and godly government, we have more plentifully received these many years under her majesty's government, than any of our forefathers have done in any longer time of any of her progenitors, kings of this realm; to declare, and by this writing make manifest our bounden duties to our sovereign lady for her safety. And to that end, we and every of us, first calling to witness the name of Almighty God, do voluntarily and most willingly bind ourselves, every one of us to the other, jointly and severally in the band of one firm and loyal society; and do hereby vow and promise by the majesty of Almighty God, that with our whole powers, bodies, lives and goods, and with our children and servants, we and every of us will faithfully serve, and humbly obey our said sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, against all states, dignities and earthly powers whatsoever, and will as well with our joint and particular forces during our lives withstand, pursue and offend, as well by force of arms, as by all other means of revenge, all manner of persons, of whatsoever state they shall be, and their abettors, that shall attempt any act, or counsel or consent to any thing that shall tend to the harm of her majesty's royal person; and will never desist from all manner of forcible pursuit against such persons, to the utter extermination of them, their counsellors, aiders and abettors. And if any such wicked attempt against her most royal person shall be taken in hand, or procured, whereby any that have, may or shall pretend title to come to this crown by the untimely death of her majesty so wickedly procured (which God of His mercy forbid) that the same may be avenged, we do not only bind ourselves both jointly and severally never to allow, accept or favour any such pretended successor, by whom or for whom any such detestable act shall be

attempted or committed, as unworthy of all government in any Christian realm or civil state. But do also further vow and protest, as we are most bound, and that in the presence of the eternal and everlasting God, to prosecute such person or persons to death, with our joint and particular forces, and to act the utmost revenge upon them, that by any means we or any of us can devise and do, or cause to be devised and done for their utter overthrow and extirpation. And to the better corroboration of this our Loyal Band and Association, we do also testify by this writing, that we do confirm the contents hereof by our oaths corporally taken upon the holy evangelists, with this express condition. That no one of us shall for any respect of person or causes, or for fear or reward, separate ourselves from this association, or fall in the prosecution thereof during our lives, upon pain of being by the rest of us prosecuted and suppress as perjured persons, and as public enemies to God, our queen, and to our native country; to which punishment and pains we do voluntarily submit ourselves, and to which punishment and pains we do voluntarily submit ourselves, and every of us, without benefit of any colour and pretence. In witness of all which premises to be inviolably kept, we do to this writing put our hands and seals; and shall be most ready to accept and admit any others hereafter to this Society and Association.

6

Record of the State Trial of Mary Queen of Scots

1586

In May of 1585, England entered a series of military confrontations with Spain; anti-Catholic fever immediately set in at home. As the fever mounted, fear grew that English Catholics might rise up against the Tudor government, presumably in the name of the captive Catholic queen (and claimant to the English crown), Mary Stuart. As if on cue, a plot to kill Elizabeth Tudor and put Mary on the throne was indeed hatched through the joint efforts of an English priest, John Ballard, and a young English Catholic, Anthony Babington, among others. Walsingham nudged the conspiracy along in hopes of incriminating the participants and eventually Mary Stuart herself. Mary did her part by beginning a secret correspondence with

Babington, which Walsingham closely monitored. On August 2, 1586, Babington was arrested and soon he had confessed to having communicated his plans to the Queen of Scots. Mary's own secretaries, Gilbert Curle and Claude Nau, testified that she was indeed the author of several conspiratorial letters to Babington, and she was brought to trial for treason against Elizabeth and the English state.

The proceedings against the Queen of Scots began on October 15, 1586, and ended the following day. At Elizabeth's request, they took place at Fotheringay Castle, in the county of Northamptonshire. The trial scene was stark and spare. At the upper end of Fotheringay's great room stood an empty chair draped with the cloth of state to represent the absent Elizabeth; Mary's place was opposite, with onlookers grouped behind her. The examining commission sat divided along the side walls, and included thirty-six peers, judges, and members of Elizabeth's Privy Council, all appointed by the Tudor queen, and only two of them sharing Mary's Catholic religion.

Like all accused traitors, Mary was denied counsel. Forced to defend herself, she rose to the occasion despite her lack of familiarity with both English law and the English language, and despite being allowed to make only brief notes concerning the charges against her. The American reader of today should realize that at Mary's trial there was no prosecuting lawyer, judge, or jury in any modern sense: The members of the English commission before whom Mary appeared acted as both prosecutors and judges.

The document that has become the definitive record of the trial comes from the notes of those present, including two official "writers." These notes were amalgamated in the early nineteenth century from the Hardwicke State Papers and the Burghley papers, among other sources, by the journalist and political activist William Cobbett, as part of his authoritative record of England's state trials. Some of Mary's most powerful words were actually spoken to her accusers before her trial; the trial document includes them as well.

The most part of these Commissioners came the 11th of October to Fotheringay Castle, in the county of Northampton, seated upon the bank of the river Nen, where the Queen of Scots was then kept. The next day the Commissioners sent to her Sir Walter Mildmay, Paulet,³ and Edward Barker, a public notary, who delivered into her hands Queen Elizabeth's letter, which, when she had read, she, with a countenance composed to royal dignity, and with a mind untroubled, said, "It grieveth me that the Queen, my most dear sister, is misinformed of me; and that I, having been

³Sir Amyas Paulet. Protestant owner of Fotheringay and Mary's keeper in her final ordeal.

so many years straitly kept in prison, and grown lame of my limbs, have I been neglected, after I have offered so many reasonable conditions for my liberty. Though I have thoroughly forewarned her of many dangers, yet hath no credit been given unto me, but I have been always contemned, though most nearly allied unto her in blood. When the Association³ was entered in, and the Act of Parliament thereupon made, I foresaw that whatsoever danger should happen either from foreign princes abroad, or from ill-disposed people at home, or for religion's sake, I must bear the whole blame, having many mortal enemies in the Court. Certainly I might take it hardly, and not without cause, that a Confederacy hath been made with my son without my knowledge;⁴ but such matters I omit. As for this Letter, it seemeth strange to me, that the Queen should command me as a subject to appear personally in judgment. I am an absolute Queen, and will do nothing which may prejudice either mine own royal majesty, or other princes of my place and rank, or my son. My mind is not yet dejected, neither will I sink under my calamity. I refer myself to those things, which I have protested before Bromley, now Chancellor, and the Lord La-Ware. The laws and statutes of England are to me most unknown; I am destitute of counsellors, and who shall be my peers I am utterly ignorant. My Papers and Notes are taken from me, and no man dareth step forth to be my advocate. I am clear from all crime against the Queen, I have excited no man against her, and I am not to be charged but by mine own word or writing, which cannot be produced against me. Yet can I not deny but I have commended myself and my Cause to foreign princes."

The next day there returned unto her in the name of the Commissioners, Paulet and Barker, who showed unto her this Answer drawn in Writing, and asked her whether she would persist in the same. When she had heard it distinctly read she commended it as rightly and truly conceived, and said, she would persist therein. But this, said she, I have forgotten, which I would have to be added thereunto. Whereas the Queen hath written, that I am subject to the laws of England, and to be judged by them, because I have lived under the protection of them; I answer that I came into England to crave aid, and ever since have been detained in Prison, and could not enjoy the protection or benefit of the laws of England; nay, I could never yet understand from any man what manner of laws those were.

In the afternoon came unto her certain selected persons from amongst

²Lain.

³The Act of Association.

⁴Perhaps a reference to the Queen's Safety Act, which assured that the English crown could pass to Mary's son, James, regardless of her fate or actions.

the Commissioners, with men learned in the civil and canon law. But the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Treasurer declared their authority by patent, and shewed that neither her imprisonment nor her prerogative of royal majesty could exempt her from answering in this kingdom: with fair words advising her to hear what matters were to be objected against her: otherwise they threatened, that by authority of law, they both could and would proceed against her, though she were absent. She answered, That she was no subject, and rather would she die a thousand deaths than acknowledge herself a subject, considering that by such an acknowledgment she should both prejudice the height of regal majesty, and withall confess herself to be bound by all the laws of England, even in matter of religion: Nevertheless she was ready to answer to all things in a free and full Parliament, for that she knew not whether this meeting and assembly were appointed against her, being already condemned by forejudgings, to give some shew and colour of a just and legal proceeding. She warned them, therefore, to look to their consciences, and to remember that the theatre of the whole world is much wider than the kingdom of England. She began then to complain of injuries done unto her; and the Lord Treasurer, interrupting her, began to reckon up Queen Elizabeth's kindnesses towards her, namely, that she had punished some which impugned the claim she laid to England, and had been a means to keep her from being condemned by the estates of the realm for the marriage sought with the Duke of Norfolk, for the rebellion in the north, and for other matters. All which when she seemed little to esteem they returned back.⁵

Within few hours after they delivered unto her, by the hands of Paulet and the Solicitor, the chief points of their Commission, and the names of the Commissioners, that she might see that they were to proceed according to equity and right, and not by any cunning point of law and extraordinary course. She took no Exceptions against the Commissioners, but most sharply excepted against the late law, upon which the authority of their Commission wholly depended, as that it was unjust, devised of purpose against her, that it was without example, and such whereunto she would never subject herself. She asked, by what law they would proceed. If by the civil or canon law, then said she, interpreters are to be fetched from Pavia, or Poitiers, and other foreign Universities; for in England none are to be found that are meet. She added also, that it was manifest,

⁵In the early 1570s there had been prolonged negotiations for Mary to marry her English supporter, the Duke of Norfolk. The Northern Rebellion had been closely linked to this possibility, and Elizabeth had not punished Mary for her role in it.

by plain words in the Queen's Letters. That she was already forejudged to be guilty of the crime, though unheard; And therefore there was no reason why she should appear before them: And she required to be satisfied touching some scruples in the said Letters, which she had for herself noted confusedly and by snatches, severally by themselves, but would not deliver them written out; for it stood not, said she, with her royal dignity, to play the scrivener.

Touching this matter, the said selected Commissioners went unto her again, to whom she signified that she did not well understand what those words meant, "seeing she is under the Queen's protection." The Lord Chancellor answered, That this was plain to every one of understanding, yet was it not for subjects to interpret what the queen's meaning was, neither were they made Commissioners for that end. Then she required to have her protestation shewed and allowed, which she had formerly made. It was answered, that it never had been, nor now was to be allowed, for that it was prejudicial to the Crown of England. She asked, By what authority they would proceed? It was answered, by authority of their Commission, and by the common law of England.

But, said she, Ye make laws at your pleasure, whereunto I have no reason to submit myself, considering that the English in times past refused to submit themselves to the Law Salique of France; and if they would proceed by the common law of England, they should produce precedents and cases, forasmuch as that law consisteth much of cases and custom; and if by the canon law, none else ought to interpret the same, but the makers thereof. It was answered, that they would proceed neither by the Civil nor Canon law, but by the Common Law of England; that it might nevertheless be proved by the civil and canon law, that she ought to appear before them, if she would not refuse to hear it. And indeed she refused not to hear it, but, as she said, by way of *Interlocution*, not *Judicially*.

From hence she fell into other speeches, That she had intended nothing to the destruction of the queen; that she had been incensed with injuries and indignities; that she should be a stone of offence to others, if she were so unworthily handled; . . . that she would have defended her innocency by letter, but it was not allowed her; and finally, that all the offices of kindness which she had tendered these twenty years, were rejected. Thus while she wandered far in these digressions, they called her back again, and prayed her to speak plainly, whether she would answer before the Commissioners. She replied, That the authority of their delegation was founded upon a late law made to entrap her; that she could not away with the queen's laws, which she had good reason to suspect; that she was still full of good courage, and would not offend

against her progenitors, the kings of Scots, by acknowledging herself a subject to the crown of England; for this were nothing else but to profess them openly to have been rebels and traitors. Yet she refused not to answer, so as she might not be reduced to the rank of a subject. But she had rather perish utterly than to answer as a criminal person.

Whereunto, Hatton, Vice-Chamberlain to Queen Elizabeth, answered. You are accused (but not condemned) to have conspired the Destruction of our lady and queen anointed. You say you are a queen; be it so. But in such a crime the royal dignity is not exempted from answering, neither by the Civil nor Canon law, nor by the Law of Nations, nor of nature. For if such kind of offences might be committed without punishment, all justice would stagger, yea, fall to the ground. If you be innocent, you wrong your reputation in avoiding a Trial. You protest yourself to be innocent, but Queen Elizabeth thinketh otherwise, and that neither without grief and sorrow for the same. To examine, therefore, your innocence, she have appointed for Commissioners most honourable, prudent and upright men, who are ready to hear you according to equity with favour, and will rejoice with all their hearts, if you shall clear yourself of this crime. Believe me, the Queen herself will be much affected with joy, who affirmed unto me at my coming from her, that never any thing befeel her more grievous, than that you were charged with such a crime. Wherefore lay aside the bootless privilege of royal dignity, which now can be of no use unto you, appear in judgment, and shew your innocence, lest by avoiding Trial, you draw upon yourself suspicion, and lay upon your reputation an eternal blot and aspersion.

I refuse not (she said) to answer in a full parliament before the estates of the realm lawfully assembled, so as I may be declared the next to the succession; yea, before the Queen and Council, so as my protestation may be admitted, and I may be acknowledged the next of kin to the queen. To the judgment of mine adversaries, amongst whom I know all defence of mine innocence will be barred, flatly, I will not submit myself.

The Lord Chancellor asked her, whether she would answer, if her late law mentioned in the Commission.

Hereupon the Lord Treasurer answered. We, notwithstanding, will proceed to-morrow in the Cause, though you be absent and continue contumax.⁶

⁶In contempt of court.

Search (said she) your consciences, look to your honour, God reward you and yours for your judgment against me.

On the morrow, which was the 14th of the month, she sent for certain of the Commissioners, and prayed them, that her Protestation might be admitted and allowed. The Lord Treasurer asked her, Whether she would appear to her Trial, if her Protestation were only received and put in writing, without allowance. She yielded at length, yet with much ado, and with an ill-will, lest she should seem (as she said) to derogate from her predecessors or successors; but was very desirous to purge herself of the crime objected against her, being persuaded by Hatton's reasons, which she had weighed with advisement.

Soon after, the Commissioners, which were present, assembled themselves, in the presence chamber. At the upper end of the Chamber was placed a chair of estate for the Queen of England, under a cloth of estate. Over-against it, below and more remote, near the transom or beam that ran cross the room, stood a chair for the Queen of Scots. At the walls on both sides, were placed benches, upon which sate, on the one side, the Lord Chancellor of England, Lord Treasurer of England, the Earls of Oxford, Kent, Derby, Worcester, Rutland, Cumberland, Warwick, Pembroke, Lincoln, and the Lord Viscount Montacute; on the other side the Barons of Abergavenny, Zouch, Morley, Stafford, Grey, Lumley, Sturton, Sandes, Wentworth, Mordant, St. John of Bleisho, Compton, and Cheney. Next unto these sate the knights of the Privy Council, Sir James a'lsid Croftes, Sir Christopher Hatton, Sir Frances Walsingham, Sir Ralph Sadler, Sir Walter Mildmay, and Sir Amias Powlet. Forward before the earls, sate the two Chief Justices, and the Chief Baron of the Exchequer; and on the other side two barons, the other Justices, Dale and Ford, doctors of the Civil Law; and at a little table in the midst sate Popham, the queen's Attorney; Egerton, the Solicitor; Gaudy, the queen's Sergeant at law, the clerk of the crown, and two Writers.

When she was come, and had settled herself in her seat, after silence proclaimed, Bromley, Lord Chancellor, turning to her, spake briefly to this effect. The most high and mighty Queen Elizabeth, being not without great grief of mind advertised, that you have conspired the Destruction of her and of England, and the Subversion of Religion, hath, out of her office and duty, lest she might seem to have neglected God, herself and her people, and out of no malice at all, appointed these Commissioners to hear the matters which shall be objected unto you, and how you can clear yourself of them, and make known your innocence.

She, rising up, said, That she came into England to crave aid, which

had been promised her, and yet was she detained ever since in prison. She protested, that she was no subject of the queen's, but had been and was a free and absolute queen, and not to be constrained to appear before Commissioners, or any other Judge whatsoever, for any cause whatsoever, save before God alone the highest Judge, lest she should prejudice her own royal majesty, the King of Scots her son, her successors, or other absolute princes. But, that she now appeared personally, to the end to refute the crimes objected against her. And hereof she prayed her own attendants to bear witness.

The Lord Chancellor, not acknowledging that any Aid had been promised her, answered, That this Protestation was in vain, for that whosoever (of what place and degree soever he were) should offend against the laws of England, in England, was subject unto the same laws, and by the late act might be examined and tried; the said Protestation therefore made in prejudice of the laws and Queen of England, was not to be admitted. The Commissioners nevertheless commanded, that as well as her Protestation, the Lord Chancellor's Answer should be recorded.

Then after the Commission was openly read, which was grounded upon the Act already often mentioned, she stoutly opposed her Protestation against the said Act, as enacted directly and purposely against her, and herein she appealed to their consciences.

When Answer was made by the Lord Treasurer, that every person in this kingdom was bound even by the latest laws, and that she ought not to speak against the laws; and that the Commissioners would judge, according to that law, what Protestations or Appellations soever she interposed, she said at length that she was ready to hear and answer touching any fact whatsoever against the Queen of England.

Gawdy now opened the law from point to point, affirming, that she had offended against the same; and hereupon he made an historical discourse of Babington's conspiracy, and concluded, That she knew of it, approved it, assented unto it, promised her assistance, and shewed the way and means.

She answered with stout courage, that she knew not Babington, that she never received any Letters from him, nor wrote any to him; that she never plotted the destruction of the queen, and that to prove the same, her Subscription under her own hand was to be produced; that for her part she never so much as heard speak thereof; that she knew not Ballard, nor ever relieved him; but she understood from some, that the Catholics in England took many things very hardly, and hereof she herself had advertised the Queen by Letters, and besought her to take pity on them; that many also, which were to her utterly unknown, had offered her their help and assistance, yet had she excited no man to commit any

offence; and being shut up in prison, she could neither know nor hinder what they attempted.

Hereupon it was urged out of Babington's Confession that there had been intercourse by Letters betwixt her and Babington. She confessed that there had passed Conference by Letters betwixt her and many men, yet could it not thereby be gathered that she was privy to all their wicked counsels. She required that her own Subscription, under her hand, might be produced; and asked what hurt it were if she re-demanded the Letters which had been kept from her almost a whole year? Then were read the copies of letters between her and Babington, wherein the whole Conspiracy was set down....

As for these Letters (said she), it may be that Babington wrote them, but let it be proved that I received them. If Babington or any others affirm it, I say they lye openly; other men's crimes are not to be cast upon me. A Packet of Letters, which had been kept from me almost a whole year, came to my hands about that time, but by whom it was sent I know not.

To prove that she had received Babington's Letters, there were read out of Babington's Confession the chief heads of certain Letters, which he had voluntarily confessed, that she wrote back unto him; wherein when mention was made of the Earl of Arundel and his brethren and the Earl of Northumberland the tears burst forth and she said, Alas! what hath that noble house of the Howards endured for my sake? and shortly after, having wiped away the tears, she answered That Babington might confess what he list, but it was an open lye, that she had devised such means to escape....

There were read also certain points picked out of Savage's and Ballard's Confessions,⁷ who had confessed that Babington imparted unto them certain Letters which he had received from the Queen of Scots.

She affirmed, That Babington received none from her, yea, that she was angry with some which had secretly suggested counsels unto her for invading of England, and had warned them to beware....

[At this point, several of the letters which had passed between Mary and Babington were read aloud.]

Of this Letter she required a Copy, and affirmed, That it proceeded not from her, but haply from her Alphabet of Ciphers⁸ in France; That

⁷John Savage and John Ballard, two of Babington's co-conspirators. Ballard was an English Catholic priest.

⁸A secret code transferred manually to the page.

she had done her best endeavour for the recovery of her liberty, which Nature itself alloweth, and had solicited her friends to deliver her; yet to some, whom she listed not to name, when they offered her their help to deliver her, she answered not a word. Nevertheless, she much desired to divert the storm of persecution from the Catholics, and for this she had made earnest suit to the Queen: for her part, she would not purchase the kingdom with the death of the meanest man of the common people, much less of the Queen. That there were many which attempted dangerous designs without her knowledge; and by a very late Letter which she had received, Pardon was asked of her by some, if they should enterprize anything without her privy: That it was an easy matter to counterfeite the Ciphers and Characters of others, as a young man did very lately in France, which had vaunted himself to be her son's base brother: That she feared also lest this were done now by Walsingham to bring her to her death, who, as she heard, had practised against her life and her son's. She protested that she had not so much as thought the destruction of the Queen; that she had rather most gladly spend her own life than for her sake the Catholics should be so afflicted in hatred of her, and drawn to cruel death. And withal she shed plenty of tears.

But (said the Lord Treasurer) no man which hath showed himself a good subject was ever put to death for Religion; but some have been for Treason, while they maintained the Pope's Bull and authority against the Queen. Yet I, said she, have heard otherwise, and have read it also in books set forth in print. The Authors, replied he, of such Books do write also that the Queen had forfeited her royal dignity.

Walsingham, who had found himself taxed even now by her words, took opportunity, and rising up, protested that his mind was free from all malice; I call God, said he, to record that as a private person I have done nothing unbecoming an honest man; nor, as I bear the place of a public person, have I done anything unworthy my place. I confess that, being very careful for the safety of the Queen and realm, I have curiously searched out the practices against the same. If Ballard had offered me his help I should not have refused it; yea, I would have recompensed the pains he had taken. If I have practised anything with him, why did he not utter it to save his life?

With this answer she said she was satisfied. She prayed him he would not be angry that she had spoken freely what she had heard reported; and that he would give no more credit to those that slandered her than she did to such who accused him: That Spies were men of doubtful credit, which dissemble one thing and speak another; and that he would in no sort believe that she had consented to the Queen's destruction. And now,

again, she burst forth into tears: I would never, said she, make shipwreck of my soul by conspiring the destruction of my dearest sister.

It was answered by the Lawyers that this should soon be disproved by Testimony. Thus far in the forenoon.

In the afternoon, to disprove this, was produced the Copy of a letter which Charles Paget had written; and Curle, one of her secretaries, had witnessed that she had received; touching a Conference betwixt Mendoza^a and Ballard, about the design for invading of England and setting her at liberty. This, answered she, was nothing to the purpose, and proved not that she had consented to the destruction of the Queen.

The Lawyers proceeded further to prove that she was both privy to the Conspiracy, and conspired also the Destruction of the Queen, by Babington's Confession, and Letters also that had passed betwixt her and him; wherein he called her his most dread and sovereign lady and queen. And, by the way, they mentioned that a Plot was laid for conveying the kingdom of England to the Spaniard. She confessed that a priest came unto her and said, That if she would not intermeddle she and her son both should be excluded from the inheritance; but the priest's name she would not tell. She added that the Spaniard did lay claim to the kingdom of England, and would not give place to any but to her.

Then pressed they her with the Testimonies of her Secretaries, Nau and Curle, out of Babington's Confession, and the Letters sent to and fro betwixt her and Babington, and the whole credit of their Proofs rested upon their testimony; yet were not they produced before her face to face. Curle she acknowledged an honest man; but not a meet Witness to be against her. As for Nau, he had been sometimes a Secretary, said she, to the Cardinal of Lorrain, and Commended unto her by the French King, and might easily be drawn either by reward, or hope, or fear, to bear false witness, as one that had sundry times rashly bound himself by oath, and had Curle so pliable unto him that at his beck he would write what he bade him. It might be that these two might insert into her Letters such things as she had not dictated unto them. It might be also that such Letters came to their hands which notwithstanding she never saw; and so she brake forth into such words as these: The majesty and safety of all princes falleth to the ground if they depend upon the Writings and Testimony of Secretaries. I delivered nothing to them but what nature delivered to me, that I might at length recover my liberty. And I am not to be

^aBernardino de Mendoza, a Spanish diplomat through whom Mary had promised to give her right to the English throne to Philip II of Spain should her Protestant son, James, not convert to the Catholic faith.

convicted but by mine own Word or Writing. If they have written anything which may be hurtful to the Queen, my sister, they have written it altogether without my knowledge; and let them bear the punishment of their inconsiderate boldness. Sure I am, if they were here present, they would clear me of all blame in this Cause. And I, if my Notes were at hand, could answer particularly to these things.

Amongst these speeches the Lord Treasurer objected unto her, that she had purposed to send her son into Spain, and to convey her Title she claimeth in the Kingdom of England to the Spaniard. To whom she answered that she had no kingdom which she could convey, yet was it lawful for her to give those things which were hers, at her pleasure, and not to be accountable for the same to any.

When her Alphabets of Ciphers, sent over to Babington, the Lord Lodovic and Fernihurst were objected unto her out of Curle's testimony, she denied not, but she had written out many; and, amongst others, that for the Lord Lodovic, when she had commended him and another to the dignity of a Cardinal; and that without offence (she trusted), for that it was as lawful for her to have intercourse of Letters and to negotiate her matters with men of her Religion as for the Queen with the professors of another religion.

Then pressed they her hard with the consenting Testimonies of Nau and Curle reiterated: And she reiterated her Answers, or else refuted¹⁰ their Testimonies by a flat denial; protesting again that she neither knew Babington nor Ballard. . . .

The next day she returned her former Protestation, and required to have it recorded, and a Copy thereof delivered to her, lamenting that the most reasonable conditions, which she had many times propounded to the Queen, were always rejected, even when she promised to deliver her son and the Duke of Guise's son for hostages, that the Queen or Kingdome of England should receive no detriment by her, so as she saw herself already quite barred from all hope of her liberty. But now she was most unworthily dealt withal, whose honour and reputation was called in question before foreign lawyers, which by wretched conclusions drew every circumstance into a consequence; whereas princes anointed and consecrate are not subject to the same laws that private men are. Moreover, whereas authority was granted to the Commissioners to examine matters tending to the hurt of the Queen's person; yet was the Cause so handled, and Letters wrested, that the religion which she professed, the

¹⁰Refuted.

immunity and majesty of foreign princes, and the private intercourse betwixt princes were called in question, and she herself made to descend beneath her royal dignity, and to appear as a party guilty before a tribunal seat; and all to no other purpose but that she might be quite excluded out of the Queen's favour and her own right to the succession; whereas she appeared voluntarily to clear herself of the matters objected against her, lest she might seem to have neglected the defence of her own honour and innocency. She called also to remembrance how Queen Elizabeth herself had been drawn in question about Wyatt's Conspiracy, whereas notwithstanding she was most¹¹ innocent; religiously affirming that though she wished the safety of the Catholics might be provided for, yet would she not that it should be effected with the death and blood of any one. For her part, she had rather play Hester than Judith, make intercession¹² to God for the people, than deprive the meanest of the people of life. She expostulated, that her enemies had divulged abroad that she was irreligious; but the time was (said she) when I would have been instructed in the Protestant Religion, but they would not suffer me to be so, as if they cared not what became of my soul. And now, concluding, When ye have done all ye can (said she) against me, and have excluded me from my right, ye may chance fall of your cause and hope. And without making her appeal to God, and to the princes, her kinsmen, and renewing her Protestation, she prayed that there might be another meeting about this matter, and that an advocate might be granted unto her to plead in her Cause, and that, seeing she was a princess, she might be believed in the word of a princess. For it were extreme folly to stand to their judgment whom she saw most plainly to be armed with prejudice against her.

To these things the Lord Treasurer said. Whereas I bear a double person, one of a Commissioner, another of a Counsellor, receive first a few words from me as a Commissioner. Your Protestation is recorded, and a Copy thereof shall be delivered unto you. To us our authority is granted under the Queen's hand, and the great seal of England, from which there is no appeal; neither do we come with prejudice, but to judge according to the exact rule of justice. The Queen's learned Counsel do level at nothing else but that the truth may come to light how far you have offended

¹¹An uprising in 1554 against Mary Tudor by Thomas Wyatt and his followers. The plan was to replace Mary with Elizabeth.

¹²Especially, ancient queen generally known for her mildness, and famous for having thwarted a plot to kill all the Jews. Her story is told in the Old Testament book of Esther. Judith was an Old Testament heroine who saved the Jews from an Assyrian invasion by cutting off the head of the Assyrian general Holofernes.

against the Queen's person. To us full power is given to hear and examine the matter, even in your absence; yet were we desirous you should be present, lest we might seem to have derogated from your honour. We purposed not to object any thing unto you but what you were privy to, or have attempted against the Queen's person. The Letters have been read to no other purpose but to discover your offence against the Queen's person and the matters to it belonging, which are so interlaced with other matters that they cannot be severed. The whole Letters, therefore, and not parcels picked out here and there, have been openly read, for that the circumstances do give assurance what matters you dealt with Babington about.

She interrupting him, said, The circumstances may be proved, but never the fact. Her integrity depended, not upon the credit and memory of her Secretaries, though she knew them to be honest and sincere men. Yet if they have confessed anything out of fear of torments or hope of reward and impunity, it was not to be admitted, for just causes which she would alledge elsewhere. Men's minds (said she) are diversely carried about with affections, and they would never have confessed such matters against her but for their own advantage and hope. Letters may be directed to others than those to whom they are written, and many things have been often inserted which she never dictated. If her papers had not been taken away, and she had her Secretary, she could better confute the things objected against her.

But nothing, said the Lord Treasurer, shall be objected but since the 19th day of June; neither will your Papers avail you, seeing your Secretaries and Babington himself, being never put to the rack have affirmed that you sent those Letters to Babington, which, though you deny, yet whether more credit is to be given to an affirmation than to a negation, let the Commissioners judge. But to return to the matter, this which followeth I tell you as a counsellor. Many things you have propounded time after time concerning your liberty, that they have failed of success, it is long of you, or of the Scots, and not of the Queen. For the Lords of Scotland flatly refused to deliver the King in hostage. And when the last Treaty was holden concerning your liberty, Parry was sent privily by Morgan, a dependant of yours, to murder the Queen.

Ah (said she), you are my adversary. Yea (said he) I am adversary to Queen Elizabeth's adversaries. But hereof enough; let us now proceed to Proofs. Which, when she refused to hear. Yet we (said he) will hear them; and I also (said she) will hear them in another place, and defend myself.

Now were read again her Letters to Charles Paget. . . .

As these Letters were in reading she interposed these Speeches: That Babington and her Secretaries had accused her to excuse themselves;

that she never heard of the six Executioners, and that the rest made nothing to the purpose. . . . As for her Secretaries, seeing they had done contrary to their duty and allegiance sworn unto her, they deserved no credit. They which have once foresworn themselves, though they swear again with never so great oaths and protestations, are not to be credited. Neither did these men think themselves bounden by any oath whatsoever in court of conscience, forasmuch as they had sworn their fidelity and secrecy to her before, and were no subjects of England. That Nau had many times written otherwise than she had dictated unto him, and Curle wrote whatsoever Nau bade him. But for her part she was willing to bear the burden of their fault in all things, but what might lay a blot upon her honour. And haply also they confessed these things to save themselves; supposing that they could not hurt her by confessing, who they thought should be more favourably dealt withal as being a Queen. As for Ballard, she never heard of any such, but of one Hallard [Ballard?], which had offered her his help; which notwithstanding, she had refused, for that she had heard that the same man had also vowed his service to Walsingham.

Afterwards were read certain brief Notes of her Letters to Mendoza, which Curle had confessed he had written in privy Cipher. . . .

Out of these she was pressed as if she had purposed to convey her Right in the kingdom to the Spaniard, and that Allen and Parsons lay now at Rome for that cause. She complaining that her Secretaries had broken their allegiance bound by oath, answered, When being prisoner, I languished in cares without hope of liberty, and was without all hope to effect those things which very many expected at my hands, declining now through age and sickness; it seemed good to some that the Succession of the Crown of England should be established in the Spaniard, or some English Catholic. And a Book was sent unto me to avow the Spaniard's Title; which, when it was not allowed by me, I incurred displeasure among some. But now all my hope in England being desperate, I am fully resolved not to reject foreign aid.

The Solicitor put the Commissioners in mind what would become of them, their honours, estates, and posterities if the kingdom were so conveyed. But the Lord Treasurer showed that the kingdom of England could not be conveyed, but was to descend by right of succession according to the laws; and asked her if she would any more.

She required that she might be heard in a full Parliament, or that she might in person speak with the Queen, who would (she hoped) have regard of a Queen, and with the Council. And now rising up with great confidence of countenance, she had some conference with the Lord Treasurer, Hatton, Walsingham, and the Earl of Warwick, by themselves apart.

ELIZABETH TUDOR

Speeches to Parliament

1586

After Mary Stuart was found guilty of conspiring to kill Elizabeth Tudor and usurp her throne, Elizabeth's Parliament began to pressure the English queen to sentence Mary to death. Elizabeth was deeply torn. Fear for her life countered fear of retaliation by the Catholic countries that supported Mary; love of her Protestant subjects vied with her blood bond with Mary, who was moreover another anointed queen, like Elizabeth herself. Parliament was adamant from the start, and after days of loud and virtually unanimous discussion among its members issued a joint supplication begging Elizabeth to defend them by sentencing Mary to "that due punishment, which by justice, and the laws of this your realm, she hath so often and so many ways for her most wicked and detestable offences deserved."

Elizabeth responded in such a way as to buy more time for herself. Her speech is thus full of paradoxes. Its language is sometimes submissive, as she expresses gratitude for her subjects' love, and sometimes imperious, as she reminds those subjects that the decision before her is "of greatest consequence" and she is not to be rushed. Similarly, Elizabeth identifies herself sometimes with Mary (a princess "of like estate") and sometimes with her people ("I see your danger in me"). Every word of Elizabeth's speech is charged with the almost unbearable tension of the moment. Nor did her speech resolve that tension. It ends only with Elizabeth promising her audience "whatever the best subjects may expect at the hands of the best princes." What that "whatever" might be, she cleverly does not say.

First Speech

So many and so great are the bottomless graces, and immeasurable benefits bestowed upon me by the Almighty, that I must not only most humbly acknowledge them as benefits, but admire them as miracles, being in no sort able to express them. And though there liveth not any that may more

William Cobbett, ed. *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England* (London: R. Bagshaw, 1806-1812).

justly acknowledge himself bound to God than I, whose life He hath miraculously preserved from so many dangers, yet am I not more deeply bound to give Him thanks for any one thing, than for this which I will now tell you, and which I account as a miracle. Namely, that as I came to the crown with the most hearty good-will of all my subjects, so now after 28 years reign, I perceive in them the same, if not greater good-will towards me; which if I once lose, well might I breathe, but never think I lived. And now though my life hath been dangerously shot at, yet I protest there is nothing hath more grieved me, than that one not differing from me in sex, of like rank and degree, of the same stock, and most nearly allied unto me in blood, hath fallen into so great a crime. And so far have I been from bearing her any ill-will, that upon the discovery of certain treasonable practices against me, I wrote unto her secretly, that if she would confess them by a private letter unto myself, they should be wrapped up in silence. Neither did I write thus in mind to entrap her, for I knew then as much as she could confess. And even yet, though the matter be come thus far, if she would truly repent, and no man would undertake her cause against me, and if my life alone depended hereupon, and not the safety and welfare of my whole people, I would (I protest unfeignedly) most willingly pardon her. Nay, if England might by my death attain a more flourishing estate, and a better prince, I would most gladly lay down my life. For, for your sakes it is, and for my people's, that I desire to live. As for me, I see no such great cause why I should either be fond to live, or fear to die. I have had good experience of this world, and I know what it is to be a subject, and what to be a sovereign. Good neighbours I have had, and I have met with bad; and in trust I have found treason. I have bestowed benefits upon ill deservers; and where I have done well, have been ill requited. While I call to mind these things past, behold things present, and expect things to come, I hold them happiest that go hence soonest. Nevertheless against such mischiefs as these, I put on a better courage than is common to my sex, so as whatsoever befall me, death shall not take me unprepared.—And as touching these Treasons, I will not so prejudicate myself, or the laws of my kingdom, as not but to think that she having been the contriver of the same treasons, was bound and liable to the ancient laws, though the late act had never been made, which notwithstanding was no ways made to prejudice her. So far was it from being made to entrap her, that it was rather intended to forewarn and terrify her from attempting any thing against it. But seeing it was now in force of a law, I thought good to proceed against her according to the same. But you lawyers are so curious in scanning the nice points of the law, and following of precedents, and form, rather than expounding the laws themselves, that by exact

observing of your form, she must have been indicted in Staffordshire, and have holden up her hand at the bar, and have been tried by a jury of twelve men. A proper course forsooth of trial against a Princess! To avoid therefore such absurdities, I thought it better to refer the examination of so weighty a cause to a good number of the noblest personages of the land, and the judges of the realm; and all little enough. For we princes are set as it were upon stages, in the sight and view of all the world. The least spot is soon spied in our garments, a blemish quickly noted in our doings. It behoveth us therefore to be careful that our proceedings be just and honourable. But I must tell you one thing, that by this last Act of Parliament you have brought me to a narrow streight, that I must give order for her death, which is a princess most nearly allied unto me in blood, and whose practices against me have stricken me into so great grief, that I have been glad to absent myself from this Parliament, lest I should increase my sorrow by hearing it spoken of, and not out of fear of any danger, as some think. But yet I will now tell you a secret (though it is well known that I have the property to keep counsel). It is not long since these eyes of mine saw and read an oath, wherein some bound themselves to kill me within a month: Hereby I see your danger in me, which I will be very careful to avoid. Your Association for my safety I have not forgotten, which I never so much as thought of, till a great number of hands, with many obligations, were shewed me; which as I do acknowledge as a strong argument of your true hearts, and great zeal to my safety, so shall my bond be stronger tied to a greater care for your good. But forasmuch as this matter now in hand is very rare, and of greatest consequence, I hope you do not look for any present resolution; for my manner is, in matters of less moment than this, to deliberate long upon that which is once to be resolved. In the mean time I beseech Almighty God to illuminate my mind, that I may foresee that which may serve for the good of His Church, the prosperity of the Commonwealth, and your safety. And that delay may not breed danger, we will signify our resolution with all convenience. And whatever the best subjects may expect at the hands of the best princes, that expect from me to be performed to the full.

[After twelve days of deliberation, Elizabeth still had not come to a decision about whether to put Mary Queen of Scots to death. Her Lord Chancellor, Bromley, and the Speaker of the House of Commons, John Puckering, approached her with an even more urgent detailed petition than the one that had been delivered before, representing Mary to Elizabeth as "greedy of your death" and reminding their queen that the Stuart queen's "friends" also "hold invasion unprofitable while you live, and therefore in their opinion your death is first and principally to be sought, as the most compendious way to

ruin the realm by invasion." Mary was likened to the most "wicked queens" of the Old Testament, and Elizabeth chastised as a bad mother to the political "children" who needed her protection.

Elizabeth's rejoinder was as equivocal as her first speech, but some of the rhetorical assurance that characterized its predecessor here seems to be missing. There is a long reverie on Elizabeth's own earlier experiences of danger, perhaps to remind her audience that she survived them, and she tries to identify herself with the ancient leaders Alcibiades and Solomon, perhaps because all imagery of queens now seemed tainted by association with Mary. She ends by confessing her speech an "answer answerless" to the hardest question of her life, and seems to have been unsatisfied with what she said, since she later polished and readjusted many of her own words before they were published.]

Second Speech

Full grievous is that way whose going on and end, yield nothing but cum-bet for the hire of a laborious journey. I have this day been in greater conflict with myself than ever in my life whether I should speak or hold my peace. If I speak and not complain, I shall dissemble; and if I should be silent your labour taken were all in vain. If I should complain, it might seem strange and rare; yet I confess that my most hearty desire was that some other means might have been devised to work your security and my safety, than this which is now propounded. So as I cannot but complain, though not of you, yet unto you; that I perceive by your petitions that my safety dependeth wholly upon the death of another. If there be any that think I have prolonged the time of purpose to make a counterfeit show of clemency, they do me the most undeserved wrong, as He knoweth, which is the searcher of the most secret thoughts of the heart. Or, if there be any that be persuaded that the Commissioners durst not pronounce other sentence, as fearing thereby to displease me, or to seem to fail of their care for my safety, they but heap upon me most injurious conceits. For either those, whom I have put in trust, have failed of their duties, or else they signified unto the Commissioners in my name, that my will and pleasure was that every one should deal freely according to his conscience, and what they would not openly declare that they should reveal unto me in private. It was of my most favourable mind towards her that I desired some other means might be found out to prevent this mischief. But since now it is resolved that my surety is most desperate without her death, I have a most inward feeling of sorrow, that I, which have in my time pardoned so many rebels, winked at so many treasons, or neglected them with silence, must now seem to show cruelty upon so

great a princess. I have since I came to the Crown of this realm seen many defamatory Books and Pamphlets against me, accusing me to be a tyrant; well fare the writers' hearts, I believe their meaning was to tell me news; and news, indeed, it was to me to be branded with the note of tyranny, I would it were as great news to hear of their impiety. But what is it which they will not write now, when they shall hear that I have given consent, that the executioner's hands shall be imbrued in the blood of my nearest kinswoman? But so far am I from cruelty that to save mine own life I would not offer her violence; neither have I been so careful how to prolong mine own life as how to preserve both, which that it is now impossible I grieve exceedingly. I am not so void of judgment as not to see mine own perils before mine eyes, nor so mad to sharpen a sword to cut mine own throat, nor so careless as not to provide for the safety of mine own life. But this I consider with myself, that many a man would put his own life in danger to save a princess's life. I do not say so will I, yet have I many times thought upon it. But, seeing so many have both written and spoken against me, give me leave, I pray you, to say somewhat in mine own defence that ye may see what manner of woman I am, for whose safety you have passed such careful thoughts; wherein as I do with most thankful heart consider your vigilant care, so am I sure I shall never requite it had I as many lives as you all. When first I took the sceptre I was not unmindful of God the giver, and therefore began my reign with His service and the religion I had been both born in, bred in, and I trust shall die in. And though I was not ignorant how many perils I should be beset withal at home for altering religion, and how many great princes abroad, of a contrary profession, would attempt all hostility against me, yet was I no whit dismayed, knowing that God, whom only I respected, would defend both me and my cause. Hence it is that so many treacheries and conspiracies have been attempted against me that I rather marvel that I am, than muse that I should not be, were it not that God's holy hand hath protected me beyond all expectation. Then to the end I might make the better progress in the art of swaying the sceptre I entered into long and serious cogitation what things were worthy and fitting for kings to do; and I found it most necessary that they should be abundantly furnished with those special virtues, justice, temperance, prudence, and magnanimity. As for the two latter I will not boast myself, my sex doth not permit it; but for the two former I dare say (and that without ostentation) I never made a difference of persons where right was one; I never preferred for favour whom I thought not fit for worth; I never bent my ear to credit a tale that was first told, nor was so rash to corrupt my judgment with prejudice, before I heard the cause. I will not say but many reports might haply be brought me in too much favour of the one side or the other; for we princes

cannot hear all ourselves; yet this I dare say boldly, my judgment went ever with the truth according to my understanding. And as full well Alcibiades¹ wished his friend not to give any answer till he had run over the letters of the alphabet; so have I not used rash and sudden resolutions in anything. And, therefore, as touching your counsels and consultations, I acknowledge them to be so careful, provident, and profitable for the preservation of my life, and to proceed from minds so sincere and to me most devoted, that I shall endeavour myself all I can, to give you cause to think your pains not ill-bestowed, and strive to make myself worthy of such subjects.

And now for your Petition, I pray you for this present to content yourselves with an Answer without Answer. Your judgment I condemn not, neither do I mistake your Reasons, but pray you to accept my thankfulness, excuse my doubtfulness, and take in good part my answer answerless. If I should say I would not do what you request I might say perhaps more than I think: And if I should say I would do it, I might plunge myself into peril, whom you labour to preserve; which in your wisdoms and discretions ye would not that I should, if ye consider the circumstances of place, time, and the manners and conditions of men.

8

ROBERT WYNGFIELD

*A Circumstantial Account of the Execution of
Mary Queen of Scots*

1587

Many witnesses attended Mary Stuart's beheading on the morning of February 8, 1587, and several of them sent descriptions of the event back to London. Of these, the "Circumstantial Account" of the otherwise obscure Robert Wyngfield has become the most famous. It is also the most lurid—balanced

¹ Ancient Athenian general and statesman.

Robert Wyngfield, . . . *The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots*. From *Clarendon Historical Society Reprints* (Clarendon: Clarendon Historical Society, 1886), vol. VIII. First published London, 1752.

in some ways, but in others an excellent example of how easily Mary Stuart's story was absorbed into propaganda. Many of its details have become legendary, particularly that of the headpiece that allegedly slipped off when the queen's severed head was held aloft and the "little dog, which was crept under her clothes" as she knelt and "would not be gotten forth but with force; and afterwards would not depart from the dead corpse."

Wyngheld apparently produced his "Circumstantial Account" for his distant relation, Elizabeth's treasurer, Lord Burghley, and though the account was initially intended for Burghley's eyes only, its fine attention to detail eventually made it the official report of the execution. It was often reprinted as such.

It may please your good Lordship to be advertised that, according as your Honour gave me in command, I have here set down in writing the true order and manner of the execution of the Lady Mary, last Queen of Scots, the 8th of February last, in the great hall within the castle of Fotheringay, together with relation of all such speeches and actions spoken and done by the said Queen, or any other, and all other circumstances and proceedings concerning the same and after the delivery of the said Scottish Queen . . . unto the end of the said execution, as followeth:

It being certified the 6th of February last, to the said Queen, . . . that she was to prepare herself to die the 8th of February next, she seemed not to be in any terror, for ought that appeared by any of her outward gesture or behavior (other than marvelling she should die), but rather with smiling cheer and pleasing countenance she accepted the said admonition of preparation to her (as she said) unexpected execution, saying that her death should be welcome unto her, seeing her Majesty was so resolved, and that her soul were too far unworthy the fruition of the joys of Heaven forever, whose body would not in this world be content to endure the stroke of the executioner for a moment. And that spoken, she wept bitterly and became silent.

The said 8th day of February being come, and time and place appointed for the execution, the Queen—being of stature tall, of body corpulent, round-shouldered, her face fat and broad, double-chinned, and hazel-eyed, her borrowed hair aborne—her attire was this: On her head she had a dressing of lawn,¹ edged with bone lace, a pomander chain and an *Agnus Dei*² about her neck, a crucifix in her hand, a pair



¹ A sheer, fine linen or cotton fabric.

² Small carved lamb meant to recall Christ (the Lamb of God).

of beads at her girdle, with a golden cross at the end of them, a veil of lawn fastened to her caul,³ bowed out with wire, and edged round about with bone-lace, her gown was of black satin printed, with a train and her sleeves to the ground, with acorn buttons of jet, trimmed with pearl, and short sleeves of satin, black cut, with a pair of sleeves of purple velvet whole under them, her girdle whole, of figured black satin, and her petticoat skirts of crimson velvet, her shoes of Spanish leather with the rough side outward, a pair of green silk garters, her nether stockings worsted color watch-clocked with silver, and edged on the top with silver, and next her leg a pair of Jersey hose, white, &c. Thus appareled, she departed her chamber, and willingly bended her steps toward the place of execution.

As the Commissioners, and divers other Knights, were meeting the Queen coming forth, one of her servants, called Melvin, kneeling on his knees to his Queen and Mistress, wringing hands and shedding tears, used these words unto her: "Ah! Madam, unhappy me, what man on Earth was ever before the messenger of so important sorrow and heaviness as I shall be, when I shall report that my good and gracious Queen and Mistress is beheaded in England?" This said, his tears prevented him any further speaking; whereupon the said Queen, pouring forth her dying tears, thus answered him:

"My good Servant, cease to lament, for thou hast cause rather to joy than to mourn, for now shall thou see Mary Stuart's troubles receive their long expected end, and determination, for know," said she, "good servant, all the world is but vanity, and subject still to more sorrow, than a whole ocean of tears can bewail. But I pray thee," said she, "carry this message from me, that I die a true woman to my religion, and like a true Queen of Scotland and France, but God forgive them," said she, "that have long desired my end, and thirsted for my blood, as the hart doth for the water brooks. Oh God," said she, "to show thou art the anchor of truth, and truth itself, knowest the inward chamber of my thought, how that I was ever willing that England and Scotland should be united together. Well," said she, "commend me to my son, and tell him, that I have not done any thing prejudicial to the State and Kingdom of Scotland." And so resolving herself again into tears, [she] said, "Good Melvin, farewell," and with weeping eyes, and her cheeks all besprinkled with tears, as they were, kissed him, saying once again, "Farewell good Melvin, and pray for thy Mistress and Queen."

And then she turned herself unto the Lords, and told them she had

³ A head covering of net.

certain requests to make unto them. One was for certain money to be paid to Curle, her servant. Sir Amias Paulet, knowing of that money, answered to this effect, it should. "Next, that her poor servants might have that with quietness which she had given them by her will, and that they might be favourably intreated,⁴ and to send them safely into their countries." To this (said she), "I conjure you as that it would please the Lords, to permit her poor distressed servants to be present about her at her death, that their eyes and hearts may see and witness how patiently their Queen and Mistress would endure her execution, and so make relation when they came into their country, that she died a true constant Catholic to her religion."

Then the Earl of Kent did answer thus: "Madam, that which you have desired, cannot conveniently be granted, for if it should, it were to be feared that some of them, with speeches or other behaviour, would both be grievous to your Grace, and troublesome and displeasing to us and our company, whereof we have had some experience, they would not stick to put some superstitious trumpery in practice, and if it were but in dipping their handkerchiefs in your Grace's blood, whereof it were very unmeet⁵ for us to give allowance."

"My Lords," said the Queen of Scots, "I will give my word although it be but dead, that they shall not deserve any blame in the actions you have named, but alas (poor souls) it would do them good to bid their mistress farewell, and I hope your mistress (meaning the Queen), being a maiden queen, will vouch for my regard of womanhood, that I shall have some of my own people about me at my death, and I know her Majesty hath not given you any such straight charge or commission, but that you might grant me a request of far greater courtesy than this is, if I were a woman of far meaner calling than the Queen of Scots." And then perceiving that she could not obtain her request without some difficulty, burst out into tears, saying:

"I am cousin to your Queen, and descended from the blood royal of Henry VII, and a married queen of France, and an anointed queen of Scotland." Then upon great consultation had betwixt the two Earls, and others in commission, it was granted to her, what she instantly before earnestly intreated; and desired her to make choice of six of her best beloved men and women. . . . Then with an unappalled countenance, without any terror of the place, the persons, or the preparations, she came out of the entry into the hall, stepped up to the scaffold, being two foot

⁴Treated.
⁵Inappropriate.

high, and twelve foot broad, with rails round about, hanged and covered with black, with a low stool, long fair cushion . . . covered also with black. The stool brought her, she sat down. The Earl of Kent stood on the right hand, and the Earl of Shrewsbury on the other; other knights and gentlemen stood about the rails.

The commission for her execution was read, . . . which done, the people with a loud voice said, God save the Queen. During the reading of this commission, the said Queen was very silent, listening unto it with so careless a regard, as if it had not concerned her at all; nay, rather with so merry and cheerful a countenance, as if it had been a pardon from her Majesty for her life, and withal used such a strangeness in her words, as if she had not known any of the assembly, nor had been anything seen in the English tongue.

Then Mr. Doctor Fletcher, Dean of Peterborough, standing directly before her without the rails, bending his body with great reverence, uttered this exhortation following:

"Madame, the Queen's most excellent Majesty (whom God preserve long to reign over us), having (notwithstanding this preparation for the execution of justice justly to be done unto you, for your many trespasses against her sacred person, state, and government) a tender care over your soul, which presently departing out of your body, must either be separated in the true faith in Christ or perish forever, doth for Jesus Christ offer unto you the comfortable promises of God, wherein I beseech your Grace, even in the bowels of Jesus Christ, to consider these three Things: First, your State past, and transitory glory; secondly, your condition present of death; thirdly, your Estate to come, either in everlasting happiness or perpetual infelicity. For the first, let me speak to your Grace, with David the King, forget (Madam) yourself, and your own people, and your father's house; forget your natural birth, your royal and princely dignity, &c. so shall the King of Kings have pleasure in your spiritual beauty, &c. Madam, even now, Madam, doth God Almighty open you a door into a heavenly Kingdom; shut not therefore this passage by the hardening of your heart, and grieve not the spirit of God, which may seal your Hope to a day of redemption."

The Queen three or four times said unto him, "Mr. Dean, trouble not yourself nor me, for know that I am settled in the ancient Catholic and Roman religion, and in defence thereof, by God's Grace I mind to spend my blood."

"Then," said Mr. Dean, "Madam, change your opinion and repent you of your former wickedness; settle your faith only upon this ground, that in Christ Jesus you hope to be saved." She answered again and again, with

great earnestness, "Good Mr. Dean, trouble not yourself any more about this matter, for I was born into this religion, have lived in this religion, and resolve to die in this religion."

Then the Earls, when they saw how far unconformable she was under Mr. Dean's good exhortations, said, "Madam, we will pray for your Grace with Mr. Dean, that you may have your mind lightened with the true knowledge of God and his word."

"My Lords," answered the Queen, "if you will pray with me, I will even from my heart thank you, and think myself greatly favoured by you; but to join in prayer with you in your manner, who are not of one religion with me, it were a sin, and I will not."

Then the Lords called Mr. Dean again, and bade him say on, or what he thought good else: The Dean kneeled and prayed . . .

All the assembly, save the Queen and her servants, said the prayer after Mr. Dean as he spake it, during which prayer the Queen sat upon her stool, having her *Agnus Dei*, crucifix, beads,⁶ and an office in Latin. Thus furnished with superstitious trumpery, not regarding what Mr. Dean said, she began very fastly with tears and a loud voice to pray in Latin, and in the midst of her prayers, with overmuch weeping and mourning slipped off her stool, and kneeling presently said divers other Latin prayers.

Then she rose and kneeled down again, praying in English for Christ's afflicted church, an end of her troubles, for her son, and for the Queen's majesty, to God for forgiveness of the sins of them in this island. She gave her enemies with all her heart, that had long sought her blood. This done, she desired all saints to make intercession for her to the saviour of the world, Jesus Christ. Then she began to kiss her crucifix, and to cross herself, saying these words: "Even as thy arms, oh Jesu Christ, were spread here upon the cross, so receive me, so receive me into the arms of mercy."

Then the two executioners kneeled down unto her, desiring her to forgive them her death. She answered, "I forgive you with all my heart, for I hope this death shall give an end to all my troubles."

They, with her two women helping, began to disrobe her, and then she laid the crucifix upon the stool. One of the executioners took from her neck the *Agnus Dei*, and she laid hold of it, saying she would give it to one of her women, and withal told the executioner that he should have money for it. Then they took off her chain, [and] she made herself

⁶Rosary.

unready⁷ with a kind of gladness, and, smiling, putting on a pair of sleeves with her own hands, which the two executioners before had rudely put off, and with such speed, as if she had longed to be gone out of the world.

During the disrobing of this Queen she never altered her countenance; but, smiling, said she never had such grooms before to make her unready, nor ever did put off her clothes before such company. At length, untired and unapparelled to her petticoat and girdle, the two women burst out into a great and pitiful shrieking, crying, and lamentation, crossed themselves, and prayed in Latin. The Queen turned towards them, embraced them, and said these words in French, "Ne criez vous, j'ai prier pour vous,"⁸ and so crossed, and kissed them, and bade them pray for her. Then with a smiling countenance she turned to her men servants, Melvin and the rest, crossed them, bade them farewell, and pray for her to the last.

One of the women having a Corpus Christi cloth,⁹ lapped it up three corners, kissed it, and put it over the face of the Queen, and pinned it fast upon the caul of her head. Then the two women departed. The Queen kneeled down on the cushion resolutely, and without any token of fear of death, said aloud in Latin the Psalm, *In te domine confido*.¹⁰ Then, groping for the block, she laid down her head, putting her chain over her back with both her hands, which holding there still had been cut off, had they not been espied. Then she laid herself upon the block most quietly, and stretching out her arms and legs cried out, *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum*, three or four times.¹¹

At last while one of the executioners held her straightly with one of his hands, the other gave two strokes with an axe before he did cut off her head, and yet left a little gristle behind.

She made very small noise; no part stirred from the place where she lay. The executioners lifted up the head, and bade "God save the Queen." Then her dressing of lawn fell from her head, which appeared as gray as if she had been threescore and ten years old, polled very short, her face much altered. Her lips stirred up and down almost a quarter of an hour after her head was cut off. Then said Mr. Dean, "So perish all the Queen's enemies." The Earl of Kent came to the dead body, and with a lower voice said, "Such end happen to all the Queen's and gospel's enemies."

One of the executioners plucking off her garters espied her little dog,

⁷Undressed.

⁸"Do not cry; I have prayed for you."

⁹Cloth reputedly from the shroud of Christ.

¹⁰I trust in you, oh God.

¹¹Into your hands, oh God, I commend my spirit.

which was crept under her clothes, which would not be gotten forth but with force; and afterwards would not depart from the dead corpse, but came and lay between her head and shoulders, a thing much noted. The dog, imbrued in her blood, was carried away and washed, as all things else were that had any blood, save those things which were burned.

The executioners were sent away with money for their fees, not having any one thing that belonged unto her.

Afterwards, everyone was commanded forth of the hall, saving the sheriff and his men, who carried her up into a great chamber, made ready for the surgeons to embalm her, and there she was embalmed.

And thus, I hope, my very good Lord, I have certified your Honour of all actions, matters, and circumstances as did pass from her, or any other at her death. Wherein I dare promise your good Lordship (if not in some better or worse words thereof spoken I am somewhat mistaken) in matter I have not in any wise offended. Howbeit, I will not so justify my duties herein, but that many things might well have been omitted as not worthy mention. Yet because it is your Lordship's fault to desire to know all, and I have certified all, it is an offence pardonable. So resting at your Honour's further commandment, I take my leave this 11th of February....

9

ADAM BLACKWOOD

The History of Mary Queen of Scots

1587

Adam Blackwood was a Scot, a Catholic, a lawyer, and a poet. He also ranks with John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, among Mary Stuart's staunchest advocates. Blackwood spent almost all of his adult life in France, where he wrote numerous diatribes against Elizabeth and defenses of Mary's virtue that far surpass Leslie's in their combative tone. Blackwood's monumental history of Mary's life and death, Martyre de la royne d'Escosse, was originally published in Paris, then translated from French into English as The History

Adam Blackwood, The History of Mary Queen of Scots, a Fragment. Ed. and trans. Alexander Macdonald (Edinburgh: Maitland Club 31, 1834). First published as Martyre de la royne d'Escosse (Paris, 1587).

of Mary Queen of Scots. Especially on the European continent, the work was destined to shape Mary's saintly image.

As his original title promises, Blackwood casts Mary as a Catholic martyr, and his engorged, graphic prose leaves his reader with little choice but to abhor the butchery at Fotheringhay. Although not present at the execution, he claimed as sources English and French reports of that event, bolstered with the testimonies of Mary's own servants. Blackwood's Martyre was first published anonymously and went into at least five editions in only two years. Part of its aim was to inspire James VI of Scotland to avenge his mother's death, and while obviously it fell short of that end, the work remains an important record of Mary Stuart's life... and a testament to the depth of devotion she could inspire.

... The place of execution was in a great parlour, in the midst whereof a scaffold was set up, twelve foot square and two foot high, spread over with black cotton, towards the which her Majesty mounted so nimbly that she seemed to have no fear of death, neither ever changed her countenance. And now being come up, she rested herself a little, and presently beganeth to speak to the officers of her cruel cousin Elizabeth, entreating them to permit her to have her almoner¹ to come to her, to comfort her in her God, and to receive of him some comfortable instruction, together with the holy sacrament, before her departure out of this vale of misery.

The Earl of Kent answered, that he was sorry for her to see her so much given to the superstitions of the times past, and that it were better for her to carry the cross of Christ in heart, not in her hand.

To whom she replied, that it was to little purpose to carry such an object in her hand, if the heart were not touched inwardly with earnest motion and remembrance of his bitter death and passion which he suffered upon the cross for miserable man's sin, that died upon the cross. I think it (saith she) a thing most fit for every true Christian, to have it to put them in remembrance of their redemption purchased by Christ, but especially they at that time, when death threatneth.

But seeing by no means she could have her almoner, as she was promised, she made another motion to them, that all her servants might be present to be eyewitness of her constancy in true piety, which, after she had instantly desired and promised that she would command and enjoin them silence, so that their crying, weeping and lamentations should be no hindrance or trouble to her in her death, they granted her

¹A person, usually clerical, who distributes alms for another.

that two of her maids of honor should come. But one of them at her entry in the place of execution, seeing her dear mistress so forwardly in preparation for the butcher's hands, could not contain herself from weeping and from pitiful moan, and fell down as dead for a time, whom, when her mistress perceived to have recovered her senses, . . . by a sign made to her by her finger upon the mouth, enjoined her silence; at the sign of which she forced herself to contain her lament.

This done, the two maids together mount up upon the scaffold to do their mistress the last charitable service, and that with watery eyes and sorrowful hearts. They began to help her to take away her mask, her coil, and other ornaments. But the shameless executioner could, by no entreaty her Majesty could make, nor yet reward, be moved to withhold his helping hands. Neither did any of Elizabeth's officers forbid him. For after her Majesty's gown was stripped down to the middle, he snatched her rudely by the arms and pulled off her doublet, her straight bodice, which [was] low in the collar, so that her neck, being all naked, appeared to the spectators more white than snow or alabaster.

This done, the cruel butcher kneelt down, asking her forgiveness. "Do thy office in the name of God; thou art but an instrument. I forgive thee with all my heart, and all others that be the authors of my death, even with as good will as I desire my own sins to be forgiven me at God's hands."

She protested likewise, in all the beholders' presence, that she never had attempted anything against the life or state of her cousin, nor committed anything worthy of blame, either for the overthrow of religion or the commonwealth. If they did impute her constancy in her religion as a fault worthy of death, let them look to it, who never had any care to instruct and inform her otherwise, all the long time of my twenty years' captivity. I hope shortly to be in Paradise with my dear saviour, Jesus Christ, for whose obedience made for me I doubt not to shed my blood, even to the last drop. I count myself more happy now to die in a right mind to end my misery, than to live longer, enduring the daily reproaches of my enemies, worse than a bitter death, than to attend any longer till nature, thus fainting, did finish the course of her life, when she should not be right in her senses, and perfect remembrance of her duty towards God and her neighbour. She said, she hoped in him, of whom that cross she carried in her hand put her in remembrance, and before whose feet she prostrated herself in soul and body, that he would receive her into eternal glory. . . . She protested, as before, in all the auditories' hearing, that she was innocently accused, charged and condemned of such things she never thought on, and hoped the loss of this temporal life should be the passage, beginning and entrance to life eternal, with the holy angels and the souls of [the] blessed, that should receive her soul and innocent

blood, and represent it before God, for a deduction of all her sins and offences. She besought them all to pray for her, that God would hear her, and that she might obtain grace and pardon.

These were her prayers, being upon her knees upon the scaffold, praying also for the Pope, the kings of France, Spain, the Queen of England, and the King of Scotland, her dear son, that God would enlighten them all with his spirit, and direct them in the truth, and that he would take pity upon his church militant, and turn away his anger from the isle of Great Britain, which she did perceive he threatened with scourges for the abominable, willful impiety committed by the inhabitants.

She thus likewise prayed at her first entry upon the scaffold, and after reiterated the same three several times. But the Dean of Peterborough, Dr. Fletcher, did what he could to interrupt her, whom she entreated not to trouble her, for she was fully resolved how to die, without any counsel from him or any of his sort. He could give her no further contentment for her soul than she had already, for she did anchor her on Christ; and for the people, they could give her no further comfort.

This notwithstanding, the Dean continued in his prayers, and she proceeded likewise forward, praying in Latin, lifting up her voice above his so loud that all being present did clearly hear her. She had a golden cross about her neck having the image of our Saviour, which, prayer being ended, she would have given to one of her maids. But the butcher snatched at it, and would not suffer her, albeit her Majesty did earnestly intreat, offering him that her maid should give him thrice the value of it, but no remedy. He would not let her have it.

All being ready, she taketh her last farewell of her maids, and kissed them courteously, thanking them for their faithful services, bidding them adieu, and bade them retire themselves quietly, giving them her last blessing, and making the sign of the cross over them, but perceiving one of them could not hold, but burst forth into tears, she commanded [her] to hold her peace, and to keep silence, telling her that she had passed to her promise that she and the other maid should not be troublesome to her in her death. She bade them both retire themselves soberly, and to pray to God for her, now they could do her no more good. This done, she fell down upon her knees, without giving the least sign or demonstration of discontent or fear of death. Her constancy and boldness of spiritual courage, her confidence and assurance of hope of recompense of eternal life, of God, in lieu and place of her momentary afflictions, now to be enjoyed of her, was such that all the assistants—yea, her hardest-hearted enemies—were greatly moved; and it was credibly reported of many that were present, that amongst all the whole company there was only two or three persons that could withhold weeping, they esteemed the spectacle

so strange, condemning these in their conscience who were the authors of such a cruelty which, in former times, they never heard nor read of the like. She commends finally her soul to the tuition of the Almighty, in these words of the psalm, saying often and reiterating the words, "*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum*,"² and that with a loud voice, far surmounting the Dean in the ears of the assistants.

In the meanwhile, the butcher gave her a great blow with the axe, whereby he pierced the strings within her head, which he struck not of but at the third blow, to make her martyrdom the more noble, albeit it well is known that not the pain, or the punishment, but the cause maketh the martyr. After he had done, he hastily snatcheth up the head in his hand, and showing it to the assistants, said, "God save Queen Elizabeth, and so befall all the enemies of the gospel," although there were no other that favoured the gospel, and that lived as the gospel directed but Elizabeth. But howsoever in outward show, she made a cloak for her wicked life of the sacred gospel, which thereby she profaned. Yet if her life were weighed in just and even balance, it should be found (if all things were clearly known and censured accordingly) she should become behind and be postponed this holy martyr by many degrees.

After, in derision and contempt, he pulled off her coif and shewed her white hairs, with contemptuous words unworthy to be spoken or heard by the mouth or ears of any Christian. He pointed also to the crown of her head, to shew it to the people, because it was newly shaven, which she was constrained to do by reason of a grievous rheum³ which troubled her often.

The tragedy ended, the poor maids, careful of the honour of their mistress, humbly besought and prayed Paulet the cruel jailor, that the butcher might have no more ado with their sovereign lady's body, and that it might be permitted them to disattire her body when all the people were departed the place, that no further indignity might be offered her of the dead ought to end after their decease. They promised him her apparel, and all that was about her, and whatsoever besides he would demand in reason, so that he would not anymore come near or handle her sacred body.

But cursed Cerberus,⁴ Paulet I mean, commandeth them very rudely to depart the chamber, leaving his hellhound with the corpse to do with

²Into your hands, oh God, I commend my spirit."

³Rheumatism.

⁴Fierce and vicious three-headed dog who guarded the entrance to Hades in Greek myth.

what he would. He presently pulleth off her shoes and all the rest of her apparel, which as yet was left about her body, and after, when he had done what he would, the corpse was carried into a chamber next adjoining, fearing the said maids should come to do any charitable good office.

It did increase greatly their desire so to do after they did see their mistress's corpse through a little hole of the chamber wall, which was covered with cloth. But the woeful corpse was kept a long time in this chamber till it began to corrupt and smell strongly, so that in the end they were constrained to salt it, and to embalm lightly to save charges, and after to wrap it up in a cask of lead, keeping it seven months there before it was interred at Peterborough, where also Catherine of Spain⁵ lay buried before.

⁵Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first wife.

A Mary Queen of Scots Chronology (1542-1587)

- 1509 Death of Henry VII; accession of Henry VIII
- 1516 Birth of Mary Tudor, to Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon
- 1517 Traditional beginning of Protestant Reformation
- 1532 Excommunication of Henry VIII and founding of Church of England
- 1533 Marriage of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn; birth of Elizabeth Tudor
- 1536 Beheading of Anne Boleyn
- 1537 Birth of Edward VI
- 1542 Birth of Mary Stuart to James V of Scotland and Marie de Guise
- 1547 Death of James V and accession of Mary Stuart to throne of Scotland
Death of Henry VIII; accession of Edward VI in England (House of Tudor)
- Death of Francois I; accession of Henri II in France (House of Valois)
- 1548 Mary Stuart sent to France
- 1553 Death of Edward VI; accession of Mary Tudor
Return of English church to Roman Catholicism
- 1554 Elizabeth Tudor imprisoned in Tower of London for suspected involvement in Protestant rebellion against Mary Tudor
- 1558 Death of Mary Tudor; accession of Elizabeth I in England
Marriage of Mary Stuart and Francois II, crown prince of France
John Knox's *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*
- 1559 Death of Henri II of France; accession of Francois II with Mary Stuart as consort
Religious settlement in England enforcing Protestant religion by law
- 1560 Death of Francois II
- 1561 Return of Mary Stuart to Scotland

- 1562 Wars of Religion begin in France
- 1565 Marriage of Mary Stuart and Henry, Lord Darnley
- 1566 Birth of Mary Stuart's son, the future James VI of Scotland
- 1567 Murder of Darnley; Mary Stuart elopes with James Hepburn, Lord Bothwell
Mary taken captive and forced to abdicate Scottish throne
James VI declared king of Scotland
- 1568 Mary Stuart flees to England
- 1569 Hearing at York leads to Mary's captivity at Tutbury Castle
Northern Rebellion against Elizabeth Tudor
- 1571 John Leslie's *Defence of the Honour of . . . Marie*
Ridolf plot against Elizabeth Tudor detected
St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France
George Buchanan's *Detection of the Doings of Mary Queen of Scots*
- 1577 Francis Drake sails world; English colonial expansion underway
- 1581 English Act of Persuasions makes reconciliation to Catholic faith treason
- 1584 Bond of Association
- 1585 Act of Association
English conflict with Spain
- 1586 Babington Plot detected
Mary Stuart tried for treason because of alleged involvement with Babington Plot
- 1587 Execution of Mary Stuart
Robert Wymngfield writes *A Circumstantial Account of the Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots*
- 1588 Adam Blackwood's *Martyre de la royne d'Escoce* published in France
- 1595 English defeat of Spanish Armada
Irish insurrection against English colonial rule
- 1603 Death of Elizabeth Tudor; accession of James VI of Scotland as James I of England