

4 HEIR TO THE THRONE (1547-1553)

We do not know whether Mary mourned her father.

Since 1536 their relationship had apparently been good, but it seems likely that she neither forgot nor forgave the humiliations which he had inflicted upon her mother and herself.

Her acceptance of his will, however, is undeniable.

Edward was the new king.

Charles V delayed acknowledging the greeting sent him on Edward's behalf, because to him Edward was a bastard, and no heir.

To Charles V:-

Mary, as Henry's only legitimate child, should have been queen.

The Royal Supremacy was a schismatic perversion, and statute law meant nothing. However, he was wise enough to accept that the English, including Mary herself, saw it differently; and **belatedly, he sent his greetings.**

When Edward Seymour, the king's maternal uncle set up the Protectorate and rewarded his friends and supporters in February 1547, there was no recorded reaction from Mary.

Mary's relations with Seymour, who had been a prominent political figure over the previous decade, had always been good without being particularly close.

Henry VIII 's death, however, affected MARY very directly.

Although she had no title, she became again the heir to the throne; and

She also acquired for the first time a large independent patrimony.

She had her own household since 1536, and her favoured residences, but the king had always paid the bills within his own household.

Now, by the terms of his will, she received lands to the value of about £3000 a year, which made her one of the half dozen or so wealthiest magnates in England.

Mary's lands

When lands were finally handed over in 1548, they were mostly drawn from the forfeited Howard lands in East Anglia.

This meant that they brought with them the well-developed Howard affinity, left leaderless by the Duke's attainder in January 1547.

For the first time, Mary had the chance to build up a following devoted to herself, and to hire servants who suited her own tastes and needs.

She had no intention of using this power for disruptive purposes.

Mary's relations with her brother, Edward VI, were good, and she showed no interest in becoming involved in the complex politics of the reign.

The one political event in which she was interested, her marriage, was not on anyone's agenda, in spite of a rather precocious joke by the nine year old Edward when he suggested to Thomas Seymour (who was already laying siege to the queen dowager) that he should 'marry my sister Mary, to turn her opinions'.

He was not serious, but the remark demonstrates that even as early as the spring of 1547 it was perceived that Edward and Mary had different views on religion.

The king had absorbed from his early tutors, particularly Richard Cox and John Cheke, a form of protestantism which could not be publicly acknowledged as long as Henry lived, but which immediately began to surface as the new regime became established.

Stephen Gardiner

The first person to challenge this development was Stephen Gardiner, the bishop of Winchester, whom Henry had deliberately excluded from his son's council.

Gardiner (like Mary) had been constrained to accept the **Royal Supremacy** in the first place, but had apparently done so with a good grace, and had even defended it in print.

To him, however, the **Royal Supremacy** had been a means to defend the true faith, not to undermine it, and when Edward's council started to propagate protestant doctrine in the Royal Injunctions and Homilies of 1547, he mounted a resolute campaign of resistance.

His argument was based on two points:

First that the faith and worship of the English church had been defined (in a conservative sense) by the Act of Six Articles of 1539. This meant that it was unlawful to preach any other doctrine.

Secondly that the Royal Supremacy was 'on hold' (as we would now say) while the king was a minor. It was as unreasonable to expect a child to make decisions for the church as for the state; but whereas there were acceptable precedents for secular minority government, there were none for ecclesiastical.

He refused to accept that the Council could wield the Royal Supremacy during Edward's nonage, and claimed instead that nothing could be decided until the king came of age.

Neither of these were very sound arguments.

The Act of Six Articles could be, and was, repealed.

11. THE WAR AGAINST HERESY, 1555-8

Mary was a woman of strong and simple faith.

It simply did not occur to her that anyone could honestly take a different view of the truth from her own. This meant that all heretics were either frauds, dupes or villains.

The villains were those, like the Duke of Northumberland or Thomas Cranmer, who used protestantism as an excuse to seize political power, and to plunder the church; the frauds were those who (like most of her nobility) had gone along with the villains for a share of the spoils; and the dupes were the ignorant, who were foolish enough to believe the smokescreen of propaganda put out by the others.

This view was confirmed by the Duke of Northumberland's last minute conversion, and by the haste with which most of the frauds had conformed.

Mary's sceptical view of heresy was shared by Stephen Gardiner, for slightly different reasons, but both believed that there would be a rush of submissions and recantations as soon as pressure was applied.

Protestantism would be exposed as a paper tiger. Their view was, of course, normal.

There could be only one true faith, and true church, and that truth must be imposed by authority in the interests of the unity of the commonwealth, and the spiritual well being of those who needed to be preserved from their own folly.

Heresy, if it was genuine at all, was the work of the devil, and a lethal virus which killed the souls of those whom it attacked.

During the first year of Mary's reign quite a number of protestant leaders showed no sign of submitting, and many were deprived and imprisoned.

However, they could not be tried for heresy until the proper jurisdiction was in place, and Gardiner believed that their apparent defiance was no more than a little *hubris*, which would not survive a life-or-death decision.

'Thou wilt not burn in this gear when it cometh to the point', was a representative view of the authorities.