

SIR THOMAS WILKES: A STUDY
IN ELIZABETHAN DIPLOMACY,
GOVERNMENT, AND PATRONAGE

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ABSTRACT

SIR THOMAS WILKES: A STUDY IN ELIZABETHAN DIPLOMACY, GOVERNMENT, AND PATRONAGE

By

F. Jeffrey Platt

This dissertation is a detailed study of the public career (1573-1598), of the Elizabethan diplomat and administrator, Sir Thomas Wilkes. It attempts to illustrate not only the ideas and principles that motivated him but also the remarkably important role such a second-level government official could play in sixteenth-century politics.

The first, and by far the major portion of the study covers Wilkes' career as a diplomat. During his twenty-five years of public service, he served a total of twelve missions in France, Spain, the Palatinate, the Spanish Low Countries, and the United Provinces. Never assigned as a resident ambassador, he was invariably used as a kind of diplomatic "trouble-shooter" or "ambassador-at-large" who was sent to deal with pressing international problems. His early years in France (1573-1576) as a private secretary to the English ambassador Valentine Dale, and as an advisor to the Huguenot and politique factions, provide a good opportunity for a close look at the troubles besetting France in the years following the St. Bartholomew Massacre. Likewise, his later assignments to Henry IV of France during the 1590's afford a chance to witness that king's struggle for his throne, and to illuminate some dark corners of too often neglected post-1588 English diplomacy.

Wilkes' brief 1577-78 missions to Philip II of Spain and to Don Juan, the Spanish Governor of the Low Countries, are important for the background and insight they give into the great Anglo-Spanish quarrel

of the 1580's and 1590's. It was in the midst of this conflict, and during the Earl of Leicester's 1585-1587 Governorship of the Netherlands, that Wilkes served his most lengthy and important mission as an English member on the Anglo-Dutch Council of State (1586-1587). An in depth look at the complexities of this particular assignment reveals much about the personalities and methods of both Elizabeth and the Earl that made inevitable the ultimate failure of Leicester's administration. Wilkes served one more mission to The Hague in the summer of 1590, but it too only emphasized the inability of the English and the Dutch to work together in harmony under the articles of the 1585 Treaty of Nonsuch.

The second portion of this three-part study covers Wilkes' career as a Clerk of the Privy Council (1576-1598). By looking at his responsibilities and experiences in this capacity, much light is shed on the workings of this surprisingly important office as well as on the Privy Council itself.

The third part of this dissertation considers Wilkes as a case study in non-salaried remuneration. As the holder of the largest salt patent in Elizabethan England, and as an avid purveyor of Crown privileges, his life demonstrates conclusively that the almost constant solicitation of such patronage was the accepted means by which a diplomat survived the crushing personal expense of foreign service.

A variety of materials were used in making this study. The primary sources were mainly of a diplomatic and administrative nature, especially those manuscript collections in the British Museum and Public Record Office in London. Many other private, city, and county manuscript collections, too numerous to list here, were also used. Numerous printed sources and secondary works were likewise consulted.

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By
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PREFACE

I wish to acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to Professor DeLamar Jensen of Brigham Young University who first directed my interest to the complicated but fascinating field of sixteenth-century diplomacy.

To Professor Marjorie E. Gesner of Michigan State University I am most indebted for her unfailing direction and encouragement in the research and writing of this dissertation. Her extensive knowledge of English History as well as her devotion to the needs of her students has been a constant source of inspiration.

To Professor Thomas L. Bushell I owe special thanks for his invaluable suggestions and painstaking editing of the entire manuscript. His other efforts in my behalf have made it possible to complete the dissertation on schedule.

I must also express sincere appreciation to Professor William J. Brazill for his willingness to serve on late notice as the third member of the dissertation committee. His comments and suggestions were not only helpful but most encouraging.

Of the numerous other people whose assistance and advice have been useful, the following merit particular mention: Professor Joel Hurstfield of the University of London who both advised me on some of my research problems, and made suggestions on the outline and scope of the dissertation; Miss Norah Fuidge for information on Sir Thomas Wilkes gleaned by the "History of Parliament Trust;" and the archivists and librarians of the

of the Public Record Office, British Museum, and numerous private, city, and county collections throughout England.

Finally, my deepest appreciation must go to my dear wife Colleen, who not only typed the entire manuscript, but without whose sacrifice and unfailing encouragement this study would not have been possible.

Because Sir Thomas Wilkes' career was comprised of three major areas of activity, this study is divided into three parts. Hopefully, this sacrifice of continuity for the sake of clarity will aid the reader in better understanding Wilkes' contributions to Elizabethan government.

The first, and by far the major portion, will cover his extensive and diverse diplomatic career which spanned nearly twenty-five years and included assignments to Germany, France, Spain, the Spanish Netherlands, and the United Provinces. The second part will be an administrative history dealing with his duties as a Clerk of Elizabeth's Privy Council, and the third portion will look at Sir Thomas as a case study in non-salaried remuneration.

Throughout this study the spelling of all sixteenth-century quotations will be modernized, and with few exceptions all dating after the year 1582 will be based on the "old style" Julian calendar rather than the "new style" Gregorian calendar. The few exceptions to this rule will be followed by the letters "N.S.," signifying "new style."

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.P.C.	<u>Acts of the Privy Council</u>
B.M. Add. Mss.	British Museum, Additional Manuscripts
B.M. Cott. Mss.	British Museum, Cottonian Manuscripts
B.M. Harl. Mss.	British Museum, Harleian Manuscripts
B.M. Lansd. Mss.	British Museum, Lansdowne Manuscripts
Cal. Dom.	<u>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic</u>
Cal. For.	<u>Calendar of State Papers, Foreign</u>
Cal. Rome	<u>Calendar of State Papers, Rome</u>
Cal. Spain	<u>Calendar of State Papers, Spain</u>
Cal. Ven.	<u>Calendar of State Papers, Venetian</u>
D.N.B.	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
Digges:	Dudley Digges, ed., <u>The Complete Ambassador</u>
E.H.R.	<u>English Historical Review</u>
G.E.C.	George Edward Cokayne, <u>The Complete Peerage</u>
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
H.M.S.O.	His or Her Majesty's Stationery Office
L. & A.	<u>List and Analysis of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth I: Aug. 1589-May 1591.</u>
Lettenhove	M. Kervyn de Lettenhove, ed., <u>Relations Politiques des Pays-Bas et de L'Angleterre</u>
P.C.C.	Prerogative Court of Canterbury
P.R.O. Excheq. 403/2559	Public Record Office, Privy Seal Book
P.R.O., S.P. 12	Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic 1558-1603

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P.R.O., S.P. 15	Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, Addenda, 1547-1625
P.R.O., S.P. 70	Public Record Office, State Papers, Foreign, 1559-May 1578
P.R.O., S.P. 77	Public Record Office, State Papers, Foreign, Flanders, 1585-1603
P.R.O., S.P. 78	Public Record Office, State Papers, Foreign, France, June 1578-1603
P.R.O., S.P. 84	Public Record Office, State Papers, Foreign, Holland, 1585-1603
P.R.O., S.P. 103	Public Record Office, Treaty Papers, 1578-1603
P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI	Public Record Office, State Papers Archives, Holland, Wilkes' Letter Book 3 Dec. 1586-10 June 1587 and 13 June-14 Aug. 1590.
V.C.H.	<u>The Victoria History of the Counties of England.</u>
Wilkes' Journal	British Museum, Cottonian Mss. Galba C. X, ff. 82-102

INTRODUCTION

In the writing of any history the historian must realize that the essence of nearly all he writes lies within the personalities his subject covers. To lose sight of this fact is not only to forget the real purpose of writing history but also to fail to realize that men are the vessels in which history has its being and the vehicles by which it moves.

Historiography has for many years been moving away from the importance of the political biography and towards the study of the more general and impersonal problem areas of economic, social, political, and even intellectual history. While the effects of this have been beneficial in that biographers have more and more realized that they can no longer ignore the total milieu in which their subject exists, there has, at the same time, been established a tendency to undervalue the worth of biography by the suggestion that such history is of necessity too limited in its outlook.

While this may be the fault of some biographers, most others now realize that only by drawing from the best of both approaches to historical scholarship can truly great history be written. Two good examples of this method comes from the pen of the brilliant Renaissance historian Garrett Mattingly. His biography Catherine of Aragon (Boston, 1941) is superb in its ability to make this unfortunate queen the focal point of an international struggle, yet, at the same time, evincing a complete awareness of the external forces playing upon her and the problems she faced.

In his more general problem study The Armada (Cambridge, Mass: 1959), Mattingly again achieves the same success but this time through a different approach. Here he focuses on the great Anglo-Spanish quarrel of the 1580's, but at the same time his splendid character sketches illustrate that never once has he lost sight of the fact that it was the individual personalities who were most responsible for the drama of that great struggle.

In spite of the contention that the more recent institutions of democracy and a free press invalidate the above approaches to modern biographies, there is much evidence to support the contention that even today the conditions which most affect the lives of the vast majority of the world's inhabitants (whether for good or bad), are brought to pass by those who initiate and carry out decisions on the political level. This is especially true at the diplomatic level where almost without exception an elite few control international policy making.

If this is true in the present century, in spite of the limiting factors of democratic institutions, then how much more valid is the argument in the case of a sixteenth-century political figure. In a society where popular pressure and freedom of the press were almost non-existent, the governing elite was left virtually free to control all affairs, even to the point of making a man's inherited faith illegal.

While this study illustrates the tight rein that Queen Elizabeth kept on her civil servants, it attempts at the same time to illustrate the immense value to be found in the biographical approach to sixteenth-century political history. The subject chosen for this task is the remarkable career of Sir Thomas Wilkes: secret agent, diplomat, member of the Anglo-Dutch Council of State, Clerk of the Privy Council, Pay-Master-General of the English forces in the Netherlands, Member of

Parliament, and Justice of the Peace. This study of his public career will not only lead one through a quarter-century of England's internal and foreign affairs, but also will illustrate the important effect an intelligent and rising middle class servant could have on Elizabethan policy. Though there exists no pretense that this biography will even begin to approach the standard already spoken of, it is none the less the ideal towards which this study is directed.

Early Life and Training

Obscure as Sir Thomas Wilkes' early life has been and remains to historians, several fairly reasonable suppositions can be made as to the year and place of his birth as well as to the circumstances under which he was raised.

Born after the year 1541¹ and probably no later than 1545,² Sir Thomas was one of at least five boys born to Thomas Wilkes Sr. and his wife Jane Edge. Thomas Sr.'s father, Robert Wilkes, was a younger son of eighteen children (of which "12 had issue") sired by the patriarch of the family, William, whose uncle, another Sir Thomas Wilkes, was slain at Tewkesbury in 1471. Robert's eldest brother John was the heir to

¹The hard pressed English diplomat Robert Beal, in a letter to the Privy Council, dated 18 April 1600 (H.M.C., Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire (London: H.M.S.O., 1910), XXI, p. 114 [hereafter cited: Salisbury], asked to be treated as generously as had Sir Thomas Wilkes "who was younger in years and not subject to such infirmities as I am." The D.N.B., IV, p. 3, lists Beal's birthdate as 1541.

²With no explanation of how he arrived at the date, A. F. Pollard (D.N.B., LXI, p. 251) lists Wilkes' approximate birth date as 1545. But this date seems a bit late because it would make Wilkes barely sixteen years old when he began his eight years of travel on the Continent in 1561; and though this is entirely possible, it seems safer to assume he was born around 1543 which would make him eighteen when he started his travel abroad. See Brief on Wilkes' diplomatic career. April 1573, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154.

his father's estates in Hodnell, County Warwickshire, but whether or not this forced Robert and his family to settle outside the same county is not known. Nor is it known where Robert's son, Thomas Sr. (Sir Thomas Wilkes' father) and his family settled. While the senior line of the patriarch William's progeny (the Hodnell Wilkeses) is easily traceable, it is the junior line (Robert's descendents) that is almost impossible to pinpoint so far as geography is concerned. There are several reasons for this. First, since they are a junior line, sixteenth-century inquisitors and genealogists were not much concerned with supplying such information on them. Second, the relatively unimportant role Sir Thomas' sixteenth-century ancestors played in their country's affairs kept them out of other records that might point to their county of residence. Third, there are a great number of little known and almost untraceable families of the same surname throughout various areas of England, especially in the Midlands. Fourth, Sir Thomas's four brothers (Robert, James, William, and John) all died without issue thus closing this possible avenue of discovering his place of birth.¹

Anthony à Wood, the seventeenth-century author of Fasti Oxonienses or Annals of the University of Oxford, stated quite directly, but without any indication as to where he obtained his information, that Wilkes "was a Sussex man born." Now, even a cursory glance at any of the genealogical records of that county will show that in the sixteenth century there were few if any Wilkeses living there. Still, A. F. Pollard, in his brief biographical sketch of Sir Thomas in the Dictionary of National Biography,

¹College of Arms Mss., 2, D, 14 II, f. 112, and "Visitation of Warwickshire," B.M., Harl. Mss. 1563, f. 3. See Appendix B for the Wilkeses genealogy.

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(LXI, pp. 251-53), felt Wood's source dependable enough to quote him as to the origins of Wilkes.¹

S. T. Bindoff's recent comments on Wilkes in the monumental "History of Parliament Trust," take exception with the above position. He feels that because Sir Thomas' cousin, William Wilkes D.D. was born within the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry it is likely that both men were of Midland stock.² This position is bolstered by the fact that most of Sir Thomas' other cousins came from Warwickshire and that this surname is almost non-existent in the county of Sussex.³

The problem would be left at that if it were not for a letter in the Lansdowne Mss. in the British Museum which provides us with several strong hints that there is an element of truth in both the above positions.

On April 25, 1573 Tobie Matthew, the President of St. John's College, Oxford,⁴ wrote a letter to Lord William West, the heir to the ancient Sussex family of Delewarre,⁵ in which he defended Wilkes' good name against

¹Wood's Fasti Oxonienses (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1815), was originally published in 1692 in two volumes, however I have used the 1815 edition, volume V, p. 188.

²Since the "History of Parliament Trust" has not yet published its findings on Elizabethan Parliamentarians I must thank Norah Fudge for her willingness to give me what information the Trust has been able to find concerning Wilkes.

³See *supra*, p. 4, footnote no. 1, and W. Bruce Bannerman, ed., The Visitations of the County of Sussex, 1530 and 1633-4, (London: The Harleian Society, 1905).

⁴Matthews was three years later appointed dean of Christ's Church and then three years after nominated Vice-Chancellor of the University by the Earl of Leicester, and then Chancellor. He was installed as Dean of Durham in 1583 and in 1595 was made Bishop. He took a prominent part in the Hampton Court Conference under James I and in April 1606 was made Archbishop of York in place of the deceased Matthew Hutton. He was the father of the brilliant Sir Tobie Matthew. D.N.B., XXXVII, pp. 60-63.

⁵Matthew to Lord Delewarre, St. John's College, Oxford, 25 April 1573, B.M., Lansd. Mss. 17, f. 135. William West was 10th Lord Delewarre. Born before 1520 he was the nephew and heir male of his uncle Sir Thomas West 9th Baron DeLaWerr who died in 1554 s.p. William was also heir of his father Sir George West of Warbleton Sussex who died in 1538. Because

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some recent slanderous charges. Young Wilkes had just left All Soul's College, Oxford to serve as private secretary to the new English Ambassador to France, Sir Valentine Dale. By quitting his studies while only a probationer instead of a fellow, he not only ran into difficulty with the authorities of that college but also opened himself up to the lies of his enemies.

In explaining his qualifications to make a judgment on the character of Wilkes, Matthew wrote of his close association with him "by daily conversation and sometimes conference." He assured the staunch Puritan, Lord Delewarre, that both in his "life and learning" Wilkes demonstrated a "zealous profession of the gospel" and further encouraged him not to be "so maliciously discouraged" at the false rumors for,

Albeit I know your good lordship will not of pity suffer any man wholly depending at your denocion [?] to be overrun and overtrodden in wrongful sort, and especially by such. So, if there were any cause why my suit should ought [be] private (as indeed there is merely none) I would become a most instant and lowly particioner; the rather [that] at my most earnest and humble desire, your lordship would both with expedition and to effect, show yourself as a patron, [as] hither to many other ways, so herein are after a parent to him, thereby binding... him...to pray for your honor as he hath long done.¹

In relation to the problem of where Wilkes was born and raised several things become apparent from reading this less than articulate

he supposedly tried to poison his uncle Sir Thomas in 1549 he was tried and disabled from all honors. He was later restored to the blood in November 1569 as William West esq., and as joint Lieutenant of Sussex was knighted by the Earl of Leicester in February 1570. At the same time he was by Parliamentary Patent made Baron Delewarre. He was one of the Peers who tried the Duke of Norfolk in 1572 and the Earl of Arundel in 1589. He died in December, 1595 and was succeeded by his son Thomas, 11th Baron DeLaWarr who in turn was succeeded by his son Thomas, 12 Baron DeLaWarr, who in 1610 became the first Governor of the New World Virginia Colony and after whom is named a state, river, bay, and Indian tribe. See G.E.C., IV, pp. 156-61 and Sir Egerton Bridges, Collins' Peerage of England (London: P.C. and J. Rivington et. al, 1812), V. pp. 13-23.

¹Matthew to Lord Delewarre, St. John's College, Oxford, 25 April 1573, B.M., Lansd. 17, f. 135. (My italics.)

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letter. First, statements that Wilkes was "wholly depending" on Lord Delewarre, that the latter was "a patron" to Sir Thomas, and like "a parent to him" all indicate that Thomas Wilkes was probably raised in the household of Lord Delewarre at Offington House, Broadwater Parish, Sussex.¹

Matthew's statements upholding the religious zeal and good name of Wilkes and asking Lord Delewarre not to be so discouraged over current rumors, also indicates a very personal interest in and even responsibility for Wilkes on the part of this Sussex nobleman. Whether this means that Wilkes was orphaned at a young age or simply placed in the home of a patron as was the custom of so much of the English aristocracy and rising middle class, is not clear.

There is one other indication of Wilkes' connection with the Delewarre family. Later in 1592 when he was knighted by the French king, Henry IV, Sir Thomas took as one of the quarters of his coat of arms the "lion rampant within an orle of Fleurs-de-lis oir" which was also a part of the Delewarre coat of arms.² Thus, it seems one is safe in inferring that Wilkes was born somewhere in the Midlands but more importantly, raised in Sussex.

Tobie Matthew's letter also strongly suggests that Wilkes may have been a Puritan. At least Matthew felt it necessary to assure Lord Delewarre that young Thomas was still "zealous" in his adherence to the gospel. Whether this predelection for Puritanism came from his parents or as a result of his stay in the Delewarre household is not certain but Wilkes' later close friendship with the strongly Puritan Earl of Leicester

¹Ibid., and Thomas Walker Horsfield, The History, Antiquity, and Topography of the County of Sussex (London: Nichols and Son, 1835), II, p. 195. Broadwater Parish is in the rape of Bramber.

²H.W. Forsyth Harwood, ed., The Genealogist (London, G. Bell and Sons, et.al., 1913), XXIX, n.s., p. 184, and W. Harry Rylands, ed.,

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and Francis Walsingham also lends credence to this position.¹ Further proof of young Wilkes' Puritan leanings is found in Manchester's John Ryland's Library in an early fifteenth-century book entitled Divers Treatises. Attributed to Wycliff, this strongly Puritan work also contains the signatures of its former sixteenth-century owners among which is Thomas Wilkes. While this fails to guarantee his Puritan sympathies, it does lead one to believe that Wilkes, like most men of the sixteenth century, would not purchase what was no doubt an expensive hand-printed book if he was not interested in it, let alone affix his signature to a work containing doctrines he did not espouse.²

Up to the year 1561 there is no reference whatsoever to Wilkes' early life. It was at this time, and possibly under the sponsorship of Lord Delewarre, that he began "eight years travel in France, Germany, and Italy."³ Apparently undertaken with an eye to preparing himself for Elizabeth's diplomatic service, these years of travel eminently prepared the young man for his future responsibilities. Along with his familiarity with Continental affairs, he returned home in 1569 with a commendable

Pedigrees from the Visitations of Hampshire, 1530, 1575, and 1622 (London: Printed for the Harleian Society by Ye Wardour Press, 1913), p. 104.

¹In a July 12, 1584 Letter to Leicester Wilkes make it clear "that my preferment to her Majesty's service, grew first by your lordship's good means and furtherance." See B.M., Cott. Mss. Titus B. VII, f. 30.

²Moses Tyson, Handlist of the Collection of English Mss. in the John Rylands Library (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1928), p. 19, no. 85. One further indication that Wilkes may have been a Puritan comes from a comment made about him in January 1578 by Philip Sega, the Papal Nuncio in Spain. Writing to the chief Papal secretary the Cardinal of Como, he among other things described Wilkes as "a most corrupt heretic." Whether or not most Catholics distinguished between the various forms of Protestant "heresy" is not certain, but Sega certainly seems to be doing so in this comment. Cal. Rome., II, pp. 367-68.

³Brief on Wilkes' diplomatic career, April 1573, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154.

"sufficiency both in the Italian and French tongues."¹ This, coupled with his abilities in Latin and a less adequate command of Spanish, was to make him a valuable asset to Elizabeth's diplomatic corps as well as to her Privy Council which he served so well as a clerk.

Upon his return to England in 1569 at the approximate age of twenty-four, Wilkes entered All Soul's College, Oxford on June 27th. Here, until April 1573, he continued his studies towards a B.A. degree, and it was while here that he received and accepted an offer to serve abroad as Valentine Dale's private secretary.² To be offered such a position while still attending the university was not unusual in Elizabeth's reign. In fact, the Queen had previously instructed the Chancellors of both Cambridge and Oxford to compile a list of promising young graduates, along with their colleges and standings, explaining that when an ambassador was appointed, she would nominate certain of these university graduates to be his secretary and chaplain. To these young men the possibility of being chosen for such a prestigious assignment served as a "switch and spur on their industries."³

¹Valentine Dale to Lord Burghley, Paris, 21 April 1573, Ibid., S.P. 70, CXXVII, f. 39.

²C.W. Boase, ed., Register of the University of Oxford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), I, p. 274. There is a sticky problem concerning the years of Wilkes' college career. Andrew Clark in his Register of the University of Oxford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), II, iii, p. 25 states the following "[All Soul's], Wilkes, Thomas; suppl. B.A. 26 Jan. adm. 20 Feb. 157² [Fellow of All Soul's in 1572]." A. F. Pollard's biographical sketch of Wilkes in the D.N.B. supports Clark's summary by concluding that Wilkes "became probationer-fellow of All Soul's" in 1572 "graduating B.A. in February 1572-3." Did Wilkes supplicate for a degree in June 1569? If so, he was apparently refused, otherwise he would not have supplicated for the same degree again in January 1573. However, Wilkes according to a letter written by Valentine Dale on April 21st 1573 (P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXVII, f. 39), was still not a fellow at the time but only a probationer. Obviously the records are confused somewhere.

³Montague Burrows, Worthies of All Soul's (London: Macmillan and Co., 1874), p. 91.

No doubt, the young and ambitious Wilkes was pleased when he learned he had been selected to serve as Dale's secretary in what was England's only fully-accredited foreign embassy.

Wilkes' Personality

The portrait that will emerge in the following pages is that of an energetic and idealistic young government official who rapidly ages and mellows under the rigors and disappointments of Elizabethan service. Quick of mind, unshakably loyal to his Queen, and Puritan in sympathy, he was a man of the same mold as his close friend Sir Francis Walsingham.¹

Well educated, and gifted in the arts of diplomacy and government, he was endowed beside with keen political insight which made him more competent than most men to untangle the innumerable threads of European politics. His years of travel along with his Oxford education combined to give him a valuable sense of history and a realistic perspective of the role England was capable of playing in sixteenth-century politics.

Wilkes was a man whose intellectual abilities were above average, and throughout his life his mind retained that rare capacity to drive to the heart of a difficult problem. That Elizabeth and her Privy Councilors were aware of his abilities is evident from the reliance they placed on his diplomatic correspondence in making their policy decisions. Though likewise conscious of his own abilities, Wilkes was not the kind to tear down others in order to build up himself in the eyes of his superiors. Confident and unassuming, he moved through Elizabethan society with a self-assurance and detachment that was rare even for the Elizabethan personality.

¹Unfortunately no painted portrait of Wilkes exists and no written description survives--not even a casual reference to something like his height, weight, or eye color. Nor does any such description exist on any member of his family which might provide such clues.

Whether angry over Elizabeth's indecisiveness or unfairly confined to prison as a result of her anger, Wilkes' loyalty to the Queen and to England remained unshakable. With one or two notable exceptions, he generally accepted her lukewarmness for the Protestant cause without complaint. Though he would have liked to see England in a position to assume the leadership in the anti-Catholic crusade, he, unlike Elizabeth's more militant Puritan councilors, realized that the burden would be too great for his country's resources. This keen sense of the possible combined with his other abilities to make Wilkes one of the most trusted and valuable of Elizabeth's public servants.

Though basically Puritan in outlook, Wilkes displayed only the finer qualities of those who espoused that religious philosophy. He was honest to a fault, a hard worker, and possessed a capacity to endure adversity like few men of his day. He was a devoted family man and a diligent provider. Though committed to the English governmental system, his 1587 debate with the Dutch States-General on the principle of sovereignty revealed his leanings towards democratic forms of government.

Like his mentor Walsingham, Wilkes seldom revealed his emotions. If he had a sense of humor, it never appears in any of his correspondence. He seldom, if ever, let slip a disparaging word against his enemies. In a society where facade and pretense were often the passwords to advancement, his remarkable integrity was not only in sharp contrast but at times brought him into conflict with some of Elizabeth's more powerful but less scrupulous servants. Polite, tactful, and always the gentleman, he could at the same time be firm and even fierce in his censure of those whose actions threatened England's welfare.

Whether working all day without food or drink, or utilizing a walking stick to drag his gout-ridden legs to a session of the Dutch Council of State, or even accepting a difficult foreign assignment that

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he correctly suspected would result in his death, the picture is that of a committed public servant. There were times when exhaustion and ill-health drove him to petition Elizabeth for permission to retire, but always, his importance to her government prevented her from ever considering such a request.

Whether recording the confessions of racked prisoners or witnessing the inhabitants of a city being put to the sword, Wilkes could write about such suffering with a detachment that is typical of his age, but almost incomprehensible to the present-day mind. Even so, he was a man of compassion and high principles. He would endanger his own position at Court in order to defend the good name of a close friend. He would jeopardize his personal financial security to borrow money to relieve the suffering of English soldiers in the Netherlands. He would even risk his own life and diplomatic immunity as well as the quality of England's foreign relations to save the lives of innocent foreigners. He was a valuable friend and a worthy opponent.

Though this study purposely goes into more detail on the diplomatic problems and institutions of sixteenth-century England than is necessary for a purely biographical work, its main purpose is to assess Wilkes as a diplomat, office holder, man of property, and above all, as a human being. This kind of approach makes it possible to penetrate many of the unyielding surface-generalities of sixteenth-century diplomatic history, and at the same time, to gain an understanding of and appreciation for the contributions Sir Thomas Wilkes made to that exciting age.

CHAPTER I

THE FRENCH WARS OF RELIGION

In March 1573 England's exceptional and highly experienced ambassador to France, Sir Francis Walsingham, was called home for reasons of debt, ill health, and a pregnant wife.¹ To replace him Queen Elizabeth had finally decided upon the learned and not inexperienced Doctor of Civil Law and Member of Parliament, Valentine Dale. Educated at All Souls College, Oxford and Orleans in France, this discerning scholar whose abilities have never been fully appreciated, brought to troubled France a sorely needed spirit of moderation.²

The French Scene

For sometime prior to Doctor Dale's arrival in Paris in April 1573, French affairs had been in considerable turmoil. In August of the previous year the tragic Massacre of St. Bartholomew, in which thousands of French Protestants were killed, had almost undone all that his predecessor had worked to accomplish and very nearly resulted in a severance of diplomatic relations between France and England. Most of the responsibility for

¹Sir Thomas Smith, Principal Secretary, to Walsingham, Greenwich, 19 March 1573, Dudley Digges, ed., The Complete Ambassador (London, Thomas Newcomb, 1655), p. 333, and Conyers Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925), I, pp. 257-61.

²Unsigned letter from London, 7 April 1573, Cal. Spain, II, pp. 467-68, C. W. Boase, ed., Register of the University of Oxford (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1885), I, p. 201, and D.N.B., XIII, p. 387. Hardly more than a sentence or two can ever be found concerning Dale's Embassy to France in any standard work on sixteenth-century English history.

this turn of events lies at the feet of the Queen Mother and widow of Henry II, Catherine de Medicis. Sensing a threat to her personal power and jealous of the growing friendship between her son, the young French King Charles IX, and the Huguenot leader, Gaspard de Coligny, she had contrived the massacre in a vain attempt to avoid what she felt would be the dangerous consequences of a bungled assassination attempt on the Admiral's life.¹

Catherine's favorite son and heir to the throne, the ardently Catholic Henry, Duke of Anjou, had, along with his confederates, the Ultra-Catholic Guise faction,² been deeply implicated in the massacre. With their fanatical hatred of Coligny and all Protestants, the results of that treachery was clearly a victory for both. But it was a victory that was to cost France dearly, for St. Bartholomew immediately precipitated the fourth of the religious civil wars that had and were to plague France for thirty-six years.³

Opposing the Guises were the French Houses of Bourbon and Montmorency, who had obviously been the most thwarted by that faction's return⁴ to

¹Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe Fénélon, French Ambassador in England to Charles IX, [London], 11, 13 and 19 Sept. 1572 and 6 April 1573, Correspondance Diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe Fénélon (Paris, Béthune, 1840), V, pp. 115-18, 120-31, 138-49, and 293-96 [hereafter cited Correspondance], Guido Lolgi to Alexander [Cardinal] Farnese, Paris, 25 Aug. 1572, Cal. Rome, II, pp. 36-37, Walsingham's servant William Faunt to Burghley, Paris, 22 Aug. 1572, Cal. For., X, p. 171. News from France, 22 Aug. 1572, Ibid., p. 170, Valentine Dale to the Lord Treasurer Burghley, Paris, 21 April 1573, Ibid., p. 318, and "Massacre of St. Bartholomew," Sept. 1572, Ibid., pp. 183-86.

²Named after their former founder and leader Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, who after being assassinated in 1563 was succeeded in the leadership by his son Henry, Duke of Guise.

³James Westfall Thompson's The Wars of Religion in France 1559-1576 (New York, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1909), Ch. 's 15 and 16, and Read's Walsingham, I, Ch. 4 give scholarly accounts of these events.

⁴It must be remembered that during the short period that Mary Stuart was the wife of the short-lived French King Francis II (1559-1560) her uncles, the Guises, were in ascendancy at the French Court.

power. The former through religious ties and the latter through ties of blood had both been strong supporters of Coligny, and his death was a severe blow to them. Though the Montmorencys were good Catholics, they had long opposed the Guises for personal and political reasons. The old patriarch of the family, Anne, Constable of France under Henry II, had been survived by four sons. The eldest two, Francis, Duke of Montmorency and Henry Damville were both Marshals in the French army as well as the acknowledged leaders of the family, while the two younger sons, the Counts of Merú and Thoré were still boys at the time of St. Bartholomew. Though suspect and forced to remain out of contact with the court after the Massacre, the Montmorencys, because of their Catholicism and past loyalty to the crown, were allowed to retain their freedom and offices.¹

The leaders of the Bourbon family at this time were the young and ambitious princes, Henry, King of Navarre and his cousin Henry of Condé, both of whom had saved their lives during the Massacre by abjuring their Protestant faith. Even though lacking in experience, after Coligny's death they were the recognized leaders of the Huguenot faction, and as such, represented a serious threat to the French Court. Consequently, immediately following St. Bartholomew, they were both put under close house arrest along with Catherine's youngest son, François, Duke of Alençon. The latter, though the only one of Catherine's sons who refused to participate in the Massacre, had long been discontented with the small part his mother and Charles IX had forced him to play in French affairs. Basically neutral in the question of religion and most decidedly an opponent of the Guises, he naturally tended to drift into the ranks of the opposition.²

¹Walsingham to Sir Thomas Smith, Paris, 13 and 16 Sept. 1576, Digges, The Complete Ambassador, pp. 239-40.

²Ibid., pp. 239-40, Guido Lolgi to Alexander Cardinal Farnese, Paris, 25 Aug. 1572, Cal. Rome, II, pp. 36-37, and Antonio Maria Salviati,

Thus it was, that within a few days' time, Elizabeth, who before had been slowly reversing England's ancient policy of friendship with Spain and enmity towards France,¹ suddenly found herself faced with a France ruled by the faction she most feared. She was to react by returning to her policy so often used in the previous civil wars; that of weakening the French throne by encouraging the dissident elements in French politics, i.e., the Huguenots, and especially after St. Bartholomew, the Politiques.² It was in carrying out this policy of Elizabeth that Valentine Dale's embassy was to serve such an important role in the coming months.

By the time Doctor Dale assumed his Ambassadorial duties in France in April of 1573, Anglo-French relations were better than they had been for some time. There were several reasons for this. The momentary strain caused by St. Bartholomew had passed, Charles IX was much too occupied with domestic problems to represent much of a threat to England's interests, and Elizabeth had realized that with Anglo-Spanish relations continuing to be strained, she could not afford to have France alienated too.

Nuncio in France to Ptolemy Galli, Cardinal of Como, Paris, 25 Sept. 1572, Ibid., p. 52.

¹For two years prior to the massacre Elizabeth had not only been involved in marriage negotiations with the Duke of Anjou but also had signed the defensive Treaty of Blois in April 1572 (Sir Thomas Smith to Burghley, Blois, 16 April 1572, Cal. For. XVII, p. 478). During the same period her seizure of Spanish pay ships in 1564, the subsequent cutting off of all trade with the Spanish Netherlands, and then the discovery of Spain's role in the Ridolphi Plot followed by the dismissal of the Spanish Ambassador Guerau de Spes placed Anglo-Spanish relations at the breaking point.

²The name given to that moderate group of both Catholics and Protestants who formed themselves into a middle party around 1573. They regarded peace and political reform as more urgent than resorting to arms to settle their religious differences.

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Private Secretary to Ambassador Dale

Prior to his departure for France, Dale had set about to collect an efficient embassy staff. One of his first requirements was a knowledgeable private secretary who was skilled in the diplomatic languages of Europe. His choice fell upon young Thomas Wilkes, who at the time was a probationer at Dale's Alma Mater, All Souls College, Oxford. Whether or not he personally knew Wilkes at the time is not certain, but at least three other key figures of Elizabethan government were acquainted with him and no doubt recommended him to the new ambassador.¹

One of these was Walsingham, who very probably came to know Wilkes during the latter part of the young man's eight years of travel and study on the continent. It is possible that the latter had spent some time at the English embassy in Paris or had even been used by Walsingham to gather news of foreign events during his travels.²

The other two men who knew Wilkes were Lord Delewarre, whose connection with Wilkes has already been discussed,³ and Elizabeth's favorite, Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. It was the latter whom Wilkes in later years acknowledged as the one most responsible in the beginning for "my preferment to her Majesty's Service."⁴

Whatever the source of Dale's preference for Wilkes, the latter willingly accepted the invitation to serve as his private secretary. Yet, because he was a probationer and not yet a fellow of All Souls's, the Warden,

¹Dale to Burghley, Moret, 31 May 1573, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXVII, f. 128.

²Ibid.

³See introductory chapter.

⁴Wilkes to Leicester, London, 12 July 1584, B.M., Cott. Mss., Titus B. VII, f. 30, and Leicester to Wilkes, [The Court], 3 May 1574, Cal. For. Addenda, XVII, p. 499.

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Subwarden, Deans, and fellows of that college were not prepared to allow him a leave of absence. "Loath to lose his College" through an unauthorized absence Wilkes expressed his misgivings to Dale who immediately prevailed upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, to write the college recommending Wilkes' leave. But this gesture convinced only the Warden. The fellows still objected, no doubt, because Wilkes had gone along to Paris with Dale anyway. By now Dale had become exasperated, especially having witnessed what he termed as Wilkes' "sufficiency both in the Italian and French tongue and other good learning and experience." Immediately the Ambassador sent a letter to Lord Burghley asking him "to write to my Lord of Canterbury to order the matter; he is their founder,¹ and by the Statutes hath the direction of such cases. . . . Surely," Dale pleaded, "he is one whom I cannot spare."²

The Lord Treasurer finally resolved the whole problem by sending a Privy Council letter to the Warden and fellows ordering them to grant the requisite licence of absence. Later, in a letter of thanks to Burghley, Dale revealed his own longstanding irritation with his Alma Mater by declaring that Wilkes was "sufficient for that college and a better place."³

For his first nine months at the English embassy in the Faubourg Saint Germain in Paris, Wilkes' infrequent correspondence reveals little

¹Dale is here referring to the office of Archbishop of Canterbury, for it was the holder of that office Henry Chicheley (1414-43), who founded All Souls in 1438.

²Dale to Burghley, Paris, 21 April 1573, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXVII, f. 39.

³Dale to Burghley, Moret, 31 May 1573, Ibid., fol. 128, and 24 May 1573, A.P.C., VIII, pp. 106-7. Dale was refused admittance to Oxford for a B.A. degree in 1541 and though eventually elected a fellow of All Souls College in 1542 he was later repeatedly denied the right to earn a doctor of civil law degree in the same college, forcing him eventually to obtain that coveted degree at Orleans in France. D.N.B., XIII, p. 387.

in the way of specifics about his duties. Along with his regular duties as Dale's private secretary, it is quite clear that he was also working under the direction of Walsingham.¹ His correspondence indicates that he corresponded officially with no one but Sir Francis and these letters are filled with intelligence reports affecting England's security as well as details on French affairs. In fact, in January 1574 he acknowledged the receipt of 200 crowns from Elizabeth which he promised Walsingham he would do "good service therewith." Exactly what "good service" he meant is not certain, but what is clear is that since his arrival, affairs in France had been moving in a direction that was to provide him with an important opportunity to serve England's interests.²

Since the confinement of the three princes, Alençon, Navarre, and Condé, following St. Bartholomew's Massacre, Catherine de Medicis and her two elder sons, Charles IX and Henry of Anjou, had been resting uneasily. In May of 1573 the factious nobles of Poland had compromisingly elected Anjou to the vacant post of King of Poland. Flattered by this honor yet fearful of its possible consequences, Catherine and Henry vacillated. If the latter went to Poland as its King, he would leave behind the aspiring Alençon, who would then be the closest to the French throne. Should the sickly Charles IX suddenly die, Alençon, who was beginning to be the rallying point for Huguenot and Politique dissatisfaction, just might succeed in acquiring that throne. Catherine's

¹Since Walsingham seems to have held no official office in Elizabeth's government from the time he arrived home in April 1573 until his appointment as "Second Secretary" to the unwell Sir Thomas Smith in December of the same year, it is unclear in what capacity he functioned. No doubt Burghley recognized his vast knowledge of Continental affairs and so utilized his advice and willingness to help in matters of foreign policy.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, Paris and Poissy, 31 July and 8 Aug. 1573 and 19 Jan. 1574, Cal. For., X, pp. 395, 403 and 460, B.M., Harl. Mss., 1583, f. 11, and B.M., Cott. Mss. Calig. E. VI, f. 279.

indecision ended when the Polish nobles began to grow angry at the latter's delay in going to Poland. Quickly deciding it was too ripe a plum to let fall, Catherine finally induced her reluctant son to set off for Cracow in November of 1573.¹

With Anjou off to Poland and Charles IX's health failing, Catherine's worst fears began to be realized. Now, Alençon, who had no strong feelings one way or the other when it came to religion, began to emerge as the nominal head of the Politique elements in France, be they Protestant or Catholic. Should he or either of the other two captive princes escape, the opposition forces, which had been growing especially strong since St. Bartholomew, would no doubt be able to obtain outside aid and eventually dictate terms to the Government. Elizabeth too began to see the possibilities of these events and soon several plots were in the offing to free Alençon and the other two princes.²

The first, in December 1573 was designed to help the former escape to England, but it came to nothing.³ Much better planned, the second escape attempt was to take place on the morning of March 1st, 1574 while the Court was at St. Germain. Taking advantage of the February 28 Mardi Gras feast the Huguenots were to capture several towns, and during the confusion a troop of Huguenot horse was to ride close enough to St.

¹Catherine to Fénélon, Fontainbleau, 25 May 1573, Correspondance, VII, pp. 414-15, "Election of the King of Poland," 5 June 1573, Cal. For., X, pp. 383-84, Dale to Burghley, Paris, 6 Sept. 1573, Ibid., p. 414, Pietro Bizarro to Burghley, Augsburg, Ibid., p. 445, and Dale to Burghley, Poissy, 12 Feb. 1574, Ibid., p. 466.

²Ibid., and "Political Discourse," [1574], Ibid., p. 591.

³Hector de La Ferrière, "Les Denieres Conspirations du Règne de Charles IX, 1573-74," Revue des Questions Historiques, 2 Seq., XLVIII (1890-91), pp. 421-70. This article goes into detail not only on this first escape attempt but also on the subsequent ones, which were far more important in terms of the reaction they caused at the French Court.

Germain to enable Alençon and Navarre to escape. If it succeeded, the plan was to declare Henry of Anjou dispossessed of his rights as heir-presumptive and to recognize Alençon as the heir to the crown along with granting him his rightful title as Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom. Everything went as planned in the "Enterprise of St. Germain" until the unit of horse under Seigneur Guitry¹ arrived ahead of schedule thus forewarning Catherine. Losing no time, the Queen Mother immediately "bundled up" the two princes and hurried them off to Paris, there to be cross-examined by a furious Charles IX.²

Much to the dismay of the Guises and the Chancellor, Charles de Biragues, the emotional and revealing interview of the Princes with the King resulted in a nominal reconciliation of Alençon and Navarre with Charles. It also saw the appointment of Condé (who had convinced both Charles and his mother that he had known nothing of the above plot), to the vacant post of Governor of Picardy as a sop to Southern Huguenot and Politique bellicosity. This latter development had the not surprising result of Condé's eventual escape from Picardy into Germany where he immediately set about soliciting aid for the Huguenot and Politique cause.³

Frightened by the near success of the recent escape attempt and angered by the pardons granted to the three Princes, Alençon and Navarre's

¹Chief of the confederates in Normandy. The Counts Merú and Thoré were also in on the planning.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, Paris, 16 April 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXX, f. 206, Dale to Burghley, Paris, 22 April 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 491, Antonio Maria Salviati Nuncio in France to Cardinal Como, Papal Secretary for Affairs of State, [Paris], 13 March 1574, Cal. Rome, II, pp. 149-50, and Sigismondo di Cavalli, Venetian Ambassador in France to the Signory, Paris, 28 Feb., 10, 17, and 24 March 1574, Cal. Ven., VII, pp. 500-504. It is evident that Elizabeth was well informed of this plot and had gone so far as to guarantee a safe-conduct to Alençon should he desire to escape into England. See "Safe Conduct," Greenwich, 16 March 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 477 and Dale to Walsingham, Paris, 1 April 1574, Ibid., p. 484.

³See previous footnote.

enemies at Court apparently devised a plot to destroy them. In early April, when these two failed in their third bid for freedom, they suddenly found themselves the victims of their adversaries' strategy. A rumor was quickly spread that these two along with the Marshal Montmorency (who had foolishly accepted an invitation by Charles to visit the Court),¹ had planned an Easter Day attempt against the King and his mother. Primed to believe such a rumor,² especially after recent events, and spurred on by the Guises and the Chancellor Biragues, the unwell Charles decided to act promptly. On April 8th, Alençon, Navarre, and Montmorency had the gates of the Castle of Bois de Vincennes suddenly shut on them and a heavy guard posted. Two of the former's entourage, the cowardly La Mole and assassin Coconnas were immediately arrested as accomplices, and in spite of their master's vain entreaties, were beheaded and quartered. Shocked at such drastic measures, Alençon and Henry of Navarre were terrified that, "either by public justice or secret violence their lives should have been taken from them."³ Had it not been for the hasty intervention of Catherine and some of the Council there can be no doubt but

¹It was hoped by some, including Montmorency's wife, who was a sister to Charles IX, that his appearance at Court would help to pacify the rebellious Huguenots in Languedoc who were cooperating with the Marshall's brother, Damville. See Wilkes to Walsingham, Poissy, 12 Feb. 1574, B.M., Harl. Mss. 1582, f. 11, Cavalli to the Signory, Paris, 5 and 9 April 1574, Cal. Ven., VII, p. 505, and Dale to Burghley, Paris, 5 May 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 496.

²There is some confusion among historians as to whether there was a third escape attempt or only a rumor of such concocted by their enemies to destroy them. See Henry M. Baird, History of the Rise of the Huguenots of France (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1879), II, p. 627 and Thompson, Wars of Religion, pp. 480-81. A careful reading of all the relevant documents seems to indicate the validity of the above position that there was a third escape attempt and that the Princes' enemies exaggerated the intentions of the plot in an effort to force the King into drastic action. See Cavalli to the Signory, Paris, 10 April 1574, Cal. Ven., VII, p. 506, Dale to Burghley, [Paris], April 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 487, "Occurents in France", 10 April 1574, Ibid., Dale to Burghley, Paris, 7 April 1574, Ibid., p. 485, and Wilkes to Walsingham, Paris, 22 April 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXX, f. 215.

³Wilkes' report on conditions in France 1574-1576, [1577], P.R.O.,

that Charles would have been pushed into executing Navarre, Alençon, and the Marshals Cosse and Montmorency. She apparently realized that to allow such drastic action would have sunk France into a bloodbath such as it had not yet known in its Civil Wars.

Remaining in such "distress and fear of their lives" the two Princes immediately found the means to let Doctor Dale know of their serious plight and to ask that Elizabeth be "moved to use her mediation to intreat for their safety and liberty." Surprisingly, it was not until this point that Elizabeth became concerned enough about the safety of Alençon, Navarre, and now Montmorency to take serious steps for their safety. Desirous of knowing first hand the exact nature of the prisoners' situation and determined to convey to them her assurances of support, Elizabeth found in Wilkes the abilities and courage necessary to establish secret contact with the Princes.¹

S.P. 78, I, ff. 144-48, Charles IX to Fénélon, Vincennes, 17 April 1574, Correspondance, VII, pp. 455-59, Charles IX to Fénélon, Vincennes, 2 May 1574, Ibid., pp. 465-68, Claude Haton, ed., Collection de Documents Inédits sur L'Histoire de France (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1857), II, p. 765, Cavalli to the Signory, Paris, 10, 14, and 19 April 1574, Cal. Ven., VII, pp. 506-9, "Occurents in France", 10 April 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 487, and Dale to Burghley, Paris, 22 April 1574, Ibid., p. 491. The imprisonment of Montmorency was a near success for the Guises who hoped to feed their old and bitter hatred of the Montmorency-Chatillon house by the execution of the Marshal. But it was not to be, for the Guises and the Court had been erroneously informed that his brother Damville, the Governor of Languedoc had been captured. When Catherine and Charles learned soon after that Damville was still at large and very much in league with the Huguenots of the South they dared not allow his brother's execution. Dale to Burghley, Paris, 5 May 1574, Ibid., p. 496 and Dale to Walsingham, Paris, 9 Aug. 1574, Ibid., p. 538. The two youngest Montmorency brothers Thoré and Merú by this time were following Condé in exile.

¹Dale to Burghley, Paris, [?], 22 and 27 April 1574, Cal. For., X, pp. 487, 491, and 493, Wilkes to Walsingham, Paris, 22 April 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXX, f. 215. Brief on Wilkes' diplomatic career, May 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154, and Fénélon to Charles IX, 16 May 1574, Correspondance, VI, pp. 110-17.

Because of the obvious dangers involved in such a plan,¹ Elizabeth and Walsingham wisely felt it best to instruct Wilkes personally rather than risk having letters of instruction intercepted. So, sometime early in April of 1574 Wilkes was back in England and then quickly before the middle of the same month, was on his way back to Paris with his directives. Coming by way of Picardy he found that province "sore troubled" because of Condé's recent departure into Germany. In fact, he found the whole area of North-western France "In such combustion that I doubted my safe arrival at Paris." Upon his return Wilkes found that his hurried trip to England was so suspect that he was "forced" to hand over his packet of letters for inspection at the French Court before delivering them to Doctor Dale. Fortunately, Wilkes' secret instructions were not among those documents in his packet, nor do they seem to have been preserved in any document. Still, the outline of them can be seen from his subsequent conduct and it clearly shows that Elizabeth was determined to help the Princes effect an escape.²

At the Court later the same day, Wilkes learned that the Princes and Montmorency were still prisoners in Vincennes and "in great danger of their lives," though the latter was not so closely guarded as the other two. In spite of Dale's earlier contact with the prisoners, Wilkes was forced to find his own "means" of secretly communicating with them. Later the reason for this became evident when Wilkes learned that they had come to distrust Dale whom they felt had revealed their last escape attempt.³

¹Henry M. Baird, The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886), I, p. 16, in an incorrect footnote (no. 3), quotes one French source as claiming that Catherine had surrounded Alençon and Navarre with as many as twenty-six spys.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, Paris, 16 April, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXX, f. 206.

³Wilkes to Walsingham, Paris, 16 and 22 April 1574, Ibid., ff. 206 and 215, and Dale to Burghley, [Paris], April 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 487.

Wilkes soon found a "gentlewoman" whom he knew "to be very sure," who promised to deliver to and receive secret information from Alençon. By April 22 he was able to report to Walsingham that both Navarre and Alençon (who still suspected Dale) desired a "privy token" from Elizabeth so that they might be assured of her friendship. Because they were so "willing" Wilkes pressed Walsingham to obtain the "token" so that matters might go forward quickly. He also reported what must have been reassuring news for Elizabeth, that the Princes, though "straightly kept" were no longer in immediate danger.¹

Wilkes was not the only secret agent employed in this matter; for Walsingham's trusted embassy servant Jacomo Manucci was also being used. Whatever his duties were, Dale was very soon pleased with the results obtained by both agents. Not only had Jacomo done well but "Wilkes travail," according to Dale, "may serve to great purpose not only for this present but for any time hereafter." Together their efforts were winning "honest hearts marvelously" for Elizabeth.²

Elizabeth too soon expressed her appreciation for Wilkes' "careful and discreet service" and instructed Leicester to send him the "token" asked for by the Princes. He was admonished no longer to trust the "gentlewoman" he was using as a liason with the Princes and to see to it that if he and Dale must use such means that it be an individual appointed by the Privy Council and no other. Wilkes was ordered personally to deliver the "token" and Leicester's letter as proof of Elizabeth's sincere desire to help the prisoners out of their unfortunate situation.³

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, Paris, 16 and 22 April 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXX, ff. 206 and 215.

²Dale to Walsingham, Paris, 22 April 1574, B.M., Add. Mss. 4104, f. 61b.

³Leicester to Wilkes, [?], 3 May 1574, Cal. For., Addenda, XVII, pp. 498-99.

How Wilkes managed to deliver these items without being discovered is not known, but this and such further rendezvous as he made were not carried out without great danger to his own life; a fact that Henry of Navarre would not soon forget and one that Alençon apparently failed to appreciate.¹

With Wilkes' intelligence on the Princes being directed back to England, Elizabeth, in May, decided to send Sir Thomas Leighton, Governor of Jersey, as a special envoy to remonstrate with Catherine concerning Alençon's and Navarre's safety. Ostensibly sent to convey Elizabeth's sympathies at the protracted illness of Charles IX, his instructions were to advise peace and to counsel the Queen Mother to avoid precipitate and impassioned actions. He was also instructed to ask permission to speak with Alençon.²

Upon his arrival in Paris in the middle of May, the English envoy found it impossible to hold open communication with Alençon and so was forced to do the same secretly through the medium of Wilkes. In this manner it was learned from Alençon that the expected death of Charles IX greatly jeopardized his safety. Informing Wilkes that a possibility for escape existed only if he could acquire the necessary money to bribe his guards, he asked that Elizabeth be induced to send him thirty to forty thousands crowns for that purpose. Informed of this, Leighton and Dale immediately passed this information on to Burghley and Walsingham who, no doubt with Elizabeth's approval, feverishly worked out a plan for helping Alençon to escape. Taking up the Duke's suggestion that money be sent to bribe the guards the Lord Treasurer arranged to have it sent

¹Brief on Wilkes diplomatic career, May 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL doc. no. 154, see this chapter pp. 29-31.

²Leighton's instructions, 2 May 1574, Cal. For., X, pp. 495-96.

into France by several means and in small amounts since secretly conveying large sums was always difficult. For a while it began to look as though Wilkes' assignment was to be doubly dangerous and arduous. But within a month's time two surprising developments occurred which thwarted this plan; the first, though expected, came sooner than anticipated and the second was totally unexpected.¹

The first development occurred on May 30th before Leighton had been able, both diplomatically and secretly, to accomplish much in behalf of the two Princes. The French King died at the early age of twenty-three after his recent dissipated and perverted behavior (spawned by a vain attempt to blot out the horrors of St. Bartholomew) had only the more quickly destroyed his already frail body.²

Fearing that both Alençon and Navarre would find immense advantages in the suddenly confused political situation, and to forestall any new escape attempt before the new King was crowned, Catherine immediately transferred them from Vincennes to the Louvre. There she placed an even tighter guard upon them, and even went so far as to have bars fastened to the windows of their living quarters.³

¹Dale to Elizabeth, Paris, 17 May 1574, Ibid., p. 499, Dale to Burghley, Paris, 22 May 1574, Ibid., p. 503, Leighton to Walsingham, Paris, 22 May 1574, Ibid., p. 503-4, Burghley to Walsingham, [?], 26 May 1574, Ibid., pp. 506-7, Wilkes oration to Catherine de Medicis, Lyons, 7 Sept. 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXXII, ff. 7-10, and Fabius Mirto Frangipani, Nuncio in France to Cardinal Como, Paris, 11 Aug. 1574, Cal. Rome, II, p. 183.

²Salviati to Cardinal Como, 2 June 1574, Ibid., p. 175.

³News from Paris, 7 June 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 512 and Cavalli to the Signory, Paris, 9 June 1574, Cal. Ven., VII, pp. 513-14. Catherine's fears were well grounded, for time after time, between the death of Charles IX and the arrival of Henry III, Alençon and Navarre tried to escape. See Cavalli and Morosini to the Signory, Paris, 16 June and 26 July 1574, Ibid., pp. 514-17.

Meanwhile, informed of his brother's death, the Duke of Anjou "escaped" from his newly acquired post as King of Poland and hurriedly started back to France and the title of Henry III. He and his mother Catherine had long been suspicious of Alençon's political designs on the French crown and now that the latter was a step closer to the throne and had a significant following in France, the Queen Mother would have to watch him doubly close until Henry was safely seated on the French throne.¹

No doubt, Catherine also suspected that if the English Queen and her counselors had any plans to help free Alençon in hopes of his being able to extract significant concessions from the French Government, it would be at this time of political instability. She knew that Anjou's ardent Catholicism, pro-Guise tendencies, and extreme dislike of Elizabeth all posed a serious threat to England. It was these suspicions on the part of Catherine that resulted in the second development which thwarted Elizabeth's plans to assist in Alençon's escape.

With the increased surveillance of the two Princes, it was not long before Wilkes' actions became suspect by Catherine. By the second week in June she had written to the French ambassador in London, Seigneur de la Mothe Fénelon, concerning his "menees" and expressed her opinion that there was afoot some practice against the French Court. Fénelon complained to Elizabeth about it but nothing was admitted and apparently Wilkes was not even warned of Catherine's suspicions.² A short while

¹Henry Killegrew, English Ambassador to Scotland to [Walsingham], Edinburgh, 18 July 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 532, Dale to Smith and Walsingham, Paris, 21 June 1574, Ibid., p. 518, Dale to Burghley, Paris, 21 June 1574, Ibid., pp. 517-18.

²Paris, 11 June 1574, Lettres de Catherine de Medicis, ed. M. Le Cte Baguenault (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1901), V, pp. 12-14 [hereafter cited: Lettres], and Fénelon to Catherine, [London], 27 June 1574, Correspondance, VI, pp. 157-58.

later Catherine's suspicions were confirmed.¹ A trap was laid in Paris to apprehend both Jacomo and Wilkes, but fortunately, through the timely "intelligence" of Henry of Navarre, who had somehow learned of the trap, Wilkes escaped. The less fortunate Jacomo, however, was captured and immediately clapped into prison.² Fearing for his own safety, Wilkes was soon dispatched back to England by Dale but not before Catherine's "bitter" and personally written "letter of complaint" was delivered into Elizabeth's hands. In that letter, dated from Paris on July 10, 1574, the Queen Mother accused Wilkes of having stirred up Alençon "to rebellion" by telling him that Elizabeth was willing to send men and 50,000 crowns to assist in his escape. She also warned the English Queen not to trust the many lies that Wilkes would dishonestly claim were spoken by Alençon and Navarre. Her most disconcerting revelation however, was Catherine's claim that all this information had been revealed to her by Alençon.³

According to Fénélon, Wilkes had an interesting and, as it turned out, surprising interview with Elizabeth upon his arrival back in England.

¹It is unclear how Catherine learned of Wilkes' activities. In later years Wilkes himself claimed that Alençon had revealed them (P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154), and indeed this is what Catherine herself wrote to Elizabeth (Paris, 10 July 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 529). However, it seems very possible that the Queen Mother gained her information from another source (as she herself later intimated. See Wilkes to Walsingham, Lyons, 10 Sept. 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXXII, fols. 18-19), and merely told Elizabeth that Alençon was the informer in order to create distrust between her youngest son and the English. Further evidence that Alençon did not reveal the information is shown by the fact that Elizabeth still trusted him enough to insist that secret rendezvous continue to be made with him, (see Ibid.). Still one should not lose sight of the fact that Alençon had the type of personality that could have purposely wrecked something designed to benefit him and one has also to remember the influence Catherine could at times exercise over her sons.

²Brief on Wilkes diplomatic career, July 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154.

³Lettres, V, pp. 53-54. Even the Venetian Ambassadors in Paris, Cavalli and Morosini, were aware at this time that Jacomo and Wilkes had been working "to corrupt the guards to allow the escape of the princes." 15 July 1574, Cal. Ven., VII, pp. 516-17.

Elizabeth displayed great interest throughout the interview and concluded along with Burghley, Leicester, and Walsingham, that Catherine had proceeded in this matter more from conjecture than from evidence. Leicester told Fénélon that Elizabeth was completely against following "the fashion of the world" which would mean leaving the whole issue without satisfaction, and therefore intended--and this is what must have surprised as well as dismayed Wilkes--to send Wilkes hot-footing it back to Catherine to justify his actions or never see her [Elizabeth's] face again. Always willing to place the blame on another, Elizabeth, with tongue-in-cheek, wrote Catherine expressing her astonishment that Wilkes was engaged in such activities. She further said that if his complicity was proved he "should be made to smart well" both for casting suspicion on her own name and to teach him "not to meddle in the affairs of princes."¹

Disheartened and "to the apparent danger of my poor carcass," Wilkes dragged himself back to France to clear his name with Catherine. Not only did he fear the wrath of the Queen Mother but amazingly Elizabeth had commanded him to re-establish contact with Alençon and Navarre. Setting out on August 9th Wilkes discovered the Court had moved from Paris to Lyons. Traveling on alone and "with much appearance of danger" Wilkes slowly made his way along the thirty-five posts that made up the distance between Paris and Lyons. Arriving on September 3rd he found Catherine gone again, this time to meet her son returning from Poland. So he cooled his heels until the new King and his mother returned on the 7th, which day he, along with Valentine Dale, had audience with her.²

¹Fénélon to Catherine, 28 July 1574, Correspondence, VI, pp. 199-200, and Elizabeth to Catherine, Gloucester, 10 Aug. 1574, Cal. For., X, pp. 538-39. See also Wilkes report [1577?], P.R.O., S.P. 78, I, ff. 144-48 and brief on Wilkes diplomatic career, Aug. 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154.

²Ibid., and Wilkes to Walsingham, Lyons, 10 Sept. 1574, P.R.O.,

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The meeting did little to satisfy either party and a great deal to worry Wilkes. The latter began by presenting a letter from Elizabeth to Catherine who, after methodically reading it began to charge Wilkes with "evil offices in meddling too far" in French affairs. Wilkes asked her to be more specific and she complied by charging him with personally visiting Navarre. To this Wilkes admitted having made two such contacts but he insisted both were for relatively unimportant reasons. The first was only to inform him that his mother's jewels which Elizabeth held for safekeeping were still his whenever he should come for them, and the second visit was made under the direction of Mr. Leighton to ask Navarre whether or not the envoy's intercession for their liberty had done any good. Ignoring the first answer, Catherine retorted that Mr. Leighton need not have worried since neither of the Princes was in danger.

When Wilkes next questioned the validity of Catherine's claim that Alençon had been the source of such revelations, the Queen Mother quickly denied that Alençon had done such. She insisted that she had learned the same from another in whom Wilkes had confided. "Thrice" and "very intently" Wilkes urged her to confront him with his accusers. Bluffing, Catherine stated that she would do so, but upon seeing Wilkes' eagerness for such a confrontation she quickly changed the subject. Wilkes, realizing she was through talking to him, stepped aside while she issued a solemn warning to Doctor Dale. As England's chief representative to France she "required him" to see to it that none who worked under him and especially Wilkes, should ever again deal in any such "practices." If, Catherine warned, the latter were again to "intrude" himself into French affairs he would be made to "repent it," for they

would be forced "to do what they would not willingly do." The Queen Mother then concluded the interview by professing her good will towards Elizabeth.¹

As if Wilkes were not convinced she meant it, others came to him advising him to "beware" of Catherine in the future. In fact, so worried did Wilkes become by the whole affair that he pleaded with both Walsingham and Leicester to secure for him a letter of defense from Elizabeth "that it may be a sufficient shield to defend me against any of their privie dealings against me for I assure you I do not trust her." In fact, he continued,

[I am] forced to have a special and narrow eye to their dealings, that if I see any danger I may trust to a fair pair of heels if need be: for some wisemen are of the opinion that honesty will scant keep his head on his shoulders long among them.²

For some unexplained reason, Wilkes was allowed to remain in France and so was able to continue gathering valuable information. One of his letters from Lyons, written to Walsingham on November 4th 1574, is a classic in its assessment of the personalities of Catherine and Henry III, the power structure of the French Court at that time, and the conditions under which he and many others were having to carry out their responsibilities.

Whereas you write that some of judgement are of opinion that the Queen Mother's authority will be abridged by this King, I can assure you, that she hath it now as ample as ever, using that art with which she did with the late King to withdraw him from the knowledge of affairs. And certainly it seemeth that his travail hath little augmented his knowledge; and his capacity is far inferior to the others. He is more in show and in countenance than Charles [IX] was; but far more simple. The greatest matters are carried away by the Queen Mother and the Chancellor [Rene

¹Ibid., and Dale to Sir Thomas Smith and Walsingham, Lyons, 11 Sept. 1574, B.M., Add. Mss. 4101, ff. 101-6. See also Catherine to F  nelon, Lyons, 8 Sept. 1574, Lettres, V, pp. 84-86 for her brief report of this audience.

²Wilkes to Leicester, Lyons, 10 Sept. 1574, B.M., Harl. Mss. 287, ff. 13-14.

de Biragues]; and Chiverny [Phillipe Hurault M. de,] serveth for a third Person with a yea or a nay, to confirm or deny with them what they will do or undo. The other part of the Council is divided from them; they urge peace; the three aforesaid with all their power persuade the Wars,¹ so that the King floateth between the storm and the rock. The Queen Mother's pestiferous counsel enchants him and the present misery of him and his country appalleth him.²

With information like this coming in, it is no wonder that Walsingham and especially Elizabeth allowed Wilkes to stay in France in spite of the French Court's suspicions concerning him.

Three days after his stormy interview with Catherine, Wilkes, not surprisingly, reported to Walsingham that as yet he had not come up with "any convenient means to speak unto Alençon and Navarre to see how they be satisfied, and to deal with them according as Elizabeth commanded me." Still, he promised to keep trying. By October 23rd he had succeeded in re-establishing contact with the two Princes,³ but as one would expect, his efforts in this matter were more and more hampered. No doubt a great deal more cautious in his intelligence work, certainly more closely watched by the French, much disliked by Catherine, and running extremely low on funds for such activities, Wilkes' value to the English effort in France

¹At first appearance it may seem that Wilkes erred in attributing a desire for war to the normally compromising and "Politique" nature of Catherine de Medicis. However, a careful reading of the documents of this period will indicate quite clearly that it was Catherine who, in advance of her son's arrival from Poland, had made military preparations to resume the war against the Huguenots. Such plans were made to the great dismay of many who hoped that Henry III would be encouraged and inclined to assume a conciliatory policy. See Dale to Smith and Walsingham, Lyons, 11 Sept. 1574, B.M., Add. Mss. 4101, ff. 101-6 and Wilkes to Walsingham, Lyons, 10 Sept. 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXXII, ff. 18-19. Also for a superb character sketch of the new King, Henry III, see DeLamar Jensen's Diplomacy and Dogmatism (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 30.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, Lyons, 4 Nov. 1574, B.M., Add. Mss. 4104, f. 116.

³Wilkes to Walsingham, Lyons, 10 Sept. 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXXII, ff. 18-19 and Wilkes to Walsingham, Lyons, 23 Oct. 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 567.

became noticeably less. Thus, in the closing months of this, his first diplomatic assignment, one hears less and less of him.¹

In October of 1574 Elizabeth had dispatched to France one of Leicester's men, Roger, Lord North. Sent ostensibly to congratulate the new King on his accession, actually he came to encourage Henry III to make peace with the Huguenots, to renew the Anglo-French alliance,² and most important to discern the feeling of the French court towards England.³ In November Wilkes reported that North's reception had been less than warm, and that "we wax every day colder than [the] other, and all we can do will kindle no fire where it should be."⁴ North certainly seconded this report in his own correspondence. He conveyed to Elizabeth the no doubt infuriating report that Catherine had openly mocked her in his presence by poking fun at two dwarfs dressed up like the English Queen. This, along with lesser indignities and the desire to aid the Huguenot cause in France, eventually pushed Elizabeth into the decision to send a secret agent into Germany. It was approximately at this same time that someone in her Privy Council drew up a list of "noblemen and gentlemen that have served and are fit to be employed in foreign messages" and on that list was "Mr. Thomas Wilkes'" name.⁵ He had served well in his first

¹Ibid., Wilkes to Walsingham, Lyons, 10 Oct. 1574, P.R.O., S.P. 70, CXXII, ff. 18-19, and Wilkes to Walsingham, Lyons, 4 and 8 Nov. 1574, B.M., Add. Mss. 4104, ff. 116 and 117.

²The Treaty of Blois signed on April 19, 1572 between England and France. It provided for a defensive league between Charles IX and Elizabeth, and itemized the amounts of sea and land forces to be provided by either party if needed.

³North's instructions, 5 Oct. 1574, Cal. For., X, pp. 560-62, and Secret instructions for Lord North, Ibid., pp. 563-64.

⁴Wilkes to Walsingham, Lyons, 8 Nov. 1574, B.M., Add. Mss. 4104, f. 117.

⁵B.M., Lansd. Mss. 683, ff. 48-49 and Dale to Burghley, Paris, 5 May 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 496.

assignment in France, he was knowledgeable in Continental affairs, and his usefulness to the embassy in Paris had become limited due to trouble with the Queen Mother. So it was, that in February 1575 the decision was reached to call Wilkes home to be that secret agent.¹

Mission to Frederick III

Since his escape from Picardy into Germany in the early spring of 1574, the Prince of Condé had been using Strasbourg as his headquarters in drumming up support for the Huguenot and Politique cause. Initially, some felt this young, inexperienced, but "worthy young impe"² could not help but fail in his grandiose designs. Frangipani, the Papal Nuncio in France, offered his opinion that because Condé "is a boy without authority, valor, experience in governing, or money," he would fail in his attempt to "raise foreigners for the invasion of this realm." However, the Nuncio underestimated both Condé and the sympathy for French Huguenots felt by many foreign princes.³

Within a short time Condé's efforts with Frederick III, the Elector Palatine,⁴ had gained a solid promise of 8,000 horse for use in an "armed intervention into France," while from Bern and Zurich came money to raise more men. Then, his confederate the Count Merú, whose eldest brother was still being held at the French Court, arrived in London in the early part of September 1574 to plead for aid in obtaining the release of the

¹Brief on Wilkes' diplomatic career, Feb. 1575, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154.

²Thomas Randolph to Walsingham, Paris, 11 May 1576, Cal. For., XI, p. 331.

³Frangipani to Cardinal Como, Paris, 11 Aug. 1574, Cal. Rome, II, p. 183.

⁴Sometimes referred to as Frederick the Pius. He had been not only the first German prince to accept Calvinism but was also the most active. Under him Heidelberg became the foremost center of German Calvinism and since the acceptance of that faith almost invariably meant

Marshal. His efforts struck a responsive chord with Elizabeth who was soon to promise a loan of money for Condé.¹

At the same time anti-Government sentiment had been increasing among the Huguenot and Politique factions in Southern France. Upset at Damville's independent course as Governor of Languedoc, the blundering new King, Henry III, in August 1574, summoned him to Court to answer for his actions. Not wishing to repeat his elder brother's mistake, Damville refused the summons and set about to create a firm alliance among the two southern opposition groups, where before there had only been weak cooperation. Successful in his efforts, Damville, a strong Catholic, was recognized as the coalition's leader and he in turn opened his council to several Protestant members.²

The logical sequel to these separate centers of rebellion was a coordination of Condé's and Damville's efforts. Thus, in November of the same year a "union" was concluded between the two with Damville becoming Condé's lieutenant.³

No doubt it was the ominous and growing threat of such intrigues by the Bourbon and Montmorency families that began to turn Catherine and

the adoption of an activist foreign policy, Condé naturally made overtures to him.

¹Morosini to the Signory, Lyons, 28 Aug. 1574, Cal. Ven., VII, p. 519, Morosini to the Signory, Paris, 12 March 1575, Ibid., p. 527, Salviati to Cardinal Como, Lyons, 6 Sept. 1574, Cal. Rome, II, p. 184, Wilkes to Walsingham, Paris, 31 May 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 507, Dale to Smith and Walsingham, Lyons, 23 Oct. 1574, Ibid., p. 566, and Merú to Elizabeth, London, 9 Sept. 1574, Ibid., p. 548.

²"League in Languedoc," 25 April 1575 [?], Ibid., XI, pp. 48-49. The date of this league appears to be wrong. Thompson in his Wars of Religion, p. 489 claims it was concluded in August 1574. See also Dale to Smith and Walsingham, Lyons, 23 Oct. 1574, Cal. For., X, p. 566.

³Dale to Burghley, Lyons, 9 Dec. 1574, Ibid., pp. 577-78, Doctor Thomas Wilson, English envoy to the Spanish Netherlands to Burghley, [Antwerp], 27 Dec. 1574, Ibid., p. 585, and Morosini to the Signory, Lyons, 26 Nov. 1574, Cal. Ven., VII, p. 522.

Henry III from a war policy to one of negotiation. In fact, in December 1574, the King made some preliminary offers of peace to Condé who was interested in the possibility of settling matters diplomatically rather than by force of arms; that is, if all his conditions were met. As a result of this apparent willingness to negotiate, Condé and "many other Huguenot chiefs" assembled in conference at Basel during December 1574 and January 1575 to discuss the conditions of peace they would submit to Henry III.¹

As reports of these peace overtures between Condé and Henry III began to reach England, Elizabeth, who was seriously considering sending money to Condé, began to doubt the necessity of having to do so. Counsel was taken, and in early February a decision quickly reached to call Wilkes home from France to be sent on a secret mission to the Elector Frederick III in Heidelberg.²

Wilkes' instructions were: first, to find out from Count Frederick if indeed Condé and his party still planned to raise an army of invasion, and secondly, to obtain the Elector's opinion as to whether or not such an army could be reasonably expected to withstand the French King's forces for sufficiently long to achieve a victory. Because of Elizabeth's hesitation to break openly her signed peace with France, Wilkes was also instructed to ask the Count's opinion on the feasibility of a negotiated settlement. If his reply were negative he was to be informed of her willingness to lend Condé the funds necessary to aid the Huguenots. Wilkes was to admonish Frederick to remember that if the invasion failed,

¹Morosini to the Signory, Lyons, 29 Dec. 1574, Ibid., p. 523, and Jerome de Federicis, Nuncio at Savoy to Cardinal Como, Turin, 18 Jan. 1575, Cal. Rome, II, p. 194.

²Wilkes' instructions, 16 Feb. 1575, Cal. For., XI, pp. 15-17.

Condé and his confederates would in all probability be constrained to accept a settlement with more disadvantages than they now suffered. Finally, he was instructed to acquaint Merú with all these matters.¹

To maintain the secrecy of the mission Wilkes was told to travel under the guise of meeting Sir Philip Sidney, the Elizabethan soldier, statesman, and poet, who would shortly be traveling home from Prague via Heidelberg. Then, upon meeting Frederick III, Wilkes was to "require him" to let it be believed that he was there concerning,

a certain horrid damnable book lately made in Germany, entitled against Moses, Christ, and Mohomet, and to require him [Frederick] that the same may be condemned and punished as so unspeakable and devilish attempt may be vanquished and suppressed.²

Departing for Heidelberg on February 22, Wilkes traveled by way of Antwerp and Brussels arriving sometime after the middle of March. He expected it to be a quick mission, though as always it turned out to be much longer. This, along with the secrecy of the mission and the fact that he reported no "convenient" means to send a written report, most likely resulted in his delivering only a verbal report when he returned home early in May 1575. Consequently, there remains no written record of his negotiations, even though subsequent events make it possible to reconstruct them with a fair degree of accuracy.³

It appears that Wilkes conferred with both Frederick III and his son Duke John Casimir. He learned from his negotiations that there was little if any chance of a negotiated peace in France. He was then

¹Ibid. This was not the first such action Elizabeth had taken nor certainly the last. She nearly always turned to the Palatinate when she wished to assist the French rebels. First it was to Frederick III until his death in 1576 and then to his younger son John Casimir.

²Ibid.

³Brief of Wilkes' diplomatic career, Feb. 1575, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154, Doctor Wilson to Burghley, Antwerp, 13 March 1575, Lettenhove, VII, p. 475, Wilkes to Burghley, Heidelberg, 30 March

asked if Elizabeth could provide a loan of 150,000 crowns, payable in Cologne, to help finance a second army to assist the one presently under preparation. They told Wilkes this second force should consist of 6,000 cavalry, 4,000 Swiss, and 5,000 or 6,000 arquebussiers as well as artillery and munitions. Casimir would undertake to raise and lead the army into France to aid Condé (who would be leading the first army), and a promise was given that no peace would be concluded without the town of Calais reverting to Elizabeth. Frederick himself promised to contribute 50,000 crowns, and Elizabeth was to be allowed to send an English agent to accompany the Duke throughout the campaign. Authorized to negotiate such terms, Wilkes, on April 11th, signed with Frederick an agreement which committed Elizabeth to a 150,000 crown loan. This agreement along with letters of credence from Frederick and Casimir were delivered to Wilkes with the promise that they would serve as the Count Palatine's guarantee to contribute his share of the money.¹

Two days later Wilkes quickly dispatched a young Scotsman of Frederick's household, Sir William Melville,² to England with these results, apparently remaining behind himself to clear up such minor

1575, Cal. For., XI, p. 38, and Fénélon to Henry III, 12 May 1575, Correspondance, VI, p. 425.

¹See M. Le Baron Kervyn de Lettenhove, Les Huguenots et Les Gueux (Bruges: Beyaert-Storie, 1884), III, p. 489, and "Memorial for Sir William Melville," Heidelberg, 13 April 1575, Cal. For., XI, pp. 44-45. Large as this sum was there can be little doubt that Elizabeth had instructed Wilkes to offer this amount. That part of his instructions (which are only a rough draft) indicating the total number of crowns to be offered was left blank (see p.), but the fact that Elizabeth was not later angry with Wilkes (even though she later greatly reduced the total amount she would loan) indicates he did not exceed his instructions.

²Frederick III to Walsingham, Heidelberg, 28 Nov. 1571, Ibid., IX, p. 583, Read, Walsingham, I, p. 290, confuses the dispatch of Melville by assuming that the "Memorial for Sir William Melville" (mentioned in the previous footnote) was a set of instructions from Elizabeth to Melville when in fact a cursory reading of the same clearly indicates that they were given to Melville by Wilkes to be delivered to Elizabeth. Thus we see that unlike Read's conclusion Elizabeth did not send Melville with an offer of 150,000 crowns.

details as remained. Having done this he returned home in early May, arriving in London with several letters and dispatches from Basel, as well as from Germany, for Elizabeth and Count Merú, who was still soliciting English aid.¹

Elizabeth found most of the agreement acceptable but having had time to think, she now objected to the stipulation that she contribute 150,000 crowns to Condé's effort. So, late in May, she sent Melville hurrying back to Heidelberg with instructions to inform the Count and his son Casimir that she would contribute only 50,000 crowns on condition that a guarantee of repayment be given and that secrecy on her part in the transaction be maintained.² She later explained that her decision to loan only part of the requested money was due to her late renewal of the Treaty of Blois with Henry III. She said she could not in all good conscience loan so much money to his enemies. Though displeased when he learned from Melville of Elizabeth's determination to loan only one-third of the requested amount, Frederick realized that it was better than none at all and so accepted the fact.³

Believing his assignment to be completed, Wilkes fully expected to be able to spend sufficient time in England to repair his increasingly poor financial situation. He did procure a Privy Council Warrant in June granting him fifty pounds for "certain services heretofore...done in France" and even obtained a promise from Elizabeth to be appointed as a

¹Fénélon to Henry III, 12 May 1575, Correspondence, VI, p. 425 and Morosini to the Signory, Paris, 12 March 1575, Cal. Ven., VII, p. 527.

²Elizabeth to Frederick III, and Casimir, [?], [May] 1575, Cal. For., XI, p. 65. According to "Obligation and Quittance of Condé," Heidelberg, 23 July 1575, Ibid., p. 96, each crown was the equivalent of six English shillings sterling. Therefore the 50,000 crown loan would equal £15,000 sterling.

³"The Queen's answer to Sir William Melville," 10 June 1575, Ibid., p. 172. The treaty was renewed 19 April 1572 ("League between Henry of France and Elizabeth," Ibid., p. 49.).

Clerk of the Privy Council. But news of the continued progress of Condé and Casimir's military preparations and Elizabeth's desire to send the money to Condé via the Count Palatine, in as secret manner as possible, again convinced her of the need to dispatch Wilkes back to Frederick. Taking all or part of the 50,000 crowns with him, and in company with Merú, Wilkes in early July departed for Heidelberg with instructions to "observe and follow" both these preparations and the subsequent "warfare."¹

In Heidelberg, Wilkes delivered the money and then he and Frederick on July 23rd signed an agreement in which the latter acknowledged receiving 50,000 crowns from Elizabeth, guaranteed to transfer the same to Condé, and promised to keep Elizabeth's role in the transaction a secret. The Elector also assumed full liability for repayment of the same "before the army now levied in Germany for service in France shall depart [return from] France."² Wilkes then "observed the negotiation of Merú" with Frederick concerning Condé's need for continued support. When a short time later both Wilkes and Merú departed from Heidelberg towards Strasbourg the latter had been assured by the Count Palatine that he would not only render Condé all the assistance necessary for the enterprise but also would send him Casimir to conduct the German cavalry forces.

On route to Strasbourg they met the Prince of Condé, M. de Thoré, "and a reasonable troop of gentlemen" on their way to Heidelberg to take "final resolution for the receipt of their money, and the time and order

¹"Warrant for Thomas Wilkes," Hatfield, 24 June 1575, A.P.C., VI, p. 456, Wilkes to Burghley, Strasbourg, 29 Aug. 1575, Lettenhove, VII, pp. 560-62, Brief on Wilkes' diplomatic career, April 1575, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154, Fénélon to Henry III, 1 July 1575, Correspondance, VI, p. 456, and Morosini to the Signory, Paris, 12 July 1575, Cal. Ven., VII, p. 531.

²Condé's Obligation, Heidelberg, 23 July 1575, Cal. For., XI, p. 96. In spite of every effort to keep the loan a secret the quick witted French Ambassador in London, Fénélon, discovered it and immediately protested to Elizabeth. Fénélon to Henry III, [London], 8 July 1575, Correspondance, VI, pp. 461-62.

of their marching." Retracing their steps, Wilkes and Merú returned to Heidelberg with the rest and there were much surprised at the change that had come over Frederick. Claiming distrust of Condé's Catholic counselors, the Count insisted that before he would assist the French Prince with troops the latter would have to marry his daughter, and that when a military victory or "pacification" was achieved he, Frederick, must receive the three important bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun. Condé's initial refusal to accept these demands caused a breakdown in the negotiations and he returned to Strasbourg having received only the promised 50,000 crowns loaned by Elizabeth via the Elector.¹

Concerned over the failure of the negotiations, Wilkes correctly assumed that William of Nassau, the Prince of Orange and his aide Doctor Junius, Governor of Veere, were to blame. Both men had desired the help of the Palatinate and France to aid the Dutch revolt against the Spanish King Philip II and to have both these possible sources of men and money fighting each other was unthinkable. What it was the Prince of Orange and Doctor Junius offered Frederick to gain his ear is not certain, but Wilkes reported two of the suppositions circulating at the time. First, that the Prince of Orange had offered Zealand to Frederick in return for military assistance, and secondly, that through Doctor Junius, who had recently been in France, Henry III had sent the Elector "some crowns" as a bribe to abandon Condé. This latter explanation appears to be the more believable one.²

After his abrupt return to Strasbourg Condé realized that the only way he could expect to regain the absolutely essential aid of the

¹Wilkes to Burghley, Strasbourg, 29 Aug. 1575, Cal. For., XI, pp. 118-19.

²Ibid., Wilkes to Burghley, Strasbourg, 20 Sept. 1575, Ibid., pp. 138-39, and Wilkes to Burghley, Strasbourg, 29 Aug. 1575, Lettenhove, VII, pp. 560-62.

Palatinate was to concede to Frederick's demands regarding the three bishoprics. So he "sent back [to Heidelberg] two deputies with full powers to accord the same." There on 27 September 1575 they signed what Wilkes was later to refer to as the "Contract of Heidelberg." By it Condé agreed not to lay down his arms without first delivering Metz, Toul, and Verdun to Casimir, who would serve as Governor of them throughout his life. He promised to allow Casimir 12,000 crowns a month for his expenses during the upcoming campaign and 100,000 crowns in pensions as soon as peace was made. Condé also pledged that no peace overtures would be made to anyone without Casimir's knowledge and in the event of the latter's death, he was to see to it that the Duke's debts were paid, especially the 50,000 crowns owed to Elizabeth by his father the Elector. Casimir, in return, promised Condé 5,000 German cavalry, 2,000 horse, 8,000 Swiss, nineteen pieces of artillery, and the willingness to serve under the French Prince as one of his generals.¹

It was this "capitulation" that became the basis for an expanded and loosely knit association not only of the Palatinate, Condé, and unofficially, Elizabeth, but also of all the royalist opposition who still remained in France. It was to be an association that would result in the most revolutionary peace settlement to date in the French Civil Wars and would also prove to be the rock upon which the success of the whole invasion and confederate effort nearly crumbled.

Throughout all these preparations Henry III of France had been growing understandably more apprehensive. He was well aware of the growing strength and unity of his diverse enemies and was doing all he could to

¹Capitulation between Condé and Casimir, [Heidelberg], 27 Sept. 1575, *Cal. For.*, XI, pp. 295-96, Wilkes to Burghley, Strasbourg, 20 Sept. 1575, *Ibid.*, pp. 138-39. See also Wilkes to Walsingham, "Boisset en la Limange d'Auvergne, a league from Gannat," 28 Feb. 1576, B.M., Add. Mss. 4104, ff. 251-52.

discover, defuse, or prepare to defeat them. Secret agents of Condé and Merú had been intercepted going to and from England and one was even executed. Henry's German Colonel, Gaspard de Schomberg, had in June been sent across the Rhine to discover if Condé was indeed raising an army, and if so to levy 8,000 mercenaries for service in the French army. The French King had even redirected the Prince of Orange's peace commissioner, Doctor Junius, towards Frederick III with the impression that it was the latter who in fact was the one most responsible for the present threats of war.¹

Then, on September 15th, in the midst of all Henry's efforts to stave off an invasion, the Duke of Alençon (who since his brother Henry had become king had automatically become the Duke of Anjou but who was more often to be called 'Monsieur') finally managed to escape from the Court. Hoping to convince him to return, Catherine frantically attempted to intercept him as he fled southward towards Languedoc, but she failed, and he soon joined his own following of Politiques with the forces of Damville and the southern Huguenots.² Fearful of pushing the younger Montmorencies to extremities Catherine and Henry III formally liberated the Duke of Montmorency on October 2nd and in doing so gained his support in a series of attempts to dissuade Alençon from making war.³

¹Morosini to the Signory, Paris, 25 July 1575, Cal. Ven., VII, pp. 531-32, Morosini to the Signory, Paris, 27 March 1575, Ibid., p. 528, Salviati to Cardinal Como, Paris, 15 Aug. 1575, Cal. Rome, II, p. 213, "Newsletter," Rome, 3 Sept. 1575, Ibid., p. 214, "Newsletter," Paris, 13 July 1575, Ibid., p. 211 and Baird The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre, I, pp. 65-66.

²Dale to [Smith and Walsingham], Paris, 21 Sept. 1575, Cal. For., XI, pp. 140-42, Dale to [Smith and Walsingham], Paris, 3 Oct. 1575, Ibid., p. 148. Catherine to Emanuel Philibert Le Duc de Savoie, Paris, 15 Sept. 1575, Lettres, V, pp. 132-34, and also footnote no. 1 of same letter pp. 132-36.

³Dale to [Smith and Walsingham], Paris, 3 Oct. 1575, Cal. For., XI, p. 148, Dale to [Smith and Walsingham], Paris, 11 Oct. 1575, Ibid., p. 154, Catherine's negotiations with Alençon, 23 Oct. 1575, Ibid., pp.

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The panic Alençon's escape caused in the French Court can be better understood by looking at the emotions it evoked from an outsider, the Venetian Ambassador in Paris, Giovanni Francesco Morosini. In a letter to the Signory, dated the 16th of September 1575, he said:

Yesterday the event took place, which has constantly been dreaded, and which may be considered to be the total ruin of this unfortunate and ill-starred Kingdom, namely, that Monsieur the Duke of Alençon escaped from the Court.

...A greater misfortune than this affair could not have happened to the King at the present time.¹

No doubt the Venetian Ambassador foresaw that the ultimate consequence of Anjou's escape would be an eventual juncture between the German forces being readied by Condé and Casimir, and the Huguenot-Politique forces of Monsieur and Damville. While it was true that standing as a barrier between the two sympathetic armies were several staunchly Catholic provinces where almost no Protestants were to be found, no one was foolish enough to suggest the confederates would not in fact attempt to combine forces. This was especially apparent after November 27, 1575 when the secret "Contract of Heidelberg" between Frederick, Condé, and Elizabeth was expanded to include an alliance with Monsieur, Damville, and the Politiques of southern France.²

160-62, and Louis-Raymond Lefèvre, ed., Journal de L'Estoire Pour Le Regne de Henri III, 1574-1589 (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), p. 84.

¹Cal. Ven., VII, pp. 537-38 and Dale to [Sir Thomas Smith and Walsingham], Paris, 28 Sept. 1575, Cal. For., XI, p. 145.

²Dale to [Smith and Walsingham], Paris, 8 Dec. 1575, Ibid., pp. 196-97, Baird, The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre, I, pp. 77-78, and Thompson, Wars of Religion, p. 521. This expanded alliance contained a promise by Damville to meet Condé's invading army with pay money, 12,000 foot, and 2,000 horse. Casimir's opinion was to be sought on all questions of peace and war and he agreed to sign the contract in force between the Huguenots and Damville. As with the "Contract of Heidelberg" one of the articles insisted upon by Casimir was that when peace was negotiated with Henry III, Metz, Toul, and Verdun had to be turned over to his father with himself as royal governor of the same.

Meanwhile, after the "Contract of Heidelberg" was finally secured, Wilkes eventually reached his original destination of Strasbourg. It was from here during the months of August through October that he carried out his responsibilities as an observer, reporting mostly the news of Thoré's diversionary expedition into France which was designed to keep Henry III's army occupied until Condé's preparations were completed.¹

Then with Monsieur's escape in September and the good harvests in October everything seemed ready to guarantee the success of "one of the finest armies that for twenty years had issued from Germany."² The army was complete and poised for attack, but it was first necessary to find more money if it were to be kept in the field sufficiently long to achieve success. For this reason Condé, Frederick, and Casimir all desired Wilkes to make yet another journey home to inform Elizabeth of the completeness of their preparations and, more importantly, to induce her to make another financial loan, or at least not to insist on repayment of the first. So bearing letters dated the 28th October and 1 November 1575 Wilkes hurried back to England.³

Informed of this new request Elizabeth, as usual, hesitated. Then, when informed that since Alençon's escape Catherine de Medicis had been talking of nothing but peace, she decided that because of this and the

¹Wilkes to Burghley, Strasbourg, 27 Sept., 8 and 20 Oct. 1575, Cal. For., XI, pp. 144, 151, and 159.

²Morosini to the Signory, Paris, 9 Aug. 1575, Cal. Ven., VII, p. 533, states "The harvest in France is generally good,..but the corn is not yet stacked. This condition of things renders war more doubtful, because any foreign army entering France might suffer from famine." See also Merú to Burghley, Strasbourg, 28 Oct. 1575, H.M.C., Salisbury, II p. 119.

³Condé to Burghley, Strasbourg, 28 Oct. 1575, A Collection of State Papers Relating to Affairs in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, From the Year 1571 to 1596, ed. William Murdin, (London: William Bowyer, 1759), II, p. 298 [hereafter cited: Murdin, Collection], Casimir to Burghley, Heidelberg, 1 Nov. 1575, Ibid., p. 291, and Frederick III to Elizabeth, Heidelberg, 1 Nov. 1575, Cal. For., XI, p. 172.

fact that the army was ready to march, she would forego making another loan. So in keeping with the original agreement Wilkes was sent to work out the necessary arrangements with Elector for his repayment of Elizabeth's 1575 loan.¹

By the time Wilkes had returned to Heidelberg and completed his assignment with the Elector, the German armies of Condé and Casimir had moved out of Germany and into North-eastern France.² Leaving Heidelberg about the 12th of December Wilkes, after an eight-day journey, caught up with the army at Sallome, in the province of Lorraine. From there he made an unexplained journey to Paris probably to confer with Doctor Dale and then to Poissy, arriving in the latter town on or before the 19th of January. From Poissy he seems to have rejoined the invading army as it feigned an attack on Paris and then veered sharply southward, working its way into Burgundy.³

As previously mentioned, Damville had promised to come northward with troops and money to meet Condé's army, but events in Languedoc decided him against this and so instead he sent only as many troops as he could spare under the Viscount of Turenne. Without the anticipated money and no more to come from Queen Elizabeth, Condé found himself saddled with an unpaid and typically brutal German army.⁴

¹"Memorial for Wilkes," 25 Nov. 1575, Ibid., p. 188.

²They had actually started their march towards France near the end of November. See Dale to Burghley, Paris, 26 Nov. 1575, Ibid., p. 188 and "Events in France," 28 Nov. 1575, Ibid., p. 187.

³M. Fermin [?] to Walsingham, Sallome, 21 Dec. 1575, Ibid., p. 206, Wilkes to Burghley, Vichy, 13 Feb. 1576, Ibid., pp. 243-44, and Wilkes to Walsingham, Poissy, 19 Jan. 1576, B.M., Add. Mss. 4104, f. 230.

⁴Wilkes to Burghley, Vichy, 13 Feb. 1576, Cal. For., XI, pp. 243-44, Jean de Serres, A General Inventorie of the History of France, trans. Edward Grimeston (London: George Eld., 1607), p. 677 [hereafter cited: Serres, Inventorie].

Wilkes who was with the army and "mounted at my own charge" gave "from time to time account of all that succeeded in that enterprise." He matter-of-factly reported that due to the inhabitants scorched-earth policy Condé's army was forced "to burn and spoil where they went," even going so far in their siege of the town of Nuits to "put the people to sword" after having "razed it." By the time the army reached the province of Bourbonnais, Wilkes could with understandable exaggeration state that "all the world trembles when they pass."¹

With little resistance from the bankrupt French Government, the invading army succeeded in effecting a juncture with Damville and Anjou's forces, and on March 11 on the plains of Soze, Monsieur was proclaimed General-in-Chief of the combined armies which now numbered a formidable 30,000 men.²

It was in the midst of all this trouble that the French Court received its crowning blow: Henry of Navarre, who had been a prisoner since St. Bartholomew, escaped from the Court in early February, renounced his pretended Catholicism, and fled to Saumur. Though at first trying to make light of this new development, the French King was not unaware of the dangers it presented. Navarre was now the true leader of French Protestantism³ and "with many gentlemen of the religion...both out of Picardy and Normandy" flocking daily to his standard it was not long before he too would have a sizeable army. Catherine and Henry hurriedly

¹Wilkes to Burghley, Vichy, 13 Feb. 1576, Cal. For., XI, p. 243-44 and Brief on Wilkes' diplomatic career, April and Oct. 1575, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154.

²Ibid., Serres, Inventorie, p. 678. Baird, The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre, I, p. 89, and Dale to Smith and Walsingham, Paris, 25 March 1576, Cal. For., XI, p. 280.

³Condé was always considered to be more of a Politique than a true leader of the Huguenots.

sent out peace feelers and on March 1st at Moulins a three week's truce was patched up while both sides parleyed for terms. But the extreme demands of the rebellious confederates caused the truce to break down. Anxious to march on Paris, Casimir was growing more and more impatient, and in the early spring Navarre's newly formed army had joined up with Alençon's. Finally, around the first of April when it looked as though the entire confederate forces were going to march on Paris, the terrified Henry III sued for peace.¹

During the first attempts to bring about a truce at Moulins in February and early March, Wilkes had written home both for instructions and to let Elizabeth know that in the upcoming negotiations she would have as "good [an] opportunity to solicit promises...as the rest." He sent her letters from Casimir and Alençon desiring her "furtherance in this treaty" and suggesting that if she was of a "mind" to send someone to deal in this matter it was "high time, for they are entered already into general terms." In the meantime, he suggested that "40 crowns...be sent me forthwith from the Ambassador [Doctor Dale] to Moulins to bear my charges there during the treaty [that] I may do some good to see the handling of things there."² He received his money,³ and from his dispatches it is clear that throughout the negotiations he was constantly (but no doubt secretly) representing England's interests in the peace negotiations. All his mail traveled to England via Dale in Paris for

¹Dale to Sir Thomas Smith and Walsingham, Paris, 14 Feb. and 16 March 1576, Cal. For., XI, pp. 245 and 274-75, and Serres, Inventorie, p. 678, Wilkes to Walsingham, Boisset, 28 Feb. 1576, B.M., Add. Mss. 4104, ff. 251-52, Dale to Burghley, Paris, 10 April 1576, Ibid., f. 267b, Wilkes to Burghley, Boisset and Moulins, 1 March and 1 April 1576, Cal. For., XI, pp. 256 and 298, and John Willes [a courier?] to Walsingham, 22 Feb. 1576, Ibid., p. 249.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, Boisset, 28 Feb. 1576, B.M., Add. Mss. 4104, ff. 251-52 and Dale to Walsingham, Paris, 16 March 1576, Ibid., f. 260.

³Dale to Walsingham, Paris, 16 March 1576, Cal. For., XI, p. 274.

reasons of safety and in order to keep the English Ambassador up to date on all new developments. Eventually Elizabeth sent Walsingham's uncle, Thomas Randolph, to France, ostensibly to mediate for peace but in reality to warn Henry III to ignore the Prince of Orange's recent appeals for help against the Spanish in the Low Countries. However, by the time he arrived in France in the middle of April it was too late to affect the peace negotiations one way or the other.¹

With the Marshal Armand de Biron, the liberated Montmorency, and Louis, Duke of Montpensier, representing Henry III, and Monsieur, Navarre, Condé, Merù, and Thoré, the confederates, the deceptive Peace of Monsieur was signed on May 5, 1576 at the Chateau de Beaulieu. Basically, all the rebel's demands were met but one--Casimir's demand for the three bishoprics. His insistence on receiving the same almost wrecked the whole negotiation but he was finally induced to forego them in place of several other extremely lucrative offers. Aside from this, the treaty appeared to be a great victory for Protestantism. It granted freedom of worship to all Huguenots everywhere in France except in Paris and where a particular lord objected to its practice on his lands. Protestants were free to educate their own children, perform all Protestant ceremonies, and enjoy civil equality in the law courts, as well as take over eight fortified towns in the southern provinces. Henry III publicly apologized for the St. Bartholomew Massacre which he said happened against the will of the Crown, and finally a promise was given that the States-General would assemble at Blois by the coming November.²

¹Randolph's instructions, 2 April 1576, Ibid., pp. 302-4, Randolph to Walsingham, Paris, 11 May 1576, Ibid., p. 332, and Morosini to the Signory, Paris, 17 April 1576, Cal. Ven., VII, p. 548.

²"Hostages and Towns," 6 May 1576, Cal. For., XI, p. 326, "The Accord," 6 May 1576, Ibid., p. 327, Wilkes to Walsingham, Boisset, 28 Feb. 1576, B.M., Add. Mss. 4104, ff. 251-52, Wilkes to Burghley, Sens, 10 May 1576, Ibid., ff. 285-86, and Serres, Inventorie, pp. 78-79.

These concessions were little short of revolutionary, but appearances were deceiving. Catherine de Medicis and her son never intended to endure such humiliations for long and as Thomas Randolph told the Venetian Ambassador to France, Morosini: "the Huguenots were madmen to make this peace, as they had no security that any promise given to them would be kept." But not all saw it so clearly as Randolph, especially the Guises who not only determined to leave the French Court, if the peace were signed,¹ but also, along with other ardent Catholics in France, were so shocked at these concessions to heresy that they initiated a backlash that eventually resulted in the infamous French Catholic League.²

With the conclusion of the Peace of Monsieur, Wilkes was anxious to return home to England. For over two years he had devoted all his energies to help restore conditions in France back to what they were just prior to the Massacre of St. Bartholomew--conditions that allowed Huguenots and their sympathizers a reasonably secure and unharried existence. Hoping, for reasons of safety, to return to England with Randolph, Wilkes was informed that he should stay in France "to attend her Majesty's pleasure with Monsieur." Apparently Wilkes was asked to remain because Randolph, who was unable to see Monsieur until the last moment, had been unable to fulfill all his instructions concerning the French Prince. A few weeks later, in early June, Wilkes was finally called home. Arriving in England later the same month, he carried letters from Anjou and Condé expressing their appreciation for his services in France and commending his abilities to the Queen. Several days later

¹Morosini to the Signory, Paris, 5 May 1576, Cal. Ven., VII, p. 549.

²Jensen, Diplomacy and Dogmatism, Ch. 2, traces the origins of this league.

on the 16th of June Elizabeth fulfilled her earlier promise and had Wilkes sworn as a "Clerk of the Privy Council in ordinary." For the next year and a half domestic duties were to be his major concern.¹

¹Wilkes to Burghley, Sens, 10 May 1576, B.M., Add. Mss. 4104, ff. 285-86, Randolph's instructions, 2 April 1576, Cal. For., XI, pp. 302-4, Alençon and Conde to Elizabeth, Chatillon, 9 June 1576, Ibid., p. 339, and Brief on Wilkes diplomatic career, June 1576, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154.

CHAPTER II

THE SPANISH NETHERLANDS

Unlike his first three years of foreign service, Thomas Wilkes' next two diplomatic assignments covered only a five-month period; and the focus of his responsibilities shifted from France to the Low Countries. Here events had been coming to a head since October 1555 when Philip II had succeeded his father Charles V as head of these northern provinces. Political, religious, and economic factors all played a significant part in these events. The replacement of the Duke of Savoy's weak administration by the stronger hand of Philip II's half-sister Margaret of Parma resulted in a smoldering resentment among the young and restless nobles like William of Orange and the Count of Egmont. Increasingly they and many others of lesser position began to chafe at the Spanish King's tendency to rule the provinces through foreigners. Rapidly growing Calvinism among the Netherlanders caused them to loath Spain's repressive religious policies; and merchants fumed over Philip's heavy taxes. The result of this growing unrest was a series of unfruitful concessions on the part of Margaret of Parma followed by Philip II's angry repudiation of her rule. Finally, came the dispatch in early 1567 of 10,000 men under the Duke of Alva and the start of the eighty-year-long revolt of the Netherlands.¹

¹Petrus Johannes Blok, History of the People of the Netherlands trans. Ruth Putnam (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900), III, pp. 1-39.

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William of Orange, who narrowly escaped Alva's coming, became the symbol of this rebellion and for the next decade he and his supporters in the northern maritime provinces of Holland and Zeeland were an ever growing thorn in Philip's side. Aware of England's, France's, and the Empire's never-ending interest in those Spanish provinces, the Prince of Orange invariably resorted to seeking outside help to thwart Philip's power. In 1568 he turned to Germany for help and from 1570-1572 to France, but both attempts to inflict defeats on Spanish forces with outside aid completely failed. Similar efforts to obtain help from England during these early years of the revolt and indeed until 1576 bore little fruit. Then, between April 1576 when Philip II's half-brother, Don Juan of Austria, was called to replace Alva's suddenly deceased successor, Don Luis de Requesens, and late November, when the Victor of Lepanto arrived in Luxemburg to assume his governorship, several events occurred that not only changed the whole complexion of Spanish rule in the Low Countries, but also radically altered Elizabeth's attitude towards them.¹

When Requesens died in March 1576, the Spanish troops were left without either his stern leadership or their monthly wages. The result was a large-scale mutiny that was capped by the terrible sack of Antwerp on November 3rd. Enraged at this "Spanish fury" the previously loyal southern provinces joined with Holland and Zeeland in rebellion and on November 8th representatives both of the Spanish and Dutch provinces, already assembled in a Congress at Brussels, hastily signed the revolutionary Pacification of Ghent. By it, peace and free intercourse were established between the two rebel provinces and the rest of the Low Countries; and the States-General was charged with the responsibility

¹Ibid., pp. 40-94, and Read, Walsingham, I, pp. 306-26.

of deciding upon what conditions Don Juan's governorship might be accepted. Also, all parties pledged to do everything possible to rid the provinces of the Spanish soldiers. The whole affair was completely spontaneous. Catholic and Protestant alike joined together in a vigorous attempt to lighten their unwanted Spanish yoke.¹

When Don Juan arrived in Luxemburg on November 23, 1576, he discovered to his dismay that he would have to negotiate with the States-General before he could assume his duties as Governor. The price he eventually paid to be allowed to fill that vacant office was the "Perpetual Edict" of February 12, 1577. By signing this he not only ratified the Pacification of Ghent but also promised to dismiss all Spanish soldiers from the provinces within twenty days. In turn, the States-General promised 600,000 guilders (i.e. £60,000) to pay off the Spanish soldiers; and pledged themselves to maintain Catholicism throughout the Low Countries. Distrustful of the new governor, William of Orange refused to sign the Edict and subsequently set about to undermine Don Juan's position in any way he could.²

Across the channel, Elizabeth had been keeping a close watch on these events by dispatching numerous envoys to the States-General, the Prince of Orange, and Philip II. In turn they had sent agents to her either with requests to aid them, or as was the case with Philip, not to meddle in his affairs at all. In one instance the Queen actually went so far as to lend the States £20,000.³

¹Daniel Rogers, English envoy to the Netherlands, to Burghley, Antwerp, 7 March 1576, H.M.C., Salisbury, II, p. 128, Thomas Heton, Governor of the company of Merchant Adventurers to Walsingham, Antwerp, 10 Nov. 1576, Cal. For., XI, pp. 417-18, and Blok, History, III, pp. 105-6.

²Ibid., pp. 113-17. The Perpetual Edict is sometimes known as the "Peace of the Duke of Aerschot."

³Elizabeth to Philip II, Hampton Court, 24 Sept. 1576, Cal. Spain,

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The upshot of all this was that Don Juan's position became more and more tenuous. His opposition in the States-General became larger and his chief enemy, the Prince of Orange, not only continued to gain strength but even went so far as to formulate a plot to seize the Spanish Governor.¹ By June of 1577 Don Juan felt the personal dangers to be too great to remain in Brussels and so retreated to Mechlin. Later, on June 24th under the guise of a hunting party, he suddenly seized the citadel of Namur and from there demanded that the States-General swear an oath of fealty to him as well as support him in a war against William of Orange, should the latter refuse to negotiate. He then set about to return the Spanish soldiers he had previously been forced to send out of the Low Countries.²

The effects of this coup d'etat were momentous. It literally drove the States-General, who before had been not unwilling to work with Don Juan, over to the side of William of Orange. The Spanish Governor was left alone without either instructions from Spain or enough Spanish soldiers to face the combined strength of the Low Countries.³

II, pp. 533-34, Francis Walsingham, "Journal," Camden Miscellany, ed. Charles Trice Martin (Westminster: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1870), VI, pp. 28-30, [hereafter cited: Walsingham's Journal], d'Aubigny's instructions, 18 Oct. 1576, Lettenhove, VIII, pp. 481, James Harvey's instructions, 10 Oct. 1576, Ibid., pp. 474-75, M. de Sweveghem, envoy of the States to England, to the Estates General, London, 24 Dec. 1576, Ibid., IX, pp. 99-100, Edward Horsey's instructions, 14 Dec. 1576, Ibid., pp. 85-90, Doctor Wilson's instructions, 1 April 1577, Ibid., pp. 254-56, and M. de Farmas' instructions, 10 Feb. 1577, Ibid., pp. 185-92.

¹Daniel Rogers to Walsingham, Enckhuyzen, 24 July 1577, Ibid., pp. 416-24 and Antonio de Guaras to [Gabriel de Zayas, Secretary of Philip II?], London, 20 Sept. 1577, Cal. Spain, II, p. 544.

²Philip de Marnix de St. Aldegonde to Count Jean de Nassau, Brussels, 28 July 1577, Archives on Correspondance inédite de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, ed. G. Groen van Prinsterer, (Leide: S. et J. Luchtman's, 1839) 1st ser., VI, pp. 113-19, and Blok, History, pp. 117-18.

³Ibid., pp. 118-19.

Elizabeth too, was troubled by Don Juan's seizure of Namur. She had suspected that the Spanish Governor had designs upon the English throne. Reporting these suspicions the Spanish agent in London, Antonio de Guaras, said:

It is publicly stated in court...that Don Juan of Austria has come to the States, not only with the intentions of conquering them, but also to marry the Queen of Scotland and change religion and government here.¹

Elizabeth's fears went even further than this. She felt that if Don Juan were allowed to push the States too far, they might in desperation call in French assistance, and for England to have the Low Countries controlled by France was even more dangerous than their control by Spain. In fact, both the States and the Prince of Orange had already made and were presently making serious overtures to this effect.² Learning of this, Elizabeth herself began to make some surprising offers of military and financial aid to both the States and the Prince of Orange.³

Don Juan and Elizabeth were not the only ones worried about the startling results of his coup. A significant number of the Catholic

¹Antonio de Guaras to Zayas, London, 30 Dec. 1576, Cal. Spain, II, pp. 536-37 and Wilson to Walsingham, Brussels, 24 Jan. 1577, Lettenhove, IX, pp. 158-60. These suspicions are confirmed by Philip II's secret instructions to Don Juan given on November 11th, 1576. Ibid., IX, pp. 15-21.

²Prior to Requesens' death the Prince of Orange had sent two agents into France to obtain aid (Edward Chester to Burghley, Dordrecht, 8 July 1575, Ibid., VII, pp. 543-45), and just prior to the arrival of Don Juan in the Low Countries, the States-General had asked for and succeeded in bringing Alençon and a French army to the very borders of these provinces. He was asked to stay his army though as a result of Don Juan's signing the Perpetual Edict (see Cal. For., XI, pp. 419-passim). When Matthias was recognized as Governor, Alençon's schemes of personal aggrandizement seemed frustrated and so from then on it was not certain whether he intended to support the States or Don Juan (see Ibid., XII, pp. 288-passim, especially Davison to the Secretaries, Antwerp, 29 Dec. 1577, Ibid., pp. 409-10, and Newsletter, Antwerp, 10 Jan. 1578, Cal. Rome, II, p. 365.

³Marquis de Havrech and Adolphe de Meetkerke, envoys of the States to the States General, Windsor, 28 Sept. 1577, Lettenhove, IX, pp. 542-45, and Walsingham to M. de Farmars, agent for William of Orange, Oatlands, 27 Aug. 1577, Cal. For., XII, p. 117.

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nobles of Brabant, in spite of their repudiation of the new governor, were not willing to submit themselves to the suddenly augmented authority of the Prince of Orange. As a result they began secretly negotiating with the Emperor Rudolph II's younger brother, the twenty-year-old Archduke Matthias. They had hopes he would agree to assume control of the Low Countries and at the same time serve as a check to the rapidly growing power of both Calvinists and William of Orange. Eagerly accepting the offer, Matthias secretly arrived in the Netherlands on October 30th and by the 8th of December was temporarily accepted as Governor by the States General pending Philip II's confirmation of the same.¹

The Prince of Orange surprisingly supported the appointment of the Archduke but not without securing his own position first. He prevailed upon the States-General to appoint him as Lieutenant to Matthias and saw to it that the latter was made completely subservient to the States-General and a Council of States nominated by that assembly. The object of this manoeuvre was the desire to separate Don Juan and the Spaniards from the Catholic Flemings and Walloons in order to create jealousy between the two branches of the House of Austria.²

Elizabeth was also dismayed by the unexpected appearance of the Archduke on the scene. She would have preferred to see the experienced Prince of Orange as both the nominal and real leader of the Low Countries, but when William went along with it all she had no choice but to accept it for the time being.³

¹Davison to Walsingham, Brussels, 23 Jan. 1577, Ibid., p. 467 and Blok, History, pp. 121-25.

²Ibid., pp. 121-25 and Davison to Walsingham, Brussels, 23 Jan. 1577, Cal. For., XII, p. 467.

³Meeterkerke's report, Windsor, 18 April 1577, Lettenhove, X, pp. 23-26, and Walsingham to Davison, [?], 26 Oct. 1577, Ibid., pp. 41-43.

It was at this point that Don Juan's agent, Jean Marinier, Seigneur de Gastel, arrived in England to justify before Elizabeth the Spanish Governor's recent actions. Granted an audience on December 1st, 1577, he, among other things, pleaded in behalf of his master that an ambassador be sent to settle any points of difference between them. To Elizabeth the opportunity for mediation was always welcome. Fully aware of the might of Spanish arms, she had no desire to see the rebellious Netherlands completely subdued by Philip's experienced soldiers. So, after bombarding de Gastel with some strong words against Spanish oppression in those provinces, Elizabeth sent him back to Don Juan with her promise to send two envoys to mediate in behalf of the rebellious States: one to himself, and the other to Philip II.¹

Mission to Philip II

Leaving within two days of each other, these two envoys were Thomas Wilkes and Captain Thomas Leighton. The latter was instructed to inform both the States-General and Don Juan of Elizabeth's desire for their surcease of arms. He was to explain that a second messenger was being sent to the Spanish King to demand the same, and until the results of the latter mission were known both parties ought to cease fighting. Don Juan was also to understand that if Philip refused to make peace with his subjects in the Low Countries, Elizabeth fully intended to assist them in their rebellion against Spain.²

Leighton's mission was a short one. The States-General informed him they had no desire to lay down their arms for fear this would provide

¹Gastel's instructions, Luxemburg, 28 Oct. 1577, Ibid., pp. 52-58, Havrech's report, Brussels, 31 Dec. 1577, Ibid., pp. 190-204 (see especially pp. 197-204), and Walsingham's Journal, p. 33.

²Leighton's instructions, 21 Dec. 1577, Lettenhove, X, pp. 174-78.

Don Juan with an opportunity to do them harm. The latter insisted that duty to Philip II bound him not to treat with the rebels until they fully accepted Spain as their true overlord. His mission completed, Leighton returned to England on February 5th.¹

Wilkes departed for Spain with instructions that were even more blunt than Leighton's. He was to let Philip know the only chance for peace lay in the appointment of a new governor "of the Royal house, agreeable to all classes" and a new ratification of the Pacification of Ghent. Convinced of the "Princelet" Don Juan's ultimate designs against England, Elizabeth had instructed Wilkes to make it clear that "the only way of maintaining the amity" between her and Philip was for the latter to remove from the Governorship "so bitter an enemy...to some place where he will not find it so easy to injure her." For Elizabeth to allow Don Juan to remain in the Low Countries would be "to foster a serpent in her bosom" and before she would allow this she would come to the aid of the States with both "men and money." On the other hand, if Philip would agree to appoint a more acceptable governor and if the States still continued in their rebellion then Elizabeth promised to "turn her sword against them, and aid the King with her forces."²

Seldom did Elizabeth speak so bluntly and from all appearances she meant it. She immediately gave orders "for mustering horses and foot" for dispatch to the States, with instructions that such preparations were to continue until Wilkes returned out of Spain.³

¹States answer to Leighton, 7 Jan. 1578, Ibid., pp. 218-19, Don Juan to Elizabeth, Marche, 24 Jan. 1578, Ibid., pp. 245-46, and Walsingham's Journal, p. 34.

²Wilkes' instructions, 19 Dec. 1577, Cal. For., XII, pp. 388-92, and further instructions, 22 Dec. 1577, Ibid., pp. 399-400.

³Edward Horsey, Capt. of the Isle of Wight, to Davison, [Hampton Court], 18 Dec. 1577, Cal. Dom., XI, p. 523.

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Equipped with £200 cash, a daily expense account of 40s. and the status of "agent," Wilkes started for Spain on the 21st or 22nd of December. With him he carried a letter from Elizabeth to Philip explaining that she sent Wilkes instead of "a more formal embassy" because such "acute diseases" needed "a speedy means of cure."¹

Traveling by sea to St. Sebastian, Wilkes arrived in Madrid shortly before the 12th of January 1578. Aware of the inadequacy of both his diplomatic title and his official position as Clerk of the Privy Council, Wilkes either intentionally or unintentionally led the Spanish Court to believe that he came with Legatus rank. To the sixteenth-century mind the term Legatus was equivalent to the term Ambaxiator and one who held either title was of the highest diplomatic position. Consequently Philip II arranged to have Wilkes escorted from his lodgings in Madrid to his first audience by one of his "major domos," the Count of Fuensalida, and "a great troop of gentlemen of the Household."²

Once in the Spanish King's presence Wilkes had but the "briefest" audience. Apparently, speaking rusty Spanish, he saluted Philip in behalf of Queen Elizabeth and requested that he read her letter of introduction. This the King attempted but as he later explained, "I did not understand a word of it." Wilkes next delivered to Philip a document containing Elizabeth's proposals for peace with the explanation that if any part proved unclear he would be around for two weeks to help clarify the same. Philip was able to read enough of Elizabeth's letters to

¹17 Dec. 1575, P.R.O., Excheq. 403/2559, p. 125, Burghley's note, 22 Dec. 1577, Murdin, Collection, II, p. 780 or Walsingham's Journal, p. 34. Elizabeth to Philip II, Hampton Court, 22 Dec. 1577, Cal. Spain, II, pp. 549-50.

²Garrett Mattingly, Renaissance Diplomacy (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 25, Brief on Wilkes' diplomatic career, Dec. 1577, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154, and Philip Sega, Nuncio in Spain to Cardinal Como, [Madrid], 15 Jan. 1578, Cal. Rome, II, pp. 367-68.

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realize that Wilkes was not styled Legatus but only Nuncio (i.e., with the minor rank of an agent), and when asked about it, Wilkes was apparently sorely embarrassed over the misunderstanding. Still, Philip did not let on to the English diplomat the extent of his anger, and so with the conclusion of his polite reception the disarmed Wilkes wrote home reporting "that there was never fairer weather made to the English nation in Spain than there is at present."¹

On the other hand, Philip, who was always repelled at having to speak civilly to any "heretic" wrote a note to one of his secretaries in which he revealed his rage at having unnecessarily accorded a minor English diplomat such a prestigious welcome:

I believe the Englishman has deceived us, as you will see that he is not called Legatus but Nuncio, and is only a secretary of the Council, so that much of that which we may arrange with him may be repudiated....It seems to me that, both upon this matter and the subjects contained in the documents, the Queen wishes to lay down the law for us here, and, if I have understood well, I can see no good to come from the matter, and no doubt this man lied to you, the same as he did on the first point (i.e., his standing), respecting which in good truth he was abashed....It will be well to send the man off long before his fortnight is up, and this before he commits some impertinence which will oblige us to burn him.²

Whether Philip would have carried out such a threat on an accredited envoy is doubtful, but what is certain is that in spite of his anger Philip realized that he had never before received such strong words from Elizabeth as those delivered by Wilkes. The last thing he

¹Laurence Tompson, private secretary to Walsingham, to Davison, Hampton Court, 1 Feb. 1578, Cal. For., XII, p. 485, Elizabeth to Philip II, Hampton Court, 22 Dec. 1577, Cal. Spain, II, pp. 549-50 and Philip II to [Zayas?], [Madrid], 12 Jan. 1578, Ibid., pp. 552-53.

²Ibid. (My italics.) The Papal Nuncio, in Madrid, Philip Sega also had some strong words concerning Wilkes' fitness to serve on this mission: "But...it is publicly said, he [Wilkes] comes not with the title of ambassador but of agent upon one sole errand, and is of very low rank, being but under-secretary of the Royal Council of England, and is, by what we understand, a most corrupt heretic." (Sega to Cardinal Como, Madrid, 15 Jan. 1578, Cal. Rome, II, p. 368.)

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wanted was to give her reason to send troops into the Low Countries. As a result, his final interview with Wilkes was without incident. He informed the English agent of his intention to send one of his own envoys to England with his answers to Elizabeth's proposals, and then, bestowing on Wilkes the traditional gift of a gold-collar worth 400 crowns, he dismissed him on February 2nd to return to England.¹

Prior to Wilkes' arrival Philip had been worrying a great deal about English designs in the Low Countries. Relations with Elizabeth had been severely strained as early as December 1571 when she ordered his ambassador Don Guera de Spes out of England for complicity in the Ridolphi Plot. More recently, in October 1577, he had learned that his agent in London, Antonio de Guaras, had been arrested for "prejudicial" correspondence with Elizabeth's "rebel subjects and the Queen of Scotland." As a result of all this Philip had been seriously considering sending another agent to Elizabeth to settle some of the differences. When Wilkes arrived carrying Elizabeth's threats, he realized something more was needed. Immediately he set about to resume full diplomatic relations with England by sending as ambassador the brilliant Spanish diplomat Bernardino de Mendoza.²

Mendoza's instructions were of a highly conciliatory nature. He was to express surprise that Elizabeth had not already learned of Philip's October announcement to the States that a new Governor would be sent to

¹Sega to Cardinal Como, Madrid, 2 Feb. 1578, Ibid., p. 378, Alberto Badoer, Venetian Ambassador in Spain, to the Signory, Madrid, 2 Feb. 1578, Cal. Ven., VII, p. 569, and Henry Killigrew to Davison, [?], 22 Feb. 1578, Cal. Dom. Addenda, VII, pp. 532-33.

²Guera de Spes to the Duke of Alva, London, 14 Dec. 1571, Cal. Spain, II, pp. 356-57, Juan de Aguirre, servant to Guaras, to Zayas, London, 31 Oct. 1577, Ibid., p. 549, Mendoza to Philip London, 31 March 1578, Ibid., p. 573, and Mendoza's first instructions, Madrid, 8 Jan. 1578, Ibid., pp. 553-58.

replace Don Juan.¹ He was to make clear that she should not expect that replacement to be the Archduke Matthias. He was to explain Philip's willingness to restore peace if the peoples of the Low Countries would observe the Catholic religion and submit to his rule as they did under his father, Charles V. He was also to beg Elizabeth not to send any aid to those rebellious subjects. Dispatched soon after Wilkes departed for England, Mendoza unsuccessfully attempted to pick up letters from Don Juan in Paris and still arrive in England ahead of Wilkes in order that Elizabeth would "not be forearmed with his information."²

In the meantime, while Wilkes was making his way home via Paris, the English Court had received some startling news. On January 31st near Gembloux in the province of Namur, Don Juan's forces, under his brilliant lieutenant, the Prince of Parma, completely routed the States' forces. Alarmed, Elizabeth and a majority of her councilors were in favor of immediately sending aid to the Low Countries. Captain Leighton, who had just returned from his mission to the States-General, was quickly sent back with assurances of her continued friendship and desire to loan men and money. Thus, when Wilkes arrived at the English Court on Sunday, February 16th, it looked as though Elizabeth had finally resolved to assist the States openly. Unfortunately, it was not to be.³

¹Angry at the disastrous consequences of Don Juan's seizure of Namur, Philip had resolved to recall him and to replace him with either his sister Margaret of Parma or her son the future statesman and general, Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma. See Philip Sega, Nuncio in Spain to Cardinal Como, [Madrid], 12 Oct. 1577, Cal. Rome, II, p. 339, Alberto Badoer, Venetian Ambassador in Spain to the Signory, Madrid, 6 Oct. 1577, Cal. Ven., VII, p. 565, [?] to States-General, [Augsburg?], 31 Dec. 1577, Cal. For., XII, p. 411, and "Occurrents from Rome," 14 Dec. 1577, Ibid., p. 483.

²Mendoza's second instructions, "Madrid," 26 Jan. 1578, Cal. Spain, II, pp. 558-60, Mendoza to Zayas, Irun and Paris, 16 and 26 Feb. 1578, Ibid., pp. 560 and 561, and Mendoza to Philip II, s Paris and London, 4, 19, and 31 March, Ibid., pp. 561, 564, and 571.

³News of the Battle of Gembloux, 3 Feb. 1578, Cal. For., XII,

The "mild answer" Wilkes brought from Philip plus Mendoza's unctuous words during his own March 16th audience soon calmed Elizabeth's worst fears about Spanish intentions in the Low Countries. The Spanish ambassador's promises that Philip was willing to recall Don Juan as well as do all in his power to preserve the privileges of the States was just what she wanted to hear. The upshot of it all was that Elizabeth not only continued to put off coming to the aid of the States but also decided to attempt once more her old expedient of seeking to mediate between the States and Don Juan.¹

To Walsingham, Elizabeth's decision to try mediation again was maddening. The States' representative in England, the Marquis de Haverch, who had worked so diligently for English aid, begged Elizabeth not to waste time by sending another agent to Don Juan. But it was all to no avail. Elizabeth's mind was made up, and with Wilkes available and "well acquainted in the matter" she decided that this time he was the one to be sent.²

p. 487, Amias Paulet, English Ambassador to France, to the Secretaries, Paris, 12 Feb. 1578, *Ibid.*, p. 494, Leighton's instructions, 6 Feb. 1578, *Ibid.*, pp. 490-91, Read, Walsingham, I, pp. 364-65, and Walsingham's Journal, p. 35.

¹Henry Killigrew to Davison, [?], 22 Feb. 1578, Cal. Dom. Addenda, VII, p. 532, Mendoza to Philip II, London, 19 March 1578, Cal. Spain, II, pp. 564-67, Walsingham to Davison, Greenwich, 20 March 1578, Cal. For., XII, p. 552, Doctor Wilson to Davison, Greenwich, 27 March 1578, Lettenhove, X, pp. 363-64, and Mendoza to Philip II, London, 31 March 1578, Joseph Lefèvre, ed., Correspondance de Philippe II sur les affaires des Pays-Bas (Brussels: Palais des Academies, 1940), 2nd pt. I, pp. 251-52. It is difficult to understand why Elizabeth expected any results from sending another agent. More than likely it was a bluff. Speaking of this mission Mendoza reported that during an audience with Elizabeth she suddenly "said in a loud voice, that it might be heard by everyone present" that "if her requests were not acceded to she would help the States with all her strength." (Mendoza to Philip II, London, 12 April 1578, Cal. Spain, II, p. 573). Her strong words had apparently already helped to convince Philip of the need to re-establish full diplomatic relations and perhaps more such talk would bring other gains.

²Walsingham to Davison, London, 5 April 1578, Lettenhove, X, p. 399

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Mission to Don Juan

In the interval between his return from Spain and his departure for the Low Countries, Wilkes had not been idle. He apparently had some unfinished business to attend to. His previous one-and-a-half years of domestic service as Clerk of the Privy Council (June 1576 to December 1577) had given him the spare time necessary to win the affections of a young lady named Margaret, who at age sixteen was the eldest of eight daughters of a wealthy London mercer, Ambrose Smith. It seems the courtship was well advanced by the time Wilkes was sent to Spain, for on February 25th, 1578, a little over a week after returning home to London, he married Margaret Smith at the parish church of St. Pancras, Soper Lane. With his pretty teenage bride came a handsome dowery of £1,000 and, though Wilkes may not have known it then, periodic financial help throughout the remaining six years of his father-in-law's life.¹

Wilkes then departed on what Walsingham termed "his sleeveless errand to Don Juan" on Friday, April 4th. He bore the same old stale instructions. He was to suggest that the Spanish Governor "grant a surcease of arms" by confirming the Perpetual Edict and to convey Elizabeth's determination to do all in her power to resist Spain's attempts to reduce the Low Countries to "servitude." Such attempts, the instructions read, could easily result in the Low Countries being "possessed by the French." His daily diet of 13s.. 4d. coupled with £100 for additional

and Marquis de Haverch, to Lords of States Council, 3 April 1578, B.M., Add. Mss. 17,677 (A), ff. 306-7.

¹W. Bruce Bannerman, ed., "Marriages," The Register of St. Pancras, Soper Lane, London (London: Harleian Society, 1915), VL, pt. 2, p. 443, John Fetherston, ed., The Visitation of the County of Leicester, 1619 (London: Printed for the Harleian Society by Taylor and Co., Printers, 1870), pp. 66-67, W. Rawlins, ed., The Visitation of London, 1568 (London: Printed for the Harleian Society by John Whitehead and Son Limited, 1963), p. 18, Wilkes to Leicester, London, Feb. 1578, B.M., Cott. Mss. Titus B. VII, f. 30, and Margaret Wilkes' Funeral Certificate, 1596, College of Arms Mss., I. 6. f. 42.

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expenses was significantly lower than his previous salary. Perhaps the usual retinue required for safety in a journey like that to Spain was not required in the much shorter mission to the Low Countries.¹

On his way to Don Juan, Wilkes stopped at Antwerp long enough to speak with Elizabeth's agent there, William Davison, as well as the Prince of Orange, who expressed his keen "desire for her Majesty's open declaration" of her intentions in the Low Countries. Wilkes also learned that two of Monsieur's agents² had recently arrived in Antwerp to negotiate with the States-General in the matter of his intervention against Spain.³

Leaving Antwerp, Wilkes traveled on to the town of Beaumont in the province of Hainault where he was forced to wait three days for the return of Don Juan from besieging the town of Chimey. Granting Wilkes an audience on April 18th, the Spanish Governor used an interpreter throughout, "more for majesty's sake than for defect of speech in himself." After giving Wilkes "very attentive hearing" Don Juan asked why Elizabeth had dispatched him concerning the same matter Leighton had been sent for. Had he not given sufficient answer to the first agent? Wilkes explained that Leighton had been unable to deliver Elizabeth's "full resolution" on the matter of a truce and English intervention until he [Wilkes] had returned from Spain with Philip's answer. Concerning

¹Walsingham to Davison, London, 5 April 1578, Lettenhove, X, p. 399, Walsingham's Journal, p. 36, 3 April 1578, P.R.O., Excheq. 403/2559, p. 128, and Wilkes' instructions, 5 [?] April 1578, Cal. For., XII, pp. 598-600.

²Antoine de Silly, M. de Rochepot, and M. des Pruneaux.

³Davison to Burghley, Antwerp, 12 April 1578, Cal. For., XII, p. 616, and Wilkes' report of negotiations with Don Juan, [30?] April, Ibid., pp. 644-50.

Elizabeth's fear of French intervention, Don Juan indicated that Spain was able to defend her own against any of her neighbors, and especially France whose condition was such that she was unable "to embrace any such enterprise." To this Wilkes replied that "the ability of France was not so slender as he esteemed it, and that the Low Countries were a fair morsel for the French King's brother." Also, for her own safety, Elizabeth would neither tolerate their subjection by the Spanish nor allow the French to intervene. Angered by this threat, Don Juan retorted that "neither he nor his brother liked to be threatened" and that they had no intention of granting a surcease of arms which would only permit the enemy "to fortify and increase his force," thus destroying the advantage Spain now had over them. Equally unintimidated by this reaction, Wilkes firmly repeated Elizabeth's stern resolve not to allow the very thing Spain was attempting, and asked Don Juan "to consider better" Elizabeth's determination in the matter. This the Spanish governor promised to do, and the audience ended with Wilkes indicating that he would remain in Beaumont until he could learn from the governor his further "resolution" in the matter.¹

Several days later Don Juan summoned Wilkes again and in a most interesting audience revealed his own bitter and disappointed feeling about the situation in which he found himself. He explained to Wilkes that "he had no intent of prosecuting this war, to keep himself governor of these countries," in fact "he desired nothing more than to be removed if it should please the King."

For, [he continued], their natures may admit no governor among them, but some woman or some child, such as the Archduke Matthias is, and no man of valor and virtue; and were this cause ended, I would not

¹Ibid.

[illegible]

remain among them, if the King would give me the inheritance of the whole countries.¹

Further discussion on the particulars of Wilkes' instructions ended with Don Juan's stern reminder of Philip's resolve not to be intimidated by Elizabeth or any other prince and his determination to insist upon the maintenance of his authority and the Catholic religion, "though it be at the hazard of all his kingdoms and countries."²

The audience ended; Wilkes departed for home. Passing through Antwerp on the 22nd of April he briefed Davison on his mission, picked up some intelligence to deliver to Elizabeth, and then continued on his way, arriving at the English Court on Tuesday the 29th.³ His report could not have been surprising to Elizabeth. She must have known as did others that his mission would accomplish nothing but a waste of time and money.⁴

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³A problem exists with the dates here. The calendared "Report" of Wilkes negotiation with Don Juan (see Ibid.), indicates that his second audience took place on the 26th of April. Yet both Walsingham's Journal, p. 36 and Mendoza's May 5th letter to Philip (Cal. Spain, II, p. 579), indicate he arrived back home on the 29th of April. Since it was impossible to travel the distance from Beaumont to London in three days the date in the calendared "Report" is obviously wrong. A newsletter from Augsburg dated May 10th (Cal. Rome, II, p. 427) indicates that Wilkes passed through Antwerp on his way home on April 22nd. It is therefore apparent that Wilkes' second audience with the Spanish governor came sometime between the 18th and 22nd of April. See also Davison to Burghley, Antwerp, 24 April 1578, Cal. For., XII, pp. 634-35.

⁴One part of Wilkes' report may have proved disconcerting to many at the English court. This was his explanation of how Don Juan hoped to reconquer the Low Countries and at the same time win the people's loyalty:

"Considering the fearful nature of this people, Don Juan takes a course which, if he follow it, will, as the effects already show, greatly further his enterprise. When he takes any of these small towns by assault, or 'by the cannon,' he in no way 'offends' the inhabitants; he receives the soldier into the King's pay, if he will, and if not, permits him to depart with his sword; he releases the person in command in any large town, with only some slight acknowledgement of his fault, and sometimes gives him a chain or like present; he does not allow his own men to spoil, or take anything without paying, upon pain of death, and in punishing, he spares no man. At his departure from any large town he leaves no garrison behind;

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To the States-General who were in desperate need of assistance this mission undoubtedly appeared to be another stall tactic on the part of the English Court. Such appearances could only and in fact did lead the States to make more overtures for French intervention, which was the very thing Elizabeth had been working to avoid.¹ But for Elizabeth such backing and filling always seemed to be the safest policy. It was less expensive, it generally kept one's enemies off balance, and most important it provided time in which either the problem might resolve itself or simply disappear.

For Wilkes these first five years of public service had proven him an able civil servant. Again and again he had been entrusted with not only important but sometimes dangerous assignments. Always, his responsibilities were of a nature that required a bright mind rather than a prestigious presence. His service had not only won the praise of his fellow Englishmen such as Elizabeth, Walsingham, and Dale, but also the plaudits of important foreigners such as Alençon, Condé, Casimir,² and Henry of Navarre. In fact the latter was so grateful for Wilkes' services to him while he was a prisoner at the French Court that when he later

the people that live within the compass of his camp are maintained in as great security as they ever had in those parts.

Hereby you will best judge what may be the issue of this kind of proceeding; how much it will assure a fearful people, already weary with these sharp wars, who in the government of the state have their authority with the rest." (Ibid., p. 648. Unfortunately for Don Juan, Philip II's failure to support him along with his own untimely death in October 1578, gave him too little time to see the long range effects of such a policy.

¹In fact, so earnestly did subsequent appeals for French aid become that by the middle of July 1578 Alençon appeared in Hainault with 15,000 men. See Ibid., pp. 667-passim.

²In a letter to Wilkes dated the 25th of April 1578, Casimir praises the "dexterity" with which the English diplomat conducted himself during his mission to the Spanish King (Ibid., p. 638).

became King of France he honored the English diplomat with a title of Knighthood.¹

Wilkes' services had also played a fairly significant role in bringing about the successful invasion of Condé and Casimir's armies in 1576. And though he had not specifically worked for it, his mission to Spain was significant in that it helped to effect a partial end to a six year lapse in Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations. His most recent mission, the one to Don Juan, was by all standards a failure. It could not have been otherwise and he no doubt knew this. Still, the mission was carried out with dispatch and in his interviews with Don Juan, England's position was not only well represented, but also the honor of Elizabeth was upheld.

For Wilkes these past five months, with their hurried diplomatic assignments, had been both tiring and expensive. Few men, and certainly none of Elizabeth's diplomatic corps, ever grew rich in foreign work. If he was to provide himself and his family with a reasonable amount of security he needed to spend time in England tending to his private affairs. The next eight years were to provide that opportunity. They were to be years of hard work, accomplishment, and the building up of an adequate fortune. They were years that would better equip him for his more important diplomatic assignments of the future.

¹See Chapter VIII, pp. 307-8.

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CHAPTER III

LEICESTER, WILKES, AND THE UNITED PROVINCES: DECEMBER 1585-NOVEMBER 1586

Though soon immersed in the manifold and often pressing duties of a Clerk of the Privy Council, Wilkes still managed to maintain a keen interest in foreign affairs throughout the next eight years. His close contact with the Council kept him well supplied with the latest foreign intelligence and he not only wrote numerous letters keeping others informed on such news but also received much correspondence himself from those serving abroad.

Shortly after resuming his duties as a Clerk of the Council, Wilkes was seriously considered for another foreign assignment. Valentine Pardieu, better known as Seigneur de La Motte, as governor of the coastal frontier town of Gravelines, had defected to the Spanish side in the spring of 1578. This bad news was soon followed by the rumor that he was thinking of switching and throwing in his lot with François, Duke of Anjou, who in July had arrived at Mons with a French army. Fearful of Anjou's well known designs upon the Low Countries, Secretary of State Wilson on the 8th of August dispatched a letter to Walsingham who, along with the Warden of the Cinque Ports, William, Lord Cobham, were both in the Low Countries trying once again to effect a truce between the States and Don Juan. In this letter he expressed the fear that the future welfare of all Flanders depended upon La Motte's dealings. If he were won over to the French side, as Wilson expected he would be, then

"God knows what universal harm will follow." The only "able man" Wilson knew who could dissuade La Motte from this course of action was Wilkes; but since the latter was "far from Court" such a remedy was impossible. As it turned out, the crisis soon passed, for within a week Wilson learned that La Motte had openly refused to join with Anjou.¹

Two years later Wilkes was again thought of when a minor diplomatic crisis developed. On July 18th, 1580, Henri, Prince of Condé suddenly and very unexpectedly arrived in England with intentions of once again seeking support for the Huguenot cause. For Elizabeth, who was trying to improve relations with Henry III, this surprise visit was most unwelcome, and even more so after the French Ambassador in London, Michael Castelnau, Seigneur de Mauvissiere, lodged an official complaint. Still, if she officially could not appear to welcome him she could do so unofficially. Wilkes was the logical choice for this, and was asked as a personal friend of the French prince to attend him throughout his ten-day visit. No doubt Wilkes took advantage of this opportunity not only to renew their friendship but also to learn from Condé the more recent developments in France's civil turmoil.

Such continued interest and contact with foreign affairs plus the years of constant working with the financial and organizational details of clerical work proved invaluable to Wilkes, for in July 1586 he began what was to become the most important as well as the most difficult

¹Davison to the Secretaries, Ghent, 2 May 1578, Cal. For., XII, pp. 653-54, Davison to Burghley, Antwerp, 18 July 1578, Ibid., XIII, pp. 65-67, Wilson to Walsingham, The Court at Bury, 8 Aug. 1578, Ibid., p. 127, and letter from Nieuport, 15 Aug. 1578, Ibid., p. 135. Where Wilkes was at this time is not known.

²Condé to Walsingham, Sandwich, 1580, Ibid., p. 311, Mendoza to Philip II, London, 29 June 1580, Cal. Spain, III, pp. 38-39, and Burghley to Thomas Radcliff, the Earl of Sussex, Nonsuch, [?] June 1580, John Strype, Annals of the Reformation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1824), IV, pp. 668-70 [hereafter cited: Strype, Annals], and Catherine de Medicis to Mauvissiere, Saint-Maur-des-Fosses, 10 July 1580, Lettres, VII, pp. 271-72.

diplomatic assignment of his career. He was first called to report on, then later to represent, England's interests in the Low Countries during a year of the Earl of Leicester's two-year governorship there.

Wilkes' Unexplained Mission to Antwerp

After Wilkes had returned from his mission of conciliation to Don Juan in late April 1578, affairs in the Low Countries had worsened. The specious alliance of the seventeen provinces under the Pacification of Ghent was being seriously threatened by the political activities of the Catholic nobility of the southern provinces as well as by the increasing religious antagonism between Catholics and Protestants there. As previously indicated, the former were distrustful of the growing influence of William of Orange and his fellow Calvinists, and were increasingly anxious to maintain Catholic overlordship even if it meant some kind of reconciliation with Spain. The more general problem of Catholic-Protestant antagonism had been severely agitated by the increasing hostility of the southern Calvinists. So severe had this "Calvinistic terrorism" become that virtual civil war was developing between the two religious camps, a development hailed by Spanish sympathizers.¹

Though both William of Orange and the States-General found themselves unable to calm these disorders, the former was shrewd enough to prepare against the danger these developments represented to the alliance. Using the confederation of Holland and Zeeland as a basis for his plan, the Prince proceeded to lay the groundwork of a possible union of the northern provinces for the purpose of off-setting the dangers presented by the possible defection of the southern provinces.²

¹Blok, History, III, pp. 129-39.

²Ibid.

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The Prince's preparations came none too soon for the Protestant-Catholic conflict eventually resulted in January 1579 in a split of the United Netherlands into the rival Unions of Arras and Utrecht. The former, made up of the southern provinces, was not a reconciliation with Spain but a threat to do so if the States-General did not immediately put an end to Protestant violations of both the Catholic religion and the Pacification of Ghent. The Union of Utrecht, in spelling out its aim of common defence, made clear that its major concern was continued opposition to Spain. Both Unions claimed continued adherence to the Pacification, yet, it was clear that both were inclining towards its eventual repudiation.¹

Again, the Prince of Orange's and the States' attempts to prevent this growing separation failed, and in time the Union of Utrecht became the foundation of the Netherlands Republic, while that of Arras the basis for welcoming back the full authority of Spain.²

On October 1st, 1578 Don Juan had suddenly died of the plague and though news of his death was received with much rejoicing in England and the United Provinces, it soon became apparent to both that his decease was in fact a disaster for their own interests. On his deathbed Don Juan had appointed as his successor his nephew the Prince of Parma whose military abilities were soon to be recognized as unquestionably superior to those of the Victor of Lepanto. But even more important, unlike his uncle, Parma was a statesman who was to win as many battles and cities by diplomatic finesse as by force of arms.³

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Davison to Burghley, Antwerp, 5 Oct. 1578, Cal. For., XIII, pp. 223-24, Wilson to Davison, Richmond, 19 Oct. 1578, Ibid., p. 241, and Walsingham to Davison, Richmond, 11 Oct. 1578, Ibid., p. 231.

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With the reins of Spanish power in the firm grasp of Parma, the Dutch States-General and the Prince of Orange had no other choice but to increase their efforts to obtain outside help. By July the States-General was seriously considering accepting the Duke of Anjou as their Lord, and within a year of that date such an agreement was so nearly concluded that the worried Elizabeth began working overtime to dissuade Orange and the States from this new union. But it was not to be stopped and in December 1580 such an agreement was signed. Later in July 1581 the States-General passed a resolution officially to depose Philip II thus making Anjou their titular sovereign.¹

Until Anjou arrived to assume his responsibilities the government was de facto in the hands of the Prince of Orange as stadtholder of the States. Anjou's delay was caused by his lack of funds and his desire to win Elizabeth's hand in marriage before assuming the sovereignty. If he could secure the Queen as his wife he knew he could win the necessary financial backing for his enterprise from both her and his brother the French King. In fact, Henry III in June of 1581 had suggested that if the English Queen would marry his brother he would agree to assist him in the Low Countries, and to enter a defensive and offensive alliance with her against Spain.²

Elizabeth, for her part, had no real desire to wed the ugly Prince nor to see his Netherlands expedition fully supported by Henry III. Furthermore she was growing increasingly worried by what was going on around

¹H.B. [?] to Davison, Antwerp, 26 July 1579, Ibid., XVI, p. 24, "memorial" and "substance" of considerations of the Council at Nonsuch, 10 July 1580, Ibid., pp. 343-48, George Gilpin, Secretary of the Merchant Adventurers in Antwerp, to Walsingham, Delft, 31 Dec. 1580, Ibid., p. 531, Pietro Bizarri to Walsingham, Antwerp, 25 Feb. 1582, Ibid., XV, pp. 504-5, and Blok, History, III, p. 151.

²Instructions for Sir Henry Cobham, English Ambassador to France, and John Sommer, 20 June 1581, Cal. For., XV, p. 209.

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her. Jesuit missionaries were making great progress among discontented English Catholics. Philip II had recently (August 1580) succeeded in making good his claim to the vacant Portuguese throne and in doing so had nearly doubled his naval strength. At the same time in Scotland under the instigation of the recently arrived Guise agent, Esmé Stuart, better known as Seigneur d'Aubigny, the pro-English regent James Douglas, Earl of Morton had not only been imprisoned but executed (June 1581) on the charge of complicity in the murder of the young James VI's father Lord Darnley. Sent to create a situation in which Elizabeth would be pressured into concessions concerning Mary Stuart, d'Aubigny had soon won the affection of the young king.¹

Faced with these problems, Elizabeth decided that the best course of action was to dangle the possibility of marriage before Anjou in an attempt to encourage his Netherlands enterprise. This, she no doubt realized, would be the safest and cheapest way of restraining the hostile purposes of Spain towards her. The upshot of the whole matter was that in October 1581 Anjou made a visit to England to obtain money for his new responsibilities, and to see what possibilities could be stirred up in the old marriage game. He was pleasantly surprised in both. By the end of November he had not only exchanged rings with the Queen and been convinced by her that she meant this time to marry him, but also had received a promise of a £50,000 loan.²

Unfortunately, Elizabeth's play-acting over the marriage was so convincing that Anjou began to forget his interest in the Low Countries. Eventually, it took two months, £60,000, Parma's capture of Tournai,

¹Read, Walsingham, II, Ch. 's VIII and IX go into great detail on these problems.

²Ibid.

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and the insistence of the States-General to induce him to return to the Low Countries. Arriving at Flushing in early February 1582 he soon after made his formal entry into Antwerp and received homage as the Duke of Brabant.¹

A little over a month later (March 18) during the festivities of Anjou's birthday celebration Orange was shot by the would-be assassin Jean Jaureguy. While he clung to life for over a month, Elizabeth fretted over the possibility of his death which would leave the figure-head Anjou as the real power in the Netherlands. Again, the prospect of a French dominated Low Countries loomed before her and again she resorted to the old marriage game with Anjou as a possible solution to her dilemma. But she fooled no one, least of all Catherine de Medicis who sent her astute advisor and Councilor of State Pomponne de Bellièvre to, among other things, discourage her son from listening any more to Elizabeth.²

Thomas Wilkes arrived in Antwerp at approximately the same time as Bellièvre (end of May or first of June 1582). Why he was sent and why there are no English references to his visit remains a complete mystery. Even his own summary of his diplomatic career fails to mention this apparently brief and perhaps secret mission to the Netherlands. The possibilities for his presence at this particular time are several. He could have been sent to congratulate William of Orange who by May 2nd had recovered sufficiently to offer public thanksgiving in the Antwerp Cathedral. He also could have been sent to get out of Anjou what little mileage may have been left in the stale marriage negotiations. More probably he was sent to discuss with Orange the best method of keeping tabs on

¹Blok, History, III, p. 161.

²Read, Walsingham, II, p. 102 and Catherine to Bellièvre, Fontainebleau, 15 May 1582, Lettres, VIII, pp. 29-30. Catherine in this letter bluntly reveals her distrust of Elizabeth's intentions ever to marry.

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the unstable French Prince, and preventing an excessive growth of French power in the Low Countries. Whatever the reasons, while Bellièvre was in Antwerp visiting with Anjou, the Prince of Orange asked Wilkes to meet with him. In the only known document concerning this visit, Wilkes reported to Walsingham the results of his several conferences with the French agent.¹

The English agent ascertained that Bellièvre's mission had three purposes: First, to discover if the professed affection of the Low Countries for Anjou was true or simulated. Second, to exhort the Prince of Orange to take the affairs of the French Prince to heart and to "have care for his person." Third, to complain to Anjou of the "extreme insolences and cruelties" of the soldiers being recruited in his name who were daily pillaging northern France. Wilkes reported that the French agent had carried out the latter two points and like himself [Wilkes] discovered that the people were strongly affected at this point to Henry III, Catherine, and the Queen of Navarre.

"We have spoken much of English affairs," Wilkes continued, "but all proposals seem to me to return to two heads:" First, Philip II's fear of turning France and the Low Countries against him have kept him from executing his enterprises against England. Secondly, the French King has refused to support the Spanish King in his designs, not because he is "assured" of Elizabeth's friendship but because it has been in the best interests of France to keep Spain from becoming too powerful.

Bellièvre explained that France had not yet forgotten Henry VIII's defection to Charles V's side after Pavia, and assured Wilkes that "they

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, Antwerp, 9 June 1582, Mr. G. Groen van Prinsterer, ed., Archives ou Correspondance Inédite de La Maison D'Orange-Nassau, 1st series, VIII, pp. 105-111. In Cal. Dom., II, p. 52 we learn that in "April?" 1582 Wilkes was still in England. So his mission obviously did not begin until after this date.

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would not suffer it again." He pleaded that Walsingham be induced to convince Elizabeth to stop creating divisions between Anjou and his brother the King, and to realize that the only way any of them were going to meet the Spanish threat was through their mutual friendship. Wilkes agreed with this and in a sentence packed with overtones defended Elizabeth and Walsingham by explaining that they were not so uninformed that they did not understand that to Anjou, Henry III's friendship was the most important thing in the world.

Next, Bellièvre complained about Walsingham's and Elizabeth's dealings over the marriage question. He protested that while the French King accorded everything that was demanded in this matter, Walsingham was either raising objections or refusing to "speak openly" on the subject. What was Wilkes' opinion on the possibility of a marriage?

To this query, the English agent responded that as before, he did not expect there would be a marriage because, as he rather lamely explained: "if there had been no obstacle it would have come to pass before now." He went on to explain that the reason for lack of candor on this subject was Elizabeth's hesitation to enter into open conflict with Philip after having been at "peace" with him for so many years. He further suggested that the French desist from pressuring the Queen to break with Spain for even without what little help she could give, France was "strong enough to hold and bridle the King of Spain."

Then, Wilkes claimed that France had not always dealt with England in the most genuine manner either. He gave as proof the machinations of the House of Guise both in France and in Scotland. To these charges Bellièvre replied that though unable to deny the power of the Guises in France he knew their credit with Henry III to be "very small." He explained that he could understand why the antics of d'Aubigny in Scotland

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worried Elizabeth but made it clear that the French King had "no practice" with the Scots either. In fact, if James VI were openly to break with Elizabeth, France would repudiate him.

Wilkes concluded his conference with the French agent by revealing what had been and always were to be his goals concerning the future of Western Europe:

I said that I felt obligated to the realms of France, England, and the Low Countries more so than to anything else in the world, and that I would deem myself very happy if before my death I could see those three countries in good friendship, for [then would] I hold them to be invincible.

Wilkes was to devote the remainder of his diplomatic career to achieving this goal. He, like Walsingham, had long before realized that Spain and not France was England's great enemy.

It is not known how long after June 9th Wilkes returned to England but his and Elizabeth's suspicions concerning the trustworthiness of Anjou were soon justified. Just six months later in early January 1583 he betrayed the Netherland's trust in him by attempting to seize Antwerp. It was a stupid ploy to gain complete power and one completely thwarted by the angry burghers of that city. No longer trusted by the States and in danger of his very life, Anjou eventually returned to France and an early death on May 31st, 1584.¹

The Treaty of Nonsuch

The most serious threat to the eventual success of the rebellious Provinces came but one month later when, on July 1st William, Prince of Orange, was assassinated at his home in Delft. His death came at a most

¹The attempt on Antwerp, 7-10 Jan. 1583, Cal. For., XVIII, pp. 24-31, Sir Edward Stafford, English Ambassador in France, to Walsingham, Paris, June 1584, Ibid., p. 533, and Thomas Stokes, English merchant at Bruges, to Walsingham, 23 June 1583, Ibid., XVII, pp. 413-15.

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inopportune time, for Parma was successfully seizing city after city in Flanders in preparation for his real goal, the capture of Antwerp. If the Dutch revolt had been going this badly while Orange lived, what hope of success had it without his guiding genius? The English Ambassador to the States, William Davison, felt they stood little chance of maintaining the struggle "being left by the Prince's untimely death as a ship tossed in the midst of a tempest, without pilot or governor," He further concluded that if English aid were not forthcoming the United Provinces would either fall under the yoke of the Spaniard or cast themselves into the arms of the French, and since the death of Anjou this latter possibility was even greater. After debating the problem the English Court took "half a resolution," that whether or not France agreed to help, England would take some course for the defense of those provinces.¹

¹Gilpin to Walsingham, Middelburg, 2 July 1584, Ibid., pp. 580-81, Walsingham to Stafford, Richmond, 17 July 1584, Ibid., p. 622, Davison to Walsingham, The Hague, 5 Dec. 1584, Ibid., XIX, p. 178, and John Lothrop Motley, History of the United Netherlands (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1861), I, pp. 23 and 134-43. In the confusion following the death of William of Orange the States-General, which only met twice a year, realized the need for a governing body for the interim periods. To fill this need it established in August of 1584 a "provisional executive board" called the Council of State. Headed by Count Maurice of Nassau, one of the Prince of Orange's sons, it contained eighteen members representing the Provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, and those areas of Flanders and Brabant which were not yet under Spanish power, (Gilpin to Walsingham, Middelburg, 29 Aug. 1584, Cal. For., XIX, p. 38). As Motley explained, this council was "empowered and enjoined to levy troops by land and sea, and to appoint naval and military officers, to establish courts of admiralty, to expend the moneys voted by the States, to maintain the ancient privileges of the country,...Diplomatic relations, questions of peace and war, the treaty-making powers, were not entrusted to the Council, without the knowledge and consent of the States-General, which body was to be convoked twice a year by the State Council." (See Netherlands, I, p. 18). The body could divide itself into two parts and still function legitimately as it did in December 1584 with one part "remaining in Utrecht, for the affairs of those provinces; the other for the most part in Zeeland with the Count [Maurice] attending upon the affairs of Brabant." (See Davison to Walsingham, The Hague, 5 Dec. 1584, Cal. For., XIX, p. 178). Each member was elected to his post (Capt. Fremin to Davison, Dort, 23 Dec. 1584, Ibid., XX, p. 234) and when Leicester arrived much of its proceedings were carried out in his name (Christophe Roels, Pensionary of Zeeland, to Davison, Middelburg, 27 Dec. 1584, Ibid., p. 247).

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This "half a resolution" continued as Elizabeth's policy for the next eight critical months. Much ink was expended upon the subject of "openly" aiding the United Provinces and many envoys were exchanged between the two governments.¹

In the meantime, the increasingly desperate States-General finally sent deputies to Henry III with an offer of the sovereignty, but beset by civil turmoils and swayed by Bernardino Mendoza who was at that time the Spanish ambassador in France, the French King in March 1585 rejected their offer. Thus, having failed to obtain support from France, unable to expect much if any assistance from the German princes, and aware that Parma was slowly tightening his coils around besieged Antwerp, the States appeared to have nowhere to turn.²

Aware of the hopelessness of their situation Elizabeth finally let the Dutch know that she was now willing "to take them into her protection." Immediately the States sent deputies to England with, among other things, an offer of their sovereignty. To them, the English Queen represented their only chance to fight off the Spaniard and her help was too valuable to be trusted to a mere military alliance. But when the deputies arrived in July 1585 they found Elizabeth not at all anxious to assume the sovereignty, especially considering the great expense such an "honor" would bring with it.³

¹Ortell's propositions to Elizabeth, Aug. 1584, Cal. For., XIX, pp. 40-41, Discourse, [Oct.?] 1584, Ibid., pp. 129-32, and Papers Concerning English aid to the Low Countries, 10 Oct. 1584, Ibid., pp. 95-98.

²Davison's instructions, 13 Nov. 1584, Ibid., pp. 149-51, Derby and Stafford to Walsingham, Paris, Ibid., pp. 315-17, Extract from letter [to Count Maurice], [March?] 1585, Ibid., pp. 387-88, Catherine de Medicis to Messieurs D'Anvers, [Paris], 14 Jan. 1585, Lettres, VIII, p. 233 (see also footnote no. 1).

³Motley, Netherlands, I, pp. 311-12, R. B. Wernham, "English Policy and the Revolt of the Netherlands," Britain and the Netherlands, eds. J.S. Bromley and E. H. Kessmann (London, Chatto and Windus, 1960), p. 32, Read, Walsingham, III, p. 93, and Walsingham to Davison, Barmels, 22 April 1585, Cal. For., XIX, pp. 423-24.

In the meantime the seriousness of Antwerp's situation drove Elizabeth to agree to send one of her finest soldiers, Sir John Norris, with approximately 4,000 men to relieve the city. Then, finally, on August 10th at Nonsuch, a treaty of assistance was signed with the States binding England to furnish an additional army of 4,000 foot, 400 horse, and a "nobleman" to command them until the end of the war. In return, Elizabeth was to receive the two towns of Ostend and Sluys as security, as well as the right to have one or two Englishmen sit in the Dutch Council of State.¹

But all this came too late to save Antwerp. Just the day before the Treaty of Nonsuch was signed, and long before Norris' troops arrived, Antwerp surrendered to Parma.²

News of the submission of this, the richest and most populous city in the rebellious Provinces, "greatly troubled" Elizabeth. She knew she would have to act quickly if any semblance of victory were to be snatched from this defeat. Increasing her troop commitment to 5,000 foot and 1,000 horse she eventually made this number additional to the 1,150 foot

¹Walsingham to Thomas Bodley, Envoy to Denmark, The Court, 23 June 1585, *Ibid.*, p. 557. Sovereignty was offered to Elizabeth by the United Provinces in hopes that if she accepted this would force her to foot the cost of their defence. Seeing through their scheme Elizabeth stoutly refused and agreed only to assume a semi-protectorate relationship with them. The Treaty of Nonsuch contained thirty articles the most important of which are mentioned above in the text. Several other important articles included: the States' promise to repay within four years all money disbursed in their behalf by England; the return of Flushing and Brill to the States when such debts were repaid; the stipulation that the Governor-General along with the Council of State would have the authority to appoint or remove any naval or military officer; that they would be responsible for the maintenance of the "public authority and military discipline of the Provinces; that neither side would treat with the enemy without the consent of the other, and that if any governor of a province or frontier city was to be replaced the provincial Estates would choose two or three candidates from which the Governor-General and the Council of State would make their choice. See Jean Dumont, *Corps universel Diplomatique du Droit Des Gens* (LaHaye: P. Hussion et Charles Levrier, 1728), V, 1, pp. 454-55 for a copy of the Treaty of Nonsuch.

²Blok, *History*, III, pp. 203-4.

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in the garrisons of Brill and Flushing, thus raising her total commitment to 6,150 foot and 1,000 horse. Then, after much vacillation over whom to put in charge as Lieutenant-General of the English forces she finally, at the end of September, decided upon the Earl of Leicester. However, until his arrival in the Netherlands on December 10th, Elizabeth's ambassador there, William Davison, and Sir John Norris, as general of her expeditionary army, were charged with the responsibility of working out the details of the new alliance.¹

Leicester's First Eight Months

Prior to his departure for the Netherlands, Leicester had been informed by Elizabeth that he was not to assume the position of Governor-General of the United Provinces if it were offered to him. Feeling that he needed as much authority as possible if success were to be achieved and overwhelmed by the enthusiastic reception given him upon his arrival, Leicester, contrary to Elizabeth's "express commandment," accepted both the position and its title of "Excellency." It proved an ill-advised step, for Elizabeth's angry reaction not only seriously undermined his authority but also created serious distrust among Dutch leaders as to her motives for assuming their protection.²

¹Neale, "Elizabeth and the Netherlands," E.H.R. (July 1930), VI, pp. 373-75, Conyers Read, Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (New York, 1900), p. 323, Walsingham to Leicester, The Court, 26 and 27 Sept. 1585, John Bruce, ed., Correspondance of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leycester During His Government of the Low Countries (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1844), pp. 4-5 [hereafter cited: Bruce, Leycester's Correspondance], Leicester to Walsingham, [?] 27 Sept. 1585, Ibid., pp. 5-7, Walsingham to Davison, The Court, 5 Sept. 1585, Cal. For., XX, p. 8, and Edward Burnham (servant of Walsingham), to Walsingham, Flushing, 12 Dec. 1585, Ibid., pp. 212-13.

²Christofle Roels, pensionary of Zeeland to Davison, Middelburg, 2 Dec. 1585, Ibid., p. 175, Sir Thomas Sirley (Leicester's cousin), to Burghley, The Hague, 25 Jan. 1586, Ibid., p. 320, Lords of the Council to Leicester, 26 Jan. 1586, Ibid., pp. 322-24, Elizabeth to Leicester, [?], 30 March 1586, "Not Sent," Ibid., p. 500, Leicester to Davison,

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There was another problem that started Leicester's Netherlands venture off on the wrong foot. Just prior to his arrival, a rumor had spread that Elizabeth was planning to demand the office of Stadtholder of Holland and Zeeland for her new Lieutenant-General; her plan apparently being to enhance his authority through that office's inherent right to appoint governors in the provinces and cities. Uncertain of the English Queen's aims, John Van Oldenbarnevelt (more commonly known as Barnevelt), the pensionary of Rotterdam and a leader in the States-General, hastily organized a successful motion in that assembly to invest the youthful Count Maurice with not only the office of Stadtholder, but also with the questionable title of "Prince."¹ Carried out on the first of November, both honors made him the first officer of the States. At the same time, the turbulent and not often sober German nobleman, Count Hohenloe (often called "Mollock" by the French and English) was made Maurice's Lieutenant-General. The latter's youth and inexperience made Hohenloe's new assignment the equivalent of commander-in-chief of the States-General.²

Frustrated in his ambitious and feeling personally affronted, Leicester was incensed with Maurice for his acceptance of the title and with Barnevelt for having masterminded the coup. From then on he

[The Hague], 7 Feb. 1586, Ibid., p. 359, and Leicester to Walsingham, [camp before Zutphen], 20 Oct. 1586, Bruce, Leicester's Correspondance, p. 425. As Governor-General, Leicester was granted supreme authority in civil and political matters as long as they were in accordance with the customs prevalent in the reign of the Emperor Charles V. All civil, legal, and political appointments were to be made by him from among two or three nominees chosen by the States of each province where the vacancy occurred. And while the States-General swore an oath of fidelity to him, Leicester in turn was required to promise that he would uphold the ancient laws, privileges, and customs of the United Provinces. See Motley, Netherlands, I, pp. 406-7.

¹Actually Count Maurice's elder brother Philip William of Nassau who was still a prisoner in Spain, was the only one who had a right to the title "Prince." Thus, Leicester's anger at this obvious violation of Dutch custom was partly justified.

²Blok, History, III, pp. 207-8.

distrusted both men as well as the Dutch States for having gone along with this scheme to restrict his power.¹

Having displeased Elizabeth at the outset of his Governorship, it was not long before Leicester found his warm welcome in the United Provinces cooled by the displeasure he incurred at the hands of the Dutch merchants, many of whom were members of the States-General.

Upset by the trading going on between the Holland and Zeeland merchants on one hand, and Spain, the southern Netherlands, and Picardy on the other, the newly reorganized Council of State (eight of whom were either appointments of Leicester or English members),² had on March 25th, 1586 induced Leicester to publish a "placard" prohibiting all such trade that might aid the enemy. Apparently unaware that Leicester had in fact opposed the measure, the surprised merchants and States' deputies directed their hot anger towards the Governor-General and the restriction they feared would divert their lucrative trade directly towards the rival Hanse towns. Unable to change their minds concerning his role in the trade prohibition, Leicester was to find this "placard" an increasingly serious obstacle to his success in the coming months.³

¹Ibid.

²Before Elizabeth had even decided which "nobleman" she would send to the Low Countries, she had instructed the States-General in accordance with the Articles of the Treaty of Nonsuch (which allowed two English members on the Council of State), to renew the powers of the Council of State until her Lieutenant-General's arrival when he would then work with them in reorganizing that executive body. Soon after Leicester's arrival in December 1585, he set about to organize the Council in as pro-English a manner as possible. In January he was allowed to appoint five Dutch members to the newly reorganized Council and agreed to fill each of the remaining vacancies from among a selection of candidates chosen for that purpose by each of the provincial States-Generals. Motley, Netherlands, I, p. 406. [See Ch. IV. pp. 121 for a breakdown of the Council's membership and sympathies.] Walsingham to Davison, Nonsuch, 18 Sept. 1585, Cal. For., XX, p. 29, Christofle Roels, Pensionary of Zeeland, to Davison, Middelburg, 27 Dec. 1585, Ibid., p. 247, and the Count of Moeurs, Governor of Utrecht, Guelderland, and Overijsel, to Davison, Utrecht, 3 Feb. 1586, Ibid., p. 349.

³Leicester to Burghley, [Amsterdam], 17 March 1586, Ibid., p. 453,

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Leicester's next problem with the States came in June when he established a Chamber of Finances in an attempt to discover for Elizabeth the abilities of the United Provinces to finance the total war effort. One of the biggest objections the States raised to this second unexpected innovation was Leicester's appointment of a "foreigner," Jacques Ringault, as Treasurer-General of the Council. As a refugee from Flanders who had served as a Clerk of Finance under three successive Spanish Governors, Ringault's considerable financial talents were as suspect to the Dutch as was his recently professed Calvinism. And though he had served well in the same capacity under both William of Orange and Francois, Duke of Anjou, his major role in establishing the Chamber of Finances won him the undying enmity of both the States and the rest of the merchant community.¹

But again, this innovation in the government of the rebellious Provinces was not just Leicester's idea. Weary of being responsible for the economy of the war effort, the Council of State had also indicated their desire that the Earl establish a Chamber of Finances. He had done so without the advice of the States-General not only because he intended to use it to audit their income and expenditures but also to put a stop

Leicester's "Placcart," Utrecht, 25 March 1586, Ibid., p. 489, Dutch "Articles" concerning Leicester's Placard, 16 July 1586, Ibid., XXI, ii, pp. 157-60, Leicester to Elizabeth, From the Camp, 11 Oct. 1586, Ibid., p. 196, and Blok, History, III, p. 212. The only two parts exempted from the placards restrictions were Calais and the East Friesland city of Emden whose Count, Edzard II, was already too upset with the States and too friendly with Parma for Leicester to risk the English staple there by pushing him completely into the arms of Spain. Edzard to [Elizabeth], [Emden?], 24 April 1586, Cal. For., XX, pp. 579-80, Wilkes "brief," 9 July 1586, Ibid., XXI, ii, p. 82, and Leicester to Elizabeth, From the Camp, 11 Oct. 1586, Ibid., p. 196.

¹"Further remonstrances of the States," 16 July 1586, Ibid., p. 91, Matters for Elizabeth, [19] June 1586, Ibid., p. 36, Doctor Bartholomew Clerk to Burghley, Utrecht, 4 July 1586, Ibid., p. 73, Richard Cavendish to Burghley, Utrecht, 18 July 1586, Ibid., p. 33, Davison to Walsingham, Flushing, 22 Oct. 1585, Ibid., XX, p. 108, Motley, Netherlands, II, p. 68, and Blok, History, II, pp. 214-15.

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to Holland and Zeeland's constant violations of the March 25th embargo. The form and membership the chamber assumed surprised and in some cases angered even the Council of State.¹

The immediate resistance of the United Provinces to this new council stems in part from its leadership which was made up of: 1) Adolf von Solms, Count of Meru and Stadholder of the frontier provinces of Utrecht, Gelderland, and Overijssel, 2) Henry Killigrew, English member of the Council of State, 3) Aesusijn van Reinhard, Seigneur van Brakel, a nobleman of Utrecht, and 4) Ringault. All were foreigners and thus immediately suspect by the States-General. No doubt intended as a sop to what Leicester knew would be the deputies' hard feelings, three native "councilors" who were to serve as clerks were also chosen for the new chamber: 1) Sebastian van Loozen from Holland, 2) Toos Teelinck from Zeeland, and 3) Paul Buys, of Utrecht, a former advocate of Holland, and an old friend of England. Incensed at being placed in a subordinate position to Ringault whom he felt "not fit to be his clerk" Buys bluntly rejected Leicester's offer. This refusal and Buys' subsequent conduct towards the Chamber of Finances soon won him Leicester's undying hatred.²

As though he did not have enough troubles with Elizabeth's displeasure over his acceptance of the Governorship and the States opposition

¹Fredericka G. Oosterhoff. "The Earl of Leicester's Governorship of the Netherlands 1586-87" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1967), pp. 149-51. This well written thesis goes into further detail on the Chamber of Finance and its opponents.

²Doctor Thomas Doyley to Burghley, Utrecht, 24 June 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 49, Leicester to Walsingham, East., 18 June 1586, Bruce, Leicester's Correspondence, p. 310, and Motley, Netherlands, II, pp. 70-71. As England's friend, Paul Buys had anxiously worked for granting the sovereignty of the Netherlands to Elizabeth. When he realized that her constant refusal of the same was final, he in despair began to look to the King of Denmark as one who might possibly accept the honor. His efforts in this direction not only increased Leicester's hatred for him but also caused concern at the English Court. See Ch. IV, p. 130, Leicester to Elizabeth, Utrecht, 20 June 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 38.

to his fiscal policies, Leicester next embroiled himself in a heated personal quarrel with his own subordinates, Sir John Norris and his brother, Captain Edward. Sons of his old enemy the Earl of Sussex, these two brothers held a special place in the Governor-General's enmity. Sir John, who had been commander of the English forces prior to Leicester's arrival, was a soldier of greater military experience and success than the Governor-General; a fact which the States never let the Earl forget. But, Norris was also a difficult, proud, and unruly man.¹ He returned Leicester's hate measure for measure, especially after he felt himself to have been reduced in responsibility by Leicester from "first" officer in the field to "fifth." After several months of having his military counsel ignored, his officers swayed against him, his abilities scorned in the presence of others, and even his very life threatened by the Earl, Norris was ready to return home.²

As Leicester's stay in the Netherlands lengthened, things went from bad to worse. In the beginning of this foreign venture, Elizabeth had estimated her annual expenditure in the Low Countries would total £126,180 10s. or approximately two-thirds of her ordinary government expenditure and nearly one-third of the ordinary annual receipt. By the middle of July 1586 it was becoming clear that expenditures were

¹Leicester to Walsingham, The Hague, 30 July 1586, Bruce, Leicester's Correspondence, p. 379, and Leicester to Walsingham, East, 10 June 1586, Ibid., p. 301. Walsingham's appraisal of Sir John is interesting: "I would to God that with his value and courage he carried the mind and reputation of a religious soldier. The chief experience and nurture that he hath received in the war hath been in those countries where neither discipline-military nor religion carried any sway, and therefore it hath taught him nothing else but a kind of a licentious and corrupt government, such as being weighed either in policy or religion can never prosper." Walsingham to Leicester, The Court, 11 April 1586, Ibid., p. 222.

²Leicester to Walsingham, The Hague, 30 July 1586, Ibid., p. 380, "Notes of remembrance delivered by Mr. Edw. Norris," Sept. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, pp. 173-74, and Sir John Norris to Wilkes, Camp at Boesburgh, 6 Sept. 1586, Ibid., p. 150.

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running far in excess of that sum. Not only were the States failing to supply the necessary funds but also corrupt disbursements of the soldiers pay were quickly draining away English funds. Leicester did not help matters any by increasing the £170 monthly pay per company by £6 5s. and raising his own daily wage from £6 to £10 13s. 4d. In many instances money meant for English companies in Elizabeth's pay was diverted to those English troops in the States pay who had not received their wages. The results of all this were constant appeals for more money. Elizabeth's refusal to send any more than originally budgeted resulted in numerous desertions, and a subsequent decrease in the effectiveness of the war effort.¹

Perhaps the most serious development that began to undermine Leicester's effectiveness in these early months of his administration was the States' growing awareness that Elizabeth and Parma were involved in secret peace negotiations. Always anxious for peace Elizabeth had quickly grabbed the bait Parma offered. Unaware that these overtures were designed to throw her off guard until Philip II's Armada preparations were complete, she foolishly persisted in the long-drawn-out affair until it had done irreparable harm to her position in the Netherlands.²

Leicester was one of the first to sense the crippling effect such overtures were having on Anglo-Dutch relations, and it was this protracted threat of being forced by Elizabeth to make peace with Spain which eventually pushed the States into open opposition against Leicester.³

¹J.E. Neale, "Elizabeth and the Netherlands, 1586-7," E.H.R., (July 1930), VI, pp. 373-96, and Leicester to Walsingham, Tergowad, 7 Aug. 1586, Bruce, Leicester's Correspondence, pp. 384-90.

²See Motley, Netherlands, I, Ch. 8 for a detailed survey of the Anglo-Spanish negotiations. See also, Bernardino Mendoza to Philip II, Paris, 24 June 1586, Cal. Spain, II, p. 584, and Letters to Paris, Brussels, 23 June 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 46.

³Leicester to Burghley, The Hague, 7 Feb. 1586, Ibid., XX, p. 359.

Thus, with the serious opposition forming against his Governorship from merchant and ruling classes alike, displeasure expressed from Elizabeth, trouble with his subordinates, financial chaos, and to top it off the corroding effects of the "secret" Anglo-Spanish negotiations, Leicester's position was anything but comfortable. Frustrated at every turn, worried by Elizabeth's increasing criticism, and no doubt feeling the need for someone whom the States did not already distrust to convey Elizabeth's assurances of continued support, Leicester wrote the English Queen a letter requesting that "some sufficient person of credit" be quickly sent over both to convey her feelings to him and to "see how all goes" in the Low Countries.¹

At first "loath" to undergo the additional expense of sending such a "special person," Elizabeth eventually decided that the "many great difficulties" besetting her favorite warranted the fulfilling of such a request. So, on July 11, 1586, she personally chose "that excellent man of business," Mr. Thomas Wilkes to be the one sent.²

Wilkes' Mission of Observation

Summoned into Elizabeth's presence on July 18th, Wilkes was given letters, written instructions, and charged "by long speeches of her Majesty" to observe conditions in the Low Countries, calm their suspicions about her intentions to make a secret peace with Parma, and to help smooth

¹Leicester to Elizabeth, Bonnell, 6 June 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 4, and Elizabeth to Leicester, The Court, 19 July 1586, Ibid., p. 94.

²Ibid., Burghley to Walsingham, The Court, 11 July 1586, Cal. Dom., II, p. 338, Walsingham to Leicester, Barnelms, 11 July 1586, Bruce, Leicester's Correspondance, p 343, and Motley, Netherlands, I, p. 179. Speaking of Doctor Clerk's quiet and academic nature which was so unsuited for diplomatic work Motley says "Wilkes was of sterner stuff. Always ready to follow the camp and to face the guns and drums with equanimity, and endowed beside with keen political insight, he was more competent than most men to unravel the confused skein of Netherland politics." (Ibid., v. II, p. 89.)

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over the differences rising between Leicester and the Dutch leaders. More importantly, he was to inform himself of the capacity of the States to fulfill their financial pledges to England. Had these pledges been kept or were Leicester's complaints of lack of cooperation true?¹

The same day Wilkes received his verbal and formal written instructions. He was also given a document headed "A brief of the perils and the reminders." Apparently, these "perils" were not only to be explained to Leicester but Wilkes was also to see to it that their itemized "remedies" were immediately implemented.²

The first "peril" to be dealt with was a group of "politic men" who either for religion's sake, their private wealth and authority, or a desire to escape all taxes, would never return to the obedience of Spain, but instead would seek to have Elizabeth or some other prince assume the sovereignty of the Netherlands. Wilkes was to make them understand that while Elizabeth would never assume the sovereignty until convinced that they alone could maintain themselves against the enemy, she did fully intend to continue in their defense.

The second danger consisted of false rumors that Leicester was raising "new taxes" for his own and England's private use. The remedy was to deny them publicly and at the same time to commission some principal men of good reputation "as superintendent[s] for the finances."

The third peril concerned Leicester's recently acquired enemy, Paul Buys. Apparently, sorely disappointed with Elizabeth's refusal to accept the States' earlier offer of sovereignty, and still angry at Leicester for attempting to place him in a subordinate position in the Chamber of

¹Wilkes instructions, 17 July 1586, B.M., Add. Mss, 48,014, ff. 263-66, Elizabeth to Leicester, The Court, 19 July 1586, Gal. For., XXI, 11, p. 94, and "Docquet of Parcels of Mr. Wilkes' dispatch, 20 July 1586," Ibid., p. 95.

²Drawn up 9 July 1586, delivered to Wilkes on 18 July, Ibid., pp. 81-82.

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Finances, Buys had secretly turned to the Danish King, Frederick II, as one who might possibly accept what the English Queen so bluntly refused. Wilkes was to reassure both Buys and his accomplices of Elizabeth's commitment to the Dutch cause, possibly to imprison them if they persisted in their intrigues, and to see to it that Leicester himself sent an envoy to learn the Danish King's feelings on the whole matter.

The fourth peril was the possible defection of the North German Count of Emden to the Spanish side, which would seriously threaten the English staple in that port. The suggested remedy was to warn the Count's brother John and others there who favored the English trade of the detrimental effects of a loss of the English staple. At the same time feelers were to be sent out to some of the towns in Holland to see if any of them would serve as a staple center for English cloth.

The unjust valuation of English money in the Low Countries was the fifth peril and Wilkes was to insist on the proper valuation of all English coin and to prohibit any further coinage of English money there.

Finally, Elizabeth wished Wilkes to make it clear to the States General that she: 1) intended to uphold her contract with them, 2) condemned "their credulity of rumors to the contrary," and 3) was displeased with them "for non-performance of their promises in yielding to their contributions."

With these instructions, a £100 advancement for "furniture," and a daily salary of 40s. Wilkes departed on his assignment on July 20th with the title of "Lord Ambassador."¹

Wilkes arrived in Utrecht on August 1st and after delivering Elizabeth's letters to Leicester, he and the Governor-General traveled

¹Doctor Thomas Doyley to Burghley, Utrecht, 8 Aug. 1586, Ibid., p. 116, and Excheq., 403/2559, p. 245.

on to Gouda where they were given a warm welcome by the Council of State which had come from The Hague to meet them. Once there, Wilkes quickly became aware of the depth of anxiety the Netherlands people felt concerning Elizabeth's intentions. In a letter to the Queen, Wilkes explained that "the constant bruit brought from the enemy of the supposed treaty of peace between your Majesty and him...had so amazed" the members of the Council of State that they had begun to "abandon all hope." Fortunately, his own timely arrival had inspired in them "a wonderful joy, as though they had been raised from a deep despair to a certain hope of your Majesty's continuance of succor towards them."¹

Leicester too was pleased with Wilkes' performance and said as much to Walsingham; "surely he behaved himself exceedingly well, and I think will do more good than any you sent these seven years." And in another letter he remarked "her Majesty doth not know what a jewel she hath of him."²

After the Council of State rendered Elizabeth "immortal and eternal thanks" for her assurances of continued support against Spain, they invited Wilkes to accompany them to The Hague in order fully to acquaint him "with the state of all the Provinces United."³

¹Wilkes to Elizabeth, Gouda, 7 Aug. 1586, B.M., Add. Mss. 40,014, f. 267.

²Leicester to Walsingham, Tergoad, 7 Aug. 1586, Bruce, Leicester's Correspondance, pp. 383, and 388-89. There were other reports of Wilkes' success. Leicester's Treasurer, Sir Thomas Shirley wrote Walsingham that Wilkes' coming was "to very good purpose, for great need there is of all good means...to keep the people constant unto us." (11 Aug. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 127). Doctor Bartholomew Clerk, one of the English members of the Council of State wrote Burghley that Wilkes was running "a diligent and honest course, without pleasing of humors." (16 Aug. 1586, Ibid., p. 132). Leicester in a letter to Burghley said of Wilkes, "He is a marvelous sufficient man, and her Majesty could not have chosen a fitter for this purpose than I see he is like to prove." (10 Aug. 1586, Ibid., p. 122).

³Wilkes to Elizabeth, Gouda, 7 Aug. 1586, B.M., Add. Mss., 48,194, f. 267.

There can be no doubt that Wilkes arrived at a critical juncture in the Anglo-Dutch venture. Animosities, jealousies, and unwillingness to discuss the opinions of either side had all but paralyzed the effectiveness of the war effort. To most, including Leicester, Wilkes represented at least a dry shoulder to cry on and hopefully, a sympathetic ear that would later explain to Elizabeth the "justice" of their individual positions. In fact, so immediate and spontaneous was the effect of his visit that even Leicester exclaimed, "I must confess the coming of Mr. Wilkes hath exceedingly stirred things; I pray God not too late!"¹

Thus, besieged with requests, complaints, reports, and weighted down with myriad tasks to accomplish, Wilkes (once he had arrived at The Hague), feverishly began piecing together what was to become an explosive political and economic report on conditions in the United Provinces.

On two occasions he delivered to the States-General questionnaires concerning their methods of taxation, annual expenditures on the war, strength of their army, frontier cities held by them and the enemy, how their navy was maintained, and many other questions. Wilkes also did some footwork himself and by the 20th of August his investigations had produced enough conclusions for him to compose a rough draft of what was probably his first report to the Privy Council. The report is lengthy, but it indicates not only the diligence with which Wilkes had been performing his tasks but also provides a clear picture of political conditions in the United Provinces at that time.²

¹Leicester to Walsingham, Utrecht, 10 Aug. 1586, Bruce, Leycester's Correspondence, p. 395. Wilkes delivered his letters and propositions to the States-General on July 13th. "Memoranda," B.M., Cott. Mss. Titus B. VI, f. 196.

²Questionnaires for the States, 10 and 25 Aug. 1586, B.M., Cott. Mss., Galba D. X, ff. 2-9, and Cal. For., XXI, ii, pp. 134-37.

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Concerning the "peril" of overtures to the Danish King, Wilkes found that not only were the Dutch not interested in seeking "any new defense" but that Paul Buys designs in this matter had been "utterly quailed."¹ Having formed, like Leicester, a less than desirable opinion of Buys, Wilkes stated:

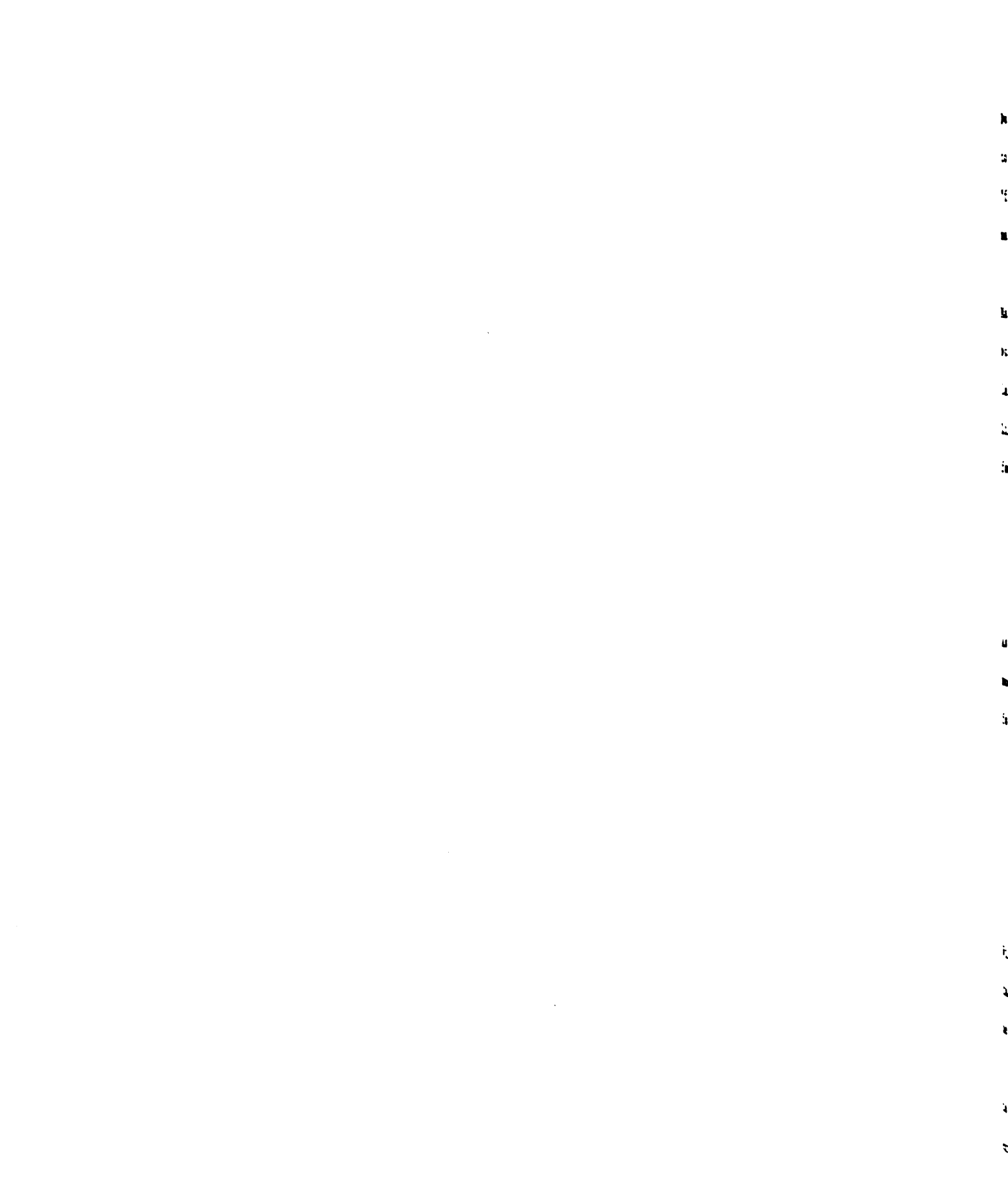
I do not find that either the States or people have any great affection to him. The man is doubtless valiant, but (as they say) rash, bloody, unfortunate, and subject to many dangerous imperfections. They would willingly be rid of him if they might without danger.

Still, to carry out the letter of his instructions, Wilkes induced Leicester to despatch an envoy to Denmark to "sound" out the King's feelings on the matter.

Wilkes found no complaints among the people brought on by the false rumor that Leicester was raising "new taxes," nor did he find it true that Count Edward was thinking of repudiating the English staple by defecting to the Spanish side. In fact, he found that if the Count should ever be disposed to join Philip, the people of Emden would prevent it.

Concerning the possibility of moving the English staple from Emden to some town in Holland, Wilkes found the Merchant Adventurers, who controlled that staple, to be opposed to the idea. They feared that if based in Holland their river trade with the Empire would be seriously jeopardized by Spain's recent capture of the Rhineland town of Neuss; whereas, from Emden and the river Ems they had free access to the same market.

¹Buys had been arrested on July 9th at the instigation of his enemies in Utrecht. Although his enemy Leicester had nothing to do with it, the latter's unwillingness to obtain Buys release from prison soon led the States (who thought highly of his talents), to suspect Leicester of complicity and to make formal complaints to Doctor Clerk, the English member of the Council of State. See Clerk to Burghley, The Hague, 24 July 1586, Ibid., pp. 101-2, Dr. Thomas Doyley to Burghley, The Hague, 16 July 1586, Ibid., p. 87, and Leicester to Burghley, [?], 20 July 1586, Ibid., p. 96.



Discovering that the English coin was in fact undervalued by the Dutch, Wilkes was successful in convincing their mint officials to "yield" to the English valuation, thus raising the value of "the angel" from "five florins one stiver and a half, with a like valuation" on the remainder of the English coins.

Revealing Elizabeth's concern over the steadfastness of Count Maurice, Wilkes reported that he was not only well affected towards her but also "loved and respected here of the people for the merits of his late father, and is like to succeed him in wisdom and sufficiency." Likewise, Wilkes mildly disputed the Queen's distrust of St. Aldegonde for what she felt was his hasty surrender of Antwerp to Parma by writing:

St. Aldegonde, contrary to the opinion conceived of him by her Majesty, is noted here of all men to be a good patriot and worthy to be employed in the services here, in respect of his ability and wisdom. Howbeit, I perceive that to take away the offence that may be ministered to her Majesty they are contented to forbear the use of his services.

As a typical Englishman with no great love for things Dutch, Wilkes had much to say about their failings. Of their government, he made the following statement:

Their state is but weak, and weaker by much in respect of the confusion of their government. They have given a government to my Lord of Leicester with the word Absolute, but with so many restrictions that his authority is limited almost to nothing, and is in truth but their servant.., having reserved to themselves, besides the sovereignty, the disposing of all the contributions (saving the monthly allowance) the church goods, confiscations, choice of officers, and many other things....And are not accountable therefore either to my Lord or to the people.

Wilkes further concluded that in order to maintain this independence they were repudiating Leicester's "Court of Finances" by alleging he had no authority to establish such a body.

Wilkes recognized this set of circumstances to be a serious threat to England's interests in the Low Countries. While English trade suffered extensively from the prolonged war, the Dutch merchants on the other hand

prospered greatly, not only from supplying the Dutch, English, and even Spanish armies, but also from the inflated war prices. As he put it,

Those men who are called the States and have had the managing of the government since their revolt from Spain, and thereby enriched themselves infinitely, will be unwilling that the troubles here should take any speedy end.¹

Another abuse he saw concerned

The matters of the forces of these countries under the pay of the States. There is a survey and muster in hand to discern their just numbers, wherein I perceive will be found much abuse, for the companies of strangers allowed at 150 heads for each company will be found for the most part not to contain above 60 or 80; whereby the treasure of those countries is consumed.²

The only solution to these problems, suggested by Wilkes, was that Elizabeth should accept the sovereignty of the Low Countries, a thing both Leicester and many of the common people desired.³

Somehow aware that Wilkes' first impression of them was not the best, and worried about the possible consequences his report would have on English aid, the States-General decided to be more candid with their own complaints. As Wilkes put it: "Until my coming the States concealed the truth of many things, but now say they will anatomise the whole to her Majesty." And "anatomise" it they did.⁴

They repeated their complaint about Leicester's "placard" which had been published without their knowledge. They expressed fear concerning the unpaid English troops who if not paid soon would "much sooner work

¹Wilkes to the Privy Council, Utrecht, 20 Aug. 1586, Ibid., p. 136.

²Later in a brief report to Walsingham, Wilkes explained much the same thing by indicating that he found "great confusion in the government; their means so weak as not able to maintain the third part of their numbers here in pay." Wilkes to Walsingham, Utrecht, 26 Aug. 1586, B.M., Add. Mss., 48,127, f. 107.

³Leicester to Burghley, [Utrecht], 10 Aug. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 120 and Wilkes to the Privy Council, Utrecht, 20 Aug. 1586, Ibid., p. 135.

⁴Ibid., and Estates of Holland and Zeeland to Ortell, The Hague, 12 Sept. 1586, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,014, ff. 272-73.

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the utter ruin and decay than the defense" of the Provinces. And they grumbled about the way Leicester was handling the logistics of the war. More importantly, they set to work to piece together for Wilkes a detailed and lengthy report of their complete tax structure and total defense expenditures for the past ten years of civil war--a report that was to cast serious reflections on Leicester's governorship.¹

Having fought the Chamber of Finances from its inception, the States suddenly found the means eventually to destroy it. In early September they arrested one of Leicester's men, Steven Peret, on the charge that he had publicly slandered the States, and among his papers was found incriminating evidence against his confederate and their enemy, Ringault. Fearful for his own position on the Chamber the latter bombarded Wilkes with explanations of Peret's innocence and warned that if his partner's detention were allowed, Leicester's authority would from then on "be abused at every turn." It was all to no avail. Shortly thereafter, in the face of the evidence and Elizabeth's own insistence, Leicester dismissed Ringault from the Chamber of Finances, and then was prevailed upon by the States-General to arrest him. After that, it was only a matter of time before the Chamber of Finances disappeared from the scene.²

Caught in the middle of this battle Wilkes was implored by the States to understand their reasons for this action against the two men and to explain the same to both Elizabeth and Leicester. Fearful of

¹Ibid., and Memorial for Wilkes, 24 Aug. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 139.

²Estates of Holland to Ortell, The Hague, 12 Sept. 1586, Ibid., pp. 156-57, Leicester to Elizabeth, From the Camp, 11 Oct. 1586, Ibid., pp. 189-90, Ringault to Wilkes, Utrecht, 4 Sept. 1586, Ibid., pp. 147-48, and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 4 Sept. 1586, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, f. 41.

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appearing to take the side of the States in this conflict with Leicester, Wilkes quickly excused himself by saying "it was not of my commission" to do so.¹

By now Wilkes was aware that much of the fault for these conditions lay with Leicester. The Earl continued to quarrel with his officers, and he not only lacked the means to hold a general muster as requested by Wilkes but also in spite of the wretched condition of the English forces he continued to recruit new English and Scottish soldiers to join with the already grossly under-paid troops.²

But the most serious problem Wilkes recognized in Leicester's government was his open and persistent attempts to cause division in the United Provinces in an effort to strengthen his own position. It was in the political and religious exiles of the reconquered south that Leicester found his most constant allies. These refugees, for the most part, had settled in Utrecht and were not only staunch Calvinists but also strongly democratic. Politically, they objected to the aristocrat-merchant dominated States-General which was made up almost entirely of Holland and Zeeland deputies. These deputies were far more interested in retaining their political domination and defending the North than in reconquering the Southern Netherlands from Spain.³ Religiously, the exiles objected to the still significant Catholic element in the States-General as well as the tendency towards Arminianism found among the Protestant deputies. For the exiles, Leicester and the English forces

¹Ibid.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, Utrecht, 26 Aug. 1586, B.M., Add. Mss., 48,127, f. 107.

³As Leicester said to Burghley, "Holland and Zeeland never cared what towns other provinces lost." (20 July 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 96). Still Holland and Zeeland together claimed and in fact bore the major portion of the war's expense. See "Remonstrance of the States," 16 July 1586, Ibid., p. 89.

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represented both their last chance to regain their homeland and their only opportunity for significant political advancement. In fact, Utrecht went so far as to make a separate offer of the sovereignty of their province to Elizabeth in June of 1586, a step that greatly angered the States-General.¹

Wilkes by now had reached the conclusion that Leicester's troubles throughout 1586 were basically consequent upon this alliance with the discontented groups, especially those in the city of Utrecht whose acknowledged leader was Gerard Prouninck, or Deventer as he is better known.² In fact, he was so convinced that Leicester was one of the major causes of deteriorating Anglo-Dutch relations, that when he later returned to England with his report he suggested to Elizabeth and the Privy Council,

That my Lord [of Leicester] be commanded not to sever from him the good disposition and minds of the States and Council, nor to make any show or meddle in severing the people and the States from their accustomed unity or breed dissension among them, considering how unapt her Majesty is to accept the sovereignty.

If this last article be not carefully looked to, my Lord's government will grow odious as it beginneth to do and will disjoint all good proceedings.³

Towards the end of August Wilkes felt sufficiently informed to return and make his report. After first reporting to Leicester at his camp near Arnhem he started for England. In passing through Utrecht

¹Blok, History, III, pp. 214-19.

²Deventer was a native of Bois-le-duc in Northern Brabant, an extreme opponent of the States, Burgomaster of Utrecht, and undisputed leader of the Leicestrian faction in that city.

³"Matters to be considered," 27 Sept. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 169. It was in Utrecht in late June and early July that Leicester's three confederates, Deventer, Ringault, and Daniel Burchgrave (a former attorney general of Flanders and newly appointed auditor of the Chamber of Finance), carried out a successful coup in which 1) Leicester's authority was permanently recognized in Utrecht, 2) the sovereignty of that province was offered to Elizabeth, and 3) Paul Buys as an outspoken critic of both Leicester and Calvinism was arrested. Blok, History, III, p. 218.

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he was intercepted by two messengers. The first was Edmund York, Chief Harbinger and Master of the Forage, whom Elizabeth had sent to urge Wilkes "to hasten home with all speed." The second messenger came from the Estates of Holland requesting him to return to The Hague to receive "certain business matters" from the Council of State which they could not deliver to him at that time. Hurrying on to The Hague, Wilkes was met by six of the principal men of the Council who delivered to him "a collection of the whole charge" of the Provinces for the past ten years of civil war, including information on "how the same hath been levied." It took Wilkes three whole days to "well understand" it and he found its contents important enough to warrant retracing his steps to show it to Leicester who was by now even further away, at Elten in Cleveland. Once there, he found the Earl either from "want of leisure or of will" unwilling to peruse the report. Even Wilkes' suggestion that it contained information concerning his governorship resulted in no more response from Leicester than an order to deliver the report to Elizabeth. Already behind schedule and aware of the Queen's impatience for his speedy return, Wilkes excused himself from staying long enough to observe whatever progress Leicester's army might make and started again for England. It was by now about the first of September and with him Wilkes carried not only the report he had come for but also everyone's hopes that he was going to give an accounting to Elizabeth with their own individual interests closest to his heart.¹

Just after Wilkes took his leave of Leicester the latter wrote to Burghley expressing his opinion that when the agent's report was heard

¹Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 4 Sept. 1586, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, f. 41, Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 12 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 17-18, and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 13 Dec. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 270.

"there will be great cause" to send someone to help maintain English interests in the Provinces. Failing to realize that the report might also point out his own shortcomings, as well as those of the States, Leicester requested that "for her Majesty's better service...he [Wilkes] be employed, for he is a very sufficient and a very painful man."¹

Wilkes' Financial and Political Report

There were two parts to Wilkes' report: First, was the financial account, which the Estates of Holland and the Council of State had given to him. That report along with portions of the material used to document it is extant, and though its contents are at times unclear and even contradictory, it was clearly designed to suggest that the war was costing more than the Provinces could pay. Unfortunately, for Wilkes' sake, Dutch anxiety to emphasize this rather obvious point led them to draw up an exaggerated estimate of expenditures and debts.²

The second part of Wilkes' report was his own personal assessment of the general political and military situation of the United Provinces vis à vis Leicester's governorship. Regrettably this portion of the report has not survived, but its contents can be inferred from his own correspondence, the reactions of Elizabeth and the Privy Council, and eventually from Leicester's change of attitude towards him.

Wilkes arrived back in England near the middle of September, just when the court at Windsor was in an uproar over the most recent plot to take the life of Elizabeth.³ "We of the Council," Burghley wrote to

¹Ibid., p. 143.

²Abstracts, Memoranda, and Estimates, Sept. 1586, Ibid., pp. 175-77, and B.M., Add. Mss. 48,014, ff. 357-95.

³Called the Babington Conspiracy after its major personality Anthony Babington, a young Catholic gentleman from Derbyshire.

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are thoroughly occupied, some at London, some here, and some abroad, to deal partly in trial of traitors, in searching for more, [and] looking to the sea coasts, to withstand the landing of certain Spanish ships of war which are come to Brest.

In fact, Wilkes found the English Court so "dangerously perplexed for lack of courage and resolution in the greatest" that it was almost impossible to induce either Elizabeth or such members of the Privy Council as were available "to hear my report of the state of those countries." Anxious to deliver what he felt was an accurate and important report, Wilkes apologized to Leicester for the slight delay in obtaining a hearing.¹

Presently, finding time to read Wilkes' report Burghley and Walsingham were thunderstruck by its contents. In fact, so astonished was the former by it, that in spite of the concern caused by the Babington Conspiracy and the problems in arranging for the trial of Mary Stuart, Burghley admitted, "yet, I find no cause so intricate and unresolvable as to determine what shall be...done upon Mr. Wilkes report of the state of the Low Countries."²

Walsingham in dismay wrote,

The hard time in which the United Provinces find themselves... have been confirmed by the report of Mr. Wilkes lately returned from there. I fear great inconvenience will occur not only to her Majesty's own subjects, but also to the soldiers of all other nations serving there on account of a lack of monetary payment.³

Wilkes, who was surprised by the reaction his report caused, wrote to his close friend Sir John Norris,

¹Burghley to Leicester, Windsor, 15 Sept. 1586, Bruce, Leicester's Correspondance, pp. 411-12, and Wilkes to Leicester, Windsor, 16 Sept. 1586, B.M.; Egerton Mss., 1694, f. 44.

²Burghley to Sir Christopher Hatton, Windsor, 16 Sept. 1586, Conyers Read, ed., The Bardon Papers (London: Royal Historical Society, 1909), p. 51.

³Walsingham to [Patrick] the Master of Gray, [Windsor], 17 Sept. 1586, Cal. Scot., IX, no. 21.

Her Majesty and her Council do greatly stagger at the excessive charge of these wars under his Excellency's government for the six months past, affirming (as it is true) that the realm of England is not able to supply the moiety of that charge, not withstanding, the necessity of the defense of those countries is so conjoined with her Majesty's own safety, as the same is not to be abandoned.¹

The first step the Court took in coping with Wilkes' bomb-shell is revealed in a document drawn up the same month, probably by Lord Burghley, entitled "The Matters to be had in consultation for the speedy preventing of the dangers like to ensue of the present state of the United Provinces." Basically, it drew three important conclusions: 1) Money for paying the poorly equipped troops must be sent "with all expedition," 2) Leicester "should be honorably revoked, with pretence of need of his presence here, and making show of his return next spring," and the States-General must be induced to allow the Governor-General to appoint "one or two to govern as his lieutenants in his absence." Apparently accepting Wilkes' evaluation of Count Maurice's loyalty, the document also suggested he be one of these lieutenants, and 3) "in respect of her own security" if Elizabeth desired to preserve these countries from the enemy she must send three or four persons of credit and judgment to help advise the Dutch government and assist in directing the finances of the war effort.²

Point number two of the above document caused quite a stir at the English Court. As Wilkes put it:

There is much variety of opinion here whether it be fit to revoke him [Leicester] or not. Such as desire the good of that State [the United Provinces] do hold the question affirmatively, but such as do not love him (who are the greater number) do maintain the negative."

¹23 Sept. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, pp. 163-64.

²Ibid., pp. 174-75.

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Eventually the decision was made to recall the Governor-General and Burghley was given the delicate task of informing him. Painting a fearful picture of the dangerous internal situation in England brought about by Mary Stuart's involvement in the recent conspiracies, he asked Leicester "to end your journey in the fields, as you may return hither without danger to the common cause there, a thing so needful, as surely, without your presence here, I know not how her Majesty will or can resolve upon her manner of proceeding."¹

From all the evidence it appears that this decision to recall Leicester mainly because of his failure in the Low Countries instead of just to assist with Mary Stuart's trial, not only surprised but also worried Wilkes. Though his report had been a candid one, there is no evidence to suggest that he had purposely intended it to do Leicester harm. No lesser light of Elizabethan government was foolish enough to run the risk of openly undermining the reputation of so powerful and influential a figure, and Wilkes who owed so much to his friendship with Elizabeth's favorite was certainly no exception. His first responsibility had been to submit an accurate report of Netherlands conditions and perhaps his only fault lay in making the report too thorough.

Taking Leicester's earlier advice, Elizabeth and the Privy Council decided that by reason of his "sufficiency and dexterity" in "former services" Wilkes was the best qualified to maintain English interests in the United Provinces during the Earl's absence. He was instructed to

¹Wilkes to Sir John Norris, Windsor, 23 Sept. 1586, Ibid., p. 164, and Burghley to Leicester, Windsor, 1 Oct. 1586, Bruce, Leicester's Correspondence, pp. 420-21. It was not expected that Leicester's departure for England would be immediate for both he would first have to make numerous preparations to insure that England's role was maintained in the Netherlands during his absence. Also, it must not be assumed that the only reason for recalling the Earl was his failure there. Walsingham was apparently sincere in his plea to Leicester that his "good advice" was necessary to induce Elizabeth to execute Mary Stuart. Walsingham to Leicester, [London?], Sept. 1586, Ibid., p. 404.

replace Henry Killigrew as a counselor and assistant in the Council of State and to prepare himself to give such advice as necessary for "the defense and preservation of the said countries...without fear or dread of any person or persons whatsoever." Concerned by Dutch complaints and the detrimental effect Leicester's March 25th "placard" was having on the ability of the States to maintain their rebellion, Elizabeth also commanded Wilkes to inform the Earl that the embargo was either to be revoked or qualified in some way. And, as a result of the storm caused in the States-General over Leicester's choice of Ringault and Peret for important offices, Wilkes was to let the Earl know that he was thenceforth to "make better choice of men" or at least to listen more sympathetically to the States suggestions on such matters. In order to quiet the States' suspicions of Leicester in the continued imprisonment of the untried Paul Buys, Wilkes was to inform them of Elizabeth's desire that either he be released or given a fair trial. Wilkes was also instructed that if he [Wilkes] wished to "avoid our displeasure" he should "take special care and charge thereof" in seeing to it that until Leicester's return his chronic laxity in answering important Privy Council letters should be remedied. Finally, he was commissioned to deliver part of £30,000 to pay the English soldiers in the Low Countries, particularly those in the garrisons of Flushing and Brill.¹

Wilkes objected strenuously when he learned of his new assignment, and with good reason. His instructions put him in a most ambiguous position vis à vis Leicester. So much so, that in order "to avoid [the] jealousy and hatred" of Leicester, Wilkes asked that his instructions

¹Wilkes instructions, [end of Sept.], Ibid., pp. 432-37. Bruce feels these undated instructions were drawn up in Oct. but Wilkes' "Notes of Memorial," 27 Sept. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 168, makes it clear that he had already seen the instructions before October.

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specifically stipulate that his assignment be as Elizabeth's "special minister" and that it be made clear that his appointment to the Council of State be "as a minister to assist and advise for the reformation of their present government." He also asked "that some authority be given to me for my dealing and discharge, that it may not seem to my Lord that [I] assume, or be things of my own head [so] as to encounter him."¹

Probably in response to Wilkes' concern over the dangerous position her instructions placed him in, Elizabeth decided it was her place initially to inform Leicester of the reservations she held concerning his performance. Her letter to the Earl has not survived, but its tone can be gathered from his distressed reply. Apparently still irritated at his acceptance of the Governorship, she had "marveled" that with such "authority and name" as he held, he still lacked the ability to command the States' obedience. She had especially criticized his handling of the war effort, such as the continuing graft with soldiers' pay, the calling in of more troops than there was money to pay, and his lack of success on the battlefield. Finally she had charged him no longer to "irritate the States" over such things as the trade placard and the appointment of undesirables to important offices. His emotional and inadequate replies to these charges are too lengthy to itemize. Suffice it to say that rather than accepting that he was in part responsible for some of the above problems, he blamed both the Dutch and his enemies at home for all his woes. "I see most gracious sovereign," he wrote to Elizabeth, "that I have few friends about you."²

Wilkes was probably also aware that his report had caused Elizabeth to order an immediate halt to further troop shipments to Leicester. What

¹Notes concerning Wilkes, 27 Sept. 1586, Ibid., p. 168.

²Leicester to Elizabeth, the Camp, 11 Oct. 1586, Ibid., pp. 189-97.

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he could not yet know was the damaging manner in which Patrick, Master of Gray (the man responsible for recruiting the Scottish troops used in the Low Countries), had informed Leicester of this change of policy. As Gray put it in his October 4th letter: "The cause why he [Walsingham] wills me to stay the troops is for that he says Mr. Wilkes has given declaration that of necessity all your soldiers shall become mutinous for want of pay."¹

Wilkes had one other worry concerning Leicester. During his recent fact-finding mission to the Netherlands, the Earl had written to him a rather extensive and vituperative denunciation of his hated subordinate Sir John Norris. No doubt he did this in the hope that Wilkes would be an instrument in obtaining Sir John's recall. Instead, Wilkes had, upon his arrival back in England, successfully removed "all sinister conceipts" held by Elizabeth and Walsingham against Norris and his brother Edward. This too, was bound to reach Leicester's ear.²

To Leicester, Wilkes of course expressed evasive reasons for not wanting to return to the Netherlands. His letter of the 28th of September is of special interest.

After much debating and no less misliking of so much treasure spent in those Low Countries...at the last her Majesty hath resolved to send over with as much expedition as may be, some thirty thousand [pounds] for a thorough payment of her forces; and hath commanded me to prepare myself to bring the same to your Excellency; and there to remain for her service in the place of one of her English Counselors of State, which although your Excellency has seemed to desire, and by your sundry letters

¹Petrus J. Blok, ed., Correspondance inédit de Robert Dudley, Comte de Leycester et François et Jean Hotman (Haarlem: Les Méritiers Loesjes, 1911), pp. 153-54. Gray who had previously been a gentleman of the Court of Mary Stuart, later promised Elizabeth he would raise 2,000 or more Scottish scoldiers for England's service in the Low Countries.

²Wilkes to Sir Edward Norris, Windsor, 23 Sept. 1586, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CXCIH, f. 155, Wilkes to Sir John Norris, Windsor, Cal. For., XXI, 11, pp. 163-64, and Leicester to Wilkes, Arnhem, 22 Aug. 1586, Ibid., p. 138.

required, yet is it much against mine own will and liking in respect of the doubt conceived here that the action there, will never be prosecuted from here with any good effect, and that I see her Majesty resolved to lose her life and kingdom here with a strange course of leniency towards that viperous Queen of Scots: and were it not that the love and duty towards your Excellency, which I have always professed, doth persuade me that I shall receive comfort and encouragement from you I protest before God, I would rather have ended my life here in prison than undertaken this service there, which cannot be but the ruin of my poor estate in the end; and since the service must be and is for the defense of my country and the increase of God's glory, I am contented to submit myself thereunto with all humility, trusting only to him and to your Excellency's goodness and favor.¹

Five days later on October 3rd Wilkes, disgusted and resigned to the fact of his new assignment, wrote another letter to Leicester in which he inadequately tried to convince himself that his new assignment was for the best.

I am thrust over into this service with some opinion of malice in some great ones here, and the Queen wrought singly thereunto upon color of your Excellency's letters and messages desiring my coming over. They think to have done me a great displeasure but truly my good Lord as the state of things be at this time... promising nothing but the destruction of her Majesty and the ruin of the Realm (such are the courses presently held here), that I may account myself more happy many fold in being out of my country than to be in the same to see and taste the calamity threatened thereunto, in respect of our sins and forgetfulness of him that hath so long and so mercifully preserved us. I do mean therefore to put all the little I have into a stock, to bring over with me my wife, and to commit myself and the residue of my fortune, after God, to your Lord under whose love and perfection I hope to live and end my life.²

These were only the words of a discouraged man. Wilkes was in no way anxious to depart from England and although he did take his wife with him it is certain he never put his property into stock.³ But in sending these letters to one whom he already suspected would resent him, Wilkes had committed a serious error in judgment. He had put into dangerous hands some unusually harsh judgment on Elizabeth's domestic and

¹B.M., Egerton Mss., 1694, f. 45. (underlined in the original.)

²Ibid., f. 49.

³Henry Smith (Wilkes' brother-in-law) to Wilkes, London, 26 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 15, XXX, f. 18.

foreign policy, and Leicester was to find occasion in the future to use them to his great disadvantage.¹

Arrangements for Leicester's Departure

It was a discouraged and apprehensive Wilkes that faced his new assignment in the Netherlands. Delayed in his departure by a revision in his final instructions² he finally departed London for Middelburg on October 13, 1586,³ having been granted a hundred pounds to equip himself for his new assignment as well as the regular 40s. per day salary due an English member of the Dutch Council of State.⁴ Wilkes had also been promised a further hundred pounds "portage" allowance to defray the additional expense of transporting £20,000 of the £30,000 to Middelburg.⁵

¹See Ch. VI, p. 229.

²These additional instructions Wilkes complained of having to wait for are probably these dated as "[?Nov.] 1586" in Cal. For., XXI, ii, pp. 249-51. These instructions deal with a paper printed in Milan entitled Nuovo Aviso which, among other things, accuses Elizabeth with plotting to take the life of Parma and in being ungrateful to Philip II for his having saved the Princess Elizabeth's life when he was husband to her half-sister Mary I. Both accusations were to be denied by Wilkes wherever they were mentioned and he was to make clear that Elizabeth never committed a crime worthy of death nor did her sister Mary ever accuse her of the same.

³Wilkes to Davison (New Elizabeth's Secretary of State), London, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 197, and Wilkes' Journal of events while serving in the Low Countries, Nov. 1586-June 1587, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba CX, f. 82.

⁴"Warrant," 3 Oct. 1586, Windsor, B.M., Egerton Mss., 5753, f. 300, Elizabeth to Leicester, Windsor, 10 Oct. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, pp. 187-88, and Shirley's "notes," [1587], Ibid., p. 409.

⁵Acquittance from Richard Huddilston, (Treasurer of the English forces in the Low Countries) to Wilkes, 28 Oct. 1586, Ibid., p. 209, and Leicester to Wilkes, Utrecht, 23 Oct. 1586, Ibid., p. 207. The actual allowance was £10 for every £1,000 delivered. However, because he had already been advanced £100 for equipment Wilkes was only granted "half" that amount or £5 per £1,000. Burghley to Walsingham, Theobalds, 5 Oct. 1586, Cal. Dom., II, p. 359, and Letters to Sir Thomas Shirley, 2 and 8 Oct. 1586, A.P.C., XIV, pp. 239-41. Though the Privy Seal Book (P.R.O., Excheq. 403/2559, p. 249) seems to indicate that Wilkes was to receive £30,000 for delivery in Middelburg, a "Report" endorsed by Burghley (11 Oct. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 199) makes it clear that he received only £20,000 and the remaining £10,000 was to be "received of the company of merchants" at Middelburg.

Once there, he was to place the money for safe-keeping into the hands of the Merchant Adventurers until the acting Treasurer of the English forces in the Low Countries, Sir Thomas Shirley, arrived to receive the same.¹

It appears that both Wilkes and the money were transported to Middelburg by Sir Francis Drake, who was on his way to The Hague to deliver ordinance to Brill and to speak with the States concerning the possibility of their assistance in one of his many plundering expeditions against the Spanish West Indies. After delivering the money safely, the two men traveled on together to Utrecht where they met Leicester, who was travelling "with all earnestness" with the Council of State "for the better settling of the government in his absence."²

Upon his arrival on October 22, Wilkes found that his expectations of a cool reception from Leicester and another warm welcome from the Council of State were both misplaced. From all the available evidence Leicester was not as yet upset with or even very much aware of the storm Wilkes' report had caused at the English court. It also appears that

¹Leicester to Wilkes, Utrecht, 23 Oct. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 207.

²Leicester to Burghley, [Utrecht], 10 Aug. 1586, Ibid., p. 119, Wilkes to Walsingham, Utrecht, 26 Oct. 1586, Ibid., p. 208, Wilkes to Walsingham, Rotterdam, 17 Nov. 1586, Ibid., p. 233, and "A Journal of my L. of Leicester's actions at the first being in Holland," 22 Oct. 1586, B.M., Add. Mss., 48,014, f. 164. Wilkes in the above 17 November letter to Walsingham reveals both the results and the reasoning behind Drake's appeals: "The voyage of Sir Francis Drake into these countries is not like to be unfruitful, although at his arrival he found no disposition in the States and people at all to assent of his motions. They cannot yield to assist his voyage with any general contribution; but are contented to deal with the inhabitants of the principal maritime towns, to furnish in every of them a ship or two, according to the ability of the merchants there residing, from when the States-General, now assembled at The Hague do expect a speedy answer and resolution, so as if her Majesty shall determine that Sir Francis Drake do venture again to the Indies, it is not to be doubted that he shall have some good assistance from hence. Of what necessity it is that the Queen's principal enemy be attempted that way, your lordship can best perceive, but we find it more than probable here that if he [Philip II] may enjoy his Indies quietly, he will make her Majesty and these countries soon weary of their defense." (my brackets.)

Leicester had completely accepted Burghley's explanation of the reason for his recall and was furthermore pleased that his suggestion, that Wilkes serve on the Council of State in his own absence, had been taken.

On the other hand, Wilkes found that with the members of the Council of State "my arrival is not so grateful as was expected, albeit for mine own part I am not deceived therein foreknowing these men."¹ Wilkes and Drake spent the next five days in Utrecht waiting for Leicester while he, "for the most part," sat "continually in counsel" with the Council of State. The formality of Wilkes' admittance to that administrative body was also attended to, and by the 30th the three of them had traveled on to The Hague via Rotterdam to take care of Drake's special business and Leicester's final leave-taking.²

Once at The Hague, Leicester, on the 31st October, formally announced to both the Council of State (which had followed him there from Utrecht) and the States-General his intention to retire immediately to England. He gave as the cause of this determination his summons to attend the Parliament then sitting at Westminster to handle the matter of Mary Stuart. Wilkes, who was present as one of the two English members of the Council of State, observed that, "The States and Council used by slender entreaty to his Excellency for his stay and continuance there among them, whereunto his Excellency and we that were of the Council for her Majesty did not a little marvel."³

This obvious eagerness on the States' part to be rid of Leicester was followed up ten days later by their submittance of a "Remonstrance"

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, Utrecht, 26 Oct. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, pp. 208-9.

²Ibid., and Journal on Leicester, 29 Oct. 1586, B.M., Add. Mss., 48,014, f. 164.

³Bruce, Leycester's Correspondance, note p. 443, and Wilkes Journal, [Oct.] 1586, f. 82.

to the Governor-General, listing the grievances for which they sought redress, or at least good answer to before his departure. Reiterating their old complaints on his military policy, his fiscal and trade policies, and his Utrecht activities, the States found they were forced, four days later, to re-submit their remonstrances because of their inability to understand Leicester's marginal answers scribbled in his own uniquely unintelligible hand. Sprinkled with some concessions, his second reply proved satisfactory to them, and they quickly assented to his departure.¹

But Leicester too had some complaints to make before he embarked for England and, because of his deficiencies in any language but English, he asked Wilkes to deliver his speech to a combined body of the Council of State, a committee of the States-General, and Barnevelt. Delivered on November 13th, Wilkes voiced Leicester's "grief" that he was as yet uninformed by the States whether or not they took his earlier advice to send a delegation of commissioners to Elizabeth to inform her of the state of their affairs and to ask for £50,000 or £60,000 sterling.² If commissioners were in fact to be sent, what were their instructions and how was he to "satisfy" her Majesty in regard to their "greater affairs" if he departed uninformed of their intentions? Wilkes also let them know of Leicester's displeasure that unlike Utrecht, the States of Holland and Zeeland had refused to offer the sovereignty of the United Provinces to Elizabeth.³

Apparently ignoring the first complaint the deputies simply pointed out the illegality of Utrecht's action by reminding Leicester

¹Ibid., ff. 82-83. See 10 Nov. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, pp. 221-23 for a summary of the "Remonstrance" and Leicester's answer thereto.

²Council of State and Leicester to the States-General, Utrecht, 1 Oct. 1586, Ibid., pp. 182-83.

³[13] Nov. 1586, Ibid., pp. 225-26, and Motley, Netherlands, II, p. 108.

that according to the articles of the Union of Utrecht no individual province could deal separately in such matters without the unanimous vote of all the other member provinces.¹

The following day a memorial from Leicester was presented to the States-General and again it was probably Wilkes who delivered it. In it were a series of questions the Governor-General desired answers to for Elizabeth.

To the question of how they planned to approach Elizabeth concerning further aid, they informed Leicester that a delegation of their deputies was to follow him immediately into England, where they would answer this question to Leicester before approaching the Queen. As to what hope he could give Elizabeth concerning an increase in their contribution to the war effort during the next three or four years, the States replied that such an increase was impossible. In turn they asked that Leicester induce Elizabeth to double her aid to them. Another of the Earl's questions sought the States' reaction to the possibility of Philip II offering peace to Elizabeth. To this they retorted that they would "utterly refuse all communication of peace." Another of the more important questions in the memorial asked the present condition of the Union of Utrecht. The States insinuatingly replied that all was going well except for Utrecht, which problem they hoped Leicester would quickly remedy.²

One of the Governor-General's last matters of business was to set up the conditions by which the affairs of the United Provinces would be governed during his absence. By his Act of Government he decided that the Council of State was to be left in general control of all civil and

¹Ibid.

²Answers of the States-General, 14 Nov. 1586, Cal. Per., XXI, ii, pp. 228-30, and Wilkes' Journal, [14] Oct. 1586, ff. 83-84.

military affairs and that all their directives were to be carried out in his name along with being signed by the Chief Stadtholder, Count Maurice of Nassau and one of the two English members of the Council. This stipulation suggests and indeed Leicester was later to claim that the Act of Government made Wilkes equal in commission to Count Maurice and the rest of the Council of State.¹ Surprisingly, General Morris was to be left in charge of the English forces and Hohenloe in command of all the other foreign troops.²

Obviously fearful of what the Council of State might do in his absence, and desirous of retaining as much authority in his own hands as possible, Leicester, the next day, proceeded to limit the Council's power by means of his "Act of Restriction." Designed to prevent the Council of State from making major changes in the military organization during his absence, the Act, in reality, created a potentially hazardous power vacuum in the military command. It also proved to be a contributing factor in the eventual ineffectiveness of the Council.³

On November 15th, just as Leicester was ready to depart, the States asked one more favor of him. Would he allow letters with his signature attached to be sent to all the provinces indicating that the reason for his departure "was not for any dislike conceived of the actions and proceedings of the said states?" This he promised to do if he could first

¹Ibid., f. 83, and Wilkes to Burghley, Rotterdam, 17 Nov. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, pp. 232-33, and Leicester's "Declaration," Aug. 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,116, f. 53.

²Wilkes to Burghley, Rotterdam, 17 Nov. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, pp. 232-33. Wilkes had written to Walsingham (Utrecht, 26 Oct. 1586, Ibid., p. 209) that Leicester preferred his Lord Marshal, Sir William Pelham for the position of commander of the English forces. Perhaps the Earl's appointment of his two enemies Morris and Hohenloe came as a result of some missing instructions from Elizabeth.

³14 Nov. 1586, Ibid., p. 230 and Wilkes Journal, 14 Nov. 1586, f. 83. Written in the margin of Wilkes' Journal (in a different hand) next to these restrictions is the note, "Leicester's great fault."

see the letter. Finally, on November 16th after shows of affection on both sides, Leicester took his leave of the States and started for home. Wilkes saw the Earl to Bordrecht and while there felt compelled to question the Governor-General's continued affection for him. Apparently he had received information that "some persons by their letters" had warned Leicester to "beware" of Wilkes, suggesting that he had spoken against the Earl. This Leicester denied, protesting that he still held an "honorable opinion" of the English councilor. Though somewhat mollified by this reply, Wilkes took his leave to return to The Hague still convinced that upon Leicester's return to England, his own position would be endangered. What he could not know was that he would never see the Earl again.¹

¹Ibid., f. 84, Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 13 Dec. 1586, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, ff. 70-71, and Leicester's Journal, Nov. 1586, B.M., Add. 48,014, f. 164. The "show of affection" on the States part and their earlier request that he cancel his departure plans (see 14 Nov. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 228) were undoubtedly more than a political gesture. The Earl's absence would obviously create a void in both the military command and the civil government; a void that would aggravate the already intolerable rivalry between factitious army chiefs and provincial leaders. But even more worrisome was the unfavorable public reaction that would likely occur if Leicester as the symbol of the Anglo-Dutch alliance were to depart. What further hope would they receive of further English support?

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CHAPTER IV
ENGLISH MEMBER OF THE DUTCH COUNCIL OF STATE

After Leicester's departure from the Low Countries in November 1586, Wilkes was left with much to worry about. To begin with, his own cool reception by the Council of State had underlined the fact that Anglo-Dutch relations were in poor condition and that his presence on the Council was no matter for rejoicing among those who had been so obviously happy at the Earl's leave-taking.

Wilkes was also saddled with the double responsibility not only of representing England and Leicester at the Council but of doing so alone in the unexpected absence of Doctor Clerk who had been forced to return home on private business. Begging not to be "left alone in Council" he implored Walsingham that either Clerk be quickly returned or another of "judgment and diligence" be sent to take his place.¹

The new Councilor of State also realized that as ineffective as Leicester's Governorship had thus far been, his absence could only worsen matters; that is, for as long as England continued its semi-protectorate relationship with the United Provinces. As he lamented in another letter to Walsingham:

I do find the state of things here so disjointed and unsettled that I have just cause to fear some dangerous alteration in the absence of our governor. Therefore I beseech you as you tender the preservation of her Majesty's estate, depending as you know upon the maintenance of this, that you will procure some speedy

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, Rotterdam, 17 Nov. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 233 and Leicester to the Privy Council, The Hague, 4 Nov. 1586, Ibid., p. 218.

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resolution at home, and the return of some governor of wisdom and value to reunite these distracted provinces, who, for lack of a head, are apt enough to be the workers of their own ruin.¹

It was clear to Wilkes that as long as Elizabeth was committed to assisting the Dutch she needed someone with extensive authority to oversee all civil and military matters. Serving as the lone English member of the Council of State and at the same time attempting accurately to represent the absent Leicester's desires in that body was to be a near impossibility.

But Wilkes had another even greater fear. He had no doubt been relieved (upon his and Drake's arrival in Utrecht) at the lack of animosity shown towards him by Leicester. Apparently, the Earl, in spite of his recall and Elizabeth's sharp letter of censure did not as yet, or at least not openly, hold Wilkes responsible for the Queen's displeasure. However, Wilkes had enemies at the English Court and he continued to dread Leicester's return to England, for as he told Walsingham:

I beseech your honor most humbly...to defend my poor credit in my absence as in your judgment you shall find me to have deserved, for I do assure myself the same will be oppugned with all violence at the return of his Excellency to the Court.²

To Leicester he wrote much the same thing:

Continue me in your good grace and favor, and if any men shall offer to do me any disgrace with you, as I know is a thing proper to our English humors and malice (whereof your Lordship hath also largely tasted your self in your absence), I do most humbly pray your Lordship to hear mine answer before I be condemned.³

¹Ibid.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, Utrecht, 26 Oct. 1586, Ibid., p. 209. Interestingly, the "Remembrances" Wilkes personally delivered to Leicester on the touchy problems of Paul Buys, Ringault and the trade placard, do not appear to have upset the Earl either. See Ibid., pp. 226-27.

³Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 3 Dec. 1586, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, ff. 59-60.

The Council of State

At this point, it is necessary to pause briefly and look at the personalities that made up the Council of State of which Wilkes was a member. Originally designed to number eighteen men, the Council seems rarely, if ever, to have had that number sitting at any one time. In October of 1586 when Wilkes assumed his duties on the Council, its membership looked something like this:¹

From Holland:

- 1) Count Maurice of Nassau, Governor of Holland and Zeeland and "head" of the Council. Throughout Leicester's first term in the Netherlands he had become more and more disaffected with the whole English effort.
- 2) William Bardesen [or Bardesius], burgomaster of Amsterdam. At first reported to be "well affected" to Leicester's Governorship, by October 1586 he was drifting more and more in the opposite direction. By 1587 he was cooperating with the anti-Leicestrian faction in Holland.
- 3) Seigneur van Brederode. Appointed to the Council by Leicester in January 1586, this "ancient gentleman" remained throughout "well affected" to the English crown.
- 4) Sebastian van Loozen, who had been one of the three clerks appointed by Leicester to the Chamber of Finances and who remained loyal to Leicester throughout his Governorship.

From Zeeland:

- 5) Jees Teelinck, who had also been one of the three clerks appointed

¹The sources for the following information are too numerous to list, however, one very helpful document is entitled "Names of Councilors of Estate in the Low Countries," and was sent by William Davison to Walsingham in February 1586 (Cal. For., XX, p. 394). Unfortunately the list is not a complete one.

by Leicester to the Chamber of Finances. He was both "skillful in matters of finances and well affected" to the English cause throughout Leicester's Governorship.

6) Jacob Valcke (sometimes spelled Falke). Appointed to the Council by Leicester in January 1586, he was in February 1586 said to be "well affected" to his governorship. In fact, he was always more desirous for a French connection than an English one.

From Utrecht:

7) Adolf van Solms, Count of Moeurs and Neuenarr. As Governor of the frontier provinces of Utrecht, Guelderland, and Overijsel he was at first considered a valuable friend by Leicester, but by January 1587 was leaning towards the opposition.

8) Aeswijn van Reinhard, better known as Seigneur Van Brakel. Appointed to the Council by Leicester in the summer of 1586, this Utrecht nobleman maintained strong Leicestrian sympathies throughout his term in the Council. Previously, he had been appointed by the Earl as one of the three heads of the Chamber of Finances.

9) Paul Buys. Originally appointed to the Council by Leicester, he was still in prison in Utrecht at the time Wilkes arrived. Strongly disliked by Leicester, and not highly thought of by Wilkes, he stayed away from the Council after his release from prison in January 1587.

From Friesland:

10) William Lewis of Nassau, nephew to the Prince of Orange and Governor of Friesland. He was also considered "well affected" to Leicester's government; and the Earl in turn thought highly of him.

11) Doctor Hessel Aysma, President of the provincial Council of Friesland. He too had been appointed to the Council of State by Leicester and remained loyal throughout his term on that body.

12) Velger Feitsma, another of Leicester's appointments about whom little is known.

From Guelderland:

13) Elbertus Leoninus, Doctor of Civil Law. Appointed to the Council by Leicester in January 1586, he was referred to by the Earl as "a very grave, wise old man;" and it was with him that Leicester left his personal seals as Governor-General to use in his name until his return.

From Flanders:

14) Adolf van Meetkerke, who was President of the Council. He too had been appointed to the Council by Leicester in January 1586 and he remained a strong supporter of the Governor-General.

English members:

15) Doctor Bartholomew Clerk, whose absence from the Council from November 1586 until his return in late March 1587 was due to his being in England on private business.

16) Thomas Wilkes

It is not known who Council members numbers 17 and 18 were. More than likely they were the Counts Maurice and Moeurs who not only sat for Holland and Utrecht respectively, but also represented Zeeland and Guelderland as Governors of these provinces. Counting them would make a total of eighteen.¹

¹Article XVI of the Treaty of Monsuech stipulated that in addition to the two English Councilors, Leicester and the two English Governors of Flushing and Brill could sit on the Council "when they will find it necessary and expedient for affairs which touch the service of her Majesty and the consideration of the United Provinces." Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, V, p. 455.

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To compare this breakdown of the Council's membership as it stood in 1586 with that as it was originally organized following the death of William of Orange¹ points out the startling success of Spanish arms in the southern provinces within two short years:

<u>1584</u>		<u>1586</u>	
Holland	4	4	Holland
Brabant	3*	*0	Brabant
Zeeland	3	3	Zeeland
Friesland	3	3	Friesland
Flanders	2*	*1	Flanders
Utrecht	2	3	Utrecht
Mechlin	1*	*0	Mechlin
Guelderland	0	2	Guelderland
England	0	2	England
TOTAL	18	18	(This total includes the Counts Maurice and Moeurs as each representing more than one province.)

Along with the above council members there were at least three clerks or "greffiers" as they were called.

- 1) Daniel de Burchgrave, former Attorney General of Flanders and one of Leicester's secretaries who had also been appointed as Auditor to the Chamber of Finances by the Earl.
- 2) George Gilpin, a former agent of the Merchant Adventurers in Middelburg whose great importance to Wilkes and Clerk lay in his ability to understand "Low Dutch."
- 3) Christopher Huygens, about whom little is known.

Originally intended to serve only a three month term, the councilors were in February 1586 appointed for a year's term. Generally sitting at The Hague, the Council of State (unlike the States-General which usually sat but once a day) met in session twice a day (except in unusual circumstances) from 9:00 a.m. to noon and from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. In

¹See Blok, History, III, p. 199 for a breakdown of the Council's membership.

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matters of great importance or when either body required it, the two "congresses" could and often did meet in joint sessions.¹

Trouble With the States-General

The first few weeks following the departure of Leicester proved to be fraught with difficulties for poor Wilkes. Just before he said good-bye to Leicester at Dordrecht, the latter had given him the responsibility of delivering into the hands of the States the prisoner Jacques Ringault. Leicester had previously arrested the former Treasurer-General of the Chamber of Finances at their insistence and the States were now demanding that as a precautionary measure during the Earl's absence, Ringault be turned over to them. Then, in an obvious display of distrust in Leicester's promise to do so, they ordered the magistrates of Dordrecht to seize Ringault, whom they suspected would attempt to follow the Earl to England.²

Aware that the States were "violently determined...under color of justice to bereave him [Ringault] of his life" Wilkes decided on another course. Ignoring Leicester's parting orders to deliver the prisoner to The Hague, he, according to "the duty of a good Christian man," conveyed Ringault to Utrecht and the safe keeping of the Provost Marshal of the English troops in that town. Wilkes explained to Leicester that had he done otherwise, "the States would have forcibly taken him out of my hands."³

In defense of Leicester's honor Wilkes assumed full responsibility for this action. He told the States' Advocate, Barnevelt, that the Earl

¹17 July 1590, B.M., Cott. Calba D. VII, f. 206. Though this document is dated "1590" it seems reasonable to assume that the meeting schedule of the Council was similar in 1586-87. See also Wilkes Journal, 4 Feb. 1587.

²Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 3 Dec. 1586, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, ff. 58-60.

³Ibid.

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had kept his promise by delivering Ringault into his (Wilkes') hands. Angered at this unexpected development Barnevelt (as he was generally referred to) warned that "he found the States and towns," as Wilkes informed Leicester,

'fort Alterez' (for that was his phrase) towards your Lordship in respect of Ringault, and feared there would follow some alteration of disposition in them towards you which he wished to be prevented.

Barnevelt ended by asking Wilkes to delay speaking of the matter to the States in order to give him time to "better" advise him on what course to follow.¹

Fortunately, Wilkes had done the right thing as far as Leicester was concerned. Just a few days after the Earl departed, Wilkes received a letter from him admonishing him:

to be very careful in satisfying the States touching Ringault. I did promise upon mine honor he should be brought back again, and so I have done; but I will be no butcher to the greatest monarch in the world, much less a betrayer of a man's life who I caused myself to be apprehended to please them...What some of themselves have sworn and vowed touching his death you know, and I pray you declare; for as I will keep promise with them for the person of the man so do I look to have my honor regarded at their hands, seeing more malice than just desert indeed against him, although I take the man to have faults enow, but not capital.²

Several days after Wilkes' visit with Barnevelt, several deputies of the States-General came to the Council of State to ask if Leicester had signed their letters which explained to the Provinces that his leave-taking was not for any "mislike conceived of the States." After telling them that Leicester had not, because of the wording of the letters, Wilkes took the opportunity to explain that the Earl had also refused because of their violent proceedings against Ringault and the little

¹Ibid. (Underlined in original.)

²Leicester to Wilkes, Rotterdam, 20 Nov. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, pp. 238-39.

credit they gave" to Leicester's "promise for his [Ringault's] return."¹

Though Ringault continued to be the cause of much disagreement between Wilkes and the States, the former's appreciation over having had his life saved by the English councilor, led him to repay Wilkes with periodic secret intelligences of affairs in Utrecht. Eventually he was allowed to return to his old home in the Spanish Netherlands where he renounced his Calvinism for Catholicism and died a faithful subject of Spain.²

But even before Wilkes' refusal to deliver Ringault, and Leicester's failure to sign their letters, the States, several individual Dutch leaders, and even a majority of the Council of State had begun to undermine Leicester's authority.

Just prior to Leicester's departure, the States and he had decided that because of the approaching winter season and their desires to make the ordinary war contributions suffice during his absence, a general muster of both English and Dutch paid soldiers would be carried out, so that the "superfluous companies of horse and foot" could be "cassed" [dismissed]. Then those among them considered "meet to be retained" would be used to raise the "un-cassed" companies to full strength.³

¹Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 3 Dec. 1586, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, ff. 58-60 (underlined in the original). So worried was Wilkes over Ringault's safety, that when the latter wrote him from Utrecht requesting permission to stay in his own home "upon caution" instead of in prison, Wilkes refused for fear that his enemies would capture him and deliver him to the States. Ibid.

²Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 12 Dec. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, pp. 268-69, Ringault to Wilkes, Utrecht, 18 Feb. and 8 March 1587, Ibid., pp. 368-69 and 395-96, and Motley, Netherlands, II, p. 107, footnote no. 2. The only instructions Leicester gave Wilkes in answer to his anxious requests for direction in this matter was to use his own judgment in the matter. Leicester to Wilkes, [The Court], 24 Dec. 1586, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, f. 78.

³Wilkes to Leicester and Elizabeth, The Hague, 9 Dec. 1586,

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Leicester turned the responsibility of effecting this muster over to the Council of State. When the latter approached the States with a request for 450,000 guilders (£45,000) to pay the soldiers under the States pay, they were refused on the grounds that the muster first be taken and then the money would be forthcoming. Realizing that soldiers always considered a muster the equivalent of being paid, the Council protested. They explained that if the soldiers were mustered without at the same time receiving their wages, they would mutiny and thus "hazard the whole state of the [Low] Countries."¹

Chagrined at being answered with an argument they themselves had used before, the States asked for time to consider the problem. Fortunately they were willing to accept the obvious and two weeks later promised a grant of £38,000 "which," as Wilkes told Burghley, "has stayed the mutiny of these of the States charge."²

In actually carrying out the reductions, both the States and the Council of State ignored Leicester's Act of Restriction and no amount of protesting on the part of Wilkes or Sir John Norris could stop them. "There are cassed ten companies of horse and about forty-eight of footmen," Wilkes explained to Leicester.

Cal. For., XXI, ii, pp. 261, and 264-64, and Wilkes' Journal, 8, 16, 17 Nov. 1586, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba CX, ff. 82 and 84.

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., and Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 9 Dec. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 262. At the start of Leicester's governorship it had been agreed that all troop musters would be carried out jointly by the English and Dutch authorities. However, in October of 1586 when Thomas Digges as Muster-Master-General of the Low Countries asked for such a joint muster, the Dutch refused, explaining that to do so without money to pay the men would result in their mutiny. In this instance, however, Digges suspected their real motive was not fear of a mutiny but a desire to see the accounts fall into "confusion." Digges to Walsingham, Camp before Zutphen, 11 Oct. 1586, Ibid., p. 198.

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Wherein there is no observation had of the order taken by your lordship before your departure. The foot companies are not reduced all to 200 heads, as was appointed, but some are of 200, some of 300, some of 150, and some but of 50 heads. Likewise our English companies retained in their pay are the one half at 200 and the other at 150 heads every company; and the places of garrison assigned for the English by a list signed by your lordship are likewise altered, and Dutch appointed unto many of them.

Wilkes further explained that Barnevelt and several others from the States-General had joined with the majority of the Council of State in arguing against the two Englishmen "so that Sir John Norris and myself, having but two voices in the Council, the reduction was in this sort concluded by plurality of voices among them."¹

Meanwhile, Count Hohenloe, who at the time of Leicester's leave-taking had been ill at Delft, was also working against the Earl. Feigning anger at Leicester's failure to "salute" him during his journey past Delft to Bordrecht, the Count had begun to "dress a party" for resisting English influence. He began to reorganize all the Dutch companies after his own "fantasy and mind...wherein," as Wilkes reported to Leicester, "almost every man that is well affected to your Lordship or her Majesty is cassed and only those returned that are of his devotion."²

To Walsingham he explained:

Count Hohenloe...hath even since my Lord's departure gone about to strengthen himself hereby assuring divers frontier towns and places within these countries to himself; having them commanded with governors and garrisons at his devotion. The man is violent and hateful to these countries and people, and yet feared and favored by the States and Council. It will behove us to have an eye to his actions.³

Wilkes had good reason to suggest that both the States and the Council were in support of Hohenloe's actions. On December 6th when the

¹Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 9 Dec. 1586, Ibid., p. 261.

²Ibid., 9 Dec. 1586, f. 64. See also, Hohenloe to Wilkes, Delft, 3 Feb. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 352.

³Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 3 Dec. 1586, Ibid., p. 253.

two Dutch Councilors Bardesius and Teelinck returned from conferring with the Count and some of the States' deputies on the progress of the cassations, they brought with them "an order" for replacing "many" of the English garrisons with Dutch companies. Wilkes immediately opposed this violation of Leicester's authority by brandishing the Earl's "Act of Restriction" which expressly forbade such alterations. Holland's Advocate, Barnevelt, who was in attendance representing the States-General, reacted with "choler and envayed indiscreetly against the said act." Unintimidated, Wilkes reproved the Advocate for his "insolence" and went on to defend the Governor-General's authority. As it turned out, Wilkes' and Sir John Morris' voices were again not enough to withstand the "plurality" of the rest of the Council and so the order was passed in spite of their protests.¹

The Council of State further demonstrated their anti-English sentiments by assenting to the Friesland Estates' revocation of a patent for the "Receivorship of the Contributions" in that province, given by Leicester to one named Inglestat. In fact, so pronounced were these sentiments becoming that Wilkes declared that he dared "not be absent out of the Council, finding already that there is course held to hide many things from my knowledge."²

In the midst of these disconcerting developments, Wilkes learned that the Danish King Frederick III and his counselors were very interested in serving as mediators for an Anglo-Spanish peace in order to help put

¹Wilkes' Journal, 6 Dec. 1586, f. 86.

²Wilkes' Journal, 1 Dec. 1586, f. 85, and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 3 Dec. 1586, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, ff. 59-60. Time and again Wilkes was forced to impede the Council's actions with Leicester's Act of Restriction but invariably he was either voted down or his demands ignored after their initial acceptance. See Wilkes' Journal, 26 Dec. 1586, f. 88.

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a stop to the economically crippling Dutch Revolt. Incorrectly suspecting that Elizabeth was secretly behind such plans, and fearful of the Dutch finding out about it, Wilkes begged Walsingham to do all in his power to turn her from them. "It will be necessary," wrote Wilkes,

for your honor and others that affect her Majesty's preservation, to oppose yourselves thereto; because if her Majesty should accept of a peace to 'conclude' these countries [and] this people will not only refuse it, but her Majesty will be like to remain in the greatest danger.¹

Then, later in December "to help forward the destruction of all;" a rumor was spread throughout the United Provinces that Elizabeth was already in the process of concluding an "underhand" peace with Parma; "whereof," Wilkes wrote, "many of the towns (upon dislike of this general confusion) do prepare themselves (as the States inform us) to allow and accept thereof." Anxious to put a stop to this rumor, the Council subsequently published a "proclamation" throughout the Provinces "to prohibit, upon pain of severe punishment that, no more speeches be used thereof."²

Along with this problem came news that a dangerous dispute had broken out in the province of Utrecht between the basically egalitarian

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 3 Dec. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 252. Later in January 1586, one of the Danish King's agents was captured near Brussels, by some horsemen of the garrison at Bergen-op-Zoom. "Rifled of all that he had" it was discovered that the agent was returning to Denmark with letters from Parma to Frederick II discussing a proposed peace between England and Spain. Both Wilkes and the States were worried in having their former suspicions so patently confirmed. The former sent a full report of the incident to both Elizabeth and Leicester, including information on the contents of the captured documents as well as the dismay both he and the States felt over such revelations. The States-General, in turn, wrote a letter to the Danish King trying to apologize for the unwarranted capture of his agent and at the same indicating their displeasure at the proposed secret peace. Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 19 Jan. 1587, Ibid., pp. 321-22, States-General to Frederick II, The Hague, 19 Jan. 1587, Ibid., pp. 324-25, and Wilkes to Elizabeth, The Hague, 19 Jan. 1587, B.M., Harl. Mss. 6994, ff. 45-46.

²Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 4 Jan. 1587, Ibid., p. 308 and Wilkes' Journal, 29 Dec. 1586 and 14 Jan. 1587, ff. 89 and 90.

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southern exiles who controlled the towns on one hand, and the clergy and nobility on the other hand. Wilkes' own lucid and direct account of the whole affair is worth quoting for the light it sheds on the machinations and membership of the Leicestrian party in these towns.

There is a controversy within the town and province of Utrecht (their estate being compounded of the nobility, clergy, and towns, containing their several members) between the towns and the clergy, whom the towns have inhibited to appear any more in the public assemblies, meaning to cask them upon pretence that the clergy, their third member, is a hindrance to their good proceedings. The nobility taketh part with the clergy, and do not think it fit or agreeable with order or justice that one third member, inferior to the other two, should take upon him to depose the first member, being the clergy, without the authority of the sovereign governor of the general assent of the Union. At the beginning of the garboile, it was thought fit by this council to depute the Count Moeurs, Mons. de Meetekart, and Doctor Hotman,¹ persons of judgment, to hear the controversy.... And as they were travailing to reduce them to an accord, there came a letter to the captains of the bourgeoisie of the town of Utrecht (being the principal movers of this dissension), written by Mr. Herle, by which they have taken heart to persist obstinately in their purpose, persuading themselves that their proceedings will be avowed by her Majesty. And albeit this letter do[es] not directly touch the matter yet the large promises he maketh in her Majesty's name of her absolute purpose to embrace their cause, "avec la pleine main," as he termeth it, hath been occasion that they have uttered in public speeches that the letters of her Majesty's ambassador Herle hath given them sufficient hope that her Majesty will not mislike of their doings in going about to banish Popery out of that province, which they make to be a show and countenance of their dealings; but, as I am informed, the most part of those that are of this clergy, and do hold the ecclesiastical livings, are married and of the religion. And in truth, as far as I can perceive, their quarrel is not against the persons of the ecclesiastics, because they are contented that the persons shall continue in their assemblies, but against the livings, which they mean to convert to some other uses. And although, for mine own poor opinion, I think the church livings were most fitly to be converted to the defense of the public cause, yet the manner of the doing thereof should be speedily prevented for all men of judgment here are of opinion that if it be not stayed, it will hazard the loss of the town, and consequently of the whole province. I am informed that the magistrates of Utrecht have despatched towards my lord-general and her Majesty one Herman Modet, their chief minister, to acquaint them with the matter, and to make good their proceedings. The said Modet, by the report of M. de Villiers, the minister and Saravia, a great learned preacher of Leyden,

¹Originally the Council had requested Wilkes to serve on this committee of mediation but being afraid to leave the Council without another English member to keep watch on its proceedings, he refused the assignment and in his place sent Leicester's Dutch agent Doctor Hotman. Wilkes' Journal, 17 Nov. 1586, Ibid., f. 85.

is taken to be the greatest mutines in all these countries; and it is avouched by them and others of the best condition that he was the only occasion of the loss of Ghent, upon the like matter begun by him within the town. The Prince of Orange, in his time, could never brook the same Modet, and, as the Count Maurice telleth me, he did always oppose himself against the counsel and designs of the Prince his father. I thought it not unfit to give you this taste of the condition of Modet, because I knew that my Lord North (Governor of Flushing), Mr. Killigrew, and Mr. [Thomas] Webbe [Clerk of the Check at The Hague] have greatly supported him in his humors at Utrecht, and it is not to be doubted that they will do the like at home. To conclude, it will behove her Majesty if she tender the preservation of the town and province of Utrecht, being the key of Holland toward Friese, Gelders, and Overijsel, to send speedily hither some person of credit from herself unto the whole states of that province and to enterpose her credit and authority for the staying of the present disorder: I think no man for that purpose were fit than Mr. Doctor Clerk for the knowledge he hath of these men and their humors.¹

At his wits end after only a few weeks of trying to cope with Dutch problems by himself, Wilkes wrote home pleading that Doctor Clerk or some other be speedily returned to help with these myriad problems. As he explained it "I am not able to go through these things alone." He begged Walsingham to do what he could to induce Elizabeth to "hasten us hither a governor," and to the Queen herself he wrote:

Your Majesty should either send back the Earl of Leicester as speedily as you may or appoint some other of quality and wisdom to take his place: for since his departure, we have been more troubled by intestine dissensions than by any attempt of the enemy.²

In short, Wilkes was already fed up with his whole situation. As he confessed to Leicester, "for my part, seeing their confusion and irresolutions, I am already the most weary of my place that maybe."³

¹Ibid., and Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 24 Dec. 1586, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 13-14.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 3 Dec. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 253, Wilkes to Elizabeth, The Hague, 3 Dec. 1586, Ibid., and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 3 Dec. 1586, B.M., Cott. Mss. Calba C. X, f. 60.

³Ibid., f. 58.

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³Ibid

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It was small comfort for Wilkes when he learned from Leicester shortly thereafter that no immediate help with these problems could be expected from home, because "little has been done, by reason of the business of the Queen of Scots."¹ This matter of the trial and possible execution of Mary Queen of Scots was of no small concern for Wilkes too. Shortly after Leicester's departure, he asked Walsingham for information concerning the government's actions against her.

If I might receive some abstract of her crimes and the manner of proceeding against her,...I should hold myself greatly bound to you, and I suppose it would do good here, to satisfy many men that hold the course taken against her somewhat strange, considering her quality.²

Much as Wilkes sided with Walsingham and Leicester in hoping that Mary would be speedily, yet lawfully executed, he, unlike most on the Privy Council was not so optimistic as to expect that it would be carried out quickly without a lynching. As he explained to Walsingham in early December:

God send our great cause at home a good issue for the safety of her Majesty and the realm, but I fear her Majesty will hardly be wrought to assent to the execution of the Scottish Queen to be done according to justice, and if she should be prosecuted upon the proclamation [of her guilt], I think in my poor opinion it will be no small blemish to the honor of her Majesty and the justice of England. Howbeit, I hold it fitter to be done than not done.³

Trouble with Leicester

It will be remembered that a concerned Wilkes had written letters to his friends at the Court asking that his credit be maintained in his

¹Leicester to Wilkes, Richmond, 4 Dec. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 257.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 14 Dec. 1586, Ibid., pp. 274-75.

³Ibid. (My brackets.)

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absence. On December 3rd Walsingham replied with assurances of his continued friendship as well as news that he had "dealt earnestly" with Elizabeth to give no credit to evil reports of him. The result of Walsingham's efforts was the Queen's non-committal promise to continue "to stand therein" as Wilkes' "gracious lady."¹

But these assurances were not enough for the English councilor. Shortly thereafter he appealed directly to Elizabeth herself. Asking for someone to assist him on the Council of State, he implored her,

not to admit any alteration of your gracious opinion formerly conceived of my fidelity and service by any sinister information that may be delivered unto your Highness against me: and that according to...your promise made unto me at my departing from your Majesty you will...not only spare an ear to hear mine answer and just defense, but also consider of the persons that shall attempt to disgrace me with your Majesty...Whereby your Majesty shall be the better judge of them and encourage me to serve you with the more plainness and sincerity (which few men do).²

But almost simultaneously with this request came the disturbing news that Leicester's Flemish secretary, Daniel de Burgrave, (whom he had sent on an assignment to England in October) had spoken harshly of the Council of State and especially against the accuracy of the financial report it had delivered to Wilkes. Angered by this questioning of their integrity the Council set about to authenticate their previous report by drawing up an even more elaborate one.³

Wilkes was also concerned about this new development, but was even more worried when he learned that Leicester was not only blaming him for "having spoken falsely" against his good name but also accusing him of

¹Walsingham to Wilkes, The Court, 3 Dec. 1586, Ibid., p. 251.

²Wilkes to Elizabeth, The Hague, 9 Dec. 1586, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 8.

³Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 13 Dec. 1586, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, ff. 70-71.

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failing to make the report available for the Earl's inspection prior to his carrying it into England.¹

Anxious to defend the integrity of his actions, Wilkes immediately wrote Leicester denying that he had ever spoken against him and pointedly reminding him of his own previous refusal to look at the report in question. Of the Council's report Wilkes told Leicester:

I am heartily sorry for my part to hear...that there is a great fault laid to my charge in receiving those things from them, and that your lordship had not perused them before my coming away, to which I may answer...that I brought them to you to Elten with a desire that your lordship might have perused them which then, you refused to do, willing me expressly to go and deliver such things as I had received...I did not perceive any great disposition in you to bestow the time to peruse so large volumes of matter as then I laid before your lordship.²

By January 12th the States' and Council's new financial report had been completed. This, they sent to Elizabeth and a copy was delivered to Wilkes who quickly enclosed it in a letter to Leicester. In this letter, Wilkes explained that the only noticeable difference between the new report and the former one was the addition of the receipts for the three months and ten days (November 20th-January 1st) which had not been contained in the first report.³

¹Ibid.

²Ibid. That Wilkes understood his report to be the main cause of Leicester's displeasure is shown in one of his letters to Burghley: "I am given to understand that there is no small offence taken by my Lord of Leicester of my late report made to her Majesty of the state of these countries, and of the greatness of the charge sustained by them since the government of his lordship here. I trust your lordship will testify for me that my said report was altogether founded upon the accounts and papers delivered unto me by the Council of State here, wherein if there be errors (as I suppose there is not), the fault is to be ascribed to them." Wilkes concludes this letter by asking that the information he has given therein will "be no occasion of my hurt or undoing; being (as I am credibly informed) dangerously threatened at home for my plain dealing in my former voyage." See 12 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 17-18.

³Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 12 Jan. 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,127, f. 77.

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The contents of this second report were summarized by Wilkes in letters he wrote the same day to Burghley and Walsingham. In these letters, he indicated that for the past twelve months of 1586, the war had cost the States and England over £560,000. "I fear it will greatly terrify her Majesty to behold it" he exclaimed to Walsingham.¹

England's share of this figure was over £150,000, which, though more than the £126,180 10s. per annum Elizabeth planned to spend, was not the main reason for her anger over these revelations. The real rub was that even after having poured an extra quarter-of-a-million pounds sterling into the Low Countries, English companies were still not only months behind in their pay, poorly equipped and fed, and nowhere near their full numerical strength, but also had accomplished only moderate success in the battlefield. The report Wilkes had delivered to the Queen in September had made all this amply clear and now the new report pointed out the same thing.²

Leicester, of course, was no more impressed with this second report than with the former one. To Wilkes he wrote:

I have your letter answering mine, though not so full as I expected. As touching the States' information concerning the accounts, I have already disproved them here openly in that and shall do hereafter, I doubt not, in the rest.³

This was only the beginning of Wilkes' troubles with Leicester. On December 12th he wrote a matter of fact letter to the Earl reporting the day's activities in the Council of State. However, in writing the letter he committed a simple oversight that would not have upset a normal

¹Wilkes to Burghley and Walsingham, The Hague, 12 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 17-19.

²Sir John Norris to Walsingham, The Hague, 11 April 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 14.

³Leicester to Wilkes, Greenwich, 21 Jan. 1587, Ibid., ii, p. 326.

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man, but to a man of Leicester's misplaced pride, the mistake was taken as an "insidious" attack on his good name.

Wilkes had matter-of-factly reported that six deputies from the States-General had come to the Council, "as their manner is," and there accused Leicester of hazarding the safety of "divers provinces" through his purely political appointments. They gave as examples his appointment of "a Receiver in Friesland, contrary to the liking of the States of that province," the "unlawful electing of a burgomaster of Utrecht," and "the giving of a Receivership of the contributions of Brabant against the opinion of the Council." Wilkes concluded his report by stating that "these and other like voices of reproach and discontent are cast daily in our noses."¹

However, in ending his report this way, Wilkes failed to give a single word of explanation as to how he defended Leicester against these charges. This oversight confirmed Leicester's suspicions that Wilkes was cunningly going about to undermine his reputation.

In an angry letter to Wilkes written on December 24th, Leicester exclaimed, "I take this manner of dealing [to be] villanious and deceitful!" Striking out at Wilkes' report he insinuated: "It appears indeed some are as backward to answer for me there as they were forward to inform untruely of me here." Finally he scribbled:

But beware, I have known men to trust so much to their fine wits as they proved [their] very follies; in the end let me have right, I desire no more. And you have cause to look [that] I should have it, being as you are, and put in trust as I have done you there, if you be not the unthankful and most ungrateful man that lives.²

¹Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 12 Dec. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, pp. 268-69.

²B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, ff. 77-78.

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As time progressed, Leicester's anger grew even more intense and unfair. He falsely accused Wilkes of writing against him to Elizabeth, of coaching the Council of State in what to say against him in their letter to Elizabeth, of exaggerated fiscal reporting, and of continued failure to defend his name in the Netherlands. He accused him of being "a patron of 100 errors" and a man tainted by the "liberalities" of the Low Countries.¹

A letter from Wilkes- brother-in-law Henry Smith, who had been at the Court at Christmas-time, is most revealing:

It is generally bruited here of a most heavy displeasure conceived by my Lord of Leicester against you, and it is said to be so great as that he hath protested to be revenged of you. And to procure you the more enemies, it is said he hath revealed to my Lord Treasurer and Secretary Davison, some injurious speeches...you should have used of them to him, at your last being with him... Further, some of the said lord's secretaries or private servants have reported that it were good for you never to return hither or if their lord be appointed to go over again it will be too hot for you to tarry there. These things thus coming to the ears of your friends, have stricken a great grief and fear into the minds of such as love you, lest the wonderful power and authority of this man being bent against you should do you hurt while there is none to answer for you.

Smith ended his letter by advising Wilkes to "entertain your chiefest friends" who are near Elizabeth with many letters, as well as letters to her Majesty.²

Wilkes protested to Leicester that his numerous reports and letters "are no invention of mine or fruits of a fineness of wit, or written to

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 27 Jan. 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 5935, ff. 6-7, and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 27 Jan. 1587, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1964, ff. 102-3.

²Henry Smith to Wilkes, London, 26 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 15, XXX, f. 18. Exactly what Henry Smith's connection with the Court was is uncertain. Sir Walter Raleigh, in a letter to Robert Cecil (Dec. 1594, B.M., Hatfield Mss. [microfilm], XXIX, f. 61), stated that he "waits on the Keeper [Sir John Puckering]," The statement, "While there is none to answer for you" refers to Walsingham's absence, due to sickness which kept him away from Court for several months in the early part of 1587. [See Read, Walsingham, III, p. 57.] Underlined in original by Wilkes himself.

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tax your lordship, but [are] to give you knowledge." In fact, Wilkes continues, his diligence in reporting all this information would be recompensed with thanks from others "whereas I am requited with checking."¹

In answer to the Earl's charge that he had refused to defend his authority, Wilkes replied that even if

I had not loved you, yet because the same was uttered in reproach of our nation and government among them, I would not have been so forgetful of my duty as to have foreborn to answer thereunto in defense as became me. And touching your lordship in particular, I do desire with all my heart, that it would but please your lordship to write to your Council to be informed with what zeal and love I have not only answered but done in discharge of my duty in all matters wherein your actions, authority, or government have been any way impugned.²

Wilkes also informed Leicester that since every letter he has sent to him "is taken and construed to my harm or disadvantage" he intends to send no more that contain reports of words spoken against him. "Your lordship knoweth best the manner of the Court of England and how prompt and ready men are to slander the absent." In fact, he reminds Leicester, that even he, as Governor-General, was not free from slander at the Court while he was in the Netherlands and so "I trust your lordship will therefore measure another man's case by your own."³

To Wilkes, it was becoming apparent that his efforts to protect his own name at the English Court were having little success. But it was not for want of trying. From the very start of his mission he had pleaded with Elizabeth, Burghley, Walsingham, and even Leicester to ignore his enemies until he could personally defend himself. But again,

¹Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 27 Jan. 1587, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, ff. 102-3

²Ibid.

³Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 26 Jan. 1587, Ibid., f. 101.

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that was not enough, he had somehow to convey information necessary for his self-defence to the Court, without at the same time offending Leicester all the more. The Earl's influence over Elizabeth was so "wonderful" that to antagonize him any more might lead to his own disgrace.

Elizabeth had instructed Wilkes from the first to write directly to her concerning those matters of "greatest importance." However, even though Walsingham suggested Wilkes could write Elizabeth if "you shall see it needful," he felt it more important that the English Councilor direct his letters to Leicester who "might take it ill if they were addressed to another."¹

But with Leicester's influence over Elizabeth, Wilkes needed a more sympathetic ear than either of them would provide. Realizing this, Walsingham sent him a special cipher for secret communication between themselves. However, the start of Walsingham's protracted illness a short while later kept him from the Court and forced Wilkes to look to Burghley for understanding. In a letter written on January 8, 1587, he promised the Lord Treasurer periodic information on the Low Countries if "for the avoiding of jealousy" he would promise not to show his letters to others.²

It was but a short while later that Wilkes began to suspect that his friends at home were not doing all they could to defend his name. To Walsingham he wrote:

If it fall out that for my true and sincere dealing in the accomplishing of the services and commandments of her Majesty I be overthrown... I shall and must ascribe the same to those that procured the service to be laid on me.³

¹Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 19 Jan. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, 11, pp. 321-22, and Walsingham to Wilkes, The Court, 3 Dec. 1586, Ibid., p. 252.

²Ibid., pp. 252 and 310.

³Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 12 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 19.

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Leicester was obviously happy to be away from the problems of the Netherlands. In fact his inclination to ignore his responsibilities in the United Provinces had even led him to "persuade" Elizabeth to ignore the two Dutch commissioners who had arrived to solicit more money. He was most anxious that she "proceed first in the great cause" of Mary Stuart's trial. He went weeks on end without writing Wilkes and then when he did so, it was not to give the useful instructions so desperately requested but to chastise the overworked councilor for what were in fact his own failures as Governor.¹

By the middle of January 1587, Wilkes was becoming more and more alarmed with conditions in the Provinces and especially with the lack of interest in them shown by Leicester. To Walsingham he wrote:

I have in sundry of my letters to [Leicester] given him to understand the disorders increased here since his departure, which because they are of dangerous consequence, and that I fear he doth not so sensibly feel them as the importance of them doth require, I thought it necessary to give your honor some notice of them to the end it may please you to help hasten some speedy redress from them.²

However, before going on with this part of the story, it is necessary to pause and look at some of the increasing disorders spoken of by Wilkes, which by January were making the English position in the United Provinces almost impossible.

As previously indicated at the time of Leicester's return to England, Count Hohenloe began conducting himself as an enemy to the Earl's government and the English nation. By the first of December 1586 he had secured for himself several frontier towns by putting in governors and garrisons loyal to himself. At the same time he succeeded in

¹Walsingham to Wilkes, the Court, 3 Dec. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 251, and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 27 Jan. 1586, Ibid., p. 338.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 19 Jan. 1586, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 22.

diminishing the Earl's authority by winning over the Commander of the Scottish forces, Colonel Balfour, who, along with "divers daptains of his regiment," took "bread and wine (as the manner is) with Count Hohenloe, and protested to be wholly at his devotion."¹

At the same time several members of the Council of State were seen "openly and privily" calling on the Count at his home in Delft, and though Wilkes attempted to bridle Hohenloe's growing power through Council action, all he could report to Leicester was: "Nothing can be yielded unto here that may abridge any part of his authority; whether it be for love or fear I know not."²

So intent was Hohenloe on strengthening his party that in the common bond of anti-Leicestrian sentiment he soon forgot his old grievances against his enemy the Count of Moeurs. Wilkes soon reported that these two "hath done almost nothing but drink and banquet for ten or twelve days together," and that Moeurs had "publicly in his drink used speeches in disgrace of our nation."³

In time Hohenloe succeeded in adding yet another of Leicester's enemies to his faction. On January 7, he induced the States-General to use "their pretended absolute authority" to secure the freedom of Paul Buys who was still a prisoner at Utrecht. Hohenloe had been an "earnest suiter for his enlargement" from the moment of Leicester's departure and in spite of the anger of the Utrecht magistrates (who were not only surprised by Buys' sudden release but also demanded his immediate return), he remained a free man.⁴

¹Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 6 Dec. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 258.

²Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 3 Dec. 1586, Ibid., p. 254.

³Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 4 Jan. 1587, Ibid., p. 308.

⁴Wilkes' Journal, 28 Dec. 1586, f. 89. "Ordinance of the States-General for the Enlargement of Paul Buys," The Hague, 7 Jan. 1587,

Increasingly alarmed at the growing scope of this anti-Leicestrian faction, headed by Hohenloe, seconded by the "vindictive" Buys, and supported by many inside and out of the Council and States-General, Wilkes redoubled his efforts to calm matters. He wrote a warm and statesmanlike letter to Hohenloe trying to mollify his anger and requested that Walsingham do the same. He also asked Elizabeth's First Secretary to write a similar letter to Buys. No doubt, it was also Wilkes' efforts within the Council that led to the States-General's letter of explanation to Elizabeth which was designed to quiet her reaction to the news of Buys' release.¹

Also realizing that Leicester's original order to "cass" five of the Scottish companies would leave the Scottish commander Balfour ample opportunity to retain only those men loyal to him and Hohenloe, Wilkes "with the privity" of Sir John Norris decided to urge the Council to divide the Scots companies into two regiments. One would be conferred on Balfour and the other (as a counter to Balfour's regiment) on a Captain William Patton, another Scottish volunteer whom he "knew" to be devoted to Leicester. "Wherein," Wilkes reported to Leicester, "with much ado I have prevailed." In spite of the fact that Balfour had a full ten companies in his regiment to Patton's five, Wilkes saw to it that four of the latter's company commanders were "the honestest captains."²

Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 310, and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 19 Jan. 1587, Ibid., p. 321. Buys was required, however, "to give caution of 25,000 florins to be forthcoming to answer at all times to such matter as shall be brought against him." Ibid.

¹Wilkes to Hohenloe, The Hague [14?] Jan. 1587, Ibid., pp. 317-18, Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 19 Jan. 1587, Ibid., p. 324, and States-General to Elizabeth, The Hague, 24 Jan. 1587, Ibid., p. 334.

²Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 6 Dec. 1586, Ibid., pp. 258-59, and Wilkes' Journal, 3 Dec. 1586, f. 85.

On January 20th the States-General "offered to the view and consideration of the Council of State" a new "placard" designed to modify the one published by Leicester back in March 1586. The new one was designed to allow trade in every commodity, except munitions, to any country (including Spain and Portugal) but the Southern Netherlands. When asked to affix Leicester's signature to the new decree, Wilkes objected, and succeeded in inducing the Council to commission Bardenius, Leoninus, and Aysma to advise the States against such an open violation of Leicester's authority. Though they admitted the need for a less restrictive trade policy the three councilors warned the States that its implementation might cause an unfavorable reaction among the populous, who, they contended, were convinced that increased exports would raise local prices and who believed in the military value of the original placard. The Councilors' suggestion was that the proposal be shelved until the Earl's return, but the States were not convinced, and on the same day proceeded to publish the new placard.¹

Army Problems

As previously shown, in early December 1586, the Council of State had convinced the States-General of the necessity of paying the already poorly equipped and mutinous soldiers at the time of the general muster rather than after. Accordingly, on December 5th the Council was informed that 380,000 florins would be forthcoming "within twenty days." By December 18th the slow progress made in raising this money caused Wilkes to report that the soldiers were suffering "hunger and want in all places."²

¹Wilkes' Journal, 20 Jan. 1587, f. 91, and Oosterhoff, "The Earl of Leicester's Governorship in the Netherlands, 1586-87," (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1967), pp. 264-65.

²Wilkes' Journal, 5 Dec. 1586, f. 85, Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 9 Dec. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 262, and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 18 Dec. 1586, Ibid., p. 281.

Continued threats of mutiny among the garrisons forced the Council to deliver a second "remonstrance" to the States demanding the money immediately. But the States were having their problems too. Tired of paying high taxes, the various provincial estates were all refusing to pay any more "ordinary contributions," claiming that they had already met their quotas through such "extraordinary contributions" as "victuals, munitions, and other provisions." When the States sent "certain special persons" into the several provinces to impress upon them the danger the unpaid troops posed for the country, they too failed to convince the local estates. Other devices were tried but with no better success.¹

Finally, during the first week of January the Council delivered yet another remonstrance to the States. Sufficiently worried this time, the latter decided to levy a tax on all salt, beer, and soap, which, as general commodities, would not fall heavier on one province than another. But it took time to raise money in this manner, and in the meantime the soldiers' conditions worsened.²

General Morris and Wilkes both wrote letter after letter to Leicester begging him to send relief to the "desperate" soldiers, but they were ignored. Exasperated, Wilkes wrote Burghley a very blunt letter on January 12th concerning the seriousness of the situation. Among other things he said:

The companies, as well horse as foot, are extremely decayed since his lordship's departure, by death and misery through hunger and cold; a case most pitiful for any English heart to behold [and]... if her Majesty shall not speedily send over some money to relieve them, the most part of them will be dead before the beginning of March.³

¹Ibid., and Wilkes' Journal, 11, 28, and 29 Dec. 1586, ff. 87 and 89.

²Wilkes' Journal, 6 Jan. 1587, ff. 89-90.

³B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, passim. P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 17-18. (My brackets.)

Wilkes went on to explain that part of the problem lay with the failure of army pay officials to carry out the original plan to pay all soldiers by "poll" rather than by company. The latter method was the more common one and was always susceptible to gross corruption on the part of the individual captains whose responsibility it was to apportion the wages to each soldier in his company. "For the disorders of most of the captains," Wilkes explained,

hath been such that they have and do keep the soldier from his due and convert the most part of the soldiers pay to their own uses. I do upon my poor credit assure your lordship that the like poverty and want hath hardly ever been seen in any army of so great a monarch as her Majesty [and] is to no little dishonor of our nation.¹

Because such miserable conditions always made the soldiers a threat to the inhabitants of any country, it was decided that "for the better safety of the countries and to avoid all danger of practice and treating with the enemy" the garrison troops would be reshuffled among the various frontier towns. But doing this only created more problems, for the town magistrates in each instance refused to admit the relocated companies because of their unpaid and mutinous condition. Thus, left with nowhere to turn, these companies were "forced to live and eat upon the country and villages to the spoil of the same." Even those troops who were left in the garrisons were so far in debt to the townspeople that, as Wilkes explained, "they can be no more trusted." Such conditions only aggravated the problem of raising pay for the troops because the angered inhabitants simply deducted such debts and illegal foraging from their ordinary contributions.²

¹Ibid. Sixteenth-century army captains almost invariably made it impossible to pay soldiers by the poll because such a pay scheme kept them from pocketing a portion of the soldiers pay.

²Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 24 Dec. 1586, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, f. 75, Wilkes' Journal, 24 Dec. 1586, ff. 87-88, and Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 12 Jan. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 315.

Obviously, Wilkes' position in the Council of State became more and more uncomfortable as news of these disorders reached The Hague. In despair he wrote Walsingham explaining that "so great is the lack of discipline among the garrisons, especially of our nation, that I am ashamed to hear the continual complaints which come to this Council board against them." He went on to explain that in spite of his and General Norris' constant orders to the Captains and governors to reform the "insolences and disorders" of the soldiers, nothing had been changed. "So," Wilkes concluded, "we begin to grow as hateful to the people as the Spaniard himself, who governeth his towns of conquest with a milder hand than we do our friends and allies."¹

Aside from the lack of money to pay the soldiers, Wilkes pointed out several other problems that made disciplining the soldiers almost impossible. Most of the captains of the foot soldiers and all of the captains of the horse could be found passing the rigorous winter season swaggering about the English Court. In justifiable anger, Wilkes said of these "court captains,"

I could wish that as many of them as cannot yield and submit themselves to the common wants and miseries of these countries, incident to soldiers, would be contented to forbear their service and resign their companies to others that can better endure and digest the poverty and lacks that follow the wars.²

Wilkes further attacked this

lack of government in the captains and officers, who for the most part are such as either never served before and have no judgment, no, not to rule themselves, and such as make their profit of the poor soldiers so extremely as they are hateful to the companies, wherein, if there be no redress [in] the next pay by delivering to the soldier his money by the poll, it were better that her Majesty did revoke all; for as the case of the common soldier now

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 19 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 23.

²Ibid.

standeth, the States receive little or no service of them but spoil and ruin of their towns and countries.¹

With conditions like these, it soon became apparent that some of the English and Dutch soldiers might begin to feel that they would receive better treatment from the Spaniard than their own governments provided.

Thus it was, that in the middle of December, a mutiny occurred in the Dutch garrison of Wauw in Zeeland. Led by one of Hohenloe's appointees, Captain Marchant, the garrison refused all attempts by the Council of State and Hohenloe to appease them. Finally, on the 8th of January Captain Marchant surrendered the fortress to the Spanish. For this treason he received the sum of 45,000 florins and was allowed to depart the garrison "with flag flying and drums beating."²

In an effort to keep the same thing from happening again, and especially in the English-held garrisons, Sir John Norris suggested to Wilkes and the rest of the Council, that he be allowed to march an army to the Prusso-Rhenish town of Wesel in order to place "garrisons" there. This, he suggested, would not only prevent the loss of this important town to Parma, who was camped near by, but more importantly, it would occupy the idle English and Dutch troops who "in all places are in terms to mutiny." His suggestion accepted, Norris, by the middle of January, was marching toward Wesel with an army of 3,000 foot and 300 horse.³

Meanwhile, Wilkes induced the Council to ask the Merchant Adventurers of Middelburg to grant a loan of money sufficient to pay the

¹Ibid. See also Wilkes' Journal, 14 Jan. 1587, f. 90.

²Wilkes to Hohenloe, The Hague [14?] Jan. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 318. Wilkes in reporting this treason to Leicester (12 Jan. 1587, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, f. 86), blames Hohenloe, who had, without the Earl's authority, placed Marchant in the castle after first removing the captain the Governor-General had placed there.

³Wilkes' Journal, 24 Dec. 1586, and 20 Jan. 1587, ff. 88 and 91.

soldiers. For this task, England's Treasurer-of-War in the Low Countries, Richard Huddleston, was sent in the Council's name and with the promise that the loan would be repaid immediately upon arrival of the next shipment of treasure from England. The request was refused.¹

In one last effort to obtain the desperately needed money, Wilkes and the Council asked the States-General to "anticipate the contributions for the month of February." This suggestion to borrow against the future resulted in a January 19th States' promise to "advance" 300,000 florins.² But hopes raised by this promise and the hoped for benefits of General Morris' excursion against the enemy were soon shattered by the catastrophic news that the English Governor, Sir William Stanley, had traitorously surrendered the strategic Overijsel city of Deventer.

Trouble with Sir William Stanley and Rowland York

The story of Wilkes' diligent efforts to prevent trouble in Deventer is informative in its illustration of one of the severe handicaps he labored under during his tenure as a member of the Council of State. That handicap was his constant fear of being censured by Leicester for reporting to the English Court the failures connected with England's involvement in the United Provinces.

Located on the Issel river,³ the City of Deventer was, next to Amsterdam and Antwerp, the most important trading center in all the Provinces. It was both a commercial and manufacturing capital, and as a member of the Hanseatic League was the great center of Dutch trade

¹Ibid., and Council of State to Merchant Adventurers, The Hague, 12 Jan. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 316.

²Wilkes' Journal, 16 and 19 Jan. 1587, ff. 90-91.

³That branch of the Rhine which flows between Gelderland and Overijsel into the Zuyder-Zee.

with the Baltic nations. Though nominally on the side of the rebellious Provinces, the majority of its strong Catholic party and magistrates not only leaned towards reconciliation with Spain but had also refused to admit either a Dutch or an English garrison into its walls.¹

About fifteen miles south of Deventer on the same river sat the Gelderland town of Zutphen, the capital of the old Landgraves of the same name. Protected by a strong wall and four "scones" or forts, this Spanish-held town was by September 1586 the only obstacle keeping the Dutch and English forces from completely controlling the Issel river. Because of this, Leicester had since then laid siege to the various small towns and forts surrounding the city, captured them all, and as a result completely invested Zutphen itself. In charge of these forts he placed that adventurer of doubtful character, his sergeant-major, Rowland York.² By the middle of October, it was felt the town, cut off from all supplies, could not hold out for long.³

It soon became apparent that critical provisions and munitions were constantly being slipped into Zutphen from Deventer, thus prolonging that town's ability to withstand Leicester's siege. Accordingly, the Earl decided to assign his Lord Marshal, William Pelham, the task of placing an English garrison in Deventer. In a cunning manoeuvre the Lord Marshal had Henry Killigrew along with several other members of the Council of State arrange a prolonged meeting with "all" the magistrates of the city and at the same time had one of his regimental commanders, Sir William

¹Leicester to Walsingham, The Hague, 27 Feb. 1586, Bruce, Leicester's Correspondence, p. 140 and Motley, Netherlands, II, p. 153.

²Motley gives a good sketch of the character and background of Rowland York (Netherlands, II, pp. 156-57), indicating that among other things York had previously served under Parma at the sieges of Brussels and Antwerp. See C. G. Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 50 for an explanation of the rank of sergeant-major.

³Ibid., p. 44 and Thomas Digges to Walsingham, Camp before Zutphen,

Stanley, order his soldiers to steal unnoticed into the city in parties of "5, 10, and 15." Then on the morning of October 20th Stanley himself arrived. Later in the afternoon Pelham also entered the city. That same evening the Lord Marshal ordered the surprised magistrates to his quarters where, after excusing the absence of Leicester whom he said was sick with grief over Sir Philip Sidney's death, he informed them that the city was to be garrisoned. After a brief flirtation with the possibility of resisting, the magistrates realized it would be futile and so submitted. Leicester appointed as governor of the city his Provost Marshal and Master-of-the-Camp, Sir William Stanley, who almost immediately introduced 1,200 "wild" Irish into the garrison. Then, a short time later, Leicester saw to it that a Calvinist city council was submitted in place of the Catholic magistrates.¹

A Cheshire Catholic, Sir William Stanley began his military career in 1567 by serving as a volunteer under the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands. Seeking to improve his fortune in 1570, he joined Elizabeth's forces in Ireland, where in spite of his Roman Catholicism he distinguished himself through fifteen years of loyal service in what was basically a religious war. However, failure to obtain the rewards he both coveted and deserved apparently turned his loyalty into an unsuspected desire to harm England. In December 1585 he followed Leicester into the

11 Oct. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 198. It was during the taking of these forts that the beloved poet-soldier and Governor of Flushing, Sir Philip Sidney, was wounded and later died. See Leicester to Burghley, Camp before Zutphen, [24] Sept. 1586, Ibid., p. 165 and Sir John Norris to Walsingham, Utrecht, 25 Oct. 1586, Ibid., p. 208.

¹Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 9 Dec. 1586, Ibid., p. 261, Magistrates of Deventer to Council of State, 21 Nov. 1586, Ibid., pp. 241-42, and Henry Archer (Leicester's cousin) to Sir Thomas Manage, Treasurer of Elizabeth's Chamber, Utrecht, 23 Oct. 1586, Bruce, Leicester's Correspondence, pp. 478-80.

Netherlands and was immediately sent back to Ireland to recruit 1,000 more men for service in the United Provinces.¹

Knowing his recruits would be "mostly Catholics" and would have to be shuttled to the Netherlands via London, Stanley saw his opportunity to strike back at Elizabeth. Contact was made between him and those Catholics in England involved in the Babington Conspiracy. It was soon decided that he would delay his troops in their march past London as long as possible in hopes they could be used in the "general" Catholic uprising that was to follow the murder of Queen Elizabeth. If for some reason the conspiracy failed or he could no longer delay his departure, he would go on to the Netherlands and there "pass over on the first opportunity to the Prince of Parma." Such circumstances along with Elizabeth's suspicions of his loyalty soon convinced him to hurry on to the Low Countries with his army of Irish Kernes.²

When Bernardino Mendoza, the Spanish Ambassador in Paris, learned of Stanley's promise to defect to Parma's side and of his recent appointment as Governor of Deventer he immediately devised a scheme to compel Sir William to hasten the fulfillment of his promise, while at the same

¹D.M.B., LIV, pp. 82-83.

²In a letter to Philip II, written on Aug. 3, 1586, Bernardino Mendoza, the Spanish Ambassador in Paris, explained this plan to utilize Stanley's Irish troops in the Catholic uprising and then made this interesting observation concerning Elizabeth's confidence in Sir William: "The Queen herself administered the Oath [of Supremacy] to this Colonel three times in one week, that he would be loyal to her; but as he is a Catholic he has found excuses for not going quickly with his men to Flanders, in the expectation that your Majesty's fleet will arrive; and he will continue this course until news of the fleet comes. When he is obliged to go to Zeeland he promises to pass over on the first opportunity to the Prince of Parma." Mendoza then goes on in his letter to explain that he suggested to some of the Catholic conspirators that "they should try to delay Colonel Stanley and the 1,000 Irishmen near London, so that when the thing was done [the murder of Elizabeth], he could seize the Queen's ships." When Philip II read this last comment he, in his usual illegible scrawl, made the marginal comment that "this is the most important thing of all." See Cal. Spain, III, p. 604. (By brackets.)

time bringing with him the rich prize of Deventer. He quickly wrote Parma and advised him to tell Stanley that not only were Elizabeth and Leicester "aware for a long time past" that he was a "Catholic at heart" but that they knew "from the confessions of the Catholics who were executed (as a result of the Babington Plot) what his...intentions were." Mendoza felt "these words" would "set him thinking," with the result that "fear for his life may cause him to surrender the place on payment." Mendoza's hopes proved well founded and in carrying out his stratagem he soon had some unexpected help from Leicester, who, unlike the Spanish ambassador, unwittingly encouraged Stanley's treason.¹

It will be remembered that at the time Leicester departed from the Netherlands he left General Norris in command of the English forces. What was not mentioned was that because of the Earl's continued anger with Sir John, he, among other things, in his Act of Restriction stupidly granted separate commissions to Stanley and Rowland York which exempted them from obeying Norris. It was not long before Sir John began to worry about the results of this action. Denying any personal jealousy as a result of Stanley's commission, Norris said: "If it prove no hinderance to the service it shall nothing trouble me...neither will I

¹Mendoza to Philip II, Paris, [14] Dec. 1586, *Ibid.*, p. 689. Unless one reads this letter carefully he is apt to suspect that all along Elizabeth and Leicester were aware of Stanley's treasonous character but simply did nothing about it. Mendoza wrote: "I advised the Duke of Parma that Colonel Stanley who had come over with the Irish troops, and was in garrison at Deventer, should be warned that the Queen of England had learned from the confessions of the Catholics who were executed what his [Stanley's] intentions were; and he should be asked whether he thought it would be prudent for him to return to his own country again, or trust the Earl of Leicester, as both he and the Queen were aware for a long time past that Stanley was a Catholic at heart. These words will set him thinking as he was certainly the accomplice of the Catholics, which the latter made clear to me; and fear for his life may cause him to surrender the place on payment. If he does so, the whole of the towns of the Overijsel will at once surrender." (My brackets.)

seek by indirect means to caluminate him or any other...but will let them show themselves."¹

Norris did not have to wait long for the two men to "show themselves." Refusing even to pay courtesy visits to General Norris when passing by his headquarters, York further displayed his obstinacy by refusing to take part in the November general muster. Then, a short time later, it was learned that one of his officers, a Lieutenant Zouche, was making regular visits to the Spanish Governor of Zutphen, Juan Bautista de Taxis. When Wilkes and the rest of the Council wrote asking him to look into the matter, he replied with an extremely insolent letter not only defending Zouche but also severely criticizing the Council both for its failure to obtain supplies for his "miserable" soldiers and for its foolishness in listening to whichever "peltre" or "false liar" spread such a rumor. "Wherefore, I pray you," he concluded, "make the slanderers answer for their calumnies, or else have the goodness to proceed a little more certainly and prudently."²

Realizing that it was useless to investigate the matter through York, Wilkes wrote to Sir William Stanley at Deventer. He explained that the accusation against Lieutenant Zouche came from the Council of the Duchy of Guelders and the county of Zutphen (which sat at Arnhem), who also claimed that the Irish in Stanley's regiment "(being for the most part papists, as it is supposed) do enter into very straight league with the papists of Deventer," in order to betray Deventer to the Spanish. Wilkes asked Sir William "to inquire carefully" into both charges and

¹Norris to Burghley, Rotterdam, 17 Nov. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 234 and Norris to Walsingham, The Hague, 9 Dec. 1586, Ibid., p. 260.

²Norris to Burghley, The Hague, 12 Dec. 1586, Ibid., pp. 266-67, muster notes, Ibid., p. 268, Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 16 Dec. 1586, Ibid., p. 274, and York to [Council of State], Fort of Velue before Zutphen, 30 Nov. 1586, Ibid., pp. 246-47.

though he received a report on the matter from Sir William, it was soon apparent nothing was going to be done about it. This was understandable, however, in light of what else was going on in Deventer at the time.¹

Almost immediately after Stanley had been appointed Governor of Deventer, he had begun to antagonize the citizens of that city. When Morris wrote him several letters concerning their complaints, Stanley refused to answer them. Wearily Morris complained to Burghley,

As I did presume, so I find Sir William Stanley and Mr. York here to oppose themselves against me, for Sir William's own men have openly given out that he acknowledges no superier authority than his own, which he himself hath also confirmed by his own speech to the 'Magistrate' of Deventer, as by the copy of their letter your lordship shall see.²

The letter Morris spoke of was one of complaint by the Deventer magistrates against the abuses of Stanley's new government. Written on November 21st, it accused Stanley of attempts to raise forced loans from the city, of forcing its citizens to supply the soldiers with beer and ale, of seizing the keys to the city gates, of gaining possession of all fortifications, munitions, and "cannoneers," and finally, of allowing the wild Irish Kernes to commit numerous outrages on the citizenry.³

As a result of this letter, the Council of State, in Leicester's name, wrote Stanley, asking that he explain himself. When nothing was received but another letter of complaint from the Magistrates, Wilkes, whose heavy responsibility it was to maintain England's good name, took it upon himself to write a firm yet diplomatic letter to Sir William. Though rather long, a complete reading of the letter is important if

¹17 Dec. 1586, *Ibid.*, p. 278. Wilkes in a letter to Leicester dated 18 Dec. [*Ibid.*, p. 281] mentions Stanley's report but it seems not to have survived.

²Morris to Burghley, The Hague, 12 Dec. 1586, *Ibid.*, pp. 266-67.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 241-42.

one is to appreciate both the conscientious nature of Wilkes and his ability to state what needed saying without the usual beating-around-the-bush tactics of so many Elizabethans.

"Good Sir William," Wilkes wrote,

Upon a late complaint made here by the magistrate and burgesses of Deventer, there was written unto you, in the name and by the authority of his Excellency derived unto the Council of State, a letter by the which you were required to make answer whether the information delivered were true, and withal prayed to innovate nothing in your government that might breed disorder or dissension between you and them. Sithence the writing of which letter, they have complained again to this Council, showing that you have as it were by violence wrested from them the keys of one of their gates; that you assemble your garrison often in arms to fear and terrify them; that you have seized one of their forts; that the Irish soldiers to commit many extortions and exactions upon the inhabitants; that a soldier drew his sword upon a woman with child because he might not have what he listed; that you have imprisoned some of their burgesses and done many things against their laws and privileges to the wonderful discontentment of the whole inhabitants; so as it is feared that even the best-affected to her Majesty and our nation within the town will, for their discontentment, forsake the same. Whether any of these things be true or not, yourself doth best know, but I do assure you that the apprehension thereof here doth make us and our government hateful.

For mine own part, I have always known you to be a gentleman of 'value,' wisdom and judgment, and therefore should hardly believe any such thing to happen where you command. Howbeit, in respect of the rumor and conceit had of those proceedings, and my duty to her Majesty and the love I bear to yourself, I could not omit in her Majesty's behalf earnestly to require you not only to take heed of the consequence thereof, but to be careful of the honor of her Majesty and the reputation of our nation. That you will consider that the means of obtaining the late possession of the town grew by them that are now in office, which being of the religion and well-affected to his Excellency's government, wrought his entry into the same, and therefore would be sorry they should receive any just cause of discontentment by his governor established among them. I know that his Excellency would never suffer any governor out of the cautionary towns to possess the keys of any of the gates of any town, although the same hath been often attempted. I know also that his Excellency is sworn to maintain all the inhabitants of the Provinces United in their ancient privileges and customs. I know further that your commission carrieth no authority to warrant you to intermeddle any further than with the government of the soldier and good of the town. Well, you may in your conceit 'conster' some words to authorize you in some larger sort, but believe me, Sir, they will not warrant you sufficiently to deal any further than I have said, for I have seen and perused the copy of your commission for that purpose. I know the name itself of a governor of a town is odious to this

people, and hath been ever since the remembrance of the Spanish government, and if we by any lack of foresight in our demeanor should give the like occasion, we should make ourselves as odious as they are, which God forbid. You are to consider that we are not come into these countries for their defense only, but for the defense of her Majesty and our own native country; knowing that the preservation of both dependeth altogether upon the preserving of these.

Wherefore I do eftsones intreat and require you (as having authority thereunto) to forbear to intermeddle any further within your town than your commission shall lead you unto; which I can assure you is but weak to carry any such power as you may suppose. And therefore if there shall follow any dangerous effect of any your further proceeding after this my friendly advice unto you; as I shall be heartily sorry for your sake, so shall I nevertheless be able to testify unto her Majesty that I have done my duty in admonishing you upon the complaints exhibited here; whereof I trust you will have consideration, and seek by some friendly means to satisfy the magistrate and to live there with the people in good terms of amity and love. The want of your soldiers shall be presently supplied, and should have been sooner if money could have been sooner had.¹

Stanley's indignant reply to this letter made it apparent to Wilkes that trouble with him was only beginning. First, Sir William expressed surprise at being "admonished and threaten[ed], yea, before you have heard my answer or reasons." Deceitfully, he explained that he had not yet replied to the Council's earlier letters because he was still busily occupied in "bringing to pass the contents thereof." After accusing Wilkes of implying that he had dishonored the "terms" of Leicester's commission to him, he justified his harsh military discipline by stating, "I have maintained justice and that severely, else hardly the soldiers would have been contented with bread and bare cheese."²

Admitting that he had seized the city's keys, Stanley defended this action as necessary in light of "the nature of these people, who

¹Wilkes to Stanley, The Hague, 9 Dec. 1586, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 6-7.

²Stanley to Wilkes, Deventer, 14 Dec. 1586, Cal. For., XXI, ii, pp. 271-72. Mistakenly, this letter was sent to Sir John Norris and Stanley's letter to Norris concerning military matters went to Wilkes. However it made no difference as both men were together at The Hague and immediately exchanged letters.

thrust out the Spaniards and Almaines, and afterwards never would obey the Prince and States." "I would be," he continued, "the...serriest man that lives that by my negligence the place should be lost, or by my want of judgment the service hindered. And for my courtesy and humanity towards the new magistrates," Stanley concludes,

I refer me unto themselves, but I think they sent some rhetorician, which could allege of little grief and speak pitiful; and truly I find your ears have been pitiful, in so timorously allowing and condemning; for I assure you that her Majesty hath not a better servant nor a more faithful man in these parts; the which I have and will prove with my flesh and blood, although I know there be divers flying and false reports spread by my enemies which are come to my ears; but I doubt not my virtue and truth will prove them caluminators and men of little. So good Mr. Wilkes, I pray you consider gravely, give care discreetly, and advertise England soundly; and for me, I have been and am your friend wherein I may; and glad to hear any admonition from one so wise as yourself.¹

Stanley then added what must have been for Wilkes an infuriating post-script. Complaining that he had received only £120 in the past five months and his soldiers only £10 per company for the past two months, he sarcastically blamed Wilkes for this lack by contemptuously stating:

You content me so well here with your good favor and money, that if you will discharge me of my promise made to his Excellency, I will accept the benefit of my passport and depart with my troops with all my heart.

Then with words that no doubt would have caught in his throat had he spoken them, Stanley wrote "God willing, I will never fail my promise to his Excellency; whatsoever I endure, it is for her Majesty's service and for the love I bear him."²

For Wilkes, who had defended Stanley's name in Council concerning this matter, the above letter was an insult, and his reply to the English

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

Governor of Deventer was as informative and precise as was his first letter. Wilkes stiffly explained that his former letter of "friendly advice" contained:

no threat (by your leave) but some persuasions unto you to give the inhabitants of that town as little cause as you might justly to grieve them, whose complaints to this Council were very bitterly delivered against you....Which were not delivered here by any rhetorician, but by letters from the magistrate, addressed to the Council. And if it please you again to peruse my letter well you shall find I do not therein prejudicate or condemn you, for I have always held you so wise and discreet as at that time I did not believe anything written against you, and made answer for you in the Council that I thought the informers did you wrong.¹

Becoming a bit more emotional Wilkes continued:

Howbeit, perceiving that you founded yourself greatly upon your commission to warrant you to intermeddle with their policy;... I thought it not unfit to peruse the copy of your commission.... Wherein I protest before God I had no purpose to hurt or offend you, and considering the advice I gave....was private between you and me, and proceeding of my good love towards you, meseemeth you have done me a great deal of wrong, not only to take it in so evil part, but to charge me, as you do by your letter in scoffing manner with lack of discretion and want of good meaning toward you.²

Wilkes then tersely informed Stanley that since "my letters" of "good will" have "so offended" he need no longer worry about receiving any more. The English councilor concluded his rejoinder with a sharp reminder to Sir William of the financial realities that all were forced to labor under in the Netherlands:

There hath been a great care and instance used here for money and other things to relieve your wants as any way might be, but the lack of money hath been and is such as it hath not been possible to help you and others in as great extremity as yourself. There was not a denier left at his Excellency's departure and since many ways have been attempted to get money to satisfy you and the rest but few have prevailed...You are to consider that neither I nor any of our nation here, that I know of, hath these men's purses at commandment, and therefore whosoever will resolve to serve here must be contented to lack where it is not to be had.³

¹Wilkes to Stanley, The Hague, 18 Dec. 1586, Ibid., pp. 280-81.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

By the end of Decmeber 1586 Wilkes, the Council of State, and the States themselves were pretty well convinced that some treason was in the offing in Deventer and around Zutphen. Strong rumor had it that courtesies were being frequently exchanged over the walls of Zutphen by Taxis and York. Apparently, the latter had sent gifts of venison, fowl, and other game into the besieged town and the Spanish governor had returned the favor with generous amounts of wine and beer.¹

Stanley too was charged with spending his time in Deventer "only with those that are notorious and dangerous papists," and with allowing his Irish Kernes both to attend mass within the city and to mingle openly with Taxis' Spanish soldiers at Zutphen. Also, as time passed it became more and more apparent that Sir William intended to do nothing about reports of York and some of his officers' intrigues with the enemy.²

Such "bruits" plus fear of the possible results of the continuing disorders in Deventer led the Council to send an "express messenger" with a letter to Leicester, requesting that Stanley "be removed and the garrison changed and diminished or else the town will be lost."³

Meantime, in an attempt to forestall such an event, the States-General in the first two weeks of January scraped together enough money to grant a month's pay to Stanley's and York's troops. The remarkable thing about this was that the States were in no way obligated to pay these troops, who were part of the contingent of English soldiers strictly under Elizabeth's pay.⁴

¹Motley, Netherlands, III, p. 165.

²Ibid., and Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 19 Jan. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 322.

³Ibid., Council to Leicester, The Hague, 4 Jan. 1587, Ibid., p. 307, and Wilkes' Journal, [4] Jan. 1587, f. 90.

⁴Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 18 Dec. 1586, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, f. 74, Council of State to Leicester, The Hague, 22 Jan. 1587,

However, in spite of receiving a month's pay, Stanley continued to demand that he be supported by the local inhabitants. Finally in a letter to Walsingham, his closest confidant at the English Court, Wilkes became as blunt as he dared concerning the actions of Stanley.

He is charged further to take within the country near abouts from the poor villagers weekly for the provision of his table, one whole ox, three sheep and a hog, or in lieu of the hog 20s. sterling, and Rowland York forceth them likewise to furnish him weekly for his table one quarter of an ox, one sheep and half a hog; and in case it be not brought unto them every week... they send the soldiers to take it by force.

Thus, Wilkes continued,

By these and many other insolencies said to be committed by the soldiers in that place, the magistrate and burgesses of the men and people of the country are grown to hate our government, and it is to be feared, unless speedily looked into, will hazard the loss of the town, while the bruit thereof will make every town refuse to receive our people into garrison.¹

Then quickly to avoid the possibility of Walsingham's displeasure over such strong words against one he trusted, Wilkes added:

I know your honor will find this information very strange, considering the opinion you have conceived of the wisdom and discretion of Stanley, and for mine own part I do as unwillingly advertise the same, if my duty, and the danger of the sufferance thereof, did not command me the contrary.²

Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 330, and Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 19 Jan. 1587, Ibid., pp. 322-24. "He [Stanley] is not contented with the entertainment of £40 sterling a month allowed him by the States as governor of the place, but hath taken perforce from the commissaries sent lately thither to deliver a month's pay, an allowance of £10 sterling a month over and besides for every company of his regiment, being as he saith ten companies, amounting by the month to 1400 guilders, besides a pay for his own company; which is more than is allowed to Sir John Norris by 300 guilders a month and as much as is given for entertainment to the Count Hohenloe or to any earl that serveth in these countries." (My italics and brackets.)

¹Ibid.

²Ibid. Because Sophia Crawford Lomas (the editor of volume XXI, ii of the State Papers), was unable to discover the key to Wilkes' cipher in the Public Records Office, much of this letter went to press erroneously deciphered.. Later, Miss Lomas discovered the cipher in the British Museum, Add. Mss. 5,935, f. 1. I have included a copy of it in the Appendices of this thesis. See Appendix C.

Interestingly, the documents of the period indicate that the only member of Elizabeth's Court that Stanley and York were in correspondence with was Walsingham. Surprisingly, the cagey Chief Secretary, who was so seldom caught unawares by anything or anybody, suspected nothing of these two men. Their deceptive letters, naturally, betrayed very little of their true intentions.¹

And so the weeks of anxiety slowly passed with nothing much accomplished but the writing of many letters and an increase in Wilkes' fears. In spite of his and the Council's efforts, Elizabeth sent no money, no one at the English Court would believe their constant warnings about Stanley and York, and in vain did they implore Leicester to return. Because of Leicester's Act of Restriction the Council and Morris felt their authority so limited that they dared not take the action necessary to guarantee the safety of Deventer. Without a second English member to help him, Wilkes dared not leave the increasingly anti-English Council of State alone long enough to investigate matters himself; and he certainly hesitated to run the risk of increasing Leicester's already hot anger against him by too severely criticizing Stanley or York. Thus did matters remain until the fateful day of January 19th, 1587.

The Surrender of Deventer and the Forts Before Zutphen

The story of the betrayal of Deventer and the Zutphen forts has been well told before² and therefore needs no detailed retelling. However, for continuity's sake a quick review of the incident is necessary and for

¹Stanley to Walsingham, Deventer, 26 Dec. 1586, Ibid., pp. 287-88, and York to Walsingham, Fort of Velon before Zutphen, 7 Jan. 1587, Ibid., p. 309-10.

²See Motley's vivid account in vol. II, pp. 169-76 of his The United Netherlands.

this Wilkes' brief report is probably the best of several contemporary English accounts.

"May it please your good lordship," he wrote to Leicester several days after learning of Stanley's treason,

it is not unlikely but that the news of the unhappy loss of the town of Deventer is already come to your lordship's knowledge which upon Friday morning last, some what before day, being the 19th of this present, was most traitorously delivered to the enemy by Sir William Stanley, as likewise the forts before Zutphen by Rowland York. It is a thing that hath been long feared here by the manner of his government and the continual intelligence between him and the enemy. Taxis, the governor of Zutphen, entered himself into the town, with 500 "landsknights" and three hundred horse. The gates were opened to him, and he and his troops marched directly into the market place, where Stanley received him with great joy and courtesy, and after they had walked awhile together, and disposed certain Corps de gards of the landsknights and Irish at every carfours of the town, and at the gates and bulwarks and other strengths within the same, Stanley with the whole regiment took their oaths to the King of Spain. The company of Sir Edmund Carie did only refuse to be traitors and were thereupon suffered to depart out of the town. From the marketplace, Taxis and Stanley went to the town house, whither the woeful magistrates were called, and made to welcome Taxis and were there required with all expedition to furnish and make ready so much money as should pay all arrearage due to Stanley and his regiment since their coming into these countries, who had received a month's pay of the States not eight days before he received the enemy into the town. They were also required to furnish and deliver as much more money as might give three month's pay to the troops of the enemy then newly entered. It would grieve your lordship to understand the conceits of the people had of this accident, and the dishonor and discredit grown to our nation thereby. Rowland York is said to be the practiser of this treason, who, as soon as the enemy was entered at Deventer, came to the gates to enquire whether the enemy were quietly possessed of the town, and upon notice thereof, being on horseback, galloped to the fort, where he made the companies to leave their colors and forsake their place. There were two companies of strangers which would have held the place if ours would have assisted them, but the enemy being at hand, they departed towards Campen, and York, with such as would follow him, into Deventer.¹

In this report Wilkes failed to mention that as a result of his treason Stanley received at least £13,000. But it was by no means his

¹Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 24 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 24-25.

main motive if, indeed, it was a motive at all. Parma himself indicates in a letter to Philip II that Sir William asked for no other reward than to be allowed to serve in the Spanish army. Corroborating this is Sir John Conway's (Master of the English Artillery) account of Stanley's reaction to seeing the Deventer townsmen "weeping" over his treason:

When Sir William Stanley saw the pitiful state of the burghers,... he wept with the burgers for company, protesting with vehement words and oaths that he had not done it out of covetousness but only for the discharge of his conscience.¹

Whether or not Mendoza had reason to boast as he did of his part in the surrender of Deventer is unclear. He may have helped to expedite the matter but certainly Stanley had made up his mind to do Elizabeth harm long before Bernardino's fertile mind conceived of using him.²

¹Sir John Conway, Master of the Artillery to Burghley, Middelburg, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 341, and Motley, Netherlands, II, p. 176.

²Mendoza to Philip II, Paris, [31 Jan.] and [8] Feb. 1587, Cal. Spain, IV, pp. 15-16 and 23.

CHAPTER V

THE AFTERMATH OF THE DEVENTER TREASON

If Thomas Wilkes found his situation difficult prior to the betrayal of Deventer and the Zutphen forts, after their loss conditions were next to impossible. The reaction of the Dutch leaders to the news of Stanley's and York's treason was extreme to say the least. These losses had destroyed the gains of an entire year's military expenditure, cost the States an important source of revenue, and opened up a great portion of the United Provinces' western defenses to the enemy.

Anti-English Sentiment

On January 20th, the day after the loss of Deventer, "the whole College of the States, to the number of 26 persons" resorted to the Council of State and there in harsh speeches not only "charged the Councilors with extreme negligence" but the "willful loss" of those strategic defenses.¹

The Council blamed their own failure to prevent such a disaster on Leicester's Act of Restriction which they claimed deprived them of the necessary authority. To this explanation the States responded by denouncing the Act and requiring to know which Councilors of State had helped Leicester draw it up. When all the Councilors present denied having had anything to do with its inception, the Council's secretaries

¹Wilkes' Journal, 20 Jan. 1587, f. 91 and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 24 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 24-25.

and clerks were called forward, and as Wilkes explained:

the matter [was] so narrowly examined that in the end it was found that M. de Brakel had given the said act to one of them [the clerks] to be written out, which I fear will lie very heavy upon him although by chance he was now absent at Utrecht.¹

To these accusations Wilkes made what answer he could, but touching the Act of Restriction

I could say nothing, [he wrote Leicester], but did assure them that your lordship therein meant nothing but their good. And for Stanley I know her Majesty herself reposed as great trust in him as in any gentleman of his sort in her realm.

Such words did little to mollify the angry deputies.²

The following day the provincial States of Holland came to the Council and also complained of how prejudicial the loss of Deventer and the forts was to their safety. They demanded that for the next four or five days the Council not "intermeddle in the giving or disposing of garrisons" in their province because they intended to handle their own defense from then on. All Wilkes and the rest of the Council could do at this point was to counsel moderation.³

The next day, the 22nd of January, another delegation of the States-General came to the Council and for a second time reproached the English. Because of Wilkes' unexplained absence, the pensionary of Rotterdam, Barneveldt, took advantage of the occasion to make such a passionate speech against Leicester and the English nation that many of the Dutch deputies wished he had not spoken. They attempted to smooth

¹Ibid. (My brackets.) In fact, on January 22 the Council wrote Leicester explaining that the "respect and obedience" due them were much diminished by the Act of Restriction and therefore asking that their previous authority be renewed by him. Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 330.

²Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 24 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 24-25.

³Wilkes' Journal, 21 Jan. 1587, f. 91.

over the harsh words, "but," as Gilpin, who was there, later told Walsingham, "I...bear them in memory...having acquainted Mr. Wilkes therewith."¹

In the midst of all these accusations, Wilkes learned that there were "secret consultations" going on between the States-General and Count Hohenloe as to how they might rid the United Provinces of all Englishmen. As if this were not enough, two days later a reputable source informed Wilkes that the States of Holland, along with Count Maurice and Count Hohenloe were busy making arrangements to place the "absolute government" of Holland and Zeeland into the hands of the former, with the latter as his lieutenant.²

Wilkes realized that if these designs were carried out Leicester's ability to function as a Governor-General would be greatly reduced. For, upon his return, he would find his authority confined to Utrecht, Overijssel, and Gelderland, areas that not only contributed nothing to the war budget but as a result had little if anything to say in the government of the States.³

The first thing to be done was to assure the safety of the critically important English garrisons at Flushing, Brill, Sluys, Bergen-op-Zoom, Utrecht, and even Ostend. After the loss of a key city like

¹Ibid., 22 Jan. 1587, f. 91 and Gilpin to Walsingham, The Hague, 24 Jan. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 335. Apparently Barnevelt had thought to take advantage of Wilkes' absence from the Council on the 22nd to sway the remainder of the counselors against England. He obviously forgot about secretary Gilpin's ability to understand Low Dutch. It was probably his later realization of this mistake that led Gilpin to suggest that "the people would be glad to be rid of me out of the Council because I understand their language so perfectly, as well as their nature, fashions, and humors." Ibid.

²Wilkes' Journal, 21 and 23 Jan. 1587, ff. 91-92.

³Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 15 May 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 64.

Deventer the Dutch would be very anxious to replace the English in controlling these cities. Quickly he and Sir John Norris sent "special commandment" to all the English garrisons to take in no Dutch companies without express orders from England.¹

This ploy was fairly effective, but Wilkes and Norris labored under the severe handicap that everyone faced in Elizabeth's government--not knowing exactly what the Queen's intentions were in regard to most matters. "As for these of Holland," Norris wrote Wilkes,

it is here openly spoken that they will make a governor-general if they can induce Friesland to join with them and that they will not suffer her Majesty sovereignty but with such conditions as they know she will not accept it. If her Majesty's mind were known unto us, it would be no hard matter to turn all their devices upside down, but not being acquainted with her purpose, it may be we should run a wrong course in striving with the Hollanders.²

Wilkes' next effort was to convince Leicester of the necessity of returning immediately. In a straightforward letter to the Earl he wrote:

I have often written to your lordship of one thing which I will here reiterate in discharge of my duty, and protest, if there grow any further harm, that I have not neglected to give admonition thereof; which is the absence of a governor, your lordship or some such one of quality and wisdom as were fit to govern these countries in your lordship's place; which if it be not speedily provided for, I see the apparent loss of all at hand. Such are the common dissensions here among the Provinces, towns and governors: the lack of discipline among our English soldiers in their garrisons, and the want of money and pay for her Majesty's forces the most part whereof are unpaid ever since the beginning of September. Their misery and poverty is so great that there is no means to hold them in any order of discipline, whereby they daily commit such disorders and insolencies as we grow all hateful to these countries. I beseech your lordship that you will have good consideration hereof and yield some remedy in them before it be too late!³

¹Gilpin to [Davison?], The Hague, 18 Feb. 1587, Ibid., ii, p. 370, Capt. Edmund Udall to Walsingham, Bergen-op-Zoom, 18 June 1588, Ibid., iii, and Col. Thomas Morgan to Wilkes, Bergen-op-Zoom, 22 Feb. 1587, Ibid., ii, pp. 375-76.

²Norris to Wilkes, Utrecht, 4 Feb. 1587, Ibid., ii, pp. 353-54.

³Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 24 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 25.

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At the same time, within the States-General, Barnevelt drew up a violent letter to Leicester criticizing his methods and policies and especially attacking his Act of Restriction which he claimed was the main reason for Stanley's and York's treason. On January 24th, Wilkes, with the rest of the Council, came by chance into the Assembly of the States just when Barnevelt was demanding a public reading of his document. After listening to this long and explosive letter, the Council's advice on the matter was requested. It was Wilkes who rose and in a "few words" told them plainly that he felt the letter to be "very sharp." To this criticism Barnevelt retorted "that there was nothing therein but the truth" and with that unsatisfactory reply curtly changed the subject.¹

Shaken by this incident Wilkes later wrote:

I, fearing that the sending of the letter would not only work great alteration in England towards these countries, but also give suspicion of myself, considering how my lord was incensed against me, repaired the next day to the Count Maurice, to the President Vandermill, and to M. de Villiers the minister, and did severally entreat them to deal with the States to stay the sending of the letter...but whether they dealt therein or not, or how they dealt, I know not; yet neither of them promised to do their best. In the end the letter was sent, I not knowing thereof but hoping always that the same had been stayed until, about fifteen days after it was sent away, I learned it was gone by some speech had with the Greffier of the States, of whom then I demanded a copy.²

In another blunt letter to Elizabeth, the States compared the loss of Deventer with that of Antwerp and lamented the fact that in one stroke anyear's sacrifice and gain against the enemy had been lost. They

¹States-General to Leicester, The Hague, 25 Jan. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, pp. 335-36, Wilkes' Journal, 25 Jan. 1587, f. 93 and Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 17 May 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 68. Motley, Netherlands, II, pp. 206-9 gives an extensive rundown of the contents of Barnevelt's letter.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 17 May 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 68. So intent was Leicester in accusing Wilkes of even encouraging the sending of this letter, that the English councilor was eventually forced to secure a sworn statement from Adrian Vander Myle, president of Holland, Zeeland and Friesland, to the effect that he [Wilkes] had begged him to induce Count Maurice not to send the same. "Certificate," The Hague, 30 June 1587, Ibid., p. 141.

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resolved never to weaken in their resolution to hold out against the Spanish King, and begged her assistance in their great need.¹

Wilkes' worst fears concerning the reaction such letters would produce at the English Court proved mild to say the least. Elizabeth was already angry from having been kept waiting nearly two months for a sufficiently large Dutch legation to gather in England. Finally, near the end of January they approached her and requested that she should increase her forces in the Provinces to 10,000 foot and 2,000 horse along with granting them an additional loan of £50,000. Elizabeth's reaction to these requests was a tirade of denunciations for their ingratitude, their shameful treatment of Leicester, and their cruelty towards her troops. When Barnevelt's violent letter of January 25th arrived on the heels of this request Elizabeth's wrath knew no bounds. In no uncertain terms she told the still negotiating Dutch commissioners that where as previously she had intended to send Leicester back to the Netherlands, she would now, "never" do so. Not only had their countrymen treated the Earl with "gross ingratitude" for his sacrifices there but now sent him "venomous letters of which a copy has been sent to his sovereign in order to blacken him with her." "She was now resolved that he should never set foot in the Provinces again!"²

Back at The Hague, in an effort to calm public opinion as well as put a stop to many insinuations that the loss of Deventer and the forts had been pre-arranged by Elizabeth and Leicester, Wilkes successfully requested the Council to issue first a decree forbidding the continued "slander of her Majesty, of his Excellency, and of the English nation;"

¹States-General to Elizabeth, The Hague, 27 Jan. 1587, Ibid., ii, p. 338.

²Motley, Netherlands, II, pp. 195-200 and 210-11.

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and second, a "placard" or "edict of prescription" against Stanley and York. The latter two were to be pronounced "traiters and enemies" of the United Provinces, and a reward of £1,000 arranged for their capture, dead or alive. Unfortunately, as was the case with so many of their requests, when the Council asked the States-General to publish this ~~decree~~, the national assembly at first agreed and then, after passing the requested act, promptly refused to publish it.¹

During the month of February, a conference was held between the States-General, Count Maurice, and his own family council as to whether or not he ought to assume the title of "prince" more formally than he had yet done. After "lengthy consultation" with the best lawyers assembled at The Hague, Maurice decided not only to assume the full title of "Prince of Orange" but also to accept the charge of the governments of Holland and Zeeland in order "that there can no man come out of England of quality superior to him to command him."²

The Estates of Holland and Zeeland placed all their own military powers into Maurice's hands as their stadtholder with Hohenloe serving as his lieutenant-general. Furthermore all soldiers in the two provinces were required to swear a new oath to the provincial Estates thus bringing into existence a provincial army. All this was done in direct

¹Wilkes' Journal, [9 Feb. N.S.] 30 Jan. 1587 O.S., Ibid., "edict," The Hague, 30 Jan. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 345, "placard," The Hague, 28 Jan. 1587, Ibid., p. 340, and Wilkes' Remonstrance to the States, 12 March 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,014, f. 448. Shortly after his treason Stanley went to Spain and then later returned to the Low Countries where he mustered a regiment under Parma in preparation for accompanying the Duke in Philip II's planned 1588 Armada invasion of England. His subsequent history is unknown. Later in the same year his accomplice, Rowland York, died suddenly following a large banquet in the city of Deventer. It was rumored that he had been poisoned but this was never proven. Motley, Netherlands, II, pp. 177-78.

²Wilkes' memorial to Sir Roger Williams, English agent in the Low Countries, Feb. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 381.

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opposition to the authority of the Council of State and the Anglo-Dutch accord.¹

Wilkes' and Norris' hands were tied in their efforts to put a stop to such violations of the treaty. The former could do nothing as he was seriously ill throughout most of February and had no one to take his place on the Council. Norris was also ill, and besides, found it necessary to remain in Utrecht in order to support the pro-Leicester municipal government there against Dutch designs.²

The Dutch "designs" in Utrecht were a plot conceived between Hohenloo and the Count of Moers as Stadtholder of Utrecht, to reduce that entire province under the government of Holland. Both men, as well as Maurice, hated the Leicestrian faction, led by M. Deventer who continued to control Utrecht's municipal government in opposition to the rest of that province. If the entire province could be pulled into the orbit of Holland it would prove to be a great blow to Leicester's power in the United Provinces. Wilkes was soon to discover that contrary to their oath the States had been assisting in this subterfuge by secretly raising troops in divers towns in Holland to be employed in surprising the garrison in Utrecht. Fortunately, "by the great dexterity and wise handling of Sir John Norris" this attempt was thwarted and the Leicestrian party remained "full masters and commanders" of the city.³

¹Blok, History, III, p. 225 and Wilkes' Journal, 27 Feb. 1587, f. 94.

²Ibid., f. 93 and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 17 Feb. 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,127, f. 112.

³Wilkes' memorial to Sir Roger Williams, February 1587, Cal. For., XXI, 11, pp. 381-82, and Wilkes to Deventer, The Hague, 21 Feb. 1587, Ibid., p. 371. Secret intelligence from Ringault who was still at Utrecht confirmed this plot to induce Moers to allow the incorporation of Utrecht under Maurice's power. See Ringault to Wilkes, Utrecht, 18 Feb. 1587, Ibid., p. 368. See also, Buckhurst to Walsingham, The Hague, 2 June 1587, Ibid., 111, p. 88 and Wilkes to Elizabeth, [London], 12 July 1587, Ibid., p. 162.

Under the leadership of Barnevelt the States found better success in crippling Leicester's authority by attacking the Council of State. When, during the month of February, the previous year's extension of the Council's life expired, the Councilors sought permission from the States-General to retire from their frustrating responsibilities. The request was refused, their term of office was extended another three months, and they were told that they were no longer to consider themselves "bound" by any acts of the Earl of Leicester touching the government of the United Provinces. The States then abruptly dismissed two of the Earl's strongest supporters on the Council, Seigneur van Brakel of Utrecht and Adolf van Meetkerke of Flanders. The former's dismissal apparently came as a result of his part in Leicester's Act of Restriction, the latter's because of his continual support of the Earl.¹ Sometime later the States excluded two more of Leicester's staunchest supporters from the Council. This time it was the two Friesian Councilors he had appointed, Doctor Hessel Aysma and Velger Feitsma.²

On the last day of January the States-General passed an act transferring the control of all naval affairs to Maurice and a six-member

¹Wilkes' Journal, 4 Feb. 1517, f. 93. This ruling was actually not put into effect until exactly one month later (March 4th) when by then the Council's life was only extended another two months. *Ibid.*, f. 95. As for Meetkerke's dismissal, Leicester was apparently upset. When, later in early April, Elizabeth's cousin and newly appointed Ambassador to the Hague, Lord Buckhurst, asked that the Flemish Councilor be returned to the Council of State he was told by that body and the States-General that because Flanders had submitted no names from which a councilor could be chosen, they could do nothing to rectify the situation. See, Leicester's objections to Buckhurst's dealings and Buckhurst's answers to the same, [July] 1587, *Cal. For.*, XXI, iii, pp. 212 and 214, no. 7. Wilkes, on the other hand, suggested that Holland and Zeeland's growing desire to "go-it-alone" (since they carried "nearly all" the expense of the war) led them to increasingly turn their backs on the rest of the provinces and "caused them to remove those of Flanders that were of the College of States and Council from their places and societies. Wilkes to Elizabeth, [?], 12 July 1587, *Ibid.*, pp. 164-65.

²Wilkes' Remonstrance to the States-General, 12 March 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,014, ff. 447-48.

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council made up of representatives from Holland, Zeeland, and Friesland. This was done in spite of their previous agreement with Leicester that gave him control of all military matters on the sea as well as on the land.¹ At the same time the States passed another act designed to "cass" all English foot and horse companies in their pay in order to raise the companies in Elizabeth's pay up to their stipulated 5,000 foot and 2,000 horse. Later, when they exhibited this act before the Council of State, they insisted they would carry out the reduction in spite of any resistance from the Council. Wilkes implored them to postpone the execution of the act until Leicester returned, but, as he expected, they ignored his advice.²

It was not long before Wilkes was reporting the results of these reductions. Many English soldiers were to be seen painfully making their way through the Provinces on their way home to England, all the way being refused entrance to the towns through which they needed to pass.³

During all these troubles, Wilkes and Morris continued to be faced with the problem of the magistrates in the several towns refusing to allow English garrisons within their walls. The problem was especially acute in the frontier province of Utrecht where many of the towns outside the main city of Utrecht were anti-Leicestrian in their sympathies. Morris explained to Wilkes that because of the refusal of the Utrecht towns to allow the horse companies entrance, they had been forced to live off the "country," and as a result the "people do put themselves in arms against

¹Wilkes' Journal, 9 Feb. 1587, f. 93.

²Ibid., Act of States-General, The Hague, 30 Jan. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 346, and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 10 March 1586, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,127, f. 109. See also Ibid., f. 110 for copy of the States "Act."

³Wilkes' memorial to Sir Roger Williams, Feb. 1587, Ibid., p. 382.

them." Therefore, he was constrained to send the horse companies into the frontier of Holland to seek a new place to forage. If they were refused entry there, Wilkes was to gain permission from the Council "that they may be discharged and passports given unto them to return to England."¹

The appearance of the ill-supplied English horse companies on the frontiers of Holland had the expected result. While Maurice and Hohenloo were threatening to "cut them in pieces" if they did not immediately leave, the enraged inhabitants rose up in arms against the troops forcing them to return to Utrecht.²

Quickly Wilkes wrote a very "bald" letter to Elizabeth explaining the condition of her army. As he had done earlier, he explained that with only two exceptions, all the Captains of the horse were in England for the winter months and as a result their "evil led" companies were "committing daily upon the villages and common people extreme spoils, inselences, and mischiefs," all of which "hath drawn our nation into the hatred of this people very deeply."³

Fortunately, Wilkes' earlier plea against these "Court Captains" had found its mark, for on a Saturday in early February "all" captains and officers holding commissions in the Low Countries were "commanded by proclamation on pain of death, the same night to depart to their charges."⁴

In his letter to Elizabeth, Wilkes went on to explain that in spite of his "being at this instant...sick to the danger of my life," he had

¹Wilkes' Journal, 31 Jan. 1587, f. 92, and Morris to Wilkes, Utrecht, 9 and 12 Feb. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, pp. 356 and 359.

²Gilpin to Leicester, The Hague, 7 March 1587, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, f. 114 and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, Ibid., ff. 116-17.

³Wilkes to Elizabeth, The Hague, 16 Feb. 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 21,506, f. 2.

⁴Thomas Cartwright to Sir John Conway, Governor of Ostend, Flushing, 10 Feb. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 358.

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fruitlessly written time and again to the States to do something to relieve the English companies until money was sent from England. In no uncertain terms he made it clear to the Queen that if money were not sent immediately and Leicester or some other returned to take charge of matters, the English soldiers would all be forced through "intolerable necessity" to return to England thus leaving the United Provinces to be "reduced under the yoke of the Spaniard."¹

Meanwhile, until some pay was forthcoming from England the much concerned English Counciler was willing to risk even his own credit to relieve the most desperate of the English soldiers. As he explained to Leicester,

I borrowed upon mine own credit and pawn of my carcass, to repay at the end of two months, £800 sterling which I divided among the companies distressed, being eight in number..., causing the same to be distributed to them by the poll which extended to 30s. sterling a man.²

In the midst of these desperate efforts, the unwell Wilkes was forced to take time to bail Leicester's secretary Otheman (otherwise known as Robert Dale) out of the serious trouble in which his indiscretion had immersed him. This eavesdropping gossip had just at the end of January enraged some of the most important Dutch nobles by his unguarded references to certain scandalous rumors concerning the Countess of Moeurs. When this reached the ears of her husband, the Governor of Utrecht, he, along with several other important nobles, seized the unlucky Otheman, interrogated him, and then, apparently satisfied with his explanations, set him free only to change their minds the next day and recapture him

¹Wilkes to Elizabeth, The Hague, 16 Feb. 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 21,506, f. 2.

²Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 17 Feb. 1587, *Ibid.*, 48,127, f. 112, and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 12 March 1587, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, ff. 116-17. *Cal. For.*, XXI, ii, p. 367 mistakenly lists the sum Wilkes borrowed as £8,000.

after a house to house search of the city of Delft. His very survival threatened, the secretary succeeded in conveying information of his plight to Wilkes, whose intercession in his behalf (backed by the authority of the Council) "miraculously preserved" his life. Examined by the Council, Otheman was successful in clearing himself at least to the satisfaction of his friends.¹

Writing to Leicester concerning the whole incident, Otheman accurately pinpointed the motives of those who had pursued him so intensely:

All your friends do see that this disgrace is not meant so much to me as to your Excellency; the Dutch Earls having used such speeches unto me, and against all law, custom, and reason, used such violence to me, that your Excellency shall wonder to hear of it.²

Angered by the intensity of the States' reaction to the loss of Deventer and the lengths to which some of its members were going to strike out at Leicester, Sir John Norris wrote a strong letter reproaching them for their "rashness." He reminded them, (with more truth than tact), of the numerous treasons committed by their own men who had in the past betrayed not only "towns" but also "whole countries" to the enemy.³

Leicester's Continued Animosity

Through all of these troubles Wilkes continued to suffer from Leicester's enmity, and he was beginning to grow tired of the Earl unreasonableness. He had recently learned from an apparently angry letter from Burghley that Leicester had falsely informed the Lord Treasurer that Wilkes had made "lewd and unreverent speeches" against him. Shocked at

¹Motley, Netherlands, II, pp. 142-45. Surprisingly there is no mention of this incident in volume XXI, 11, of Cal. For.

²Motley, Netherlands, II, p. 145.

³Wilkes' Journal, 4 Feb. 1587, f. 93.

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the extent to which Leicester was willing to go to blame others for his own faults, Wilkes quickly wrote Burghley, denying that he had ever spoken disrespectfully of him to Leicester.

I will avow with mine oath upon the Holy Testament, that I am therein as falsely and injuriously abused as ever was poor man, and, upon that protestation I do utterly deny that ever I advised my Lord to beware your lordship...or that I ever used unto him or to any creature living, any vile, uncivil, lewd, or undutiful term of your lordship.

Reminding the Lord Treasurer of the years he had served directly under him as a clerk of the Privy Council, he continued:

I trust, your lordship, in the observation you have made of my conversation, serving her Majesty a dozen years under your Lordship's wing, did never see or learn that I was so indiscreet as to speak unreverently of men in your lordship's place...I thank God I was never so mad!

Then, remembering better days when his services and friendship were more valued, Wilkes wrote:

I might speak it without vaunt, that there was no man in Court of my sort that had more goodwill of high and low than myself before this cursed and unprofitable journey, which as I declared to your lordship at the beginning will be, I fear, the cause of my ruin.¹

In concluding his defense against Leicester's tales, Wilkes made the surprising suggestion: that if "my adversary were as mean in quality as myself, I would not doubt but by good grace and help to make mine innocency appear upon him with my hand!" Whether or not Wilkes would have defended his honor in a duel is not certain but, at least at this point in his quarrel with Leicester, he found himself wishing the whole matter could be settled in that manner.²

Apparently, at the same time Wilkes learned that Leicester had also succeeded in turning Sir William Pelham (who had followed the Earl into England in order to take the waters at Bath) against him. Writing to

¹Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 17 Feb. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 31-32.

²Ibid.

Walsingham on this subject, the English Councilor protested his loyalty to the Lord Marshal and asked that he be told as much "because," Wilkes wrote, "I make more account to the love of that gentleman than of ten Themistocles." These were strong words against Leicester but he had every reason to mean them.¹

Next, addressing himself to the Earl's continued efforts to slander his name because of his continued friendship with Leicester's chief enemy, Sir John Norris, Wilkes had this to say to Walsingham:

I will not answer for any follies committed by Sir John Norris. I have not been much privy to any of his writings or doings; for myself..., I never mentioned in any letters to her Majesty or to any other the errors of Themistocles; I have written plainly to no man but to yourself only, because in truth I durst not trust any other in Court....I beseech you, let it not be found strange that I live in friendship with Norris, with the which her Majesty's services would be hindered; and it is not my disposition to live out of love with men in who so many rare things are to be noted as in that man.²

Because of recent earnest solicitations by the Dutch commissioners in England for Leicester's return, Walsingham had written Wilkes questioning his earlier report that Leicester's return "would not be welcome unto the States." In reply to this the English Councilor warned Walsingham not to place any great credit on the commissioners' report that the States-General desired the Earl's return. "They handle themselves as cunningly in that point as in any other," Wilkes wrote,

and if you will learn their humors and affections towards him, it must be understood from hence whereby they have taken all manner of courses that they could devise to cut off and shorten his credit and authority as he shall find at his return, and yet I am of opinion seeing the present violence of the States and towns, and how far they have run themselves out of breath to abridge his authority, fearing his return, that if her Majesty send any other but him, these countries will be lost. The experience he hath already had of them and the fear they have of him (being but

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 17 Feb. 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,078, p. 243.

²Ibid.

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cowards and men of base minds) will do more good here in a day than the presence of any other can do in three months. He knoweth their conditions and shall rule them as a schoolmaster does his boys....Therefore, in any case, let him return if you mean to have any good of these countries, because no man shall cure the inward infirmities of this state so well as he, which if you leave to be healed by any easy medicans to be applied by a physician ignorant of the state of this body you shall hazard the same.¹

This letter points out one great difference between the quality of Leicester and Wilkes as public servants. Whereas Elizabeth's favorite was never able to divorce his personal feelings from what he felt was best for the English government, Wilkes always kept his emotions subservient to the demands of his political assignments. In spite of his unfair treatment at Leicester's hands as well as his awareness of the States-General's dislike for the Earl, Wilkes could see that there was no one else of comparable prestige who was knowledgeable enough to salvage England's position in the Netherlands. Nor was there anyone else who could ever hope to claim as much authority to do so as could Leicester. Even though he knew the Governor-General's return would endanger his own position, Wilkes was willing to make the recommendation he felt was best for England. This difference in the personalities of the two men worked to no small disadvantage for Leicester and to the great credit of Wilkes.

It was in the midst of all this trouble that one ray of hope broke through Wilkes' clouds of despair. Around the beginning of February, Elizabeth decided to send that crusty soldier of fortune, Sir Roger Williams, on a mission to The Hague to sound out the "humors and dispositions" of various Dutch leaders towards Leicester. His brief stay not only equipped him with this information but also gave him the chance to see first-hand how Wilkes was handling the whole situation in the

¹Ibid., and Walsingham to Wilkes, London, 10 Feb. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 357.

Netherlands. This was just what Wilkes needed; someone who would carry back to the Court the facts instead of passing on to Leicester every damaging rumor.¹

Prior to Sir Roger's return to England, Wilkes drew up and delivered to him a "Memorial" of conditions and sentiments among the Dutch at that time. With this and his own findings, Williams hurried back to England to give what was apparently a very favorable report on Wilkes' administration.. In fact it was so beneficial that Walsingham was soon to write the English Councilor that "the mistastes beginneth now to calm towards you. Captain Williams hath done good offices between you [and Leicester]." Even Leicester wrote a conciliatory letter to Wilkes, saying that he had heard good reports of his conduct at The Hague and furthermore knew that Elizabeth too was well pleased.²

For the moment Wilkes' spirits lifted, his health began to improve slightly, and even more important, Walsingham sent him the encouraging news that Elizabeth was finally realizing that there was "small hope of profit" in Spain's continuing peace overtures to England. Continued reports of Philip's "very great and puissant" Armada preparations suggested that his real motives were to use the proposed peace as "a means to increase danger and hurt than a way to yield security and commodity" to England.³

Most important was Leicester's letter reporting that the Paymaster of the English Forces in the Low Countries, Sir Thomas Shirley, was

¹Wilkes' Journal, Feb. 1587, ff. 92-93.

²Leicester to Wilkes, "My House," 23 Feb. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 376, and Walsingham to Wilkes, The Court, 23 Feb. 1587, Ibid., p. 377.

³Walsingham to Wilkes, The Court at Greenwich, 23 Feb. 1587, Ibid., p. 377 and Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 17 Feb. 1587, Ibid., p. 365.

shortly to return from England with £5,000 to pay her Majesty's troops. This, plus the news that Elizabeth was seriously considering sending Leicester back to the Provinces as Governor-General, were the two things Wilkes knew would do more to help solve the problems he faced than anything else.¹

Wilkes' Political Theories

In spite of his sick leave from the Council during the critical month of February, Wilkes made every possible effort to restore England to the affections of the people of the Provinces. It seemed that at the first news of Stanley's and York's treason nearly everyone had turned against the English. Through letters to those Calvinist "ministers" and other local leaders who were "constant in their affection" to Elizabeth and Leicester, Wilkes asked that the "people" be informed of the "ungrateful and dangerous proceedings of the States," as well as of the expected speedy return of the Governor-General. In writing to the Earl, the English Councilor claimed that this policy had such "good effect" on the inhabitants of the Provinces that they became,

wonderfully animated and have delivered each where in speeches that if by the overthwart dealings of the States, her Majesty shall be drawn to stay her succors and goodness towards them, and that thereby your lordship be also discouraged to return, they will cut their throats; and you would wonder to see the people (who so lately by the practice of the said States and the accident of Deventer and the fort were notably alienated) so returned to their former devotion...²

Throughout his illness Wilkes had not neglected to issue written remonstrances to the States-General in criticism of their anti-English tactics. When, in early March, he recovered his health sufficiently to

¹Leicester to Wilkes, "My House," 23 Feb. 1587, *Ibid.*, p. 376.

²Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 12 March 1587, *Ibid.*, p. 405.

attend Council meetings, he resumed his verbal protests there. By March 3rd these continual charges plus concern over popular unrest, led a delegation of the States to make one of their frequent visits to the Council where their spokesman, Barnevelt, suggested that Wilkes "deliver his mind frankly to them, and they doubted not but to satisfy him." Accepting the challenge Wilkes, supported by Leoninus, Loozen, and Teelinck, launched into a lengthy explanation on how the States had "very injuriously... derogated from and trodden the authority of his lordship and of this council under your feet."¹

In response, Barnevelt argued that the States

were sovereigns, and therefore [it was] not fit that the Governor who drew his authority from them should call them to account for their doings, no more than the governors of Charles V might tax them for any action of his done in the government.

The pensioner of Rotterdam further stated that always in the past the authority of the States had been a

bridle unto the actions of their Princes, and that whosoever should hereafter accept the sovereignty of their countries they did mean to retain the same authority and to assemble themselves at all times at their pleasures for the affairs of their said county.²

Wilkes was not surprised by Barnevelt's arguments in defense of the States' sovereignty, he had heard them often enough before. But this time he was prepared to meet the argument with facts of his own. He had become convinced that such opinions were the cause of the States' blatant usurpation of the Council's authority--an usurpation that made him and the other councilors "but ciphers" in the management of military matters in the Provinces.³

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., and Wilkes' Journal, 3 March, 1587, f. 94.

³Wilkes remonstrance to the States, 11 March 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,014, ff. 448-49, Wilkes' Memorial to Sir Roger Williams, Feb.

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Rising to his feet, he surprised the States' deputies by bluntly challenging their conception of sovereignty. No doubt recently coached by Deventer and others regarding the governmental structure of the Provinces, Wilkes made answer to the States' deputies by doing what he could "to beat them from that humor of their sovereignty, which I declared and proved to be in the people, showing that upon that error they had grounded the rest of their willful absurdities."¹

In answer to their claim of an ancient right to meet in a national assembly when they pleased, Wilkes "proved unto them...that by the laws of the countries, the States-General never assemble but when they were called by their Sovereign."²

What else Wilkes may have said in reply to the States delegation is not recorded. However, one can read the crux of what must have been his argument in his concluding paragraphs of a written remonstrance which he submitted to them on the evening of March 11th in order, as he said, that "they might see their folies the better."³

Written to the States in French the remonstrance stated, among other things, that:

Sovereignty, through the failure of a legitimate prince belongs to the people and not to you, gentlemen, who are only servants, ministers, and deputies of the said people. You all have your

1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 382, Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 10 March 1587, Ibid., p. 400, and Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 12 March 1587, Ibid., p. 405.

¹Ibid.

²Wilkes' Journal, 3 March, 1587. f. 94.

³Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 12 March 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 405. Wilkes delivered this remonstrance to a group of the States' deputies in the presence of the Council of State and also included within it were approximately eighteen specific charges of their "violations" of Leicester's authority. The deputies promised Wilkes they would answer each of them but for obvious reasons never did. Wilkes' Journal, 12 March 1587, f. 95.

commissions and instructions limited not only by time but also by the affairs you deal with. Thus, for these reasons your conditions are as distant from sovereign power as is that of a subject to his Prince, or a servant to his master, or to be more exact as the sky is from the earth. For, sovereignty is not limited either as to power, as to responsibility, or as to time. Even less do you gentlemen represent the sovereignty; for the people in giving the general and absolute government to his Excellency have conferred upon him the administration of justice, policy, naval affairs, war, and all other points of sovereignty. Nevertheless a Governor-General is only a guardian and depository until such time as it may please the Prince or people to revoke such power; there being no other in these United Provinces who can do this. Before this, it was the people through your means and office, who conferred this power, authority, and government on his Excellency.

Therefore, according to the common rule of law (quo, jure quid statuitur, eodem jure telli debet), you, gentlemen, have been fully empowered by the Provinces, the cities, and to be more exact, by your masters and superiors to confer this government on his Excellency. It follows that you require a like power and authorization in order to take it away either all or part of it. And if you have not been commissioned by them to curtail his authority or that of the Council of State...two things follow: one, that you do not understand what they are doing and have not carefully thought and considered the extent of this power, or rather, you...have fallen into the crime of disobedience, considering how solemnly you have sworn and promised obedience to him.¹

By the time Wilkes' written remonstrance was delivered to the States, they were busily preparing a counter-argument. This elaborate and comprehensive Deductie or Justification was compiled by the pensioner of Gouda, Franchois Vrank. Commencing with what Motley called "an astounding absurdity," Vrank chastized Wilkes and his supporters as "mischief-makers" who "have not been ashamed to dispute, and to cause the Earl of Leicester to dispute, the lawful constitution of the Provinces; a matter which has not been disputed for eight hundred years." During these years, he continued, the land had been ruled by "Counts and Countesses on whom the nobles and cities, as representing the States, had legally conferred the sovereignty." Further, it was claimed that the municipal town councils were as old as the cities themselves.²

¹Wilkes' remonstrance to the States, [11] March 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,014, ff. 448-49.

²Motley, Netherlands, II, pp. 226-28 [Motley's italics].

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Having ludicrously dated the States own constitutional existence and sovereignty from the year 787 A.D., and displayed the usual sixteenth-century ignorance of medieval history, Vrank went on in a more logical vein. He explained that the cities and nobility together represent the people. The thirty or forty deputies who made up the national assembly were in no way the vessels of sovereignty but only represented those who held this power, and whoever said differently was ignorant of their real function. The truth of the whole matter, he continued, was as follows: In order to avoid being tyrannized by their prince the people had long ago decided that it was their duty to control him. Because they could not do this directly they divided themselves into two estates, the nobility, and the towns governed by their colleges of councilors or wise men. These magistrates, who were chosen for life, and the nobility by reason of "their ancient dignity and splendid possessions" together "represented the whole State" and "the whole body of the population," and it was they (the magistrates and nobility) who in turn sent their representatives to the national assembly or States-General to represent the estates of the country before their prince. To repeat: "The deputies who wield the government are not the States themselves, but 'represent their principals.'"¹

The Deduction as well as Wilkes' arguments have been detailed at some length in order to prevent the misconceptions (that tend to result from a too superficial reading of the related documents), that Vrank's argument proclaimed for the States their independent sovereign authority while Wilkes, in opposition, was espousing democratic principles.

If one reads only Wilkes' side of the argument he comes away convinced that the States were claiming that sovereignty lay only with

¹Ibid., pp. 227-29, and Blok, History, III, p. 227.



themselves. And while their periodic and apparently not-too-carefully-thought-out public statements seem to substantiate this position, Vrank's Deduction makes it amply clear that in reality they claimed only a representative or derivative sovereignty which could be recalled at any time by the two sovereign estates of magistrates and nobility. One must be careful not to read modern democratic implications into Vrank's reference to the sovereignty of the people. Few if any sixteenth-century men, including hard-line Calvinists, could even conceive of a theory that included the concept of universal suffrage. The pensioner of Gouda's Deduction represented as Blok says "the manifesto of the aristocratic government" which was "wholly consistent with the national character which in general demanded no share in the government of the States for the people."¹

The more common tendency is to misrepresent Wilkes' political theories, as propounded in his remonstrance as essentially different from that proposed in the Deduction. Suggesting that Wilkes argued for democratic principles, Blok states that the English Councilor "claimed that, in default of a prince, the people, not the States, inherited the sovereignty."²

On the other hand, Motley was perceptive enough to realize that Wilkes in no way suggested a concept of universal suffrage or that sovereignty lay within the common people.³ But, he contradicts himself by explicitly stating that "Wilkes retracted these democratic views

¹Ibid., p. 228.

²Ibid., p. 226.

³Motley further states that "By the people, he [Wilkes] meant, if he meant anything, only that very small fraction of the inhabitants of a country, who, according to the English system, in the reign of Elizabeth, constituted its Commons." (p. 223.)

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[as contained in his remonstrance] before the end of the summer and gradually adopted the constitutional theory maintained by Holland."¹

Either Wilkes maintained democratic views or he did not. Apparently, in an attempt to juxtapose Wilkes' position against that of the States, Motley was forced subtly to confuse the issue by suggesting to the mind of the reader that the two parties were poles apart in their political theories, when, in fact, he had not proven that to be the case at all.²

The fog surrounding this problem can be cleared away if one realizes that at the beginning of this debate (i.e., before Vrank's Deduction was drawn up), Wilkes and the States did appear to be poles apart. The deputies' periodic references to "their sovereignty" led Wilkes to believe that they meant what they said. Therefore, both his verbal and subsequent written remonstrances attempted to prove them wrong by showing that the real sovereignty lay with the two estates of the nobility and the magistrates (i.e., the Provinces and the cities), and that the States-General exercised only a representative or derivative sovereignty. Wilkes also indicated that in spite of this derivative sovereignty and the fact that they had been "empowered by the provinces and the cities...to confer this government on his Excellency," it was,

¹Footnote no. 1, p. 222. (My italics and brackets.)

²Further proof that Wilkes propounded the correct interpretation of Dutch constitutional theory came later in the summer of 1587, when on July 12th he informed Elizabeth that if she should continue to refuse Dutch offers of their sovereignty, it should "remain with such as now by the laws of those countries do retain the same, which is not in the common people as some are persuaded, but in some fifty or sixty persons in every city and town called by the name of Vroetschap, who are the chiefest burgers in the cities, and out of them the persons called the Estates. This Vroetschap are most jealous of their liberties and privileges, for defense whereof they now make war against their lawful sovereign, and charge themselves with impositions which no prince would force them to." Ibid., and Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 163. (My italics.) Motley quotes this same letter in an attempt to prove that Wilkes changed position in his political philosophy from March to July 1587.

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in fact, the two estates, and not the States-General, who had the right to say whether or not Leicester was deprived of the authority they originally granted to him.

Made aware by Wilkes that they had been less than discreet in their claims and exercise of that sovereignty and fearful of the growing unrest among the politically powerful inhabitants who disliked their high-handed treatment of Leicester's authority, the States apparently requested Vrank to draft a more accurate statement of Dutch political philosophy. The result was the Deduction, which took very nearly the same position that Wilkes held.

The major purpose of the document was not to refute an argument for popular sovereignty, which some have thought Wilkes made, nor was it designed to defend the States-General's earlier statements which suggested that sovereignty lay within their hands. Instead, the entire instrument was aimed at convincing Wilkes, the rest of the Council, and those "people" who supported them that the States had never claimed to be the repository of sovereignty and that they, like him, clearly recognized that such ultimate power resided in the hands of the magistrates and the nobility.

What the Deduction failed to do was answer Wilkes' argument that because the two sovereign estates had given Leicester his authority as Governor-General the States-General had no right to deprive him of it without first receiving permission from the provinces and cities. This proved to be the greatest difference in the two men's arguments, and though on the surface Vrank appears to have ignored the English Councilor's argument, there is, throughout the Deduction, a discernable undertone that rejects Wilkes' position. Perhaps Vrank felt no need to argue the obvious for both the provincial Estates of Holland and Zeeland did generally

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support the States' attacks on Leicester's authority; and this is what Wilkes had insisted was necessary before they could act.

There was another minor variance in their position but it was more a difference of emphasis than one of fundamentals. Wilkes placed greater stress on the "people's" rights than did the States, and with good reason. His responsibility in Leicester's absence was to maintain the authority of the Council of State, a task that the States had been making increasingly difficult. His remonstrance plus his letters to some of the politically vocal portions of the population were undoubtedly designed not only to warn the States that they had better pay closer attention to the "people's" wishes, but also to remind the latter of their political responsibilities.

The States, on the other hand, tended naturally to emphasize their own rights rather than those of their "Masters" as Wilkes termed them. But, such disagreement in emphasis in no way invalidates the similarity of the two parties' constitutional theories.

Ultimately, Vrank's Deduction could have been a notable success. In spite of the obvious discrepancy between the document's position and the States' earlier stance, the former would not only have taken the teeth out of Wilkes' accusations, but also, by correctly defining the national assembly's own constitutional position, probably helped to quiet some of the suspicions that were beginning to circulate among both the common and the ruling classes concerning their usurpation of the sovereignty. But as it turned out, it was never published. Why this is so is not clear, but it seems logical to assume from the States' subsequent conduct that they were unwilling publicly to acknowledge the correctness of Wilkes' and Vrank's positions knowing that to do so might diminish their authority, which they continued to claim was sovereign.¹

¹Wilkes' Journal, 12 March 1587, f. 95.

At home in England, Lord Burghley's reaction to Wilkes' remonstrance was both interesting and favorable. "I have," he wrote to Walsingham on April 12th, 1587,

considered an large writing exhibited to the States-General by Mr. Wilkes on the behalf of her Majesty, and my Lord of Leicester as her Majesty's Lieutenant, and Governor of those countries. Wherein he hath in my opinion both wisely, clearly, and yet modestly, expressed the offences committed by the States generally against my lord's authority, and in the end he presseth them with a sharp argument, taxing the States with their challenge of sovereignty, where the same properly belongeth to the whole country and people of whom they have their authority. This argument is somewhat biting and I long to hear what will be answered, for it is a matter questionable and full of absurdities.¹

Utrecht

Meanwhile, the quarrel between the States-General, Hohenloe, Count Moeurs, and their supporters in Utrecht on one hand, and the Leicestrian factions in that same province on the other hand, was still in full swing.² The designs of the former to place all of Utrecht under the government of Holland had caused Utrecht to recall its deputies from the States-General and to cease paying its "common contributions" to the already sorely reduced national treasury.³

The fact that Utrecht was no longer represented on the Council of State severely isolated this important bastion of English support. Pleased as Wilkes must have been to see them remain loyal to Leicester, he and the rest of the much depleted Council were fully aware of the dangers such a separatist position represented to the strength of the United Provinces in their stand against Spanish power.⁴

¹P.R.O., S.P. 12, CC, no. 21.

²See this chapter, p.173.

³L. Calvart to Henry Killigrew, Delft, 22 Feb. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, 11, p. 374, and Wilkes' Journal, 6 March 1587, f. 95.

⁴Wilkes' Journal, 6 April 1587, f. 97, Council of State to

In time, the States also grew concerned with Utrecht's isolation, especially when it became clear that General Norris' herculean efforts, seconded by those of Wilkes, would prevent that province from being pulled into the orbit of Holland. The States, who had hoped to win Utrecht plus its "common contributions" to their side, were forced in early March to beg the Council of State to send a delegation to the Utrecht estates to "prevail" upon them to heal their divisions, "continue their contributions," and to send "qualified" deputies to the national assembly.¹

Wilkes was the man chosen to carry out this assignment. Departing for Utrecht on March 12th, he also carried with him £3,000 that had recently arrived from England to pay Elizabeth's troops that were "in garrison or at large" in that province.²

The approximately two weeks Wilkes spent in Utrecht were used to good effect. In early April the Council of State reported to Leicester that Wilkes had induced the provincial estates there "to hearken to a pacification with the States-General and to send deputies to the national assembly. At the same time Wilkes and Norris somewhat pacified the understandably unruly English troops by delivering their partial pay, by

The Hague, 29 March 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 430. Of the three Utrecht Council members Paul Buys had chosen for obvious reasons to stay away from the Council after his surprise release from prison in January 1587. Seigneur von Brakel had been illegally dismissed by the States for his part in Leicester's Act of Restriction and the third member, the Count of Moeurs, had deserted the Leicestrian party in an attempt to join Utrecht with Holland and so obviously stayed away from the pro-Leicester council. The provinces of Flanders and Friesland were also no longer represented on the Council. the former's Adolf van Meetkerke had been kicked off the Council by the States at the same time as Brakel and Friesland's Doctor Hessel Aysma and Velger Feitsma had also been removed by the States because of their pro-Leicestrian sympathies. The third member for Fries was William Lewis of Nassau who as Governor of that province apparently had neither time nor interest enough to attend Council sessions.

¹Gilpin to Walsingham, The Hague, 26 March 1587, Ibid., pp. 425-26, and Wilkes' Journal, 6 March 1587, f. 95.

²Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 12 March 1587, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, f. 116, and "Note of distribution," 15 March 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 415.

promising more to come within the next week, and especially by their attempt to carry out the recent Privy Council instructions that the troops pay "shall not hereafter be delivered to the captains...but [is] to be paid to the soldier by the poll."¹

Lord Buckhurst's Mission

In spite of his successes in Utrecht, Wilkes arrived back at The Hague on or before March 25th in a very discouraged mood. In a letter to Walsingham he began by insinuating that it seemed "a little strange" that after all his letters explaining the terrible conditions of the Provinces he has still been given no "direction how to carry myself towards the States, or other, for the staying of the violence and disorders attempted here."²

After a lengthy itemization of the problem he faced, and the urgent need for Leicester's return, Wilkes concluded by asking that Walsingham "be a means to Elizabeth" in obtaining his "revocation." "I am not able," he continues,

to go through this service alone, especially in these confusions, and I receive so slender comfort from home as I have no courage to continue the same; withall, I find my body unable by reason of my late sickness to abide the travail this place requireth.³

¹Privy Council to Norris, Greenwich, 21 Feb. 1587, *Ibid.*, p. 372, Privy Council to Wilkes, Greenwich, 13 March 1587, *A.P.C.*, XIV, pp. 374-75, and Wilkes' Journal, 8 April 1587, f. 97. The English captains were "somewhat grieved" by this order to pay by the poll. They did not feel "their dealings should deserve such distrust." Sir William Russell, Governor of Flushing, to Walsingham, Flushing, 31 March 1587, *Cal. For.*, XXI, 11, pp. 430-31 (My brackets.)

²Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, [26] March 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 5,935, ff. 17-19.

³*Ibid.* Walsingham's reply to this discouraged letter by Wilkes is interesting. "You may not take it in evil part," he wrote, "that you have not received directions from the Earl of Leicester and me touching your proceeding there, for that we could not draw her Majesty to any resolution. The late severe dealing used by her Majesty towards Mr. Secretary Davison and others of her Council maketh us very circumspect and careful not to proceed in anything but wherein we receive direction

Why this extreme discouragement after an apparently successful trip to Utrecht? The answer lies in the fact that Elizabeth, who had once again favored Leicester's return to the Netherlands, now for a second time decided against it. Wilkes, who had been busily spreading the news of the Earl's return in order to encourage English support and to discourage the States from further violations of his authority, was now forced to sit out another indefinite delay.¹

Instead of sending Leicester back to the Netherlands, Elizabeth had decided to send Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, to prepare the way for the Governor-General's return by putting a stop to the States anti-Leicestrian activities. Poet, dramatist, diplomatist, man of wealth, trained at the bar, favored by Elizabeth, all of these words describe Lord Buckhurst who, though 51 years of age, was yet to become Earl of Dorset and Lord-Treasurer of England. A member of Burghley's political circle, he was nevertheless trusted by Leicester. As a "near kinsman" of the Queen and one of her Privy Councilors, he seemed just the calibre of man to impress the Dutch. Unfortunately, both Elizabeth and Leicester

from herself...[Davison, it will be remembered, delivered Mary Stuart's death warrant and by doing so provided Elizabeth with a scape-goat for what was really her own responsibility for Mary's death. The Secretary was banned from Court, stripped of his offices, and imprisoned.] Walsingham continues by explaining that he acquainted the Queen with Wilkes letters "declaring the present confusion and dangerous estate of those countries, and how necessary it was for her Highness to take speedy order therein, and specially how needful my lord of Leicester's presence is there if it were but for two months' but she postpones her answer and resolution on the matter until she hears of Lord Buckhurst's successes in his negotiation. As for Wilkes' request to be recalled, Walsingham could only remind him how "hardly" Elizabeth "is drawn to revoke those employed in public charges" and therefore advised him "not to labor in that suit" but to continue to serve as long as she needed him, "for which service there is none found more sufficient or better experimented than yourself, which ought to give encouragement to your painful service and travail." Walsingham to Wilkes, Greenwich, 13 April 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 18.

¹Leicester to Wilkes, "My House," 23 Feb. 1587, Ibid., ii, p. 376, and "A Letter from the English Court," 10 March 1587, Ibid., pp. 400-401.

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seemed more anxious that he obtain reparation from the States for past offences than to heal the wounds that existed between the two countries.¹

Arriving at Flushing on March 24th in company with Doctor Bartholomew Clerk and the States' commissioners who had been negotiating in England, Buckhurst was immediately briefed by Sir William Russell, the English Governor there, while the commissioners hurried on to The Hague in order to hold "sundry secret conferences" with the States before Elizabeth's new ambassador arrived too. In this manner Buckhurst's reasons for coming were "discovered" to the States, thus giving them "time to think upon their answers," and to spread the rumor that his coming was "but to win time for some other purpose, [the States] being out of hope of any further favors from her Majesty and not looking for the return of...Leicester."²

Disappointed with the decision to send Buckhurst instead of Leicester, Wilkes protested to the Vice Chamberlain, Sir Christopher Hatton, that he could in no way see how the former's presence could solve anything, for

whilst he shall spend time in expostulating the causes of our innovations, the enemy will have prevailed upon some of our principal towns; who hath already prepared himself to field and besiege a place by us lately surprised called Rurode.³

Still, Wilkes knew it was his responsibility to give full support to Buckhurst and he did so. The next two months were to see them both draw closer together in the face of a common enemy who threatened to destroy them both.

¹Buckhurst's instructions, [14?] March 1587, Ibid., pp. 411-12, and D.M.B., L, pp. 97-100.

²Buckhurst to [Walsingham?], Middelburg, 26 March 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 422, and Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 26 March 1587, Ibid., pp. 427-28.

³Wilkes to Hatton, The Hague, 26 March 1587, Ibid., p. 424.

Buckhurst arrived at The Hague on March 30th and there on the 4th of April dutifully presented to a combined session of the States-General and the Council of State a list of injuries done to Elizabeth's subjects and to Leicester. To these charges the Council made a "very honest, modest, and wise answer" but, the States desired a day to prepare its answer. The following day they began by denying all the charges except for their January 25th letter to Leicester which they said was written "in amaritudine cordis" as a result of Stanley's and York's treason. They then blamed all the faults listed by Buckhurst "not to their governor but to certain lewd persons...who sought to seduce his lordship and to cause him to hate the States."¹

Buckhurst thought it unwise to argue against this weak reply upon the ground that there had already been accusations and counter-accusations enough and that "a little bitterness more had made them 'feetter' to determine dangerously than to resolve for the best." The subject was then changed to a discussion of how much in men and money would be required during the coming year's war. It was decided that 33,000 foot, 7,000 horse, and 1,000 pioneers would be essential for both garrison duty and a five-to six-month campaign. Such numbers would require all of the States' £240,000 annual contribution, Elizabeth's annual £133,000, and an additional £150,000. The States requested that the Queen assume two-thirds of this latter amount, they paying the other third. This Buckhurst refused and the meeting ended with the States asking, and him agreeing, to induce Elizabeth to contribute at least one-third of that sum while the former treated with the Provinces to bear the remainder.²

¹List of injuries, 4 April 1587, Ibid., iii, pp. 6-8, Doctor Clerk to Burghley, The Hague, 12 April 1587, Ibid., pp. 15-17, and Wilkes' Journal, 30 March 1587, f. 96.

²Estimate of Elizabeth's charges, 12 July 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,088, f. 5. Doctor Clerk to Burghley, The Hague, 12 April 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, pp. 15-17.

In spite of this brief disagreement over Elizabeth's portion of the additional contribution, Wilkes was pleased with the effects of Buckhurst's presence. He wrote to Walsingham that because of the ambassador's good judgment, discretion, and extreme diligence there was now "general contentment" among the "people." His tactics of enumerating the States' "errors...without urging the same" and his seeming to be satisfied with their "weak and slender" answers, resulted in a "full reconciliation" which included their promise to obey Leicester as well as Elizabeth.¹

Buckhurst too was confident his methods were achieving success. To Burghley he reported "that all things" were "reduced to a quiet calm, ready to receive my Lord of Leicester and his authority whensoever he cometh, and with as great devotion to her Majesty as can be desired." To Elizabeth he confidently sent the States' request for an additional loan of £50,000, which would take care of one-third of the additional £150,000 needed.²

Having watched the success of Buckhurst's conciliatory methods for a fortnight, Wilkes began to have second thoughts as to what would happen when and if Leicester returned. He expressed these misgivings to Walsingham: "His coming will either consolidate all our wounds or open them again." In another comment to the First Secretary he explained why he felt this way and at the same time zeroed in on the Earl's chief

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 8 and 13 April 1587, *Ibid.*, pp. 10 and 19.

²Buckhurst to Elizabeth and Burghley, The Hague, 19 April 1587, *Ibid.*, p. 23. In a post script of a May 11th letter to Walsingham, Buckhurst stated: "The honorable entertainment which I have had at Utrecht with the States, the Burger-masters, and after by the Count Maurice, Governor there; and likewise at Amsterdam, Haarlem and Leyden, I assure you have been so great as if they had been done to her Majesty's self." Cabala, *Sive Scrinia Sacra: Mysteries of State and Government in Letters of Illustrious Persons, and Great Ministers of State*, (London: Thomas Sawbridge, 1691), pt. 2, p. 30.

weakness by stating with neat alliteration that "He is not so facil to forget as ready to revenge."¹

Wilkes had a better reason for hesitating about Leicester's return. Writing to Walsingham and Hatton he reported that sometime around the middle of April a "dear friend" who was "inward" with his "great and heavy enemy" had informed him,

that even at my Lord Buckhurst's departure from the Court, I was with very bitter words and terms deadly threatened with revenge at his coming hither. How or in what sort I know not, but believe it will be by means of a gap opened by mine own letters to him... wherein I have touched some persons of quality here for their indirect proceeding against her Majesty and our nation.

Fearfully he added, "I pray that I may return before he comes."²

This suggestion that Leicester was seeking to be avenged on Wilkes by using his diplomatic reports to anger certain Dutch leaders against him worried the English Councilor. He had no desire to be caught between the revengeful Earl and his aroused opponents in the Provinces. This concern turned to outright fear when Wilkes learned that the normally discreet Walsingham had carelessly passed on to Elizabeth

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 13 and 19 April 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iiii, pp. 19 and 24. When Walsingham informed Wilkes of the English Court's unhappiness over Buckhurst's dealings with the States, the English Councilor replied that, "(under correction) I may answer, that if the matter should have been referred to me...I would not have received so easy payment for so apparent injuries; but as things are now handled at home, I do change my opinion, and think it was the wisest course..." Walsingham to Wilkes, Croydon, 2 May 1587, Ibid., pp. 47-48, and Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 17 May 1587, Ibid., p. 67.

²Wilkes to Walsingham and Hatton, The Hague, 19 April 1587, Ibid., pp. 23-24. Not long after this plea for his recall Wilkes received a letter from Walsingham indicating that he should not pursue the matter because of Elizabeth's need for his services at The Hague. In reply to this statement by the Queen which was so obviously contradictory to her treatment of him, Wilkes shot back the following comment to Walsingham: "I may answer justly that I am very insufficient for many considerations... yet when mine employment shall be accompanied with so many apparent hazards of my poor life...it seemeth unto me, under correction, a hard reward for my faithful services to be left to the mercy of such as have will and means by revenge to bereave her Majesty of a true and obedient servant, and me of my life in an obscure sort to my perpetual infamy, to the pleasing of mine enemies and the discomforting of all honest men by my example from

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some recent intelligence concerning Count Hohenloe, intelligence that suggested the Count had been in secret correspondance with Parma.¹ Elizabeth's reaction had been immediate. Aware that Hohenloe controlled many important towns, and still having the treasons of Stanley and York fresh in her mind, she quickly dispatched a ciphered letter to Lord Buckhurst, who was by this time being welcomed and feasted in Utrecht.²

Not having the key to the cipher, Buckhurst wrote Wilkes at The Hague to come to Utrecht immediately and bring it with him. But, as he was sick again, Wilkes sent only the key. A second and more urgent dispatch from Buckhurst the following day convinced Wilkes to leave his sickbed and painfully make his way to Utrecht. Once there he read in shocked amazement Elizabeth's recently deciphered letter. In it the Queen ordered him, Buckhurst, and Norris to decoy Hohenloe into a safe town, under pretense of consultation, and there to imprison him on a charge of treason.³

All three men knew that in light of Hohenloe's large and powerful following in the Provinces, to have carried out such instructions would have been pure folly.

Protesting to Walsingham, Wilkes stated that even to attempt such a thing would "hazard the ruin and overthrow" of the whole country, especially after Buckhurst had so successfully calmed matters there. Then, chastising the First Secretary for his indiscretion in the whole matter,

serving of her Majesty with that due sincerity that in her like services will be requisite..." Wilkes to Walsingham, Utrecht, 28 April 1587, Ibid., p. 37.

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, [The Hague], 26 March 1587, Ibid., ii, p. 426.

²Gilpin to Wilkes, [Utrecht], 25 April 1587, Ibid., iii, pp. 29-30, Elizabeth to Buckhurst, [Greenwich], 15 April 1587, Ibid., pp. 19-20, and Wilkes to Walsingham, [Utrecht], 29 April 1587, Ibid., pp. 35-37.

³Ibid., and Elizabeth to Buckhurst, [Greenwich], 15 April 1587,

Wilkes continued:

I was not a little amazed, considering that her Majesty's resolution in [this matter] was founded upon a late advertisement written by me to your honor, which I hoped you would have reserved to your own knowledge, until upon further inquisition I might have been able to have attained to a more perfect understanding of the matter, by discovering of [Hohenloe's] instruments and the effect of his practice with the Duke of Parma.

Next, revealing his anxiety lest the Earl of Leicester should hear of this matter, Wilkes said:

Her Majesty...as your honor knoweth, can hold no secrets. If [she] do impart it to Leicester I am sped, unless you help to hasten me home the faster, and in the meantime, that her Majesty be seriously entreated to conceal it from Leicester, or in case it be imported unto him, then to lay upon him an extraordinary charge and commandment not to use it to my harm.

The last thing Wilkes wanted was to be destroyed by Hohenloe at Leicester's instigation.¹

Fortunately Wilkes' fears were not confirmed, and his official friendship with the Count continued. It had, nevertheless, been a lesson to him to be more careful with his reporting of rumors. "Mr. Wilkes never meant it to such an end," Buckhurst wrote Walsingham,

for he had but bare suspicions, nothing fit, God knoweth, to come to such a reckoning. He saith he meant it but for a premonition to you there, but I think it will from henceforth be a premonition to himself, to take heed to have good ground before he write of such particular.²

Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, [Utrecht], 29 April 1587, Ibid., pp. 35-37. The dilemma, as Wilkes saw it in this whole problem of the intentions of Hohenloe coupled with the return of Leicester was as follows: "I do see and palpably touch that [Maurice, Hohenloe, and the States] will never be soundly reconciled to Leicester, whose return, in all appearances, will work dangerous effects here; and yet I see the necessity of his coming such, for the preservation of these countries, that there is no remedy but that he must come; and withal, if anything make Hohenloe play false, it will be the return of Leicester, whom he hateth deadly, not withstanding all his fair promises to my Lord Ambassador." Ibid.

²Buckhurst to Walsingham, Utrecht, 29 April 1587, Ibid., p. 35.

During all this commotion, Elizabeth and Leicester had been confidently awaiting news of the effects on the States-General of Buckhurst's call to repentance. When it became clear that instead he had sympathized with their position from the beginning, their anger was intense. In a long, accusatory, and typically garbled letter, Leicester charged Buckhurst with failing to defend his honor before the delinquent national assembly and, he informs us, with having the audacity to attempt to arrange a reconciliation between him and his most hated enemy, General Norris. "I have some cause to [think my] friendship in small account with you," he told the Ambassador; "your lordship hath deserved little thanks of me."¹

Elizabeth too, sent Buckhurst a sharp but typically eloquent letter of censure for his leniency with the States. "You conceived, it seemeth," she said,

that a more, sharper manner of proceeding would have exasperated matters to the prejudice of the service, and therefore you did think it more fit to wash the wounds rather with water than with vinegar; wherein we could rather have wished, on the other side, that you had better considered that festering wounds had more need of corrosives than lenitives. For your judgment ought to have taught you that such a slight and mild kind of dealing with a people so ingrate and devoid of consideration as the States have showed themselves to be of towards us, is the ready way to increase their contempt.²

She was of course also incensed at the Ambassador's matter-of-fact willingness to pass on to her the States' request for an additional loan of £50,000, and so instructed him to tell them

that considering their unkind and ungrate dealing towards us they ought with good reason to content themselves with the continuance of our former contribution without pressing us to any further charges.³

¹Leicester to Buckhurst, Croydon, 30 April 1587, *Ibid.*, pp. 37-40.

²Elizabeth to Buckhurst, Croydon, 3 May 1587, *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³*Ibid.*, p. 49.

Having soundly berated the unfortunate and well-meaning Buckhurst, Elizabeth delivered a parting coup de grace with this biting postscript: "There is small disproportion betwixt a fool that useth not wit because he hath not, and him that useth it not when it should avail him."¹

In accordance with this severe criticism, Buckhurst wrote to the States-General; this time, criticizing them in no uncertain terms for having written to Leicester their "proud and presumptuous" letter of January 25th. He also told them that thus far nothing had been said in reply to these charges that had yielded any satisfaction to Elizabeth or her favorite. "Thus," the Ambassador wearily reported to Burghley, "The wound that was so well stayed and settled is fallen into a fresh bleeding."²

Even though Wilkes was enjoying having someone else assume the leadership of English affairs in the Provinces, he was not so lucky as to escape from receiving his portion of the Queen's and her favorite's ill humor. Along with charging Buckhurst with negligence for not being strong enough with the States, Elizabeth and Leicester, in those same letters of remonstrance, accused both him and Wilkes of knowing about and maliciously concealing a rumor to the effect that Count Hohenloe suspected Leicester of having intentions to assassinate him. The story of their efforts to convince the Earl of their innocence in this matter is another example of the impossibility of their situation vis à vis the Governor-General.

Apparently, out of a desire to keep Leicester from returning, Hohenloe had started the above rumor. Hearing this dangerous report, one

¹Ibid., p. 50.

²Buckhurst to Burghley, The Hague, 13 June 1587, Ibid., p. 112, and Buckhurst to Elizabeth, The Hague, 13 June 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48, 078, p. 81.

named Villiers, a former chaplain of the Prince of Orange, immediately came to The Hague where on April 12th he reported it to Doctor Clerk. In the course of their conversation Wilkes "came by chance into the midst of this talk...and heard the substance thereof, but spake no word." When, immediately thereafter, Villiers hurried off to Zeeland, Clerk decided he had better discuss the rumor with Leicester's secretary, Arthur Atye. The two men decided that because of the uncertainty of the whole matter and the trouble that could result from spreading such a story if it were false, they would keep it to themselves until they could question Villiers who was expected back from Zeeland shortly.¹

However, Atye immediately informed Leicester of it all, not only claiming that Villiers had also spoken to Buckhurst of it but that Wilkes knew of the rumor even before he chanced onto Villiers and Clerk's conversation. "All which," Leicester wrote to Buckhurst when he learned this, "makes good proof of his former good dealing with me that hath heard of so vile and villaneous a reproach of me and never gave me knowledge."²

Confronted with this charge by the Queen and the Earl, Wilkes wrote to Elizabeth explaining that he had neither heard the rumor prior to Villiers arrival nor placed any credit on so "foul" a report concerning the Governor-General. Remembering the recent trouble he had caused by reporting the rumor of Hohenloe's suspected activities, Wilkes explained to the Queen,

how tender and delicate a thing the reputation of so great a person as my lord is, and how unfit it had been for me, upon so slender an information, to have brought the matter in question publicly, and to have filled the ears of such as do not well affect my lord in these countries.³

¹Ibid., pp. 77-78, and Leicester to Colonel Sonoy, Governor of North Holland, Croydon, 1 May 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, pp. 46-47.

²Leicester to Buckhurst, Croydon, 30 April 1587, Ibid., pp. 39-40.

³Wilkes to Elizabeth, The Hague, 3 June 1587, Ibid., pp. 89-90.

In the meantime, Leicester wrote numerous letters to the Council of State, the States-General, to his staunch friends Governor Dietrich Sonoy of North Holland, and M. Deventer of Utrecht, and to "diverse towns," indicating his anger at the rumors and threatening not to return until his honor was vindicated. All these letters "so stirred the coals here," Wilkes reported to Hatton "that all the world speaketh thereof, and now the Count [of Hohenloe] must produce the "informer" or be charged of being the author himself. I fear this will breed implacable hatred in him towards my lord."¹

So it was, that immediately upon Villiers return from Zeeland, he was summoned before the Council of State and there questioned by Wilkes and Clerk about the whole incident. Not only was it learned that Hohenloe had been the one who started the rumor but a sworn statement was secured from Villiers clearing Buckhurst of having concealed the matter.²

Deputies of the States-General, who were present at the time, indicated displeasure that Leicester would use such reports to postpone his return during the best campaigning season of the year and informed the Council that they would "abide no further delays" on England's part.³ Apparently, all the investigations, explanations, declarations, and sworn statements were sufficient at least to satisfy Elizabeth, but, it is

¹Wilkes to Elizabeth, Hatton, and Walsingham, The Hague, 3 June 1587, Ibid., pp. 89-91, and Wilkes' Journal, 5 June 1587, f. 99.

²Leicester to Buckhurst, Croydon, 30 April 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 39, Walsingham to Buckhurst, [?], 15 June 1587, Ibid., pp. 115-16, and Buckhurst to Walsingham, The Hague, 22 June 1587, Ibid., pp. 125-26. After discovering that it had been Hohenloe who started this trouble in an attempt to keep Leicester from returning, Wilkes wrote the Count a conciliatory letter admonishing him for the good of the Provinces to forget the slights of the past and do what he could to accomodate the Earl. "Show yourself," he wrote, "...to prefer the public good of the country to private offences." [Wilkes] to Hohenloe, 11 June 1587, Ibid., p. 108.

³Wilkes' Journal, 5 June 1587, f. 99.

doubtful whether any amount of proof could ever have calmed Leicester's suspicions once they were aroused.

Two interesting facts emerge from this matter. First, Doctor Clerk, who acknowledged being the first to hear of the rumored assassination plot, never had his integrity questioned by Leicester. Second, no matter what Wilkes did, he could not please the Earl. If he faithfully reported every rumor he was charged with encouraging them in order to harm Leicester's good name. If, on the other hand, he took the time to search out the truth of such reports, he was charged with maliciously concealing important matters from him. It was impossible situations such as these that drove Wilkes to despair of ever receiving a fair hearing. "My very heavy and mighty adversary," he wrote to Hatton, "will disgrace and undo me, considering the goodness of her Majesty's nature to be induced to believe whom she favoereth and his subtlety to persuade."¹

Wilkes' earlier plea to Walsingham to secure his recall before Leicester returned did not go unheeded. In early June he received the First Secretary's promise that it would be taken care of. This comforting news came just a few days before Leicester's surprise announcement of his "speedy" return. The courier arrived at The Hague on the 5th with instructions to prepare the Earl's lodgings immediately in anticipation of his arrival at Dordrecht.²

Wilkes, Buckhurst, and Clerk were obviously surprised by the news. They had been led to believe by Elizabeth's letters that the Earl would not be sent back until the States had made restitution for their slights against him and produced at least £100,000 for his use in military

¹Wilkes to Hatton, The Hague, 3 June 1587, Ibid., p. 245.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 17 May 1587, Ibid., p. 67, Walsingham to Wilkes, Nonsuch, 27 May 1587, Ibid., pp. 74-75, and Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 8 June 1587, Ibid., pp. 102-3.

matters. They had done neither. Elizabeth had decided to send Leicester anyway, and as a result Wilkes' courage failed him.¹ Writing to Walsingham, the one man he trusted to help him, Wilkes said:

And now, since it appeareth that his Excellency doth return in such haste, I trust your honor, according to your promise, will procure my speedy revocation, and not suffer me to be endangered, either to receive any disgrace or mischief here; for, in case her Majesty shall not be pleased to call me home...then do I protest to hazard her displeasure in returning without leave, being resolutely determined (whatsoever shall happen unto me) not to stay in these countries after his Excellency shall be arrived. I have received advertisement from a sure hand of his implacable hatred towards me...and therefore it doth beleave me to have regard to myself. I mean not by God's grace to be dandled with any love days or reconciliations.²

Four days later he displayed his bitterness at the ill-fortune he had suffered at Leicester's hands since his coming to the Netherlands by writing:

I doubt not but to beware ever hereafter how I be driven into the like services again. Although my state and quality be so far inferior to his, yet will I rather choose to die like a man than to have my mind and conscience capture to one that hath so little virtue.³

It was this decision to flee the Netherlands before Leicester's arrival that proved to be the biggest mistake of Wilkes' diplomatic career.

¹Ibid., and Elizabeth to Buckhurst, Croydon, 3 May 1587, Ibid., pp. 48-50.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 8 June 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 58.

³Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 12 June, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,078, pp. 258-59.

CHAPTER VI

WILKES' FLIGHT FROM THE NETHERLANDS AND HIS SUBSEQUENT DISGRACE

Though Thomas Wilkes had petitioned almost continuously for Leicester's return, there can be little doubt that his feelings were mixed when he learned on June 5th of the Governor-General's arrival. Such reservations were not due just to a fear of the Earl's promised revenge, but to a frank acknowledgement that neither Leicester's personality nor his political and military abilities were equal to a resumption of his position in the Netherlands. "And yet," Wilkes said, "I see the necessity of his coming such, for the preservation of these countries, that there is no remedy but that he must come." Apparently, the English Councilor felt Leicester's continued absence promised to create as many problems as would his presence.¹

Leicester's Return to the Netherlands

The reasons for Elizabeth's decision to send her favorite back to the Netherlands were several. No doubt, the arrival of the campaign season, coupled with the continual appeals of Buckhurst, Wilkes, and

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 19 and 29 April 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, pp. 24 and 36. Shortly before the announcement of the Earl's return Wilkes had for the first time dared to suggest to Walsingham that "if her Majesty would resolve upon some other Governor...it would be no hard matter to reduce the state of all things here to so good a temperature as might be desired not only to her Majesty's great advantage but to the ruin of the enemy." Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 15 May 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,127, ff. 114-15.

Clerk helped, but there were more important ones. There was pressure from her councilors. Walsingham as well as the peace-loving Burghley felt it to be the only solution to the problem, and Leicester himself seemed to be willing, that is, if Elizabeth first met his requests for sufficient money, men, and above all "the revocation of Sir John Norris," whom he refused ever to serve with again.¹

There were also alarming reports from the Provinces concerning the safety of the critical frontier towns of Sluys and Ostend. Defended by under-supplied garrisons, these important defences seemed to be developing as the object of Parma's summer campaign. They were also being increasingly ignored by the States-General whose membership by now was made up almost entirely of Holland and Zeeland deputies. Because these two provinces funded nearly the entire war effort they displayed a growing disposition "to abandon the rest of the provinces," as Wilkes explained to the Queen, "and reduce their wars and defence to their own alone," thus making them "careless" of Sluys and Ostend.²

In dispatching Leicester, it is almost certain that Elizabeth was also motivated by a desire to sustain those pockets of English support found in Utrecht and North Holland. Generally made up of staunch Calvinists, these buttresses of Leicestrian authority were increasingly under attack from the States-General, Count Maurice, and Hohenloe. At the same time, she could not help but be encouraged by Wilkes' reports of

¹Leicester to Walsingham, Wansted, 19 May 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, pp. 69-70, Walsingham to Wilkes, Greenwich, 13 April 1587, Ibid., p. 18, Burghley to Walsingham, 12 April 1587, Cal. Dom., II, p. 404, Walsingham to Leicester, Greenwich, 5, 8, and 10 April 1587, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba C. XI, ff. 292-97, and Burghley to Leicester, [?], 16 April 1587, Ibid., f. 306.

²Wilkes to Elizabeth, [London?], 12 July 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, pp. 164-65, and Sir William Russell to Walsingham, Flushing, 21 May 1587, Ibid., pp. 71-72.

Buckhurst's success in reconciling the Dutch people to continued English support.¹

The news of Leicester's intended return was delivered to Buckhurst, Wilkes, and Norris in the midst of their attendance at a morning session of the Council of State. Counts Maurice, Moeurs, and Hohenloe, along with several other deputies from the States-General were also present and engaged, at the time, in presenting two "propositions" for the Council's consideration. The first was a proposal to establish Maurice as "temporary" commander-in-chief of all military operations in the United Provinces in order to give some direction for a summer campaign prior to Leicester's return. The second proposition suggested that while "the matter of policy and civil government should remain in the Council of State as it had done since the departure of his Excellency" there should on the other hand be a "removing and cassing of all such acts as had been made by his said Excellency in diminuation or restriction of the authority formerly given by the States-General to the Council."²

After delivering these two proposals, the Chancellor Leoninus rose and requested the States to withdraw themselves while the Council debated the matters. This being done, Buckhurst's, Wilkes', and Norris' opinions were the first solicited; and though "extremely pressed by the whole Council" they "discreetly" excused themselves from giving an opinion on the grounds that Elizabeth had not authorized them to discuss such matters. Just the same, a vote was taken and in spite of their abstentions both propositions were "assented unto and concluded."³

¹M. Deventer to Leicester, Utrecht, 25 March 1587, Ibid., 11, p. 421, Wilkes to Hatton, The Hague, 26 March 1587, Ibid., p. 424, and Wilkes' Journal, 12 March 1587, f. 96.

²Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 8 June 1587, Cal. For., XXI, 111, p. 102.

³Ibid., p. 103.

At this point Buckhurst dropped a minor bomb-shell into the proceedings by delivering Leicester's letters (announcing his decision to return) to the Council and States deputies. The confusion created by their contents, Wilkes reported, "gave some stay of any further proceeding until the next meeting in the afternoon." At that time, the States returned again to the Council and with Barnevelt as spokesman, urged the execution of the resolutions passed that morning. He explained that despite Leicester's imminent return and "forasmuch as the counsels and resolutions of princes are often subject to change and alteration upon new occasion," they felt it necessary to proceed as originally intended. Thus, Maurice was "appointed general of all the forces, et quid sequitur necimus and Leicester's Act of Restriction "cassed."¹ While the States and Council were carefully explaining that Maurice's appointment was only a "temporary" one, the new commander-in-chief was busily appointing Hohenloe as his Lieutenant-General of the army, the Count of Moeurs as General of the Cavalry, and General Norris as Marshal of the Camp. The latter, though pleased by the honor, was wise enough to refuse the appointment, on the ground that "it might prejudice the authority" of the Anglo-Dutch Contract.²

¹Ibid.

²Council of State to Leicester, The Hague, 8 June 1587, Ibid., pp. 100-1, and Norris to Burghley, The Hague, 8 June 1587, Ibid., p. 101. When Norris was informed by deputies from the Council and States of his appointment as Marshal he was also surprised by their information that Elizabeth had decided to recall him. Complaining of their need for his continued services the deputies asked him to write the Queen to stay his revocation. Norris could only reply that he had not yet received word of his recall and that if it were true his replacement would no doubt be a competent soldier. Two days later Norris joyfully read Walsingham's announcement of his revocation. Ibid. For a striking example of how highly Norris was thought of by the States-General see their letter to Elizabeth (8 June 1587, Ibid., pp. 99-100) begging her to reconsider her decision to recall him. Such pleas frightened Wilkes who feared that Leicester would "construe" the States request as a device to hinder his [Leicester's] coming and in turn "lay it to my [Wilkes'] charge." Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 10 June 1587, Ibid., p. 105.

It had been the States' desire to make good use of the campaign season along with the flurry of activity in the enemy's camp that had motivated the above legislation. On May 31st, Parma at the head of a 16,000 man army had feinted an attack on Ostend and then unexpectedly turned towards Sluys to which he laid siege on June 2nd. As the garrison there had only twelve ill-equipped companies, five of which were English, it was apparent that something must be done immediately if this critical defence were to be saved. No doubt it was the news of the investment of Sluys that helped stimulate Elizabeth's decision to send Leicester back to the Netherlands.¹

Count Hohenloe's reaction to the announcement of the Earl's return was no more animated than the States' had been. This was a surprise to some who had seen his response to Wilkes' premature March announcement of the Earl's coming. Reacting "like a madman" he had been seen "running here and there to assure what he may [of] the principal towns of Holland for himself and Count Maurice." These antics were followed by his secret removal of all his belongings "of any value" from The Hague to the northern Brabant frontier town of Geertruidenberg. Later in May, Wilkes reported that the Count was using,

high speeches at The Hague, protesting that if her Majesty do embrace the cause in no other sort than now appeared and that the Earl of Leicester did return to his government he would never serve under him or be commanded by him, alleging that his purpose then was to repair to his frontier where such as were his friends would come and find him.²

With speeches like this it is no wonder that Wilkes had dared suggest to Walsingham that Leicester's return might drive Hohenloe to treasonous actions.³

¹Thomas James to Walsingham, Ostend, 11 June 1587, Ibid., p. 107.

²Doctor Hotman, Leicester's agent, to Wilkes, The Hague, 13 March 1587, Ibid., ii, p. 410, Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 26 March 1587, Ibid., p. 426, and Wilkes' Journal, 15 May 1587, f. 98.

³Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 29 April 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 36.



Before discussing Leicester's own efforts to prepare the way for his return it is necessary to back-track to the month of April, just after Lord Buckhurst had arrived at The Hague. At that time Elizabeth had sent Buckhurst a letter reporting the progress of her secret Anglo-Spanish peace negotiations and instructing him to discuss the matter with the States. In doing this she hoped that for the sake of peace they could be induced to accept a Spanish guarantee of religious toleration in return for a resumption of Spanish control of the Provinces.¹

But, having already participated in these secret negotiations himself, Buckhurst had serious doubts as to Philip II's sincerity. Furthermore, he had already, in the course of his embassy to The Hague, learned that the issue was an especially touchy one with the Dutch. Thus, unenthusiastic about carrying out the Queen's instructions and fearful of the States' reaction to it all, Buckhurst warned Elizabeth that no peace was ever made without a "mighty war" preceding it and that the "sword in hand" was always the best pen to write the conditions of peace.² But, in spite of these doubts and his temporary postponement of the whole matter, Buckhurst decided to proceed with the carrying out of his instructions by discussing it "with some few of the States and Council of State."³

¹Elizabeth to Buckhurst, [?] April 1587, Ibid., pp. 41-42.

²Ibid., Andrea de Loo, Spanish agent for the negotiations, to [Sir James Croft?], Comptroller of the Household and peace negotiations, Brussels, 8 May 1587, Ibid., p. 54. "Declaration," Aug. 1586, Ibid., ii, p. 144, Buckhurst to Elizabeth, Utrecht, 30 April 1587, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba C. XI, f. 438.

³Buckhurst to Elizabeth, The Hague, 28 June 1587, Ibid., ff. 61-63. The temporary delay in discussing the peace came as Wilkes explained to Walsingham: "Buckhurst has made stay of proposing the peace to the States-General not only in respect to the difficulties like to ensue but also because of Sir Francis Drake's exploit upon the Spanish navy [his raid on Cadiz] which may cause the King to alter his humor of peace to a resolution of revenge." (Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 3 June 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 91). Receipt of this letter before learning of Buckhurst's determination to go ahead anyway, greatly relieved Elizabeth who no doubt felt that discussing the peace would only raise obstacles

In the meantime, sobered by the ambassador's reservations and consequently, frightened by his intentions to proceed anyway with the execution of her instructions, Elizabeth sent a letter sorely chastising him for his obedience:

We find it very strange, considering the difficulties that you yourself have set down likely to arise in the further proceeding therein...that you should resolve of any further proceeding therein before you had first acquainted us with the said difficulties, especially considering that one direction was chiefly given unto you to have sought to frame the minds of the people there to content themselves with the toleration in our letters mentioned, and deal for such purpose with men of judgment and best affected to the state of those countries, how they have been inclined to a peace.¹

It was obvious from this letter that Elizabeth was most anxious to smooth the way for Leicester's return. She was also very concerned that upon his arrival he be given "sufficient power and authority" to put a stop to the political and military confusion found there. In her instructions, she directed him to make this request upon his first conference with the States. If they refused he was immediately to inform the provinces and towns of this and let them know that the States appeared to have more regard for their own "profit and ambition" than of the "public good." He was also to inform both them and the States that if the required grant of authority was refused Elizabeth would withdraw all her aid to the Provinces.²

Taking his cue from such instructions, Leicester decided to try his own hand at preparing the way ahead for himself. Penning an intentionally divisive letter, he arranged to have it distributed throughout the Provinces to those magistrates, provincial leaders, and religious ministers whom he counted on for support. In the letter he indicated

in the successful return of Leicester. (Walsingham to Buckhurst, [?], 13 June 1587, Ibid., p. 111).

¹Elizabeth to Buckhurst, [?], 4 June 1587, Ibid., p. 95.

²Leicester's instructions, 20 June 1587, Ibid., pp. 121-23.

that even though his mistreatment at the hands of the States-General had given him sufficient reason not to return, yet, for the "good peoples sake" whom he knew "did love him," he was willing "to abandon his own quiet ease and pleasure at home to adventure his life and fortune in their defence."¹

Such a ploy was ill-judged on Leicester's part. Even he must have realized that eventually copies of this letter would fall into the hands of the States-General. By the middle of June the inevitable had happened, and Buckhurst was angrily confronted by several of that Assembly's deputies with copies of the letter. "They alleged," Wilkes reported,

that this letter had been published by copies sent through all the provinces, as though it were to stir the people against the States and prayed his lordship to advise his Excellency thereof and to make him understand how dangerous a thing it was to take that course.²

Upset and embarrassed by the contents of these letters, Buckhurst wrote Walsingham that while on one hand their publication "taxed" the States with misconduct, on the other hand they "pitied" the "good poor people," thus dangerously inciting them "against the States." The Lord Ambassador went on to state that,

The States are in wonderful fear of the Earl of Leicester for by the spreading of these letters they doubt the alienation and tumult of the people upon them; and I assure you, as the course is kept, it is generously to be feared. The end where of no man knoweth whereunto it will tend, but like enough to endanger the Earl himself and to bring all to the enemy.

Again, he said: "This is a most dangerous course, and maketh the States greatly to fear the end, for if the Earl come with mind to revenge, the cause will come to subversion."³

¹Wilkes' Journal, 12 June 1587, f. 100.

²Ibid.

³Buckhurst to Walsingham, [The Hague], 18 June 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 117. (Italics in cipher.)

As if this were not enough to destroy the groundwork Wilkes and Buckhurst had prepared for Leicester's return, they soon learned that Leicester had done more than just publish a letter.

Shortly after dispatching his divisive letter, the Earl had decided to write his secretary, Junius, who was still in the Netherlands, instructing him to visit those friends of England "who have charge over the people and whom he thinks may be of service." He was to inform them that any rumors of Elizabeth's peace overtures with Spain were false, and that he hoped they would,

forebear all the difficulties of the past and...yield to him such legitimate authority as is fitting for administrating the sovereignty of the countries without opposition and countermining by the States as in the past.

As with the earlier letters, Junius was also to let them know that if the Governor-General was not granted such authority, Elizabeth would demand his immediate return.¹

It was an amazed Wilkes and Buckhurst who in the latter part of June received from Junius himself a copy of these instructions. Having just recently broached the subject of Anglo-Spanish peace with some of the States and Council deputies, Buckhurst was stung by Leicester's deceitful disavowal of these negotiations. Appealing to Elizabeth he tactfully pointed out the Earl's deceit by reminding her that he had spoken to the deputies "upon your Majesty's commandment" and that "even your own royal hand hath written unto the Duke [of Parma] himself." The Lord Ambassador continued by expressing fear "that under the name of such as have charge over the people, (i.e., "the ministers, the Church, and captains"), "...his Lordship bendeth his whole purpose...to attain to his

¹Leicester to Junius, Greenwich, 10 June 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, pp. 105-6. (My italics.)

desire of administering the said sovereignty." He warned that the results of this would be to

hazard all, yea it tendeth to the overthrow of the present government by which the enemy is repelled. For since their King is now removed, the sovereignty is thereby defacto, by free consent and choice of the people, actually transferred and remaining in the States-General. The States...are resolved, since your Majesty doth refuse the same, to lay it upon no creature else as a thing contrary to their oath and allegiance to their country.¹

Buckhurst concluded his point by informing Elizabeth that the States' dissatisfaction with what they believed had been Leicester's previous excesses of his commission determined them,

to retrench and limit his authority at his return. His lordship may be assured never to attain to his purpose therein except the people tumultuously rising against the States would so enforce it, and what may be the woeful end thereof your Majesty can easily judge.²

There can be little doubt that Wilkes was also upset with the Earl's letter to Junius. He had already done battle with the States-General over the touchy subject of sovereignty and though unaware that he had pressured at least Vrank into agreeing with his own position, he had come away from the conflict convinced that the States were determined upon insisting that sovereignty lay within their own hands. Though Wilkes had been pleased with the anger of many of the Dutch inhabitants over the States' violations of Leicester's authority, and even though he had written letters during the month of February to rally support for the Earl, he had never advocated popular rebellion for the purpose of maintaining the Governor-General's position.

¹Buckhurst to Elizabeth, The Hague, 28 June 1587, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba C. XI, ff. 61-63, and Buckhurst's answers to Leicester's objections, Aug. 1587, Cabala, ii, p. 65.

²*Ibid.* Buckhurst was not the only one who felt Leicester's scheme to be a dangerous one. The Earl's good friend in Utrecht, M. Deventer, thought so too and made plans to tell him so personally. See M. Deventer to Hotman, Utrecht, 26 June 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 131.

Within less than a week of the discovery of Junius' letter it was learned that he had been arrested. Suspected by the States because of his many interviews and much traveling, the Earl's secretary had been detained while on his way to North Holland to visit another of Leicester's friends, Colonel Sonoy. Discovering his instructions, the States needed no further proof that Leicester fully intended to resort to his old tactics of governing by popular support, and, more importantly, that he would resort to force if necessary to obtain and retain the necessary authority.¹

Meanwhile, Buckhurst and Wilkes had decided that Wilkes must immediately be dispatched to England to inform Elizabeth of the dangers involved in the Earl's return. Two other circumstances helped them reach this decision: firstly, Walsingham had successfully procured both their's and Doctor Clerk's recall, and in their places, they were informed, would come Henry Killigrew, whom Wilkes had earlier replaced as a Councilor of State, Robert Beale, one of the Clerks of the Privy Council, and of course Leicester.²

The second circumstance that helped them reach their decision to send Wilkes was news of Leicester's arrival at Flushing on Monday afternoon, June 26th. Out of a genuine fear for their personal safety both Wilkes and General Norris were determined not to remain around long enough to meet the Earl. This should not be thought strange considering

¹Leicester to Walsingham, [?], 4 July 1587, Ibid., pp. 149-50.

²Clerk's, Wilkes', and Buckhurst's revocations, Greenwich, 20 June 1587, Ibid., 48,014, ff. 440-1 and Buckhurst to Elizabeth, The Hague, 28 June 1587, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba C. XI, ff. 61-62. It is unclear whether the above official revocations actually reached the three men before they departed. Leicester later claimed Wilkes did not have a "letter of revocation from Mr. Secretary" but that "it was rather a signification that an other should come in his place and thereupon he be revoked." (Leicester's "Declaration," [Aug.] 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,116, f. 70.) However, once a document received Elizabeth's signature it was almost immediately dispatched to its destination. This would have given ample time (8 days) for the revocations to reach Buckhurst, Wilkes, and Clerk in the Netherlands.

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his recent threats. Even Buckhurst, who stood very close to the Governor-General in social rank, expressed a keen desire to leave before his arrival. Fortunately, the Lord Ambassador was wise enough to realize that as the one in charge of English affairs he had to remain to welcome Leicester and report on the state of affairs.¹

Wilkes, on the other hand, was not so strongly obligated to remain, being no longer in charge and having been commissioned by both Elizabeth and his immediate superior, Buckhurst, to return to England. Empathizing with Wilkes because of his fear of Leicester's influence over Elizabeth, the States wrote to the English Queen thanking her for the Councilor's services, which had given "such good proof of his prudence and skill in the management of affairs."²

Buckhurst also suspected that Wilkes' welcome at the English Court might be less than warm and so also wrote Elizabeth in his behalf, asking her to grant him a "gracious audience" as one

so well trained in your affairs at home; with such excellent gifts of utterance, memory, wit, courage, and knowledge, and with so faithful and careful a heart to serve your Majesty, as it were a woeful case if such a worthy servant should for any respect be discomforted and disgraced by your Majesty's displeasure.³

Wilkes, too, did what he could to cushion the effect of his sudden leave-taking. He wrote his and Leicester's good friend M. Deventer at Utrecht asking that he bear witness to the Earl of

how much I have had at heart the defence of your proceedings, where the honor or authority of his Excellency might be brought in question...

¹Richard Lloyd to Walsingham, Middelburg, 28 June 1587, Cal. For., XXI, 111, pp. 134-35, and Buckhurst to Burghley and Walsingham, The Hague, 28 June 1587, Ibid., pp. 124-25. Even the deputies of the Council of State and the States-General expressed their fear of meeting Leicester in Zeeland for fear he might arrest them. Ibid., p. 125.

²States-General to Elizabeth, The Hague, 29 June 1587, Ibid., p. 136.

³Buckhurst to Elizabeth, The Hague, 28 June 1587, B.M., Cott. Mes. Calba C. XI, ff. 61-62.

I pray you, when occasion offers, to give your testimony of my sincerity towards his Excellency, who,...is somewhat turned against me, for which I am very sorry, not only because I am greatly hurt thereby, but because I have always loved and respected him.¹

Next, he wrote to Leicester himself stating:

My Lord Buckhurst, having taken occasion to dispatch me from hence immediately towards England for her Majesty's special services, I am thereby prevented of my purpose to have waited upon your Excellency and presented myself to answer such false reports and calumnations as have been delivered unto you against me.

He then goes on to protest that he is "as injuriously abused as any man living upon earth" and refers the Earl to the Council of State, "who have seen and noted mine endeavors in these services and the effectual demonstrations of my zeal and affection towards your Excellency."² Wilkes closed his letter with an appeal to Leicester to suspend his judgment until he could be "heard with indifference," assuring him that if he would do this it would "moderate much your displeasure against me."³

Having done as much as he dared in the time available, Wilkes took his leave of the Council, the States, and Buckhurst and hurried on to Brill where he hoped to catch the first boat home before Leicester sent for him. "Contrary" winds delayed his departure until at least July 4th, which gave him the time to write the new Councilor of State, Robert Beale, and apologize for not staying long enough to "have conferences with you concerning the present state of these countries, and have given you some notice of things here worthy of your knowledge." However, he promised to send the full details of the same "by the next." Then, possibly indicating concern that letters to him from his friends at

¹Wilkes to Deventer, The Hague, 27 June 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 134.

²Wilkes to Leicester, The Hague, 28 June 1587, Blok, ed., Correspondance inédite de Robert Dudley, pp. 165-66.

³Ibid.

Court might be opened by Leicester, he asked Bealt to forward them to him by "this bearer."¹

In the meantime, while Wilkes was nervously waiting at Brill for a change in the wind. Lord Buckhurst, Doctor Clerk, the Council of State, and the States-General had traveled to Middelburg to "welcome" back Leicester. There in the presence of Killigrew, Beale, and the Lord Admiral Charles Howard, Buckhurst held an interview with the Earl. If Leicester and Killigrew are to be believed, Buckhurst passionately refused to cooperate in discussing fully his handling of the grievances between the Earl and the States-General, claiming that he would lay the whole matter before Elizabeth and the Privy Council as "indifferent judges." If Buckhurst is to be believed, he purposely avoided "all color of quarrel" with the Earl by freely imparting "the whole course of their said negotiation with the States." In any event, the two men separated company without having communicated a great deal of anything but their mutual animosity.²

Results of Wilkes' Flight to England

The reaction of Leicester and those who came with him to Wilkes' and Norris' hasty departure to England was one of amazement and anger. Of these, one named Richard Lloyd reported:

Of Sir John Norris and Mr. Wilkes I can say nothing for where they be, and whither they go none know; but all marvel at their behavior, and many make bold speeches, wondering how they dare depart hence before they have spoken with her Majesty's lieutenant.³

¹Wilkes to Beale, Brill, 4 July 1587, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, f. 132.

²Killigrew to [Walsingham], Middelburg, 13 July 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,014, ff. 554-55, Buckhurst to Burghley, [England], 24 July 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, pp. 193-94, and Leicester to Elizabeth, Middelburg, 7 July 1587, Ibid., pp. 151-52.

³Lloyd to Walsingham, Middelburg, 2 July 1587, Ibid., p. 146.

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Henry Killigrew, in writing to Walsingham about the States' violations of Leicester's authority said:

At our coming hither, by reason of the departure of Mr. Wilkes, we could receive no light from him, of such things as had passed before, and were (in our opinions) necessary to have been communicated unto us for our better direction in this service.

Surely it had been very expedient that Mr. Wilkes should have remained for a time here, for that he was the first that dealt in these causes, as appeareth by his letters unto his Excellency and his "remonstrations" unto the States; the points whereof were to be proved by him as the informer which sent them into England and a councilor then present at the doing of the same, and cannot so well be avowed of us now, but must be laid upon his credit.¹

Leicester, who believed that Wilkes had fled without an official recall, was furious. In a long and typically woeful letter to Elizabeth he wrote:

I trust your Majesty doth not forget the strange usage of Mr. Wilkes: a thing I think never used before by any minister in his place. He will say that my lord of Buckhurst did send him with his packet, but I hope that will be taken for no reasonable answer, when neither of them had that authority, either the one to send or the other to go, being here your councilors, and having the chief place in dealing in all the affairs in this long time of by absence, placed by me, and to be discharged...[only] upon your Majesty's revocation...Between him and my lord I remain utterly without knowledge of all matters passed here, and there will be many things...wherein we shall have need to have had his knowledge...My hope is you will not forget the manner wherein the credit of your poor minister is so touched.²

By the middle of July 1587, all four men, Wilkes, Norris, Buckhurst, and Clerk were back in England, and with the exception of Clerk, the reception they each found there was surprising to say the least. Buckhurst was ordered out of the "sight and presence" of Elizabeth until informed differently. Wilkes and Norris, who apparently traveled from Brill together, attempted to see Elizabeth at Theobalds but were forbidden to do so. Instead they were called before the Privy Council and, as Walsingham

¹Killigrew to Walsingham, Middelburg, 13 July 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48,014, ff. 554-55.

²Leicester to Elizabeth, Middelburg, 7 July 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 153.

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reported to Leicester, "charged severally with their contempts which were weakly by them replied unto." When Elizabeth heard the results of the Council's interrogation, she ordered Norris to leave the Court, and to retire to his father's house in Oxfordshire until her further pleasure. Poor Wilkes was arrested and commanded to set down in writing for the Queen the message he was to have delivered personally to her. He was also to "make better answer" of his actions, "if he could."¹

Initially under house arrest, Wilkes worked for the next two or three days preparing his written report. Much of the report deals with problems already discussed such as underpaid troops, corruption in pay distribution, successes of Spanish-inspired treasons, failures due to the absence of a governor-general, the States' conception of sovereignty, and those Dutch leaders who were known to be sympathetic to England. But most important were Wilkes' remarks concerning the possible dangers of a struggle for supremacy between Leicester and the States.

The States have been frightened with some bruits out of England that my lord of Leicester should have a purpose not only to remove divers of them that are now of that college but to chastise some of them by death with the assistance of the common people, and albeit for my own part I know my lord to be of so great wisdom and experience as he will never attempt the same, yet, if by any counsel or advise on that side in respect of the oppositions and thwart like to be offered to his lord by the States...he should make them of any such purpose, I dare assure your Majesty that it will hazard the ruin and overthrow of the whole country, indanger his lordship greatly and the loss of all your Majesty's charge employed upon the defence of the same.

And further, whereas it is supposed that it will be a matter very facile to carry the common people into any such violence at any time against the States, the attempts thereof shall find that position to fail for that the magistrates of every city and town upon premonition

¹Privy Council to Leicester, Theobalds, 25 July 1587, *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97, Buckhurst to Burghley, [?], 24 July 1587, *Ibid.*, p. 193, and Walsingham to Leicester, [The Court?], 14 July 1587, B.M., Harl. Mss. 287, f. 32. It becomes obvious as one reads the documents of this period, that Walsingham was playing a double game with Leicester. Always aware of the influence the Earl had with Elizabeth, the First Secretary was careful to hide the sympathy he felt towards Wilkes. This will become more apparent as the Wilkes-Leicester quarrel continues.

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already given...hold a vigilant eye and a severe hand over any that shall stir or move by word or faction within any of their jurisdictions.¹

Having illustrated the dangers Wilkes went on to suggest the remedy.

The remedy thereof, to prevent the mischief that might ensue of any popular commotion is to leave that course and to follow the steps of the late Prince of Orange who in his time of government among the States did find as many oppositions and difficulties as ever my lord of Leicester hath or shall find in these times, and yet, forbore to discredit or discontinue the States with the people for the consequence thereof. Knowing the humor of the people he did always entertain some five or six of the States that had always the most credit in the assemblies; some of the modest of them with pensions, the rest with presents, they being all naturally covetous, and all with calling them often to his table and society. By these five or six he wrought all the rest of that college at his pleasure. There was nothing determined or to be handled in their assemblies but he knew thereof always beforehand, and whensoever he had anything to propound or bring to pass among them he did first consult with these persons and by them was made acquainted whether the matter would pass or be impugned, and by their instruction knew the reasons and argument that would be made against his propositions. Thus, he came always to their assemblies armed and furnished with answers and counter-reasons to the wonderful admiration of them all and so prevailed with them in all his purposes. He would never attempt anything of importance until he had imparted the same to the States and had obtained their liking and allowance thereof; and the reason was because the nature of that people was and is to dislike of the actions and attempts of their governors if they succeed not to the profit of the country whosoever they be designed with reason or probability. This Prince [Orange] had not the shoulders of so great a Monarch as your Majesty to countenance his government but did all by wisdom and dexterity. The States are the same people and of the same humor they were then, and to be plain with your Majesty they do not naturally love to be subject to any monarchical government. I know they have many other errors and imperfections irreformable in them, but their natures cannot be altered and therefore your Majesty (under most humble correction) must in this case make overture of necessity since your safety is so contingent with the preservation of the countries.²

Wilkes ended this long and informative report by pleading with Elizabeth to write letters to the Provinces to dispel their doubts about

¹Wilkes to Elizabeth, [London?], 13 July 1587, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. I, ff. 156-60.

²Ibid.

Leicester's intentions and at the same time to advise the Earl to reconcile to himself such important Dutch leaders as Barnevelt and Hohenloe.¹

In spite of the troubled state of Wilkes' mind his report deserved more serious consideration than either Elizabeth or the Privy Council gave it. With the exception of suggesting that another be sent to replace Leicester (a suggestion Wilkes had just dared to make to Walsingham), there was really no better advice the Queen and her Council could have received. Wilkes was simply proposing that they induce the Governor-General to swallow a portion of his pride, to work with instead of against the States, and to avoid even flirting with the possibility of a popular uprising. But as it turned out the Council contemptuously informed Leicester that Wilkes' report was "a long writing, discoursing matters of more length than of substance," while the Queen demonstrated her satisfaction by ordering the physically unwell ambassador to be imprisoned in the Fleet.²

Along with Elizabeth's disheartening directive came an order for Wilkes to draw up another far more extensive report relating "all the proceedings in the Council of State," as well as other "matters of importance during the time he assisted there." Realizing he could never do this from memory alone, Wilkes begged Walsingham to allow him to "repair one night to his house to make search amongst his writings" for such papers as would assist him. As expected, the ever-understanding Walsingham allowed him to do so.³

¹Ibid. Galba C. V, ff. 80-81 are the final pages of Wilkes' report which were somehow separated from the first section and eventually ended up in a different volume of the Cottonian manuscripts.

²Privy Council to Leicester, Theobalds, 25 July 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 197. Obviously not all of the Council members sided with Leicester in his quarrel with Wilkes. Both Walsingham and the Lord Chancellor Sir Christopher Hatton advised him continually. [?] to Leicester, [The Court], [July] 1587, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba C. XI, f. 167.

³Walsingham to Leicester, The Court, 29 July 1587, Ibid., Galba

Having gathered up copies of all his letters written while in the Low Countries, Wilkes dutifully returned to Walsingham and in tears asked that in light of his "dangerous infirmity" which he termed the fistula could he [Walsingham] direct the Warden of the Fleet "to see him well lodged?" Again, Walsingham willingly risked the displeasure of Wilkes' enemies and granted the request. He was also kind enough to allow the dejected ambassador to go alone to the prison without the public humiliation of an escorting officer.¹

Within a fortnight, Francis Needham, Walsingham's trusted servant, who at the time was serving as Leicester's secretary, wrote to the First Secretary that the Earl had heard that when Wilkes was committed to prison "he was not sent by an officer but carried a private letter from your honor to the Warden of the Fleet that he should be well used for that he was not to be close prisoner" but was only sent there "upon a little displeasure conceived by her Majesty." Leicester protested "with an oath" that "if his nearest kinsman in the world had done the like to any of their lordships [of the Council] he would never speak for him."²

When, a day later (July 26th), Leicester himself wrote Walsingham questioning his apparent kindnesses to Wilkes, the First Secretary decided some kind of explanation was necessary. He acknowledged that Wilkes went alone to the Fleet and "that a letter was written in some favorable sort to the Warden" but, he insisted, he had done so only in respect of his "dangerous infirmity." Whether or not Leicester was satisfied with his explanation is not known.³

D. I, f. 139.

¹Ibid.

²Needham to Walsingham, before Sluys Haven, 25 July 1587, B.M., Harl. 287, f. 37. (*Italics in cipher.*)

³Walsingham to Leicester, The Court, 29 July 1587, B.M., Cott.

In the meantime, Wilkes had his hands full with paper-work, and answering questions. He worked on his lengthy twenty folio "Journal" covering events in the Low Countries from November 1586-June 1587. From Elizabeth and Burghley he received detailed questionnaires concerning specific problems and negotiations in those countries. Then, on July 27th he was summoned along with Buckhurst and Norris to appear before the Privy Council to be interrogated.¹

Having read over and discussed all of these reports and explanations the Privy Council concluded that there were other reasons for Wilkes' hasty return than Leicester's letter to Junius or the receipt of his recall papers. Apparently, their insistence that he come up with a better explanation induced the disgraced Councilor to make the following confession:

I am forced to show some inward cause of my so doing, which I would most willingly have concealed, even with a patent acceptance of my punishment and so must boldly confess that the displeasure conceived of my by his lordship was the chief cause which terrified me to appear in his presence...wherewith, if her Majesty be displeased, I am most heartily sorry.²

Even though Wilkes' accommodations in the Fleet were the "best" available, and it was seasonally the warmest time of the English summer, his "close" confinement, coupled with his discouragement made it impossible to overcome his fistula. He began to doubt if his health would ever allow him the questionable luxury of public service again. Physicians advised him to take the mineral waters at Bath as soon as possible, but he was

Mss. Galba D. I, f. 39 and Leicester to Walsingham, before Sluys, 26 July 1587, B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, f. 154.

¹Edmond Hunt (Auditor) to Leicester, London, 28 July 1587, Ibid., f. 159, and "Matters," Questions," and "Answers," Fleet, 17 and 20 July 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, pp. 181-83 and 187.

²Wilkes to the Privy Council, [The Fleet], 19 July 1587, Ibid., p. 186.

unable to secure permission even to "give some direction" for his own neglected business interests, let alone gain his freedom.¹

Finally, approaching Walsingham on the subject of when it would "be fit...to make suit" for "enlargement," he was apparently instructed to broach the subject with Burghley. The results were surprisingly immediate as he was promptly released from the Fleet and once again placed under house arrest in the home of one of his London friends. News of this elicited a prompt response from Leicester who told the Lord Treasurer in no uncertain terms that Wilkes should have been made "to suffer a longer and worse punishment" and that "if at some other time the service of a prince had been so hindered, it would have cost some of them dear."²

Continually venting his splenetic hatred of Wilkes, it was probably statements by the Earl like the following that succeeded in keeping the disgraced ambassador in confinement for the next six to eight weeks.

"Surely," he raged to Walsingham, "there was never a falser, craftier, seditious wretch than Wilkes is...a villan and devil, without faith or religion." And to Burghley he wrote:

I think this hundred years no man of my calling hath been so ill dealt withal as Norris and Wilkes hath dealt with me. If I have no reason in this, I will never look for justice in anything, much less for favor.³

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, The Fleet, 17 July 1587, Ibid., p. 180, and Wilkes to Burghley, The Fleet, 22 July 1587, B.M., Lansd. Mss., 54..

²Ibid., Wilkes to Walsingham, The Fleet, 17 July 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 180, Wilkes to Burghley, London, 31 July 1587, Ibid., p. 211, and Leicester to [Burghley], Flushing, 27 July 1587, Ibid., pp. 199-200. What Leicester meant by suggesting that such actions "at some other time...would have cost...them dear" can be seen in his comment about Norris' conduct which "in King Henry VIII's time...for sure would have cost him his pate." (Leicester to Walsingham, Berghes, 12 Aug. 1587, Ibid., p. 233.)

³Leicester to Walsingham, Middelburg, 4 Aug. 1587, Ibid., p. 221, and Leicester to Burghley, Middelburg, 13 July 1587, Ibid., p. 172.

Then, to top it off, after reading a copy of Wilkes' replies to questions submitted to him by Elizabeth while in confinement, Leicester charged him, Norris, and Buckhurst with purposefully turning the States and Count Hohenloe against his governorship (as if this needed doing).¹

The Privy Council was in agreement that Wilkes, Norris, and Buckhurst were guilty of withholding information from Leicester at his arrival, but to charge them with deliberately turning the Provinces against him was another matter. Therefore, they asked the Earl for "particulars" if the three men were to be "directly charged in that behalf." The result of this request was an extremely lengthy "Declaration," drawn up in Leicester's name, and which listed every possible reason that "moved the Earl of Leicester to think himself not well dealt with by the Earl of Buckhurst, Sir John Norris, and Mr. Wilkes."²

Filled with slanted judgments, misinformation, and gross exaggerations, the "Declaration" is too long to go into in any detail but a careful reading of the document leads to several interesting conclusions:

Firstly, and most damaging to Wilkes, was the Earl's persistent and devious selection of out-of-context statements from his letters written while an English Councilor of State. Time and again these excerpts were maliciously juxtaposed against something written either much earlier or later in Wilkes' mission, and when circumstances were very different. Most serious was Leicester's revelation of Wilkes'

¹B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. I, ff. 73-77. Before Leicester received an official copy of Wilkes' answers to Elizabeth's questions, someone at the Court wrote the Earl giving a brief but dangerously slanted summary of the same. In it the Governor-General is made to be the one responsible for all the troubles in the Provinces. [?] to Leicester, [The Court], 1587 [July], Ibid., Galba C. XI, f. 167.

²Privy Council to Leicester, Theobalds, 30 July 1587, A.P.C., XV, pp. 175-76, and "Declaration," Aug. 1587, B.M., Add. Mss. 48, 116, ff. 51-79.

unguarded statements concerning Elizabeth's lack of resolve in both Dutch affairs and Mary Stuart's trial. Made just prior to his departure for The Hague (28 September 1586) to assume his position on the Council of State, they proved to be dangerous weapons in the hands of the Governor-General. It is possible that the Earl informed Elizabeth of Wilkes' statements even earlier, for by the end of July the imprisoned ambassador began to suspect that her displeasure towards him was not just the result of Leicester's animosity but of "some other matter."¹

Secondly, the Earl must have had legal help in drawing up his "Declaration," for it reads like a prosecuting attorney's brief. One can be certain that Leicester took neither the time nor had the disposition to compile such a lengthy, albeit poorly argued, document.

Thirdly, in his anxiety to prove the individual disloyalty of either Wilkes, Buckhurst, or Norris, by contrasting one's actions or statements with the others, Leicester inadvertently proves the loyalty of the other two.

Fourthly, the Governor-General constantly hides behind the skirts of Elizabeth's honor by charging that every slight of his own name or authority was aimed directly at her. He could not see that it was possible for someone to dislike him and at the same time not dislike the Queen.

Fifthly, Leicester seemed always to confuse his benefactors with his enemies. Unable to accept that the States had of themselves turned against him, he blamed all their ill-will on a plot by Wilkes, Norris, and Buckhurst to destroy his position as Governor-General. He could not accept that anything that had gone wrong in the Provinces was his fault.

¹Wilkes to Burghley, London, 31 July 1587, Cal. For., XXI, iii, p. 211. Wilkes had good reason to feel that Elizabeth had "some other matter" against him for there was Norris who was every bit as much an enemy of Leicester and yet was never imprisoned.

Sixthly, in covering such a wide range of problems and subjects, the "Declaration" illustrates conclusively that the Earl lacked that most essential ingredient of a successful leader--the art of compromise, or to put it another way--the ability to forgive and to forget.

One final point should be noted concerning this document. In it Leicester makes an interesting accusation concerning the September 1586 financial and political report that Wilkes brought with him from the Netherlands. He charges the English Councilor with having boasted that his report contained,

matter wherewith to be even with the said Earl for an old grudge which he bore him for that the said Earl had caused his [Wilkes'] mother-in-law to be released out of prison, being, upon an untrue suggestion of the said Wilkes, committed to prison by letters from the Lords of her Majesty's Council for a private brawl between his wife and her own natural mother in her own house.

It can be concluded from this quote that there was a serious fight between Wilkes' wife and her mother, that Wilkes was able to have the latter incarcerated, and that she obtained her freedom through Leicester's mediation. The only point in question is whether or not the Privy Council issued a warrant for her arrest or if Wilkes as a Clerk of the Council assumed the right to do so. There is no mention of the incident in the Acts of the Privy Council or elsewhere.

What little is known of Wilkes' mother-in-law, Joan Smith, makes the above incident very possible. She was a vain, domineering, and extremely ostentatious woman¹ and such treatment at the hands of her son-in-law won him her fierce anger. When her husband, Ambrose, a wealthy London

¹A reading of Joan Smith's Will (P.C.C. 28 Woodhall) which was proved in May 1601 is a real revelation as to the character of the woman. She willed that over £200 be spent for mourning gowns for 200 poor people to wear at her funeral. Another £600 was set aside to be distributed in her name and to the "world's end" to provide Sunday bread for the poor in two separate parishes. So upset was her family when they heard the will, that her executors did "clearly and absolutely forsake and utterly renounce the execution" of the same. Instead, it was turned over to another of her sons who apparently re-distributed her possessions in a more acceptable manner to the rest of the family. Even Sir Walter Raleigh feared that

mercator, died in June of 1584, there was some lengthy litigation in the probate courts over his will. Apparently she created difficulties concerning Wilkes' portion as well as those of others in the family. Finally, in January 1587, Wilkes' brother-in-law, Henry Smith, wrote him about the favorable results of much of the litigation and said in relationship to it all, "My mother continueth her displeasure very bitterly towards you and my brother [in-law?] [William] Lewes, but I thank God is somewhat moderated towards me and the rest." It seems that Walsingham was responsible for the favorable settlement and Wilkes thanked him warmly for his "goodness to Ambrose Smith's children."¹

The ink spilled by Leicester and his three enemies in debating the failures of England's venture into the Netherlands is staggering. The former, who under normal conditions hardly ever kept the Privy Council informed, now was sending to England volumes, most of which were in defence of his reputation. On the other hand, though not so verbose, the latter three were forced to answer all his charges simply out of their desire for political survival.²

Like anyone who reads these seemingly endless documents, the Privy Council soon grew tired of the whole matter. It was apparent to all concerned that the battle was being kept alive at the Earl's insistence and simply to feed his vindictive nature. The Council delayed bringing official charges against the three men and eventually put an indefinite

she would have the Sheriff of Dorset after him for refusing to pay her for a debt incurred by another whom he had acted as a "surety" for. Raleigh to Robert Cecil, Alsford, Dec. 1594, B.M., Hatfield Mss. [microfilm], XXIX, f. 61.

¹P.C.C. 14 Watson, Henry Smith to Wilkes, London, 26 Jan. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 15, XXX, f. 18, and Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 26 Feb. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, ii, p. 379.

²See Wilkes' answers and Leicester's replies thereto, July 1587, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. I, ff. 73-77, collection of Leicester's charges, Buckhurst's replies, and the Earl's rejoinders, Aug. 1587, Cabala, ii, pp. 55-66, and B.M., Add. Mss. 48,116, ff. 81-85.

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stall on doing so by refusing to proceed any further in the matter until Elizabeth had studied it; "although as yet she seemeth not to be at leisure for the same." This coupled with Leicester's anxiety to hold the Queen to her promise of allowing him to return home within three months of the start of his second administration in the Netherlands, soon brought a temporary halt to his constant vendetta against the three men.¹

By this time (September 2nd) Wilkes decided the time was ripe to request, once again, a release from his confinement. Writing to Burghley he said:

I trust (under most humble correction) in respect that thy case is no more heinous than that of others, who are in like predicament (though my betters), I shall not be refused after two months imprisonment to stand in like terms for my liberty as they do. The place where I remain is without garden or open air, much disagreeing with my nature and doth greatly pain my health; and further I find by my physicians that for the better care of my disease I shall be constrained to use the benefit of the Baths which after fifteen days or three weeks will be fruitless until next spring.²

Again, the response to his request for freedom seems to have been immediate. All his correspondence ceases and what little was written to him in the next few months indicates that he was not in London. Most likely he was at Bath until the end of September and then at his home in Downton, Wiltshire. Wherever he was, it is certain he was busy restoring his neglected estate and health.³

¹Privy Council to Leicester, Theobalds, 1 Sept. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, 111, p. 294 (italics in Burghley's hand), Leicester to Burghley, [The Hague?], 11 Sept. 1587, Ibid., p. 305, and Leicester to Walsingham, The Hague, 16 Sept. 1587, Ibid., p. 315.

²Wilkes to Burghley, "From My Lodging," 2 Sept. 1587, B.M., Lansd. Mss. 54, f. 170.

³Sir John Norris to Wilkes, London, 23 December 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 12 CCVI, f. 88, and Francis Hotman to [Wilkes], [?], [11 Jan.] 1588, Cal. For., XXI, iv, p. 12. There is an interesting letter from one of Wilkes' Dutch friends at The Hague, Lancelot Parasia, whose son had served under the English Councilor. On October 8, 1587 he wrote to Wilkes, "I am very glad...that I learn by your letters that you are shortly

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Isolated at his estate in Downton, and in disgrace, Wilkes still maintained a keen concern for his country's welfare, especially where it concerned Elizabeth's peace overtures with Spain. When in late November 1587 he learned that Henry Stanley, the Earl of Derby, was one of several chosen by the Queen to negotiate with Parma on the subject, Wilkes decided he must do something.¹ Digging through his prison papers, he found his "Discourse to the Queen's Majesty against the treaty of peace with the King of Spain." Written the previous August for Elizabeth's perusal, Wilkes had at the last minute decided it was too candid to be sent. Now, with the constant news of Philip II's Armada preparations coming in, he felt the "Discourse" might do some good in Derby's hands. Both it and the accompanying letter to Derby are excellent examples of the depth of Wilkes' insights into the international politics of sixteenth-century Europe.²

Wilkes began by asking Derby to consider several points in relation to Philip II's vast naval preparations that all Europe was talking about. "It cannot be imagined," he wrote,

that so huge preparation made both by the King in Spain and in the Low Countries should be to invade either upon the Turk, France, or Italy which are the only places for him to attempt by sea. He

to return hither" (*Ibid.*, iii, pp. 354-55). Since Wilkes did not return, it is uncertain why he was even considering doing so. However, earlier, on August 12th, Francis Needham wrote from Bergen-op-Zoom to Walsingham suggesting the possibility of sending Wilkes to help mediate a "reconciliation" between Leicester and Hohenloe (*Ibid.*, p. 237). For obvious reasons the suggestion was not put into effect.

¹Sir James Croft to Andrea de Loo, [The Court], July 1587, *Ibid.*, p. 216, Burghley to de Loo, [The Court?], 31 Aug. 1587, *Ibid.*, p. 288, and "Memorial" for John Herbert, Master of Requests, 12 Oct. 1587, *Ibid.*, p. 366.

²Wilkes' "Discourse to the Queen," Aug. 1587, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. I, ff. 284-88 and Wilkes to Derby, "From my poor house in Wiltshire," 27 Nov. 1587, *Ibid.*, D. II, f. 175. Since part of this letter is missing in the Cott. Mss. one has to go to *Cal. For.*, XXI, iii, pp. 434-35 for the edited second half.

standeth in so great fear of the Turk and is not out of hope to renew his truce again with him for some longer time, and the preparations that are made against the Turk by the King are ever made within the Straits of Gibraltar and not without them, and commonly in Italy and not in Flanders. Therefore, the King's purpose of invasion must in all reason be in these parts. It cannot be for Italy where he commandeth in effect among the several provinces of those countries what he listeth, having their ports, towns, and countries at his devotion upon all occasions.

It is not likely to be for France, because if he meant to invade them his access is now commodious and nearer by land than by sea.

It is as unlikely that his preparations should be for the Eastern countries of Germany, as the Hanse Towns, Denmark, or Sweden from whence he is relieved daily with great quantity of victuall, armor [and] shipping.

Wilkes then went on to point out the injuries Spain had suffered at English hands which could only prove that the Armada preparations were for England. Going back to December 1568 there was the seizure of Philip II's bullion ships which were carrying 800,000 ducats of pay for Alva's troops in the Netherlands. There was the seizure of "great masses of his treasure in the Indies" as well as the "late invasion and sack and spoil of divers of his towns in those countries." English soldiers had been drawing the blood of Spaniards in the Low Countries without any open declaration of war, and finally, Drakes' recent raids on Spanish ports had resulted in the destruction of at least a hundred of the King's ships. "If those provocations may move a king of his mind to seek revenge," Wilkes wrote, "then doubt not but England is the place whereunto his preparations are intended."

He next explained to Derby that there was no better way for Philip to hurt the English than by treating for a peace in order to "lull" them into their "accustomed security." However, he continued, if Elizabeth was determined upon peace then "let her seek it alone and not draw the United Provinces into it, who for some years without assistance, will be able to defend themselves."

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"The security of England depends also upon the wars in France," he wrote.

If the King of Navarre prevails England will be the more assured, and Spain dangerously threatened. This peace will greatly benefit the King in that behalf, as the Low Countries being pacified, all his forces can go to aid the Guises. Care must therefore be taken, in concluding the peace that the Duke of Parma be restrained from sending succors into France.

Wilkes concluded his letter to Derby by suggesting that he do all in his power to dissuade Elizabeth from the peace and at the same time to keep the contents of the letter a secret from his "great" enemy the Earl of Leicester.

The "Declaration" that Wilkes had intended for Elizabeth and instead sent to Derby also presented some telling arguments on the proposed Spanish peace. In it he explains to the Queen that given her peace-loving nature and the apparent ill-success of England's Netherland venture, he could understand why she was seeking a peace with Spain. However, he felt she should consider more carefully the dangers it represented to her "honor and safety." Firstly, she would have to break her pact with the Provinces in which she had promised "without limitation of time" to support their rebellion against Spain. This, he explained would be such a serious psychological blow that in spite of their strength the Spaniard would "prevail and become lord of them in a short time." Also, by such a peace, she would not only be turning her back upon all her subjects who gave their lives there, but also totally negating the results of the great quantities of her money spent there.

He warned the Queen against ever trusting the word of Philip and to remember,

the implacable malice of the Pope...whose avarice and thirst after the blood of your Majesty and of your loyal subjects will never be satiated until he may see the execution and end of his wicked designs upon you.

Wilkes then asked Elizabeth to look around her own realm of England and see the effects of Philip's interruption of England's trade, "which of late years has much impoverished the common people whose living hath only depended upon the working of wools and makings of cloth."

He next offered the most important advice one could advance at this specific point in English history.

The power likewise of the Spanish King is in no case to be neglected whether you consider the strength of his purse or the form of his people and the number of experienced soldiers...to be employed in the wars. But as he is in no way able to assail and damage your Majesty but by sea, so can he not in all Europe be furnished of ships, vessels, and mariners sufficient for such an exploit, so long as your Majesty can hold him from the possession of Holland and Zeeland; whereunto if he may attain either, by peace or conquest... (which alone without the assistance of his other kingdoms and countries are able to furnish more ships and mariners than all the realm of England) your Majesty shall be in danger of two notable inconveniences: the one to be over-matched at sea and the other to have the trade of your subjects utterly overthrown in all places.

Answering the usual arguments given in behalf of a peace with Spain Wilkes wrote:

There is an objection often made against the...puissance of the Spanish King that is not likely that the French King and Princes of Germany should suffer him to grow to great in respect of the inconvenience that might ensue to them and their estates. This objection were well propounded if this age were agreeable to that which is as when Henry VIII and Francis [I] the French King lived, whereof...[each] endeavored to hold the greatness of their neighbor King in equal balance. But, whosoever shall now look into the state of France and observe the insufficiency of the King that now is and what a party that Spain hath made him within the same, by the Duke of Guise and his faction and how the country standeth divided in respect of the civil wars; the jealousy between the King and the Guisards, and between them and the King of Navarre and House of Bourbon, shall find no appearance that they or any of them can encounter or stop the growing course of the King of Spain's greatness, and as far as the Princes of Germany, how cold and careless they are thereof is sufficiently known to all men.

Having demonstrated the fallacy of depending upon France or the Germanies to check Spanish designs, Wilkes went on to state the hypothetical case in which Philip II would agree to all Elizabeth's demands for making a peace. These would include removing all his forces from the Low Countries, allowing the Netherland peoples the same "ancient privileges"

they had under Charles V, and a grant of religious toleration for all sects. "How," Wilkes asked in a series of rhetorical questions, "shall it be assured that these things shall be maintained?" Does she suppose Philip will allow the Dutch to maintain any of their own frontier garrisons? Will she and the King of Denmark be "respondant" for keeping the truce?" Does she think that like herself, Frederick II would ever make war on Spain in defence of the Provinces? Will the Spanish King ever tolerate only Protestants in the governmental and judicial offices of the Dutch provinces and towns?

Wilkes then offered the following warning to his Queen:

To one thing above the rest your Majesty is to have a special eye and regard, as to a matter of no small hazard which is, that the States themselves seeing your Majesty's irrevocable resolution to have a peace and fearing the dangers...likely to ensue,..do for the avoiding thereof offer the enemy to make their peace without you and leave you to incur the perils before mentioned if Spain becomes master of the countries. Your Majesty may not think but that Spain would be glad and ready to take that occasion. And if it should so happen, which God defend and yet greatly to be feared, your Majesty shall find and feel that people a more dangerous and bitter enemy unto you than the insolent Spaniard. Consider therefore good Madam, the weight and importance of the matter before you enter into the same, as of the greatest consequence since you came to the Crown and whereupon your preservation or ruin doth depend. Be not deceived in the humor and subtlety of the revenging Spain. Remember the maxim of the papist: Nula Fides Servand Hareticus. Forget not the Holy League and the resolution of the Pope.

Beware how you strengthen the same League in drawing Spain from the present action of war in the Low countries; for if he be at quiet there look for no quiet in your own kingdoms.

God hath blessed you with wisdom, with people full of valor and magnanimity; with wealth and the means to defend yourself and with power to destroy your enemies.

If your Majesty be weary of the action of the Low Countries either in respect of the greatness of the charge you do sustain therein or the doubt you have [that] the enemy will prevail against them by reason of the weakness of their common purse, and the discords and dissensions among them, I beseech your Majesty that you will but measure the necessity of your preservation with the weight of your purse and the wealth of your subjects who will be glad to buy their security at so easy a rate.

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Such a treatise just may have had some influence on Elizabeth's decision to continue with the Spanish peace overtures. Unfortunately, the disgraced Wilkes dared not send it to her. What the Earl of Derby thought of it is not known. Apparently, it did little to influence him for he, along with the other peace commissioners, spent from February through July 1588 earnestly but fruitlessly treating with Parma in the Spanish Low Countries.¹

Leicester's Return to England and Wilkes' Efforts for a Reconciliation

There is very little need to detail the events of the Earl of Leicester's second expedition into the Low Countries. The suddenness of his return had no doubt come as a result of the serious danger the Duke of Parma represented to Sluys. England could not afford to allow the Spanish to gain control of such a strategic seaport. However, the States' discovery of Leicester's letters to Junius and others had done sufficient harm that upon his arrival he found them uninterested in cooperating in the relief of the town. As mentioned earlier, this reluctance was due in part to Holland and Zeeland's increasing inclination to go-it-alone thus leaving the other provinces (who contributed so little to the Republic's defence), to their own defences. The upshot of the whole matter was the fall of Sluys on Wednesday, July 26th.²

¹See Motley's Netherlands, II, Ch. XVIII for an extensive review of these protracted negotiations. Interestingly, the Earl's of Derby, almost down to the present, have been curiously inert men.

²Lord North to Walsingham, Flushing, 27 July 1587, Ibid., pp. 200-1. With the fall of Sluys, the Spaniards were masters of all of Flanders, except the town of Ostend. Just a month prior to the loss of Sluys, the city of Gelders was yielded to the Spanish by one named Aristotle Patton, a Scottish colonel in the States' pay. As the capital of the province of Gelderland it was a serious loss for the United Provinces and no doubt an embarrassment to Wilkes who earlier in December 1587 (Ibid., ii, pp. 258-59) praised the colonel's devotion to Leicester and urged his appointment as a regimental commander to "bridle" one of

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As expected, Leicester angrily blamed nearly everyone but himself for Parma's victory. Firstly, and with good reason, he accused the States of negligence. Next, he singled out Counts Maurice and Hohenloe as mostly to blame. Finally, Buckhurst, Norris, and Wilkes were held partially responsible, and even the gallant Captain Roger Williams, who had so bravely defended Sluys, was called into question. In spite of these indiscriminate efforts to shift what blame he deserved onto others, Leicester could not prevent Elizabeth from holding him partially responsible or from intensifying her efforts to conclude a peace with Spain.¹

From the start of the Earl's second mission to the Netherlands, the Queen had repeatedly insisted that he discuss the Anglo-Spanish negotiations with the States in order to know how to proceed with the increasingly impatient Parma. Leicester's belated acknowledgement of Elizabeth's overtures to Spain (August 1st), after his repeated denials of the same both revealed his hypocrisy and was the occasion for violent protests in the Provinces. Vainly the Governor-General attempted to retrieve his image by publishing a defence of his position in relation to the United Provinces and a Spanish peace. When this failed to clear his name, he desperately tried to secure the authority the States refused him by taking control of such centers of Leicestrian support as Leyden, North Holland, and Amsterdam. All failed.²

Hohenloe's commanders. When Leicester learned of Patton's treason he immediately recalled Wilkes' recommendations as intentionally "lewdly and knavishly done." Leicester to Walsingham [?], 4 July 1587, Ibid., III, pp. 149-50.

¹Leicester to Walsingham, Berges, 12 April 1587, Ibid., pp. 232-33, Leicester to the Privy Council, Berges, 12 April 1587, Ibid., pp. 231-32, and Read, Walsingham, III, p. 248.

²Blok, History, III, pp. 231-32, Lancelot Parasis to Wilkes, The Hague, 8 Oct. 1587, Cal. For., XXI, III, p. 355, and [Leicester] to Killigrew, [?], 28 Sept. 1587, Ibid., p. 338.

Out of money, lacking sufficient authority, and despised by the States, Leicester could only plead for his recall. After the usual indecision, Elizabeth finally granted his request in November. Leaving Lord Willoughby in command of the English troops, the Earl arrived back in England by the middle of December.¹

His arrival at the Court shortly before Christmas 1587, provided Wilkes, Buckhurst, and Norris with the circumstances they all desired for a reconciliation with him. The volatile atmosphere of the Netherlands was behind them all, each was happy to be home, and it was here that all parties concerned could work out their differences under the judicial if not impartial eyes of Elizabeth and the Privy Council.

Norris was the first to attempt an accord and by December 23rd could report to Wilkes that through his own efforts and others he had "almost perfected" a reconciliation with Leicester.²

Buckhurst had greater difficulty in accomplishing as much. Even warnings by the Earl's best friends that if he [Leicester] did not seek a reconciliation he would not long enjoy Elizabeth's good opinion, had little effect. A little over a month later Buckhurst finally requested permission to come to Court to work on the matter personally and the subsequent lack of comment on the problem seems to indicate that a settlement was soon achieved.³

For Wilkes it was a different story. Perhaps waiting to see the results of Buckhurst's and Norris attempts, he kept his distance from the Court prior to the Christmas season. It was just before Christmas

¹Willoughby to Burghley, Flushing, 8 Dec. 1587, Ibid., p. 447, Leicester to the States-General, Flushing, 16 Nov. 1587, Ibid., p. 420, and Leicester to Elizabeth, Flushing, 21 Nov. 1587, Salisbury, III, p. 297.

²Norris to Wilkes, London, 23 Dec. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCVI, f. 88.

³Walsingham to Wilkes, [?], 1 Jan. 1588, Ibid., CCVIII, f. 1, and Buckhurst to Walsingham, [?], 9 Feb. 1588, Cal. Dom., II, p. 462.

that he received three encouraging letters. The least reassuring of these was one by Walsingham reporting the "greatly increased" anger of Leicester towards Wilkes because of some proported "unreverent speeches" by him. The First Secretary warned Wilkes "to prove yourself more warily in your speeches than heretofore you have done," but at the same time encouraged him to begin seeking ways of removing the Earl's displeasure.¹

The second letter came from Norris who was jubilant over his own success. Promising to do what he could to help Wilkes, ~~he~~ asked for some direction and then cheered him with these words, "I do think the matter will be as easy for you as any of us although my Lord does still say that he hath your hand for much matter." Suggesting that Wilkes absence from the Court and London made him "the more threatened," Norris lamented "I would have been glad we might have seen you this Christmas."²

Most welcome was Lord Chancellor Hatton's letter written in behalf of the Privy Council. It advised Wilkes that the time was ripe to make "humble petition" to Elizabeth. He was instructed to ask her if his cause could be heard before the Lords of the Council and to explain that his hasty flight from the Netherlands was due to a "dangerous disease gotten in her service." Advised to have such a petition "delivered by one of the maids of the [Queen's] Chamber" as quickly as possible, he was further instructed that if no answer were forthcoming within five days he was then to petition the Council itself. "I can assure you," Hatton concluded, "all is secured and sure...if I have any judgment or faith."³

¹Walsingham to Wilkes, The Court, 23 Dec. 1587, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCVI, f. 90.

²Norris to Wilkes, London, 23 Dec. 1587, Ibid., f. 88.

³Hatton to Wilkes, The Court, 24 Dec. 1587, Ibid., f. 92. Scribbled across the top of the letter was his request that the letter be burned.

Encouraged, Wilkes quickly started for London. Arriving sometime in early January 1588, he discovered instead that Leicester was totally uninterested in even seeing him let alone in effecting a reconciliation.

Walsingham's friend, Francis Hotman, informed Wilkes that,

at supper with Mr. Walsingham the other day, he told me that his Excellency believed that you had come here to make fresh intrigues against him, and his bitterness is still so great that he [Walsingham] would advise you not to insist on a reconciliation and to retire quietly to your house...Doctor [William] James [Dean of Christ's Church, Oxford] assured me that he had spoken to his Excellency but found him most remote from an agreement. Time alone will be the physician.¹

Thwarted in this attempt, Wilkes next took Hatton's advice and drafted a short letter to Elizabeth, begging her forgiveness and asking to be restored to some measure of his former place. Three days after asking his "old acquaintance" and Maid of the Chamber, Mrs. Bridgette Carr, to deliver the letter, he received her reply:

My good friend...you shall understand that I have delivered that which you sent to me unto her Majesty...At the first she wished me not to meddle in it for she would not look upon it. But then I told her Majesty that you were an old acquaintance of mine for which cause I did beseech her Highness to read it or then you should find friends more than I for to speak unto her, whereupon her Majesty hath promised me to peruse it, and then will I certify you of her answer...²

Apparently, Walsingham's last-minute advice to Wilkes "Not to insist on a reconciliation and to return quietly to your house." had been sound, for Elizabeth seems to have ignored the disgraced Ambassador's petition. The next time we hear of him it is six months later and he is at his estate in Downton.³

¹Hotman to Wilkes, [The Court], [11 Jan.] 1588, Cal. For., XXI iv, p. 12.

²Wilkes to Elizabeth, [London?], 13 Jan. 1588, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCVIII, f. 10, and Mrs. Carr to Wilkes, Greenwich, 16 Jan. 1588, Ibid., f. 36. Bridgette was the wife of a London brewer William Carr. Cal. Dom., II, p. 88.

³Audley Danett to Wilkes "at his home in Downton," London, 9 July 1588, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCXII, f. 51.

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All this while, Elizabeth continued to blow first hot and then cold, as she tried to decide whether or not Spain's vast Armada preparations were meant for England. Her hopes had long been that a peace could be arranged between her and Philip, and reports of a possible invasion only stimulated her desires for an accord. However, with the return of Leicester and Walsingham (who had been ill), to Court in December 1587, she suddenly began to press for England's defences to be readied. But this resolution soon faded, and from February 1588 to May, when it was reported the Armada had embarked, there was little continuity in her preparations. News of the Armada's sailing and the sighting of several Spanish ships near the channel in late June greatly stimulated defence activities. Ships and soldiers were readied, Charles, Lord Howard of Effingham, was commissioned as Commander-in-chief of all sea and land forces, and the Earl of Leicester was made Lieutenant-General of the English army in Essex. But it soon appeared that all their frantic efforts were for naught, when in early July there was no sign of the Spanish fleet, and especially when Elizabeth and even Walsingham decided it would not sail until the next year.¹

This brief relaxation in everyone's posture of readiness provided Wilkes with what he felt to be another opportune moment to regain Elizabeth's favor. His friend Audley Danette had just reminded him of Doctor Valentine Dale's "old rule:" "Tristitia Vestra: that...you must in this business use your friends," and, accordingly, suggested that he have his friends plead his cause before the Queen. He also playfully advised the disgraced Wilkes to make his "confession and so to be restored to the Mother Church."²

¹Read, Walsingham, III, pp. 268 and 297-311, Cal. Dom., II, p. 445, and A.P.C., XVI, p. 179.

²Danett to Wilkes, London, 9 July 1588, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCXII, f. 51.

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Within a short time Wilkes was back in London. Shortly before or just after his arrival he wrote Walsingham at Richmond for advice about how best to proceed with his petition. The Chief Secretary's reply was "as always...your best and readiest way to recover her Majesty's favor will be to make your peace with my Lord of Leicester." He further suggested that the best course in achieving the latter was to find someone close to the Earl, like his friend "Mr. Fowler," who would be willing to plead his case.¹

This time Wilkes pulled out all the stops in an attempt to regain his political standing. He asked Sir John Norris to approach Leicester's step-son and General of the Horse, Lord Essex, in his behalf. Essex promised faithfully to speak to his step-father about Wilkes. Next, the disgraced Ambassador sent a letter to the Earl himself through the medium of their common friend Doctor Ralph Gifford and followed this up by also inducing Mr. Fowler to approach Leicester on his behalf. Again, he wrote to Elizabeth protesting his discomfort in having borne the "intolerable weight" of her "heavy displeasure for more than a whole year" and at the same time begging her to allow him to spend "the residue" of his "wretched years" in her service.²

For a moment it looked as though these efforts might achieve some success. Gifford wrote Wilkes that in spite of Leicester's comment that "he feareth to speak with you lest you should perhaps overcome him too quickly...with...your fair speeches," which "would enchant him," he [Gifford] was convinced that "thus far the ice is broken." The next day, after learning that Essex had forgotten to speak with Leicester, Norris

¹Thomas Edmonds, Walsingham's servant, to Wilkes, Richmond, 12 July 1588, Ibid., f. 75.

²Joseph Marr to Wilkes, [?], 12 July 1588, Ibid., f. 74, Walsingham to Wilkes, Richmond, 19 July 1588, Ibid., f. 141, Wilkes to Leicester, London, 21 July 1588, Ibid., f. 163, Wilkes to Elizabeth, [London], 13 July

himself mentioned the matter to him. Though finding the Earl unwilling to discuss the subject at any length, Norris assured Wilkes that Leicester was not as "impossible" as he had at first thought and that he was only continuing his obstinacy out of a desire to force him into a "longer suit."¹

Apparently hoping that one more letter might turn the trick, Wilkes set about to draft one. Doctor Gifford read it carefully and suggested modifications which would assure that the impatient Leicester would read all of it. However, this last letter proved to be the final straw.²

Physically unwell, fed up with being petitioned in behalf of his enemy, Wilkes, every time he turned around, and all of it coming on top of the alarming news that the Armada had been sighted (July 19th), Leicester point-blank forbade any more mention of the subject. "Sir," Gifford wrote to Wilkes, "I find my lord marvelously changed and in such storms as by no means he will receive any letter from you." Realizing it was useless to press the matter any further, Wilkes apparently joined with most in official circles in breathlessly awaiting some word on the success or failure of the great Armada they all had feared so long.³

1588, Ibid., f. 77, and Norris to Wilkes, The Court, 21 July 1588, Ibid., f. 153.

¹Ibid., and Gifford to Wilkes, [The Court?], 20 July 1588, Ibid., f. 149.

²Wilkes to Leicester, London, 21 July 1588, Ibid., f. 163, Gifford to Wilkes, [The Court?], 22 July 1588, Ibid., CCXIII, f. 1, and Wilkes to Leicester, London, 24 July 1588, Ibid., f. 213.

³Gifford to Wilkes, [The Court?], 31 July 1588, Ibid., f. 170. In volume XVI, p. 213 of J. R. Dasent's edition of the Acts of the Privy Council under the date 2 August 1588, there is a Privy Council letter to Lord Henry Seymour in which Dasent erroneously transcribed the name "Tho. Mills" to read "Tho. Wilkes." The letter mentions that Mills is to be sent on a precautionary mission to the Duke of Parma. Other records prove Wilkes was not sent on a mission at this time and a close look at the original document (XV, p. 238) clearly reveals the error in transcription--an error which led A. F. Pollard in his biographical sketch of Wilkes in

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Leicester hurried back to his post at Tilbury and there waited for the expected landing of Parma's army. He need not have worried. Farnese had known for a long time and had even told Philip that it was impossible for his army to rendezvous with the Spanish fleet. Within two weeks' time, portions of the English fleet and gusting winds forced the Armada into the North Sea and the start of its tragic journey homeward. The crisis over, the now very sick Leicester took his leave of Tilbury and started for the baths at Buxton to recuperate. On the way there on August 29th he wrote Elizabeth a letter inquiring after her health. It was his last. A week later on September 4th, 1588, he was dead. Across his letter the lonely and aging Queen wrote, "His last letter."¹

Unlike the Queen, Wilkes must certainly have felt a sense of relief at Leicester's death. He had never had nor would ever again have an enemy who rained upon him such an unreasonable and implacable hatred. He had suffered from Elizabeth's displeasure for over a year simply because of the Earl's influence over her. This fact alone tarnishes that bright image of Elizabeth as the Queen who, when faced with a choice between her heart and what was logically best for England, always chose the latter. As long as her "Rob" lived and even through those

the D.N.B. (LXI, p. 253), to assume that he was sent on a mission to Parma in August 1588.

¹Leicester to Elizabeth, Rycott, 29 Aug. 1588, Cal. Dom., II, p. 538. There is an interesting letter to Walsingham from one of his Continental contacts Giovanni di Campo in Marseilles. Written in November 1588 after Philip II had finally learned the awful truth about his Armada, it reports that nothing displeased him so much as the loyalty of the English Catholics to Elizabeth during the fleet's presence in the Channel. The Spanish King, he reported, had held great hopes of support from "malcontent Protestants," like "Gray, Norris, Wilkes, the Admiral, and many other schismatics." If Campo's letter is an accurate representation of Philip's expectations, it is not difficult to see why he launched his Armada in the face of insurmountable odds. To expect any of the above men, no matter what their grievances, to defect to his side gives a clear indication of Philip's lack of touch with reality at this point in his reign. Cal. For., XXI, p. 360.

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critical months prior to and during the Armada's fateful journey she was content to allow Wilkes' valuable experience and abilities to go unused. Proof of this lies in the fact that within a short time of Leicester's death, the disgraced ambassador was allowed unofficially to resume his duties as a Clerk of the Privy Council and to stand for Southampton in the September 1588 Parliamentary election. This did not mean that he was restored to the Queen's favor. That would take some time yet, for she still felt the offence Leicester had claimed at the hands of Wilkes. However, it did mean that he could function in his old office and enjoy the benefits derived therefrom.¹

The word "unofficially" is used to describe Wilkes' return to his clerical duties, because in the Acts of the Privy Council there is written at the bottom of one of the Council records: "Here came Thomas Wilkes, Clerk of the Council in Ordinary, after two years absence, to give attendance on the Lords of Council." This, in light of the fact that for the nine previous months he had been busy serving warrants, carrying out investigations, and settling disputes in the name of the Council seems to indicate that his position was "unofficial" only insofar as he had not (until approximately August 1589) regained Elizabeth's favor.²

In foreign affairs, too, Wilkes' extensive knowledge of Dutch affairs was still being utilized prior to his restoration at the Court. In May of 1589 Lord Burghley requested that he draw up a report offering

¹H.M.S.O., Returns of Members of Parliament: England 1213-1705 (London: Henry Hansard and Son, 1878), i, p. 425 and Wilkes to Walsingham, [?], 16 Nov. 1588, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCXVIII, f. 57.

²Ibid., "Warrant to Wilkes," Whitehall, 8 May 1589, Ibid., CCXXIV, f. 38, Privy Council to Hereford County Commissioners, Nonsuch, 4 Aug. 1589, A.P.C. XVIII, p. 11, Privy Council to [?] and James Digges, Greenwich, 4 and 22 March 1589, Ibid., pp. 398 and 433, and "abstract" by Wilkes, [Greenwich?], [Dec.] 1588, Cal. For., XXII, pp. 401.

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his opinion on the United Provinces' ability to maintain their own defences, along with a general summary of the soundness of Anglo-Dutch relations. The result was a fairly lengthy document, which provides a good summary of basic problems in that joint venture.¹

Wilkes explained at the beginning of the report, that his information concerning the period since his return from the Netherlands had come from "intelligence and correspondance...with divers persons of the said countries acquainted with the proceedings and government there." He also implored the Lord Treasurer that "whatsoever I shall note unto you herein be not interpreted to my prejudice." He then went on to explain that there were several problems England was going to have to put up with in continuing to work with the Provinces. First, was the "avarice and ambition" of their leaders who, "rather than...be put from their places and from their profit...will go near to hazard the whole country."

A second obstacle England faced in working with the United Provinces was their confused form of government. As Wilkes expressed it:

The infirmity of that state is not to be wondered at first, in regard of the alteration of the government fallen lately from a monarchy to an anarchy, in effect, from the government of a king to the authority of a people, from whom there is derived a kind of aristocracy, delivered into the hands of those men that are called the States; and it is a thing I have noted in my slender study of histories, that when a commonweal falleth from one kind of government into another, as this hath done, it is long before it can be settled in that kind whereunto it is elapsed.

¹Wilkes' "Discourse," [26 May] 1589, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. V, ff. 317-23. Though this document has no date other than the year 1589 on it, it can be dated as being drawn up later than March because of the reference within to the surrender of Geertruidenberg (31 March 1589) and more specifically to May 26th because of a letter from Wilkes to Burghley on that date which makes reference to the report which he was sending on to the Lord Treasurer. See B.M., Lansd. Mss. 61, f. 126.

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This instability led to the third problem, which was the incessant quarrels among the various provinces, especially Holland and Zeeland versus Utrecht, Gelderland, and Friesland. Such divisions had clearly undermined the effectiveness of the Anglo-Dutch war efforts.

Next, Wilkes pointed out that the States would continue to take "advantage of the necessity her Majesty hath in respect of her own preservation to see those countries kept from the Spaniard." However, what they most wanted from Elizabeth, Wilkes suggested, was not men but money.

Wilkes then drew attention to the incompatibility of the "humors" of the two nations which always results in "a special dislike" by the Dutch of the Englishmen sent to serve in the Netherlands. "God forbid," he quickly added, "I should lay the fault on mine own country, although I think...we have failed in many things there, by lack of skill and knowledge of the State and condition of the countries and peoples."

To this great weakness on England's part, Wilkes added the harsh words used against the States-General by Elizabeth's officials in the Provinces. "I have found," he wrote, "that there is nothing that hath alienated the minds of those men from her Majesty and from all good liking of her governor and ministers, so much, as the bitterness of such words proceeding from us." It was his feeling that "by discretion and choice of persons to be employed by her Majesty among them...the distemperature of the two humors may be reformed and brought to a reasonable harmony between them and us." But he added, it must be done "now or never."

As always Wilkes feared the possibility of the Queen refusing any more aid to the Provinces. He knew the results of this could be catastrophic, as it might force the States into a peace with Spain and provide the means whereby Philip II could successfully invade England. "I think

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it a master point," he concluded, "to avoid all occasions that may move or induce them [the States] to mislike of the confederation with England."

As if to emphasize his personal inclination for a continuance of the alliance, the second half of Wilkes' report is a detailed itemization of how the Provinces financed their rebellion, and it leaves the unmistakable impression that they would continue to require financial assistance from England.

Interestingly, Wilkes had by this time even been considered for a possible return mission to the United Provinces. Sometime in March 1589 Elizabeth had toyed with the idea of sending either Sir Thomas Wilford or Lord Buckhurst to attempt a settlement of some of the outstanding differences between the States-General and England. When she approached Walsingham as to which of the two men he would recommend he indicated his preference for Buckhurst, and suggested that the knowledgeable Wilkes be sent along too, not as an ambassador but as a humble dispatch bearer. However, the mission was postponed when Walsingham learned that the States intended to send over their own commissioners to England.¹

It had been in February 1589 that Wilkes had made at least one other attempt at healing the breach between him and the Queen. Sick abed with the gout at his London residence the Clerk of the Council sent his wife Margaret with a letter to the Countess of Lincoln. In it he spoke of the "late" Earl of Leicester,

whose power and credit with her Majesty...have wrought so strange an alteration in her Majesty's wanted favor towards me, that after sixteen or seventeen years painful and dangerous service, I am in sort cast as though charged with no fault or offence towards her

¹Read's Walsingham, III, p. 357 discusses this proposed mission and lists as his source Cal. Dom., II, p. 592. Since Wilkes is not mentioned there in that severely edited letter it is assumed a reading of the original would supply the information. Unfortunately this student has no way of obtaining that information.

Majesty other than that I had not given contentment to my Lord of Leicester.

Could the Countess, he asked, speak in his favor to the Queen?¹ Unfortunately, this attempt also failed, and at the end of May he was still in "disfavor in Court." Clearly, his "official" re-acceptance as a Clerk of the Council later in August of the same year marks the successful conclusion of his efforts to regain Elizabeth's favor.²

At the close of this chapter it is necessary to draw some conclusions on the successes and failures of Wilkes' 1586-1587 Netherlands' mission. It was the longest and by far the most demanding assignment of his diplomatic career, and he was never to have another in which his responsibilities were greater. Not only had Leicester claimed to have made him equal in commission with Count Maurice and the rest of the Council of State during his absence, but the English Councilor was forced to carry this burden without the stipulated assistance of a second councilor.

That he had to work hard there can be little doubt. His voluminous correspondence alone bears testimony to his diligence. His letters are filled with accurate reports that could have easily been the basis for some needed direction from home. Letters written to those in the Provinces who flouted the Earl's authority are models of tactfulness and persuasion. Yet when these failed, his voice in Council meetings issued stern, often discomfiting, but never rude reminders of their obligations to England.

¹Wilkes to the Countess of Lincoln, [London], 8 Feb. 1589, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCXXII, f. 119. Wilkes' residence in London was located in Warbrook Ward, one of twenty-six wards in that city. See Wilkes' Certificate of Residence, 1 Nov. 1590, P.R.O., Excheq. 115/407, f. 134.

²Arguments in favor Wilkes' Salt Patent, 29 May 1589, B.M., Lansd. Mss. 59, f. 182. George Gilpin, the English secretary on the Dutch Council of State wrote Wilkes on March 3, 1590 (in answer to his letter of January 15th) in which he "rejoiced" that Wilkes had been restored to Elizabeth's favor. (L. & A., I, No. 315). Whether or not this indicated Wilkes was not restored until as late as December 1589 or early January 1590 is not certain.

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Despite his constant lack of assistance, money, and instruction from home, he never wavered in defending Elizabeth's honor or the authority of her inept favorite. While they both tended to other affairs in England, he was left to bear the brunt of the States' displeasure over such lack of concern. Unable even to obtain pay for the starving English troops the physically ill Wilkes was forced to borrow on his own credit to relieve their misery.

Very little ever escaped him, and it is remarkable that he maintained England's position as well as he did considering the conditions he worked under. He watched in utter helplessness as Leicester's hatred poisoned Elizabeth's feelings towards him and made it impossible for him to do anything without offending both.

Wilkes did make mistakes, but there were surprisingly few. One of his biggest was his refusal to report to Leicester upon the latter's return to the Netherlands in August 1587. It admittedly broke one of the most essential laws of diplomatic protocol. Yet, one must not be too harsh in his judgments. It is impossible for the twentieth-century mind to fully understand just how frightened Wilkes was of Leicester's threats. Even the prestigious and battle-seasoned Norris had preferred to escape rather than meet the Earl. Whatever his reasons, Wilkes felt he had made the best decision. Experience had taught him he could not reason with the Governor-General, so his only hope had lain in gaining Elizabeth's presence and personally explaining to her the utter impossibility of his position vis à vis the Earl. Here he had hoped for a fair judgment. Instead, he was robbed of his opportunity by her adamant refusal to see him, and the result was lodgings in Fleet prison as a reward for twelve months of selfless service.

Perhaps his chief fault lay in not catering enough to what he knew to be Leicester's unrelenting meanness. His straight-forward and

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accurate reports left no doubt in the reader's mind as to what was going on in the Netherlands, and it was these more than anything else which naively yet devastatingly pointed out the follies of the Governor-General's protracted absence. If Wilkes had glossed over his dispatches in an effort to report that which the Earl desired to hear, he would have been negligent of his duties and Leicester soon would have discovered it.

If Leicester is to be believed, Wilkes' chief fault lay in his continued loyalty to Leicester's great enemy, Sir John Norris. But here, as in all other instances, Wilkes had refused to compromise his standards. Furthermore, he had dared say so:

If his [Leicester's] chiefest offence be conceived in respect of my love and good will towards Sir John Norris I do not grieve thereat assuring myself that he is as worthy thereof...as any man living, and the more I know him the more I have cause to affect and admire him...He is a rare gentleman and exceedingly worthy to be honored and advanced, and I doubt not but God will move her Majesty (in spite of the Devil) to respect him as he deserveth.¹

It thus appears that the only conclusion one can reach regarding Wilkes' 1586-1587 embassy is that he was bound to fail from the first. The main reason for this was the personality of Leicester and his astonishing influence over England's Queen. Her unwillingness to understand Wilkes' position in this matter demonstrates conclusively that her mind.. was not always the master of her heart. Here, one sees the monarch in her bowing to the woman. Though Wilkes had served courageously, it required the Earl's death and time's healing balm to remove "Rob's" influence sufficiently for Elizabeth to restore Wilkes to the position his abilities merited.

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CHAPTER VII

WILKES' 1590 MISSION TO THE UNITED PROVINCES

At the time Thomas Wilkes began his three month mission to the United Provinces in the early summer of 1590, he was one of the most experienced and astute members of the Elizabethan diplomatic corps. Approximately forty-five years of age, he had served missions to France, Spain, the Spanish Low Countries, the Palatinate, and the United Provinces. His acquaintance and in some cases personal friendships with many of the leaders of Western Europe made him an obvious choice for a great variety of assignments. When not engaged in diplomatic work he had been immersed in the details of the Privy Council which not only honed his skills on domestic problems, but also kept him abreast of the international situation. Though his 1590 mission to The Hague has, with one exception,¹ attracted little attention from sixteenth-century diplomatic historians, it does represent an important stage in the development of Anglo-Dutch relations.

Dutch Affairs

After Leicester had taken his final leave of the Netherlands in November 1587, the English position there deteriorated markedly. Once

¹R. B. Wernham's "The Mission of Thomas Wilkes to the United Provinces in 1590," Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson, ed. J. Conway Davies (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 423-55 is a well written and heavily documented study for which I am indebted for many of the ideas expressed in the following pages.

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again, the States-General saw their opportunity to claim sovereign power at the expense of their cross-Channel ally. The Council of State, which was composed mostly of Leicestrians, was soon thrown into confusion and within two years its conduct of foreign affairs, war, and judicial matters had all been withdrawn and transferred to the States-General.¹

The States had also moved against other bastions of Leicestrian strength such as Utrecht and North Holland. As long as Leicester lived, Deventer kept the democratic party in power in the city of Utrecht, but by July 1589 he had not only been driven from office but tried and banished. Though Deventer eventually returned after a stay in England, he was never again able to play a significant role in Utrecht affairs.²

It was much the same story with Colonel Sonoy in North Holland. As long as there was a possibility that Leicester might return for a third expedition in the Netherlands he refused to have anything to do with Holland. However, when at the end of March 1588 it was officially learned in the Provinces that Leicester had abdicated his office as Governor-General, Sonoy's position became untenable. Thus, he allowed the States' troops who were besieging his stronghold of Medenblik to take possession of it and in the course of the summer he too was deprived of his offices and fled to England.³

Lord Willoughby who had been left in charge after Leicester's departure, soon grew unhappy with his position. An ardent Leicestrian, who had long shared the Earl's resentment against the leading politicians of the States his presence served only to aggravate matters further. Finally, in March 1589 he was recalled, and his sergeant-major Sir Francis

¹Blok, History, III, p. 238.

²Ibid., p. 239.

³Motley, Netherlands, II, p. 355.

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Vere left in command. The latter proved to be a far more tractable man than either Leicester or Willoughby had been and as a result the possibilities of Anglo-Dutch cooperation increased.¹

There were other reasons for the definite improvement of conditions in the United Provinces. During most of the summer of 1589 Parma's bad health had seriously hindered his generally aggressive campaigning, but, more importantly, affairs in France in the spring of 1590 began to claim more and more of his time and military strength.²

French Affairs

The explanation for this diversion lies in the complicated and sorry course of the French Civil Wars. With the death of the Duke of Anjou in 1584 the French Catholics began to see the distinct possibility of the Huguenot heir presumptive, Henry of Navarre, succeeding the effete Henry III as King of France. Fear of this moved them to revitalize the Catholic League into the Holy League which was to rely even more heavily on the support of Spain and the Papacy. Its chief objective was to prevent the Crown of France from falling to a Protestant heretic. The immediate result was the Spanish-Guise Treaty of Joinville in December 1584 which committed the contracting parties to achieving the above objective.³

Henry of Navarre's refusal to renounce his Protestantism in order to join with Henry III, plus the latter's growing fear of Guisard strength soon resulted in the French King's alliance with the League in July 1585. During the next three years of their joint struggle against

¹Read, Walsingham, III, pp. 369-60.

²Ibid., p. 361.

³Jensen, Diplomacy and Dogmatism, pp. 41-55.

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Henry of Navarre, the French King found that the Duke of Guise was too domineering an ally. Likewise, Guise began to feel a desire to be rid of his inept royal ally in order that the League's own candidate, the Cardinal Bourbon (uncle of Henry of Navarre), or possibly himself could be king. This resulted in the well known "Day of the Barricades" when in May 1588 the Parisian citizenry declared itself in favor of the principles of the Catholic League and forced Henry III to flee his capital for safety.¹

Escaping to Blois, the frightened and humiliated King planned and carried out his revenge by murdering both the Duke of Guise and his brother Louis, the Cardinal, in December of the same year. The result of this was a full scale revolt of the League which spread rapidly through northern and eastern France. In the meantime, the King had succeeded in joining forces with Henry of Navarre and the politiques in an effort to wrest Paris from the hands of the League. The attempt was temporarily thwarted however, by Henry III's assassination on the morning of August 1st, 1589.²

By the King's dying words, French hereditary laws, and the Declaration of Saint Cloud three days later, Henry of Navarre became Henry IV of France. But, for the next four years, as long as the League survived and he maintained his Protestantism he could never hope to obtain official recognition from most elements in France. Thus, began Henry IV's long struggle to secure his throne.³

¹Ibid., Ch. VII.

²Ibid., Ch's. VIII-IX.

³Ibid., Ch. X.

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English Affairs

These events in France had been followed closely by Elizabeth, but because of the complexity of their nature she had shown the usual indecision in coping with them. With the death of the vacillating Henry III, her problem had been greatly simplified. She now had the simple choice either of supporting Henry of Navarre or abandoning him. To do the latter could prove disastrous, whereas, supporting him would clearly work to Spain's disadvantage. Therefore, when in late August 1589, Henry IV dispatched his Councilor of State, Beauvoir la Nocle, to Elizabeth with an appeal for men, money, and supplies, she responded with surprising quickness by fulfilling all three requests. Delivered to Navarre by the end of October, this assistance included £20,000 and 4,000 troops.¹

Such commitments to France and the knowledge that much more would be required made Elizabeth all the more anxious to reduce her expenses in the Netherlands, but, before she dared do that she had to guarantee that the United Provinces' strength would be sufficient to continue resisting Parma. The first step she took was to appoint Thomas Wilkes as Muster-Master-General of the Low Countries. Instructed to coordinate from London all muster reports as sent in by the various resident muster officials in the Provinces, it was hoped that his careful auditing of each company's troop strength would give Elizabeth significantly more mileage than she had heretofore received for her money. Next, she set about to require of the States-General an effective executive government. Both she and her advisors agreed that this was the greatest weakness in the Netherland's Republic. They were also in agreement that the best

¹Read, Walsingham, III, p. 367.

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way of accomplishing this was to persuade the States to restore her Lord General's and the Council of State's authority to that which had originally been intended in the 1585 Treaty of Nonsuch.¹

Accordingly, from November 1589 until May 1590 there was much talk and several false starts as to whom would be sent to accomplish this difficult assignment. At first it looked as though Lord Buckhurst was to be the one chosen. Then, early in 1590, Thomas Wilkes wrote to George Gilpin, who was still a secretary in the Dutch Council of State, informing him of his restoration to Elizabeth's favor and his anticipated mission to The Hague. Gilpin replied by promising that his lodgings would be readied for his arrival. Whether or not Wilkes was to have gone alone or in company with someone like Buckhurst is not known but it really did not matter for the mission was again postponed.²

On March 10th a memorial was delivered to Wilkes which, among other things, asked him to set down five or six principal reasons why he felt Elizabeth should send a "person of credit to reform the confusions between the Provinces and herself." It also asked him to draw up for the benefit of Thomas Bodley, the only English Councilor of State at The Hague, a list of "points to be demanded by her Majesty" from the States. Wilkes sent such a memorandum to Lord Burghley on March 14 and in spite of "an extreme cold" promised to wait upon the Privy Council the next morning with the dispatches for the Low Countries.³

¹Discourses by Beauvoir, [Dec. 1589], L. & A., I, no. 488 and "Discourse on the Present Government of the United Provinces," [1589?], Ibid., nos. 31-41. See Ch. IX, pp. 378-82 of this study for further details of Wilkes' office as Muster-Master-General of the Low Countries.

²Abstract of Low Country letters, 16 Nov. 1589, Ibid., no. 291 and Gilpin to Wilkes, The Hague, 3 March 1590, Ibid., no. 315⁶

³Memorial for Wilkes, [10 March] 1590, Ibid., no. 315 and Wilkes to Burghley, London, 14 March 1590, Ibid.

Wilkes' memorandum made several valuable suggestions concerning the governing of the Provinces and necessary treaty revisions. He explained that time had revealed many imperfections in the contract and suggested that Elizabeth insist upon a restoration of the authority granted by the treaty to her general and the Council of State. This alone, he explained, could remedy the confusions caused by the "multiplicity and equality of commandment in the United Provinces' Government." Wilkes further suggested that the Queen was partly to blame for this confusion, for in the absence of a general to replace Willoughby, the Council could not effectively execute what authority they did retain. Actually, he explained, this problem dated back to Leicester's first departure from the Provinces. Even the States had "urged" and instructed the Council that a general always be present "to exercise with them that joint authority, without whom there is an insufficiency of power." Wilkes went on to suggest that Elizabeth send "some person of countenance" and "discretion" who "knew their humors" and could effect "a reformation" of their government.¹

As promised, on the following day (March 15th) Wilkes delivered his dispatches to the Privy Council, which forwarded them on to Bodley. In compliance with their instruction the latter informed the States that Elizabeth expected them to restore the authority of the Council of State according to the treaty. He explained that their attacks on the Council's power had not only increased the cost and inefficiency of the war effort but also added to the confusion of their government. Therefore, he continued, Elizabeth insisted that the treaty be henceforth strictly observed and the war conducted by the Council of State.²

¹Considerations touching the Low Countries, [14 March] 1590, Ibid., nos. 316-18.

²The Privy Council to Bodley, [Greenwich], 15 March 1590, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. VII, ff. 97-98.

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The reason for sending these instructions to Bodley was apparently to sound out the States on this issue before dispatching an expensive embassy which might possibly end in failure. Subsequent events supported this position.

Bodley received his March 15th instructions on April 4th and was delayed from delivering them to the States until the 16th. Though defensive, the States' reply that reached the Privy Council on the 25th was surprisingly apologetic. They protested that their actions had been "round," "sincere," and "wholly directed to preserve the countries." "At present," they claimed, the Provinces "did not suffer one-hundreth part of the dissensions and confusions which afflicted them in the years 1586 and 1587." The war was also going better and would go better still if they could have the full use of Elizabeth's 1,000 horse and 5,000 foot. As for the difficulties over the authority of the Queen's governor and the Council, they could only be solved "upon a full and true understanding of the Treaty." Apparently, in reference to Buckhurst they expressed their willingness to discuss the issue "with the personage her Majesty was sending." In fact, they complained they had long "kept the deputies of the Provinces duly empowered, assembled, [and] awaiting the arrival of a personage of her Council to treat and accord all misunderstandings."¹

After reading this reply Wilkes was instructed by the Privy Council to call on their London agent, Joachim Ortel, and learn what further matters he had to propound from the States-General and the Council of State. As a result of this interview Wilkes, who was "not altogether out of my physic and chirurgery," informed Burghley that he did

¹Bodley to the Privy Council, The Hague, 18 April 1590, L. & A., I, no. 324, The States to the Privy Council, The Hague, [20] April 1590, Ibid., and Bodley to the States, The Hague, 13 April 1590, Ibid.

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not think the matters of those countries and the affections of the States and people were so altered but that her Majesty might yet gain all that could be reasonably required, for her service and their good, through the discreet mediation of some person sent from herself and gracious to them.¹

Evidently, Burghley agreed with Wilkes' evaluation for by May 9th Bodley had been informed that Buckhurst was soon to be sent over. Understandably, Buckhurst was not pleased with the assignment. Upon learning of it he insisted he would not go unless Wilkes was sent along too. Even more aware of the pitfalls of service in the Low Countries, Wilkes declined the questionable honor and asked Buckhurst to remember his [Wilkes'] reason for refusing such employment. He also implored the Privy Councilor not to "press her Majesty" into commanding him to make the journey without first making sure certain "conditions" were granted, such as, a "timely warning" that would give him the leisure to prepare himself and the assurance of a "sufficient entertainment during his service."²

On May 3rd Wilkes prepared a memorial for Buckhurst which suggested several important items he should attend to before leaving on his mission. First, he should make certain that he obtained from Elizabeth and her Council a list of the "points and articles reformable" in the 1585 contract as well as "authority under the great seal" to treat therein. He should not allow himself to be "too strictly tied to words" and should definitely assist in the framing of his own instructions "because there are few of the Council that understand the state of the Low Countries." He advised him not to accept the mission if the Queen insisted upon a diminution of her charges in the Netherlands. Due to the death of their old and

¹Ortel to Burghley, London, 25 April 1590, Ibid., no. 326, and Wilkes to Burghley, London, 26 April 1590, Ibid.

²Bodley to Burghley, The Hague, 9 May 1590, Ibid., nos. 329 and 333 and Memorial for Buckhurst, [3 May] 1590, Ibid., no. 329.

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irreplaceable friend Walsingham on April 6th, Wilkes warned Buckhurst to beware who might be chosen to replace him in the office of Chief Secretary.

If the two men [Burghley's son, Robert Cecil, and ?William Davison] become Secretaries who are thought to be elected, then is the faction of the late Earl of Leicester revived and his lordship [Buckhurst] in danger to be stricken at in his absence.¹

Wilkes also asked Buckhurst to remember "certain special matters required by the States and necessary for her Majesty to think upon" such as her responsibility to "publicly disavow all factions" and at the same time to attempt to win back the friendship of such men as Barnevelt. She should also be "earnestly pressed" to send over a general, namely, Sir John Norris.²

The First Draft of "Instructions for A.B."

Apparently, at the same time this memorial was prepared and before its suggestions could be followed the first draft of Buckhurst's instructions were drawn up.³ Entitled "Instructions for A.B." they directed him to go to The Hague and there clarify for the States-General Elizabeth's position on the Treaty of Nonsuch. If they raised objections either about her or her ministers' past actions he was "to charge them with their ingratitude." Having done that he was to ask them "to commit to oblivion" all such offences just as Elizabeth was willing to do. Following this were three clauses which in substance comprised one of the two main purposes of the mission. In them the Queen explained that the "late

¹Ibid. For details on the problems of Walsingham's successor, see Chapter IX, pp. 371-76 of this study.

²Ibid.

³"[First] Draft of Instructions for A. B.," [May] 1590, Ibid., nos. 334-35. See also nos. 340-41.

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attempts" of the Spanish King against her "had bred" an "intolerable charge and much diminished" England's ability to defend herself against Philip's continued preparations. Therefore, she desired to lessen her foreign charges by reducing the numbers of her auxiliary troops "to [blank] horse and [blank] foot." If the States continued to claim that they could make better use of her treasure if they had the managing of it, Buckhurst was to ask them if they would accept from her "a sum of [blank] pounds yearly" in cash as well as commodities, and at the same time bind themselves to maintain "a convenient number" of her troops at English rates of pay. If the States agreed to this he was to let her know and she would give him further instructions on how to proceed.¹

The remainder of the points Buckhurst was to negotiate were many. They are grouped under four heads each itemizing Elizabeth's demands and what she would in return consent to, for the States' satisfaction. The articles under the first head pertained to martial causes and discipline. They included demands that the States allow England's two cautionary town garrisons to be reinforced from the auxiliary forces, that the States be bound to maintain a specified number of horse and foot in their ordinary garrisons as well as a fixed number in the field for four months of each summer, and that if necessary, the Queen be allowed some of her auxiliary forces for the defence of England or Ireland.

Those articles under the second head dealt with civil policy and the government of the Provinces. The three most important stipulated that the States restore full authority to the Council of State and Elizabeth's

¹While there is no indication of a reduction being considered for the auxiliary forces there is a suggestion as to what reduction was being considered in Elizabeth's annual charge. In a memorial to the Lord Chancellor Hatton (May 1590) the suggestion was made that even with the present carefully husbanded charge of £110,000 per annum not more than 1,400 horse and foot could be drawn into the field. Thus, the Queen's help would hardly be worth anything if she reduced her charge to £60,000. Ibid., no. 330.

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general, that they also hand over to England for three years "the entire and absolute managing of the Provinces' ordinary and extraordinary contributions as well as establish a standing committee of the States with which the Queen could deal year round, and that all "deliberation and registers" of the Council of State be carried out in Latin or French as originally intended. Lately the States had insisted that they be in Flemish or Dutch with which the English were not familiar.

Under the third head, conditions and limitations were set within which Elizabeth would allow Dutch ships to trade with Spain and Portugal. The fourth head listed matters of account such as "defalcations," English versus States' pay, and the repayment of debts. A concluding article stipulated that if these things were accorded by the States Buckhurst was to have a contract drawn up but only bearing the title of an "Explanation of the Former Contract." This done, he was to return and report his negotiations.

At this juncture it is possible to conclude that Elizabeth and the Privy Council had intentions of sending both Buckhurst and Wilkes, if he were willing, to The Hague to accomplish two goals. Firstly, to attempt a reduction of England's military and financial commitment to the Netherlands and, secondly, to achieve an "Explanation" of the Treaty of Nonsuch that would remedy its many defects and more importantly, allow for a restoration of full authority to the Council of State and Elizabeth's general, whoever he might be.

The Second Draft of "Instructions for A. B."

The interesting thing about the first draft of instructions is not so much their content as the difference between them and the second draft of "Instructions for A. B." --a difference that not only indicates a major modification in the purpose of the mission, but as a result of that

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modification, a change in the ambassador to be sent. The change occurred between the dates of May 11th and 19th. On the first date Burghley told Bodley that Buckhurst soon was expecting to depart for The Hague, and on the second the Clerk of the Signet, Thomas Windebank, told Burghley that Elizabeth had decided to send Wilkes instead.¹

The second draft of instructions proved to be a transitional one bridging the gap between the first draft and Wilkes' final set of instructions. They illustrate the evolution of Elizabeth's thinking prior to his dispatch to The Hague. The second draft was basically the same as the first with the exception of two additions which had apparently been taken from Wilkes' earlier memorial to Buckhurst. These were that Elizabeth should publicly disavow all factions in the Provinces and that efforts should be made to win the devotion of those members of the States and others who had opposed her former generals. There was also an added suggestion that £300 per annum be used to bestow "rewards and pensions to the 4, 5, or 6 who had most credit and authority in the States" assemblies.²

By far the most important addition was an article explaining the two "secret" causes that had "especially moved" Elizabeth to send Wilkes on this mission. The first was reports that certain persons in authority in the Provinces had made secret overtures to the French King, Henry IV, in an attempt to induce him to assume the sovereignty of those countries. Wilkes was instructed to do all in his power to "discover this and counter-mine it by the skill and credit he had with such as were equals and

¹Burghley to Bodley, [?], 11 May 1590, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. VII, f. 138, and Windebank to Burghley, [the Court], 19 May 1590, B.M., Harl. Mss. 6995, f. 4.

²[Notes for Wilkes' Mission], [May] 1590, L. & A., I, no. 336 and "[second] Draft of Instructions for A.B.," [May] 1590, Ibid., no. 337.

opposites to those men." The second cause which worried the Queen most of all was the "credible advertisement from foreign parts" that the King of Spain had procured from Pope Sixtus V,

a dispensation to grant free exercise of religion to those Provinces that are revolted from him in the Low Countries; and that he hath given order to make offer of peace unto them, wherein the point of religion, which hath hitherto been the only impediment thereunto, shall be granted.

Though the 1585 Treaty had bound the Provinces not to make a peace without the Queen's knowledge and consent she was worried that they might be "alienated" from her and thus "violently carried to embrace a peace for themselves, to her prejudice." Wilkes was first to observe what had been done therein and then "by all means possible seek to impeach and hinder it."¹

The introduction of these two causes clearly revealed a fundamental change in the purpose of the intended mission. Whereas, before, it was designed to persuade the States to accept a revision of the Treaty of Nonsuch and to allow a reduction in Elizabeth's commitments to them; now, the mission was primarily designed to prevent the Provinces from entering into treaties with France or worst of all with Spain. Exactly why Elizabeth became so disturbed over these possibilities at this point is a partial mystery. She had known of Dutch intrigues with France which included both Counts Maurice and William since the middle of April, and of Philip II's intended peace offers since November 1589. Perhaps the explanation lies in Elizabeth's usual slowness in making up her mind. After so many threatening reports of Spain's new armada preparations, she may have finally decided that it was going to sail that summer

¹Wilkes' Instructions, 26 May 1590, Ibid., no. 340, xx. A second copy of these instructions is to be found in B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. VII, ff. 155-64.

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as it had two years earlier. If so, the greatest mistake she could make would be to lose her cross-Channel allies.¹

A new opening clause was also inserted in this second draft for the purpose of explaining to the States the alleged reasons for not sending Buckhurst. It explained that as Lord Lieutenant of the maritime county of Sussex he could not be spared during the summer months when another attempt by Spain was expected. Wilkes was also told that if he should succeed in drawing up an "Explanation" of the 1585 Contract he was to advise the Queen of it whereupon she "might send over Lord Buckhurst with authority to confirm and ratify" it.²

One other important change was included in the second draft before it became the final draft of Wilkes' instructions. Both the first and second drafts were headed by the important three articles dealing with Elizabeth's desire to reduce her money and troop commitments in the Provinces. However, in the second draft these articles have a marginal cross marked against each of them indicating their elimination. Consequently, in Wilkes' final instructions they are entirely omitted. The

¹William Lyly, servant to the English Ambassador in France, Sir Edward Stafford, to Walsingham, Melun, [2] April 1590, *Ibid.*, no. 362 [see also nos. 361 and 364-65], Letter from A.B., [The Hague], [late Nov.] 1589, *Ibid.*, no. 591, Henry IV to Burghley, Rozonay, [26 April] 1590, *Ibid.*, no. 525, Intelligence Reports, April 1590, *Cal. Dom.*, II, p. 661, and Thomas Windebank to Burghley, [the Court], 19 May 1590, B.M., Harl. Mss. 6995, f. 4. In fact as we have seen Windebank gives as the reason for Elizabeth's decision to send Wilkes instead of Buckhurst her fears of "what attempts may be made by the Spaniards" against England. Burghley too, in a letter to Bodley, speaks of Elizabeth "in these times of danger from enemy attack on England" having "put all maritime Counties in readiness." See Burghley to Bodley, The Strand, 20 May 1590, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. VII, f. 153.

²Wilkes' instructions, 26 May 1590, *L. & A.*, I, no. 34, 1 and xix, Privy Council Memorial for Wilkes, 28 May 1590, *Ibid.*, no. 341 [see B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. VII, ff. 167-69 for another copy of these additional instructions]; and Thomas Windebank to Burghley, [the Court], 19 May 1590, B.M., Harl. Mss. 6995, f. 4. Windebank mentions "Buckhurst's sickness" as another excuse used by Elizabeth to explain her decision not to send him to The Hague.

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reason for the omission is obvious. If the Provinces were to be kept loyal to their contract with England there could be no reduction in Elizabeth's troop and money commitments to them. The memorial to Hatton had made it amply clear that even her £110,000 a year permitted only 1,400 horse and foot to serve in the field. If this were to be reduced to the suggested £60,000 her assistance would hardly be worth having, and the States would consequently be forced to look for assistance from France or to a peace with Spain.¹

The reason for the change in ambassadors from Buckhurst to Wilkes is also fairly obvious. What was needed to carry out the new instructions was not the prestigious embassy of a great personage but a skilled diplomatist, trained in the art of uncovering important intelligence and experienced in the ways of the Dutch. Within England's diplomatic ranks Wilkes' knowledge of Netherlands affairs was unparalleled and it was for this reason that he was selected.²

¹"[Second] Draft of Instructions for A.B.," [May] 1590, L. & A., I, no. 337. There were also added to Wilkes' final instructions four new articles dealing with the comparatively minor points of Ostend's sea defences and the conversion of 500 auxiliary horse to 1,200 foot.

²Considering the extreme length and detail of these instructions it is not surprising that we find Wilkes' own condensed notes covering each of the numerous articles. He knew there could be no fumbling with vast folios of written instructions when he debated these articles with the States. See Wilkes' abstract of his Instructions, 10 June 1590, Ibid., nos. 345-47. In spite of the above position it is interesting to note one of Thomas Windebank's statements to Burghley when he informed the latter of Elizabeth's decision to send Wilkes: "At the first, her Majesty seemed not to like [that] Mr. Wilkes or any should go, but afterward, when I told her that the States continuing their assembly and looking that my Lord of Buckhurst should be there by the end of this month, would think it too strange that neither he nor any other should go, and that I thought it to great purpose, were it but to keep them in good minds towards her Majesty, specially now that so many practices are like to be wrought by her enemies and adversaries." Windebank to Burghley, [the Court], 19 May 1590, B.M., Harl. Mss. 6995, f. 4.

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The First Month of Negotiation

Unaware of the "secret" reasons for Wilkes' coming, the States and Bodley were not particularly happy about the decision to send a Clerk of the Council rather than a Privy Councilor. Bodley felt most would regret the decision. "A person of nobility," he explained, "especially one so much desired, might have reduced matters to a tolerable state," but now he was "out of hope to see it effected by anyone." When he informed the States of the change of ambassadors they replied that they had looked forward to a nobleman coming to settle all difficulties, but hoped Wilkes would "do all good offices." George Gilpin reported that "this people do not show any great liking" for Wilkes' coming, "but the issue cannot be judged till his errand be known."¹

Wilkes set off for The Hague on May 28th. With him he carried his May 26th instructions, the Privy Council's Memorial (or additional instructions), dated May 28th, letters of credence to the States-General, the Council of State, Count Maurice, and Count William of Nassau,² a copy of the Queen's declaration disavowing factions in the United Provinces,³ a proclamation concerning the conditions upon which Dutch trade with Spain would be allowed,⁴ a passport dated May 28th,⁵ an £80

¹George Gilpin to Sir Robert Sidney, Governor of Flushing, The Hague, 2 June 1590, Collins, ed., Letters and Memorials, I, p. 301, Bodley to Burghley, The Hague, 31 May 1590, L. & A., I, no. 338, and the States-General to Bodley, [The Hague], 6 June 1590, Ibid.

²Elizabeth to the States-General, to the Council of State, to Count Maurice, and Count William, Greenwich, 28 May 1590, Ibid., no. 342.

³Thomas Rymer, ed., Foedera, Conventions Literae et Cojuscunque Generis Acta Publica, Inter Reges Angliae (London: A. & J. Churchill, 1615), XVI, pp. 66-67 [hereafter cited: Rymer, Foedera].

⁴B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. VII, ff. 144-45.

⁵L. & A., I, no. 342.

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advance on his salary, and a daily diet of 40s. that had begun on May 20th.¹ Despite the "unfitness of the wind and the calm" he made a speedy passage and arrived at Flushing on June 4th. The next day he went to Middelburg to deliver a message from Elizabeth to the Princess of Orange. From there he traveled to Dordrecht² and arrived at The Hague on June 9th.³ Wilkes' negotiations from this point onward are so extensively documented that it is possible to witness in him an interesting change of opinion as day by day his knowledge of the Dutch situation grew.

The day after his arrival Wilkes informed two of the States' deputies who came to visit him that he wished to have audience the next morning. However, when morning came (June 10th) he found himself so "taken with a sudden lameness in my arms and legs" that he had to defer his audience until June 13th. In the meantime, he took advantage of this spare time to work on his opening speech, to make an abstract of his instructions, and to discuss them with Bodley, whom Elizabeth had joined with him in commission. Together the two men decided that Wilkes should first discuss matters of musters and martial discipline with the States in order "to sound" out their "inclinations" to the remainder of the articles.⁴

¹P.R.O., E. 403/2559, p. 312. Murdin, ed., Collection, II, p. 793 states: "Thomas Wilkes sent into the Lowe Countryes, with letters of credit to the states, £3 per diem." Apparently, this is wrong for Cal. Dom., II, p. 667 lists Wilkes' daily salary as 40s. per day.

²Wilkes to Burghley, Flushing, 5 June 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 84, XXXVII, f. 253.

³[Wilkes] to Burghley, The Hague, 14 June 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 177b-78.

⁴Ibid., Note of Audience with States-General and Council of State, 13 June 1590, Ibid., f. 177, Elizabeth to the States-General, Greenwich, 28 May 1590, L. & A., I, no. 342, and Elizabeth to [Bodley], Greenwich, 18 June 1590, Rymer, Foedera, XVI, p. 72.

Soon able to walk with a staff, Wilkes, along with Bodley, appeared before the States-General on the afternoon of June 13th. After presenting his letters of credence he delivered his prepared speech in which he explained that her Majesty had sent him to redress the disorders and confusions bred by breaches of the contract on both sides, to remove all "misintelligences" between the Queen and them, and to present "certain demands." He asked them if they had the authority "to treat and conclude" and if so to send some of their members to deal with himself and Bodley. After the States replied by thanking her Majesty for her choice of Wilkes, whose "skill and affection they knew from his former good services," the English ambassador went on to explain that he had many matters to discuss with them. He explained he would deal with them separately under different heads, beginning with matters of musters and martial discipline. The conference ended with the States asking that these matters be put in writing which Wilkes promised to do, as it was "a course they have always used, and best with them for expedition." Wilkes then went on to the Council of State and there presented his letters of credence and asked to confer with them about the possibilities of redressing the recent abridgements of their authority.¹

These preliminary meetings left Wilkes with a strong feeling of optimism. Two days later he wrote to the new Governor of Flushing, Sir Robert Sidney, claiming that his negotiation was already "much applauded by the States and great hope had of the issue." He found the membership of the States-General much the same as in 1587, but that of the Council was quite changed. The only familiar faces were Joos Teelinck and Jacob Valcke of Zeeland, Doctor Elbertus Leoninus of Gelderland, and of course

¹Notes of Audiences with States and Council, 13 June 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 177.

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Counts Maurice and William of Nassau, who seldom attended. George Gilpin was still there as a Secretary to the Council as was Christopher Huygens. Because Wilkes' assignment was as an ambassador only and not as a Council of State, Bodley remained the only English councilor in that body.¹

Three days after first meeting with the States, Wilkes and Bodley delivered their proposals relating to musters and martial discipline. Wilkes expressly asked if, like themselves, the States were authorized "by their superiors [i.e., the provincial estates]" to treat and conclude these and other matters. If so, they hoped to deal speedily with these points and pass onto others. Apparently, as before, there was no direct answer.²

Whatever their answer, it led Wilkes to expect a prompt reply to his proposals, but, as June slowly wasted away he received nothing but excuses. His growing impatience over this delay was understandable, for until he received their answers he could not begin to negotiate on the more important matters contained in his instructions. Moreover, he and

¹Wilkes to Sidney, The Hague, 15 June 1590, H.M.C., Report on the Manuscripts of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley Preserved at Penhurst Place, ed., C. L. Kingsford (London: Printed by H.M.S.O. for the Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1934), II, p. 107 [hereafter cited: De L'Isle and Dudley], and membership of States-General and Council of State, 17 July 1590, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. VII, ff. 205-6. The membership of the 1590 Dutch Council of State looked something like this:

Holland:	1) Count Maurice	Friesland:	9) Count William
	2) Jan Matheness		10) Kemp Donia
	3) Sebastian van Loosen		11) Christofle Arensma
	4) Simon Maineston		12) Joris Bye
Zeeland:	5) Jacob Valcke	England:	13) Thomas Bodley
	6) Joos Teelinck		14) [Vacancy]
Utrecht:	7) Nicholas van Berck	Receiver	
Gelderland:	8) Doctor Elbertus	General:	15) [?]
	Leoninus	"Sometimes"	16) Philip Dublet
			17) [?] 18) [?]

²Articles exhibited to the States-General, 16 June 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 178-80.

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Bodley found their efforts further hampered by the States' decision temporarily to transfer the Council of State to Arnhem in Gelderland, "there to second the purposes of Count Maurice for some further attempt upon the fort before Zutphen" and "to take better order upon every accident of the wars." Both Wilkes and the Council vigorously protested this decision, with the former going so far as to ask that if the Council must go then the States should go to; so that he could treat with both together. But, it was to no avail, and Wilkes and Bodley were both convinced "that it was a matter purposely continued, to rid them [the Council] out of the way" while the negotiations were in process.¹

Wilkes' conversations with the Councilor Jacob Valcke and the States' greffier Cornelius Aerssens further convinced him of this. Valcke told him that even though conditions in the Provinces were better than they had been for a long time and the people were generally devoted to Elizabeth, there was a general fear that another English governor might renew their former disorders. Valcke also felt that if the States were to agree to the observance of the 1585 Contract they "would make constructions there of in favor of their liberties." When Wilkes complained to Aerssens of the States' delay, the latter simply replied that such important matters could not be decided quickly.²

By June 21st Wilkes was beginning to doubt if the States would ever "show much forwardness to satisfy her Majesty" on the matters of his negotiation. More importantly, he was now convinced that the delay was due to their inclination to France and that they would protract the

¹Note of Audience with the States, 19 June 1590, *Ibid.*, f. 180, Bodley to Burghley, The Hague, 9 July 1590, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. VII, f. 195, and Wilkes to Sidney, The Hague, 23 June 1590, H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley, II, p. 108.

²Note of Conversation with Valcke, 20 June 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 180b.-81, and Note of Conversation with Aerssens, 22 June, *Ibid.*, ff. 181-82.

negotiations as long as there was hope of a settlement with Henry IV. When Burghley informed Elizabeth of Wilkes' feelings she commented that though she thought the King "to be free thereof for any meaning" she doubted the "wandering disposition" of some in the States. Accordingly, Burghley instructed Wilkes to try to penetrate the States' intentions with regard to France.¹

Wilkes Changes His Mind

In the meantime, Wilkes' anxiety for the States' answers drove him to pay a visit to Barnevelt, the undisputed leader of that College. It proved to be a visit that significantly modified his opinion as to the reasons for their delay. Barnevelt was generous in his professions of loyalty and gratitude to Elizabeth and explained that in spite of past differences with such men as Leicester and Willoughby, he was willing to act as mediator between the States and England. When Wilkes pressed him for some answer to the June 16th proposals he promised they would be forthcoming shortly. The delay, he explained, was due to the fact "that the deputies of every province had severally taken copies of the propositions and had apart considered of them." They had only met all together that very day to reconcile their opinions for an answer. Barnevelt went on to say that the exact terms of the Treaty of Nonsuch had not been understood by the "whole people" until Bodley in early 1589 had charged the Provinces with thirty-five separate breaches of that contract. Learning of these charges, the "towns desired to know particularly wherein the contraventions were and so grew to consider of the Contract itself and to make such constructions of the same as they

¹Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 21 June, L. & A., I, no. 352, and Burghley to Wilkes, Greenwich, 29 June, Ibid.

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thought good." When Wilkes replied that there could be but one true construction of the Contract, Barnevelt agreed and said that Elizabeth would doubtless find their answer satisfactory. He then asked Wilkes if he had the authority necessary to treat about their trade with Spain and if he had brought with him the Queen's declaration against factions. When Wilkes replied that he had both, Barnevelt explained that the first was "very necessary to them" and that the second "would do good."¹

Still, there was no answer from the States, so on June 29th Wilkes wrote Barnevelt complaining that a whole month had passed since he left England, and that the Queen and Privy Council must be very surprised that they still had no news from him. The next day Aerssens visited him and assured him that the States had finally resolved upon their answers but that it would take him, as secretary, another three days to draft a minute of them and gain the States' approval of that minute. Meanwhile, would he accept some of their own requests so that they might know if he had the necessary authority to satisfy them on those points? Wilkes agreed, provided it did not delay their answers to his own proposals.²

The States' continual questioning of the sufficiency of his authority along with his visit with Barnevelt, finally changed Wilkes' mind about the reasons for their delays. No longer did he feel it was due just to their inclination toward France, but more importantly to their own lack of authority. "There are strange delays and hitherto no answer to my propositions," Wilkes wrote to Sidney. "They seem glad of my coming, but do nothing, I suppose from lack of authority." To Burghley he

¹Note of Conversation with Barnevelt, 24 June 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 182-83.

²[Wilkes] to Barnevelt, The Hague, Ibid., f. 185b. and Note of Conversation with Aerssens, 30 June 1590, Ibid., f. 186.

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elaborated on this point:

I suspect and do partly find it by good intelligence that the States here resident have no authority to treat with me, neither was there any assembly general of them, nor had been, though by their letters to her Majesty and your lordship it was certified they were assembled. So as this delay in truth doth grow by that means which they will not acknowledge....[i.e.] That their authority and commissions from their towns are always limited to things particular.

Thus, they were always required to refer everything back to their "principals" in the several provinces. As a result, Wilkes realized that if he continued to divide his proposals into parts and treat each separately he would be negotiating until Christmas time. So it was that on July 6th he asked Burghley for authority "to deliver the whole at once."¹

It is not surprising to find the States so reluctant to acknowledge their deficiency in authority, for, time and again during Wilkes' 1586-1587 mission they had claimed to be sovereign only to be challenged openly on that position by him. Now, Wilkes was being proven right. Sovereignty did lie with the provincial estates.

Count Maurice

Wilkes discovered one other important piece of information during his first month at The Hague. Meetings with the States-General and Council of State, as well as conversations with Barnevelt, Valcke, and Aerssens, all made him aware of the general contentment the United Provinces felt for their present situation. They indicated that conditions were generally better than they had been since first asking for English assistance. Though grateful for Elizabeth's aid it had proved less valuable than expected due to the "insufficiency" of her former governors, who were "raw and unacquainted" with the actual state of Dutch affairs.

¹Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 6 July 1590, Ibid., f. 187.

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Because the "townspeople" were now so "skillful and well instructed" in the 1585 Contract, they hoped her Majesty would not tie them to a more rigid observance of it than their natures and the good of their estate might bear. These and other hints led Wilkes to realize that the States would hardly agree to receiving another English Governor, especially one endowed with the authority mentioned in the Contract. Instead it seemed they were beginning to place their hopes on Count Maurice, whose prestige had been steadily growing since 1586. As an excellent military leader and as "governor of all the Provinces except Friesland,"¹ he now possessed both the qualities and authority necessary to carry out a coordinated war effort. In fact, he "bestrode the authority of the Provinces" in such a manner that it would be next to impossible for Elizabeth to place any general over him. Furthermore, the States and Council were hinting that they now needed no such governor from her Majesty because by conferring the whole on Maurice they had reformed their former confusions.²

If, as Wilkes suspected, all this were true; and Maurice, as it had been rumored, was wholly Frenchified, then it was extremely important that he be won over to the English side again. Fearful that his negotiations might be construed as an attempt to subvert the Count's authority, Wilkes immediately wrote to him apologizing that he could not conveniently meet him at his camp before Nijmegen and explaining briefly the purpose of his mission. He asked Sir Francis Vere to deliver the

¹Count William of Nassau was still Governor of Friesland, but since the accidental death of the Count of Moeurs in October 1589, Utrecht, Gelderland, and Overijsel had come under Maurice's authority.

²Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 6 and 10 July 1590, L. & A., II, no. 195.

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letter personally and at the same time sound out Maurice's feelings on the French connection.¹

Maurice's brief reply expressed pleasure with the purpose of Wilkes' mission and promised to further it. However, Vere reported on June 30th that he found the Count "somewhat backward" and suggested that this was probably due to his pro-French advisors. A short time later when Vere took the opportunity to "break thoroughly" with Maurice on the question of his French inclination, he found the Count pleased with the opportunity to clear himself of Elizabeth's suspicions. Vere also found Maurice able to excuse his earlier contacts with Henry IV as an attempt to regain "certain places of his patrimony in Burgundy." This and his "solemn" protestations of devotion to the Queen convinced Vere of his sincerity.²

Wilkes did not fully agree with Vere about Maurice's devotion to Elizabeth, but was convinced that there would never be a better time to win him securely to England's side. Writing to Burghley on July 10th, he acknowledged another change of opinion.

Mr. Secretary [Walsingham] not much before his death did often ask my poor opinion whether if her Majesty might be persuaded to establish the Count Maurice as her Lieutenant in these countries to exercise the authority yielded by the Contract,...Although I then dissented from him therein, yet finding now how far the Count is entered into authority here in the Countries (from the which it will be hard to remove him and dangerous to attempt it) and into the good opinion and expectation of this people, I should think of her Majesty did give him the title of her Lieutenant-General to command with the Council of State as by the Contract is provided, and to commit the leading of her auxiliary succors in the nature of a regiment to some man of meaner quality, as to the gentleman that now commandeth them in the field [Vere] or to Sir John Norris, there would not only follow any prejudice thereby to her Majesty (as things may be handled) but

¹[Wilkes] to Count Maurice, The Hague, 24 June 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 184 and Wilkes to Vere, The Hague, 25 June 1590, Ibid., ff. 184b-85.

²Count Maurice to Wilkes, Before Nijmegen, 29 June 1590, L. & A., I, no. 356, and Vere to Wilkes, [?], 30 June 1590, Ibid.

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rather good, for that the States in that respect might be drawn to yield her Majesty satisfaction in all the matters of most importance required by her Majesty of them. And moreover, if her Majesty might be pleased to gratify the said Count with the Order of the Garter or some other signification of her favor unto him, it would be a mean the more to tie him in duty and affection to her Majesty and her estate.¹

Impasse

The same day Wilkes wrote the above he also sent a note to the States-General pressing them again for an answer to his June 16th proposals so that he could decide whether to wait longer or to take his leave. If they lacked authority or there was some other legitimate excuse for the delay, he was grieved that they had not informed him of it, for he could have explained as much to the increasingly impatient Queen. At the same time, he and Bodley replied to the States' six articles presented to them by Aerssens on June 30th. They pointed out that most of these very articles had already been presented by Ortel and answered by the Privy Council as far back as March 15th. However, to satisfy the States that they had sufficient authority, Wilkes and Bodley specifically listed what proposals they were willing to discuss and to conclude.²

Finally, three days later, they received the States' answers to their own June 16th proposals.³ Finding that the States had in effect denied all the principal demands, Wilkes and Bodley requested and obtained an audience on July 15th.⁴ After carefully explaining why Elizabeth had

¹Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 10 July 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 189.

²Wilkes to the States, The Hague, 10 July 1590, *Ibid.*, f. 189b., and Report of Negotiations, 18 July 1590, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D, VII, ff. 208-11.

³States' Replies, 13 July 1590, *Ibid.*, ff. 198b-201.

⁴When Wilkes first read the States' replies he was extremely exasperated. In a letter to Sidney written the same day he exclaimed: "I hold nothing so strange as the delays and dalliance used with me by

demanded these things, and asking them to reconsider, the two English Ambassadors asked the embarrassing question whether the States were authorized by their Provinces to "treat and conclude" on the treaty. Their answer, "Standing" as it did "upon the points of their sovereignty and their absolute authority" proved so doubtful that Wilkes and Bodley insisted it be put in writing. The States then confessed that though as a body their authority was sufficient to deal and to conclude in all things, yet "in their discretions" they always sought the advice of the provincial estates upon matters which could bind these local provinces. They further admitted that previous failures to conclude upon such general matters had come as a result of the Provinces' unwillingness to "give them authority" when their commissions were "always and only given upon things particular."¹

A second conference was held the next day, July 16th, and the discussion gave Wilkes and Bodley "some hope of better success." So, on the 17th a third meeting was held in which a copy of Elizabeth's conditions on Dutch trade with Spain was delivered and her declaration against the faction displayed but not delivered because of the States' obstinate refusal to accept the trade restrictions. On the 18th of July Wilkes and Bodley "returned again" to their "audience expecting some grateful answer" but instead were disappointed by Barneveldt's statement that the States could not alter their position. The two ambassadors tried to argue the matter and even protested that the States' proceedings seemed so full of suspicion "that if we had been

these persons. I am so far beyond my Latin therewith as I cannot tell what to conjecture rightly of the cause thereof." Wilkes to Sidney, The Hague, 13 July 1590, H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley, II, pp. 108-9.

¹Report of Negotiations, 18 July 1590, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. VII, ff. 208-11. See also Wilkes and Bodley to Hatton, Burghley, and Buckhurst, The Hague, 22 July 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 194-98.

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Spaniards it could not have been worse," but, all this "bred in them no great alteration of their purpose but rather a stomach to answer us." Thus the meeting ended with nothing accomplished.¹

Wilkes was "so stirred" by the whole fiasco that he and Bodley decided that very night to send George Gilpin to inform the Queen and her Council of the whole matter. However, on July 19th one of the States' deputies--"the chief man that looketh so high"--came to Wilkes at his lodgings and told him, under pledge of secrecy, that his colleagues were willing to consider matters further if he and Bodley would deliver to them in writing their verbal arguments. Encouraged by this, the two ambassadors decided to follow the advice and at the same time to stay Gilpin's departure.²

Accordingly, on July 20th the two men quickly framed several objections to the States' replies; replies which they charged were in part "defective" and in part "derogatory" to the Queen's authority as guaranteed by the 1585 Treaty. At the same time, and having secured Burghley's permission to do so, they submitted a lengthy document containing most of Wilkes' remaining instructions. These included Elizabeth's demand that the Provinces' forces be commanded by her own Governor-General, and that his and the Council of State's authority should be "strengthened and amplified" as stipulated in Articles XIX and XX of the Treaty. After considering those two papers, the States wrote back on the 22nd claiming that they contained matters of such importance, some of which exceeded the limits of the Contract, that they were forced to refer them back to their principals for their advice.³

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., and Gilpin to Killigrew, The Hague, 21 July 1590, L. & A., II, no. 207.

³Burghley to Wilkes, [?], 16 July 1590, Ibid., no. 196, the States

Convinced this was only a device to prolong the negotiations until it was seen whether or not Henry IV was successful in his siege of Paris, Wilkes and Bodley obtained an audience with the States on July 24th. There they protested that it was quite needless to seek the advice of the provincial estates since Article XIX of the Treaty already gave the Queen and the Council of State full power and authority to deal with commonweal matters and martial discipline. Surprised by this statement the States rose from the table "in a sort amazed and retired themselves to another room to advise upon their answer." After more than a quarter-of-an-hour they returned and their President, John van der Warck of Zeeland, delivered their answer. He explained that since Elizabeth had previously refused their offer of sovereignty, they supposed she would not now seek it by virtue of the Contract. Having more heads or sovereigns than one would make their state a monster. Besides, the authority granted to the Queen by that article was only to be exercised once and that had already occurred under Leicester's governorship. Thus, "the effect of that article was already performed and that article vanished." Wilkes and Bodley denied that Elizabeth had any intentions of demanding the sovereignty through Article XIX and maintained that it was no more extinct than any other part of the Contract. After "much vain argument" the States again side-stepped the issue by insisting it must be referred to their principals.¹

to Wilkes and Bodley, The Hague, 22 July 1590, Ibid., no. 219, Wilkes and Bodley to Hatton, Burghley, and Buckhurst, The Hague, 29 July 1590, Ibid., no. 207, [Declaration by Wilkes and Bodley], The Hague, 20 July 1590, Ibid., nos. 208-10, Wilkes and Bodley to the States, The Hague, [20] July 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 192b-93, and Wilkes to States-General, 20 July 1590, B.M., Add. Mss. 17,677E., ff. 55b.-56. See also Ibid., ff. 56b.-58.

¹Wilkes and Bodley to Hatton, Burghley, and Buckhurst, The Hague, 29 July 1590, L. & A., II, nos. 218-20. See second copy in B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. VII, ff. 239-40.

With the exception of presenting their few remaining proposals to the States on July 25th, Wilkes' and Bodley's negotiations were for all intents and purposes "brought to a non plus." Nothing more could be done until everything had been submitted, debated, and resolved at the local levels of government, and Wilkes felt certain that would take until the end of September or the middle of October. In fact, he correctly surmised, the longer they delayed the less hope he and Bodley had of a good answer.¹

Still, this did not stop him from accepting the advice of his old friend, Paul Buys, that Elizabeth be persuaded to write each of the principal towns to induce them to "more conformity" in the matters the English Ambassadors had propounded. Burghley was successful in moving the Queen to do this but she failed to write each town separately. Instead the letters were addressed to the towns of each province jointly. When these letters were sent to Wilkes he refused to deliver them. He explained that errors of precedence in addressing the letters as well as the improper naming of Dutch officials would make them unacceptable to "this ceremonious people." It is also possible that Wilkes was influenced by Gilpin who wisely recollected the storm caused in July 1587 by Leicester's indiscreet attempts to influence the towns by his letters.²

¹Ibid., Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, [29 July?], 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 207-8, Wilkes and Bodley to the States, 25 July 1590, Ibid., ff. 203b.-204, Wilkes and Bodley to the States, 25 July 1590, B.M., Add. Mss. 17,677E, ff. 58b.-59, Gilpin to Killigrew, The Hague, 28 July 1590, L. & A., II, no. 223, and Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 7 Aug. 1590, Ibid.

²Wilkes and Bodley to Hatton, Burghley, and Buckhurst, 11 July 1590, L. & A., II, no. 217, Burghley to Wilkes, the Court, 7 Aug. 1590, Ibid., no. 229, Elizabeth to various Dutch towns, 7 Aug. 1590, Ibid., Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 7 Aug. 1590, Ibid., Gilpin to Killigrew, The Hague, 21 July 1590, Ibid., no. 218, and Wilkes to Burghley, [The Hague], 14 Aug. 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 210b.-211. Wilkes never did deliver the letters and apparently brought them home with him in the end. Ibid.

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The Secret Instructions

Meanwhile, what about the more important secret instructions which Wilkes had been sent in place of Buckhurst to fulfill? Would his mission be an utter failure because he was unable to broach the subject with the States? Were the United Provinces likely to offer their sovereignty to the French or were they planning a separate peace with Spain? Where did Count Maurice stand on these important issues? The answers Wilkes produced on these and other questions demonstrate clearly how far out of touch Elizabeth and the Privy Council were with the changes that had taken place in Dutch opinion since 1587.

It will be recalled that on July 6th and 10th Wilkes had written Burghley of his doubts concerning Count Maurice's French inclinations and of the possibilities of his being appointed as Elizabeth's Lieutenant-General. On the 16th the Lord Treasurer had replied, explaining that after discussing these views with Elizabeth and the Council, the Queen had instructed him to inform Wilkes that she was not interested in Maurice as her Lieutenant-General. However, she did feel there might be some value in encouraging the Count in such a "humor" for the present. Though she leaned towards Wilkes' opinion of Maurice rather than Sir Francis Vere's, the Queen felt his greatness should not be feared since he could not submit to Spain without endangering his own position through the restitution of his elder brother Philip William. For his part, Burghley admitted that he favored Wilkes' idea of the Count as Elizabeth's Lieutenant-General with Vere or Sir John Norris serving as "General-Captain" of her forces.¹

¹Burghley to Wilkes, [?], 16 July 1590, Ibid., no. 197.

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Hesitant to follow Elizabeth's suggestion of hinting to Maurice at the possibility of the Lieutenancy, when he knew she would not countenance it, Wilkes replied to Burghley's letter by stating his decision not to mention it for fear the Count might become worse affected if his expectation were not fulfilled. In sounding out the possibility with Barnevelt, Wilkes had "perceived" that the generally suspicious nature of the States and "chief persons" who had grown very ambitious "by the usurpation of their pretended sovereignty" would "never" suffer Maurice to possess the authority granted in the Contract. It was the same authority they continued to refuse her Majesty for fear of being bridled in the course of their government.¹

Burghley's July 16th letter had also indicated that "as things stood" there was less cause to fear the States' disposition towards the French than the possibility of their reaching an accord with Spain. Elizabeth had recently heard that some of the "disunited provinces," in a meeting with Parma at Brussels, had offered to confirm any good peace that could be made with the United Provinces, even if it meant allowing freedom of worship. Also, recently intercepted Spanish letters indicated that Philip II's commander, Morea, was urging the King to relinquish his quarrel in the Low Countries in order to send all his forces against Henry IV, for "once he had France at his commandment he could easily subject the Netherlands." Wilkes and Bodley were therefore instructed to underhandedly "without seeming too earnest" sound the States and other counsellors and "procure some prevention to withstand this offer."²

¹Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, [29 July?] 1590, Ibid., no.224.

²Burghley to Wilkes, [?], 16 July 1590, Ibid., no. 212.

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Wilkes wrote back explaining that neither the people nor the States were at all inclined to peace with Spain. They were "as senseless in that matter as ever they were" and had even given order to keep watch for any enemy agents "sent secretly to practise the people." In fact, the States' biggest worry was the continuing reports that Elizabeth was treating "underhand" with Spain. Wilkes went on to assure Burghley that having tasted the sweetness of liberty the Dutch hated to be subject to any kingly government and would therefore make no peace with Spain as long as they were able to defend themselves by war. He reminded the Lord Treasurer that Holland and Zeeland had grown wealthy as a result of their wartime trade and that the people bore their heavy taxes "without grudging." Finally, "the mislike of the States, bred by faction, was now removed and the government quieted and settled as never before since their troubles began."¹

Wilkes also assured Elizabeth that she had nothing to fear concerning their French inclinations. "Some of those" so inclined had "dangerously blown into the ears of the common people" that despite her refusal of their sovereignty the Queen had always meant to usurp the government by indirect means. However, the present "backwardness" of the people was "but a relic of my Lord of Leicester's good demeanor and of the common errors of our English government among them and time will wear it out." As for the rumors of Dutch offers of sovereignty to Henry IV, they were but bait to hook the French King's affections towards them just as they had done with her Majesty and the King of Denmark.²

¹Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 22 July 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 198, Wilkes to Hatton, The Hague, 22 July 1590, *Ibid.*, ff. 198b-199, and Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, [29 July?] 1590, *Ibid.*, ff. 207-8. See also *L. & A.*, II, no. 190. Wilkes wrote to Sidney on July 22nd: "I fear no peace with Spain, the [United Provinces] are fixed so strongly upon their liberties and hate with a most perfect hatred, as well the Spaniard as any other monarchical commandment over them." H.M.C., *De L'Isle and Dudley*, II, p. 108.

²Wilkes and Bodley to Hatton, Burghley, and Buckhurst, The Hague,

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In short, Wilkes was making it as clear as possible that Elizabeth and the Privy Council could stop fretting about either a French connection or a Spanish peace, for what the Dutch wanted was to tear up Articles XIX and XX of the Contract. If the Provinces refused to allow their generous English ally to assume a portion of their sovereignty how could one expect them to turn around and give the same to either their great enemy, Spain, or to a still uncrowned King of France?¹

For a time, Wilkes contemplated going to Arnhem to induce the Council of State to join in demanding a restoration of its authority, but Bodley and Gilpin felt the Council would decline for fear of offending the States and possibly being removed or otherwise disgraced. However, near the end of July the two ambassadors did make a ten-day tour of North Holland on the pretext that Wilkes had never been there, but really to discover the humors of the people and magistrates. Welcomed in each of the towns they visited they found the magistrates loyal to Elizabeth and resolved not to accept any peace with Spain. But it was apparent that nothing else could be done, at least for the moment, to encourage favorable answers to their proposals.²

11 July 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 194-98, Wilkes to Hatton, The Hague, 22 July 1590, Ibid., ff. 198b-199, and Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 22 July 1590, Ibid., f. 198.

¹Remembering his previous mission to The Hague, Wilkes worried about Elizabeth's reactions to this impasse. Writing to the Privy Council on July 29th he clarified his and Bodley's efforts by stating: "We do protest unto your lordships upon our allegiance to the Queen's Majesty we have travailed and endeavored all that we may, not only in our public conferences with the States in General but with the chieftest of them in particular and cannot for our lives foresee what success will follow of our actions here..." (B.M., Cott. Mss., D. VII, f. 241) Wilkes need not have worried for Leicester was no longer around to influence Elizabeth's mind. In fact, it was soon apparent that the Queen was upset with the States for their "usage...towards Mr. Wilkes." Gilpin to Sidney, The Hague, 16 Sept. 1590, Collins, ed., Letters and Memorials, I, p. 311.

²Wilkes to Sidney, The Hague, 10 Aug. 1590, Ibid., p. 307, and Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 7 Aug. 1590, L. & A., II, no. 226.

[illegible]

Returning to The Hague by way of Amsterdam and Haarlem Wilkes and Bodley had one more fruitless conference with the States on August 10th. Tired and still bothered by "dangerous infirmities," Wilkes was now anxious to return home. In fact, on July 29th, he had written begging Burghley for his recall, even suggesting his willingness to return to The Hague when the States' answers were ready. Burghley secured the Queen's formal letter of recall on August 6th, and it was in Wilkes' hands by the 14th. Four days later he took his leave of the States and on August 22 embarked "re infecta" from Brill having "no better hope of success from the States."¹

Conclusion

From Wilkes' departing comment at Brill, one can safely assume that he felt his mission to have been a failure; and from all appearances that seems to be the case. The States had rejected nearly every request Elizabeth had made. They had failed to cooperate on restricting their trade with Spain, they purposely protracted even their smallest decisions by referring everything to their principals; but above all, they resolutely refused to restore the authority of the Council of State and

¹Ibid., Abstract of Wilkes' Proposition to the States, Sept. 1590, Ibid., no. 227, Elizabeth to Wilkes, Oatlands, 6 Aug. 1590, Ibid., no. 231, Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, [29 July?] 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 207-8, States-General to Wilkes and Bodley, 8 Aug. 1590, Ibid., f. 209b., and Wilkes to Sidney, Brill, 22 Aug. 1590, Collins, ed., Letters and Memorials, I, p. 307. Earlier Wilkes had suggested to the States that for private reasons he should go to England and return when he heard their resolutions were taken. They begged him to stay and come to some conclusion with them on the conditions of their trade with Spain but his health and especially his discovery of some "matter of no small importance" determined him to return. What this matter was he does not explain but he felt it urgent and secret enough even to consider departing for England about it without leave "but that I am taught a little too well how I presume to offend in that kind." Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, [29 July?] 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, ff. 207-8, and Wilkes and Bodley to Hatton, Burghley, and Buckhurst, The Hague, 29 July 1590, L. & A., no. 222.

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Elizabeth's general. In short they had been "as headstrong as so many bulls." Still, Wilkes' mission had demonstrated the impracticability of England's policy of attempting to force the Dutch into a rigid observance of the 1585 Contract. Even more important, Wilkes had calmed English fears about the Provinces' inclination for either a French connection or a treaty with Spain. This would leave Elizabeth and her Council free to concentrate on more pressing matters.¹

Eventually, in early October 1590, nearly two months after Wilkes departed The Hague, the States completed their answers to his proposals. Bodley later commented that he had expected their answers to make "a more plausible show" than they did, for they denied all Elizabeth's demands, even on matters where they were expressly bound by the Treaty. Having resolved "to govern all alone" they meant "directly to frustrate the Contract and to free their estate of her Highness' authority."²

Meanwhile, events were demonstrating that Spain was becoming more and more preoccupied with French affairs. In the middle of July, Philip II had ordered Parma to march his army south to relieve the besieged Paris. Just prior to his departure in August, Wilkes and Bodley had taken it upon themselves to urge the States to use this opportunity to attack Brabant or Flanders. Hopefully, this would divert Parma sufficiently to allow the States to win back some lost territory. Whatever the result would be, it was clear that the United Provinces were going to continue for some time in their present state of tranquillity and that, as Wilkes

¹Wilkes to Sidney, The Hague, 22 July 1590, H.M.C., De L'Isle and Dudley, II, p. 108.

²Bodley to Burghley, The Hague, 7 and 29 Dec. 1590, L. & A., II, no. 252.

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advised "it would be better and more honorable for her Majesty to stay and leave things as they were."¹

¹Burghley to Wilkes, Westminster, 3 Aug. 1590, Ibid., no. 228, Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 22 July 1590, P.R.O., S.P. 105, XCI, f. 198, Wilkes to Burghley, The Hague, 14 Aug. 1590, Ibid., ff. 210b.-211, and Elizabeth to Bodley, Windsor, 10 Spet. 1590, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba D. VII, f. 271.

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CHAPTER VIII
ANGLO-FRENCH RELATIONS, 1590-1598

When Thomas Wilkes returned from The Hague in August 1590, he still had nearly eight years of official service ahead of him. Like the previous seventeen they were to be years of hard work and accomplishment but mostly on the domestic scene. Of the four diplomatic assignments he was yet to receive, circumstances would prevent his fulfilling two of them while the other two would cover only a period of approximately two months. These were to be years in which French affairs would occupy a major portion of the English government's attention, and in which Wilkes would be the logical choice for assignments to that country because of his friendship with Henry IV.

Rouen and Brittany

In the previous chapter it became increasingly clear that there was developing a definite shift in the focus of England's foreign policy from the Netherlands to France. From 1589 until 1595 that policy was increasingly dominated by the fear that Spain would take advantage of the French civil wars and the friendship of the Catholic League to gain control of the north-west Channel coast of France. If Philip II could achieve that, his soldiers would be very favorably placed for an invasion of England. The danger of this happening was greatest between 1590 and 1592 when Parma's invasions from the Spanish Low Countries coincided with the presence of another Spanish army in Brittany.

For a period during the first months of 1590 it had looked as though Henry IV might, with the help of English support and his victory over the League at Ivry, succeeded in meeting this Spanish challenge. However, failure to wrest Paris from his enemies, prior to Parma's arrival in the latter part of August, forced the King to raise his siege and allow the revictualling of that key city. A month later, in September, it was learned that the Spanish had landed 2,000-3,000 troops in Brittany under Don Juan d'Aguila.¹

Reports of these two events caused a stir of martial activity in England. Henry IV's appeals to Elizabeth for money to pay his German and Swiss mercenaries were quickly answered with a 30,000 crown loan. However, because Parma's army was on its way back to Brussels, the Queen included with her loan a demand that Henry immediately use his forces to drive the Spaniards out of Brittany. By the end of January 1581 Sir Edmund Yorke had been sent over to tell the King that Elizabeth would aid him in Brittany with as many as 3,000 soldiers. Two months later Sir Roger Williams was dispatched with 500 men to assist the Governor of Dieppe, and in early May Sir John Norris landed a small expeditionary force at Paimpol to join the French in Brittany.³

In spite of Elizabeth's feelings that Brittany should be the focus of attention, Henry IV felt differently. Since failing to take Paris in 1590 he had undertaken a less direct method of reducing that city. His

¹Chateaumartin [?] to Burghley, St. Jean de Luz, 8 Oct. 1590, L. & A., II, no. 594, and Jensen, Diplomacy and Dogmatism, pp. 206-7.

²Beauvoir's Bond, London, 25 Sept. 1590, L. & A., II, no. 454, Beauvoir to Burghley, London, 22 Sept. 1590, Ibid., Beauvoir to Burghley, Hackney, 8 Oct. 1590, Ibid., no. 459, Ottywell Smith (Merchant) to Burghley, Dieppe, 5 Oct. 1590, Ibid., York's Instructions, 27 Jan. 1591, Ibid., nos. 490-92, Williams' Instructions, [27?] March 1591, Ibid., no. 528, Norris' Instructions and Commission, April 1591, Ibid., nos. 528 and 532, Sir Roger Williams to Privy Council, Dieppe, 11 April 1591, Ibid., no. 526, and Norris to Burghley, Jersey, 1 May 1591, Ibid., no. 557.

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plan was to invest the second city of the kingdom, Rouen, in hopes that by wresting it from the grasp of the League he could both cut off the Seine as the major lifeline to Paris and at the same time open his line of communication with England. Accordingly, he began to build up his men and supplies in preparation for that siege. He begged Elizabeth for at least 4,000 more troops to serve two months and asked that the young Earl of Essex be put in command. In return, he promised that when Rouen or Havre fell, she would be allowed to collect the royal revenues of those towns until all his debts to her were repaid. This was all the inducement the Queen needed, and on June 25th 1591 such an agreement was signed. Essex was put in command, but only after many petitions on bended knee and his promise to do nothing without the consent of three experienced tutors, Sir Thomas Leighton, Sir Henry Killigrew, and the new ambassador to France, Sir Henry Unton.¹

Apparently, not at all interested in serving with so inexperienced a commander as Essex, Thomas Wilkes narrowly missed being assigned as one of these advisors. Writing on July 11th from London to his good friend, Sir Robert Sidney, Wilkes said:

The 20th of this month Lord Essex intends to embark with 4,000 men for Normandy. Sir Thomas Shirley and myself were appointed counselors to the Earl, which with much ado we have avoided (as I hope), I have not known so gallant a troop go out of England with so many young and untrained commanders.²

¹R. B. Wernham, "Queen Elizabeth and the Siege of Rouen, 1591," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4th Series, XV (1932) pp. 163-79, Jensen, Diplomacy and Dogmatism, p. 215, and G. B. Harrison, The Life and Death of Robert Devereux Earl of Essex (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), pp. 47-48.

²H.M.C. De L'Isle and Dudley, II, p. 119. Had Wilkes gone part of his assignment would also have been to examine various parties concerned with the capture of Spanish letters which had revealed "all the King of Spain's doings in France and England." [Thomas Phelippes, alias John Morice "the decipherer" to Saint Mains?], [?], 19 July 1591, Cal. Dom., III, p. 75.

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Essex and his army arrived at Dieppe on August 3rd only to find that Henry IV was unwilling to invest Rouen until his 15,000 German and 5,000 Swiss mercenaries arrived. Meanwhile, the King was busily pursuing a papal force through Lorraine while his Marshal, Armand de Bontaut, Baron of Biron, was laying siege to such Norman towns as Gournay and Candebeac. This delay, coupled with reports of several foolhardy escapades by Essex, threw Elizabeth into a rage. On September 12th Essex and his army were commanded to return to England. Only the young gallant's personal pleas, Privy Council pressure, the fall of Gournay, and Henry IV's announcement of his intention immediately to begin the siege of Rouen changed her mind. With the return of Essex and his troops the investment finally began on October 29th. Two weeks later the German army arrived to help. Some time later Elizabeth was also induced to transfer one thousand of her Netherlands forces to France. However, little progress was made and by the latter part of December it was increasingly obvious to the Queen that the siege was getting nowhere. Thick walls, lack of pay for the German soldiers, desertions, sickness, and successful efforts by the League partially to revictual Rouen were several of the reasons for the French King's ill-success. When, in January 1592, it was learned that Parma's army was again advancing from out of Flanders to relieve Rouen, Elizabeth decided to recall Essex and leave Sir Roger Williams in charge.¹

After Essex's return to England, Elizabeth was more and more reluctant to increase her commitments in France. Realizing this the French King quickly reduced his January request for 3,000 more men to 1,500. Again, the Queen's fear of Spanish prowess forced her to reconsider.

¹Wernham, "Queen Elizabeth and the Siege of Rouen, 1591," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4th Series, XV (1932), pp. 163-79.

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Fearful that Parma might relieve Rouen before Henry could capture it and no doubt hoping the King would do battle with the invading Spanish army before it arrived, Elizabeth ordered a levy of 1,600 additional men on February 19th. However, this time she meant to be certain that her added expense would be met with better success. Accordingly, in early March she decided to send Thomas Wilkes to confer with Henry,

both for the causes of Brittany and for the matters of Rouen, whereby her Majesty may be certified from the said King to her demands and doubts before she can resolve to continue her great charge or to increase the same.¹

1592 Mission to Henry IV

Convinced that the "untowardness" and delays in Henry's actions were caused by his Catholic advisors, Elizabeth insisted that Wilkes "privately and confidentially" communicate his instructions to the King and at the same time, to avoid this causing "jealousy" among those men, he was to "have some other matter in outward appearance to deal with."

Concerning Rouen, Wilkes was directed to express her Majesty's dissatisfaction at the King's tardiness in utilizing all his forces in Normandy as well as the 4,000 English she had sent to invest that city. This delay had not only wasted her men and treasure without purpose, but had also allowed Parma time to reach the borders of France. As far as she was concerned at that time, Rouen was more important than Paris but unfortunately the opportune time for its capture had been lost and as a

¹Ibid., Burghley to Sir Henry Unton, Westminster, 25 Jan. 1592, Joseph Stevenson, ed., Correspondence of Sir Henry Unton Knt., Ambassador from Queen Elizabeth to Henry IV King of France in the years MDXCI and MDXCII (London: William Nicol, 1847), pp. 280-82 (hereafter cited: Unton's Correspondence), Burghley to Unton, The Court, 12 Feb. 1592, Ibid., p. 319, Unton to Burghley and Elizabeth, Claire, 13 and 16 Feb. 1592, Ibid., pp. 323 and 334-36, Elizabeth to Unton, Westminster, 19 Feb. 1592, Ibid., pp. 336-37, and Wilkes' Instructions, March 1592, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXVII, ff. 251-58. See Ibid., ff. 248-50 for "An abbreviate of Wilkes' Instructions to the French King," dated March 19th.

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result the city was likely to continue "in more strength than it was from the beginning." Wilkes was to explain Elizabeth's suspicion that the failure to take Rouen was in "greater part" the fault of the King's Catholic advisors "who have no liking that Rouen should be recovered at all." Most important, he was to make clear that if the Queen did not receive some satisfactory answers on these points "she mindeth to revoke her forces from thence."

As for Brittany, her Majesty had "like cause" to be angry, for there in the past ten months both "her people and her Treasure" had been "wasted" without "any diminishing of the enemy's forces." Though Henry had often promised "to send sufficient forces thither," very little had been done about it thus forcing his governor there to flee Brittany for his safety. Nor, had any attempt been made by the King to provide England with the required maritime town to enable the Queen's forces to be re-supplied without great difficulty. Her decision, the previous December, to recall her troops from that province had been dropped because of the King's "promises to send thither sufficient forces," but still, none had been sent. This left a combined Anglo-Swiss force of only 3,000 and worse still, only the port of Brest (which could not be reached by land) in the hands of Henry IV. Wilkes was to warn the King that if he hoped to maintain his hold on the remaining one-third of that province he had better send additional forces. He was also to make it clear that her Majesty would not tolerate the opinion of some of his council who were advising that because the defence of Brittany was so crucial to England he need not worry about it himself, but let her take care of it.

She would not have the King fed with such an error of her lack of wisdom that she will abandon the strength of her own realm to defend another King's country where she hath neither port nor harbor by sea nor town nor strength by land.

Again threatening to "revoke her forces there" if Henry did not forthwith

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increase his troops in Brittany and provide her with a port, the instructions went on to warn the King that in spite of

whatsoever the King of Spain shall succeed in Brittany, she will by God's grace so provide for the defence of England and other her dominions as the gaining of Brittany by the Spaniard shall not make him an owner of a foot of ground in England.

However, she concluded, if Henry were willing to help her to stay Spanish power in that province and at the same time grant her the town, castle, and port of Brest as well as work to recover St. Malo as her second port, then, she would continue to aid him in his struggle for the crown.

For the avoiding of "jealousies," the instructions ended by supplying Wilkes with two points upon which he and Henry might openly deal before the King's Council. Firstly, why was the siege of Rouen taking so long? Did the King and his councilors feel it could be won? Were Elizabeth's forces needed any longer? Was it true that some of his Council were against the city being taken? Secondly, complaint should be made of the lack of succor given by the King in Brittany, of the unprofitable services of her Majesty's forces there, and of the danger of losing that province.

In short, the purpose of the mission was as Lord Burghley described it to Sir Henry Unton:

Her Majesty, having considered of the backwardness of this matter of Rouen and of her expense of treasure and wasting of her people there to no such purpose as was first intended, and of the like evil success of her forces in Brittany where also her people have been wasted without purpose, finding it doubtful what resolution to make without some serious conference with the King there, she hath thought best to send...Mr. Wilkes...for which purpose he hath special instructions of weight determined by her Majesty and written by me.¹

Shortly after Wilkes' instructions were finalized, a rough draft of several additional "matters" was drawn up bearing the date of March

¹Rymer, Foedera, XVI, p. 156. See also B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. VIII, f. 10.

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14th. It contained mostly minor points relating to Anglo-French supply exchanges, musters, troop payments, patrolling of the coastal waters near Dieppe in order to "inhibit the shipping over from there of any English soldier other than such as are notorious sick or have sufficient passport from Sir Roger Williams," and the supplying and protecting of the English ships "on the river before Rouen."¹

Bearing these instructions, the title of "Lord Ambassador," letters to Unton from Elizabeth, Burghley, Essex, Sir Robert Cecil, and the Lord Chamberlain Hunsdon,² and supplied with a £50 advancement on his daily diet of 40s. (which began on March 8th),³ Wilkes started for France on the 16th of the same month.⁴ Traveling from London to Dover via Rye he arrived in Dieppe on the 24th, just five days after the newly levied English troops arrived under the command of Sir Edmund Yorke. There he immediately set about to carry out some of his additional instructions.⁵

¹Wilkes' additional instructions, 14 March 1592, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXVII, ff. 215-16. The final draft has no date but is probably of the same date. Ibid., ff. 230-31.

²Elizabeth to Unton, Westminster, 15 March 1592, Rymer, Foedera, XVI, p. 157, (also B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. VIII, f. 200), Burghley to Unton, The Court, 13 March 1592, Ibid., p. 156, Essex to Unton, [?], 14 March 1592, Unton's Correspondence, p. 375, Sir Robert Cecil to Unton, The Court, 14 March 1592, Ibid., p. 374, and Hunsdon to Unton, Whitehall, 15 March 1592, Ibid., pp. 378-79.

³Privy Seal Warrant, 15 March 1592, P.R.O., Excheq. 403/2559, p. 335. In the "Household Accounts of 32nd-35th Elizabeth," 15 March 159[2], B.M., Add. Mss. 22,924, f. 50 this same information is given, suggesting that Wilkes was paid out of Elizabeth's private account under the Privy Seal. On this particular mission, letter and intelligence money were not advanced.

⁴Burghley's diary of events, 16 March 1592, H.M.C., Salisbury, XIII, p. 464.

⁵Unton to Burghley, Dieppe, 19 March 1592, Unton's Correspondence, pp. 390-92, and Ottywell Smith to [Burghley?], Dieppe, 24 March 1592, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXVII, f. 270.

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After a brief stay at Dieppe Wilkes along with Unton, who had come there to meet him and the newly arrived English troops, started for Darnetel, a suburb of Rouen, in the hopes of meeting the King. Because of enemy patrols in the area they were constrained to shape their journey according to the march of the English troops on their way to Rouen and so did not arrive until the 27th. Once there they learned that just two days before Henry had departed on an unsuccessful military enterprise to intercept the young Duke of Guise. Afraid to attempt following the King because of lack of "sufficient convoy" and "the danger of our travel," the two ambassadors sent off a letter to Henry announcing Wilkes' arrival. In reply the King wrote that he would grant an audience on April 2nd after his return to Darnetel, but arriving ahead of schedule on March 31st he moved the meeting to April 1st.¹

The English ambassador's conference with Henry came at a critical time in his struggle for the crown. Not long before, around the end of February and first of March, it had looked for a moment as though Parma was not going to proceed with his relief of Rouen. A successful sally by that city against the besiegers had so hurt Henry's army that its governor, Villiers, informed Parma that with the exception of a moderate reinforcement of men and munition they needed no relief. This had caused the Duke, against his better judgment, to retire momentarily behind the Somme. However, the error of Villiers hasty judgment was soon revealed and Parma prepared to advance towards Rouen. Secret letters ordering an April 8th rendezvous of Spanish and League forces for this purpose had been intercepted by Henry IV just before Wilkes' arrival and as a result

¹Unton and Wilkes to Burghley, Darnetel, 1 April 1592, Ibid., f. 289.

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the King was clearly troubled. This was apparent in his April 1st audience with Wilkes and Unton.¹

Successful in obtaining a private conference, the two ambassadors began by delivering Elizabeth's charge of negligence in laying siege to Rouen. To this the King answered that at the time he had felt the taking of Noyon to be more important, otherwise towns like St. Quentin and Cahun would have fallen to the enemy. More importantly the lateness of the German army's arrival, the refusal of his own unpaid troops to march, and his preparations to meet Parma's forces had all delayed him. As to what Elizabeth could expect from the present siege of Rouen he could give no answer due to the anticipated arrival of Parma within the next two weeks. But he did promise not to raise the siege until the city was taken.²

As for Brittany, Henry assured the two ambassadors that he too was concerned about saving that province from Spain and then requested that Elizabeth loan him 20,000 crowns a month to help accomplish the same. However, what was most urgent was the obtaining of 2,000 more English troops for one month's service to help him complete the siege of Rouen. Could they promise him this? Wilkes and Unton replied that they had no such commission. When Wilkes asked the King to grant Elizabeth the port of Brest, he refused for fear of how his Catholic councilors might react. When Wilkes next asked for St. Malo, which had lately indicated a desire to restore itself to Henry's obedience, the same

¹Motley, Netherlands, III, pp. 142-46, Unton to Burghley and Robert Cecil, Blangy, 28 Feb. 1592, Unton's Correspondence, pp. 353-59, and Unton to Burghley, Dieppe, 3 and 20 March 1592, Ibid., pp. 360-63 and 395-96.

²The King's answers to Wilkes' and Unton's articles of negotiation, 1 April 1592, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXVII, ff. 285-86. Unfortunately, most of the report was delivered orally when Wilkes returned home thus, there is no more detailed record of the audience. See Wilkes' Abstract, 10 April 1592, Ibid., ff. 320-21, and Unton to Elizabeth, Dieppe, 8 April, 1592, Unton's Correspondence, pp. 411-13.

objection was raised. However, the King did agree that the Queen could have the first port "which should be taken from the enemy," and in the meantime her ships and people were welcome to enter any coastal town he held. When they mentioned Elizabeth's threat to withdraw all her forces, he begged that she be induced not to forsake him at such a critical time. As for her charge of his having "backward" Catholic councilors he admitted this was so, especially in regard to the present siege.¹

Henry then dropped a disconcerting bit of information that increasingly worried Elizabeth and her Privy Council in the coming months. He revealed that he had recently been approached about forsaking Protestantism in order to marry the Spanish Infanta, Isabel Clara Eugenia, who as the eldest daughter of Philip II and a granddaughter of Henry II of France was the Spanish King's announced candidate for the French crown.² It was not the thought of Henry IV obtaining a divorce in order to marry this princess which worried the Huguenots and Elizabeth. Both knew he had no reason to do so since the Salic Law made his claim to the throne unquestionably superior. What frightened them was the possibility that such demonstrations of Catholic willingness to accept a converted Henry might lead him to abjure his Protestantism. He was not made of the stuff of martyrs and already more than once he had renounced his childhood faith

¹Unton to Burghley, Dieppe, 8 April 1592, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXVII, f. 301, The King's answers to Wilkes' and Unton's Articles of negotiation, 1 April 1592, Ibid., ff. 285-86, and Wilkes' Abstract, 10 April 1592, Ibid., ff. 320-21.

²Since March Henry had been using his brilliant Protestant advisor Philippe de Morney, Seigneur du Plessis, in secret negotiations with Seigneur de Villeroy who represented the Duke of Mayenne and the League. Both sides were tired of civil war and were looking for terms of settlement. Though the lengthy negotiations came to nothing a memorandum was adopted for submission to Henry under the heading, "The expedient proposed." Most important it suggested that the King promise to undergo instruction within a definite period in preparation for joining the Catholic Church. The date of this memorandum was 4 April 1592. See Baird, The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre, II, pp. 300-309 for more details.

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when it proved expedient to do so. He assured Wilkes and Unton that he would "never forsake his religion," but the very fact that he mentioned the proposal indicated that it was increasingly on his mind. Anxious to get back to his army, Henry ended the conference by appointing one of his Protestant advisors, the Duke of Bouillon, and his Secretary of State, Louis Revol, to continue treating with the two ambassadors. He also requested that all Elizabeth's demands, except the one for a port town, be put in writing for his councilors to consider.¹

What actually transpired in the subsequent discussions with the Duke of Bouillon is difficult to sort out. In the Public Record Office there is a difficult to read, single folio document which is dated 6 April 1592 and catalogued as "Unton and Wilkes on speeches with the Duke of Bouillon."² Apparently, there was talk among the politique elements in France of trying to bring peace by inducing Henry IV and the various Parlements to declare the young four-year-old Prince of Condé as first prince of the realm and thus successor to King Henry.³ His religious training would be turned over to the bigoted Cardinal de Bourbon,⁴

¹Wilkes' Abstract, 10 April 1592, Ibid., ff. 320-21, and Unton to Burghley, Dieppe, 8 April 1592, Ibid., f. 301. The Duke of Bouillon spoken of above is Henry de la Tour D'Auvergne and is not to be confused with the former Duke of Bouillon Robert de la Marck who died in Geneva in 1587. This new Duke of Bouillon had been the Viscount of Turenne and had just the year before been rewarded for his devotion to Henry IV with the hand of Charlotte, sole heiress of the great house of De la Marck.

²P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXVII, f. 297.

³This was Henry (II) Prince of Condé who was the son of Henry (I) of Condé, whom Wilkes had known so well, and Catherine Charlotte de la Trémouille. On March 5th 1588, less than two years after marrying Catherine, Condé had suddenly died. It was rumored he had been poisoned at the instigation of his new wife, but at her trial her life was spared because of her pregnancy. The child born to her during her first of six years in prison was the young Prince of Condé referred to above, who later married Charlotte of Montmorency of whom was born the Great Condé of seventeenth-century fame. See Baird, The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre, I, pp. 396-97, and II, pp. 20-21.

³Not to be confused with his uncle of the same name and title who

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While the Duke of Bouillon himself would administer his estates; "the guard of the body of the child to remain with the King who will have care of his education." A marginal note on the document makes clear that the purpose of this plan was to provide a King that all parties in France would accept should Henry IV suddenly die.

Bouillon was not only aware of Elizabeth's fear about Spain controlling France's north-west coast but apparently Henry had also confided in him her demand for one or possibly two French seaports. No doubt at Henry's bidding, the Duke hinted to Wilkes and Unton that Elizabeth might find the southern Breton port of St. Nazaire, located at the mouth of the Loire, suitable for her purposes. It could be "easily fortified" he assured them. In fact, Bouillon went on, just the day before he had heard the King declare to the Cardinal de Bourbon "that he wished six of his best towns in her Majesty's hand, assuring himself that they should be that way more sure unto him than in the hands of many of his Catholic followers." This was only talk on the Duke's part but he did go on to reassure Wilkes and Unton that precautions were being taken to keep Dieppe loyal to the Crown, since it was the only adequate port of entry for Elizabeth at the time. It was felt that when its governor, Aymar de Chatte, died, the King's bastard sister, Lady d'Angoulême would succeed him. Though a Catholic, she was "wholly devoted" to Henry, and there would be placed under her "such persons for the guard of the town as shall be of the Religion and faithful to the King.

There was some further discussion on the possible marriage of the Marshal of Montmorency's daughter; and Unton was informed of Marshal

died during the siege of Paris in 1590. The new Cardinal Bourbon was one of three surviving sons of Louis, Prince of Conde' who fell at Jarnac in 1569, a cousin of Henry of Navarre, brother of the Prince of Conti who was at this time in charge of some of the King's forces in Brittany, and uncle of the young Prince Henry (II) of Conde'.

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Biron's anger with him for his alleged failure to do "good offices" with Elizabeth in his and the King's behalf. If anything else was discussed, it was not recorded.

Sometime between the 7th and 8th of April, Wilkes had his final audience with the French King. It proved to be much more interesting than the normal "leavetaking" not only for what transpired there but for the insights it gives into the character of Henry IV. First, Wilkes was informed that not only the King but now also his Council were willing that Elizabeth be granted the first seaport taken from the enemy. This was good news for the English ambassador for it had been the primary object of his mission to secure such a promise.¹

Next, and probably with more than usual interest, Wilkes listened to Henry as he worked to retain Elizabeth's much needed assistance by playing on her great weakness--her love of flattery.² A master of this art, Henry began by profusely thanking the Queen for both her picture and her scarf which apparently Wilkes had delivered to him. He promised to wear them in all "his exploits and attempts" against the enemy; especially in the anticipated clash with Parma wherein the very sight of these objects would cause him to "fight with more resolution against her Majesty's enemies and his own." As for the Spanish Infanta whose hand "hath been tenured unto him in marriage" he,

hath refused and yieldeth her no place in his affection; the same being already possessed by her Majesty whose admirable virtues and the respect he hath conceived of her person have so besieged his mind and love towards her as he shall not be quiet until he may see her...and signify as much unto her by mouth.

¹Unton to Burghley, Dieppe, 8 April 1592, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXVII, f. 301.

²See Bernardino de Mendoza's account of his stormy interview with the Queen on 11 October 1581 at Richmond. Mendoza to Philip II, London, 20 Oct. 1581, Cal. Spain, II, pp. 185-90, especially p. 188.

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Henry then went on to confide in Wilkes that as soon as he had done battle with Parma it was his intention "to make a step into England" where he would "be glad to find her in some port or town near to the seaside." He confessed that he had postponed revealing to her his "secret" love until someone like Wilkes came along; someone who had "run fortune and hazard of life with him...to whom he might in confident sort comit so great a secret."¹

A Knighthood

The final portion of Wilkes' leavetaking must have been the most surprising and gratifying. Always generous and never quick to forget a favor, the French King saw in Wilkes' mission the opportunity to reward him for his 1574 secret assignment "wherein he did often adventure his life" to convey encouragement and relief to him as a prisoner at the French Court. Accordingly, King Henry IV graciously dubbed Wilkes with "the Title of Knighthood." It was always a singular honor to be knighted by a reigning monarch and one Sir Thomas had long deserved. Indeed, the shame of it was that Elizabeth had not seen fit to bestow the same honor on him herself. It is true Wilkes' pedigree was not outstanding, but his services to the Crown of England had been long and undeviating.²

¹"Speeches of Henry IV," Dieppe, 8 April 1592, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXVII, ff. 303-4. Henry explained that he had only spoken of this to one other person and that was Unton who had never dared write to her Majesty about it because "he heard she committed the reading of his letters to some about her, that are not his friends, and such as carp at all his services." Ibid.

²Brief on Wilkes' diplomatic career, May 1574, Ibid., S.P. 12, CCVIL, doc. no. 154 and "A Cat. of Knights: Temp. Eliz.," 1592, B.M., Lansd. Mss. 578, p. 29. William A. Shaw's Knights of England (London: Sherratt & Hughes, 1906), II, pp. 88-89, erroneously lists Wilkes as being knighted in September 1592 "(by the French King)" along with Thomas Challoner, Devereux Poole, and Christopher Lydcote. This is also in error for Challoner is shown in Wood, ed., Fasti Oxonienses, II, p. 158 who quotes from Challoner's tomb inscription that he was knighted by Henry in August and not September 1591. As for the exact date of Wilkes' knighting it could only have taken place just before his departure for England. Letters

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The whole of Sir Thomas' final audience illustrates the anxiety of Henry to retain Elizabeth's assistance at this critical point in his struggle for the throne. Every move, from his flattery of the Queen and his concession of a port town, to the knighting of her ambassador were designed to accomplish this.

Wilkes apparently sailed from Dieppe on the 8th and arrived back in London sometime between the 10th and 15th of April. With him he brought a written report of the French Council's answers to his negotiations, his own written observations on conditions in France, notes from Ottywell Smith and Sir John Wingfield on Dieppe's munitions, and letters for Elizabeth, Burghley, and the Privy Council from the Burgomaster of Ostend concerning its fortifications. He also submitted and was later reimbursed for his itemized account of all his travel and correspondence expenses for the mission which totaled over £115.¹

As for the "secret" matter Henry had committed into Wilkes' charge, there is understandably little to be discovered about it. Wilkes delivered the flattering message to the Queen, but for reasons of her own she did not correspond with the King concerning it. This upset Henry who felt Wilkes had failed him. Unton wrote Sir Thomas that the King was more than ever insistent upon crossing over to England and planned to

written to him later in April, May, and June 1592 refer to him as "Sir" (see Unton's Correspondence, pp. 442, 448-50, and S.P. 12, CCVIL, f. 59) although one letter in Unton's Correspondence (pp. 407-8) is erroneously transcribed into reading "Sir Thomas Wilkes." A quick look at the original in P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXVII, f. 289 illustrates this mistake by Stevenson.

¹Burghley's Diary, 10 April 1592, H.M.C., Salisbury, XIII, p. 465, Wilkes to Burghley, London, 22 April 1592, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIXL, f. 123 and Wilkes' "Accounts," London, 22 April 1592, Ibid., f. 123, I, (see below).

Posting charges for Wilkes, his servants and gentlemen from London to Rye	£ 4 10s.
Posting charges from Dieppe to Darnetel and from there back to Dieppe	£ 9 19s. 7d.
Posting charges from Dover to London	£ 4 14s.
Charges for shipping and transportation from Rye to Dieppe and back from Dieppe to Dover	£ 18 5s.

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do so within the month or "immediately upon his return out of Picardy." He still hoped to "steal from hence secretly" and arrive in England "unknown, under the color of an ambassador sent from himself to her Majesty." He had begged Unton, who was anxious to go home, to stay his return long enough to be his guide, and furthermore requested that Wilkes "meet him at the seaside that he may know whether his coming will be grateful." He had two ships in constant readiness for the voyage and had asked Unton to let it be known that they were for his [Unton's] return to England. Unton begged Wilkes to get this information "to her Majesty alone" and to have her "with all speed to direct me accordingly and to send me some answer whereof the poor King may have comfort." In fact, he went on, Henry "speaketh of nothing to me but of his journey into England, which he sayeth nothing shall alter." Unton closed his letter by writing:

I have not written at all unto her Majesty of this matter for two respects; first, because my letters to her Highness are stolen sometimes out of her packet and from such place where they are left and so deskanted [?] to my prejudice; then, for that I dare not commit so weighty a matter to a letter not knowing what effect your former report hath had, and fearing misconstruction of my dutiful meaning. But your discretion may use what is best and impart by speech better than letter can report, wherein the King hath before used you and trusted you, and yourself have been a witness. P.S. This bearer is ignorant of what this letter mentioneth, and I pray you let it be concealed from all the world but her Majesty!¹

It seems apparent that Henry was serious at least about coming to England, but for some unknown reason Wilkes, who was at Bath at the time, hesitated to approach Elizabeth again on the subject. Perhaps his previous attempt had in some way angered her. Whatever the reason he finally decided that instead he would show Unton's letter to Lord

For Wilkes' diets for 39 days at 40s. per diem	
begun the 8th of March and ended the 15th of April . . .	£ 78
For convoys, sending of letters, and for	
intelligences	[blank]
TOTAL	£115 8s. 7d.

¹Unton to Wilkes, Bhuy, 11 May 1592, Unton's Correspondence, pp. 448-50.

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Burghley, who was also taking the waters at Bath. Not wanting to interrupt his "cure," Burghley at first apparently intended to forward the letter on to the Queen and so wrote a note apologizing for not delivering it personally. However, it seems he reconsidered and decided the matter was important enough to hurry to Greenwich where two days later he personally delivered the letter "into her own hands." After reading its contents, Elizabeth set about to answer Unton, but when she heard that he was expected at the Court within two or three days she decided to wait and discuss it with him personally. The last bit of evidence on this subject is the following June 23rd note from Burghley to Wilkes:

Sir, I have received...your letter with one enclosed to you from Sir Henry Unton her Majesty's late Ambassador in France who being returned hither four or five days past. I mean to deliver back to him his said letter and to deal no further in the matter.

On the outside of the letter Wilkes wrote: "Lord Treasurer meaneth to deal no further in the matter of the French King." Apparently, like Wilkes, Burghley had decided he would rather not be involved in this curious incident.¹

Further Deterioration of Henry IV's Position

In the meantime, Henry was having his own troubles with the siege of Rouen. On April 10th, two days after Wilkes sailed from Dieppe, Parma's 16,000 man army suddenly appeared within four leagues of Rouen. It was only with some difficulty and embarrassing haste that Henry, the French, and the English raised the siege and took to their heels. For the second time the French King had been out-generalled. After Parma resupplied the city, he, with great difficulty, led his much reduced

¹[Burghley] to Elizabeth, Bath, 3 June 1592 Cal. Dom., III, p. 230, Burghley to Wilkes, Greenwich, 5 June 1592, Ibid., p. 230, and Burghley to Wilkes, the Court, 23 June 1592, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCVII, f. 59, and Burghley to Unton, the Court, 6 June 1592, Unton's Correspondence, pp. 467-68.

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army back to Flanders where in early December he died as a result of a wound received during his May attack on Caudebec.¹

It was just a month later on May 13th that Henry and Elizabeth received another serious setback in their struggle against the Spanish and League forces in France. On that date the League Governor of Brittany, Philippe Emmanuel de Lorraine, better known as the Duke of Mercoeur, administered a crushing defeat upon the combined English, German, and French Royalist forces who were besieging Craon. Completely surprised and outnumbered, the Prince of Dombes who was Henry's Governor of Brittany and the Prince of Conti had been unable to retreat quickly enough to save their army. The English alone stood their colors and most were cut to pieces. The rest, in their erratic attempt to flee, were either killed or captured. Mercoeur quickly followed up this victory with the seizure of Chateau Gontier and Laval and then laid siege to Mayenne, the capital city of that region. Unton reported that:

This doth strike great fear into all the hearts of the King's subjects in Brittany. It doth frustrate the King's former designs of blocking Rouen and Newhaven [LeHavre] and clearing of Normandy by taking the towns there. It also doth divert the King from following Parma and therefore he is forced to return to Vernon to take council for his best course to succor Brittany.²

Burghley reflected Elizabeth's reaction to this news when he said, "I had rather both Paris and Rouen were left unrecovered than have Brittany lost." When the French King appealed for more assistance to meet his increasingly desperate situation, the Queen quickly reconsidered her earlier threats to withdraw all her forces from France and appointed

¹Unton to Burghley, From the Camp within a league of Pont de l'Arche and within two leagues of Rouen, 12 April 1592, H.M.C., Salisbury, IV, pp. 186-87, Giovanni Mocenigo Venetian Ambassador in France to the Doge and Senate, Chartres, 12 May 1592, Cal. Ven., IX, p. 30, and Baird, The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre, II, pp. 289-93.

²Unton to Burghley, Compiègne, Unton's Correspondence, pp. 460-64.

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a committee of Privy Councilors to negotiate with the French ambassadors on the subject. This resulted on June 30th in an agreement by which she promised to send another 4,000 men of which 2,500 would be transferred from the Netherlands and Sir John Norris put in command. However, it was not until the following January that these troops finally reached their destination.¹

Meanwhile, the French King's situation was worsening. Not only had recent events increasingly hampered his operations in Normandy and greatly encouraged the League, but they had threatened his prospects in Brittany with complete overthrow. More and more he recognized the improbability of winning the crown as a Protestant. His efforts in March and April 1592 to negotiate a settlement with the League had failed and in late September he resolved to win the support of the recently elected Pope Clement VIII by convincing him of his intentions to undergo instruction and become a Catholic. His personal letter to Clement is still extant and it definitely foreshadows the King's complete submission to Papal authority.² He not only spoke of his resolve "to render during our entire life, the obedience which we owe to your Holiness and to the Apostolic See" but of his desire to resume diplomatic relations with the Papacy by sending Henry III's former ambassador to Rome, Jean de Vivonne, the Marquis of Pisany. The Cardinal of Gondy was sent along with Pisany to deliver the letter, but Clement refused to consider the possibility of "a relapse" being "received into the bosom of the Church."³

¹Burghley to Unton, [?], 29 May 1592, Ibid., p. 466, and Read, Lord Burghley, p. 481.

²Henry IV to Clement VIII, [Chams-sur-Marne], 8 Oct. 1592 N.S., Berger de Xivrey, ed., Recueil des Lettres Missives De Henri IV (Paris: Imprimerie Royal, 1846), III, pp. 674-75 (hereafter cited: Lettres Missives).

³Thomas Edmondes, English Agent with Henry IV, to Burghley, Camp before Provins, 22 Aug. 1592, Geoffrey G. Butler, ed., The Edmondes

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At the same time, it was necessary that Henry not lose his Protestant ally across the Channel, so he sent Ambassador Maurier to Elizabeth to mislead her as to his real intention in the Pisany-Gondy mission. Surprised by his success in convincing the Queen, Maurier reported that "she felt great pleasure when I explained to her what I had been commissioned to tell her." Unton's recent replacement, the English "agent" Thomas Edmondes had also been fooled. He had correctly guessed the purpose of the mission to Rome but felt convinced the King's promise to be instructed and converted was only a diplomatic "lie." He still held this position in January 1593 when he wrote that there was "no appearance" that the King would be converted.¹

Elizabeth and the French Protestants continued to be deceived by Henry's duplicity until 16 May 1593 M.S. when his ever-worsening circumstances forced him to authorize his Catholic advisors to publish a formal statement known as the "Declaration of Mantes." This document stated that, pending the arrival of the time for his "instruction," no measures should be adopted that would negate the rights granted to the Huguenots by the edicts of Henry III, or of the friendship existing between loyalist Catholics and Huguenots. This made it clear to many that Henry was indeed toying with the idea of abjuring his Protestantism. Only four days before Edmondes had secured his promise that he "would not proceed to the resolution thereof without her Majesty's advice."

Papers: A Selection from the Correspondence of Sir Thomas Edmondes, Envoy from Queen Elizabeth at the French Court (London: J. B. Nichols and sons, 1913), p. 24 (hereafter cited: Edmondes Papers), and Edmondes to Burghley, Blois, 16 March 1593, Ibid., pp. 58-59.

¹Edmondes to Burghley, Chartres, 19 Jan. 1593, Ibid., p. 47, and Baird, The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre, II, pp. 311-14.

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Now, in dismay, the English envoy was forced to write that the King "was determined to render himself a Catholic."¹

The reaction of the English Court to this news is best illustrated by Wilkes' own letter to Edmondes.

Your last dispatch hither hath amazed us all; yet are we hardly induced to believe that the King for any respect should change his religion. It is supposed amongst some of the wisest here that this show of the King's conversion is but a strategem to draw her Majesty on to some further succor.

Wilkes went on to admonish Edmondes to "look well to this matter and see you are not abused in it; for the [French] ambassadors here have not hitherto received so much as an inkling of this purpose in the King."²

The reaction in France was understandably more intense. Edmondes explained that it "bred in the Duke of Mayenne so great an astonishment" that he immediately set about "to render himself Master of Paris" and obtain additional instructions from Rome and Spain.

In the meantime the combustion is great among them at Paris: the people and the nobility demanding earnestly the peace and the heads and clergy opposing themselves thereunto, and therefore to stay the violence of the people, there was never so seditious preaching as they have therein, being on advice (as they say) given him by her Majesty to work his establishment, as she in the like case did hers and afterwards cut the throats of all the Catholics....And for this reason also, they are not willing to accept the truce proposed by the King for three months for fear least the people should take savor thereof. Herewith the practices of the ministers of Spain are likewise infinite, offering in this extremity to give over their instance for the practising of the royalty for their Master or his daughter and to continue their accustomed succor in favor of any election that shall be made, either of one of the house of Bourbon or Lorraine.³

¹Edmondes to Burghley, Blois, 16 March 1593, Edmondes Papers, pp. 58-59, and Edmondes to Burghley, Mantes, 6 May 1593, Ibid., pp. 70-72.

²Wilkes to Edmondes, Croyden, 15 May 1593, B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, f. 173b. Later in the month Edmondes sent Burghley "the King's declaration of the promise of his conversion." See Edmondes to Burghley, Mantes, 30 May 1593, Edmondes Papers, p. 79.

³Edmondes to Burghley, Mantes, 18 May 1593, Ibid., pp. 75-77, and Edmondes to Burghley, Mantes, 30 May 1593, Ibid., pp. 78-79. (Underlined in cipher.) When a short time later the Duke of Mayenne and the Spanish ministers attempted to precipitate the election of a new King "the nobility joined with the Court of Parlement of Paris and deputies of Orleans,

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Obviously, Elizabeth could not allow Henry to continue walking down the path of conversion without attempting to divert him. If there was any chance of changing his mind it could only be done by someone who was both skilled in the art of diplomacy and a close friend of the King. So it was that Sir Thomas Wilkes was again chosen for special assignment in France. His instructions, dated 24 July 1593, are lengthy but can be summarized under four main headings: 1) the King's conversion, 2) affairs in Brittany, 3) a joint offensive-defensive alliance against Spain, and 4) arguments to be used in combating French Catholics.¹

As for the prospect of the King's conversion, Wilkes was instructed to let him understand that in no way could her Majesty,

allow nor think it good before God that for any worldly respect or any cunning persecutions he should yield to change his confidence or opinion in religion from the truth wherein he hath been brought up from his youth and for the defence whereof he hath continued many years in arms with good forces as it hath manifestly appeared by God's providence.

Furthermore, he was to require the King to listen to "a number of good reasons by us conceived" as to why he should not change, and was to attempt to persuade his Catholic councilors that more time was needed for

Toulouse, Bourges, and other places, do to the same oppose themselves saying that they cannot accord thereunto. This doth give us a little life." Edmondes to Burghley, Camp before Dreux, Ibid., p. 84.

¹Wilkes' Instructions, 24 July 1593, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXVII, ff. 276-82. A second copy of these instructions minus the arguments to be used against Catholics can be found (Ibid., ff. 248-51) under the date of July 14th. Why the discrepancy in dates is unclear. Wilkes certainly did not leave on his mission until on or after the 18th of August (see Cal. Dom., III, p. 362 and P.R.O., Excheq. 403/2559, p. 350). His resumé of his diplomatic career (P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCIVL, doc. no. 154) states that his instructions were dated July 18, but considering the time of arrival in Caen (Aug. 2) it seems probable that he left on or after the 24th. See Wilkes to Burghley, Argentan, Ibid., S.P. 78, XXXII, f. 15. A summary of Wilkes' instructions can be found under the date of 14 July 1593 in G. B. Harrison, ed., The Elizabethan Journals 1591-1603 (Ann Arbor, The Univ. of Michigan Press, 1955), I, pp. 251-53.

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his proper instruction. If Wilkes found upon his arrival that Henry had already abjured his Protestantism, he was to express Elizabeth's unhappiness "that by his conversion he shall be subject to the Pope whom he knoweth to be our mortal enemy and thereby it may be doubted that the Pope may enjoin him to keep no amity with us."

The second portion of Wilkes' instructions concerning Brittany were to be discussed with Henry whether he was converted or not. The King was to explain how he planned to rid that province of the Spanish. "We think it the principal matter of weight that he hath to take in hand after he shall be established in his crown," Elizabeth said, "and that it is... more convenient for himself to take the same in hand in his own person than to commit it to others as hitherto he hath done, without any profit thereby." Also, a seaport must be granted, otherwise "we cannot with our honor nor the good welfare of our natural subjects send any more forces thither to be wasted and spoiled, as the former have been for lack of such a place to retire unto for their relief." The King was to understand that at his request 1,500 English foot were being levied "to be transported at no delay" for service in Brittany if the above conditions were met.

Next, if the "accident of his conversion," took place, Wilkes was to persuade Henry "as a King of France under his hand, and great seal" to enter into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Queen against Philip II "as long as the said King of Spain shall continue in his enmity against us." Henry was to be told "in earnest sort" that he owed Elizabeth at least this much considering England had never before "yielded" so many lives and pounds for the benefit of a foreign country.

The last portion of the instructions is a long and in several cases well-reasoned list of arguments to be used by Henry and Wilkes in meeting the objections of his Catholic subjects who desired both the King's

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conversion and more stringent measures against Protestant heresy. Each was designed either to induce these Catholics to allow Henry to become King without conversion or at least to allow him more time to be instructed. This desire to extend the instruction period seems to be the general tone of this entire document, a tone which suggests very strongly that Elizabeth was resigned to the fact of the King's conversion.

When Wilkes was through delivering these arguments to Henry, he was then instructed, with the King's permission first, to visit each of the "Princes of the Blood" which included Henry de Bourbon, Duke of Montpensier (formerly Prince of Dombes), the young Prince of Conde', and Charles de Bourbon the Count of Soissons. If Henry were still a Protestant, Wilkes was to encourage each of them (except Conde', who was still too young) to press for more instruction time for the King. However, if he were Catholic, they were to be encouraged to continue giving him their full support in order to make secure his crown.

Foresighted diplomat that he was, when Wilkes read over these instructions, he immediately saw the need for clarifications and additions in order that he best utilize his time in France. These he no doubt submitted to Burghley and marginal comments were appropriately placed which gave him the further instruction or authority he sought.¹

¹"Remembrances," July 1593, Ibid., XXXI, f. 252. A summary of these Remembrances is as follows:

Marginal notations

1. "This may be thought of at your return."
2. "You have no such commission."
3. "This you may do of yourself."

Wilkes' Remembrances

1. If Henry IV can be induced to assure Brest or St. Malo to Elizabeth he must do so by contract?
2. If for security of a port Henry demands a larger portion of funds from Elizabeth what should our promise in her behalf be?
3. Is it alright to ask Henry to permit a muster of his horse and foot strength so that if he besieges

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At the end of this document is a section headed "Remembrances for myself" in which Wilkes reminds himself to ask that the Lord Admiral appoint one of Elizabeth's pinnaces to transport him to and from France and "that her Majesty may be pleased to grant me some good allowance for my journey, the rather because the country is dear and my stay I trust shall not be long there." Whether the rapidly aging Wilkes obtained the luxury of the first request is unknown, but, he did receive an extra £100 over and above his £65 13s. 4d. advancement on his daily diet of 40s.¹ Bearing instructions, letters of credence to Henry and the Princes of the Blood, a hundred marks for the poverty stricken Thomas Edmondes, and his passport, Wilkes set off for France on July 25th.²

Wilkes arrived at the Norman port of Caen on August 2nd only to learn that over two weeks before (July 15th) at Saint Denis, Henry IV had publicly abjured his Protestantism and been accepted into the fold of the Roman Catholic Church.³ With his conversion and until Clement

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| <p>4. "You may inform yourself from Sir R. Williams or by your own inquiry."</p> <p>5. "You may do so."</p> | <p>Rouen again Elizabeth may consider the possibility of success?</p> <p>4. If being at Elizabeth's camp I should not take a muster of her troop strength?</p> <p>5. If Edmondes should be made acquainted with the matters of my negotiation and authorized by letters to join with me therein?</p> |
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¹Ibid., and Warrant, 18 July 1593, P.R.O., Excheq. 403/2559, p. 350-51. Wilkes' daily diet began on July 28th.

²Ibid., and Burghley's Notes, 17 July 1593, Cal. Dom., III, p. 362. See Edmondes' bitter letter of 16 June 1593, The Edmondes Papers, p. 80 in which he threatened to return to England without leave if money were not sent him.

³Wilkes to Burghley, Argenton, 5 Aug. 1593, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXXII, f. 15. From Saint Denis on July 15th, Edmondes wrote Burghley the following report of the King's conversion. "Although by my last two letters of the 5th and 9th here of I assure your Lordship of the King's certain resolution to go to the mass and the time thereof; yet, now would I not fail to signify also his like fulfillment of the same, which he performed this day with all the solemnity and magnificence that the Catholics here could devise to express so great a joy and to the end the

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VIII's reaction to it was known, there came a temporary truce between Henry and the League--a truce which bound the King not to receive into his obedience any "towns" or "strangers" who might now desire to throw in their lot with him. At his arrival Wilkes had read a copy of the truce and after discussing it with several of the local leaders decided that there was "great probability of a peace to ensue [thereby]." After three days in Caen, Sir Thomas hurried on to Argentan for a half-day, then on to Alençon, and thence to Chartres where he expected to find the King. In spite of the truce, he was forced to travel a rather circuitous route and with large "convoys" because the highways were "full of lewd people that beat the passages with 30 or 40 cuirasses together only to rob and spoil such as pass."¹

Not finding Henry at Chartres, Wilkes hurried on to Saint Denis on Friday, August 10th where, the following morning, he was able to hold a brief audience with the King who was about to depart for Fontainebleau. When Edmondes had requested the audience, Henry had asked that Wilkes hold off discussing the various points of his instructions until the following Tuesday (August 14th) when they would both be at Melun just four leagues from Fontainebleau. Thus, the first meeting at the King's lodgings in the Abbey of Saint Denis lasted "not of half a quarter-of-an-hour." Apparently thinking that Elizabeth knew of his conversion prior to Wilkes departure, Henry made excuses for not reading her letters of introduction that Wilkes presented and instead "without any speeches or occasion offered" by the English ambassador, immediately launched into

same should be carried to those of Paris, bonfires were made in their view at Montmartre. The attention is great of the fruit hereof which within few days will be seen." The Edmondes Papers, p. 89.

¹Ibid., Edmondes to Burghley, Saint Denis, 22 July 1593, Ibid., pp. 90-91, and Wilkes to Burghley, Argentan, 5 Aug. 1593, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXXII, f. 15.

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a hasty explanation of his conversion, promising to say more at their next conference. He also expressed pleasure that Elizabeth had seen fit to send Wilkes with whom he could "deal more confidently therein...than with any other." The brief meeting concluded with Wilkes commenting on "how strange it would appear unto her Majesty that of so resolute and long continued Protestant he should so suddenly become a convert."¹

Elizabeth, as usual, proved more forceful and eloquent in her reaction to Henry's conversion. "Ah!" she began in her letter to the King,

What sorrow, what regrets, and what groans have I felt in my soul, at the sound of the tidings which Morlas² has brought me! My God! Is it possible that any worldly consideration can have effaced the terror denounced by the Divine wrath? Can we, even according to reason, look for a good sequel to so iniquitous an act? Can you imagine that He who has sustained and preserved you by His hand would permit you to walk alone in your greatest need? Is it a perilous thing to do evil that good may come. Still I hope that a more healthy inspiration may come to you. Meanwhile, I shall not cease to place you in the foremost rank of my devotions, in order that the hands of Esau may not spoil the blessings of Jacob. Whereas you promise me all friendship and faithfulness, I confess that I have dearly merited them, nor shall I repent, provided you do not change your Father (otherwise I shall be to you but a bastard sister on the Father's side); for I shall always love the natural better than the adopted. God knows it is so, and may He guide you in the right way. Your very confident sister, sire, if it be after the old fashion, with the new I will have nothing to do. Elizabeth R.³

¹Wilkes to Burghley, "Briconte Robertt within 8 Leagues of Paris and 4 leagues of Melun," 13 Aug. 1593, *Ibid.*, ff. 34-35. A summary of this report can be found in Harrison, ed., *The Elizabethan Journals*, I, p. 258.

²Henry's special envoy to Elizabeth.

³Not having the original I have used Baird's (*The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre*, II, pp. 356-57), translation. P. de Rapin-Thoyras, *The History of England as well Ecclesiastical as Civil*, trans. N. Tindal (London: James and John Knapton, 1732), IX, pp. 152-53, and Camden's *Annales*, p. 422 both give translations of the same letter. The British Museum Sloane Mss. 2764, f. 24, also has a copy of the original with the more simple endorsement of "your very affectionate sister. Elizabeth R." None, however, list any more specific date than August 1593.

One should not allow this letter to convince him that the Queen was both thunderstruck by Henry's conversion or totally opposed to it. The possibility of this step had long been in the air and the lateness of the hour before Wilkes was dispatched to France as well as the contents of his instructions leave no doubt but that she was resigned to the inevitability of the King's decision. More important is the fact that Elizabeth was shrewd enough to see the benefits to be had from the King's conversion. The above letter makes this amply clear when she states: "It is a perilous thing to do evil that good may come." (Italics mine.) A unified France under the leadership of a King who was at heart a Protestant was the best guarantee England had against Philip II's designs for European domination and the suppression of all "heresy," It also meant that the Queen could safely consider withdrawing some if not all her troops in France, and feigned anger at the King's conversion would provide her with a good excuse for doing so. Elizabeth had not poured great quantities of men and money into France for the past four years and not learned the simple fact that Henry IV was not going to secure his crown without abjuring his Protestantism.¹

Meanwhile, on the way to Melun with the King's train, Wilkes had the opportunity to dispatch a letter to Burghley in which he assessed the possible effects of Henry's conversion on French politics. "I say," he wrote,

that the King's conversion doth promise much, whereof there appeareth as yet no great effect more than that he hath in appearance assured

¹Later on 19 Oct. 1593 (B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, ff. 173b-174) Wilkes made a statement that at first reading would appear to contradict the above position. He explained that the "backwardness" of Clement VIII in "admitting the King's conversion may alter greatly our intentions here" for it provided an opportunity for Elizabeth to "alienate him and his whole party from the Church of Rome which would be an infinite strength and security to her Majesty." What Wilkes was suggesting here was not a hope that Henry would repudiate his newly professed Catholicism but that if Clement rejected the King's conversion his and the French

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his estate with those that were declining from him (I mean his Catholics), by breaking the neck of the third party¹ whereby he hath doubtless gotten a strong assurance.

The poverty of the Dukes of Mayenne and Guise, the not performing of promises by the Pope and King of Spain, the uncertainty of the people of that faction, who all desire a peace, the weariness of the King and his party, the disagreement between the Dukes of Guise and Mayenne, and the general misery of the country (which is pitiful to behold) will draw them in all likelihood to an end of their present dissensions.²

Henry arrived in Melun on the 14th but it was the next day before Wilkes had audience "in his cabinet very privately." During their three hour session the two men discussed mainly the King's conversion and Brittany. Concerning the former, Henry explained at great length that "the necessity of his estate was such that no verbal reasons could have prevented the mischief whereunto he had fallen if his conversion had not been performed." At the time of Henry III's death and his own succession, he had promised to be instructed in the Catholic faith within

reaction generally would lead to the same thing that happened in England under Henry VIII--i.e., the establishment of a French Catholic Church free of Papal jurisdiction. In fact, in 1591 just such a separation had nearly occurred. See Baird, The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre, II, pp. 269-71.

¹This "tiers parti" as it was known was formed as a result of the March 1st 1591 N.S. papal bulls issued by Gregory XIII. These bulls threatened the French clergy with suspension and excommunication if they did not renounce their obedience to Henry IV within fifteen days and commanded all nobles, judges and tiers etat to abandon the King else they too feel the weight of papal wrath. Moreover, the King was declared excommunicated and forfeit of his entire estate. Such decrees introduced a division in Henry's royalist party and led to the formation of the "tiers parti" political faction made up of loyalist Catholics who feared the consequences of the bulls. These men had long been content to serve a "heretic" king while biding the time when he should see fit to submit himself to the long-deferred "instruction." Now they began to press hard for his prompt conversion as an indispensable condition of continued support. One of these, the aspiring Charles of Bourbon, Archbishop of Rouen saw in this situation a possible chance for asserting a claim of his own to the throne. See Baird, The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre, II, pp. 246-61.

²Wilkes to Burghley "From Briconte Robertt, within 8 leagues of Paris and 4 leagues of Melun," 13 Aug. 1593, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXXII, ff. 34-35.

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six months, yet here it was four years later. Was not this sufficient proof of his unwillingness to take such a step? Besides, his pressures had been many: He had been forced to retain all Henry III's officers, even though most were "corrupt" and so privy to his secrets that he could never launch an effective enterprise against the League. At the same time, most of his Protestant councilors had deserted him to attend to their own private affairs. In all this his enemies grew stronger and he weaker, until he saw no other choice but to assent to being "Instructed." Then, when the League heard of his decision they began urgently to press for the election of the young Duke of Guise. All of these reasons, he explained, hastened his conversion by at least two months.¹

Henry went on to explain that as much as he had disliked doing it, his conversion had already strengthened his estate. The "third party" was "now assured to him." His conversion had "staggered the election of the Duke of Guise," drawn the love and affection of the people generally unto him, and prevented Calvinism from being scandalized by his having to be converted by "instruction and disputation." It had also "stayed the falling away of all the princes of his blood, of his whole Council Catholic, of the Catholic Governors of all the provinces and towns under his obedience, and generally all of his nobility." Even "a great number of gentlemen who followed the League are come unto him and have acknowledged him for their lawful King."²

At this point the discussion shifted to Brittany wherein Wilkes "spent as much time" as he could in "amplifying" his instructions. He mentioned the king's "breach" of promise and his Marshal Jean d'Aumont's

¹Wilkes to Burghley, Melun, 17 Aug. 1593, *Ibid.*, ff. 51-52, (See copy in B.M., Cott. Caligula E. IX, ff. 134-37 and summary in Harrison, ed., *The Elizabethan Journals*, I, p. 259.), and "Heads of discourse," 15 Aug. 1593, B.M., Cott. Caligula E. IX, ff. 42-46.

²*Ibid.*, note no. 47.

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failure in waging a useful war there, as well as of "the unprofitable expense and consumption of her Majesty's treasure and people" due to lack of a seaport for resupply and retreat. Henry quickly "transferred the fault from himself to the Marshal and charged him with negligence and undue proceeding in that service." With the exception of the port town, and after his own estate was pacified he promised to redress all these grievances by "not fail[ing] with all the force he could make to repair in person into Brittany to remove the Spaniard." This second audience ended at this point, with Henry requesting Wilkes to submit the principal matters of his negotiation in writing wherewith he and his Council would give him answer in five or six days.¹

Henry proved better than his word, for on August 19th, within just four days of the previous audience, he presented Wilkes with his written answers to Elizabeth's proposals.² With one exception these were little different from what he had already told Wilkes. That exception was the King's willingness to draw up, sign, and seal with his great seal a "bond of Amity,"³ in which he pledged himself to join with Elizabeth in a "war offensive and defensive against the King of Spain" so long as he should continue to make war on either of them. Furthermore, he promised to enter into no peace with Philip without her consent and without both England and France being encompassed in that peace. Wilkes was no doubt

¹Ibid. Wilkes did learn from the Admiral of France, Armand de Biron, later in the day, that because of the Duke de Mercœur's refusal to accept the truce until he had finished taking Breton town of "Montgoutoux," Henry had decided to send 6,000 Swiss and French troops there for two months to "assail" Mercœur. Ibid.

²"The answers of the French King, Melun, 29 Aug. 1593 M.S., P.R.O., S.P. 103, VII, ff. 332-34. Another copy exists in B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, ff. 59-65.

³"Bond of Amity," Melun, 29 Aug. 1593 M.S., P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXXII, f. 58. Folios 59 and 61 are copies as are B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, f. 85 and 138.

pleased, for it had been one of the major purposes of his mission to ascertain the King's feelings toward Spain. Along with these two documents Wilkes received a brief note by the Duke of Montpensier requesting Elizabeth's continued support in Brittany.¹ Satisfied that he had accomplished what he came for² Wilkes prepared to take his leave. Knowing that Sir Thomas' sympathies lay with his desire to retain Elizabeth's support, Henry begged the ambassador "to stay to the end of the truce, with the English troops" in that province.³ But low on funds⁴ and anxious to be home, Wilkes departed for Dieppe on August 19th,⁵ accompanied by an escort of French horse under Captain Fournier, whose company was considered one of the King's best.⁶ It was the last time he was to see Henry.

After a seven-day journey Wilkes arrived in Dieppe on Saturday August 25th. Detained there until the following Thursday he spent that

¹P.R.O., S.P. 78, XXXII, f. 63.

²The only mention Wilkes makes of his attempts to deal with the "Princes of the Blood" comes in his August 13th letter to Burghley in which he explained that as yet "I find not any of the Princes of the Blood with the King."

³Ottowell Smith to Burghley, [Dieppe], 2 Sept. 1593, Ibid., f. 96.

⁴Within three days of his arrival at Saint Denis Wilkes wrote Burghley of his desire to complete his business as rapidly as possible "for (truely) my good Lordship, my fortune will not bear the continuation of the charge I am at which notwithstanding all my husbanding thereof is so far above her Majesty's allowance as I am ashamed to mention it and more grieved to feel it." See Wilkes to Burghley, "Briconte Robertt...", 13 Aug. 1593, Ibid., f. 34.

⁵"Charges of Thomas Wilkes Knight" July-August 1593, B.M., Add. Mss. 18,764, f. 3, and Wilkes to Edmondes, Windsor, 6 Sept. 1593, I Ibid., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, ff. 181-82.

⁶Henry IV to Beauvoir, Fontainebleau, 17 Sept. 1593 N.S., Lettres Missives, IV, p. 30, and Ottowell Smith to Burghley, Dieppe, 19 March 1591, L. & A., II, no. 397.

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night and Friday morning sailing to Dover in the Quittance.¹ Once there, he was met by a John Symons with a packet from Lord Burghley,

and a le[tter to my] self cunningly penned to require me to stay with the King t[ill the] assembly appointed for those of the Religion should be past; [But I], finding this stratagem, hastened nevertheless home as hard as I could and so have prevented the purposes of my kind adversaries."²

¹The itemized list of "Charges of Thomas Wilkes Knight returning from the French King homeward" (July-Aug. 1593, B.M., Cott. Mss. Add. 18,764, f. 3), is most informative:

Melun to Corbeil	£3	12s.
Corbeil to Chastre	£4	
Chastre to Villepreux	£8	6d.
Villepreux to Nante	£6	13s. 8d.
Nante to Vernon	£4	3s. 2d
Vernon to Audely	£4	6s.
Audely to Cailly	£6	3s. 8d.
Cailly to Dieppe.	£7	6s.
	<u>SUMMA:£44</u>	5s.

Horsehire for 7 days journey from Melun to Dieppe and that for 12 horses as well for the saddle as for carriage at 6s. the day for the said horses £ 25 4s.

For entertainment of 40s. per day for 50 days [actually only 40 days] begun July 28th and ended Sept. 5th . . . £100

Whereof he received by way of imprest £66 [actually £65] 13s. 4d. which being defaulted out of the £100 remaineth £ 34 6s. 8d.

For his transportation from Dieppe to Dover £17 11s. 4d.

For charges of horsehire from Dover to the Court at Windsor for 12 horses for himself, his servants, and for his carriages £ 9 8s.

For sending letters £ 5

For intelligences £ 20

SUMMA TOTALLI: £154 15s.
[actually £155 15s.]

²Wilkes to Edmondes, Windsor, 6 Sept. 1593, Ibid., Caligula E. IX, ff. 181-82. Portions of this letter are burned. The "assembly" spoken of above was apparently requested of Henry by the Huguenots who wished to know what their new position would be under the converted King.

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Though it is not clear who was trying to make trouble for Wilkes at this time, it was soon obvious from what followed why they wished his continued absence from the English Court. When Wilkes read the Lord Treasurer's letter, he learned that Elizabeth had not only "resolved to call home all the companies at Dieppe" but was in fact sending ships for their transport. Her reason for this decision was that they would do no good in Normandy during the truce there. "Considering how dangerous a thing it would be to the King in the midst of his greatest affairs to have the countenance of her Majesty's assistance taken from him and of what consequence the same would be to her Majesty," Wilkes quickly wrote to Burghley asking him "to intreat her Majesty to stay the execution of her purpose till I might be heard." Hurrying on to the Court at Windsor, "as fast as I could," Wilkes was able to have audience with the Queen on Sunday, September 2nd. His letter to Edmondes describing this meeting is worth quoting:

I came to her Majesty's presence whom I found infinitely distracted with the proceedings of the King with his conversion, with the truce, yea with everything; and albeit she seemed to be greatly satisfied with all my doings, commended them greatly, used me with great kindness, made me sit down on a stool by her; yet, could I not fasten any good conceipt of the King in her, neither would she be capable of any one reason delivered by me to show the danger that would ensue of the revocation of her people. There concurred with me for the stay of the men, my Lord Treasurer and all the rest of the Council. In the end, our persuasions have prevailed so far as her Majesty is pleased to stay the revocation of the men till there may be heard from you answer of the dispatch now sent unto you by this bearer,¹ which doth contain a demand made by her Majesty to the King of a

Would they be allowed to exercise their religion, defend themselves, or take part in French affairs? Henry kept postponing the conference until word could be had from Clement VIII as to the acceptability of his conversion. See Edmondes to Burghley, Dieppe, 26 Oct. 1593, Edmondes Papers, p. 111 and Wilkes to Edmondes, Windsor, 13 Nov. 1593, B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, f. 177.

¹Burghley to Edmondes, Windsor, 8 Sept. 1593, Ibid., ff. 191-92. This was the very thing the opponents of Elizabeth's involvement in France were afraid Wilkes would accomplish. It had been the reason for their abortive attempt to keep him away from the Court for a longer time.

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place standing below St. Valéry upon the river of Somme...Herein therefore you are to deal with all earnestness and good discretion so as the King if he love the furtherance of his own cause may be induced to satisfy her Majesty's demands; and if you will tell him it is very poor advise that in no case he refuse it, you shall do me favor.

Worried lest the King think he had failed him in his report to Elizabeth, Wilkes went on to instruct Edmondes that,

Withall, you may let him know my earnest travail with her Majesty for the stay of the troops and that without the same they had been brought away; which I know his own ambassador will witness unto him. The Queen declareth absolutely to me that she will give him no more assistance for that as she sayeth, all her succor are employed to no good end and she will not hurt herself to assist him that is so unworthy thereof. This backwardness in her Majesty is wrought by two instruments (as I conceive): first, by some insufficiency dealing of Mons. du Morlas, here testified by the ambassadors. Second, by a knight...[burned]...in your cipher.¹

It was fortunate that Wilkes took this precaution, for in a letter to Henry, Ambassador Morlas had suggested that he was the cause of Elizabeth's sudden determination to recall her troops.² Edmondes did good service in defending his friend's honor to the King, and Wilkes thanked him for the

apology you made in my defence concerning the letter of the French ambassador, for no man witnesses with me so much in that case as yourself. I think he doteth, taking Robert for Richard, as we say, for if his intelligence here had been so good as he will pretend he might have found the true ground of that hasty resolution: and may as truly say that my endeavors only were the cause to stay the execution thereof.³

¹Wilkes to Edmondes, Windsor, 6 Sept. 1593, B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, ff. 181-82.

²Henry IV to Beauvoir, [?], 4 Oct. 1593, N.S., Lettres Missives, IV, p. 39.

³Wilkes to [Edmondes], Windsor, 20 Sept. 1593, B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, f. 182b. Even so, over a month later Wilkes was still worried about Henry's opinion. In an Oct. 19th letter to Edmondes he wrote: "I would be glad to hear from you what conceipt the King hath of me, seeing how backward his causes have gone here since my coming home. I protest before the living God, I have done all the good offices for him that possibly I might, but all would not serve; and I was there with the King as appeared by her Majesty's sending for the companies at Dieppe before my coming home." Ibid., ff. 170-71.

As for Elizabeth's demand for a seaport at the mouth of the Somme in exchange for allowing her soldiers to remain in France, Henry simply tried to evade the whole issue. He instructed Beauvoir, his ambassador in London, to explain to the Queen that the port she requested¹ had "neither bastion nor edifice" to protect her troops. It was too close to the League-controlled towns of d'Abbeville and Amiens to be safe, and besides St. Valéry was in the hands of Henry's cousin the anti-Protestant Duke of Nevers, who would never tolerate the English so near. Instead, Henry suggested to Edmondes that the unoccupied English forces work together with the soldiers of the United Provinces to besiege Dunkirk, while he would "go and remain between Boulogne and Calais" with 2,000 Swiss and 3,000 French foot.² However, these explanations, coupled with Wilkes' continued appeals to leave the troops in France, accomplished nothing. On October 11th Sir Thomas had to report to Edmondes that "the troops at Dieppe are now sent for in all haste and as soon as they shall be landed here shipping shall bring the rest from Brittany." Wilkes also asked Edmondes to tell the Duke of Montpensier, who was still awaiting an answer from the Queen "concerning his going into Brittany and to his demands made to her Majesty for supply of things in that province," that he was sorry for his negative answer "for as I am a Christian man I have travailed to overthrow all these desperate resolutions not only by persuasion to her Majesty and her Council by speeches and conference but by writing [and] setting down the dangers that would follow thereof."³

¹A town called Goudet on "l'extrême embouchure de la Somme, au-dessous de Saint-Valéry, sur la pointe de la rive gauche." Lettres Missives, IV, p. 36, footnote no. 2.

²Henry IV to Beauvoir, [?], 4 Oct. 1593, Ibid., pp. 36-37, and Edmondes to Burghley, Fontainebleau, 18 Sept. 1593, Edmondes Papers, p. 96.

³Wilkes to Edmondes, Windsor, 11 Oct. 1593, B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula

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The following week, Elizabeth decided to send someone to represent English and Protestant interests on the "assembly" that Henry and the Huguenots were planning to hold. Her first choice was Wilkes, but he "escaped the voyage by very great fortune; for her Majesty ever insisted upon me," he told Edmondes, "as the meetest for that service, but my lack, my late charge, and that she was unwilling to grant me my suit have excused me." Instead, she decided to relieve Sir Robert Sidney of his post at Flushing and send him.¹

In the meantime, frequent reports of Spanish intentions to attack Ostend accelerated Elizabeth's withdrawal of her eight Normandy companies. In early November they sailed from Dieppe to Sandwich, where "lest they should run away," they were kept on board the ships for several days and then shipped on to Ostend. The troops in Brittany never got much further than the coast. Burghley had suggested that Norris and his men be removed to the Channel Islands until Henry IV showed himself more amenable to the Queen's demands. The plan was accepted, and orders were sent to Sir John Hawkins to carry it out. But Norris objected so strenuously it was dropped, and his forces remained in Brittany throughout that winter.²

E. IX, f. 173 and Wilkes to Edmondes, Battersea, 19 Oct. 1593, Ibid., ff. 173b.-174. Actually, upon finding Elizabeth so unwilling to consider leaving her troops in France, Wilkes had dared not deliver Montpensier's letter to her because, as he explained, it "would rather accelerate that determination..." Ibid., f. 173.

¹Ibid., ff. 173b-174. For further information on Sidney's mission see Ibid., ff. 177 and 180b, Edmondes Papers, p. 111, Cal. Dom., III, pp. 443-44, and Lettres Missives, IV, pp. 86-87, 116-18, 125-28, and 138. Assuming the role of advocate in behalf of the Huguenots was certainly not new for Elizabeth but she knew she had to be careful in not appearing to interfere too much with French internal affairs. Fortunately, Sidney was careful and though Henry IV was irritated at his coming he made it clear that no persecution of the Protestants would be allowed. See J. B. Black, Elizabeth and Henry IV: Being a Short Study in Anglo-French Relations, 1589-1603 (Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, 1914), pp. 69-71.

²Lord Admiral Howard and Lord Cobham to the Privy Council, Dover,

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One last comment is necessary on Wilkes' 1593 mission to France. When he brought back Henry's signature on an offensive and defensive alliance it was anticipated that in the same way Elizabeth would officially demonstrate her concurrence in the matter by sending "an authentical promise" to him. In November, Henry was still waiting for this. The reasons for Elizabeth's delay were several disturbing rumors that the French King was negotiating with Philip behind her back. Once these were shown to be false Elizabeth had a similar bond drawn up in her name and sent to Henry in January 1594.¹

Abortive Mission to Archduke Ernest

For the remainder of 1593 and most of 1594 Wilkes was primarily concerned with domestic affairs. During that time the political atmosphere of England was charged with rumors of various plots and conspiracies. In January 1594 Elizabeth's personal physician, Doctor Roderigo Lopez, was arrested on suspicion of plotting to poison the Queen. After confessing that he had promised Philip II he would perform the deed for a substantial sum of money, Lopez was tried at the Guildhall and executed along with several other accomplices in June of the same year.² Throughout

4 Nov. 1593, Cal. Dom., III, pp. 382-83, Howard to Sir Robert Cecil and Sir John Hawkins, Hampton Court, 11 Dec. 1593, Ibid., p. 393, Note [by Sir Thomas Shirley to Burghley], 12 Nov. 1593, Ibid., p. 385-86, and "Estimate," 24 Nov. 1593, Ibid., p. 388. See Edward P. Cheyney, A History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth (New York: Longmans Green and Co., 1914), I, pp. 292-95.

¹Edmondes to Burghley, Dieppe, 1 Nov. 1583, Edmondes Papers, p. 114, and Black, Elizabeth and Henry IV, p. 69.

²See Arthur Dimock, "The Conspiracy of Doctor Lopez," E.H.R., IX, (July 1894), pp. 440-72, and Martin Hume, Treason and Plot: Struggles for Catholic Supremacy in the Last Years of Queen Elizabeth (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1908), pp. 115-55.

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the whole affair Wilkes was busily involved in the investigations, but that is another story best left for the next chapter.¹

No sooner had the Lopez plot been taken care of than another was discovered, this time involving three young English exiles who had recently been granted permission to return to England. Edmond Yorke, nephew of the traitor Sir Rowland Yorke, and his two companions, Richard Williams and Henry Young, were watched carefully from the moment they arrived. Soon it was discovered that they were part of a plan designed by Sir William Stanley of Deventer infamy and the extremist wing of English Jesuit exiles in Flanders, which included Father William Holt, Doctor William Gifford, and Doctor Thomas Worthington. It was also suspected that both Philip's secretary of war in Flanders, Esteban de Ibarra, and one of his private secretaries, Don Cristobal de Moro, were accomplices. Apparently, the plan had been to kill Elizabeth with a poignard, arrow, or rapier as she walked in her garden.²

It was upon discovering the particulars of the Yorke and Williams Plot (August 1594) that Elizabeth decided it was time to move against the seedbed of many of these conspiracies--the English exiles in Flanders. Accordingly, she resolved to send Sir Thomas Wilkes to remonstrate with the new Governor of the Spanish Low Countries, the Archduke Ernest. For over a year after the death of Parma in December 1592, these southern provinces had awaited the arrival of this man who was both a brother to the Emperor Rudolph and a nephew of Philip II. Destined to rule only one

¹Examinations before Wilkes, Attorney General Egerton, Solicitor General Coke, William Waad, and Richard Young, 4, 8, 11, 12, and 16 Feb. 1594, Cal. Dom., III, pp. 425-27, Richard Young to Lord Keeper Puckering, London, 14 April 1594, Ibid., p. 483, and Ferrara de Gama's Confession, 18 Feb. 1594, Harrison, ed., The Elizabethan Journals, I, pp. 286-87.

²Hume, Treason and Plot, pp. 155-61.

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year, this poverty stricken, lazy, and completely unmartial Hapsburg Prince presented quite a contrast to his predecessor.¹

Wilkes' instructions need not be gone into in detail. Basically, they commissioned him "to expostulate" with the Archduke concerning "the wicked practices of the Spanish King's ministers and her Majesty's rebels in going about to take her Majesty's life by poisonings and murderings." Wilkes was to require Ernest to put a stop to the intrigues of his own men as well as those advisors of the Spanish King who were with him in Flanders, to expel such English rebels as William Stanley, Father Holt, Doctor Gifford, Doctor Werthington, Charles Paget, and Hugh Owen so that they might be tried for their crimes in England, and to warn Philip that if remedies to these problems were not immediately forthcoming Elizabeth would declare open war on Spain. As proof of the legitimacy of the Queen's accusations, Wilkes was to submit "true copies...of the examinations, confessions, and proofs," and if these did not satisfy the Archduke he could send a special messenger to Ostend where Wilkes was to have left the originals in the safe-keeping of Sir Edward Norris.²

The language these instructions are couched in is by far the most stern Wilkes had ever been given. Elizabeth was obviously frightened by the recent plots, and with Parma dead and the pro-English Henry IV increasingly in command in France, she could afford to display her true feelings.

¹Motley, Netherlands, III, pp. 278-83.

²Wilkes' Instructions, 18 Sept. 1594, B.M., Cott. Mss. Vespasian C. VII, ff. 234-40, and Sir Henry Maynard, Burghley's secretary, to Michael Hicks [Burghley's servant?], the Court, 14 Sept. 1594, Thomas Wright, ed., Queen Elizabeth and Her Times: A Series of Original Letters (London: Henry Colburn, 1838), II, pp. 435-36. A less complete copy of these instructions can be found in P.R.O., S.P. 77, V, 1, ff. 132-36. As with his 1593 mission to Henry IV Wilkes read over his instructions, found problem areas, and then asked Burghley to give him further instructions. See Wilkes to Burghley, London, 14 Sept. 1594, Ibid., f. 130.

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On September 11th while the Privy Council was busy drawing up these instructions, the Queen sent off to Ernest a request for Wilkes' passport to and from Brussels.¹ However, before the Archduke's reply could be received, news of Sir Thomas' impending mission created consternation at The Hague and at the French Court. Both feared that Elizabeth was secretly attempting to conclude a peace with Spain. In fact, Edmondes reported from St. Germain that the "intended negotiation hath put us in very evil reputation here."² Then, before it was necessary to put a stop to that rumor the requested passport³ arrived from Brussels enclosed in an extremely rude letter to Elizabeth from Ernest. Addressing the Queen in the third person, the letter purposely omitted all honors generally given to a reigning monarch. Furthermore, the Archduke made it very clear that he wished Wilkes, upon his arrival, to propound nothing that might be to the disservice of the King of Spain.⁴

Elizabeth was so angered by the contents and style of the letter that she promptly changed her mind about sending Wilkes. Instead, she sent a tersely worded letter to the Archduke reprimanding him for his

¹Elizabeth to the Archduke Ernest, Greenwich, 11 Sept. 1594, B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, ff. 265-66. Other copies of this letter can be found in P.R.O., S.P. 77, V, 1, f. 151 and Harrison, ed., The Elizabethan Journals, I, p. 323.

²Edmondes to Burghley, Paris, 1 Oct. 1594, Edmondes Papers, p. 180, Sir Horatio Palavicino to Sir Robert Cecil, Middelburg, 19 Oct. 1594, H.M.C., Salisbury, V, p. 11, and Edmondes to Essex, St. Germain, 13 Nov. 1594, Ibid., p. 20. George Clark who was dispatched to Brussels to obtain Wilkes' passport later wrote from Ostend to his friend Richard Bagot about the popular reaction in that area to the proposed missions: "His [Wilkes'] coming we daily expect and in all the country hereabout great preparation is made for his receipt, with hopes that his coming is to treat of peace." H.M.C., Fourth Report: The Manuscripts of the Right Honorable Lord Bagot at Blithfield, Co. Stafford, (London: H.M.S.O., 1874), I, p. 338.

³Passport, 14 Oct. 1594 N.S., P.R.O., S.P. 84, IL, f. 152.

⁴Archduke Ernest to Elizabeth, Brussels, 14 Oct. 1594 N.S., Ibid., S.P. 77, V, 11, f. 152. Copies in Ibid., f. 153, B.M., Cott. Mss. Titus C. VII, f. 39, and Ibid., Vespasian C. VIII, f. 240.

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ill-bred dispatch, which she stated was,

so different in style and title from that both the Emperor your grandfather, your father, and brother, yea, by all Kings and potentates in their letters hath from the beginning of our reign been attributed to us,...we are now sorry that we did write to you in such friendly manner as we did.

Elizabeth went on to explain that her original purpose had been to give both Ernest and Philip an opportunity to clear their names of "certain detestable factors to be abhorred by all good Christians" but, because he refused to listen to any such matter,

we mean not to trouble you herewith; otherwise than we mind to publish these matters to the world as the same are proved or affirmed without any sinister additions, and then we shall expect such issue thereof both by you under whose governments such detestable acts have been attempted and by the King of Spain whom the same doth so nearly touch as in reason he ought to discharge himself of the same being imputed to him by his own ministers: which if he will not, we mind otherwise by God's favor to procure a redress thereof, by such other course as hither to we have foreborn.¹

From the start, it had obviously been the Archduke's intention to discourage Elizabeth and her Council from sending Wilkes, whom he knew would ask many embarrassing questions. However, to Philip II he simply explained: "From their changing their minds for such a trifle one may may conclude that there was little sincerity in their embassy."² Though Henry IV and the Dutch States-General were also pleased with the failure of this mission, one can be sure that no one was more happy than the rapidly aging Wilkes who wanted nothing more than to spend his remaining years within the safe confines of England's shores.³

¹Elizabeth to the Archduke, the Court, 30 Oct. 1594, *Ibid.*, f. 240. (My italics.) Copies can be found in *Ibid.*, Titus C. VII, f. 39 and H.M.C., *Salisbury*, V, pp. 13-14. Elizabeth's thinly veiled threat to the Archduke was preceded ten days by an equally stern letter from the Privy Council to Richardof, President of Ernest's Council. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13. See also P.R.O., S.P. 77, V, ii, ff. 155 and 157.

²Archduke Ernest to Philip II, Brussels, 10 Dec. 1594, H.M.C., *Salisbury*, V, pp. 34-35. It is very possible that French and Dutch hostility had caused Elizabeth to reconsider the sending of Wilkes.

³Sir Moratius Palavincino to Sir Robert Cecil, The Hague, *Ibid.*,

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Personal Affairs

From the time of his 1590 mission to The Hague until his death in 1598, Wilkes was regularly incapacitated by severe attacks of the gout.¹ This, along with his heavy duties as a Clerk of the Council, made it more and more of an inconvenience to manage his distant estate in Downton. Accordingly in late 1591 or early 1592 he sold the estate and purchased a home on the south bank of the Thames in Battersea.² Still he found the pressures of his duties too great, and for a period during the last months of 1593, he made up his mind to resign his office as Clerk.³ Probably due to lack of any sufficient means to sustain himself, this resignation never materialized and in June of 1595 he purchased another estate in the parish of Rickmansworth, County Hertfordshire, which was close enough to Westminster (approximately twenty miles) to allow him easy access to the center of government and yet far enough away for him not to be disturbed with official business each time he sought a moment of relaxation.⁴ It was here in late January or early February 1596 that his wife Margaret gave birth to their only child and heir--

p. 19, and Edmondes to Burghley, St. Quentin, 30 Nov. 1594, Edmondes Papers, p. 194, (second copy in B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, f. 270).

¹Wilkes to Burghley, Battersea, 12 Feb. 1592, Ibid., Lansdowne Mss. 69, f. 121, Wilkes to Burghley, London, 8 March 1594, Ibid., 76, f. 28, Essex to Wilkes, [?], 17 March 1593, Cal. Dom., III, p. 330, Sir Robert Cecil to Lord Keeper Puckering and Lord Buckhurst, the Court, 24 Dec. 1595, H.M.C., Salisbury, V, p. 507, and Wilkes to Sir Robert Cecil, London, 30 June 1597, Ibid., VII, p. 280.

²As late as June 1591 Wilkes was still residing in Downton, Wiltshire (Wilkes to Sir Robert Sidney, Greenwich, 8 June 1591, Collins, ed., Letters and Memorials, I, pp. 325-26), but, by the 12th of February 1592 he was living at Battersea (Wilkes to Burghley, Battersea, 12 Feb. 1592, B.M., Lansd. Mss. 69, f. 121).

³Wilkes to Edmondes, Windsor and Battersea, 19 Sept. - 19 Nov. 1593, Ibid., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, ff. 173, 175-77, and 180.

⁴V.C.H. A History of Hertfordshire (London: Archibald Constable and

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a baby girl also named Margaret. Then, several months later, on May 24th tragedy struck Wilkes' life when his thirty-four year old wife died.¹ The cause of her death is unknown, but it left a very busy government official with a four-and-a-half month old baby to care for. After Lady Wilkes burial on June 9th "in the parish church of Rickmansworth,"² the approximately fifty-three-year-old Sir Thomas set about to find another wife. By December of the same year he had married Frances Savage, youngest daughter of Sir John Savage of Rocksavage, Cheshire.³

Wilkes' Last Diplomatic Assignment

In the meantime, the European diplomatic situation had been undergoing some interesting changes. Since Henry IV's conversion in July 1593, Elizabeth's attitude towards the King had significantly modified. More and more English interests had narrowed to the protection of France's Channel coast, while the larger task of defending all of France against the Spaniard and destroying the League was left to the French King. Time and again the latter's appeals to Elizabeth for help in these larger matters had been turned down. At the same time Philip II had been making it increasingly clear that he intended to make the north-west coast of France a part of his domain. By May 1594 the Spanish had not only erected

Company Limited, 1908), II, pp. 371-73, and P.R.O., Chancery Proceedings, Series 2, Bdle. 253, no. 11.

¹Lady Wilkes' Funeral Certificate, College of Arms Mss. I. 6. f. 42.

²Ibid.

³Lady Frances Wilkes to William Wallopp Mayor of Southampton, London, 4 Dec. 1596, R. C. Anderson, ed., Letters of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, from the Archives of Southampton (Southampton: Cox and Sharland, 1921), pp. 209-10, Sir Thomas Wilkes to William Wallopp, Court at Whiethall, 16 Jan. 1597, Ibid., p. 213, Sir John Savage's Will, 2. Dec. 1597, P.C.C., 40 Montague, and Savage genealogy, B.M., Harl. Mss. 1535, f. 246.

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a fort at the Breton coastal town of Crozon but by doing so threatened to cut Brest off from all hope of succor by sea. In August of the next year the Picard town of Doullens fell to Spanish troops and Cambrai was invested. Then, while Henry begged Elizabeth for help to prevent Calais from falling too, Cambrai was taken. Always anxious to regain an English foothold on the French coast, Elizabeth stalled, hoping that this would force Henry to allow her to garrison Calais. This he refused to consider, knowing that if ever England regained that coveted seaport it would spell the end of Anglo-French friendship. The result of this impasse was the capitulation of Calais in April 1596. Obviously, Elizabeth had misjudged Henry's power of resistance. When finally in March 1597 the Spanish Governor of Doullens dramatically captured Amiens and the King's arsenal there, Henry began seriously to consider the possibility of peace negotiations with Philip. A month later in April he solicited the Pope's assistance and found the response so encouraging that by October enough progress had been made for Philip and Henry to agree that the Treaty of Cateau Cambresis (1559) should be the starting point of the negotiations. It was further agreed that both Elizabeth and the Dutch should also be invited to the peace conference. The Queen at first refused the invitation, but when it was learned in early January 1598 that the Dutch were sending deputies to France, she and her Privy Council were led against their will to do the same. Sir Robert Cecil was chosen to head the English commission, and assigned to accompany him were Doctor John Herbert, Master of Requests, and Sir Thomas Wilkes.¹

Still suffering from the adverse effects of his more recent "great voyages and charges," Wilkes was sorely displeased with this new

¹Black, Elizabeth and Henry IV, pp. 71-129.

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assignment. "Truely, sir," he wrote Sir Robert Cecil on January 7, 1598,

such an employment could not have been laid upon me in a more unreasonable time than this; for I protest unto you I am in effect unfurnished of all things needful for such a voyage, and no money in my purse to make a provision, which, with the shortness of the time appointed for your departure hence, doth amaze me not a little.

Nevertheless, dutiful Wilkes promised to be at Court the next day and only asked that Elizabeth be induced to allow him a reasonable "imprest" towards his preparations.¹

As the dreary month of January progressed, and while instructions were being drafted for the mission, Wilkes busied himself with preparations for his new assignment. Knowing the hazards of making such a journey in the dead of winter and at his age, Wilkes drew up his will. The fact that he now had a child also made this essential. Dated 18 January 1598 it stipulated that his wife Frances be charged with the responsibility of raising Margaret to maturity. For this purpose she was to inherit his home, all his lands, his plate, jewels, stocks and other goods, and £1,000 cash. Also, £300 was to be set aside for Margaret until "either married or of the age of seventeen yeras." For himself, Wilkes asked that

if in this voyage which I am now to take beyond the seas by the commandment of her Majesty I shall happen to depart this life my will is that my body be buried in such place where I shall die without any funeral pomp to be used either there or here at home in England."

¹H.M.C., Salisbury, VIII, p. 6. One can obtain a taste of how unpleasant Wilkes felt diplomatic assignments could be from a badly burned letter of his written to Thomas Edmondes in October 1593. Warning him of the dangers involved in serving away from the English Court too long he went on to say that in such foreign service one is generally treated "no better than a posthorse, i.e., run u[n]til out of breath and after lay the bridle on our necks and give u[s] to go seek our stable--something you may learn by w[e] who have served long and at this hour [are] more in want than [plenty]. I speak and cannot be heard, I am pittied of some, but not relieved. When your young years shall be spent and your body no longer _____ [?]."

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At the end was an itemization of his over £400 of debts which were to be paid out of his assets.¹

This done Wilkes next had to furnish himself with suitable apparel for his mission. Fortunately there remains a misdated document² that itemizes just what he required for such an assignment which helps one to understand why he was so reluctant to be sent on another:

<u>Item:</u>	<u>Price</u>
1) 6 1/2 yds. of rich black satin, 14s. per yd	£.4 14s.
2) 2 ells ³ gross of double Bologna taffeta	20s. 3d.
3) 1/2 ell of black rich taffeta	8s.
4) 4 1/2 yds. of black satin for to draw out 3 pair of hose 12s	54s.
5) 1 1/2 ells gross of black rich taffeta for to line the face of 2 doublets 13s. 4d.	18s. 4d.
6) 13 yds. of black unshorn velvet 20s. per. yd.	£13
7) 12 1/2 yds. of black shagg 16s.	£10
8) 2 1/2 yds. of rich black satin 14s.	35s.
9) 13 yds. of rich black velvet for a gown at 23s. per yd. .	£16 2s.
10) 14 yds. of rich black velvet shagg for to line the black velvet 22s.	£15 8s.
11) 3 yds. more of rich black velvet	17s. 3d.
12) 1/2 yd. of black velvet shagg	11s.
13) 3 gross of black unshorn velvet	15s.
14) 1 gross of black rich tastoe	3s. 4d.
Sum Total	£68 35s. 2d. ⁴

¹P.C.C., 36 Lewyn.

²This "Bill for Silkes, Satins, Velvets, and taffetas sold by Baptist Hicks, merchant, to Thomas Wilkes on his going to France" is dated 15 August 1597 (Ibid., S.P. 12, CCLXIV, f. 179). This is clearly wrong for Wilkes himself expressed surprise and complained of his unpreparedness when called to this mission in January 1598. Yet, definitely this bill of sale is for his February 1598 mission, for on the 6th of that month Wilkes commissioned his friend Richard Hill to collect a £50 debt owed to Wilkes and use it to pay "Baptist Hicks...in part of payment of three-score eight pounds, three shillings, two pence owing by the said Sir Thomas..." (B.M., Hatfield Mss. [microfilm] 85, petition no. 2137.)

³One English "ell" equals 45 inches.

⁴The amazing thing about this bill is that it only represents the money expended for the purchase of cloth and not the tailoring expenses. Wilkes' servant Edward Vaughan later indicates that all such preparations plus £200 cash to carry with him into France gave Wilkes a total bill of £500! Even more interesting is the fact that by the time Wilkes had been in France for only eleven days he and his eleven servants had "utterly spent" the whole £200. Wilkes had anticipated borrowing more money from an English merchant in France but apparently that fell through.

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On January 31st Cecil's, Herbert's and Wilkes' instructions were ready. These were followed in early February by a set of additional directives. Though long and involved they basically required the ambassadors to seek an understanding with the Dutch commissioners concerning the possibilities of peace, and not to treat with the Spanish without this consent unless the former proved impossibly stubborn. More specifically, they were to consider carefully the Spanish proposals, insisted upon the United Provinces being "restored to quietness," and most importantly see whether or not Calais would be restored to England as agreed in the Treaty of Cateau Cambresis. The instructions explained that all three men were chosen for their experience and knowledge in European affairs, and Wilkes specifically because he was "well known" to Henry IV.¹

With these instructions, and Cecil receiving a daily stipend while Wilkes and Herbert each received 50s., the ambassadors and their train set off for Dover.² With them went Thomas Wriothesley, first Earl of Southampton, Sir George Carew, Lieutenant of the Ordinance, Sir James Wotten, Sir Charles Blount, Lord Montjoy, and a host of lesser officials and private servants.³ By the time they all reached Dover on or before the

Such figures help one to understand better why most, if not all, Elizabethan diplomats lost rather than made money in foreign service. See Edward Vaughan to Robert Cecil, Rouen, 2 March 1598, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XLI, f. 200.

¹Cecil's, Herbert's, and Wilkes' Instructions, [31 Jan.] 1598, B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, ff. 166-73 (Roughdraft Ibid., ff. 196-202) and "Ex Instructions," Feb. 1598, Ibid., Julius F. VI, ff. 94-96. See also Sir Robert Cecil to Henry IV, Dieppe, 19 Feb. 1598, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XLI, f. 161.

²Birch, Memoirs, II, p. 372. All "Docquets" for this period of Elizabethan history have been lost. See P.R.O., S.P. 38, V.

³List of Boats and those who sailed therein from Dover to France in [Feb.] 1598," B.M., Add. Mss. 18,654, f. 19:

1) Vanguard - R. Cecil, E. of Southampton, Sir George Carew,

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13th of February, there was a storm in the Channel, and Wilkes had a bad cold.¹ Four days later when the weather had moderated enough to set sail, Cecil dispatched a quick note to the Privy Council reporting that Wilkes was by that time "especially" unwell.² Weighing anchor at 5:00 p.m. on the 17th the five ships assigned to carry the embassy had a very rough crossing, and it was with some difficulty that they docked the next day at 4:00 p.m. in Dieppe harbor.³ In relating their crossing in a letter to Essex, Cecil wrote:

I passed very well....Young Norris was very sick, as were Charles Blount, Vane, Tufton, Cope, Wotton, and others in the Crane and Quittance. I only fear lest Sir Thomas Wilkes prove worse; but he shall ride in my coach and have all ease to Paris.⁴

After recuperating in Dieppe until Wednesday February 22, the embassy made a difficult two-day journey to Rouen in which the "foulness of the rains and that no convenient lodgings were to be had between Dieppe and Rouen" forced them to traverse the entire distance without stopping. Though met outside Rouen by the Duke of Montpensier and taken to warm lodgings and quantities of good food, the journey proved too

Mr. Norris, 11 other officials and some of Mr. Secretary's servants.

- 2) Answer - Mr. Herbert, Mr. Throgmorton, Sir James Wotten, Sir Charles Blount, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Paget and 12 other officials. [Later Cecil reports that some of these men crossed in the Crane. Cal. Dom., V, p. 30.]
- 3) Quittance - Tho. Wilkes, Mr. Frances Manners, Mr. Vane, Mr. Cuttes, Mr. Turvil, Mr. Corbett.
- 4) Tremonten - Mr. Cannon, Mr. Smith with most of Mr. Secretary's servants.
- 5) The Moor - Her Majesty's pinnace served to transport Mr. Secretary's trunks and other provisions which were shipped the 13th of this instant Feb.

¹Cecil to Burghley, Dover, 14 Feb. 1598, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XLI, ff. 135-36.

²Cecil to the Privy Council, Dover, 17 Feb. 1598, Ibid., f. 150.

³Diary of Cecil's 1598 mission, 17 Feb. 1598, B.M., Add. Mss. 18654, f. 22.

⁴Cecil to Essex, Dieppe, 19 Feb. 1598, Cal. Dom., V, p. 30.

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much for Wilkes' already weakened condition. The next day, just before setting off for Paris, it was discovered that he had become "dangerously sick" of a "very sharp fever full of bad acidity and sweating, continual sleeping, and great decay of strength." Local physicians were called in and immediately prescribed the usual bloodletting. Convinced that this "refreshed him," they repeated the treatment the following day, Sunday the 26th. Realizing that "a slow recovery" was the best that could be hoped for and aware that Henry IV was impatiently awaiting his arrival Cecil arranged for Wilkes to be looked after and started for Paris on Monday the 27th.¹

Wilkes' Death

After Sir Robert Cecil and the rest of the embassy hurried on to Paris, Wilkes' condition steadily worsened. Aware that he was dying, he had Edward Vaughan, his faithful servant of thirteen years, promise to ask Cecil to see that his £500 of debt incurred thus far in the mission would not be left for his wife Frances to pay. It would "be an heavy burden to the poor woman," Vaughan later wrote,

who hath not other means to advance money to pay it, but by selling of her stock from her grounds, and some household stuff, he having left her only his lease of Rickmansworth which is not much above eight-score pounds by year, being but a miserable fortune for a gentlewoman of her birth and the wife of a man of his place and force.

having assured himself that every effort would be made to protect the welfare of his family, Wilkes died at about 3:00 in the afternoon on Wednesday, March 1st, 1598.²

¹Cecil's Diary, 25th and 27th of Feb. 1598, B.M., Add. Mss. 18,554, ff. 29b.-30. Cecil, Herbert, and Wilkes to Privy Council, Rouen, 24 Feb. 1598, P.R.O., S.P. 78, XLI, f. 181, and Cecil and Herbert to Privy Council, Rouen, 26 Feb. 1598, Ibid., f. 187.

²Edward Vaughan to Cecil, Rouen, 2 March 1598, Ibid., f. 200.

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Wilkes' death left his servants in a predicament. Anxious that "no scandal" arise over his burial abroad, they contravened his wish to be buried in Rouen and gave order for preparing the body for shipment back to England. However, this all required significant outlays of unavailable cash for apothecary fees, a coffin, and a carriage to transport the body back to Dieppe.¹ Vaughan quickly dispatched another of Sir Thomas' servants, Mr. Corbett, to Paris to explain their problem to Cecil and ask him to direct "some merchant at Dieppe to furnish us with some 200 crowns." He was also to ask that Cecil write his father, Lord Burghley, to grant "some honorable allowance" for transportation charges and to continue Wilkes' 50s. per diem diet until they could return. Corbett arrived in Paris on the 3rd and there submitted these requests. Cecil graciously made arrangements for shipping Wilkes' body home, "gave order to one Willaston a Merchant of Rouen to furnish Vaughan with 200 crowns," and sent the latter's letter to the Privy Council for further consideration.²

After Wilkes' body reached England, he was probably buried beside his first wife Margaret in the parish church of Rickmansworth.³ Still living at Rickmansworth, Wilkes' second wife Frances was remarried there on June 24th of the same year to William Jephson, son of William Jephson

¹Cecil to Burghley, Paris, 3 March 1598, Ibid., f. 202.

²Ibid., Vaughan to Cecil, Rouen, 2 March 1598, Ibid., f. 200. There is a "Report" of Cecil's 1598 embassy to France which includes a lengthy itemization of his expenses but there is no mention of any expense incurred because of Wilkes' death. Ibid., f. 38.

³The Hertford County Record Office, "Transcript of Church Register Transcripts: St. Albans Archdeaconry: Rickmansworth," IV is incomplete for the year 1598. The "Bishop's Transcripts" only cover from 19 Sept. to the end of 1598. A visit to the parish Church of St. Mary's in Rickmansworth also reveals nothing about Wilkes or his first wife. Even N. Salmon's The History of Hertfordshire (London: [No publisher given], 1728), p. 111, which gives a rather extensive list of the monuments found within the early eighteenth-century Church (before it was torn down and replaced with the present structure in the early nineteenth century),

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esquire of Froyle, Hampshire.¹ As for Sir Thomas Wilkes' only child, Margaret, there is only one mention of her after her father's death. This can be found in George J. Armytage and J. Paul Rylands, ed., Pedigrees Made at the Visitation of Cheshire, 1613 (London: The Harleian Society, 1909), p. 204 which lists the Sir John Savage pedigree. It not only indicates that Sir John's daughter, Frances, married Thomas Wilkes but also shows that Frances' nephew, another Sir John Savage, married "Margarett da. to Tho. Weekes, Clarke of" The name "Weeks" is often found in sixteenth-century documents as a substitute for "Wilkes," so that presents no problem. What about the missing words? A quick guess would give one "the Privy Council." Fortunately, in this case there is proof that such an assumption is correct. A close look under an ultraviolet lamp, at the original early seventeenth-century visitation record (B.M., Harl. Mss. 1535, f. 246) reveals unmistakably the letter "the P._ounc_." Thus it appears that Frances Savage Wilkes accepted the charge given her by Sir Thomas to raise up little Margaret to a marriageable age. In fact, she saw to it that Margaret married her brother Edward's son, John.

As for Wilkes' official positions, they were eagerly bid for by hungry office seekers. Only six days after his death, and certainly not more than one or two days after news of it reached England, Rowland White reported from Westminster, that "Sir Thomas Wilkes died in Rouen upon

some of which date back to 1503, lists nothing on Wilkes. There are also no Inquisitions Post Mortem on Wilkes that might include where he was buried. Dr. Conrad Swan, York Herald of Arms informs me that unlike Lady Margaret Wilkes, there is no extant funeral certificate for Sir Thomas.

¹The Society of Genealogists, "Hartfordshire Marriages," p. 147, W. Harry Rylands, ed., Pedigrees From the Visitation of Hampshire (London: The Harleian Society, 1913), p. 149, and P.C.C. 108 Cope. Later on 23 April 1603, William Jephson was knighted by King James I at Belvoir Castle. See Shaw's Knights of England, II, p. 103.

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Thursday [sic] last; here is great suitors for his two places, the Clerkship of the Council and the Muster Master General of the Low Countries."¹ William Waad, a fellow Clerk of the Council, was the successful one in landing Wilkes' job as Muster Master General² and Thomas Edmondes, for whom Wilkes had earlier been willing to resign his Clerkship, finally obtained his position as Clerk on 29 June 1599.³

¹White to Sir Robert Sidney, Strand, 7 March 1598, Collins, ed., Letters and Memorials, II, pp. 94-95.

²Council Warrant to William Meredith, Paymaster General in the Low Countries, Greenwich, 23 July 1598, A.P.C., XXVIII, pp. 602-3.

³A.F. Pollard, "Council, Star Chamber, and Privy Council under the Tudors," E.H.R., XXXVIII (Jan. 1923), pp. 56-57, footnote no. 3.

CHAPTER IX
CLERK OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL

It is interesting to note at this point in the study of Sir Thomas Wilkes' career, that of his approximately twenty-five years of public service (April 1573-March 1598), only five were actually spent on diplomatic assignments. The remaining twenty were taken up with his responsibilities as a Clerk of the Privy Council. Yet, the documents available for his domestic career are perhaps only one-fifth as numerous as those relating to his foreign service. Still, this proves to be more than enough information to illustrate adequately this fascinating portion of his life.

Though much has been written about the Privy Council itself, very little has ever been said concerning the office of Clerk of that Council, and what has been written has never focused very intently upon the personalities of those who held that position.¹ By looking closely at Wilkes' service with the Council it is hoped that some light may be shed not only upon the office of Clerk but upon the functioning of the Privy Council itself.

¹A. F. Pollard, "Council, Star Chamber, and Privy Council under the Tudors," E.H.R., XXXVIII, (January 1923), pp. 42-60 [hereafter cited: Pollard "Council"], has some information on the clerks themselves but very little on the office of clerk. E. R. Adair, "The First Clerk of the Privy Council," Law Quarterly Review, XXXIX (April 1923), pp. 240-44 has some background material on the development of this office under Henry VIII but not much else. Cheyney, A History of England, I, Ch. V also has a little information. The most important information to date on the subject appears to be that of Dorothy M. Gladish [later Meades], The Tudor Privy Council (Retford: The Retford, Gainsborough and Workshop Times, 1915), pp. 36-43.

The Privy Council

Before launching into Wilkes' career as a Clerk of the Council it is necessary to look briefly at the Privy Council itself. As a select group of the King's numerous counselors it was born sometime between the years 1527 and 1537 as the offspring of its parent chamber, the Council of the Star Chamber. By 1540 every other Tudor Council, whether it was the Star Chamber or the "ordinary council" and "council at large" were in complete subordination to it. It was the Privy Council speaking in the name of King Henry which could exercise all the plenitude of his power to carry out the actual work of government. It developed out of a need for a separation of the judicial from the executive and administrative duties of Henry's Council, and though it concerned itself primarily with the latter responsibilities it did continue to exercise quasi-judicial and even legislative powers. Judicially, its main concern was with the "arrangement and supervision of judicial administration and not the supervision of the courts." Legislatively, its main concern was to govern England during those long periods, especially under the reign of Elizabeth, when Parliament did not sit.¹

In an informative document entitled "A Brief and Summary Tract Showing what Appertaineth to the Place, Dignity, and Office of a Councilor of State in a Monarchy or other Commonwealth,"² Wilkes provides many clues

¹Cheyney, A History of England, I, Ch. V, and Pollard, "Council," pp. 42-60.

²B.M., Stowe Mss. 29b, ff. 7-20. This tract is a "17th century copy" and is said to have been "Written by Sir Thomas Wilkes Knt. one of the Clerks of her Majesty's Council and by him dedicated to Sir Robert Cecil Knight, one of her Majesty's Privy Council and Principal Secretary of Estate." It is difficult to pinpoint the date of this treatise. At the beginning Wilkes suggests that his "10 years experience in a school of state" under many "rare" schoolmasters may have qualified him to write such a paper. If he means from the time he became Clerk of the Privy Council this would give us the date of 1586. If this is

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as to the responsibilities of the Council. He divided the first half of his treatise into three main headings: Religion, War, and Justice. The first he barely touched upon, claiming its maintenance to be the "highest" duty of any Councilor. On the "science of War" Wilkes revealed his own solid understanding of the subject and in doing so stressed that the councilors must be well informed on the ability of their sovereign to make war, on the apportionment of the country's foot, horse, ships, castles, and ports, and on all alliances and treaties in force between England and other countries. As for Justice, Wilkes detailed the three kinds of causes which come before the Council: firstly, all matters of state that concerned the governing of the realm both at home and abroad; secondly, "the common griefs of the subjects," some of which were remediable by common law, but because of the poverty of the litigants were heard before the Council; and thirdly, disputes between the nobility or other principal men of the realm which could easily prove dangerous to the monarch and the state.

Wilkes went on in his paper to explain that since all monarchs have both "virtues and vices" it was extremely important that the Council further the "love and loyalty" of the subjects towards their sovereign by not suffering these "imperfections" to be made known. To do otherwise could lead to their refusal to obey his will.

The Council also had responsibilities towards the "coinage" and "commodities" of the realm. "The fineness or baseness of the coin current groweth from the Prince," Wilkes explained, and the better the coin the

Cecil was approximately twenty-three years of age. Perhaps Wilkes wrote it in an effort to endear himself to Burghley who certainly had aspirations for his son's advancement. It seems more likely that the treatise was written sometime around August 1591 when Sir Robert joined the Council. It may have been Wilkes way of showing that there were no hard feelings for his own failure to be appointed as Principal Secretary or possibly an attempt to illustrate his own qualifications for that office.

better it was for both sovereign and subject. As for England's commodities, care had to be taken that those produced in overabundance were not restricted from being exported. This was especially true of wool, cloth, and corn of which at least two-thirds of the annual production was shipped abroad.

The Council under Elizabeth exercised its extensive powers in all directions. For the first time during her reign the Council can be found "issuing orders in its own name in the form of proclamations" such as those for the proper observance of Lent, for reformation of abuses in dress, and the regulation of coinage. Piracy and foreign trade were both constant reasons for proclamations. Throughout the whole of the Tudor period the Council retained, under the crown, the immediate control of all military affairs both on land or on the water. Recusants, popish and otherwise, came especially under the Council's scrutiny. In short, the Privy Council involved itself in everything.¹

Increasingly after 1540 both the duties and composition of the Privy Council were anti-feudal. With few exceptions after that date can one find councilors who could trace their titles back to before the dissolution of the monasteries. Nearly all came to owe their positions to the generosity of one of the Tudor monarchs. Likewise, the necessity of their continuous residence in and around Westminster as well as their training in statecraft and diplomacy proved wholly incompatible with feudal habits and aspirations. "If," as Pollard states, "the Renaissance ruled out feudal nobles, the Reformation tended to exclude the clergy." Thus, under Elizabeth, ecclesiastical Privy Councilors tended to

¹Gladish, The Tudor Privy Council, pp. 83-101.

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disappear altogether. Henry limited the exclusive and all powerful Privy Council to an efficient and controllable nineteen. Under Edward VI it grew to at least twenty-six and under Mary to the inordinate size of fifty. It took Elizabeth to rectify this administrative error, and for the first thirty years of her reign the Privy Council averaged about fifteen members. After the Armada, it dropped to thirteen and after 1595 to as low as ten or eleven, with attendance averaging about six to eight.¹

Clerk of the Privy Council

Though there were many "Clerks of the Council" during the years 1460 to 1533² the man who can accurately be called the first "Clerk of the Privy Council" was Thomas Derby who was already a Clerk of the Signet when appointed to his new office on January 28th 1533. Unlike others who served on the Council of the Star Chamber, Derby's duties were concerned mainly with administrative activities.³ On August 10th 1540 his fellow

¹Ibid., pp. 53-56. Archbishop Heath ceased to be called after 5 January 1559 and after Wotton died in 1567 no ecclesiastic sat in Council until Archbishop Whitgift began attending in 1585 to symbolize Elizabeth's alliance with the Church against Parliament. Ibid.

²Gladish, The Tudor Privy Council, pp. 36-37 gives an extensive list of some of those clerks, however, she seems unaware of the distinction to be made between the various types of council clerks.

³The distinction between the two offices of Clerk of the Privy Council and Clerk of the Star Chamber is explained in another way by Lord Burghley's speech in the Star Chamber when he "declared before all the presence that the same Court [of Star Chamber] was the Council of State and the Clerk of the Council of England and that there was no other Clerk of the Queen's Council of State but only the Clerk of this Court, and that the others were Clerks of the Privy Council attending upon her Majesty's Royal person and those other Clerks were to attend at The Council table." Cora L. Schofield, A Study of the Court of Star Chamber (New York: Burt Franklin, 1969 [originally published in 1900]), p. 62.

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Clerk of the Signet, William Paget, took his place as Clerk of the Privy Council while he [Derby] was made secretary to the new Queen Catherine Howard.¹ From then on until the appointment of Wilkes as a clerk on July 18th 1576 the succession of clerks of the Privy Council was as follows: On September 28th 1541 the King's French secretary, John Mason, was sworn to act as clerk, while Paget was sent as ambassador to France. Upon his return from France, Paget was made one of the two Principal Secretaries and a Privy Councilor so, on April 23rd 1542, Mason and William Honnings were sworn as clerks. On December 18th 1545, with Mason having succeeded Sir Brian Tuke as Master of the Posts, Honnings became senior clerk and Thomas Chaloner was appointed junior clerk. Thomas Smith is referred to as a Clerk of the Council on January 3rd 1548 and on April 17th of the same year the Council register states that Armagil Waad (or Wade) had acted as such without fees since mid-summer 1547. Honnings', Chaloner's, and Wade's salaries are then mentioned without any reference to Smith. The last mention of Honnings is in 1549, and when Chaloner was promoted in 1551 Wade became senior clerk with the Welshman William Thomas (appointed April 19th 1551) and Bernard Hampton (appointed September 24th 1551) both becoming junior clerks. At Mary's accession all three of these men lost their offices while in their places were sworn Francis Allen and William Smith (July 30th 1553). However, the next year (June 19th 1554), Hampton reappears on the scene as a clerk in place of Allen. He and Smith were then employed by Mary throughout the remainder of her reign. Anxious to dislocate public service as

¹E. R. Adair, "The First Clerk of the Privy Council," Law Quarterly Review, XXXIX (April 1923), pp. 240-44 makes this claim for Derby just three months after Pollard's above cited article on the Privy Council stated that Paget was the first clerk.

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little as possible, Elizabeth not only left William Smith in office but apparently appointed no one else for a number of years. Finally, on 3 May 1571 a second clerk was appointed in the person of Edmund Tremaine who was probably rewarded with the office for having done intelligence work for William Cecil in Ireland in 1569. Smith seems to have given up his position at this time for he is no longer mentioned in the Council Register after 1571. On 8 July 1572 Walsingham's brother-in-law and former personal secretary, Robert Beale, was appointed as clerk to assist Tremaine.¹

At this point it will be remembered that sometime in late 1574 or early 1575 Wilkes had been promised the office of Clerk but because of pressing diplomatic assignments had been unable to be sworn in until his return from France in June 1576.² By this time the increase in the business transacted by the Council necessitated an increase in the number of clerks from two to an unprecedented four. Accordingly, on 18 July 1576 while the Council was in session at St. James, Wilkes and Mr. Henry Cheke were sworn in as clerks for life, with a yearly salary of £40 or £50 each.³

¹Pollard, "Council," pp. 37-39 footnote no. 3 and Gladish, The Tudor Privy Council, pp. 37-39.

²Wilkes to Burghley, Strasbourg, 29 Aug. 1575, B.M., Cott. Mss. Galba B. XI, ff. 351-52.

³Wilkes Patent, 12 Oct. 1576, P.R.O., "Calendar of Patent Rolls: Elizabeth," f. 3 and A.P.C., IX, p. 166. The figure of £40 per annum is given as Wilkes' salary by Edward Hughes, Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825 (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1934), p. 53, but, he lists no source for that information. Clerk of the Council Robert Beale spoke to Sir Robert Cecil in May of 1599 of "my fee of £50 yearly for the clerkship of the Council." (H.M.C., Salisbury, IX, p. 154.) Whether he meant that this was his salary or salary plus additional fees is not certain. Cheyney, The History of England, I, p. 76, states that Wilkes and the other three clerks all received "a salary of £25 and fees" but he too fails to give the source of his information. As far back as April 1550 the three clerks Honnings, Chaloner, and Wade were receiving

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The oath of office the two men were required to take is worth quoting:

You shall swear to be a true and faithful servant unto the Queen's Majesty as one of the Clerks of her Highness' Privy Council. You shall not know or understand of any manner thing to be attempted, done, or spoken against her Majesty's person, honor, crown, or dignity royal, but you shall let or withstand the same to be the uttermost of your power, and either do or cause it to be revealed unto you or that shall be treated of secretly in Council, or if any of the same treaties or counsels shall touch any of the same Councilors, you shall not reveal the same unto him, but shall keep the same until such time as, by consent of her Majesty or of the Council, publication shall be made thereof. You shall to your uttermost bear faith and true allegiance to the Queen's Majesty, her heirs and lawful successors, and shall assist and defend all jurisdictions, pre-eminences, and authorities granted to her Majesty and annexed to her Crown by Act of Parliament or otherwise against all foreign princes, persons, prelates, or potentates, etc., and generally in all things you shall do as a faithful and true servant and subject ought to do to her Majesty. So help you God and the holy contents of this book.¹

Wilkes soon found himself with more than enough to do. Early in Elizabeth's reign the rule of the Council had been to meet either at nine A.M. or in afternoon sessions on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, with morning or afternoon meetings and extra sessions when necessary. However, the ever-increasing pressure of business soon extended meeting times not only to all day sessions but to daily meetings, including Sundays. For example, there was so much business during the year 1 October 1590 to 1 October 1591 that the Council was forced to meet on forty-seven out of fifty-two Sundays.² Periodically, individual Privy Councilors would summon Wilkes as early as 7:00 or 8:30 A.M. to discuss pre-council business.³

salaries of £50, £40, and 50 marks respectively. See Gladish, The Tudor Privy Council, p. 38. The above mentioned Henry Cheke was the son of Sir John Cheke tutor to Edward VI, and William Cecil's college friend.

¹A.P.C., VIII, pp. 78-79.

²Ibid., p. 180, Ibid., VII, pp. 33-34, 267, and 306, and Ibid., XVII, pp. 1-150.

³Burghley to Sir Robert Cecil, [?], [June 1595], Wright, ed., Queen Elizabeth and Her Times, II, p. 445 and Hatton to Wilkes, [?],

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Just how much of the time the clerks had to be in attendance on these meetings is uncertain. Their job was never to record discussion in the Council Register but only the decisions, and then, only those decisions they were instructed to enter. Interestingly, they did not always write the entries but employed deputy clerks to do so, thus making their own work in connection with the Register one of their more insignificant duties.¹ Once in a while Wilkes and his fellow clerks were even excluded from Council meetings of a highly secret nature. The Spanish Ambassador in London, Mendoza, reported to Philip II on 16 October 1579 that Elizabeth

summoned the whole of the Council to again give her their opinion with regard to the marriage [with Alençon]. They met many times, and on the 7th instant were in session from 8:00 o'clock in the morning until seven at night, without stirring from the room, having sent the clerks away, which as I have told your Majesty is very rarely done and only when something very secret and important is being discussed.²

When Elizabeth made her usual summer tour of the royal palaces at Richmond, Nonsuch, Woking, and Windsor the Privy Council always followed

20 May 1585, B.M., Egerton Mss. 2074, f. 57.

¹G. R. Elton, The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1960), p. 102 and Gladish, The Tudor Privy Council, pp. 40-41. In 1593 the Clerks of the Council appear to be sharing a servant between them to assist them in the Council Chamber. On 26 August of that year there is a warrant to the Treasurer of the Chamber "to pay unto the Clerks of the Council or else unto Randolph Bellin their common servant attending on the Council Chest, for four standishes at 6s. a piece, for a paper book and two canvas bags, for a hinge and mending the Council Chest, the sum of 37s.10d." This "common servant may have been Humphrey Rogers or his equal who in April 1598 was Keeper of the Council Chamber. He probably followed the Councilors in order to prepare the Chamber where they sat in Council, when they went on progress with the Queen. Rogers was granted £24 in 1598 "for his attendance and pains taken, and for provision of boughs, flowers, and other necessities for the said Chamber, and for his charges in the progress time for his stuff and lodging for one whole year." A.P.C., XXIV, p. 486, and Ibid., XXVIII, p. 387.

²Cal. Spain, II, p. 702. (My brackets.)

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her.¹ There was generally no great need for a Council at Westminster during this time, for none of these royal palaces was more than two or three hours ride from the capital. Occasionally, one or two of the Council remained behind to transact some pressing business but more often than not the ordinary matters that arose in the Council's short absence were left to the care of one or two of the always clever and competent clerks who were also assigned to remain behind.²

In June of 1552 the three Clerks of the Council had asked for and received permission for two of them always to be present at the Council Board, with the third free of responsibility for a fortnight at a time.³ It is not certain if some similar type of work schedule was available to the two clerks in the early part of Elizabeth's reign, but when the appointment of Wilkes and Cheke brought the total to four it was soon decided among them to petition the Council for a new schedule. On 3 January 1578 it was agreed that each clerk would be in attendance for three periods of two months in each year, thus requiring six months council service a year with the remaining months to be used for private purposes or diplomatic assignments.⁴ Unfortunately this

¹Greenwich was Elizabeth's usual spring residence. Invariably during the "plague" months of July-September she started on the above "Surrey tour" occasionally varying it, as she did in 1587, with a visit to Lord Burghley at Theobalds. Pollard, "Council." P. 50, footnote no. 1.

²Ibid., and Gladish, The Tudor Privy Council, p. 48.

³A.P.C., IV, pp. 82-83.

⁴Ibid., XI, pp. 4-5. Their schedule looked like this:

Jan. <input type="checkbox"/>	Henry Cheke	July <input type="checkbox"/>	Thomas Wilkes
Feb. <input type="checkbox"/>	Edmund Tremaine	Aug. <input type="checkbox"/>	Henry Cheke
March <input type="checkbox"/>	Edmund Tremaine	Sept. <input type="checkbox"/>	Henry Cheke
April <input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Beale	Oct. <input type="checkbox"/>	Edmund Tremaine
May <input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Beale	Nov. <input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Beale
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excellent arrangement was soon made useless by the appointment of Chaka to the office of Secretary of the Council of the North in 1581 and the death of Tremaine in 1582.¹ This left Wilkes and Beale to carry the whole load which soon proved to be a great strain on them both. By July 1584 the increased burden of clerical work coupled with the death of Wilkes' wealthy father-in-law, the expense of his home in Brentford, and a £500 debt led him to approach Elizabeth for some kind of relief. As he later explained to Leicester:

I besought her partly in respect of my poverty, but principally in regard of a natural weakness and infirmity fallen upon me by reason of the continual and intolerable toil of my writing, whereby I am so troubled with aches in my head and pains and swelling in my eyes that I protest I cannot any longer endure and abide the toil and attendance of mine office, without peril of my life or of some dangerous disease like to grow upon me, I might either be relieved by the admission of one more into the office or wholly dismissed from the same; whereof her Majesty at that time gave no show of misliking but seemed contented that some other might take my place.²

When to his dismay Wilkes later learned that Elizabeth was terribly upset with his request, she thinking him determined "to forsake her services," he turned to Leicester and begged him,

to be a means to qualify and remove her Majesty's indignation conceived against me, and withall that it may please your Lordship earnestly to move her Majesty to have compassion of my hard estate, I mean as well of my poverty as of my bodily infirmity, that she may please to allow my most humble and lowly petition to admit a third clerk of the Council, whereby, each of us waiting monthly I may have two months likely to follow and attend my particular affairs, for the maintaining of my house and of my charge of my wife and family and every third month to give mine attendance at the Court.³

¹D.N.B., X, p. 178, and Pollard, "Council," p. 56, footnote no. 3.

²Wilkes to Leicester, [?], 12 July 1584, B.M., Cott. Mss. Titus B. VII, f. 30.

³Ibid.

Living just a few miles up the Thames from London at Brentford, Wilkes had been so continually on call by the Privy Council that he determined to sell his home and,

remove with my wife and family into Wiltshire, where I mean to hide myself till God shall bless me with some better fortune; and being so far removed from London, I shall not be able to attend so much as I have done...without my undoing.¹

Either Wilkes' appeal or the Privy Council's intention to send Beale on assignment to Germany eventually produced results, for in May of 1585 one finds William Waad, son of the former Clerk Armagil Waad, serving as a Clerk of the Privy Council.² Whether Wilkes received his request for two months leave out of every three is doubtful.

Beale, Wilkes, and Waad remained the only three clerks until the first five months of 1587 when an additional three were appointed: firstly, in January, Thomas Windebank, Elizabeth's Clerk of the Signet,

¹Ibid. Wilkes went on in this letter to ask Leicester that if he [Leicester] was unable to induce Elizabeth to appoint another Clerk then to attempt to persuade her "to dismiss me from my service at The Council Board and retain me to be employed in some other service, at her good pleasure...hoping that it shall not seem strange or new unto her that for the reasons before mentioned I desire to be released. If her Majesty [will] recall to her remembrance that Sir Ralph Sadler [1507-1587], one of Henry VIII's two Principal Secretaries of State) being in the King her father's time, Secretary, and finding himself unable to endure the painful travail of that office, was, upon his [request?], with the King's good favor dismissed." (My brackets.)

²H.M.C., Salisbury, III, p. 96, and Cal. Dom., II, pp. 240 and 242. Because the Council Register is missing for the years 1582-1586, it is uncertain when Waad became Clerk. In 1613, while still serving in that capacity, he stated that he had "been Clerk of the Council in Ordinary for 30 years,..." This would make him a Clerk in 1583, a whole year before Wilkes complained of their being only two clerks. Most likely Waad exaggerated the length of his service for it is certain that even though he was in London in July 1584 [Cal. For., XVIII, pp. 600 and 606] it was not he but Beale who was serving as the second clerk throughout 1584 [Cal. Dom., II, pp. 151-171, and 200]. Thus, if Wilkes' statement about there being only two clerks is accurate (and there is no reason why it should not be), then, it appears that Waad was not appointed Clerk until late 1584 or early 1585.

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received a temporary appointment as acting Clerk of the Council--one which he seems not to have held past the first of the year.¹ Next, on March 19th at Greenwich, Anthony Ashley was sworn a Clerk of the Council² and finally, on May 5th Daniel Rogers was also appointed.³ The latter two clerks were apparently chosen to carry on the work in place of Beale, who was threatening to resign because of his poverty,⁴ and Waad, who was busy being a courier.⁵ It must also be remembered that from July 1586 to July 1587 Wilkes was in the Netherlands and from August 1587 until August 1589 he was more or less in disgrace.⁶

¹H.M.C., Salisbury, III, p. 214 and A.P.C., XIV, p. 288.

²Ibid., p. 385.

³Ibid., XV, p. 111. Rogers died on 11 Feb. 1591 [D.N.B., II, pp. 116-17] and apparently no successor to him was appointed. This left four clerks, Wilkes, Waad, Beale, and Ashley until 16 Sept. 1595 when Thomas Smith appears as a Clerk [H.M.C., Salisbury, V, pp. 380 and 385]. The D.N.B. (LIII, p. 127) states Smith was appointed Clerk in 1587 but there is no evidence for this anywhere]. Thus, for a time there were again five clerks; but sometime in the late summer or autumn of 1596 Ashley appears to have been disgraced either for misconduct while acting as Secretary for War in the famous 1596 Cadiz expedition [A.P.C., XXVI, p. 180 and D.N.B., II, pp. 170-71] or for interference with the normal procedures for petitioning redress of grievances in October of the same year [Ibid., p. 275]. The four Clerks were reduced again to three upon the death of Wilkes in March 1598. His place was eventually taken by Thomas Edmondes, but again with the death of Beale on 25 May 1601 the number became three. Unfortunately what little remains of the Council Register between 1601 and the end of Elizabeth's reign tells us nothing about these clerks. Ashley may have been reinstated as a clerk before the Queen's death [Cal. Dom., V, p. 506] but more probably the reign ended with only Waad, Smith, and Edmondes as clerks. With James I's accession these three were re-sworn as Clerks on 4 May 1603 [A.P.C., XXXII, p. 497] just five days after Ashley had also been reinstated [Ibid., p. 496].

⁴Suit of Robert Beale, April ? 1587, Cal. Dom., II, p. 408.

⁵Ibid., p. 407 and 418.

⁶A.P.C., XVIII, p. 11.

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At this point it is necessary to look more closely at Wilkes' specific duties as a clerk. By its very nature the Privy Council dealt with subjects varying in dignity from the highest matters of state to the most trivial affairs of private life and almost without exception the clerks proved to be the workhorses for carrying out these innumerable tasks. Though it would be impractical to itemize all their responsibilities, a fairly close look at Wilkes' duties alone will demonstrate amply what was required of all of them.

Interestingly enough, the most important duty this domestic office required of Wilkes and his fellow clerks was the confidential transaction of important diplomatic business with foreign princes. As has already been demonstrated, time and again, Wilkes' first-hand knowledge of Privy Council matters more than adequately equipped him for his numerous foreign assignments. Still, the great bulk of his time was spent on more local matters.

For the transaction of Council business and the authentication of the numerous documents that passed through their hands, each clerk had a Privy Council Seal (not to be confused with the Privy Seal). In 1555 the Council had requested of Queen Mary that it be granted a special seal of its own, and on May 20th of the same year this was agreed to with the stipulation that the,

seal should be made with the letters "P." and "M.", with a crown over the same, which seal all letters passing this Board should be sealed, and the same to remain in the custody of the eldest clerk of the Council.¹

Later, on 30 April 1573, a warrant to the Treasurer of the Chamber granted £4 2s. 6d. to the two clerks, Beale and Tremaine, to purchase

¹Ibid., V, p. 130.

two seals for their office.¹ Though Wilkes like the other most certainly possessed one of these seals, neither he nor any of them had independent authority sufficient to use the seal without the Council's permission.²

In his "Brief and Summary Tract" dedicated to Sir Robert Cecil, Wilkes explained that the office of Clerk of the Council was established in the reign of Henry VIII,

to the end that acts and records might be kept of their doings and consultations, for the benefit of the King's services, [the] commodity of his subjects whose causes should come before them, and [the] discharge of themselves in the course of their proceedings.

However, aside from these more secretarial duties of taking minutes, translating documents, copying dispatches and instructions, and deciphering, sealing, and dispatching letters Wilkes was continually swamped with a host of odd jobs. Following the death of important people, he could be found making an "inventory" of their "furniture, wardrobe, plate, etc.," compiling a catalogue of all their books, papers, and matters of state," and submitting suggestions as to what should be done with the deceased's household servants.³ He was always busy "fetching" someone before the Council Chamber for the Lords to question, releasing acquitted prisoners from London jails,⁴ and searching the lodgings of suspicious characters. When, in November 1584, it was discovered that "a lewd fellow" had gained entry into Commons and listened

¹Ibid., VIII, p. 101. See Leonard W. Labree and Robert E. Moody, "The Seal of the Privy Council," E.H.R., XLIII (April 1928), pp. 190-202 for an explanation as to why the keeper of this seal, unlike the Keepers of the Great Seal, the Privy Seal, and the Signet, never developed into administrative officers of the first rank.

²Ibid., p. 198.

³B.M., Stowe Mss., 296, ff. 7-20, Ibid.; Egerton Mss. 2074, f. 44, B.M., Hatfield Mss. [microfilm] CXL, f. 51.

⁴Ibid., III, pp. 165-66; P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCXXIX, f. 47; B.M., Add. Mss. 39,828, f. 86, and A.P.C., XX, pp. 200-201, and XXII, p. 14.

to a whole day's debate before being detected, it was Wilkes who searched his home, interrogated him, and placed him in custody.¹ Often, Wilkes was assigned both to carry information between the Council and the various foreign ambassadors in London, and to treat with them in Elizabeth's behalf. Occasionally he was sent to discover, if possible, these ambassador's instructions before they presented them to an unprepared Elizabeth.² In 1593, and possibly in connection with his responsibilities as Muster-Master-General of the Low Countries, Wilkes was put in charge of seeing to it that all "maimed" soldiers were supplied with a pension by their local county authorities. When the Justices of the Peace in the County of Staffordshire complained that they had more maimed soldiers than they were able to relieve, Wilkes went about to secure a council letter directing the county officials to lessen each man's pension enough so that every soldier could obtain relief.³ Earlier, near Christmas 1590, when London was again overrun with absentee "court captains" and "other officers" from the Low Countries, Wilkes, along with the Treasurer-at-War Sir Thomas Shirley, was directed "to make diligent inquiry" into the matter. These men were to be called before them, questioned as to the validity of their reasons for being in London and then fined, deprived of their offices, or commanded back to their posts if unable to defend their absence.⁴

Because he had a good head for figures and was experienced in foreign customs Wilkes was often used to investigate commercial disputes

¹Wright, ed., Queen Elizabeth and Her Times, II, pp. 244-45.

²L. & A., II, no. 268, Cal. Spain, II, pp. 190-91, and Digges, p. 359.

³A.P.C., XXIV, pp. 191-92 and 200, and XXV, p. 182.

⁴Ibid., XX, pp. 152-53.

both on a local and an international level. In the local quarrels he was sometimes asked to do what he could to settle the dispute out of court but generally he merely submitted his recommendations to the Council for their consideration.¹

Often Wilkes' clerical duties led him out of the capital to other parts of the realm. In October 1589 he was in Somerset collecting a private debt on behalf of the Privy Council.² Later, in October 1596, he was assigned to look into the "relief of the poor" in County Hertfordshire, where the export of grain by monopolistic merchants had caused a "great dearth of grain...in the hundreds of Cashio and Dacorum." Wilkes was charged with seeing to it that all such merchants and farmers were instructed not "to carry their grain to other markets before the market within the hundred be served."³ In December 1582 he was in Kirtling, Cambridgeshire playing cupid for Elizabeth who was interested in arranging a marriage between a Mr. Knollys (not Sir Francis) and Lady Rivett's youngest daughter. In spite of that mother's earlier promise to Elizabeth, Wilkes found to his and Knollys' dismay that she had filled her daughter's head with so many objections to the match as to make it impossible. It did not take Knollys long to change his mind, especially after seeing the eldest daughter whom he quickly decided was the better pick of the two. He asked Wilkes "to employ" himself "to the winning of her," but because the latter's commission directed him only to the youngest daughter he dared not comply with the request without

¹Ibid., pp. 195-6, XXI; pp. 393-94, XXII, pp. 199-200, XXIV, p. 159, and XXVI, p. 166, P.R.O., S.P. 12 CCXXIX, f. 43 and CLXXXVIII, f. 185, and B.M., Egerton Mss. 1694, f. 22.

²A.P.C., XVIII, p. 175.

³Ibid., XXVI, pp. 258-59.

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"further warrant." The outcome of this assignment is not known.¹ In early 1594 Wilkes found himself acting as the chief liason and correspondent between Elizabeth and the Privy Council on one hand and one Roloff Peterson of Lubeck, Germany, who in letters had promised "at the peril of his head, to bring 40,000 dollars² into her Majesty's coffers... without one penny of expense." Apparently, a Kentish Alchemist, one Clement Ouldfield, had lived with Peterson in Lubeck from 1587 until his death in September 1593, at which time he claimed to have perfected a formula composed of "sol" (gold), "luna" (silver), and mercury. Contained in three "glass bodies," Peterson explained that this formula was of such importance, value, and secrecy that "none but a high and mighty prince should participate in it." Given six months to decide if she were interested, Elizabeth ordered the "glass bodies" sent to her for inspection. However, not finding anyone in England knowledgeable enough to ascertain the formula's worth, she returned the "glass bodies" to the safe keeping of the Governor of the Merchant Adventurers in Stade (Niedersachsen, Germany) until a continental expert, who at the time was sick, could inspect them. She promised Peterson £500 if "pleased" with the formula. Obviously, the whole affair proved to be just another one of those sixteenth-century hoaxes designed to pry money away from monarchs, but it is useful in illustrating the diversity of a clerk's duties.³

¹P.R.O., S.P. 12, CLVI, ff. 58-59.

²"Dollar" was the sixteenth-century English name for the German thaler, a large silver coin equal to approximately 5s. Thus, 40,000 dollars would be equivalent to £10,000.

³Harrison, ed., The English Journals, I, pp. 277-78, 282, 287, and 325, H.M.C., Salisbury, V, p. 458, and VIII, pp. 113-14, and Cal. Dom., IV, pp. 17-18.

As a Clerk of the Council, and when given permission by that body, Wilkes, like the other clerks, had the right to sit in judgment on many of the more minor disputes between parties. He could issue writs for their appearance before him, call in witnesses, and could even commit to prison those he found guilty.¹ More generally, as has been pointed out in the case of commercial disputes, he merely held a kind of "court of inquiry" to determine the evidence, attempted to settle the matter at that point, and if unable to do so, submitted his recommendations to the Privy Councilors for further actions.²

Probably the most sinister and unwelcome of Wilkes' duties as a clerk was that of investigating suspected treasons and interrogating political prisoners. In 1570 Pope Pius V had published his infamous bull Regnans in Excelsis absolving all English Catholics from allegiance to Elizabeth. It was, in effect, a declaration of war against the Queen and quite literally made her assassination lawful in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church. Later, in 1580 Gregory XIII went even further by encouraging the deed. When two English noblemen asked Sega, the papal nuncio at Madrid, whether they would incur mortal sin by such an act they received from Cardinal Como, the papal secretary at the Vatican, the following clear and direct answer:

Since that guilty woman of England...is cause of so much injury to the Catholic faith, and loss of so many million souls, there is no doubt that whosoever sends her out of the world with the pious intention of doing God service, not only does not sin but gains merit.³

¹Ibid., II, p. 52, John Strype, Annals of the Reformation (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1824), VII, p. 254 and A.P.C., XVIII, p. 398, XX, pp. 230-31, and XXIV, pp. 227-28.

²Ibid., XIV, pp. 173-74, XXII, p. 15, and XXVII, pp. 73-74, and P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCXVIII, f. 57.

³Black, The Reign of Elizabeth, pp. 135-45.

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With traitorous English Catholics receiving such encouragement, plus the inauguration in 1580 of the Jesuit missionary campaign to win England back to the Roman fold, Elizabeth soon began to feel surrounded by her enemies. Part of her counter-campaign involved a rash of arrests and investigations in which Wilkes played an important role. His first assignment in this capacity came on 29 October 1581 when he, the Attorney General John Popham, the Solicitor-General Thomas Egerton, Doctor John Hammond, who was a member of the Court of High Commission, the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir Owen Hopton, and Thomas Norton the notorious Elizabethan "Rackmaster" were assigned to examine several Jesuit prisoners including Edmund Campion. Though Campion had already been questioned and racked two months previously the Privy Council ordered it done again. Wilkes' assignment was to record for the Council's consideration the results of such methods.¹

Under Elizabeth, as under the other Tudors, this practice of using torture to extract confessions was more common than some have been willing to admit.² No court of common law or equity, no official or governing body in England save the Council alone, could make use of this means of

¹A.P.C., XIII, pp. 249 and 144. See William Durvant Cooper "Further Particulars of Thomas Norton and of State Proceedings in Matters of Religion in the Years 1581 and 1582," Archaeologia, XXXVI (1855), pp. 105-199 for more information on Norton's duties as an interrogator. Norton was later accused in a Catholic publication of bragging that he pulled one of these prisoners named Bryan "one good foot longer than ever God made him." Cal. Dom., II, p. 48.

²Cheyney, A History of England, I, p. 70 claims that "it cannot be said that the Council used its odious powers very frequently or otherwise than with restraint," and then quotes Burghley's pamphlet entitled A Declaration of the Favorable Dealing of Her Majesty's Commissioners, appointed for the Examination of Certain Traitors and the Tortures unjustly Reported to be Done upon Them for Matter of Religion. (1583). Wherein the Lord Treasurer claims that such torture as had been inflicted was but slight. L. Hicks, An Elizabethan Problem: Some Aspects of the Careers of Two Exile-Adventurers (New York: Fordham University Press, 1964), p. 31, footnote no. 90, shows that this and other governmental attempts to play down the volatile subject of torture were often filled with misinformation.

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obtaining testimony. Usually, the Tower, Newgate, and King's Bench prisons were the only places it was used. The amount of such torture necessary to extract a confession was generally left to the jailor's discretion which undoubtedly resulted in many abuses of an already extreme measure.¹

Almost two years after Campion and his companions were executed at Tyburn (1 November 1581) for their activities, Wilkes was again called on to assist in the investigation of what proved to be a madman's plot against Elizabeth's life. The papal sanction of assassination as a lawful weapon against a heretic ruler had nearly succeeded in killing William of Orange in 1582. Both the papal bull and this exploit against Orange did succeed in turning the head of one John Somerville of Edstone, Warwickshire who came under the influence of a priest named Hugh Hall, who was living with his wife's parents Edward and Mary Arden. Possessed by a "frantic humor" Somerville set off for London in October 1583 with intentions to shoot the Queen with a "dag," as he wanted "to see her head set upon a pole, for she was a serpent and a viper." Somerville's public boasting of his intentions quickly led to his, Arden's and Hall's arrest. Wilkes, along with two others, was directed to search Somerville's and Arden's homes. At the latter's house on November 4th he received further instructions to search Hall's home at Idlecotte and one Edward Grant's home at Northbrooks. Finding very little, he next examined Somerville's wife and son and assured himself of their innocence in the matter. However, this opinion did not convince the authorities who condemned his wife to death along with her husband, Hall, and Arden.

¹Gladish, The Tudor Privy Council, pp. 83-84.

The latter two were executed in December; Somerville committed suicide the day before, and Mrs. Somerville, who was pregnant, was given a reprieve until her child was born.¹

At the time that Wilkes was busy sorting out the Somerville Plot, Walsingham completed his six months of secret investigation into the activities of one Francis Throgmorton, the elder son of Sir John Throgmorton, the Justice of Chester. Early in November he was arrested and imprisoned on suspicion of having carried letters to and from the captive Mary Stuart. Among his papers were found a list of Catholic noblemen, a document containing the names of suitable harbors for landing foreign forces, and several "infamous pamphlets against her Majesty printed beyond the seas." Examined by a committee of the Privy Council, Throgmorton denied that the incriminating papers were his. He was sent to the Tower to be racked. Throgmorton's ability to endure the first torture without confession forced the Privy Council to order a second. Walsingham asked Wilkes to join Mr. Norton for this second trial. "I have seen," he wrote,

as resolute men as Throgmorton, stoop, notwithstanding the great shame that he hath made of a Roman resolution. I suppose the grief of the last torture will suffice without any extremity of racking to make him more conformable than he hath hither to showed himself.

Walsingham was right. The next day (November 19th) Throgmorton was again put on the rack, but "before he was strained up to any purpose he yielded to confess everything he knew."²

¹Wilkes to Walsingham, Charlecotte, 7 Nov. 1583, S.P. 12, CLXIII, f. 130, Wilkes to Burghley, Leicester, and Walsingham, *Ibid.*, ff. 132-33, Mendoza to [Parma?], [London], [Dec.] 1583, *Cal. For.*, XVIII, pp. 651-52, and *Cal. Dom.*, II, pp. 125-26, 128, 130, 138, 161, and 182.

²Read, *Walsingham*, II, p. 382, Hicks, *An Elizabethan Problem*, pp. 31-32, footnote no. 90, Walsingham to Wilkes, at the Court, 18 Nov. 1583, P.R.O., S.P. 12 CLXIII, f. 152, and "A Justification of the Trial of Francis Throgmorton," June 1584, *Ibid.*, CLXXI, ff. 199-214.

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Throgmorton's confessions soon led to further arrests. Throughout December, Wilkes and Norton were busy questioning Francis' brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. George Throgmorton, Mrs. Throgmorton's sister, another member of the family, John Throgmorton, a Mrs. Cook, and a "long haired youth." They also examined John Halter, a shipmaster of Arundel, and William Warde, secretary to the recusant Lord Paget, concerning their bringing over of papists to Sussex, and George Breton as to a priest named Cotton. So swamped were they with these investigations that at the end of one especially busy day they wrote a note to Walsingham asking to be excused from "coming to the Court this night...having not eaten or drunk this whole day."¹

All the evidence accumulated revealed a Guisan plot backed by Papal and Spanish gold to invade England for the purpose of putting Mary Stuart on the throne. Many others were implicated in this affair. Catholic nobles Charles Paget, his brother Lord Paget, and Charles Arundel had shown their colors by immediately fleeing for France when they learned of Throgmorton's arrest. Mendoza, the Spanish Ambassador in London was also implicated and in January 1584 was given fifteen days to pack his bags and leave England. Finally, in May of the same year (and with Wilkes keeping the official record of the proceedings), Throgmorton was tried, found guilty, and eventually executed on July 10, 1584.²

¹Wilkes and Norton to Walsingham, "Gilt Key," 15 Dec. 1583, Ibid., CLXIV, f. 68, Examination of John Halter, 20 Dec. 1583, Ibid., f. 95, Examination of George Breton, 1 Jan. 1584, Ibid., CLXXI, f. 1, and Examination of William Warde, 20 Dec. 1583, Cal. Dom., II, p. 138.

²Read, Walsingham, II, p. 387, Catholic Record Society, XXI, The Ven. Philip Howard Earl of Arundel 1557-1595 (1919), p. 46, Mendoza to Philip II, London, 26 Nov. 1583, Cal. Spain, III, pp. 510-11, and Wilkes record of Throgmorton trial, 21 May 1584, B.M., Stowe Mss. 1083, ff. 17-20.

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It is not surprising that by the middle of July Wilkes was utterly worn out with his continual toil. It was at this time that he first sought to be released from his duties as a clerk or at least to have a third Clerk of the Council appointed. There was another reason for the defeated attitude he displayed at this time. On July 14th he wrote to Leicester,

that her Majesty, in the late discredit and disgrace offered unto my by Throgmorton, seemed not to value the repairing of my credit and good name in such a degree as I might challenge to have duly merited, wherewith, I rest not a little comforted, as with the bruit now lately spread that I should be in disgrace with her Majesty for my dealings with Throgmorton.

Apparently Throgmorton had suggested that Wilkes was pro-Catholic, for the Clerk went on in his letter to protest: "Your Lordship knoweth how deeply I am sunk into the hatred of papists and such as are her Majesty's public and secret enemies." Whatever Throgmorton said against Wilkes, it caused sufficient suspicion to have him followed each time he was at Court.¹

This suspicion soon passed, and in the year 1585 one finds Wilkes just as busy as before. Again, his task was primarily the unpleasant one of searching out Elizabeth's enemies. During this year he served as a secretary, firstly, for the enquiries into the flight of the Earl of Arundel, then into the prosecution of the Earl of Northumberland, and finally for the inquest into the latter's suicide. These responsibilities also carried over into the interrogation of William Shelley of Michelgrove, Sussex, who like Northumberland, was on Throgmorton's list of Catholic nobles likely to favor the invasion conspiracy. In fact, much of the British Museum, Egerton Mss. 2074 is simply Wilkes' dossier of these and

¹Wilkes to Leicester, [?], Ibid., Cott. Mss. Titus B. VII, f. 30.

a myriad other investigations that went on in 1585. A good example of how busy he was can be seen in one of his hastily written notes which itemized his most pressing duties for the day "16 May 1585."

To send for John Neve to the Tower. To send for [William] Byrd of the Chapel and that his home be diligently searched. To have Richard Howell alias Smith sent up. Item: To consider how to proceed with Baker of Walton. Item: to prepare examinations for the Earl of Arundel and the Lord William [Howard] against the morrow. To examine Mr. [Edward] Ateslow upon the letter of late sent from Mr. Secretary [Walsingham],...to consider what is to be done with the Lady Margaret [Howard]. To consider what gentlemen [i.e., Gentlemen Warders] should be appointed to my Lord of Northumberland and likewise the Lord William [Howard]...¹

Though the years 1583-1585 were the busiest for Wilkes in terms of investigatory work, and though 1586-1588 saw him completely removed from it because of his assignment in the Netherlands and subsequent disgrace, the remaining years of his career are replete with instances of similar service. Too numerous to mention, they continued to occupy a greater amount of his time and energy as a Clerk of the Council than any other duty.²

A New Principal Secretary?

Despite the brief shadow cast upon his good name by Throgmorton in 1584 and his disgrace of 1587-1588 Wilkes' services through the years had been more than adequate. By 1590 he was recognized as an experienced diplomat with important friends and connections in many places in Europe. He had proven his abilities as an intelligence agent, as a man of accounts

¹My brackets. See also Catholic Record Society, XXI, The Ven. Philip Howard Earl of Arundel 1557-1595 (1919), pp. 118-123, 126, and 127 and Cal. Dom., II, p. 270 for more details.

²See Cal. Dom., II, p. 597, III, pp. 425-27, 434, and 483, and IV, p. 19, A.P.C., XXII, pp. 166-67, XXIV, pp. 200-201 and XXV, pp. 179-80, H.M.C., Salisbury, XIV, p. 317, Harrison, ed., The Elizabethan Journals, I, pp. 286-87, and B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, f. 178.

and numbers, and as a linguist. His connections at the Court made him a source of patronage for many who desired favors and advancement. He had experience as a Member of Parliament and as a Justice of the Peace,¹ and his position as Clerk of the Privy Council had thoroughly acquainted him with nearly every aspect of Elizabethan administration. In short, by this date in Elizabeth's reign there can be little doubt that Wilkes was one of the most experienced, trusted, and consummate of England's civil servants.

With Walsingham's death on 6 April 1590 there began a political struggle to appoint a successor to his office of Principal Secretary which under him had become the chief administrative office, particularly in foreign affairs. In time, Wilkes became one of those in the forefront of consideration for this office. Not anxious to assume any more responsibilities, Lord Burghley at first sought to distribute the duties of the office among several members of the Privy Council until one or even two new secretaries could be appointed. But there were very few if any in that body qualified to undertake such a task.² By early May it appeared that Elizabeth was considering two names for the position. Wilkes, who was busy writing up a memorial for Lord Buckhurst's projected mission to The Hague, warned him that "if the two men become Secretaries who are thought to be elected, then is the faction of the late Earl of Leicester revived and his lordship in danger to be stricken at in his absence."³ Apparently, the "two men" referred to were Robert Cecil and William Davison. To Burghley's dismay, Walsingham's unexpected death had left

¹See this Ch. p. 382-88.

²Read, Lord Burghley, p. 464.

³Memorial for Buckhurst, 3 May 1590, L. & A., II, no. 329.

his son Robert too young and inexperienced to be acceptable to Elizabeth at this time. On the other hand, it was the Earl of Essex who was importuning the Queen in behalf of Davison who, though still out of royal favor as the scapegoat of Mary Stuart's execution, had been released from captivity in 1588 and still drew his pay as royal secretary.¹ Not anxious to open the Council Chamber to the same restless factions that already made uneasy the audience and privy chambers of her Court, Elizabeth deferred any decision on Robert Cecil and said no to Davison.²

The fact of the matter was that the only men adequately qualified for such a position were to be found in Elizabeth's corps of trained careerists. Men like the diplomatists, Edward Wooten, and Sir Edward Stafford, as well as Thomas Wilkes. Unfortunately, none had the social standing or influence necessary to resist Essex's opposition. However, Elizabeth was content for the moment to place the burden on her oldest, most trusted, and already overburdened Councilor, Lord Burghley. Though he at first balked at this increase of responsibility he was shrewd enough to realize that by accepting it he could prepare the ground for his son Robert while at the same time preventing another from holding the office.³

As a result of this arrangement the English diplomatic corps suffered. With no one to continue the prolific correspondence that

¹B. W. Beckingsale, Burghley: Tudor Statesman, 1520-1598 (London: MacMillan, 1967), p. 177, R.B. Wernham, "The Disgrace of William Davison," E.H.R., IVL (October 1931), pp. 632-36, and B.M. Ward, "Queen Elizabeth and William Davison," Ibid., VII (January 1929), pp. 104-6.

²P.M. Handover, The Second Cecil (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959), pp. 72-74. For a while it appeared that Elizabeth favored the poet and courtier Edward Dyer for the post of Principal Secretary but fortunately this never materialized. Beckingsale, Burghley, pp. 177-78, and D.N.B., XVI, p. 283.

³Read, Lord Burghley, p. 466.

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Walsingham had always maintained, the ambassadors and agents abroad received very little news from home.¹ Apparently it was a combination of their complaints, Burghley's periodic sickness, and the growing necessity to have someone in the office of Principal Secretary that drove Elizabeth and her Lord Treasurer to reconsider their temporary arrangement. By the end of November 1590 Francis Needham, who had been Walsingham's confidential servant, wrote the following to the Earl of Shrewsbury:

The resolution for secretaries lieth between Mr. Robert Cecil and Mr. Wilkes; your Lordship can easily judge whose creatures they are, and the choice were happy if they happen to run one course; the one in respect of the great help he shall have from his father, himself being a towardly personage; the other a well experimental gentleman, and of good understanding, and great dispatch and no less courage.²

A little over a month later on 1 January 1591 it looked as though there was nothing that could stop the two men from being installed as Principal Secretaries. On that day Richard Broughton wrote to his father-in-law Richard Bagot that "news is that Robert Cecil and Mr. Wilkes should this day be sworn Secretaries, but it is not yet published with us because the time...[here letter is torn]."³ Unfortunately, for all concerned, Elizabeth apparently balked again at the prospect of filling the vacancy. However, she did bend to Burghley's efforts on behalf of his son to the extent of granting him a knighthood in May of 1591. Many, Wilkes included, felt this came in "expectation of his advancement

¹Sir Robert Sidney to Wilkes, Flushing, 29 July 1590, L. & A., II, no. 69, Wilkes to Sidney, The Hague, 23 June and 22 July 1590, Collins, ed., Letters and Memorials, I, pp. 303 and 305.

²Edmund Lodge, ed., Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners, in the Reign of Elizabeth (London: John Chidley, 1838), II, pp. 426-27.

³H.M.C., Fourth Report: The Manuscripts of the Right Honorable Lord Bagot at Blithfield, Co. Stafford, I, p. 335.

to the Secretaryship." But it was not to be. Instead, in August of the same year the Queen made Robert Cecil a member of the Privy Council. Realizing this killed his own prospects for the Secretaryship, a disappointed Wilkes wrote the following to his old friend Sir Robert Sidney:

Sir Robert Cecil (as you may have heard) is sworn of the Council though not Secretary; whose election (as I conceive) will be a bar to the choice of any Secretary during the life of his Father.¹

This note reveals Wilkes' opinion that Burghley's unrelenting efforts to push his son into the fore had destroyed his [Wilkes'] own chances for advancement. Burghley knew that once Robert was a Privy Councillor Elizabeth would be content to let this father-son team carry out the responsibilities of the Secretaryship instead of appointing another. A year and a half later Wilkes was still bitter about his failure to obtain this office. Writing to Thomas Edmondes he spoke of the Lord Treasurer's continual absence from the Court being due ostensibly to his sickness "but primarily (as it is conceived) to draw on the preferment of his son, which is not much brooked by the Queen, nor by many great ones in Court. What the end of his expectation therein will be few men can judge."²

Though Wilkes failed to win the prize of Principal Secretary the very fact that he was one of the two main candidates for a post previously held by men like Burghley himself, Sir Thomas Smith, and Walsingham, says a great deal about what his contemporaries thought of his abilities. Unfortunately, ability alone counted for little when confronted with

¹Collins, ed., Letters and Memorials, I, pp. 325-26 and 329.

²Wilkes to Edmondes, London, 19 Jan. 1593, B.M., Cott. Mss. Caligula E. IX, f. 177b.

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the machinations of a spoiled but influential courtier, a doting and powerful father, and a parsimonious and indecisive Queen.¹

By September 1593 Wilkes was ready for a second time to quit his post as Clerk of the Council. It was apparent it could no longer be used as a stepping-stone to the office of Principal Secretary and though it often involved him in important matters, too many times his duties took on the appearance of a glorified errand boy. Anxious that a deserving friend be appointed in his stead he approached Burghley on behalf of Thomas Edmondes who at the time was serving in France as an English agent to Henry IV. Writing to Edmondes from Windsor Castle on September 19th he said:

I have made overture for you to my Lord [Treasurer] and signified my resolution to resign unto you the exercise {of my} office. He seemeth very well inclined to further it. I p[ray you] take knowledge of it, and write to him your thanks and p[ray] him to be mindful of it and I will omit no means to further it.²

Throughout October and November Wilkes continued his efforts to obtain Edmondes' recall from France and his appointment to the office of Clerk but in the end it seems that Elizabeth again refused to allow Sir Thomas to give up his office.³

Several points need to be made by way of conclusion concerning the office of Clerk of the Privy Council. It was a more important position in Elizabethan government than many have been led to believe, perhaps equivalent to an Under-Secretary of State or Deputy Foreign Minister today. A seventeenth-century student of English history felt

¹The Office of Principal Secretary remained vacant for six years after Walsingham's death. Sir Robert Cecil, who in the meantime conducted the official business, was a length formally appointed to that office in July 1596. H.M.C., Salisbury, VI, p. 248.

²Ibid., f. 182c. Portions in brackets burned in original.

³Wilkes to Edmondes, Windsor, 11 Oct. 1593, Ibid., f. 173 and Henry [Unton?] to Edmondes, Windsor, 19 Nov. 1593, Ibid., f. 180a.

it important enough to pen in the margin of Cecil's, Wilkes', and Herbert's 1593 instructions the opinion that during Elizabeth's reign the office of "Clerk of the Council" was of "no small esteem."¹ From its inception it was singularly rich in men of distinction, including administrators like William Paget and John Mason; diplomatists like Wilkes and Edmondes; scholars like Sir Thomas Chaloner and Sir Thomas Smith; and "a controversialist of no mean power," Robert Beale.² As was nearly the case for Wilkes and was most certainly so for a majority of the other clerks, the office proved to be a ladder to higher and more lucrative appointments. The pay of £40-£50 per annum may not seem like much, but when one considers that these figures must be multiplied by the number 15 to get a more accurate approximation of their real value, then they take on a different light.³ Just the same, no clerk ever became rich from serving in this office. David Rogers whose widow was said to have been left with "but small ability to maintain her, self and her children" certainly did not.⁴ Robert Beale made it amply clear that the office of Clerk could in no way help him overcome the debts incurred in his "extraordinary employment[s]."⁵ Wilkes also found the salary insufficient to cover the personal expenses of crown service,

¹B.M., Add. Mss. 25,416, f. 46.

²E. R. Adair, "William Thomas: A Forgotten Clerk of the Privy Council," Tudor Studies, ed. R. W. Seton-Watson (London: Longmans Green and Company, 1924), p. 133.

³R. W. Chambers, Thomas More (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958 [first published in 1938]), p. 75 feels that in the year 1500 £1 = £15 in 1936 currency. Sixteenth-century inflation and twentieth-century devaluation of the pound sterling ought to make this figure fairly accurate for the present time.

⁴A.P.C., XXI, pp. 400-401.

⁵Cal. Dom., II, p. 408, H.M.C., Salisbury, VII, pp. 404-405, and Ibid., IX, p. 154.

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Probably the greatest benefit to be derived from the office was the opportunities it presented to one to obtain the patronage of the monarch. Wilkes invariably took advantage of the close proximity to the Court offered by this post to ask many favors of Elizabeth.¹

Muster-Master-General of the Low Countries

Wilkes exercised his responsibilities as Muster-Master-General of the Low Countries simultaneously with his office as Clerk of the Council. This post was always a key one in the administration of Elizabeth's army. The success or failure of her entire military organization depended upon the efficiency of the muster both in peace and war. It was the Muster-Master's duty to record the number of men in service, on sick leave, and those unaccounted for. This in turn provided a basis for the distribution of supplies, gave the Treasurer-at-war the data he required to calculate pay, and most important, provided the information necessary for the Commander-in-chief and the Privy Council to make accurate decisions concerning matters of war. However, the irregularity of general-musters, the hostility of captains to any census of their troop strength, and the general dishonesty found among the Treasurer-at-war and lesser officials responsible for paying the soldiers, all combined to make Elizabethan musters less than efficient.²

The first Muster-Master-General of the Low Countries was Thomas Digges who was appointed to that office by Leicester when he first arrived there in 1585. Digges' diligent efforts to correct the long-standing

¹This will be gone into in detail in Chapter X.

²C. G. Cruickshank, "Dead-pays in the Elizabethan Army," E.H.R., LIII (Jan. 1938), pp. 93-97, and C. G. Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1966), Ch. VIII.

abuses in pay distribution were only thwarted by the impossibility of auditing such wide-spread garrisons as were found in the Netherlands, the undying hatred of the English captains, and suspicion from Westminster. As a result, he returned to England with Leicester in 1587 and left in his place his brother James Digges. The latter soon came to logger-heads with Sir John Norris and the Treasurer-at-war Sir Thomas Shirley. Before long, serious attempts were being made by such military men to abolish the office of Muster-Master-General from the United Provinces.¹

By early 1588 the financial affairs of the English Army in the Netherlands left much to be desired. A document of this date illustrates this quite clearly by stating that in spite of huge sums of money being spent there by Elizabeth neither the army's creditors nor the soldiers were receiving their due. In fact, the Treasurer-at-war, Sir Thomas Shirley, was receiving a salary of £2,000 a year which was more than either the Lord Chancellor or Lord Treasurer received. With such money, plus his "collateral gains," he could "make such friends about her Highness, as her Majesty shall hardly ever know how she is robbed." The two chief bridges to a corrupt Treasurer were the Muster-Master and the Auditor, but the latter had already been removed and every device was being used to discard the former or at least to discredit him. For this very purpose a commission, with the Treasurer-at-war at the head of it, had been set up to examine the Muster-Master, thus making the Treasurer the only man who could discover the "abuses." The other commission members were those who had been charged with misdemeanors by Muster-Master Digges. Whoever wrote this paper, therefore, strongly suggested that before Digges was discharged another commission be appointed to hear both parties.

¹Ibid., Estate of James Digges' Account, 7 April 1590, L. & A., I, no. 249, and James Digges' True Report, [After 15 March 1590], Ibid.

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Furthermore, the practice of auditing the books at Westminster was ridiculous for even though the Treasurer had £50,000 in hand, he could easily contrive to make it appear that the Queen was in his debt.¹

Unfortunately, this plea went unheeded, and on March 25th, 1588 the office of Muster-Master-General of the Low Countries was abolished. In its place James Digges was given the title of "Clerk Controller of the Checks and Overseer of the Musters." This did not last long either and in March 1589 he too returned to England when Lord Willoughby was recalled. There on 15 March 1590 he was discharged from all his duties as a muster-master. In the meantime, of course, resident muster officials had been appointed to keep check on each of the English garrisons.²

Just when the title of "Muster-Master-General of the Low Countries" was reinstituted is not clear. What is certain is that as early as February 1590 Sir Thomas Wilkes was functioning as the clearing house of all muster reports from the Low Countries and at times even from France.³ Apparently his responsibility was the one referred to above as "ridiculous," i.e., that of auditing the muster books at Westminster. The documents referring to his responsibilities in this area are much too numerous to cite, for he retained this job in one form or another until

¹Low Country Matters, [early in 1588?], H.M.C., Report of the Manuscripts of the Earl of Ancaster Preserved at Grimsthorpe (Dublin: Printed for H.M.S.O. by John Falconer, 1907), pp. 76-77.

²James Digges' Petition to the Privy Council, [April?] 1590, L. & A., I, no. 247, Estate of James Digges' Accounts, 7 April, 1590, Ibid., no. 249, James Digges' True Report, [After 15 March 1590], Ibid., Patent by Lord Willoughby, Middelburg, 5 Aug. 1588, Cal. For., XXII, pp. 109-10, and Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, p. 139.

³Instructions for Audley Danet, Commissary for the Musters, Greenwich, 9 April 1591, A.P.C., XXI, p. 49, Richard Smith, Commissary of Musters at Ostend, to Wilkes, Ostend, L. & A., I, no. 185, and "The Checks raised upon the whole troops serving in her Majesty's pay in the Low Countries for the time of the employment of Sir Thomas Wilkes begun 15 October 1590, and ended 11 April 1596," 22 Oct. 1596, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCLX, ff. 70-73.

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his death in 1598. Lord Burghley made it clear that Wilkes' appointment to this office grew out of his "long experience in muster causes." This and Wilkes' impeccable honesty explain why the Lord Treasurer never hesitated to defer to his advice in such matters.¹

At first, musters were to be taken every month and sent to Wilkes with copies of the weekly certificates for the imprests delivered to the paymasters. In time the impracticability of this became apparent and it was extended to every six months. The effectiveness of this whole system rested upon the honesty of the resident muster-officials and some of them appear to have done their jobs well. The records are filled with government action against corruption ranging from captains up through the ranks to the Treasurer-at-war himself. When the amount of fraud was of a significant amount Wilkes merely investigated it, and submitted a report to the Chancery for their decision; otherwise, he handled it himself. If a captain delayed holding a muster he was immediately written a sharp letter reminding him of his duties and of the penalties for such failures.²

Interestingly, Wilkes was never referred to specifically as "Muster-Master-General" until shortly before and after his death. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that this was the office he held all along. His salary of 6s. 8d. per diem was apparently paid on a five day a week

¹Burghley to Wilkes, the Court, 11 Feb. 1592, Cal. Dom., III, p. 181, and Wilkes to Burghley, Battersea, 12 Feb. 1592, B.M., Lansd. 69, f. 121.

²Privy Council to James Digges, Greenwich, 22 March 1589, A.P.C., XVIII, p. 433, Audley Danet's Instructions, Greenwich, 9 April 1591, Ibid., XXI, p. 49, and Privy Council to Sir Francis Vere, Greenwich, 21 July 1592, Ibid., XXIII, p. 44. See also Ibid., XXVII, p. 57, and XXVIII, pp. 152-55; Cal. Dom., IV, pp. 177, 265, and 494; H.M.C., Salisbury, VII, pp. 368 and 434-35, and XIV, p. 344; Ibid., De L'Isle and Dudley, II p. 296, and Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army, Chs. VIII and IX.

basis and as with all Muster Masters, was drawn from "such money as shall be saved upon the said checks."¹

Though Wilkes worked hard at his job, the corruption was too widespread for any one man to stop. His effectiveness depended wholly on the reports he received from the Low Countries and a quick look at these will suffice to demonstrate that some were less than accurate. When a garrison the size of the one at Flushing with 2,100 men assigned, reports only twenty-three as either "absent" or "deficient," then one can be sure the resident muster official was working hand in glove with the commander. The same is true for Brill, a garrison of 950, which listed only thirty-six not present. Still, these same documents do show that Wilkes saved the government considerable sums of money; and, after all, that was what he was paid to do.²

Member of Parliament

One of Wilkes' less demanding responsibilities as an Elizabethan public servant was that of Parliamentary service. One of the important steps on the road to this honor came on 28 January 1581 when he was enfranchised by the corporation of the town of Southampton. What his connection with this town was is uncertain. Perhaps he owned part interest in the brewery owned by his brother-in-law Clement Smith, which had been operating in Southampton as early as 1571. Though Clement never seems to have become a burghess of that town, Wilkes' connections with the

¹Statement by William Meredith, 23 Feb. 1597, B.M., Egerton Mss. 5,753, f. 225, and Privy Council Warrant to William Meredith, Greenwich, 23 July 1598, A.P.C., XXVIII, pp. 602-3.

²"Checks raised upon the whole troops," 22 Oct. 1596, P.R.O., S.P. 12 CCLX, ff. 70-73, and "Abstracts of the checks," 12 Oct. 1597, Ibid., CCLXIV, ff. 298-303.

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English court certainly made his enfranchisement valuable to that community. This can be seen when he later petitions the Privy Council on behalf of Southampton in order to reduce that town's assigned portion of the national defence. No doubt the city fathers also had intentions of Wilkes representing them in the next Parliament.¹

As it turned out, a year later in March 1582 and before the next Parliament was called, Elizabeth granted Wilkes a forty-year lease on the parsonage and rectory of Downton, Wiltshire as a reward for his services as a Clerk of the Council.² As a result, when the October 1584 Parliamentary writs were issued Thomas Wilkes esquire was returned for the borough of Downton as one of thirty-two Members of Parliament from County Wiltshire.³

Called primarily as a result of the numerous threats against Elizabeth's life that had recently surfaced, the sessional dates of this Parliament run from 23 November 1584 to 29 March 1585. Nowhere in any records is there an indication of what part Wilkes played in the lengthy proceedings of Commons. One can be sure that he cast his vote in favor of all of the legislation designed to protect the Queen. It is known that when a non-Member of Parliament, "a lewd fellow called Robinson" was

¹"The Book of Oaths, Ordinances, and Burgesses Admissions: 1496-1704," 28 Jan. 1580 [1], H.M.C., Eleventh Report, Appendix Part II: the Manuscripts of Corporation of the town of Southampton, p. 21, A.L. Merson, ed., The Third Book of Remembrance of Southampton 1514-1602 (So (Southampton: At the University Press, (1965), III, pp. 105-8, and R.C. Anderson, ed., Letters of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, From the Archives of Southampton (Southampton: Cox and Sharland, 1921), pp. 134-37.

²Warden, Fellows, and Scholars of St. Mary's College, Winchester to Elizabeth, 13 March 1582, Cal. Dom., II, p. 47. The securing of this lease for Wilkes will be gone into in more detail in Chapter X.

³H.M.S.O., Returns of Members of Parliament, 1213-1705, I, p. 416.

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found sitting through one of the Common's debates Wilkes was involved in investigating him. Other than this the record is blank.¹

When the Babington Plot broke in August of 1586 Wilkes was just completing his brief investigatory mission to the Netherlands. Upon his return to England the following month he not only found the Court in an uproar, but writs were being issued for a new Parliament to help with the conviction of Mary Stuart for her complicity in the conspiracy. During the latter part of September or early October, Wilkes received a letter from the Mayor of Southampton requesting him to represent that town in the new Parliament. Since there was apparently no patron involved in their choice of Wilkes it can be assumed the borough simply wished to pay a compliment to the crown by choosing one of its officers. No doubt they were also motivated by a desire to have a sympathetic voice close to the Privy Council as well as a desire to save money by not having to pay him the daily 2s. wage set aside for a burgess representative in Parliament.² However, because Wilkes had just been assigned to return to The Hague as a member of the Dutch Council of State he had to turn the offer down. "Since the receipt of your said letter," he wrote to the Mayor,

...it hath pleased her Majesty so to dispose of me as to employ my service in the Low Countries whither I am to repair with all possible expedition, and thereby forced (much against my will) to disappoint you. I do therefore heartily pray you to make choice of some other that may attend that place, and if you were not or might not be speedily provided to your better contentment I would be a suitor unto you to bestow the same upon my brother-in-law, Mr. Henry Smith, her Majesty's servant and a gentleman, that will be ready to

¹J.E. Neale, The Elizabethan House of Commons (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 433, J.E. Neale, Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1584-1601 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1957), pp. 13-101 gives a close look at the issues of this Parliament, and William Fleetwood, the Recorder, to Burghley, [Westminster?], 29 Nov. 1584, Wright, ed., Queen Elizabeth and Her Times, II, pp. 244-45.

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do any good endeavor for the good of your town, wherein if it shall please you to gratify my report I pray you to signify your answer unto him lodging at his mother's at the Gilt Key in Cheapside.¹

Having refused this appointment, Wilkes then allowed himself to be appointed to Parliament for the borough of Downton. The explanation for this seemingly odd behavior lies in the type of borough Downton was in relation to Southampton. The prime duty of any borough representative in Parliament was to handle its business and promote its interests there, and the larger the borough the weightier the duty was likely to be. In the case of Southampton, a leading seaport, it most likely would have suffered from an absentee member; while on the other hand the interests of a rural township would scarcely be affected.²

When election writs were again sent out in September of 1588 Wilkes was still in disgrace over his quarrel with Leicester. Fortunately, the Spanish Armada had just been repelled, but only at an inordinate cost to the Exchequer. Because more money was needed if the government was to remain solvent the decision had been taken to call this new Parliament. This time Wilkes was returned for the borough of Southampton.³

Parliament was summoned to meet on 12 November 1588, but by October 15th Elizabeth had changed her mind, perhaps because the last

for seats these people would have stood no chance of being elected on different terms. See J. E. Neale, The Elizabethan House of Commons, p. 322.

¹Wilkes to Mayor of Southampton, London, 7 Oct. 1586, R. E. Anderson, ed., Letters of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, From the Archives of Southampton, pp. 98-99. Southampton did not take Wilkes' suggestion about Henry Smith but instead chose their town Recorder along with another who was probably a townsman. Neal, The Elizabethan House of Commons, p. 179.

²V.C.H., A History of Wiltshire (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 126.

³H.M.S.O., Returns of Members of Parliament, 1213-1705, 1, p. 425.

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payment of the subsidy granted in the previous Parliament was just being collected. To request a doubly large grant before the former one could be paid would undoubtedly cause trouble. So the assembly was prorogued until 4 February 1589. With the exception of the Queen being granted her two subsidies, the output of this Parliament was moderate and its dissolution on 29 March 1589 came with no mention having been made as to any contribution Wilkes may have made.¹

Realizing that the final installment of the two subsidies granted to Elizabeth in 1589 was to be paid into the Exchequer by 12 February 1593 Elizabeth called a new Parliament to meet a week later. Wilkes was again returned for Southampton and this time through the imperfect medium of the early Stuart antiquary, Sir Simonds D'Ewes, there are two brief references to Wilkes. Both mention his being appointed to serve on two separate committees. One, which was set up on March 8th, was designed to look into a bill concerning the "confirmation of the assurance unto certain purchases of lands sold by Sir Richard Knightly, Mr. Valentine Knightly and Mr. Edward Knightly esquires." Wilkes, along with Sir John Harrington, was assigned to the committee a day later and on Thursday March 15th "being twice read" the bill was ordered engrossed. Two days later it was read for a third time and "passed upon the question."²

¹Neale, Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1584-1601, pp. 193-239. We do know that several Knights and Burgesses from the counties of Yorkshire and Norfolk complained in Commons of alleged abuses by the "assignees" of Thomas Wilkes' who administered his well-known salt patent in that part of England. It is not known whether Wilkes was in the Commons the day the charges were made, we do know that the problem was eventually settled outside of that body. "The State of the Controversy," July 1589, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCXKV, f. 93. See Ch. X, pp.399-400 for details.

²H.M.S.O., Returns of Members of Parliament, 1213-1705, p. 430, and Sir Simonds D'Ewes, The Journals of All the Parliaments During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, Both of the House of Lords and House of Commons (London: John Starkey, 1682), pp. 494-95 and 501-502. By 1593 Wilkes had sold his property in Downton and was living in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire.

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The other assignment Wilkes received was to sit with what D'Ewes humorously called "a select and grave committee" of about 150 members which met on March 27th "to consider the dangers of the Realm and of speedy supply and aid to be given to her Majesty." Made up of men like Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Henry Unton, Mr. Francis Bacon, Sir Francis Drake and Sir Edward Stafford, this committee agreed to repeat the exceptional 1589 grant of two subsidies and then reported back to the House through Sir John Fortescue on February 28th for what proved to be a heated debate. When Parliament was finally dissolved late in the evening of 15 April 1593 Elizabeth had been granted three subsidies instead of just two and some of the severest anti-Catholic legislation of her reign.¹

Just why Wilkes did not sit in the October 1597-February 1598 Parliament is not clear. He certainly did not learn of his assignment to France until well after Parliament was in session. Perhaps his deteriorating health combined with his heavy responsibilities as a Clerk of the Council determined him not to assume the responsibility again. Just what kind of figure he cut in the Parliaments of the second half of Elizabeth's reign can only be guessed at. If Leicester's appraisal of Wilkes is to be believed, he was of eloquent speech and possessed great ability to persuade other men--even his enemies. His own Puritan inclinations certainly would not have allowed him to keep silent on such issues as Jesuit missionaries, Mary Queen of Scots, and Spanish threats. Yet, if he did speak out in Commons on such matters not one sentence of his surviving correspondence suggests it.²

¹Ibid., p. 474, and Neale, Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1584-1601, pp. 241-323.

²Doctor Ralph Gifford to Wilkes, [London?], P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCXII, f. 149.

Justice of the Peace

As a Freeman of Southampton, A Clerk of the Privy Council, and a property owner, it goes without saying that Wilkes served in the county of his residence as a Justice of the Peace. S. T. Bindoff in the "History of Parliament Trust" states that Wilkes was a Justice of the Peace from 1583-1593 in Wiltshire and from 1592-1598 for Hertfordshire.¹ Though the "Liber Pacis" and other lists of Justices of the Peace for these years are incomplete and sometimes contradictory they do show Wilkes serving in that capacity at least from 17 November 1584-16 November 1588 and in the year 1596. In both cases his name has no "q" by it which signifies he was more or less an honorary member with no quorum responsibilities.² However, he was not completely exempt from service as is shown in one of the County Wiltshire records which speaks of "sessions of the Peace held Thursday after Epiphany 28 Elizabeth [13 January 1586] before John Lord Stourton, Thomas Wilkes, Giles Escourt" and others. Like Southampton, Wiltshire and Hertfordshire no doubt found it valuable to have an important government official holding office in their counties even though his other responsibilities made it impossible for him to serve in the capacity of Justice of the Peace except on those rare occasions when he was home.³

¹Again, I must thank Norah Fudge who works with the Trust for this information.

²"Liber Pacis," 17 Nov. 1584 - 16 Nov. 1588, P.R.O., Excheq. Mss. 163/14/8, f. 39b. and "Liber Pacis," 1596, *Ibid.*, S.P. 13, Case F. no. 11, f. 16b. B.M., Harl. 474, ff. 38-39, and Lansd. 35, f. 137 which cover the years 17 Nov. 1581-16 Nov. 1583 and 1585 do not list Wilkes as a Justice of the Peace.

³H.C. Johnson, ed., "Minutes of Proceedings in Sessions 1563 and 1574 to 1592," Wiltshire County Records, IV (1948), p. 108. (My brackets.)

CHAPTER X

A CASE STUDY IN NON-SALARIED REMUNERATION

That Sir Thomas Wilkes "was a trafficker in crown privileges" can hardly be disputed. As one historian has put it: "he was not the kind of man who left the matter of his remuneration to chance; indeed, he would not have been a good Elizabethan had he not made crown service a stepping-stone to private fortune."¹ Indeed, for the reign of Elizabeth he probably represents the best example available of this practice. From the very beginning of his official career he used his connections at the Court, his invaluable service, and his own powers of persuasion to draw from England's frugal Queen an amazing number of material rewards.

The Queen's Printer

In 1574, shortly before Wilkes left England to assume his duties in France as Sir Valentine Dale's private secretary, he asked his patron, the Earl of Leicester, to make "suit" to Elizabeth in his behalf. Most likely the favor he petitioned for was the office of Clerk of the Privy Council which he received upon his return from France two years later. Not long after, on 12 October 1576, he was successful in obtaining a patent for the office of the Queen's Printer. He apparently never intended to retain the position, for soon after he sold the officer to one Christopher

¹Edward Hughes, Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825: With Special Reference to the History of Salt Taxation in England (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1934), pp. 46 and 53.

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Baker. Though it is not known what profit he derived from this transaction there can be little doubt that such a practice was not only quite common but that the government was fully aware of it. Thus, in July 1578 Wilkes wrote quite frankly to Burghley in favor of Baker, asking for a Privy Council order to prohibit "diverse printers of London" from further unlawful printing of "books specially and only appertaining to her Majesty's printer."¹

Rectory and Parsonage of Downton

Between 1578 and 1581 Wilkes petitioned Elizabeth for favors at least three more times. Burghley was always the chief means by which such suitors achieved their desires and Wilkes discovered this the hard way in 1581 when he was severely berated at the Council Table by the Lord Treasurer for venturing to use the medium of Walsingham to place a suit before Elizabeth.²

Burghley's anger in this instance is understandable when one realizes the nature of Wilkes' request. Apparently the latter had asked

¹Wilkes to Leicester, Lyons, 10 Sept. 1574, B.M., Harl. Mss. 287, ff. 13-14, and Wilkes to Burghley, London, 14 July 1578, H.M.C., Salisbury, II, pp. 187-88. See Wallace T. MacCaffrey, "Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics," Elizabethan Government and Society, eds., S. T. Bindoff, Joel Hurstfield, and C. H. Williams (University of London: Athlone Press, 1961), for further discussion of such sale of offices. See P.R.O., "Calendar of Patent Rolls: Elizabeth," 18th year, f. 3, for exact date of receiving his patent as the Queen's Printer.

²Wilkes to Burghley, [?], 2 Feb. 1581, B.M. Lansd. Mss. 31, ff. 108-9. Stebbing Shaw, The History and Antiquities of Staffordshire (London: J. Nichols, 1798), I, p. 57 makes the following unclear statement: "By a deed of Inspeximus, dated February 12, 1614 the 9th of James I, it appears that the late Queen Elizabeth in the 20th year of her reign (1578) granted unto Thomas Busby, and others, 211 acres of arable demesne lands of the castle and manor of Tutbury for 31 years, at the rent of £8 6s. 8d.; and afterwards demised the same, at the expiration of that term[?] to Sir Thomas Wilkes, Knt. and others for 40 years." (My brackets.) Whether Shaw is referring to the subject of this study or to an unknown seventeenth-century Sir Thomas Wilkes is unclear.

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Elizabeth to secure him a "lease in reversion" on the lucrative Rectory and Parsonage of Downton, Wiltshire which was owned by St. Mary's College, Winchester. A 192-acre plot along the east side of the river Avon, "Parsonage Farm" with its "Gleebe Lands" was worth approximately £700 per annum, while the Vicarage was worth £40 a year.¹ From the start of her reign Elizabeth had plagued the Warden, Fellows, and scholars of Winchester College with constant requests for appointments in behalf of her petitioning friends. For this very reason, the school had chosen Mr. Secretary Cecil in 1566 (as their predecessors had done with Mr. Thomas Cromwell), to be the College Steward in hopes of working through him to stop the Queen.² By the time Burghley learned that Wilkes had induced both Leicester and, through Walsingham, the Queen to request a lease on "Parsonage Farm" it was too late to do anything but be angry. Wilkes humbly apologized to the Lord Treasurer for having assumed he could have his support "in any reasonable cause" by explaining that having "not long before troubled you with the gift of a warden, I feared to be over importunate."³ Leicester's letter, which had been sent about the same time as Elizabeth's, recommended to the College in no uncertain terms that they comply with Elizabeth's request. They reluctantly yielded, but at the same time expressed the hope that their concession in this instance would not serve as a precedent for any future application of the same nature.

¹Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, "The Church Survey in Wiltshire, 1649-1650," The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine, XL (June 1919), p. 303, and Sir Richard Colt Hoare, The Modern History of South Wiltshire (London: J.B. Nichols and son, 1830), III, p. 32.

²V.C.H., A History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Company Limited, 1903), II, pp. 315-16.

³Wilkes to Burghley, [?], 2 Feb. 1581, B.M., Lansd. Mss. 31, ff. 108-9.

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However, before the completion of the grant their Warden died and a temporary delay occurred which one may assume the Fellows were not very eager to abridge. Thus, on 11 March 1581 the Privy Council (with the notable absence of Burghley's signature) wrote a stern letter insisting that as a result of the College's recent election of Doctor Wilson as the new Warden they ought to proceed forthwith to complete the grant to Wilkes. At the same time the letter assured the College that in future Elizabeth would make no more similar requests.¹

This letter had the desired effect. Extant in the Winchester College Muniments and signed and sealed by Elizabeth is that institution's forty-year lease to her and her "assignees" at a yearly rent of £73 6s. 8d. In return the Queen promised not to sublet the property to anyone but "Thomas Wilkes of London" and that he would never sublease the land for more than one year, except to his wife or children, without licence from the Warden. Wilkes was responsible not only for paying all the civil and ecclesiastical taxes and for maintaining the property, but also for providing two days and night's food, drink, and lodging for twelve men and twelve horses from the College when they came each year to hold court at Downton or to "observe the estate of the parsonage." It also stipulated that Wilkes was to "have, keep, and maintain in and upon the said parsonage one family or household of four persons at the least."²

¹Leicester to Warden, and Fellows of Winchester College, the Court, 17 Jan. 1581, "Downton" Winchester College Mss. no. 4975, and Privy Council to Warden and Fellows of Winchester College, Whitehall, 11 March 1581, *Ibid.*, no. 4974. Hoare, The Modern History of South Wiltshire, III, pp. 32-33, and T.F. Kirby, Annals of Winchester College From its Foundation in the year 1382 to the Present Time (London: Henry Frowde, 1892), p. 282 have further information on this subject. Elizabeth's letter to the college has been lost.

²"Lease," 14 March 1581, "Downton," Winchester College Mss. no. 4970. See also *Ibid.*, no. 4972, and Cal. Dom., II, p. 47 [misdated as 1582] for the College's reply to Elizabeth respecting this lease. There is one document in the Winchester College Lease Book, Register E. 22998, f. 148 which indicates that on 7 May 1589 Wilkes subleased part of his

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It was over three years before Wilkes' pressing duties as a Clerk of the Council drove him to sell his home in Brentford (ten miles up the Thames from London) and move to his estate in Downton.¹ In the meantime his rent was raised in June 1583 to £100 per annum which was to be paid twice yearly in one of two ways: either a cash payment of £33 6s. 8d. along with "120 quarters of good, sweet, and well-winnoed wheat, six score quarters of good, well-dried, and well-winnoed malt," or "instead of both" a straight £100 of "good English money."²

The Salt Patent

As valuable a piece of property as Parsonage Farm was, Wilkes was soon casting about for other means of increasing his income. He had not long to wait, for some time in the summer of 1585 it appears he was

Downton property to John Thorne, gentleman farmer of London. Whether this was a single year's lease on Wilkes' leased property or a longer lease on his indentured property is not indicated.

¹Wilkes to Leicester, London, 12 July 1584, B.M., Cott. Mss. Titus B. VII, f. 30. For a brief history of Downton, its parish Church of St. Laurence, and "Manor House" the residence of Thomas Wilkes and later the Raleigh family, see Sir Robert Perkins, Duntone (Poole, Dorset: W.H. Hallett Ltd., 1967). It appears from what few records exist that when Wilkes arrived in Downton in the late summer of 1584 he found Thomas Huddles as the vicar of the parish church at St. Laurence. When Huddles either died or moved from Downton in 1587 Wilkes was then free to obtain the appointment of his cousin William Wilkes, D.D., who was already rector of Barford St. Martin in Wiltshire, (1585), as the new vicar. Even though William Wilkes later became Chaplain to James I, he apparently continued as Vicar of Downton until his death in 1637 and definitely until 1599. A.R. Woodford, Notes on the Parish Church of S. Laurence, Downton, Wilts. (Nelson: Sanky (Nelson) Ltd., [no date]), p. 8, and Joseph Foster, Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714 (Oxford: Parker and Co., 1892), IV, p. 1632. See R. E. Brettell, "The Rev. William Wilkes, D.D., Rector of Barford St. Martin, Wiltshire, 1585-1637, and John Marston, dramatist (1576-1634)," The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine, LXI (1966), pp. 47-62 for more information on the life of William Wilkes.

²"Lease," 6 June 1583, "Downton," Winchester College Mss. no. 26277. Later in January and February 1586 Wilkes expanded his holding in Downton by purchasing two plots of land in "Byrcham Coppice." Wiltshire Record Office, "Radnor Collection: Downton Deeds, 1537-1586," no. 830.

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approached by John Smith, Searcher of the port of Lynn Regis in Norfolk, Robert Anderson, a leading mineowner and shipper from the Tyne, and Robert Bowes, Treasurer of the garrison of Berwick and Elizabeth's principal Ambassador to Scotland, with the suggestion that he make suit to the Queen for a patent as the whole supplier of salt to the east coast of England. It was agreed that if the monopoly were granted Wilkes would sell his licence to them for "a sum of money" and a "yearly annuity" of £100 and they would handle the production and distribution of the product.¹

This time Vice-Chamberlain Hatton appears to be the chief means of petitioning Elizabeth. "I have," he wrote to Wilkes on the occasion of the passing of his salt patent,

with great difficulty, after many storms and thwarts, obtained your bill to be signed by her Majesty, which, notwithstanding, is as yet stayed by commandment and may not proceed to the Signet until I have spoken with you. I pray you, therefore, let me see you here as soon as you can, and then you shall hear further what her Majesty's pleasure is and what course it to be taken for the free discharge of that matter.²

This patent gave Wilkes and his assignees a twenty-one year monopoly on the supply of white salt within the port of Lynn Regis and the Lincolnshire port of Boston (a year later this patent was extended to include the port of Kingston-upon-Hull in Lincolnshire). For a nominal rent of only £6 6s. 8d. (a year later raised to £6 13s. 4d.) they were to have the exclusive right to produce and distribute this salt throughout these counties. At the same time Wilkes bound himself to John Smith for the

¹"Reasons to move my Lord Treasurer not to mislike the continuance of the Patent of Salt,," 29 May 1589, B.M., Lansd. Mss. 59, f. 182, and Hughes, Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825, p.47.

²Hatton to Wilkes, Nonsuch, 22 Aug. 1585, H.M.C., Salisbury, III, p. 107.

sum of £2,000 "to warrant her Majesty's grant to Smith for the term therein limited."¹

This dabbling in the field of industrial monopolies by such government officials as Wilkes, only began in earnest in the late 1580's and 1590's. At this time Elizabeth's resources were considerably strained by her war with Spain and she readily acceded to requests for such monopolies as an inexpensive method of rewarding deserving servants. These courtiers were not particularly interested in the risks of launching a new technical invention but preferred to create a lucrative monopoly in some well-established industry. At the same time it seems that more often than not it was the merchants, not the courtiers, who initiated the idea and then, as in the case of Wilkes, approached the government official whom they thought had the best chance of securing such a licence.²

At first Wilkes' assignees did not prove equal to their new responsibilities and by March 1586 the Privy Council was being flooded with complaints from the angry inhabitants of the town of Boston. Petitioning the Council through John Manners, the Fourth Earl of Rutland, they

¹"Mr. Wilkes Licence," Aug. 1585, P.R.O., Signet Office Docquets, I, Ind. 5800, f. 35, "Mr. Wilkes' Grant," Jan. 1586, Ibid., f. 51, Wilkes' Patent, 1 Sept. 1586, Ibid., Patent Roll, C. 66/1295, membrane 11, Wilkes' Patent, 20 Feb. 1587, Ibid., C. 66/1275, membranes 33-34, and "Reasons to induce [the] Lord Treasurer and the rest of my Lords of the Council to allow and strengthen the execution of the patent," [3] July 1589, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCXV, f. 95. See B.M., Lansd. Mss. 52, ff. 56-63 for a second copy of the February 1587 licence.

²William Hyde Price, The English Patents of Monopoly (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913), pp. 16-17. Hughes, Studies in Administration and Finance, pp. 52-53 takes exception to the view that Wilkes' patent was given as a reward for his public service. "It was," he states, "the merchants not the courtiers who invented and stressed the plea that patents were rewards for public service." This argument is in fact a superficial one. The real issue is not one of "who invented and stressed the plea" but whether or not patents were given as rewards for service. No civil servant in Elizabeth's government ever received such a monopoly unless he was her trusted and devoted friend. She certainly had other motives for making these grants but to suggest they were not also given as rewards for service to her is inconceivable.

accused Wilkes' deputies of using the new salt patent to monopolize all trade in that port. Because their salt pans were not yet in production, all salt was purchased from Scottish merchants and then resold to the citizenry at exorbitant rates. "If Mr. Wilkes and his deputies provide for us by buying of the Scots that is not the meaning of the grant and hitherto his deputies have made no salt...but have office to buy the salt of the Scots." Furthermore, the Boston citizenry claimed that the Scots were forced to trade all their other commodities with the patentees or the latter would refuse to purchase their salt. In the same way, other merchants who brought their ships to Boston to trade for salt were forced to exchange their goods only with Wilkes' assignees. At one point their offer of "5s. for every weigh" of imported salt was so ridiculously low that "four or five Scottish ships at the beginning of Lent, laden with Lenten provisions departed out of our deeps and left us destitute." These problems and the fact that local salt makers were being "utterly discouraged from making any salt" led the inhabitants of Boston to conclude that the patent had resulted in the "utter decay of all traffic" in their port.¹

Along with this petition came a close legal analysis of the patent and its prerogative implications. Its comments are terse and to the point:

There wanteth the usual quantu[m] in nobis est: there wanteth words of grant to Mr. Wilkes to provide and all other persons are prohibited to provide whereof may ensue destitution of the thing. These words: "Any former grant by his or our progenitors notwithstanding" are not want to impeach former grants. When composition is arbitrary, it is infinite, and if her Majesty's prerogative be infinite (which I know not) yet, when any part of it is granted to

¹Earl of Rutland to Burghley, [?], 2 April 1586, B.M., Lansd. Mss. 50, f. 41 and "the inconveniences of Mr. Wilkes, his patent for white salt," 27 April 1586, Ibid., 47, f. 194.

a subject it is meet to be finite, but this grant is without proscription....The thing is of use so general and of such necessity that it is not apart for a monopoly of all other things (except fire and water), for it is a victual and an incident inseparable from preservation of victuals and therefore, not meet to be in few hands or in restraint; for take away salt by fault or negligence and take away all store of victuals from time to time and take away victual or rather disarm the subjects from whom it is taken. And a monopoly of this thing of such use...is a manifest publication to the subjects that all other things whatsoever may be made subject to monopoly and fear that many other things will come to that rate may ensue thereof. It may also breed possibly a general suspicion between her most excellent Majesty and the subjects that she will extend her prerogative...very far and further than ever heretofore because properly every prerogative employeth a proscription and this is without example. This is a grant of subjects goods to be forfeited for doing that which is before granted to them to do and that bringeth in question as well all her Majesty's former grants as this one.¹

With all the trouble over plots against the Queen's life, the ineptness of Leicester's administration in the Netherlands, and Mary Stuart's trial and execution, it was March 1587 before the Privy Council found time to act on the matter of the salt patent. On the 22nd of that month and no doubt at the instigation of Leicester who by that time hated Wilkes, the Council sent letters directing the Earl of Huntingdon, Lord President of the North and various gentlemen of Yorkshire, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire to call Wilkes' assignees before them to examine the causes of the dispute.² When Wilkes, who was at The Hague, heard of this and Leicester's other efforts to turn Burghley against the patent he wrote the following to Walsingham who was in favor of the licence:

I perceive we are like to be over matched by our adversary [Leicester] who holdeth at his devotion a great one in Court [Burghley]; and yet I trust God and her Majesty will afford us justice. I had not need to be fleeced at home considering my charge here.²

¹"The inconveniences of the patent for white salt," 26 April 1586, *Ibid.*, f. 190.

²*A.P.C.*, XIV, p. 395.

³Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 20 Feb. 1587, *Cal. For.*, XXI, ii, p. 379. (My brackets.) Later Wilkes wrote Walsingham that "I am not only plagued in my reputation in Court but in danger to be dispoiled of such poor means as God hath given to feed myself and family at home." Wilkes to Walsingham, The Hague, 17 May 1587, *Ibid.*, iii, p. 68.

Later he wrote to Hatton,

I am advertised my poor grant for making of salt, obtained by your goodness, is impugned under favor of My Lord of Leicester and (as I hear) with some allowance of my Lord Treasurer. It were a very good course to deprive a man of his living whilst he is employed in her Majesty's service, and I take it to be directly against the laws of the realm that a man in my case should be condemned and not heard. I entreat you therefore, earnestly, to move her Majesty to cause a surcease of proceedings against my patent until I may come home. And if it be thought fit to have inquiry made of any misbehavior of my deputies, that they be heard without prejudice to me or to her Majesty's grant.¹

In response to these pleas all that Walsingham could report to Wilkes was that with the exception of himself and Hatton the salt patent was "very greatly impugned" by the remainder of the Council. At first that body issued letters stipulating that from henceforth "Wilkes and his assignees would sell their salt at 18d. the bushel, not to be exceeded in war or peace, dearth or plenty." They were also required to accept "such reasonable quantities of white salt as should be agreed on between them [the local salt farmers] to be brought by them to the ports aforesaid [Hull, Boston, and Lynn] at the rates of 12d. the bushel." This also applied to any white salt delivered to these ports by the Scots.²

Then, for a while it looked as though the patent would be revoked. Fortunately, a combination of Walsingham's and Hatton's efforts along with John Smith's answers to a series of objections by certain commissioners from Lynn prevented this. Smith explained that he had been forced to purchase Scottish salt because his own salt pans were under construction at the time. Now that they were completed he would be able to make "sufficient provision" of the same. He admitted that his men had raised

¹Wilkes to Hatton, [The Hague], 17 May 1587, Ibid., p. 67.

²"The State of the Controversy...", July 1589, P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCXXV, f. 93 and complaint by Knights and Burgesses of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Norfolk to Privy Council, [April 1593], B.M., Lansd. Mss. 73, f. 157. (My brackets.)

the price of salt "yet, the same being done in his absence ought not to be laid so heavily upon him, the rather because he will see to it to be fully reformed and the gains from henceforth shall be ruled by that rate of the Council." In reply to the charges that the Scots would sell their salt for half what he was charging if it were not for the monopoly, Smith replied that his salt was "far exceeding the Scottish salt" in quality. He further claimed that in the Bishopric of Durham alone "300 poor subjects are planted and set at work and shall be still fed and maintained by the continuance of the licence." He concluded his defence by promising there would be no monopolizing other trade products.¹

"Signifying their Lordship's liking" of Smith's answers and promises, the Privy Council sent a letter (29 August 1587) to the Mayor and Aldermen of Lynn ordering them to enforce the grant or to report further objections. Apparently, "their Lords and the Counties remained satisfied" with the settlement and in February 1588 Elizabeth was persuaded to reissue the twenty-one-year patent to Wilkes and his assignees for the same annual rent.²

During the February-March 1589 Parliament two knights and three burgesses of Yorkshire and Norfolk took occasion in the House of Commons for "pretending some abuse, offered by the assignees of Thomas Wilkes in the execution of the patent, and that the order of the Lords was not performed." Not only did they claim that the salt was scarce and overpriced but that "unless there might be other contentment given" in this matter they would renew their complaints to the Privy Council. A meeting

¹"Answers and Offers of John Smith," 7 Aug. 1587, *Ibid.*, 52, f. 50, and Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825*, pp. 51-52.

²Wilkes Salt licence, Westminster, Feb. 1588, B.M., Lansd. Mss. 52, ff. 56-63 [second copy in *Ibid.*, ff. 64-65].

between the disputing parties was quickly called to meet in the presence of the Earl of Huntingdon who was in Westminster attending the House of Lords. Anxious that a settlement be reached before news of these fresh troubles reached Elizabeth's or the Council's ears, Wilkes, along with Smith, consented to reduce the price of salt from 16d. to "15d. the bushel, water measure" at Hull and "14d. the bushel, land measure" at the other ports in county Yorkshire. He further promised to see to it that sufficient quantities of salt would be supplied for all the inhabitants of those counties. In return for these concessions the knights and burgesses present "did in the behalf of the whole inhabitants undertake and contract with the said Wilkes and Smith...to maintain and defend the execution of the patent among them," and to recruit a sufficient number of salt workers to bring production up to the necessary level. It was further agreed that if any further disputes arose both parties would again lay their differences before Huntingdon.¹

Though this conference settled some problems it created others. Such low salt prices hurt those "ingrossers" who could no longer afford to compete with the patentee's salt. Consequently, these men took up the cry against the patent claiming further violations of it and subsequent agreements. So it was that from May to July 1589 there was a real danger that the patent would be revoked. Wilkes and his deputies had to exert all their influence to see that it was maintained and their greatest task was to convert Burghley, who was always suspicious of monopolies.

¹"The State of the Controversy," July 1589, P.R.O., S.P. 12 CCXXV, f. 93 [second copy in B.M., Lansd. Mss. 59, f. 186]. For an example of how such extremely low salt prices hurt others in the business, see Sir Robert Delaval to Burghley, [Blyth, Northumberland?], [30 May] 1592, The Northumberland County History Committee, A History of Northumberland (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton Kent and Company, Limited, 1909), IX, p. 352. Hughes, Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825, pp. 54-55, mistakenly refers to this meeting as the "York Conference" and erroneously places it in the year 1588.

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At the end of May they drew up a paper entitled "Reasons to move my Lord Treasurer not to mislike the continuance of the patent of salt to Thomas Wilkes,"¹ in which they stressed the high quality of their 14d. per bushel salt and the employment created by their erection of "a great number of salt pans." They also claimed that "good quantities" of salt were being purchased from the Scots each year "though to the loss of the patentee and his assignees in respect of the evil condition of the salt."

If your lordship will but consider the prices that salt is presently sold at within the city of London² and other places where the patent is not in force and shall compare the same with the offer now made and concluded...you shall find that the said patent is most beneficial to those parts of the realm. It is true that Wilkes had a sum of money for the patent when it was first granted, so had he withall an annuity growing yearly unto him during the term of the said patent. The money hath been since all spent, and a good portion more in her Majesty's service. The annuity remaineth and is the best and chiefest stay of his maintenance. He trusteth his poor service shall be thought to deserve and be worthy of the benefit he enjoyeth thereby and that in this time of his disfavor in Court and out of hope of any present reward the same shall not be taken from him.

On June 14th Wilkes took it upon himself to draw up and send to Burghley for his signature a letter that would "put a stop" to three or four "troublemakers" in Lynn who continued to impeach his patent,

in contempt of her Majesty's prerogative and authority, in so much as if the same be not met with all by some good direction from your Lordship and the rest of my good Lords of the Council, the contempt of her Majesty's said authority will increase and the prejudice of myself and deputy be such as it will undo us both. I do therefore most humbly ever upon my knees beseech and intreat your good Lordship to yield me your extraordinary favor herein and I trust you shall never hear more of any just quarrel or discontentment...for the time I mean to take the benefit of it.³

These two documents had the desired effect and almost immediately two of

¹B.M., Lansd. Mss. 59, f. 182.

²See Ibid., 58, ff. 152-53 for London salt prices from 1583-1588. In the vast majority of cases salt was sold at an average of 2s. per bushel and in some cases as high as 3s.4d.--never as low as 15d.

³Ibid., 59, f. 184.

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the troublemakers were hailed before the Council for having "impugned her Majesty's grant." The results of this confrontation is recorded in a letter from Walsingham to Burghley.

There have appeared here one George Gibson [and] John Bassett and given their attendance ever since noonday last, and because your Lordship and the rest of the Council are for the most part absent I thought it good to call them and charge them with such matters as have been informed against them by Mr. Wilkes, and they confessing their faults and submitting themselves not having any matter of grief either from the town of Lynn or otherwise to exhibit against the patentee or his assignee...¹ I have dismissed the said Gibson and Bassett whereof I would not omit to give your Lordship knowledge the rather at the instance of Mr. Wilkes [and] Mr. Bowes who as I perceive, depend not a little on your Lordship's good favor in their case.¹

It seems Burghley and several other members of the Council were still questioning the patent's validity--suggesting that it "smacked of a monopoly." As a result, Wilkes and his deputies prepared an even more elaborate defence "to induce my Lord Treasurer and the rest of my Lords of the Council to allow and strengthen the execution of the patent granted to Thomas Wilkes." Submitted on July 3rd, it read:²

First, the grant made to Thomas Wilkes her Majesty's servant in reward of his service, who receiving the same bona-fide authorized under the Great Seal of England sold the said grant to John Smith his assignee for a sum of money, reserving a yearly pension or annuity of one hundred pounds per annum during the term of the said grant, a good part of the living and maintenance of the said Wilkes.

If the grant shall be thought unlawful because it seemeth to be a monopoly I beseech their Lords to remember that her Majesty hath granted others of the like nature, as that for the bringing in of sweet wines, currents, cochineils, cards, making of starch, printing of law books, grammars, and such like, and of the same nature one to Harebrand of Yarmouth. Upon the opinion of the validity of this grant being (as it is said) under the Great Seal of England which with the authority of her Majesty's prerogative held among lawyers to be absolute although her power limited by the laws of the realm be (as they term it) Potestas terminata by which absolute power she

¹Walsingham to Burghley, Nonsuch, 6 July 1589, Ibid., f. 190.

²P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCXXV, f. 95 [second copy in B.M., Lansd. Mss. 59, ff. 188-89].

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hath granted this and the like patents heretofore. The said Wilkes hath sold and the said John Smith his assignee hath bought bona-fide the said patent, and hath thereupon disbursed as well to the patentee as to the others her Majesty's subjects whom he hath induced to erect pans for making of salt above five-thousand pounds. The party whom he hath induced and led upon the like opinion of the sufficiency of her Majesty's said grant to enter into charge of the setting up of salt pans [is] one Mr. Robert Bowes, Treasurer of Berwick who will depose that he hath by that means entered into a charge of four thousand pounds.

Thomas Wilkes hath bound himself in two-thousand pounds to warrant her Majesty's grant to Smith for the term therein limited. Smith hath likewise entered into bond of two thousand pounds to Mr. Bowes and of fifteen hundred to Mr. Anderson in respect of the charge they have been at by reason of the patent to take from them yearly certain quantities of salt at a price.

Now therefore, if the patent should be revoked or the execution thereof not strengthened as appertaineth, Thomas Wilkes doth not only lose his reward but is undone by the forfeiture of his bond given for the warranty thereof and the counties of Yorkshire and Norfolk with whom he hath compounded to serve them with sufficient quantities of salt at all times at 14d. the bushel may have an action of covenant of no less importance than the forfeiture of his said bond.

The document concluded with several familiar arguments about the high price of salt before the patent and the danger the ingrossers of salt would present to the inhabitants if the patent were revoked.

This lengthy but well argued defence had the desired effect. A letter over a week later, on July 13th, the strict enforcement of the salt patent was secured by a Council order to the Lynn officials informing them of Gibson's and Bassett's confessions, and requiring them to make certain that no others wilfully impugned the Queen's prerogative in this matter.¹ Unquestionably, it was the joint influence of men like Hatton, Walsingham, Wilkes, and Bowes that saved the patent during this crisis.

¹A.P.C., XVII, pp. 384-85.

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Fearing that Wilkes' assignment to the Netherlands during the summer of 1590 would lead to renewed attempts to impeach his patent, the Privy Council ordered the Earl of Huntingdon to call any such "forward persons" before him,

examine the matter, and take order with them either by committing them to prison, if you see cause, or otherwise as your Lordship shall think fit, that he [Wilkes] be not damnified in the time of his absence in her Majesty's services.¹

Later in April 1591 Nicholas Hare, Justice of the Peace of Stowe Barfold in Norfolk, was charged by the Council with illegally importing "150 weighs" of white salt from Scotland to Lynn. His cargo "stayed and seized" as punishment, he was told that if he or anyone else could ever prove that the patent was not providing sufficient salt the Council would "take order for redresses as shall appertain."²

Apparently by April 1593 salt production had increased to the point that Wilkes and his deputies found it unprofitable to buy salt from local salt producers. These salt farmers quickly protested to Burghley and on April 8th the patentees were ordered to resume buying all salt offered to them in sale by the local producers at the rate of 12d. per bushel. They were told that if they infringed "the true intent and meaning of this order" then by default it would be lawful for the grieved parties to sell and buy salt without "restriction or impeachment." When Wilkes demonstrated that he and his deputies could hardly do this unless freed from the Lords' former order to buy from the Scots the Council agreed to waive that requirement.³

¹Privy Council to Huntingdon, Ely Place, 5 June 1590, Ibid., XIX, p. 186. (My brackets.)

²Ibid., XXI, pp. 37-38. At this same time Wilkes enlarged his interest in the salt business by securing a private forty year lease of "diverse salt houses in Nantwich in the county of Chester" at an annual rent of £16. P.R.O., Signet Office Docquets, I, Ind. 6800, f. 289.

³Privy Council order to Wilkes and his deputies, 8 April 1593,

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From this point to the death of Wilkes there was hardly a formal complaint lodged against his patent. Angry with the Privy Council decision that no longer required that their salt be purchased, the Scottish merchants tried and failed to have the patent "called in by Quo Warranto." When Wilkes died in March of 1598 his licence was reissued to John Smith for the remaining eight years of the patent's twenty-one years' duration. With Wilkes restraining influence removed, Smith turned his back on all pledges and soon salt prices were soaring to as high as 14s. and 15s. per bushel. Consequently, when Parliament convened in October of 1601 the Commons was rocked by the uncompromising denunciations of angry Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Members of Parliament against Wilkes' patent. The result of these and numerous other complaints against the whole Elizabethan patent system resulted in a proclamation abolishing this particular salt monopoly as well as several other patents.¹

Further Suits

Age in no way slowed Wilkes down as a trafficker in crown privileges. In June of 1595 he was not only anxious to secure another patent, but this time hoped to expedite matters by presenting a choice of suits for the Queen to decide upon. In the Public Record Office is an interesting document entitled "the effect of the suits presented to the Queen's Majesty by Sir Thomas Wilkes; of which he most humbly desireth her Majesty to bestow on him some one for his present relief."² It goes on to read:

B.M., Lansd. Mss. 73, f. 158 and compalint of the Knights and Burgesses of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Norfolk to Privy Council, [April 1593], Ibid., p. 157.

¹D'Ewes, The Journals of all the Parliaments During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, pp. 644-48, "Discourse on letters patent for making salt," 10 [March?] 1597, Ibid., 84, f. 8, Smith's licence, 26 August 1599, Cal. Dom., V, p. 310, Hughes, Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825, p. 65, and Neale, Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1584-1601, pp. 376-93.

²P.R.O., S.P. 12, CCLII, f. 115.

Whereas great quantities of seacoals, being a commodity of the realm, are daily transported into foreign ports freely and without contradiction by strangers and others, that her Majesty will be pleased to grant to Sir Thomas Wilkes for twenty-one years that none may pass out of the realm but by his licence, wherein, no subject of the realm that shall either use the trade of the seacoals or burn them for his use within the realm shall be prejudiced, nor her Majesty's custom, for that kind be any way diminished.

He continues:

If her Majesty shall not be pleased to grant him this, then, with like humility he desireth the grant of some fee farm to such a value as her Majesty shall be pleased to grant, wherewith he may satisfy his debts and have some means to maintain him in her Majesty's services.

Again, he suggests:

But if neither of these may stand with her Majesty's liking then doth he most humbly refer himself to her Majesty's gracious liberality to be speedily given him in such kind as she in her goodness shall think fit to relieve his present necessities.

No doubt the absence of his close friends Walsingham (d. 1590) and Hatton (d. 1591) contributed to his lack of success in obtaining this patent. Nevertheless, Elizabeth was disposed to take his second suggestion and in August of the same year she called for

two warrants directed severally to the Lord Treasurer, Sir John Fortescue, and Sir Thomas Heneage Knights to give order for several particulars to be made of such lands, tenements, manors, and hereditants as shall amount to the yearly rent of one hundred marks [£66 13s. 4d], or thereabouts, whereof one half, or thereabout, to be in the survey of the Exchequer, the other half of the duchy of Lancaster being such as the Lord Treasurer shall think fit to be demised. And thereupon, to cause lease to be severally drawn of the same in advowson or possession to pass her Highnesses signature and seals unto Sir Thomas Wilkes, Knight for forty-one years; reserving the ancient accustomed rents, and under accounts and conditions usually procured by Sir Robert Cecil.--gratis¹

The same year Wilkes followed up this success with another request for a patent. This time he asked for a

licence for the buying of one-thousand sarples of wool yearly for the space of ten years by himself or his deputies, and to sell the

¹Ibid., Signet Office Docquets, I, Ind. 6800, f. 542. (My brackets.)

same again within her Majesty's dominions at reasonable prices. This suit hath been thrice granted by her Majesty since her coming to the Crown; the first to one Scottishford a clothier...second to William Wilson, brother to Mr. Doctor Wilson...and the third to Simon Bowyer esq....The copies of these two later grants are remaining with my Lord Treasurer. All these three grants have had their course for their second terms without interruption or offence to the subjects and are all expired; the last to Mr. Bowyer more than ten years since.¹

Again, Wilkes appears to have failed to win this suit. He did procure a "grant" of some kind in December of 1595² but there seems to have been some delay in obtaining Elizabeth's signature on it. Thus, on 31 January 1596 he scribbled a quick note to Sir Robert Cecil which not only asks that this be taken care of but also admirably illustrates the motives that induced Wilkes to become a purveyor in crown privileges.

Have me in your favorable remembrance for my poor bill...in respect that the parties to which I am to make the assignments are here attending to their charges and will depart homeward at the end of the Term before which time if I obtain not her Majesty's signature to the grant I shall be constrained to attend and forebear the receipt of my money till the next Term which will turn to my very great hinderance.³

Perhaps the above "poor bill" Wilkes was seeking confirmation of was the following lease granted in February 1596.

A lease in reversion granted to Sir Thomas Wilkes Knight one of the Clerks of her Majesty's Privy Council of the Manor of Burnham Overy at Burnham, Norfolk, called the Lathis and Crabhall, and the Rectory belonging to the said manor of Lathis. And also of diverse lands, tenaments, and hereditaments in Stebonith March, Barking and over in the several counties of Norfolk, Middlesex, Carnarvon, Essex, and Cambridge, for term of forty-one years; rent in the whole by the year £25 2s. 10d.--gratis⁴

¹Ibid., S.P. 12, CCLV, f. 145.

²W.P.W. Phillimore, ed., An Index to Bills of Privy Signet Commonly Called Signet Bills 1584 to 1596 and 1603 to 1624 (London: British Record Society, 1890), p. 40.

³B.M., Hatfield Mss. [microfilm] XXX, f. 44.

⁴P.R.O., Signet Office Docquets, I, Ind. 6800, f. 570. See Wilkes' Lease, 14 Feb. 1596, P.R.O., Patent Roll C. 66/1451, membranes 35-38.

From all available records, this was the last suit Wilkes secured. In June 1597 he appears to have made one last attempt to procure a patent but Burghley's awareness of the growing discontent in England over Elizabeth's patent policy, plus his own personal aversion to monopolies killed it. Wilkes' subsequent letter to Sir Robert Cecil on the subject is especially illuminating on the way in which one went about obtaining Crown privileges.

I was on Tuesday at the Court hoping to have had the opportunity to have seen your honor to have given you thanks for your honorable readiness to have done me good in the suit I presumed to move unto you and with all to let you know the dislike my Lord your father hath of the nature of my suit, holding the same to be an absolute monopoly; and although I have endeavored as well by speech as by weighing with many reasons to remove his conceipt in that point yet I find my labor vain and myself void of all hope to win his Lordship to any liking of the same. Nevertheless, I find his Lordship so honorably inclined towards my relief as he hath willed me to find out some other thing that may be better to his liking, which I will (God willing) seek to have by such good means as I may, and because it will require time (for I protest unto you I know not what to seek out on the sudden) I must have patience and will try my friends and skill to the uttermost to be furnished of some other things that may be to his Lordship's liking.¹

No one worked more assiduously at obtaining the patronage of the Crown than Wilkes, and few, throughout Elizabeth's reign, could boast of having landed so important and all encompassing a patent as his on salt. It was, in fact, the largest salt patent in England and though not the most lucrative of the monopolies it did provide Wilkes with the not inconsiderable sum of £100 per annum. This, along with his £40 a year salary as a Clerk, his ambassadorial diets, and his income from his estate in Downton and later in Hertfordshire (not to mention his later leases and property income granted at the Crown's pleasure), added up to a surprisingly substantial amount. Still, his will attests to the fact that he died an

¹Wilkes to Sir Robert Cecil, London, 30 June 1597, B.M., Hatfield Mss. [microfilm], LII, f. 87.

unwealthy man. There is no more eloquent testimony than this of the tremendous expenses involved in being a servant of the Crown, especially when one was required to fulfill as many foreign assignments as did Wilkes. It should also be remembered that in spite of the numerous complaints against Wilkes' salt patent, it eventually provided good quality white salt at prices well below that sold in London, and thus was a benefit to everyone but those who wished to sell their own salt at higher prices. Despite Edward Hughes suggestions to the contrary,¹ Wilkes career conclusively demonstrates the validity of William Hyde Price's statement that "it is evident that the grants to the servants of the Queen's household, and to the clerks were conferred in lieu of salaries."² Perhaps it would be even more accurate to say that these grants "were conferred to supplement admittedly inadequate salaries."

¹Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825, pp. 52-53.

²The English Patents of Monopoly, p. 17.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

Throughout the twelve missions of his diplomatic career--from the spring of 1573, when he became secretary to Ambassador Dale in Paris, to his lonely and unfortunate death in 1598 while traveling on assignment to Henry IV, Sir Thomas Wilkes was motivated by an overriding concern for the interests and religion of his country.¹ Like his mentor Walsingham, he was one of the few in official circles who recognized as early as the 1570's that it was Spain and not internally divided France that posed the greater threat to England's security. So intense was his distrust of Philip II that in late 1589 or 1590 he went so far as to write a treatise suggesting that the "Infidel Turks" be persuaded to launch an all out war on Spain in order to stop Philip II's expansive tendencies. Entitled "A consideration whether her Majesty may with her honor accept the Turk's offer and provoke him to invade the King of Spain," this surprising document pointedly argues that,

There is [a] difference between invoking the aid of an infidel against a Christian prince and the using of the same against the King of Spain, for to use the color of religion to cut the throat of religion and to use the cloak of Christianity to the destruction of Christianity is worse than infidelity.²

¹See Appendix E for a list of Wilkes' diplomatic missions and their dates.

²Wilkes' "Consideration" was found in a manuscript volume entitled "Leycester's 'Commonwealth': Together with other Political Papers," collected by Mr. Beauprebell in 1726 (University Library, Cambridge, England), ff. 62-63. See Appendix F for a complete copy of this interesting document.

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The possibility of such action had first been broached in March of 1587 when the English agent in Constantinople, William Harborne, sent Walsingham word that Philip II was attempting to effect a truce between Spain and Turkey. The Principal Secretary's reply to the Sultan which hinted that he might attempt something "presently for the impeachment of the said Spaniard's greatness" apparently worried the Queen and her other councilors.¹ Concerned about the prospect of scandalizing Europe through provoking the infidel against a Christian prince, they appear to have asked for Wilkes' opinion. What effect his strong words had on their peace of mind is not known, but the very existence of this "consideration" is eloquent testimony on Wilkes' common sense approach to the problem of dealing with England's great enemy.

Wilkes was a man whose personality was in marked contrast to that of his sovereign. Elizabeth was an opportunist, Wilkes an idealist; she awaited dangers while he went forth to meet them. She was as inconstant and variable as water, while he was as stable and unmoving as a rock. Much of the frustration and discouragement that Sir Thomas was to experience throughout his twenty-five years in her service came as a result of this difference in approaching the problems that faced sixteenth-century England.

Because Wilkes was neither a close friend of Elizabeth nor one of her trusted councilors, he was forced to use means other than personal persuasion to put pressure on her for the realization of his goals. One of his most obvious methods of doing this was through his close friendship with such members of the Privy Council as Hatton, Walsingham, and even

¹Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham, III, pp. 326-32. (My brackets. Underlined portions in cipher.) Here Professor Read quotes what appears to be the only other documents on this particular subject.

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Leicester, before their friendship ended. Periodically we see Walsingham seeking out Wilkes' opinion on important foreign matters. Less obvious was the influence Wilkes' diplomatic correspondence had on both the Queen and her Privy Council. Accurate, easily read, persuasively written, his official dispatches served time and again as the basis for important decisions at the English Court.¹

Throughout his foreign service Wilkes' assignments were never as a resident ambassador, but always as a kind of "ambassador-at-large" or diplomatic "troubleshooter," who was sent to solve pressing international problems. Invariably, these missions required an astute mind rather than a prestigious presence. His early travels on the Continent, his competence in the Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish languages, and his acknowledged integrity made him one of Elizabeth's most valuable career diplomats.

Wilkes recognized foreign service as a stepping-stone to higher office, but like most other diplomats, after two or three missions he was not anxious to serve another. Too often, foreign service brought with it ill-health, a depletion of private fortune, a never-missed opportunity for one's enemies at home to spread lies, and as Wilkes learned very early, the possibility of Elizabeth repudiating the very actions she had instructed one to take.

Nor was this the "Golden Age of Diplomacy" when poor communication made every ambassador the alter-ego of his monarch, requiring him to make many crucial on-the-spot decisions that bound his government to important policies. Wilkes' and others' careers demonstrate conclusively that

¹See Appendix D for a reproduction of one of Wilkes' holograph letters.

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ambassadors and agents had little if any more freedom to make important decisions than the diplomats of today.¹ In fact, Wilkes' independence was often more restricted because of the delays incurred by Elizabeth's insistence that all decisions be made at home. Many were the times in his negotiations when Wilkes would have preferred to settle some minor point of difference and pass on to more important items, but instead, had to sit and cool his heels until further instructions arrived. Still, he was no yes man like his contemporaries Sir Henry Cobham and, to a lesser degree, Sir Henry Killigrew. Wilkes' entire career is a monument to the advice he gave Sir Robert Cecil that a good councilor to any monarch is always the one who will not hesitate to warn his sovereign of the dangers threatening the realm. As he stated it: "the councilor is bound by oath to discharge his duty by showing his opinion."²

Like most of his colleagues, Wilkes' contributions in the field of diplomacy were less than spectacular; nevertheless, there were some solid achievements. His early role in winning the confidence of Henry of Navarre in Elizabeth proved invaluable to England's interests when he became King of France. There can be little doubt that his efforts played an important part in assisting Condé and encouraging Frederick, the Elector Palatine, to put together an army of invasion which forced Catherine de Medicis and Henry III to sign the Peace of Monsieur in May 1576. Unfortunately, even though he was instrumental in the renewal of full diplomatic relations between England and Spain in 1578, Mendoza's

¹F. Jeffrey Platt, "Sir Henry Cobham's Embassy to France, 1579-1583" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1968). See also A.B. Robertson, "A Study of the Ambassadors and the Conduct of Embassies to France during the Reign of Elizabeth I" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Newcastle-upon-Tyne University, 1964), for a general look at the functioning of Elizabeth's diplomatic corps.

²Wilkes' "Brief and Summary Tract," [1591?], B.M., Stowe Mss. 296, ff. 7-20.

presence in London proved more detrimental than helpful to the friendship of the two countries. Wilkes' 1586-1587 mission to the Netherlands could have proved a great boon to the Anglo-Dutch war against Parma, if only Elizabeth had been willing to accept the suggestions he made instead of allowing herself to be swayed by the splenetic hatred of her dear "Rob." The treatment this courageous and honest servant received at the hands of both the Queen and her favorite was completely undeserved. From Leicester, little else could have been expected, but from Elizabeth such conduct was reprehensible. Here remains one of the most striking evidences against the oft-repeated claim that in the ultimate solution of any problem Elizabeth's mind always ruled her heart. Only Leicester's death and a year of forgetting allowed the Queen to emerge again as master of the woman. Yet, throughout it all, unlike the Stanleys and Essexes of his day, and to his lasting credit, Wilkes never faltered in his loyalty to Elizabeth. In time, his natural abilities could no longer be suppressed. He was restored to favor, and lived to render England nine more years of valuable service. Though coming too late to dissuade Henry IV from changing his religion, Wilkes' 1593 mission to France did result in the important "Bond of Amity" which reassured the troubled Elizabeth of the continued friendship of this newly converted monarch. Perhaps more important than any of these was his prolific and accurate correspondence which always kept the government well informed on foreign events and thus provided a firm foundation upon which it could base its decisions.

Unlike the Elizabethan diplomats, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton and Doctor John Man, Wilkes was not a divisive diplomat. Always patient and understanding, he brought to every negotiation a spirit of moderation, coupled with firmness, that generally won for him the respect of those

he had to deal with. It was for this reason as much as anything else that his diplomatic career was so successful.

Like most other diplomats of the sixteenth-century, Wilkes appears to have possessed great physical and mental stamina. Travel was a difficult and hazardous business under the best of conditions, yet, Wilkes was often called upon to travel in the dead of winter and through extremely hostile territory. The emotional tension resulting from the slowness and unreliability of communication, coupled with the mental strain of conducting negotiations, was always exhausting. Add to these the terrific pressure that he faced in being the lone defender of English interests on the Anglo-Dutch Council of State, of trying to fulfill his assignment with insufficient funds, and of vainly striving to defend the good name that his enemies back home were intent on destroying, and it becomes easy to see why his last journey to France was too much for his weakened body to endure.

Because of the difficulty diplomatic historians have had in accurately determining England's position in and contributions to the evolution of late sixteenth-century diplomacy, it becomes almost impossible to state what Wilkes' own position and contributions may have been. One generality historians have agreed upon is that by the second half of the sixteenth century, the use of resident ambassadors had become one of the normal methods of diplomatic intercourse throughout Europe. In this sense Elizabeth and Wilkes were both out of step with their times. For the major portion of her reign Elizabeth had a permanent legation only in France, and Wilkes, who had one of the longest diplomatic careers in her reign, never served as a resident ambassador. Still, Wilkes possessed, and appears to have exercised, many of the attributes necessary for a successful diplomat in any age. He was adroit, hard working, patient, fair,

and tactful. He kept his government well-informed on foreign matters and was not afraid to spend his own meagre fortune to further England's cause. Unlike many of his contemporaries who were looked upon as spies or men "sent to lie abroad for the good of their countries," Wilkes was generally trusted and respected by those with whom he dealt.

As a diplomat, Wilkes emerges, on the whole, in a favorable light; and if his contribution to the evolution of Western-European diplomacy seems small, it must be remembered that he did help to brighten an otherwise considerably tarnished image of sixteenth-century diplomacy.

On the domestic scene, Wilkes' contributions are no doubt far greater than surviving records indicate. Enough remains to demonstrate quite clearly that his duties as a Clerk of the Council, Member of Parliament, Justice of the Peace, and Muster-Master-General of the Low Countries involved him in nearly every level of national and local government. A look at his duties as clerk leaves one with the unmistakable impression that this office was one of significant importance. There may have been many other offices of greater prestige and more lucrative stipend, but few involved their occupants in such weighty matters as advising on matters of international relations, unraveling plots against the Queen's life, and treating with foreign embassies visiting London. His contributions to this office as well as in the field of international politics was so significant that only at the last moment was he cheated out of the high honor of being one of England's two Principal Secretaries. Had he obtained this office he would have been just what Elizabeth needed at that time--someone of Walsingham's calibre to complement the super-cautious nature of Burghley and later of his son Sir Robert. The very fact that a second level non-pedigreed government official was even considered for the office demonstrates the remarkable fluidity of Elizabethan society.

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Wilkes' career is one of the best examples available of the importance of patronage in Tudor society. Like all second-level officials he was dependent upon men like Walsingham, Burghley, and Hatton for favors and protection. His activities as a purveyor of Crown privileges demonstrate conclusively that this was the accepted means by which Tudor diplomats offset the crushing personal expense involved in foreign assignments.

It is the acknowledged tendency of most biographers, and this one is no exception, to be somewhat blind to the shortcomings of their subjects. But even with that in mind, it is still difficult to come away from a study of Wilkes' life without a feeling of reassurance that thousands of hours of research and writing have at least been spent on a man whose integrity in public office was remarkable for his day and age. Despite the trouble over his salt patent, due to infractions on the part of his assignees, it must be remembered that it was Wilkes who saw to it that high quality salt was produced and sold at prices far below those in London. His presence at the rackings of several Catholic conspirators need not be held against him, for his assignment was only to record their confessions. His flight from the Netherlands to avoid facing Leicester was his most serious mistake, but even that can be understood when one remembers that he had not only been officially recalled but also feared for his life in the Earl's presence. The real source of this trouble and his subsequent disgrace was not a lack of integrity but a case of too much honesty. His always detached and objective reporting was the one thing Leicester's type of administration could not endure. Much to his credit his letters during this period and throughout his career are remarkably free of the rancor and pettiness that filled so much of the correspondence of his day.

All in all, it is hoped that this study of Wilkes' career has demonstrated the importance of the biography in history. It is a type of history which forces both the reader and especially the author to broaden his understanding of a particular period of time by delving into a staggering variety of its problems. More often than not, this also proves the best way to gain a genuine "feel" for a bygone era, and invariably it personalizes the much too often impersonalized approach to history. Hopefully, this biography of Wilkes has demonstrated the need for a host of similar studies, especially in the field of Elizabethan diplomacy. A closer look at more of the lesser-known lights of that age could not help but illuminate many dark corners of sixteen-century English history.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

I

PRIMARY SOURCES

The sources available on the life and career of Sir Thomas Wilkes are as varied as they are numerous and, with the exception of several Dutch collections, the following represent virtually all that is available on the subject.

Early Life and Family Genealogies:

As always, one of the most indispensable sources for tracing the genealogy of most important sixteenth-century figures is to be found in the Public Record Office "Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills." The Wills of Thomas Wilkes, his father and mother-in-law Ambrose and Joan Smith, his second wife's father Sir John Savage and her second husband William Jephson, are found in 36 Lewyn, 14 Watson, 28 Woodhall, 40 Montague, and 108 Cope, respectively. These, along with the numerous genealogies found in the British Museum, "Harleian Mss." and those published by the Harleian Society, make it possible to shed some light on the otherwise obscure origins of Thomas Wilkes. B.M., "Harleian Mss." 1563 gives Wilkes' genealogy as well as his coat of arms [The "Pedigrees" in the College of Arms Mss. 2. D 14 II provides a more detailed genealogy].

John Fetherstone's (ed.), The Visitation of the County of Leicester, 1619 (London: Printed for the Harleian Society by Taylor and Co., Printers, 1870), and Sophia W. Rawlins, ed., The Visitation of London, 1568 (London: Printed for the Harleian Society by John Whitehead and Son Limited, 1963), contain genealogies of Wilkes' first wife Margaret Smith. W. Bruce Bannerman's (ed.), The Register of St. Pancras, Soper Lane (London:

The Harleian Society, 1915), gives the date and place of her marriage to Sir Thomas. Information on Margaret's age, death, burial and their baby girl is provided in her "Funeral Certificate," College of Arms Mss. I. 6. It also contains a beautiful representation of their combined coat of arms.

The genealogy of Frances Savage, (Thomas Wilkes' second wife), her nephew's marriage to her step-daughter Margaret Wilkes, and her own marriage to William Jephson after Sir Thomas' death are found in G. J. Armytage and J. P. Ryland, eds., Pedigrees made at the Visitation of Cheshire, 1613 (London: Printed for the Harleian Society by Ye Wardour Press, 1913), and in the records of the London Society of Genealogists, "Hertfordshire Marriages."

What little primary material is to be found on Wilkes' early travels is in The Public Record Office, "State Papers, Domestic Mss., Elizabeth" CCIVL doc. #154 which gives a very important but brief mention of his eight years of travel on the Continent before he began his official career. His education at All Soul's, Oxford is covered by the Register of the University of Oxford, eds., C.W. Boase and Andrew Clark (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1885 and 1888), I and II.

Diplomatic Career:

Sir Thomas Wilkes' diplomatic career is documented by a vast quantity of papers relating specifically to his missions and often to important related events. The Public Record Office is by far the most important depository of these documents. The "State Papers, Foreign Mss." covering the reign of Elizabeth are the heart of this study. For the years 1558-July 1589 these documents have been edited by Joseph Stepheson, et al. and published in the monumental Calendar of State Papers,

Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth (London: H.M.S.O., 1863-1950), I-XXIII. For the period August 1589-May 1591 a new approach was attempted in editing these increasingly numerous documents. Completed under the brilliant editorship of R. B. Wernham, the holder of the Chair of Modern History at Oxford University, the List and Analysis of State Papers, Foreign Series, Elizabeth I (London: H.M.S.O., 1964 and 1969), I and II provide a "consolidated summary, in more or less narrative form, of all the information about any particular event or topic that is to be found in the S.P. Foreign as a whole." Together the Calendar of State Papers Foreign and the List and Analysis provide a bulk of the information on Wilkes' diplomatic career through 1590.

For the years after May 1591 one is forced to search out the original documents themselves. The "State Papers, Foreign Mss. Flanders" 77, V, provide several important papers relating to his abortive 1594 mission to the Archduke Ernest. The "State Papers, Foreign Mss., France" 78, XXVII-XXIX, XXXI-XXXII, XXXVII, and XLI provide most of the information on his 1592, 1593, and 1598 missions to France. The "State Papers, Foreign Mss., Holland," 84, XLIII-III have several important documents touching various phases of Wilkes' foreign assignments. Likewise, the "State Papers, Foreign Mss., Treaty Papers," 103, VII and XXXIII have several unpublished documents dealing with his 1593 mission to Henry IV and to his 1586-1587 mission to The Hague. Probably one of the most valuable collections of Wilkes' own correspondence for the years 1586-1587 and June-August 1590 is his "Letter Book" found in "State Papers, Foreign Mss., Archives" 105, XCI. Though all these letters have been published in the calendared volumes, and the List and Analysis few if any are printed in extenso.

Though the "State Papers, Domestic Mss." for the reign of Elizabeth have very little concerning Wilkes' foreign service, there is one particularly important document in volume CCIVL which gives a valuable resume of his diplomatic assignments through July 1593.

Another absolutely essential source for any diplomatic historian is the Public Record Office "Privy Seal Book: Elizabeth" (E. 403/2559) which not only provides a complete list of all diplomatic personnel during Elizabeth's reign but also the dates of their despatch, where they were sent, and the amount of their daily diets.

Several other collections published by the Public Record Office proved invaluable to this study. The Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, ed. G. Cavendish-Bentinck (London: H.M.S.O., 1890), VII, was especially useful for providing details on French internal affairs during the early years of Wilkes' diplomatic service there. The same is true of J.M. Riggs' edition of the Calendar of State Papers, Relating to English Affairs Preserved Principally at Rome in the Vatican Archives and Library (London: H.M.S.O., 1926), II and Martin A. S. Hume, ed. Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs Preserved Primarily in the Archives of Simancas (London: H.M.S.O., 1894-1899), II and III. Volume III of the Calendared Spanish documents was used primarily for Wilkes' 1586-1587 mission to The Hague.

Switching over to that other great depository of Elizabethan papers, the British Museum, one finds numerous manuscript collections relating to Wilkes' diplomatic career. The most important of these are the extensive "Cottonian Mss." Galba D. VII covering his 1590 mission to The Hague and Caligula E. IX comprising his 1593 mission to France contain the largest block of letters and papers. However, there are also numerous

and important documents in Galba B. XI, C. V, VIII, X, and XI, D. I, II, and V, and E. VI; Caligula E. VI, Titus B. II and VI and C. VII, and Vespasian C. VIII.

The "Additional Mss." are the next most important collection of Wilkes' diplomatic papers in the British Museum, especially: 5935, 18,654, 21,506, 48,014, 48,078, 48,088, 48,116, and 48,127. Those in the "48,000" series were originally a part of the "Yelverton Mss.," collected by Henry Yelverton, Viscount Longueville (d. 1704) whose books and manuscripts were offered for sale in 1784. Many of these documents are not permanently catalogued and thus their foliation and volume numbers are still subject to change by the museum archivists.

The British Museum "Egerton Mss." 1694 is another extremely valuable source of Wilkes' letters for his 1586-1587 mission to the United Provinces. The less valuable but nevertheless important collections in the museum are the "Lansdowne Mss." 54, 678, and 683; the "Harleian Mss." 287, 1582, 6994, and 6995; and the "Sloan Mss." 2764. These all touch on a wide variety of Wilkes' experiences abroad.

Aside from the Public Record Office and the British Museum there is another valuable collection of documents which fortunately has been published. These papers are the extensive Cecil Manuscripts at Hatfield House. Published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission they are entitled the Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire (London: H.M.S.O., 1833-1923), I-XIV. As valuable on domestic as they are for foreign affairs, these volumes invariably serve to lead the historian out of the dead-ends of his historical research.

Other published documents that are essential to the student of sixteenth-century diplomacy are the following: Joseph Kervyn de Lettenhove's

(ed.), Relations Politiques des Pays-Bas et de L'Angleterre, sous Le Règne de Philippe II (Bruxelles: F. Hayez, Imprimeur de L'Académie Royale Des Sciences, 1889-1900), VIII-XI, which is a collection from English, Flemish, and Spanish archives dealing with the diplomatic relations between England and the Low Countries. Unfortunately, it only covers the period from 1555-1579, but still proves to be the most important collection of sources upon relations between England and the Low Countries. Though Wilkes was not on assignment in the Netherlands during these years, the correspondence still sheds much light on events throughout Europe at the time.

Two other printed collections which contain a large amount of Wilkes' correspondence are Thomas Rymer's (ed.), Foedera, Conventions Literae, Et Cojuscunque Generis Acta Publica, Inter Reges Angliae (London: A. and J. Churchill, 1615), XVI and Cabala, Sive Scrinia Sacra: Mysteries of State and Government in Letters of Illustrious Persons and Great Ministers of State (London: Thomas Sawbridge, 1691), pt. 2. Covering Wilkes 1590 and 1586-1587 missions respectively, one finds most of their letters have by now been printed in the Calendar of State Papers, Foreign and List and Analysis.

Two volumes which each contain a sizeable portion of Wilkes' 1590 correspondence are C. L. Kingsford's (ed.), Report on the Manuscripts of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley Preserved at Penshurst Place (London: Printed by H.M.S.O. for the Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1934), II, and Letters and Memorials of State, in the Reign of Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, King James..., ed. Arthur Collins (London: T. Osborne, 1746), I. Both volumes contain many of the same letters and though the latter quotes them more in extenso, the former contains additional papers, thus making them both important.

C. Groen van Prinsterer, ed., Archives on Correspondance inédite de la Maison D'Orange-Nassau (Leide: S. et J. Luchtmans, 1839), 1st series, VIII, provides the only letter extant on Wilkes secret mission to William Prince of Orange in May and June of 1582. Another important document is provided by Conyers Read's (ed.), Documents Relating to the Imprisonment and Trial of Mary Queen of Scots (London: Royal Historical Society, 1909). Here one learns of the amazement caused by Wilkes' September 1586 financial and political report on Leicester's administration of the Low Countries.

There are several published collections of individual correspondence that are especially helpful when writing about Elizabethan diplomacy. Covering Walsingham's correspondence during his 1570-1573 embassy to France and providing background material on Wilkes' first assignment in that country is Sir Dudley Digges' (ed.), The Complete Ambassador or Two Treaties of the Intended Marriage of Queen Elizabeth (London: Tho. Newcomb, 1655). Information of the first year of his service as Sir Valentine Dale's secretary is found in the Correspondance Diplomatique de Bertrand De Salignac De La Mothe Fénelon, Ambassador De France En Angleterre De 1568 a 1575, ed. A. Teulet (Paris: Béthune, 1840), V-VII.

For Wilkes' 1578 mission to Spain Joseph Lefèvre's (ed.), Correspondance de Philippe II sur Les Affaires Des Pays-Bas, 1577-1580 (Bruxelles: Palais Des Academies, 1940), 2nd Series, I, provides several important references. For his 1586-1587 mission to The Hague John Bruce's (ed.), Correspondence of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leycester, During His Government of the Low Countries in the Years 1585 and 1586 (London: Camden Society, 1844), and P.J. Blok, ed., Correspondance inédite de Robert Dudley, Comte de Leycester et François et Jean Hotman (Haarlem:

Les Heritiers Loosjes, 1911), are very important. To be quite frank, anyone who has deciphered Leicester's atrocious handwriting deserves credit for that alone.

Though by no means a complete collection of Henry IV's correspondence Jules Berger De Xivery and J. Guadet, eds., Recueil Des Lettres Missives De Henri IV (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1846-1848), III and IV, are still valuable sources for Wilkes' 1592 and 1593 missions to France. Two key sources of letters on Anglo-French relations from 1591-1599 are Joseph Stevenson's (ed.), Correspondence of Sir Henry Unton Knt. Ambassador from Queen Elizabeth to Henry IV, King of France in the Years MDXCI and MDXCII (London: Printed for the Roxburghe Club by William Nicol, 1847), and Geoffrey G. Butler's (ed.), The Edmondes Papers: A Selection From the Correspondence of Sir Thomas Edmondes, envoy from Queen Elizabeth at the French Court (London: Printed for the Roxburghe Club by J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1913).

Helpful because of the exact dates it supplies on the dispatch and return of embassies is Charles Trice Martin, ed., "Journal of Sir Francis Walsingham," Camden Miscellany (Westminster: Printed for the Camden Society by J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1871), IV.

One memoir which proved helpful in sorting out some of France's internal history was Pierre de L'Estoile's Journal de l'Estoil Pour le Reigne de Henry III, ed. Louis-Raymond-Lefèvre (Paris: Gallimard, 1943).

Domestic Career:

For the chapter on Wilkes' domestic responsibilities the two main sources were the Public Record Office publications of the Acts of the Privy Council, ed. John Roche Dasent (London: H.M.S.O., 1890-1921), I-XXXIII and the Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth I, and James I, eds. Robert Lemon and Mrs. Everett Green

(London: H.M.S.O., 1856-1871), I-VII. The first, which is the official record as found in the Privy Council Register, is perhaps the greatest source of Administrative history in the Tudor period. On the other hand, it was found that in many instances the calendared Domestic papers were so severely edited that the only recourse was to turn to the originals in the Public Record Office (see volumes CLVI, CLXII, CLXXI, CCXVIII, CCXXIX, CCLX, and CCLXIV).

Again the British Museum "Cottonian Mss." (Caligula E. IX, Galba B. XI, and Titus B. VII), "Additional Mss." (39,828 and 25,416), "Lansdowne Mss." (35 and 69), "Harleian Mss." (474), and "Egerton Mss." (1694, 2074, and 5753), proved to be valuable sources for a wide variety of topics. This was also true of the Historical Manuscripts Commission's Calendar of Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury (III, V, VII-IX, XIII, and XIV), and Fourth Report: The Manuscripts of the Right Honorable Lord Bagot at Blithefield, Co. Stafford (London: H.M.S.O., 1874), I.

Other smaller collections of published documents which also proved useful for numerous topics are the following: John Strype's (ed.) Annals of the Reformation (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1924), Edmund Lodge's (ed.) Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners, in the Reign of Elizabeth (London: John Chidley, 1838), Thomas Wright's (ed.), Queen Elizabeth and Her Times: A Series of Original Letters (London: Henry Colburn, Publisher, 1838), II, and G. B. Harrison's (ed.), The Elizabethan Journals: Being a Record of Those Things Most Talked of during the Years 1591-1603 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1955), I-III. While the first two collections offer valuable correspondence on diplomatic and domestic policy, the latter two provide those seemingly less important bits of information which so often result in important insights into the personality of the subjects one is studying.

Aside from the calendared Domestic papers one of the important (though obviously biased) sources for both documents and background information on Wilkes' responsibilities in tracking down Catholic conspirators during the early 1580's is the Catholic Record Society's The Ven. Philip Howard Earl of Arundel 1557-1595, ed. John Hungerford Pollen and William McMahon (London: Harrison and Sons, 1919), XXI.

Much of the material relating to Sir Thomas' connections with the city of Southampton came from the following three volumes of published documents: The Historical Manuscripts of the Corporation of the Town of Southampton (London: H.M.S.O., 1887), is important though often too severely edited. More valuable is The Third Book of Remembrance of Southampton 1573-1585, ed. A.L. Merson (Southampton: At the University Press, 1965). A part of the scholarly Southampton Record Series under the general editorship of H. Rothwell, A.L. Merson, and A. T. Patterson, it provides important documents and commentary on Wilkes' connection with that port city. R.C. Anderson's (ed.), Letters of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, From the Archives of Southampton (Southampton: Cox and Sharland, 1921), is the third important volume giving several important references to Wilkes and his second wife Lady Frances. Well edited, with extensive footnoting, this work is also one of the publications of the Southampton Record Society.

Though there is little information on Wilkes Parliamentary career the two most important sources are part I of the Public Record Office publications of the official Returns of Members of Parliament: England 1213-1705 (London: Henry Hansard and Son, 1878), which gives the dates and places of Wilkes' returns and Sir Simonds d'Ewes' The Journals of all the Parliaments During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, Both of the House of Lords and House of Commons (London: John Starkey, 1682). These

two volumes are the most valuable sources extant on Elizabeth's Parliaments.

For Wilkes' career as a Justice of the Peace the best place to begin is Bertha H. Putnam's "Justices of the Peace From 1558 to 1688," The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, IV (February 1927), no. 12, which serves as an index to Public Record Office and British Museum documents listing Justices of the Peace. The only two references discovered on Wilkes were in the Public Record Office in the 1596 "Liber Pacis" (State Papers 13 Case F. No. 11) and the "Exchequer Miscellany" 163/14/8 which is also referred to as "Liber Pacis." H. C. Johnson's (ed.), "Minutes of Proceedings in Sessions 1563 and 1574 to 1592," Wiltshire County Records, IV (1948), provides the only record of Wilkes actually functioning in this office.

Crown Patronage:

There are three main sources that both lead one to and supply information on the patents, warrants, and licences that Wilkes secured throughout his public career. The first is W. P. W. Phillimore's An Index to the Signet Office Docquet Books 1584-96 and 1603-24 (London: British Record Society, 1890). However, this index proves to be incomplete and one is forced to go to the "Long Room" in the Record Office where he will find the other two reference works. One is the "Signet Office Docquets" I. 6800 covering the years 1585-1597 which gives a very complete listing of all favors bestowed on an individual. The other is the "Calendar of Patent Rolls: Elizabeth" which leads one to Wilkes' grants of 1 September 1586, 20 February 1587 (Chancery 66/1259) and 14 February 1596 (Chancery 66/1451).

The Historical Manuscripts Commission, Salisbury Mss. II and III provide valuable information on his licence as the Queen's printer and

vice-chamberlain Hatton's efforts to obtain his salt patent, but it is the British Museum, "Lansdowne Mss." that proves to be the single most valuable source on the administration and troubles of this important patent. (See Mss. 31, 47, 50, 52, 58, 59, and 73.)

As for Elizabeth's grant of the Rectory and Parsonage of Downton, Wiltshire, the Winchester College Muniments "Estates: Downton" were the most helpful. The Wiltshire Records Office "Radnor Collection: Downton Deeds," no. 830 was also useful. The Public Record Office "Exchequer: King's Remembrances, Certificates of Residence," (E. 115/429) provide additional information on Wilkes' other places of residence.

II

SECONDARY SOURCES

Unlike the primary sources, the vast majority of the secondary sources used in writing this biography were only used to provide the historical setting in which Sir Thomas Wilkes played out his role as a sixteenth-century government official. Interestingly, with two notable exceptions that will be discussed below, there have been no historians who have ever published more than just a paragraph or two on Wilkes.

Early Life and Family Genealogies:

Initially, for this study, the single most important beginning source for the life of Thomas Wilkes was A. F. Pollard's "Sir Thomas Wilkes," The Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1900), LXI. Pollard's, like many others' contributions to this monumental work, has some serious mistakes but they do not detract from what is otherwise a very accurate assessment of Wilkes' personality. Pollard agreed with Anthony à Wood's Fasti Oxonienses, or Annals of the University of Oxford (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1815), V, which

claims that Wilkes hailed from the county of Sussex, and though this statement appears to be only partially accurate it does provide important clues for the conclusions drawn in the "Introduction" of this study. Another very useful source of information on Wilkes' origins and relatives is R. E. Brettell's "The Rev. William Wilkes, D. D., Rector of Barford St. Martin, Wiltshire, 1585-1637, and John Marston, Dramatist (1576-1634)," The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine, LXI (1966).

As for his education at Oxford, Montagu Burrows in his Worthies of All Soul's: Four Centuries of English History (London: MacMillan and Co., 1874), provides information on how promising young men like Wilkes found it helpful to have an education at either Oxford or Cambridge if they hoped to obtain an early entry into a diplomatic career.

Diplomatic Career:

For any student of Elizabethan Diplomacy an extremely valuable source of references to documents relating to English ambassadors is F. J. Weaver's "Anglo-French Diplomatic Relations, 1558-1603," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, IV-VII (1926-1930). Volume VI contains an extensive, but by no means complete, listing of sources relating to Wilkes' numerous missions to France.

Without any doubt, the most detailed look at English diplomacy from 1570-1590 is Conyers Read's three volume work Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925). Time and again a quick reference to their pages helped in unraveling difficult diplomatic problems.

Another valuable work on the milieu in which Wilkes found himself during his first assignment in France is James Westfall Thompson's The

Wars of Religion in France 1559-1576 (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1909). Like Read's work on Walsingham, it too proved useful on Anglo-French affairs.

Two other extremely important works are volume II of Henry M. Baird's History of the Rise of the Huguenots of France and volume I of his The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1879 and 1886). These volumes go into great depth on many of the key issues that plagued France during the reigns of Charles IX and Henry III. Also helpful but very briefly done is Joseph Kervyn de Lettenhove's Les Huguenots et Les Gueux: Etude Historique Sur Vingt-Cinq Années du XVI^e Siecle (1560-1585) (Bruges: Beyaert-Storie, 1884), III. The same holds true for Jean de Serres' A General Inventorie of the History of France, From the beginning of that Monarchy unto the Treaty of Vervins in the year 1598, trans. Edward Grimeston (London: George Eld., 1607).

Especially helpful for the various attempts by Alençon, Henry of Condé, and Henry of Navarre to escape from the French Court after the St. Bartholomew Massacre is Hector de la Ferrière's "Les Dernières Conspirations du Règne de Charles IX, 1573/4," Revue Des Questions Historiques, XLVIII (1890-91) 2nd seq.

The only two secondary works found necessary for discussing Wilkes' 1577-1578 missions to Philip II and Don Juan were Garrett Mattingly's brilliant handbook on Renaissance Diplomacy (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), and volume III of Petrus J. Blok's scholarly History of the People of the Netherlands, trans. Ruth Putnam (London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900). This latter work especially proved helpful in understanding the problems facing both Elizabeth and the Spanish King which led to Wilkes' assignments.

Blok's History was also very helpful in providing a succinct look at the very complicated history of the United Provinces during Wilkes' residence there from 1586-1587. Even more valuable was J. L. Motley's beautifully written History of the United Netherlands: From the Death of William the Silent to the Synod of Dort (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1861), I and II. In spite of his heavily anti-Spanish bias Motley's superb narrative style and extensive research into English, Dutch, and Spanish archives makes this history the best English source on Anglo-Dutch relations. It also remains one of only two works that deal in any length on the diplomatic career of Wilkes.

A thought-provoking article on Anglo-Dutch relations during this same period is R. B. Wernham's "English Policy and the Revolt of the Netherlands," Britain and the Netherlands, eds. J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossmann (London: Chatto and Windus, 1960), which suggests that Elizabeth's policy throughout her reign continued to be one of wanting neither French, Spanish, nor English sovereignty in the Low Countries. Instead, she hoped and worked for a way in which the Spanish King could and would rule these provinces in the discreet and acceptable manner of his father the Emperor Charles V.

On the problems of military terminology and administration which Wilkes dealt with constantly during his mission to The Hague, C. G. Cruickshank's Elizabeth's Army (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1966), proved most helpful.

On the problem of the chronic lack of sufficient funds to pay the English auxiliary troops, J. E. Neale's "Elizabeth and the Netherlands, 1586-87," English Historical Review, XLV (July 1930), shows in a scholarly manner the way in which Elizabeth actually kept her financial commitments to the Dutch and her Governor-General Leicester.

R. B. Wernham's "The Mission of Thomas Wilkes to the United Provinces in 1590," Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson, ed. J. Conway Davies (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), was the only secondary source needed for this particular mission. Aside from Motley's *The United Netherlands*, it is the only other published work which focuses on Wilkes to any extent. Written by the very man who intricately edited the List and Analysis of State Papers, Foreign Series for this same period, it goes without saying that it is a thoroughly documented and thought-out work.

With the exception of two good but rather brief accounts, the diplomatic history of England after the 1588 Armada has been sadly neglected. One of the exceptions is J. B. Black's Elizabeth and Henry IV: Being a short study in Anglo-French Relations, 1589-1603 (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1914), which represents the first significant attempt to cover adequately this period of history. The same year Edward P. Cheyney in his broad study of English history entitled A History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1914), I and II, included several sections on Anglo-French diplomacy. Together, these two authors have provided an accurate albeit cursory look at this important phase of English history which was essential in the writing of Chapter VIII.

H. M. Baird's second volume of The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre (1903), was extremely helpful in piecing together the complicated internal French puzzle of Royalist, League, and "tiers parti" politics which so hampered Henry IV during Wilkes' 1592 and 1593 missions.

Two other sources, one old and one rather recent, also shed some light on this period. The first comes from the pen of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century chronicler William Camden. Historically, his

Annals, or the History of the most Renowned and Victorious Princesse Elizabeth, Late Queen of England, trans. into English by R. N. Gent (London: Benjamin Fisher, 1635), is the most valuable contemporary account of the reign of Elizabeth. The second helpful work is an article by R. B. Wernham entitled, "Queen Elizabeth and the Siege of Rouen, 1591," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4th Series, XV (1932), which not only gives useful information on events surrounding Wilkes' 1592 mission to France but also illustrates Elizabeth's willingness to give significant support in men, money, and supplies to Henry IV's cause.

Another well-written summary of events in France during this the hey-day of the Catholic League is DeLamar Jensen's Diplomacy and Dogmatism: Bernardino de Mendoza and the French Catholic League (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964).

Two final works which helped in sorting out several minor problems for the years 1592-1593 were William A. Shaw's Knights of England (London: Sherratt and Hughes, 1906), II and P. de Rapin-Thoyras, The History of England, As Well Ecclesiastical as Civil, trans. N. Tindal, (London: James and John Knapton, 1732), IX.

For Wilkes' abortive mission to the Archduke Ernest it was only necessary to look at the Lopez, James, and Yorke conspiracies which threatened Elizabeth's life and induced her to send Wilkes to Brussels. Martin Hume's Treason and Plot: Struggles for Catholic Supremacy in the Last Years of Queen Elizabeth (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1908), is best for a broad look at all the plots that beset Elizabeth at this particular time. Arthur Dimock's "The Conspiracy of Dr. Lopez," English Historical Review, IX (July, 1894), provides the most detail on this the most serious of the plots.

With the exception of the already mentioned Letters and Memorials by Arthur Collins, the only two works used to bring Wilkes' career to a close in 1598 were Thomas Birch's Memoires of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1581 till her Death (London: Printed for A. Millar, 1754), II, and N. Salmon's The History of Hertfordshire: Describing its Ancient Monuments, Particularly Roman (London: [no publisher], 1728). The former provides information on the salaries of Cecil, Herbert, and Wilkes and the latter with information on the burial of Wilkes in Rickmansworth.

Domestic Career:

In looking at the development of the Office of Clerk of the Privy Council many volumes of The Dictionary of National Biography proved to be helpful. Especially valuable for a brief history of the development of the Privy Council itself and a rough listing of its clerks throughout the Tudor period is A. F. Pollard's "Council, Star Chamber, and Privy Council under the Tudors," English Historical Review, XXXVIII (January 1923). Pollard's thesis that the Privy Council grew out of its parent the Council of Star Chamber, is seconded by E. P. Cheyney's chapter on the same subject in his History of England, I.

Apparently, the most that has ever been published about the office of Clerk of the Council is several pages of well summarized notes at the end of Dorothy M. Gladish's [later Meades] The Tudor Privy Council (Retford: The Retford, Gainsborough and Workshop Times, 1915). Heavily footnoted it serves as an excellent starting point for any in depth research on the development, duties, and personalities of that office.

Two other studies which provided more specific information on two of the Clerks of the Council are E. R. Adair's "The First Clerk of the Privy Council," Law Quarterly Review, XXXIX (April 1923), and his

article on "William Thomas: A Forgotten Clerk of the Privy Council," Tudor Studies, ed. R. W. Seton-Watson (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1924).

Further information on the workings of the Council and the not unimportant duties of its Clerks can be found in Leonard W. Labaree's and Robert E. Moody's "The Seal of the Privy Council," English Historical Review, XLIII (April 1928). This interesting article points out the little known fact that each Clerk possessed his own "Privy Council Seal" which was vital to the functioning of the Council.

On Wilkes' involvement in the interrogation of Catholic conspirators L. Hicks' An Elizabethan Problem: Some Aspects of the Careers of Two Exile-Adventurers (New York: Fordham University Press, 1964), presents some thought provoking views on the legitimacy of the Privy Council's methods of extracting confessions. William Durrant Cooper's "Further Particulars of Thomas Norton, and of State Proceedings in Matters of Religion in the Years 1581 and 1582," Archaeologia, XXXVI (1855), provides information on this notorious "rackmaster" with whom Wilkes was made to work.

Concerning the rather involved problem of Wilkes' failure to secure the office of Principal Secretary in 1590-1591 two studies were helpful. One is Conyers Read's Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), and the other is B. W. Beckingsale's Burghley: Tudor Statesman, 1520-1598 (London: MacMillan, 1967). Both volumes look at the Lord Treasurer's machinations either to secure his son's appointment to that office or to keep it vacant until Elizabeth was disposed to appointing Sir Robert.

On the difficult subject of Wilkes' position as Muster-Master-General of the Low Countries C. G. Cruickshank's Elizabeth's Army

provided some valuable background information; but apparently he too is unclear as to the fate of this office after 1590. His article on "Dead-Pays in the Elizabethan Army." *English Historical Review*, LIII (January 1938), points out the wide extent of this abuse in the Queen's army and the inability of the muster-masters to cope with it.

Though a great deal has been written on Elizabeth's Parliaments in the latter half of her reign, few students of English history need to look any further than J. E. Neale's two definitive works, Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1584-1601 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1957), and The Elizabethan House of Commons (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950). They more than adequately provided what background information was needed on Wilkes' nearly unknown career in the Commons.

Crown Patronage:

The two main sources of secondary information on the English Patent system and more particularly Wilkes' salt patent are William Hyde Price's The English Patents of Monopoly (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913), and Edward Hughes, Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825: With Special Reference to the History of Salt Taxation in England (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1934). Though disagreeing on many minor points the two men do agree that like most other patents, Wilkes' salt licence was a source of great irritation to many Englishmen of the day.

Wallace T. MacCaffrey's "Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics," Elizabethan Government and Society ed. S. T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield, and C. H. Williams (University of London: Athlone Press, 1961), presents an interesting picture of the acceptability of the kind of "suit making" Wilkes was continually involved in.

Elizabeth's grant to Wilkes of the Winchester College estate in Downton, Wiltshire is spoken of in several important works. Sir Richard Colt Hoar's mammoth Modern History of South Wiltshire (London: J. B. Nichols and Son, 1830), III, provides much information on both the history of Downton's connection with the college and the latter's unwilling lease of Parsonage Farm to Wilkes. E. J. Bodington's "The Church Survey in Wilts. 1659-60: I. Parochial Surveys: Downton Hundred," The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine, XL (June 1919), give important clues as to the worth of this generous grant, and T. F. Kirby's Annals of Winchester College From its Foundation in the Year 1382 to the Present Time (London: Henry Frowde, 1892), presents a more sympathetic view on Winchester College's reaction to Elizabeth's request for the Downton farm. The Victoria County History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (London: Archibald Constable and Company Limited, 1903), II, provides the clue to Burghley's anger when Wilkes petitioned the Queen through Walsingham instead of himself.

Concerning Wilkes' home in Downton, the village's parish church and its Vicar William Wilkes D.D. there are three useful sources of information. First is Joseph Foster's Alumni Oxonienses, IV which gives a brief biographical sketch of Wilkes' cousin William. A. R. Woodford's Notes on the Parish Church of S. Laurence, Downton, Wilts. (Nelson: Sankey (Nelson) Ltd., [no date]), tells us when William was vicar of that church and Sir Robert Perkins' Duntone (Poole, Dorset: W. H. Hallett Ltd., 1967), provides numerous bits of information on many aspects of Downton.

III

UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

Though the following items did not comprise a large portion of this study, they did prove useful at several important points of the writing.

Being able to obtain some of the information compiled by S. T. Bindoff for the as yet unpublished "History of Parliament Trust," set this student's mind at ease on several worrisome problems that neither Mr. Bindoff nor I were able to solve.

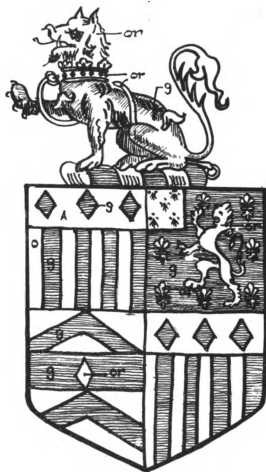
What little information I had time to glean from Frederika G. Oosterhoff's "The Earl of Leicester's Governorship of the Netherlands 1586-1587" (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London, 1967), before leaving London was very valuable in helping to sort out Wilkes' actions at The Hague during those same years.

The two unpublished M.A. theses by A. B. Robertson "A Study of the Ambassadors and the Conduct of Embassies to France during the Reign of Elizabeth I" (The University Library, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1964), and my "Sir Henry Cobham's Embassy to France 1579-1583" (Brigham Young University, 1968), were helpful in drawing some conclusions about Wilkes' diplomatic career in relation to others who had given similar service.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Sir Thomas Wilkes' Coat of Arms
B.M., Harl. Mss. 1563, f. 3



APPENDIX A

Sir Thomas Wilson, C.B. & C.V.
 B.M., West. Hill, 1901



Sir Thomas Wilson, C.B. & C.V.
 B.M., West. Hill, 1901

Sir Thomas Wilson, C.B. & C.V.
 B.M., West. Hill, 1901

Sir Thomas Wilson, C.B. & C.V.
 B.M., West. Hill, 1901

Richard Wilkes, Esq.

Sr. Thomas Wilkes
Slain at Tewkesbury
1471

Sir Richard Wilkes
ob. S.P. legit.

John Wilkes
Inherited all
father's lands
in Co. Warwick

Richard Wilkes
Slain in France
with Sr. Edw.
Howard, Lord
Admiral

Thomas Wilkes
of Hodnell, Co.
Warwick. Ob.
S.P. letit. 4th
Eliz.

Frances Savage (2) = Sr. THOMAS WILKES - (1) Margaret Smith
youngest d. of d. of Ambrose
Sr. John Savage Smith of London
of Rock Savage Ob. 24 May 1596
Cheshire

Margaret Wilkes	Sr. John
b. 13 Jan. 1596	Savage of
d. & heir of Sr.	Rock Savage
Thomas Wilkes	Cheshire.
	Nephew of
	Frances
	Savage

Sources

"Visitation of Cheshire, 1580," B.M., Harl. Mss. 1535, f. 246.

"Visitation of Warwickshire, 1563-1619," Ibid., 1563, f. 3.

Sir Thomas Wilkes' Pedigree, College of Arms Mss. 2. D. 14 II, f. 112.

"Margaret Wilkes' Funeral Certificate," June 1596, Ibid., I, 6, f. 42.

APPENDIX C

Wilkes' 1586-1587 Cipher

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	k	l	m	n
┘	┘	┘	┘	□	┘	┘	┘	┘	┘	┘	┘	┘
o	p	q	r	s	t	u	w	x	y	z		
□	┘	┘	┘	┘	┘	┘	┘	┘	□	┘		
England	A	Q. Majesty	⊙	L. Treasurer	Colossus							
France	C	French King	⊕	E. of Leicester	Themistocles							
Spain	F	King - Spain	M	L. Admiral	Saspho							
Scotland	B	King - Scots	⊗	L. Chamberlain	Hiano							
Brabant	E	King - Denmark	2	Mr. Vice-Chamb.	Cleanthes							
Flanders	D	Duke Casimir	♂	Sec. Walsingham	Philadelphus							
Artois	H	Earl - Colonia	^	Sec. Davison	[blank]							
Holland	P	Earl - Col. Bau	+									
Zeeland	R	Prince - Parma	Y									
Denmark	Q	Count Maurice	⌒									
East Country	L	Count Hohenloe	⌒	Antwerp	Cariclea							
Germany	X	Count - Moeurs	⊙	Bruges	Crates							
		Duke - Cleves	XIL	Ghent	Antigonus							
		Earl - Essex	XXX	Flushing	Pirrhus							
The States	100	Lord North	⊕	Brill	Agatocles							
Coun. of State	40	L. Willoughby	2	Ostend	Silla							
Gov. of Towns	60	Lord Burgh	⊗	Utrecht	Marrius							
Garrisons	10	Sr. T. Cecil	2	Middelburg	Cajus							
soldiers	20	Col. J. Norris	⊕	Zutphen	Casar							
The Enemy	25	Sr. Wm. Stanley	⊕	Nymegen	Calligulla							
Footmen	12	Sr. Wm. Pelham	⊕	Deventer	Tremulus							
Money	1000	Sr. Wm. Russell	⊕	Campen	Pithasoras							
Victual	500	Cpt. R. York	⊕	Zwolle	Delphos							
Discontentment	⊕	Cpt. R. Williams	⊕	Emden	Dunisius							
War	⊕	Mr. T. Digges	⊕	Groningen	Androgeos							
Peace	⊕	Sr. T. Shirley	⊕									
Renenen	⊕	Mr. Huddilstone	⊕									
The People	99		⊕									

See B.M., Add. Mss. 5935, f. 1b.

APPENDIX E
DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

Traveled in France, Germany and Italy	? 1561-? 1575
Sir Valentine Dale's private secretary and secret agent	April 1573-February 1575
Secret mission to Count Frederick, Palatine of the Rhine	February 22-May 1575
Follows Condé's and Duke Casimir's army of invasion into France	July-October 1575
Mission to Philip II of Spain	December 21, 1577-February 16, 1578
Mission to Don Juan in Low Countries	April 4-April 29, 1578
Secret mission to William, Prince of Orange	[May?-June?], 1582
Investigatory mission on Leicester's Governorship of the Netherlands	July 20,-September [15?], 1586
Mission to The Hague as English member of the Dutch Council of State	October 13, 1586-July [6?], 1587
Mission to The Hague over suspected Hispano-Dutch Peace	May 28,-August 1590
Mission to Henry IV concerning Rouen and Brittany	March 16,-April 15, 1592
Mission to Henry IV to dissuade him from conversion	July 25,-September 2, 1593
Abortive mission to Archduke Ernest in Low Countries	September-October, 1594
Mission to Henry IV and death in route	February 10,-March 2, 1598

APPENDIX F

"A Consideration Whether her Majesty may with her honor accept of the Turks offer and provoke him to invade the King of Spain."*

The solution of this question consisteth chiefly and in a manner only in resolving of a general doubt whether any necessity may make it lawful for a Christian prince to join with an infidel or to provoke an infidel to make war upon another Christian prince. And surely taking the matter simply in to arms of Christianity and infidelity, removed from all other circumstances, it may be doubted that it cannot well stand with the reverence due to the common bond of Christianity, for one Christian prince being at variance with another Christian prince about matters of state to invoke the aid of an infidel, being not only a despiser but also an enemy of Christian religion. Therefore, the way to make a more direct answer between her Majesty, the King of Spain, and the Turk is to consider whether any circumstances of the estate of things now in Christendom or of the person of the said King of Spain be of matter between her Majesty and him may give just grant to vary the general question either to the affirmative or negative part, especially supposing that the King of Spain do object [to] the aforesaid overture for the pacification of Christendom, for, if he do imbrace it then this question shall need to be further thought of.

And first, it may be said towards him that observeth not the bonds of Christian religion in his proceedings, the reverence of Christian religion is not to be observed towards him nor the strictures thereof doth not the such to return danger by his unchristian proceedings with their disadvantage to forbear that which otherwise were lawful for them to do. And in favor of this position matter may be alleged out of the examples of other Christian princes in like cases.

Secondly, that if the King of Spain's doings in this part of Christendom of late years have not tended to the benefit and advancement of Christian religion, but rather to the endangering of the same, then there is not that respect to be had of them as otherwise the strictures of common name and bond of Christianity would require, and to prove that his said doings have greatly indamaged and impaired the state of Christendom it is manifest that he hath been contented to suffer some dishonor at the Turks as namely the loss of the Kingdom of Tunis, and to nourish a continual peace and quietness with the Turk and to convert his whole power and force to the annoyance of diverse places of Christendom, it may be also said that men of great judgment of all nations of Christendom have observed of long time, and published it by writing both in the time of the Emperor Charles the Fifth and since also in his own time, that the

*Written by Sir Thomas Wilkes, [1590?], and found in "Leycester's 'Commonwealth': Together with Other Political Papers," collected by Mr. Beauprebell in 1726 (University Library, Cambridge, England), ff. 62-63. (My brackets.)

whole scope of the proceedings of the Spaniards ever since the inhabitants offer, largely do tend to the establishing of a monarchy over these parts of the world which is a purpose and design far differing from the scope and rules of Christian religion. God hath given him so many goodly kingdoms and states as in Christian construction he ought to be contented with that he hath and not with ambition to enlarge his dominions, [and] disquiet other Christian princes his neighbors as justly inheritable to their estates as he is to his.

And although the differences grow of late years about matters of religion or between the churches of Rome and certain other princes and countries and the odious title of heresy given by the said Church of Rome to those that have dissented from it, have made the color of many of their doings, both of the late Emperor Charles and of the new King Phillip, yet in a true and Christian consideration of the said dissenters within the deepest points of salvation have been doubted by many learned men affected otherwise to the Church of Rome whether they deserve the name of heresy or not it cannot be maintained that those that have differed from the Church of Rome might not have been dealt withal in some other sort than the sword, and with the less danger of Christendom. Or then the differences in Religion merited that the King of Spain should convert his forces rather against them than against the Turk as he did in the year 1572 after the great victory at Lepanto leaving there the persecution of the Turks, and employing his whole forces for in the Low Countries.

That if the said King of Spain had carried a Christian and compassionate mind to the welfare of Christendom the late peace begun between her Majesty and him might have brought forth the effects that would have redounded to the great benefit thereof which was not only intended by the said King of Spain but her Majesty's sincerity most dishonorably abused to her disadvantage if that same had not otherwise been discovered.

That the supporting of the late Duke of Guise and the rest of the League in France against the late King their master [Henry III] being a Prince of the same religion and at that time in league with the King of Spain, and the continuance of his support to those of the said League, who have first murdered the late King their master with a dangerous example to all princes and do now stand in arms against the new king [Henry IV] his successor to whom in right of blood their heritance of that crown doth undoubtedly appertain, or things that being examined in the strict balance of Christian religion can hardly agree therewith, or at least the French King's case is such an likewise her Majesty's that the preservation of them cannot give the King of Spain a just excuse to reject the overture propounded unto [him] for the pacification of Christendom, for that it is evident to all that are of indifferent judgment that they tendeth to the solving of the wounds of Christendom and further to the augmenting of them for that it is to be supposed that every prince and every people whom his said designs shall threaten to minister jealousy unto will defend their liberty, their state, destiny, and whatsoever worldly possessions God hath by inheritance given them, and so consequently, the wars and jars of Christendom must continue.

These circumstances being admitted, and the cause thus standing between her Majesty and others interested in the same fortune that she is on the one side and the King of Spain on the other side it may be said that the

question before propounded is greatly varied from that general position and that it is likewise to be valued being spoken of the King of Spain so affected as by the former circumstances he is supposed to be and being spoken absolutely of a Christian prince and that there is difference between invoking the aid of an infidel against a Christian prince and the using the same against the King of Spain, for to use the color of religion to cut the throat of religion and to use the cloak of Christianity to the destruction of Christianity is worse than infidelity. It may be said also that other Christian princes have been done the like is namely of late the French King Francis the First and how before the Emperors of Constantinople did the like against the Emperors of the West. And if it be objected that the state of Christendom have received great danger thereby, that cannot be denied nor likewise that Christendom shall remain for their damage by this calling in of the Turk, but thereto it may be replied that respecting nothing in the question but the points of danger in that the concerneth other princes, her Majesty need make the less re[ason?]ing thereof, having so warned the said princes of that danger and required them to hold their helps for the setting of herself and her friends free from the necessity of urging the same.

And wherein it concerneth herself and her realm that the danger imminent to us with the ambition of the King of Spain is never at hand then any danger that in future time may be feared from the Turk, and these perils that do most threaten us are first to be provided for.

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