

**Appendix D - UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL**

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PROJECT TITLE: Sing a Song of Sixpence: Mother Goose Rhymes as Political
Satire in Tudor England

Very good well written

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

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Abstract
Sing a Song of Sixpence: Mother Goose Rhymes as Political Satire in Tudor England
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This paper explores certain social and political events of the Tudor era in England as they relate to selected Mother Goose rhymes. The fall of Richard III, last of the Yorkist kings, and the establishment of the Tudor dynasty at the Battle of Bosworth Field and the situation's resemblance to the "Humpty Dumpty" rhyme open the examination of the rhymes. Secondly, Henry VII's miserliness and penury are then discussed in the terms of the "I Love Sixpence" rhyme and the circumstances of the arrangement of marriages for his sons' and the dowry of the prospective bride. The events of the reign of Henry VIII are summarized in the "For The Want of a Nail," "Jack and Jill," "Sing a Song of Sixpence," and the "Robin the Bobbin" rhymes. All of these rhymes comment upon the transmogrification of European politics to create an environment that encouraged the English Reformation, the aftereffects, and Henry's notoriously checkered marital career. Edward VI and his government are represented in terms of his taxation policy as depicted in the "Baa Baa Black Sheep" rhyme. Mary I's Counter-Reformation and her unpopular foreign marriage are found to correspond to the "Pat A Cake" and the "My Little Old Man and I Fell Out" rhyme, respectively. At the end of the era comes Elizabeth I, with the early crises of her reign immortalized in the "Hey Diddle Diddle" rhyme and one of her rejected marriage proposals in the "A Frog He Would A-Wooing Go" rhyme.

Sing a Song of Sixpence: Mother Goose Rhymes as Political Satire in Tudor England

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Introduction/Purpose

This project incorporates research on works normally considered as children's literature and historical information with an emphasis on the establishment and reigns of the Tudor monarchs in Renaissance England to demonstrate that these rhymes were originally structured as political satire and social commentary.

Review of Literature

A. Working Versions of the Mother Goose Rhymes

1. Baring-Gould, William S. and Ceil. 1962. *The Annotated Mother Goose: Nursery Rhymes Old and New, Arranged and Explained*.
2. 1969. *Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes*.
3. Petersohn, Frank. "A Frog He Would A-Wooing Go." From <http://ingeb.org/songs/afroghew.html> , accessed 12 April 2000.
4. Walter, L. Edna, Ed. 1919. *Mother Goose's Nursery Rhymes*.

B. Historical and Biographic Works

1. Eakins, Lara E. "Henry VIII." From <http://tudor.simplenet.com/henry8/> , accessed 12 April 2000.
2. Fraser, Antonia. 1992. *The Wives of Henry VIII*.
3. Fritze, Ronald H. Ed. 1991. *Historical Dictionary of Tudor England, 1485-1603*
4. Nicholls, Mark. 1999. *A History of the Modern British Isles, 1529-1603: The Two Kingdoms*.
5. Ridley, Jasper. 1984. *Henry VIII*.
6. Ridley, Jasper. 1987. *Elizabeth I: The Shrewdness of Virtue*.
7. Seward, Desmond. 1983. *Richard III: England's Black Legend*.
8. Weir, Alison. 1996. *The Children of Henry VIII*.
9. Weir, Alison. 1995. *The Wars of the Roses*.

Hypothesis

The situations portrayed in Mother Goose rhymes so neatly fit historical situations that a historical basis for the rhymes does exist and the rhymes can be used to provide a timeline of English and British history.

Preliminary Data Analysis

The socially tumultuous Tudor Era in England is well documented through the rhymes.

Each Tudor monarch and his/her government are commented upon in at least one rhyme. The longer the reign, or more socially transforming, the greater the number of rhymes.

Preliminary Conclusions

Religious changes were accompanied by a large number of rhymes and this hypothesis has largely been confirmed with Humpty Dumpty, Sing a Song of Sixpence, Flour of England, Hey Diddle Diddle, as well as others. Each monarch's rhymes are differentiated by specific themes that pervade the rhymes that allude to that particular monarch.

Recommendations

Further research into other dynasties of the British monarchy should be investigated, especially the Stuarts and the Hanoverians. With the conclusion of my research, I feel that a strong case can be made for the body of the Mother Goose rhymes as a timeline through British political history. More detailed research into the background and publishing history of the rhymes would be of assistance in this topic, considering the dearth of information concerning the origination of the rhymes.

The Tudor dynasty stretched over the reigns of five monarchs, from Henry VII and the establishment of the dynasty at the battle of Bosworth in 1485 to Elizabeth I's death in 1603. This period was an extremely turbulent time in English history, with the final resolution of the Wars of the Roses, and no less than four shifts in the dominant state paradigm of religion and royal supremacy. Interestingly, depending on interpretation, many of the popular Mother Goose rhymes fit many of the situations faced by the Tudor monarchs, and other English monarchs as well. Matching historical data with interpretation of the rhymes, a definite pattern begins to appear and one starts to see that a case can be made for what is normally considered children's literature serving as social commentary and political satire.

Each monarch has a theme specific to that individual that pervades the rhymes surrounding that ruler. The rhymes concerning Henry VII are focused on the establishment of the dynasty and his parsimony, while Henry VIII is trailed with rhymes concerning the English Reformation and his diplomatic dealings. Edward VI is memorialized for his regency council's unpopular taxation policies, and Mary I is remembered for the Counter-Reformation and her highly unpopular marriage to Philip of Spain. Elizabeth I makes her appearance in rhymes concerning her manipulation of her council and her various marriage proposals. The actual establishment of the Tudor dynasty at the battle of Bosworth Field with the fall of Richard III is memorialized in the Humpty Dumpty rhyme, and it is there that the tale begins.

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall
All the King's horses and all the King's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.¹*

¹ L. Edna Walter, *Mother Goose's Nursery Rhymes* (New York: Macmillan, 1919), 136.

It is proposed that the Humpty Dumpty rhyme is a reference to the fall of Richard the Third and establishment of the Tudor monarchy at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. This battle ended the reign of the Yorkists and the accession of Henry VII, placed an individual with Lancastrian blood on the throne. Henry soon married Elizabeth of York, Edward IV's daughter and Richard III's niece, to help bolster his claim to the throne, although his claim was not based upon the rights of his wife, but instead the claim he inherited from his mother Margaret Beaufort as the last surviving descendant of John of Gaunt and the Lancastrians.

Richard III was one of the most unpopular kings of England, especially after his usurpation of the throne in 1483, mere months after the accession of his nephew, Edward V.² Richard's brother, Edward IV, was the victor of the battle of Tewkesbury where the Lancastrian faction, supporting Henry VI as king, was defeated to allow the Yorkists complete control of the throne and rule of England. The battle of Tewkesbury served as the end of the Wars of the Roses in 1471, because of Edward's firm control on the throne, and the dissolution of the Lancastrian faction, with the deaths of both Henry VI and his son, Edward, Prince of Wales.³

Edward IV was quite popular with the commons of England who resented greatly the tyranny of Margaret of Anjou, who essentially ruled England during her husband's reign. Margaret and her supporters formed the Lancastrian party that played such an important role in the Wars of the Roses and were not above subverting justice in order to gain their own ends and who had also given up control of a Scots border town to the Scots in order for Scottish support of the Lancastrian cause. As a result, Edward IV was able to use this tyranny to his own advantage to overthrow Henry VI and claim the throne for himself.⁴

² Alison Weir, *The Wars of the Roses* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 420.

³ *Ibid.*, 409.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 258-91.

Edward was exceedingly popular during his reign, notwithstanding his forced loans from London merchants, which had the result of making the crown solvent at his death for the first time in several generations and reigns.⁵ Edward was able to provide the justice for the commons that they greatly desired and had lacked under the reign of Henry VI.⁶ After the successes of his reign, he unexpectedly died in 1483 at the age of forty-two, leaving his twelve-year old son Edward to ascend the throne with his brother, Richard of Gloucester, as Regent⁷. Richard usurped the throne and in the process, murdered both his nephews and bastardized his brother's remaining children to give his usurpation basis in law.⁸ As a whole, the English commons did not take to Richard, who lacked the regal bearing and appearance of his brother, who was seen as the physical ideal of kingship.⁹ Richard reigned for two years, with his unpopularity ever increasing, especially after the death of both his son and his wife; the latter's death was rumored to be due to poisoning.¹⁰

During this period, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, was living in exile after the defeat of the Lancastrians at the Battle of Tewkesbury. In July of 1485, Richard received word that Henry Tudor's fleet was preparing to sail towards England. Richard's paranoia affected the Keeper of the Great Seal of England, which was unfortunate for his cause, since without the seal it was impossible to issue Commissions of Array or to even gather troops for an army. Finally, the Great Seal was delivered to Richard on 11 August 1485, so that he could muster forces, but the same day, he learned that Henry Tudor had landed in the place he was least expected and was marching on London with his army. The stage was set for a confrontation between him and Richard III.

⁵ Ibid., 299.

⁶ Ibid., 291-5.

⁷ Ibid., 420.

⁸ Desmond Seward, *Richard III: England's Black Legend* (London: Country Life, 1983), 110.

⁹ Ibid., 84-5.

¹⁰ Ibid., 156-7, 169.

Upon first glance, there was no hope for Henry's cause, in that he was vastly outnumbered, but there was no hope of avoiding a battle.¹¹

Henry's strategy seemed to consist of marching upon London and hoping for the best, but he was aided by several defections from Richard's cause. Lord Strange, who was at Nottingham as a hostage for the Stanleys' loyalty, tried to escape from the castle, and his father, Lord Stanley, had written, claiming that he was suffering from the sweating sickness and would be unable to meet the royal army at Leicester. Strange was questioned, and eventually admitted that Sir William Stanley, Sir Gilbert Talbot, Sir John Savage, and himself were planning to join the Earl of Richmond and desert Richard. Richard's failure to accurately judge William Stanley had betrayed him. Other defections were soon to follow that of the Stanleys, including such former stalwart supporters as Sir Thomas Bouchier, and Sir Walter Hungerford. For all the turncoats, Henry Tudor's force was still much too small to face Richard's army in direct combat.¹²

Richard's support at Bosworth consisted of only fourteen of the thirty-three noblemen who had attended his coronation, yet two of the fourteen were traitors. Yet another of the deserters of Richard's cause was the Earl of Northumberland, one of the premier peers of the north of England. While Richard was organizing his forces, Henry Tudor had lost contact with his force and hid in a small village, only three miles from Tamworth, so he was able to rejoin his army without incident. The Stanleys, in their perpetual quest for success, decided that their only option was to take their soldiers to the field, where they would support Henry Tudor if he looked to be winning, or they would support Richard, under the pretence of continual loyalty, if it looked that he would sweep all bets.¹³

¹¹ Ibid., 181-2.

¹² Ibid., 185-6.

¹³ Ibid., 185-7.

Richard approached the battle with great pomp, riding out of Leicester on 21 August, wearing his crown so that all could see the King of England departing for battle. His force of 12,000 men compared to Henry Tudor's 5,000 men was an impressive force. Henry was well aware of his need for the Stanleys' 8,000 men, and Richard was also aware of the Stanleys' large force, and both the protagonists must have wondered how the Stanleys and their forces would act in the battle. The next morning, Richard prepared for the battle and chose to wear his crown in the battle, providing not only an easy target, but also a lucrative booty.¹⁴

Richard III had the high ground, or the wall of the rhyme, in the battle, and Henry Tudor awaited Richard's force to come and decimate his troops, and his only option, other than flight, was to make an uphill attack, which could cause Richard's narrow front from fully using his vast superiority. Tudor's strategy was successful, and Richard and his Knights and Esquires of the Body charged down the hill, fulfilling the great fall of the rhyme, in a spectacular death charge. Richard's horse was killed underneath him, but he would not mount the charger that was brought as a replacement, and the king's men were either slaughtered or fled, neither of which were in anyway able to aid Richard in his fight for his life. Richard fell, his troops fled, and Richard's body was left to be trussed and dishonored by the Tudor forces, and later buried without the honors due a king.¹⁵ With the situation of the battle of Bosworth and Richard's death in the field, the circumstances of the Humpty Dumpty rhyme are satisfied and the parallels between Richard and Humpty Dumpty can easily be drawn.

*I love sixpence, pretty little sixpence,
I love sixpence better than my life.
I spent a penny of it, I lent another,
And took fourpence home to my wife.¹⁶*

¹⁴ Ibid., 189-91.

¹⁵ Ibid., 192-6.

¹⁶ Walter, 46.

Henry VII had a reputation as a miser and was exceptionally careful with the revenues of the Crown throughout his reign. Although he was forced to quash rebellions in the early years of his reign, his careful and convoluted diplomatic moves allowed him to put money in his strongboxes and to leave a solvent and secure crown with a treasury of £ 1,500,000 to his son Henry, later Henry VIII.¹⁷ His scheming had the intent of not only bettering his treasury, but also to enhance his and England's political reputation. One of his most well documented political machinations involved the marriages of two of his sons to Catherine of Aragon, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.

Henry was able to consolidate his unstable footing with the Spanish monarchs' agreement to deliver one of their daughters, the Infanta Catherine, for marriage to Henry's son, Arthur, the Prince of Wales. With Arthur, the matter of the dowry and marriage were fairly straightforward, with few complications on the part of Henry as well as Ferdinand and Isabella, until Ferdinand announced that 35,000 crowns of the remaining unpaid 100,000 crowns of Catherine's dowry would be paid in plate and jewels. Henry much preferred actual cash, and so, contrary to plan, sent Catherine to join her husband at Ludlow, where she would have to use the plate and jewels her father had set aside for the payment of her dowry in order to establish her household. Henry's Machiavellian plan would make it exceptionally difficult for Ferdinand to have the now second-hand jewels and plate remain as a part of Catherine's dowry. Catherine was sent to Ludlow and Henry's plan to obtain cash for the remainder of Catherine's dowry went into effect.¹⁸

¹⁷ Lara E. Eakins, "Henry VIII"

¹⁸ Antonia Fraser, *The Wives of Henry VIII* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 31.

However, the situation was complicated with Prince Arthur's death on 2 April 1502.¹⁹ From here until 1509, Henry and Ferdinand were locked in a battle over Catherine's possible marriage to Arthur's younger brother Henry. The match was proposed almost immediately following Arthur's death, and from a Spanish perspective, the trouble of Catherine's dowry could be solved most easily with a marriage to Prince Henry. Half of the 200,000-crown dowry still remained to be paid, and that which had been paid could be negotiated to work for the second marriage. This solution appealed to Henry in that he would not be obligated to return the money that was already paid and that taking into consideration that his second son was only eleven years of age, the betrothal to Catherine could be repudiated if the political theatre of Europe changed to disfavor the Anglo-Spanish alliance once Prince Henry reached his majority.²⁰

Catherine was entitled to the return of her dowry, upon Arthur's death, as well as the third of the revenues of Wales, Cornwall, and Chester, as agreed by the betrothal contract if the marriage was consummated. This point would prove to be a highly contentious one for several reasons. First of all, the marriage had certainly not been consummated because of Arthur's delicate health, which was to become a feature in Henry VIII's later attempt to have this marriage annulled. The Spanish were annoyed that Henry was forcing their princess to live off parts of her dowry, which was against the terms of the betrothal agreement, which stated that she was to live off the revenues of the properties assigned her for life, and Henry's actions concerning Catherine and her dowry after Arthur's death also ran counter to the ideals of chivalry of the time.²¹

Another complicating issue of the proposed match between Catherine and Henry was the marriage between Catherine and Arthur and whether or not that marriage was consummated. The Pope was required to grant a dispensation for this marriage since the marriage between Catherine

¹⁹ Ibid., 33.

²⁰ Ibid., 35.

²¹ Ibid., 35-6.

and Arthur had created a first-degree affinity, or relationship, between Henry and Catherine. This type of dispensation was unusual, but not unknown since two of her sisters had been married to King Manuel of Portugal with such a dispensation. In the summer of 1505, as Prince Henry's fourteenth birthday approached, the matrimonial diplomatic scene had changed quite a bit since Arthur's death, and King Henry appeared to be in favor of a triple marriage for himself, his son, and the Princess Mary with members of the Hapsburg family, who were in a powerful position in European diplomacy as the heirs to the Holy Roman Empire.²²

Catherine's sister was the wife of Philip, the son of the Emperor Maximilian, so the situation was all in the family, yet her status at the English court shifted in response to Henry's diplomatic schemes.²³ When the Hapsburg alliance was attractive, Catherine's rank in England was minimalized, but when it suited Henry, Catherine was treated as his son's betrothed. In 1507, Ferdinand managed to send some of Catherine's missing dowry and Henry responded by turning on her and accusing her of breaking into the original portion, with her use of the plate she had brought for Arthur. Henry's rationalization was that the plate belonged to Arthur as it was part of his wife's dowry and that property had passed to Henry on Arthur's death.²⁴ Catherine survived upon the barest of resources, since her father was as reluctant to fund her household, as was Henry, and did so for almost seven years.

Finally, in March of 1509, Catherine's patience with her situation finally gave out, and in desperation, told her father that she could no longer deal with the persecution she faced at the hands of Henry VII, who had recently told her that he was under no obligation to provide food for her or her household, and that her food was given to her as charity. Catherine also expressed

²² Ibid., 37-8.

²³ Ibid., 37.

²⁴ Ibid., 44.

her wish at this point to return to Spain and enter a convent.²⁵ Henry's attitude towards Catherine was the most obvious example of his parsimoniousness as it combined with his diplomatic convolutions. The "I love sixpence" rhyme reflects and jeers at his tightfistedness and unwillingness to let go of any of his money, no matter the consequences, even though it was his duty.

*For want of a nail, the shoe was lost;
For want of the shoe, the horse was lost;
For want of the horse, the rider was lost;
For want of the rider, the battle was lost;
For want of the battle, the kingdom was lost;
And all for the want of a horse-shoe nail.²⁶*

From 1527 onwards, the main theme of the rhymes concerning Henry VIII is concerned with the troubles and trials of the English Reformation. "For want of a nail" is reputed to refer to the refusal of the rest of Europe to take action against Henry at request of the Pope. The tensions in this particular rhyme bear a resemblance to the situation of the siege of Thérrouanne, also known as the "Battle of the Spurs" which took place in 1513 and marked the effective end of Catholic Europe's influence upon England's internal politics. This particular rhyme works on two levels, the first of which is the battle itself, and the second of which is the course of events throughout Europe that played a role in the development and continuance of the English Reformation.

The siege of Thérrouanne was one of the deciding moments of the Anglo-French War of 1512-1514. At this time, Henry VIII was allied with Ferdinand of Spain, the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian, and the Pope, all against Louis XII of France, to whom Henry had recently married his sister. After a naval disappointment and the fiasco with a force of twelve thousand men sent to invade the Gascony province, Henry decided to take a more practical approach with

²⁵ Ibid., 48.

²⁶ Walter, 114.

attacking northern France from the English toehold on the Continent at Calais. Henry enlisted the help of Maximilian, although in June 1513, Ferdinand agreed to a truce with France, which contradicted and diminished the treaty of Mechlin between Henry, Ferdinand, Maximilian, and the pope signed the previous April.²⁷

Notwithstanding Ferdinand's betrayal, Henry moved his force of nineteen thousand men across the English Channel and through Calais in order to begin the siege of Th rouanne in June 1513. Henry met up with Maximilian, who arrived without the army he had promised Henry. Although Henry's campaign in France was largely for propaganda reasons and personal glory, he was still determined to achieve some tangible profit from this military campaign. The weather in France was torrential and made for difficulties in the movement of such a large body of troops as Henry had. Twelve days passed in marching the English force the twenty-five miles from Calais to Th rouanne, and it was August 4 before the English forces were able to reach Th rouanne.²⁸

Henry had prepared for a long siege and being aware of the propaganda effect, he had his officers lodged in colorful tents and built for himself an impressive and luxurious pavilion from which to direct his forces. Henry also desired the siege to be administered as an impressive demonstration for the benefit of England's position in European eyes, even to the efficiency of the supply lines as managed by Cardinal Wolsey. The French enlisted a force of eight thousand men to encourage Henry to initiate the siege and on August 16, the English forces advanced to meet the French troops near the town of Bomy. The English artillery force threw the French advance into a state of chaos and Henry then sent his cavalry to charge the French to take advantage of the disorder in the French lines. The English and French infantry troops engaged in hand-to-hand

²⁷ Ronald H. Fritze, Ed. *Historical Dictionary of Tudor England, 1485-1603* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 12.

²⁸ Jasper Ridley, *Henry VIII* (London: Constable, 1984), 64.

combat, but soon the French troops turned and fled the battleground. The French cavalry galloped away with such speed that the battle became known as the “Battle of the Spurs.”²⁹

The English success at the siege of Théroutanne against the French and the almost simultaneous triumph of Flodden against the Scots heralded the beginning of an era in which the rest of Europe witnessed the rapid growth of England's burgeoning strength after a lengthy recuperation from the destruction brought about by the Wars of the Roses. In addition, as a result of Henry's martial successes in 1513-1514, England assumed a role of formidable power in the European political theater. Théroutanne and Flodden also established not only Henry's prominence as the richest king in Europe, but also as the one who had won the greatest military glory. These reputations would last throughout the rest of Henry VIII's reign.³⁰

This firming of Henry's position as ruler of a powerful state would lead the development of the laissez-faire attitude that the other states of Europe would adopt with which to deal with Henry and England. This hands-off policy would come to play a significant role in the English Reformation where Henry took up the battle to make his realm and its church an empire subject only to him. Within this framework, the “All for the want of a horseshoe nail” rhyme operates on two levels: that of the battle of Théroutanne itself and that of the social and political movements in Europe that would culminate in the English Reformation. For the first level, perhaps had the French had a larger force—the lack of riders, the city of Théroutanne would not have fallen, nor would France be cowed by the idea of defeat at English hands in the future, where the kingdom lost would be that of French pride. On the macrocosmic level, had France not been overpowered, resulting in an apprehension of the English, the French could have continued to pose an active threat to Henry and his dominions. Had these events combined with the removal of other

²⁹ Ibid., 64-5.

³⁰ Ibid., 68-9.

influential events, the course of the English Reformation may have been changed and the Roman Catholic Church would not have lost the kingdom of England and its revenues.

*Jack and Jill went up a hill,
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
And Jill came tumbling after.³¹*

The Jack and Jill rhyme appears to fit nicely with the circumstances Henry VIII's attempt to marry his daughter Mary to the French Dauphin as first proposed in the fall of 1518 as the conclusion of a treaty between Henry VIII and François I of France. This treaty stated that if a third party attacked either France or England, the other king would personally lead an army to help fend off the troops of the third party. The agreement was, in turn, a part of another agreement where England, France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire, at the request of the Pope, agreed to form a league against Turkish Muslim aggression and to make peace amongst themselves, with the period of guaranteed non-aggression of eight months. The terms of this treaty were very general and very short-lived.³²

The betrothal of Mary to the Dauphin was to play a role in European politics for some years to come. At the Field of Cloth-Of-Gold, an enormous and sumptuous summit meeting between Henry and François in June 1520, both Henry and François signed a treaty renewing the contract for Mary's marriage to the Dauphin. Shortly after this meeting, Henry met with Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, with the intent of offering Mary's hand to Charles to allow England to take advantage of Charles' power and position in the realm of European politics and diplomacy. Both Henry and Cardinal Wolsey, who served as Henry's chief minister and was in favor of the

³¹ Walter, 8.

³² Ridley, *Henry VIII*, III.

French as opposed to the Empire, knew that the peace agreed to in 1519 was unstable and that tensions between Charles V and François would more than likely lead to the outbreak of war in the summer of 1521. According to the 1518 treaty, England was obliged to aid the victim of aggression, but it was unclear whether it would be the Empire or France's assuming the role of victim.³³

The situation with Mary's marriage caused much tension in these tortuous negotiations. Henry's queen, Catherine of Aragon, aunt to Charles V, was past childbearing age, and Mary was Henry's only surviving legitimate child. As such, she was the heiress to the throne of England. Henry and Wolsey were trying to hammer out agreements with both of Mary's suitor that if she did inherit England that it would not be swallowed by her husband's realm. This idea was quite a bone of contention to Henry, Wolsey, and the rest of the English population, with their xenophobia and insistence upon England's being an independently sovereign realm. As a result, Mary's possible sovereignty over England was an important factor of negotiation of her potential marriages.³⁴

Negotiations with Charles broke down in 1525 with the dissolution of the marriage contract between himself and Mary and his marriage to Isabella of Portugal, however a French match still existed for the princess of England. Meanwhile, Henry had come to the realization that he did have an opportunity to provide himself with a male heir through an annulment of his marriage to Catherine and a remarriage to a presumably nubile second wife. The tension about his own marriage began to play a role in the negotiations for his daughter's marriage. The primary consideration Henry saw as vital to his annulment was the question that his marriage to Catherine was invalid, due to the injunction in Leviticus against marrying a brother's widow and Catherine's

³³ Ibid., 118-9.

³⁴ Ibid., 130-1.

status as Henry's brother's widow. This situation applied to Mary in the idea of her legitimacy as a child of this possibly invalid union.³⁵

In 1527, a deputation from France arrived in London to shore up the final agreement for Mary's marriage to the Dauphin, while the English ambassador to France, Bishop Tarbes, was doing likewise at the French court. However, Bishop Tarbes questioned the princess' legitimacy and the ecclesiastical legality of her parents' marriage. Tarbes' venture cannot have taken place without royal support, since otherwise, Tarbes' doubt of Mary's legitimacy would have been construed as a gross insult to the monarch he was serving and to the monarch with whom he was supposed to be structuring an alliance—because of the taint of a bastard marrying that monarch's son, as opposed to marrying a legitimate child of another king, which conferred a higher status than did marriage to a king's illegitimate child.³⁶

The names "Jack" and "Jill" were in contemporary usage as slang for priests, and "Jack" in the rhyme refers to Cardinal Wolsey, while "Jill" represents Bishop Tarbes, both of whom were fairly important clergymen in England. Their "going up the hill" was treading the ground of European diplomacy to secure a French match for Henry's daughter. The repercussions of Wolsey's attempt to obtain the annulment that Henry so desired would cause his fall in from the king's confidence and thus, from power. Wolsey was attainted on a charge of refuting the king's authority as spiritual head of England and faced execution, but he died on the journey back to the Tower of London. However, with Tarbes and Wolsey's actions, the seeds for the English Reformation were sown, and thus, they both fell as the result of their positions in the Catholic church.

Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye,

³⁵ Ibid., 152.

³⁶ Fraser, 131.

*Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie,
When the pie was opened, the birds began to sing,
Was not that a dainty dish to set before the king?
The king was in his counting-house,
Counting out his money;
The queen was in the parlor,
Eating bread and honey.
The maid was in the garden,
Hanging out the clothes,
When along came a blackbird
Who snipped off her nose.³⁷*

This particular rhyme bears much resemblance to the occurrences of Henry VIII's "great matter" in the form of the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and his subsequent marriage to Anne Boleyn in 1533. This "great matter" also encompassed the framework of the social upheaval of the English Reformation. The "Sing a song of sixpence" rhyme encapsulates the factors causing Henry VIII to place the English church in schism against the Roman Catholic Church. One of the primary forces was Henry's desire to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon in order to marry Anne Boleyn in the hopes of providing himself with a male heir to the English throne. Pope Clement VII's reluctance to grant Henry the annulment he so desperately desired, not for theological reasons, but for political ones, forced Henry to cause the English church to separate from the Catholic Church.

Throughout the first half of the 1520's, Henry tried in vain to create a marriage alliance for Catherine's daughter Mary that would ensure that England kept its independent sovereignty yet allowed for Mary to rule with the assistance of her prospective husband, with the eventual succession of the English throne going to Henry's prospective grandson, much like the succession of Matilda, the daughter of Henry II with the succession's falling to Matilda's son and Henry's grandson. The terms of the possible marriage contracts were outlined in the view of Henry's lack

³⁷ Walter, 15.

of a male heir to ensure England's continued independence although its sovereign would be female and also subject to the whims of her husband, in keeping with the contemporary social attitudes. Negotiations for Mary's potential matches to both French and Spanish princes fell through, the Spanish match's failing in 1525, and the French one in 1527. Almost simultaneously, Henry came to the realization that his interests may best be served with an annulment of his marriage to Catherine with a subsequent marriage to a younger woman capable of bearing a male heir, who could also serve as a manner by which Henry could accomplish a useful political alliance. The crisis began in earnest in 1527 when Henry fell in love with one of his wife's ladies-in-waiting, Anne Boleyn, and began to take an active role in removing the restraints of his first marriage.³⁸

However, marriage to his wife's maid of honor would deny him the opportunity to create a beneficial political alliance while destroying the alliance in existence with Catherine's family, rulers of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. Catherine's connections would serve to complicate Henry's plea for an annulment, since her nephew Charles was the Holy Roman Emperor who sacked Rome and a large portion of Italy in 1527 and 1528, and even held Pope Clement VII in his power for the majority of the same period.³⁹ The same year, 1528, brought Anne Boleyn out of the shadows of the English court life, where she was not afraid to use her ever-increasing influence in the cause of religious reform. Previously, she had been seen as little more than a pair of dark eyes and a graceful figure with an ability to speak fluent French, or in less synecdochic terms, as a mere dalliance of the king's, along the lines of Bessie Blount, who bore the king a bastard son, and not a passion that would cause Henry to leave his wife of twenty years' standing and end in the death of both Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn, in their different ways.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ridley, *Henry VIII*, 152-3.

³⁹ Ibid., 156.

⁴⁰ Fraser, 143.

Such an ending to Henry VIII's "great matter" was mercifully hidden from the principals in this drama in the late 1520's. Instead, the struggle was against the Pope and Catherine's powerful relatives. The crux of the issue of the "divorce" was the controversial wedding night between Henry's elder brother Arthur and Catherine nearly thirty years before. The questions at stake were whether or not Prince Arthur had consummated his marriage to Catherine, and had the dispensation issued for her marriage to Henry covered the situation completely. Henry's argument against this was the situation expressly stated in Leviticus counseling against taking a brother's widow to wife. Henry had expected Catherine to be resigned and yielding to the matters of the affair and his judgment, however she was prepared to carry out a protracted legal battle, which would eventually last seven years, upholding the legitimacy of her marriage to Henry.⁴¹

When faced with answering the central issue of her virginity upon her second marriage, Catherine made a full confession, receiving the sacrament, several times that she had not been carnally known to Arthur and had entered her second marriage as a virgin. Henry professed to not believe this claim, and even went so far as to cast aspersions upon the comments he had made about Catherine's virginity after the marriage with an excuse of his feasting and speaking in jest.⁴² Nevertheless, Eustace Chapuys, the Imperial ambassador, would state that non-consummation of a marriage was impossible to prove absolutely nearly thirty years later of a woman who had been married to another man for twenty years.⁴³ For all his statements to the contrary, Henry never would give Catherine the lie on the issue and it is virtually impossible to believe that someone as pious and straightforward as Catherine would lie about such an issue.

Henry managed to get Pope Clement to agree to an investigation of the affair, with Cardinal Wolsey, a firm King's man, as a papal legate. Clement VII also sent Cardinal Campeggio

⁴¹ Ibid., 153-4.

⁴² Ibid., 168.

⁴³ Ibid., 163.

to inquire into the case alongside Wolsey. After the secretive inquisition Wolsey had conducted without Catherine's knowledge- or so he thought, and without any type of representation for any party except Henry's perspective. Bishop John Fisher served as Catherine's representative at the "trial," so as to give the proceedings an air of strict legality, and Fisher proved to be the backbone of Catherine's counsel at the court held in the palace of Blackfriars. For all of Henry's self-interested cynicism about Catherine's claim of virginity, the Blackfriars inquiry did have a genuine curiosity and uncertainty as to the actual legality of the marriage in question. Catherine quickly realized that the tribunal was anything but indifferent between the warring parties, with Henry's great power over those taking part and his fervent desire to end this marriage in view of his ever-increasing passion for Anne Boleyn. Catherine refused to appear before the court of inquiry after her realization about the lack of impartiality, knowing full well that Wolsey would do his best to arrive at the answer Henry wanted. Catherine was declared contumacious because of her refusal to appear, which resulted in the procession of the court proceedings without her.⁴⁴

The continuance of the case without Catherine's presence was a mercy to her modesty in view of the evidence given concerning her. The boasting of Prince Arthur the morning after his wedding to Catherine in 1501 was remembered and reported by various courtiers, who also gave personal evidence of consummating marriage as possible and frequent at the age of fifteen, much to their sovereign's benefit. Notwithstanding Henry's haste to dissolve his marriage, Cardinal Campeggio declared the case too important to be decided without consultation with the judicial body of the Church in Rome, which was then on its long summer holiday. The Blackfriars court had sat for several months, yet Henry was no closer to ridding himself of Catherine in order to replace her with Anne Boleyn, much to his dismay and that of Cardinal Wolsey, who was painfully

⁴⁴ Ibid., 157-62.

aware that the anger of the prince means death. Wolsey was outstandingly aware that much for him rested on the outcome of his master's divorce case.⁴⁵

Cardinal Wolsey was also aware of the increasing influence of Anne Boleyn and her faction at the English court. Anne maintained a semblance of civility towards Wolsey since he was working towards Henry's attainment of the divorce, yet this effort was not enough to diffuse her anger towards him for his role in the destruction of her romance with Lord Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland, in 1525. So in being the king's good servant in aiding the divorce suit, Wolsey was bringing a force hostile to him to power. Nonetheless, Henry himself was displeased with the length of time Wolsey's processes took, since they were getting him nowhere closer to ridding him of Catherine. With the dissolution of the Blackfriars court, progress on the divorce ground to a halt, until Henry realized that there were other options open to him.⁴⁶

Realizing that the papal inclination to deal with the issue was non-existent, Henry decided to move this issue from the realm of canonical law to that of theology. The most prestigious universities were canvassed for their opinion on the marriage of Henry and Catherine, and not surprisingly, most of the universities found in favor of the rulers of their country, notwithstanding the large amounts of money in bribes paid out by Archbishop Cranmer, who had assumed a position in the church much like that Wolsey had. The Italian universities were divided, the University of Paris found for the divorce, Spanish universities were negative towards the matter, and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford supported their king. So Henry found himself in yet another stalemate. In spite of Henry's search for a way to obtain his annulment, Pope Clement still hesitated in taking action in the interests of not antagonizing any one European power.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid., 162-4.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 164-75.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 175.

In view of the impasse that existed in the various avenues Henry had explored, he was beginning to take a more radical solution into consideration, a solution in which the Pope's authority would play no role. Henry had threatened at schism as a threat to the Pope to coerce Clement to grant the annulment. However, advantages did exist to be gained from not alienating the Pope. If Henry could secure papal approval of his projected second marriage, the union would not come under question. However, knowing full well that political considerations and not theological ones that were delaying the divorce suit, Henry did not feel the need to acknowledge the sovereignty of Rome in spiritual matters.⁴⁸

Henry's next step in his divorce was the development of the theory of royal supremacy, which centered on the point that monarchs were divinely appointed to rule and as the representatives of God, were immune from papal judgments. Thomas Cromwell, who had assumed Wolsey's administrative role, was able to make this theory and its ramifications more attractive to Henry by introducing a manner by which to receive a financial gain from it by threatening the clergy with a charge of *praemunire*, the charge of flouting the king's authority and also the charge that caused Wolsey's fall. The clergy paid a fine of £100,000 to cover any collusion with Cardinal Wolsey's situation. In addition, the clergy agreed to Henry's first obvious break with Rome—granting him the title of “Supreme Head of the Church and Clergy of England,” however Parliament was less conservative and refused to ratify the title. The responses of the two women in Henry's life to the proposed title were, as to be expected, completely opposite. Catherine, as a loyal daughter of the church, was greatly dismayed and fearful of what Henry might do, while on the other hand, Anne Boleyn was ecstatic.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 176-7.

The year 1531 brought with it Henry's attempt to convince Catherine to agree to Henry's idea of a compromise and agree that their marriage was invalid. Predictably, Catherine rejected this proposal each time it was presented to her by the King, the Duke of Norfolk, and other emissaries on behalf of the King. The Roman court, meanwhile, had been appointed to try the case, and it opened in June to the protests of Henry's lawyers who argued that Henry could not be summoned to appear outside his dominions. Henry was outspoken in his displeasure, stating that he would not agree to the Pope's judgment in the case and that the Pope's threat of excommunication bothered him not at all, because Henry was determined to do what he thought best for his realm. Henry sent Norfolk at the head of a larger deputation to visit Catherine to persuade her to agree to suspend the proceedings in Rome and to have an inquisition established on neutral territory, since the Pope was still fearful of the maneuverings of Catherine's nephew, Charles V.⁵⁰

Catherine still refused to agree to this suggestion, considering that she deemed the Pope as the only individual qualified to judge the case. Now that Henry was the supreme power in both spiritual and secular matters in England, Catherine was advised to put her affairs in his hand, yet she still declined the offer forcefully. She was then removed from court and shuttled between various royal residences, including the More, Hatfield, and Ampthill. With Catherine's effective banishment from the court, the progress of the English Reformation and Anne Boleyn's power grew, while Henry became more determined to rid himself of his nagging wife. In March of 1532, Parliament was greeted with the Act of Conditional Restraint of Annates, where the Pope would receive only five percent of the first year's revenue of a newly appointed bishop instead of the whole revenues he previously enjoyed, and if the Pope refused to consecrate a bishop, then the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 179-80.

ceremony would advance without papal approval. However, this act was not to be put into effect until Henry ordered it, providing him with another weapon against the dithering Pope Clement.⁵¹

After this act was passed, the English Reformation picked up speed and the marriage between Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII came ever closer. May 1532 brought with it the transformation of the Supplication against the Ordinaries, a list of complaints against the church, into the Submission of the Clergy. The Submission of the Clergy stated that all clerical legislation in future would require the royal approval while present legislation would be reviewed under the assumption that it had come from the king's supremacy and not that of the Pope. The clergy at first rejected this proposal, but under duress, the clergy bowed to Henry's demands. With this achievement, Henry had effectively destroyed clerical opposition to his plans.⁵²

Anne Boleyn's status had been changing alongside that of the clergy as well, while her power was waxing while that of the clergy was waning. Henry had taken steps to make it obvious that Anne had the status of royal wife and consort in all but name. September 1532 saw her creation as Marquess of Pembroke with estates entailing thirteen separate manors. Anne was also to wear the royal jewels, after a message from Henry was necessary to force Catherine to relinquish them. In October of the same year, Anne shone at a meeting between Henry and François of France in her new role as the first lady of the English court.⁵³ Around the first week of December of 1532, assuming a nine month's development, Anne became pregnant and sometime about 25 January 1533, Henry and Anne were married at last, after a wait of seven years. However, Henry's marriage to Catherine was not yet annulled.⁵⁴

There was a twisted logic behind the actual achievement of this second marriage. If Henry's marriage to Catherine had never been valid, the result was that Henry was a bachelor and

⁵¹ Ibid., 181-2.

⁵² Ibid., 182.

⁵³ Ibid., 184-5.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 187.

totally free to marry. However, the concept of public honesty demanded that his marriage to Catherine be dissolved and so a divorce proceeding was still necessary. A public announcement of Henry and Anne's marriage was made in April 1533, although the date of the wedding was antedated to 14 November 1532. Catherine was informed of this new state of affairs on 9 April, but it did not force her to abandon her struggle and in the face of this humiliation, she was summoned to the court of Dunstable where her marriage would be dissolved in the eyes of the English church. On 23 May 1533, Henry finally got what he had wanted for seven years—Archbishop Cranmer gave his judgment that Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon was invalid.⁵⁵

A week later, 1 June 1533, Anne Boleyn was crowned and anointed Queen of England. Her procession through the streets of London showed her just how unpopular she had made herself to the English commons as opposed to the popularity her predecessor had enjoyed. At the pageants along the route, most of which underlined the joy that England as a whole would feel if Queen Anne fulfilled her primary duty of bearing the King a son with the pregnancy of which she was in the midst. Queen Anne's confidence in the occurrence was obvious in her attitude at her public display.⁵⁶ However, Catherine's fight was still not over. Upon orders that she was no longer entitled to use the title of Queen, but instead entitled to status of Princess Dowager, as her status was no longer that of Henry's wife, but of Arthur's widow. Nevertheless, Catherine would soon receive the answer for which she had been waiting seven years. On 11 July 1533, Pope Clement issued a bull declaring Cranmer's judgment on Henry's first marriage as void, ordering

⁵⁵ Ibid., 188-90.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 190.

Henry to put away Anne, and excommunicating Henry. The bull did not materially help Catherine's cause, but it was indeed a moral victory for her.⁵⁷

However, Catherine was still stuck in a type of limbo. Her nephew, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, would not come to her aid with troops, which would be the only way in which Catherine's cause would be materially supported. On the other hand, she was firmly and officially demoted to Princess Dowager.⁵⁸ In the meanwhile, Anne and Henry's marriage was not the serene and perfect world Henry had envisaged. Anne was unafraid to lash out with her tongue and made enemies even among her supporters. Anne did not tolerate Henry's dalliances during her pregnancies in the same admirable way, in Henry's eyes at least, Catherine had tolerated them. However, Anne realized that the stakes were higher for her than they had been for Catherine. Henry had already rid himself of one wife for love of another and no guarantee existed that such an occurrence would not happen again in the future. Within a few months of his second marriage, Henry had become conscious that his second wife was in no way temperamentally suited nor properly trained to be a successful queen consort.⁵⁹

However, Henry and Anne were more amorous after a row, and so most explosions of rage and hysterics were easily comforted by kisses, and in the early days of the marriage, assuaged by the thought that his dreams of a son were soon to be realized. Anne took to her chamber to await the birth of her son on 26 August 1533. Three o'clock on the afternoon of 7 September, Anne gave birth to her child, but it was a girl to be named Elizabeth and not the son Anne had implicitly promised Henry. The announcements of the birth were rapidly changed from announcing the birth of a prince, to that of a "princes."⁶⁰ Elizabeth's birth did not shore up the need for a male heir and caused some controversy as to which of Henry's daughters was his legitimate child. In

⁵⁷ Ibid., 195.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 195-6.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 197-8.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 198.

Catholic eyes, Mary as daughter of Catherine of Aragon was Henry's legitimate heir, while those of reforming tendencies saw Elizabeth as the legitimate one of the two.⁶¹ This first disappointment would have far reaching consequences for both Anne and Henry.

A second pregnancy came hard on the heels of the first, and by 27 April 1534, a courtier was writing to inform a courtier away from court of Anne's pregnancy.⁶² However, for one reason or another, the pregnancy of 1534 failed. Henry's flirtation of the autumn of 1534 was reported to be due to either his uncertainty of his wife's pregnancy or to his anger at the failure of the pregnancy.⁶³ All this while, Catherine and her daughter Mary were not inactive. They both kept up their refusals to submit to Henry's demands to bend completely to his will. However, December 1535 saw a worsening of Catherine's health, and in January 1536, Catherine of Aragon died.⁶⁴ Henry insisted that she was buried with the honors due to a Princess Dowager of Wales, and not those of a Queen Consort.⁶⁵

Catherine of Aragon's death brought Anne Boleyn's downfall. With Catherine's death, Henry was, by strict Catholic standards, a widower and at liberty to remarry. Combined with Anne's miscarriage in January 1536 and Henry's satiety with Anne, the conditions were ripe to bring down a queen. Henry had conceived a passion for Jane Seymour, ironically one of Anne's ladies-in-waiting, and was ready to rid himself of yet another wife who appeared unable to bear him a son and heir.⁶⁶ The first two days of May 1536 were marked by the arrests of several prominent courtiers and Queen Anne Boleyn. The wheel had turned completely for Anne, from adored mistress to nagging wife, in three years. With the failure of all her pregnancies except the first, and most notably her last miscarriage of an apparently male child, Anne had demonstrated to

⁶¹ Ibid., 202.

⁶² Ibid., 206.

⁶³ Ibid., 217.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 223-8.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 231.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 231-2.

Henry that she was incapable of bearing him a son, the original reason for their relationship. As a result, she was a hindrance that must be removed so that Henry could try to obtain his male heir from Jane Seymour. After all the trial Henry had undergone in ridding himself of Catherine, Anne was not going to be given the same opportunity to fight a legal battle.⁶⁷

Anne and the courtiers arrested with her, including her brother Lord Rochford and Henry's Keeper of the Privy Purse Sir Henry Norris, were charged with adultery and participating in a conspiracy to murder the king. Anne and Lord Rochford also had the burden of an incest charge to deal with, which was patently untrue but was simply a propaganda move to blacken Anne's name beyond rehabilitation. The group was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where Anne's fall came home to her and was exhibited in alternating fits of hysterical tears and hysterical laughter. The "trial" of the alleged guilty parties came closer, being as it was a cynical affair intended to lead only to Anne Boleyn's death. Various bits of overheard conversation with the savor of treason were repeated at the trial along with the hodgepodge of not quite truths and complete lies from which Cromwell had constructed the case against Anne. However, although Henry did not want to be saddled with another ex-wife mere months after death had rid him of the first, Archbishop Cranmer was required to annul Henry and Anne's marriage. The end of the "great matter" and of the opening stages of the English Reformation came on 19 May 1536 with the beheading of Anne Boleyn.⁶⁸

The "Sing a song of sixpence" of the rhyme is a reference back to Henry VII and noting that Henry VIII did share his father's miserliness to a degree. The "pocket full of rye" refers to the crops of the repossessed monasteries. The "four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie" are reputed to be twenty four deeds to monasteries and abbeys, although a strong case for the birds as

⁶⁷ Ibid., 243-5.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 250-7.

the clergy and the pie as the English Reformation can be made, since the clergy “sang” or bent into submission when Henry “opened the pie” or started in on the English Reformation. Henry VIII is the “king in his counting house,” who was counting out the spoils of the Reformation. Catherine of the Aragon is the “queen in the parlor” soothed by the honeyed promises of Spain that Henry would not be allowed to divorce her. The maid in the garden is Anne Boleyn, who had recently returned from France in her new clothes of Paris fashions. The blackbird in this sense is the executioner, who came along and snipped off her head, instead of her nose.

*Robin the bobbin, the big-belted Ben,
He ate more meat than fourscore men,...
He ate the Church, he ate the steeple,
He ate the priests and all the people,...
And yet he complained that his belly wasn't full.⁶⁹*

The “Robin the bobbin” rhyme provides a caustic portrait of Henry VIII in the later years of his life. The “big bellied Ben” is Henry himself, affected by the tendencies of corpulence he had inherited from his Yorkist blood and most notably from his grandfather Edward IV.⁷⁰ Edward and Henry were both formidably built men and were able to maintain their leanness so long as they were able to keep to their athletic and punishing routines. Edward in his later years would take emetics after meals so as to be able to feast again due to his love of food and drink. Both Henry and Edward gained weight over the years, with Henry’s most notable weight gain in 1540.⁷¹ After 1536, Henry’s weight was rapidly increasing and made feigning surprise when he revealed his identity at masques more difficult for his wives and courtiers than it was for Catherine of Aragon in her dealings with the athletic youth of 1509.⁷²

⁶⁹ Walter, 29.

⁷⁰ Weir, *The Wars of the Roses*, 292.

⁷¹ Fraser, 334.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 260.

The year 1540 marked Henry's greatest weight gain and in the midst of negotiations for his marriage to Anne of Cleves in 1539, ambassadors questioned Henry's physical condition. The English ambassadors did their best to circumvent the question, merely stating that their king was fit. However, a suit of armor made for Henry in 1540 with a fifty-four inch waist measurement and a fifty-seven inch chest measurement gave the lie to the ambassadors' assertion of Henry's physical fitness. A large part of this massive size was due to the diet of royalty of the time—huge meals centered on meat, all washed down with wine and beer. This diet would certainly not make the maintenance of an athletic physique easy. Undoubtedly with his large frame, Henry was greedy, but after the jousting accident in 1524 and the varicose ulceration of his legs in the late 1520s, his adherence to his former extremely strenuous routine was problematical. His weight and the condition of his legs trapped him in a cruel rotation. His weight made his chronic ulcerations worse, but simultaneously his legs kept him from taking the exercise that would have been curative.⁷³ The net result is the massive figure shown in the portraits by Hans Holbein and other artists.

The individuals consumed in the second half of the rhyme are all references to the accomplishment of the English Reformation and the dissolution of the monasteries and convents, starting in 1536 with the disbanding of the religious houses with an annual income of less than £200 and eventually extending to the exceedingly rich monasteries and convents which would be suppressed some years later. Yet again, one of the overwhelming reasons behind the suppression of religious houses was the emaciated state of the royal treasury. Henry profited for this latest religious policy, collecting hundreds of thousands of pounds, and then profited even more when he sold the properties collected from the monasteries to his courtiers.⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibid., 334-5.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 269-70.

The suppression of the abbeys was not an overwhelmingly popular move with the commons of England. The dissolution of the monasteries released thousands of dispossessed monks and nuns without any form of sustenance save begging into English towns and villages. In addition, the beggars already in abundance in the English countryside no longer had a refuge and a shelter that they had found in the religious houses. The commons rose against Henry's move, realizing the economic drain of beggars and their religious conservatism's being greater than that of the intellectual liberalism of the court. 1 October 1536 brought with it news of a rising in Lincolnshire against Henry's religious policies as a response to the suppression of the abbeys. Nine days later, Henry issued a response to the rebels in which he rejected all of the rebels' demands.⁷⁵

For all the majesty of the King's "Answer to the Petitions of Traitors and Rebels [in] Lincolnshire," the commons continued to revolt and were joined in their rebellion by gentlemen and nobles, sharing the religious conservatism of the commons. Forty thousand people marched on the city of York in what the participants called "Our Pilgrimage of Grace for the Restitution of Christ's Church." The English Reformation had gone far enough before the closing of the monasteries in the opinion of most Englishmen, and the commons were wary of Henry's intentions. The revolt continued and Henry drew up another response to his dissenting subjects. Henry was resentful that his subjects should be so obviously ungrateful for what he had done for them in the form of the Reformation. The rebellion died down after Henry's grant of a general pardon for events prior to 7 December 1536.⁷⁶ This obvious dissatisfaction on Henry's part was a part of the complaint about "his belly wasn't full." Other points with the empty belly included Henry's concern over the slimness of treasury funds and his desire to firmly establish himself as

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 270-1.

Supreme Head of the English church without the Pope's suzerainty and to create new traditions for his church.

*Baa baa black sheep
Have you any wool?
Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full.
One for my master, one for the dame,
And one for the little boy who lives down the lane.*⁷⁷

After Henry's death, his son by his third wife, Edward VI, ascended the throne at nine years of age under the guidance of a regency council in January 1547. Edward's uncle, Edward Seymour, who assumed the role of Protector until his fall in 1552, headed the council. Protector Seymour was overthrown in a coup led by John Dudley, the Earl of Warwick and son of one of Henry VII's counselors. Edward's reign stretched six years from January 1547 to July 1553 and encompassed the most radical of the religious changes of the English Reformation, where England was a strictly Protestant state intolerant of Catholicism in any form, at least in the classes closest to the court, while the lower classes still retained some Catholic leanings.⁷⁸

The English public realized that the regency council that governed in Edward's name was responsible for the vast majority of the unpopular legislation, not Edward himself who was a child of nine upon his accession and never reached his majority before the end of his reign. Notwithstanding Edward's presumed lack of participation in government, he was generally the moving force, along with Somerset and Archbishop Cranmer, behind the religious legislation of this reign. The Duke of Somerset, Edward Seymour, was Edward's uncle and took control of the regency council Henry VIII had appointed for his son's minority. Somerset was arrogant to the

⁷⁷ *Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 57.

⁷⁸ Mark Nicholls, *A History of the Modern British Isles, 1529-1603: The Two Kingdoms* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 121.

other nobility and alienated the support of the other members of the council, who were disinclined to agree with his policies because of their personal dislike of Somerset.⁷⁹

The political situation was precarious in England at the time of Henry VIII's death. A strong and awesome king had died, leaving behind a child, albeit a male one, as his successor. Child monarchs were notoriously weak rulers, being under the control of regents who had no true claim to the throne. The unobstructed power of the regent generally caused some rancor amongst the nobles, and as a result, the many reigns of child monarchs were marked by civil unrest, dissension amongst the noble, and even the monarch's removal from the throne as in the case of Edward V, who was overthrown by his uncle, later Richard III, who was serving as regent under the terms of the will of his brother Edward IV.

In addition to the perils of a comparatively weak monarch, England was yet again facing its perennial financial troubles, much like those that Henry VIII faced with his martial campaigns in France. The "Rough Wooing," or England's attempt to commandeer Scotland with the marriage of Edward to the Scots' child-queen, Mary Stuart, brought about this particular fiscal situation. The idea of suzerainty over Scotland was one of Henry VIII's pet projects and it was Henry's desire, as well as Edward's, to marry the two and enhance England's reputation with the appropriation of Scotland. Somerset embarked on a fierce campaign against the Scots with destructive attacks on major Scottish border towns with such success that the Queen Regent of Scotland, Marie de Guise, sent her daughter to France to keep her out of the hands and the power of the English. The English plan to capture Scotland through marriage was thwarted with Mary's betrothal and subsequent marriage to the French Dauphin François.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ibid., 122.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 123.

Nonetheless, the finances of the English crown were in dire straits in 1548. The counselors recognized the need for social reforms and in the second parliamentary session of Edward's reign during the winter of 1548- 1549, the English economy was the primary consideration. Most of the legislation passed had the intent of curbing and controlling inflation with restrictions placed on leather, malt, steel, and bell metal. In addition, these bills also sought to exempt the north Atlantic fishermen from tariffs to increase production and to control and moderate price fixing in certain markets. The inflation in the English market as well as other economic forces were not helping the emaciated state of the royal finances. All of the proposed bills of Edward's second Parliament were offered either at the suggestion of or with the firm support of the council, yet all these recommended measures were not unanimously successful.⁸¹

The legislative result of this session with the greatest impact was the tax on both sheep and cloth, which hit the English wool market particularly hard. This tax was viewed as a financial reaction to the diminishment of royal revenues from the wool trade because of an increase in the domestic production of woollen cloth. Alternately, this tax was seen as a move to control the number of sheep in the country and thereby promote tillage of the land to open up new industries in England, which at the time was predominantly dependent upon the wool trade with the Low Countries. Other economic proposals failed, but the wool tax was the most significant economic legislation of the parliamentary session.⁸²

The taxation of both sheep and wool were highly unpopular and the rhyme commemorating this particular political machination is still recited by modern children. Although Edward himself was not responsible for the taxation policy, he makes an appearance in the "Baa baa black sheep" rhyme. The whole of the rhyme seems to have a sarcastic and sardonic slant.

⁸¹ Ibid., 124.

⁸² Ibid.

The first line, “Baa baa black sheep,” appears to be a potentially stress-relieving mockery of the sheep, the indirect cause of the commons’ trouble. Without ownership of the sheep, the tax to be paid would be lower. The black sheep represents a failure to fit in and adapt, since the wool trade, and by extension, the sheep will not soon adapt willingly to this new scheme. In addition, the blackness of the sheep hints at the adverse and negative consequences of the new tax.

The question “Have you any wool?” appears to be an ironic device, since the wool trade with the rest of Europe was very profitable and the production of wool was a primary concern for a rather large section of the population. With such a focus and potential for profitability, it is only certain that those involved in the production of wool and woolen cloth would have a large inventory of wool to satisfy European demand. The inventories are noted in the line that states, “Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full.” The dissatisfaction of the sheep-owning populace is almost tangible here with this attack on the politicians who are essentially double-taxing their livelihood in the interests of enriching the royal treasury.

The terms of the tax are also outlined in the rhyme after the expression of disgust. The three bags of wool are to be divided amongst three individuals—the master, the dame, and the little boy. One third of the income earned from the wool was used to pay the master, or landlord, the rent due for the land used in the maintenance of the sheep. Another third is due to the “dame” for the household expenses and family sustenance. The remainder of the revenue is payable to the “little boy down the lane,” of the child-king Edward VI. The diminution of the monarch in such a way also demonstrated the displeasure of the population at the government embodied by Edward, although it is also quite a statement on how weak Edward appeared in comparison to his illustrious father and his power and strength.

“Pat-A-Cake, pat-a-cake, baker’s man”

*"That I will, master, as fast as I can"
"Prick it and pat it and mark it with a T..."⁸³
And put it in the oven for Baby and me."⁸⁴*

The "Pat-A-Cake" rhyme takes its start from the accession of Mary, the daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, to the English throne. Before his death, Edward had put Mary's claim to the throne aside in favor of the claim of his cousin, Jane Grey, who shared his fervent Protestant beliefs, instead of the orthodox Catholicism Mary practiced and in which she believed. At Edward's death, the Earl of Warwick, John Dudley, who was Edward's chief adviser and Protector of the realm after Somerset's fall, as well as Jane Grey's father-in-law, decided to checkmate Mary's accession to the throne. Following the terms of Edward's will, Warwick placed his daughter-in-law on the throne. However, this machination was illegal in that a king's testament could not supercede an Act of Parliament, i.e. Edward's will could not overturn the Act of Parliament in which Henry VIII had settled the succession of the throne—first to Edward, then Mary, then Elizabeth. In addition, Edward's will was not a valid legal document, since he had not attained his majority at the time of his death.⁸⁵

Nonetheless, once Edward's death was made public, Warwick wasted no time in proclaiming Jane as queen.⁸⁶ However, throughout the period of waiting for Edward's death, since it was treason to proclaim someone as sovereign while the actual monarch still lived, Mary had not been inactive. She had attempted to muster foreign support for her cause, although most of the ambassadors saw her claim as suicidal and refused to countenance supporting it. Mary knew of Warwick's plan to select a puppet successor for Edward so Warwick would retain power, and she also knew of his dislike and distrust of her and her Catholic faith. Warwick knew that Mary's

⁸³ Walter, 6.

⁸⁴ *Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes*, 5.

⁸⁵ Alison Weir, *The Children of Henry VIII* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), 146-7.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

accession would indubitably lead to his loss of power and quite possibly his death. Mary's rebellion against Queen Jane was not one that was painstakingly thought through, but more of a spontaneous response to a situation to which the English commons was greatly opposed. The commons flocked to Mary's camp, and she and her supports marched on London, collecting more supporters on the way.⁸⁷ After nine days, the reign of Queen Jane was over. Jane willingly set aside the crown and abdicated in favor of Mary. The English public was overjoyed that the daughter of "Great Harry" had gotten her throne while foreign ambassadors were amazed and made haste to congratulate the new queen.⁸⁸

Mary's first priority on her accession was to clear out the backlog of state business that had accumulated since her half-brother's death. She then set about her personal agenda to which she was totally committed and determined to accomplish—the rejoining of her realm to the Catholic Church. Her goal entailed undoing all of the changes in the religious settlement under her father and brother over the past three decades, and by extension a revision of the histories of the reigns. England was not a firmly Protestant nation at the grassroots level, and many people were Catholic despite the official Protestant stance of the country but still disliked the idea of being under the influence of the Pope. Mary viewed her popularity with the English people and their almost-unanimous support of her claim as a sign that they too wished to rejoin the body of the Catholic Church. However, with her seclusion from the currents of popular feeling with the twenty years she had spent either in disgrace or as a wealthy landed magnate, Mary was totally unaware of the true feelings of the English populace who greatly enjoyed their independence and not being subject to a foreign power, whether it was religious or not.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid., 172-8.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 180-1.

⁸⁹ David Loades, *Mary Tudor: A Life* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 193.

Within two months of her succession, Mary had written to Rome to ask the pope to receive her kingdom back into the church and to repeal the cull excommunicating Henry VIII and his subjects. Mary's communication with the pope was kept secret for the time being in the hopes of not offending the populace and allowing for a gradual reintroduction of the tenets of Catholicism.⁹⁰ In the beginning, her position in terms of religious matters was fairly simple. Mary was intent upon restoring the ceremony of the mass and the traditional liturgy, which were the centers of her private religion, and the Mass was celebrate daily in the chapel royal after 9 August 1553.⁹¹ Pope Julius appointed a papal legate in the person of Reginald Pole, who had Plantagenet blood and lived in exile after his treatise damning Henry VIII's second marriage. However, Julius was aware of the stakes of the matter and so did not send Pole to England until the situation was clearer and the appropriate attitude on the part of the papacy could be adopted. Cardinal Pole immediately began encouraging and urging Mary to end the schism between England and the church immediately. However, Mary was aware that her task was more difficult than she had previously believed since the repeal of legislation of the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, as well as a host of other practical considerations existed that had to be resolved before the schism itself would be settled.⁹²

The ambassadors of Mary's cousin, Charles V, were doing what they could to aid their master's cause since Mary found a great deal of emotional and political support in her communications with her cousin ever since the days when her father's eye had lit upon Anne Boleyn. The Hapsburg ambassadors were also aware of the perils of Mary's policy, since with dissention in England, the relationship between Mary and Charles would not be as profitable to

⁹⁰ Ibid., 195-6.

⁹¹ Ibid., 193-4.

⁹² Ibid., 197.

Hapsburg interests.⁹³ Taking the exploitation of England to aid the Empire against France, the ambassadors encouraged Mary to not allow the papal legate to set foot in England before Parliament had been sounded out on the issue.⁹⁴ Mary agreed with this plan and also reluctantly acquiesced with the idea that it was papal authority that was abhorrent to the English, and not the mass. September 1553 had Mary writing the Venetian ambassador that a legate should not be sent to England until the time was more advantageous, which caused Pope Julius to divert Cardinal Pole's attention and mission to a more pressing goal, that of peace between the French and the Holy Roman Empire. The Emperor's advice to Mary was, to a large degree, self-interested in that he wished to keep England internally stable, so as to guarantee the support of the English against France.⁹⁵

In addition, Charles was attempting to arrange a marriage alliance between Mary and his son Philip II in the interests of strengthening Mary's emotional ties to him and thereby doubling her support of the Empire with a husband that was biased in favor of the Empire. So Charles had multiple motivations for assisting Mary in her project of the restoration of the Catholic Church in England. The papacy was also exceptionally motivated to reclaim England as a Catholic realm, although the church's motivations were as much financially based, if not more so, than they were spiritually based. The Catholic Church stood to receive the revenues from annates and first fruits from English bishoprics that had been denied since the reign of Henry VIII. Mary's motivation, on the other hand, had a purely spiritual origin and centered on her personal spiritual beliefs and faith in the rituals of the mass. She was not terribly concerned with saints, shrines, or pilgrimages, nor was she particularly interested in the reestablishment of religious houses. On the other side of the coin, the English population as a whole was in no way, shape, or form motivated to accept a

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 199.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 197-8.

foreign power in their country, whether it was the Pope as head of the church, or Charles' son, Philip II of Spain.⁹⁶

Mary did marry Philip and he played a large role in the reconciliation, according to his father's wishes to make the English situation as advantageous as possible to the Empire. In June 1554, Pope Julius realized that concessions concerning the secularization of church property had to be made for the gulf between England and the church to be settled. Julius was also aware that English hostility towards the pope was politically based, rather than theologically motivated, harking back yet again to the issues of Henry VIII's divorce case in the late 1520s. The Pope instructed Cardinal Pole that his powers had been increased, that English affairs should take priority, and that Pole had the authority to negotiate on the secularization of English church property. Unbeknownst to anyone, Mary had been in contact with the Cardinal, who had been advising her and had affirmed her episcopal appointments, which was in direct conflict with the law of *praemunire* in England. However, Pole could not travel to England without the support of both Charles and Philip, which would only come at the cost of a general and unconditional absolution that Pole felt was a betrayal of the church.⁹⁷

Philip knew that the Pope was the only one who could command Pole to grant the obligatory absolution for English readmission and sent instructions to the Empire's ambassador in Rome to commence negotiations with the Pope while sending the Empire's English ambassador to Brussels to persuade Cardinal Pole to be more amenable to English demands. Pole was influenced to yield enough to be worth the risk of his coming to England during the parliamentary session, but he had not changed his views but had also told Julius that he would not exercise any of his powers as legate without Mary and Philip's permission. Finally, an agreement was reached where

⁹⁶ Ibid., 198-200.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 235-6.

Pole would be given leave to enter England, but only as a papal envoy, not as legate. In addition, Pole still had the status of an attainted traitor in England, and this condition had to be rectified before Pole's entrance into the country.⁹⁸

Finally, the reconciliation with the Catholic Church was taken into the public realm on 17 November 1554 with the introduction of a bill in Parliament repealing Pole's attainder. The repeal passed through both the Commons and the Lords within five days, and on the twenty-second, both Mary and Philip went to the House of Lords to finalize the bill before Pole's arrival. The twenty-eighth of November saw Cardinal Reginald Pole, who had spent the last twenty years as an attainted traitor, making an appearance before both Houses of Parliament to welcome back the prodigal son to the church with a speech focusing on the sacred purpose of the resolution, avoiding such troublesome topics as papal suzerainty, taxation, and secularized church property. This last stumbling block was cleared, and two days after Pole's appearance, the members of Parliament presented a petition to Mary and Philip to negotiate with Cardinal Pole for absolution from the church. Pole pronounced the papal sentence, and on the surface, the twenty-year schism was at an end.⁹⁹

The tensions underlying the absolution soon bubbled up, and it was obvious that the absolution was far from the end of the schism, except in the most external sense. The petition of the members of Parliament to Mary and Philip was a definite step towards England as a Catholic state, but not progress had been made in the repeal of the laws breaking away from the Catholic Church passed during Henry VIII's reign. The repeal of such laws would bring up two questions concerning the religious position of the English and the status of their lands. Pole's perspective was intransigent in that the absolution he'd granted did not release the guilt of the transgression,

⁹⁸ Ibid., 237.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 238-40.

nor did he accept the laws that had dissolved the monasteries.¹⁰⁰ However, for all the bubbling tensions, Mary had managed to bring her kingdom back under the guidance of the Catholic Church and restore her religion amongst her subjects, at least on the surface.

The “Pat-a-cake” rhyme does not neatly outline the entire situation of Mary’s Counter-Reformation like the “Sing a song of sixpence” rhyme did for Henry VIII’s divorce case, but there are still parallels in the rhyme and the situation. There is a definite mark of Catholic belief in the rhyme with the “Prick it and pat it and mark it with a T,” in that communion wafers are marked with crosses, or T’s as in the rhyme. That particular rhyme is referring to the resumption of use of the communion wafer, while the contrary Protestant belief found it difficult to believe that something made by a man, i.e. a communion wafer made by a baker, could represent God is seen in the first two lines.

In a sense, this rhyme also represents the rapid revisions of history that had to be completed during the religious upheavals in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary I, with the direct conflict of Protestant and Catholic beliefs in the first three lines of the “Pat-a-cake” rhyme. The last line, “And put it in the oven for Baby and me” can be construed to be a reference to the phantom pregnancy Mary was undergoing during the reconciliation. The child was purported to have quickened upon Pole’s arrival, which Mary interpreted as a sign from God that she was doing as she should. However, when all symptoms of pregnancy had vanished and it became obvious that she had not been pregnant, Mary increased the vigor of her war against heresy. This comment on the non-existent child is also an insult to Mary, who lost most of her popularity after her marriage to Philip of Spain, much like the diminution of Edward VI in the “Baa baa black sheep” rhyme.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 240.

*Flour of England and fruit of Spain
Met together in a shower of rain,
Put in a bag and tied round with a string.
If you'll tell me this riddle, I'll give you a ring.¹⁰¹*

Almost immediately upon her succession, Mary faced pressure from her counselors to choose a husband so as to lend some masculine power to her throne. Mary had faced marriage alliances before, throughout her father's reign, but for some reason or another, they had all failed. This time, however, Mary was determined to wed a husband who could help her with ruling England and would could also help her conceive an heir so as to keep her heretical, in Mary's view, half-sister Elizabeth off the throne and ensure the maintenance of the Catholic faith in England. Factions soon formed in the court, each proposing the candidate that best suited the party's interests and aims. The two front-runners were Edward Courtenay, a great-grandson of Edward IV and the premier English candidate, and Philip II of Spain, son of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and Mary's second cousin. The vast majority of the English subjects wanted Mary to wed an Englishman and thus preserve England's self-government. Mary's Lord Chancellor Gardiner, the French ambassador de Noailles, and the majority of the English masses supported a marriage to Courtenay, while Mary was interested in allying herself with a foreign power and her mother's family.¹⁰²

However, the issue was not so straightforward and clear-cut as it might appear. Mary, after leading a serene and righteous life for so long, was overcome by reticence whenever her counselors or anyone else discussed the matter of her marriage within her hearing, as it often happened in the first few months of her reign. No matter with whom she would infrequently speak of the possibilities of her marriage, Mary was insistent that she would choose a husband as

¹⁰¹ Walter, 90.

¹⁰² Weir, *Children of Henry VIII*, 204-5.

she was divinely inspired, without regard to physical considerations. Nonetheless, both affairs of state and religious factors would play a role in her choice. Mary was also quite conscious that she had little time to dawdle if she was to bear an heir, since she was thirty-seven at the time of her accession.¹⁰³

Once it became apparent to the rest of Europe that Mary needed a husband, the diplomatic corps were abuzz with activity. The French ambassador de Noailles realized that Mary had a natural bias towards the Hapsburg Empire and was trying to twist the situation to France's advantage by pushing non-Hapsburg bridegrooms, such as Edward Courtenay, and thus keep England from being dominated by the Empire's concerns. On the other hand, the Holy Roman Empire was looking to exploit its advantage with Mary's tendency to favor the Empire over the French. The diplomatic war had begun with de Noailles' extolling the match with Courtenay, and Renard, as the Empire's diplomat, attempting to convince Mary of Courtenay's lack of experience while avoiding such dangerous topics as Courtenay's dissolute life where he was making up for lost time, and his visits to brothels. Mary, having heard the rumors about Courtenay, had already decided against him, which was only aided by Renard's comment that those individuals who favored the match with Courtenay were supporters of the French. Charles V then sent Renard instructions suggesting that Renard give Mary an inkling of the advantages of a marriage with Charles' son Philip.¹⁰⁴

Charles appreciated the fact that this proposal would take some time to develop fully in that the English would need time to accustom themselves to the idea of Mary's marriage to a foreign prince. Renard sensed that Mary would warmly accept Philip's proposal, but made no definite mention of it to her. However, the French ambassador had foreseen that Charles would

¹⁰³ Ibid., 203-4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 204-5.

offer a match between Mary and Philip. De Noialles had warned his master of the potential suggestion and worked in support of Courtenay and to also advance Elizabeth's claims to the throne. Meanwhile, there were practical diplomatic matters that Charles and Philip had to resolve before the pathway to England was clear.¹⁰⁵ The spring prior to Mary's accession, Charles had been urging Philip to marry again, and Philip had involved himself in negotiations for the hand of a Portuguese princess.¹⁰⁶

However, the prospect of ruling England was too great of a temptation for the Hapsburgs, and so the negotiations with Portugal were broken off in September of 1553. The Emperor then instructed Renard to arrange a private interview with Mary to officially submit a proposal from Philip. Ten days after Mary's coronation Renard obtained an audience with Mary and wasted no time in coming to the point concerning a marriage to Philip. Mary received the proposal in silence with an inner panic, but was able to marshal her arguments against it, including her subjects' reaction, the Council's consent, and avoiding English involvement in Hapsburg wars, amongst others. Renard assured Mary that Philip was a superlative example of a prince, but Mary was not so certain that Renard's words were the truth, in light of European gossip. Yet again, Renard exerted his powers of persuasion, but still Mary was unsure and wanted to meet Philip face-to-face before making up her mind.¹⁰⁷

For all her uncertainty, Mary was not insensible of the advantages of the proposed match with Philip. He had extensive familiarity and knowledge of politics, with his rule of Spain, and was wealthy, supported by the considerable resources of the Hapsburgs. However, two of the most important advantages that Philip held were that he was a kinsman of her adored mother and that he was an advocate of the Catholic faith. However, Edward Courtenay was not about to give up

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 205-6

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 212.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 216-20.

on marrying the Queen. He and his supporters started a propaganda campaign to blacken Philip's name, which managed to achieve one of its intended aims in Parliament's attitude. Parliament was all too ready to be convinced that a Spanish marriage would not be profitable for the English, however neither would a marriage with Courtenay. Mary was infuriated by Courtenay's actions and maintained her refusal to marry him. On the other hand, Mary was still vacillating over Philip's proposal and spent many sleepless nights pondering the question. On 28 October 1553, Renard presented Mary with Charles' formal written proposal for her marriage to his son. Moving out of the earshot of her counselors, Mary told Renard that she was almost decided to accept the proposal. The next night, Mary held another audience with Renard where she promised before the Sacrament to marry Philip.¹⁰⁸

Public opinion did not favor Mary's decision to enter this marriage, and most Englishmen were extremely dismayed by the news of the betrothal. The main fear was that England would be dragged into the perpetual and destructive Hapsburg wars. English society was unanimous in its dislike of the Spanish, based upon resentment of Spanish trade monopolies in the Americas and the disgust with the horrors of the Inquisition. These sentiments caused a shift in the formerly placid acceptance of Mary's religious policy and overnight made Protestantism an issue of patriotism with the close association between Catholicism and Spain. Mary's further reforms would be connected to Spanish influence and as a result, became more contentious. London was outspoken in its disgust with the proposed marriage. Most people saw England as Mary's dowry, which would become her husband's property upon her marriage, thus making England another Hapsburg satellite. The English public's ire was also raised with their projections of Spanish rule as harsh and ruthless.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 220-2.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 223.

Mary and her council were quite aware of these concerns, as was Renard. Both parties attempted to alleviate these fears while negotiating the terms of the marriage contract, the stipulations of which would play a role in the later tension between Philip and Mary. The English were adamant that England would retain its autonomy and that Philip's role was to be that of a consort, without political power or royal clout.¹¹⁰ Charles V, hearing of these concerns, instructed Renard to be as obliging and pacifying as possible, so that nothing would hinder the Anglo-Spanish coalition. When the commissioners, on behalf of Charles V, arrived in London, they were met with glowering resentment and protests on the part of the English. Meanwhile, Philip had heard the terms of the contract, and had considered withdrawing from the alliance, but contented himself with a secret and formal avowal that he did not consider himself subject to the terms of an agreement negotiated without his knowledge or sanction. Throughout the negotiations, Mary was faced with quelling a rebellion, which was finally accomplished after the conclusion of the treaty on 9 January 1554 and Mary's signing of the document three days later. The *fait accompli* was made public on 14 January to an exceptionally hostile population.¹¹¹

With Mary's intent to marry after Lent, Philip was in no hurry to travel to England. Philip was not terribly responsive to any of Mary's actions, since this alliance was little more than an affair of state to him, and most of the gestures said to come from Philip in fact came from Charles. Between the finalization of the contract and the actual proxy betrothal ceremony, Philip had not communicated with Mary at all.¹¹² The sixth of March 1554 saw the betrothal ceremony, which was considered binding on both parts. Parliament met on 2 April 1554 and duly ratified Mary's marriage contract. The demonstrations in London against the marriage continued, but

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 223.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 232-4.

¹¹² Ibid., 251.

Mary paid them no mind.¹¹³ The preparations for the wedding progressed, and Philip Spanish household set sail for England in June. The twelfth of July 1554 had Philip embarking upon his voyage to England and on 19 July, the Spanish fleet was seen off the Isle of Wight and escorted into Southampton harbor.¹¹⁴

The “Flour of England” rhyme encapsulated the first meeting between Mary and Philip, although there is the theory that the rhyme is actually discussing the preparation of plum pudding. Mary is, of course, the flour of England, and Philip takes the role of the “fruit of Spain.” Philip’s first sight of and first steps on English soil occurred in a torrent of rain, fulfilling the requirements of the second verse of the rhyme. The third and fourth verses form the vast basis for the theory for the rhyme’s reference to the plum pudding, although it most certainly appears to be a metaphor for the marriage between Mary and Philip. The flour of England combined with the plums of Spain, which is then put in a bag and tied with a string and baked, would result in a plum pudding. As the history stands, the metaphor is fitting for the situation and the rhyme suits quite well. The last two lines, with the mention of the gold ring, also hint at the ring used in the marriage vows. With the background of the situation and a knowledge of the considerations, using this rhyme as a notation of Mary and Philip’s marriage is quite valid.

*My little old man and I fell out,
I'll tell you what it was all about;
I had money and he had none,
And that's the way the trouble begun.*¹¹⁵

This rhyme revisits the stipulations of Mary and Philip’s marriage treaty and some of the tensions exacerbated by Mary’s superior role in the partnership. Philip had felt slighted by the

¹¹³ Ibid., 261-2.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 271.

¹¹⁵ William S. Baring-Gould, Ceil Baring-Gould *The Annotated Mother Goose* (New York : New American Library, 1967), 83.

terms of the original agreement, which stipulated that he was to have neither political influence nor royal authority, and in response, he had made a declaration that he did not feel constrained by a contract whose provisions were bargained without his knowledge and consent. Nonetheless, the English council was determined to limit Philip's authority and to give the appearance, at least, that England was still autonomous, no matter how much Mary involved her husband in affairs of state. Philip's dissatisfaction and displeasure in his marriage to a middle-aged virgin merely increased with the failure of Mary's alleged pregnancy in 1555, and thereafter, tensions between the couple continued to mount. Mary's status of queen was contrary to the popular idea of natural law and her refusal to always yield to her husband on issues of state also contravened the idea of order in society. Her flat-out refusal to consistently take her husband's advice on matters of state also placed strain on the relationship.¹¹⁶

After Mary had accepted the failure of her hopes for a child in August 1555, Philip told her that his duty to his father meant that he had to leave England almost immediately. He informed Mary that he would be away for no more than six weeks and promised to leave most of his household behind as a proof of his intent to return quickly. Philip knew that Charles had not intended Philip to continue in England permanently, since Hapsburg interests would require him to be abroad, and Philip was immediately needed to fight the French. Charles was also planning soon to abdicate in favor of his son, and with Philip as ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, would have little time for Mary and England.¹¹⁷

September 1555 passed and Philip was virtually never replying to Mary's letters. Mary's devotion to him had been the talk of Europe, and Philip now intended to exploit her wish for his return as a bargaining tool to obtain more power for himself in England and responded to her

¹¹⁶ Weir, *Children of Henry VIII*, 301.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 315-6.

letters with demands to be crowned. This was out of Mary's power, since either the Council or Parliament had to sanction the crown matrimonial, and neither was terribly interested in doing so. Philip had made it clear to Mary that he would not return to England until she had arranged for him to wield more power in the English government. He also arranged for the rest of his household to leave England allegedly to replace Charles' servants, who would be returning to Spain, but Mary did not believe this excuse.¹¹⁸

Adding to these tensions, Mary's Lord Chancellor Gardiner, died on 12 November 1555, and Philip pressed for Sir William Paget to be Gardiner's replacement. However, Mary had other ideas and selected Nicholas Heath, who lacked many of Gardiner's qualities, and as a result, Cardinal Pole quickly became Mary's foremost advisor. Unfortunately, Pole did not possess the political knowledge and drive that Gardiner had, nor did Pole understand the English people as well. Notwithstanding these problems, Mary was still attempting to coerce Philip to return with such ploys as sending him his favorite meat pies. With one of these shipments, she included a letter stating that she was unable to persuade Parliament to grant Philip the crown matrimonial and would not be able to in the near future. Philip responded with another epistle maintaining that he wished to please her but would not return to England unless he was given a role of political power. His honor and pride would not allow him to continue in the role of consort.¹¹⁹

The last of Philip's household left England in December 1555, which prompted a letter from Mary to Philip apologizing for her failure to accede to his request and responding to his demand for support against the French. She claimed that sending troops as his backing against the French would threaten the security and stability of her throne, not to mention that it would be in direct contravention to the stipulations of the marriage agreement. A standoff had been reached in

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 320-I.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 323-4.

the relationship, and Mary knew that her husband would return if and only if she could grant all his requests. However, she would not, because she was queen first and foremost.¹²⁰

The year 1556 brought change, but not in the impasse between Philip and Mary. Charles abdicated on 16 January, and Philip and Mary became king and queen of Spain, the Netherlands, Spain's holdings in Italy, and the Spanish colonies in the Americas. Philip's attitude towards England had changed in that he was no longer interested in ruling the realm, except for protecting Elizabeth's claim as heir and using England as a source of troops for his wars. Mary was still begging him to return, but Philip was only trying to get her to commit to sending him forces for his army. Mary made timid appeals to the Council for the men Philip wanted, but the Council stuck to the point that the request violated the marriage treat and that England had not the finances to consider going to war in any circumstance.¹²¹ Mary learned that Philip had sent of his household back to England on 19 October, which meant to her that he was coming soon as well. However, Philip's intention was to visit as a public relations maneuver because of his neglect of his English interests.¹²²

In December 1556, Cardinal Pole learned that the Pope was refusing the deal with English affairs because he believed Mary as guilty as Philip of sins against the Church. Mary was infuriated by this information and confidentially decided that England should join Philip's war, since she was starting to see it as a just war. Philip sent a messenger to Mary in early February 1557 to tell her that his return to England was contingent upon her declaration of war upon France. She responded with a promise to do her best to convince the Council to make the declaration and with £ 100,000 as a promise of her intentions. Finally on 18 March 1557, Philip arrived back in

¹²⁰ Ibid., 325.

¹²¹ Ibid., 326.

¹²² Ibid., 336.

England at Dover, even though Mary had not declared war on France.¹²³ Philip had not been back a week before he began to compel Mary to insist the Council agree to declare war. Philip threatened to leave permanently without the declaration. The seventh of June 1557 saw a declaration of war on the part of the English, who had been frightened by a minor French-supported assault in Yorkshire. Philip was triumphant at the news of the declaration and began to prepare for the battles. The twentieth of June marked the sighting of the Spanish fleet in the English Channel and the earnest preparation for Philip's departure. On 6 July 1557, Mary said a moving leave-taking to Philip at Dover, and then watched as his ship sailed away. She would never see him again.¹²⁴

The "little old man" of the rhyme is Philip, since the heir to the Hapsburgs was of less than average height and was far more impressive on horseback than standing while the "I" of the rhyme is Mary, who is complaining of her husband's treatment of her in the rhyme. 211 It is indeed true from the background of the struggle between the two that they did "fall out," and there is no doubt that many battles were fought in the palaces of England between the two over the issue of the terms of the marriage contract. England did not really have any money at the time, however, it was still more than that which Philip's lands had, and the population of England was a great resource from which Philip to gain troops for his military exercises. The trouble began with the insulting terms, in Philip's view, of the marriage contract and ended with Philip's final departure from England.

*Hey diddle diddle,
The cat and the fiddle
The cow jumped over the moon
The little dog laughed to see such sport,*

¹²³ Ibid., 338-40.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 344-7.

*And the dish ran away with the spoon.*¹²⁵

The “Hey diddle diddle” rhyme is a commentary upon the early years of Elizabeth I’s reign neatly summarizing the major events of the first year of her governance. Elizabeth ascended the throne upon the death of her half-sister Mary in November of 1558, to the joy of the English people who were tired of Mary’s rule and that of her husband Philip II of Spain. Mary’s stringent Catholicism had grown wearisome to the people, and it was well known that Elizabeth embraced the Protestant church and its beliefs. With this knowledge, the people happily anticipated a return to the religious settlement as it was under the reign of Henry VIII, the last formidable ruler that England had seen, and an end to Mary’s persecution policy with the burning of heretics. The standard issues that greeted a female monarch’s accession were once again evident, and they all were dealt with in their time.

However, Elizabeth faced a slightly unusual crisis in the first months of her reign, with the struggle between the Catholics and the Protestants in Scotland. The Congregation, comprised of Protestant lords rebelling against the Queen Regent Mary of Guise, had asked Elizabeth’s government for financial support of their cause, but Elizabeth was wary of doing so, being painfully aware of the financial situation of the English crown. Nonetheless, William Cecil convinced Elizabeth to send money in support of the Scottish Protestants, but with the condition that the Congregation knew that the funds were not from Elizabeth, nor her government, but instead from English nobles who sympathized with the Protestants’ cause.¹²⁶ One of the Scottish lords came to Berwick to get the English funds, but through a mishap, one of the Queen Regent’s supporters obtained the money and the proof that the English government was assisting the rebels.

¹²⁵ Walter, 3.

¹²⁶ Jasper Ridley, *Elizabeth I: The Shrewdness of Virtue* (New York: Fromm International, 1987), 98.

The Congregation then made an official petition for aid, not as rebels against their ruler, but as loyal defenders of their land from foreign rule. After some time watching the situation, Cecil came to the conclusion that England had to help the Scottish Protestants, while others disagreed. The decision fell to Elizabeth who decided that she would not get involved in Scottish affairs at the time.¹²⁷

However, Cecil came close to resignation in November 1558 and wrote Elizabeth a letter in which he informed her that he could not effectively carry out her policy because he thought she was wrong in her decision. He asked to be transferred to another area to serve, and Elizabeth changed her mind about dissolving Parliament at the time. December 1558 brought Elizabeth's decision to enact a new policy of armed intercession in Scotland. Europe's reaction was immediate and unanimous, foreseeing a French defeat of the English in Scotland, with France conquering England and holding complete control over the English Channel, thus blocking a major trade route for Spain and the Low Countries. No one in Europe believed that Elizabeth could defeat the French nor did they accurately estimate Elizabeth's power and status as a potential threat. Elizabeth changed her mind again in late December and rejected the military option, but she was late in that her ships had sailed the day before her decision.¹²⁸

A formal treaty between Elizabeth and the Duke of Châtellherault was signed on 27 February 1560, declaring that Elizabeth was content that the Scottish lords were indeed proving loyal to the Queen of Scots with their defense of the realm from foreign conquest. Lord Grey led 9,000 English troops into Scotland on 29 March to support the Protestants and by the middle of April 1560, there troops were involved in the siege at Leith.¹²⁹ Lord Grey's force attempted to take Leith on 7 May, but their confrontation was resisted. Cecil immediately feared that Elizabeth

¹²⁷ Ibid., 99.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 99-102.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 103.

would change her mind on the issue yet again due to the failure, but she sent more men, money, and weaponry to Leith almost immediately. Fortunately for the English, the French were not supporting their stronghold at Leith and soon agreed to undertake negotiations with the English to resolve the matter.¹³⁰

The negotiations began on 17 June 1560 and were consolidated into the Treaty of Edinburgh on 6 July. In the terms of the treaty, France consented to retreat from Scotland and allow the Scots to decide their own religion. The English terminated their mandate that the French return Calais and the compensation for Mary Stuart's assumption of the English royal arms. In addition, the English also consented to suspend the agreement between Elizabeth and the Lords of the Congregation. With the English compromises, the French were able to maintain that it was a conciliatory peace, but actually, it was a complete conquest for Elizabeth and the Protestant cause with the gains on every issue that was significant to them. Despite her uncertainty and wavers in policy, Elizabeth herself was responsible for the decision to take the risk of interference in Scotland and disregard the greater powers of Europe, and thus the victory in Scotland was a victory for England and the Protestant cause.¹³¹

Another issue that Elizabeth was forced to face in the opening months of her reign was a more standard concern of female rulers, especially those who were unmarried. The nobility of England wanted to know whom Elizabeth would appoint as her heir in case that she did not marry nor bear an heir of her own. There were several potential candidates, in the forms of Ladies Catherine and Mary Grey, and Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, amongst others. Lady Catherine Grey, as the elder surviving child of Henry VIII's niece and Elizabeth's cousin, and her adherence to the Protestant faith, marked her as the premier Protestant candidate to be heir presumptive to

¹³⁰ Ibid., 106.

¹³¹ Ibid., 107.

the English throne, while the leading Catholic candidate was Mary Stuart. There was much to do over this question, since the fact that none of the candidates were of the direct bloodline and all of them were female had the possibility of forcing England into a potential civil war over the succession after Elizabeth's death.

Lady Catherine appeared to be the leading candidate, however she ran into difficulties with Elizabeth over her proposed marriage to Edward Seymour, Lord Hertford. Lady Catherine asked Elizabeth's permission to marry Hertford, which was required by an Act of 1536 that made it high treason to marry a member of the royal family without the monarch's sanction. Elizabeth refused her permission and thus it was assumed that the Grey-Hertford match would end there. One idea as to why Elizabeth refused to tolerate the marriage is that if the heir to the throne was married and produced an heir while Elizabeth remained unattached, it would encourage malcontents to overthrow Elizabeth and place Catherine on the throne.¹³²

In the summer of 1561, Lady Catherine was found to be pregnant and eventually gave birth to her child. She told Elizabeth that she had clandestinely married Hertford and that Hertford was the father of her child. Hertford was interrogated and admitted to marrying Lady Catherine as well as his role as the father of her child, however neither Catherine nor Hertford would name the priest who had married them nor could they produce other evidence of a marriage having taken place. Elizabeth was incensed and sent them both to be incarcerated in the Tower of London, but the Lieutenant of the Tower allowed the pair to continue living together and so Catherine gave birth to a second son in 1563.¹³³ Elizabeth was absolutely furious at the flouting of her orders and soon removed Catherine to house arrest. Catherine's offences merely made Elizabeth resolute in not naming Catherine as her heir, due to her marriage to Hertford without

¹³² Ibid., 114-5.

¹³³ Ibid., 115.

Elizabeth's permission. Taking an alternate view of the situation, one could also say that Catherine had the black mark against her reputation of illegitimate children, since there was no proof of her marriage to Hertford, and this as well may have contributed to Elizabeth's aversion to her and to nominating Lady Catherine as her heir.¹³⁴

The rhyme's terms encompasses both the Scottish situation and that of Lady Catherine Grey's marriage to Hertford, as well as Elizabeth's reaction to both. Elizabeth is the cat in the rhyme, which is calling the tune that her Council must follow, no matter their intentions, as in the case of William Cecil. Elizabeth's victory in the Scottish situation gives her the role of the controlling cat with her manipulation of the Council to achieve the aims she desired. The dog appears to be Robert Dudley, Elizabeth's paramour, who greatly profited from her thumbing her nose at the Council and continuing her relationship with him. The dish and spoon of the rhyme look to be Lord Hertford and Lady Catherine Grey, since as members of the court, they would fulfill roles at the sovereign's table. Lady Catherine was reputed to be the royal taster at times, thus giving her the role of the spoon, while Lord Hertford may have been used in the ceremonial role of bearer of the sovereign's meat to the table, accordingly giving him the role of the dish.

*A frog he would a wooing go,
A frog he would a wooing go,
Whether his mother let him or no...*

*He rode right to Miss Mousie's den,
He rode right to Miss Mousie's den,
Said he Miss Mousie are you within?...*

*He said, my dear I've come to see,
He said, my dear I've come to see,
If you, Miss Mousie, will marry me...*

¹³⁴ Ibid., 132.

*I don't know what to say to that,
I don't know what to say to that,
Till I can see my Uncle Rat...*

*So Uncle Rat he rode to town,
So Uncle Rat he rode to town,
And bought his niece a wedding gown...*

*The Frog and Mouse, they went to France,
The Frog and Mouse, they went to France,
And this is the end of my romance.¹³⁵*

“A frog he would a wooing go” is a reference to one of the proposed matches for Elizabeth I with the Duke of Anjou, which would have led to a defensive alliance with the French against the Spanish. The Anjou proposal was not a measure to shore up Elizabeth’s throne, nor to provide masculine support of the throne, as the marriage of her half-sister Mary had been, and at its first proposal was more for French benefit than for English benefit. The English stood to profit from the alliance in terms of a defense against Spain, but the French hoped to exploit the resources of England the Anjou’s marriage to Elizabeth. Henry III and Catherine de Medici were also trying to orchestrate a political partnership with Elizabeth in addition to the proposed marriage where both England and France would check any form of Spanish aggression against either party. However, this application was eventually shelved for a few years, based on Elizabeth’s disinclination to marry.¹³⁶

The political situation at the time of the winter of 1577-1578 in Europe was exceedingly tense. The state of affairs in the Netherlands was reaching a crisis point with the rebellion of the Dutch against Philip II’s rule coming between Philip and Elizabeth, the former clinging to his policy, the latter gaining an expanding role in the area as protector of the Protestants. The States-General, looking for independence, had turned to Elizabeth for assistance, which she had granted,

¹³⁵ Petersohn, <http://ingeb.org/songs/afroghew.html>

¹³⁶ Wallace Macaffrey, *Elizabeth I* (London: Edward Arnold, 1993), 179-8.

but with her tortuous political machinations, she later appeared uninterested and so the States-General turned to the Duke of Anjou for support. Elizabeth was attempting to avoid war with her policies and her counselors spent the summer of 1578 involved in unproductive mediations to avoid the outbreak of war. Elizabeth was furious at the terms the States-General was proposing, while the ambassadors decried her actions, which were having the effect of running the States-General directly into the hands of the Duke of Anjou. The ambassadors were firmly convinced that Elizabeth had gone too far and that the stability of the English crown was threatened.¹³⁷

The States-General and Anjou were locked into negotiations until August 1578, when a provisional agreement was reached. However, sometime during the negotiations, looking to win from the situation no matter what, Anjou had resurrected the previously tabled marriage proposals to Elizabeth, and Elizabeth seemed to have gained a certain measure of trust in the Duke's movements. Shortly, Elizabeth, obviously doubting Anjou's intentions, offered the States-General between ten and twelve thousand men and £ 100,000, but the States-General signed with Anjou a few days later. After the reappearance of the marriage proposal, Elizabeth appeared to unbend toward the Duke and seemed to be seriously considering the proposal again. The English ministers were watching the situation warily, taking into consideration Anjou's status as heir to the French throne and anticipating a repetition of the troubles Mary had with her marriage agreement if Elizabeth did decide to accept Anjou's proposal. Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester and Elizabeth's former paramour, believe that she was not terribly keen about the marriage, but was swayed by those who supported the marriage with Anjou.¹³⁸ The machinery to arrange a marriage of an English queen regnant seemed to be moving again to work another match.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 195-6.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 196.

After the resolution of the matter with the States-General, the marriage proposal became increasingly significant. Anjou's Master of the Wardrobe, Jean Simier, arrived at the English court in January 1579 and was taken to the center of the court where he was inundated with Elizabeth's courtesies. Elizabeth herself was actually taking an active role in the flattery for the first time in the history of her various proposed marriages and appeared more than interested in wedding Anjou. Elizabeth had coerced several of her earls to commit to supporting the match, and she was hinting at the possibility of a wedding before Easter 1579, while also suggesting that Anjou come to England for a face to face meeting. By March, the formal negotiations for the marriage treaty had begun to settle the practical questions, such as Anjou's income and his public role. Elizabeth urged her Council onward, without the usual delay strategies, and she insisted that preparations be finalized for Anjou's arrival in August 1579.¹³⁹

The Duke arrived on 17 August 1579, traveling in disguise so as to keep his visit as much of a secret as possible. This precaution was essentially useless, since the entire court knew what was in the air, and even the Spanish ambassador was able to relate the proceedings of Anjou's visit in some detail to Philip II. The Duke's visit to England brought the matter of the marriage alliance to a crisis point. Anjou had passed the test of acceptability and was even dubbed her "frog" by Elizabeth. The courtship was completed and the prospective bridegroom had been found agreeable. The ball was in Elizabeth's court and she had to give an answer to Anjou's suit. Prior to doing so, however, she looked to her Council for their advice. William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Elizabeth's head counselor, had laid out a case for the Anjou marriage in the spring of 1579, which would cement the pact between England and France. The alliance would also grant the Huguenots, or French Protestants, toleration, and the civil war in France would come to an end. The French Catholic conspiracy where Elizabeth would be overthrown and replaced with

¹³⁹ Ibid., 199-200.

Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland, would also cease. Most importantly, the alliance would force Philip II to concede satisfactory terms to the rebels in the Low Countries. Burghley was a strong supporter of the Anjou match during the beginning of the negotiations, in contrast to his previous stance of fortified separation. He felt that the marriage would eradicate most of the dangers England faced in terms of aggression from France and Spain.¹⁴⁰

However, the opponents of the Anjou marriage did not take such a perspective. They were certain that England would once again face the tensions it had endured after Mary's marriage to Philip II of Spain. The opponents, including Dudley, Sidney, and Leicester, were disturbed on the basis of religion as well, since Anjou, as a member of the French royal family, carried the stigma of the deed of St. Bartholomew against the French Protestants. John Stubbs, a London writer, crystallized the opposition's stance in his "A gaping gulf wherein England is like to be swallowed by another French marriage if the Lord forbid not the bans by letting Her Majesty see the sin and punishment thereof."¹⁴¹ Stubbs censured the match as treachery against the Protestant beliefs with the use of parallels with Old Testament history. His second argument was that of vociferous patriotism, nationalism, and xenophobia against foreign rule, once again as in the case of the opponents of Mary's marriage. Stubbs' third argument was based on possibilities, all of which he predicted would end in England's assumption of the role of French satellite. Stubbs and the opponents of the match also disparaged the potential benefits of the alliance that Burghley had outlined.¹⁴²

On 2 October 1579, the Council was asked to advise Elizabeth on the matter, and each member of the Council had to give his individual opinion. Burghley outlined the pros and cons of the marriage, taking the stance that of all the dreadful choices, the least dire should be chosen,

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 200-I.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 202.

¹⁴² Ibid., 202-4.

which he saw as the Anjou marriage. Burghley concluded his position with an unenthusiastic support of the marriage. The opponents of the match also presented their case, but at the end of the counselors' presentations, no answer had been reached and Elizabeth was to be coerced into showing her own inclinations. A week afterward, the Council granted an official and dour acquiescence to the marriage, making clear their lukewarm sentiments towards the match. Elizabeth, realizing how unpopular the proposed marriage was, began to work to extricate herself from the situation. A contract was drawn up, but with the proviso that gave Elizabeth time to sway the English public into agreeing with the match. She was going to submit the proposal for Parliament's discussion and the necessary legislation, but the Council showed her it would be an uphill climb. The court and the Council had initiated the torrent of popular feeling against the match, and as a result, Elizabeth's status as the Virgin Queen would be safeguarded.¹⁴³

The rhyme neatly sums up the situation, although it fails only in the sense of the ending. Anjou is the frog of the rhyme, and Elizabeth takes the role of Miss Mousie. Catherine de Medici takes the role of the frog's mother whose advice was not taken, and this role suits her well in that she was indeed Anjou's mother and did not particularly support the match with Elizabeth. Lord Burghley is Uncle Rat, whose endorsement of the marriage translates to buying a wedding gown in the rhyme. Anjou did ride to Elizabeth's den to ask if she would marry him with his visit to England in August 1579. Elizabeth's refusal to accept the proposal without the advice of Burghley and the Council is apparent in the verse with "I don't know what I can say to that... 'Till I can see my Uncle Rat." The point on which the rhyme appears to fail is that of the frog and mouse going to France, which would have happened had Elizabeth not ultimately rejected Anjou's proposal. Perhaps this is because the rhyme entered the popular consciousness prior to Elizabeth's rejection

¹⁴³ Ibid.

when she appeared to be on the brink of acceptance, which would explain the frog and mouse's journey to France.

With the matching of the Mother Goose rhymes to the situations faced by the Tudor monarchs and the English populace of the era, a case for the Mother Goose rhymes as English political satire becomes increasingly apparent. Certainly the rhymes do not fulfill all of the details of the various situations, however, the resemblances between the conditions of the rhymes and the actual states of affairs is too close to be argued as irrelevant. Richard III is Humpty Dumpty, just as Henry VIII is the king in the counting house. Edward VI is the little boy down the lane of the "Baa baa black sheep" rhyme, and Elizabeth is the cat in "Hey diddle diddle." It is not for certain that these individuals are the origins of those particular figures, but it certainly seems more than probable. The matches between Mother Goose rhymes and English monarchs do not end with the Tudors, but in fact reflect other monarchs, such as Charles I and his wife Henrietta Maria as Jack Sprat and his wife. The question of whether or not the rhymes actually are political satire is a fascinating one, but it will never be answered for certain.

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