

# MARY'S CLAIM TO THE THRONE

Kenning Hall, 9 July 1553

My lords, We greet you well and have received sure advertisement that Our dearest brother the King, Our late sovereign lord, is departed to God's mercy. Which news, how woeful they be unto our heart He only knows, to Whose will and pleasure We must, and do, humbly submit Us and Our wills. But in this so lamentable a case, that is, to wit, now, after His Majesty's departure and death, concerning the Crown and governance of this realm of England, with the title of France, and all things thereto belonging, what has been provided by act of Parliament and the testament and last will of Our dearest father, besides other circumstances advancing Our right, you know, the Realm and the whole world knows. The rolls and records appear by the authority of the King, Our said father, and the King, Our said brother, and the subjects of this Realm. So that We verily trust that there is no good true subject that is, can, or would pretend to be ignorant thereof. And of Our part, We have of Ourselves caused and, as God shall aid and strengthen Us, shall cause, Our right and title in this behalf to be punished and proclaimed accordingly.

And albeit this so weighty matter seems strange, that Our said brother, dying upon Thursday at night last past, We hitherto had no knowledge from you thereof, yet We consider your wisdoms and prudence to be such that having oftsoons among you debated, pondered, and well-weighed this present case with Our estate, with your own estate, the commonwealth, and all Our honours, We shall and may conceive great hope and trust with much assurance in your loyalty and service, and therefore for the time interpret and take things not to the worst, and that you will, like noblemen, work the best.

Nevertheless, We are not ignorant of your consultations to undo the provisions made for Our preferment, nor of the great bands and provisions forcible wherewith you be assembled and prepared—by whom, and to what end, God and you know, and nature cannot but fear some evil.

But be it that some consideration politic, or whatsoever thing else has moved you thereto; yet doubt you not, my lords, but We can take all these your doings in gracious part, being also right ready to remit and fully pardon the same, and that freely, to eschew bloodshed and vengeance against all those that can or will intend the same; trusting also assuredly you will take and accept this grace and virtue in good part, as appertains, and that We shall not be enforced to use the service of others, Our true subjects and friends, which in this Our just and right cause, God, in Whom Our whole affiance is, shall send Us.

Wherefore, my lords, We require you and charge you and every of you that of your allegiance which you owe to God and Us, and to none other, for Our honour and the surety of Our person, only employ yourselves, and forthwith, upon receipt hereof, cause Our right and title to the crown and government of this realm to be proclaimed in Our city of London and other places, as to your wisdom shall seem good, and as to this case appertains; not failing hereof as Our very trust is in you. And this Our letter, signed with Our hand, shall be your sufficient warrant in this behalf.

Guy Carleton Lee, ed. *Sourcebook of English History* (1901):286–287.