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The Pseudocycysis of Mary Tudor I

Lead: Popular at the beginning of her rule, Queen Mary needed time and an heir to follow her. She got neither.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts

Content: When Mary Tudor came to the English throne in the summer of 1553, the hopes of Catholics all over Europe were raised. She was committed to returning England to the Catholic faith, took as husband Philip, the future King of Spain, and set out to produce the heir who would confirm her rule and the Catholic restoration.

The sadness of Mary was that both marriage and monarchy were failures. Her union with Philip lacked love and children, and her rule failed to return England to the Catholic fold.

Marriage to the heir of the Spanish throne ate into the Queen's initial popularity and within six months rebellion was brewing. In January, 1555 Sir Thomas Wyatt, leading 3000 peasants from southeastern England, marched on London to overthrow the Queen. She easily crushed this revolt and executed Wyatt, but instead of proceeding with prudence she threw caution to the winds. Convinced that England was filled with subversive secret Protestants, Mary and her advisors set to root them out. Wrong

in her belief that Catholicism could be restored, she tragically thought this could be furthered by blood and fire. In the last three years of her reign, beginning with Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, 300 men and women were burned at the stake for their Protestant faith. Instead of terrorizing the country, the executions stiffened resistance to the Queen's program and soon the jails were bursting at the seams with heretics awaiting their turn at the stake.

It is possible that England could have been restored to the Catholic faith but that would have required a long reign by the Queen herself and another by a child which she never produced. Neither of these were to be

given to the increasingly saddened, abandoned, and disillusioned Queen, one of the most tragic monarchs in English history. Her determined commitment to a faith no longer held by her countrymen earned her the hatred of her people and the history's designation as Bloody Mary. Next time the false pregnancies of Mary Tudor.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

Erickson, Carolly. *Bloody Mary*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Publishing Company, 1979.

Prescott, Hilda Frances Margaret. *Mary Tudor*. New York, NY: Macmillan and Company, 1953.